

THE VIKINGS IN BRITTANY

BY

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For Sabrina Rampersad

INTRODUCTION

WHEN a selection of the objects from the great Viking ship burial on the Ile de Groix, off the south coast of Brittany, was displayed at Caen in 1987, the accompanying text lamented the fact that the most interesting Scandinavian finds in France came from a region where the Vikings played only *un rôle passager*. That the Viking impact on Brittany should be considered fleeting is principally the result of a lack of detailed study coupled with a dearth of excavated remains.

The first problem encountered by the student is that of nomenclature (cf. Page 1984-5, 308-9). It seems reasonable to use the term 'Vikings' to refer to the large numbers of Scandinavians who descended on Europe in the ninth and tenth centuries in search of loot and plunder, sustaining themselves by means of a life of itinerant violence. It is to this category, which includes the Great Army, that the majority of Scandinavians operating in Brittany belong, hence the title of this paper. Wherever possible, national terms (Norwegians, Danes, etc.) will be employed to describe these people, and a clear distinction will be drawn between Viking raiders and those who chose to settle in the lands they had conquered. Part of the problem is the almost universal use in the French sources of the term *Normands* to refer to Scandinavians; to translate this as 'Normans' is misleading (the word has been used in translating an annal written as early as 866, in Sawyer 1971, 128). In this paper the term refers only to the inhabitants of the region of modern Normandy after the succession of William Longsword c. 925.

Similarly, the geographical and chronological range needs to be clarified. Before the ninth century, early medieval Brittany proper was the area west of the linguistic boundary dividing places with Breton and Frankish names (i.e. the Franko-Breton March), broadly corresponding to the course of the river Vilaine. After that date, and certainly in a Viking context, Brittany extended to roughly its modern borders, incorporating the counties of Rennes and Nantes. It must also be remembered that at times Breton influence extended far into Neustria and Aquitaine. Turning to chronology, the first real Viking contact with Brittany comes in the early ninth century and the major impact is over by 950. Nevertheless, sporadic raiding continued late into the tenth century

and Brittany was subject to a degree of Scandinavian influence via the Duchy of Normandy well into the eleventh century. Such then is the general chronological scope of this paper, though reference will occasionally be made to relevant events at earlier and later dates as appropriate.

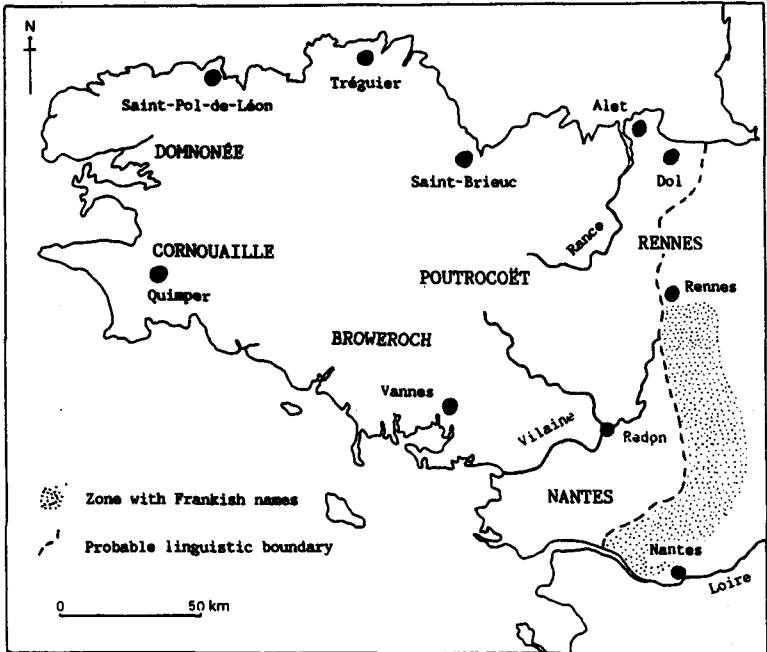


Fig. 1. Early Medieval Brittany (after Davies 1988)

Only two summaries of the subject have appeared in English in recent years, both of which concentrate on the Carolingian Empire and deal with the Vikings secondarily (McKitterick 1983; Smith 1985, by far the most detailed study to date). Furthermore, the activities of the Vikings in Brittany have never been studied from the viewpoint of the invaders themselves; instead the Breton reaction has been stressed.

This paper attempts to redress the balance, examining different aspects of the evidence in turn, in an effort to shine some light on this neglected area of Viking studies. Firstly, the relevant documentary material is reviewed and the manuscripts' relative merits and accuracy discussed. In each case any political propaganda bias and possible scribal preoccupations are considered, along with the effect of the Viking incursions on the Breton scriptoria.

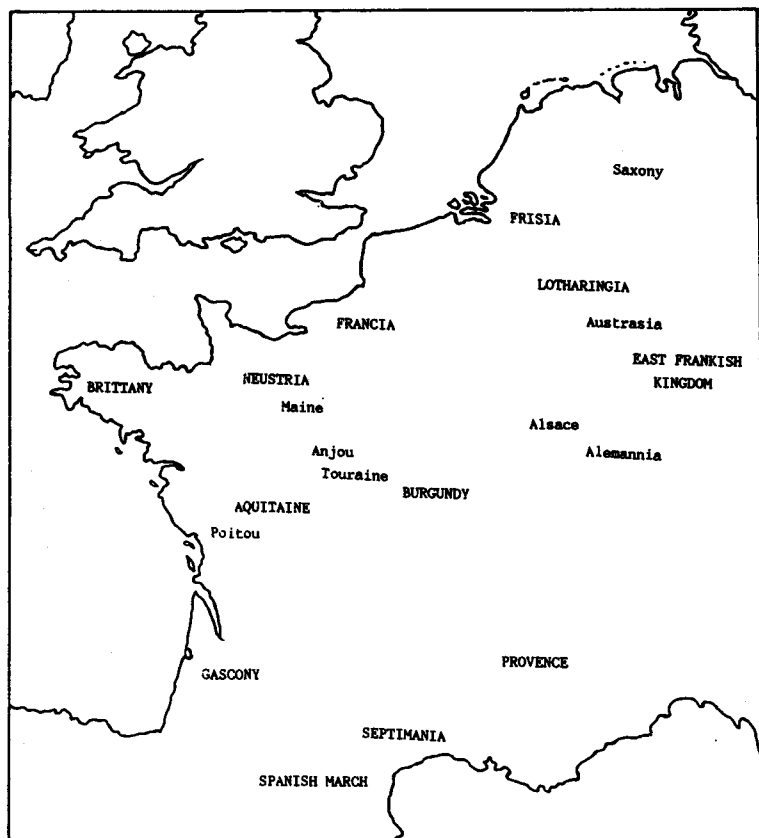


Fig. 2. The territories of the later Carolingian Empire

Using the information from these documentary sources, the Vikings in Brittany are studied against the historical background of French ninth- to eleventh-century power politics. Such factors as the growth of Breton independence and the great complexity of the relationships between the different interests are also taken into account: the opportunistic civil warfare that the Scandinavians exploited at every level as the various factions formed alliances with different Viking mercenary fleets, each with its own leaders and motives. Only by unravelling this tangled situation can the Scandinavian impact on the Breton church and state be assessed.

In the third chapter the archaeological material is examined: the corpus of Scandinavian sites and finds in Brittany, including fortifications, burials and destruction levels at monasteries and secular sites recorded as targets of Viking attacks. Along with

weaponry dredged from the great arterial rivers of France, Neustrian towns and early Norman settlements are additionally studied as possible analogues for gaps in the Breton archaeology. The place-name evidence is also reviewed.

The evidence is then drawn together in a conclusion which presents a new model for the Scandinavian involvement in Brittany, setting the area in its context of the wider Viking world through comparison with contemporary Scandinavian operations in England and the Celtic West. Particular emphasis is placed on Wales, with which Brittany has interesting parallels, especially regarding the action of the Vikings as catalysts for political unity (albeit sometimes temporary) but with little archaeological impact. Issues such as the dispersal of the last Viking mercenary armies, the development of the Duchy of Normandy and the Bretons' rôle in European politics are also considered. Finally, two appendices provide a gazetteer of Scandinavian sites and finds in Brittany and Normandy and lists of contemporary rulers.

1. DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

I HAVE grouped the documentary sources for early medieval Scandinavian activity in France into four broad categories: material from Scandinavia itself, Carolingian and Breton sources, early Norman manuscripts and insular sources (Anglo-Saxon, Irish and Welsh). These are discussed in turn below and their relevance to the Breton situation assessed. While lack of space precludes a detailed analysis of each work it is nevertheless possible to outline briefly any reservations that should be borne in mind concerning their objectivity and accuracy. Of necessity, some of the more peripheral references are discussed in later sections as they arise.

Scandinavian sources

Among the contemporary written sources from Scandinavia (runic inscriptions on memorial stones, pieces of bone and fragments of wood) there are several references to 'the land of the Franks', usually as the scene of past battles, but no specific mentions of Brittany. We must therefore look to the later medieval sources, in particular the corpus of Icelandic sagas.

Any search for saga references is frustrated by problems of terminology. Several sagas mention *Bretland* but it is uncertain whether this refers to Brittany, Wales or even sometimes the small kingdom of Strathclyde: the inhabitants of all these areas may have been regarded as 'Welsh' by the Scandinavians, and it is entirely possible that the saga-writers themselves, reliant on earlier material, were not clear on the matter either. This problem is compounded by the usual uncertainties of saga information due to its Christian context and late date.

Brennu-Njáls saga, written in the late thirteenth century by an unknown author, mentions raids in *Bretland* by Kári and the Njálssons (1954, chapter 89). Both incidents occur in the late tenth century, though the internal chronology of the saga is inconsistent. Several references to *Bretland* in *Orkneyinga saga*, c. 1200 (1965, chapter 8, 15, 39, 40 and 78) are almost certainly concerned with Wales (see also *Magnúss saga skemmri* 1965, chapter 3 and 4 and *Magnúss saga lengri* 1965, chapter 9 and 10). *Jómsvíkinga saga* is more useful, though cryptic. Tenth-century Vikings are described

as successively ruling and apportioning *Bretland*, and a man called *Björn inn brezki* is mentioned (*Jómsvíkinga saga* 1969, chapter 13; see also Ashdown 1930, 184). While *Bretland* may simply be a convenient faraway place in the context of the saga, it does at least indicate that a *Bretland* colony was not thought unrealistic by medieval Scandinavians. Similarly, in Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld's dirge for Óláfr Tryggvason, Óláfr is given the epithet of *Breta stríðir* (*Óláfsdrápa* 11); again, this may refer to the Welsh, since Snorri Sturluson mentions Óláfr raiding in Wales (*Snorri Sturluson* 1941-51, *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* chapter 30). *Heimskringla* contains several other references to raids on *Bretland* (*Snorri Sturluson* 1941-51, *Haralds saga ins hárfagra* chapter 32 and 33; *Óláfs saga ins helga* chapter 98 and *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar* chapter 76) including one led by Eiríkr blóðøx (*Snorri Sturluson* 1941-51, *Hákonar saga góða* chapter 4).¹

By far the most detailed reference is contained in Sighvatr Þórðarson's *Víkingarvísur*, written in the first half of the eleventh century and the main source for the early life of St. Óláfr, before he became king. The place-name forms and syntax suggest that the version of the poem that we have is an early one, and thus a contemporary source. Óláfr is described as fighting a battle in *Hringsfjörðr*, an unidentified place on the Breton coast, before raiding a stronghold held by Vikings at *Hól*, thought to be Dol (*Sighvatr Þórðarson* 1981, 118-19; *Fell* 1981).

Although all these sources make only brief mention of Brittany (and it is worth stressing that none of them is unequivocal) they are none the less important contributions if an attempt is to be made to recover the Scandinavian point of view. The relative value of these sources has been discussed further by d'Haenens (1969, 244-5).

Carolingian and Breton sources

The bulk of the historical information is to be found in this category of source material. The documents may be divided into contemporary and non-contemporary records and consist of annals, chronicles, hagiographies, religious texts (sermons and liturgical documents), poems, diplomas, edicts, letters, monastic cartularies and ecclesiastical agreements. The earlier Breton genealogies (*Fleuriot* 1976) are not relevant in this context.

The viewpoint of the Imperial rulers is presented in the *Annales*

Regni Francorum, compiled as a court product following Charlemagne's move to Aachen in 794. Based on oral reports or occasionally personal experience, the *Annales* highlight the problems of accurate long-distance communications within the Empire (Nelson 1981, 15-36). Notwithstanding their obvious bias towards the Carolingian throne, the *Annales* are a vital source for ninth-century Europe and even provide information about Scandinavia, such as one of the earliest records of Danish kingship. Following on directly are the *Annales Bertiniani* (the name simply refers to the origins of a later copy), written by Prudentius from 835 to 861 and continued by Hincmar until 882. These annals are fully discussed by Janet Nelson (1981, especially 18-24) who reviews their limitations and rejects the suggestion that Hincmar may have used them to set out guidelines for royal behaviour. Suffice to say here that they are written objectively with no attempt to place events in any order of importance, and in measured language giving precise detail. We may be sure that exact distinctions are intended when the *Annales* record that the Vikings raided, sacked or burned a settlement (Wallace-Hadrill 1975b, 221). The growing preoccupation with Scandinavian attacks throughout the ninth century would seem to reflect the worsening situation accurately, and it must be remembered that Hincmar's first-hand experience of such a raid in 882, which might be expected to prejudice his account, occurs at the end of his time as annalist. The *Annales Bertiniani* may be regarded as one of our chief sources.

One of the major sources not only for the Vikings but for Brittany in general is the *Cartulary of the Abbey of Redon*. This contemporary document survives in an eleventh-century manuscript (discussed in detail in de Courson's 1863 translation, i-vi) and gives a wealth of reliable information as to the legal system, social hierarchy, land organisation and partition of early medieval Brittany in its records of 'the sales, mortgages, grants and disputes that affected . . . properties before they were absorbed by [the monastery of] Redon' (Davies 1988, 1). It is the primary source for the complex administrative system and multi-tiered power structure of this area of France (cf. Davies 1981; 1983 and 1988; de la Borderie 1898, 171-209).

The *Chronicle of Nantes* also contains much relevant information for the later phases of Viking involvement in Brittany, but its usefulness is limited by its non-contemporaneity. Composed c. 1050-1059, probably by a canon at Nantes cathedral drawing on earlier annals now lost, the *Chronicle* has a clear ecclesiastical

bias and favours the community at Nantes; this is tempered by a lucid, concise style free of literary pretensions. In spite of its drawbacks, single events and secondary data may be sifted from the *Chronicle* with little difficulty provided that caution is exercised with regard to statistics that could profit from exaggeration, such as the size of Scandinavian fleets. The *Chronicle of Nantes* is particularly rich in references to secular fortifications and the state of Breton defences in the face of Viking attack (cf. Privat 1971, 81-93; Jones 1981, 151-3).

The *Annales* and *Historia Remensis Ecclesiae* of Flodoard, a canon of Rheims who lived 893-966, are almost the only contemporary sources for the Viking occupation of Nantes and Brittany in the early tenth century (see below), and as such are perhaps the most important of all. Although an understandable abhorrence of the Scandinavians is present in Flodoard's work, he records dispassionately and credits Viking victories without hesitation or apparent exaggeration in favour of the Bretons. He is the sole source for much vital information about the Nantes Vikings, including the names of their leaders (when later chronicles mention them, they are ultimately derived from Flodoard). His account of this period differs notably from that of Dudo of Saint-Quentin (see below), but a convincing case for Flodoard's accuracy has been made by de la Borderie (1898, 373, 378-9) based on a detailed study of terminology.

A particularly important contribution comes from hagiography and other religious works. The later Breton saints' lives usually follow the pattern of the *Life of Saint Samson* (Davies 1982a, 148), probably dating to the later seventh century though Poulin (1978) has suggested an early ninth-century date. Many saints' lives preserve contemporary accounts of the Vikings' depredations, such as Bili's *Life of Saint-Malo* and Uurmonoc's heartfelt prayer, written in 884, for the deliverance of Landévennec from the 'continual incursions . . . of these barbarians' (*Uurmonoc XXI*). However, the use of the saints' lives as vehicles for political propaganda should be considered (cf. Poulin 1977, 14-18), especially during the reigns of Nominoe and Salomon in the context of the archbishopric of Dol and its implications for Breton independence (Smith 1982). Scandinavian raids are also the subject of some of the miracles associated with saints' relics, as in the *Miracula Sancti Bertini* which contain heavily embroidered accounts from which details of Viking movements in Brittany must be extracted. Although these texts emphasise the plight of Christianity and the

destruction of monasteries, some, such as Ermentarius's records of the translation of Saint Philibert's remains from Noirmoutier, preserve a degree of objectivity and use distinctive terms to describe the actions of the Vikings in the same way as the *Annales Bertiniani* (Wallace-Hadrill 1975b, 222).

Cartularies from the abbeys at Landévennec, Saint-Bertin, Saint-Croix de Quimperlé and the cathedral at Angers together with the *Gesta Conwoionis Abbatis Rotonensis* also contain intermittent references to the Vikings, but have a rather narrow outlook, being preoccupied with their own foundations.

Among the lesser, but still valuable, sources are the *Annales Fuldenses*, *Annales Vedastini* and *Annales Xantenses*. All are primarily concerned with the Empire itself rather than with Brittany; indeed following the siege of Paris the *Annales Vedastini* are the primary source for Carolingian affairs until 900. Despite each manuscript having its own localised bias (especially the latter pair), insights into the complex political alliances engineered by the Vikings and the Carolingians may still be obtained, together with details of the resulting campaigns. The *Annales Engolismenses* preserve similar information, particularly for the earlier raids and Scandinavian activity along the Empire's coasts in the ninth century. Regino of Prüm's *Chronicon* also records contemporary Viking attacks, but the facts need to be sieved from a slightly dramatised description of events. Hugh of Fleury occasionally mentions Brittany in his chronicle of the Frankish kings, as does Gregory of Tours much earlier (a useful background to Franko-Breton relations at the start of the Viking Age), but both confine themselves to brief references to secular politics.

Norman sources

The only Norman source that directly concerns us is Dudo of Saint-Quentin's *Historia Normannorum*, written in the period 1015-1026 and heavily criticised by most modern scholars. His account is a history of the early dukes of Normandy and their activities, written for the court and stressing the legitimacy of their claim to power. Obviously the accuracy of any work composed for such a purpose is open to question, but it has been recently argued that Dudo did not intend to record facts but instead to write a 'lineage history', in effect a Norman 'saga' incorporating identifiable literary motifs (Searle 1984, 121-2, 134). This may then be used to give us

the Normans' view of themselves, 'the pattern of their present polity and of their destiny' (Searle 1984, 137). While this is undoubtedly of great value it does not assist the student of the earlier period that Dudo writes about. He gives a description of the Viking occupation of Brittany and its end, discussed fully in chapter 2, which is completely at odds with that of Flodoard and stresses the intervention of the Norman duke. Dudo's chronology and interpretation have been examined in some detail by de la Borderie (1898, 373-80) and demonstrated to be false. His account is not complete fiction however, simply a distortion of reality, and his history contains many important items of information. A further insight into the nature of his work and the atmosphere of the Norman court can be gained from a study of his contemporary, the poet Garnier of Rouen (cf. Musset 1954b, 247-8). Thus while Dudo's records may be used, great care must be taken.

Anglo-Saxon, Irish and Welsh sources

Considering English sources first, a wealth of information about the Vikings may be obtained from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Although essentially an 'official' history of the Wessex dynasty, the *Chronicle* gives plausible details about the campaigns of the Great Army in the late ninth century: its wars with the English and its movements on the Continent. The *Chronicle's* treatment of the size and logistics of the Viking threat has been analysed at length in recent years (notably by Sawyer 1971, 123-32 and Brooks 1979) and is of great importance for the understanding of the Scandinavian impact on Brittany in the ninth century, since the army concerned is the same but seen from a different perspective. While the same reservations apply to Asser's *Life of King Ælfred*, this is less concerned with the Scandinavians and instead offers insights into the relationship of Brittany to England, examined in chapter 2.

Relevant source material is also found in Celtic Britain and Ireland with both direct and indirect references. The various Irish annals, especially those of Ulster, Clonmacnoise and the Four Masters, frequently place their emphasis on Scandinavian activities outside Ireland (cf. MacNiocaill 1975). Particularly close links existed between the Norse and Danish colonies of Dublin and York, and the politics of the Irish Sea certainly affected those Vikings travelling to or occupying Brittany (though with less harm-

ful long-term consequences than the Dubliners' preoccupation with external affairs; cf. Ó Corráin 1972, 104). Among the more vexing problems is that of Ragnarr loðbrók, the great Viking chieftain whose very existence is questionable and whose 'sons' are recorded as leading elements of the Great Army in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and elsewhere. Although the Viking forces with which Ragnarr and his 'sons' are associated are central to any study of Scandinavian contact with Brittany, detailed debate as to their involvement or existence is regrettably beyond the scope of this paper (for the main arguments see Smyth 1975; 1977; 1979; Ó Corráin 1977-8; McTurk 1976). Interesting parallels exist between the situations in early medieval Ireland and Brittany, for in both regions the animosity felt towards the Scandinavian invaders by the indigenous people simply confused the existing state of civil hostility, as reflected in the frequent use made of the Vikings as mercenaries by the natives in their power struggles. It is noticeable that the Irish sources do not employ defamatory epithets when describing Scandinavian forces as frequently as do contemporary European documents. Comparisons have also been made between the Irish social structure based on the *rí* and *túath* and the Icelandic social system built around the *goðar*, while there is a remarkable similarity between the complex Irish law codes and the Icelandic laws, especially those governing killing (Sawyer 1982b). As with Ireland, the main Scandinavian influence on Brittany came from Norway – thus the nature of Hiberno-Norse relations is of particular importance.

As mentioned above, Wales has particularly interesting parallels with Brittany. Links between the two regions will be explored in later chapters using evidence from the saints' lives and charters (cf. Davies 1982b), such as those from Llandaff (Davies 1982a, 192). Apart from the *Annales Cambriae*, no continuous chronicle survives for early Welsh history such as does for example in Wessex, so we must rely on contemporary Irish and Anglo-Saxon sources together with later Welsh authors like Giraldus Cambrensis who must be used with great care. An exception is the *Armes Prydein*, the 'Prophecy of Britain', a poem which describes a looked-for alliance of all the Celtic realms and the Dublin Norse who will rise up against Anglo-Saxon rule. Its date is disputed but it is generally agreed to be mid-to-late ninth century, the problem being its relationship to Æthelstan's Brunanburh campaign of 937 and the later wars with Eiríkr blóðøx in the 950s. These issues are discussed in chapter 2, since the poem's references to Brittany are illuminating in a Viking context.

The final primary source to consider is not a document at all, but is nevertheless appropriate to this chapter: the Bayeux Tapestry. Embroidered shortly after the conquest of England, the Tapestry depicts in its earlier sections Duke William's campaign against Conan II of Brittany and shows several Breton towns and fortifications at Dinan, Dol and Rennes. These pictures obviously provide useful references for the earlier period too, and some of the artefacts illustrated have been cited as parallels for items in the Breton archaeological assemblages (cf. Wilson 1985, 175, discussed below). In addition, while the objectivity of the Tapestry is open to question in view of its nature as a celebration and confirmation of Norman power, the contemporary scenes of daily life and military exercises are unimpeachable.

In conclusion, a few words should be said about the effect of the Scandinavian raids on the Breton scriptoria. Before the Viking attacks began, Brittany had a tradition of fine illumination (cf. Wormald 1977; Morey, Rand and Kraeling 1931) and was a centre of book production with recorded transmissions of manuscripts to Wales and possibly England (Davies 1982a, 215). Foci of learning and culture existed at Léhon, Redon and Dol (cf. Périn and Feffer 1985, 449; Riché 1985), while neighbouring Neustria also enjoyed far-reaching fame for the quality of its book decoration (Mütherich 1985) and literary invention (Fontaine 1985), with twenty scriptoria divided among the bishoprics and monasteries (Vezin 1985). Following the initial impact of the ninth-century raids, however, book production dwindled and eventually ceased as the monasteries were sacked and burned. The saints' relics and shrines, once thought to be protection enough against attack as at Paris in 886 (a notion reinforced by rewritten saints' lives), were given priority for evacuation in the face of an onslaught thought by some to be an instrument of divine judgement (Riché 1969, 709). By 882 books were eagerly sought as the raids escalated in the late ninth century, an escalation reflected in the great exodus of church possessions and clergy (discussed in chapter 2, but see Chédeville and Guillotel 1984, 379-89; Wallace-Hadrill 1975b, 222-6). Many relics and manuscripts came to southern England where there is evidence of several Breton saints' cults. A similar situation existed in Neustria, where no monasteries at all remained by the time of Rollo (Göngu-Hrólf) (c. 911-925); the relationship of the Breton and Neustrian churches during this decline is discussed by le Patourel (1944, 137). The resulting dearth of late ninth- and tenth-century Breton records has been noted above, and did not begin to be reversed

until Alain Barbetorte's restoration of the monasteries after 939, when a new cultural lead was taken from the Frankish and Latin traditions.

2. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: FRANCE IN THE VIKING AGE

Although the existing documentary record has been subject both to intentional and accidental distortion by contemporary scribes, and to the arbitrary bias of manuscript survival, it is still possible to construct a fairly coherent, if broad, scheme of events and raids over the ninth and tenth centuries in France; this may then be compared with the archaeological evidence reviewed in chapter 3. In trying to avoid a relentless chronological narrative I have divided the period from the beginning of the ninth century to the end of the eleventh into five phases. Though each phase characterises a different general aspect of Scandinavian operations in France, with a specific reference to Brittany, it is important to realise that this is an imposition of artificial divisions on to a continuous historical sequence. The activities of the dozens of Scandinavian fleets and commanders present in France during this period, considered individually below, were obviously not restricted by any such chronological distinctions. Indeed, the need to consider separately the movements, objectives, composition and leadership of the various Scandinavian groups usually classified collectively as 'Vikings' is not only the central theme of this paper but is also vital if we are to understand the complex relationship of Brittany to the Frankish and Scandinavian worlds.²

The first raids: 799–856

The eve of the ninth century saw the culmination of a series of Carolingian campaigns against Brittany, dating back to the sack of Vannes by Pippin III in 753, possibly an attempt to pacify the Bretons after a failed invasion in 748. (The date of Pippin's campaign is disputed; see Smith 1986 for a full discussion.) After a Frankish army led by the hero Roland had been sent into Brittany in 778, Franko-Breton hostility had intensified, with another invasion in 786 by Audulf (*ARF* 786). In 799, this resulted in the conquest of the whole region by Wido 'as had never been done

before' (*ARF* 799). In the early years of the ninth century the Franks launched several further consolidatory campaigns, notably in 811 by one of four Carolingian armies in the field that year (Verbruggen 1967, 428), and by Louis the Pious in 818. Following the rebellion of the Breton leaders Morvan and Wilhomar, Louis ordered additional expeditions against Brittany from Vannes and Rennes in 822, 824 and 825 (McKitterick 1983, 242). The friction between the Franks and Bretons, and the numerous Carolingian interventions in the area, had several causes. In part, the Carolingians were suppressing raids into Frankish territory, but more importantly perhaps, in doing so they were reviving earlier Merovingian claims to the region and extending the power of the Empire. Military gains along the Breton march had been consolidated by the granting of monastic estates there, which acted as both a buffer to Breton aggression and a convenient excuse for further Frankish campaigns to protect them. The rôle of the Frankish church in the attempted subjugation of Brittany was matched by aristocratic involvement, fostered through family connections (for example, from 813 to 822 the count of Vannes appears to have been the brother of Lambert of Anjou; see Davies 1981).

799, the year of Wido's initial conquest of Brittany, was a doubly significant one in that it also saw the first recorded Viking raid on Gaul, in the Vendée region, and thus the introduction of a new, extra-systemic factor into the politics of the Empire.³ Following the first Scandinavian attacks, Charlemagne reacted by ordering the defence of Aquitaine in 800, and built a fleet to protect the Elbe eight years later. Until the 830s raids on France were scarce, although in 820 a small fleet of thirteen ships attacked Flanders and the Seine estuary before moving on to the Vendée coast (*ARF* 820; Hill 1981, 33), possibly using an island near Noirmoutier as a temporary base as they had done in 819 (Davies 1988, 22). The island of Noirmoutier itself became one of the major Viking sea-bases in France by the mid ninth century, and by 830/831 the monks of the monastery there had been forced to construct a *castrum* to defend themselves against the Scandinavians (Chédeville and Guillotel 1984, 253).

At about this time, a Breton called Nominoe was appointed as imperial representative in Brittany by Louis the Pious and appears to have been accepted by the populace as well as remaining loyal to the emperor. During the early years of Nominoe's office Viking attacks on Noirmoutier became so severe that between 834 and 836 the whole monastic community evacuated the island, taking

with them the relics of Saint Philibert (*AE* 836; see *Ermentarius* for an account of their journey). It is, however, worth stressing that the only records of Scandinavian raids on Brittany itself prior to 843 come from the eleventh-century *Chronicle of Nantes*. Until 838, Frisia had been the focus of Viking activity in western Europe, coming under constant attack by a large Danish fleet. Efforts to fortify the coasts against them had failed in 835, as had an abortive siege of the Vikings' base on Walcheren Island (*AB* 837); the trading centre of Dorestad was burned four times and the whole region laid waste (*AF* 835-7; *AB* 834-7; the Vikings in Frisia are discussed by Braat 1954). In 838, this same Danish fleet, probably composed of exiles from the Danish power struggles with Horik (cf. *AB* 836; papers by Olsen, Lebecq and Sawyer given at the 1987 Société d'Archéologie Médiévale conference at Caen), was wrecked by a storm off the Frisian coast (*AB* 838).

In 840, Louis the Pious died, an event with great repercussions for Brittany and the Carolingian Empire. The following year a massive Viking fleet sailed up the Seine, burning Rouen, Jumièges and several monasteries, and taking many captives (*AB* 841). They then sailed to the Loire estuary to meet with heavy resistance from Count Renaud, after the new emperor, Charles the Bald, had ordered the nobles of the Loire to organise their defences (Chédeville and Guillotel 1984, 258). Coinciding with this phase of Viking aggression (in 842 a second fleet destroyed the northern coastal emporium of Quentovic in collaboration with Frankish traitors (*AB* 842)) the strained military capacity of the Empire made it possible for Nominoë to lead the Bretons in revolt against Carolingian rule. Count Reynald of Nantes was killed by Nominoë's son, Erispoe, and Bretons fought alongside Saxons and Gascons at the battle of Worms (Verbruggen 1967, 425; for a discussion of Breton military tactics see Nicolle 1984, 16).

In June 843, Nantes was attacked on the festival of Saint John the Baptist by a Viking fleet operating in alliance with the rebellious Count Lambert (*AB* 843). The cathedral was stormed and Bishop Gunhard slain with all his clergy and many of the citizens. The fleet then continued up the Loire to sack the monasteries at Indres and Vertou (see de la Borderie 1898, 310-14), northern Poitou and back down along the coast of Aquitaine, wintering on an island, perhaps Noirmoutier. The next year, 844, saw further raiding by this same fleet, severe enough to bring Nominoë back from Le Mans, where he was campaigning against the Franks, in order to fight the invaders (*AB* 844). The fleet withdrew, sailing

up the Garonne destroying everything as far as Toulouse. They then turned south to Galicia, where they were driven back by missile-throwing war machines (AB 844), wintering on the coastal islands off Poitou.

The depredations of this fleet acted as a severe drain on Carolingian military resources, taxing Charles the Bald's ability to respond to such a mobile threat. In 845, the Scandinavian fleet which had first appeared on the Seine four years earlier sent 120 ships upriver to Paris, exacting a Danegeld payment of 7000 pounds of silver from the emperor. Taking advantage of Charles's weakness, Nominoe defeated a large Carolingian army at Ballon later in the year (AB 845). The following year, 846, Charles, faced with raiding all along the northern and western coasts of France, had no option but to make peace with the Bretons. A growing threat was also appearing in the far north, as the Danes consolidated their hold on Frisia after Horik of Denmark had sent a massive raiding force (the sources claim 600 ships, almost certainly a gross exaggeration) up the Elbe against Louis the previous year, destroying Hamburg after three battles (AF 845; AB 845-6).

In 847, Brittany suffered its worst raiding up to that time, as the fleet of Vikings based on the coastal islands near the mouth of the Loire launched a major offensive. Nominoe and the Breton army resisted, fighting three battles, but eventually the Scandinavians were victorious (AB 847). Nominoe himself was forced to flee for a short time, but managed to buy the Vikings off — one of only two occasions on which the Bretons paid Danegeld (Smith 1985). The fleet then ravaged the coast of Aquitaine.

It is apparent that after 841 there were two main Scandinavian fleets raiding in France, broadly based on the Seine and Loire rivers, though they recognised no fixed boundaries (for example, the Seine Vikings fought on the Loire in 841). Those operating on the Seine are usually referred to as *Dani* 'Danes' in the *Annales Bertiniani*, in preference to the more common term *Nordmanni* 'Norsemen' used for Scandinavians in general. This fleet did not winter in France until 851, instead returning to Denmark. It was probably not a cohesive unit as such, rather a loose affiliation of looters and pirates returning regularly to an area known to be a worthwhile target. The Loire fleet was very different, wintering off the coast of Poitou and Aquitaine for three years after 843. Only a few estimates of size are given in the sources for its early activities, but between 67 and 80 vessels is likely (see Brooks 1979 for a comparison of Viking fleet sizes). Nothing is known of the

change in composition of this fleet, if any, over these three years but it seems probable that it acted as an effective, combined force presumably under a nominal leadership and with at least a basic command structure (the infrastructure of peripatetic Scandinavian forces is discussed briefly below in relation to the Great Army and the mercenary fleets of the 880s and 890s, and in more depth in Price, forthcoming). As to the fleet's origins, the *Annales Engolismenses* call them *Wesfaldingi*, 'Westfoldings'(?), in 843, a statement supported by recent scholars (McKitterick 1983, 232). These two armies, Danish and Norwegian, are henceforth referred to as the Seine and Loire Vikings respectively. A third fleet, mentioned above and operating along the Somme and in Frisia, also formed an important factor in the mid ninth-century Frankish political situation, acting as a constant threat and drain on resources though never active on the west coast or in Brittany.

During this first phase of raiding, Nominoe had made strenuous efforts to further Breton independence from Carolingian influence, particularly that of the Frankish church. The details of this are the subject of much debate. The establishment of the Redon community in 832 during the reign of Louis the Pious may have been a deliberate element in this policy; the expulsion of four Frankish bishops in 848 over the question of the Rule of Saint Benedict of Aniane, and their replacement with Breton clerics seems unequivocal (*CN* 848; Bernier 1982, 109–11). Nominoe apparently set up an archbishopric at Dol in an attempt to foster an independent Breton church, though the see was not ratified by Rome for several centuries, but there are still too many source problems to be certain (see Smith 1982; for a discussion of Breton religious institutions, see de la Borderie 1898, 246–75). In addition to his efforts to achieve ecclesiastical autonomy, Nominoe also expanded Brittany's borders, gaining Rennes and Nantes from the Franks in 846, and raiding far into Anjou, the Vendômois and the Bessin.

In 848 Charles managed to drive off a small fleet of Danes who had been besieging Bordeaux (*AB* 848), but no further Viking activity is recorded until 850. In that year the *Annales Bertiniani* report that the Scandinavians began to fight amongst themselves. The arrival of a new Danish leader in Frisia, Roric, the brother of the Haraldr who commanded the fleet raiding there in the 830s, seems to have disrupted the balance of power among the Frisian Vikings with a significant effect on north-western France. Having previously served as a mercenary under both Louis and Lothar,

Roric began to ravage along the Rhine and Waal in 850; in response, Lothar ceded Dorestad to him on the condition that he took over the administration and resisted further Danish attacks, thus granting the Scandinavians a major power-base in the north. In the same year, Harald's son Godfred moved into the Seine and formed an alliance with Charles the Bald (*AF* 850; *AB* 850).

The following year, 851, Nominoe died and was succeeded by his son Erispoe. Charles the Bald attempted a hasty invasion but was defeated by Erispoe at the Battle of Jengland. As a result, Rennes and Nantes were again ceded to the Bretons along with the Pays de Retz. This may also have been an attempt to buy Breton aid against the Viking threat from Noirmoutier, since in the same year Charles had already had to drive back a Danish force which had moved south from Frisia to sack Rouen, before marching on foot to Beauvais (*AB* 851). To complicate the situation still further, Charles also began actively to support Erispoe's cousin, Salomon, against him. In 852, Charles went so far as to grant Salomon a third of Brittany.

The same year Haraldr was killed fighting in Frisia, and Godfred's fleet (recorded as 252 ships) was bribed to leave the region. Ignoring this agreement, Godfred raided along the Scheldt and attacked settlements in Frisia before sailing down to the Seine. His fleet was met by a combined Frankish army under Charles and Lothar, and besieged (*AB* 852). It proved only a temporary halt to Godfred's Vikings however, since the siege was lifted when Charles was forced to leave in 853. The Danes sailed out into the open sea and round the Breton peninsula into the Loire estuary, where they sacked Nantes and Saint-Florent (*AB* 853; it is interesting that an entry written in 1054 in the *Annals of Saint-Florent* attributes the destruction to Nominoe, see Chédeville and Guillostel 1984, 230). Tours was also burned, though the monks of Saint-Martin's had time to remove relics to Corméry (*AB* 853).

Godfred's fleet encamped on the Ile de Bièce in the Loire at Nantes. At this time, another Viking fleet (itself perhaps a subdivision of a larger force) under the command of Sidroc had arrived at the mouth of the Loire. In desperation the Bretons agreed an alliance with Sidroc's Vikings, the terms of which are not recorded, and in 854 Sidroc and Erispoe attacked Godfred's camp with 105 ships. The Bretons suffered heavy casualties and were driven back (Smith 1985). The following day Sidroc betrayed the Bretons and allowed Godfred to sail up the Vilaine with 130 ships towards an unprotected Redon. Sidroc led his fleet round the coast into the

Seine. Redon was saved by a sudden storm which wrecked some of Godfred's ships, but the remainder of the fleet disembarked to loot elsewhere in Brittany (CR 369, 21-2), taking many captives including the bishop of Vannes.

In 855, Godfred withdrew to join his uncle Roric in Dorestad. The previous year civil war had broken out in earnest in Denmark, causing many Danes to return home from Frisia (AF 854). The resulting carnage wiped out almost the entire Danish ruling family, including Horik himself (AB 854; for the Frisian politics see Sawyer 1982a, 87-8, 91, 98). Sidroc's Loire Vikings returned from the Seine to attack Bordeaux, and were driven back to Nantes after an abortive assault on Poitiers (AB 855).

The career of Godfred provides a convenient link with which to conclude this discussion of the first phase of raiding in France. The

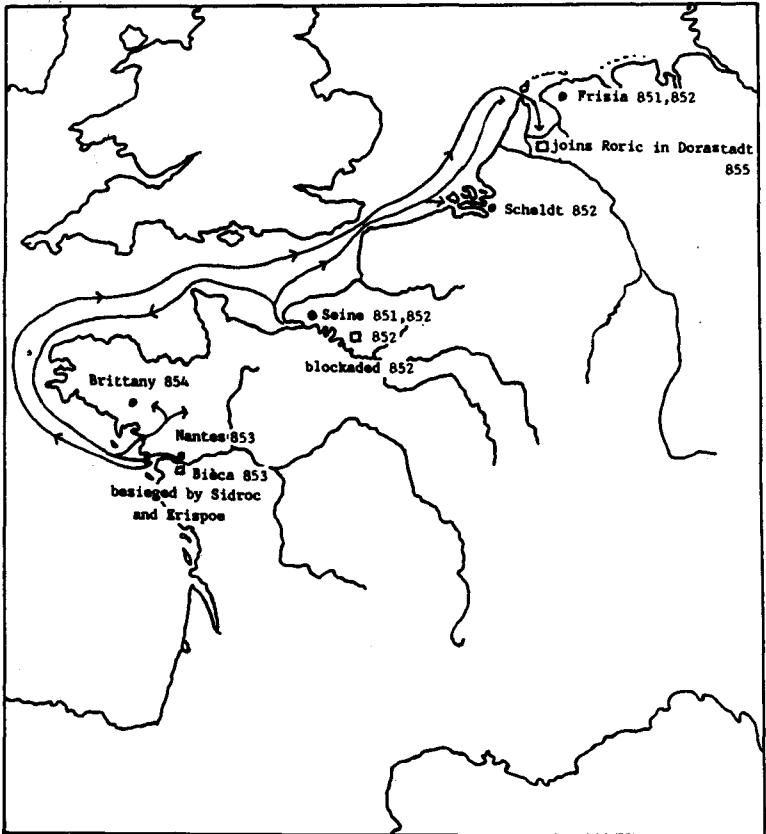


Fig. 3. The campaigns of Godfred, son of Haraldr, 851-855

only Viking commander known to have fought in Frisia, on the Seine and on the Loire, which can be considered the three foci for Scandinavian operations in ninth-century western Europe, Godfred is an excellent example of a pirate chieftain of this period. Like many of the Viking leaders, often described as 'kings' (*reges* or *regii*) in Frankish sources, he was an exiled renegade from Scandinavia's constant struggles for power, taking the opportunity provided by foreign raiding to gain wealth and a following in a way not possible before (earlier exiles had gone to Sweden or Finland). Godfred's activities embody the rôle played by Scandinavians in France up to 856: peripatetic raiding over a large area with a medium-sized fleet, with occasional over-wintering and occupation of Frankish settlements, involvement in Scandinavian politics, and shifting alliances with and against the Carolingians, Bretons and other Viking fleets. The mid ninth century saw a dramatic change in the Viking attitude to Europe.

The assault on France: 856-892

856 saw the beginning of one of the most intense periods of Scandinavian activity abroad in the ninth century. The simple piratical operations carried out before were replaced by a carefully planned attack on the centres of wealth, settlement and trade, taking into account local topography and religious festivals when the targets would be unprepared for defence: the 'Great Invasion' of 856-862 (McKitterick 1983, 234-5). This period particularly highlights the extent to which the Vikings were involved in Frankish politics, and the rivalries between Charles the Bald, the sons of Louis the Pious, the disaffected Neustrian and Aquitanian nobles and the Bretons.

In July 856, Charles the Bald was occupied fighting renegade counts in Aquitaine and an alliance of the Loire Vikings and Pippin II when news reached him of a combined Viking attack on Paris. Sidroc had sailed up the Seine and joined forces with a second Scandinavian fleet commanded by Bjørn at Pitres; continuing up-river to Paris, everything had been burned except for the churches of Saints Germain-des-Prés, Denis, Stephen and Vincent which had paid bribes to be spared. Charles reacted in October, launching an offensive with Adalhard, Rudolf, Welf and Counts Ricoin, Augier and Bérengar. The Vikings were driven back to their winter base on Oselles island (*AB* 857 [856]). In addition to defending

Aquitaine and the Seine, Charles was faced with attacks from the west. Orléans was sacked by a Danish host and Charles was forced to cede Maine to the Bretons in return for a temporary alliance against the Vikings. The Carolingian position was so threatened that Charles even attempted to gain English help against the Scandinavians by marrying his daughter Judith to Æthelwulf of Wessex (a similar policy had been promoted by Charlemagne, see Wallace-Hadrill 1967, 691-4; Hodges, 1981a, 224).

The following year, 857, Charles's support of Salomon in Brittany grew to fruition when Erispoe was assassinated in a church. Although Salomon immediately seized control of Brittany, however, ostensibly as a Frankish vassal, he at once began to ally with anyone who would oppose Charles; notably Louis the Stammerer and Robert the Strong of Neustria. Charles was unable to deal successfully with a major raid on Tours and the surrounding districts by the Loire Vikings, being simultaneously faced with a Danish attack on Chartres during which Bishop Frotbald was killed (*AB* 857). In response to Charles's inability to defend the Seine and Loire, not surprising in the circumstances, Robert the Strong and his supporters rebelled in 858. Charles the Bald formed an alliance at Verberie with Bjørn, one of the Seine Viking commanders who had fought at Paris two years earlier (*AB* 858). The outcome of this alliance is not known, but Charles besieged the remaining Seine Vikings on Oselles in July, after paying a massive ransom to Sidroc for the abbot of Saint-Denis who had been captured at Paris. Although joined by his nephew Lothar II after tense negotiations, Charles was once again obliged to raise the siege in September to quell a rebellion of Neustrian counts. The revolt had been backed by Salomon in alliance with Louis the German (*AB* 858).

In 859, the Seine Vikings continued to raid widely, destroying Noyon and Beauvais, killing bishop Immo and forcing the monks to flee with the relics of Denis, Eleutherius and Rusticus. In this year too, a new threat to the Empire appeared in the north, as a new Danish army arrived on the Somme under the command of Weland. (Although Roric had sailed to Denmark in 857, Danes had continued to raid in Frisia, attacking the Scheldt basin and Saxony from their bases at Dorestad and Batavia.) Weland's fleet laid waste Amiens and Saint-Valéry-sur-Somme and wintered at the mouth of the river (*AB* 859). The following year, 860, this Somme fleet campaigned in England but Weland offered to return and fight the Seine Vikings for Charles, provided he was paid 3000

pounds of silver and supplied with food and wine. Charles agreed, raising the money by levying a tax on church land (*AB* 860; Davies 1988, 57-8, 213). In the same year, another Danish fleet raided along the Rhône.

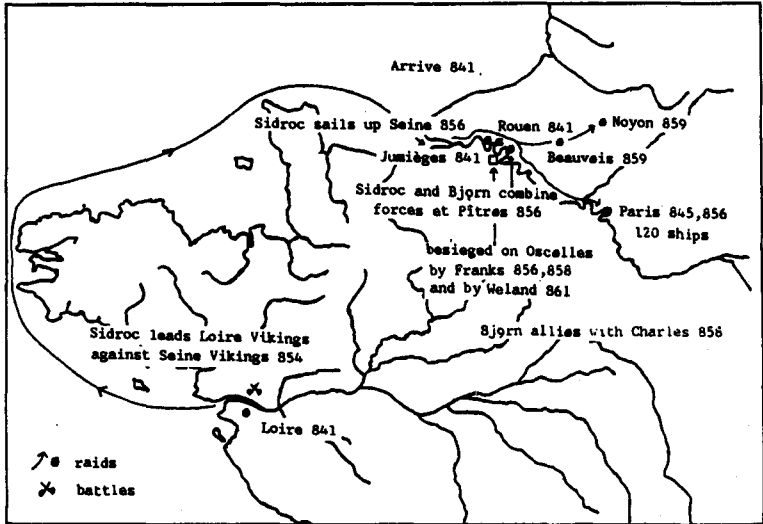


Fig. 4. Seine Viking activity 841-861, and the movements of Sidroc and Bjorn

Weland returned from England with 200 ships in 861 and besieged the Seine Vikings on Oselles, being joined later in the blockade by reinforcements of 60 ships which had sailed up the Seine and Epte. After a payment of 6000 pounds of silver, however, Weland allowed the Seine Vikings to sail away and winter elsewhere on the river while his own Somme fleet made camp at Saint-Meur-des-Fossés (*AB* 861). Paris was burned again by a Danish fleet which also ravaged the Théroouanne district.

In early 862 Charles the Bald changed his response to the Viking raids from a reactive to a preventative basis (cf. Sawyer 1982a, 88-91), initiating a programme of river fortifications to restrict access for the Scandinavian fleets. The Marne was blockaded at several points, trapping Weland's ships at Trilbardon Bridge and forcing them into Jumièges for repairs. In February, Weland formally submitted to Charles (*AB* 862), who then ordered the construction of fortifications on the Seine. The remainder of Weland's vessels split from his command and joined a small force of Vikings on the Loire, which had hitherto been raiding in Spain. This combined fleet was hired for a reported 6000 pounds of silver by Robert

the Strong who was now campaigning against Salomon, 'before Salomon could ally with them against him' (*AB* 862), a salutary reminder of the changeability of Viking loyalties. Salomon responded by hiring 12 ships of Loire Vikings who had been troubling southern Brittany (*CR* 121, 269-70).

After 862 the pressure of raids on France eased for a short time. Weland, since 859 the principal Viking commander in France, was killed in a duel in 863. Salomon made peace with Charles in the same year, acknowledging his power and receiving land grants between the Mayenne and the Sarthe in return, as well as being made lay abbot of Saint-Aubin of Angers. The Viking threat was concentrated in the north, in Frisia, as Dorestad was sacked again and a Danish fleet sailed up the Rhine to a base near Neuss; they were contained and driven back by Lothar and a Saxon army (*AB* 863). Limited raiding still continued in France, however, as at Poitiers in 863.

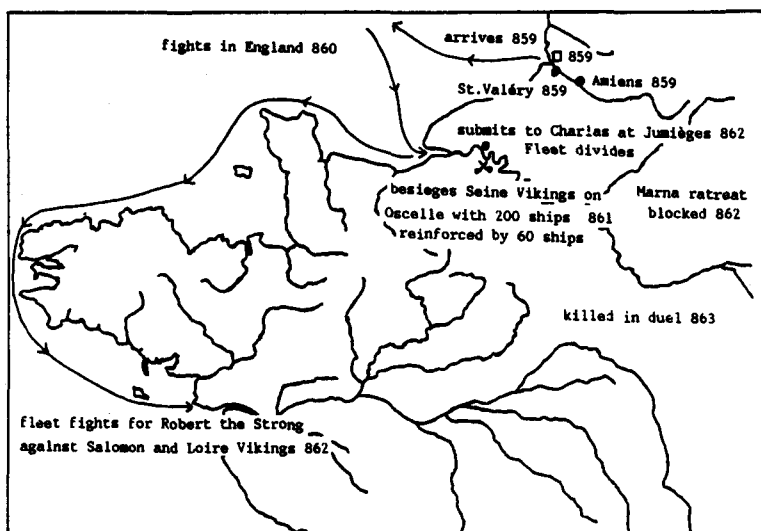


Fig. 5. Weland's campaigns in north-western France, 859-863

Several of the Frankish defensive works set up in the early 860s seem to have been almost immediately dismantled, with royal sanction, and the stone re-used in ecclesiastical buildings, perhaps an indication of the value of cathedrals as refuges (McKitterick 1983, 233). At the assembly of Pîtres in 864 Charles requested that these fortifications be rebuilt. Local defences were proving an inadequate containment to the Viking threat; in the same year the

citizens of Aquitaine took up arms against the Seine Vikings but were unable to prevent them sacking Clermont and reaching their ships, Robert of Anjou defeated one group of Loire Vikings but was beaten back by a second, and Pippin II of Aquitaine had actually joined the Danes and renounced Christianity (*AB* 864). The dynasty of Haraldr was still causing trouble in the north, as his son Rodulf was able to extort a Danegeld payment from Lothar, who was fighting Vikings in Flanders and on the Rhine.

Through a combination of mismanagement and civil dissension Charles was unable to employ his fortification system to good effect. In 865, 50 ship-loads of Seine Vikings escaped a blockade at Pîtres, bypassing fortified bridges at Auvers and Charenton after a raid on the Parisian vineyards, while the Loire Vikings were able to raid upriver as far as Fleury and burn Orléans before returning to their base. A second Loire force was defeated at Poitiers by Count Robert (*AB* 865 mentions five hundred casualties and a great haul of 'banners and weapons') and in Aquitaine the local militia fought with a Scandinavian host from the Charente under the command of Sigefrid. Later in the year Salomon again allied with Vikings for a joint raid on Le Mans.

866 saw a dramatic victory for the Seine Vikings: after defeating Robert and Odo at Melun a large host forced Charles the Bald to pay not only a tribute of 4000 pounds of silver and *wergild* for dead Vikings, but also to agree to release all Scandinavian prisoners. An abortive attempt to block the Seine at Pîtres failed in June and by July the Seine host had reached the open sea (*AB* 866). The Franks did have some success, however, confining the Loire Vikings to their base after repulsing them from Neustria. Their permanent camp in the Loire estuary made the surrounding area so hazardous that Bishop Actard of Nantes was forced to request translation to a safer see (*CR* 264), which was granted to him by the Pope two years later.

The period 866-873 was one of escalating Viking activity in Brittany, as often in alliance with the Bretons as in opposition to them, while Salomon's political manoeuvres grew more intricate and sophisticated. The year after the Le Mans raid of 865, Salomon made contact with Hæsten (Hásteinn), one of the main commanders of the Great Army, and a joint Breton-Danish force attacked Poitou, Anjou, Maine and Touraine. Le Mans was sacked again and a Frankish army was defeated at Brissarthe, a battle in which Counts Robert and Ranulf were killed (*AB* 866; *Regino* records the battle under his 867 annal, describing a night attack

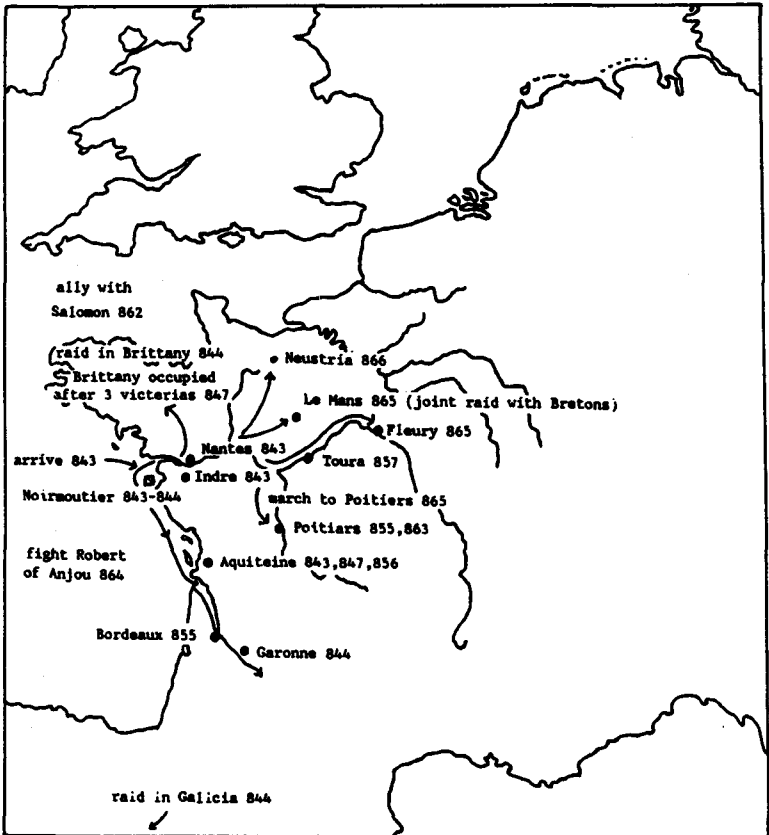


Fig. 6. The Loire Vikings, 843-866

on a fortified church). As a result, Salomon was granted the abbeys, *villae* and *fiscs* in Coutances and thereafter styled himself *rex* (though it would be inappropriate to lay too much stress on this title; Wendy Davies, pers. comm.). It is important to note that Salomon was an ally, not a vassal, of Charles and ruled a very much independent Brittany (see Davies 1981). The first contemporary reference to the Dol archbishopric occurs at this time, and it is possible that ecclesiastical estrangement from the Empire was more pronounced under Salomon than Nominoe. Through his complex web of mutually exclusive alliances, Salomon nevertheless sought to make himself and Brittany vital to the protection of north-west Francia, where he may have held equal power to Charles (Davies 1981, 91).

By 868 Salomon had agreed to lead a campaign against the Loire

Vikings with Carolingian aid, perhaps in return for a grant of land (Davies 1988, 20), but instead found himself defending south-eastern Brittany after the promised Frankish army ignored the Scandinavians and ravaged Neustria itself. It was left to the levies at Poitiers to drive off the Vikings (*AB* 868). In April 869 Salomon confirmed the monks of Redon in the sanctuary at Plélan, to which they had fled earlier, and the relics of Saint-Maxent were brought there (*CR* 189-92; Privat 1971, 84-5; Davies 1988, 23). By May, Hásteinn had assumed command of a group of Loire Vikings and attacked the Vilaine region. They were met in battle by 'Salomon and all the Bretons' (*CR* 242) and the *princeps* Guorhwant, who had halted in Auessac before proceeding towards Nantes (Davies 1988, 171); a peace treaty was concluded by exchanges of hostages, livestock and food, with the Bretons also gaining part of the Anjou wine harvest as part of the agreement since their access to it had been blocked by the Vikings (*AB* 869; *Regino* 869). Despite the treaty, Abbot Hugh and Gauzfrid attacked the Vikings later in the year and killed a monk who had become apostate (*AB* 869); Charles the Bald ordered the fortification of Le Mans and Tours. The early 870s saw further Viking activity in Brittany, sufficient to cause the Breton nobles to prevent Salomon's intended pilgrimage to Rome so that he could lead the Breton defence (*CR* 247), but no details are recorded of the raids (though *Bili* mentions a raid on Alet before 872: II, 15-16). In 873 Hásteinn's army was besieged at Angers by the Franks who had trapped the Scandinavians by diverting the course of the river there (de la Borderie 1898, 94).

In 874 Brittany's internal politics were thrown into turmoil when Salomon was murdered by a rival. The resulting surge of Viking attacks made possible by the power vacuum was narrowly held at bay by a hasty Breton-Frankish alliance between Alain of Vannes and Bérengar of Rennes (de la Borderie 1898, 334; see also Musset 1965). The civil warfare intensified the following year when Pascwethen, Salomon's son-in-law, made an alliance with the Loire Vikings, probably under Hásteinn, and attacked Erispoe's son-in-law Guorhwant at Rennes, having sacked the monastery of Saint-Melaine en route. From this power struggle Pascwethen's brother Alain and Guorhwant's son Judicael emerged as joint rulers of Brittany, cooperating well until 877, when the Vikings began to exploit their growing dissension.

In the late 870s the Scandinavian raids intensified as the deaths of both Charles the Bald and Louis the Stammerer gave the Vikings virtual immunity from retaliation (Chédeville and Guillotel 1984,

361). Widespread devastation in Neustria forced the monks of Evreux, Lisieux, Bayeux and Avranches to flee. The inability of Charles the Bald to fight the Vikings successfully had led to the promotion of those who could, such as Baldwin II of Flanders. However, this caused a preoccupation with more localised and opportunistic resistance since many of these men frequently made alliances with Vikings for their own ends, despite being charged with the defence of the Empire (cf. Flodoard *HRE* III, 23). From 880 to 882 the imperial frontiers were overrun by Vikings, with raiding all along the Rhine, in Frisia and in the area north-east of the Seine; no attacks are recorded in Brittany during this period. The main Viking commanders are recorded as Godafrið, Sigifrið, Vurm and Hals, and are sometimes said to have fought in mounted units. The dislocating effect on the Franks was considerable, with numerous key noblemen and clerics slain and many towns and monasteries destroyed; to this was added a financial drain as enough Danegeld was paid to fill 200 ships. (The details of these raids are not relevant to the Breton issue; they are discussed in Price 1988, 31-6 and visually summarised in Hill 1981, 42. The main primary sources are the *Annales Fuldenses*, 880-82, which are severely critical of the Frankish response to the Vikings.)

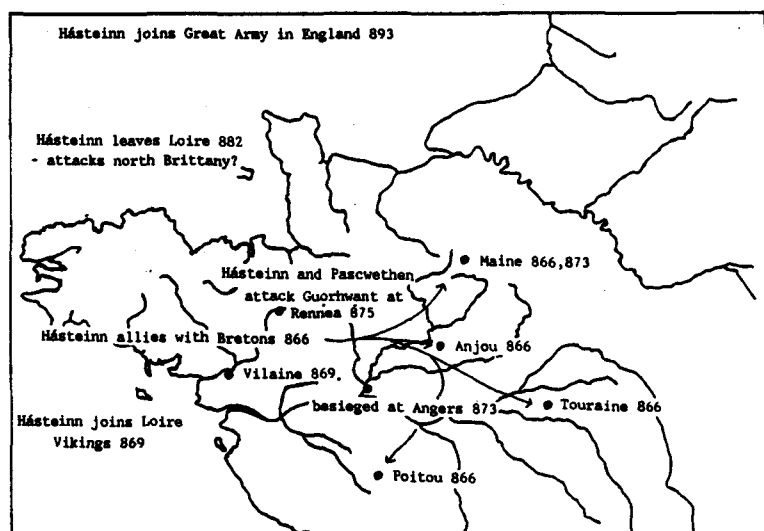


Fig. 7. The Loire Vikings 866-882, and the campaigns of Hásteinn

During 883 and 884 the Carolingians began to recover, rebuilding and fortifying the Rhineland settlements and driving the Vikings

back to the frontiers. Count Heimrich freed the Rhine and the Frisians won a great victory at Norden; peace was strengthened by the marriage of Godafrid to Lothar's step-daughter (*AF* 883-4). Brittany had suffered least from the five-year assault: in 882 Hásteinn had left the Loire Vikings under the terms of his agreement with Louis III and may have begun raiding northern Brittany (de la Borderie 1898, 326-8; Smith 1985), and in 884 *Uurmonoc* (XXI) records a raid on the Ile Lavret monastery.

The Frankish recovery continued through 885, as Paris withstood the siege of Sigifrid's Danes. Heimrich killed Godafrid who had broken his oath and attacked the Rhineland, and a Viking army in Frisia was wiped out (*AF* 885). Despite these victories the tide began to turn against the Franks with startling speed. Scandinavians had now been in Francia continuously for over six years, and in one of the worst years of raiding in the ninth century the whole eastern Empire was inundated by Vikings. In 886 the Franks were defeated near Paris and Abbots Hugh and Gozelin were killed. In July of the same year, Heimrich, the defender of the eastern frontiers, was slain in battle by Sigifrid; the emperor decided to pay a tribute and retreat.

Brittany found itself the target of renewed raiding in 886, and in the latter part of the year the county of Nantes was overrun and the city captured. Alain of Broweroch was able to maintain only a guerrilla force to fight them (de la Borderie 1898, 329). By 888 the power-struggle between Alain of Vannes and Judicael had intensified to such a degree that no resistance was offered to the Scandinavians, and the Loire Vikings were able to occupy western Brittany completely (*Regino* 890). The death of Judicael in battle with the invaders left Alain in command of the Breton forces, and he led a united army to a great victory at Questembert, driving the Vikings back to the mouth of the Loire (see de la Borderie 1898, 494-5 for a discussion of the battle).

In 889 the Vikings in Frisia and their Slav allies concluded a peace treaty with the Empire (*AF* 889), leaving the Carolingians able to push the Seine fleet eastwards. Some Frankish settlements seem to have drawn up their own truce agreements with Vikings in their area, such as that made by the citizens of Meaux (McKitterick 1983, 232). Over 889-90 the Seine Vikings moved into Brittany, hard on the heels of the Loire fleet that Alain had successfully driven out (this latter force had broken up into several small flotillas and sailed west). Alain again joined forces with Bérengar of Rennes and led two Breton armies into the field. Finding their

retreat down the Marne blocked, the Vikings hauled their ships overland to the Vire and besieged Saint-Lô, where the Bretons virtually annihilated the fleet (*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* 890; Smith 1985). A second force was also defeated on the river Couesnon. Alain won two more victories against the Seine Vikings the following year (*Regino* 891), which consolidated his hard-won peace.

As Alain finally cleared Brittany of Vikings, the Scandinavian stranglehold on the Empire was also coming to an end. King Arnulf destroyed the great army encamped at Louvain, killing Sigifrid and capturing sixteen Viking standards (*AF* 891), and attacks also lessened in Flanders after the strengthening of city walls. By the end of 892 the Great Army had left mainland Europe and sailed for England (*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* 893), shifting the focus of Viking activity in the West firmly on to the kingdom of Wessex.

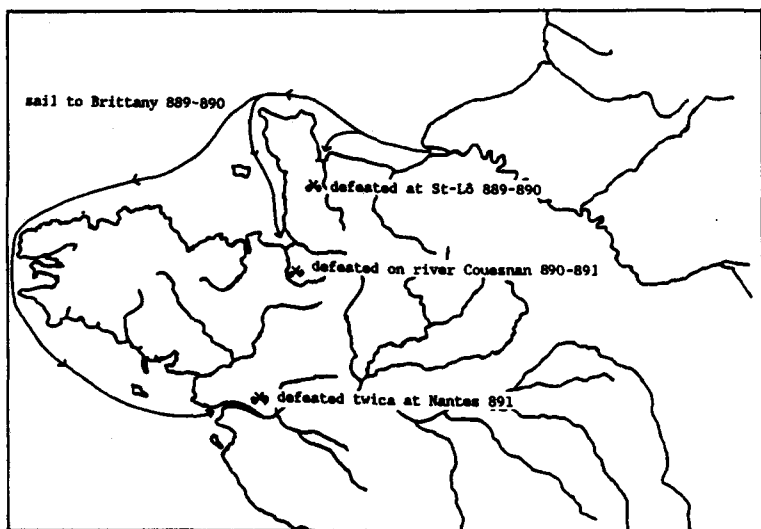


Fig. 8. Seine Viking campaigns in Brittany, 889-891

The peace of Alain the Great: 892-907

Alain's success in battle heralded a few years of peace for Brittany, and there are few raids recorded before his death in 907 (though the Loire Vikings sacked Tours in 903; see also *AV* 898 and Smith 1985). Instead, he made an attempt to rebuild the Breton church after its decline as a result of the Viking disruptions.

For several years after 899 there is no recorded activity by the Seine and Somme Vikings. It has been suggested that they congregated in the lower Seine area and began to settle (McKitterick 1983, 236), though this has not been proved.

Although severe, the Viking threat had been withstood up until 907 through a combination of military endeavour, judicious alliances and payment of tribute. Just as the Frankish response was marked by local defence rather than organised national resistance, in the ninth century the Viking attacks tended towards piecemeal raids rather than concentrated invasions (the apparent emphasis on the Scheldt basin may be due to an annalistic preoccupation). Before the early tenth century the Scandinavians showed no clear inclination to settle, but instead specialised in carefully planned attacks in ecclesiastical and market centres. Although the economic losses seem immense (and Danegeld payments certainly led to increased financial demands on the populace) it is possible that Charles the Bald had inherited an empire with already declining trade networks (Hodges 1981a, 228; though see Wallace-Hadrill 1975b, 228 for an alternative view).

There are no references to widespread agrarian devastation in Brittany (see Wallace-Hadrill 1975b, 229-32), but it has been argued that the Vikings may have deliberately avoided this and allowed agricultural production to be maintained, to provide themselves with a food supply to be exacted as part of tribute payments (Davies 1988, 55; *AB* 869). Viking supply routes and logistics are discussed in Chapter 4 below. In Brittany the raids seem to have been largely a problem for the aristocracy, with the peasants fighting only in personal defence, though it must be stressed that the details of Breton military organisation at a local level are obscure (Davies 1988, 23, 170). Certainly the capacity for armed resistance in Brittany may have been affected by dislocations in the chain of command from the ruler to the *machtierns*, the local hereditary officers upon whom the civil administration depended (see Davies 1981, especially 99; de la Borderie 1898, 124-64).

The dismemberment of Carolingian power, notably the division of the Empire in 888, was partly a result of the Vikings' drain on Frankish resources. This loss of coordinated regional control, together with the many gaps in the local power structures caused by the deaths of officials during raids, was a contributory factor to the establishment of small states such as Flanders and Normandy (Bates 1982, 5; see also Yver 1969, 302-6).

The conquest and occupation of Brittany: 907–939

Following the death of Alain the Great in 907, Brittany was left without a strong leader (it has been suggested that Breton resistance up to that time was chiefly dependent on the personal leadership in battle of Salomon and Alain, see Smith 1985). Although the sources are unclear, Viking attacks seem to have escalated dramatically during the reign of Gurmhailon, the count of Cornouaille, who succeeded Alain.

Far more significant for Brittany's future was a battle fought at Chartres in 911 between Charles III (the Simple) and the commander of the Seine Vikings, Rollo (usually identified with Gøngu-Hrólftr); as a result of this battle Hrólftr was granted the *pagi* of Talon, Caux, Roumois and parts of the Vexin and Evrecin in the 'Treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte'. This agreement has been much discussed, and the statement by Dudo of Saint-Quentin that the cession included Brittany as well should be dismissed. The entire treaty may be an invention of Dudo, but a charter of 918 confirming a grant of land to the monastery of Saint-Germain-des-Prés says that land has been granted *Nottmannis Sequanensibus videlicet Rolloni suisque comitibus* 'to the Northmen of the Seine, namely Rollo [Hrólftr] and his followers', *pro tutela regni* 'for the defence of the kingdom' (McKitterick 1983, 237; Lauer 1940–49, no. 92).

Hrólftr seems to have been made a count with responsibilities for defence and judicial administration, on similar terms to Salomon's receipt of the Cotentin but with the inclusion of bishoprics. Although Hrólftr was probably a Norwegian, the son of Earl Røgnvaldr Møerajarl, his army is likely to have been a conglomerate of Scandinavians including many Danes who had been with the Great Army in England. The valleys of the Orne, Dives and Risle were settled sporadically by different groups of Vikings over the following years. They seem to have ruled the Frankish population, which may not have been large, and to have rapidly absorbed Frankish customs and culture at a rate accelerated by intermarriage and conversion (see Musset 1975b, 42). The various Viking groups were by no means mutually friendly (see Douglas 1947, 107–8), and the constant civil strife recorded led to instability in the early years of Normandy's creation. Though there is no evidence of widespread repopulation, place-name research suggests settlers from Scandinavia, England, Ireland and possibly Orkney (see Fellows-Jensen 1988; Davis 1976, 21–5; Bates 1982, 16–19; Adigard des Gautries' definitive studies 1951–9 and Guinet 1980; the Celtic names may point more closely to the Hebrides — Gillian Fellows-Jensen, pers. comm.). There may have been a particularly strong

element of militant paganism in western Neustria, where place-names show that Scandinavian settlement was densest (see Bates 1982, 13–14).⁴

With the settlement of Hrólfr's Seine army, the character of Scandinavian involvement in France changes. 'Vikings' no longer, the invaders pursue definite land-taking objectives, linked to the fortunes of their fellow Scandinavians in England and Ireland. The attacks of the early tenth century in Brittany, however, represent the last phase of the 'First Viking Age', the period of raiding and devastation, and it has been suggested that the heaviest attacks on Brittany occur when Viking activity elsewhere eases off (Smith 1985), a theory discussed below. It is certainly clear that the 911 settlements around the Seine reduced raiding in that area and that only Brittany and Ireland were then subject to serious assault, something doubtless welcomed by the Franks.

For Brittany, the most dramatic consequence of Hrólfr's agreement with the Franks was that the most aggressive and ambitious of the Seine Vikings split off from the main group and sailed round the coast to the Loire. From this time onwards, Brittany was the focus of Viking raiding activity in France.

In 912 the raids continued with unparalleled ferocity. The monastery of Saint-Guenolé at Landévennec was destroyed by Vikings from the Loire in 913, and the monks fled to Château-du-Loir with the saint's relics (in 926 they moved again to Montreuil-sur-Mer). The impact of this phase of attacks can be seen particularly clearly in such evacuations, recorded at many monasteries, though it is not always apparent whether it is the whole community that leaves or just an escort for the monastic treasure and relics. Léhon was used as an assembly point for clerical fugitives as the attacks worsened, organised by Salvator of Alet who had fled there earlier with the relics of Saint Machutus (de la Borderie 1898, 364–5).

The effect on the church was already considerable by the early tenth century. After leaving Noirmoutier in 836, the community there travelled through Saint-Philibert-de-Grand-Lieu, on to Cunauld in Anjou, Messay in Poitou, finally reaching Tournus in Bourgogne by May 875 (Chédeville and Guillotel 1984, 379–89). The monks of Saint-Martin-de-Vertou had left in 843 to go to Saint-Jouin-de-Marnes in Poitou (de la Borderie 1898, 310–14) and the clergy of Saint-Florent-le-Vieil at Mont Glonne departed for Berry in 866 (Chédeville and Guillotel 1984, 379–89). The Quimper community also went to Montreuil-sur-Mer, and Saint-Guenaël's sent many monks first to Coucouronne and then to

Corbeil (de la Borderie 1898, 336). The relics of Saint Samson were moved from Dol to Avranches and Orléans (de la Borderie 1898, 367–8), and those of Saint-Paul-de-Léon were taken to Fleury (McKitterick 1983, 245). Saint-Méen removed its relics to safety in 919, Redon did the same in 924 and Saints Maxentius, Gildas, Melenius and Paternus of Vannes were among many others whose remains were evacuated between 917 and 927. Not all the major saints were removed, however, and some, such as Marcellinus, Hypothemius and Conwoion, remained in their churches. Hugh the Great made considerable efforts to settle the fleeing clergy, notably those from Dol and Bayeux (see Guillotel 1982).⁵

Many of the Breton saints' relics, monks and cult practice found their way to Æthelstan's England, where they became established bastions of the church, notably Samson's remains at Milton Abbas (*William of Malmesbury* 399–460); the English lists of saints' resting-places provide many more examples (Rollason 1978; Gougaud 1919–21).

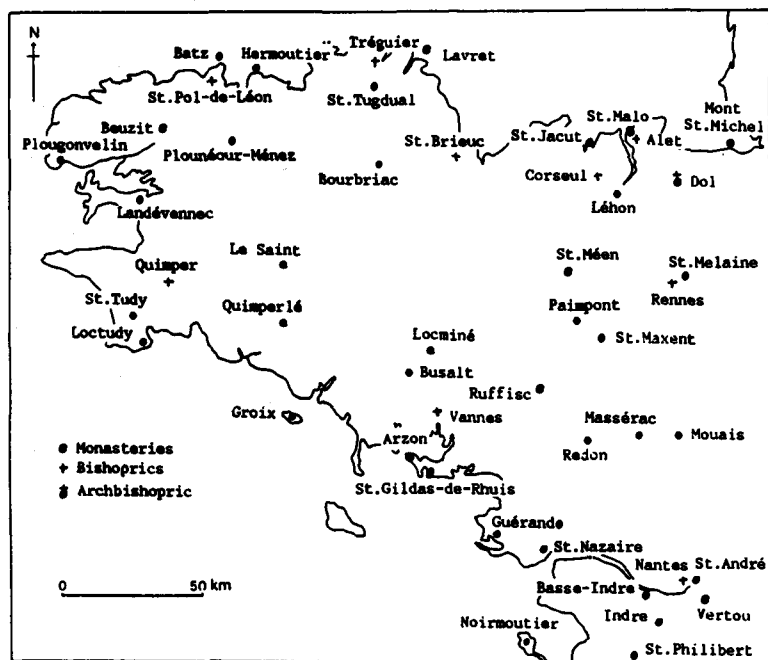


Fig. 9 The Church in Brittany from the eighth to tenth centuries

The movement of relics and monks has been seen by Wallace-Hadrill (1975b, 222–32) as reflecting the contemporary perception

of the Vikings as a real threat to Christianity itself, perhaps still felt as late as the eleventh century (cf. Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*). He draws attention to the emphasis placed on conversion as a condition in treaties (e.g. *AB* 873) and argues that perhaps the Scandinavians sometimes demanded apostasy as a similar indication of loyalty, as with Pippin II of Aquitaine (*AB* 864; also discussed by Brooks 1979, 12–16). Certainly, the desecration of churches was a widespread phenomenon (Wallace-Hadrill 1975b, 223–5) and possibly even blood sacrifices, as at the siege of Paris. But in Brittany itself there is no evidence either in the archaeology or place-names to suggest specific pagan cult activity (Olaf Olsen, pers. comm.).

In 914 Brittany suffered its worst raiding to date. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that a large fleet of Danes led by Ohter (Óttarr) and Hroald/Hraold (Haraldr?) sailed south from the Severn estuary to attack Brittany. It is possible that these Vikings were kept informed about the political situation both in Brittany and Frankia through connections with their countrymen in Normandy, and were thus able rapidly to take advantage of the disorganised and divided Bretons (Chédeville and Guillotel 1984, 337). The Danes campaigned in Brittany for nearly four years before moving north again to ravage England and Wales: during this time the Breton church, aristocracy and general popular morale were further eroded.

The end came in 919. A massive fleet of Loire Vikings sailed for Brittany under the command of a Norwegian, Rognvaldr, and landed at Nantes. It is possible that the incentive for the invasion came from reports of Óttarr's and Haraldr's success reaching the Scandinavian homelands, though there is no proof of this (de la Borderie 1898, 355). The picture we get is one of total devastation:

Nortmanni omnem Britanniam in Cornu-Galliae, in ora scilicet maritima, sitam depopulantur, proterunt atque delent, abductis, venditis, ceterisque cunctis eiectis Brittonibus.

Flodoard *Ann.* 919

Although the initial target seems to have been Nantes, a wealthy city excellently placed for controlling the mouth of the Loire and access to further targets upstream, there is no evidence that the effects of the invasion were confined to the south-east. The impact is particularly evident in the flight of refugees. Mathedoi of Poher and his son Alain Barbetorte (grandson of Alain the Great) together with many other counts, clerics and *machtierns* fled to England. Others went into Bourgogne and Aquitaine (*CN* 81–3);

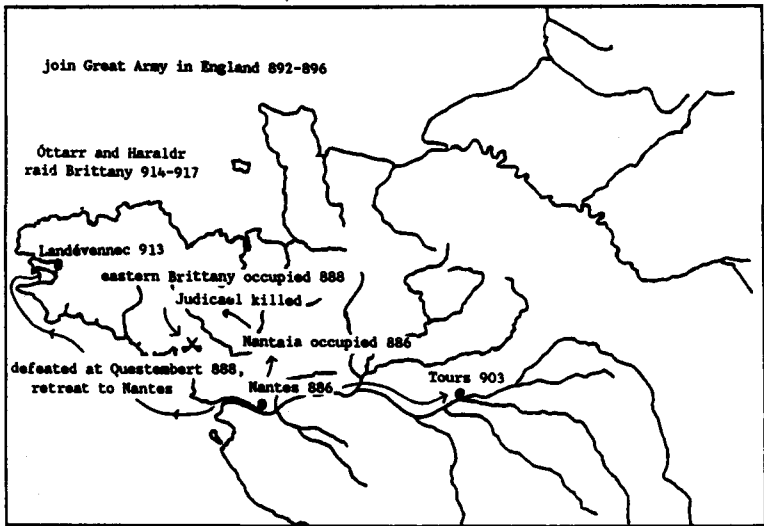


Fig. 10 The Loire Vikings, 886-917

Breton resistance appears to have been small, followed quickly by abandonment. This is not to imply a completely empty land (as Chédeville and Guillotel state, 1984, 397), since several monasteries obviously remained occupied at least until the 920s; Abbot Radbod of Dol was certainly present there in 926 when he sent a letter to Æthelstan requesting aid against the Scandinavians. The surviving Bretons may have been led by Judicael Bérengar, who seems to have stayed in Brittany throughout the invasion (*Hugh of Fleury* 4). It is nevertheless apparent that the scale of the invasion was unparalleled; the thoroughness of Rognvaldr's army in eliminating all opposition certainly implies that they intended to stay for a long time. The mention of slave-raiding by Flodoard is probably a mistake, as there is no evidence of an increase in slavery in Scandinavia or elsewhere at this time (though see Wallace-Hadrill 1975b, 232), and any such prisoners would most likely have stayed in Brittany. It should be emphasised that only the Loire Vikings occupied Brittany in 919, not a combined force involving the Scandinavians from the Seine too as stated by Dudo of Saint-Quentin (see chapter 1 and de la Borderie 1898, 373, 776).

By 920, Rognvaldr had gained complete political control of Brittany, which was confirmed in 921 when Nantes was ceded to him by Robert of Neustria after an unsuccessful five-month siege during which the Vikings dug fortifications around the estuary to protect their fleet; as part of the agreement the Vikings nominally

'received the faith of Christ' (Flodoard *Ann.* 921). From this point onwards there is an almost total absence of documentary references to Brittany until the return of Alain Barbetorte in 937; sources from other areas may illuminate the picture slightly, however. In 923 and 924 Hrólfr's Scandinavians raided widely along the Seine in alliance with Rognvaldr's Nantes army, destroying Beauvais in 923 (Flodoard *Ann.* 923-4). It is possible that Rognvaldr aided Charles the Simple in his struggles with Herbert of Vermandois, and Flodoard believed that Rognvaldr was seeking land for settlement (*Ann.* 925); this will most likely remain obscure since the precise details of the 921 agreement are unknown. In 923 Rognvaldr devastated Aquitaine and the Auvergne, and then sailed up the Oise to the Ile de France, only returning after land concessions on the Seine (Flodoard *Ann.* 923). The following year the Breton Vikings and some of Hrólfr's forces again raided in France, striking down into Bourgogne; despite this, Hrólfr was granted Le Mans, Bayeux, l'Huernin and the Bessin, thus consolidating his hold on Neustria. From late 924 to early 925 Rognvaldr was driven back to Nantes after a major battle against the combined armies of Raoul I, Hugh the Great and Herbert of Vermandois, though many of the Neustrian aristocracy were killed. Having broken free of their siege, Rognvaldr was forced to fight a retreat through heavily forested country in order to reach Brittany, though he accepted a payment of silver to do so (Flodoard *Ann.* 925). This is the last reliable record that survives of this Viking leader; his impact on popular consciousness may be seen in the fictionalised account of his death in the second book of the *Miracles of Saint-Benoit* (see Chédeville and Guillotel 1984, 379) written in the early eleventh century by Aimoin, which tells of gaudy pyrotechnics, moving stones and apparitions accompanying the passing of one of the last Viking sea-kings.

In 927 the Loire Vikings were attacked again in a five-week siege by Hugh the Great and Herbert of Vermandois. A truce was drawn up, and in return for peace elsewhere in France the Scandinavians were ceded Nantes again, though Brittany itself is not mentioned (unlike in the 921 treaty), probably because it was not under nominal Frankish control in the first place (Flodoard *Ann.* 927). A new agreement may have been thought necessary following Rognvaldr's attacks after 921. Despite the terms of the 927 cession, the Loire Vikings raided Limousin in 930 but were driven out by twelve cavalry squadrons led by Raoul I (Flodoard *Ann.* 930).

Throughout the Carolingian period Brittany had been vulner-

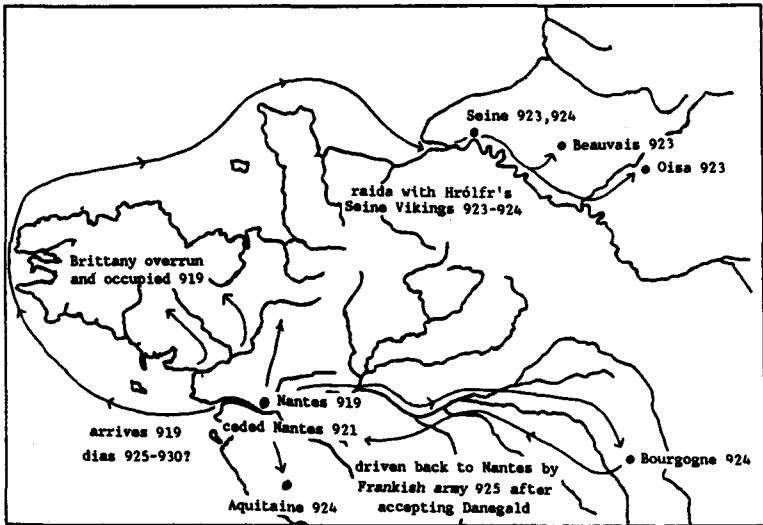


Fig. 11 The career of Rognvaldr and the occupation of Brittany, 919–925

able to attack from the neighbouring regions of France, especially at times of civil strife, and the Loire Vikings now seem to have experienced similar difficulties. In 931, Scandinavians from all over Brittany assembled in a great army on the Loire, poised for an attack on the Franks. The Bretons seized their chance and rebelled, an indication that at least some of their leaders had stayed behind in 919. The Vikings appear to have been taken completely by surprise and many were killed in a series of small battles throughout the region, including one *Felekan*, 'their duke' (Flodoard *Ann.* 931; *Cartulary of Quimperlé* 931). A counter-attack was rapidly mounted by the Loire army mentioned above, under their chieftain *Incon*, and Brittany was reconquered (Flodoard *Ann.* 931).

The 931 rebellion gives us an important insight into the nature of the Viking occupation, through studies of the names of the two commanders mentioned by Flodoard. Unlike *Rognvaldr*, a common Norwegian name, *Felekan* and *Incon* are not Scandinavian names. Initial research suggested an Irish origin for *Felekan*. The *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* (O'Brien 1976) yielded several possible parallels and Musset (1978, 108) claimed that the name was well attested in twelfth-century Irish sources.⁶ Given the context, however, the name is more likely to come from the Breton/Cornish *Felec*, with an added *-an* diminutive ending

(Gillian Fellows-Jensen, pers. comm.; cf. Olson and Padel 1986, 48). The only parallel for *Incon* is a name from the *Chrestomathie Bretonne* (Loth 1890), *Inconmarc*. Since the only close parallels for these chieftains' names are Breton, this raises the interesting possibility that the Loire Vikings may have been commanded by Bretons after the death of Rognvaldr (presumably sometime between 926 and 930/31). Close integration with the indigenous population is a marked feature of other Scandinavian colonies, and it is possible that some parties in the Breton civil power struggles actively joined the Vikings to further their own causes or to prevent widespread disruption within Brittany. This would certainly explain the 931 rebellion as the action of disaffected Breton political factions. It must however be emphasised that this deduction is by no means conclusive and the names as preserved by Flodoard are probably corrupt. It is unlikely that Felekan was Rognvaldr's sole successor since he would surely have been with the Loire host; perhaps he and Incon were joint-rulers or leaders of separate groups of Vikings. Whatever the truth of the matter, Incon became the ruler of Brittany after the 931 rebellion.

The rôle of the Normans in quelling the revolt should be considered. Hrólfr's son William Longsword had assumed power c. 925 (Hrólfr actually died in 932), and had nominally submitted to Ralph in 928. Flodoard records that in 933 William was given by the Franks 'the territory of the Bretons at the edge of the sea' (*Ann.* 933), which has been interpreted as meaning the Franko-Breton March, thus implying a deliberate attempt on the part of the Franks to foster conflict between the Loire Vikings and the Normans of the Seine. This is further confused by Dudo of Saint-Quentin's assertion that William put down the Breton revolt himself, a fiction designed to support retrospectively the Normans' claim to Brittany (see de la Borderie 1898, 379-80; Fellows-Jensen 1988, 115-16). A detailed examination of Flodoard's terminology, however, shows that only the Cotentin and Avranchin were ceded to William, territory earlier acquired by Salomon in 867, and that Incon still held the whole of the Breton peninsula. In 935 William Longsword made an alliance with Hugh the Great, thus effectively ruling out any further assistance for the Loire Vikings in the case of war (Chédeville and Guillotel 1984, 400). By early 936, the Vikings in Brittany were completely isolated and without allies.

During the years of Scandinavian occupation in Brittany, Alain Barbetorte had grown up at Æthelstan's court in England, raised as the king's foster-son (Breton links with England dated from at

least Ælfred's time; see *Asser* 76, 102). Abbot John of Landévennec, who seems to have remained in Brittany, had maintained contacts with the exiled Bretons and in 936 asked Alain to return, perhaps sensing the Vikings' vulnerability. With the help of a fleet and some troops given by the English king, Alain landed at Dol with an army of Bretons (*Flodoard Ann.* 936). Brief references to the situation in Brittany as Alain found it on his return help towards the reconstruction of a picture of the area under Scandinavian rule. As in 931, the Vikings were unprepared and Alain quickly defeated a contingent of them who were reveling in the monastery at Dol. He then met a second small force at Saint-Brieuc and was obliged to retreat, sailing along the coast to Plourivo where he fought another Viking host and erected a victory cross, an action which perhaps indicates that the Scandinavians were pagans (*Flodoard Ann.* 936; de la Borderie 1898, 388-90). Given that within a few days Alain had encountered three separate groups of Scandinavians in the north of Brittany, none of whom had apparently gone there to oppose him, we can hardly conclude that Viking settlement was restricted to the Nantes area. Instead it seems that they had dispersed throughout Brittany, occupying settlements and looting at will, and only banding together when concerted action was required, as with the assembly of the Loire army in 931. The following year Alain renewed his march, his army probably growing as he passed through the country. *Flodoard* records that he fought many battles, gradually driving the Scandinavians back until the whole occupying force was concentrated in Nantes. No Viking leaders are referred to at this time; perhaps Incon had died and the Scandinavians were divided by internal feuds (common enough in Viking colonies), though this is pure conjecture.

The Scandinavians built a great camp at Saint-Aignan in the angle of the Loire and the Erdre, just outside Nantes. Alain had been declared duke by the surviving Bretons on his return, and now led them in a charge against the ramparts, only to be beaten back. After forcing a Viking sortie to retreat in disorder the Bretons rested and attacked again. In a battle lasting the whole day in stifling weather, Alain's army eventually stormed the fortress; the Viking force was badly mauled and the survivors retreated down the Loire in their remaining ships, leaving Alain in possession of the field (the siege is described, perhaps somewhat fancifully, in the *Chronicle of Nantes*, 90-92).

We are given a vivid picture of Nantes as it was when Alain

entered it: his army walked through weed-covered streets past ruined buildings, and Duke Alain was forced to cut his way through thick brambles to reach the basilica of Saint Felix, empty and disused for nineteen years (*CN* 92; although the *Chronicle of Nantes* is a later, untrustworthy source, it is quite likely to derive from an earlier chronicle, now lost). Nantes was established as Alain's capital and he immediately set about ordering its defences and built a great rampart around the cathedral.

By 939 many of the exiles had returned to Brittany and Duke Alain II had established his rule over the area. The previous year the scattered remnants of the Nantes Vikings had re-formed and moved north-east into the county of Rennes, where they had built a large fortification at Trans. In 939 they resumed raiding in the vicinity of Rennes, opposed by Judicael Bérengar. In August he was reinforced by an army under the joint leadership of Alain and Hugh the Great; after a brief siege, a combined assault on the Viking camp finally removed the last of the Scandinavians who had occupied Brittany for so long (*Flodoard Ann.* 939).

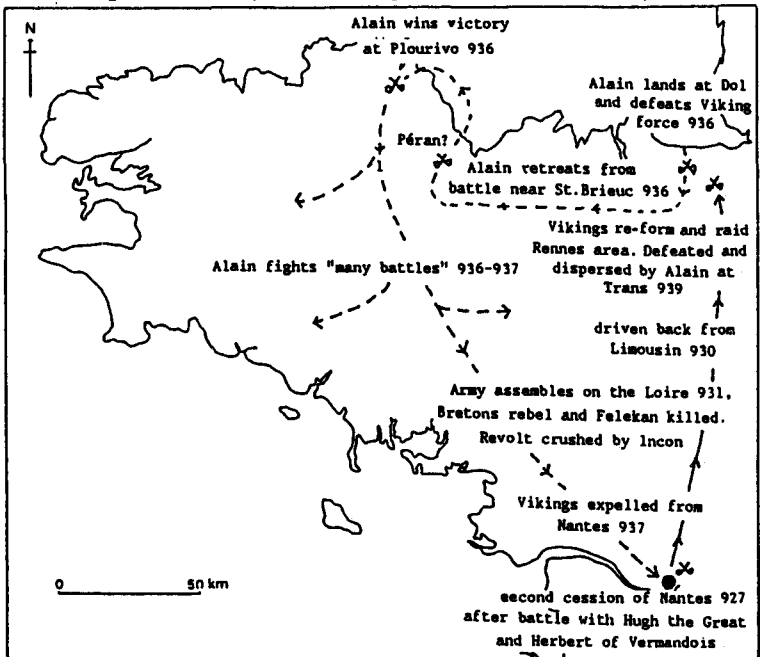


Fig. 12. The return of Alain Barbetorte and the dispersal of the Loire Vikings, 930-939

Interesting light is thrown on the last years of the Viking colony

by a Welsh poem, the *Armes Prydein* or 'Prophecy of Britain', which describes an alliance of the Celtic kingdoms, the Hiberno-Norse and the Vikings of the Northern Isles against Æthelstan. Amidst bitter complaints about Anglo-Saxon rule there is a cryptic reference to Brittany:

From Llydaw [Brittany] will come a splendid army,
Warriors on war-steeds who spare not their foe.

Armes Prydein 153-4 (tr. Clancy 1970, 111)

The poem is of problematic date (see chapter 1), but if it does refer to the 'Great Battle' of Brunanburh in 937 rather than to the campaigns against Eiríkr blóðøx in the 950s then the Breton reference is particularly important. Even if the poem is an 'appeal to history', a reference to a myth of Celtic unity from which Brittany could not be excluded (Roberts 1976, 36), the unlikelihood of Bretons joining such a coalition does not detract from the absurdity of such a request given the close links between Æthelstan's court and the descendants of Alain the Great, even assuming the presence of disaffected Breton nobles in the homeland. The reference makes much more sense if it is interpreted as an appeal to the Nantes Vikings, which would be ironic considering the dire straits in which they found themselves in 937 (cf. Dumville 1983, 151-2).



Fig. 13. Memorial crosses erected on the sites of two Breton victories over the Scandinavians, at Plourivo in 936 (left) and Questembert in 888 (right).

From de la Borderie 1898

With the Scandinavian defeat at Trans in 939 the period of major Viking involvement with Brittany came to an end. Before considering later contact with raiding fleets and campaigning armies, it is appropriate to review the Scandinavian occupation, the

motives of the invaders and why they were ultimately beaten so rapidly. The ninth-century raids have already been shown to have been typical looting expeditions of the period, Brittany perhaps being in an unfortunate position on the route between the Continent and the Irish Sea. Apart from convenient islands for coastal bases, Brittany had little to offer the prospective land-taker when compared with the richer prizes of England, Ireland and the Northern Isles. As mentioned above, however, the options and openings for Vikings who wished to settle down had become severely restricted by the start of the tenth century, due more to political considerations than to lack of space (there is no real evidence of population pressure in Scandinavia at this time). By c. 900 the complex power struggles of York and Dublin were already well advanced, extending to Man, Scotland and Orkney; Scandinavia itself was riven by political strife resulting in numerous exiled pretenders with their retinues. Many of these must have joined the Great Army, but the majority who wished to do so would surely have been able to settle in the Danelaw unless prevented by personal or political differences.

The Vikings operating on the Seine under Hrólfr's general command appear to have been just such a polyglot army as might be expected (cf. Fellows-Jensen 1988, 129-33): the severe divisions within it have already been noted. The settlement of northern Neustria and the rise of Normandy, although taking place towards the end of the settlement period, still unfolded within the periphery of the Viking world. With the baptism of Hrólfr and William Longsword Normandy became at least nominally integrated into Christian Europe (Musset 1975b, 42), and after an initially pronounced Scandinavian cultural impact the settlement began to assume a Frankish character. The perceived threat to paganism has already been discussed; is it not possible that towards the second decade of the tenth century there were increasing numbers of true 'Vikings' left stranded in and around north-western France, hard-core mercenaries who had no wish to settle down and farm the land? The choices open to such men would have been limited indeed, and Brittany may have seemed a natural target, in fact the only one remaining.

It would be foolish to suggest that Rognvaldr's Loire army was entirely composed of such renegades, or read too much from such meagre evidence, but there are a number of singular features of the Viking occupation that are inescapable. Firstly, there are no references anywhere to actual Scandinavian settlement, only to

military occupation. The only Scandinavian place-names in Brittany cluster around Mont-Saint-Michel and Dol, and probably represent settlers coming from the Cotentin in the later tenth century; indeed it would be unusual to observe a significant impact on place-names after only nineteen years of occupation. There is no mention of agriculture or stock-rearing (the nearest equivalents are raids on the vineyards of Anjou), only random and senseless violence very different from the precisely planned assaults of the ninth century; even the later raids into the Frankish heartland seem to serve little practical purpose. Similarly, the signs of occupation seen by Alain II and his troops as described in the *Chronicle of Nantes* do not present an image of ordered settlement: deserted, overgrown streets lined with ruined, empty buildings. The very devastation apparent in Brittany is uncharacteristic of Viking colonies; the shock in Flodoard's 919 annal is evident and surprising considering the long years of raiding that France had seen.

Everything points to occupied Brittany as an anachronism, isolated politically and militarily. The fact that Alain was able to succeed in the liberation of a vast area of land, starting from a seaborne invasion and landing launched from another country, a very rare occurrence in the early medieval period, testifies to the Viking colony's weakness. Long-term settlement would in any event have been impossible without the maintenance of Brittany's trade networks. York had extensive mercantile contacts in the tenth century, with links to Scandinavia, western Europe and beyond; a prosperity unmatched elsewhere in the Danelaw (see MacGregor 1978). Dublin looked to the Irish Sea and the Celtic kingdoms. Normandy itself had considerable trading connections, not only with the Viking homelands (see Breese 1977, 54-7), but also with the local markets of the Franks (Musset 1975b, 43-4). Without comparable trade Brittany could not be maintained as a viable state. There is no evidence that the Loire Vikings made any attempt to introduce an administrative system of their own, or to maintain and absorb Breton institutions (see Davies 1988, 52-60). What is surprising in fact is that the occupation lasted for nearly twenty years, a testament to the capabilities of Rognvaldr who managed to hold his army together for so long and also perhaps an indication of Frankish relief at being presented with a Viking threat that was both containable and centred in the lands of their old enemies, the Bretons.

The last of the Vikings: 939-1076

Between 941 and 947, the already strained relationship between the Bretons and Normans gave rise to some of the last Scandinavian activity in Brittany. In 941 or 942 William Longsword allowed a Danish exile, Aigrold, to settle in the Cotentin with his followers (Aigrold has been identified with Haraldr Gormsson of Denmark (Gillian Fellows-Jensen, pers. comm.); cf. Albrechtsen 1979, 123 note 27). Based at Bayeux, for a time Aigrold maintained an uneasy peace with the Bretons. In 942 however, William was murdered, an event that sparked off a wave of civil warfare for control of Normandy. William's son Richard, in alliance with Aigrold and Louis IV of Outremer, fought with Hugh the Great in a series of internecine struggles involving considerable treachery and several broken agreements. Late in the year Sigfrid Sigtrygsson arrived in the Seine with warriors from York and a Viking called Tormod; the latter led a pagan revolt in Normandy and together with Sigfrid joined forces with Hugh. Both Vikings were killed in battle at Rouen by Louis IV (*Richer of Rheims IV*, 57; see also de la Borderie 1898, 413 and Bates 1982, 13-14).

In Brittany, while the warring Norman factions sought to extend their control by force, Judicael Bérengar rebelled against the authority of Duke Alain. This left Dol unprotected and Aigrold led a raid against the town in 944. The citizens took refuge in the cathedral and the Scandinavians were driven off by a Breton relief force (de la Borderie 1898, 413). By 947, Richard had emerged the victor of the Norman disputes (see Bates 1982, 12-15) and ruled an autonomous Normandy as duke. After marrying the daughter of Hugh the Great he revived his father's claims to Breton overlordship, as celebrated by Dudo of Saint-Quentin.

In 952 Alain II died, having kept Brittany free from Viking attack since his victory in 939. He had slowly restored all the Breton monasteries except for Indres and had consolidated his ducal authority, exercising power far in excess of that once wielded by Nominoe. Alain was succeeded by his son Drogo, still a child, precipitating renewed civil conflict in Brittany. Drogo's mother, the sister of the count of Blois and Chartres, married again, to Fulk the Good of Anjou who was a rival of her brother. In the fighting that followed, Conan I of Rennes eventually became duke, having made an alliance with the count of Blois and defeated Judicael Bérengar. In order to rid himself of influence from Blois, Conan then signed a pact with Richard I of Normandy and thus established firm Breton-Norman links for the first time (see de la Borderie 1898, 246-8).

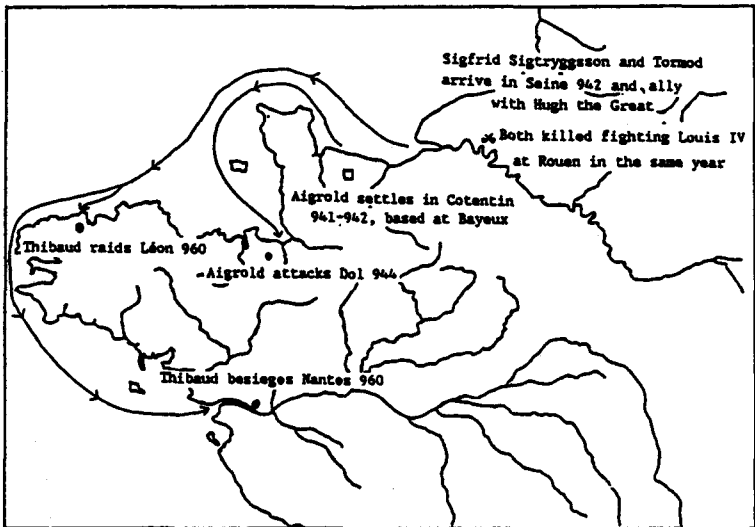


Fig. 14. Viking raids from Normandy, 941-960

In 960 a renegade Norman, Thibaud, attacked the monasteries around Léon with a small fleet and went on to besiege Nantes; he was defeated after a short battle (*CN* 111-12). Between 961 and 965 Normandy was again wracked by internal warfare following raids made from the Seine against Chartres and the Breton March (Breese 1977, 53; Douglas 1947, 107-8). As the tenth century wore on the Neustrians and Normans rapidly fused into a single people, encouraged by growing prosperity and urban expansion. The Normans, however, did not lose their Scandinavian links. Richard II (996-1026) received from Sveinn Forkbeard of Denmark a share of the plunder from his invasion of England (Bates 1982, 7), and Norman mercenaries may have fought alongside Vikings at Clontarf in 1014. That year also saw the last recorded raid on Brittany, when Dol was burned by a Viking fleet (Chédeville and Guillotel 1984, 400).

Breton dependency on the Normans grew (in 1030 Alain III paid homage to Duke Robert) and by the reign of William the Conqueror, Brittany was feudally dependent on Normandy after the duke had reasserted the old claims to overlordship (see de Boüard 1984, 222-7). William seems to have played the Bretons against each other; the Bayeux Tapestry shows him besieging Conan II at Dol with the help of Harold Godwinson (though Conan was in fact probably besieging it himself). Although he

supported Riwallon of Dol against Conan, William later released Conan after his defeat, and the latter promptly imprisoned Riwallon. Having demonstrated his power, William had gained an ally and while a Breton contingent fought at Hastings in 1066, Conan attacked Anjou rather than taking advantage of William's absence from Normandy (Wilson 1985, 178-81), though it is interesting to note that it was the Bretons of all his army who failed him in the battle.

After the Conquest, several notable Bretons, among them Judhael of Totnes, Alan of Richmond, Eudo of Tattershall and Alfred of Lincoln, received lands in England from which they took their names; a small Breton colony was established in Richmondshire (Stenton 1971, 628-30). The problems caused by the imposition of feudalism on Breton society made them always something of an anachronism among William's subjects (they actually mounted a brief rebellion at Dol in 1076, see Stenton 1971, 608; feudal elements in earlier Breton society are considered by de la Borderie 1898, 210-44). Within decades of the Conquest they found themselves without an independent homeland and with no direction for development or expansion; this was especially true for those in England, 'alien among the invaders of an alien land' (Stenton 1961, 28). It is surely ironic that after more than a century of struggle for self-assertion and freedom from Scandinavian oppression, culminating in Alain's great victory of 939, within a hundred and fifty years the Bretons were reduced to second-rate vassals of a fifth-generation Viking.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Having reviewed the historical background we can now turn to the archaeological material as an independent record, comparing it with the theories put forward in the previous section. Of particular importance is the period 919-939, the duration of the Scandinavian occupation, and it is to this that archaeology can make the biggest contribution. Although meagre by comparison with the archaeology of Danelaw towns such as York, the material impact of the Scandinavians in Brittany is considerable and certainly more pronounced than in Wales or Cornwall. This is surprising considering both the relatively short period of known occupation and also the limited nature of Breton medieval archaeological investigation to date (see Sanquer 1976).

The Breton evidence falls into four categories, fortifications, place-names, burials and weapons, with additional study of indigenous monasteries, rural settlements and commerce. The excavated material from Normandy will be briefly reviewed and finally mention will be made of Frankish artefacts found in Scandinavia.

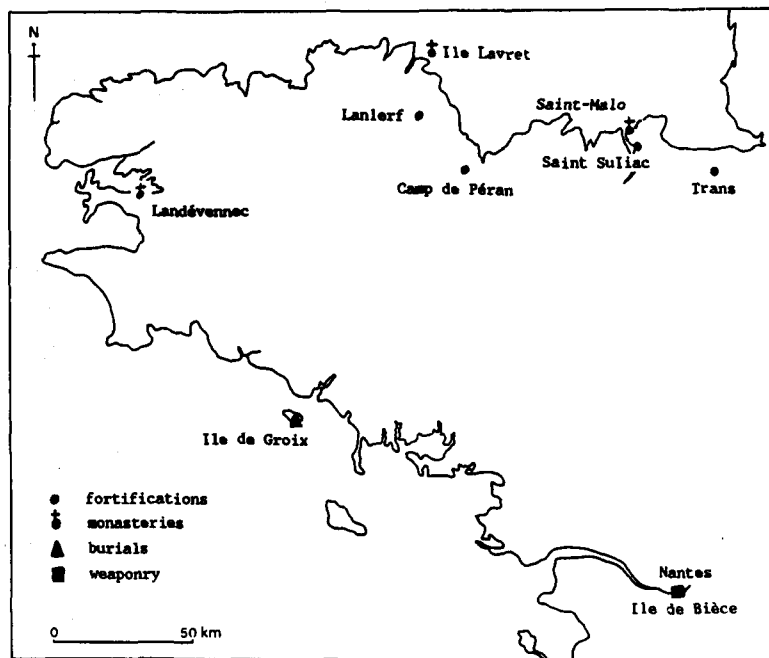


Fig. 15. Scandinavian sites and finds in Brittany

Fortifications

The most impressive Scandinavian remains in Brittany are fortifications. Two of these have now been confirmed as dating to the Viking period, and more particularly to the early tenth-century occupation. The first is the Camp de Pérán, near Plédran and Saint-Brieuc in northern Brittany. The site comprises an irregularly circular earth-work with a single 3m high rampart and 4m wide ditch, dominating the valleys of the Urne and Gonet (the appearance of a double ditch is due to the removal of earth from the main ditch; see Nicolardot 1984, 3-4). Originally assigned to the Iron Age, the site has been redated following excavations which have been carried out there since 1983 and are still continuing. Sections

across the ramparts have revealed a composition of large stone blocks resting on a clay bank, with timber bracing on a vertical and horizontal lattice; the rampart has been preserved by vitrification as a result of a fire which has been found to have engulfed the whole site. This vitrification effect stops a metre from the base of the rampart which has been interpreted by the director as showing two phases of construction, though this has been disputed on the grounds of the intensity of the heat required to fuse the entire rampart (Anne Nissen-Jaubert, pers. comm.; see also Nicolardot, Nissen-Jaubert and Wimmers 1987, 230-31). The rampart is estimated to have been originally nearly 4m high and 5m thick. Although only a few trial trenches have been dug in the interior to date, some remarkable finds have been made. The most significant is a coin of Saint Peter minted at York c. 905-925, found in the burnt layers beneath the collapsed rampart in area 2 (see excavation plan, Fig. 16); nearby was found a small fragment of metal believed to be from a helmet; in area 3 the ferrule of a lance has been uncovered. Further dating is provided by considerable quantities of tenth-century pottery and a series of radiocarbon dates which cluster around 865-1045. While on current evidence it is perhaps premature to suggest that the site 'presents the typological characteristics appropriate to Viking fortified sites' (Nicolardot 1984, 10, comparing it with the Danish Trelleborg-type enclosures), the find of the York coin, although so far unique, does lend weight to the theory that the Camp de Péran was either constructed, reoccupied or attacked by Vikings in the early tenth century, a period when it was certainly in use. This hypothesis is further strengthened by the record of Alain Barbetorte's landing at Dol in 936 and subsequent battle with a Viking force near Saint-Brieuc (Flodoard *Ann.* 936; *CN* 89); this would certainly fit the picture of the destruction at Péran. Future excavations at the site over the coming years are sure to expand considerably our knowledge of the Viking occupation (the main published reports are Nicolardot 1984-7; Nicolardot, Nissen-Jaubert and Wimmers 1987, with additional notes in Chédeville and Tonnere 1987, 183).

The second major fortification relating to the Scandinavian occupation is at Trans, Ille et Vilaine, where two earthworks lie 500m apart. The first, known as Vieux M'Na, is an 80m by 90m trapezoid with double banks and multiple, very wide ditches. The enclosure is divided in two by a bank of granite blocks of exceptional size. Although unexcavated, the site has parallels in shape at Saint Suliac near La Rance and Lanlerf near Saint-Brieuc (where de la

CAMP de PÉRAN

Plédran, Côtes-du-Nord

Plan of Excavations

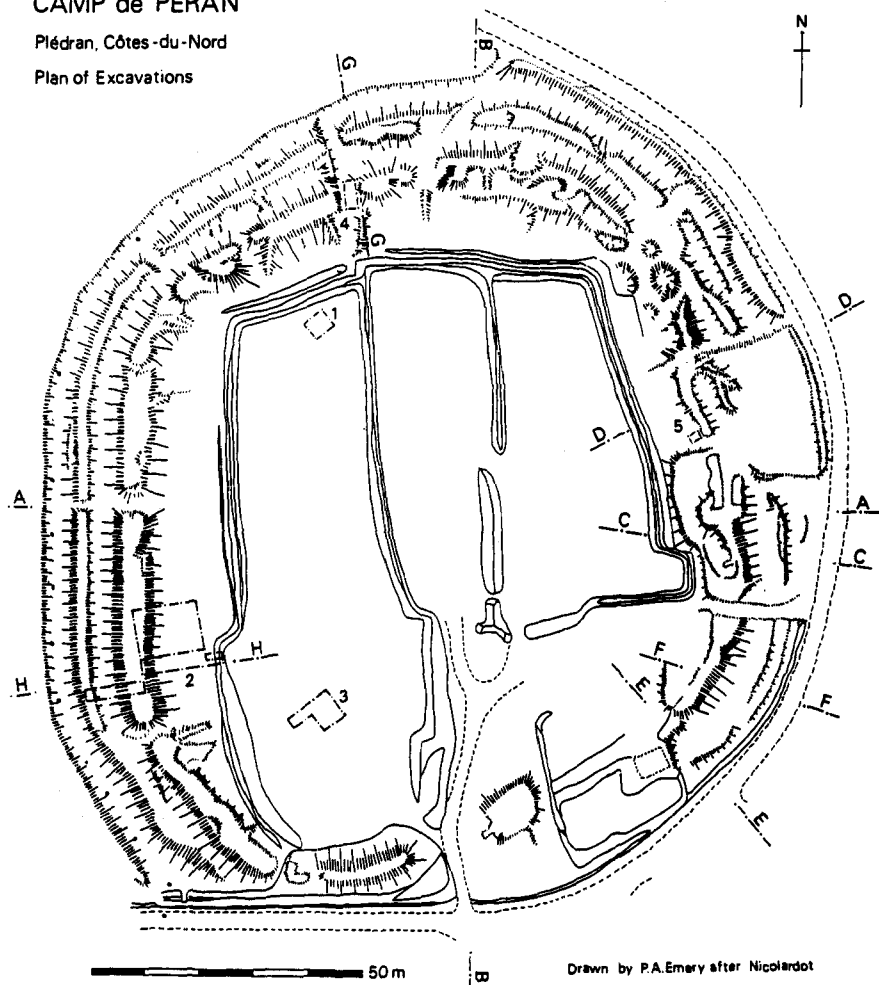


Fig. 16.

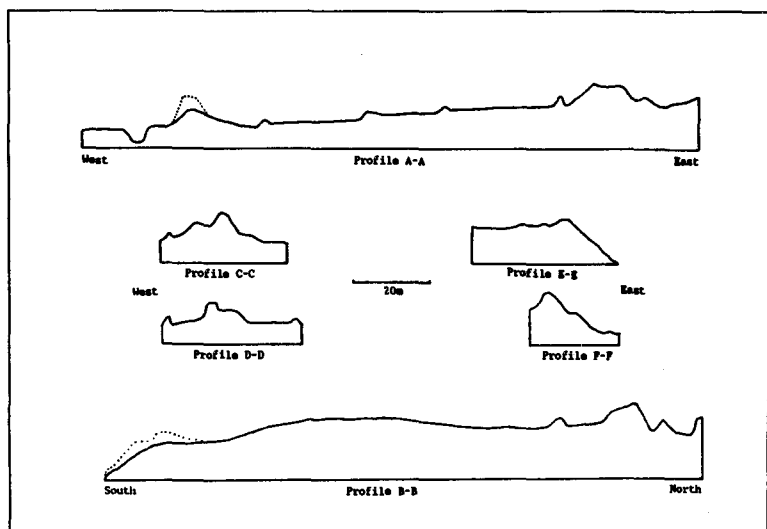


Fig. 17. Profiles across the ramparts of the Camp de Pérán – see main plan for locations (after Raboron in Nicolardot 1984).

Borderie 1898, 388 placed the 936 battle). Half a kilometre away on the crest of a hill is the Camp des Haies, a circular double-ditched enclosure which was excavated in 1979. Pottery found in the nineteenth century provides a firm date of 920-980 for the occupation, and the excavations showed the rock-cut ditches to be very rough and irregular; this is interpreted by the excavators as an indication of hasty construction. A few ephemeral traces of interior structures were observed, and finds of iron nails and a knife were made. It has been suggested that the enclosure at Vieux M'Na is that constructed by the Loire Vikings in 939 after their retreat from Nantes, and that the Camp des Haies is Alain Barbetorte's siege camp built shortly before the battle of Trans that year. While this interpretation does fit the pattern of the battle as described in the documentary sources, and the earthworks are certainly in the right location, the lack of evidence from Vieux M'Na means that any firm conclusion will have to wait until this site is excavated. (The excavations are published as Hamel-Simon, Langouet, Nourry-Denayer and Mouton 1979, from which the above interpretations are taken, with additional references in Guigon 1987a, 228 and Chédeville and Tonnere 1987, 184).

By way of brief comparison with the fortifications at Pérán and Trans, mention should be made of the 150m diameter circular earthwork at Oost-Souburg in Zeeland. Generally dated to the



Fig. 18. Section H-H through the rampart and ditch at the Camp de Péran, with plan of excavated area. Position of St. Peter's coin from York indicated by arrow (P. A. Emery after Nicolardot and Tostioint in Nicolardot 1984).

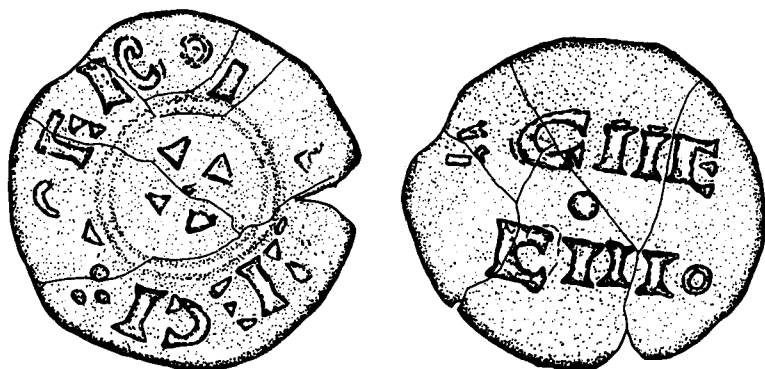


Fig. 19. Coin of St. Peter minted at York c. 905-925, found at the Camp de Péran. Legend reads EBORACE CI (heavily worn) and a corruption of SCI PETRINO. Diameter 2cm. (P. A. Emery after Nicolardot 1984).

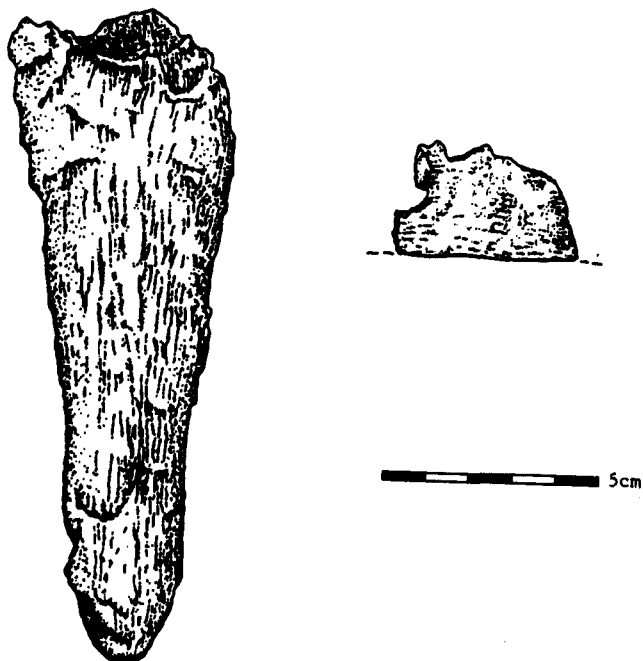


Fig. 20 Lance ferrule and possible helmet fragment found at the Camp de Péran. (P. A. Emery after Nicolardot 1984).

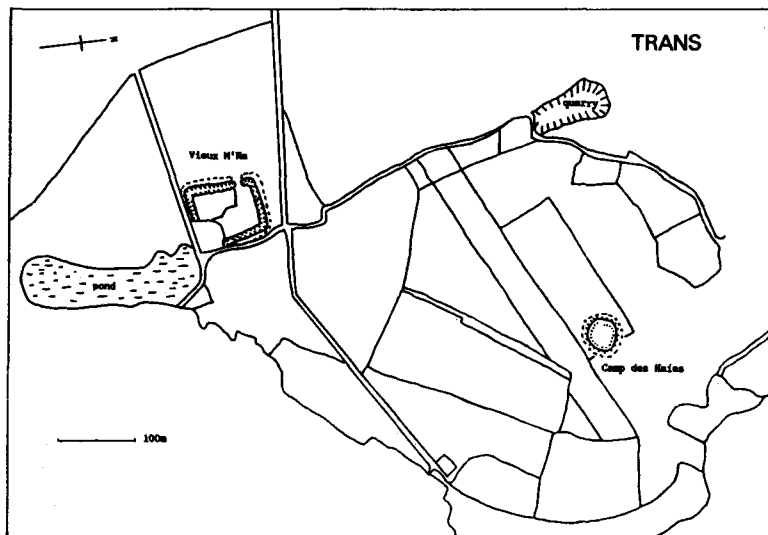


Fig. 21. Location plan of the earthworks at Trans (after Hamel-Simon et al 1979).

late ninth/early tenth centuries, though precise dating is as yet impossible, the site has been interpreted as one of the chain of forts built to defend Flanders against Viking attack (Sawyer 1982a, 82, 87), but might equally well be a Scandinavian base (Trimpe Burger 1973). It is possible that any Viking fortifications in Brittany were constructed under the influence of forts such as these or the burhs of Ælfred's Wessex, which may have also provided the idea for the Trelleborg-type enclosures of Denmark.

There are many other fortifications in Brittany dated to the Carolingian period; indeed Breton medieval archaeology has tended to concentrate on them (Sanquer 1976, 16-18). None, however, shows definite Scandinavian activity and they may well be Breton defences against Viking or Frankish attack. Documentary sources show a period of construction of fortifications around personal residences and at strategic sites like bridges by the Breton and Frankish aristocracy from c. 864 to 879, with a second period of fortification by royal command after 887 (Hodges 1981a, 224). Terminology is a problem with these sources; Alain the Great's residences at Rieux and Plessé are described as *castella* (Smith 1985) and the late twelfth-century *Song of Aiquin* uses similar terms to describe a fortification at Dorlet with a ditch, moat and high rampart occupied by Aiquin's Vikings in the reign of Charlemagne (Guigon 1987a, 228). The civil defences constructed during the aristocratic power struggles around Rennes and Nantes

are also referred to in several documents (see Chédeville and Tonnere 1987, 184).

Any attempt to take an overview of fortification types in Brittany, in order to put sites like Péran and Trans into context, is frustrated by problems with the dating of these features and their arrangement in a relative chronological sequence. Mottes are found in the tenth century in Brittany, but exist concurrently with circular camps as late as 1050 (cf. the excavations at Lou-du-Lac (Guigon 1987a, 228) and Lamber en Ploumoguier (Sanquer 1976, 18); see also Chédeville and Tonnere 1987, 184). Attempts have been made by de Boüard and Fournier (1977) to set the fortifications in a landscape context using documentary references, and Breton fortifications are now chronologically classified by *département* (see Chédeville and Tonnere 1987, 181-2). To confuse the issue, Iron Age earthworks are known to have been re-occupied in the eleventh century and there are also problems of recognition; several excavators have mistaken windmill mounds and even tumuli for mottes (Chédeville and Tonnere 1987, 181).

Carolingian earthworks excavated in Brittany include the ramparts and chapel sequence at Lezkelen en Plabennec (Irien 1976 and 1982), the tenth-century enclosure at Goarum ar Salud (Guigon 1987b) and the circular fortifications at Botalec and Kermestre en Baud (Chédeville and Tonnere 1987, 183). A particularly spectacular example is the promontory fort at Castel-Cran en Plélauff, 130m above the confluence of the Blavet and Cavern rivers in Côtes-du-Nord. Though the presently visible walls date to the eleventh century, finds show that a ninth-century enclosure preceded them (Chédeville and Tonnere 1987, 185). The site was deserted in the early tenth century on coin evidence and has been tentatively interpreted as a *machtiern's* residence (Jones 1981, 156). Breton defences seem to have relied extensively on inaccessibility and the local topography of marshes or rocky slopes.

The major towns allowed their walls to decay in the early ninth century, which is surprising when one considers the obvious strategic importance of the urban settlements evident in the Franks' Breton campaigns. Urban defence may have centred on cathedrals and ecclesiastical sites as refuges; several are known to have had fortifications, as at Nantes in 937 and possibly Saint-Paul-de-Léon (Smith 1985). Alain Barbetorte's wall at Nantes was excavated in 1913 and was found to have been largely built of re-used materials, including Roman tiles and Merovingian sarcophagi, its hasty construction an indication of the perceived threat from the Vikings

even after their 937 defeat (Guigon 1984, 36 and 1987a, 228; a similar contemporary wall, known as the Norman Gate, still stands in Perigeux). It is possible that the walls of Rennes and Vannes were re-fortified in the tenth century after the return of Alain II (Jones 1981, 153; see also Musset 1974 for urban growth in this period), but this rests on very tenuous source evidence (Wendy Davies, pers. comm.). The appearance of later fortifications may be recovered in part for Dinan, Dol and Rennes from the Bayeux Tapestry (Wilson 1985, though note his reservations 178-81).

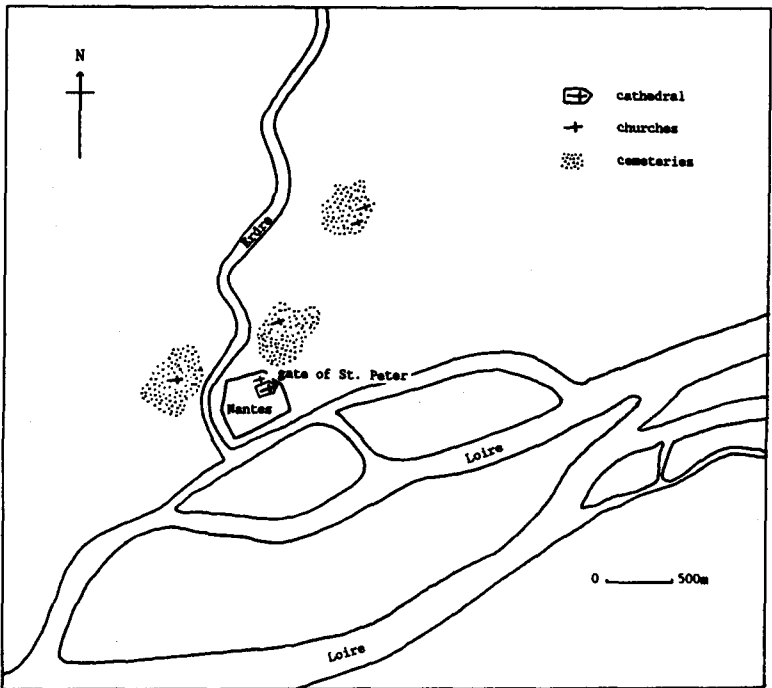


Fig. 22. The topography of early medieval Nantes (after Barral i Altet 1984).

Place-names

Place-name studies neatly illustrate the problems associated with fortifications in Brittany: the *motte*, *roche* and *plexis* names cluster thickly on the borders of Neustria, Maine and Anjou, and are very numerous: 115 in Loire Atlantique, 251 in Ille et Vilaine, 44 in Côtes-du-Nord, 37 in Morbihan and 17 in Finistère (Jones 1981, 157). Even the names do not always reflect the true situation, as graphically demonstrated by the known presence of 166 mottes

of all periods in Finistère alone, the majority of which are thought to have ninth- and tenth-century origins (Jones 1981, 156). Difficulties associated with Breton place-name studies are highlighted by Musset (1975a, 190-200), part of the problem being the low level of French place-name research compared to the intensity of investigation of, for example, Danelaw names (Fellows-Jensen 1988, 113).

The only place-names in Brittany which may have a Scandinavian origin are those containing the element *la Guerche*, from Old Norse *virki* or Frankish *werki*, meaning a fortification. Askeberg (1944, 181-5) found three examples in Brittany, near Vitré, Vannes and Saint-Brieuc (the latter offering another candidate for the location of Alain Barbetorte's 936 battle), in addition to twenty-nine others elsewhere in France. However, Quentel (1962) has located many more *la Guerche* names, not only in Brittany but with a widespread distribution all over France, thus strengthening the suggestion that the names may in fact be of Frankish origin. A valuable exercise regrettably beyond the scope of this paper would be to compare the Scandinavian personal-name elements cited by Adigard des Gautries (1954a) with the Breton names listed by Loth (1890), in the hope of revealing Scandinavian influence on the population itself (I am grateful to John Dodgson for this suggestion). The Breton place-names themselves are discussed in de Courson's introduction to the *Cartulaire de Redon* (1863, xc-xciv).

Burials

In contrast to the other categories of archaeological material, the evidence for Scandinavian burials in Brittany is not only unequivocal but also without parallel in the whole of France. In 1906, two amateur archaeologists, du Chatellier and le Pontois, excavated a partially eroded mound on a cliff edge near Locmaria on the Ile de Groix, 6km from the southern Breton coast. The mound overlooked a small, sandy bay, the only suitable landing spot in that part of the island, and was easily visible from a great distance. Upon excavation, the mound was found to cover an extensive cremation deposit, recognised as the burnt remains of a longship. From the excavators' reports and Müller-Wille's 1978 publication of the finds it is possible to build up a sequence of events on the site.

First, the ship was dragged up to the headland: a vessel between

11m and 13m long, possibly with a smaller ship's boat as in the Gokstad burial (800 rivets survive but more than 1000 are mentioned; Müller-Wille 1978, 68 argues for a second boat on this basis). An area 17m in diameter was marked out by four vertical stone slabs and further slabs were arranged in a line leading off to the south-west (see plan, Fig. 24). These may have marked out the path by which the ship was brought up, or the route of a funeral procession. The mound seems to have been prepared before the ship was burnt judging by the condition of the turfs of which it was composed (du Chatellier and le Pontois 1908-9, 129).

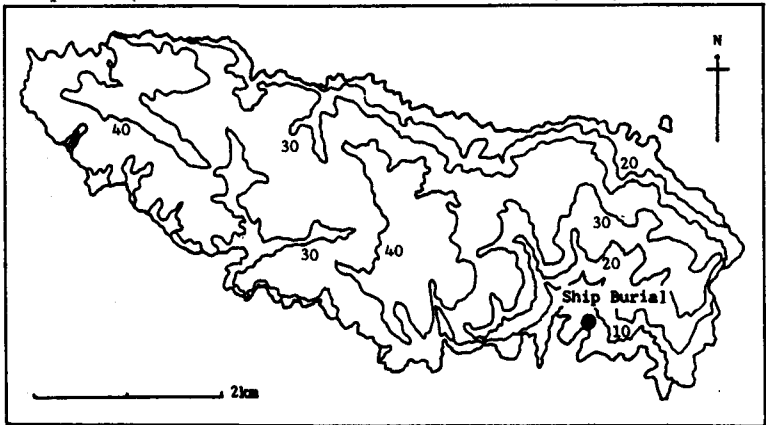
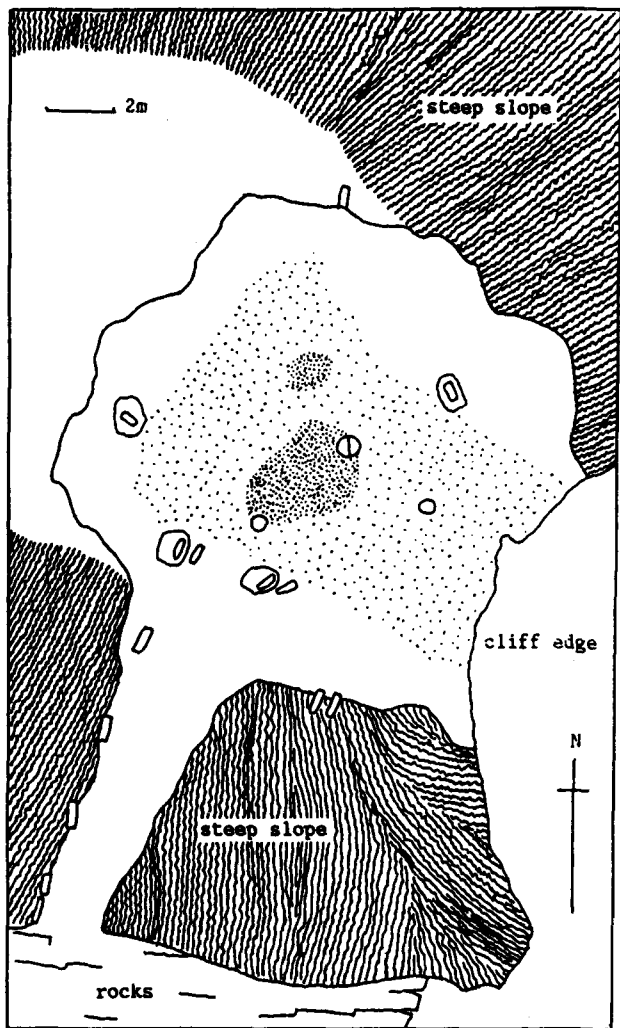


Fig. 23. The Ile de Groix, showing contours and location of the barrow (after Müller-Wille 1978).

The ship contained the remains of two people, one mature and one adolescent (possibly a weapon-bearer or slave, as at Balladoole and Ballateare on the Isle of Man, see Bersu and Wilson 1966), along with dogs and birds. Among the objects found in the 15cm thick burnt deposit, more than 6m × 5m in area, were weapons, riding gear, jewellery, tools, vessels, gaming pieces and agricultural implements (for full descriptions of the objects see Müller-Wille 1978, 51-8; a list is given in Appendix 1 below). After being burnt, the ship was closed in the mound after the area outside the vertical stones had been carefully swept. The barrow was composed of shingle, clay and sand, and raised over 5m high and 20m in diameter.

As to the date of the burial, Müller-Wille suggests the second half of the tenth century on the basis of the Mammen style decoration on one of the swords, though he does allow a 'Spielraum' (Müller-Wille 1978, 68). However, much of the material dates to the late ninth/early tenth century; sufficient perhaps to give a more










- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
|  | limits of mound |  | concentrations of objects |
|  | standing stones |  | iron cauldron |
|  | standing stones on horizontal slabs |  | bronze vessels |
|  | burnt area | | |

Fig. 24. Plan of the Ile de Groix ship burial (after du Chatellier and le Pontois 1908-9, scale added).

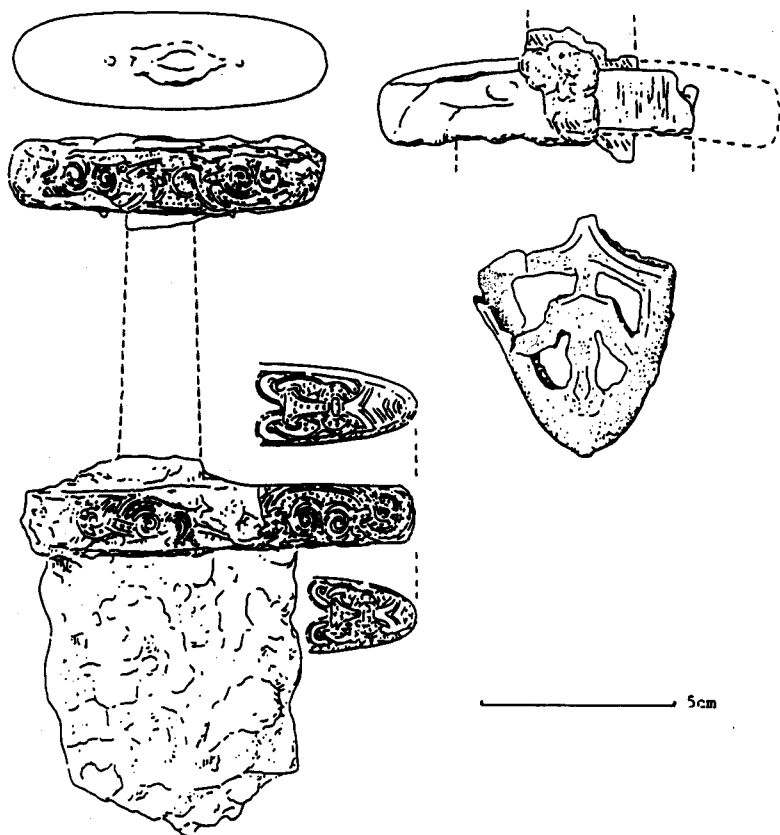


Fig. 25. The swords and scabbard chape from the Ile de Groix ship burial (P. A. Emery after Müller-Wille 1978).

general date for the cremation of 900-1000. (A detailed discussion of the dating is beyond the scope of this paper, but see the comprehensive listing of parallels with Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 184-92 in Müller-Wille 1978, 58-70. A date of c. 900 is favoured by Brøndsted 1965, 83 and Breese 1977, 48.⁷) Overall, the burial has a Norwegian cultural background in a rather older tradition (see Fell 1980), but the artefact assemblages indicate links with France and perhaps also Ireland (Müller-Wille 1978, 68-9; Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 192). In general, its closest parallel is to mounds one and three at Myklebost in Norway; its Norwegian affinities have been supported by Musset (1965, 124).

Is the Groix tomb that of a later sea raider, well after the period of occupation in the early tenth century (Sawyer 1982a, 98), or is

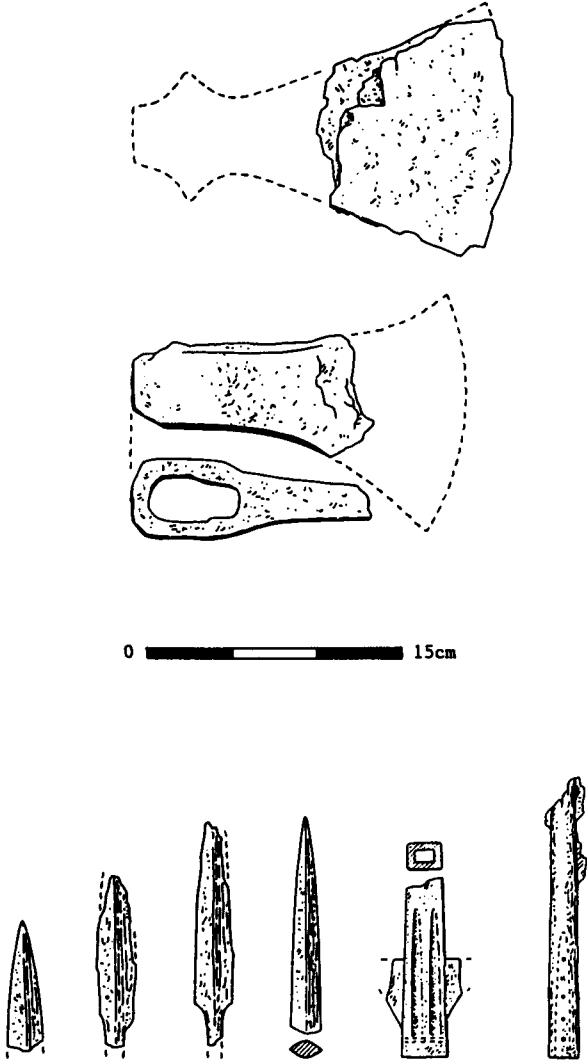
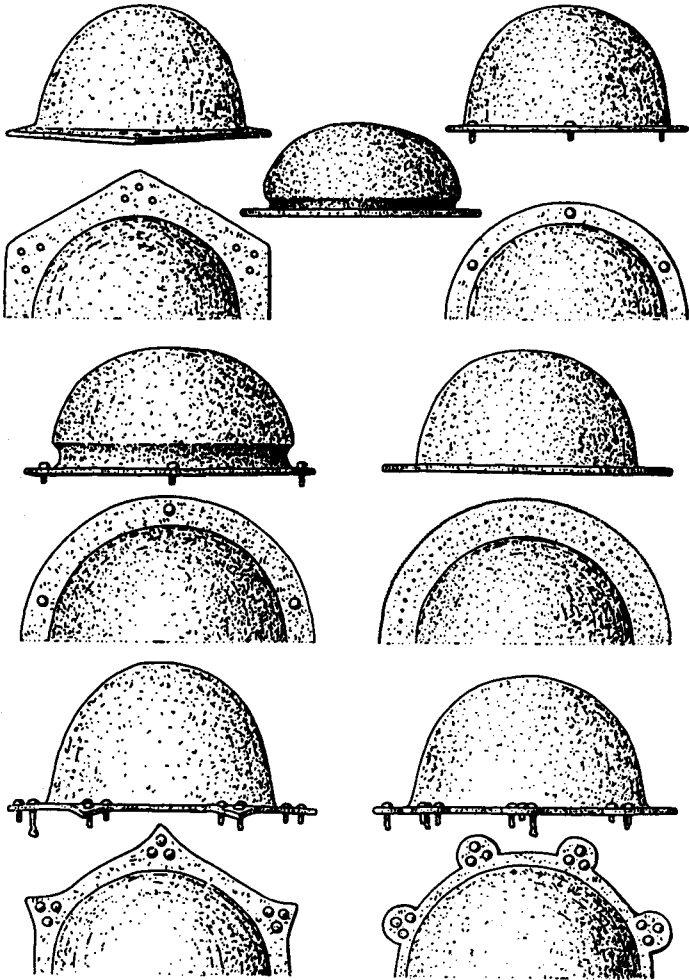


Fig. 26. Axes, arrowheads and lanceheads from the Ile de Groix ship burial (from Müller-Wille 1978; reprinted by kind permission).




0  15cm

Fig. 27. A selection of shield bosses from the Ile de Groix ship burial (from Müller-Wille 1978; reprinted by kind permission).

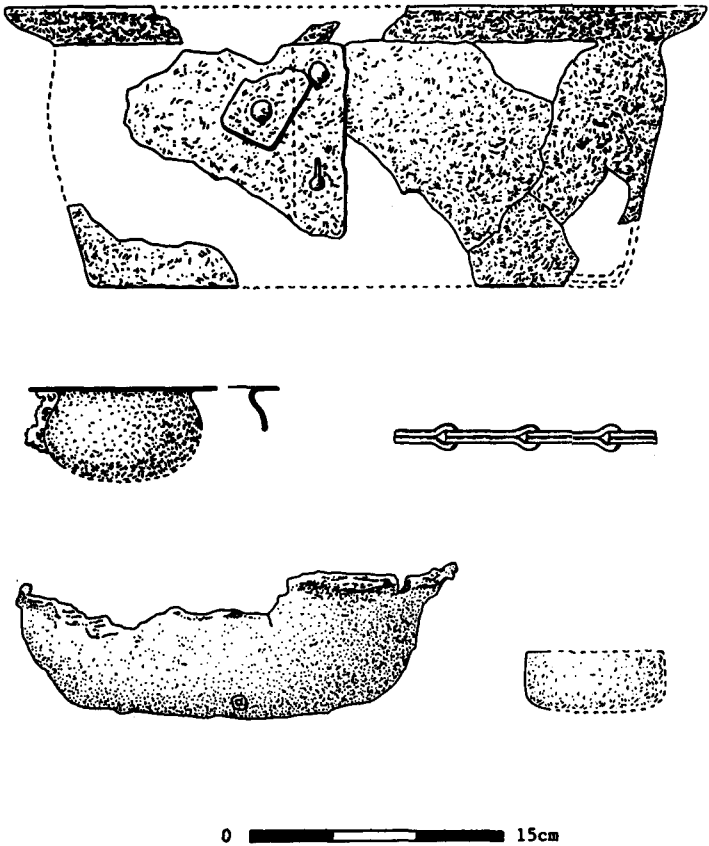


Fig. 28. Iron cauldron, bronze vessels and chain from the Ile de Groix ship burial (from Müller-Wille 1978; reprinted by kind permission).

it contemporary with the 919-937 invasion? There is no way to obtain a definite solution, but I would argue for contemporaneity for several reasons. Firstly, the Norwegian background, especially its militantly old-fashioned paganism, seems to fit well with the picture of the invaders as anachronistic Viking warriors at the time of settlement and conversion elsewhere as discussed in chapter 2. Secondly, the parallels with the Westfold ship burials are particularly striking given the probable origin of Rognvaldr and his followers; and finally the burial ritual seems far too elaborate to be the work of peripatetic sea raiders. The Groix burial is totally isolated in Europe; it is the only known Viking cremation outside Scandinavia (Foote and Wilson 1970, 407), with the possible exception of Ingleby. It is tempting to suggest that a burial of such

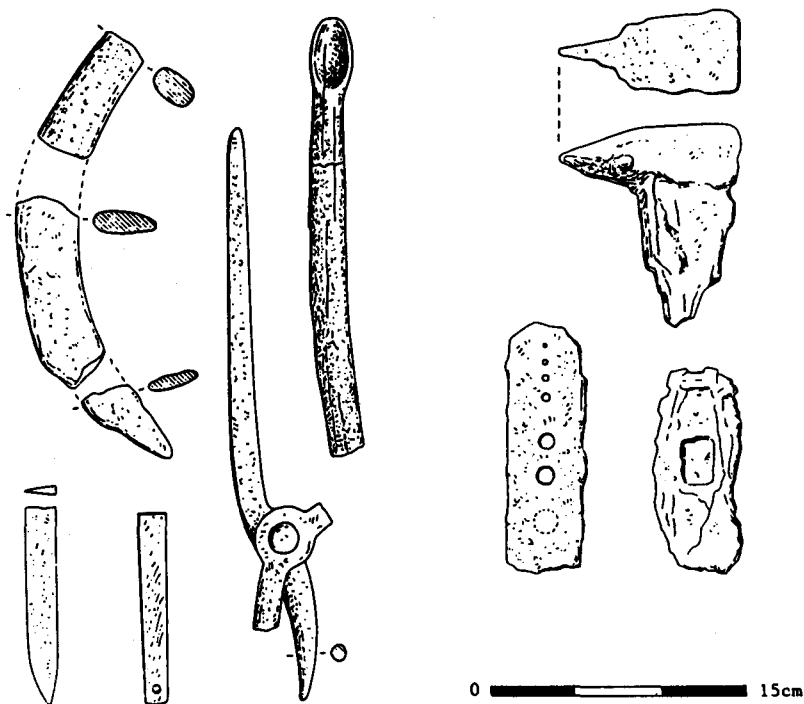


Fig. 29. Tools from the Ile de Groix ship burial (from Müller-Wille 1978; reprinted by kind permission).

magnificence could only have been for a chieftain of pre-eminent status. Is it possible that Groix was the last resting place of one of the Nantes leaders mentioned by Flodoard? Possible, but unfortunately not provable. One last point that could link the burial to the Nantes Vikings is Arbman and Nilsson's suggestion (1966-8, 191) that the unusual star-shaped shield bosses, with no known parallels, are in fact products of the Loire. It would certainly be natural for a mobile fighting force to maintain and manufacture its own weapons, and perhaps even unavoidable for the isolated Scandinavians in Brittany. Once again, this must remain hypothesis until further evidence is uncovered.

Two of the objects deserve special mention. The burial provided the only known example of a stern ornament from a Viking ship (several prow vanes have survived): a 60cm diameter circular band of metal with leaves and movable rings around its edge, probably a 'dragon's tail' like that depicted on a runestone from Smiss, Stenkyrka, on Gotland (see Arbman 1961, 82-4, pl. 21). The other unusual artefact was regarded as an object of unknown function



Fig. 30. Jewellery, fittings, belt equipment, gaming pieces and a clench nail from the Ile de Groix ship burial (from Müller-Wille 1978; reprinted by kind permission).

by the original excavators, but identified as a bent lancehead by Müller-Wille (1978, 53) and Arbman and Nilsson (1966-8, 188-9). Wilson has recently cited a parallel on the Bayeux Tapestry, where a man standing in the water next to a ship is depicted holding a curved rod (1985, 175). It is most likely however, that what the tapestry shows is a type of angled chisel used for working grooves on ship timbers (illustrated in McGrail 1980, 53).

Weapons

The only other specifically Scandinavian objects from Brittany are weapons, found by chance. Two swords have been discovered

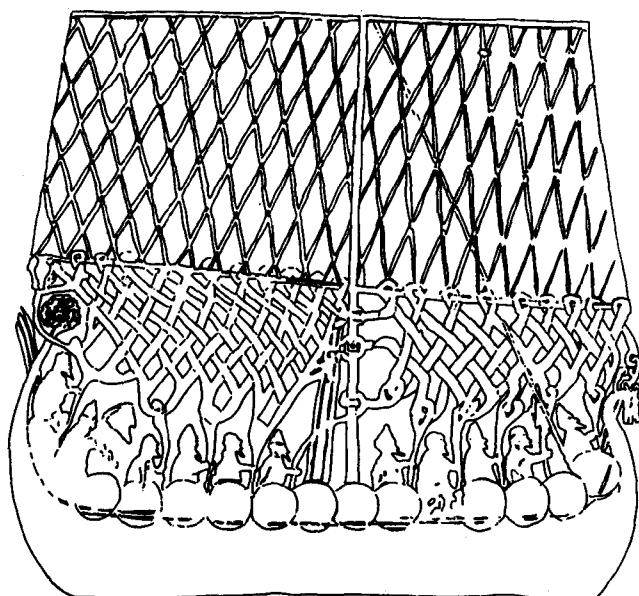
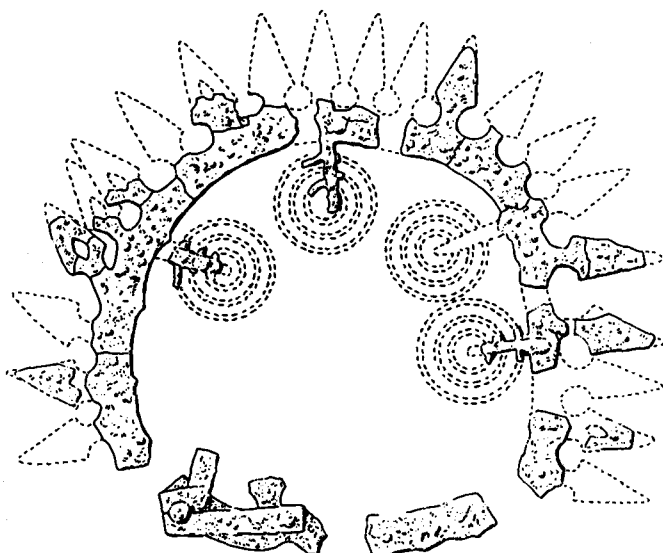
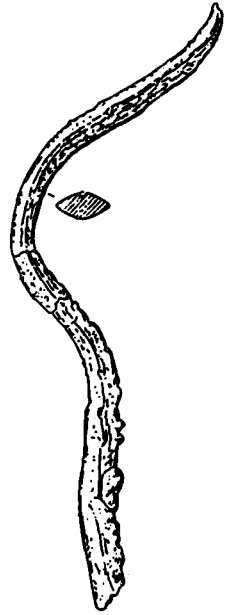


Fig. 31. The stern ornament from the Ile de Groix ship (above), diameter 60cm (from Müller-Wille 1978) and (below) the ship depicted on the stone from Smiss, Stenkyrka, on Gotland (P. A. Emery after photo in Arbman 1961).



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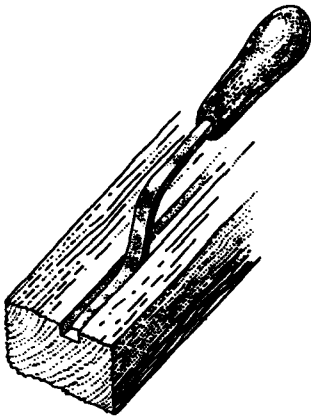


Fig. 32. Above: the controversial lancehead from the Ile de Groix ship burial (from Müller-Wille 1978; reprinted by kind permission). Top left: the figure from the Bayeux Tapestry holding an angular object which Wilson (1985, 175) has compared to the Ile de Groix lancehead. The Tapestry probably depicts a type of angled wood-working chisel used in shipbuilding and shown bottom left (from McGrail 1980).

on the Ile de Bièze where Godfred's Danes were besieged by Sidroc's fleet in alliance with Erispoe in 854, two more of type H have been found in the Sens and at the confluence of the Loire and Chezine, and another type H sword was reported from Nantes in the nineteenth century (all these weapons are described by Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 166-71). Considering the amount of Viking activity around the Loire, so few finds are surprising, but it is likely that many of the Frankish weapons that have been discovered were in fact used by Scandinavians (Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 192).

Monasteries, rural settlements and commerce

Despite the dearth of recognisably Scandinavian finds in Brittany, the archaeological reflection of the Breton reaction to the raids is also of value. Of particular interest are the results of excavations at ecclesiastical centres. At Landévennec work has revealed the reconstruction of the church after it was destroyed by the Vikings in 913, including a superb tile floor, c. 950 on archaeomagnetic dating (Bardel, Barral i Altet and Caziot 1984, 81-2). Wooden remains from the late ninth-century church have been located below the burnt levels of the Scandinavian attack, as have re-used pieces of worked stone from the church built into the later tenth-century structure. Carolingian coins of the early tenth century have also been found (for the latest reports see Bardel 1985-7). Viking destruction debris has been excavated at Saint-Malo (Langouet 1976 and 1979) and at the monastery on the Ile Lavret, attacked in 884, along with finds of Carolingian pottery and jewellery (Giot 1983-5; 1987).

Several more monasteries and churches occupied at the time of the Scandinavian raids have been located, such as the crypt and relics found at Lanmeur along with gold pendants datable to the early tenth century (Guigon 1986). The Breton clergy favoured isolated hermitages as well as churches, following the example of Saint Samson. Some were attacked by the Vikings, including Locoal (CR 326); this site has not been excavated but it probably followed the Irish model as found elsewhere in Brittany, at Saint-Hervé-en-Lanrivoaré (Cleac'h and Letissier 1976) and Saint-Saturnin-en-Plomeur, where several oratories have been recorded (Giot 1975 and 1976; Giot and Monnier 1978). A contemporary cemetery with ninth-century burials at Salle des Fêtes, Corseul has

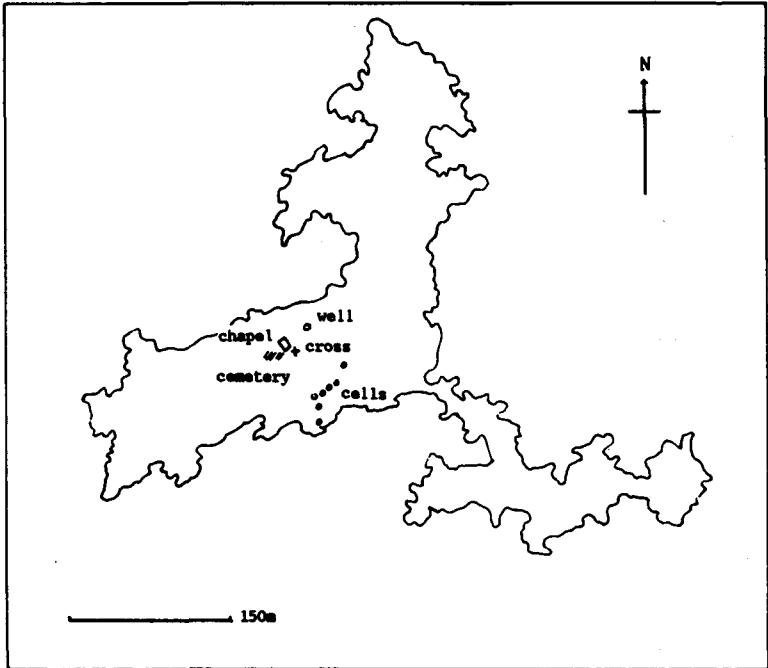


Fig. 33. The excavated remains of the monastery on the Ile Lavret raided by the Vikings in 884 (after Privat 1971).

also been excavated (Fichet de Clairfontaine 1986); the Breton cemetery evidence is reviewed by Guigon, Bardel and Batt (1987). Several coin hoards have been found as well, which may indicate attempts to hide wealth from Viking attack; notable examples are the hoard of c. 920-923 excavated at the church of Saint-Melaine at Rennes (Chédeville and Guillotel 1984, 384) and the Priziac hoard of more than 2000 coins (Davies 1988, 56).

Little is known about the rural settlements of this period, but they may have been similar to the eleventh-century village uncovered at Lann-Gouh Melrand, with its cluster of rectangular stone houses (André 1982; compare with Meirion-Jones 1982, chapter 8). The study of rural life in Brittany and its landscape context will be considerably advanced with the publication of the Oust-Vilaine watershed surveys that have been carried out by Astill and Davies since 1982 (see their 1982 and 1985 reports).

The nature of Breton commerce has been briefly referred to in chapter 2 but the archaeological evidence can add a little to the picture. The pottery industry appears to have been quite advanced,

with distinctive forms produced at Meudon, near Vannes (André, Barrère, Batt and Clément 1984 and Triste 1985-7) and Trans (Hodges 1981b, 74-5), examples of which have been found at Pledeliac, dated 920-980 (Henry 1983, 313). A possible additional kiln has been identified at Guipel (Lanos 1983). It is not possible to say at present whether these industries were maintained during the Scandinavian occupation, but no pottery has been found in definite association with Viking artefacts at the Camp de Péran. Full ceramic chronologies have not yet been developed for this period (see Hodges 1981b, 74-5) which would enable a definite statement to be made. As to other industries, the presence of quern quarries in eastern Brittany has been suggested (Hodges 1982, 124), and some local production of linen smoothers is likely, as the examples from Treguennec show (see Hodges 1982, 122 and Haevernick 1963, 130-8).

Before turning to the Norman material, which may be used to fill gaps in the archaeology of Brittany, the Breton evidence should be briefly reviewed. The finds at the Camp de Péran would seem to support the argument made in chapter 2 for Scandinavian occupation outside the Nantes area, and together with the Trans excavations serve to confirm aspects of the historical record of Alain Barbetorte's return. The scattered pattern of fortifications throughout the Breton countryside emphasises the preoccupation with local defence rather than organised resistance, and it is not hard to see how such a system would collapse under pressure from a large military force. Finds of Scandinavian weapons also corroborate the documentary sources, as do the destruction levels at the monasteries. The Ile de Groix burial remains slightly problematic due to its ambiguous date, but it does not contradict the ideas set out in chapter 2 and can considerably support them if it is interpreted as a territorial statement, like the Manx examples. Only the commercial evidence remains a serious problem; while the Vikings do not seem to have had recognisable mercantile interests in Brittany, much more work is required before we can be sure.

Normandy

Given Normandy's origins of Viking settlement it is not surprising that the region has produced more Scandinavian artefacts than Brittany; what is remarkable is the relative lack of material

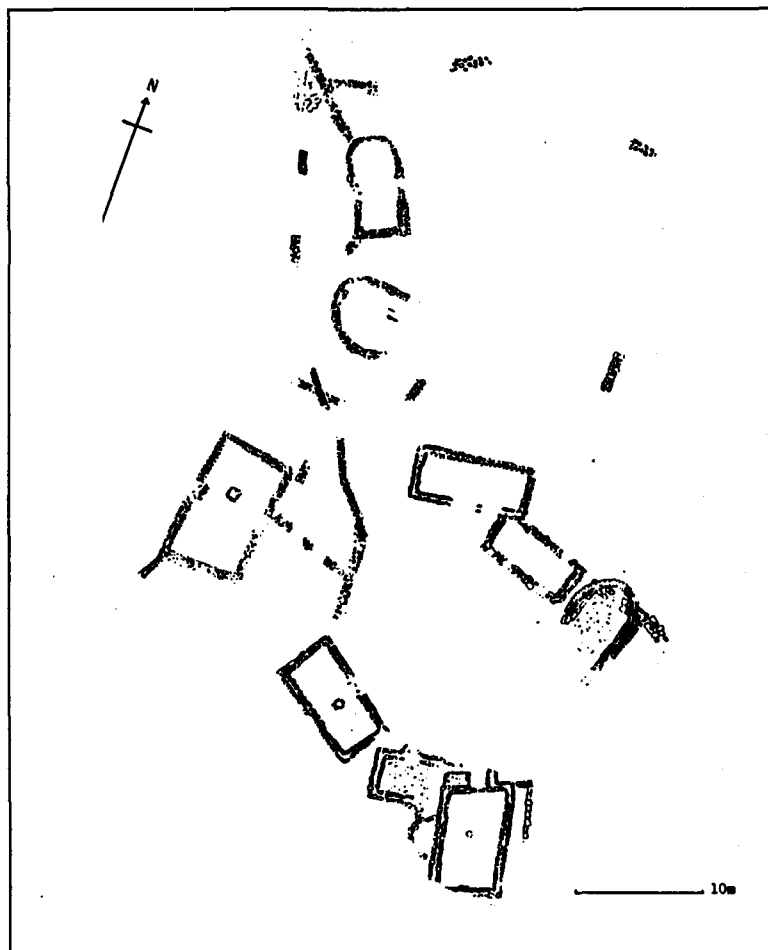


Fig. 34. Part of the eleventh-century Breton village at Lann-Gouh Melrand (after Mauny in André 1982).

compared to areas like the Danelaw. As in Brittany, the most impressive remains are fortifications. At La Hague, at the tip of the Cherbourg peninsula, a great dyke encloses more than five square miles of land including two deep-water bays and the only natural harbour on this stretch of coast. Originally thought to date to 900-800 B.C., the earthwork has been shown by excavation to be a two-phase construction, with the prehistoric ramparts being refortified in the ninth or tenth century (de Bouäard 1964b). It seems likely that the defences were elaborated to protect the natural landing stage and that the dyke was of Viking construction

(the name La Hague is of Scandinavian origin, one of only three *pagi* names to change to a Norse word; see Fellows-Jensen 1988, 119-20). The Scandinavians may have needed protection against Breton raids (the Cotentin had been ceded to Brittany in the mid-ninth century) and it is possible that during the early years of the 919-937 occupation the La Hague occupants were allied to the Breton Vikings; it is certainly recorded that the Scandinavians of this area were hostile to the Seine Vikings. Local tradition tells of a Viking called Moeren operating from La Hague around 960, folklore which may contain some truth (see de Boüard 1953 and Arbman's 1953 excavation report). Gillian Fellows-Jensen has suggested that the name may indicate a man from Mæren in Norway (pers. comm.), an interesting possibility considering that the name as we have it is almost certainly corrupt. Scandinavian burials are reported to have been found in the vicinity of the dyke (Bates 1982, 19).

A female Scandinavian grave has been excavated at Pîtres, with grave goods of pottery and two type P41 oval brooches. Their late ninth-century date implies that the woman was a camp follower of the Great Army on its rampages around Rouen (the find is published by Elmqvist 1966-8, who discusses the dating and parallels 209-23). The most enigmatic burials in Normandy may not be Scandinavian at all; at Réville, on the Cotentin coast, slab-constructed graves of several types were exposed by shifting sand in the early 1960s. Hasty excavation recorded stone settings in the shape of ship outlines, low cairns and rectangular lintel graves. The cairns contained decomposed vegetal matter and cremated bone, while the ship settings, 3.65m to 2.15m at the beam, preserved a few crumbling bone fragments covered by peat and flint. The lintels contained skeletons with carefully placed stone slabs covering them, with a crude quartz-tempered pot in one grave. All the graves were at the same level, the rectangular lintels oriented E/W or NW/SE and the ships broadly E/W. No dating processes have been applied to the bones, so all dating must rely on the typology of the only artefact, the pot. This has close parallels with the vessels found in graves 24 and 151 at Birka (Arbman 1940-43, 9, 66; see Fig. 36), and de Boüard argues for a parallel with a pot from Jarlshof (1964a; Hamilton 1956, 82 number 2); the Jarlshof example does not seem sufficiently close but the Réville pot shows definite affinities with the Slav-inspired flat-bottomed vessels of Sjælland and Øresund, as found at Trelleborg (Helen Clarke, pers. comm.; the pottery is illustrated by Roesdahl 1982, 122-3).

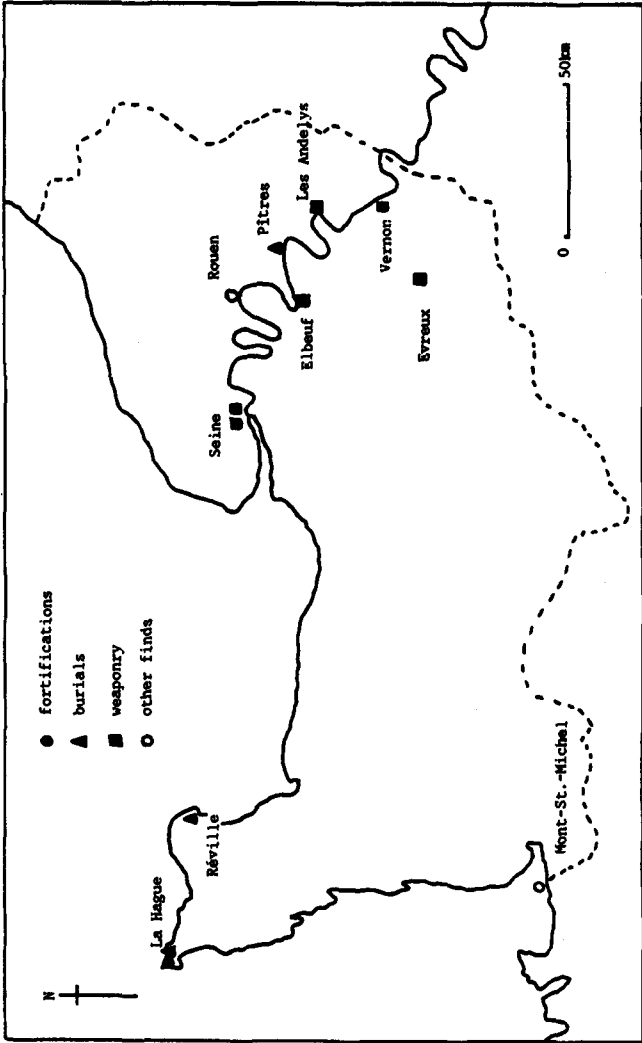
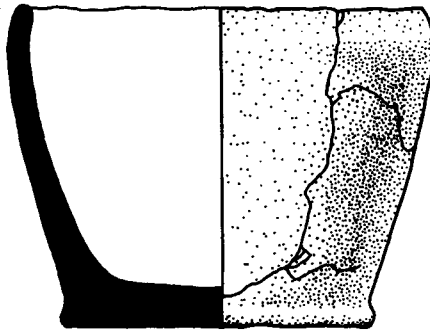


Fig. 35. Scandinavian sites and finds in Normandy.

While the burials seem initially like Scandinavian ship settings (as found at Lindholm Høje) superimposed on Frankish lintel graves, the lack of inter-cutting features and the pseudo-Scandinavian pot in a lintel grave make the hypothesis tenuous; in addition, we have insufficient knowledge of prehistoric burial types in this area to rule out an earlier date. The Réville graves must remain problematic until either the bones are dated or further comparative work is done.



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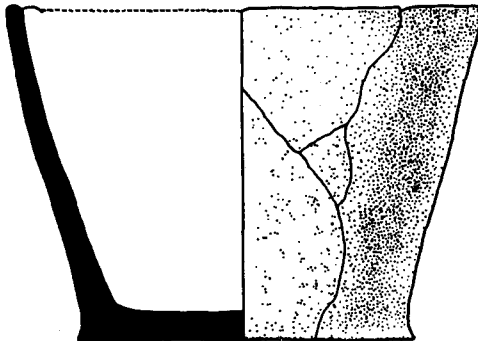


Fig. 36. Pots from Birka graves 24 (below) and 151 (above), comparable to the vessel from the Réville burial (P. A. Emery after Arbman 1940-43).

Scandinavian place-names can provide much information as to the settlement patterns in early Normandy, but only the data

relating to Brittany will be discussed here (for place-name studies in general, see the references in the second section of this chapter above). Fellows-Jensen (1988, 115-16) has noted that the *Bretteville* names on the Normandy coast may signify ninth-century settlement of Bretons as a deliberate policy of the Frankish kings to provide a buffer against Viking attack, but could equally relate to Bretons who came with the Scandinavian settlers in the tenth century. In Bessin and Maine, the lack of Scandinavian place-names may indicate that the cession of 924 recorded by Flodoard may have failed as a colony and was exposed to more limited Scandinavian influence (Fellows-Jensen 1988, 115). This latter point could well affect our perception of Rognvaldr's career during his campaigns with Hrólfr's army after the 919 occupation of Brittany, as discussed in chapter 2 at the end of the 4th section (but see Bates 1982, 9-10).

Turning to the finds of Scandinavian weaponry discovered accidentally over the years, we find a picture similar to that in Brittany. Many weapons must have been lost during the Viking raids of the ninth century and the Norman power struggles of the tenth; Neustria saw the most concentrated fighting of the entire Viking Age in France (see Werner 1985). Swords have been found at Vernon and Elbeuf, and a type G axe has been dredged from the Seine at les Andelys. The Seine has also produced swords of types M and Y. The only other Scandinavian weapon known from Normandy is a type H lance-head found at Evreux (see Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 163-75 for descriptions of all these weapons). In addition a horse bit of a type found in Scandinavian tenth-century graves was discovered in the vicinity of Rouen (Arbman 1961, 201).

Normandy has also produced two major coin hoards. In 1963, the largest hoard ever found in France was uncovered within the *castrum* area at Fécamp, dated 970-990 and containing 4400 pieces (see de Boüard 1963; Yver 1969, 341). However, from the Breton viewpoint the most important hoard is that found at Mont-Saint-Michel (Dolley and Yvon 1971). Among its contents was a coin bearing in corrupt form the legend VVILEIM DU(X?) BRI. Does this mean that William Longsword was issuing coins as Duke of the Bretons? If so, the substance of Dudo of Saint-Quentin's claims for Norman rule in Brittany may not be complete fiction (Bates 1982, 9; Dolley and Yvon 1971, 7-11).

By studying the late Neustrian and early Norman settlements we may find a reflection of a similar pattern in Brittany where the

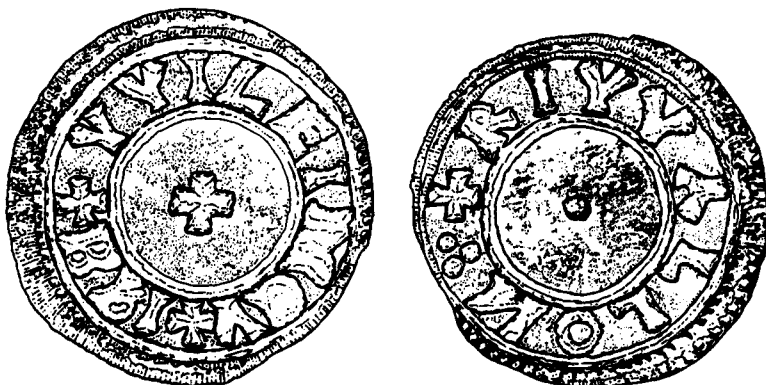


Fig. 37 Coin of William Longsword (reigned c. 925-942) found in the Mont-Saint-Michel hoard. Legend reads: Obverse: + VVILEIM D(reversed)VX (or +) IRB(reversed) for VVILEIM DUX BRI(TONUM) Reverse: + RIVVALLON ∴ (probably the name of the moneyer). Diameter 2 cm (P. A. Emery after photo by Pilet-Lemière).

archaeology is lacking. For fortified residences, le Maho (1980) has published several studies of early earthworks at Saint-Lô, Radicatel, Beaubec-la-Rosière and Quettehon along with his work on earlier timber structures in Normandy (Halbout and le Maho 1984). The excavations at Mirville show the range of buildings constructed in the eleventh century, with a complex of longhouse, stables and outbuildings which has remarkable pictorial parallels on the Bayeux Tapestry (Halbout and le Maho 1984, 57-61). These may be applied to slightly earlier settlements in eastern Brittany. More relevant still are the late ninth-century houses found at Saint-Martin de Mondeville, with finds of pottery, jewellery and carved memorial stones (Lorren 1985), and the Carolingian domestic buildings at Les Rues-des-Vignes and Brebières (Florin 1985). A complete landscape study has been carried out at Plessis Grimoult, with a survey of all known place-names, settlements, parish records and archaeology in the region of a fortified enclosure which was then excavated to reveal the internal structures (see Zadora-Rio 1974 for the full report).

Turning to higher-status sites, a massive contrast with the Breton material is seen. Annie Renoux's long-running excavations at Fécamp have produced an occupation sequence at the château site dating back to the eighth century. An eighth- to ninth-century monastery with two successive chapels developed into a luxury residence in the late ninth century with finds of fine-quality metalwork, coins and pottery (see Renoux 1987, 15-20). By the early

tenth century the structures had been abandoned and the land converted to agricultural use by a small farming community. Very little effect of the Viking raids is apparent, an observation echoed on many other sites (Renoux 1987, 14). Between 927 and 932 William Longsword built his first residence at Fécamp, a modest building but well-placed for access to water and trade routes. From then on the site was developed with more elaborate ducal palaces and a castle, ultimately becoming a fortified abbey in the thirteenth century (see Renoux 1975; 1979; 1985; and 1987 for full reports). Similar residences that might have been expected in Brittany have not appeared; even considering the limited nature of Breton medieval archaeology to date, the contrast seems to reinforce the conclusions of chapter 2 about the tendency to isolationism in the area.

Finally, we must seek a parallel for the Viking capital at Nantes. Almost nothing is known about the city in the early medieval period (the archaeology is reviewed by Barral i Altet 1984, and see Verhulst 1985, 336), but a rough comparison may be made with Tours. Both cities contained similar numbers of churches, suffered equally at Viking hands and experienced much the same expansionist boom after the removal of the Scandinavian threat (Galinié 1978; see Audin 1987 for the Touraine region). However, Galinié's excavations in Tours have demonstrated that the dislocation in occupation was not nearly as great as might have been expected from the documentary sources. At Saint-Martin's, for example, despite the recorded removal of relics in 853, the community obviously continued to function (Galinié 1978, 44). Part of the reason may be the sheer difficulty involved in evacuation; for a farming community such a move would mean economic suicide. Perhaps the total invasion of Brittany provided an exception to this, unforeseen circumstances which really did result in devastation. While the picture of Brittany laid waste is not significantly altered, in the light of Galinié's work we must have reservations about the actual conditions in early tenth-century Nantes until more excavations have been completed.

Frankish finds in Scandinavia

Turning lastly to Frankish artefacts found in Scandinavia, we see that the ninth-century raiding is certainly reflected in Carolingian loot (though not so much in hoarded coinage; see Musset

1954a, 33 for his theory that the Danegeld payments were melted down). A full discussion is obviously beyond the range of this paper, but if we take Birka and Hedeby as representative of the grave goods material, fibulae and mounts of Carolingian workmanship have been found in many burials (the finest are graves 507, 526, 550 and 649 at Birka and 269 at Hedeby; for full lists of Carolingian material in Scandinavian graves see Arbmänn 1937; Callmer 1977, 12–32, 230; Wamers 1985; the earlier Merovingian evidence is discussed in Bendixen 1974). Even allowing for the presence of some Frankish merchants in Scandinavia, the amount of Carolingian wealth that was taken back to the Viking homelands was obviously considerable.

As to future archaeological strategy in Brittany, a problem-orientation approach would clearly serve best for extending our understanding of the Viking occupation. While most excavation obviously relies primarily on opportunity and finance, investigation of more rural settlements and monasteries needs to be carried out to examine the effects of dislocation resulting from the occupation.⁸ An extensive open-area excavation in a large fortress would surely illuminate the nature of the Scandinavian presence itself, with the Camp de Péran being ideally suited for a research programme. Above all, excavations are needed in Nantes, the heart of Scandinavian Brittany, as it is in this city that the answers to our questions lie.

4. CONCLUSION: BRITTANY IN THE VIKING WORLD

In the two preceding chapters the historical and archaeological evidence for the Scandinavians in early medieval Brittany has been assessed against the general background of western European politics. It has become apparent that after the raiding of the ninth century Brittany underwent a profound change from the Scandinavian viewpoint, a familiar pattern echoed elsewhere and similarly reflected in the excavated material. In order to understand this more fully, in addition to reviewing the Bretons' changing relationships with the Carolingians and Anglo-Saxons, we must compare the history of Scandinavian contact with Brittany with that in the other Scandinavian settlements and areas of operations in the west. Such a comparison is particularly valuable for assessing

the importance of trading networks and the growth of Breton independence.

First, it is helpful to examine briefly the composition and logistics of the raiding forces themselves, for which the records of the Great Army's campaigns in Wessex preserved in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* are of great value since they give a much fuller account of its movements and actions than the Continental sources. Given that the various ravages, winter bases and marches of the Great Army of Danes and its predecessors have been mapped and discussed by Hill (1981, maps 46-64 and annotations), the present treatment will be confined to what the English sources tell us of the army itself.⁹

It is obvious that the Great Army was no mere raiding force or loose assembly of opportunists. From the precision of its movements and base locations in the 880s and 890s in England it must have had a cohesive command structure with powers of delegation and intact lines of communication and supply. To suggest that such a host simply moved about the countryside supporting itself from the land, without fairly advanced reconnaissance and prior knowledge, would certainly be unjustified.

Some indication of the magnitude of the army's influence is surely contained in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* entry for 893, when the Danes marched to Boulogne after campaigning in France *ond þær wurdon gescipode* 'and were there provided with ships', a fleet estimated later in the annal as at least 250 vessels. This may perhaps have involved a coercive or cooperative arrangement with a local town or an area sympathetic to the Danes, as is indicated too in the *Chronicle* entry for 866 when the East Anglians provided the army with horses. The Great Army may have operated as coordinated royal bands, surviving continual re-formation and division, as in 879, absorbing reinforcements as necessary to replace losses sustained in battle or resulting from elements of the army choosing to settle (Brooks 1979, though see chapter 2 above for the looseness of the term 'kings' at this period; Christopherson 1981-2 discusses the intricate structure and loyalty of the royal retinues in Scandinavia, together with conditions of service and reward).

The size of Viking armies at this time is also open to question, with considerable differences of opinion. Sawyer has argued that the hosts numbered only a few hundred men and that the sources tend to exaggerate (1971, 123-32), but Brooks (1979) has put forward a convincing refutation of this by comparing a wide variety

of sources from all over Europe, and finding a broad uniformity of estimates for fleet sizes. While some references are more likely to be gross distortions (such as the 600-ship raid on Hamburg in 845), Brooks notes that major armies are usually described as comprising 50-250 ships, with 100-200 not uncommon. The tactics of the Vikings seem to vary in accordance with the size of their armies, as do the corresponding defensive measures taken against them; compare the situations in Belgium (d'Haenens 1967) and Frisia (Braat 1954, especially 225; Trimpe Burger 1973) with the burh system (Brooks 1979). The effect of the Viking occupation on the surrounding areas during these campaigns has been examined by Brooks and Graham-Campbell 1986, 108 by comparing dated hoard depositions with the location of Great Army winter bases.

The Loire army operating in Brittany seems to have been smaller, possibly a force from Westfold in Norway, numbering 70-80 ships. Though a separate force, its leaders may have connections with the Great Army via Ragnarr loðbrók and his 'sons', together with Hásteinn (discussed by Brooks 1979, but see Smyth 1977, 17-35; the dispute about Smyth's work was mentioned in chapter 1).

The kingdom of York

York, more than any other of the Scandinavian colonies, provides a particularly clear contrast to the Viking occupation of Brittany. Although only 0.025% of the estimated area of the Viking Age city has been excavated so far, the work of the York Archaeological Trust has revealed a bustling commercial centre with trading connections spreading throughout the Viking world. Commanding the vital north-south land route along the Vale of York and situated at the confluence of the Ouse and Foss rivers, York occupied a similar strategic position to Nantes with its control over the mouth of the Loire. The city was taken by the Vikings in 866 and 867, but full settlement did not begin until 876. The situation remained turbulent until the early 920s, with a series of Scandinavian rulers governing the city, issuing coinage from c. 900 which shows considerable affinities with Carolingian examples (see Dolley 1978 for a review of the Viking coinage; and Pirie 1986 for the excavated evidence, especially p. 54 and plate IV for comparison with the Péran coin). The early tenth century saw a contest for power in the city between the Danes and the Norse from

Dublin, with a Hiberno-Norse victory at Tettenhall in 910. Ragnall of Dublin took command in 914, to be followed by more Irish Vikings until Æthelstan's conquest of the city in 927, after which it remained in English hands until 939. From that year York was ruled by Scandinavians until the death of Eiríkr blóðøx in 954, when it was absorbed into the Anglo-Saxon kingdom. (A brief guide to York's history may be found in Hall 1984, 43-66; see also Smyth 1978 and Sawyer 1978.)

Under Scandinavian rule York's economy flourished as a result of the new commercial contacts brought by the invaders (the relationship of Jorvík to its Anglian predecessor Eoforwic is still uncertain). Evidence of the city's prosperity was unearthed in abundance at 16-22 Coppergate, and in 1989 at the Queen's Hotel site in Micklegate, where a series of craftsmen's tenements was excavated, excellently preserved in the waterlogged soil. In the buildings and backyards, crowded along a street frontage, evidence was found of woodworking, shoemaking, leather-working, jewellery manufacture in several precious metals, needle and comb manufacture and coin minting, along with pottery and a full environmental record (see Hall 1981).¹⁰ York's prosperity as a trading centre led to a flourishing of Anglo-Scandinavian stone sculpture with distinctive regional styles (see Lang 1978 and 1984).

The contrast between the booming commerce of Jorvík, with its links to Scandinavia, the Continent and the East, and Viking-occupied Nantes is obvious and striking. However, Brittany certainly offered potential for trade of this kind; the extensive Breton commercial network has been mentioned above, and mints are known from Rennes and Nantes (McKitterick 1983, 244). None of this mercantile apparatus seems to have been maintained by the Loire Vikings. York has numerous documentary references to its economic functions in addition to archaeological confirmation, Nantes has none at all. Despite the damage done to the Carolingian empire by the Scandinavian raids, in view of their past record of advantageous alliances it seems likely that the Franks would have been willing to set up at least a basic trading system with Viking Brittany in the early tenth century, if one had been offered. Close commercial ties and a degree of economic interdependence would also have lessened the Scandinavian threat to Frankia. In later tenth-century York, although it was then under nominal Anglo-Saxon control, there coexisted definite English and Scandinavian communities which traded freely. On this evidence, the conclusion that the occupation of Brittany was never intended to establish an

independent commercial state like York is inescapable. While it is unlikely that any such commercial drive existed as a deliberate policy of the first Scandinavians who settled in northern England and Normandy, in these areas the newcomers very soon began to establish themselves as traders with an eye to the markets, as in towns like Hedeby. On present evidence this development is entirely absent from Brittany.

Celtic Britain: Wales, Cornwall and Scotland

If we turn to the Celtic regions in the west of Britain, a different picture again emerges. In Wales it is not yet clear whether the Viking impact consisted simply of a succession of raids and continual small wars, or involved a definite crisis and confrontation as in Wessex. In discussing such events in relation to the source material, we must remember that from the viewpoint of a contemporary Anglo-Saxon or Welsh chronicler the Viking situation can rarely have seemed anything but bleak and hopeless.

The Welsh political background seems to have consisted of a pattern of allegiance to small groups and individuals, but organised into rudimentary territorial units and kingdoms such as Gwynedd. Wales shows a history of alternately hostile and interactive relationships with England like that we see between Brittany and the Carolingian Empire, and also a similar pattern of Viking raiding except that in Wales the attacks continue until c. 954. Like Brittany, Wales offered poor prospects for conquest in the ninth century, owing to a mixture of geographical factors and perhaps the relative poverty of the Welsh compared with the targets in England. From the 850s, raiding was initially confined to the north and south coasts but in the later ninth century there were probing attacks through the lowlands, linked to the assault on Wessex. Gwynedd also had a strong leader in Rhodri Mawr until 878, just as did the Bretons in leaders like Nominoe and Salomon.

The raids persisted into the mid tenth century, with the emphasis shifting to the exiled Dublin Norse after 902. By this time Wales had achieved a measure of unstable cohesion and independence similar to that in Brittany, under the direction of Hywel Dda who fought the Vikings in alliance with the Anglo-Saxons, which parallels the Franko-Breton campaigns in France. In Wales too, the Scandinavians became part of the existing political scene, which added an extra factor to the civil power struggles. The extent of

Anglo-Welsh connections under Hywel is shown by the Welsh absence from Brunanburh (see the discussions of the *Armes Prydein* in chapters 1 and 2 above, and the references to the *Vínheiðr* campaign in *Egils saga Skalla-Grimssonar* 1933, chs. 51-5; further accounts of this period are given in Loyn 1976 and 1977, 35-62 and Davies 1982a, chapter 4). The lack of serious Viking assault at this time was also due to the peripheral position of Wales in relation to the main colonies in Ireland and the Danelaw.

With the deaths of Hywel Dda (c. 950) and Eiríkr blóðøx (954) the Scandinavian impetus against Wales increased. Although this was still generally limited to raiding, concentration on the Bristol Channel and the Chester region is evident from the place-names, which show possible settlement around Milford and perhaps the establishment of basic trading posts in Pembrokeshire (see Davies 1982a, 116-20 and Loyn 1976); Anglesey may also have been occupied for a time. These settlements seem to have been temporary and the majority of the Scandinavian place-names are navigation points. There were certainly no substantial fortified centres like those in Ireland. The meagre documentary sources and the archaeology (limited to eight hoards and a few problematic pieces of sculpture, see Davies 1982a, 117-9 and Boon 1986, appendix) reinforce this picture.

The northern and southern colonies, if such they were, seem to have been maintained into the early eleventh century as a result of their proximity to the Danelaw and Man in the north, and Bristol's links with the southern kingdom of Knútr and Sveinn (the Bristol slave-trade may be referred to by Wulfstan in 1014). It is Wales's connections with areas of major Scandinavian interests which Brittany lacked, and which make the Vikings' failure to exploit the great centre at Nantes so unusual. But despite the close involvement of Wales in the political and military upheavals of the Irish Sea and the Danelaw, the ultimate Scandinavian impact there remains comparable with that in Brittany; in each case it had little linguistic or institutional effect, but was a significant factor in the development of independence and opposition to the Anglo-Saxons and Franks respectively.

The documentary evidence for Scandinavian influence in Cornwall is even more scarce than that for Wales. There is one ninth-century reference to a Cornish-Danish alliance against Egbryht of Wessex in 838, and there were Danish campaigns in the south-west in 981, 982, 988, 997 and 1001 (the sources are reviewed by Wakelin 1976-7). The Vikings seem to have fought as

mercenaries in the Cornish struggles for autonomy, as in Wales and Brittany, but generally appear to have restricted their activities to raiding. Lydford, Tavistock and Bodmin or Padstow are known to have been sacked, but the Cornish put up a spirited defence in 988 and 1001, repulsing the Scandinavians from Exeter on the latter occasion. Wakelin lists all the place-names and loan words of Scandinavian origin (1976-7, 46-7), all of which concern the sea and topography except for three which incorporate personal names; together with a few interlace crosses in the Anglo-Scandinavian styles of the Danelaw and three hogbacks (see Laing 1975, 140), these are the only indications of settlement. With such indirect and insubstantial evidence, no adequate model of Scandinavian activity in Cornwall can really be suggested, but it is interesting to note the familiar pattern of Viking raiding and simultaneous involvement in civil politics.

The Scottish material is peripheral to the subject of the Vikings in Brittany, representing as it does the complete and lasting takeover of an area by the Scandinavians; Orkney and Shetland remained under autonomous Scandinavian control well into the medieval period. Scotland and the Northern Isles belong as much to the North Atlantic sphere of Scandinavian operations as they do to the Irish Sea, and as such the points of contact with Brittany are slight.¹¹

Ireland

York has already been discussed as an example of a booming trading centre in an area of basically English culture which was settled and influenced by Scandinavians. In Ireland we see a similar situation, but in a Celtic land and thus of great relevance to Brittany. After initial raids in the late eight century, the Vikings established a *longphort* on the site of Dublin at the Liffey mouth in 841, which grew into a small settlement (of this early Dubhín settlement, only the cemetery has been located archaeologically, at Islandbridge; see Wallace 1985, 103-5). Until 876 the Scandinavians' interests lay mainly in Scotland and the Hebrides, but they became progressively more involved in the struggles for power in York. The Irish managed to expel the Dublin Norse in 902, as mentioned above, and they did not return until 917, although they are known to have remained on a few coastal islands. During their exile the Norse established closer links with York and set up a

dynasty there after their return to Ireland. By 919, the Vikings had founded towns at Wexford, Waterford, Limerick and Cork. Throughout the 920s and 930s the Hiberno-Norse were key figures in the wars with Æthelstan, but after the Brunanburh disaster of 937 their interests were increasingly confined to Ireland. Their rôle in Irish politics, similar to that in Wales and Brittany, grew less influential as the tenth century advanced, with serious setbacks in the 970s and 980s. By 1014 and the Battle of Clontarf, the zenith of Scandinavian power in Ireland was already long past.

Scandinavian activity in Ireland focused on the urban centres more than on any other kind of settlement. The towns came to occupy a position of considerable importance in the Irish civil strife of the tenth and eleventh centuries; as new foundations, their influence and monopoly of luxury imports and long-distance trade led to a gradual shift in emphasis from prehistoric cult sites like Tara and Cashel to the urban centres as symbols of power and royal authority.

As a result of large-scale redevelopment, archaeologists in Dublin have been fortunate enough to uncover the remains of more than 200 structures of the early medieval period. Grouped into four types, the buildings can be reconstructed as the homes and workshops of metalworkers, jewellery manufacturers, weavers, leather-workers and many other craftsmen; particularly fine wood-carvings have been preserved by waterlogging. Dublin's trading connections, seen in the imported goods, stretched mainly northwards to Scandinavia and Scotland but contact is also evident with England (an Anglo-Irish element may have played a significant rôle in Dublin, see Wallace 1986) and the Carolingian Empire.¹² Between them, the commercial centres of Dublin and York dominated the Scandinavian mercantile operations in the British Isles and north-western Europe.

In spite of the dearth of archaeological evidence and the ambiguous nature of much of the documentary material, it has been possible to construct a remarkably coherent picture of the Scandinavian impact on Brittany. Against the background of the dispersal and settlement of the great Viking armies that had been characteristic of the ninth century, and seen in the context of the establishment of the Duchy of Normandy, Brittany emerges as a final target for the raiders and looters. Although small Viking raids on England continued up to and even after the Norman Conquest, it is only in Brittany that we see true Viking activity on such an

ambitious scale in the tenth century. As to its long-term effect on Brittany, most scholars have argued for a minimal impact (cf. Smith 1985 and Davies 1988, 24, 213). This is true to the extent that there is nothing in the social organisation and institutions of Brittany after 939 that is specifically due to Scandinavian influence. To take this line, however, is to ignore the massive impact of the Vikings as a catalyst for political coalition and the formation of an independent Brittany. Without the deleterious effect of the Viking raids on the Carolingian empire, it is arguable whether Brittany would have developed the degree of autonomy that it enjoyed in the mid to late tenth century.

In this paper I have tried to do no more than present a summary of the evidence for the Vikings in Brittany and an assessment of its significance. Much research remains to be done, especially on the French sources; future archaeological work may radically alter our perception of this most enigmatic of Scandinavian colonies. It is to be hoped that this paper can at least provide a basis for a fuller understanding of the Vikings in Brittany.

APPENDIX ONE

GAZETTEER OF SCANDINAVIAN SITES AND FINDS IN BRITTANY AND NORMANDY

As a supplement to chapter 3, a gazetteer has been compiled detailing all sites and finds of Scandinavian character known to the present author which have been recorded in Brittany and Normandy. In one or two instances native Breton sites have been included where evidence relating to Scandinavian activity has been found (for example, the early tenth-century destruction levels at Landévennec), but only in cases where the attribution is reasonably certain.

The gazetteer has been arranged alphabetically by site name and is divided into two parts covering Brittany and Normandy respectively, with a subsidiary section for unprovenanced finds from the area. For site location, in addition to the relevant département, references have been given to the Institut Géographique National standard 1:25 000 maps of France; this method of location has been chosen in preference to the far more precise cadastral survey of the nineteenth century (see Astill and Davies 1985, 103) for ease of reference for English readers.

BRITTANY

<i>Site name or Find spot</i>	<i>Département, Map reference</i>	<i>Evidence</i>	<i>Method of discovery/ Investigation</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	<i>References</i>
Ile de Bièze	• Loire-Atlantique 1223/E	Type H sword	Chance find from river Loire	Site of battle between Seine and Loire Vikings in 854	Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 169-70
Ile de Bièze	Loire-Atlantique 1223/E	Sword with curved guard (Petersen 1919, fig. 77, unclassified)	Chance find from river Loire	See above	Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 171
Ile de Groix	Morbihan 0721/N	Ship cremation in mound with surrounding stone setting. Mound contents: 800-1000 rivets, 200 nails (11m-13m longship and possible ship's boat) Remains of one adult and one adolescent, dogs and birds 2 swords, types O/R and H Bronze scabbard chape 8 arrowheads, Wegraeus' type A; 3 or 4 lance heads	Excavation	Site was repeatedly robbed at night during excavation, and excavators did not recover all bone and iron finds - the existing finds are therefore only a portion of the original grave goods	du Chatellier and le Pontois 1908-9; Müller-Wille 1978; Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 184-92

BRITANY (continued)

Site name or Find spot	Département, Map reference	Evidence	Method of discovery/ Investigation	Remarks	References
Ile de Groix (continued)		15-24 shield bosses 2 axe heads, type G 6 iron buckles 2 iron spur-fragments 3 perforated bronze mounts Bronze buckle and strap			
		2 silver hooked tags Gold and silver clothing appliqués			
		Gold and bronze finger rings			
		2 bronze bowls			
		Iron cauldron with chain			
		2 iron buckets			
		Bronze animal-head mount			
		Bronze rivetted mount			
		Circular iron mount			
		5 iron casket mounts			
		Iron and bronze strip mount			
		Padlock			

BRITTANY (continued)

Site name or Find spot	Département, Map reference	Evidence	Method of discovery/ Investigation	Remarks	References
Ille de Groix (continued)		19 bone gaming pieces 2 bone dice Anvil Nail size gauge Hammer Pliers 2 drill fragments Iron socket Sickle Slate whetstone Iron knife 2 iron bodkins Scissors Iron stern-ornament			
Landévennec	Finistère 0517/0	9th/10th-century monastery with destruction levels attributable to 913 Viking attack	Excavation		Bardel 1985-7; Bardel, Barral i Altet and Caziot 1984

BRITTANY (continued)

<i>Site name or Find spot</i>	<i>Département, Map reference</i>	<i>Evidence</i>	<i>Method of discovery/ Investigation</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	<i>References</i>
Lanlerf	Côtes-du-Nord 0815/0	Trapezoid earthwork	Unexcavated	Possible Viking camp	de la Borderie 1898, 388; Hamel-Simon, Langouet, Nourry-Denayer and Mouton 1979, 47
Ile Lavret	Côtes-du-Nord 0814/E	9th-century monastery with destruction levels attributable to 884 Viking attack	Excavation		Giot 1983-5; 1987; Privat 1971, 88
Nantes, confluence of the Loire and Chezine	Loire-Atlantique 1223/E	Type E sword	Chance find from river Loire		Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 166-8
Nantes	Loire-Atlantique 1223/E	Type H sword	Chance find from river Loire		Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 169-70
Camp de Péran	Côtes-du-Nord 0916/0	Vitrified circular earthwork, with finds of York coin, c. 905-925, helmet fragment and lance ferrule	Excavation	Possible site of battle between Alain Barbetorte and Vikings, 936	Nicolardot 1984-7; Nicolardot, Nissen-Jaubert and Wimmers 1987; Chédeville and Tonnere 1987, 183

BRITTANY (continued)

<i>Site name or Find spot</i>	<i>Département, Map reference</i>	<i>Evidence</i>	<i>Method of discovery/ Investigation</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	<i>References</i>
Saint-Malo	Ille-et-Vilaine 1115/0	Monastery with destruction levels attributable to Viking attack	Excavation		Langouet 1976 and 1979
Saint Suliac	Ille-et-Vilaine 1115/0	Trapezoid earthwork	Unexcavated	Possible Viking camp	Hamel-Simon, Langouet, Nourry- Denayer and Mouton 1979, 47
Trans, Camp des Haies	Ille-et-Vilaine 1216/E	Circular earthwork with tenth-century finds	Excavation	Possible siege camp of Alain Barbetorte at battle of Trans, 939	Hamel-Simon, Langouet, Nourry- Denayer and Mouton 1979; Guigon 1987a, 228; Chédeville and Tonnerre 1987, 184
Trans, Vieux M'Na	Ille-et-Vilaine 1216/E	Trapezoid earthwork	Surveyed but not excavated	Possible Viking camp at battle of Trans	As above

NORMANDY

<i>Site name or Find spot</i>	<i>Département, Map reference</i>	<i>Evidence</i>	<i>Method of discovery/ Investigation</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	<i>References</i>
Les Andelys	Eure 2012/E	Type G axe	Chance find from river Seine		Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 175
Elbeuf	Seine-Maritime 1912/E	Sword with curved guard (Petersen 1919, fig. 77, unclassified)	Chance find during railway construction		Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 175
Evreux	Eure 2013/0	Type H lance head	Chance find		Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 172
La Hague	Manche 1110/E	Linear earthwork enclosing 5 sq. miles of headland. Viking period C14 dates. Burials reported in the vicinity	Excavation	Possible base of western Seine Vikings	de Boitard 1953 and 1964b; Arbman 1953; Bates 1982, 9
Mont-Saint-Michel	Manche 1215/E	Hoard containing coin issued by William Longsword as duke of Brittany	Chance find		Dolley and Yvon 1971; Bates 1982, 9
Pîtres	Eure 2012/E	Female burial with grave goods of 2 P41 oval brooches and pottery	Excavation		Elmqvist 1966-8

NORMANDY (continued)

<i>Site name or Find spot</i>	<i>Département, Map reference</i>	<i>Evidence</i>	<i>Method of discovery/ Investigation</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	<i>References</i>
Réville	Manche 1310/0	Burials with stone ship settings, cairns and rectangular lintel graves	Excavation	Ship settings may be Scandinavian burials	de Bouiard 1964a
Rouen	Seine-Maritime 2011/0	10th-century horse-bit	Chance find		Arbman 1961, 201
Seine river	—	Type M sword	Chance find		Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 163-5
Seine river	—	Type Y sword	Chance find		Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 165
Vernon	Eure 2113/0	Sword (unclassified)	Chance find from river Seine during bridge construction		Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 172

UNPROVENANCED FINDS

Probably from the river Seine	—	Type V sword Type A, G and M axes	—		Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 165-6, 172
Probably from the river Loire at Nantes	—	Type I lance head Bronze sword pommel	—		Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 171

APPENDIX TWO REGNAL LISTS AND TABLES

While researching the Vikings in Brittany I found it helpful to compile brief lists of the successive rulers of the period in Brittany and Normandy, together with a table summarising the activities of the main Scandinavian commanders operating in France. I reproduce these here in the hope that they may provide an additional point of reference for the text. (It should be noted that all the dates given in the lists refer only to the length of reign, not to birth and death).

A guide to the complexities of Carolingian politics, the various territorial partitions of the Empire, and the distinctions and rivalries between emperors, kings and noble factions is essential; I found the best visual summary to be the excellent set of genealogical tables and maps drawn up by Rosamond McKitterick (1983, 349–92), to which I refer the reader.

Rulers of Brittany from Nominoe to Alain II, 830–952

Nominoe	830/831 – 851
Erispoe	851 – 857
Salomon	857 – 874
Pascwethen and Guorhwant (joint rule)	874 – 875
Judicael and Alain I ‘the Great’ (joint rule)	875 – 888
Alain I ‘the Great’	888 – 907
Gurmhailon	907 – c. 914
Viking invasion and occupation: Óttarr, Haraldr, Rognvaldr, Felekan and Incon	c. 914 – 936
Alain II ‘ <i>Barbetorte</i> (Twisted-Beard)’	936 – 952

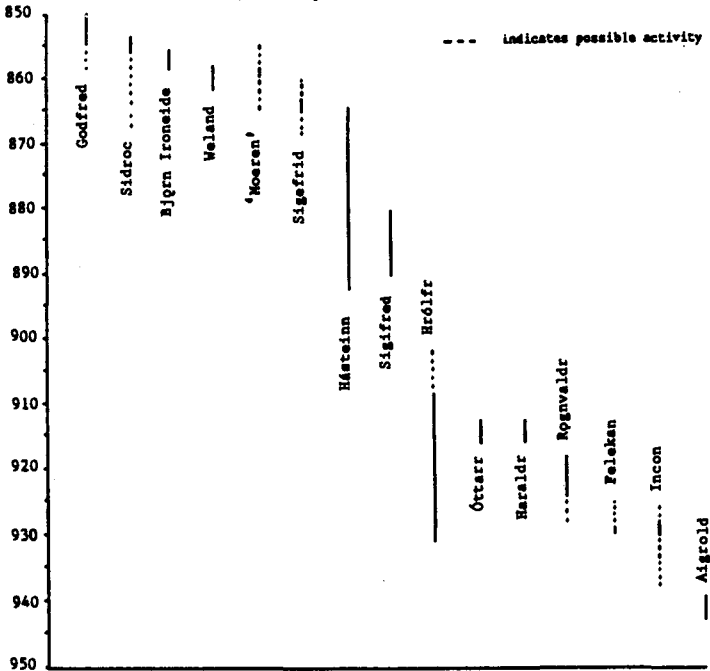
Rulers of Normandy from Hrólfr to William II, c. 911–1087

Göngu-Hrólfr (Rollo)	c. 911 – c. 925
William I 'Longsword'	c. 925 – 942
Richard I	942 – 996
Richard II	996 – 1026
Richard III	1026 – 1027
Robert I 'the Magnificent'	1027 – 1035
William II 'the Bastard', 'the Conqueror'	1035 – 1087

Note: the title *Dux* 'Duke' is first mentioned in connection with Richard II in 1006: there is no reliable evidence that the title was in use before this date (cf. Bates 1982, chapter 4).

The principal Viking commanders operating in France, 850-950

Note: only time spent in France is indicated.



Notes

¹ A complete listing of saga references to *Bretland* can be found in Metzenthin 1941, 14–15.

² A more detailed discussion of this theme will be found in a forthcoming paper by the present author (Price, forthcoming).

³ It is possible that there may have been some earlier Scandinavian contact with Gaul, as in Spain from c. 795.

⁴ The question of the assumption of power in Neustria by the Seine Vikings and the development of Normandy is of great relevance to Brittany, but available space permits only the briefest treatment. In general see Bates 1982; Davis 1976 and Searle 1984 give insights into the Normans' self-perception; for the transitional settlement phase see Musset 1985, de Bouard 1955 and Douglas 1947; Hrólfr is discussed by Douglas 1942, and the Scandinavian influences in Breese 1977, Yver 1969, 319–23, Musset 1975b and Stenton 1945; for political development and institutions see Yver 1969, 316–19, as well as Musset, Bouvris and Maillefer 1985; Douglas 1958 discusses the bishoprics and le Patourel 1944 considers their development; Musset 1954a deals with trade and the army is covered by Nicolle 1987 and Wilson 1985.

⁵ The subject of relic translation has attracted a vast literature: for general accounts in addition to Guillotel's 1982 summary, see Musset 1965, 218–22; de la Borderie 1898, 302–25, 362–71, 507–18; Lot 1899. Specific monasteries and relics are covered by Gasnault 1961 and Mabille 1868 (Saint-Martin), Riché 1976 (Saint-Malo), Guillotel 1979 (Alet), de la Motte-Collas 1957 (Saint-Germain-des-Prés), Merlet 1930 (Tréguier) and Oheix 1905 (Montreuil-sur-Mer). For the comparable situation in Normandy see McKitterick 1983, 239.

⁶ Gillian Fellows-Jensen has noted the following names which might conceivably lie behind *Felekan*: *Fallach*, *Feochán*, *Fédleán*, *Fer-caille*, *Fiaccán*, *Fiannacán*, *Finnacán*, *Finnechán*, *Fóelleán* and *Folachtán* (pers. comm.).

⁷ Since initially going to press, James Graham-Campbell (pers. comm.) has suggested that the knot patterns on the upper and lower faces of the guard of the more complete sword (Fig. 25) are related to the earlier Borre-style 'ring-chain' motif and that the overall decoration is to be paralleled, for instance, by that on certain 'ball-type' brooches of his sub-group C, dated by him to the first half of the tenth century (Graham-Campbell 1984, 32 and 1987, 242). It therefore seems more reasonable to suggest a date range for the cremation of c. 900–950, placing it squarely within the period of the Viking occupation.

⁸ An excellent example for future excavators of early medieval settlements has now been set by Groenman-van Waateringe and van Wijngaarden-Bakker (1987), with their reconstruction of the changing economy of Kootwijk, a tenth-century Carolingian village in the Netherlands.

⁹ Hill's forthcoming companion volume to *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England*, covering the Continental material, should provide a valuable source for the Vikings in Brittany.

¹⁰ Most of the finds from Coppergate are to be published shortly but in the interim see Hall 1984 for a general account, Radley 1971 for the economy (pre-Coppergate), MacGregor 1982 and Tweddle 1986 for finds from related sites, Holdsworth 1978, 5–10 and 18–24 for the pottery (pre-Coppergate), Hall, Kenward, Williams and Greig 1983 for the environment and Moulden and Tweddle 1986 for settlement south-west of the Ouse. Finds from the other Danelaw towns are briefly reviewed in Hall 1981, 100–39.

¹¹ It is impossible to summarise the Scottish political picture in small space; the

most recent discussions of the complex interactions between the Dal Riadans, Picts and Vikings are to be found in Smyth 1984 and Crawford 1987, who also reviews the Manx material and is particularly strong on the archaeological evidence. The recent Pictish work is covered in Ralston and Inglis 1984, Friell and Watson 1984 and Small 1987. All these works have extensive bibliographies to provide further reading.

¹² A programme of full publication of the Dublin excavations is currently under way, but in the interim see Ó Riordáin 1971 and 1976, de Paor 1976, Murray 1981, Bradley 1984, Wallace 1985 and 1988a and c, Mitchell 1987, Lang 1988 and Wallace and Ó Floinn 1988. A full Dublin bibliography will be found in Wallace 1988b. Excavations in Waterford and Wexford are currently adding to our knowledge of Viking towns in Ireland, but as yet no reports are available. Irish social structure in the early medieval period is discussed in Byrne 1973.

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