Western Silver from the East

_Hiberno-Norse and Gotlandic contacts in the Viking Age_

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Abstract

In my previous thesis I wrote about what features that characterize the Hiberno-Norse identity in Ireland during the Viking Age/Early Medieval period and the origin of these features. I also discussed whether they are to be viewed as a creolized Scandinavian society or as a hybrid culture with focus on said features. In this thesis I will attempt to shift the focus towards 9th and 10th century Gotland. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate if there were some connections between the Hiberno-Norse world and Gotland. I will focus on one particular hypothesis regarding the early import of Islamic dirhams, particularly Samanid silver to Ireland. The idea is to examine if a trading network might have existed and, in essence, to establish that there were connections between the Hiberno-Norse world and Gotland.

Key words: Hiberno-Norse, Vikings, Silver hoards, Samanid, Viking Age, Scandinavia, Ireland, Gotland, Actor-Network, Diaspora, Circulation, Trade.
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Picture on the cover is of the co-called “Moses coin” from the Spillings hoard on Gotland with the inscription “Moses is the apostle of God”. This famous coin is a Khazar copy of an Abbasid coin and also happens to be the only archaeological evidence that the Khazars converted to Judaism in the 9th century, as stated by historical sources (Westholm 2005: 16). The Moses coin is often used to highlight the importance of historical coins, and to show that even a single coin among thousands can cast a long shadow. Photo by Kenneth Jonsson. After Hellqvist & Östergren 2011: 3.

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# Table of contents

1. Introduction .................................................................................................................................5  
   1.1. Purpose and issues ...................................................................................................................5
   1.2. Material and delimitations ......................................................................................................6
       1.2.3. Definitions ........................................................................................................................7
   1.3. Method and theory ..................................................................................................................8
       1.3.1. Actor-Network theory .......................................................................................................9
       1.3.2. Viking Diaspora ..............................................................................................................11
   1.4. Earlier research .....................................................................................................................12
   1.5. Source criticism ....................................................................................................................13

2. Setting .........................................................................................................................................13
   2.1. From the mines of Transoxania .............................................................................................14
   2.2. Hiberno-Norse economy: 9th-11th century ...........................................................................15

3. Western Silver from the East .......................................................................................................17
   3.1. *Filaka* and the Gotlandic Silver Hoards ..............................................................................18
       3.1.1. Early Samanid Hoards .....................................................................................................20
   3.2. Hiberno-Norse Silver Hoards ...............................................................................................23
       3.2.1. Dysart IV ........................................................................................................................24
       3.2.2. Millockstown ..................................................................................................................24
       3.2.3. Leggagh ..........................................................................................................................24
   3.3. Unconfirmed hoards ..............................................................................................................25
       3.3.1. Drogheda ........................................................................................................................25
       3.3.2. Bossall/Flaxton ..............................................................................................................25
       3.3.3. Goldsborough hoard ......................................................................................................26
       3.3.4. Bangor hoard ..................................................................................................................27

4. Analysis .......................................................................................................................................28

5. Discussion ....................................................................................................................................34

6. Conclusion ....................................................................................................................................38

7. Summary .....................................................................................................................................39

8. References ....................................................................................................................................40
   8.1. Electronic references ............................................................................................................44

9. Figure index ..................................................................................................................................44

10. List of abbreviations ..................................................................................................................45
1. Introduction

One of the Hiberno-Norse elements that I did not discuss in my earlier thesis was their coinage. This is due to the fact that I focused on other expressions, such as art and personal articles. This smaller, yet connected thesis will focus on imported coins. This introduced silver economy would eventually lead to the Hiberno-Norse starting their own minting. However, the Hiberno-Norse coinage will only be presented briefly in the background chapter since this is a small thesis and the subject of Hiberno-Norse coinage is a very large subject and a subject that is the focus on many authors with years of numismatic experience in the subject. Therefore I will here instead focus on a hypothesis that has been proposed as a possible explanation of some Islamic coins that occur in early Irish hoards of a Scandinavian character.

The hypothesis in question mentions that it is possible that the Samanid dirhams in Ireland have a Gotlandic origin. This idea will be examined from a network perspective. In order to understand if, and in that case how the coins could have arrived in Ireland, an understanding of the trading networks that existed in the Viking Age is to be considered key. The focus on this thesis will lie on one of these networks, the one between Gotland and Ireland, and the Islamic dirhams have been chosen as they best represent this network. If this network has existed, the coins are certainly part of it.

The reason for choosing this topic is because it can be connected to my earlier thesis “Black Pool” about Hiberno-Norse identity. The main reason for choosing Sweden, and particularly Gotland as a subject is that the connection with Sweden and the Hiberno-Norse world does exist, albeit in a much smaller sense than it does with Denmark and particularly Norway, where research on this already exists. Several topics have been the focus for many authors writing about the connections between Scandinavia and the Hiberno-Norse world, be it identity and transformation of objects (See Tsigaridas-Gløørstad 2012), economy (See Sheehan 1998) or the overall impact of the Viking landfall (See Griffiths 2012). The field in Sweden is basically non-existent which is why I believe it can be of interest to investigate the possible connections that may exist, since it has not been done before (at least not recently) and could of course be of interest to the field of Hiberno-Norse and Scandinavian Viking Age research.

1.1. Purpose and issues

Regarding the early presence on the British Isles, Egon Wamers wrote in 1998 that “The Swedes did not have any role of importance” (Wamers 1998: 49). It is a well-known fact that the Swedes, i.e. the “Svear” or “People of Eastern Scandinavia” to a much larger extent travelled east and that the Swedish influence in the west was minimal, indeed. This is a fact also reflected in the
import from Ireland, but at the same time import also show that some form of contacts did exist.

The aim with this thesis is to examine why a specific type of Islamic silver - the Samanid dirhams, could occur so far west, when the only concentrations from this very specific time period are in Eastern Europe and Scandinavia, particularly Gotland. In this thesis I will examine if it is possible that these dirhams could have travelled west from the island of Gotland to the Hiberno-Norse settlements in Ireland. In order to understand how these dirhams could have arrived so far west I will discuss this from a network perspective and focus on this one, very specific network that might have existed. The purpose is not to disprove the other theories, or to say that Swedish influence in the west was great, but rather to offer an alternative. By mentioning Wamers remarks another purpose is to problematize this rather outdated idea of only Danes traveling to England and France, Norwegians to Scotland and Ireland and Swedes to Russia and the Middle East. Lately this old and categorical view of the Viking Age has been questioned, which opens up for smaller studies of smaller groups and even individual actors from all over Scandinavia travelling within what is known as the “Scandinavian diaspora”. This concept refers to the interconnected Scandinavian world in the Viking Age, i.e. the regions where Scandinavians were influential besides their homelands in Scandinavia, such as the settled provinces in Britain and Ireland. Connections and networks within this diaspora is an underlying theme in this thesis. In this case I will be using early Samanid silver on Gotland and Ireland, and in some cases Britain as a case study in order to highlight this one specific, and very complex network.

The following questions will be addressed:

- Is it possible that the early Samanid silver in Ireland came from Gotland?
- Which Gotlandic and Irish hoards contain early Samanid silver?
- What can this tell us regarding the contacts between Viking Age Gotland and Hiberno-Norse Ireland? Is this a result of direct contacts?

1.2. Material and delimitations

This thesis is primarily based on literature, with the addition of a small GIS-study. The Hiberno-Norse culture existed in Ireland, and the material in question is Irish. Using mainly relevant articles, I have also used books, dissertations and papers as well as Bruno Latour’s Actor-Network Theory. This theory is already established in archaeology (Ex. Sindbæk 2007), and will here be used as a tool for discussing the trade network in the Viking Age.

The study has been delimited to studying connections between the Hiberno-Norse population on Ireland and the island of Gotland during a limited period in the Viking Age (c. 890-930). When discussing Gotland in the Viking
Age it is impossible not to mention the massive amount of silver coins that exists here. As it is, there exists one hypothesis that could show a possible connection between these two islands and it is this hypothesis that I will investigate and discuss in this thesis.

Both Ireland and Gotland have numerous hoards from the Viking Age. I have delimited this thesis to include only hoards with Samanid dirhams from the period AD 890-930. This is a very specific time period that can be recognised in Scandinavian hoards that contain Samanid silver. Why this specific time period has been chosen and which hoards fall into this category is presented in chapter 3.

The choice of only including Samanid dirhams is because I believe that they can be used in order to highlight the network that could have existed between Gotland and Ireland. There are other dirhams available during this period, but these might and probably do reflect other networks between other actors. While these would be immensely interesting to study in order to understand the different networks operating within the Scandinavian diaspora, this one has been chosen for further investigation, as it is relatively small and different in character due to its connection of two islands not normally under discussion.

It must also be mentioned that there is no official term for “Early Samanid” coins, and that the distinction between early and late Samanid coins is made because of the great import of Samanid coins that occur in archaeological contexts from the 930’s and onwards; most Samanid coins in Scandinavia are actually struck between AD 890-920 (Kilger 2015, manuscript). The material is much scarcer prior to c. 930, which is why I have chosen to classify these hoards as “Early Samanid (c. 890-930)”. It is key to remember that when I speak of early Samanid coins, I am referring to the contexts in which they are found i.e. when the coins were imported to Scandinavia and deposited, not the date when the coins were struck. This distinction may well be transformed in future works, when the area of Scandinavian import of Samanid silver is a wider and more explored subject than it is today.

1.2.3. Definitions

The term “Hiberno-Norse” can be very problematic, depending on the reader. The term “Norse” has previously been used by some to specifically denote Norwegians (Downham 2009: 139-140). In this, and my earlier thesis, I am using the terms “Norse” and “Hiberno-Norse” without specific ethnic labels. With “Norse” I am not specifically referring to Norwegians, but rather as a collective term for the Vikings or Scandinavians. It is not a term that I use frequently, but it is very important to remember when I speak of the “Hiberno-Norse”, which is not to be read as “Hiberno-Norwegians”. With “Hiberno-Norse” I am referring to the culture that arose in Ireland after the arrival of the Norse. As this is also a rather complicated term, perhaps a better term should
be “Hiberno-Scandinavian” (cf. Abrahms 2012), but “Hiberno-Norse” is still the most common term and is why I have chosen to use it, at the same time staying consistent with my earlier thesis.

Here I will use the term from a non-cultural perspective, and use it as it is most often used, i.e. to define the period of Irish history from the years 795 (800)-1170 (1200) as the culture is not under discussion here. This is unlike my other thesis when I used the term to denote when the Scandinavians in Ireland became the Hiberno-Norse hybrid culture (Amlé 2014).

Another term that requires definition is the term “Swedes”. In this thesis I am using the term to signify the people that inhabited what is now Sweden. One term that might fit the picture is “Svear”, but this group might not have signified the many different groups inhabiting Sweden (See e.g. Svanberg 2003a, 2003b) which is why I have used “Swedes” as a collective term, rather than using “Eastern Scandinavians” which might be misinterpreted as people from eastern colonies etc. With “Swedes” it is quite clear what is meant. The same logic has been used for “Norwegians” and “Danes” and is not to be mistaken for people from the states of Sweden, Norway and Denmark, but rather the geographical areas which these states now represent. However, when I specifically speak of the people involved I use the term “Gotlanders” as it is more accurate both from a geographical and a cultural perspective (See e.g. Melander 2014).

1.3. Method and theory

The one particular theory that is under discussion here is the Actor-Network Theory (ANT) developed by Bruno Latour (among others). Latour’s approach to the theory has its origin in sociology, but the term has also been used in archaeology by e.g. Søren Sindbæk. In addition to this, I will discuss Lesley Abrahms “Viking diaspora” as a complement to the Actor-Network approach.

These approaches have been chosen because they are, or can be connected to each other. My use of ANT is both influenced by Latours basic idea of ANT as well as Søren Sindbæks use of the idea in archaeology. I believe that ANT can be used in order to understand the different networks operating in the Viking Age. From the mines of Transoxania to the trade hub in the Baltic – Gotland, and possibly further west to the Hiberno-Norse world. In order to understand Sindbæks idea of ANT and how it is used in archaeology I believe it is important to have a basic understanding of the original concept of ANT. However, ANT must be transformed and adapted in order to be used in archaeology, which is exactly what Søren Sindbæk has achieved in his paper “Networks and nodal points: the emergence of towns in early Viking Age Scandinavia”.

Another term that is frequently mentioned in this thesis is “T.P.Q.” which stands for “Terminus Post Quem”. This term is used to determine the earliest point in which the hoard could have been buried. For example, if a hoard has
a latest coin with the date 910 inscribed, the hoard is given a t.p.q. of 910, i.e. the hoard cannot have been buried earlier than 910. It is, however, possible that the hoard could have been buried later, but the t.p.q. gives us an indication of when the hoard might have been deposited.

Important to keep in mind, however, is that this is an archaeological theoretical study of networks, and not a numismatic study of coins. The coins are simply means to an end and are used to exemplify the complex network under discussion.

1.3.1. Actor-Network theory

The Actor-Network Theory is a concept used to describe the relations between objects, or actors in a network (Latour 1998; Latour 2007). The theory is not really a theory, but rather a method. Being difficult to summarize, I will make an attempt to make it understandable for my coming discussion from this perspective and for the presentation of Sindbæk’s use of ANT in archaeology.

Each person or object can be viewed as an actor working within a network. However, each object or person can also be a network in itself. This is a study of relations. For example, each dirham is to be viewed as an actor within this larger network of import/export in the early Middle Ages/Viking Age. But the dirham is a network in itself as well. One has to consider who minted the coin, what it consists of, who ordered the minting, what or whom the coin represents etc. This network within this one actor, i.e. the dirham, is of no interest to us at this point which is why we can choose to “blackbox” it. This means that all of this additional information is put inside a hypothetical closed black box. Hence, a network consists of many black boxes, or “actors”, that when opened presents additional networks with their own separate black boxes. One can’t be reduced to only one of all the properties it contains. The black box system exists to make the network theory easier to use, without having to consider all additional information (Latour 1998: 11-20; Sindbæk 2006: 120).

Having established that there are non-human and human actors within a network, we must continue to define the actors. There are micro- and macro-actors within these networks. A macro-actor is a micro-actor with more hypothetical power (See the power paradox in Latour 1998: 41), sitting upon a mountain of black boxes, e.g. consisting of relations, patterns of thought, items and customs. In modern days, a macro-actor could be defined as a political party, for example, while the micro-actors are the voters. We (the micro-actors) have pledged ourselves to one political party which we believe represents our best interests. The macro-actor knows us, and uses a technique Latour calls “translation” in order to get our attention. The macro-actor says what we want, and because we want it, we listen. They act on our behalves and therefore we listen and agree. A micro-actor can become a macro-actor through the concept of translation and the obtaining of black boxes, i.e. a macro-actor is or consists of micro-actors, but acts as one man. Together, we create the ultimate being,
the Mortal God: The Leviathan. Keeping with the example of politics, the Leviathan would represent the government. It is a non-human entity that exists above all of us, but we still make up for its form and substance. In this example, the Leviathan is the government, but it consists of the macro-actors we, the micro-actors, have chosen. It is all connected in a complex network consisting of humans, non-humans, translations and black boxes (Latour 1998: 11-20).

ANT assigns agency to both humans and non-humans for a very specific reason. They do not argue that objects act for themselves in some supernatural way, but rather that only when we assign agency to both parties can we understand the cogwheels that make the network function (and break down). ANT assigns agency to objects because objects “act” and because objects make us act. Objects “act” in the way that the railing keeps us from falling, the hammer strikes the nail, the guitar makes the sound etc. They do not act by themselves, they need us, just as we need them (Latour 2007: 70-72).

1.3.1.1. Networks and nodal points

Trading places have often been recognized as royal centres as well, especially in the later Viking Age. While this might not be untrue, Søren Sindbæk offers a more elaborate and detailed explanation of such centres. Trade and power are linked, but such long way trading connections cannot just be ascribed the royal elite, but rather a number of actors within this network. Besides the social elite taking part and showing interest in trading connections, one of the key actors within this network is naturally the traders themselves. One does not simply travel from point A to point B. Each trader would seek out the best possible place to trade his/her wares through smaller connections. To make these deals as lucrative as possible many traders flocked to the same nodal points in order to meet the right people and to strike the most successful deals. These trading centres would have been located in optimal locations for the traders, and being perfectly located, most traders would flock to the same trading places in order to get the most lucrative connections. In Viking Age Scandinavia there were only a few of these nodal points within a network of local contacts with many smaller markets. The choice of such a nodal point would not only have to match the traveller’s needs, but also that of the local rulers as well as the geographical location (Sindbæk 2007: 128-129).

This interpretation of centres is of use for a study such as this. The Viking Age was a period of expansionism and exploration for the Scandinavians. SETTLING new lands previously inhabited naturally brought trade into the picture. That trade occurred between Scandinavia and Ireland is already established, but the question is if Ireland had what Sindbæk calls “nodal points”. During the later Viking Age towns would emerge in Ireland, the first being the “Black Pool” – Dublin. Dublin started the transformation into a town in the early 10th century, but it would be in the middle of the century that Dublin could be
viewed as a proper town, or what Harold Mytum describes as a major trading and population centre (Mytum 2003: 127; Clarke 1998: 334, Griffiths 2012: 31). However, prior to the expansion of Dublin into Ireland’s first town there was a phase of settlement characterized by what is known as a “longphort”. The longphuirt (plural) were ship camps erected by the Vikings in the 9th century and used primarily as bases in order to prolong the raiding season, but archaeological digs have also shown evidence of trading taking place. The first longphuirt mentioned in the sources were at Linn Dúachaill, modern day Annagassan and Dubh Linn, modern day Dublin (AU: Mac Airt & Mac Niocáill: 841; Clarke 1998: 368; Hall 2007: 86-87; See Amlé 2014). These longphuirt might well fit the picture of “nodal points” in the Scandinavian diaspora and will be discussed later.

1.3.2. Viking Diaspora

A term which is common today in Viking Age research is “Viking diaspora”. This of course refers to the expanded Viking world, with all of its overseas settlements, and that somehow, this entire world was connected (Abrahms 2012: 17). The idea of a pan-Scandinavian culture in the Viking Age is a long existing one, which has been heavily questioned in the 21st century. The best example of this is Fredrik Svanbergs “Decolonizing the Viking Age (Part 1 and 2)”. Here Svanberg has looked to the grave finds and rituals in southern Scandinavia and arrived at the conclusion that there was no pan-Scandinavian burial practice (Svanberg 2003a, 2003b), something that has also been argued by Neil Price (Price 2008: 257). However, burial rites aside, there are many things that do unite the Scandinavian peoples in the Viking Age. The most important one is language. The runic alphabet was shared all over Scandinavia and the settlements abroad and is often viewed as a particular Scandinavian trait. The shared language is also something that naturally helped communication between Scandinavian and the abroad settlements. In addition to this there are the many examples of shared material culture and artistic styles across the regions. The best example probably being the oval brooches, something discussed by Susanne Thedéen in her paper “Box Brooches Beyond the Border” about creolized individuals in central places. Another shared feature that cannot be ignored is the shared idea of religion and certain traditions. One good example is the occurrence of Thor’s hammers across the Viking world and the several examples of the story of Sigurd, and the spread of the Skaldic poems (Abrahms 2012: 21, 23, 25; Thedéen 2012). In short, there are several cultural aspects that did unite the Viking world. Without the continuing contacts between Scandinavia and the abroad settlements, maintaining colonies with a shared cultural identity would have been difficult, as the native traditions and culture definitely influenced the Scandinavian settlers (Abrahms 2012: 27; See e.g. Amlé 2013, Kershaw 2013, Hall 2007).
The concept of a Viking diaspora is an important concept when discussing the people within these spheres of interest. In this case it can be used to strengthen the idea of a network connecting the different areas of Scandinavian interest. In short, this theory can be used to show that the connected Scandinavian world was not as static and simple as has been believed earlier. In my case it will be used in order to show that individuals from Gotland could very well have travelled to the western colonies in order to initiate trade with the locals, i.e. the Hiberno-Norse, who in turn might pass the silver onwards.

Here it seems fitting to define the network and the actors and how they will be applied in this thesis. There is one network under discussion. This network reflects the trade that might have taken place between Gotland in the east and Ireland in the west, as well as possible links in between. The actors are the people working within this network. In this case the key actors are the traders that have travelled between these locations, bringing exotic wares with them, but there are naturally many more actors that have played a role in this network but are much harder to define. Royalty, for example, and possible middlemen, diplomats etc. Many actors have likely been part of long distance exchange, as discussed by Sindbæk, but to define each one of these actors and their specific role in the network would take up far too much space and is something hence left undefined.

1.4. Earlier research

Many have written on the subject of Gotlandic silver hoards. Numerous bachelor theses, master theses, dissertations and papers have been written with regards to the massive amount of silver found on Gotland. My supervisor Christoph Kilger is one of the numismatics and archaeologists that have written several articles about the silver hoards and is one of the current experts on the area (e.g. Kilger 2008). Other experts that have written several key works in understanding Samanid circulation are Gert Rispling (e.g. 2007a, 2007b) and Thomas Noonan, although Noonan’s works have not been used in this thesis. Many other archaeologists active on Gotland have written articles on the subject. One of these is Gun Westholm (e.g. 2005, 2008) who have written much on the Spillings hoard. Prior to this, Mårten Stenberger wrote on the subject in his massive work “Die Schatzfunde Gotlands Der Wikingerzeit” (Stenberger 1958). There are, of course, many more from Sweden and several other countries, but these are some key individuals that will be used in this thesis, although Stenberger’s research is mostly used in the background as one of the first to write about the hoards, since most of his interpretations have been updated.

In Ireland there is of course John Sheehan, who is one of the foremost experts in the field. Sheehan has written much on the Hiberno-Norse hoards, their compositions etc. and is one of the primary authors that I will use in this
thesis with regards to the Irish material (e.g. Sheehan 1998, 2000, 2001). However, James Graham-Campbell must also be mentioned as one of the experts in the field (e.g. Graham-Campbell 1976, 1993). Finally, like Stenberger, one of the very important older individuals much be mentioned. For Irelands silver hoards, this is Michael Dolley who pioneered the field and wrote many key works that I use in this thesis (e.g. 1955, 1961, 1966).

1.5. Source criticism

While I have no particular issue in writing, reading and understanding English, it must be mentioned that English is not my native language. I am also knowledgeable in the younger futhark. This is a skill which I have learned through a course, but this does in no way mean that my transliterations are better than anyone else’s. This should not be an issue, however, as I have compared my transliterations with others, and since translating runes only appears once in this thesis I will simply mention it here for the same reason as the English; to simply state that I am aware of my possible shortcomings as they are not my native languages.

Like in my previous thesis, I’ve had to obtain many English and Irish sources that can be hard to come by in Sweden. It must be kept in mind that I am writing this in Sweden, where this is not a large and often discussed subject (in fact basically non-existent). Therefore, I might have missed some sources that could be considered important. If this has happened it is likely because I did not know of their existence or were otherwise unable to obtain them. Another criticism regarding the literature worthy of mentioning is that much of it is unfortunately rather outdated.

2. Setting

The travels of Norwegians and Danes are well-known and well-documented. However, the people of what is now Sweden did travel just as much during the Viking Age. Most travelled east to Russia and further, but there are some examples of Swedes travelling west to the British Isles. Following is a background presentation of some material that testify to a small Swedish presence in the western colonies in order to point out that contacts and even travel might have occurred.

In the Swedish province of Småland, for example, there are at least three runestones that mention local Smålanders travelling to England. These are Sm 5, Sm 27 and Sm 29 (Kinander 1961: 44, 92, 97; See Stille 2008). In addition to the runestones from Småland, there is a runestone on Gotland that mention the brothers Vatar and Hailgair who “erected this stone after Hailga, their father, who travelled west with Vikings” (Westholm 2008: 24; English translation by me). In England there are also a dead individual from the Dorset mass burial of Vikings which have shown the rather odd custom of filing his
teeth (Oxford Archaeology 2015). This is something that has also been recorded as taking place on Gotland and in Scania (Arcini 2005: 727). It is tempting to see this one individual as being a person from Gotland or at the very least Sweden since it is known that this practice took place there, and that the analysis of the teeth pointed suggested that none of the individuals were from Denmark (Oxford Archaeology 2015) however, this individual could possibly have been from Scania, a Danish province in the Viking Age.

As it is, the region under discussion is Ireland, not England. We have seen that there is such a thing as a Swedish presence in the west, however small it may be when compared to the Danes and the Norwegians. In Ireland there is one example of possible Swedes among the Hiberno-Norse. This example is Gloghermore cave in Co. Kerry which was excavated in 1999-2000. In this cave several burials were discovered that the excavators argued held many parallels with the burial rites described by Ibn Fadlan among the Scandinavian Rus. The excavators compared the artefacts recovered and the burial rites with several locations in Sweden (Birka, Helgö and Öland) and then-Danish region of Scania. They strongly indicate that they believe that the individuals were from Sweden (Connoly & Coyne 2005: 68-74; cf. Griffiths 2012: 80).

While this might not reflect the trading network operating within the diaspora, it does show that more than commodities might have travelled west from Sweden. It can, though, be fairly certain that the Swedish presence on Ireland was considerably smaller than it was for the Norwegians and the Danes. This is something that can be seen when looking towards the historical sources that mention the different groups of Vikings active in Ireland. Historical sources mention the Dubgaill and the Finngaill, often translated into “Dark/Black foreigners”, “Fair/White foreigners”. These have traditionally been interpreted as ethnic markers for Danes and Norwegians (Hall 2007: 89), although this interpretation have since been heavily questioned (See Downham 2011). In addition to these groups, there is a third faction first mentioned in the Annals of Ulster in the year 856. These were called the “Gallgoidil” and are most often interpreted as the descendants of the Scandinavians and the Irish. Today we call them the “Hiberno-Norse” (Smyth 1977: 113; AU: Mac Airt & Mac Niocáill). What can be fairly certain, however, is that it is very unlikely that the Swedes and Gotlanders were a large and different enough group to earn a mention in the historical sources. It is possible that if there was a small Swedish presence in Ireland in the Viking Age, the Irish chroniclers would not have made any distinction between the Swedes, or in this case Gotlanders and the other active Scandinavian groups in Ireland.

2.1. From the mines of Transoxania

The earliest examples of dirhams reaching the northern periphery lie in the 8th century when peace was reached in the Caucasus between the Khazars and the Abbasid caliphate, which enabled large-scale trading between both factions.
The appearance of these dirhams in north-western Russia caused the Scandinavians to get involved (Rispling 2007b: 102). This large-scale trade continued under the Samanid dynasty – a royal dynasty founded in the 9th century AD by Ahmad ibn Isma‘il in Central Asia and the Middle East. The Samanid state was a flourishing and expanding empire, centred on the regions of Khurasan and Transoxania. Several cities in the empire, including the capital of Bukhara, were located along the Silk Road. This road to the east reached as far as Northern China and Mongolia, and the road to the west reached Bulgah on the Volga. Due to the expansive trade, silver mining and subsequent minting in the empire, their coins have reached as far north as Scandinavia (Negmatov 1998: 84-85, 87, 89, 91). Through extensive trading with the Volga Bulgars, the Samanid dirhams also found their way to Scandinavian hands with the Viking traders that travelled east. Massive amounts of this coinage ended up on Gotland in the beginning of the 10th century and it seems that Gotland is the first region in Scandinavia that was supplied with this type of coins (Negmatov 1998: 92; Kilger 2008: 239). Gert Risplings analysis of Russian and Baltic material has shown that some dirhams have been used for several hundred years before finally being deposited, a timespan which was severely shortened in the 10th century. Risplings analysis, however, also accounts for Russian and other Baltic hoards, in addition to having a wider timespan and is therefore not representative of the Gotlandic material under discussion (Rispling 2007a: 60, 61, Table 4).

2.2. Hiberno-Norse economy: 9th-11th century

The general view is that there was no native coinage in Ireland in the early middle-ages or the end of the “Dark Ages” and that it was the Vikings that brought this phenomenon to Ireland as well as being the first to mint their own coins. Before the coming of the Vikings, wealth in Ireland was measured in other forms, such as cattle (Hall 2007: 125-126). Although there are singular finds of different types of coins from Ireland prior to the arrival of the Vikings (Blackburn 2006: 123), these are too few to indicate the presence of a strictly coin-based economy. This does, however, prove that the coin medium was not unknown to the Irish before the Viking colonization.

The arrival of the Vikings made coins a much more commonly available resource. Coins were brought from Anglo-Saxon England, Frankia, and as far east as the Islamic caliphate with their very distinct Kufic coins. These coins from the Samanid era, are the focus in this thesis and are usually indicative of the early Hiberno-Norse phase on Ireland. The coins, however, were not part of a coin-based economy in this early phase, but were rather used as bullion, together with standard weight ingots and armrings. Rather than using the face value of the coins, these silver objects were cut up and used for their weight in silver, which is today known as “hack-silver” (Griffiths 2012: 101). The
coin phenomenon was, according to Michael Dolley, characteristic of the Hiberno-Norse and confined to the Hiberno-Norse settlements (Dolley 1961: 45-46), i.e. the longphuirt. However, this Scandinavian monopoly on silver hoards has later proven to be unlikely by John Sheehan. He has studied find locations of the Irish hoards and arrived at the conclusion that while it is certain that the Scandinavians were the ones who brought the silver to Ireland, it did not always stay in Scandinavian hands. It is not known exactly how the silver ended up in Irish hands, but it could be as a result of trade or as a form of tribute, or gift-exchange (Sheehan 2001: 51, 53).

In Ireland there are over one hundred and thirty hoards of Scandinavian or Hiberno-Norse character. These are characterized not only by coins, but by hack-silver, ingots, and ornaments as well, often combined with coins. There are also completely coinless hoards, consisting only of finds from the “non-monetary” categories. The Hiberno-Norse period in Ireland stretched from AD 795 – AD 1170 when the Normans conquered Dublin, and there are hoards from this entire period, with over one hundred hoards that can safely be attributed to the 9th and 10th centuries, which is a number unparalleled outside of Scandinavia (Sheehan 2001: 51-52).

The hoards from Ireland adhere to three different categories: Coin hoards, mixed hoards and coinless hoards. Around Fifty-two of the total hoard finds from Ireland are from the last category and contain no numismatic material. The most common artefact from these hoards are Hiberno-Norse ornaments with the so-called “Broadband armring” being the most common type. The majority of these coinless hoards are dated between ca. AD 850-950. The coinless hoards can further be subcategorized into three more categories. The first subgroup of these coinless hoards consists solely of Hiberno-Norse ornaments, ranging from two-four examples from each hoard. This subgroup makes for about 48 % of the total number of coinless hoards. The next subgroup consists of hoards containing ornamented or plain ingots, but no hack-silver. This is the smallest group, making up only 16 % of the total number. The final subgroup makes up 36 % of the total number and consists of hoards containing hack-silver, regardless of the hack-silvers origin, be it ingots, ornaments etc. (Sheehan 2000: 50; 2001: 52).

The second category consists of mixed hoards. These consist of coins mixed with ingots, ornaments and hack-silver. This is the smallest category and only sixteen hoards from this category are known from Ireland, nearly all of which were deposited in the 10th century (Sheehan 2001: 52).

The final category is the one containing only coins. These represent the latest deposits, most of which were deposited after ca. AD 940. Most of the coins represented in these hoards are Anglo-Saxon, but other issues from Viking dominated areas of England also occur, as do Islamic coins. Hiberno-Norse coins do not dominate the hoards until the 11th century. In bullion terms,
this is the smallest category when regarding the total amount of silver in Ireland from this period (Sheehan 2001: 53, 54).

By studying the hoards in Ireland the progression from an introduced bullion based economy to a completely coin-based economy can be traced. In the late 9th century/early 10th century the bullion based economy is introduced by the Vikings. Then later in the 10th century we start seeing the transitional phase, which is represented by the mixed hoards, containing both numismatic and non-numismatic material. Finally at the end of the 10th century we see the last phase of Hiberno-Norse economy when the Hiberno-Norse minting started in Dublin in AD 997 under their king Sigtryggr Silskiegg (Sithric Silkenbeard). By the beginning of the 11th century this transition is complete and Ireland is now has a completely coin-based economy (Dolley 1966: 19; Seehan 2001: 53-54; See Hudson 2005).

Of the early imported objects in Ireland, especially from the late 9th to the middle of the 10th centuries, it is clear that most actually came from southern Scandinavia and the Baltic, not Norway. Since there was a large silver working tradition among the Hiberno-Norse and the native Irish, it is likely that what has been preserved only represents a fraction of the once existing material. John Sheehan has argued that it is likely that much silver was imported to Ireland from Scandinavia and England and then melted down in order to keep this tradition going. It also seems likely that the Hiberno-Norse and the Irish preferred familiar forms of silver, i.e. ingots, certain types of armrings and coins. This resulted in some of the imported material, such as armrings, spiral rings and brooches of Scandinavian manufacture surviving the silver industry (Sheehan 1998: 192).

3. Western Silver from the East

There have been several major inflows of Islamic silver import to Scandinavia during the 9th century. During this period the silver was struck by the Abassid rulers of the Caliphate and the coins are known as “Abassid dirhams”. A considerable inflow of Islamic silver started in the second quarter of the 9th century (Kilgers phase III) (c. 825-860) (Kilger 2008: 221-222). There have been import to Scandinavia prior to this, but to a much smaller degree (Kilger 2008: 211, 215, table. 7.4, 7.5, 7.6). Although this phase stretches from 825-860, most hoards have been dated to c. 830 (Kilger 2008: 221-222). The coins from the second part of this phase is a result of the Khazars starting their own minting, copying that of the Caliphate (Kilger 2008: 228).

The following phase is Kilgers phase IVa (c. 860-890) (Kilger 2008: 228). This phase consists of Late Abassid coins and has been characterized as a brief rise of silver in the 860’s followed by a decline of silver reaching Scandinavia that lasted until the arrival of the Samanid dirhams in the early 10th century.
(Blomqvist 2008: 161) but the theory of a silver crisis has lately been questioned. During this time the silver reached its widest geographical distribution, reaching the Carolingian Empire and Anglo-Saxon England (Kilger 2008: 234-235). The largest Viking hoards in the world are also dated to this period.

The aforementioned are the two Spillings hoards from Othem parish, found only 3m from each other and often grouped together as “The Spillings hoard”. The hoards have a total number of 14,200 coins, 500 arm rings of varying size and many other items. The total weight of the hoards is c. 65kg (Hall 2007: 56; Kilger 2008: 230). The oldest coin in the hoard was struck in AD 539 and the most recent was struck in AD 870/871. This hoard proves that the minting from AD 830-870 was considerably larger than previously believed. The hoard also gave the first archaeological evidence that the Khazars converted to Judaism in the 9th century with the famous “Moses coin” (Östergren 2008: 19-20, 30-31).

3.1. Filaka and the Gotlandic Silver Hoards

That Gotland acted as an intermediary of various items during the Viking age in the Baltic is a matter long since established (Westholm 2008). But is it possible that Gotland also acted as an intermediary to the west? During the Viking Age big parts of the Mediterranean came under Muslim rule, including its gate – Gibraltar, which might have disturbed the previous trade routes available to merchants from Europe. Another concern in the Mediterranean was the large scale piracy operating there, making trade in the Mediterranean very dangerous, particularly the western route from Constantinople. Both of these factors could have given opportunity to the Scandinavian traders with their long way connections to act as intermediaries of exotic wares in Northern Europe (Westholm 2008: 51). Gotland with its central location, large scale trading network and the massive import of Islamic silver might just fit the picture.

In total Gotland has some 750 hoards, a number unequalled in the Viking world. This number stands for 2/3 of the total number of hoards from Sweden. This number, however, pales in comparison to the estimated total believed to have once existed, which reaches somewhere between 2000 and 8000 hoards (Wienberg 2001: 231). It is somewhat uncertain as to how this massive amount of silver appeared on the island. Raiding neighbouring regions has most certainly taken place but it is far more likely that Gotland with its central location in the Baltic acted as a hub for trading in the Viking Age. Historical sources also attest to the close relations the Gotlanders had with their neighbours in the middle ages, even going against the church on their behalf (Hall 2007: 56; Westholm 2008: 121).

The evidence of large scale trading are there, but one recurring question is who could organize such a massive network, stretching from the Middle East all the way to Northern Europe (and possible further)? It has been suggested that this was the result of certain key individuals operating within this network.
(e.g. Westholm 2008; Kilger 2008). One indication of such an important individual is given through a runestone found on the island Berezan, modern day Ukraine. The runestone is a tombstone, carved by *Grane*. On the runestone he mentions the deceased by name and occupation: “*Grane made this coffin after Karl, his business partner*” (Westholm 2008: 126; English translation by me). What makes this more interesting is that the shape of the runestone is very reminiscent of the Gotlandic picture stones, leading some to interpret this stone, and the ones mentioned on it, as Gotlanders. However, their names are not “typical” Gotlandic names, which might indicate that they are from mainland Sweden (Westholm 2008: 126).

The word “business partner” is also very interesting. This is my translation of the Swedish word “bolagsman”, that is a translation of the Icelandic word “félag” (Westholm 2008: 126), from the word filaka on the stone, that I have transliterated into the word “filaka” which is confirmed and finally normalized as “felaga” by T.J. Arne (Arne 1914: 47).

![Figure 1. The Berezan runestone with the word “filaka” encircled. After Arne 1914: 46. Modified by me.](image)

The word could be interpreted as them belonging to the same family, but due to the connection with trade, Gun Westholm has interpreted the word as meaning “business partner” in this case. This has been interpreted as them belonging to some sort of organized company, and is thus an indication that there were key individuals in charge of these excursions. Westholm speculates that there could have been interpreters who travelled with the trading parties and were knowledgeable in the visited areas. These individuals knew the local
culture and language and made the experience easier for the traders. She mentions that Gotland could possibly have been organized, like some sort of predecessor to the later medieval trading companies. This would result in a smaller number of people travelling to these remote areas to engage in trade, while the rest stayed home at the farms, thus avoiding the years-long journeys that this sort of trade entailed (Westholm 2008: 126-127). This is pure speculation, but it is nonetheless a very interesting part of the runestone that does engage the modern reader in speculation as to the nature of these “business partners”.

3.1.1. Early Samanid Hoards

From Sweden proper, as many as 38,523 coins of Samanid origin have been found. This represents 69 % of the total amount of Islamic dirhams (Kilger 2008: 204). The Samanid dirhams first appeared on Gotland in the early 10th century, although very few also arrived in the late 9th century (Kilger 2008: 235-236). Gotland has over 145,000 coins of Viking Age character, many of them Islamic dirhams and the rest being mostly English and German coins. In addition to the coins, massive amounts of hack-silver have been found in the various hoards (Hall 2007: 56).

The period which will be under discussion here is Kilgers phase IVb (AD 890-920), although the end date has been pushed by 10 years. Among the first hoards to contain Samanid silver is Lingsarve on Gotland (t.p.q. 896/897). This hoard is the only Swedish hoard to contain Samanid silver with a t.p.q. before the 10th century. In addition to Lingsarve, there are several more Gotlandic hoards containing early Samanid dirhams with a t.p.q. of AD 890-930 (Fig. 1, 2). This can be compared to mainland Sweden (including Öland) with a total of three hoards within the same timeframe. It is a very interesting pattern that the great majority are found on Gotland, with two of the three from mainland Sweden are found on Öland (also an island) and the last and only one from Sweden proper is found in Hälsingland/Helsingia in northern Central Sweden. From the last decade of the 9th century and the first decade of the 10th century, only Gotland and Hälsingland are supplied with Samanid dirhams (Fig. 1; Kilger 2008: 235-236). The only other place in Scandinavia that has Samanid dirhams from the first decade of the 10th century is the single hoard Over Randlev I in Jutland, Denmark (von Heijne 2004: 365; Kilger 2008: Fig. 7.20, 237).

This has been interpreted as Gotland being the first region in Scandinavia that is supplied with Samanid dirhams, shortly after being struck, and that the Gotlanders have subsequently passed the silver on to Sweden proper and Denmark (Kilger 2008: 237). Considering this, that Gotland is the first region supplied with Samanid dirhams, their role as a trade hub in the Baltic and the fact that Scandinavian presence in the British Isles was big during this time, it is
not unlikely that the few finds of early Samanid dirhams that are found in the British Isles came from Gotland, with a possible link in Over Randlev I (Kilger 2008: 237; von Heijne 2004: 365). The central places in mainland Sweden and Norway first receive Samanid dirhams in the 920’s, almost 30 years after they begin to appear in Gotlandic hoards (Kilger 2008: 239).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Find</th>
<th>T.P.Q.</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Samanid</th>
<th>Samanid %</th>
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<tr>
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<td>896/897</td>
<td>244</td>
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<td>58</td>
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<td>906/907</td>
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<td>Dalbo</td>
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<td>100</td>
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Table 1. Table of early Samanid finds (including Volga Bulgar imitations) from Gotland (t.p.q. 890-930). Only hoards containing five coins or more, including grave deposits. Information after Landgren database, cf. Kilger 2008: 236.
Figure 2. Parish map of early Samanid hoards on Gotland (t.p.q. 890-930). Note: Rough hoard positions. Information after Riksantikvarieämbetet 2015 and Lantmäteriverket 2015 (© Lantmäteriet 2014/00601).
3.2. Hiberno-Norse Silver Hoards

According to Michael Dolley (1966), there were five known hoards from Ireland that contain Kufic dirhams: Lugga, Drogheda, Glasnevin, Co. Meath and Co. Kildare (Dolley 1966: 26). Since then, several more Irish hoards have come to light. Two of these are presented below: Millockstown (t.p.q. 905) and Dysart Island (t.p.q. 907) (Ryan et al. 1984; Sheehan 1998: 169; See Kilger 2008: 236).

Important to keep in mind is that besides the hoards under discussion there are many more Irish hoards that do contain Islamic dirhams with dates before and after the selected timeframe. Some (e.g. Magheralagan) contain Islamic dirhams and have a t.p.q. that is between AD 890-930, but the Islamic coin in question is from the wrong century (Briggs & Graham-Campbell 1976: 21; Graham-Campbell 1993: Table 10.1, 80). The same can be said for the Dunmore Cave hoard (See Archibald 1977: 128) and possibly the Glasnevin hoard that contains 2 “Kufic” dirhams, but no closer information on the Islamic coins can be found (Dolley 1966: 28, 50; Stewart 1982: 110). There are also hoards that do have an interesting, albeit rough t.p.q. (930’s) but no more exact information than country and county (Graham-Campbell 1976: 64) or lost ones that are very hard to find information about, e.g. County Derry (t.p.q. 910?) (Sheehan 1998: 188; Purcell & Sheehan 2013: 46). There is also a fragment of an 8th century dirham from the excavation of the Woodstown longphort. From the same excavation there is another possible dirham fragment (Russel et. al. 2007: 38, 59).

The famous Cuerdale hoard also has a fitting t.p.q. of AD 905, and a likely origin in Ireland, but the Islamic coins are late Abassid rather than early Samanid (Lowick 1976: 21, 25-26; Sheehan 1998: 187-188; Naismith 2005: 212-213). It is difficult to say if the population on Ireland and Gotland preferred, distinguished or even could recognize the different types of dirhams. Other types of dirhams have not been included here as they might, and probably do reflect other active networks between different actors. This network under discussion is simply one of many active networks that has been chosen because it can be connected to both Gotland and Ireland. It seems likely that while the different types of currency might reflect different networks it is the same people that use these coins. As stated, it is not the coins nor the cultures using the coins that are under the microscope here, but rather the network connecting both regions. Several of these hoards include Anglo-Saxon, Abassid and other coins, which indicates that the introduction of Samanid dirhams did not in any way disrupt the use of other types of coins. There are earlier Irish and English hoards that contain Abassid coins which show that Islamic coins were already in circulation by this time and not some unknown phenomenon.

One thing that is very important to keep in mind here is that several of these hoards are dated by English coins, not the Samanid dirhams which is why I have included both a t.p.q.t. (Total) and a t.p.q.s. (Samanid) in Table 2.
3.2.1. Dysart IV

The Dysart IV hoard, Co. Westmeath was deposited around AD 907 (Sheehan 2000: 61). Altogether, the Dysart IV hoard contains 45 coins, 19 of which are described as “Kufic”. The remaining 26 are from Anglo-Saxon and Viking rulers in England. In addition to this there are also 85 ingots and 19 pieces of cut ornaments (Ryan et. al. 1984: 339, 350-351). Included in this is a type of bangle which has been described as typically Gotlandic (Sheehan 1998: 171; Kilger 2008: 237).

The Dysart IV hoard, as the name indicates, was discovered on Dysart Island, close to three other hoards, none of which contained any coins. Dysart IV contains, as previously stated, 19 Kufic coins. However, “Kufic” is just as vague as “Islamic” coins and is of no use here unless the coins are analysed. Fortunately, the Islamic coins from Dysart IV have been analysed. The hoard is not only mixed in containing both numismatic and non-numismatic material, but also since it has both Abassid and early Samanid dirhams. Six of these coins are believed to be Abassid and range in date from 815-903. Of these six, only four are dateable, with two being early Abassid (before AD 815 & 825) and two are late Abassid (AD 870-892 & 892-903). The hoard also includes six Samanid dirhams. Five of these coins have been minted during the reign of Isma‘il ibn Ahmad who ruled between AD 892-903. The remaining coin, unfortunately, cannot be dated, but is likely to have been struck in Samarkand (Ryan et. al. 1984).

The remaining coins from the hoard include two dirham imitations and five undetermined coins. The two imitations are described as a “Barbarous” copies of either an Abassid or early Samanid dirham. The type indicate that it was copying a late 9th or early 10th century dirham (Ryan. et. al. 1984: 349-350.

3.2.2. Millockstown

From the Millockstown, Co. Louth hoard only one dirham has barely survived, together with several ingots. This hoard was struck in Balkh in the year 905/906. The dirham in question is only half preserved and has seemingly been used as bullion. Because if its state it is difficult extract much information from the coin, but comparison have been made with similar coins from Denmark and Sweden. Due to these comparisons the date was established and just like the Dysart hoard the ruler proved to be Samanid ruler Isma‘il ibn Ahmad (Kenny 1994: 156).

3.2.3. Leggagh

The Lugga or Leggagh hoard, Co. Meath found in 1843 was also investigated by Aquila Smith. According to Dolley, Smith’s two records of the hoard are inconsistent, but what is clear is that it contained eight English pennies, one Viking penny from East Anglia and one dirham of Samarkand for a total of
10 coins. The hoard has been relatively closely dated to 923/924 (Dolley 1966: 27, 50; Dolley 1976: 18-19; cf. Graham-Campbell 1976: 63). Dolley mentions later that there is little information available on the Islamic coin, but that it is possible that it could have been a dirham struck under Samanid amir Nasr II in the year 914, something which later seems to be confirmed by Richard Hall (Dolley 1972: 16; Hall 1974: 73).

3.3. Unconfirmed hoards

Here I will present hoards that might fit the picture, but are unconfirmed for now as their information is very scarce and/or outdated or have a difficult context. I will present the available data and mention shortly why these might be included in the later analysis. In total four hoards will be presented, and why they are described as “unconfirmed” in this thesis due to each one’s difficult context.

3.3.1. Drogheda

The Drogheda hoard, Co. Louth was discovered in 1846. The only person that examined some of these coins was numismatist Aquilla Smith, who concluded that these were Kufic dirhams and a penny from York (Dolley 1966: 26, 184). An estimate made by Michael Dolley based on the original testimony that the hoard weighed “close on two gallons” would have rendered some 5000 coins. Unfortunately these coins were not further examined to establish if they were Abassid or Samanid dirhams, due to the disappearance of the hoard (Ryan et. al. 1984: 345). Dolley, however, mentions that from the available information given by Smith, the find was closely reminiscent of the early 10th century Samanid dirham finds from Scandinavia. It is also worth noting that the t.p.q. in this hoard is AD 905 (Dolley 1966: 26, 49), so it closely matches the early Samanid hoards in question. The t.p.q. and the expert opinion of Michael Dolley is reason enough to include this hoard in the later analysis. However, source criticism must be considered and the hoard must therefore be classified as “unconfirmed” due to its disappearance and few analyses.

3.3.2. Bossall/Flaxton

Unlike the other hoards I have discussed in this thesis this hoard is not Irish, but English. It does, however, have its origin in Ireland (Graham-Campbell 1993; Sheehan 1998: 187-188). The first we hear of this hoard is in Gentleman’s Magazine in 1807, written by a Robert Belt of Bosall under the pseudonym “Amicus”. According to Belt the hoard consisted of c. 270 coins and several pieces of silver, the latter weighing around 2 pounds (ca 900g). Most of the coins were so-called “St. Peter’s pennies” from York, but in the hoard many coins from other English monarchs were included, such as Alfred the Great, Edward the Elder and Athelstan. Also included in this hoard were two
Islamic coins, one of which has survived to this day. This surviving coin is of the Samanid ruler Ahmad ibn Isma’il and was struck in Al-Shash in AD 911-12. The hoard was later analysed by Michael Dolley in 1955 and published in the British Numismatics Journal. Here he presented the available evidence of the hoard and through analysis of the coins he arrived at the conclusion that it had likely been deposited in ca. AD 927. This date has, however, since been slightly challenged (Dolley 1955: 11-14; Graham-Campbell 1993: 79).

James Graham Campbell followed Dolleys analysis of the coins with a discussion regarding the bullion. Since the discovery of the hoard, much of it has disappeared or has been melted down. From the bullion, for example, only one piece remains. Much of the coinage has disappeared as well, but some has been found again at auctions, for example (Graham-Campbell 1993: 81).

Since there are many coins from Viking York and Anglo-Saxon England in the hoard, it has a different context than the nearby Goldsborough hoard, which has a clear origin in Ireland. Bullion in a hoard from York at this time is rather uncommon, due to the fact that York had a well-established and productive coin economy. Graham-Campbell gives two explanations to the bullion. One is that the hoard has its origin in Ireland, where the bullion economy still existed, and was brought to England with the king of Dublin Sithric Cáech (One-eyed) and his followers when he arrived in York or that the bullion represents continued contact and trade with Ireland (Graham-Campbell 1993: 83) as they were two of the Viking kingdoms present in the British Isles, which naturally meant that there were extensive connections between the two (Smyth 1975-1979). In either way, the Irish connection is established and of interest for this study. What makes this hoard further interesting is its connection with the Goldsborough hoard.

3.3.3. Goldsborough hoard

The Goldsborough hoard was, like the Bossall/Flaxton hoard, found in Yorkshire. Although much smaller than the Bossall/Flaxton hoard, it too has an Irish origin and contains Islamic coins. The hoard consists of thirty-nine coins, thirty-seven of which, are Islamic. It also contains fourteen pieces of bullion, nearly all of which (possibly all) has its origin in Ireland. James Graham-Campbell has argued that due to the fact that much/all of the bullion is of Irish origin and since nearly all of the coins are Islamic, i.e. not coins struck in York it is very likely that the hoard has its origin in Ireland. The hoard has been dated to 920 (Graham-Campbell 1993: 83) but the latest Samanid dirham is dated to 913-933, however given the context as most dirhams from the hoard are struck between AD 890-910 (Naismith 2005: 214), it is likely to have been struck closer to 913 than 933. This dating is likely because the coin missed the year of minting and only contained who minted it.

Just like the Bosall/Flaxton hoard Graham-Campbell has argued that because of the hoards Irish origin combined with the dating of AD 920 it is likely
to have been brought from Ireland by Sithric Cáech when he succeeded Ragnall (ua Ímair) as king of York in AD 920 (Graham-Campbell 1993: 79, 83). This hoard is included in the coming analysis due to its likely Irish origin of both the coins and the bullion, but must nonetheless be considered “unconfirmed” here due to its English provenance and thereby more difficult context.

3.3.4. Bangor hoard

The Bangor hoard was found in 1894 in northern Wales and was first published in Illustrated Archaeologist in the same year. In total this small hoard contained 13 coins made up of 8 English coins and 5 Islamic. The Islamic coins are all Samanid dirhams struck under Isma'il ibn Ahmad and Ahmad ibn Isma'il. In addition one dirham was a copy of a Samanid coin with an uncertain provenance. Like previous hoards from Great Britain, the connection with Ireland is due to a fragment of a Hiberno-Norse armring (Blunt 1954: 260, Pl. II: 14; Sheehan 2000: 55). Blunt is somewhat unclear with regards to the dating of the Samanid coins, as he gives the copy a date of c. 913 but then mentions that its “date and mint are hopelessly blundered” (Blunt 1954: 260, 262). In either way, if the copy is to be disregarded it would hardly make a difference as the other Samanid coins have a very close date (See Blunt 1954: 260). The Bangor hoard has a similar background and status as the Bosall/Flaxton and the Goldsborough hoards since it also contains Hiberno-Norse bullion. Due to this fact it will be included in the coming analysis, but must still be considered “unconfirmed” for now.

Bossall/Flaxton, Goldsborough and Bangor do contain Samanid dirhams and have a probable origin in Ireland (Sheehan 1998: 187; Sheehan 2000: 55), but nonetheless have to be classified as “Unconfirmed” here. This is due to the fact that the origin of the Samanid coins cannot be established. These coins could have come from Ireland as seen in several Irish hoards presented, but only the bullion is established as Hiberno-Norse, which could mean that the Samanid coins are a later addition. There are British hoards within the range 890-930 that show no connection with Ireland but still contain Samanid dirhams (Naismith 2005).

4. Analysis

In this chapter I will analyse the data that has been presented in previous chapters and attempt to bind this data to the questions presented at the beginning of the thesis.

- Is it possible that the early Samanid silver in Ireland came from Gotland?
- Which Gotlandic and Irish hoards contain early Samanid silver?
- What can this tell us regarding the contacts between Viking Age Sweden and Hiberno-Norse Ireland? Is this a result of direct contacts?

The first question can be answered as “possibly”, of course. It is very difficult to prove such a claim, but much easier to say that it is a possibility and to discuss it from the available data and let the reader make up his/her own mind. The first Samanid dirhams to reach Northern Europe are on Gotland with a context that put them in the very beginning of the 10th century and a few in the very late 9th century (Tab. 1; Kilger 2008: 236). This is interesting since there is a gap in context between the Gotlandic hoards and the ones from the mainland. Samanid silver first became common on the mainland around AD 915/920 and reaching central places such as Birka and Kaupang in the 920’s (Kilger 2008: 239). This makes the Irish material that much more interesting, since Samanid silver occur on Gotland in fairly large quantities when compared to other locations from the same time. The only other North European locations where early Samanid dirhams occur is Over Randlev I in Denmark and three hoards in Sweden (Kilger 2008: 237, 239; von Heijne 2004: 365). When looking specifically at the Samanid coins in the Irish/British
hoards it is clear that they were struck in a very specific time period between AD 905-914 (Tab. 2). This is a very short time period that gives the indication that they were deposited years before Samanids arrive in other locations. One possible explanation of this puzzle is that Samanid dirhams arrive on Gotland in the early 10th century and are carried westwards by traders to the British Isles, with a possible link in Denmark (Kilger 2008: 237). Several of the hoards in Ireland/Britain have a later t.p.q. from the 920’s based on Anglo-Saxon coins. This could mean that the Samanid coins were used for a long time before being deposited in the ground or that they arrive several years after they were struck. However, that the coins should have arrived at a later date is not corroborated by the early Irish hoards (especially Dysart IV) that does indicate that Samanid dirhams actually were present in the very early 10th century due to its early t.p.q.

The possible Gotlandic origin is further supported by John Sheehans analysis of the composition of many Irish hoards that have shown that most of the early imported objects from the late 9th century to the middle of the 10th have a southern Scandinavian or Baltic provenance, not Norwegian as has previously been believed (Sheehan 1998: 192). Another indication among the bullion is a fragment of a bangle in the Dysart IV hoard recognized by Christoph Kilger as “typically Gotlandic” (Kilger 2008: 237). It is not clear exactly which purpose this has served, as it is fragmented. It seems possible that the artefact, in Ireland, has just worked as bullion, along with the coins and other silver objects. In this case it seems unlikely that it would have “survived” because of its importance as an object with a deeper, symbolic meaning.

These factors do point to a possible Gotlandic origin of the Samanid dirhams, and towards contacts between Gotland and the Hiberno-Norse world. Norway has no hoards containing Samanid dirhams prior to 920 and Denmark has only one confirmed early Samanid hoard this far (Kilger 2008), which rather indicates trade than direct import from the caliphate or other eastern connections.

The second question regards which hoards that fall into the category of “Early Samanid” among the Gotlandic and Irish hoards. This has already been shown by Table 1 and 2. What these graphs have shown is that there are several Gotlandic hoards with a fitting t.p.q. and a few Irish and British ones. The British ones, of course, are only included because they have an Irish origin, something which several archaeologists and historians have connected to the arrival of Hiberno-Norse king Sithric Cáech in York in AD 920 (Graham-Campbell 1993: 83).

The Gotlandic hoards are naturally more numerous than the Irish hoards of the same time period, which fits Gotlands pattern as a “treasure island” in the Viking Age. It is possible that a few, or at the very least one concentration of hoards can be located on Gotland. The one that is far clearer than the rest is concentrated to the three neighbouring parishes Lärbro, Hellvi and Rute in the
northern part of Gotland. Of interest is that this concentration is closely located to the Spillings hoard from Othem parish. The Spillings hoard was, of course, deposited two decades earlier according to the t.p.q., but since this northern concentration appears to exist it is worthy of mentioning, not least because of the Spillings hoard’s status as the world’s largest Viking Age treasure (Fig. 3).

Figure 3. Map of Gotland showing possible concentrations during this period with the northern concentration encircled. Map includes the Spillings hoard for comparison. Note: Rough hoard positions. Information after Riksantikvarieämbetet 2015 and Lantmäteriverket 2015 (© Lantmäteriet i2014/00601).
Adding further interest to the northern concentration is the possibility of a Viking Age port in the bay of Boge, very near the hoards from Spillings, which could explain this concentration. This port has yet to be found, but there are several indications that there have been a Viking Age (or older) port near Slite in the bay of Boge (Carlsson 2008: 104-105). It is also a possibility that this concentration is a result of family owned treasures or possibly as a result of alliances. What can be said is that if there is such a thing as an active port in northern Gotland during this period, it would most likely be connected to the northern concentration of hoards from the neighbouring parishes.

It is also rather interesting that coin finds from graves seems to be a local phenomenon concentrated to the northern half of Gotland, or region B. However, due to the fact that only three such graves have been located during this period this picture is likely to change with the discovery of more Gotlandic graves. In this “region” (See Fig. 3) there also appears to be more Samanid hoards of only five coins or more. There are three such hoards from this region but only one such hoard each from the more southern regions. Indeed, from the region C there are three more large hoards than there are from the region B. The most find-poor region is the far south of Gotland, or region D, where there is a total of four hoards: three large and one small.

Why there appears to be four regions that contain early Samanid dirhams is a very hard question to answer. It could simply have to do with population in the different areas, or riches between the different active farms or families. It is very difficult to say anything, because it is hard to see clear concentrations in regions B, C and D. However, there are areas between regions B, C and D that do not show any hoards from this period. While this might change in the future, for now it is fairly clear to see that between these three regions there are empty spaces. This empty space is not as large between region A and B, but the division has nonetheless been highlighted because of the only clear concentration that exists in region A, making it very special.
One thing that can be safely confirmed with regards to the amount of hoards within the specific timeframe is that if the Samanid dirhams do have a Gotlandic origin the trade between Ireland and Gotland was not massive in any way. The hoards do show that contacts did exist during this phase, but the amount of confirmed dirhams imported is still below 50. However, as John Sheehan has mentioned much of the imported material was melted down in order to keep the Hiberno-Norse silver working tradition alive, and that it is likely that what has been preserved is but a fraction of what once was (Sheehan 1998: 192). It is very hard to say what the original numbers of dirhams were on Ireland and Gotland but it was certainly more than today. In either way, more are sure to surface in the future which might make this issue clearer.

Figure 4. County map of Ireland showing which modern counties that contain early Samanid hoards (in red) as well as the longphuirt of Linn Dúachaill (blue) and Dubh Linn (green). Note: Hoard positions are extremely rough and just indicate a random point inside the county. After NordNordWest 2008. Modified by me.
One thing of interest regarding the Irish hoards is that at least two point to a connection with the longphort Linn Dúachaill. These are the Drogheda and Millockstown hoards. Located very near Linn Dúachaill in Co. Louth, they indicate that these hoards have an origin there. As trade occurred within the longphuirte it is not unreasonable to speculate that the hoards arrived with ships in Linn Dúachaill. They could of course have come from another longphort, such as Dubh Linn, but it would raise further question as to why one would travel to Dubh Linn instead of going to Linn Dúachaill directly. They could naturally have arrived some other way as well, such as trade, but their close ties with the longphort say otherwise. The other two hoards from Ireland, Dysart IV and Leggagh, are also interesting as their provenance is Co. Meath and Westmeath. If looking at a map two hoards are located very close to Linn Dúachaill, Co. Louth, one in neighbouring Meath and one in Westmeath, west of Meath. This paints a trail of hoards leading from Linn Dúachaill to Westmeath, which is of interest of further investigation. This picture might however look very different when looking towards all hoards in Ireland from this period and not just the ones containing Samanid coins.

Before I discuss my third question I would like begin with a short analysis of the coins that have been found in the Hiberno-Norse hoards. The earliest coin in the hoards have a t.p.q. of AD 905 (Dolley 1966) and the latest a rough dating of 913-933 (Naismith 2005). The Samanid rulers under question are Isma'il ibn Ahmad, Ahmad ibn Isma'il and Nasr II. These are the Samanid rulers that can be established as having minted the coins. In addition to this there are copies and fragmented coins. What is very interesting is that these three rulers succeed each other in a very short time period (Negmatov 1998: 84-85). The t.p.q.s on these coins support the notion that they are indeed very early and were minted during a very short period, which makes this group of finds very distinctive. The context of the one coin from the Goldsborough hoard that has a t.p.q. of 913-933 (Naismith 2005) is more likely to have been struck closer to 913 than 933 when regarding the hoards context.

From the available evidence it is interesting to speculate on my third question. If the Gotlandic origin is assumed, the coins would then have travelled west from Gotland with a possible stop in Denmark, and then further across the North Sea reaching Linn Dúachaill in modern Co. Louth and then further westwards, eventually reaching the Irish, possibly through trade or payment. Then, taking the final hoards into account, the Bossall/Flaxton, Goldsborough and Bangor hoards would have travelled east from Ireland reaching Scandinavian York and Wales. As York had close ties with Dublin and that these hoards often are connected with a specific event it is not difficult to see how the Irish hoards reached England. Bangor in Wales has a more complex context than the English hoards, but could possibly be explained either by Hiberno-Norse Viking activities in Northern Wales or through trade.
As there is a lack of early Samanid coins (at least as early as Dysart IV, Millockstown and Drogheda) in other regions in the North Sea I would say that for now it is possible to consider that the Samanid coins may have been a result of direct contacts between Gotland and Hiberno-Norse Ireland. What must be considered, however, is the extent of these contacts. I would not argue that these Samanid dirhams are a result of extensive contacts and massive trade between the two islands, but rather that it has occurred, even if it’s on a small scale. Small scale trade and contacts can be as interesting as large scale when it is between two regions not normally under discussion. Especially since this connection is between two islands, both of which are rich in Viking Age silver hoards. When considering who minted the Samanid coins, their t.p.q. and the small amount of Samanid dirhams in Ireland it is also possible to consider that these contacts did not last very long. Was this possible a result of a few shiploads arriving from Gotland, or even a single one, arriving sometime around AD 915-920? Here comes the source criticism, where one must take into account John Sheehan’s analysis of early Irish hoard contents which does indicate that much of the imported material came from southern Scandinavia and the Baltic rather than Norway. He also mentions that much of the imported silver was melted down in order to keep the Hiberno-Norse silver working tradition alive, which would have required quite a lot of silver (Sheehan 1998). Taking this into account, and the doubtful massive amount of coins originally present in the Drogheda hoard (c. 5000) (Dolley 1966) it is possible to speculate that while the contacts between Ireland and Gotland would not have been great, they could very well have existed, and maybe to a higher degree than the small amount the Samanid dirhams indicate.

5. Discussion

What this thesis has achieved is a different view of the Irish silver during this very limited period as well as a different view of (modern) Swedish/Gotlandic influence on Ireland during the Viking Age. The influence of Gotland or Sweden on Ireland is something that is rarely seen. This has its natural explanations, as it is a very small and difficult subject to examine. The influence of Norwegians is the subject that is most common, but this also has its natural explanations as it is a far more promising and a much larger subject.

To consider the Viking world as connected opens up for these smaller and more abstract works. The field of Swedish influence on the Hiberno-Norse world is a subject unlikely to become a big subject in archaeology, but it is nonetheless of scientific value, both for Swedish and Irish Viking Age research.

Samanid dirhams is also currently a rather narrow field that has not been widely examined, unfortunately. I believe that this is something that is going
to be a larger topic in the future, at least in Sweden where there are far more Samanid dirhams than there are in Ireland, and where I am also more familiar with the current stage in archaeology.

What I have done in this narrow thesis is to examine the Irish hoards containing Samanid dirhams, which is a very small number of only four hoards. Three of these can be considered “confirmed” as their archaeological evidence and examination is rather extensive. In addition to these there are three more, two from northern England and one from northern Wales. All of these lie within the “Viking sphere” of influence and/or interest and have a likely Irish origin. I have also discussed the Gotlandic counterparts which numbers 27 with a t.p.q. of 890-930. I have yet to discuss what all this means from a more theoretical perspective. I have used theory in several parts of the thesis, but here I would like to discuss my questions from a theoretical perspective.

The Gotlandic origin of the Samanid silver seems possible. Both these regions were in the Scandinavian diaspora during the Viking Age. That the Vikings were travellers who reached remote regions such as Iceland, Greenland, and North America is already established, as well is the fact that contacts between these regions and their homelands continued. This makes the occurrence of Gotlandic material in Ireland seem not so farfetched. If Scandinavians could travel to the Middle East and North America it does not seem likely that they would have been limited to their respective “spheres” as have previously been believed, i.e. Swedes in the east, Danes in England and Norwegians in Ireland. There is already archaeological evidence that Swedes travelled west and that Danes and Norwegians travelled east making this old assumption obsolete. That said, this old assumption is of course based on fact, but the picture is far too simplified. The Viking world was a connected one, and that widespread contacts existed is known. Therefore it is interesting to examine such a limited one as this.

The longphuirí could have acted as nodal points within this diaspora. As Sindbæk has argued, for traders to travel far in order to reach the best possible deals is not unlikely. To travel from Gotland to a region that has fairly recently been settled and fairly well-established in the early 10th century could have been very lucrative. That trade occurred in the longphuirí and in the later Hiberno-Norse towns is well-known, and it is possible that it was also well-known to Viking Age Gotlanders and, indeed, many traders in the Viking world.

The traders are the obvious key actors in this thesis. If looking towards ANT, the network is the Leviathan that contains all of these features that have been discussed. The traders can be considered the macro actors, as they work within the network to provide the service that other people seek. The micro actors in this case are the several people, both on Gotland and Ireland that use these coins in their everyday life, and that make sure that supplies are being
delivered by using the skills and knowledge of the traders. Everything is connected, and if one of these actors fall, so do the others.

Both things discussed are connected with the idea of Actor-Networks. Linn Dúachaill, for example, is a node in this network. It is a longphort, and we know what a longphort is, but when discussing a longphort we cannot just ascribe it trading properties. We must also consider what has taken place there. People from many countries are likely to have visited this place. What was their purpose to visiting? What can their presence tell us of the longphort? Many things are likely to have taken place. The inhabitants of the longphort are documented to have raided Irish settlements and ecclesiastical centres. We know that trading and raiding has taken place within and from these longphuirt, but other things have likely also taken place. Perhaps crafting has taken place? Farming? Even worshipping? These are all factors that have or have not played a part within this specific nodal point and are of massive interest in order to understand the place. However, as this is a study of networks and contacts several of these things are not of key importance and can hence be “blackboxed”. They are now a point within a connected network consisting of black boxes, each box a network within itself.

The same can be said for the Hiberno-Norse settlements and towns, Gotland and even the dirhams. Each of these factors are of massive interest but consist of so many different aspects, each of which could be a thesis in itself, that they cannot all be discussed and analysed.

Future works can of course be connected to this thesis. Each black box can be opened and analysed in order to reach a deeper understanding. There are already many different works that each examine these many factors that make up a network, each a key work in itself. There will always be factors to discuss and each work will further explain the Hiberno-Norse world and its connections. The same thing naturally applies to Gotland as well.

Future works could expand on the imported coins. The chance of finding more Samanid dirhams in more hoards exists. There are also likely to exist Samanid dirhams that were struck in this period, but that show up in later hoards. The delimitation of 890-930 is a very limited one, and this can of course be expanded upon in future works. More hoards can possibly be included to further expand this picture. It would also be of interest to analyse the total number of hoards, in order to see how this very restricted phase would fit in with the total number. For example, it seems likely that Linn Dúachaill is of smaller importance than Dubh Linn when considering the total number, something which is not reflected here. If Samanid dirhams struck within this period but found in later hoards are included, the picture might look very different. The concentrations located on Gotland might and probably would look very different or non-existent when considering the massive inflow of dirhams that occur post-930. However, this is a very limited study only reflecting the “early Samanid” dirhams and cannot include later hoards. Further works could
of course also focus on the bullion, or other factors that might point to a possible Gotlandic origin of the hoards. There is much still to be done in order to prove or disprove such a connection, and the future will make this picture far clearer. The seed has been sown for future works in what I believe to be a very interesting part of the Viking Age.

It is also possible that dirhams could show up more in Denmark in the future, which might alternate this picture entirely. If more Samanid hoards would appear in Denmark it is possible that the origin of the Samanid dirhams lie in Denmark or the Danelaw, rather than Gotland. Since there are Samanid dirhams in British hoards that do not show any connections with Ireland, it would not seem impossible.

Unfortunately I have not had the opportunity to investigate the Gotlandic or Irish hoards in person. To rely solely on what others have written is of course a source criticism in itself. If one individual has written something that would be untrue it would affect this thesis. This is especially true with regards to some of the irish hoards that have not been recently examined. The disappeared Drogheda hoard is the prime example of this source criticism that must be kept in mind. While John Sheehan has kept an up to date record on several hoards, a few others have outdated references that would have benefitted from an update. However, one must also consider the reliability of the sources regarding these hoards, and I believe that Michael Dolley’s testimony is not easily disregarded as unreliable, even though the hoards might not have been examined post-Dolley. The Gotlandic hoards have fortunately recently been examined which reduces the source criticism by some amount, but must still be considered.

One final thing to keep in mind is that since this is a subject barely explored, and because this is a limited thesis it is impossible for me to know and include everything that I would have liked to include. For example, like I mentioned earlier, it would be immensely useful to include late Abassid coin hoards, both on Gotland and on Ireland as well. Even a discussion regarding the British hoards with late Abassid and early Samanid coins would have been very useful. For a thesis such as this there are limitations, which is why not everything that possibly should be included can be included.

Like my previous thesis I would like to conclude my discussion with what has been achieved in this work. I have used prior research regarding Gotlandic and Hiberno-Norse hoards in order to investigate an idea that has briefly been mentioned, but not further discussed: the idea of a possible Gotlandic origin of the early Samanid silver found in Ireland. I have analysed which hoards might fit into this category of “early Samanid” and found several that, while not Irish, have a likely Irish origin. This brought the total amount of hoards that might fit into this category to 7. Finally, if this Gotlandic origin is to be
considered as likely, this thesis would also point to small Swedish-Irish contacts during the Viking Age, a fact that, at the very least to my knowledge, has not been thoroughly examined.

6. Conclusion

- Is it possible that the early Samanid silver in Ireland came from Gotland?

It is indeed possible as there are several things that do point towards this. The first is the most obvious. The Irish hoards have a t.p.q. of 905-914, and the only region in Northern Europe that has a fairly large number of Samanid dirhams during this time is Gotland. Gotland and Ireland are both islands that have a prevalent Scandinavian culture present during this period and lay within the Scandinavian diaspora. Besides the early t.p.q. of these hoards there is the existence of a typically Gotlandic bangle in the Dysart IV hoard (Kilger 2008) and a likely southern Scandinavian/Baltic origin of most imported material from Ireland during this time period (Sheehan 1998).

- Which Gotlandic and Irish hoards contain early Samanid silver?

Today there are 27 Gotlandic hoards that contain early Samanid dirhams. These range from large hoards to small ones of five coins, to including a few grave finds with t.p.q. ranging from 890-930. In Ireland, when regarding the same t.p.q. as on Gotland, there are four hoards. In addition to these I have included two English hoards and one Welsh that have a proven or at least very likely Irish origin. There is a possibility that there are more hoards with early Samanid dirhams, but that have a later t.p.q. based on other coins that have been left out of this thesis due to the delimitation of 890-930. There is also a likely concentration of Gotlandic hoards in northern Gotland (Fig. 3) and a possible origin of these Irish hoards in the longphort of Linn Dúachaill.

- What can this tell us regarding the contacts between Viking Age Sweden and Hiberno-Norse Ireland? Is this a result of direct contacts?

One interpretation of the material could be that Samanid silver has travelled from Gotland to the longphort Linn Dúachaill in Ireland, where it was used for trade, payments, melted down etc. and subsequently reached Irish hands, as well as travelling east to northern England and northern Wales. Since there is a lack of Samanid silver in other regions in the North Sea, with the exception of one hoard in Denmark and three in Sweden (Kilger 2008) it is possible that
this is a result of direct contacts between Gotlandic merchants and the Hiberno-Norse traders in Ireland. However, the archaeological evidence suggests that this was a result of small connections and not large scale trade, although it is likely that much of the imported silver was used for the Hiberno-Norse silver working tradition (Sheehan 1998). The trade and connections between the regions might have been larger than the archaeological evidence suggests, but not large-scale in any way. One network among many.

7. Summary

The purpose of this thesis has been to examine a very specific type of coin that exist in Gotlandic and Irish silver hoards in the Viking Age and to examine a possible origin of these coins. The coins in question are the dirhams struck under the Samanid dynasty in Central Asia/Middle East (Negmatov 1998). These coins first appear in Northern Europe at the very end of the 9th century/beginning of the 10th century on Gotland. This is the first region in the Scandinavian Viking Age diaspora that is supplied with this type of coin which do not appear in other parts of Scandinavia until 20 years later (Kilger 2008). They do, however, appear in Ireland. I have analysed and discussed several Gotlandic and Irish hoards in order to examine if it is possible that these Samanid coins found in Ireland have a Gotlandic origin. The first indication is of course the terminus post quem of the coins. They first appear in the Northern European theatre on Gotland, only to appear in one Danish hoard and then to appear in Ireland with a very similar t.p.q. on these early hoards (Kilger 2008). In Ireland there are 3 hoards that I see as “confirmed” that contain these coins, and four additional “unconfirmed” hoards from Ireland, England and Wales that contain these coins but have a likely Irish provenance. There are very few coins, but all Samanid dirhams were likely struck between AD 905-914, which indicates that they were likely shipped to Ireland during a very limited period in the early 10th century. In the Dysart IV hoard from Ireland there is another indication that shipping from Gotland has occurred, as it contains a fragment of a Gotlandic bangle (Kilger 2008). In addition to these indications, there are John Sheehans analysis of the bullion from early Irish silver hoards, which has shown that much of it has a southern Scandinavian/Baltic origin (Sheehan 1998). It is also possible that these dirhams were shipped from Gotland to the longphort Linn Dúachaill in Ireland, where two hoards with Samanid dirhams exist. Two further also exist in neighbouring counties. In addition to studying the material, a theoretical analysis has been made in order to problematize, discuss and analyse my results and to try and offer possible explanations for the issues presented. If the dirhams are indeed from Gotland this shows us that contacts between the regions existed, albeit very limited. This contradicts the old view of the Viking Age where Swedish-Irish contacts was, more or less, non-existent.
8. References


8.1. Electronic references


9. Figure index

Pictures that are not my own have been used with the authors permission, if such a protection exists. Pictures have since been modified by me for their use in this thesis. Other pictures are my own creations through ArcGIS with information retrieved through references below the pictures.


**Figure 2.** Parish map of Early Samanid hoards on Gotland. Anton Amlé (2015). Information after Riksantikvarieämbetet (2015). Riksantikvarieämbetets forminnnesinformationssystem, FMIS. GIS-data.

10. List of abbreviations

*AU: Annals of Ulster*

*T.P.Q.: Terminus Post Quem (Earliest possible deposition)*

*T.P.Q.T.: Terminus Post Quem Total (Same as t.p.q. Only used in order to distinguish the total t.p.q. from another form, for example “t.p.q.s”).*

*T.P.Q.S.: Terminus Post Quem Samanid (Latest Samanid coin)*

45