Appendix A: Historical Overview of the Viking Ages in England

At the close of the eighth century, Europe entered the Viking era. With regard to England, the Viking era divides into two distinct phases, with rather dissimilar characteristics (cf. e.g. Sawyer 1969: 163). The first Viking Age essentially spans the ninth century and its phases are assessed in Section 1, the second Viking Age finds description in Section 2, again subdivided into its more or less distinct phases. It began around 980 CE and lasted until the Norman Conquest.

1. The First Viking Age

The first Viking Age is divisible into early raids (Section 1.1), the time of the micel here, the so-called ‘great host’ (Section 1.2), its breaking up and settling down (Section 1.3) and Viking activities in the north from 900 CE on (Section 1.4).

1.1. Early Raids

The first record of a Viking raid obtains from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in annal 787, but may in fact refer to 789 CE (cf. e.g. Jones 1968: 208). The chronicle briefly reports three ships of the Northmen landing on the English coast,\(^1\) probably near Dorchester (cf. Sawyer 1962: 17-18), where the local reeve mistook them for traders and ordered them to pay taxes.\(^2\) Instead, the Vikings slew him and his men.

Better known and iconic of the beginning Viking Age as such is the raid on Lindisfarne monastery in 793, which elicited very large amounts of surprise and alarm (cf. Arbman 1969: 50). The Chronicle prefaces this event with references to portents such as famine, tempests, excessive lightning and fiery dragons flying through the air,\(^3\) which is likely to be motivated by the religious significance of Lindisfarne rather than by

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\(^1\) The terms *norðmen* ‘northmen’ and *Dene* ‘Danes’ were used indiscriminately for Vikings from modern Denmark as well as from modern Norway/Sweden. Only from mid-tenth century onwards the terms distinguish between ‘civilised’ Christianised Danes settling in the Danelaw and ‘barbaric’ heathen Norsemen harrying northern England from their bases in Ireland, Norway, the Hebrides, Orkneys and Shetlands (cf. e.g. Stenton 1943[1989]: 239).

\(^2\) A *reeve* is a government official, appointed by the king to manage an administrative unit, typically a shire (hence *sheriff* ← *shire reeve*).

\(^3\) The reference to fiery dragons may have some grounding in reality: very rarely, during times of particularly strong solar winds, the Northern Lights may be seen as far south as northern England, for instance on January 3\(^{rd}\), 2012. Beholding the Aurora Borealis’ splendid display of moving lights spread over large portions of the sky makes abundantly clear how terrifying this experience must have been to mediaeval people, and why they conceptualised it as ‘fiery dragons’. A somewhat more realistic view of the Northern Lights is found in MS. E, annal 1131 (cf. example (20)).
the raid itself.\textsuperscript{4} Doubtlessly these early raids terrified the population, but the Chronicle was not begun until about a century later (cf. Appendix B, Section 2), when only Wessex under Alfred the Great resisted the Viking \textit{micel here}. The retrospect relevance of these first Viking encounters is hence immediately obvious and also motivates the Chronicle’s quasi-mythical preface to the ransacking of Lindisfarne. The temporal remove strongly suggests a written source available to the chronicler (cf. Sawyer 1962: 18).

Although terrifying and to immediate witnesses often lethal, these and other early raids were small-scale, isolated hit-and-run operations, frequently targeting churches and monasteries as obvious sources of treasure and slaves. Despite their comparably small scale, these raids had at times disastrous effects: major Northumbrian monasteries such as Streoneshalh/Whitby, Wearmouth, or Bede’s home Jarrow disappeared from the historical record in the ninth century and were not refounded until after the Norman Conquest, i.e. after the Viking Age(s) had ended (cf. Pryce 2003: 156-158).

In order to gain an understanding about the headcount of these early and also later, larger raiding parties, it is illuminating to briefly consider the longship, the Viking’s chief mode of transportation and arguably the key to their military success: combining speed, manoeuvrability, seaworthiness, and very low draught for travelling far upriver, longships used for raiding in all likelihood did not carry more than 30-35 people (cf. e.g. Sawyer 1962: 128; Richards 1991: 15). This means the early raids were carried out by only about a hundred warriors, assuming the number of three ships reported in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in annal 787 to be typical of the early, isolated raids, which seems to be generally accepted, even though subsequent mention of Viking ships feature rather larger numbers.\textsuperscript{5}

Addressing this, Sawyer (1962: 120-129) convincingly argues that in martial contexts, the numbers of ships, men, horses and so on provided by mediaeval chroniclers are far from trustworthy, often exaggerated, and sometimes even bordering on the absurd. He provides converging evidence, such as ship sizes and their resultant limits of personnel and cargo payload, size and capacity of identified strongholds and islets used for overwintering, comparisons with other chronicles, for instance from France, where more reliable evidence, such as muster rolls or accounts of pay, survive independently. Furthermore, he considers the general limitations on raising and maintaining an army in mediaeval northern Europe, which are resultant from population density, sustenance and logistics. From this follows that the headcount of the early raiding parties comprised between a few dozens and about a hundred warriors, and even the \textit{micel here} (cf. next section) and the ‘large armies’ of the ninth and tenth

\textsuperscript{4} Lindisfarne is also called ‘the holy island’, as its monastery was one of the most important clerical centres of the earlier Anglo-Saxon England.

\textsuperscript{5} The next mentions of ship numbers in the Chronicle are 35 in 836, 33 in 840, 35 in 843, 350 (sic) in 851 (cf. Sawyer 1962: 121)
centuries (cf. section 2 below) reported in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle are much better measured in hundreds than in thousands of warriors (cf. Sawyer 1962: 125; Jones 1968: 219; Richards 1991: 15, 23). In addition, Alfred the Great most probably commissioned the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle around the time of the *micel here* or shortly afterwards, so the Chronicle compilers had good political reason to exaggerate the Viking threat in order to maximise their king’s (and client’s) lustre in prevailing against them, whence the disproportionate numbers of men, horses and ships.

1.2. **The *micel here***

In mid-ninth century the Viking attacks reached a new level; the small-scale, unrelated forays for immediate gain reported in the previous section were now being replaced by comparably larger, more centrally organised campaigns with longer-term objectives. This most notably entailed overwintering in foreign, possibly hostile territory, first attested in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in annal 850, when Vikings spent the winter on the Isle of Shippey in the Thames estuary in order to raid London and Canterbury the following year. The economic repercussions of these raids are evidenced by a short cessation of coin minting and a subsequently reduced silver content of new coins (cf. Griffiths 2003: 85-86).

With the arrival of the *micel here* in 865 these larger operations had developed into a campaign for conquest and colonisation. The brothers Ivar ‘the Boneless’, Halfdan, and Ubbe are known as leaders of the *micel here*. According to Norse sagas they were the sons of the semi-legendary king Ragnar Lodbrok, whose death at the hands of King Ælla of Northumbria they came to avenge (cf. e.g. Jones 1968: 219; Smyth 1975; Townend 2002: 2). While this could be true, a more prosaic motivation for this campaign, such as overpopulation and lack of arable land in the Scandinavian homelands appears more plausible. A simple headhunt would hardly result in campaigning for years with at least several hundred warriors. Also, the profound and diverse influence Vikings had on Anglo-Saxons and vice versa – fleshed out in section 4.1 (cf. also Townend 2002: 48-49 for a succinct overview and some forceful arguments) – remains utterly puzzling if we deny an intent to colonise as a *casus belli* and thus subsequently substantial immigration.7

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6 The term *micel here*, typically rendered as ‘great army’ or ‘great host’, sometimes even as ‘great horde’ is taken from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, where it is used to refer to the Viking armed forces active in England from 865 until around 880 CE (cf. also section 4.1.3).

7 Experts on Viking England essentially belong to one of two camps, with very little middle ground in between: ‘maximalists’ argue for substantial Scandinavian influx, based on positive evidence in linguistics, onomastics, and toponymy, whereas ‘minimalists’ understand the number of Scandinavian settlers to have been marginal, in view of negative evidence obtained from archaeology and history (cf. Trafford 2000). Given that negative evidence may just be absence of evidence rather than evidence of absence while this is not so for positive evidence, we tend to follow the former
Aided by King Edmund of East Anglia, who rather foolishly – and in the long run unsuccessfully (cf. section 4.1.2) – bought off the Vikings by providing them with horses, and by the quarrelling of two claimants to the Northumbrian throne (Ælla and Osberht, who both died fighting the *micel here* in 867), the Vikings captured York in 866 or 867 and conquered all of Northumbria, Mercia and East Anglia within the following decade (cf. e.g. Crawford 2003: 53). Illuminating accounts detailing these developments are offered by e.g. Stenton 1943[1989]; Hodgkin 1952; Sawyer 1962; Pyles 1964; Jones 1968; Arbman 1969; Stenton 1970; Clemoes & Hughes 1971; Dumville 1992; Loyn 1994; or Davies 2003.

The success and relative swiftness of the Viking conquest as well as traditional translations of the term *micel here* as the ‘great army’, ‘great horde’ or ‘great host’ may seduce the unwary to picture this body of Viking warriors in epic proportions, e.g. similar in size and sophistication to Roman Legions at the height of their power. However, this is very unlikely, not only because of Sawyer’s (1962), Jones’ (1968), and Richards’ (1991) analyses summarised in section 1.1 above, but also because of the semantics of *here*: The *Laws of Ine*, dating to the late seventh century, but surviving only as an appendix to the *Laws of Alfred* in the same manuscript that also contains the *Parker Chronicle* (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 173), show the word *here* to have a very precise meaning, given in example (1) below:

(1) *Deofas we hatað oð VII men; from VII hloð oð XXXV; siððan bið here.*

Thieves we call up-to 7 men; from 7 troop up-to 35; beyond is host.

‘(A band of) up to 7 men we call thieves; between 7 and 35 we call a troop; and more than 35 a host’ (diPaolo Healy 2000, my translation)

This portrays the Anglo-Saxon view of the Viking adversary as a gang of criminals – experienced, well-equipped, and in fairly, though not immensely large numbers – yet criminals nonetheless, i.e. in principle subject to Anglo-Saxon law and thus conceptualisable in terms of Anglo-Saxon cultural norms, rather than monstrous or alien entities (cf. e.g. Sawyer 1962: 120; Jones 1968: 218). This may be interpreted as a reminder to exercise caution when addressing nature, duration and extent of language contact between OE and ON, lest we envision Vikings and Anglo-Saxons as culturally and ethnically totally distinct, or internally fully homogenous groups, because “[i]t is by no means clear that the Danish or English ways of doing things were either as internally

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8 By contrast, the Anglo-Saxon army is only rarely referred to by *here*, but generally named *fyrd* ‘levy’. It indeed was a (peasant) militia, in which every free man had to participate (cf. e.g. Bosworth & Toller 1898: 351). The Viking forces in turn are never referred to by *fyrd*.
consistent or as easily distinguishable from one another as is sometimes supposed” (Trafford 2000: 20).

Given the ample and varied evidence for close and prolonged OE-ON language contact showcased in this appendix as well as in chapter 4, it is hence defensible to conclude that only a relatively small part of the many Viking newcomers came as soldiers, and that by far the most were civilian settlers, most of them probably arriving a little bit later,9 when treaties turned conquest into colonisation, as shown in the following section. The logic is simply that soldiers tend to use force when dealing with civilians, while nobles rely on authority (backed by force), neither of which requires much negotiating and thus close language contact. By contrast, dealings between civilian commoners happen on more or less equal footing, and hence do require cooperative strategies, which in turn require a fair amount of talking to one another.

1.3. Raiders Become Settlers

The late 870s CE mark a turning point for both the micel here and Anglo-Saxon England: in 877 Halfdan shares out the land of Northumbria to his followers and thus establishes a permanent Scandinavian presence in England, strengthening the link between the recently conquered and refortified York and its surrounding estates (cf. e.g. Stenton 1943[1989]: 252; Jones 1968: 221). The next year, half of Mercia was shared out among the Vikings – the other half was governed until 883 by Ceolwulf II, an English puppet king installed by the Vikings, and whom the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle characterises as anum unwisum cyninges þegne ‘an unwise king’s thane’. (cf. e.g. Stenton 1943[1989]: 254; Griffiths 2003: 86).

Also in 878, Alfred leads the English fyrd of Somerset, Wiltshire and parts of Hampshire against one part of the micel here (which had split in 874, after having been one body since 865, cf. Jones 1968: 221) under Guthrum. The latter had marauded fairly unopposed throughout southern England since 875, time and again capturing a town (e.g. Wareham, Exeter, Chippenham) and holding it, waiting for a ‘treaty’, i.e. being given a hefty sum in exchange for the promise to leave immediately, only to move on to the next town.10 The English fyrd defeated the Vikings in the battle of Edington and pursued them to their base at Chippenham. After a fortnight’s siege, Guthrum sued for peace.

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9 In this respect, the Viking settlement of England resembles the Germanic conquest of Britain as related in Bede’s Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum: a victorious spearhead inviting colonisation by sending word to the homelands of fertile lands and pusillanimous inhabitants.

10 Giving the Vikings large amounts of money or treasure in the vain hope that they might henceforth desist from harrying the land is a historical error in judgement, which Æthelred ‘the Unready’ repeated on an even larger scale in the second Viking Age in the late tenth and early eleventh century (cf. section 4.2.1 below).
In addition to the usual and often short-lived deal of paying off the Vikings in exchange for their promise to leave, Guthrum and 30 of his chief men were baptised three weeks later at Alfred’s court. Alfred officiated as godfather for Guthrum, who was christened Æthelstan (cf. eg. Stenton 1943[1989]: 255-257). Guthrum-christened-Æthelstan appears to have taken his new identity and faith fairly seriously, as he had coins struck bearing his new English, Christian name (cf. Jones 1968: 223). This highlights the role Christianity played as a powerful, but first and foremost political, tool (cf. section 4.1.2).

These events led to (or perchance were preceded by – cf. Dumville 1992: 14) the non-extant, possibly hypothetical, Treaty of Wedmore and the surviving Treaty of Alfred and Guthrum. The latter delineates the border between the remainders of Anglo-Saxon England (Wessex, Kent and English Mercia) and Viking-occupied East Anglia, Northumbria and Danish Mercia, known as the Danelaw. The term Danelaw is of great importance in the present study, as it is used to refer to that part of today’s England north of this boundary, which thus came to be under Viking control for about two generations. We consider it immaterial whether the Danelaw area is under Anglo-Saxon or Scandinavian control at a given point in time; what matters is that sizeable numbers of Vikings that immigrated to and prospered in the Danelaw, while outside this area Scandinavian settlement did not occur in appreciable amounts (cf. section 4.1.1). The southern boundary of the Danelaw is given as example (2), and visualised in Figure A1 below.

(2)  Up on Temese, & ðonne up on Ligan, & andlang Ligan oð hire æwylm, up on Thames and then up on Lea, and along Lea up-to its source  ðonne on gerihte to Bedanforde,ðonneup on Usan oð Wætlingastræt. then on straight to Bedford, then up on Ouse up-to Watling street  'Up the Thames, then up the Lea and along it to its source, then straight to Bedford, then up the Ouse to Watling Street.' (Dictionary of Old English Corpus, diPaolo Healy (ed.) 2000, my translation)

Also, the treaty significantly increased the sum to be paid as wergeld on either side of the border, making private raids and feuds a forbiddingly costly enterprise, but more importantly effecting equal legal status of Anglo-Saxons and Danes in both realms, which, in Stenton’s (1943[1989]: 262) words, “shows the reality of Alfred’s power

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11 Interestingly, the term itself is no older than King Cnut (d.1035) (cf. Jones 1968: 223).
12 There might have been a second wave of immigrants from the Scandinavian mainland during the reign of King Cnut (1016-1035) and those of his two sons. However, positive evidence for this is wanting, and also, as Cnut was king of all England, this putative second wave of colonists could have settled anywhere in England (cf. section 4.2.4)
13 The term wergeld refers to the fine for killing a man, payable to his family or lord.
throughout southern England”. These measures plainly demonstrate that the Danelaw boundary is better thought of as an open border between not quite identical, but clearly akin cultures rather than an impermeable demarcation line between two hostile, alienated peoples, and also points to extensive language contact between OE and ON even shortly after the cessation of hostilities, with the difference between these two languages not being pronounced enough to pose too much of a problem for mutual understanding (cf. section 4.1.5).

In 880, Æthelstan-née-Guthrum shares out East Anglia among his portion of the micel here for settlement and England enjoys a respite from Viking raids until 892. Somewhat paradoxically, settlement of the conquered territory heralds the end of Viking military supremacy of the first Viking age. One plausible explanation is that once the former raiders had made a home on British soil, they had land to till and a family to care for, and this then curbed their enthusiasm to go raiding, as this would leave work undone, their homes and families unprotected and also might lead to acts of retribution on the part of the raided: with their settlement, “they were as vulnerable to military pressure as their victims had earlier been” (Sawyer 1969: 174).

The Vikings’ political control over the Danelaw area was – for now – short-lived: Alfred’s son and successor Edward the Elder brought all of England south of the Humber back under English rule before he died in 924 (cf. Jones 1968: 228-229), by erecting a

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14 For a very detailed, careful account of this treaty and the history around it, refer to Dumville (1992: 1-27).
series of strategically placed fortresses (*burhs*) which rendered the hitherto successful Danish raiding tactics unfeasible. It is interesting to note that he wanted the by-then Christianised Danes of Danish Mercia as subjects, not dead (cf. Jones 1968: 234-235): the Scandinavian settlers’ rapid Christianisation as well as their relatively unproblematic integration into the Anglo-Saxon political and administrative system forces us to conclude that there was not only lots of intense language contact, but also – in view of the little time that had passed since the Vikings’ arrival – that (semi)-communication between Anglo-Saxons and Vikings was comparably easily achieved and is unlikely to have been limited to a small group of interpreters/bilinguals (cf. also Section 4.1.5).

1.4. The North and the Norse

So far, we concentrated on the southern England and Danelaw. Now it is time to address the Viking activities in the North. The three reasons for this separation are firstly that the goings-on in the North occurred somewhat later than the events reported above and secondly that they appear to be of a different nature. Thirdly, while the historical record for the southern Danelaw is fairly good, details on the situation in the North are lacking as there are no surviving authentic pre-Viking charters from Northumbria (cf. e.g. Pryce 2003: 158-159).

It appears that from about 900 CE on, Norse (i.e. non-Danish, non-Christian) Vikings infiltrated or invaded Northumbria, destroying the English Northumbrian army at Tettenhall in 910, and a Norse Viking force under an Irish-Norse named Rognvald seized York in 919, only to be driven out by Edward’s son Æthelstan the following year (cf. e.g. Jones 1968: 235-236).

That the political and military power structure had shifted heavily in favour of the English is readily apparent from the Battle of Brunanburh in 937: Alfred’s successors had managed to quickly reconquer all of England south of the Humber (cf. Section 1.3 above), and in addition undertook successful campaigns against the Welsh and Scottish kings. This led the Norse-Gael king of Dublin Olaf Guthfrithson, the Scottish king Constantine II, and king Owen of the Strathclyde Welsh to put aside their considerable cultural, political and religious differences and unite against Æthelstan in an unlikely Celtic-Norse alliance, because “it must have been clear throughout the north that Athelstan [sic] could only be held in his country by the union of all his enemies” (Stenton 1943[1989]: 342). This broad alliance nevertheless suffered an “annihilating defeat” (Stenton 1943[1989]: 343) and the carnage at Brunanburh must have been considerable even by mediaeval standards (cf. e.g. Jones 1968: 237-238, Crawford 2003: 63-64).

The Norse-Gael Olaf Guthfrithson escaped from Brunanburh, and shortly after Æthelstan’s death in 939, he was back in Jorvik (York) and gained the *Five Boroughs* (Derby, Leicester, Lincoln, Nottingham, and Stamford) from Æthelstan’s successor
Edmund by treaty rather than warfare. Edmund thus abandoned this area’s Anglo-Saxon and by-now fully Christianised, pro-English Danish populace, but managed to reacquire the Five Boroughs afterwards, according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in 942, after Olaf Guthfrithson’s death.

Jorvik remained under Viking rule until 944, and both Viking kings of this short period visited Edmund and were baptised. Until 948 Northumbria was under English rule again, when Eirik Bloodaxe appeared, whose reputation pictures him as the stereotypical heathen Viking with an insatiable thirst for raiding, sacking, and bloodshed. He was made king of Jorvik and reigned until he was finally driven out in 954, marking the end of the first Viking age (cf. Jones 1968: 239).

2. The Second Viking Age

The second Viking age began about 980 CE and is rather distinct from the first and its aftermath. The following sections detail in what way the two Viking ages differ and what bearing the second has on language contact and hence contact-induced language change.

2.1. ‘Your Money or Your Life’: Searching England’s Wealth

While the Viking attacks on England in the ninth and early tenth centuries were most likely motivated by the need for land (cf. Section 1 above) and thus culminated in conquest, followed by a relatively brief period of occupation and a long period of settlement and hence language contact, Sawyer (1962: 83-116) and Richards (1991: 24) argue that in the second Viking age (c. 980-1066 CE) it was the need for silver that drove not just Danes and Norsemen, but all kinds of Scandinavians across the North Sea: Vikings were hugely interested in silver; it served them as currency, raw material for artwork and, not least, as a convenient and important way to display one’s status and wealth. Interestingly, however, there was no silver mined in Viking-age Scandinavia, so that virtually all of this economically and culturally most important resource had to be imported. While Danish and Norse Vikings harried the North Sea coasts, the British Isles and western Europe in general during the first Viking Age, Swedish Vikings went east across the Baltic, and then south into the Arabic realm. From around 800 CE on, a steady stream of silver coins with Kufic inscriptions from e.g. Balkh, Bukhara, Merv, Samarkand,

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15 Jorvik is the Norse name for York: OE eoforwic ‘boar-abode’, ON jofurr ‘chieftain’ but originally ‘boar’, vik ‘bay’ (cf. Cleasby & Vigfússon 1874: 327, 716; Bosworth & Toller 1898: 252, 1212)

16 Although running a money-based economy from rather early on, Viking cash then was simply silver by weight, regardless if in coins, jewellery, bullion or hacksilver. Restriction of legal tender to particular coinages was established only in the eleventh century (cf. Sawyer 1962: 116). It is conceivable that the new currency-based monetary system was fashioned after the English model.
Tashkent, Isfahan, Basra, and Baghdad, flowed via the Volga, Dvina, and Dnieper into Scandinavia (cf. e.g. Jones 1968: 241-261; Sawyer 1962: 83-114).

The Viking recipients became reliant on these Arabic imports, given that “[w]ith remarkably few exceptions the coin material of Scandinavia from the beginning of the ninth century to the middle of the tenth was entirely Kufic” (Sawyer 1962: 104). This changed rather abruptly when the silver mines feeding aforesaid mints were depleted in mid-to-late tenth century, resulting in a severe crisis that “caused serious economic and political dislocations in the Muslim world” (Sawyer 1962: 113). The import of Kufic coins into Scandinavia ceased around 970 CE, showing the swiftness with which the Arab silver reached Viking lands. Moreover, Sawyer (1962: 114, 202-205) reports that the trade route along the Volga was permanently disrupted by Kiev princes around that time, ending Scandinavia’s oriental phase.

Thus bereft of this hitherto steady stream of a vital economic and military resource, Viking leaders were forced to look elsewhere to replenish their treasuries in order to maintain their military strength and found in “a disorganized, disheartened, and immensely wealthy England” (Jones 1968: 364) an easy target: earlier, Eadgar ‘the peaceful’ (943/44-975) had transformed the West Saxon monarchy into an all-English one, and proved to be a successful and powerful King of all England. He not only shrewdly created internal stability by granting the settled Danelaw Vikings equal rights and a certain amount of juridical independence in exchange for loyalty (cf. section 4.1.5.4) – again a development difficult to envisage without allowing for intimate (language) contact between Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians. Eadgar was also adept in diplomacy and foreign policy, managing to make several heretofore rather hostile Celtic kings accept him as overlord. Moreover, he had a navy at his disposal that very likely was unrivalled in the British Isles at that time (cf. Williams 2004c).

His death of unknown causes brought about difficulties in succession, because “principal contestants for the kingdom were Edward, aged about thirteen and probably illegitimate, and Æthelred, undoubtedly legitimate but aged no more than nine, and probably [just] six or seven” (Hart 2004a). The former, “young, unstable, resented by many” (Jones 1968: 355), was enthroned in 975 and murdered not three years later, hence his cognomen ‘the martyr’. The crown of England then fell to the second contestant, who is known to history first as unråd ‘the ill-advised’ and then as unredi ‘the unready’. Æthelred is probably the most reviled English monarch of all times, with both his unflattering cognomens being a testament to this. He was enthroned aged 12 and his long reign (978-1016) stands in sharp contrast to that of his father Eadgar: it

17 Unlike the English fyrd, which was a militia consisting of peasant draftees and their þegns whose participation was part of their civic duty (cf. e.g. Stenton 1943[1998]: 583), the Vikings by now employed a standing army, or rather navy, comprising full-time warriors on pay (cf. Jones 1968: 360).
was marked by treachery, wavering loyalties, massive blunders in military tactics, strategy, logistics and leadership as well as political decisions that – with the benefit of hindsight – must be characterised as exceptionally unsound, such as the payment of *gafol* or *danegeld* in vast and increasing amounts *after* the sackings and pillages had taken place, or the instigation of the St Brice’s day massacre (cf. section 2.2 below).

In short, while Eadgar’s England was comparably peaceful, united behind its king, and successful in war and diplomacy, Æthelred ruled a land locked in inner strife, whose leading nobles and clergy cheated, betrayed and double-crossed him and each other at every turn, and a military that, through cowardice, extremely bad leadership and logistics, went from one avoidable defeat to the next. Culturally, however, the reign of Æthelred turned out to mark the height of Anglo-Saxon scholarship, with Ælfric of Eynsham and Wulfstan of York as prolific writers of outstanding quality (cf. e.g. Jones 1968: 354-360; Richards 1991: 24; Loyn 1994: 64-65; Godden 2004).

Word of this sudden political and military weakening of England and its ruler must have reached the Scandinavian Vikings, because from 980 CE on,18 Viking longships again traversed the North Sea with hostile intentions, just as almost two centuries before (cf. sections 1.1 and 1.2 above). Unlike the first Viking age, however, which began with isolated, small-scale raids only slowly developing into a concerted effort of conquest and colonisation,  

[we] deal now much more than in the earlier period with armies and navies nationally organized with less of an obvious urge for settlement and virtually none of the characteristics of a migration. Wealth, sheer loot and then political power were the objectives (Loyn 1994: 64).

Another important difference is that, while in the late eighth, ninth, and early tenth century essentially all of coastal and riverside Europe was fair game to the Vikings, this time the attacks focussed on the British Isles. One reason is certainly England’s “internal weakness and irresolution” (Jones 1968: 355), but another is that Normandy for instance was now inhabited by fellow Northmen. For parallel reasons, the Danelaw was not (yet) attacked, but raids were directed at the coastline from Hampshire up to Cheshire (cf. Jones 1968: 356). The first decade of the second Viking age resembles the onset of the first in that it too consists of raids for immediate gain through sacking and looting, but differed in that these raids were part of a concerted, national effort carried out by full-time soldiers under a central command, rather than a number of small and unrelated operations, each under the aegis of local chieftains leading militias of farmers-

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18 In Wales, Viking raids, incursions, and at times rendering of mercenary services resumed earlier, from 952 on (cf. Jones 1968: 355).
turned-fighters, who were participating mostly in order to obtain a piece of farmland (cf. Jones 1968: 360)

It has often been observed that history has a curious tendency to repeat itself, and the following is another case in point: almost exactly a century before, Vikings repeatedly captured towns, which they left again in return for money, only to repeat the procedure in the next town, while the Anglo-Saxons apparently continued to vainly believe that, despite much evidence to the contrary, this time the Vikings might keep their word (cf. Section 1.3 above). Precisely the same tactics were equally successfully employed now, the only difference being one of magnitude. While before the Vikings held hostage one town, to be given up for a sum that can be called tidy with respect to the wealth of that town, this time Vikings ‘took hostage’ all of England, in the sense that they raided, harried, plundered, sacked, and looted without warning virtually everywhere, and promised to desist from doing so only in exchange for a sum to be called tidy with respect to the wealth of the entire nation.

From 991 CE onwards and in addition to the loot, the Vikings received gafol, more widely known as danegeld, in effect protection money paid by the English crown – but ultimately the people – in return for the (empty) promise of peace. Williams (2003: 151) cautions that the term danegeld “is essentially a post-Conquest coinage”, referring to the (moderate) tax levied to finance the English army,19 rather than the excessive amounts of extortion money repeatedly paid by Æthelred in return for the Vikings’ empty promises to cease terrorising England. Thus, referring to the payments of tribute as danegeld is historically inaccurate, but it became the established term, reflected in the fact that today the word Danegeld is used figuratively in reference to any kind of protection money, i.e. payments in reaction to extortion, threat, or blackmail.20

After English forces fought the Vikings against overwhelming odds in the Battle of Maldon in 991 CE and suffered defeat, Æthelred, according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, paid the sum of 10,000 pounds of silver to the Scandinavian aggressors.21 Note that here pounds are a measure of weight, not a denomination: in England, the Tower Pound was current between 757 and 1527 CE, weighing approx. 350 grams, which returns the first payment of danegeld alone to have amounted to no less than three and a half metric tons of silver.

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19 An army-tax to finance England’s military was introduced before the Conquest, referred to as heregeld and characterised as swide strang gyld ‘very severe tax’ (cf. e.g. Stenton 1943[1989]: 412; Williams 2003: 152). The danegeld-tax of post-Conquest times was, by comparison, moderate.


21 The treaty that records the making of this peace is extant and gives the sum paid as 22,000 pounds of silver (cf. Jones 1968: 356).
Unsurprisingly, raids continued and danegeld payments increased. For illustration, Table A1 below summarises the development of the latter as reported in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chronicle annal</th>
<th>Danegeld paid in silver</th>
<th>metric tons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>991</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>994</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1002</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1006</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1009</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1012</td>
<td>48,000</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1014</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>7.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1018</td>
<td>82,500</td>
<td>28.875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>234,500</td>
<td>82.075</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A1: Danegeld paid to the Vikings as reported in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, tons calculated on the basis of the Tower Pound.

Of course, the amounts provided in Table A1 warrant some scepticism with regard to their accuracy, not only because the Chronicle manuscripts do not all list the same payments of danegeld. Also, other sources refer to payments not mentioned in the Chronicle. Documents as well as scholars differ with regard to the amounts paid each time (cf. footnote 21 above) and/or in which year they were paid. For instance, Arbman (1969: 65) gives the sum of 36,000 pounds paid in 1007 instead of the 30,000 for 1006 given above. Sayles (1966: 144) asserts a sum total of 158,000 pounds of silver having been paid by 1014 – 6,000 pounds more than the sum derived from adding up the amounts given in the Chronicle. Williams (2003: 153), in view of this, supposes that “numbers expressed in thousands and tens of thousands tend to mean little more than ‘lots and lots’”, while Metcalf (1978: 185) sees evidence that “the volume of English mint-output was usually far in excess of the sums which had to be collected”, which suggests that the payments as reported may not be entirely accurate, but may well represent the right order of magnitude.

Although the amounts provided by documents as well as historians differ somewhat, the figures that are given for the numerous payments of danegeld share the attribute of being very large – typically in the five-digit-range. That the payments in fact were immense is further evidenced by Swedish hoards alone containing far more Anglo-Saxon coins from the relevant period than found in all England; about 50,000 Anglo-Saxon silver pennies were unearthed on the island of Gotland alone (cf. Richards 1991: 26).

What this policy of large-scale extortion means for continued or renewed Scandinavian immigration is difficult to ascertain. Loyn (1994: 64, cf. above) sees “less of

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22 It is common knowledge in schoolyards around the world that paying a bully may make him/her go away for the moment, but at the same time ensures that s/he will soon return for more.
an obvious urge for settlement and virtually none of the characteristics of a migration”, but absence of evidence need not be evidence of absence. At any rate, even if we follow Loyn by assuming Viking immigration to have practically ceased by the onset of the second Viking age, this would in no way detract from the considerable quality, quantity and duration of OE-ON language contact ascertained in Section 4.1. But before moving on, we now provide a brief assessment of selected events highlighting pertinent characteristics of Anglo-Saxon/Viking relations – and hence kind and degree of language contact – during the second Viking age.

2.2. ‘Kill All Danes in England’

In 1002 Æthelred ordered all Danes in England to be killed on St Brice’s day,23 according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle because he had learnt that they were planning to seize England by means of killing him and his advisors. This justification given for the apparent attempt at genocide may very well be spurious (cf. Jones 1968: 358), not least because arguably the greatest danger to England and its monarch were the seaborne raiders rather than the Danes who already lived in England and in many cases had done so for several generations (cf. Section 4.1). Also, Stenton (1943[1989]: 380) notes that, for demographic reasons, “[w]ithin more than a third of England no order of this kind could ever have been carried out” because northern urban centres such as Lincoln or York were populated by at least as many Danes as Anglo-Saxons. The Danes of the Danelaw are hence seen as too numerous and well-settled to have been in much danger (cf. also Jones 1968: 358), and possibly were seen as neighbours rather than foreigners, all of which indicates a state of affairs necessitating diurnal dealings and hence ubiquitous and incessant language contact.

The only other broadly contemporary mention of the St Brice’s day massacre obtains from a Latin charter by Æthelred, dated December 7 1004. In this charter Æthelred recounts events of the St Brice’s day massacre two years earlier, which is interesting enough to be quoted here in full.

For it is fully agreed that to all dwelling in this country it will be well known that, since a decree was sent out by me with the counsel of my leading men and magnates, to the effect that all the Danes who had sprung up in this island, sprouting like cockle amongst the wheat, were to be destroyed by a most just extermination, and thus this decree was to be put into effect even as far as death, those Danes who dwelt in the afore-mentioned town, striving to escape death, entered this sanctuary of Christ, having broken by force the doors and bolts, and resolved to make refuge and defence for themselves therein against the people of the town and the suburbs; but when all the people in pursuit

23 13th November.
strove, forced by necessity, to drive them out, and could not, they set fire to the planks and burnt, as it seems, this church with its ornaments and its books. Afterwards, with God's aid, it was renewed by me. (Whitelock 1979: 591)

A number of aspects invite comment: first, tone and rhetoric are typical of speeches advocating hate-crime, genocide, or simply violence, through the ages: _sprouting like cockle amongst the wheat_ frames the referent as a pest of weed or vermin that must be eradicated if (more) harm is to be averted. Conceptual metaphors of this kind are a frequently employed technique to dehumanise an adversary in order to justify violent action (cf. e.g. Lakoff 1991, 2003; Bergen & Binsted 2004). Second, despite the decidedly anti-Danish sentiments expressed, the Danes are reported to have fled from the English townspeople intent on killing them, instead of fighting back. This indicates that the Danes were outnumbered and/or non-combatants. Third, the Danes entrenched themselves in a church, which strongly invites to surmise that they did so for religious reasons in addition to putative tactical considerations; it is more likely that they were Christians than pagans. The latter two points allow deducing that the Oxford Danes were fairly well integrated, and integration requires mutual understanding. Finally, Oxford is the only place on record mentioned in association with the St Brice’s day massacre; there is no positive evidence for wholesale persecution of Danes elsewhere, which licenses the tentative conclusion that maybe the seemingly national attempt at genocide was in fact merely one local outbreak of hate-crime with negligible repercussions for Anglo-Saxon/Scandinavian relations – and hence OE-ON language contact – on a national level.

Tradition assigns a larger role to the St Brice’s day massacre by placing among the victims the sister and the brother-in-law of Svein Forkbeard, then King of Denmark and Norway and as such commander-in-chief of the Viking raiders (cf. e.g. Stenton 1943[1989]: 380; Jones 1968: 358; Richards 1991: 24). Hence, the Scandinavian onslaught in the following years 1003-1005 can be seen as fuelled by the combined motivation of obtaining profit in the form of loot as well as _danegeld_ on the one hand and carrying out a blood-feud for retribution on the other (cf. Jones 1968: 358-359).

A different interpretation of the event obtains from Williams (2003: 52-55). She demonstrates that the evidence of Svein’s relations having perished in the massacre is very tenuous and understands that Æthelred’s orders to kill _ealle da Deniscan men þe on Angelcynne wæron_ ‘all the Danish men that were in England’ (ASC MS. E, my translation) rather pertained to “remnants of Viking bands” (Williams 2003: 53), which Æthelred had employed as mercenaries from 994 CE on, presumably to defend English towns against their raiding compatriots – yet another decision of questionable wisdom – and whose loyalty he now found wanting (cf. Williams 2003: 53). This interpretation is plausible, the reference to _all_ Danes rather than e.g. ‘those that betrayed me, Æthelred’
in both the Chronicle as well as the Charter discussed above could be explained away as catering to understandable resentments against the Danish raiders harboured by the populace, who were suffering from Viking pillaging for the better part of a generation.

However, if indeed Æthelred’s order to kill all Danes in England pertained to Danish mercenaries that might have been employed to garrison towns, the townspeople would have had a very hard time indeed to dispose of these well-trained and well-equipped warriors. Finally, it may be noted that these considerations remain conjecture as long as the only positive evidence of the St Brice’s day massacre pertains to Oxford, to which we now briefly return.

Recently, two mass burials were excavated in Oxford, at St John’s College and near the Weymouth Ridgeway, which could illuminate the issue some more: the former site contains the remains of “mostly young adult males” (Pollard et al. 2012: 83), who died of severe blade wounds. Isotopic analyses of bones and teeth, which allow inferences regarding diet and origin, rather suggest Scandinavian extraction than English Lowland origin (cf. Pollard et al. 2012: 83). This would fit an interpretation that these are the remains of Danes killed in the St Bryce’s Day massacre. But three separate radio-carbon analyses return a dating in the tenth century, rather earlier than the St Bryce’s Day massacre in late 1002. In light of this, Pollard et al. (2012) tentatively conclude that the unearthed bones more likely are the mortal remains of a Viking raiding party that was captured and executed rather than evidencing “the slaughter of Oxford inhabitants of Danish descent” (Pollard et al. 2012: 83).

In sum, positive evidence for the St Bryce’s Day massacre having reached genocidal proportions is absent so far, although it seems undisputed that atrocities were committed against Danes or people of Danish descent at that time, at least in Oxford, even though evidence for this is restricted to assertions and intentions obtaining from just two documents and is as yet unsupported by the archaeological record. In relation to all of England, the impact appears to have been very limited. Notably, the Oxford incident is the only instance on record of organised hate-crime directed against English Danes, i.e. against those whose ancestors conquered the land for settlement and whose former compatriots were now back, causing great harm. Obviously, this by no means entails that no other occurred, but even so, it being the only one known does fit quite well the numerous indications of generally peaceful coexistence between Anglo-Saxons and Danish settlers reported in Section 4.1.

A final observation suggesting limited impact of the St Brice’s day massacre is that the decade following the incident resembles very much the decade leading up to it, with Vikings plundering all over England and afterwards receiving danegeld on top of the spoils, while English resistance, such as it was, was generally ineffectual, and virtually always unsuccessful, with only two noticeable exceptions.
One is the East Anglian fyrda under the Anglo-Dane Ulfcytel, which temporarily routed the Viking army in 1004 CE near Thetford and could have annihilated it, had Ulfcytel’s orders been carried out to scuttle the Vikings’ ships during their absence (cf. e.g. Jones 1968: 359). This provides positive evidence that at least some English Danes sided with the Anglo-Saxons, once more implying a considerable degree of Danish integration into Anglo-Saxon society and power structures.

The other exception is London, apparently the only place offering sustained opposition against the invaders. Its inhabitants managed more than thrice to defend their town against the Vikings: once in 994, when the Vikings failed in the attempt to burn the town but suffered heavy losses instead due to fierce and unexpected resistance, and again several times in 1009, for which year the Chronicle MSS CDE state: oft hi on þa buruh Lundene fuhton [...] and hi þær æfre yfel geferdon ‘often they [the Vikings] attacked the town of London [...] and they fared badly there every time’ (Dictionary of Old English Corpus, ed. diPaolo Healy (2000), my translation). The Londoners again withstood a Viking assault in 1013, protecting King Æthelred, who had taken refuge there when most of England had already submitted to Svein Forkbeard (cf. below). In all cases, the Vikings soon aborted the siege in order to loot the countryside for easier pickings instead (cf. Jones 1968: 357, 366, 368).

2.3. The Second Danish Conquest

In 1013 CE the Viking strategy and objective changed. Svein Forkbeard now wanted to possess England rather than ‘merely’ continually rob it, and the shrewd way he went about it could not contrast more starkly with Æthelred’s numerous military and political blunders: Svein assembled an impressive armada, which reached Sandwich in summer, wherefrom it proceeded into the Humber estuary and up the Trent well into the Danelaw. When this army disembarked at Gainsborough, it was welcomed, not fought. Soon afterwards Northumbria, Lindsey, and the Five Boroughs, as well as Danish Mercia submitted to Svein. No fighting appears to have been involved. The army then went south on horseback, and Svein allowed his troops to pillage only after they had crossed Watling Street, thus ensuring a continued friendly and supportive disposition on the part of the Danelaw Danes, possibly even all the Danelaw population. (cf. e.g. Sayles 1966: 144-145; Jones 1968: 368-369; Richards 1991: 28; Loyn: 1994: 66).

With the temporary exception of London (cf. above), the remainder of England soon submitted to him also. Shortly before the turn of the year, Æthelred fled to Normandy into exile, and now all of England, including London, was willing to accept its former scourge as its new king. No more than five months passed between Svein’s arrival off Sandwich and his achieving masterhood over all England. However, five weeks later and
before he was crowned, Svein died in early February 1014 (cf. e.g. Stenton 1943[1989]: 384-386; Jones 1968: 369).

The leading Anglo-Saxon nobles then apparently had a change of heart, which is very strange in light of their disloyal behaviour towards Æthelred over the past years. Nevertheless, they seem to have surmised that they would rather rule Danes than being ruled by them, and so they sent for Æthelred and bade him return as their king, and start over with a clean slate, which he did. Reinstated Æthelred and his suddenly loyal nobles for once succeeded in putting a large enough force together and sending it quickly enough towards the Viking army under Svein’s son Cnut in Lindsey to make them leave England. Cnut returned in 1015 CE, backed by many ships and seasoned warriors as well as able military leaders, and the English nobility was once again busy with mutual distrust, treachery and infighting. While war raged through England, Æthelred died in April 1016, and his son Edmund Ironside, who had revolted against him the year before, succeeded him (cf. e.g. Stenton 1943[1989]: 386-390; Jones 1968: 366-371; Loyn 1994: 66).

Edmund proved to be a talented military leader, organising such effective resistance against the Viking invasion army that the decisive Battle of Assandun in October 1016, despite the English defeat, resulted in a compromise that reminds of the treaty of Alfred and Guthrum (cf. section 1.3 above), but with division of England along the Thames rather than along Watling Street, and without the baptism, as Cnut already was Christian in third generation. Edmund died very shortly afterwards and since no alternative presented itself, Cnut, aged 22, was made King of all England (cf. e.g. Stenton 1943[1989]: 386-393; Jones 1968: 371-372; Loyn 1994: 66).

2.4. Viking Kings of England

Cnut’s reign in England differs very much from Æthelred’s inaptitude summarised above as well as from the disregard and contempt William the Bastard and his imported court and administration displayed towards the English people, their language and culture (cf. e.g. Thomas 2003b: 241-255). Also in sharp contrast to the latter, Cnut spent most of his time in England and took on board some of Æthelred’s advisors, notably Wulfstan, Archbishop of York. This certainly helped in developing and maintaining an amiable relation between crown and church. Cnut strove for continuity in England, married Æthelred’s widow Emma in 1018 CE (according to the Chronicle after he had commanded that she be brought to him from Normandy), thus entering into the Norman

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24 Whether or not this treaty was a ruse in order to regroup in the attempt to annihilate the respective enemy as Jones (1968: 371-372) surmises is a moot point, because of Edmund’s death soon thereafter.

25 With Cnut’s accession to the English throne the _dane geld_ changed its nature from extortion money paid to the enemy to a tax for the own army (cf. e.g. Stenton 1943[1989]: 386-393).
court, forestalling claims to the throne by Emma’s sons with Æthelred (cf. e.g. Stenton 1943[1989]: 394-397; Jones 1968: 372-373; Loyn 1994:66).

Cnut also moderately advanced the development of Anglo-Saxon law, an endeavour in which he “was as English as the English” (Jones 1968: 373). Stenton (1943[1989]: 410) ascribes him “a high place among the legislators of the Dark Ages”. Cnut’s actions thus depict him as an English king, not just a king of England: he adapted to be an English rather than a Danish monarch and likewise fostered integration and assimilation among the Anglo-Danish populace. He also was successful in foreign policy and befriended both the current pope and Emperor Conrad II when in Rome (cf. e.g. Sayles 1966: 146-147).26

It is hard to say whether or not in Cnut’s reign another wave of Scandinavian immigrants alighted on English shores: unlike William the Bastard, Cnut did not dispossess English landowners on a grand scale, nevertheless he too “was surrounded by men who expected a reward in land for their service in war” (Stenton 1943[1989]: 412). That he did accede to these expectations is evident from a number of charters granting lands to people with Norse names and because during his reign, the ON loan eorl virtually replaced the Saxon ealdorman as a term for a provincial ruler, without the office it described changing noticeably (cf. Stenton 1943[1989]: 414).27 Whether these new eorlas brought with them – or sent for – Scandinavian retinue in sufficiently large numbers to have made an additional impression on the English language is conceivable, but difficult to demonstrate: documentation of Cnut’s reign is meagre and incomplete in this respect (cf. Stenton 1943[1989]: 415). Moreover, Cnut ruled all of England, and consequently could and did deploy Danish retainers basically anywhere in the country (cf. Stenton 1943[1989]: 414-418), so that the handy within/without the Danelaw-distinction regarding the influence of ON (cf. Section 5.4.3.2) no longer holds.

Cnut died in 1035 CE, but his son and apparently designated successor Harthacnut, who lived in Denmark as king, was unable to travel to England to claim the throne

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26 Cnut was ruler over a realm that, though in existence no longer than until his death in 1035, was comparable in size only to the Holy Roman Empire in Europe at that time: it spanned today’s England, Denmark, Schleswig-Holstein, Norway as far north as Harstad, southern Sweden roughly from Gothenburg to the southern tip of Oland, and Isle of Oland. In addition, its vassals comprised the peninsula on which now Stockholm and Uppsala are found and on which the important mediaeval Viking centres Sigtuna and Birka were located, moreover all of Scotland, Wales and Cornwall, the isle of Man, the Hebrides, Orkneys, Shetlands, and Faeroes as well as the Irish towns of Dublin, Wexford, Waterford and Cork (cf. e.g. Sayles 1966: 145-146).

27 Whether eorl in fact derives from ON jarl is disputed, and I am indebted to Craig Davis for having brought this to my attention. Pons-Sanz (2008: 426-427) for instance doubts a Norse origin of this word, citing a number of scholars in support. However, she herself states that “the use of OE eorl […] is first attested only in relation to the Scandinavian newcomers or men with Scandinavian names” and that it was applied to others only after 1017, when Cnut already was king of all England. Thus, since eorl in reference to a political office first was applied to Scandinavians exclusively, and only later gained general currency replacing the Anglo-Saxon ealdorman, such usage of eorl is an indication of Norse influence on meaning, even if the word form might not be borrowed or derived from ON. A similar position is assumed by Lutz (cf. 2012: 23), who calls it a “semantic borrowing”.
because Cnut’s North Sea Empire had already disintegrated and the new kings of Sweden and Norway threatened to invade Denmark. Thus, Harold Harefoot, son of Cnut with his first wife Ælfgifu of Northampton, was appointed regent and, two years later, made king (cf. e.g. Stenton 1943[1989]: 420; Körner 1964: 56-64, Sayles 1966: 145-151 Loyn 1994: 67).

Harold was “a dim figure” (Stenton 1943[1989]: 421) and nothing much is known about his reign as regent and king.28 Harold does not appear to have had strong ties to Scandinavia, and, though an offspring of Cnut, is probably more accurately pictured as an English rather than a Danish or Norse king. He died of illness in March 1040, when Harthacnut, having dealt with the belligerent kings of Norway and Sweden, apparently was about to invade England. Being next in line to the throne, he was invited instead and soon crowned (cf. Stenton 1943[1989]: 421).

As king of Denmark since Cnut’s death in 1035, Harthacnut certainly had ties to the Scandinavian mainland. These could have served as a conduit for additional influx of Danish or Norse immigrants. However, the extant records are silent on this, but picture this last Viking king of England as vengeful, greedy, and as an oath-breaker. The Anglo Saxon Chronicle (MS. C), noting his succession in an entry for 1040, and hence with the benefit of hindsight, quite acerbically subsumes his reign thus: he ne gefremede ec naht cynelices þa hwile ðe he ricxode ‘he never achieved anything kingly while he reigned’ (diPaolo Healy 2000, my translation). Loyn (1994: 67) and Stenton (1943[1989]: 424), among others, report that Harthacnut invited his half-brother Edward, son of Æthelred, to England and possibly to the throne. However, Körner (1964: 66-71) shows that this notion comes from the Norman *Encomium Emmae*, a heavily propagandistic manuscript created at the behest of Emma of Normandy, Cnut’s wife, and former wife to Æthelred, though the *Encomium* conveniently omits this inconvenient fact (cf. also Stenton 1943[1989]: 426). Hence, the veracity of this invitation is doubtful, as are the sleights Edward is said to have committed according to Norman Chroniclers. Harthacnut died in 1042 and before the late king was buried, Edward was declared king by popular acclamation and crowned in 1043, and for the last time a descendant of Alfred occupied the English throne.

The events of Edward’s reign do not concern us overly much, as Scandinavian activity in England diminished, only a few unconnected raids in 1048 and 1049 are on record (cf. e.g. Stenton 1943[1989]: 428, 430). Edward died in early January 1066 and was succeeded by Harold, who was to lose England to the Normans within the year. His short reign also witnessed one of the last Scandinavian efforts towards England.

While William the Bastard was preparing his invasion of England, somewhat hampered by adverse northerly winds, Harold of Norway harried and invaded

28 One exception is the unsavoury story of the blinding and subsequent death of Alfred Ætheling in 1036, an event of some use for the placement of Chronicle manuscripts (cf. Appendix B section 2.5.1).
Northumbria and took York. When word of this reached the English Harold, he hastily gathered as big a force as possible and force-marched it north. The English army arrived within just four days at the Scandinavians’ location at Stamford, east of York. The English victory in the ensuing Battle of Stamford Bridge on 25 September 1066 turned out to be a Pyrrhic one, the forced marches from their defensive positions on the southern coast towards York and back again, as well as the losses suffered there, left the English at a considerable disadvantage in the following Battle of Hastings, which occurred a mere 19 days later. Harold died in this battle and England fell to the Norman invaders.

This is commonly seen as the end of direct Scandinavian political and military influence in England (cf. e.g. Stenton 1943[1989]: 588-593; Sayles 1966: 164-166; Jones 1968:410-414), although a few, unsuccessful Scandinavian campaigns against England were attempted over the next two decades (cf. e.g. Stenton 1943[1989]: 602-617; Jones 1968: 414; Loyn 1994: 69). The Viking Age in England was well and truly over, yet “[c]ontact between Denmark and England remained significant economically and socially. Privileges in London and on the eastern seaboard were granted to Danish merchants” (Loyn 1994: 69). These significant contacts indicate that Old Norse continued to be spoken to some extent among people of Scandinavian descent, thereby prolonging OE-ON contact beyond the end of the Viking Ages.

In sum, then, although Viking engagements in England during the second Viking age were substantial, as were their financial and political consequences, their repercussions for language contact are largely implicit as extant historical documents rarely address the issue. Additional migration from Scandinavia to England could and probably did happen to some extent during the reigns of Cnut and Harthacnut, however an assessment of their magnitude in relation to the Scandinavian influx in the ninth and tenth centuries amounts to no more than speculation. What should be kept in mind are the indications for continued contact of Danelaw settlers with the Scandinavian homelands and Viking dependencies on the isles of the North Atlantic and the Irish Sea, indicating that Old Norse was used for centuries after the Viking colonisation of England, in turn inviting to surmise that close OE-ON language contact persisted at least until the Norman Conquest, possibly longer (cf. also Section 4.3.5.3).