

The Vikings in Ireland

Who were they?
How did they live?



Viking Raiders



On a sunny day in AD 795 disaster struck the quiet monks of a small Irish island.

Strange ships were seen: their pointed prows ran up onto the beach.

Hordes of armed men jumped out...

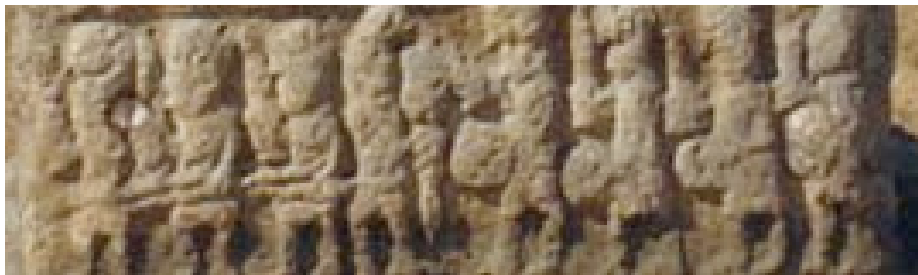


The Vikings had come!

The Vikings raided settlements and monasteries all over Ireland



They killed many people and they took many others as slaves.





**They took cattle and
food to eat and
precious objects to sell
or take back home**

This top of an Irish bishop's
staff was found in Norway

Where did the Vikings come from?



The Vikings came from **Norway, Denmark, and Sweden.**

Can you find these places on the map?

A fjord in Norway



The Viking homelands have many areas with thin soils and long cold winters.

Farming is hard.

So the Vikings learned to be good fishermen and to build fine ships.

Viking Ships

Their ships made Vikings
the communications
masters of their age





They could sail across the Atlantic Ocean to **Iceland**, **Greenland**, and even **Canada**

**They could row up rivers through Europe
across to Asia.**



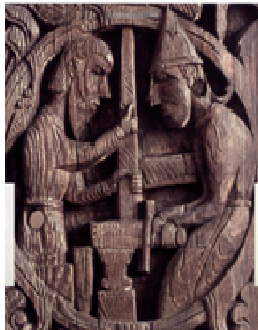


Vikings
from
Norway
attacked
Scotland
and
Ireland.

How do we know about the Vikings and their raids?



We can read the records that Irish monks kept of what was happening.



We still have the stories Vikings told describing their adventures on their raids.



Archaeologists sometimes find remains of Viking raiders buried with their weapons.

Viking culture in Ireland



After the first 40 years, the Vikings began to stay longer in Ireland

They began to build camps,
which became towns.

They became involved with
Irish wars and politics.



Some Vikings brought their wives from Norway or Scotland.



Viking women wore pairs of brooches like these found in Dublin

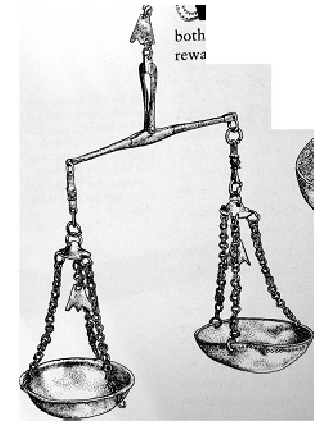


Some Vikings married Irish women

Money



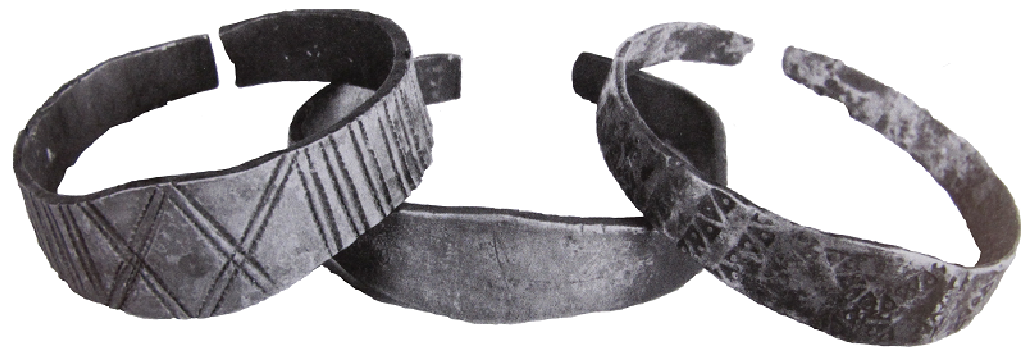
The first Viking 'money' was just chopped up pieces of stolen gold and silver. The pieces were weighed up on a set of scales.



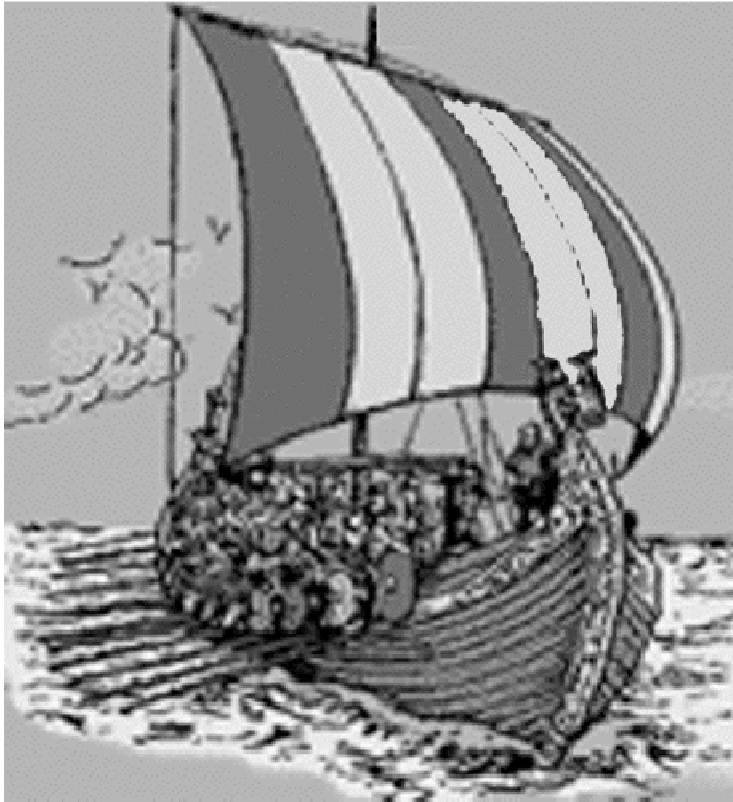
Then they began to melt silver into crude bracelets.

A wealthy merchant's arms would be covered with bracelets.

If he wanted to buy something, he just paid with a bracelet.



Their ships began to change.



Their war ships grew longer to carry more men.

Their trading ships grew wider to carry more goods.



The Vikings of Dublin grew so rich from trade that in 989 the King of Ireland, Mael Sechnaill II, laid them under a heavy tax: one ounce of gold for every Dublin yard or household.

Soon after this the Dublin Vikings began to mint their own coins



The Battle of Clontarf

The Battle of Clontarf, fought against the Irish high-king Brian Boru in 1014, was the Vikings' last bid to remain independent from Irish kings.

The Irish king Brian Boru was killed, but so were many Viking leaders and their ally, the king of Leinster.

Many Vikings were slaughtered as they ran from the field. People reckoned that Brian's side won.

From this time on, the Vikings were just one group amongst all the others living in Irish kingdoms.

What happened to the Vikings?

People descended from the Vikings still live in many of the places where Vikings settled.

How do we know this?

Our bodies can tell us.

Did you know?

Your body is made of millions of cells.

But did you know?

You started off as **JUST ONE CELL.**

That cell had to know how to build you:

- what colour eyes you have
- how curly your hair is
- what shape your nose
- how long your fingers

All that information, *and much more*, is contained in every cell of your body.

How did these cells know how to construct you?

Every cell in your body has **two sets of genes**:

One set is from your mother, one set is from your father.

Scientists study people's genes to find out where their father's father's father came from, and who their mother's mother's mother was related to.

Genes of people in Scandinavia are similar to, but a little different from genes of people from Asia, Africa, Australia, or even central Europe. That's why they look a little bit different.

Where many Vikings settled, we find people today who have Viking genes in their cells.

Today's genes show that Norwegian men and women came in about equal numbers to live in Orkney and Shetland.

Only half as many Norwegian women as men came to live in western Scotland.





In Iceland nearly all the women came from Britain or Ireland although almost all the men came from Norway.

The genes of people in eastern England show that their Viking ancestors didn't come from Norway. Instead they came from ...

Can you guess?

So how do we know where the Vikings settled when they left their homelands?



We have the writings of Irish monks, the stories of the Vikings themselves and the finds of archaeologists to tell us about Viking history.

But we also have the genes in our bodies which can tell us about our Viking ancestors and where they came from.

