

CAMPS AND EARLY SETTLEMENT IN THE VIKING DIASPORA: ENGLAND, IRELAND AND THE CASE OF GALICIA

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Resum

Des del segle IX al segle XI, els víkings van atacar constantment àrees com Anglaterra, Irlanda i Normandia. Durant les primeres fases dels assentaments, el campament víking (anomenat *longphort* en els annals irlandesos) apareix com un model d'estructura des del qual controlar el territori adjacent a rius i costes. Algunes d'aquestes estructures van evolucionar i es van tornar centres comercials i militars. En alguns casos, es van convertir en centres urbans i van ser el germen de ciutats com Dublín. Aquests campaments són fonamentals per a entendre el desenvolupament d'una fase de ràtzies a una d'assentament. No obstant això, aquests campaments no s'han trobat en altres regions menys estudiades de la diàspora vikinga, com és el cas de Galícia. Galícia va rebre atacs víkings durant tota l'Era vikinga i també va ser poblada per víkings, encara que a molta menys escala que a altres parts de la diàspora. En aquest article, presentaré les similituds dels campaments víkings d'Anglaterra i Irlanda i avaluaré quin tipus d'estructura es podria trobar a Galícia.

Paraules clau: víkings, campaments, *longphuir*, Galícia, assentament, Anglaterra, Irlanda

Abstract

From the ninth to the eleventh century, Vikings famously raided areas like England, Ireland and Normandy and started to settle there. In its early phases of activity, the Viking camp, called *longhort* in Irish annals, appeared and was used as an initial structure from which to control areas adjacent to navigable rivers or to the coast. These structures sometimes evolved into centres of trade and military activity, and in some cases, they became urban centres. However important they are to understanding the progression from raiding to settlement in the Viking diaspora, these camps have not been found in less-studied regions that underwent a long period of Viking contact. That is the case of Galicia, a frequent raiding destination and, as argued in this paper, one that also witnessed the medium- and long-term presence of Vikings, although possibly in much lower numbers than in other areas of the diaspora. In this article, I will present the commonalities of Viking camps in England and Ireland and will assess whether that type of structure should be expected in Galicia.

Key Words: vikings, camps, *longphuir*, Galicia, settlement, England, Ireland

It was in the last decade of the eighth century, during the reign of Beorhtric, king of the West Saxons, that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* mentions the first arrival of Scandinavian attackers to English soil: «and in his days there came for the first time 3 ships; and then the reeve rode there and wanted to compel them to go to the king's town, because he did not know what they were; and they killed him. Those were the first ships of the Danish men who sought out the land of the English race» (SWANTON 1998: 54). Soon after, the famous raid of the monastery of the island of Lindisfarne occupies the ominous entry for AD 793 of the chronicle. According to this entry, a period of lightning, dragons in the air and famine preceded the arrival of viking heathen raiders who looted the island's monastery and massacred the monks (SWANTON 1998: 56). These events mark the beginning of the Viking Age, which can be defined as a period of the history of Scandinavia characterised by outward movement in the form of raids, settlement, exploration and commerce. Why the Viking Age occurred is a complex question, but an a process of political centralisation, demographic aspects, the developments in ship technology and competition for status and wealth are some of the causes traditionally ascribed as causes (BARRETT 2008). The Viking Age in England comes to a symbolic end in AD 1066 (BRINK 2008: 5) with the Battle of Stamford Bridge (and the death of Harald Hardrada) and the Battle of Hastings, when king Harold II was killed by William of Normandy (RICHARDS 2004: 35). In Ireland, on the other hand, the end of the Viking Age is marked by the Angevin invasion of AD 1171/2 (DOWNHAM 2004: 71).

The Viking Age was a period of expansion. This expansion often took the form of trading links, continued contact through mercenary work and political connections, but also developed into a considerable amount of new settlements in inhabited (as was the case of England, Ireland and Normandy, amongst others) and uninhabited areas (as in Iceland). All the regions that came into close contact with Scandinavian travellers and were temporarily or permanently settled by them are referred to as the viking diaspora.¹ While much attention has been placed on the figure of the viking pirate, the violent raider found in some medieval accounts of their arrival in different lands, it is a focus of current scholarship to attempt to understand the early stages of settlement during the ninth and tenth centuries. In areas of the diaspora where vikings settled permanently and there was an amalgamation into the existing population, different stages of contact can be seen, from sporadic to heavy raiding, to conquest, negotiation and settlement. This is the case, for instance, in England and Ireland, where archaeological, place-name and documentary evidence have been combined to reveal information about the different periods of viking presence. In other areas of the diaspora, like Normandy, only toponymy has been available for scholars working to understand the geographic distribution of the settlers, their impact on the local onomasticon and how they integrated with the local population.² Other areas of the viking diaspora have received moderate attention as targets for sporadic to

¹ For a comprehensive debate about the use of the word *diaspora* in this context and its implications in our understanding of viking identity at the time, see ABRAMS 2012.

² For more on the Scandinavian toponymy of Normandy, see, for example, RENAUD 1989, ABRAMS 2013 and LEPALLEY 2002.

heavy raiding but little to no attention at all regarding the periods of temporary or permanent settlement. Such is the case of Galicia (and the Iberian Peninsula in general), where there was sustained contact throughout the Viking Age and yet all the research focus until recently has been on the medieval historical sources that recount the violence of the raids.³ For Galicia, chronologising and creating a coherent narrative from those historical documents has been central for scholarship on the topic. However, the existence of viking toponymy and the certainty that there was a medium-/long-term viking presence in the area (GARCÍA 2018) showcase the necessity of understanding interactions that were more impactful than mere raiding.

This paper focuses on the early stages of settlement in the viking diaspora, paying special attention to the construction of camps as a means of controlling watercourses and sustaining a presence in a certain area. Though some disappeared, some of these camps became towns. In England and Ireland, this type of construction has received and is currently receiving great attention, but this form of viking presence in other parts of the diaspora, like the Iberian Peninsula, has not been fully studied. In this article, I will compare current knowledge on viking camps in Ireland and England, and I will then extrapolate from this information to explore the potential for such sites to be present in Galicia.

Viking camps in the early diaspora

Viking camps were initially temporary constructions that could be «as fleeting as a sheltered stretch of water where ships moored overnight, or an army making use of an abandoned ringfort to rest and recoup before pushing on towards a more distant goal» (DOWNHAM 2010: 94). Some of these camps developed into structures that were used for years or decades, and some evolved into large defensive centres of power. The establishment of these viking bases points to the idea that, not long after the beginning of the Viking Age, incursions may have taken a turn from single fast assaults to longer campaigns. Viking camps, called *longphuirt* ('ship-ports') in Irish annals (DOWNHAM 2004: 74), became central to sustaining such campaigns.

Generally speaking, *longphuirt* are viking camps found in Ireland (similar examples from England are referred to as 'winter camps') that are set near a navigable water-source. New excavations in England are providing more material to compare with our pre-existing knowledge of the Irish *longphuirt*, ultimately demonstrating the similarities between viking camps in these two regions during the ninth and tenth centuries.

Longphuirt began to be created following an evolution in raiding strategies. During the late eighth century, raids were conducted during the summer season, and raiders returned to their respective

³ The most comprehensive works on the topic are CHRISTYS 2015 and MORALES 2004.

countries to spend the winter. However, by the 840s, camps, referred to as *longphuirt*, began to be recorded in Irish annals (SHEEHAN 2008: 282). The *Annals of Ulster* mention the camps directly for the first time in the entry for the year 841: «There was a naval camp at Linn Duachail from which the peoples and churches of Tethba were plundered. There was a naval camp at Duiblinn from which the Laigin and the Uí Néill were plundered, both states and churches, as far as Sliab Bladma» (BAMBURY, BEECHINOR 2000). These encampments seem to be crucial for reassembling men, booty, gathering provisions and defending harbours during raiding season.

Even though physical evidence for *longphuirt* has only been found in Ireland and England, this kind of camp may have also existed in Wales and Scotland. In Scotland, some *longphort* place-names have survived, like *Longformacus* (DOWNHAM 2007: 138). These names, however, seem to be later than the period under study, and could be due to the evolution of the term *longphort* to refer to any kind of military encampment (DOWNHAM 2007: 229). Other place-names related to the term can be found in Wales, as is the case of the site of *Llanbedrgoch*, which shows evidence of viking presence (WILLIAMS 2015: 100), and the place-name *Llongborth*, which has been recorded in a medieval Welsh poem called *Geraint ab Erbin* (CLANCY 2002: 107). In this last instance, it would be difficult to know whether the name points to an actual *longphort* or to the later generalised usage of the noun.

A *longphort* is usually understood as formed by a sometimes elongated, sometimes D-shaped area, often enclosed by a curved rampart and open to a body of water (KELLY, O'DONOVAN 1998: 13-16). This area is surrounded by a bank and a ditch and can be surrounded by marshy land. A fording area is usually close by (SHEEHAN 2008: 284), and, in several of the Irish and English camps, there is an island in the vicinity or, in many cases, the incomers occupied an island (HADLEY, RICHARDS 2016: 32). In general, *longphuirt* are not thought to have developed as permanent places of settlement, but rather as a winter camp or a strategic defensive/trading site. However, some *longphuirt* were the basis for later large urban communities like Dublin, and archaeological evidence from excavations in other *longphuirt* attests to more developed settlements, with instances of dwellings inside the structure, burials and industrial activity (O'SULLIVAN ET AL. 2014: 69). Some *longphuirt* could have enclosed an inner citadel, which may postdate the initial structure, but not necessarily by much.

I will review what knowledge we have of significant *longphuirt* and viking camps to exemplify the general features presented above and help us better understand what to expect of ninth-/tenth-century viking encampments elsewhere. My first example of a *longphort* possesses an inner citadel, if the interpretation is correct. This is the site at Knoxpark in Co. Sligo, Ireland. It was initially assumed to be a promontory fort, but, after a new rampart was identified, the site was reclassified as a *longphort* with an internal citadel including burial grounds, all dated to the late seventh to tenth centuries. The citadel is surrounded by a scarp in the southwest end, with a stone-faced

rampart and a ditch that was «steeper in the inner side» (KELLY 2009: 488). Kelly suggests a boat burial at the centre of the burial grounds due to the appearance of nails in a curvilinear manner, but this is just a suggestion and a study of the nails in question has not been undertaken (KELLY 2009: 485-497).

Other *longphuirt* in Ireland that have seen significant research are Woodstown, Co. Waterford; Dunrally, Co. Laois; Annagassan, Co. Louth; possibly Athlunkard, Co. Clare; and Dublin. These are all situated along a navigable water source, on a defensible headland, which would be «defended by a ditch, bank or palisade, with a moorage close by where ships could be anchored in shallow water» (O’SULLIVAN ET AL. 2014: 123). An example of a *longphort* that has come under a great deal of scrutiny recently is that of Woodstown (possibly an initial location for the larger settlement of Waterford), which is an enclosure on the banks of the River Suir. It is 2.91 ha (HADLEY, RICHARDS 2016: 59) and, within its enclosure, evidence for different phases of usage has been found. There is evidence for a burial ground by the northern entrance of the enclosure, and viking weapons have been found within this space. This grave is understood as that of a high-status individual and denotes an intention of the camp community to have a longer-term presence in the area (HARRISON 2014: 102). It appears that this site was perceived as a more permanent settlement, as there is extensive evidence for iron-working and domestic life, and its inhabitants were «devoted to looting, manufacturing, slaving and trade» (O’SULLIVAN ET AL. 2014: 125).

Another clear example of a *longphort* is that of Dunrally. Again, a rounded inner citadel is enclosed by a much larger D-shaped area of 360m in length, which is delimited by a ditch, a bank and partially a counterscarp bank (KELLY, MAAS 1995: 31). The location of the site is ideal for ship harbouring, and it is strategically placed at a historical crossing place and kingdom boundary. The physiognomy of the site is in accordance with annalistic evidence, and the location would have been advantageous for raiding monasteries in the Barrow valley area. If the site were related to the annalistic evidence of the exploits of the viking Rodolf, son of a Danish king, it would situate the building of the *longphort* after AD 852, when Rodolf first arrived in Ireland (KELLY, MAAS 1995: 32).

The *longphort* of Athlunkard is more reduced in size but shares all the characteristics of Dunrally and the other identified *longphuirt*. Also surrounded by marshes and by river banks, its enclosure measures 75m long and 30m wide, with an inner «oval raised area measuring 20m by 12.5m, protected formerly by a ditch and a counterscarp bank» (KELLY, O’DONOVAN 1998: 14). This *longphort* is located within close distance to a church, a feature that reoccurs in other camps, both in Ireland and England. The camp at Repton (below), for instance, used a church building as part of its enclosure.

Newer interpretations of this type of settlement propose that *longphuirt* were not necessarily simple in their functions, but rather that they could be quite complex. Harrison draws

on the instance of the Woodstown *longphort*, in particular, to suggest a more diverse classification of these constructions, which can range from large multifaceted sites such as Woodstown to a two-day *longphort* constructed in the monastery of Emly in AD 968 (HARRISON 2013). The excavations at Woodstown uncovered over 6000 Viking-Age finds, including silver, lead weights and weapons, the latter from a furnished grave.⁴ The finds point to a trading more than a military site, and indeed one of economic importance, even though the basic structural features remain the same.

Overwintering was first recorded in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in England in AD 850, with the building of the first camp on the Isle of Thanet (SWANTON 1998: 64,5), which already had a monastic site. The presence of a church site is seen in other camps, such as the winter camp at Repton, South Derbyshire, which has been linked the Great Heathen Army winter camp (*wintersetl*) of 873-4 mentioned in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (SWANTON 1998: 72). The Great Heathen Army was a very large cohort of ships and warriors which arrived at East Anglia in AD 865 and terrorised England during the following decade, signalling the beginning of «a sustained campaign that marked a change in tactics from previous intermittent raids» (HADLEY, RICHARDS 2016: 24). Repton is one of the camps mentioned by name in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. This site, measuring 1.46 hectares and encircled by a bank and a ditch (WILLIAMS 2015: 97), shares many features with the Irish *longphuirt*, including the D-shape enclosure, with its flat side facing the river Trent, and the proximity of a church. The church, which could have been damaged by the ninth century, is, in this case, embedded within the enclosure ditch and surrounded by viking burials (BIDDLE, KJØLBYE-BIDDLE 2001: 97-104). A mass burial of 264 bodies was also found on site. The dating of the mass burial has been, until now, uncertain, as ¹⁴C analysis in the past had a mixed result of seventh- to ninth-century datings (BIDDLE, KJØLBYE-BIDDLE 2001: 78-79). However, new radiocarbon analyses have shown that all the bones in the graves and the mass burial date from the ninth century (JARMAN 2018).

Torksey (Linconshire) is another winter camp that has received scholarly attention. According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the Great Heathen Army settled for the winter in Torksey in the year 872 (SWANTON 1998: 72). Their camp also faces the river Trent and is significantly larger than Repton, although recent work has disproven that it has a D-shaped form, which was originally assumed.⁵ As was the case with several of the Irish *longphuirt*, the site displays signs of a buoyant economy and trade, with around 100 weights and a sizeable amount of hacksilver, sceattas, Northumbrian stycas, silver pennies and dirhams (STEIN 2014: 7). The high percentage of coins from the 860s and 870s has greatly helped identify this camp with the Great Heathen Army (HADLEY, RICHARDS 2016: 39). Gaming pieces, dress pieces and precious metals have also been found on site (HADLEY, RICHARDS 2016: 43). The typology of the findings and the proportions of the enclosed area links

⁴ For details about the excavation at Woodstown, see RUSSELL, HURLEY 2014.

⁵ On the discussion of Torksey's shape, see STEIN 2014.

this type of camp to the model described by Harrison for Woodstown, yet it is significantly larger. Torksey is also much larger than Repton, with an extension of around 55 hectares. Its large size and the variety of activities hosted in the camp represented by the findings show that the size of the Great Heathen Army was substantial, possibly in the thousands (HADLEY, RICHARDS 2016: 58). It also shows that viking camps share clear functional similarities, but that their size and shape can vary considerably, and thus researchers may «have been seeking sites that are far too small and have been lured into an unnecessary search for D-shaped enclosures» (HADLEY, RICHARDS 2016: 63).

The basic structural characteristics present in these Irish and English constructions have not been found in other areas of viking Europe, but one can draw links to certain ports of trade in the Scandinavian homelands that share many of the characteristics detailed above, even though these commonalities are not often observed. Sites like Birka in Lake Mälaren, Köpingsvik in Öland, Västergarn in Gotland, Hedeby in Denmark and Kaupang in Norway are examples of maritime harbour-focused trade centres often enclosed by a U-shaped wall.⁶

The same can be said of many other trade ports, though the same variety of size and complexity applies to them as it does to the British Isles' camps. In France, in particular in Brittany, two viking camps have been tentatively identified, but their shape and features do not correspond to the structures under study here. The first of these sites is Camp de Péran, which «comprises an irregularly circular earth-work with a single 3m high rampart and 4m wide ditch» (PRICE 1989: 55, 373) and measures 3.7 hectares (WILLIAMS 2015: 100). The other camp that was identified in Brittany is Trans, a name that encompasses two different structures separated by half a kilometre. One is a trapezoidal structure of 80 m x 90 m defended by deep ditches that would have been inundated with water from an adjacent pond (CASSARD 1996: 62). The other, called Camp des Haies (0.7 ha), is formed by a round double-ditched enclosure on top of a hill (PRICE 1989: 58, 376). That these sites are viking is suggested by both annalistic evidence and finds, though the latter are not conclusive. However, they are not located adjacent to a navigable water source, and therefore are not thought to belong to the same category as the previously discussed camps.

As we have seen throughout this overview, there are divergences in this corpus of sites in terms of purpose and complexity. Some camps were sizeable trading centres, constructions of relative permanence, larger in size than many of the settled nuclei of Anglo-Saxon England. This contrasts to the defensive, military and short-lived character of some of their Irish counterparts. Furthermore, even though the Irish and English camps are equivalent in many physical features, the transition from *longphort* to town in Ireland is not paralleled in England, where these constructions were «almost exclusively a ninth-century phenomenon, with a widespread shift to more permanent settlements, though these had a partial military character» (WILLIAMS 2015: 93). Even then, both *longphuir* and English camps can be thought of as pre-urban sites, as they all present a similar

⁶ Thanks are due to Jan-Henrik Fallgren for conversing with me regarding the relationship between camps and early Scandinavian harbour towns.

mixture of military purpose with a higher or lesser degree of economic exchange or on-site production. The evidence for the economic activity on these sites appears mostly as coins, weights and bullion finds, though ninth-century camps present a combination of local and imported coins, hacksilver and lead weights. These findings raise questions as to the purpose of trading in some of the sites, and whether they traded internally, with other camps, with surrounding areas or more widely. It could be that the division in these camps' functions between military and military/exchange is related to the planned degree of permanence of the settlement. Whereas the first camps could raid and exploit the vicinity without any view towards sustainability, other camps could have been established for longevity and thus had to develop an economy of trade (WILLIAMS 2015: 109-110) and have acted as «offshore *emporía*» (O'SULLIVAN ET AL. 2014: 269) to facilitate trade with other areas of the north Atlantic. It is important to understand this distinction when thinking about all these sites as representing one type of defensive construction. They share commonalities in functionality, shape, or both, but they also show divergences in terms of complexity and purpose.

To complete this summary, a good number of the camps reviewed above are situated in strategic emplacements, often in proximity to a church or monastery site. Also common to the identified and excavated camps are their D-shaped/elongated enclosures (although shape may not be a defining feature as mentioned in the discussion of Torksey), the flatter side of which faces the source of water, demarcated by a ditch and often a rampart. There are frequently burial grounds within or in the periphery of the camp, and findings in some of these camps reflect their importance as trading sites.

Extrapolating information gathered in an individual camp to other sites can offer an insight into the impact of viking presence in an area and the different stages of this presence. For instance, the study of the typologies of findings in Torksey has allowed for a reinterpretation of the process from raid to settlement that occurred in Northumbria and the development of an Anglo-Scandinavian culture in the places vikings did establish settlements (RICHARDS, HALDENBY 2018). The abandonment of sites by previous Anglo-Saxon inhabitants points to «consequent disruption of Anglo-Saxon settlement patterns» (RICHARDS, HALDENBY 2018: 345).

The Viking Age in Galicia

Even though the Iberian Peninsula was a focus of viking activity throughout the Viking Age, the study of the impact of Scandinavian presence in this region has attracted less scholarly attention than more northern areas of the diaspora. This is possibly because this area is not usually considered part of the diaspora as it was not as heavily settled by vikings as, for instance, Normandy was. In general, raiding has been viewed as the most visible type of relationship between the vikings and the different cultures they encountered in the Peninsula. In this section I will advocate for

trying to understand their presence in certain areas as more established than the term ‘raiding’ implies. I refer to potentially permanent or medium-term presence as ‘settlement’, indicating an intention of achieving permanence in the land that would have involved the quotidian existence of viking communities, and differentiating it from sporadic raiding. Although the viking presence was as strong in places like Al-Andalus as it was in the northwest regions of the Peninsula, I will here make a case study of Galicia, where, for the past few years, I have used an interdisciplinary approach to better understand the impact of the viking contact. I have used toponymy, historical documents and archaeology to cast a light upon more complex interactions like, for example, mercenarism and settlement.

What distinguishes Galicia from other areas of the viking diaspora like Normandy is the significantly lesser amount of settlement that took place there and in surrounding areas (like León and northern Portugal, as commented below). Raiding and violent interactions kept occurring well into the twelfth century (even though, at these later points, the perpetrators of the violence were pilgrim Scandinavian leaders),⁷ but those viking communities that did remain behind left little in the way of obvious historical or archaeological evidence.

Reinhart Dozy’s nineteenth-century work on the medieval Iberian sources that record viking raids has been the canonical text upon which much of the later research has been based (DOZY 1881). Since then, few but valuable contributions have compiled and chronologised the varying types of contemporary and later sources dealing with this period of contact: northern Iberian Christian sources, Andalusian documents and some texts coming from Scandinavia like the *Orkneyinga Saga* and *Knýtlinga Saga*.⁸ No actual archaeological work has been undertaken in Galicia until recently (two campaigns described below and two campaigns led by me in 2017 and 2018 which are still continuing) but two sets of archaeologically significant items have been identified: the small antler box of the Mammen and Ringerike styles found and displayed in the Basilica of San Isidoro, León (FRANCO VALLE 2016) and the large number of coastal defensive structures built in Galicia as a reaction to viking and arabic piracy (MORALES 2004).

The viking contact in Galicia was intense and continued throughout the Viking Age and after. It was in the entry for AD 844 that the *Annales Bertiniani* mention the first arrival of vikings to the northern coast of Spain from Toulouse (MORALES 1997: 89-90). This violent raid was followed by one of the most renowned long-term raids on southern Europe and north Africa in AD 859, which

⁷ As an instance, *The Orkneyinga Saga* (PALSSON, EDWARDS, 1981: 167-171) recounts how Earl Rognvald spent the Christmas period in Galicia in AD 1151-2, battled an oppressive count as a mercenary for the locals, plundered the land westwards and then composed some verses of poetry about it. For more, see ALMAZÁN 1997.

⁸ The most comprehensive works are ALMAZÁN 1986; MORALES ROMERO 2004; MORALES ROMERO 1997 and CHRISTYS 2015.

would bring continued violence to Galicia and have long-standing impact, as exemplified by the establishment of the episcopal see of Santiago when the previous see, Iria Flavia, was destroyed (MORALES 1997: 109). Galicia continued receiving raids that became increasingly frequent and destructive during the second half of the tenth century. In fact, the 960s would see yearly raids that brought a significant response from the contesting ecclesiastical and political powers of Galicia, incorporating the building of many defensive fortifications (including the walls of Santiago). More importantly, during the second half of the tenth century the sources are more specific and elaborative regarding the scope of viking presence on Galician soil. Concretely, a specific passage of the *Chronicon Sampiri* details how a group of vikings in AD 968 roamed the inner parts of Galicia for three years and reached the frontier with León (SANTOS 1921: 56-57). This longer period of presence should be connected with the settlement of a group of vikings in the province of León in the village still called *Lordemanos* (an exonym equivalent to *Nordomanni*, ‘northern men’, which implies the settlement was named by those outside the viking community).⁹

Camps, settlement and permanence in Galicia

As we have seen before, other north Atlantic areas of the viking diaspora evolved, by the mid-ninth century, from suffering from repeated raids to hosting structures of temporary viking habitation, which in some cases became permanent. Galicia is not unique in having no archaeological record of viking presence. In Normandy, we are able to understand viking occupation through historical records and place-name analysis,¹⁰ but almost no archaeological material has been found in the region (ROESDAHL 2003: 207). And while we have no historical record of a colonisation process, there is indeed evidence of permanence or long-term habitation in Galicia, León and Portugal in the form of place-names.

In Coimbra, northern Portugal, there is still a neighbourhood called *Lordemão*, which is the same name as the village of León commented on above, *Lordemanos*, our easternmost reference for the presence of vikings inland in Spain. This latter settlement of *Lordemanos*, which I believe dates to the second half of the tenth century (GARCÍA in preparation), is recorded in an eleventh-century document without mention of its origins (RUIZ ASENCIO 1990: 346). There is no current place-name in Galicia coming from an exonym for *Nordomanni* or *Lordomanni* as the instances of León and Portugal do. However, such a name did exist, and a now-lost Galician charter from AD 966 mentions the former «city of the Loclimanos» (CHRISTYS 2015: 16). This is probably a misreading of *Lodimanos*, as the name has often been transcribed (LÓPEZ 1988: 225), which would have considerable implications for our understanding of the viking presence in Galicia for two reasons. Firstly, it allows us to date the existence of a viking community in Galicia to before AD 966, as the

⁹ I have discussed this settlement, its potential mercenary origin, and the raid of AD 968 elsewhere in GARCÍA in preparation.

¹⁰ For more on the topic, see FELLOWS-JENSEN 1988, ABRAMS, 2013 and RENAUD 2008.

document states «to where the city of the Lodimanos used to be» (LÓPEZ 1988: 225).¹¹ Having said this, this information only exists now in translation after the loss of the original manuscript, so the word ‘city’ is an interpretation from López Alsina (1988), which must be borne in mind. Secondly, it allows us to locate said settlement. The document already mentions the river Ulla, which is of immediate interest because it was the most direct way into Santiago from the sea and was indeed utilised by vikings very frequently. Indeed, the bishopric of Iria Flavia mentioned above was on the shore of this same river, and so was the town of Catoira, which fell repeatedly under viking attack from the first arrival of the Scandinavians to Galicia onwards, and whose towers have been linked to the defence of the entrance of the river Ulla from the Ria of Arousa (CHRISTYS 2015: 76-78).¹² We can more closely trace an approximate placement of the ‘city’ from the medieval document’s mention of other locations to which the viking settlement is relative:

Ordoño Laurencio donates to the Monastery of San Martin the estate he owned in the village of Campaña, which was Paladin and his wife’s, with its enclosures, trees and pastures, near the river Ulla, as was delimited by the river Louro and by Cordeiro and Valga, and up to where the city of the Northmen was.¹³

Within the course of the river Ulla, we can delimit an area from the mouth of the river Louro south to Cordeiro, east to Valga and then north again to the river bank, with this northern point being the old viking settlement. In fact, the document mentions the village of Campaña (meaning ‘encampment’) at the centre of these four points. This village is still in that same location nowadays.

That camps were set in Galicia as they were in the other areas of the diaspora commented upon above is without doubt. Such continued presence, constituting frequent raids and longer periods in the region, could not be sustained without a camp. Much like the Great Heathen Army used several camps in England to overwinter, gather goods and recover, the vikings that raided Galicia would have been in need of such structures in the midst of a hostile and already-settled region, especially as some of the raids involved large numbers of ships and men. In fact, similarly to Hadley’s estimates of a size of 50-100 ships for the Great Heathen Army (HADLEY 2016: 58), the medieval Galician sources claim 70 ships for the first of the recorded viking attacks in AD 844 (FLÓREZ 1763: 289).¹⁴ And while it is possible this number has been exaggerated in the Latin text to extol the virtues of the nobleman that defeated them (CHRISTYS 2015: 42-45), there is nothing to suggest that the most significant raids during the period (AD 844, AD 859 and AD 968) were not led by large

¹¹ Translation by the author.

¹² In this case, other pirates from Al-Andalus may have contributed to the need for defences.

¹³ Translation by the author of LÓPEZ 1988: 225.

¹⁴ There is a discrepancy in numbers in different editions of the original text, as some transcribe 60 ships instead of 70 (see MORALES 1998: 93).

numbers of ships. In fact, the *Chronicon Iriense* records that a hundred ships arrived in Galicia in AD 859 (FLÓREZ 1765: 602), and the *Chronicon Sampiri* states that a hundred viking ships, with their leader Gunrød, attacked Galicia in AD 968 (FLÓREZ 1758: 457).

In this context, the existence of a viking settlement by the course of a major river that they used continuously in raids should not come as a surprise. A camp in this location on the river Ulla would have granted fast access to the river mouth into the ria and the open sea. It would have been located in an ideal position mid-way along the river into Santiago de Compostela, just before the river becomes less navigable by the town of Pontecesures, an old Roman harbour. Thus, it would fulfil a similar role to that of the camps and *longphuirt* presented above: as a strategic emplacement, by a water-course, perhaps with a church in the vicinity (potentially, the church of Valga). The next step is, naturally, to attempt to locate and analyse the site in question. I have two archaeological projects already under way in two separate spots along the river, one presenting remains of a structure. Within the next two years, I hope to have further information about the nature of this settlement.

Although pinpointing this last example was facilitated by the presence of the place-name *Lodimanos* in a medieval source discussed above, there are other locations in Galicia that have high potential as prospective sites of temporary or permanent settlement. I have investigated and continue investi-gating several of these, but, as examples, a temporary camp must have existed (whether as a reutilised already existing structure or a newly built camp) in the parish of O Cebreiro, where the vikings spent three years near the frontier with León in the second half of the tenth century (GARCÍA in preparation).¹⁵ Recent research shows a high concentration of place-names with possible Scandinavian origin around part of (and inland from) the Rias Altas region of northern Galicia, which makes this an area of high potentiality for settlement as well (GARCÍA 2018).

Another interesting site is that of Os Moutillós, in the A Mariña region of northern Galicia. In March 2014, a series of sea storms brought a large amount of stone artefacts to the Galician beach of Os Castelos within the San Román parish of the A Mariña region. Amongst a few Roman items, like millstones and pieces of clay roof-tile, locals found more than a hundred stone artefacts (EL PAÍS 2014). A promontory towers over this beach and pieces of clay and bones were continuously found for decades in its environs.¹⁶ The site piqued local interest because a local heritage association, Mariña Patrimonio, suspected it to be a motte and bailey. While this link with a motte and bailey is based on an assessment of the place-name of the structure, *Os Moutillós*, derived from Galician *mouta* meaning ‘hillock or ‘fortification’ (CUVEIRO 1876: 214),

¹⁵ The author relates this location to the one mentioned in the *Historia Silense*, where the medieval author claims that vikings «ac totam Galleciam depredaverunt, usquequo pervenerunt ad Pireneos montes Ezebrarii» (SANTOS 1921: 56-7).

¹⁶ Pers. comm. with Mariña Patrimonio. Thanks are due to Mariña Patrimonio for arranging my first visit and for their continued support.

this promontory is not the only instance of such a place-name, or variation of it, in Galicia, and there is no evidence for a connection to motte and bailey structures. The site also raised interest because the promontory showed evidence of human habitation, as a paleosol stratus is visible from an eroded cliff on the beach side. As this area has a large concentration of hillforts, it was obvious to the local association that the site did not resemble any other type of fortification in Galicia. That the site presents some form of human structure is certain, but the potential connection to viking usage is through some of the objects that appeared on the beach by the promontory: large amounts of flint ballast and a number of stone anchors. These were described as viking in national media (EL PAÍS 2014) and the site connected to the beach has since been investigated by the archaeologist Iñaki Sagredo Garde as a potential viking site. The results of his archaeological action are described below. As no research has been published on the matter but Os Moutillós has claimed such attention, I will proceed to analyse certain aspects of the site and the objects found to establish if they could be related to viking presence in the area.

Some context is necessary to establish whether this site has any potential to be used as a base for viking activity. The beach in question is situated on the northern shore of Galicia, very close to Estaca de Bares, the northernmost point of the Iberian Peninsula, historically a natural watchtower. The western part of this beach is dominated by a geological feature referred to as Os Castelos ('the castles/fortifications'), which gives its name to that area of the beach. This feature is composed of two rock formations that stem from two different points in the sand to give this small beach the shape of a horseshoe, making it a natural harbour. In fact, the area between the rocks is called O Porto ('the harbour').

The promontory's shape is elongated and faces the beach. The promontory communicates with two sides of the beach, that of the small harbour area enclosed by Os Castelos, and the wider (if still sheltered) part of the beach, known as San Román. External walls and a ditch have been detected using tomographies and confirmed by the test digs carried out in the past years by Iñaki Sagredo Garde, which have shown usage of the site from the third century BC to the thirteenth century AD (EL PROGRESO 2016). The promontory is located in an area that had been of significance since before the Middle Ages, both economically and as a strategic point for surveillance of incoming threats. The site is surrounded by hillforts and promontories whose place-names are related to surveillance and beacons. Less than 600m north of this headland is a final geographical feature important for understanding Os Moutillós, an island called Isla Coelleira ('island of the rabbits'), whose surface area measures 27ha and rises up to 80m above sea level. Connecting this island to the possible viking site is its monastery.¹⁷ Thus, the emplacement of the site corresponds well with what can be expected as an attractive camp location due to its positioning by a strategic harbour area, its elevation and elongated shape and the presence of a nearby island.

¹⁷ Archaeological campaigns in Isla Coelleira have been led by archaeologist Iñaki Sagredo Garde.

What makes Os Moutillós most interesting as a potential site of viking re-usage is the group of artefacts that were found on its beach after the sea-storm. I review these elsewhere (GARCÍA in preparation 2) but will summarise my findings here.

Regarding the stray finds, the most significant items are several stone anchors and around 100 flint ballasts, some of which weigh up to 200kg. There is a notorious absence of flint in the northern coast of Galicia and only small amounts inland in the provinces of Ourense and Lugo (RODRÍGUEZ ET AL. 2009: 69-74). The type of ballast found on the beach corresponds to the clay-with-flints or *argile à silex* deposits from northern France, most notably in Normandy or the north Paris Basin, or in Southern England, where flint is as abundant (PEPPER 1973: 336). Such large ballast would have been used by large ships that would have used the natural harbour of the Os Castelos.

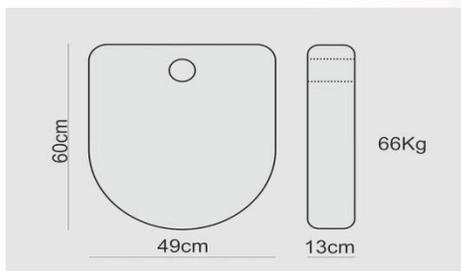


Fig. 1

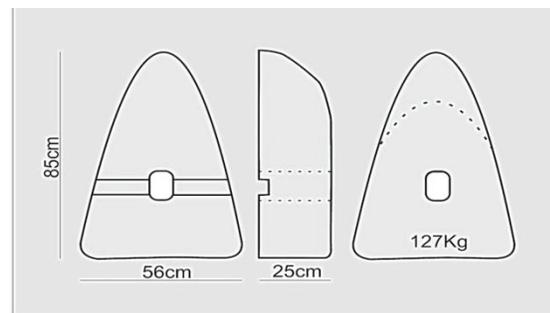


Fig. 2

The anchors are cut out of local stone, a type of gneiss called *ollo de sapo* ('toad's eye') which is found only in this small area of Galicia and abundantly on the beach itself. From the two instances that first washed ashore, one weighs 66 kg (Fig. 1) and the other 127kg (Fig. 2).¹⁸ Another three anchors (also lithic, large, with a central hole, and round or oval) appeared on the beach in subsequent years, and divers have spotted two more with the same characteristics off Galicia's western coast.¹⁹ Even though Galicia boasts a large number of lithic anchor findings, these objects have always been significantly smaller, with two or three holes (PATIÑO 2016). Although the Galician one-holed anchors could be assimilated to Mediterranean Bronze-Age anchors, I have elsewhere (GARCÍA in preparation 2) concluded that the divergences in the fundamental features of all Mediterranean anchors from those of the Galician anchors (especially the position of the hole) do not grant such a comparison. Instead, the Galician anchors are more easily understood as viking from the descriptions of viking anchors in literature and instances of Scandinavian anchors used from the Viking Age until recently: they share the main characteristics of central holes, they are lithic, and they could have wooden encasings (which are suggested in Galicia by the grooves around the central hole of some of the samples). The dating of lithic anchors in Brittany to the eleventh century (VERGER 2009: 99-100) also supports this as a potential link.

¹⁸ Images courtesy of Mariña Patrimonio.

¹⁹ I would like to thank Modesto Tajés Suarez and Manuel Tajés Suarez, professional divers in Costa da Morte, for their updates regarding underwater anchors.

Taking this all into account, it is still not possible to be certain that Os Moutillós was utilised by vikings during the raiding period, but it is likely. There is reason to suggest that vikings may have used the site, given that an array of different material found by the site can potentially be linked to Scandinavian ships, that the structure shows continued usage for an extended period, and that Os Moutillós shares similarities with the other sites presented above in Ireland and England in that it is protecting a harbour, is by the water and near an island, and is associated with now-lost burials (the large quantities of human bone that used to be found on-site, though these are undated and no formal record of them exists). However, the test digs by Iñaki Sagredo have found no sign of viking presence, so this must remain just a suggestion.

In this article, I have presented the state of research into the role of overwintering camps in the raiding and early settlement phases of viking contact, focusing initially on *longphuirt* in Ireland and winter camps in England to showcase some commonalities amongst these structures. This is a rapidly evolving field of research and one that helps us to better understand the early years of the viking diaspora. The areas more to the south of that diaspora have traditionally received less attention from scholarship and so, in the latter part of this paper, I have taken Galicia as a case study to begin redressing this imbalance. I have summarised the parts of my own research that provide insights into how to approach the question of early and temporary settlement in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, and in particular shown the benefit of drawing on information about other parts of the diaspora to help us comprehend the impact of the sustained viking presence in parts of the Iberian Peninsula.

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