

**The *dubh gall* in southern Scotland: the politics of Northumbria, Dublin, and the Community of St Cuthbert in the Viking Age, c. 870-950 CE**

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*The wide-ranging interests of the Scandinavians who controlled Dublin from 851, known as the dubh gall (and later the Uí Ímair), have been noted by some scholars. At various times they are thought to have controlled or exercised some form of over-lordship over the Kingdom of Northumbria, northern Wales, and southern Scotland, including the Kingdom of Strathclyde. Although evidence from present-day northern England and southern Scotland are often assessed separately, it is important to note that much of southern Scotland was part of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Northumbria up to c. 950 CE. It is argued in this paper that the political interests of Scandinavian kings of York (members of the dubh gall/Uí Ímair), often aligned with the Archbishop of York and the Community of St Cuthbert, explains much of the evidence of Scandinavian burial and settlement.*

Although it is commonplace to use modern political boundaries to demarcate regions for study, this does not always reflect the political realities of earlier periods. For example, it needs to be remembered that during the early Viking Age ‘Scotland’ did not yet exist, and that southern Scotland was part of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria.<sup>1</sup> At the start of the Viking Age Northumbria stretched as far north as the River Forth in eastern and central Scotland, encompassing the current council areas of the Scottish Borders, East Lothian, Midlothian, West Lothian, and City of Edinburgh. It also included Dumfries and Galloway in Scotland’s south-west and South Ayrshire and most of East Ayrshire further north.<sup>2</sup> The ninth-century Scandinavian conquest and settlement of Northumbria had a large impact on those parts which are now in England in terms of such things as political control, onomastics, and art-styles, particularly in the area around York and in what is now Cumbria.<sup>3</sup> Although a Scandinavian impact on the very north of Northumbria, what is now southern Scotland, was not as pronounced it has been noted by scholars previously: it is most obviously seen in place-names, and recent archaeological finds have added significantly to our knowledge. Although not part of Northumbria, this paper will also include evidence from Midross in Argyll in the former Kingdom of Strathclyde, which may have been under Scandinavian domination for part of the Viking Age. In advance of full publication, interim reports suggest that

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<sup>1</sup> The best coverage of this period is A. Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba 789-1070*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba 789-1071*, Map 1.2.

<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that the Kingdom of Northumbria covered a far greater area than the modern English county, encompassing all of England north of the River Humber.

this site has more affinities to settlements and burials further south than those in Scotland's north and west. These sites are all located in the southern half of the Scottish mainland. In terms of chronology, this paper will concentrate on the period up to 950 CE and will consequently not discuss later evidence for possible Scandinavian settlement in southern Scotland, principally the hogback monuments.

## Historical Background

Our knowledge of events in southern Scotland are sketchy at best for the period from 870 to 950, but this is still better than our knowledge of the rest of Scotland for which contemporary written sources are virtually non-existent for this time. Fortunately the southern half of Scotland was of some interest to contemporary chroniclers in England and Ireland so occasionally information is available in texts such as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the *Annals of Ulster* to supplement the sparse Scottish sources.<sup>4</sup> The latter is variously known as the *Scottish Chronicle*, *Older Scottish Chronicle*, or the *Chronicle of the Kings of Alba*. It only survives in a fourteenth-century copy of a twelfth century reworking, but the *Chronicle* appears to have been a contemporary record maintained from the mid-ninth to the late-tenth century.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, other useful sources are those produced by the Community of St Cuthbert, the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* which was possibly largely completed in the mid-tenth century but now exists in a copy made a century later, and the *Historia Regum*, a compilation of early sources assembled in the mid-twelfth century.<sup>6</sup> The latter text includes two separate annals (in Part I and Part II of the text) covering the period discussed in this article, but fortunately the pertinent information is in Part I, which is thought to have been written in the tenth century 'and it is therefore likely to be very reliable'.<sup>7</sup> The gaps in our information are most obvious when one considers that the important monastic centre at Whithorn is not mentioned in

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<sup>4</sup> The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is a contemporary source for the period covered by this paper. The *Annals of Ulster* are a late fifteenth-century compilation of a contemporary chronicle, E. Purcell, 'Ninth-Century Viking Entries in the Irish Annals: No "Forty Years' Rest"', in J. Sheehan and D. Ó Corráin (ed.), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West: Proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, 18-27 August 2005*, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2010, pp. 322-323.

<sup>5</sup> B.T. Hudson, 'The Scottish Chronicle', *Scottish Historical Review*, vol. 77, 1998, pp. 133, 146.

<sup>6</sup> *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto: A History of Saint Cuthbert and a Record of his Patrimony*, T. Johnson South (ed. and trans.), Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 2002, p. 36; L. Simpson, 'The King Alfred/St Cuthbert Episode in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*: Its Significance for Mid-Tenth-Century English History', in G. Bonner, C. Stancliffe, and D. Rollason (ed.), *St Cuthbert: His Cult and Community to AD 1200*, Woodbridge, Boydell, 1989, pp. 397-411; D. Rollason with D. Gore and G. Fellows-Jensen, *Sources for York History to AD 1100*, York, York Archaeological Trust, 1998, p. 27. For issues regarding the use of the Cuthbertine sources see S. McLeod, *The Beginning of Scandinavian Settlement in England: The Viking 'Great Army' and Early Settlers, c. 865-900*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2014, pp. 33-36 and the sources cited therein.

<sup>7</sup> Rollason with Gore and Fellows-Jensen, *Sources for York History to AD 1100*, p. 27. For issues regarding the use of Part I of the *Historia Regum* see C. Downham, 'The Chronology of the Last Scandinavian Kings of York', *Northern History* vol 40 (2003), pp. 36-38.

historical sources for almost three centuries.<sup>8</sup> Other areas, such as Lothian, are only occasionally mentioned.

Despite these problems there are a few recorded historical events involving Scandinavians in southern Scotland. Northumbria was conquered by the Scandinavian 'great army' in 867 and although it is unclear if this included all of this expansive kingdom rather than just the eastern area between the rivers Humber and Tyne (the area raided by the army), it must have caused some dislocation in the rest of the kingdom, including what is now southern Scotland.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, there is evidence that the client king established by the Scandinavian leadership in 867 only ruled the kingdom north of the Tyne.<sup>10</sup> The Scandinavian rulers of Dublin, Ivar and Olaf conquered the primary stronghold of Strathclyde, Dumbarton, in 870 following a four month siege and they returned to Dublin the following year with a large number of Strathclyde Britons, Picts and Anglo-Saxons as slaves.<sup>11</sup> In 875 Halfdan, probably a brother of Ivar of Dublin, raided the Picts and Strathclyde Britons from his base on the River Tyne before returning to settle Northumbria around its principal city of York in 876.<sup>12</sup> His army must have travelled through what is now southern Scotland to reach these areas further north, and if it had not been conquered in 867, then it may be expected that it was subdued now to help protect the soon-to-be-established Scandinavian settlements. Furthermore, a new king is named in northern Northumbria in 876 when the Scandinavians began to rule the southern portion directly, and they are likely to have been subservient, at least initially, to the Scandinavians.<sup>13</sup> These northern kings were based at Bamburgh and appear to have become independent of the Scandinavian king in York before 913, and continued to be so until c. 918.<sup>14</sup>

After the demise of Halfdan the next named Scandinavian king of Northumbria was Guthfrith (r. c. 883-895), who established good relations with the Community of St Cuthbert, who were originally based on Lindisfarne but later moved to Norham-on-

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<sup>8</sup> P. Hill, 'Whithorn: The Missing Years', in R.D. Oram and G.P. Stell (ed.), *Galloway: Land and Lordship*, Edinburgh, Scottish Society for Northern Studies, 1991, p. 28.

<sup>9</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. and trans. by D. Whitelock with D.C. Douglas and S.I. Tucker, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961, annal 867, p. 45.

<sup>10</sup> McLeod, *The Beginning of Scandinavian Settlement in England*, pp. 177-178. The southern portion was probably ruled by Wulfhere, Archbishop of York, on behalf of the army, see *Ibid.*, pp. 178-180.

<sup>11</sup> *The Annals Of Ulster (to A.D. 1131). Part 1: Text and Translation*, ed. by S. Mac Airt and G. Mac Niocaill, Dublin, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983, annals 870.6 and 871.2, p. 327. Ivar of Dublin is thought to be the same person as Ivar leader of the great army: A.P. Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings in the British Isles, 850-880*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977, pp. 224-239; C. Downham, *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland: The Dynasty of Ívarr to A.D. 1014*, Edinburgh, Dunedin Academic Press, 2007, pp. 64-67. Anglicized Scandinavian names will be used throughout, rather than their (probable) Old Norse equivalents.

<sup>12</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 875, 876, p. 48. It is unsure if this was the River Tyne in England or Scotland (East Lothian).

<sup>13</sup> McLeod, *The Beginning of Scandinavian Settlement in England*, pp. 215-216.

<sup>14</sup> *The Annals of Ulster* describe Eadwulf as king of the north Saxons on his death in 913: 913.1, p. 361. For the association with Bamburgh see Æthelweard, *The Chronicle of Æthelweard*, A. Campbell (ed. and trans.), London, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962, p. 53.

Tweed, Chester-le-Street and eventually Durham.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, the close ties established between the Community and Guthfrith, who was buried at York Minster, may be thought to have impacted on those places under the Community's control.<sup>16</sup> Guthfrith was followed by a number of kings about whom we know little.<sup>17</sup>

The expulsion of the Scandinavian elite from Dublin in 902 is likely to have led to some of the refugees moving to Dumfries and Galloway, as well as Cumbria and Lancashire in present-day England.<sup>18</sup> After Scandinavians re-conquered Dublin in 917, Ragnall conquered Northumbria in 918/919, including the northern part not previously ruled directly by Scandinavians.<sup>19</sup> He died in 921 and was succeeded by his brother Sihtric who ruled until his death in 927.<sup>20</sup> There followed a quick succession of Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon rulers until the expulsion and death of Eric of York in 954, after which Northumbria was ruled by Anglo-Saxon kings from the House of Wessex, effectively forming 'England'. This means that Scandinavian kings were ruling parts of what is now southern Scotland for much of the first half of the tenth century. However, the attack by Olaf Guthfrithsson, king of Northumbria from 939-41, in 941 on East Lothian suggests that his claim to the most northerly part of his kingdom had to be re-established.<sup>21</sup> In south-west Scotland Northumbrian control appears to have ceased before 927 by which time Strathclyde had extended its borders southward until an attack by the Anglo-Saxon king led to him (possibly) granting it to the king of the Scots in 945.<sup>22</sup>

## Evidence

### Place-names

Place-names are an important yet difficult category of evidence, chiefly in that the earliest record of a name may be centuries later than its first use, so the dating of place-names is often highly problematic. Indeed, some of the place-names containing Scandinavian elements are thought to date to the twelfth century and be due to later

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<sup>15</sup> Guthfrith is also known as Guthred in some sources. For discussion of the 'wandering' of the Community of St Cuthbert see *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, pp. 96-101.

<sup>16</sup> Æthelweard, *The Chronicle of Æthelweard*, p. 51.

<sup>17</sup> D. Rollason, 'Anglo-Scandinavian York: The Evidence of Historical Sources', in R.A. Hall, D.W. Rollason, M. Blackburn, D.N. Parsons, G. Fellows-Jensen, A.R. Hall, H.K. Kenward, T.P. O'Connor, D. Tweedle, A.J. Mainman, and N.S.H. Rogers, *Aspects of Anglo-Scandinavian York*, York, York Archaeological Trust, 2004, pp. 309-310.

<sup>18</sup> *Annals Of Ulster*, 902.2, p. 353.

<sup>19</sup> *Annals Of Ulster*, 917.2, 918.4, pp. 363, 367, 373; *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, 22-24, pp. 61-63; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, D, 923, p. 68. The northern 'D' version of the *Chronicle* clearly has the wrong date, which should be either 918 or 919, *Ibid.*, fn. 3. For discussion see Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba*, pp. 142-144.

<sup>20</sup> *Annals of Ulster*, 917.2, 920.5, 927.2, pp. 367, 373, 379; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, D, 925, 926, p. 68. For discussion see Downham, *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland*, pp. 97-99.

<sup>21</sup> 'Historia Regum', in T. Arnold (ed.), *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*, vol 2, London, Longmans & Co, 1885, p. 94.

<sup>22</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 945, p. 72; G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavians in Dumfriesshire and Galloway: the place-name evidence', in R.D. Oram and G.P. Stell (ed.), *Galloway: Land and Lordship*, Edinburgh, Scottish Society for Northern Studies, 1991, p. 80.

Anglo-Norman migration from English Northumbria, where similar Scandinavian place-names are found.<sup>23</sup> Despite these issues, it has been argued that some of the place-names in Dumfries and Galloway that end in Old Norse (ON) *-byr* (farm/settlement, usually surviving as *-by* or *-bie*) were coined by Scandinavians, or at least people familiar with the ON language, migrating from northern England. There is an absence of the Norse place-name elements common in the north and west of Scotland, such as *-staðir*, *-setr*, *-bólstaðr*, and *-ærgi* which may suggest that most of the Scandinavian settlers did not come from those areas.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps the most secure place-name for indicating Scandinavian settlement is Tinwald, north of the city of Dumfries. It begins with ON *Þing*, assembly-place, indicating that legal matters were discussed there and that those assembled must have included resident ON-speakers.<sup>25</sup> It has also been suggested that the *-by* names in coastal Ayreshire opposite the Isle of Arran indicate Scandinavian settlement during the Viking Age, but in the absence of corroborating evidence this area will not feature in this paper.<sup>26</sup>

### Settlement evidence

Excluding place-names, the only evidence for Scandinavian settlers in southern Scotland are burials, assuming that those buried were not temporary visitors, and archaeological finds at Whithorn in Galloway, and Midross. The most substantial evidence for Scandinavian settlement comes from the important monastic site of Whithorn. This Northumbrian bishopric was established on the site of an earlier monastery by 731.<sup>27</sup> Although its history during the Viking Age is shrouded in mystery, extensive excavations have revealed that Scandinavian, or more likely Hiberno-Scandinavian, crafts-people were resident in the late-tenth and eleventh centuries.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, there is an earlier Scandinavian weight and the possibility of a Hiberno-Scandinavian craft workshop by the end of the ninth century, plus Scandinavian-style

<sup>23</sup> G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavian Settlement in the British Isles and Normandy: What the Place-Names Reveal', in J. Adams and K. Holman (ed.), *Scandinavia and Europe 800-1350: Contact, Conflict, and Coexistence*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2004, p. 146; J. Graham-Campbell and C.E. Batey, *Vikings in Scotland: An Archaeological Survey*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1998, pp. 38-39.

<sup>24</sup> Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavian Settlement in the British Isles and Normandy', p. 139.

<sup>25</sup> Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavians in Dumfriesshire and Galloway', p. 87.

<sup>26</sup> A. Grant, 'The Origin of the Ayreshire *Bý* Names', in P. Gammeltoft, C. Hough, and D. Waugh (ed.), *Cultural Contacts in the North Atlantic Region: The Evidence of Names*, NORNA, Scottish Place-Name Society, and Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland, 2005, pp. 127-40. It should be noted that although there is no corroborating evidence for settlement in Ayreshire, there are two Scandinavian burials on record from the Isle of Arran.

<sup>27</sup> P. Hill, *Whithorn and St Ninian: The Excavation of a Monastic Town, 1984-91*, Whithorn, The Whithorn Trust, 1997, p. 16. The bishopric is mentioned by Bede in his *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, a work completed in 731.

<sup>28</sup> Hill, *Whithorn and St Ninian*, pp. 55-59. I use Hiberno-Scandinavian to describe the mixed culture of Scandinavians settled in the Irish Sea area, regardless of the geographic origin of the immigrants or their forebears. For some of the problems associated with the term, in particular that 'Norse' is often used as an ethnic label for Norwegians, see C. Downham, 'Hiberno-Norwegians' and 'Anglo-Danes': anachronistic ethnicities and Viking Age England', *Medieval Scandinavia*, vol. 19, 2009, pp. 139-169.

burials from the late ninth or early tenth century.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately the evidence from Midross, south of Luss and close to the shore of Loch Lomond, has yet to be fully published, but the initial report suggests that a circular enclosure which contained a cemetery with fifteen inhumations 'radiocarbon dated to the late ninth and tenth centuries', including Scandinavian-style burials was also used for wood-working and shale-working, whilst a metal-working area was located 50 metres from the enclosure.<sup>30</sup> The craft activity is dated to the ninth century.<sup>31</sup> This suggests a settled community rather than people passing through on a raid or for trade.

### *Hoards*

There are four hoards in southern Scotland which may be, to varying degrees, attributed to Scandinavians. The Talnotrie hoard in Galloway, containing various pieces of metalwork, spindle whorls, a Scandinavian weight, and Anglo-Saxon, Arabic, and Frankish coins may have belonged to a local metalworker with Scandinavian contacts, or to a Scandinavian.<sup>32</sup> A new find in Dumfries and Galloway (location undisclosed) is a large hoard containing over 100 items, including some in a silver Carolingian cup, plus Hiberno-Scandinavian armrings and ingots, Insular brooches, beads, a solid silver Anglo-Saxon cross with enamelled decorations, a gold finger-ring, and a gold pin in the shape of a bird. It is provisionally dated c. 850-950.<sup>33</sup> There is also a hoard of five items found at Gordon in Berwickshire which has been identified as Hiberno-Scandinavian, and a hoard of Anglo-Saxon coins deposited in c. 930-50 at Cockburnspath, Berwickshire, which may be associated with Scandinavian activity.<sup>34</sup>

### *Burials*

In reviewing the Scandinavian burial record in Scotland it is apparent that there are regional variations in the locations chosen for the burials. In particular, the region that this paper is concerned with contains the only burials (Midross/Boiden, Whithorn,

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<sup>29</sup> A. Nicholson, 'Weights', and 'Appendix 2. Metalwork and Sculpture: Design and Patronage in c. 900 AD', in P. Hill, *Whithorn and St Ninian: The Excavation of a Monastic Town, 1984-91*, Whithorn, The Whithorn Trust, 1997, pp. 392-393, 621-623. The burials are discussed below.

<sup>30</sup> C.H. Buchanan, 'Scandinavians in Strathclyde: multiculturalism, material culture and manufactured identities in the Viking Age', in A. Ritchie (ed.), *Historic Bute: Land and People*, Edinburgh, The Scottish Society for Northern Studies, 2012, p. 21; G. MacGregor, 'Changing People Changing Landscapes: excavation at The Carrick, Midross, Loch Lomond', *Historic Argyll*, 2009, p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> MacGregor, 'Changing People Changing Landscapes', p. 11.

<sup>32</sup> For the hoard and the suggestion that it belonged to a native metalworker see J. Graham-Campbell, *Whithorn and the Viking World*, The Eighth Whithorn Lecture, Whithorn, Whithorn Trust, 2001, pp. 20-26. For the suggestion that it was deposited by a Scandinavian see below.

<sup>33</sup> This find has yet to be fully analysed or published. A good report on it can be found at [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2790197/metal-detectorist-finds-britain-s-biggest-haul-viking-treasure-hundreds-artefacts-including-ancient-silver-cross.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2790197/metal-detectorist-finds-britain-s-biggest-haul-viking-treasure-hundreds-artefacts-including-ancient-silver-cross.html) (accessed October 13, 2014). I would like to thank Caroline Paterson for her preliminary identification of these finds.

<sup>34</sup> Graham-Campbell and Batey, *Vikings in Scotland*, pp. 105-106.

and Carronbridge) which are situated a significant distance away from the coast. In this regard the burials more closely resemble those from England.<sup>35</sup> There are currently nineteen/seventeen certain burials known in southern and central mainland Scotland, but sixteen/fourteen of these are found at only two sites. The circular enclosure at Midross included eight or six accompanied and nine unaccompanied burials,<sup>36</sup> which may suggest the cohabitation of locals and Scandinavians, each following their own burial customs.<sup>37</sup> The grave-goods accompanying the eight/six people may be considered culturally Scandinavian included an Anglo-Saxon coin, knives, jewelry, a tool, and a whetstone from Norway.<sup>38</sup> Adults of both sexes and children seem to be represented, and the burials are thought to date to the ninth or tenth centuries.<sup>39</sup> One hundred metres east of the cemetery was a possibly prehistoric mound known as Boiden into which a Scandinavian warrior burial with a sword, spear, and shield had been added.<sup>40</sup> The finds from Boiden suggest that this burial was roughly contemporary with the accompanied burials in the enclosure. A shield boss found in the ditch surrounding the cemetery may represent another warrior burial.<sup>41</sup> At Whithorn a group of seven burials appear to be Scandinavian as they are not consistent with other burials at the monastic site. An infant was buried with two beads, and next to this burial was placed a bag containing the partially disarticulated remains of a male and female adult along with the forelimb of a cow. Above the adult and infant burials was spread a layer of cremated bones containing the remains of at least four individuals.<sup>42</sup> There are a further three single burials at Carronbridge and Kirkcudbright in Dumfries and Galloway, and Auldham in East Lothian. The latter burial was found at a monastic site that included domestic structures,

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<sup>35</sup> S.H. Harrison, 2007 'Separated from the Foaming Maelstrom: Landscapes of Insular 'Viking' Burial', in S. Semple (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History 14: Early Medieval Mortuary Practices*, Oxford: Oxford University School of Archaeology, pp. 176.

<sup>36</sup> Unfortunately the two published preliminary reports do not agree on the number of accompanied burials: MacGregor, 'Changing People Changing Landscapes', p. 11, has eight; Buchanan, 'Scandinavians in Strathclyde', p. 21, has six.

<sup>37</sup> A similar situation is evident at Westness, Orkney, S.H.H. Kaland 'The Settlement of Westness, Rousay', in C.E. Batey, J. Jesch, and C.D. Morris (ed.), *The Viking Age in Caithness, Orkney and the North Atlantic: Select papers from the proceedings of the eleventh Viking Congress, Thurso and Kirkwall, 22 August-1 September 1989*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1993, p. 314; B.J. Sellevold, *Picts and Vikings at Westness: Anthropological investigations of the skeletal material from the cemetery at Westness, Rousay, Orkney Islands*, Oslo, NIKU, 1999, fig. 3, Table 1.

<sup>38</sup> MacGregor, 'Changing People Changing Landscapes', p. 11; Buchanan, 'Scandinavians in Strathclyde', p. 21.

<sup>39</sup> MacGregor, 'Changing People Changing Landscapes', p. 11; Buchanan, 'Scandinavians in Strathclyde', p. 21. The demography is based on the grave-goods, particularly the child's bracelet.

<sup>40</sup> H.J. Stewart, 'Notice of the Discovery of some ancient arms and armour, near Glenfruin, on the estate of Sir James Colquhoun of Luss, Baronet', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 1, 1851-54, pp. 144-145.

<sup>41</sup> Buchanan, 'Scandinavians in Strathclyde', p. 21.

<sup>42</sup> Hill, *Whithorn and St Ninian*, p. 189. The bag of bones and the cremation raise the possibility that these remains had travelled a long distance before being buried at Whithorn.

but no culturally Scandinavian artefacts have been reported other than those in the burial.<sup>43</sup> These three burials all included weapons.<sup>44</sup>

## Discussion

As the overview of the evidence above demonstrates, in present-day southern Scotland Scandinavians may have been arriving from Anglo-Saxon England to the south, as well as Ireland and Scandinavian settlements to the west and north, plus Scandinavia itself, particularly Norway. This should come as no surprise, as the various Scandinavian groups elsewhere in Britain and Ireland came from a multitude of places, including Denmark, Norway, and northern Francia. There is also evidence for Scandinavian migration within Britain and Ireland.<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately, isotope analysis of teeth is not available for any of the burials under consideration, which may have helped to ascertain the childhood homes of those individuals.<sup>46</sup> Considering its location on the Irish Sea, Dumfries and Galloway in particular can be thought to have received visitors and settlers from that region. Yet Lothian should by no means be considered a back-water and any area with evidence for Scandinavian activity is likely to have had Scandinavians embarking from various locations, as is clearly seen with a destination as isolated as Viking Age Iceland.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, although the inland site of Midross may appear to be an unlikely place to find a probable settled group of Scandinavians, Loch Lomond could be reached by sailing up the River Clyde, into Loch Long and then into Loch Lomond by using the short portage route at Tarbet.<sup>48</sup> It could have also been reached by sailing directly up the River Leven from the Clyde once the Scandinavians had free access past

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<sup>43</sup> A. Crone and A. Heald, 'Auldhame: in search of a Viking King', *British Archaeology*, vol. 141, 2015, pp. 16-21.

<sup>44</sup> A. Crone and A. Heald, 'Auldhame: in search of a Viking King', *British Archaeology*, vol. 141, 2015, pp. 16-21; O. Owen and R. Welander, 'A traveller's end? – an associated group of Early Historic artefacts from Carronbridge, Dumfries & Galloway', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. 125, 1995, pp. 753-770; Graham-Campbell, *Whithorn and the Viking World*, pp. 13-15, 17-18.

<sup>45</sup> Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings in the British Isles*; Downham, *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland*; McLeod, *The Beginning of Scandinavian Settlement in England*, pp. 109-171; J. Montgomery and J.A. Evans, 'Immigrants on the Isle of Lewis – combining traditional funerary and modern isotope evidence to investigate social differentiation, migration and dietary change in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland', in R. Gowland and C. Knüsel (ed.), *Social Archaeology of Funerary Remains*. Studies in Funerary Archaeology 1. Oxford, Oxbow, 2006, pp. 122-142.

<sup>46</sup> The forthcoming publications of the burials at Midross and Auldhame may include such analysis.

<sup>47</sup> Iceland appears to have been settled by Scandinavians from Norway, and Scandinavians and Britons from Ireland and Scotland, A. Helgason, E. Hickey, S. Goodacre, V. Bosnes, K. Stefánsson, R. Ward, and B. Sykes, 'mtDNA and the Islands of the North Atlantic: estimating the proportions of Norse and Gaelic ancestry', *The American Journal of Human Genetics* vol. 68.3, 2001, pp. 723-737.

<sup>48</sup> D.A. McCulloch, *Investigating Portages in the Norse Maritime Landscape of Scotland and the Isles*, PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow, 2000, p. 298. Such an operation was carried out in 1262 by Haakon IV of Norway. I became aware of this information via E. Pierce, *The Hidden Heritage of a Landscape: Vengeful Vikings and Reckless Rustlers. Archaeological and historical evidence for the Vikings in Central and Western Scotland* (2013): [http://hiddenheritage.org.uk/docs/060\\_307\\_archaeologicalandhistoricalevidenceofthevikingsincentralandwesternscotland\\_forwebsite\\_1386075884.pdf](http://hiddenheritage.org.uk/docs/060_307_archaeologicalandhistoricalevidenceofthevikingsincentralandwesternscotland_forwebsite_1386075884.pdf) (accessed 09 July 2014).



the fortress of the Strathclyde Britons at Dumbarton at the confluence of the Clyde and Leven.

In trying to ascertain where the Scandinavians in southern Scotland came from, our varying forms of evidence do not present us with an obvious answer. It is clear that Scandinavians from various locations visited Scotland on numerous occasions, so it would be useful to separate evidence which is likely to be the result of a short-term visit/s to that for settlement. Once the settlement evidence has been determined possible cultural affiliations and historical probabilities will be discussed. To begin with the four hoards, at least three of them are likely to be the result of temporary visits. The Talnotrie hoard may relate to the raids by Halfdan and the great army in 875.<sup>49</sup> If the hoard belonged to a native metal-worker then it is highly likely that they had contact with Scandinavians, but it is impossible to determine if those Scandinavians were travellers or permanent residents in the area. The Hiberno-Scandinavian hoard at Gordon dated to the late-ninth/early-tenth century has been associated with the campaigns of Ragnall in the 910s.<sup>50</sup> Finally, if the Cockburnspath hoard is Scandinavian at all, and the lack of non-coin items or testing of the coins makes a Scandinavian attribution impossible to prove, then its c. 930-950 date may associate it with the campaign of Olaf Guthfrithsson on the area in 941.<sup>51</sup> The new hoard from Dumfries and Galloway awaits full analysis, site disclosure, and publication, making an attribution to a likely historical scenario impossible. However, the collection of Insular, Scandinavian, and Carolingian material appears to have been assembled over time from various sources, probably including raids for the Carolingian cup and Anglo-Saxon cross which are items unlikely to have been handed over freely. Unlike the Talnotrie hoard there can be little doubt about its attribution to Scandinavians. The burial of the hoard in a county with Viking Age Scandinavian place-names and burials does raise the possibility that it was buried by a resident, perhaps one who had had a career as a 'viking'.

Place-names provide general evidence for the parts of southern Scotland which experienced settlement by speakers of ON, or people from a region that already had Scandinavian place-names, but it is difficult to demonstrate that any particular name was certainly coined by a Scandinavian in the Viking Age. However, place-names are more likely to have been coined by residents in the area rather than people passing through, with the possible exception of navigation markers, so some of the names do suggest a resident ON-speaking population, although the density of the population, or their time of arrival, is impossible to pinpoint.<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately, place-names do not always indicate where those coining the name may have come from. Names ending in *-by* in Dumfries and Galloway have plausibly been associated with Scandinavians

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<sup>49</sup> McLeod, *Scandinavian Settlement in England*, p. 150, n. 252.

<sup>50</sup> Graham-Campbell and Batey, *Vikings in Scotland*, p. 105.

<sup>51</sup> For the hoard and its dating see Graham-Campbell and Batey, *Vikings in Scotland*, p. 106.

<sup>52</sup> It has been suggested that the majority of *-by* names had been coined by the mid-tenth century, Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavians in Dumfriesshire and Galloway', p. 85.

migrating from northern England, yet Tinwald in Dumfriesshire is thought to indicate settlers from northern Scotland.<sup>53</sup>

The surest evidence for Scandinavian settlement is burials and other archaeological evidence. Midross/Boiden and Whithorn have what may be referred to as Scandinavian cemeteries since multiple burials are present, as well as signs of a permanent population in the form of craft-working. This sense of permanency is also suggested by the combination of males, females, and children at both sites, although it should be noted that women and children are known to have accompanied Scandinavian groups on campaign elsewhere.<sup>54</sup> At Whithorn the Scandinavian-style burials are dated to c. 900, at the same time as a possible craft workshop but a generation or two before the more substantial evidence for late tenth and eleventh-century Hiberno-Scandinavian craft workers.<sup>55</sup> This could indicate two separate Scandinavian groups settled in the area at different times, and it has been suggested based on place-name evidence that the burials belong to a population who had been brought to Whithorn as mercenaries.<sup>56</sup> If this were the case then some warrior burials may yet to be found. The lack of later Scandinavian-style burials suggests that the resident craft workers were buried in a Christian manner. The chronology at Midross is uncertain until the site is fully published, but the preliminary report suggests that the accompanied burials and craft-working evidence are roughly contemporary so those buried may have included craft workers.

In the absence of other archaeological evidence for settlement the three burials at Carronbridge, Kirkcudbright, and Auldhame may all represent warriors (due to the inclusion of weapons) who fell on campaign. Indeed, it has been suggested by historian Alex Woolf during an interview, and more recently by the site's excavators, that the Auldhame burial may be a member of Olaf Guthfrithsson's army who raided Lothian in 941, or even King Olaf himself.<sup>57</sup> Although the high status of the burial is suggested by his wearing a pair of spurs, indicating a mounted warrior, the other grave-goods consisted of only a spear (from the illustration of the grave it seems that its shaft was broken and the spear-head pointed towards the foot of the grave) and an ornate belt-set of a type commonly found in the Irish Sea region.<sup>58</sup> This makes it unlikely to be the burial of the King of Northumbria and Dublin, as does the lack of any evidence for a

<sup>53</sup> Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavians in Dumfriesshire and Galloway', pp. 83-87; Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavian Settlement in the British Isles and Normandy', p. 139.

<sup>54</sup> For a review of the evidence for England see S. McLeod, 'Warriors and Women: the sex ratio of Norse migrants to eastern England up to 900 AD', *Early Medieval Europe*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2011, pp. 332-353.

<sup>55</sup> Hill, *Whithorn and St Ninian*, pp. 54-59, 189. The c. 900 craftspeople may have been working for Scandinavian patrons rather than being Scandinavians themselves, Hill, *Whithorn and St Ninian*, p. 54.

<sup>56</sup> Hill, *Whithorn and St Ninian*, p. 54.

<sup>57</sup> The information from Wolf has appeared in various places but the fullest account that I am aware of is 'St Andrews expert solves royal and ancient puzzle', University of St Andrews: <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/news/archive/2014/title.244518,en.php> (accessed 1 July 2014); Crone and Heald, 'Auldhame', pp. 20-21.

<sup>58</sup> Crone and Heald, 'Auldhame', pp. 19, 20. For a review of this belt type see C. Paterson, 'Insular Belt-fittings from the Pagan Norse Graves of Scotland – a Reappraisal', in M. Redknap, N. Edwards, S. Youngs, A. Lane and J. Knight (ed.), *Pattern and Purpose in Insular Art*, Oxford, Oxbow, 2001, pp. 125-132.

grave marker. So too may the likely age of the individual, estimated at 26-35, since Olaf had been a king for seven years when he died he is certainly unlikely to have been at the lower end of this range.<sup>59</sup> However, the suggestion that it was a member of Olaf's army is certainly plausible.

The other two burials also appear initially to be those of travellers rather than settlers. Indeed, the Carronbridge burial was attributed to a 'lone traveller' by its excavators, although James Graham-Campbell notes that one of the grave-goods, a sickle, is usually found in the graves of settlers and it is an unusual item for a traveller to be carrying.<sup>60</sup> Additionally, the Carronbridge burial overlooks the Nithdale, with dale coming from ON *dalr*, 'valley'. The use of an ON term for a topographic feature suggests that an ON-speaking population lived somewhere in or near the valley, but as the name is first attested in the twelfth century it could have also derived from a later English-speaking population arriving from northern England where 'dale' is commonly used.<sup>61</sup> The Kirkcudbright burial was found on a hill overlooking a Christian cemetery and probable chapel site.<sup>62</sup> Although it is the only burial on record, the area does contain a number of ON place-names which may indicate a settled Viking Age population, but no additional archaeological remains associated with Scandinavians, other than a glass linen smoother possibly from the Viking Age, have been found in the town.<sup>63</sup>

However, regardless of the doubts regarding place-names I suggest that all of these burials, with the possible exception of Carronbridge, belong to Scandinavians resident in the area in which they were buried, and that they are closely linked to the fortunes of the Northumbrian kingdom. This does not discount the possibility that some of those buried came from locations other than Northumbria, only that Scandinavian rule in Northumbria provides the necessary political background to the available evidence.

To begin with those at Boiden and Midross, this settlement may relate to the successful siege of Dumbarton by Olaf and Ivar of Dublin in 870.<sup>64</sup> As mentioned above, Loch Lomond is easily accessible via the Rivers Clyde and Leven, so dating the Scandinavian involvement at the site to shortly after the fall of Dumbarton is certainly plausible. Although Olaf and Ivar returned to Dublin the following year they did not lose interest in the area.<sup>65</sup> It has been suggested that from c. 870 the same Scandinavian group, described in Irish and Welsh annals as the *dubh gall/dubgint* or dark foreigners/gentiles, controlled not only Dublin and parts of England (Northumbria and

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<sup>59</sup> Crone and Heald, 'Auldham', p. 19. Olaf became King of Dublin in 934.

<sup>60</sup> Owen and Welander, 'A traveller's end?', p. 768; Graham-Campbell, *Whithorn and the Viking World*, p. 18.

<sup>61</sup> G. Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian settlement names in the North-West*. Navnestudier udgivet af Institut for navneforskning 25, Copenhagen, C.A. Reitzels, 1985, p. 383.

<sup>62</sup> Graham-Campbell, *Whithorn and the Viking World*, pp. 13-15.

<sup>63</sup> Graham-Campbell, *Whithorn and the Viking World*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>64</sup> *Annals Of Ulster*, 870.6, p. 327.

<sup>65</sup> *Annals Of Ulster*, 871.2, p. 327. That Picts and Angles were captured along with Britons suggests that Ivar and Olaf had raided north and south of the British kingdom of Strathclyde.

East Anglia), but also Strathclyde, northern Wales, and possibly parts of Pictland.<sup>66</sup> Such control would have allowed numerous settled Scandinavian groups to be established across this vast area of Britain and Ireland, no doubt protected by warriors like that suggested by the Boiden burial. Olaf was killed in Scotland in c. 872 fighting the Scots, but the *dubh gall's* interest in Scotland did not end with this setback, nor with Ivar's death in 873, where his Irish obituary describes him tellingly as the king of all the Scandinavians living in Britain and Ireland.<sup>67</sup> In 875 the *Scottish Chronicle* refers to a Scandinavian victory at Dollar (in Clackmannanshire, Central Scotland), after which the Scandinavians stayed for an entire year.<sup>68</sup> The *Annals of Ulster* attribute this victory and resultant 'great slaughter' to the *dubh gall*, and it may relate to the campaign of Ivar's brother, Halfdan, who based the great army on the River Tyne and raided north and west against the Picts and Strathclyde Britons.<sup>69</sup> There are also notices of Scandinavian attacks in Central Western and Eastern Scotland in the 890s, 900, 903, and 904, with the latter involving the death of a grandson of Ivar according to Irish sources.<sup>70</sup> Unfortunately the fortunes of Strathclyde are rarely mentioned during this period, but a period of Scandinavian overlordship using local client kings as is known in parts of England is certainly a possibility.<sup>71</sup>

A late ninth century date for the Midross burials, a possibility according to the radiocarbon dates, and a connection to the *dubh gall* is suggested by the coin Æthelred I of Wessex (r. 865-871). These coins are principally known from hoards, especially those from Croydon and Gravesend, both of which are thought to have been deposited by members of the 'great army'. It has been noted that 'All the hoards containing coins of Æthelred I appear to have been deposited before 875', although this single coin may have been deposited later.<sup>72</sup> A coin of Æthelred I was also added to a lead weight found near Kingston, which has been dated to the time of the great army's winter camp at nearby Wareham in 875-6.<sup>73</sup> This demonstrates that the *dubh gall* of the great army had

<sup>66</sup> D.N. Dumville, 'Old Dubliners and New Dubliners in Ireland and Britain: A Viking-Age Story', in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin IV: Proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin Symposium 2004*, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2005, pp. 85-86; D.N. Dumville 'The Vikings in the British Isles: A Question of Sources', in J. Jesch (ed.), *The Scandinavians from the Vendel Period to the Tenth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2002, pp. 226-227; Downham, *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland*, pp. 142-143.

<sup>67</sup> Hudson, 'The Scottish Chronicle', p. 154; *Annals of Ulster*, 873.3, p. 329. For the dating of Olaf's death see Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba*, pp. 108-110.

<sup>68</sup> Hudson, 'The Scottish Chronicle', p. 154.

<sup>69</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 875, p. 48; *Annals of Ulster*, 875.3, p. 355. It has been suggested that this relates to a campaign of Sigurd I, earl of Orkney, B.E. Crawford, *The Northern Earldoms: Orkney and Caithness from AD 870 to 1470*, Edinburgh, John Donald, 2013, fn. 52, p. 94. However, considering the lack of contemporary evidence for Sigurd I or an Orkney earldom at this time it seems safe to accept the *Annals of Ulster's* attribution of the campaign to the *dubh gall*. For the historicity of Sigurd I see Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba*, pp. 307-308.

<sup>70</sup> Hudson, 'The Scottish Chronicle', p. 155; *Annals of Ulster*, 904.4, p. 329.

<sup>71</sup> For client kings in England see McLeod, *The Beginning of Scandinavian Settlement in England*, pp. 173-198.

<sup>72</sup> A.W. Lyons and W.A. Mackay, 'The Coinage of Æthelred I (865-871)', *British Numismatic Journal*, vol. 77, 2007, p. 74.

<sup>73</sup> M.M. Archibald, 'Two Ninth-Century Viking Weights Found Near Kingston, Dorset', *British Numismatic Journal*, vol. 68, p. 20.

access to these coins, probably through the 'peace' payments made by Wessex when the great army invaded the kingdom in 870-871, which may explain how one ended up in Argyll. The Norwegian whetstone found in a burial at Midross could suggest settlers from Norway or northern Scotland, such as Orkney, but considering the *dubh gall's* dominant position in the Irish Sea region and the trade route between western Norway and the Irish Sea via Orkney and the Hebrides, people from Norway are thought to have numbered amongst the *dubh gall*.<sup>74</sup>

The wide ranging interests of the *dubh gall* may also provide the political background to the other burials. From the time that Scandinavians conquered York in 866 and subsequently took control of Northumbria they appear to have established a good working relationship with Wulfhere the Archbishop of York, who kept his post until his death in 892.<sup>75</sup> The Scandinavian king of York, Guthfrith (r. c. 883-895), a possible relative of Ivar, also developed a close relationship with the Community of St Cuthbert, granting them estates and the Community moved its headquarters closer to the Scandinavian power base of York during Guthfrith's reign.<sup>76</sup> The Western part of Northumbria was presumably under Scandinavian control at this time as Abbot Eadred of Carlisle crossed the Pennines to officiate at Guthfrith's coronation.<sup>77</sup> Consequently, the Scandinavian rulers of Northumbria, part of the *dubh gall* group, had an interest in the church due to their links to the Archbishop of York and the Community of St Cuthbert. This may directly relate to the notion of Scandinavian mercenaries being hired to protect the Northumbrian church at Whithorn, arriving sometime between 880 and 920 and being granted prime estates, as suggested by Peter Hill.<sup>78</sup> However, considering that the Scandinavian king is likely to have had an interest in maintaining the ecclesiastical establishments within his kingdom, not all of the Scandinavians may have been mercenaries, and even those that were may have been recruited through the Scandinavian leaders.

Excavations at Whithorn have established that a fire destroyed much of the church in c. 845, but that it was soon rebuilt.<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, continued Christian burial and the production of Christian sculpture indicate that it remained an important Christian centre, at least regionally.<sup>80</sup> Sometime after the fire the Scandinavian burials described above were inserted close to the outer wall of a mortuary chapel which may have recently been repaired following the fire. Although the burials were not consistent

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<sup>74</sup> For the argument against considering all of the *dubh gall* as 'Norwegians' see Dumville, 'Old Dubliners and New Dubliners', pp. 82-86; Downham, *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland*, pp. 12-15. Instead, such groups are likely to have included Scandinavians, and possibly non-Scandinavians, from numerous places.

<sup>75</sup> McLeod, *The Beginning of Scandinavian Settlement in England*, pp. 178-180.

<sup>76</sup> This was on land granted to the Community by Guthfrith and is thought to have happened in c. 883, *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, 20, p. 59, and pp. 96-101 for discussion. For Guthfrith being related to Ivar see Dumville, 'Old Dubliners and New Dubliners', pp. 87-88; Downham, *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland*, pp. 75-77.

<sup>77</sup> *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, 13, p. 53.

<sup>78</sup> Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavians in Dumfriesshire and Galloway', p. 80.

<sup>79</sup> For the possible reasons for the fire see Hill, *Whithorn and St Ninian*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>80</sup> Hill, *Whithorn and St Ninian*, p. 54.

with Christian practice at the time, particularly the cremation layer, they were buried next to a high status Christian mortuary chapel including the burials of important people, possibly leading churchmen.<sup>81</sup> As extraordinary as it may seem, since there is evidence for continuity of Christian practice at the site, these burials were presumably tolerated (if not officially sanctioned) by the church community. Indeed, other than the cremation layer the burials were all tolerably Christian, being in a churchyard, aligned in the usual manner, and without ostentatious grave-goods.<sup>82</sup> Even the bag containing disarticulated bones of a female and male adult had some precedent in the nearby mortuary chapel, where disarticulated bones were stored.<sup>83</sup> This mixture of pagan and Christian burial practice is not difficult to envisage for a recently arrived Scandinavian group who had not fully acculturated to Christian/local burial customs. The absence of other pagan burials suggests that acculturation occurred quickly. In terms of geographic origins, the different burial practices evident at Whithorn may indicate that different communities were present. Similarly, the great army's cremation cemetery at Heath Wood, Derbyshire, was situated only four kilometres away from the accompanied churchyard burials and mass burial incorporating disarticulated bones at Repton, and this is thought to represent two communities within the army.<sup>84</sup>

Kirkcudbright was another part of the Northumbrian diocese which survived, and where sculpture belonging to the 'Whithorn School' has been found.<sup>85</sup> Consequently, the accompanied inhumation burial overlooking the cemetery and likely chapel site of St Cuthbert from which the town derives its name may represent another Scandinavian protecting a Northumbrian church, in this instance continuing to watch over the church even in death. Fellows-Jensen has noted that in Galloway the *-by* and topographical place-names are 'more or less concentrated around Whithorn and Kirkcudbright'.<sup>86</sup> Considering her suggestion that the names around Whithorn are evidence for the granting of estates to Scandinavian mercenaries it seems highly plausible that a similar situation occurred at Kirkcudbright, especially with its link to Whithorn. Perhaps related to this is the Scandinavian cremation at Blackerne in Crossmichael parish, twelve miles North-east of Kirkcudbright.<sup>87</sup>

Although there was no evidence for contemporary settlement in the field where the burial at Carronbridge was discovered, the site is only 2.2 kilometres north of an Anglo-Saxon cross shaft at the Nith Bridge river crossing between Thornhill and

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<sup>81</sup> Hill, *Whithorn and St Ninian*, pp. 167-170.

<sup>82</sup> Hill, *Whithorn and St Ninian*, p. 189.

<sup>83</sup> Hill, *Whithorn and St Ninian*, pp. 169, 189.

<sup>84</sup> J.D. Richards, 'Pagans and Christians at a Frontier: Viking Burial in the Danelaw', in M. Carver (ed.), *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300-1300*, Woodbridge, Boydell, 2005, pp. 390-391, 394.

<sup>85</sup> Hill, *Whithorn and St Ninian*, p. 54.

<sup>86</sup> Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavians in Dumfriesshire and Galloway', p. 90.

<sup>87</sup> J. Graham-Campbell, *The Viking-Age Gold and Silver of Scotland*, Edinburgh, National Museums of Scotland, 1995, p. 153; Graham-Campbell, *Whithorn and the Viking World*, pp. 16-17 for a reappraisal stating that this probably was a burial. The exact location of this burial is unknown, hence the lack of discussion herein.

Penpont.<sup>88</sup> The cross, which survives to a height of approximately 2.75 metres, is thought to date to the mid-ninth century, suggesting that an important settlement existed in the vicinity at least just prior to the time of the burial at Carronbridge.<sup>89</sup> The cross, the nearby *eccles* place-name (ecclesia/church), and the possible timber buildings opposite the cross, also suggests that an important church was in the vicinity.<sup>90</sup> Based on surviving sculpture, place-names, and surviving earthworks indicative of early buildings in several churchyards, Christopher Crowe has suggested that Penpont was the ecclesiastical centre for the district.<sup>91</sup> Consequently, the Scandinavian burial is in an early medieval parish and within easy walking distance of a settlement which was evidently important and wealthy enough to pay for a large, highly decorated and no doubt very expensive cross. Another of the cross shafts in this postulated parish, at Closeburn, a village 3.5 kilometres south of Thornhill, is also Anglo-Saxon in style.<sup>92</sup> This cross has its closest parallels with late ninth century sculpture from Yorkshire, the south of the kingdom of Northumbria at a time when Scandinavian rule was being imposed.<sup>93</sup> Although certainty is impossible, an association between the burial and these settlements is possible and the sickle included with the burial at Carronbridge may indeed indicate a settler as suggested by Graham-Campbell.<sup>94</sup>

To end with the burial at Auldhame, although the suggestion that the man was a member of the army of Olaf Guthfrithsson, a great-grandson of the Ivar who died in 873, is certainly plausible, it is not the only explanation. It is possible that Auldhame itself had not been sacked since the earliest record of this event only reports that 'Olaf devastated the church of St. Baldred and burned Tynninghame', which probably means that the church and the settlement that had grown up around it were destroyed.<sup>95</sup> If this were the case then the Northumbrian king may have been attacking churches which had refused to acknowledge his rule (Olaf had become king of Northumbria in 939), leaving nearby Auldhame, also associated with St Baldred (Balthere), alone. This possibility may explain the silence on these attacks in contemporary chronicles. Although the failure of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* or the *Annals of Ulster* to mention these events may simply mean that the attacks were too remote from Wessex and Ireland respectively to be of interest to the annalist, the failure of the *Scottish Chronicle* to mention them when they were close to the Scot's southern border may indicate that the destruction was not

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<sup>88</sup> A.W. Clapham, 'The cross-shaft at Nith Bridge', *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, vol.22, 1942, pp. 183-184.

<sup>89</sup> D.J. Craig, 'The distribution of pre-Norman sculpture in South-West Scotland: provenance, ornament and regional groups', PhD Thesis, Durham University, 1992, pp. 148-149. Available at Durham E-Theses Online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/1553/>.

<sup>90</sup> Craig, 'The distribution of pre-Norman sculpture in South-West Scotland', p. 110.

<sup>91</sup> C. Crowe, 'Early Medieval Parish Formation in Dumfries and Galloway', in M. Carver (ed.), *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300-1300*, Woodbridge, Boydell, 2005, pp. 201-203.

<sup>92</sup> R. Cramp, 'The Anglian sculptured crosses of Dumfriesshire', *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, vol. 38, 1961, pp. 17-18.

<sup>93</sup> Craig, 'The distribution of pre-Norman sculpture in South-West Scotland', p. 155.

<sup>94</sup> Graham-Campbell, *Whithorn and the Viking World*, p. 18.

<sup>95</sup> *Olilaf, vastata ecclesia Sancti Balteri et incensa Tiningaham*, 'Historia Regum', p. 94.

widespread.<sup>96</sup> Alternatively, the monastery and its settlement may have been abandoned by c. 900 as suggested in the preliminary report, and the use of the cemetery was both a convenience and an effort to display legitimacy.<sup>97</sup>

But if Auldhame was not attacked it is hard to understand the suggestion that some of the other burials may represent victims of the attack and/or other Vikings who had died (despite none of these burials including grave-goods).<sup>98</sup> But it may be thought that 941 was a little late for the fine belt set of Irish Sea type that the man was wearing, which is more likely to be from the late ninth or very early tenth century.<sup>99</sup> It may also be significant that skeletal isotope analysis failed to demonstrate that the man was not from the local area, as the majority of other skeletons were.<sup>100</sup> An alternative possibility is that the man buried was a Scandinavian mercenary protecting the church at Auldhame like those proposed for Whithorn and Kirkcudbright, and he had died earlier than Olaf's rule. Indeed, Wolf describes Auldhame as 'an Anglo-Saxon church and cemetery that was in use from about 700-900', and that the accompanied burial was the latest in this period.<sup>101</sup> This would appear to contradict the association of the burial to the events of 941 and make a c. 900 burial more likely.<sup>102</sup> Both Auldhame and Tynninghame belonged to the Community of St Cuthbert according to a Cuthbertine source, which may explain how a Scandinavian came to be buried there.<sup>103</sup> However, the scarcity of ON place-names in Lothian, especially when compared to those around Whithorn and Kirkcudbright, suggests that mercenary activity was limited.<sup>104</sup>

Considering the close connection between the Scandinavian kings of Northumbria and the Community of St Cuthbert, employing some Scandinavian mercenaries to protect these northern churches in troubled times is highly plausible. Indeed, it may be significant that these churches with Scandinavian burials all have a connection to St Cuthbert or his Community. As we have seen, Auldhame belonged to the Community, while the Community may have visited Whithorn during their years of wandering with their treasures which ended with the crowning of Guthfrith and their move to Chester-le-Street.<sup>105</sup> In addition, Kirkcudbright is named after St Cuthbert and a supposed chapel was dedicated to the saint, whilst it is possible that if the Community

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<sup>96</sup> At this time the southern border of the Scots was probably the Firth of Forth, as they did not occupy Edinburgh (formerly a Northumbrian settlement) until the reign of Idulb, c. 954-962, Hudson, 'The Scottish Chronicle', p. 159. Although this short Chronicle was primarily concerned with events involving the Scottish kingdom, it does comment on events outside the kingdom which were of interest, such as the death of the English king Æthelstan in 937, *Ibid*, p. 157.

<sup>97</sup> Crone and Heald, 'Auldhame', pp. 18, 20-21.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, p. 21.

<sup>99</sup> C. Paterson, personal communication.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid*, p. 20.

<sup>101</sup> Woolf cited in 'St Andrews expert solves royal and ancient puzzle', University of St Andrews: <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/news/archive/2014/title,244518,en.php> (accessed 1 July 2014).

<sup>102</sup> Radiocarbon dates for the burial are 800-1000 CE, Crone and Heald, 'Auldhame', p. 19.

<sup>103</sup> 'Historia Regum', p. 101.

<sup>104</sup> Indeed, most of the names are now thought to date from after the Viking Age, Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavian Settlement in the British Isles and Normandy', p. 146.

<sup>105</sup> Hill, *Whithorn and St Ninian*, pp. 21-2 for discussion.



visited Whithorn they would have stayed at Kirkcudbright en route. The connection between Scandinavian burial and churches associated with St Cuthbert is not limited to southern Scotland. During construction of the treasury extension to Carlisle Cathedral, Cumbria, a number of late-ninth/early-tenth century burials are thought to have a Scandinavian cultural association due to the inclusion of numerous artefacts including Carolingian style strap fittings and belt fittings, the closest parallels for which are to be found in pagan Norse burials of the Irish Sea, and also include the Auldham burial.<sup>106</sup> Abbot Eadred of Carlisle officiated at Guthfrith's coronation and also joined the Community of St Cuthbert for at least part of their period of wandering, demonstrating that Eadred and Carlisle were closely associated with the Community.<sup>107</sup> Eleven miles from Carlisle Cathedral lies the Scandinavian inhumation cemetery at Cumwhitton dated to the first half of the tenth century which included the graves of four men, all accompanied by weapons, and two women.<sup>108</sup> This location seems to duplicate the place-name evidence at Whithorn and Kirkcudbright where it has been suggested that Scandinavian mercenaries were granted estates close to the region of the church, as well as the Blackerne cremation twelve miles from St Cuthbert's church/ Kirkcudbright. The burials at Carlisle Cathedral and Cumwhitton may represent Scandinavian communities who were employed to protect the church, with the latter not accepting Christian burial customs.

The use of Scandinavian warriors to protect churches has a parallel in Ireland, where in 970 the King of Dublin Olaf Sigtryggsson (alias *Cuaran*) sent troops to the churches of Dromiskin, Monasterboice and Dunleer (Co. Louth) to protect them against attacks from the Irish Northern Uí Néill.<sup>109</sup> It is thought that Olaf was also a patron of the church at Skreen (Co. Meath).<sup>110</sup> Olaf had briefly been king of York (r. 941-944), where he appears to have worked closely with the Archbishop of York, Wulfstan I, and he was baptised in England in 943 with King Edmund of Wessex as his sponsor.<sup>111</sup> The career of Olaf clearly demonstrates that Insular Scandinavian kings could work closely with the church, including the use of troops to help protect churches. Considering the close working relationship between earlier Scandinavian kings and church leaders in Northumbria there is no reason that a similar policy could not have been adopted.

Although it may at first appear strange to have Scandinavians protecting Northumbrian churches, the example from Ireland demonstrates that churches were

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<sup>106</sup> C. Paterson and D. Tweddle, 'Gold and Silver' and 'Copper Alloy', in M. McCarthy, 'A post-Roman Sequence at Carlisle Cathedral', *Archaeological Journal*, vol. 171 (2014), pp. 210-212, 213-224.

<sup>107</sup> *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, 13 and 20, pp. 53 and 59.

<sup>108</sup> C. Paterson, A.J. Parsons, R.M. Newman, N. Johnson, and C. Howard Davis, *Shadows in the Sand: Excavation of a Viking-Age Cemetery at Cumwhitton, Cumbria*, Lancaster, Oxford Archaeology North, 2014, p. 154.

<sup>109</sup> C. Downham, 'Religious and Cultural Boundaries between Vikings and Irish: The Evidence of Conversion', in E. O'Byrne and J. Ni Ghraidaigh (ed.), *The March in the Islands of the Medieval West*, Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2012, pp. 15-34.

<sup>110</sup> E. Bhreathnach, 'Columban Churches in Brega and Leinster: Relations with the Norse and the Anglo-Normans', *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 129 (1999), pp. 5-18.

<sup>111</sup> Downham, 'The Chronology of the Last Scandinavian Kings of York', p. 41.

often targeted by rival Christian groups due to the often close alignment between the church and local rulers. That this could also be the case in Anglo-Saxon England is demonstrated by the burning of the minster church at Ripon, part of the estate of the Archbishop of York, by King Eadred in 948 due to the Northumbrians choosing Erik (alias Bloodaxe) as king.<sup>112</sup> In northern Northumbria churches closely aligned to the Archbishop of York or the Community of St Cuthbert may have been seen as legitimate targets by Strathclyde Britons and Scots trying to expand their territory south. In regions with a shore on the Irish Sea, including Whithorn, Kirkcudbright, and Carlisle, raids from other Scandinavian groups are also likely to have been a problem. The Scandinavian conquest and settlement of Northumbria had undoubtedly led to a degree of dislocation, and made its peripheral areas more prone to attack. In such circumstances it is not surprising that the Community of St Cuthbert and their ally the Scandinavian king of York would want to protect their people and property.

If Scandinavian involvement with the Community of St Cuthbert explains the appearance of culturally Scandinavian burials at churches associated with the Community, then it is possible to refine the likely dating of these burials. Fellows-Jensen has suggested that Scandinavian settlement around Whithorn occurred sometime between 880 and 920 CE.<sup>113</sup> I suggest that the end-date can be modified slightly to c. 918 when Ragnall became king of Northumbria. The *Historia* makes it quite clear that the Community of St Cuthbert did not get on with this latest member of the *dubh gall* (now better termed the Uí Ímair, the dynasty founded by Ivar), who took a number of their estates to share amongst his followers, so it is highly unlikely that Ragnall would have helped the Community by sending warriors to help defend their church centres.<sup>114</sup> As the *Historia* mentions none of the Scandinavian kings who ruled Northumbria in the two decades between Guthfrith and Ragnall we may presume that at least the status quo was maintained between them and the Community of St Cuthbert, especially as the Community still had extensive estates south of the River Wear for Ragnall to seize, including some that had been purchased from Guthfrith.<sup>115</sup> However, the *Historia* does mention Ealdred son of Eadwulf, Anglo-Saxon rulers of north-eastern Northumbria, the later earldom centred on Bamburgh, in such a way which implies that this region was no longer subservient to the Scandinavian kings further south.<sup>116</sup> Despite the existence of these rulers, they do not preclude the likelihood of Scandinavian kings before Ragnall supporting the Community of St Cuthbert in north-eastern Northumbria.

## Conclusion

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<sup>112</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* ('D'), 948, p. 72. Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba 789-1070*, p. 186.

<sup>113</sup> Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavians in Dumfriesshire and Galloway', p. 80.

<sup>114</sup> *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, 23-24, pp. 61-63. This does not exclude the possibility that descendants of those sent earlier continued to live on the estates provided and to protect the church.

<sup>115</sup> *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, 19 and 22, pp. 59 and 61. The estates were purchased by Abbot Eadred of Carlisle.

<sup>116</sup> *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, 22, p. 61.

With the possible exception of the burial at Carronbridge, the burial and settlement evidence suggests that most of the Scandinavian activity in the southern half of mainland Scotland was related to the group known as the *dubh gall*, particularly those who were in power in the Kingdom of Northumbria. The burials at Midross are most likely to date to a possible period of over-lordship over Strathclyde in the aftermath of the fall of Dumbarton to the *dubh gall* in 870 which allowed easy access to the area. Those in northern Northumbria are likely to be later. Although it may seem surprising that Scandinavians were employed to protect Northumbrian churches, the close connection between the original conquerors of York, the great army, and Archbishop Wulfhere, and especially between the Scandinavian King Guthfrith and the Community of St Cuthbert clearly demonstrate that the Northumbrian ecclesiastical community could work with the Scandinavian elite. The crowning of Guthfrith by the Community and the preservation of laws associated with him in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, and the granting of extensive lands to the Community by Guthfrith, shows the two groups in a symbiotic relationship.<sup>117</sup> Indeed, it is clear that the Community of St Cuthbert considered Guthfrith to be a great king and benefactor, far better than the last 'native' kings in York who confiscated some estates from the Community.<sup>118</sup> The use of Scandinavian warriors to protect churches belonging to the Community would have been an obvious part of this relationship.

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<sup>117</sup> For the laws see *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, 34, p. 71, and pp. 117-118 for discussion.

<sup>118</sup> *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, 10, p. 51.

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### ***Author Biography***

Shane McLeod is a Research Fellow at the University of Stirling having completed a PhD at the University of Western Australia. His research focusses on Scandinavian migration during the Viking Age, drawing upon migration theory and using a multi-disciplinary approach to assess likely embarkation points and migration routes, and assessing how the culture of the embarkation points may have affected the acculturation processes in the new 'home'. His Stirling project — <https://vikingfuneralscapes.wordpress.com/> — investigates the landscape settings of Scandinavian burials in Scotland, with an emphasis upon viewsheds and their location in relation to other natural and man-made landscape features. A collaborative project — [www.funeralscapes.org](http://www.funeralscapes.org) — with colleagues at the University of Aberdeen, explores performative and emotional aspects of early medieval funerals in their landscape setting.

### ***In Memoriam of Philippa Maddern***

This paper builds upon an aspect of my doctoral thesis which was supervised by Philippa Maddern. It was Philippa who first helped me to get to grips with the difficulty of the Cuthbertine sources, including improvements to my stumbling translations of Latin. But perhaps Philippa's greatest contribution was her enthusiasm in a subject area which was not her specialty, and her encouragement to question the arguments of all scholars, regardless of how revered they are. Although I would like to think that Philippa would have enjoyed reading this paper, it would no doubt have been improved by her considered input.