

# The Irish and the Vikings on the Edge of Central Civilization

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## I. Introduction and Summary

One of the most enigmatic entries on our list of interaction systems is the Irish case. Wilkinson includes it on his long-standing list of civilizations, with an entry date of approximately 450, and engulfment by 'Central Civilization' sometime between 1050 and 1175. We will consider the Irish in terms of their entry into prestige goods networks, their development of a state system, engulfment by Central Civilization, and I will look at the Irish in light of Wilkinson's own definition of civilization. The findings are mixed. The Irish begin trading prestige goods across the Irish Sea and beyond starting as early as 2500 BCE and are linked securely to the Central Civilization prestige goods network between 1500 and 1000 BCE. A state system is more difficult to attribute to the Irish. Writing on early Irish political history is systematically untrustworthy. We do know that the Irish laws and norms of the time militate against the rise of states or the success of a state system. Using the most liberal definition, an Irish state system might be attributed to the mid-7<sup>th</sup> century. The Viking incursion c.800 worked to destroy various elements of Irish society, but did facilitate state formation. This was nonetheless a slow process, providing a state system at best for only about 150 years before the Irish were engulfed by Central Civilization. The matter is further complicated if we take into account the lack of other elements of civilization as defined by Wilkinson. The Irish cease to be militarily autonomous at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, and fail to develop significant urban centers through the entire period. Those urban centers that developed on Irish soil were Viking cities. I review Wilkinson's rationale for including the Irish on the list, and it appears that they stand as a surrogate for all the 'failed' or 'aborted' civilizations. Wilkinson is to be applauded for keeping areas like this on the agenda. It would be wrong to ignore non-civilizations, and equally difficult (and probably fruitless) to seek new classification schemes. In this case, I would nonetheless suggest that we study the Irish in light of the literature on incorporation associated with Tom Hall (1986; 2005; 2006; 2009; 2012).

Much of the reason it is difficult to justify the existence of an independent Irish state system is that the Vikings played so fundamental a role in Ireland for three hundred years prior to the Norman invasion. Perhaps we ought to include the Scandinavians, who are not on our list, for consideration. I find membership in a prestige goods system from 1500 BCE, and the development of a state system as early as 500 and most certainly by 700. Questions as to when Scandinavia was engulfed by Central Civilization must await further review of the dynamics of their far-flung empire. The dates for engulfment could be quite early, and must be based in part

on how coherent the Viking world was when elements of their empire began to engage Central Civilization.

## II. The Irish Prestige Goods Network

In mid-2015 the popular science press trumpeted an interesting find. In a paper published in the *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, Standish et.al. report a mechanism to identify the geographic origin of gold. Some of the earliest gold artifacts in Ireland were traced to ore mined in Cornwall, Wales. Trade between Cornwall and Ireland dates to about 2500 BCE. The puzzle that emerges is why Ireland, with its local gold ore and knowledge of smelting, would have imported the metal. Indeed, the first metals in the British archaeological record were Irish copper-arsenic alloys (Sturt and Van-de-Noort 2010:38). Standish suggests that the ‘foreign’ status of gold may have enhanced its provenance. He also argues that the fact that so much more gold is found in Ireland than in Cornwall suggests that the exchange was significant. Estimates are that up to 200 kilos of gold were extracted from rivers near Cornwall between the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, and much of it was probably exported to Ireland (Ring 2015). The gold might not have been the primary target, but a byproduct of the production of tin which was critical to the making of bronze (ibid.). If true, Cornwall’s tin would have been even more profitable to exploit, altering social and economic conditions on both sides of the exchange.

The popular attention lavished on this news was surely due to the fact that gold is synonymous with wealth, archaeology is confused with treasure-hunting, and impressive museum photos of fine gold artifacts make appealing eye candy. But the role of gold, copper, and tin in the creation of the early global economy is difficult to overstate. Sturt and Van-de-Noort suggest that trade in the far west of Europe emerged in the third millennium BCE because metals were not equally distributed. From their perspective, the 2500 BCE dating of the traceable finds means “Britain and Ireland are relatively late entrants into these exchange networks...” (2010:38; 36). This proposed date for new linkages is supported by the archaeological record. Sturt and Van-de-Noort report a variety of new phenomena in Ireland consistent with the onset of long-distance connections. There is greater diversity in grave sites that signal visits and migrations from Brittany. ‘Passage grave’ builders “...secured a powerful economy and constructed massive tumuli which ...reveal their builders’ sophistication and the richness and maturing of the culture they established in Ireland” (Herity and Eogan 1977:57). Single burial traditions in the same period were brought by ‘Beaker People’ (Herity and Eogan 1977:111). Even local burial practices in the period just prior to 2000 BCE evidence influences from as far away as Bohemia and Saxo-Thuringia (ibid.). Herity and Eogan suggest that the route “up the Elbe into Jutland, venturing across the North Sea and Scotland, then turning confidently south for Wicklow and Cornwall...” mark “...the first tentative steps along what is to become a much traveled trade route in the mature Bronze Age” (ibid.).

Between 2500 and about 1500 BCE we see the development of a series of interlinked trading networks that brought and sent both bulk and finished goods over long distances (Cooney and Grogan, 1994 citing Rowlands 1971). Copper, tin, and gold were necessary for the making of bronze and gold artifacts for elite goods, ritual purposes, and for weapons. Locally, mining was increasing, especially at sites like Mount Gabriel near the southwest coast of Ireland, which was particularly active between 1700 and 1500 BCE (Cooney and Grogan 1994:120). New

designs that owe much to Mediterranean fashion emerge in Ireland in about 1600 BCE (Waddell 1989:2). Sturt and Van-de-Noort suggest that long-distance trade was more the norm until the Middle Bronze Age when metals had become more generally available and could be exchanged in larger amounts between neighboring groups (2010:37). As forward bases were created (as by the Phoenicians in Iberia, who Sharratt (1993:5) identifies as a semiperipheral actor in the Mediterranean economy), as maritime technology altered, as mining regions became unsettled, as mines themselves played out, or as trade partners experienced hard times, it would make sense for trade relations to vary in several ways. There was nonetheless a fair degree of continuity until about 1200 BCE when environmental changes influenced trade in these areas.

There is a diminution in long-distance trade, though not necessarily in regional exchange, in about 1200 BCE. The devastating eruption of Hekla III in Iceland in 1159 BCE played havoc with the environment. There was an 18-year span of global cooling recorded in Irish bog oaks and impacts as far off as Egypt are noted (Baillie 1988). There are even arguments that this volcanic event ended the Late Bronze Age (Yurco 1999). Tectonic activity at the northwest edge of the European plate, and in Asia as well, may have played a role in these changes (Chew 2007:88-9; 99). Population peaked in Ireland between about 1150 and 900 and then began to fall rapidly to about 750 BCE (Armit et. al. 2014). At the same time we see the disappearance of contact between southern England and Nordic areas (Herity and Eogan 1977:215). Data and simulations by Armit et. al. (2014) suggest that population decline began about one hundred years before persistent climate change emerged, and therefore could not have been its result. But the impact of the massive eruption, and the higher rate of decline *after* environmental changes began, presents a picture of a complex human-environmental interface.

There were key social changes as well. In 1200 BCE we see the decline of the Hittite confederation, which was utilizing, and guarding jealously, the technology necessary for making iron weapons. Their decline saw the spread of craftsmen and iron technology through western Asia. Iron was not controlled by the elite, as bronze had been, was more readily available, easier to create, and more durable. Iron tools and weapons would increase the independence of individuals from chiefs and cults. As iron replaced bronze, long-distance trade was less necessary and often broke down, leveling the playing field by weakening bronze-dependent elites and making durable farming equipment and arms more generally available. In an old argument, this change is said to have led to a decline of central authority, prestige goods exchange, and other attributes of civilization, by reducing trade, facilitating revolt, invasion, and leading to isolation and illiteracy (Childe 1942:183). Ekholm Friedman provides a far more sophisticated analysis of the essential political contradictions of the Bronze Age (2005). Part of her analysis examines the trade system, and she notes that Mycenaeans controlled the rich “trade routes leading to metal-rich ports of Europe, one up through France to the British Isles. . . From these areas the Mycenaeans imported copper, tin, and gold (2005:80). As this trade ceased, we see a reduction of goods from the Mediterranean and the gradual introduction into Ireland of Baltic goods c.1000 BCE.

Kristiansen (1989:144-60) assembles evidence for an ‘Atlantic façade’, an inter-regional trading system, in the period after about 1200 BCE: “The Atlantic Bronze Age was made up of a number of distinct regional centres of metal production, unified by the regular maritime exchange

of some of their products. ... These regions were also linked to central European exchange networks.” Kristiansen’s sense of the region including the Irish is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Atlantic Facade plus Regional/Local Groups about here

The trade from Ireland across these regions included both utilitarian objects like buckets and ornaments, as well as prestige goods like cauldrons, and is evidenced across “the whole Atlantic Front.” Kristiansen concludes that “The diversity [of goods exchanged] is most clearly demonstrated in Ireland, testifying to its central position in the Atlantic network” (1989:145). Herity and Eogan (1977:215) argue that by 800 BCE a number of types of technologies and styles “converged on Ireland from different areas” and “initiated native development” of various crafts. Ireland began to export goods farther afield. Irish buckets bearing styles known as far away as Hungary, along with swords, halberds, and shields, are found in various hoards locally, in England, and on the Continent. “But possibly the greatest achievement of the Irish smiths was their competence in manufacturing large vessels – buckets and cauldrons – from sheet bronze. In western Europe Irish craftsmen became foremost in sheet-bronze working ... some of the most outstanding examples of gold ornaments in the old world ... without parallel in barbarian Europe ... ranks as one of Bronze Age Europe’s foremost technical achievements” (Herity and Eogan 1977:217). “The major link ... through southern England to the wider networks of the Atlantic and Late Urnfield worlds...” join “...important direct connections with the west Baltic or Nordic zone” (Champion 1989:290). Irish cauldrons in particular were used by elites for ritual feasting. Figure 2, derived from Kristiansen, shows the distribution of finds of Irish cauldrons from the 9<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE.

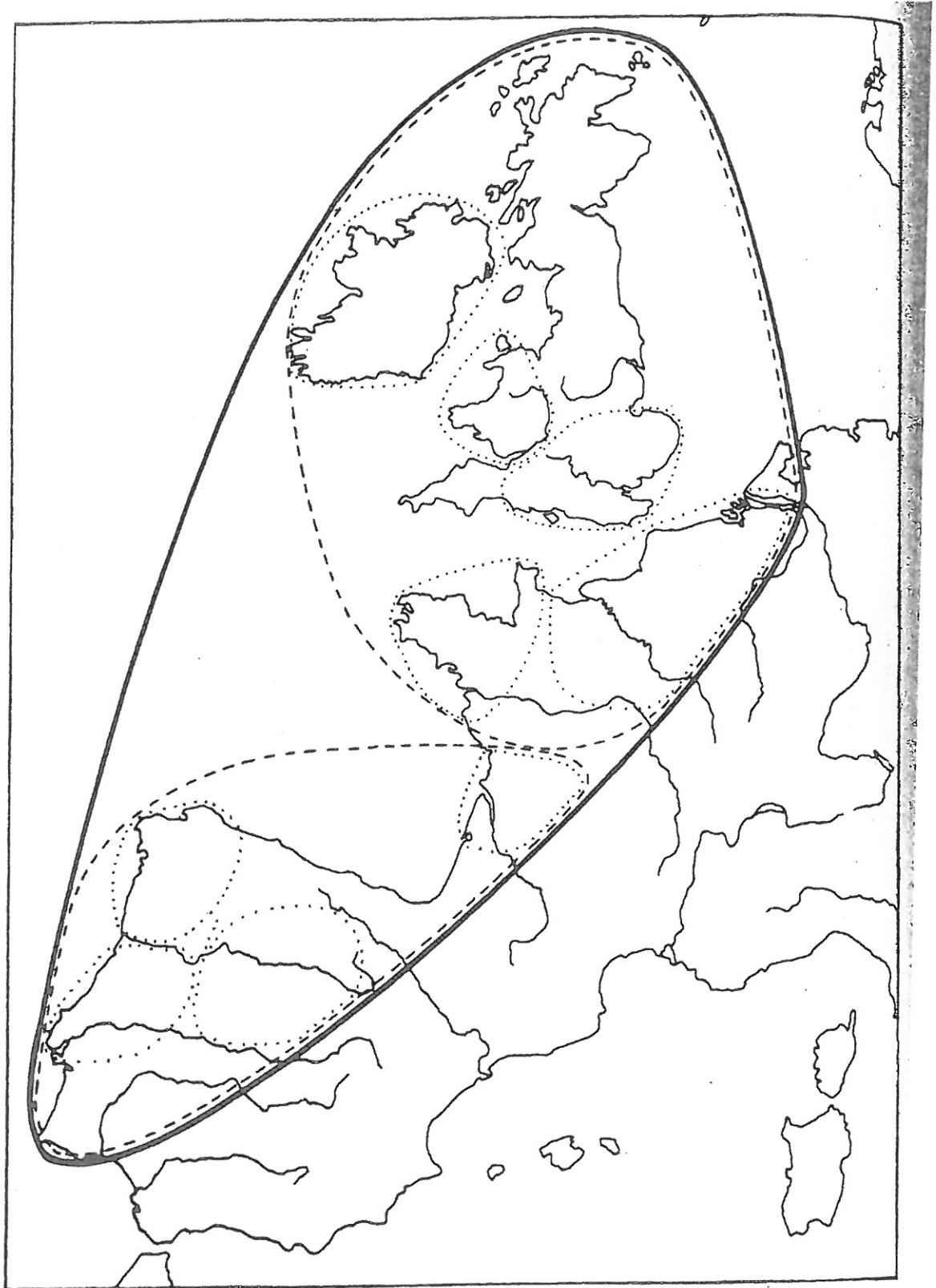
Figure 2: Distribution of Irish Cauldrons c.9<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE about here

The disruption of Irish social structure that was expected by scholars with the onset of the Iron Age was muted. Bronze industry declines in about the 7<sup>th</sup> century, iron comes into use even before that period, and is manufactured locally from about the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE. Iron disrupted the social hierarchy (Waddell 1989:286), but changes due to lost trade were mitigated because Ireland possessed its own copper, gold, and iron ore, while tin was nearby. Irish gold ornaments continued to find markets. More iron technology filtered in. Cooney and Grogan argue that “One aspect of the nature of the archaeological evidence for the Iron Age in Ireland is the considerable degree of continuity from the Late Bronze Age. This ...extends. . . to about 300 BC” (1994:185). They call attention to an “...overall picture showing the persistence of Late Bronze Age traditions and social and political organization” (1984:202). British and Continental influences continue to be noted in the mixed metal work of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. Waddell notes that “...in the last few centuries BC a Celtic-speaking Ireland was demonstrably in contact with a Celtic-speaking Britain, and possibly with the Continent as well, and the patterns of contact were probably similar to the patterns that obtained since the later second millennium BC at least” and points to “...a larger body of evidence testifying to a pattern of significant contact across the Irish Sea in the first and second centuries AD ...” (1989:289; 375-7).

Ireland was part of a large and well-connected Prestige Goods Trade Network/Oikumene from 2500 BCE that sometimes extended to the eastern Mediterranean, and never seemed to shrink much below the level of systematic relations among other parts of the Atlantic façade –

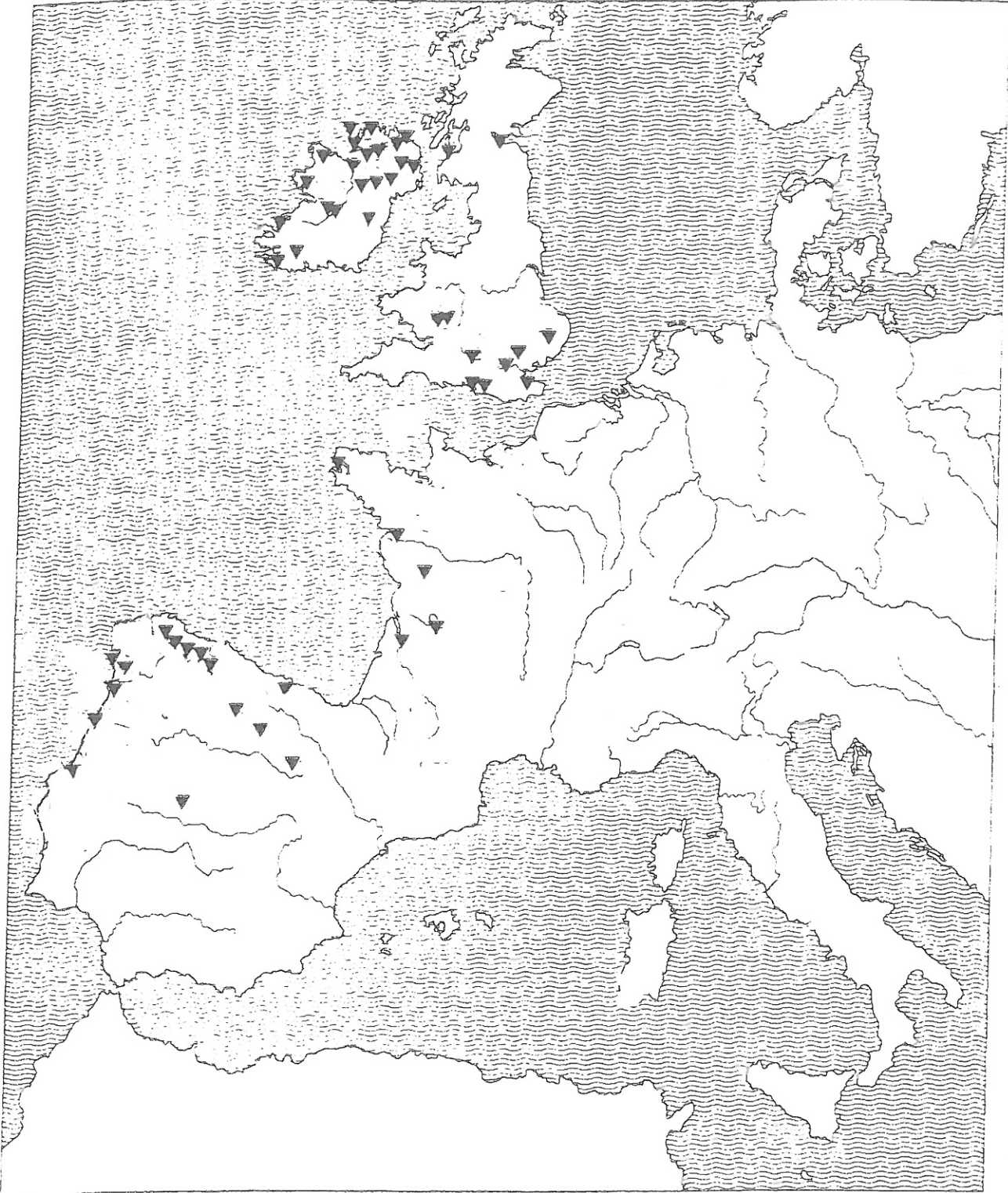


Figure 1: The Atlantic Facade plus Regional/Local Groups



Source: Kristiansen 1998:146

Figure 2: Distribution of Irish Cauldrons c.9th and 8th Centuries BCE



Source: Derived from Kristiansen 1998:149

including England, parts of modern France, Portugal, and Germany. Raw materials, manufactured items, and ideas, were both imported and exported, and included Irish-manufactured high-quality prestige goods. Kristiansen implies that Ireland may have been part of the periphery of an Iberia-centered network that subsequently fed Mediterranean markets (1989:159-60). More tentatively, the Irish prestige goods network clearly flirted with Central Civilization as early as 1600 BCE (following Waddle) as indicated by the growing use of changing Mediterranean fashions. Following Kristiansen, the Irish were a more established part of a linked centre-periphery subsystem by 1000 BCE. He argues that the reappearance of Mediterranean commerce after 1000 BCE has a large impact on Iberia and the Atlantic trading network, and concludes that "...it is clear that these two systems were to some extent dependent upon each other" (1998:144). Following Herity and Eogan (1977) the Irish were a much established part of Central Civilization by 800 BCE as Mediterranean links resurrected themselves from Iron Age dislocations. It is safe to argue that Ireland's prestige goods network merged with Central Civilization between 1500 and 1000 BCE.

### III. The Irish State/System

It is difficult to track the development of an Irish state system, which requires the interaction of separate, relatively coherent units possessed of territory, a differentiated social structure, a mechanism of governance not solely dependent on kin relations, and very often some sense of solidarity among the populace, and a developing core/periphery structure. Traditional histories of Ireland recount a remarkably linear process of the consolidation of five primordial territories into just two contenders for hegemony in the early centuries of the Common Era. These are the arguments of Irish history texts from secondary school onward (Binchy 1959: 124-5; Croinin, 2005). The five areas, Ulster, Leinster, Munster, Connacht, and Meath, and their ruling clans, were suggested to be of ancient origin, legitimate in their regions, coherent, and contenders for the 'kingship of Ireland' from the 6<sup>th</sup> century. As is often the case, traditional histories can be as much myth as reality. In the Irish case we find the writing of early history was self-consciously designed to legitimize political aspirations as opposed to describing actual conditions. Further, social and legal structures of the period suggest that few of the elements of a state system were actually present. Finally, the forces necessary to transform the Irish social system into a more complete state system were generated not domestically but by a foreign invasion that began at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, and continued in the form of a long-term settlement. But from that point forward any Irish state system was part of a broader network which was developing its own links to Central Civilization. There are several questions about that system which we must address before concluding as to whether the Irish were actually linked to Central Civilization via the Vikings.<sup>1</sup>

Wilkinson's original estimate for the start of 'Irish Civilization' was 450, corresponding to Toynbee's argument and the coming of Christianity, with its wider linkages and enhanced concern with literacy, scholarship, record-keeping, and monasticism (Wilkinson 1982:16). While the Church is understood to facilitate state formation, it is premature to suggest the

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<sup>1</sup> Irish historiography appears to go through periods when external influence is viewed as all-important, and when external influence is ignored to make way for more of a focus on domestically-driven change. I understand that anthropology as a discipline undergoes similar swings. There is the chance that my analysis has fallen prey to a literature from the period of an overemphasis on 'external' concerns.

existence of a state system at that early date. Irish Christianity was relatively independent from central authority and unique in its blending of local and Christian doctrine. Its origins rest in northern Gaul, not Rome, and it was more colloquial, rural, and charismatic. Polygamy, for example, was very much the norm in Ireland and was not denounced (Hughes 2005:315-6). The benefits of literacy and record-keeping were slow in coming. There is no exact record for the arrival of the first Bishop in Ireland, though scholars believe it was about 431. St. Patrick's chronology was assembled only in the 7<sup>th</sup> century from oral tradition, in part given his own shortcomings with literacy (Hughes 2005:307). The Irish church was built around monastic cells of a dozen men whose missionary zeal led them to cross the Irish Sea in 563 to proselytize in Britain 34 years before the first Papal mission arrived at the same place from the continent (Toynbee 1935ii:329). But this was a rural church that possessed few of the attributes that helped facilitate the development of state systems elsewhere.

The lack of early sources on Irish history opens more than the usual share of questions regarding later efforts to chronicle events. Irish records of the 7<sup>th</sup> century onward were notoriously open to falsity. Not only do the genealogies, king lists, and annals, present “a bewildering array of disjoint and discordant texts,” but their authors self-consciously wrote “to please their political masters and legitimate the existing *status quo*” (Croinin 2005:183). The writing of history was not just sponsored by, it was explicitly designed for political leaders. This historiographical method is referred to as ‘synthetic history’. Croinin, in a high-profile publication, warns “As a work of propaganda, this scheme was a *tour de force* ... The fact that the schema, in its prehistoric part, was entirely fiction, and in its historical portion artificial (to say the least!), in no way diminished its attractiveness in the eyes of eight century contemporaries” (2005:182-3). He uses phrases like “vast and impenetrable wasteland” and treats the 400s as a “lost century” for documentary historical purposes. Other authors concur. Doherty declares outright that only in the 7<sup>th</sup> century do we find sufficient documents with which to do any reasonable historical study of the Irish (1991:54).

The real challenge is that subsequent analysis based on a study of relevant period documents, including genealogies and records of battles, provides a false sense of the history of the era that was designed to give the impression that whatever ruler was in power at the time of the writing had a long-standing and legitimate claim to office by virtue of (often non-existent) family dominance of a (vaguely defined) region, where he had (often very little) control. The high kings of the period appeared far better at having scholars write about their political control than in actually acquiring or retaining it. The five primordial regions of Ireland named previously were suggested to be of ancient origin, with legitimate and long-standing ruling families, political coherence, and at one point or another from the 6<sup>th</sup> century on they were all identified as contenders for the ‘Kingship of Ireland’. But Croinin notes that “... at no time in the historical period did the political division represented ... have a tangible existence ... no document records the names or extents of the ‘original’ five provinces” (2005:187). While specific regions did coalesce and acquire superior power, mostly (says Croinin) because they maintained peaceful family relations, some of the major regions did not even interact with one another on any level until later in the 8<sup>th</sup> or even the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Even then, the interaction both within and between regions was chaotic.



MacNiocail notes the small and fractured nature of Irish society before 600 and takes 80 pages to review 250 years of leadership struggles among scores of clans. State formation appears only in its infancy at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century (1972:28-9; 151). Croinin takes 40 pages to review historically cross-checked provincial interactions over a similar period. Richter suggests that if we assume an average reign of 15 years there would have been 3000 kings in Ireland between 450 and 750. Though provincial kings were important from the 5<sup>th</sup> century, "...this does not mean ... that the old tribal kingship ... had become meaningless" (Richter 1988:32). Snow suggests that between 400 and 1177 Ireland had "at least 120 chiefdoms [larger or provincial kingdoms]... typically having about 700 warriors" (2001:46). This averages to 15 provincial kingdoms in any given year. Several authors follow Binchy (1959) in suggesting that the oft-claimed term 'King and Ireland' was in fact without meaning in the law or on the ground.

In a critical essay first presented in 1959 and still widely referenced, Daniel Binchy argued that Irish society was not oriented toward the creation of state-like structures at all. Every tribe had a king, though his leadership did not confer land ownership separate from his own, nor were legislative powers, nor authority to enforce private rights, part of the king's duties (Binchy 1959:123). The primary duty of these many *primus inter pares* kings was to negotiate or fight other kings, but any agreements made with other kings (whether they were equals or superior in their capacity) were personal in nature and not binding on his subjects. Binchy goes so far as to credit this "extreme fragmentation of sovereignty" with protecting Ireland from conquest. As there existed no central authority or appreciable political machinery, invaders had to subdue each of the hundreds of tribes to rule (Binchy 1959:122; 126-7).

The norms of warfare were also stacked against state formation. Through the 8<sup>th</sup> century inter-tribal wars were only fought until a king was killed. New kings had to be chosen from among the traditional dynasty and could not be imposed by the victor. Winners could not annex territory or confiscate private lands, though they did sometimes demand security denominated in cattle or land – if not family members. Non-combatants were protected in special zones (Binchy1959:128). Under these circumstances there is little ability to specialize, differentiate, or consolidate into larger and more capable units. Any such process would be long, slow, and tend to break down quickly with the death of a king or a change in military circumstance. While the various annals report on a series of strong, specialized, organized, and visionary monarchs engaged in the long-standing process of unifying the areas around them, the actual history may be rather different.

The structure of 'war' itself was telling. Reported 'wars' were often little more than retaliatory raids designed to steal (or steal back) cattle. There is little sense of the development of dedicated retinues of soldier-administrators whose sole profession was service to the king, or permanent control of territory via the building of fortifications. About 200 coastal promontory forts are known that appear to date from the Late Bronze Age. Edwards suggests Iron Age occupation of many of these forts is uncertain (2005:254-5). They may have been built to deal with Roman trade and their use declined shortly after the Empire withdrew. Some high-status sites were reoccupied in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, and a very few in the 8<sup>th</sup> through the 11<sup>th</sup>. The vast majority appeared to have been abandoned after the first occupation.

Much would change with the coming of the Vikings.<sup>2</sup> Viking raiders began to prey upon Irish monasteries and populations from 795, and established permanent settlements in 839. The raids were widespread and often devastating. The first and most obvious impact of the raiding was on the monastic establishment. Irish monasticism was known and respected from the 7<sup>th</sup> century in Britain (as per the positive comments of Bede), as well as on the Continent (Picard 1991:39-44). The Irish themselves would raid monasteries, but would not destroy religious relics, and generally caused fewer fatalities (Valente 1998:72). Viking raids had a tendency to destroy monastic institutions, and some were never rebuilt. The death of literate monks and the destruction of historical records threatened important pillars of civilization. Raids intensified after the Vikings, as illustrated in figure 3, and literacy itself appeared to be under siege.

Figure 3: Post-Settlement Viking Activity, 850-879 about here

Wealth, at least at the elite level, was also destroyed. Monasteries served as the safety deposit banks of their day, making them popular targets. The precious metals that were taken by Vikings left Ireland as booty and was lost to the indigenous economy, stripping elites of the resources necessary to maintain legitimacy, play their historic role in supporting artisans, rebuild damaged institutions, or raise a more potent defense (Valente 1998:57). Edwards concludes that "...in the 9<sup>th</sup> century excess wealth was no longer used to oil the wheels of the hierarchical, client-based social system. Instead, it was diverted into recovery and warfare and became concentrated in the hands of a dwindling number of ruling elites..." (2005:295).

Everyday wealth, defined in terms of livestock, was threatened when the Vikings established permanent settlements. After 840 Viking cattle raids joined domestic rustling as a major threat to popular wellbeing. This is all the more relevant given that clan relationships and loyalty were often based upon three-year loans of livestock to younger clan members. If the livestock disappeared then solvency, loyalty, and the bedrock extended family structure were weakened accordingly.

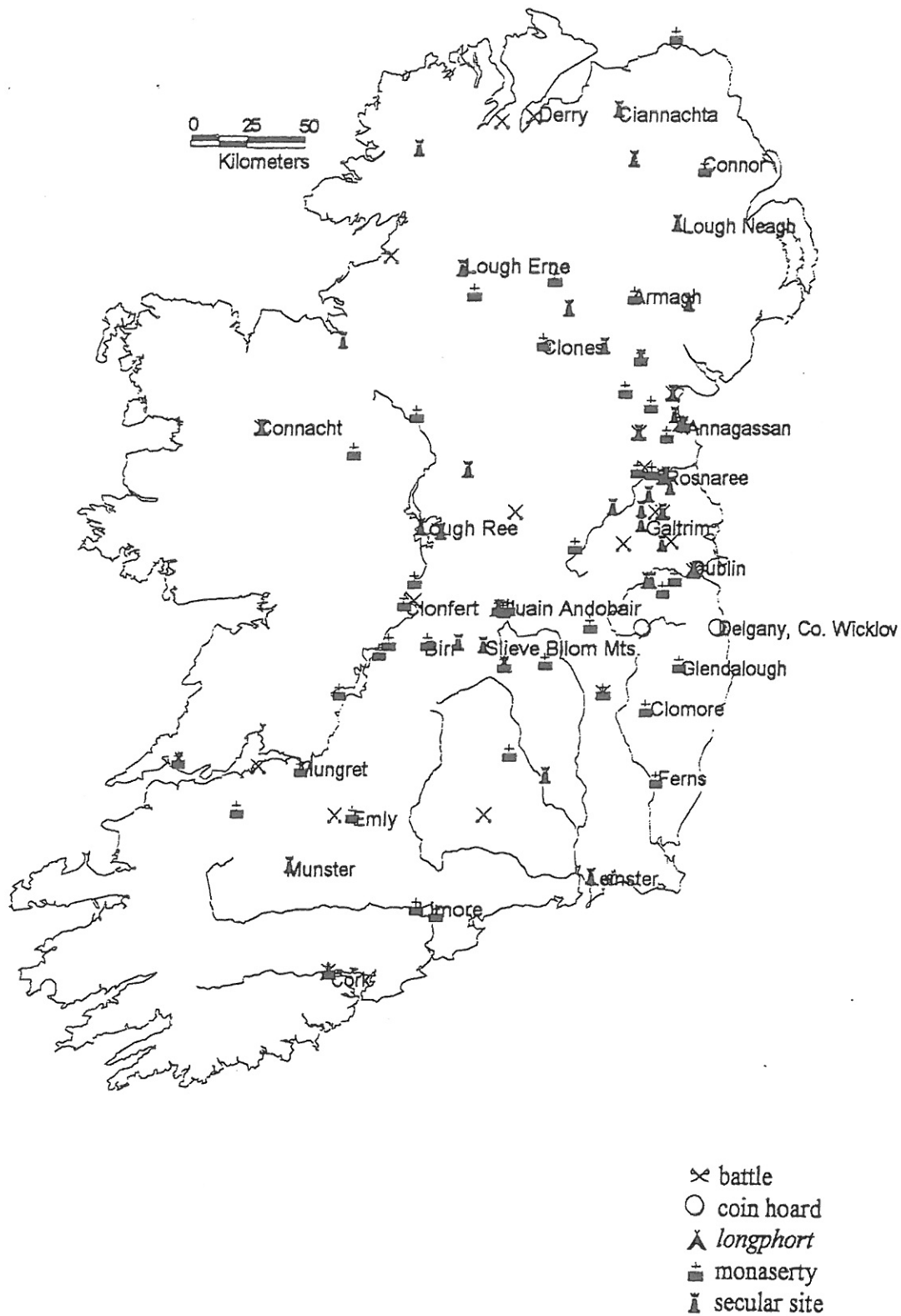
The Vikings also altered the nature of warfare among the Irish. Violence continued after kings were killed, or the opposition relented, leading to massacres and the taking of women and children. Two major changes are noted. First, the Vikings introduced broad-scale slave raiding. Irish annals first record slaving by the Vikings in 821, though given the hit-and-run tactics used during this period it is doubtful that the number of captives was significant (Holm 1986:319). This changed as the Vikings settled. By 869 the taking of slaves played a new strategic role. It was a mechanism by which to show dominance and cripple the enemy in a permanent manner (Holm 1986:320). By 871 this strategy was also in use in England, and by the 880s slave raids in Ireland were netting several hundred captives at a time. Slavers preferred to kill militarily capable males and take skilled craftsmen, women and children (Holm 1986:325).

In the 10<sup>th</sup> century slavery became a commercial enterprise, if not domestically in Ireland where slave-owning was solely an elite prerogative, then for the overseas 'market' in Scandinavian settlements such as Iceland, for the home country, or south to the slave markets

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<sup>2</sup> The term 'Viking' is problematic and based on some root words indicating piracy. Its popular use makes it difficult to ignore. I will use the term 'Viking' to reference a Scandinavian diaspora of raiders, traders, and settlers, that emerged in about the 8<sup>th</sup> century and was active to about the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

Figure 3: Post-Settlement Viking Activity, 850-879



Source: Valente 1998:83

that served the Islamic world. The Irish themselves adopted the practice in retaliation. But by that time there were also Irish-Viking alliances, and in 939 we learn of a joint operation specifically for slaving. In the 950s raids could net as many as 3000 captives (Holm 1986:328-9). Slaves and cattle were exchanged for the Irish imports of the day: wine, silk, handicraft items, precious stones, and other elite goods. Slaving of this sort, both as a military device and as a commercial activity, would peak in the 12<sup>th</sup> century when William the Conqueror halted the trade in Bristol, and the Dublin market declined (Holm 1986:343). While Holm argues that the economic impact of slaving is unclear, it certainly weakened the social structure.

As the Vikings showed no respect for the Irish norms of war, the Irish themselves began to ignore them. Large clans began to engulf smaller groups, replacing their leaders, annexing their territory, and forging larger holdings. Binchy argues that we find the first stirrings of Irish nationalism in this period and concludes that “The modern nationalist, then, has much to be grateful to the Norsemen. Their assaults jolted the country out of its old tribal framework; created, if not a modern sense of nationalism, at least a feeling of ‘otherness’ among peoples whose only loyalty had hitherto been to their local kings...” (1959:131). War became a mechanism not just to improve status in a tradition-bound system, but to create self-sustaining hierarchy by acquiring the resources necessary to expand the process. Forced consolidation and ‘state making’ allowed the Irish to defend themselves, rekindled monasticism in fortified areas, and allowed the Irish to play a larger role in their own future. (For the classic statement on the role of war in political consolidation see Finer 1975).

It was, however, only a beginning. Small jurisdictions were consolidated, but large bases of power also fragmented. Large clans held many who aspired to the throne. Deaths, pretensions, or whims, led to the splintering of alignments and alliances. The king lists and long descriptions of inter-kin competition are testimony to the fact that speaking of competing ‘states’ before the true process of state-making began following the invasions of 795 would be anachronistic, and real competitive states featuring any level of permanence, control of fixed territory, structures of governance, or loyalty of a populace, might not be in place until the middle or end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. If correct, this would leave at most 150 years between the creation of a real Irish state system and its engulfment by Central Civilization.

#### IV. Urbanization and Economy

There is a debate in the history of urbanization, both generally and with regard to Ireland, over the role played by monasteries in the founding of cities. For the Irish, towns that might have emerged from ecclesiastical centers were rare to begin with, as monasteries tended to be small and focused not around growing areas but in deeply rural environments (Aalen 101). The anthropological record shows that monasteries were really no larger than traditional rural households, and functioned in much the same way (Valente 1998:34). Nonetheless some monasteries did attract ancillary activities and display settlement patterns that might have served as the kernel of urban development (Valente 1998:69). Binchy argued that this early process was difficult given that “... the idea of a town, with a corporate personality distinct from that of the ruler, was quite foreign ... until the Scandinavians set up their ‘cities’” (1959:122).



With the arrival of the Vikings, destructive attacks on monasteries extinguished even those settlements that did seem to be on the verge of nucleation. Instead of providing collective security, monasteries became targets for violence that people chose to avoid. During the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries Stout estimates that some 45,000 fortified household ‘ring forts’ were erected (2000:97). These were basically family or extended family compounds that were surrounded with a stockade. Ireland had been rural, and it appears that the Viking incursions would reinforce that tendency. When ‘Irish’ cities were founded in the 9<sup>th</sup> century they would be Viking establishments, not indigenous ones. Waterford was the first city in Ireland founded expressly as a trade center in 914 (Valente 1998:102). Cork, Limerick, and Wexford were Viking enclaves. The most important Viking city was Dublin, founded in 841 as a mustering point and trade center. The city was fortified in 867 (Valente 1998:84). Raiding, but now as often trading with the farms in a broad area under their control, Dublin exported “bulky essentials” and “raw materials” as well as luxury goods to Scandinavia and Europe (Kuhn 1982:42). The slave trade grew. Imports included iron, as well as silver, amber, and jet. Craft production increased, but only slowly. Valente concludes that via Dublin, “Ireland was thus the periphery from which goods and materials were extracted and traded back to the core in Norway” (1989: 80). Older Irish centers like Armagh were sacked on multiple occasions and re-emerged in an inferior position to the newer Norse trading towns that offered ready access to foreign goods. The Irish did not urbanize, and to the degree that urbanization is important in our schema, this is a concern. The Vikings, on the other hand, did urbanize both in Ireland and elsewhere.

Similar arguments can be raised with regard to the local economy. The word ‘market’ is introduced into the language by the Norse. Before that time the only similar term was for the annual clan fair (Binchy 1959:121-2). The Irish had no currency. Units of account existed, but were based upon the value of different types of cattle (ibid.). Binchy concludes that the Norse “...forced a primitive and pastoral society to adopt, very much against the grain, a more progressive economic technique” (1959:131). It was about 997 before the first coins were minted in Ireland, and this was at Dublin under the Vikings (Wallace 2005:837).

## V. An Irish Civilization?

This picture of the Irish provides little semblance of the coherence that might be hoped for in an area to be considered with regard to inter-civilizational engulfment. While the Irish establish a vibrant prestige goods network as early as 2500 BCE, there is little semblance of a state system until the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The situation is even more difficult if we adopt the definitional elements of ‘civilization’ suggested by Wilkinson. For Wilkinson, ‘civilizations’ are “...militarily closed, geotechnologically isolated social-transactional networks with an autonomous political history during which they need not take or need not have taken much account of the possibility of conquest, invasion, attack – or alliance and cooperation – from any outsiders...” (1988:22). They include a collection of interlocking cities of significant size (ten thousand in general, twenty thousand for this meeting, the former figure having been derived from empirical analysis and not arbitrarily (Wilkinson 1993a:107). There should exist record-keeping, economic surplus, and a non-producing class (Wilkinson 1988). A civilization need not be an empire, and may present itself as a state system ruling a territory. Even here, autonomy or ‘military closure’ seems crucial to the definition.

Wilkinson himself does not appear to support the claim that the Irish possessed many of these definitional elements. Wilkinson identifies sufficiently-sized urban centers in Ireland only around 1100, some 700 years after the 450 start date posited for consideration and after incorporation into Central Civilization (Wilkinson 1993b:81). Barioch suggests an earlier and much larger population for Armagh, but this is derived from estimates by local officials of the number of college students, many of them foreign, and may have been designed to entice additional students to matriculate (1988:159-60). Barioch's estimate is not echoed, even faintly, by Chandler, or by any specialized treatments (Barry 2000; Clarke and Ambrosiani 1991; Valente 1998, or Hodges 2000). There is also no core/periphery structure in Ireland as a whole until around 1000 (Ulster) or 1100 (Munster), and this is 600 years after the 450 start date provided, and practically coterminous with the date proposed for engulfment (Wilkinson 1991:129).

Lacking autonomy and a city system, with record-keeping meager and under threat, and with what can only be generously described as a rudimentary state system, any Irish 'civilization' would have to be relegated not to the period 450 to c 1100, but from about the mid-600s to about 800. Wilkinson understands the extent of the Viking incursion and notes temporary alliances between the Irish and the Norse rulers as early as 842 (ibid.). So why do the Irish remain on the list?

I contend that part of the reason for the inclusion of an Irish civilization may be found in a 1994 paper titled "Missing Civilizations" by Wilkinson and Iberall. Wilkinson's (separately authored) introduction grapples with the problem of civilizations that are "problematic candidates" by virtue of the fact that they remained small, were missing just a few of the definitional elements, and were invaded or otherwise destroyed before they reached maturity. Wilkinson suggests that Toynbee dismisses these "arrested" civilizations "as unlucky and of no real interest, in that their failures occurred at such early developmental stages as to contain no lessons for the modern West, target of his counsel. I reserved judgment, and though them worth both collecting and analyzing" (1994:3). Irish civilization appears to be a surrogate for an entire class of 'almost-civilizations' and is testimony to a belief that we need to improve our understanding of such areas. Hence Irish civilization should perhaps not entertain too much additional concern *except* as a case study in the integration of a *relatively* advanced non-core area into Central Civilization. I agree with Wilkinson that this class of actors requires greater attention, if for no other reason than the role they play in the processes of global production and exchange are significant and impact other societies in fundamental ways. The literature on 'incorporation' associated with Tom Hall (1986; 2005; 2006; 2009; 2012) would be an excellent place to begin such a consideration, but in this paper I propose a different path. The straw that broke the Irish civilizational back was the Viking incursion. Were the Vikings a civilization?

## VI. The Vikings 'in' or 'of' Ireland

Were the Vikings settlers? They came as raiders, but if they end up as a migrant population then their incursions become less a matter of "foreign" intervention of the sort that contravenes the requirement that civilizations be militarily closed. By 842 the Norse Vikings were making alliances with the Irish, often against the Danes or other Norse trading towns, but

sometimes against other Irish groups (Wilkinson 1991:129). After 880 the Irish would occasionally defeat Viking armies (Valente 1989:85). In 902 the Vikings were forced out of Dublin (and repressed in Ireland more generally). Viking raids ceased, and would only resume in 914. Dublin would be sacked three times - in 995, 1000, and 1014 - the last date constituting a major loss at the Battle of Clontarf (Lydon 1972/2003:11). Elite intermarriage in support of alliances was well along by that point (Valente 1998:123). Valente concludes that "Involvement of the Dublin Norse in the Irish political scene [c.930s] is a foreshadowing of events to come" and that in the 980s "... we see the Norse communities coming into conflict with one another because of their kinship ties with the Irish and their consequent involvement in Irish politics" (1998:110; 125).

An argument might be made that after 850, and especially after 915, the Vikings had become independent of Scandinavia and permanent settlers in Ireland who had facilitated, and added to the *domestic* creation of a competitive state system in an increasingly urban context. Put differently, perhaps there was an Irish civilization that included an important Viking minority population and their towns, that was (all) engulfed by Central Civilization when Henry II arrived in 1171. Valente, upon whom I rely for a good deal of material in this work, adopts the term "settler" for the Vikings as we end the tenth century (1998:131). I do not agree for two reasons. First, the Dublin Norse, and those of other trading cities, remained independent of Irish rule even after their defeat in 1015, and through to 1051. Second, and more importantly, the Vikings maintained a larger, more powerful, and decidedly separate set of political and economic relationships in Wales, Britain, Viking-controlled islands in the Irish Sea, as well as in Scandinavia and perhaps beyond.

With the defeat of the Vikings of Dublin in 902 their leadership fled to Britain where they had significant political interests. They returned to Dublin in 914, but did not abandon their pre-existing interests elsewhere. Between 914 and 934 Dublin kings occasionally ruled Northumbria, and took control once again in the 950s (Valente 1998:103;121). By the 930s Dublin was again attacking other Scandinavian towns in Ireland (*ibid.*). By 940 the King of Dublin was also the King of York (Valente 1998:117). Independent groups of Vikings based on islands in the Irish Sea and in Scotland would come to Ireland to fight in local conflicts at the invitation of mainland Norse as a result of their economic interests and other ties in the years around 1000 (Valente 1998:128-9). This ability to rule elsewhere, find sanctuary or raise troops and ships outside Ireland, was unique to the Vikings. The Irish had no such capacity, and when they exploited divisions among Vikings, their 'external' alliances were simply with other Vikings. This ability to resort to external support continued after 1014. Political and economic ties to the Isle of Man and Wales allowed Dublin Kings to find sanctuary and fresh troops in the 1030s (Duffy 1992:193). Dublin and England (especially the North under King Knut) had close ties and each was able to call upon the other for extra ships and men when necessary (Hudson 1994). In 1068 Dublin attacked Bristol (Valente 1998:199). There is a formidable list of Viking conquests in England, Scotland and Wales, from bases in Dublin; of Viking sanctuaries outside Ireland; of inter-Viking violence that implicated Irish troops; and of Viking naval operations that included ships from around the Irish Sea (see Forte et. al. 2005 and Valente 2008:chapter 5).

While there is no question that the Irish army was victorious at Clontarf in 1014, both the tactical and the strategic nature of that victory were unclear. The death of the Irish commander,

Brian Boru, "...marked the end of the most successful attempt to establish a kingdom of Ireland ... and left the high-kingship as a prize to be fought over ... Thus was created the political conditions that allowed King Henry II of England to intervene in Ireland..." (Lydon 1972/203:11). Byrne calls the results at Clontarf a "pyrrhic victory" that "exposed the weakness of his high-kingship" (2005:862). That weakness did not lie with Boru, but with the fact that his claim to the kingdom rested on a set of rickety alliances including rulers from as far away as Scotland. An analysis of the dozens of clans involved in the post-war efforts to consolidate power runs to 35 pages in Flanagan (2005). It appears that the Irish won the battle but lost both the war, and soon after, their sovereignty.

The Viking ruler of Dublin, who ostensibly lost the Battle of Clontarf, was allied with the high-king of Leinster, and survived the battle. He had built political and economic ties with England under the Danish King Knut, as well as with Wales, where he fled after his loss. Although Dublin lost stature after 1014, it remained independent until its capture by the King of Leinster in 1052 (Valente 2008:152-4).

There is little question that between the start of the raids on Ireland in the 790s and the Irish conquest of Dublin in 902, the Vikings were a foreign force. While direct demands for tribute from Vikings with greater status were successful in 850, this was not the end of political influence and control. Tensions at home would reflect on the Viking establishment. In 871, for example, King Olaf left Ireland to take up his father's kingdom in Norway (Holm 1986:321). Olaf was clearly part of an important family that siphoned resources from Ireland (and Britain) that enhanced the power of the heir apparent. (Olaf would later seek safe haven in Viking Kiev.) Attempts by Vikings to establish control and tax the resources of the Irish Sea on behalf of various kings at home continued through 1104 (Holm 1986:345).

Valente argues that Vikings had been "fully integrated into the Irish political scene between 980 and 1014," but I contend that the Irish were in no way fully integrated into the politics of the Vikings (1998:104). The Vikings could call upon other Viking groups, while the wealth and power of Viking trading towns (even in periods when the Vikings lost them to the Irish) were clearly understood by their some-time-allies in England and elsewhere.

## VII. Scandinavian Prestige Goods Networks, States, and Civilization

I contend we should consider the Scandinavian system among our interaction networks. Like the Irish, Toynbee characterized this civilization as "abortive," through he compliments some Scandinavian polities for "a high degree of development" in their founding of the Russian state, Iceland, and affords a share of the "credit for subsequent English political achievements" (1935:98-100). Unlike the Irish, the Scandinavians did found large cities (both at home and in the eastern portion of their areas), and while they interacted with many other groups, they were not so obviously peripheral or easily upended as the Irish proved to be. They eventually circumscribed the whole of Europe. Figure 4 illustrates the extent of raiding and trade parties who went west, south, and finally through the Straits of Gibraltar into the Mediterranean and on to sack cities on the Italian peninsula. Figure 5 illustrates their paths down the riverine systems of northern Europe, extending their influence to the borders of the Kazak territory, and to the Hungarian plain with settlements less than 100 miles north of the Black Sea.



Eventually the eastern Vikings focused on Constantinople, attacking the city and winning concessions in 860. If we can argue that the Viking system was a reasonably interdependent network, then links with the eastern Mediterranean put the Vikings into a direct relationship with Central Civilization some 300 years before Henry II ‘engulfed’ the Irish.

Figure 4: The Western Viking Expansion about here

Figure 5: The Eastern Viking Expansion about here

The cities that the Vikings helped to found grew far larger than any in Ireland. Chandler notes that Lejre, the 9<sup>th</sup> century capital of Denmark, had a population of about 20,000. Rouen, which Chandler describes as the “Danish advanced base” stood at about the same population in the same period, and was listed specifically at 20,000 in 1000. Kiev, the capital of Russia and a Viking city, is listed with a population of 45,000 in 1000 (Chandler 1987).

Together with the questions of prestige goods networks and state formation, which are addressed in preliminary terms below, we must consider two additional issues that this work does not yet address. First, are Viking territories systematically networked such that linkage to Central Civilization in one area has demonstrable effects throughout? Second, when did elements of the Viking diaspora come into politico-military contact with Central Civilization?

#### A. The Scandinavian Prestige Goods Network<sup>3</sup>

A Scandinavian prestige goods network was in place by 1500 BCE. In an early attempt to apply the logic of core and periphery to the Bronze Age, Kristiansen (1987) considers this network in Scandinavia:

Social organization during the Bronze Age was based on a close relationship between prestige goods exchange and the ideology of (foreign) tribal elites. This was sustained by a complex ritual system to which alone the elite had access. The whole of Scandinavia was embraced by this process. . . The spread of a prestige goods ideology that in a few generations became dominant throughout Scandinavia took place during the Early Bronze Age (Period I) and was firmly established from Period II in Northern Scandinavia . . . beginning around 1500 BC (1987:79).

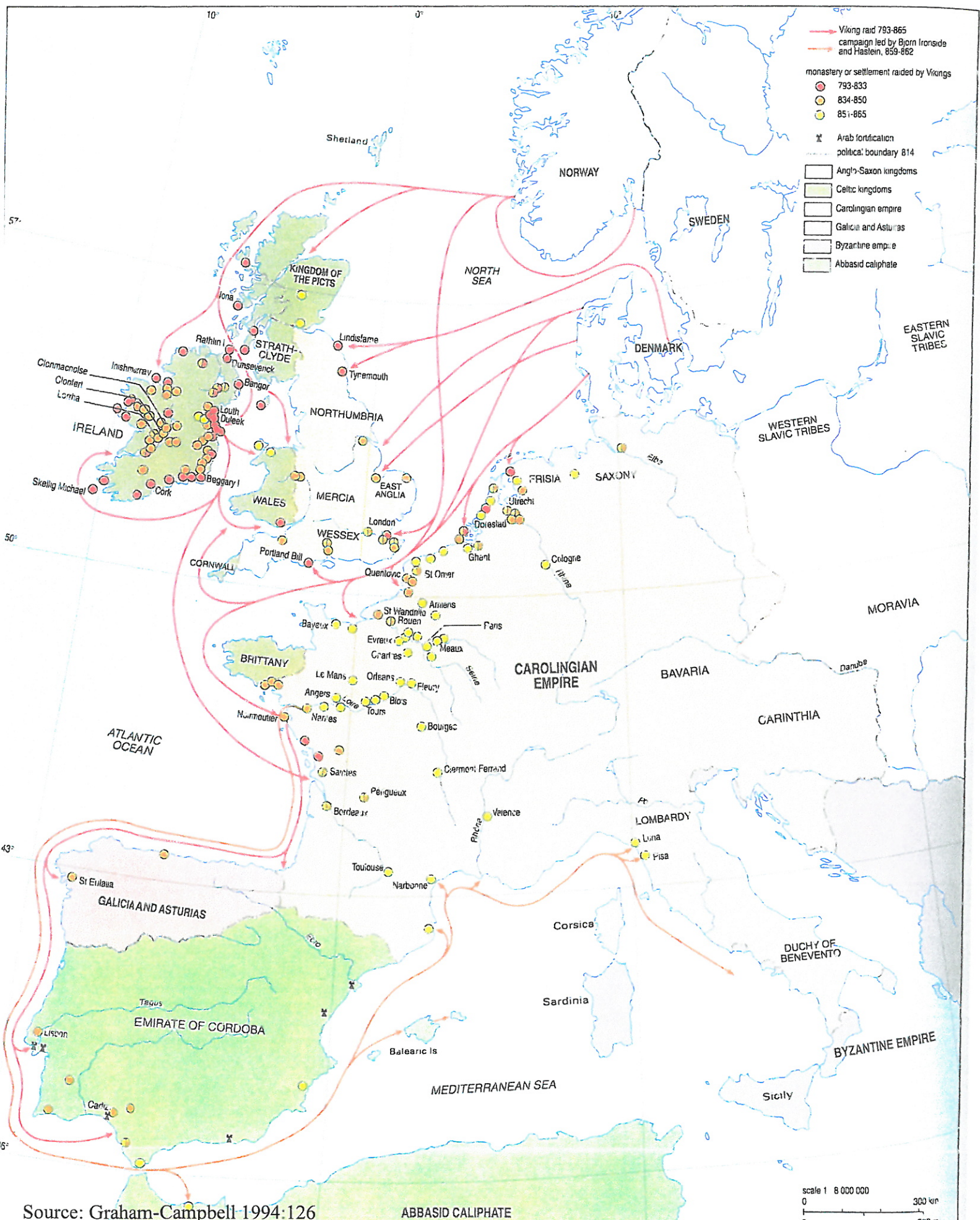
Nordic goods, especially gold drinking cups and personal ornaments, were highly prized in the near-by regions south of the Baltic. There was a tendency to build alliances to the south through intermarriage. Nordic spears were also popular. Kristiansen concludes that there were “close dynastic and commercial links between princely families around the Western Baltic (1998:180).

Scandinavia tended to acquire its prestige goods from further south, especially Hungary and later Italy. These included bronze in the form of ax heads, along with wagons, horse gear, and armor. Over time, Nordic metal work, as well as craftsmen, were sent south (Kristensen 1989:168). As Scandinavian trade expanded along the river systems, rare but bulky goods like

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<sup>3</sup> This preliminary section draws heavily from the works of Kristian Kristiansen.

Figure 4: The Western Viking Expansion



Source: Graham-Campbell 1994:126

ABBASID CALIPHATE



Figure 5: The Eastern Viking Expansion



well-bred cattle, hides, furs, skins, and sea salt were among the exports (Kristiansen 1989:180). Disks of raw pitch/resin were especially popular (*ibid.*).

In the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE Italy eclipsed Hungary as the southern European center for elite metal work. Kristiansen points to evidence of regularized long-distance trade between Italy and Denmark at that time and suggests there may have been some slave trading with Italy, along with the movement of mercenaries (perhaps as gifts) and brides with which to cement alliances (Kristiansen 1998:161). Amber was particularly sought-after and Scandinavians controlled the amber trade all the way through Pomerania (Poland) (Kristiansen 1998:161; 180).

The growing influence of this long-distance exchange is reflected in several ways. Nordic ritual art developed new motifs that demonstrated the importance of new prestige goods (Kristiansen 1989:96). Regions where there were trade route termini grew in terms of wealth and status (Kristiansen 1989:174). More complex social hierarchies are evidenced in the archaeological record (Larsson 1984). The flow of goods into the Seddin region stimulated sufficient new social hierarchies that they “probably approached archaic state formation” (Kristiansen 1989:174).

Kristiansen’s conclusion leaves no doubt as to the linkages involved: “This whole process represented the integration of the entire Scandinavian region into an international network of centre-periphery relations that linked the Aegean/Mediterranean region, Central Europe and Scandinavia to a common if transformed ideological framework” (1987:84).

This unity also left Scandinavia vulnerable. Unlike Ireland, Scandinavia lacked the range of raw materials used in the making of prestige goods, counted among its regional trading partners other parts of Scandinavia with similar mineral resource profiles, and so was impacted by declining trade at the onset of the Iron Age. Sørensen shows that as the Bronze Age ends, grave goods became poorer, ornaments disappear, and there is a shift to miniaturizations (1989:480). Kristiansen notes “With the decline of international exchange networks of prestige goods at the transition to the iron Age, the whole system . . . collapsed . . . When we are again confronted with centre/periphery relations in the Iron Age their foundation is not ritual superiority but commercial and military dominance (1987:84).

## B. A Scandinavian State System

Scandinavian prestige goods exchange may have developed later than that of the Irish, but state building seemed more advanced given enhanced interaction with the Roman Empire, help from the Church, and resources from overseas. King lists, weapons finds, interpretations of grave goods regarding social stratification, tax laws, fortifications, and centralized control of trade, all suggest state formation from as early as 500 and clearly by about 750.

Forte et. al. note that the Scandinavian countries “...could clearly support a military class that was able to extract enough surplus from the land to invest in sophisticated arms, maintain central armories, train large armies, and develop a sophisticated hierarchical society as early as the third century AD” specifically because of interaction with Rome (2005:11). Germanic tribes totally destroyed 3 Roman legions in 9 CE and the Empire’s response was to engage in



diplomacy and hire local mercenaries. Both facilitated state formation. Roman diplomacy enhanced prestige goods exchange and the supply of weapons. Existing dynasties were strengthened (Forte et. al. 2005:24). Chiefs can be identified as professional warriors with a wealthy territorial agricultural base. Trade was centralized c.500, planned communities were founded as market towns and royal households by 700, large fortifications to secure both land and sea were built as early as 200 (Myhre 2004:71), and we also see the building of ritual structures and transport canals. Roman use of local mercenaries from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century on provided weapons, training, additional knowledge of fortifications, and organizational skills (Forte et. al. 2005:32-8).

Scandinavian records, and those of foreign visitors and adjacent powers, note 28 or 29 tribal units in 551, far fewer than the number of polities not just in Ireland but in some individual Irish provinces (Myhre 2005:82). Cultivation intensified around 600, and fixed power centers emerged in the 7<sup>th</sup> century that exploited near-by trade routes, maintained redistributive economic structures, supported craftwork, and trade. Roman road structures aided in this construction (Myhre 2005:86). The histories provided by non-Scandinavian sources are often sparse, but can be checked against one another, local records, and archaeological evidence, to provide a more reliable picture, and that is a picture of an established, capable, socially differentiated political structure with many of the attributes sufficient to be considered by Kristiansen (1989:46) as a decentralized archaic state.

The Church made inroads into Scandinavia in the 700s, but it was not until the 800s that elite or popular conversions became significant. By that time the number of independent leaders had decreased and competition among them was fierce. The Church offered advantages in these regards. The conversion of kings brought them additional influence relative to old pagan power structures. The church legitimized new leadership and undermined local leaders who opposed royal power. It also brought contact with more advanced systems of administration and government (Lindkvist 2003a:166). Religious leaders became important advisors, and the ecclesiastical structure was a dense social network that would be useful to any potential leader. By the 11<sup>th</sup> century the king would also be the head of the Church (Krag 2003:196).

When Viking raiders began more systematic exploitation of the eastern and western regions in the late 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries they often returned to Scandinavia with significant resources. Seasoned warriors could come home as a unit, newly wealthy, and ready to join movements to enhance their status. They fed the new (planned, royal) trade towns and the retinues of leaders looking to centralize power.

Part of the evidence for this alteration rests with the changing focus of historical considerations of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century. Political histories consider the unification of (presently existing) states. This would be a serious Whigish *faux pas* were it not for early and reliable evidence of this process. Foreign travelers in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries wrote of three basic polities in the region, and by the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century Denmark records the dynamics of holding key parts of all three (Skovgaard-Petersen 2003:169). The Danes had consolidated early, with large-scale royal fortifications dating to the 6<sup>th</sup> century, warring against Charlemagne in 808, followed by binding treaties of peace, and the launching of armadas of 200 or more ships (Skovgaard-Petersen 2003:172-3). The narrative regarding consolidation evidences successes

and setbacks, but the fact is that the most powerful Danish lineage of the later 10<sup>th</sup> century captured royal power and has been in place ever since (Skovgaard-Petersen 2003:168).

Norway was slower at consolidation, but by 872 the few remaining contentious rulers were fighting to establish control over most of modern 'Norway'. Taxation, large fortifications, and appeals to the general population all figured into the conflicts (Krug 2003:186; 192-3). By 1015 the rule of Olaf Haraldsson united the entire area. Danish efforts to undercut his rule led Olaf to flee to the eastern empire where he lived with his brother-in-law who ruled Viking Kiev. His son eventually returned to Norway to retake the throne (Krug 2003:194-6).

Swedish unification began even later, in about the 11<sup>th</sup> century, but evidence of public assemblies for collective decision-making in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and planned communities in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, suggest earlier elements of state structures. By 1080 there were only two major political regions of Sweden (Lindkvist 2003b:225).

The elements of a state system that were energized by contact with the Roman Empire, together with the later use of Church resources and the spoils of raiding and conquest, suggest the early development of a Scandinavian state system. The strongest power throughout this period was Denmark, which consolidated early, took to raiding, carved out major kingdoms in the Irish Sea and ruled most of Northern Britain. They used their wealth and power to expand into Norway and Sweden, so that by about 1050 "a policy of power balance" evolved that kept the three kingdoms independent (Krag 2003:201). While declaring a Scandinavian state system by 500 is perhaps a bit early, there should be little question that one is in place by 750. The focus on unification, and power balancing, makes sense only under these conditions.

### C. A Scandinavian Civilization?

Should we add Scandinavia to the list of interaction networks/civilizations to be considered, or was it 'abortive' as Toynbee suggested? Wilkinson's list of polities does not include actors like the Mongol Empire. Although it was the largest empire in history, it was remarkably ephemeral. Its very effective military commanders conquered societies, but then appeared to be domesticated by them: Kublai remained a Chinese emperor; Batu declined to take control of the 'Grand Khanate' of Chingis and remained in Eastern Europe; and Hulugu converted to Islam and remained in Western Asia. Cities founded by the Mongols themselves lacked permanence. Any resources that flowed 'home' are difficult to identify as having a lasting impact. But I am not convinced the Vikings resembled the Mongols in these regards. Resources flowed back to Scandinavia to create early and powerful states. The exchange also included an exit strategy for landless peasants and deposed kings, and ready-made alliances that could be called upon either at home or in the empire. I have illustrated this Viking network in the Irish case, could do so further with the history of King Knut of Denmark and England, the story of Olaf of Norway evidences similar traits, as does that of Harald Sigurdson who served in the Imperial Guard in Byzantium and then returned with men and treasure to rule Norway from 1046 to 1066 (Davidson 1976:207). Forte et. al. argue that "what happened in one area of Viking hegemony could and did influence events in other regions" (2005:11). More information is necessary to discover how deeply or broadly this might have been the case. For the same

reason I cannot yet suggest the dates and extents of interaction with Central Civilization. But I conclude that further consideration of Scandinavia may prove a fruitful endeavor.

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