



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

# A Level History A

Y302/01 The Viking Age c.790–1066

**Friday 9 June 2017 – Morning**

**Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes**



**You must have:**

- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet  
(OCR12 sent with general stationery)

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Use black ink.
- Answer Question 1 in Section A and any **two** questions in Section B.
- Write your answer to each question on the Answer Booklet.
- Do **not** write in the barcodes.

## INFORMATION

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

## 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 impact of the Vikings on Ireland. [30]

**Passage A**

By the late eighth century Ireland was a centre for art, literature and learning. Despite the lack of unified kingship the Irish elite had developed the concept of an Irish identity, based on language, culture and religion, and defined and justified through genealogy and origin myths. It was in contrast to this that incoming Vikings were seen as *gaill*, or foreigners. The Vikings continued to be seen as outsiders – the Irish looked back to their Celtic heritage for their roots, although the Vikings have been credited with the establishment of the major Irish towns. As is the case in England, there is actually considerable evidence for the development of a hybrid culture in Ireland. Although many of the settlers may have shared a common Norwegian ancestry they are unlikely to have arrived direct from Scandinavia and they were willing to adopt aspects of Celtic culture. It is therefore often appropriate to describe them as Hiberno-Norse.

The Vikings were not the only ones who looted monasteries in Ireland. Raiding was endemic in early Christian Ireland and there are at least 30 recorded attacks by Irish raiders prior to the first recorded Norwegian raid on Rechru (probably Rathlin Island, County Antrim) in 795. Up to the early tenth century there is always a clear distinction between Norse and Irish raids; thereafter the differences become blurred. The raids followed similar pattern to those recorded in England. From the 830s isolated coastal attacks on monastic sites give way to systematic expeditions inland by larger fleets, and the construction of fortified camps, known as *longphorts*.

Adapted from J. D. Richards, *The Vikings: A Very Short Introduction*, published in 2005.

**Passage B**

The Vikings did shake up the major Irish kingdoms, but no large kingdom was conquered. The territories taken, though small, were strategic, and from the tenth century the cities were very important. The economic changes that came in the wake of urban settlement in the second Viking Age, especially the unprecedented growth of trade, and thus of royal income, provided the greater dynasties with the means to build up their power dramatically and fuelled the struggle for the kingship of Ireland. The example of Athelstan and later English kings was not lost on Ui Neill [leading Irish dynasty] or their successors, particularly since the connections of Dublin and York ensured that the leading Irish kings followed closely the changing fortunes of the English. The idea that there should be a kingship of Ireland, pursued with great energy in the eleventh century, owed more to foreign example and to the economic and political changes brought about by the Vikings than inherited concepts of power. The vigorous warfare of the kings, the use of cavalry, fleets, fortifications and castellation, owed much to the Vikings. Above all the Vikings were enablers of communication, ultimately the most effective agent of change in all societies. They brought Ireland into closer political and economic contact with Britain and the mainland and with the tide of change that flowed strongly in the eleventh century in government, church and commerce. This, in the end, was their most important contribution.

Adapted from D. O’Corrain, ‘Ireland, Wales, Man and the Hebrides’ in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings*, published in 1997.

**SECTION B**

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

- 2\*** 'Scandinavian livelihood was mostly dependent on developments in shipbuilding in the period from c.790 to 1066.' How far do you agree? **[25]**
- 3\*** To what extent did the motives for Viking expeditions change in the period from c.790 to 1066? **[25]**
- 4\*** To what extent did Christianisation impact on Viking religious beliefs in the period from c.790 to 1066? **[25]**

**END OF QUESTION PAPER**

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