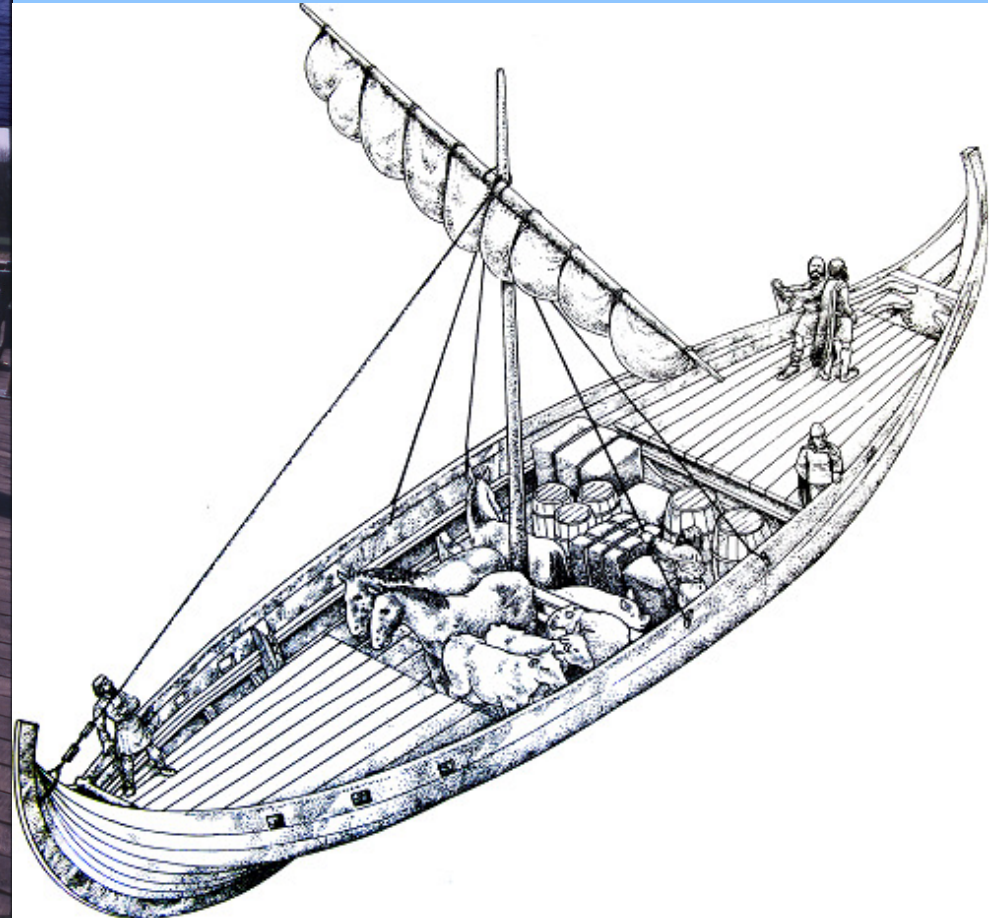


Viking Ships



Building a ship

1. Selecting timbers of the right shape



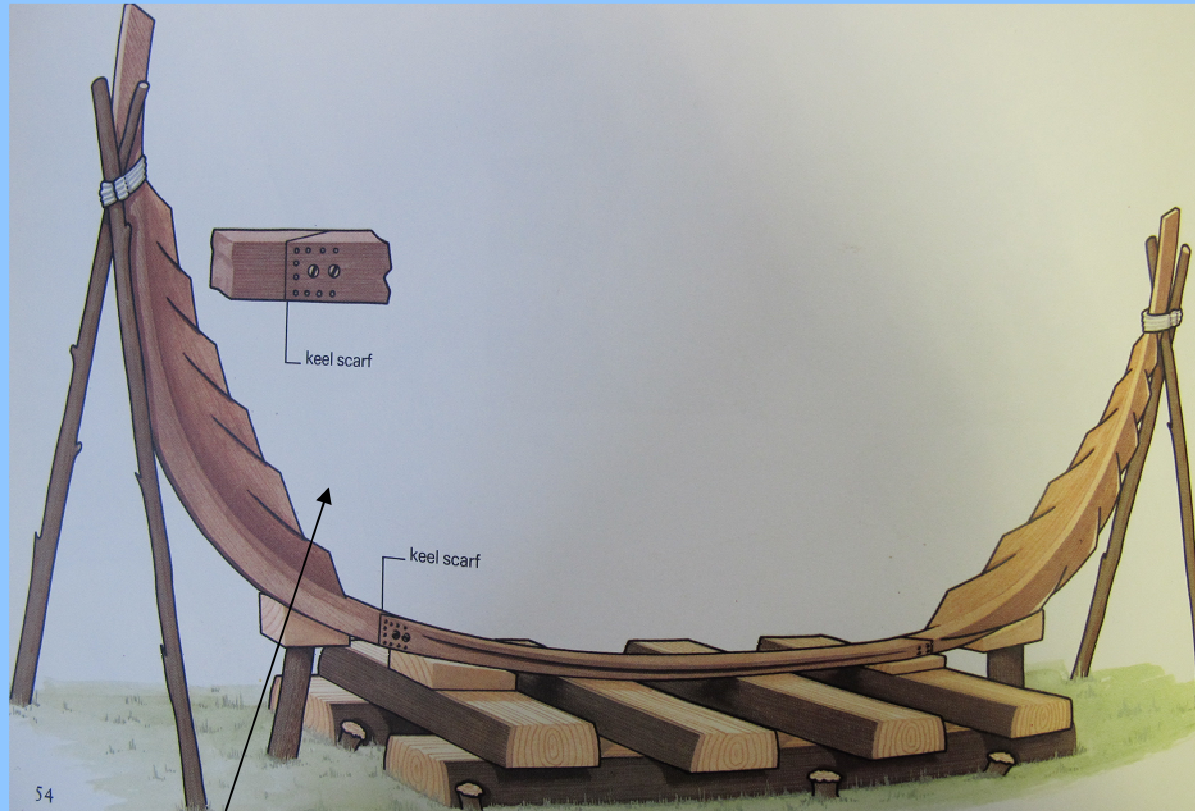
In Norway the ships were built largely of pine.

Oak is better timber because it is stronger and doesn't rot as easily in the water.

However oaks are not common in Norway because the winters are too cold.

Building a ship

2. Laying the keel



The keel is the backbone of the ship:

The timber for it has to be long enough
to run the whole bottom of the ship

Building a ship 3. The sides and ribs



The sides are made of timbers that overlap slightly.
Animal hair and moss are packed along the plank edges to keep the boat watertight.

Vikings could find all the materials in Scandinavia

Strong big timbers for the main structure.



Springy pine for the mast and oars.

The sails were made at home



They grew flax to spin into linen

They sheared sheep for wool



Women spun and wove these together into sails for the ship



Sails are controlled with ropes



→ Bast is a kind of tree bark.

It is twisted into cords or ropes.



→ Sheep's wool makes rope, too



More materials



Ropes were tarred with pitch from pine trees



Nails were hammered from iron gathered in the bogs



Viking warships could be
either rowed by oars



or sailed with the wind.



Warships were designed to carry men as fast as possible across the sea.

The oarsmen sat together on benches or sometimes on sea-chests in which they stored their gear.

If they were too far from land to stop for the night, the oarsmen slept on the benches as well.





Trading vessels, in contrast, usually just had a small crew and they were sailed rather than rowed.

Archaeologists have found evidence that the goods brought to Ireland on Viking ships were packed in barrels.

Goods brought in from Scandinavia included amber, furs from the Arctic, fish, rich clothing, saddles and weapons.



Toilets aboard ship: 'The head'

Men hung over the prow or 'head' of the ship.



Women used a bucket

Some Viking fleets in Ireland



Early fleets of 60 ships landed near Drogheda and Dublin.

Later fleets were stationed on Lough Neagh, Lough Erne, Lough Ree and Lough Corrib.

After they settled in Ireland, the Vikings began to build ships here.



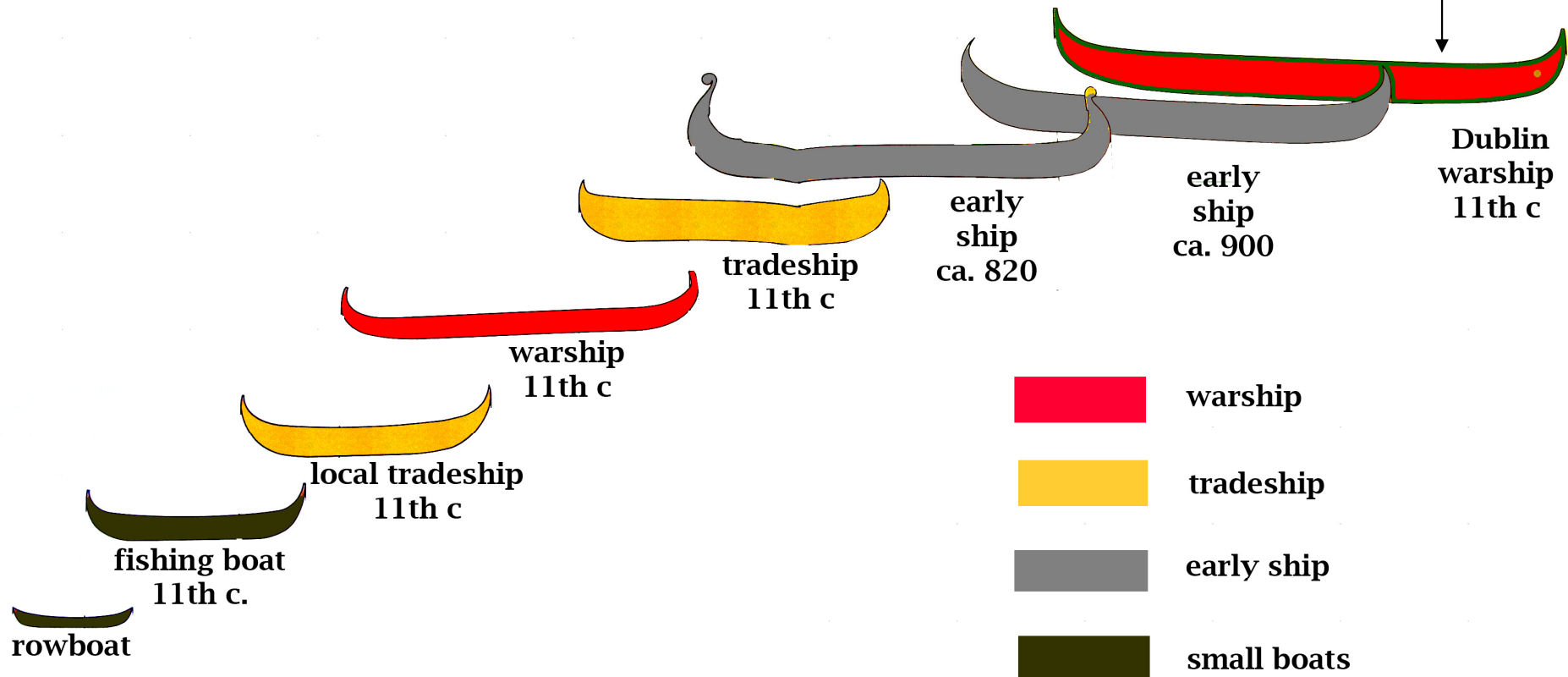
Ireland was the best source of oak in western Europe.



The remains of a ship from south-east Ireland were found in Denmark.

It was built in the eleventh century (in the generation after the Battle of Clontarf.)

Here's how big it was compared with other Viking ships



Danish archaeologists built a replica of the Irish ship which they named the Sea Stallion of Glendalough.

In 2008, volunteers sailed the Sea Stallion from Denmark around the north of Scotland and south to Dublin.

Do you think this is a warship or a trading vessel?



Long after the Vikings in Ireland had ceased to be independent, their fleet of warships like the Sea Stallion were still hired out to foreign warlords by Irish kings.



Similarly the descendants of Vikings living in Irish ports also continued to build trading ships.

In Waterford, Dublin and Cork archaeologists have found the remains of boats built to carry goods to England and France as well as smaller barges designed to carry goods up river.

Youghal town seal AD 1527

