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Re-created Viking ship arrives in Dublin

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DUBLIN, Ireland — A Viking ship replica sailed triumphantly into Dublin's harbor Tuesday after re-enacting the arduous 1,000-mile journey that Scandinavian warriors made more than a millennium ago.

But this time around, there was a little towing with the rowing, and absolutely no pillaging.

During a six-week journey, the ship dubbed Stallion of the Sea crossed the waters of Northern Europe from Scandinavia, around Scotland and into the Irish Sea, retracing the path of Vikings who invaded Ireland. At times it passed through violent waters and high winds.

Spectators cheered and sailors blew their horns as the ship drew into the harbor in Dublin, which was founded by Vikings in the ninth century.

The 65-member crew was overjoyed upon arrival.

"Of course we're happy," Capt. Poul Nygaard told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. "Tonight we will be celebrating in an Irish pub."

Danish Culture Minister Brian Mikkelsen, watching the ship arrive, chose the occasion to apologize for the Vikings' invasions of Ireland.

"In Denmark, we are certainly proud of this ship, but we are not proud of the damages to the people of Ireland that followed in the footsteps of the Vikings," Mikkelsen said. "But the warmth and friendliness with which you greet us today and the Viking ship show us that, luckily, it has all been forgiven."

The Vikings, who hailed mainly from Denmark but also from neighboring Scandinavian countries, plundered Ireland and Britain through the eighth and ninth centuries, briefly conquering a vast stretch of England. Denmark's royal family traces its lineage to Viking King Gorm the Old, who died in 958.

Experts have long marveled at the Vikings' navigational prowess, and the ship was intended to simulate the conditions of a Viking voyage from Scandinavia to Ireland. But it carried some decidedly un-Viking-like equipment — a support ship, a global positioning system, radar, a radio, life jackets, survival gear and satellite weather forecasting equipment.

The ship will be displayed at the National Museum of Ireland.

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