



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Wednesday 6 October 2021 – Morning

A Level History A

Y302/01 The Viking Age c.790–1066

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes



You must have:

- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use black ink.
- Write your answer to each question in the Answer Booklet. The question numbers must be clearly shown.
- Fill in the boxes on the front of the Answer Booklet.
- Answer the question in Section A and **any two** questions in Section B.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is **80**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets [].
- Quality of extended response will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (*).
- This document has **4** pages.

ADVICE

- Read each question carefully before you start your answer.

Section A

Read the two passages and then answer Question 1.

- 1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the motives for Viking raids on Ireland. [30]

Passage A

A quick glance at a map plotting all the Viking raids on monasteries in Ireland shows that the Irish had a particularly bad time of it. When they first set out across the Irish Sea, the Vikings could not have known what they would find. But from their bases in the Northern Isles they saw in Ireland a country rich in monasteries, and with more opportunities for raiding.

In 795 the Vikings raided the monastery on Iona, and in the same year there was an attack on the Irish monastery of Rechru. Rechru is thought to be Rathlin Island, off the north-east coast of Ireland and just across the water from Iona. The proximity of the two raids on monasteries carried out in the same year, 795, suggests that it may have been the same Viking crew that was responsible for both. Rechru was certainly a rich establishment so maybe one lucky band of Vikings took loot from both religious houses back to their homelands that winter.

Raids by heathens rapidly became a permanent fixture in the Irish record books. In 798 Vikings burned a church on St Patrick's Island, off the east coast, smashing up shrines, and during this year they are said to have made inroads into much of Ireland. Attacks around the Irish Sea intensified in 821, and in 822 monasteries like that at Cork on the south coast felt the full effect of Viking ferocity. In north-east Ireland, Bangor was particularly badly hit in 824 when its monastery was attacked, the relics of St Comgall flung from their shrine, and the bishops killed.

The most obvious evidence for raiding is the insular metalwork found in Norwegian graves, although some would argue that these ecclesiastical objects could have been acquired by peaceful means, such as trading. However, it does not seem credible that monks would have handed over precious religious items to these same Vikings whose raids they described in their annals.

Adapted from: J. Richards, Blood of the Vikings, published in 2001.

Passage B

Viking warriors came in search not just of silver but slaves as well. As the second half of the ninth century wore on, Dublin was increasingly used by Vikings as a holding point for captives on their way to markets elsewhere. During a single raid on Armagh the Viking slavers collected 710 men, women and children. What is clear from the available writings is that many thralls [slaves] in Scandinavia had been acquired in Ireland, so that island was indeed either the source, or at least the hub, of a plentiful supply.

Historians are agreed that many slaves were taken so they might be sold back to their fellows on payment of a suitable ransom. The various chains in the National Museum of Ireland are a stark indication of how the status of any given individual determined their fate. The richest and most elaborate of the collars were clamped, if only briefly, around the necks of captured aristocrats or even kings and queens. Having been displayed as prisoners, such men and women were surely reacquired by their people in short order once the necessary gold, silver and trading terms had either been handed over or agreed. The annals record that Abbot Forannan, leader of the monastery of Armagh, was taken captive in 845, along with many of his fellow churchmen and the relics of St Patrick. They were not returned until the following year – no doubt after the payment of a breathtaking ransom. The apparently industrial scale of the slave trade in Ireland is yet another indication of just how substantial an operation the Dublin long port must soon have become.

Adapted from: N. Oliver, Vikings: A History, published in 2012.

Section B

Answer **TWO** of the following three questions.

- 2*** To what extent did Scandinavian society change in the period from c.790 to 1066? **[25]**
- 3*** To what extent did the motives for Viking raids on England and Scotland change in the period from c.790 to 1066? **[25]**
- 4*** 'Changes in Viking burial customs were greater than changes in any other aspect of Viking religion in the period from c.790 to 1066.' How far do you agree? **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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