

# **Viking Camps in Ninth-century Ireland: Sources, Locations and Interactions<sup>1</sup>**

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This paper focuses on historical records relating to viking bases in ninth-century Ireland. It will be divided into three parts. The first part will reflect on how viking bases can be identified in written records. This is followed by a study of the location of these camps. Finally I shall explore how interaction between Gaels and vikings influenced the history of these settlements. It will be argued that Irish chronicles give us a remarkable insight into the strategies employed by viking leaders. This has the potential to shed light on viking activity in other parts of Europe where the records are of a different character, as well as offering opportunities for comparative research with the establishment of trading settlements in other cultures.

## **The earliest viking camps in Irish chronicle accounts**

Written records cannot be expected to provide a comprehensive list of viking settlements.<sup>2</sup> The geographical coverage by Irish chronicles is skewed towards the East Midlands and Shannon Basin, and the fullness of these records fluctuates over time.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore it was not always the priority of annalists to record where vikings founded their camps. The written record is sometimes ambiguous about when and where such sites were set up. Vikings are first recorded in Ireland in the 790s, and Irish chronicles focus on their deeds as predators raiding coastal churches and by the 830s leading campaigns deep into the Irish countryside.<sup>4</sup> Some viking camps of the

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<sup>2</sup> C. Downham, 'Non-urban settlements of vikings in Ireland before A.D. 1014', in T. Bolton and G. Steinsland (eds), *Proceedings of the conference on Irish-Norse relations 800-1200 held in Oslo on 5 November 2005* (Leiden, forthcoming).

<sup>3</sup> Colmán Etchingham, *Viking Raids on Irish Church Settlements in the Ninth Century: A Reconsideration of the Annals* (Maynooth, 1996).

<sup>4</sup> That ambitious raids were led inland at an earlier stage is hinted at by the recorded attack on Roscommon in 807: *The Annals of Clonmacnoise, being Annals of Ireland from the Earliest Times to A.D. 1408*, ed. Denis Murphy (Dublin, 1896), s.a. 804 (hereafter *AClon*); *Annala Rioghachta Eireann: Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters, from the Earliest Times to the Year 1616*, ed. J. O'Donovan, second edition, 7 vols (Dublin, 1856) s.a. 802 (hereafter *AFM*); *The Annals of Ulster (to*

ninth century may have been as fleeting as a sheltered stretch of water where ships moored overnight, or an army making use of an abandoned ringfort to rest and recoup before pushing on towards a more distant goal. Such settlements might be invisible in the archaeological record and may not have seemed significant enough to warrant report in Irish chronicles. Nevertheless, the temporary character of some viking camps is explicitly referred to in tenth century records. In 936 vikings sacked Clonmacnoise (Co. Offaly) and remained there for two nights.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, in 968 the church at Emly (Co. Tipperary) was attacked and the perpetrators (probably, but not certainly vikings) established a base there for two days.<sup>6</sup> At the other end of the spectrum, camps - including Dublin, Waterford and Limerick - developed a permanent aspect as defended centres of population ruled by their own dynasties of kings. Nevertheless, in their early days, these important settlements may have seemed precarious and temporary in nature. It is often only in retrospect that our sources indicate that a viking base has been established.

One important question which has been provoked by recent archaeological findings is whether the first viking visitors to Ireland established campaign bases. The textual evidence on this matter is highly inconclusive. Breandán Ó Ciobháin has drawn attention to a description in the early twelfth century *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* of 120 ships at *Camas Uí Fhathaidh Tíre* in the second decade of the ninth century.<sup>7</sup> Ó Ciobháin has suggested that this reference may be associated with the ninth century viking site at Woodstown (Co. Waterford) which produced a splendid number of finds during the archaeological investigation of the site in 2003 and 2004.<sup>8</sup> Although the *Cogadh* drew heavily on Irish chronicles, it also contains elements of fiction, and it is not clear where the author drew his information from on this particular matter. It should also be noted that the *Cogadh* does not explicitly refer to a

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*A.D. 1131*), eds and trans S. Mac Airt and G. Mac Niocaill (Dublin, 1983) s.a. 807.8 (hereafter *AU*); *Chronicum Scotorum: A Chronicle of Irish Affairs, from the Earliest Times to A.D. 1135*, ed. and trans. W.M. Hennessy (London, 1866) s.a. 807 (hereafter *CS*).

<sup>5</sup> *AU*, s.a. 936.2.

<sup>6</sup> *The Annals of Inisfallen (MS. Rawlinson B 503)*, ed. and trans. S. Mac Airt (Dublin, 1951) s.a. 968.2 (hereafter *AI*).

<sup>7</sup> B. Ó Ciobháin, 'Camas Ó bhFathaidh Tíre: a note on its location and significance' (2005) at [http://www.vikingwaterford.com/images\\_documents/woodstown\\_camass.pdf](http://www.vikingwaterford.com/images_documents/woodstown_camass.pdf) accessed 30/01/09.

<sup>8</sup> Ian R. Russell *et al.*, *Woodstown 6, Supplementary Research Project* (Drogheda, 2007) at <http://www.environ.ie/en/Heritage/Archaeology-NationalMonumentsService/PublicationsDocuments/FileDownload,17284,en.pdf> accessed 30/01/09.

camp, but rather states that the devastation of Ireland began at *Camas Ui Fhathaidh Tíre*.<sup>9</sup>

This ambiguity as to whether the presence of a viking fleet meant the existence of a viking camp is a recurrent problem when analysing the written sources. In a previous article I suggested that the viking burials which have been assigned an early ninth century date in Dublin could be linked to records of viking activity nearby. In particular, there is reference to vikings gathering cattle tribute at Holmpatrick in 798: this may have been a lengthy undertaking, and so it is tempting to deduce that a camp was set up there.<sup>10</sup> However, without more certain evidence that vikings remained at a particular location overnight, the presence of such a camp must remain hypothetical.

This raises the question how a viking camp might be identified in the written sources. In ‘Appendix One’ I have listed references to what may be identified as viking bases in a range of Irish chronicles. Precisely because of the ambiguous nature of some of these identifications the relevant texts and translations have been quoted to facilitate debate. It should be noted that the close similarity of a number of reports from different chronicles in any given year is due to the fact that a common source dubbed ‘The Chronicle of Ireland’ lies behind these ninth-century accounts. Texts also borrowed from each other. For example, ‘The Annals of the Four Masters’, compiled in the 1630s, contains information copied from ‘The Annals of Ulster’ and a source closely related to ‘The Fragmentary Annals of Ireland’.<sup>11</sup> While some bases can be clearly identified through the use of settlement terminology, the existence of other bases can be inferred when vikings were reported as remaining at a particular location for a sustained amount of time, or because a group of vikings became identified with a particular site.

The easiest viking camps to identify, therefore are those where chroniclers described a settlement under viking control. The well known term *longphort* (plural *longphuirt*) is found describing some of the early viking settlements in Ireland. This

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<sup>9</sup> *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh: The War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*, ed. and trans. James Henthorn Todd (London, 1866), 4, 222 (hereafter *Cogadh*): ‘ro tinnscainset Goill indrar Erenn ar tús, dáigh is nanaimisir sin tangadar Goill i gCamas ó Fothaid Tíre .i. fiche ar céad long; agus ro hindredh léo an tír’.

<sup>10</sup> *AU*, s.a. 798.2; C. Downham, ‘The historical importance of Viking Age Waterford’, *Journal of Celtic Studies* 4 (2004) 71-96, at p. 75; Alex Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba 789-1070* (Edinburgh, 2007), p. 46.

<sup>11</sup> Edel Bhreathnach and Bernadette Cunningham, *Writing Irish History: The Four Masters and their World* (Bray, 2007), p. 106; C. Downham, ‘The good, the bad and the ugly: portrayals of Vikings in “The Fragmentary Annals of Ireland”’, *The Medieval Chronicle* 3 (2004), 28-40, at pp 36-37.

name pays homage to the importance of the ship in early viking endeavours. The label comprises two elements, ‘*long* from Latin (*navis*) *longa* “[war]ship” and *port* from Latin *portus* “port”, “landing place”, “bank”, “shore”.<sup>12</sup> Edel Bhreathnach has suggested that the term developed from near adjacent usage of these Latin loanwords in Irish texts, citing the phrase *ro gab port a long* used to describe Saint Patrick’s landing at *Inber Dée* in his *Vita Tripartita*.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless the appearance of the term *longphort* in ninth-century chronicles with specific reference to viking settlements seems quite striking and innovative.<sup>14</sup> For example, under the year 841, ‘The Annals of Ulster’ and *Chronicum Scotorum* record:

A *longphort* at Linn Duachail, from which the territories and churches of Tethba were raided. A *longphort* at Dublin, from which the Laigin and Uí Néill were raided, both territories and churches, as far as Slieve Bloom.<sup>15</sup>

There may have been something distinctive in the character of ninth century settlements (in addition to the Scandinavian ethnicity of their inhabitants) to warrant the coining of *longphort* as a new name.<sup>16</sup> However, it was not long before the term acquired a wider range of meanings, and certainly by the late tenth century *longphuirt* could refer to both viking and Irish bases.<sup>17</sup>

Other labels used to describe viking bases were taken from a pre-existing vocabulary of settlement terms including *dúnad* (a term also used to describe marching camps established by Irish forces) and *dún* (a term which was also applied to permanent Irish defences, notably ringforts).<sup>18</sup> For example ‘The Annals of Ulster’ record the foundation of ‘a *dúnad* of foreigners, that is, with Þorgestr on Lough Ree’ in 845; and *Chronicum Scotorum* records the ‘destruction of the *dún* of Cork against

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<sup>12</sup> C. Doherty, ‘The Vikings in Ireland: a review’, in Howard B. Clarke *et al.* (eds) *Ireland and Scandinavia in the Early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998), pp 288-330, at p. 324.

<sup>13</sup> E. Bhreathnach, ‘St Patrick, Vikings and *Inber Dée* – *Longphort* in the early Irish literary tradition’, *Wicklow Archaeology and History* 1 (1998), 36-40, at p. 39.

<sup>14</sup> *AU*, *s.aa.* 841, 851, 866; *CS*, *s.aa.* 841, 851; *AI*, *s.a.* 866. More numerous references are given to *longphuirt* in the ninth-century annals of *AFM*, *s.aa.* 840, 841, 851, 862, 866, 870. This may reflect later usage of the term *longphort* rather than accurately reflecting how such bases were identified in ninth century usage. For example, *AFM*, *s.a.* 868[=870] has the word *longphort* for an Irish base and in so doing imitates the language of the eleventh-century source for this entry, namely, ‘The Osraige Chronicle’ from a version of *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland*, ed. and trans. Joan Newlon Radner (Dublin, 1978) §387 (hereafter *FAI*).

<sup>15</sup> *AU*, *s.a.* 841.4; *CS*, *s.a.* 841. A version of the same text appears in *AFM*. In the appendix I have translated the word *longphort* as ‘base’; cf. Downham, ‘Non-urban settlements’.

<sup>16</sup> J. Sheehan, ‘The *longphort* in Viking Age Ireland’, *Acta Archaeologica* 79 (2008), 282-95, at pp 282-86.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283.

<sup>18</sup> Doherty, ‘The Vikings in Ireland’, p. 326.

the heathens' in 848.<sup>19</sup> These terms *longphort*, *dún* and *dúnad* were sometimes used interchangeably in chronicle-accounts and in other literature.<sup>20</sup> Through the use of these terms in chronicles, we can identify viking bases at Clondalkin, *Cluain Andobair*, Cork, Dublin, Dunrally, *Linn Duachail*, Lough Ree, Youghal, and other sites of uncertain location.

The founding of bases may be linked with the seizure of territory. In 837 there is record of the 'first taking' (*cét gabáil*) of *Áth Cliath*, although the value of this report is compromised by its evident retrospectiveness.<sup>21</sup> This record also raises the question of the relationship of *Áth Cliath* ('ford of hurdles', a name surviving in the Modern Irish name of Dublin) to *Dubhlinn* (the 'dark pool') where a *longphort* was founded four years later. The interrelationship of early viking settlements is a matter which will be returned to below. The use of the verb *gabaid* ('takes' 'seizes') to indicate the establishment of a camp can be compared with this account in 'The Annals of the Four Masters' for the year 839:<sup>22</sup>

A marine fleet of foreigners took (*ro ghabhsat*) [a position] on Lough Neagh.

The territories and churches of the north of Ireland were devastated and raided by them.

'The Annals of Clonmacnoise' report for the same year that a 'fforte' was established at Lough Neagh, and the existence of a base there is further confirmed by viking activity on the lake in 840 and 841.<sup>23</sup>

Other camps may be identified in the chronicles through the continued presence of vikings at a given location. For the year 842 we have record that vikings were still (*beos*) in Dublin after the founding of a *longphort* there in the previous year. Similarly, in 841 vikings were reported as 'still' being on Lough Neagh.<sup>24</sup> Not only does this seem to confirm the survival of these bases, but it also suggests that chroniclers in this period deemed it remarkable for vikings to remain at one place for consecutive years. Less certain ground is offered by a reference to vikings fighting at Carlingford Lough for three days and three nights in 852. This provides evidence that

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<sup>19</sup> *AU*, s.a. 844.3; *CS*, s.a. 848.

<sup>20</sup> Downham, 'Non-urban settlements'; Bhreathnach, 'Saint Patrick', pp 37-39.

<sup>21</sup> *AClon*, s.a. 834; *AFM*, s.a. 836; 'The Annals of Roscrea', eds D. Gleeson and S. Mac Airt, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 59 C (1957-59), 137-80, §235 (hereafter *ARC*); *CS*, s.a. 837.

<sup>22</sup> *AFM*, s.a. 838[=839]: 'Ro ghabhsat murchobhlach do Ghallaibh for Loch Eathach. Ro h-urtha 7 ro h-airgte tuatha 7 cealla tuaisceirt Éireann leó'.

<sup>23</sup> *AClon*, s.a. 836 [=839].

<sup>24</sup> *AU*, s.a. 841.1, 842.2.

vikings were remaining at a location on successive nights (although there is a risk that ‘three days and three nights’ is a formulaic way of recording a long battle, or a period of judgment).<sup>25</sup> It is not entirely clear that vikings had set up some sort of camp at the lough.

Another form of references to settlements is when vikings are labelled through association with a particular place. The identification of camps at *Inber Dée*, *Cael Uisce*, Limerick, Lough Foyle, Rosnaree, St Mullins, Strangford Lough, Waterford and Wexford relies on this method. There is a risk that these vikings were merely being identified by their last known location, or their point of entry into Ireland. A comparison can be drawn with the language of the early twelfth century saga *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* where mention is made of where fleets arrive before they plunder the countryside, for example the gathering of ships at *Camas Uí Fothaidh Tíre* to plunder Munster c. AD 812, and the appearance of a fleet at *Áth da fert* to plunder Ulster in c. AD 824, where a base may or not be implied.<sup>26</sup> On balance, however, I would argue that where vikings ‘of’ a particular place are found mentioned in chronicles of the ninth century, there is a strong possibility that a camp was established at these sites. This opinion is favoured by recurrent reference to viking activity at most of these sites in Irish chronicles, or relevant archaeological and place-name evidence.<sup>27</sup> In all, some twenty sites can be identified from the existing body of Irish chronicles.

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<sup>25</sup> C. Downham, ‘Tomrar’s death at Port Manann, a possible *longphort* in Ireland’, *Ainm* 9 (2008), 57-64, n. 7; N. McLeod, ‘Irish Law: Significant Numbers and the Law of Status’, *Peritia* 9 (1995), 156-66.

<sup>26</sup> *Cogadh*, §§ 4, 6.

<sup>27</sup> See Thomas McErlean *et al.*, *Strangford Lough: An Archaeological Survey of the Maritime Cultural Landscape* (Belfast, 2002), pp 78-87. The strategic significance of this lough led to its intermittent use as a base for vikings. For Lough Foyle, see *AFM*, s.a. 864[=866]; *AU*, s.a. 866.4; *CS*, s.a. 866; and *AFM*, s.a. 941[=943]; *CS*, s.a. [942][=943]. For Rosnaree, see C. Downham, ‘The Vikings in Southern Uí Néill to 1014’, *Peritia* 17-18 (2003-2004) 233-55, at p. 236; for *Inber Dée*, see Edel Bhreathnach, ‘St Patrick’; for St Mullins, see *AFM*, s.a. 915 [=917]; for Wexford, see *AClon*, s.a. 930 [=935]; *AFM*, s.a. 933[=935], *CS*, s.a. [934][=935]. For place-names in general see D. Mac Giolla Easpaig, ‘L’influence scandinave sur le toponymie irlandaise’, in E. Ridel (ed.) *L’Héritage maritime des vikings en Europe de l’ouest* (Caen, 2002), pp 441-82. In addition it is possible that a camp may have existed at Lough Swilly in County Donegal. A fleet is mentioned there by ‘The Annals of Clonmacnoise’, ‘The Annals of Ulster’ and *Chronicum Scotorum* for the year 842, alongside references to fleets at Rosnaree and Lough Foyle. While it can be argued that bases existed at Rosnaree and Lough Foyle, the case for Lough Swilly is only made by association. I have therefore placed it in ‘Appendix One’ with a question mark.

## **Additional bases named in ‘The Fragmentary Annals of Ireland’ and *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh***

In ‘Appendix Two’ I have listed references to ninth-century viking camps which are referred to in ‘The Fragmentary Annals of Ireland’ and *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh*. These texts contain a mixture of saga and chronicle. As their authors had access to chronicles now lost, they are valuable sources for the Viking Age, but they need to be treated with caution. Section Four of the ‘Fragmentary Annals’ deals with the ninth century. The chronological structure and stylistic variation within this part of the ‘Fragmentary Annals’ demonstrate that it was compiled from two main texts with some minor additions.<sup>28</sup> The main elements were a Clonmacnoise version of ‘The Chronicle of Ireland’ and a saga-like text whose author drew from chronicles and elaborated on their entries. This saga-chronicle has been dubbed the ‘Osraige Chronicle’. Joan Radner has made a convincing case that the ‘Osraige Chronicle’ was composed in the eleventh century, while the version of ‘The Chronicle of Clonmacnoise’ employed for this text contained contemporary records.<sup>29</sup>

*Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* (‘The War of the Irish and the Foreigners’) was composed in Munster the early twelfth century.<sup>30</sup> Its author also drew on a version of ‘The Chronicle of Clonmacnoise’ and has a significant proportion of information from southern Ireland. Máire Ní Mhaonaigh has demonstrated that the author of the *Cogadh* had access to a source-text of ‘The Annals of Inisfallen’ (a compilation of ‘The Chronicle of Clonmacnoise’ and Munster annals) as well as other sources of Munster origin.<sup>31</sup> It can be argued that the *Cogadh* does not imitate annalistic texts in its chronological structure (which is loosely based around the reigns of locally and nationally significant kings, with digressions on various

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<sup>28</sup> *FAI*, pp xxii-xxxiv; Downham, ‘The Good’; C. Downham, ‘The Career of Cearbhall of Osraige’, *Ossory, Laois and Leinster* 1 (2004), 1-18, at p. 18.

<sup>29</sup> *FAI*, p. xxvi.

<sup>30</sup> M. Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘*Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaib*: Some Dating Considerations’, *Peritia* 9 (1995), 354-77.

<sup>31</sup> M. Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘*Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaib* and the Annals: A Comparison’, *Ériu* 48 (1996), 101-26, at pp 118-25.

topics or themes).<sup>32</sup> Some unique information in the *Cogadh* seems to be of a fictitious or legendary nature, while other elements were probably drawn from local annals.<sup>33</sup>

It can be argued that the *Cogadh* and the ‘Fragmentary Annals of Ireland’ were related to one another. Due to its incomplete nature, the ‘Fragmentary Annals’ only has ninth-century annals for the period 851×873; nevertheless it shares a significant amount of information with the *Cogadh*.<sup>34</sup> In particular, there are four instances where information is unique to these sources.<sup>35</sup> The author of the *Cogadh* may have used a copy of the ‘Fragmentary Annals’, and more certainly had access to a common source.<sup>36</sup>

A couple of the bases uniquely identified in *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* and ‘The Fragmentary Annals’ have been discussed in recent articles. Michael Connolly and Frank Coyne have linked a viking base named *Dún Mainne* in the *Cogadh* with an enclosure on the River Maine at Rathmore (Co. Kerry).<sup>37</sup> The text states that:<sup>38</sup>

Dún Mainne in western Ireland was destroyed, and a huge unspeakable slaughter was inflicted on foreigners there by Conlígan son of Mael Cróin and by the Eóganacht Locha Léin, and Flandabrat ua Dúnadaig, king of Uí Chonaill, and Congalach mac Lachtnai, king of Ciarraige and [the people of] western Ireland in general.

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<sup>32</sup> C. Downham ‘The Chronology of *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh*’ (forthcoming). For reference to regnal years and obits, see *Cogadh* §§ 1, 2, 4, 6, 14, 20, 23, 26, 28, 30, 37.

<sup>33</sup> Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘*Cogadh* and the Annals’, p. 126. I would reinforce Ní Mhaonaigh’s note of caution about using information from the *Cogadh* and go a little further. There is a risk that we may assign too much of the *Cogadh*’s unique information to lost ninth century chronicle information. The creativity of the author of the *Cogadh* in the later sections of the text was also present in his reinterpretation of ninth century records. The early part of the *Cogadh* was no less significant in having a propagandist message, and I suspect that the author was willing to elaborate on annalistic sources to suit his aims. The local sources which he drew from might also be varied in character (folklore and saga) and need not have consisted solely of ninth-century chronicle data. Further analysis of the language and chronology of the *Cogadh* is needed to shed light on these issues.

<sup>34</sup> *Cogadh*, §§ 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28; *FAI* §§ 233, 235, 239, 252, 259, 264, 278, 327, 337, 340, 408, 458.

<sup>35</sup> Only the ‘Fragmentary Annals’ and the *Cogadh* record that 5000 vikings fell in battle at Carlingford Lough in 852; that a battle was fought between vikings and the Ciarraige c. AD 856; and refer to the activities of Hona and Tomrar (*FAI*, §§235, 252, 278; *Cogadh*, §§20, 22, 23). In addition, these sources provide unique information about the slaughter of vikings in Kerry at the site identified as *Dún Mainne*, discussed below.

<sup>36</sup> Downham ‘The Chronology of *Cogadh*’ (forthcoming).

<sup>37</sup> D. Ó Corráin, ‘Vikings, III: Dún Mainne’, *Peritia*, 10 (1996), 273; M. Connolly and F. Coyne, *Underworld: Death and Burial in Cloghermore Cave, Co. Kerry* (Bray, 2005), pp 172-73. This view is also endorsed by Donnchadh Ó Corráin in a forthcoming article ‘The Vikings and Iveragh’, in J. Crowley and J. Sheehan (eds), *The Iveragh Peninsula: A Cultural Atlas of the Ring of Kerry* (Cork, 2009), pp 141-47, at p. 144. I am grateful to John Sheehan for this reference.

<sup>38</sup> *Cogadh*, §29: ‘Ro toglad dna, Dun Main iniarthur Erend, ocus ro cured ar dermair diasnesi for Gallaib and la Coinligan mac Mail croin, ocus la hEoganacht Lacha Lein, ocus re Flandabrat Ua nDunadaig, ri Ua Conaill, ocus re Congalach mac Lachtna ri Ciarraigi ocus la iartur Erend ar cena’.



The reference to the site is found in what seems to be an interpolation in the *Cogadh*, which could cast doubt on its veracity.<sup>39</sup> The event is also referred to in the ‘Fragmentary Annals’ where the name of the base is not given. The historicity of the record provided by the *Cogadh* is however supported by the fact that Congal[ach] mac Lachtnai, king of the Ciarraige, is also named in ‘The Annals of Inisfallen’.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, other information interpolated in this section of the *Cogadh* can be cross-referenced with other sources.<sup>41</sup> The geographical range of information from Kerry, Waterford and Lismore in this interpolation fits well with Ní Mhaonaigh’s theories of the existence of a Lismore chronicle which could have provided this information.

Another base mentioned in the *Cogadh* and the ‘Fragmentary Annals’ is *Port Manann*. I discuss this in a separate article.<sup>42</sup> In ‘Fragmentary Annals’, *Port Manann* is identified as the spot where a viking leader, Tomrar (ON. Þórrarr) dies in 866. His death is recorded twice in the ‘Fragmentary Annals’, once in a fairly brief account (which I would link with a local version of the Chronicle of Clonmacnoise) and once in a lengthier account (which may derive from the ‘Osraige Chronicle’).<sup>43</sup> *Port Manann* is identified in the shorter (more reliable) account. This event is also referred to in ‘The Annals of Inisfallen’.<sup>44</sup>

Some other camps are identified uniquely in *Cogadh*, and they are of varying credibility. A case may be put for the existence of a base at *Dún Médoín*. Referring to the year 866 or 867 it is stated:<sup>45</sup>

This was the year in which Colphin (ON. Kolfinnr) and the fleet of Dún Médoín fell at Cenn Curraig. They were slaughtered from Cenn Curraig to Lismore, and a multitude of them fell, that is, by Rechtabra son of Bran.

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<sup>39</sup> The version of the *Cogadh* in ‘The Book of Leinster’ ends at §28. Reference to *Dún Mainne* is found in §29 in the other manuscripts. In other manuscripts the last sentence found in ‘The Book of Leinster’ appears at the end of §29. The early part of §29 therefore looks like an interpolation, which also repeats information given in §24 and which is chronologically out of sequence. §28 covers the years 914-916, and §30 covers the year 917, but §29 provides information datable to 867-8 (except for the final sentence, also found in ‘The Book of Leinster’, which refers to an event of 918). See Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘*Cogadh* and the Annals’, p. 105.

<sup>40</sup> *AI*, s.a. 878.1.

<sup>41</sup> e.g. *AClon*, s.a.a. 865[=867], 866 [=868]; *AFM*, s.a.a. 865[=867], 866[=868]; *AI*, s.a. 867.1; *AU*, s.a.a. 867.6, 867.8, 868.4; *FAI*, §§347, 349, 459.

<sup>42</sup> Downham, ‘Tomrar’s death’.

<sup>43</sup> It is likely that the phrase *Isin bliadain si* was added by the compiler: *FAI*, p. xxxi.

<sup>44</sup> *AI*, s.a. 866.1.

<sup>45</sup> *Cogadh*, §24: ‘Is isin bliadain i drochair Colphín ocus longes Duni Medoín i Cind Curraig. Ro bas ica marbad o Cind Curraig co Lis Mor, ocus do drocradair socaidi dib .i. la Rechtabrat mac Brain’.

The event is mentioned briefly in the same interpolated section of the *Cogadh* which mentions *Dún Mainne* (Co. Kerry).<sup>46</sup> Rechtabra mac Brain is identified in *Chronicum Scotorum* and ‘The Annals of the Four Masters’ as a king of the Déisi who died in 876.<sup>47</sup> The record therefore has an air of authenticity and merits consideration. However, we cannot be certain whether the two references to Kolfinnr’s demise reflect either two source texts or the efforts of the interpolator to synchronise events by referring back to earlier records in the *Cogadh*.

A colourful tale is given in the *Cogadh* about the presence of viking bases at Armagh and Clonmacnoise. A viking leader called *Turges* (ON. Þórgísl) is said to seize the abbacy of the church of Armagh and hold it for four years. His wife *Ota* (?ON. Auða) is said to take control of Clonmacnoise, where she issued prophecies while seated on the altar. Although Þórgísl is a historical character, the internal chronology of the story does not work when compared with chronicle records, nor is the seizure of two of the most powerful churches in Ireland noted in contemporary sources.<sup>48</sup> As Donnchadh Ó Corráin has persuasively argued, the author of the *Cogadh* creatively wove together, re-interpreted and embellished chronicle reports and other stories.<sup>49</sup> Historical accuracy was given second place to propaganda as the account was probably aimed at discrediting Uí Néill kings as historic defenders of the Church.<sup>50</sup> Without corroborating evidence this story cannot be taken seriously.

*Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* and the ‘Fragmentary Annals’ refer to other viking bases linked with individual viking leaders. However, none of these sites can be identified with any certainty. The ‘Fragmentary Annals’ refers to a ‘*longphort of Óisle*’ (ON. Ásl) which was seized by his brother *Amlaíb* (ON. Óláfr) in 867.<sup>51</sup> This reference derives from the ‘Osraige Chronicle’. While the author clearly drew on chronicle sources, (s)he elaborated on them; so the reference is unreliable. Furthermore, as the base had fallen under Óláfr’s control, it could have been the place later identified with the *longphort* or *dún* of Óláfr which was attacked in the same year.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> *Cogadh*, §29: ‘Is si sin bliadain idrocair Colphin i Cind Curraig’ (‘This was the year in which Kolfinnr fell at Cenn Curraig’).

<sup>47</sup> *AFM*, s.a. 874[=876]; *AI*, s.a. 876.1; *CS*, s.a. 876.

<sup>48</sup> *Cogadh*, §§ 9, 11.

<sup>49</sup> D. Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin, 1972), pp 91-92, 109.

<sup>50</sup> Ó Corráin, *Ireland*, p. 92.

<sup>51</sup> *FAI*, §347.

<sup>52</sup> *AClon*, s.a. 865[=867]; *AFM*, s.a. 865[=867]; *AU*, s.a. 867.8; *FAI*, §349. In *Cogadh* §29 the raid on Óláfr’s base at Clondalkin is interpreted as divine judgment for his slaying of Ásl.

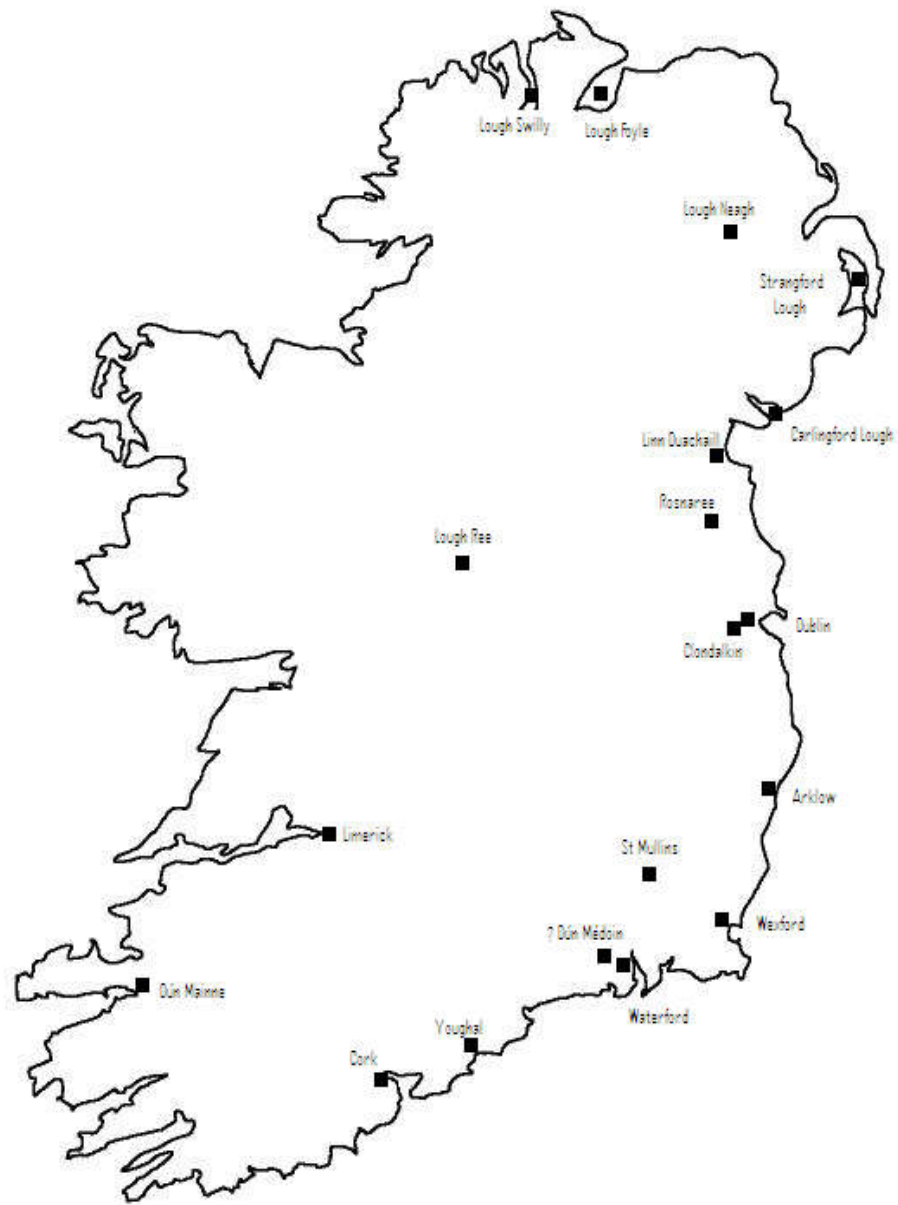
Another viking leader, *Caitill* (ON. Ketill) is said to possess a base in *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh*. He is named in chronicle sources as dying in Munster in 857. No clue is given as to the location of his camp, which is mentioned uniquely in the *Cogadh*.<sup>53</sup> Elsewhere in the *Cogadh* a viking appears with the name *Tomás Cinn Crete*. John O'Donovan interpreted this name as 'Tomás of Credan Head', a place in County Waterford, and suggested that a viking settlement existed there.<sup>54</sup> This seems an uncertain identification. Furthermore, the name only appears in one of the two manuscripts which preserve this section of the *Cogadh*; it may therefore not have existed in the original text. The textual evidence is insufficient to identify the viking base posited by O'Donovan.

In sum, *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* and 'The Fragmentary Annals' provide credible information on viking camps at *Dún Mainne*, *Port Manann*, and perhaps *Dún Medóin*, none of which is named in Irish chronicles for the ninth century. Other bases are mentioned in these sources, but the records are problematic. In addition to the twenty or so ninth-century bases recorded in chronicles, we have an impressive volume of information (albeit incomplete) about early viking settlement in Ireland. In the next section of this paper the locations of these sites are explored with a view to interpreting the settlement strategies employed by vikings.

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<sup>53</sup> The site has been speculatively linked with Dunkettle, on the shores of Cork Harbour: J. Sheehan *et al.*, 'A Viking Age Maritime haven: a Reassessment of the Island Settlement at Beginish, Co. Kerry'. *Journal of Irish Archaeology* 10 (2001), 93-120, at p. 115.

<sup>54</sup> *Cogadh*, p. 27, n. 12.



**Figure 1: Possible locations of ninth-century viking camps**

**The location of ninth-century viking camps**

The ninth-century viking bases at Dublin, Limerick, and Waterford gave rise to major port cities.<sup>55</sup> Some other bases, including those at Arklow and Wexford, also underly modern urban settlements in Ireland. Archaeology offers the potential to identify the precise location of these viking camps, and recent discoveries in Dublin have certainly shifted perspectives on where the original settlement(s) may have stood. There is also much scope for future detailed fieldwork on the location of reported viking camps which do not lie beneath modern urban settlements. In the present circumstances, my aim is not to provide in-depth descriptions of individual viking bases. Instead I will offer general observations on where camps were established and do so from a broad geographical and viking cultural perspective. This will lead into the final section of this paper where bases are interpreted as the product of interaction between viking and Irish populations.

It is probably not surprising that most ninth-century viking camps were focused on the coast. The names of early settlement sites include the terms, estuary (*inber*), pool (*linn*), and lough (*loch*). These were all sites accessible by boat, sheltered from stormy seas, and able to offer an escape route to the coast if circumstances on land became hostile. The eastern flank of Ireland was favoured for the location of bases. This was a natural sailing route for ships from Norway travelling via the Scottish islands to the south-west of England or to northern France, and back. Prevailing winds and coastal morphology meant that it was safer to sail beside the eastern shores of Ireland than to travel along the western coasts of Wales and England.<sup>56</sup>

It is possible that some camps began as way stations. Fleets may have combined the necessity of landing with plunder or trade. It is estimated that a viking ship could sail the equivalent of 80 to 120 land miles on a good day.<sup>57</sup> If so, the camps recorded along Ireland's coasts in the ninth century could all lie within a day's sailing distance from their nearest neighbour. However, it is highly questionable whether all the bases were inhabited at any one time, and they may have served a range of functions. We

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<sup>55</sup> I do not include Cork in this list as its alleged vikings remain remarkably quiet in our sources. The viking camp here may have failed in 867 but the site could have continued to develop under ecclesiastical authority with a resident community of viking traders. I imagine that around Ireland there may have been ports under Irish control which hosted small groups of viking traders (Killaloe may be another example). The lack of evidence for a politically active community of vikings in Cork, at a time when the church is so well documented, lends itself to this interpretation. Nevertheless, multiple interpretations are possible wherever evidence is lacking and the settlement at Cork raises interesting questions. For further discussion, see Downham 'Non-urban'.

<sup>56</sup> Aidan O'Sullivan and Colin Breen, *Maritime Ireland: An Archaeology of Coastal Communities* (Stroud, 2007), p. 149.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24; Paddy Griffiths, *The Viking Art of War* (London, 1995), p. 103.

may look at other factors beyond convenience for coastal traffic when interpreting the location of viking camps.

Access to food resources may have been of significant concern. A dire fate could befall a fleet which did not have supplies as witnessed by ‘The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’ for the year 914, when the vikings who sheltered on an island in the Severn Estuary ‘were very short of food and many men perished with hunger’.<sup>58</sup> Along Ireland’s south-west coast, along the south-east corner, and in the northern part of the Irish Sea, thermal seafronts brought rich seasonal populations of seabirds, fish and marine mammals.<sup>59</sup> It is possible that some camps were established for their access to good fishing and marine hunting grounds. Reference is made to vikings slaughtering porpoises off the coast of County Louth in ‘The Annals of Ulster’ under the year 828, and fish was an important part of the viking maritime economy.<sup>60</sup> Access to land resources would have been equally significant, and the ninth-century bases were all placed near lands with good agricultural potential in a mixed livestock and arable economy.<sup>61</sup>

Bases were also placed near pre-existing trade centres and routes inland. Many of the viking bases were founded by rivers and some at crossing points of rivers (e.g. Rosnaree, and *Áth Cliath* or Dublin). Some were located close to church sites (as at Dublin, *Linn Duachail* and Strangford Lough). Stereotypically, vikings came to Ireland to plunder churches, and often these were located at nodes of communication in the landscape. Churches and their associated settlements served an important role in overseas trade in the early medieval economy of Ireland.<sup>62</sup> Vikings’ greed for transferable wealth from plunder at the beginning of the ninth century may have soon turned into the desire for more sustained wealth through trade. In such circumstances sacking a nearby church (for example Dublin, *Linn Duachail*) could be a profitable

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<sup>58</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. A Collaborative Edition, Volume 3, MS A*, ed. Janet Bately (Cambridge, 1986), s.a. 914 (hereafter *ASC*).

<sup>59</sup> O’Sullivan and Breen, *Maritime Ireland*, p. 19.

<sup>60</sup> *AU*, s.a. 828.3: ‘Mucar már di muccaibh mora i n-airer nArdde Ciannachta o Gallaibh, 7 martre Temhnen anchorat’ (‘A great slaughter of porpoises on the coast of Ard Ciannachta by foreigners, and the martyrdom of the anchorite Teimnén’); J. Barrett, ‘The Pirate Fishermen: the Political Economy of a Medieval Maritime Society’, in Beverley Ballin Smith *et al.* (eds) *West Over Sea: Studies in Scandinavian Sea-Borne Expansion and Settlement Before 1300* (Leiden, 2007), pp 299-340.

<sup>61</sup> The base at *Dún Mainne* was located on good lands within Kerry (Ó Corráin, ‘Vikings III’), though not as rich as some other areas of Ireland, many marine food resources were nonetheless accessible from this location.

<sup>62</sup> Mary Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland: Settlement, Trade and Urbanisation* (Dublin, 2008), p. 26.

short-term and long-term economic strategy, as it weakened local economic competitors.<sup>63</sup>

Vikings had access to superior shipping technology and an extensive network of overseas contacts; so they could undercut local prices for luxury goods. In an earlier article I likened vikings to dodgy car boot salesmen, selling their stolen wares from the back of ships and moving on.<sup>64</sup> At a slightly later stage of viking interaction in Irish affairs, it is tempting (though in a fairly crude way) to compare them with modern supermarket chains drawing profits away from local businesses (though undoubtedly in a more violent way). The fact that Irish people seem to have joined the vikings in attacking the church of *Linn Duachail* in 842 shows that divisions between natives and foreigners could be blurred from an early stage. Local people came to buy or sell at the advantageous rates offered by viking traders, even if they sometimes questioned the morality of their actions.<sup>65</sup>

The most successful viking bases were those which had access to an extensive and varied landscape which fostered their development as trading centres. Dublin was developed by a ford on the River Liffey. This river skirts around the north of the Leinster uplands of raised moorland and richly wooded glens. On the opposite side lay the central plain of Ireland, a fertile 'triangle' of territory which stretches north to Dundalk bay and west to the marshes of the River Shannon.<sup>66</sup> Communication across this area was limited by stretches of bog, but (generally speaking) Dublin had good access to the centre of Ireland. In the south, Waterford was well placed for travel into the heartlands of Munster and western Leinster, using the river systems of the Barrow, Suir and Nore. Viking travellers also used lowland routes between Waterford and Limerick, the third major port of Viking Ireland. Limerick lies at a crossing point of the River Shannon. This is the longest river in Ireland and easily navigable for much of its length, with the result that ships could go to Lough Ree, and from there crews could reach the east central plains overland.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> There was an ecclesiastical settlement at pre-viking Dublin. *Linn Duachail* was plundered by vikings from the nearby base in 842. *AClon*, s.a. 839[=842]; *AFM*, s.a. 841[=842]; *AU*, s.a. 842.1; *CS*, s.a. 842.

<sup>64</sup> Downham, 'Non-urban settlements', note 13.

<sup>65</sup> Perhaps comparison could be made with British piratical involvement in south-west Ireland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: C. M. Senior, *A Nation of Pirates: English Piracy in its Heyday* (Newton Abbot, 1976), pp 53-58.

<sup>66</sup> J.H. Andrews, 'A Geographer's View of Irish History', in T.W. Moody and F.X. Martin (eds) *The Course of Irish History*, (rev. ed. Cork, 2001), pp 1-12, at 3-4.

<sup>67</sup> Walter Fitzgerald, *The Historical Geography of Early Ireland* (London, 1925), pp 23-45.

One possible feature of the distribution of ninth-century camps is that some sites were close together. Waterford may or may not have originally been located at the site called Woodstown.<sup>68</sup> In 1906 Patrick Power linked the medieval name *Balleode* or *Baliowodam* with Woodstown, based on a twelfth-century charter.<sup>69</sup> Another base which may have lain in the vicinity of Waterford is *Dún Médoín*, referred to in *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh*.<sup>70</sup> The vikings of this base were said to have been slaughtered at Kincurry a little farther along the River Suir. The name *Dún Médoín* can be translated as ‘the middle fort’, which perhaps implies a total of three bases, with one on each side of that named.<sup>71</sup> Given the nature of the record in *Cogadh*, this evidence does however need to be treated with caution. Breandán Ó Ciobháin has suggested that vikings may have had a string of camps along the River Suir occupied at different times to control river transport.<sup>72</sup> At Dublin, there may have been separate bases at *Dubhlinn* and *Áth Cliath*.<sup>73</sup> Ragnall Ó Floinn has identified and discussed an extensive area of cemeteries and single graves around the mouth of the Liffey.<sup>74</sup> This may imply the existence of multicore settlement rather than a single nucleated base. By the 860s a base had been established at Clondalkin, roughly six miles to the west of Viking Dublin.<sup>75</sup>

Practical and cultural reasons might underpin why settlements were clustered at Dublin and perhaps at Waterford. With regard to practical reasons, one may compare with Jeremiah Pelgrom’s observations about early Latin colonies in Italy. He has argued that a multi-core settlement system had:<sup>76</sup>

‘obvious advantages in an early colonial context. One has to remember the potentially hostile environment which the colonists were entering, ... it would make sense to live in larger and better defensible settlements ... rather than to live

<sup>68</sup> Downham, ‘The Historical Importance’.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71, notes 2 and 3; P. Power, *The Place-names of the Decies*, second edition (Cork, 1952), p. 104. Power had previously tentatively identified the place-name *Balleode* with Ballymabin: P. Power, ‘The priory church and hospital of St. John the Evangelist, Waterford’, *Journal of the Waterford and South-east of Ireland Archaeological Society* 2 (1896) 81-97, at p. 83; Russell *et al.*, *Woodstown* 6, p. 4. Further exploration of the matter seems necessary.

<sup>70</sup> *Cogadh*, §24.

<sup>71</sup> *Dictionary of the Irish Language based mainly on Old and Middle Irish Materials: Compact Edition*, ed. E.G. Quin (Dublin, 1983), p. 456, col. 79, lines 14-66.

<sup>72</sup> Ó Ciobháin, ‘Camas Ó bhFathaidh Tíre’.

<sup>73</sup> Sheehan, ‘The *Longphort*’, pp 288-90.

<sup>74</sup> Ó Floinn, R., ‘The Archaeology of the Early Viking Age in Ireland’, in Howard B. Clarke *et al.* (eds) *Ireland and Scandinavia in the Early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998), pp 131-65, at 132-37.

<sup>75</sup> *AClon*, s.a. 865 [=867]; *AFM*, s.a. 865 [=867]; *AU*, s.a. 867.8.

<sup>76</sup> Jeremia Pelgrom, ‘Roman colonization and the unification of Italy (334-218 BC.)’, p. 7, available online at [http://www.let.leidenuniv.nl/pdf/geschiedenis/gradsem\\_pelgrom.doc](http://www.let.leidenuniv.nl/pdf/geschiedenis/gradsem_pelgrom.doc) accessed 30/01/09.



in isolated farmsteads spread out over the territory, or to be concentrated in a single urban centre which left the whole rural area unprotected’.

This model would presuppose that vikings sought to control small rural hinterlands around their bases from the earliest times. As herds are referred to as being kept at ninth-century viking bases in the north of Ireland, this may indeed have been desirable.<sup>77</sup> Where bases are in close proximity they may also have had varying levels of functionality. For example, the camp at Clondalkin may have served primarily as a military outpost for the more prominent settlement at Dublin.

A cultural reason for establishing interrelated settlements around major rivers might have been to develop a socially meaningful ‘ethnic landscape’. This idea has been explored by Neil Price in relation to the Rus settlement at Staraja Ladoga on the Volkov River. In this landscape a complex variety of settlement forms, in particular burial monuments, was used to express colonial control. Price has used the metaphor of a dialogue, with each monument ‘shouting’ its own message as travellers passed along the river or associated land routes.<sup>78</sup> It seems appropriate to compare this model with the settlement layout and monumental landscape of Viking Age Dublin with its numerous burials, ‘long stone’ and thing-site.<sup>79</sup>

One further consideration in relation to the settlement pattern at Dublin, and perhaps Waterford, is that viking colonies were sometimes run by multiple kings, who were sometimes related, working in close co-operation.<sup>80</sup> Such a situation may have prevailed in Ireland during the reigns of Ívarr, Óláfr and Ásl in the 860s.<sup>81</sup> In these circumstances, a multicore settlement pattern would enable contingents under a single leader to have a level of independence while remaining in close proximity to others for mutual protection. In such a model, practicality and the expression of social meaning could go hand in hand.

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<sup>77</sup> *AClon*, s.a. 864 [=866]; *AFM*, s.a. 864 [=866]; *AU*, s.a. 866.4.

<sup>78</sup> N. Price, ‘Ethnic attitudes, ethnic landscapes: some thoughts on the Viking Age’, in B. Johnsen and S. Welinder (eds) *Etnicitet eller kultur* (Östersund, 1998), pp 37-59, at 50-54.

<sup>79</sup> Ó Flóinn, ‘The Archaeology’, pp 131-37. Such ritual landscapes can also be observed in Scandinavia where they signal centres of political authority. According to Dagfinn Skre, the development of a sacral landscape under strong royal control could encourage Scandinavian traders to congregate, with the perceived dangers of trade being offset in stable and sacrosanct locations: D. Skre, ‘Towns and Markets, Kings and Central Places in South-western Scandinavia c. AD 800–950’ in Dagfinn Skre (ed.), *Kaupang in Skiringssal: Excavation and Surveys at Kaupang and Huseby, 1998-2003, Background and Results* (Aarhus, 2006), pp 445-469, at 450-51.

<sup>80</sup> e.g. *ASC(A)*, s.a. 871.

<sup>81</sup> *AU*, s.aa. 863.4, 867.6.

Irish chronicles of the ninth century reveal that co-operative relations existed between bases which were not close together. There were at least two occasions in the ninth century when coastal bases worked together against a common enemy. In 841 the vikings at Dublin and *Linn Duachail* led military campaigns across the east of Ireland. Together the two groups targeted the Uí Néill territories in modern County Meath and County Westmeath.<sup>82</sup> In 892, vikings from Waterford, Wexford and St Mullins co-operated to defeat a king of the Osraige.<sup>83</sup> These alliances were fostered by the position of these viking camps in relation to Irish political geography, but such links could also be fostered by a sense of common history and perhaps because some camps had been set up as secondary bases from an older ‘mother’ camp.

Dublin seems to have established itself in a position of prominence from an early time. Following the establishment of a camp at Dublin in 841, a base was created at Rosnaree on the Boyne (Co. Meath) in 842. A comparison of the records from ‘The Annals of the Four Masters’ and ‘The Annals of Ulster’ implies that the Rosnaree vikings originally hailed from Dublin.<sup>84</sup> It is more certain that the vikings of Dublin founded a base at *Cluain Andobair* (Co. Offaly) in 845.<sup>85</sup> The founding of daughter camps provided opportunities for inland exploration. In 842 the vikings of the Boyne plundered Birr and Seirkieran (Co. Offaly), while the vikings of *Cluain Andobair* plundered Killeigh (Co. Offaly) in 845. These campaigns correspond with an era when camps were founded inland at Lough Neagh (839×841) and Lough Ree (845). The efforts made by vikings to establish bases in the interior of Ireland were crushed by a series of Irish victories during the late 840s.<sup>86</sup> It is not until the 920s that large scale efforts to establish a network of camps inland are witnessed in the chronicles.

### **Cultural Interactions**

In the long term the territorial power of vikings in Ireland was largely restricted to the coast.<sup>87</sup> The highly localised nature of Irish politics and the rapidly shifting currents of political allegiance may have made it hard for vikings as ‘outsiders’ to maintain an inland base for very long. The economic success of viking ports therefore depended

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<sup>82</sup> *AFM*, s.a. 840[=841]; *AU*, s.a. 841.4; *CS*, s.a. 841.

<sup>83</sup> *AFM*, s.a. 888[=892].

<sup>84</sup> *AFM*, s.a. 841[=842]; *AU*, s.a. 842.7, 842.8.

<sup>85</sup> *AU*, s.a. 845.12.

<sup>86</sup> *AFM*, s.a. 846 [=848].

<sup>87</sup> Downham, ‘Non-urban settlements’ (forthcoming).

on an internal trading network based on Irish settlements and seasonal fairs, and it is notable that the majority of silver hoards in Ireland have been found in areas outside viking control. According to John Sheehan, the degree of wealth represented by these finds is 'rarely surpassed elsewhere in the Viking world'.<sup>88</sup> His research has highlighted the significance of ecclesiastical sites and crannogs in networks of exchange, as the locations of many 'economically active' coin-hoards and hoards containing hacksilver which date from the ninth and tenth centuries.<sup>89</sup> The existence of trading links between the interior of Ireland and the coast would have encouraged cross-cultural encounters. This undoubtedly assisted the development of a mixed Gaelic-Scandinavian culture in Ireland's coastal ports, and it perhaps promoted conversion from viking heathenism to Christianity (which could facilitate trade with major churches).<sup>90</sup> Using the models of cross-cultural trade outlined by Philip Curtin, the viking settlements in Ireland could be interpreted as a 'militarised trade diaspora' which failed to reach inland.<sup>91</sup> In common with other such diasporas the vikings practised an aggressive economic policy, striking at political enemies and wreaking havoc on rival economic centres which refused to co-operate in their trading networks.

By comparing viking ports with other pre-modern trade diasporas, we can open up a broader historiographical and theoretical framework for interpretation of the subject. One topic which is relevant when discussing cultural interaction is how attitudes towards ethnicity and cross-cultural interaction have developed over recent decades. Far from seeing ethnicity as purely biological phenomenon, studies over the last thirty years have increasingly focused on how and why identities were assumed or assigned in a historical context.<sup>92</sup> There has also been some criticism of the longstanding model of colonial urban development in which trading towns are viewed

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<sup>88</sup> J. Sheehan, 'Social and Economic Integration in Viking-age Ireland: The Evidence of the Hoards', in John Hines *et al.* (eds), *Land, Sea and Home* (Leeds, 2004), pp 177-88, at p. 177.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 181-88.

<sup>90</sup> For the argument that conversion progressed more quickly among vikings in Ireland than has often been credited, see C. Downham, 'Religious and Cultural Boundaries' in E. O'Byrne and J. Ní Ghradaigh (eds) *The March in the Medieval West* (forthcoming).

<sup>91</sup> P.D. Curtin, *Cross-cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 5. For recent discussion of Curtin's work and a necessary distinction between the concept of 'trade diaspora' and 'merchant networks' in the modern era, see Claude Markovits, *The Global World of Indian Merchants, 1750-1947* (Cambridge, 2002), pp 21-25.

<sup>92</sup> D. Nurse and T. Spear, *The Swahili: Reconstructing the History and Language of an African Society, 800-1500* (Philadelphia, PA 1985); A.B. Knapp, *Prehistoric and Protohistoric Cyprus: Identity, Insularity and Connectivity* (Oxford, 2008).

as cultural transplants:<sup>93</sup> ‘This ... implies an understanding of history that sees all cultural innovation ... as the result of diffusion of peoples and ideas from elsewhere, thus denying [indigenous] historical actors roles in their own histories’. Certainly in Ireland, the idea that towns were purely a foreign import has loomed large in historical writing; rather than seeing the economic development of viking ports as the result of cultural interaction.<sup>94</sup>

A sharp distinction may be observed in the understanding of *Gaedhil* and *Gaill* in some scholarly contexts. There has been debate whether the presence of viking style artefacts in a settlement meant that the inhabitants were Irish or Scandinavian. However, it might be more productive to discuss these finds in terms of an evolving Gaelic-Scandinavian identity which became linked to a business culture of coastal trading rather than being a matter of genetic inheritance.<sup>95</sup> In the viking bases of ninth-century Ireland, there were already groups of sufficiently mixed culture to be identified as *Gall-goidil* by the 850s, and intermarriage is well attested between vikings and Gaels in the upper echelons of society before 900.<sup>96</sup> The distinction made between the Irish (*Gaedhil*) and the foreigners (*Gaill*) in medieval written accounts was a political or cultural distinction which sometimes had blurred edges.

It is therefore relevant to discuss the location of Irish bases in relation to Irish political geography. One factor which has already been observed is that bases are not uncommonly established on political boundaries.<sup>97</sup> This enabled vikings to take advantage of potential rivalries between different groups, and perhaps also to serve as mediators in trade. Dublin lay on the border between Leinster with Brega, and Waterford stood on the frontier between Munster and Leinster. Other bases may have been placed to take advantage of more localised divisions. The base identified as Dunrally (Co. Laois) seems to have lain on the margins of the Loígis and Uí Muiredaig, while that at *Dún Mainne* (Co. Kerry) was by the River Maine which

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<sup>93</sup> Nurse and Spear, *The Swahili*, p. vii. Cf. Knapp, *Prehistoric and Protohistoric Cyprus*, p. 1.

<sup>94</sup> Gerald of Wales, *Topographia Hibernie*, §117: J. J. O’Meara (ed.) ‘Giraldus Cambrensis in Topographia Hibernie: text of the first recension’, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 52 C (1948-50) 113-78, at p. 175; J. J. O’Meara (trans.), *Gerald of Wales, The History and Topography of Ireland* (Harmondsworth, 1982), p. 122.

<sup>95</sup> C. Downham, ‘Coastal Communities and Diaspora Identities in Viking Age Ireland’, in James Barrett (ed.) *Maritime Societies of the Viking and Medieval World* (forthcoming).

<sup>96</sup> AU, *s.aa.* 856.3, 856.5; 857.1; CS, *s.aa.* 856, 857; Downham, ‘Religious and Cultural Boundaries’ (forthcoming).

<sup>97</sup> Sheehan, ‘The *longphort*’, p. 286; E.P. Kelly and J. Maas, ‘The Vikings and the kingdom of Laois’, in Pádraig Lane and William Nolan (eds), *Laois: History and Society - Interdisciplinary Essays on the History of an Irish County* (Dublin, 1999), pp 123-59, at p. 140.

formed the boundary between Ciarraige Luachra and Eóganacht Locha Lein in the Middle Ages.<sup>98</sup>

The location of bases could be motivated by military strategy. Camps were established on the borders of enemy territory not only for the purpose of raiding, but where retreat into a neighbouring kingdom could easily be achieved. An example of this strategy is the base established on Lough Ree in 845, from which a series of local churches was attacked.<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, viking bases were also used to raid churches in non-adjacent territories. This raises the possibility that some camps were set up with the consent of local kings who could direct viking military might elsewhere. The evidence of viking settlement in northern Brega, at Rosnaree (and the possible female viking burial at Navan, Co. Meath), may be associated with a political alliance between the local ruler, Cinaed mac Conaing, and vikings in 850.<sup>100</sup> Together they raided the lands of southern Brega and the lands of the Southern Uí Néill. Another instance where bases may have been placed in friendly territory was during the alliance between Aed Finnliath, overking of the Northern Uí Neill, and Óláfr, a king of the vikings of Dublin. In 861 and 862 these rulers battled against Mael Sechnaill, overking of southern Uí Neill.<sup>101</sup> However, in 866 Óláfr crossed over to North Britain to wage a campaign against the Picts, and Aed ended the alliance. In the same year, Aed ‘pillaged all the bases of the Foreigners, that is, of the coast of northern Ireland, both in Cenél nEógain and in Dál nAraide’ and defeated a large force of vikings at Lough Foyle (Co. Derry) on the borders of his territory.<sup>102</sup> It is possible that these bases had been founded during the period of friendship with Óláfr. The coastal camps would have been well placed to bring the sea lanes of the North Channel of the Irish Sea under Dublin control and they could have been a springboard for Óláfr’s campaigns in Scotland. For his part, Aed might have encouraged his viking allies to establish bases in Dál nAraide, to strengthen the control of his own people (Cenél nEógain) over the northern parts of Ulster.

Aed’s aggression against the vikings in 866 was part of a more widespread phenomenon. In the years from 866 to 868, Irish rulers attacked viking bases at

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<sup>98</sup> Sheehan, ‘The *longphort*’, p. 286.

<sup>99</sup> AClon, *s.a.* 842[=845]; AU, *s.a.* 845.3; CS, *s.a.* 845.

<sup>100</sup> AFM, *s.a.* 848[=850]; AU, *s.a.* 850.3; CS, *s.a.* 850.

<sup>101</sup> FAI §§279, 292; AU, *s.a.* 861, 862; AFM, *s.a.* 860[=862]. The AU and AFM references to events in 862 should have been included in Clare Downham, *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland: The Dynasty of Ívarr to A.D. 1014* (Edinburgh, 2007), p. 239, line 9.

<sup>102</sup> AClon, *s.a.* 864[=866]; AFM, *s.a.* 864[=866]; AU, *s.a.* 866.4.

Youghal (Co. Cork), Clondalkin (Co. Dublin) and a site in or near Uí Bairrche Thíre in Leinster.<sup>103</sup> Battles were also won by Irish kings fighting against viking armies in Osraige, south Munster and eastern Meath.<sup>104</sup> This phenomenon corresponds with the campaigns of Óláfr, and his associates Ívarr and Ásl, in Britain.<sup>105</sup> Irish rulers may have taken advantage of the diminished military and political resources of the ‘Dark Foreigners’ to unleash their anger against unwelcome visitors, or it may simply be that weakened vikings seemed less useful as allies when they appeared more frequently on the losing side. Óláfr and Ásl returned to Ireland in 867, perhaps to try to restore order, although disagreement among the viking elite led to Ásl’s murder at the hands of his former allies.<sup>106</sup> Viking power in Ireland was further weakened by battles between the ‘Dark Foreigners’ and their old rivals, the ‘Fair Foreigners’ in the 870s.<sup>107</sup> Towards the end of the ninth century we hear less about the foundation of camps by vikings and there is more evidence of rivalry between the rulers of Dublin. The low point in viking power was in 902 when the ‘Dark Foreigners’ of Dublin were expelled. It is only after they returned to Ireland in 914, that a new phase of camp building is recorded.<sup>108</sup>

## Conclusion

Drawing on the evidence of Irish chronicles and saga-chronicles we can identify the location of a significant number of ninth-century viking bases. This body of evidence offers the potential for further archaeological fieldwork, and further study of Irish sources may reveal the context in which each base was founded and their place in local politics. In a general overview, such as this, a range of possible factors emerges as to why some bases were successful and others were not.

Geographical considerations loom large in this equation. The most prominent bases were located at sheltered locations along the Irish coast with access to major shipping lanes and maritime food resources. They were positioned to take advantage of existing transport infrastructures; sometimes they were located next to pre-existing trading centres and as a rule they had access to routes inland by river or by road.

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<sup>103</sup> *AFM*, s.aa. 864[=866], 865[=867], 866[=868].

<sup>104</sup> *AFM*, s.aa. 864[=866], 865[=867], 866[=868].

<sup>105</sup> *AU*, s.aa. 866.1, 867.7.

<sup>106</sup> *AI*, s.a. 867.1; *AU*, s.a. 867.6.

<sup>107</sup> *AFM*, s.a. 874[=877]; *AU*, s.a. 877.5; *CS*, s.a. 877.

<sup>108</sup> *AFM*, s.a. 897[=902, 910[=914]]; *AU*, s.a. 902.2, 914.5; *CS*, s.a. 902, 913[=914].

Access to rich farmland and a varied environment (e.g. upland and lowland, forest and pasture) promoted the economic growth of ports.

There was also a range of political and cultural factors which influenced viking settlement. One strategy may have been to introduce a multi-core settlement pattern along the lower reaches of major rivers, thus creating a well defended 'ethnic landscape'. This policy may have influenced the settlement pattern observed in Dublin, but it is difficult to demonstrate this elsewhere in Ireland.<sup>109</sup> The vulnerability of viking bases could also be offset by the creation of co-operative networks of sites: two or more bases might be linked through a 'mother-daughter' relationship, or through common interest in facing a particular enemy. It appears that vikings sought to exploit political divisions within Ireland by founding bases at the borders between kingdoms or provinces. This might allow one group to be played off against another, but it also offered opportunities for cross-border trade. The character of Irish politics made it difficult for bases inland to survive longterm. To maintain a chain of communication inland would often require crossing a number of potentially hostile boundaries and patterns of political allegiance between viking leaders and Irish kings shifted rapidly in a dynamic political environment. Only along the coast or on the major loughs of the River Shannon could these dangers be offset.<sup>110</sup> Some viking camps seem to have been established for the purpose of a single campaign in order to plunder hostile lands. The sources also hint that camps could be founded with the consent of local kings in exchange for economic or military benefits.

When viking power in Ireland weakened in 866 there was a significant backlash from local Irish kings in different parts of the island against viking bases and viking leaders. The appearance of viking camps in the Irish landscape may have caused some resentment. In 902, following divisions between viking leaders, the Irish kings of Brega and North Leinster succeeded in taking Dublin under their control. Nevertheless, archaeological evidence indicates that the port remained inhabited after this event and suggests that Irish kings wanted the profits of trade, more than they wished to rid the country of a foreign culture.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Future fieldwork and research along the lower reaches of the Suir and Shannon would be desirable to see whether Dublin is unique within Ireland in this respect or not.

<sup>110</sup> I am grateful to John Sheehan for pointing out that on the River Shannon the difficulty of crossing potentially hostile boundaries would apply less than on many other inland routes.

<sup>111</sup> Linzi Simpson, 'Forty Years a-digging: A Preliminary Synthesis of Archaeological Investigations in Medieval Dublin', *Medieval Dublin*, 1 (1999), 11-68, at p. 25

In both geographical and political terms, viking bases in Ireland appear to be located to maximise potential for economic exchange. This characterises the pattern of viking settlement as a trading diaspora, with parallels in many pre-industrial cultures. In line with this model, vikings in Ireland were merchant-pirates acting as cross-cultural brokers between Gaels and Scandinavians. Through cultural interaction they fostered a distinct Gaelic-Scandinavian identity which came to characterise coastal trading communities along the southern and eastern seaboard of Ireland.

In sum, the location and evolution of viking bases in Ireland was largely the result of interaction between vikings and Irish people. The development of viking bases into towns took place after a century or more of interaction between Scandinavian and Gael. The viking towns of Ireland therefore result from a cross-fertilisation of cultures (albeit with numerous violent episodes) rather than the simple domination of one group by another.

### Appendix One

#### Viking bases in Irish chronicles of the ninth century

The chronicles used in this appendix are as follows: ‘The Annals of Boyle’, ‘The Annals of Clonmacnoise’, ‘The Annals of Inisfallen’, ‘The Annals from The Book of Leinster’, ‘The Annals of Roscrea’, ‘The Annals of the Four Masters’, ‘The Annals of Ulster’, and *Chronicum Scotorum*. The texts are copied from published editions but with amended translations. Sites are listed in alphabetical order with correct dates underlined at the head of each group of entries.

#### Arklow (Co. Wicklow)

836

AFM 835.12 Ceall Dara do orgain do Ghallaibh Inbhir Deaa, 7 do loisccedh leth na cille leo. [Kildare was raided by foreigners of *Inber Dée* (Arklow?), and half of the church was burned by them.]

AU 836.5 Ceall Dara do orgain do gentib o Inbir Deaę 7 ro lloscad a leth na cille. [Kildare was raided by heathens from *Inber Dée* (Arklow?), and half of the church was burned.]

CS 836.2 Ceall dara dargain ó Gentibh o Inber Dex, ocus ra loisccsiod leth na cille. [Kildare was raided by heathens from *Inber Dée* (Arklow?), and half of the church was burned.]



Cael Uisce (Co. Down?)

842

AClon 839.4 Disertt Dermott was destroyed by the Danes of Keyle Usge.

AFM 841.10 Orgain Disirt diarmada la Gallaibh Chaoil Uisce. [Castledermot was raided by the foreigners of *Cael Uisce*.]

AU 842.11 Orgain Disirt Diarmata o genntibh di Chóel Uisce. [Castledermot was raided by heathens from *Cael Uisce*.]

CS 842.6 Orgain Disirt Diarmada do Cael usque o Gentibh. [Castledermot was raided from *Cael Uisce* by heathens.]

?Carlingford Lough (Co. Down/Louth)

852

AFM 850.16 Lucht ocht fichit long do Findghallaibh do-rochtadar do chath fri Dubhghallaibh co Snamh Eidhneach, trí la 7 teora h-oidhche dóibh acc cathucchadh re 'roile, co ro mebhaidh ria n-Dubhghallaibh, go f-fargaibhsiot Fiondghoill a longa leó. [The crew of eight score ships of Fair foreigners came to do battle against Dark foreigners at Carlingford Lough; they battled for three days and three nights against each other, and the Dark foreigners prevailed, and the Fair foreigners left their ships with them.]

AU 852.3 Lucht ocht .xx.it long di Fhindgentibh do-roachtadur du cath fri Dubgennti do Shnamh Aighnech; .iii. laa 7 .iii. aithchi oc cathugud doaib act is re nDuibhgennti ro mmeabaidh co farggabsat a ceile a llonga leu. Stain fugitiuus euasit et Iercne decollatus iacuit. [The crew of eight score ships of Fair heathens came to battle against Dark heathens at Carlingford Lough; they battled for three days and three nights but the Dark foreigners prevailed, and the others left their ships to them. Steinn escaped fleeing, and Iarnkné lay beheaded.]

CS 852.3 Luct oct .xx. long dFinngentibh do rocttatur do cath fria Duibgentibh do Snamh Aighnech; .iii. laithe ocus trí aidhche og cathuccadh doib, acht as re Duibhgentibh ro meabaidh, co fargsat a cheli oa longaibh leo. Stain fugitiuus euasit; et Iercne decollatus est. [The crew of eight score ships of Fair heathens came to battle against Dark heathens at Carlingford Lough. They battled for three days and three nights; but the Dark heathens prevailed, and the others left their ships to them. Steinn escaped fleeing, and Iarnkné was beheaded.]

Clondalkin (Co. Dublin)

867

AClon 897.2 Lann, daughter of Dongalie, was then king of Osseryes mothers name, and Kennydy mcGoyhinn lord of the contry of Lease. This same Kennedy broke down Donn Awley beside Dublyn (Awley himself being the cheefest Dane in Ireland

and then dwelling within that town) now it is called Clondalkan; hee killed many of his men and chased himselfe to the citty of Dublin.

AClon 865.6 Donawley at Clondalkan was burnt and destroyed, Goyheynie o'More and Moylekearan mc Ronane took with them 100 heads of the cheefest Danes dwelling there.

AFM 865.12 Loscadh Duine Amhlaibh, occ Cluain Dolcáin, la mac Gaithene, 7 la Mael Ciaráin mac Rónáin, 7 céd cenn do thoisechaibh Gall do thaisealbhadh dona saor-chlandaibh isin armaigh occ Cluain Dolcáin. [The fort of Óláfr at Clondalkin was burned by the son of Gáethíne and by Máel Ciaráin son of Rónán; and one hundred of the heads of the lords of the foreigners were exhibited by the noble families in the field of slaughter at Clondalkin.]

AU 867.8 Loscadh duine Amhlaim oc Cluain Dolcain la m. nGaithini 7 la Mēl Ciaran m. Ronain, 7 ár .c. cenn di airechaibh Gall in eodem die apud duces predictos in confinio Cluana Dolcain. [The fort of Óláfr at Clondalkin was burned by the son of Gáethíne and by Máel Ciaráin son of Rónán; and a slaughter of one hundred (heads) of the chiefs of the foreigners on the same day, by the aforesaid leaders, in the vicinity of Clondalkin.]

#### Cluain Andobair (Co. Offaly)

845

AClon 842.6 The Danes of Dublin founded a forte at Clondewer and spoyled Lis-Keilleachie and executed martiredom therein upon Nwadat mc Segenye.

AFM 843.10 Sloighedh la Gallaibh Atha Cliath a c-Cluanaibh Andobhair, 7 argain leiss Chille h-Achaidh, 7 martradh Nuadhat mic Seigeni leo. [A military outing by the foreigners of Dublin to *Cluain Andobair*, and the enclosure of Killeigh was raided; and Nuadu son of Ségíne was martyred by them.]

AU 845.12 Dunadh di Gallaibh Atha Cliath oc Cluanaib Andobur. [An encampment of the foreigners of Dublin at *Cluain Andobair*.]

#### Cork (Co. Cork)

848

AFM 846.11 Slóighedh la h-Olchobhar do thoghail Dúin Corcaighe for Ghallaibh. [A military outing [led] by Ólchobur to destroy the fort of Cork against the foreigners.]

CS 848.7 Dunadh la hOlcoibar do toghail dúin Corcaighe for Gentibh. [An encampment by Ólchobur to destroy the fort of Cork against the heathens.]

867

AFM 865.16 Gnimbeolu, toiseach Gall Corcaighe, do mharbhadh lasna Désibh. [Gnimbeolu, lord of the foreigners of Cork, was killed by the Déisi.]

### Dublin (Co. Dublin)

N.B. that there are multiple references for this site in the ninth century – to save space, only records pertaining to the establishment of the site in 837, 841 and 842 are given here.

#### 837

AClon 834.4 The first taking and possession of the Danes in Dublin was this year 834.

AFM 836.20 Céd-ghabháil Atha Cliath la Gallaibh. [The first taking of Dublin by foreigners.]

ARC §235 Cetgabail Átha Cliath o geintibh. [The first taking of Dublin by heathens.]

CS 837.10 Ced gabail Atha Cliath o Gentibh. [The first taking of Dublin by heathens.]

#### 841

AFM 840.3-4 Longphort acc Linn Duachaill la Gallaibh, as ro h-urtha 7 ro h-airgthe tuatha 7 cealla Teathbha. Longport oile ag Duibhlinn, as ro h-urtha Laighin 7 h-Uí Néill, etir tuatha 7 cealla, co Sliabh Bladhma. [A base [was established] at *Linn Duachaill* by foreigners, from which the territories and churches of Tethba were devastated and raided. Another base at Dublin, from which the Laigin and Uí Néill were devastated, both territories and churches, as far as Slieve Bloom.]

AU 841.4 Longport oc Linn Duachaill asar orta tuatha 7 cealla Tethbai. Longport oc Duibhlinn as-rorta Laigin 7 Oi Neill etir tuatha 7 cealla co rice Sliabh Bledhma. [A base at *Linn Duachaill*, from which the territories and churches of Tethba were raided. A base at Dublin, from which the Laigin and Uí Néill were raided, both territories and churches, as far as Slieve Bloom.]

CS 841.2 Longport oc Lind duachaill, as ar loitedh tuatha ocus cealla Teabtha. Longport og Duibhlinn, as ar loitedh Laighin ocus H. Neill eidir tuathaibh ocus cellaib co Sliab Bladma. [A base at *Linn Duachaill*, from which the territories and churches of Tethba were laid waste. A base at Dublin, from which the Laigin and Uí Néill were laid waste, both territories and churches, as far as Slieve Bloom.]

#### 842

AClon 839.1 The Danes continued in Dublin this year and the Danes of Lynndwachill preyed and spoyled Clonuickenois, Birre, and Sayer.

AU 842.2 Geinnti for Duibhlinn beos. [Heathens still at Dublin.]

CS 842.1 Gente for Duiplind beós. [Heathens still at Dublin.]

### Dunrally (Co. Laois)

#### 862

AFM 860.11 Cosccradh longphuir Rothlaibh la Cind Éittidh, mac n-Gáithín, tighearna Laighisi isin cúicidh Id September, 7 marbhadh Conuill Ultaigh 7 Luirgnen, go sochaidhibh oile immaille friú. [The base of Rauðulfr was torn apart by Cennétig son of Gáethíne, lord of Laigis, on the fifth of the Ides of September; and Conall Ultach and Luirgnen were killed, and other multitudes along with them.]

#### Limerick (Co. Limerick)

##### 845

AClon 842.1 Forannan, abbot of Ardmach, was taken captive by the Danes at Cloncowardy, together with all his familie, rilickes, & books, and were lead from thence to their shipes in Lymbrick.

AFM 843.12 Forannán, primhaidh Arda Macha, do erghabháil do Ghallaibh i c-Cluain Chomharda, cona mhionnaibh 7 cona mhuintir, 7 a m-breth leo dia longaibh go Luimneach. [Forannán, primate of Armagh, was captured by foreigners in *Cluain Comarda*, with his venerated objects, and with his community, and they were carried away by them to their ships to Limerick.]

AI 845.2 Forannán, abb Aird Macha, do brith do gentib ó Chluain Comardae 7 scrín Patraic do brissiud 7 do brith dóib. [Forannán, abbot of Armagh, was carried away by heathens from *Cluain Comarda*, and the shrine of Pátraic was broken and carried away by them.]

AU 845.1 Forindan, abbas Aird Machae, du ergabail du genntibh i Cloen Comardai cona mindaibh 7 cona muintir, 7 a brith do longaibh Luimnigh. [Forannán, abbot of Armagh, was captured by heathens at *Cluain Comarda*, with his venerated objects, and with his community, and he was carried away to the ships of Limerick.]

CS 845.1 Forandán, ab Aird Macha, du ergabail ó Gentibh a cCluain Comarda, cona mindaibh ocus cona muintir, et ambreith a longaibh go Luimnech. [Forannán, abbot of Armagh, was captured by heathens at *Cluain Comarda*, with his venerated objects and with his community, and they were carried away in ships to Limerick.]

##### 887

AClon 871.4 The Connaughtmen committed a great slaughter upon the Danes of Lymbrick.

AFM 884.16 Ar do thabhairt ar Ghallaibh Luimnigh la Connachtaibh. [A slaughter was brought upon the foreigners of Limerick by the Connachta.]

CS 887.6 Ar Gall Luimnigh la Connactaibh. [A slaughter of the foreigners of Limerick by the Connachta.]

#### Linn Duachaill (Co. Louth)

##### 841

AFM 840.3-4 Longphort acc Linn Duachaill la Gallaibh, as ro h-urtha 7 ro h-airgthe tuatha 7 cealla Teathbha. Longport oile ag Duibhlinn, as ro h-urtha Laighin 7 h-Uí Néill, etir tuatha 7 cealla, co Sliabh Bladhma. [A base [was established] at *Linn Duachaill* by foreigners, from which the territories and churches of Tethba were devastated and raided. Another base at Dublin, from which the Laigin and Uí Néill were devastated, both territories and churches, as far as Slieve Bloom.]

AU 841.4 Longport oc Linn Duachaill asar orta tuatha 7 cealla Tethbai. Longport oc Duibhlinn as-rorta Laigin 7 Oi Neill etir tuatha 7 cealla co rice Sliabh Bledhma. [A base at *Linn Duachaill*, from which the territories and churches of Tethba were raided. A base at Dublin, from which the Laigin and Uí Néill were raided, both territories and churches, as far as Slieve Bloom.]

CS 841.2 Longport oc Lind duachaill, as ar loitedh tuatha ocus cealla Teabtha. Longport og Duibhlinn, as ar loitedh Laighin ocus H. Neill eidir tuathaibh ocus cellaib co Sliabh Bladma. [A base at *Linn Duachaill*, from which the territories and churches of Tethba were laid waste. A base at Dublin, from which the Laigin and Uí Néill were laid waste, both territories and churches, as far as Slieve Bloom.]

#### 842

AClon 839.1 The Danes continued in Dublin this year and the Danes of Lynndwachill preyed and spoiled Clonuickensis, Birre, and Sayer.

AFM 841.9 Orgain Cluana Mic Nois la Gallaibh Linne Duachaille. [Clonmacnoise was raided by the foreigners of *Linn Duachaill*.]

AU 842.6 Orgain Cluana M. Nois o genntibh di Linn Duachail. [Clonmacnoise was raided by heathens from *Linn Duachaill*.]

CS 842.2 Orgain Cluana muc Nois o Gentibh do Linn Duachaill. [Clonmacnoise was raided by heathens from *Linn Duachaill*.]

AClon 839.3 There was a fleet of Normans at Lynnrosa upon the river of Boyne, another at Lynsoleagh in Ulster, and another at Lyndwachill aforesaid.

AFM 841.12 Longas Nortmannorum for Bóinn occ Linn Rois. Longus oile díobh occ Linn Saileach la h-Ulta. Longus oile díobh occ Linn Duachaill. [A fleet of Northmen on the Boyne at Rosnaree. Another fleet of them at Lough Swilly in Ulaid. Another fleet of them at *Linn Duachaill*.]

AU 842.8 Longas Nordmannorum for Boinn, for Linn Roiss. Longas Nordmannorum oc Linn Sailech la Ultu. [A fleet of Northmen on the Boyne at Rosnaree. A fleet of Northmen at Lough Swilly in Ulaid.]

CS 842.4 Loinges Normaindibh for Boinn oc Linn roiss. Loinges ele occ Linn duachaill. [A fleet of Northmen on the Boyne at Rosnaree. Another fleet at *Linn Duachaill*.]

AClon 839.4 Keowan abbot of Lyndwachill was both killed and burnt by the Danes, and some of the Irishmen.

AFM 841.2 Caomhán, abb Linne Duachaill, do mharbhadh, 7 [do] loscadh la Gallaibh. [Cóemán, abbot of *Linn Duachaill*, was killed and burned by foreigners.]

AU 842.10 Comman, abbas Linne Duachail, do guin 7 loscadh o genntibh 7 Goidhelaibh. [Cóemán, abbot of *Linn Duachaill*, was fatally wounded and burned by heathens and Gaels.]

CS 842.5 Coeman Abb Linde duachaill do goin, et do loscadh do Gentibh. [Cóemán, abbot of *Linn Duachaill*, was fatally wounded and burned by heathens.]

AClon 839.2 Morain mcInreaghty, B. of Clochar was killed by the Danes.

AU 842.9 Moran m. Indrechtaigh, abbas Clochair M. nDaimeni, du ergabail do Gallaibh Linne, 7 a éc leo iarum. [Morann son of Indrechtach, abbot of Clogher, was captured by the foreigners of *Linn*, and he died by them afterwards.]

### 852

AFM 849.9-10 Dubhghoill do techt do Ath Cliath, co ro lasat ár mór for Fionnghallaibh, co ro indirset an longport etir daoine 7 maoine. Slatt oile do Dubhgallaibh for Fionnghallaibh occ Linn Duachaill, 7 ro chuirset ár mór forra. [The Dark foreigners came to Dublin, and they inflicted a great slaughter on the Fair foreigners, and they invaded the base, [attacking] both people and possessions. Another pillaging by the Dark foreigners of the Fair foreigners at *Linn Duachaill*, and they inflicted a great slaughter on them.]

AU 851.3 Tetact Dubgennti du Ath Cliath co ralsat ár mór du Fhinngallaibh 7 coro [sh]latsat in longport eitir doine 7 moine. Slat do Dubhgenntib oc Lind Duachail 7 ar mor diib. [The Dark heathens came to Dublin, and inflicted a great slaughter on the Fair foreigners, and they pillaged the base, both people and possessions. An attack by the Dark heathens on *Linn Duachaill* and a great slaughter of them.]

CS 851.3 Teacht Duiphgentib do Ath Cliath gur ralsat ár mór for Fionn Galloibh, ocus gur indirsíot an longport edir daoinib ocus maoinib. Slat ele do Duibhgentibh con ár mor for Finngentibh oc Linn Duachaill. [The Dark heathens came to Dublin, and they inflicted a great slaughter on the Fair foreigners, and they invaded the base, both people and possessions. Another pillaging by the Dark heathens with a great slaughter of Fair heathens at *Linn Duachaill*.]

AFM 850.17 Ard Macha do fásughadh la Gallaibh Linne Duachaille an domhnach iar c-Caiscc. [Armagh was laid waste by the foreigners of *Linn Duachaill* on the Sunday after Easter.]

AU 852.2 Uastatio Aird Machae o Gallaibh Linde die Samchasc. [Devastation of Armagh by the foreigners of *Linn* on the day following Summer-lent.]

CS 852.2 Uastatio Aird Macha o Galloibh Linne Duacaill die Samh Chasg. [Devastation of Armagh by the foreigners of *Linn Duachaill* on the day following Summer-lent.]

Lough Foyle (Co. Derry)

898

AFM 893.10 Ard Macha do orgain ó Ghallaibh Locha Febhail 7 Cumascach do ghabháil dóibh, 7 a mhac Aodh mac Cumascaigh do mharbhadh. [Armagh was raided by the foreigners of Lough Foyle, and Cumascach was taken by them, and his son, Áed son of Cumascach, was killed.]

CS 898.4 Ard Macha dargain ó Galloibh Lochu Feabhail, et Cumusccach do gabáil dáiph, et a mac .i. Aodh mac Cumusgaicch, do marbadh. [Armagh was raided by the foreigners of Lough Foyle, and Cumascach was taken by them, and his son, that is, Áed son of Cumascach, was killed.]

Lough Neagh (Co. Antrim/ Armagh/ Derry/ Tyrone)

839

AClon 836.2 The Danes made a fforte, and had shipping on Logh Neaagh of purpose and intent to wast and spoyle the north from thence, and did accordingly.

AFM 838.10 Ro ghabhsat murchobhlach do Ghallaibh for Loch Eathach. Ro h-urtha 7 ro h-airgthe tuatha 7 cealla tuaisceirt Ereann leó. [A marine fleet of foreigners took upon Lough Neagh. The territories and churches of the north of Ireland were devastated and raided by them.]

AU 839.7 Fecht di Ghallaibh for Loch Ecdhach cor ortadur tuatha 7 cella tuaisceirt Erenn ass. [An expedition of foreigners on Lough Neagh and they raided the territories and churches of the north of Ireland from there.]

CS 839.2 Gaill for Loch Echach gur airgetor tuaisgert Erend as, edir cill is tuaithe. [Foreigners on Lough Neagh, and they raided the north of Ireland from it, both churches and territories.]

840

AClon 837.1 Lough was destroyed by the Danes of Loughneagh and lead with them many Bushopps, Prelates and Priests captives from thence, & killed many others.

AFM 839.10 Orgain Lughmhaidh la Gallaibh Locha h-Eathach, 7 ro ghabhsat braighde iomdha d'espucioibh 7 do dhaoineibh eaccnaidhe foghlamtha, 7 rucsat iatt dochom a longhort iar marbhadh sochaidhe oile leó bheós. [Louth was raided by the foreigners of Lough Neagh, and they took many prisoners – bishops and wise men of learning - and they carried them away to their base, moreover, after a multitude of others were killed by them.]

ARC §239 Orgain Lugmaig di Loch Eac[h]ac[h] o geintibh, qui *episcopos* et *presbyteres* et *sapientes* captiuos duxerunt et alius mortificauerunt. [Louth was raided by heathens from Lough Neagh, who led bishops and priests and scholars into captivity, and who put others to death.]

AU 840.1 Orggain Lughmaidh di Loch Echdach o genntibh qui episcopos et praespiteros et sapientes captiuos duxerunt et alios mortificauerunt. [Louth was raided by heathens from Lough Neagh, who led bishops and priests and scholars into captivity, and who put others to death.]

CS 840.1 Orgain Lugmaigh do Loch Echach ó Gentibh, episcopos et prespiteros et sapientes captiuos duxerunt. [Louth was raided by heathens from Lough Neagh. They led bishops and priests and scholars into captivity.]

841

AU 841.1 Gennti for Loch Eachach beós. [Heathens still on Lough Neagh.]

CS 841.1 Gente for Loch Echach beós. [Heathens still on Lough Neagh.]

Lough Ree (Co. Longford/Roscommon/W'meath)

845

AClon 842.3 Turgesuis, Prince of the Danes, founded a strong force on Loughrie, from whence Connaught and Meath were destroyed, burnt Clonvickenois, Clonfert, Tyrdaglasse, Lothra, and withal their churches and houses of religion.

AB §251 Turges do dul ar Loch Ri 7 dun do denum do air 7 a gabail ria Maelsechnaill mac Mailruanaid 7 a badud i lloch Uair. [Þorgestr went to Lough Ree and a fort was made by him there, and he was captured by Máel Sechnaill son of Máel Ruanaid and drowned in Lough Owel.]

AU 845.3 Dunadh di Gallaibh .i. la Tuirgeis for Loch Ri coro ortadur Connachta 7 Midhe, 7 coro loscaiset Cluain M. Nois cona dertaigibh, 7 Cluaen Ferta Brenainn 7 Tir Da Glass 7 Lothra 7 alaile cathracha. [An encampment of foreigners, that is, with Þorgestr on Lough Ree, and they raided Connachta and Mide, and they burned Clonmacnoise with its oratories, and Clonfert, and Terryglass, and Lorrha, and other enclosed settlements.]

CS 845.3 Dún la Turges do Gallaiph for Loch Ribh, go ro loitetor Connachta ocus Mide, et cor loisesiot Cluain muc Nois cona dertighibh, 7 Cluain ferta Brenuinn, 7 Tír da glass, 7 Lotra, 7 catracha iomdha. [A fort [was built] by Þorgestr for the foreigners on Lough Ree, and they laid waste Connachta and Mide, and they burned Clonmacnoise with its oratories, and Clonfert, and Terryglass, and Lorrha, and many enclosed settlements.]

?Lough Swilly (Co. Donegal)

842

AClon 839.3 There was a fleet of Normans at Lynnrosa upon the river of Boyne, another at Lynsoleagh in Ulster, and another at Lyndwachill aforesaid.



AFM 841.12 Longas Nortmaoinorum for Bóinn occ Linn Rois. Longus oile díobh occ Linn Saileach la h-Ulta. Longus oile díobh occ Linn Duachail. [A fleet of Northmen on the Boyne at Rosnaree; another fleet of them at Lough Swilly; another fleet of them at *Linn Duachail*.]

AU 842.8 Longas Nordmannorum for Boinn, for Linn Roiss. Longas Nordmannorum oc Linn Sailech la Ultu. [A fleet of Northmen on the Boyne at Rosnaree; a fleet of Northmen at Lough Swilly in Ulaid.]

#### Rosnaree (Co. Meath)

842

AFM 841.11 Orgain Biorra 7 Saighre la Gallaibh Bóinne. [Birr and Seirkieran were raided by the foreigners of the Boyne.]

AU 842.7 Orgain Biror 7 Saighre o genntibh di Duiblinn. [Birr and Seirkieran were raided by heathens from Dublin.]

CS 842.3 Orgain Birra ocus Saighre o Gentibh. [Birr and Seirkieran were raided by heathens.]

AClon 839.3 There was a fleet of Normans at Lynnrosa upon the river of Boyne, another at Lynsoleagh in Ulster, and another at Lyndwachill aforesaid.

AFM 841.12 Longas Nortmaoinorum for Bóinn occ Linn Rois. Longus oile díobh occ Linn Saileach la h-Ulta. Longus oile díobh occ Linn Duachail. [A fleet of Northmen on the Boyne at Rosnaree. Another fleet of them at Lough Swilly in Ulaid. Another fleet of them at *Linn Duachail*.]

AU 842.8 Longas Nordmannorum for Boinn, for Linn Roiss. Longas Nordmannorum oc Linn Sailech la Ultu. [A fleet of Northmen on the Boyne at Rosnaree. A fleet of Northmen at Lough Swilly in Ulaid.]

CS 842.4 Loinges Normaindibh for Boinn oc Linn roiss. Loinges ele occ Linn duachail. [A fleet of Northmen on the Boyne at Rosnaree. Another fleet at *Linn Duachail*.]

#### St Mullins (Co. Carlow)

892

AFM 888.6 Maidhm ria Riaccán, mac Dunghaile, for Ghallaibh Puirt Lairge, Locha Carman, 7 Tighe Moling, i farccbhadh dá chéd ceann. [A defeat by Riaccán son of Dúngal, of the foreigners of Waterford, Wexford, and St Mullins, in which two hundred heads were left behind.]

#### Strangford Lough (Co. Down)

879

AFM 876.5 Maol Cobha, mac Crunnmhaoil, abb Arda Macha, do erghabháil do Ghallaibh Locha Cuan, 7 an fer leighinn .i. Mochta. [Máel Coba son of Crundmáel, abbot of Armagh, was captured by the foreigners of Strangford Lough, and the lector, that is, Mochta.]

AU 879.6 Mael Cobho m. Crunnmhaeil, princeps Aird Macha, do ergabhail do Gallaibh, 7 in fer leighinn, .i. Mochta. [Máel Coba son of Crundmáel, superior of Armagh, was captured by foreigners, and the lector, that is, Mochta.]

CS 879.2 Maélcoba mac Crunnmaél, princeps Aird Macha, do ergabail, agus an ferleiginn Mochta. [Máel Coba son of Crundmáel, superior of Armagh, was captured, and Mochta, the lector.]

#### Waterford (Co. Waterford)

860

AFM 858.6 Maidhm ria c-Cerball for loinges Puirt Lairge oc Achodh Mic Erclaighe. [A defeat of the fleet of Waterford by Cerball at Agha.]

892

AFM 888.6 Maidhm ria Riaccán, mac Dunghaile, for Ghallaibh Puirt Lairge, Locha Carman, 7 Tighe Moling, i farccbhadh dá chéd ceann. [A defeat by Riaccán son of Dúngal, of the foreigners of Waterford, Wexford, and St Mullins, in which two hundred heads were left behind.]

#### Wexford (Co. Wexford)

892

AFM 888.6 Maidhm ria Riaccán, mac Dunghaile, for Ghallaibh Puirt Lairge, Locha Carman, 7 Tighe Moling, i farccbhadh dá chéd ceann. [A defeat by Riaccán son of Dúngal, of the foreigners of Waterford, Wexford, and St Mullins, in which two hundred heads were left behind.]

#### Youghal (Co. Cork)

866

AFM 864.7 Maidhm for loinges n-Eochaille riasna Désibh, 7 cosgradh a longphuirt. [A defeat of the fleet of Youghal by the Déisi, and their base was torn apart.]

#### Unlocated sites between Cenél nEogain and Dál nAraide

866

AClon 864.2 King Hugh assaulted a fort the Danes had in Orear Anoghlae between Tire Owen and Dalnarie, and from thence took all their Jewels, cattle, and goods,

together with a great number of their captives, and also made a great slaughter upon them to the number of 240 of their heads were taken.

AFM 864.3 Ro teccloimadh léirthionól an Tuaisceirt la h-Aodh f-Findliath, go ro aircc longphorta Gall gach airm h-i rabhatar isin Fochla etir Cenel Eoghain 7 Dál n-Araidhe, 7 do-beart a crodh 7 a n-étead, a n-édala 7 a n-iolmhaoine. [A complete muster of the North was gathered by Áed Finnliath, and he raided the bases of the foreigners, wherever they were in Fochla, both in Cenél nEógain and Dál nAraide; and he brought away their herds, and their garments, and their booty, and their many possessions.]

AU 866.4 Aedh m. Neill ro slat uile longportu Gall, .i. airir ind Fochla, eter Chenel nEugain 7 Dal nAraide co tuc a cennlai 7 a n-eti 7 a crodha a llongport er cath. Roiniudh foraib oc Loch Febail asa tuctha da .xx. dec cenn. [Áed son of Níall pillaged all the bases of the foreigners, that is, of the coast of Fochla, both in Cenél nEógain and Dál nAraide, and he brought away their heads, and their cattle, and the herds of their base, through battle. A rout of them at Lough Foyle, from which twelve score heads were brought away.]

Unlocated site destroyed by a king of Uí Bairrche Tíre

868

AFM 866.12 Conn, mac Cionaedha, tighearna Ua m-Bairrchi Tíre, do mharbhadh oc toghail in dúine forsna Gallaibh. [Conn son of Cináed, lord of Uí Bairrche Tíre, was killed while destroying the fort of the foreigners.]

Unlocated site = Port Manann (See Appendix Two.)

866

AI 866.1 Tomrar iarla do orcain Cluana Ferta Brenaind conro marb Brenaind tres ló iar richtain a longphoirt. [Pórrarr the jarl raided Clonfert, and Brénainn killed him three days after he reached his base.]

#### Appendix Two

This is a list of ninth-century viking bases mentioned in 'The Fragmentary Annals of Ireland' and *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh*. I have restricted the list to bases which are not identified in Appendix one.

Armagh (Co. Armagh)	CGG §9	A.D. 832×845
<i>Cenn Crete</i> (?)	CGG §26	A.D. 917
Clonmacnoise (Co. Offaly)	CGG §11	A.D. 838×845
<i>Dún Mainne</i> (Co. Kerry)	CGG §29, FAI §341	A.D. 867
<i>Dún Médoín</i> (Co. Waterford)	CGG §§24, 29	A.D. 866/867
<i>Longphort of Caitil Find</i>	CGG §23	A.D. 857
<i>Longphort of Oisle</i>	FAI §347	A.D. 867

*Port Manann*

CGG §24, FAI §340 A.D. 866