CHAPTER FOUR

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The Scylding-Skjǫldung Historical Legends: Some Historiography and Considerations

Pre-Viking Scandinavia is not well-served by written sources that would commonly be classed as historical in the modern sense. There is, however, a large body of legendary material which concerns—or purports to concern—persons and events of pre-Viking Scandinavia; that is, historical legend.[1] Of particular note is the cycle of legends concerning the *Skjǫldungar*, who according to medieval Scandinavian sources were a dynasty of early Danish kings taking their name from an ancestral founder: *Skjǫldr*.[2] References in Anglo-Saxon sources such as *Beowulf* (where the Skjǫldungar seem to be identified by the OE cognate *Scyldingas*) and *Widsið*, as well as in various Scandinavian skaldic poems, suggest that narratives from the Skjǫldung cycle existed during the Viking Age.[3] Most of the Skjǫldung material, however, is known from written Scandinavian sources of the twelfth century and later. It is thought that Sæmundr fróði Sigfússon (1056-1133) may have drawn up a genealogical tally of the Skjǫldungar,[4] though perhaps the earliest substantial work concerning them was the now lost *Skjǫldunga saga*, which may have been composed by the end of the twelfth century;[5] a sixteenth-century Latin epitome by Arngrímur Jónsson survives.[6] Characters from the cycle also feature prominently in the late twelfth-century

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[1] The term *legend* is used here, in a manner often employed by folklorists, to denote popular narratives which their tellers (and audiences) generally believe to be true and to contain important factual information. This understanding of *legend* goes back to the work of B. Malinowski, *Myth in Primitive Psychology* (New York: Norton, 1926), pp. 20-30. Our modern Western understanding of the historical may often be at odds with the values of non- or semi-literate societies where 'preservation of facts is not a consciously designed undertaking but rather a reflex of tradition itself'; John Miles Foley, *Traditional Oral Epic: The Odyssey, Beowulf, and the Serbo-Croatian Return Song* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 10.

[2] The names of cognate figures in the legends have various forms: e.g. Hroþwulf, Hroþulf, Hrólfr, Rolf, Roluo, etc. In this study where a precise source is being referred to, the spelling commonly used in that source is reproduced. Elsewhere, where the character is being referred to more generally, this study employs the name in a commonly recognizable form (i.e., Hroþulf, or Hrólfr, etc.).

[3] On dating *Beowulf* and *Widsið*, see §5.1.1.

[4] Stefán Karlsson, 'Fróðleiksgreinar', pp. 328-49 (332-36, 341-47); Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Sagnaritun Oddaverja: Nokkrar athuganir*, Studia Islandica, 1 (Reykjavík: Ísafold, 1937), pp. 12-16; Halldór Hermansson, *Sæmund Sigfússon and the Oddaverjar*, Islandica, 22 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1932), p. 41; 'Skrá um Ættartölu Sturlúnga', in *Diplomaticum Islandicum: Íslenzkt fornbréfasafn*, ed. by Jón Sigurðsson and others (Copenhagen: Møller, 1857-), 1 (1857-76), 501-06.

[5] Snorri Sturluson mentioned it in *Ynglinga saga*; *Heimskringla*, 1, 57. Bjarni Guðnason controversially suggested *Skjǫldunga saga* could have dated as early as 1180; Bjarni Guðnason, *Um Skjǫldungasögu* (Reykjavík: Bókútgáfa Menningarsjóðs, 1963), pp. 142-45.

[6] See discussion in Arngrímur Jónsson, *Arngrimi Jonae opera latine conscripta*, ed. by Jakob Benediktsson, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana, 9-12, 4 vols (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1950-57); *Danakonunga sǫgur*, ed. by Bjarni Guðnason, Íslenzk fornrit, 35 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1984); and the (contentious, but valuable) commentary in Bjarni Guðnason, *Um Skjǫldungasögu*; and Axel Olrik, 'Skjoldungasaga i Arngrim Jonssons udtog'', *Aarbøger for nordisk olkyndighed og historie* (1894), 83-164.

Chronicon Lethrense from Denmark.[7] Other works concerning the Skjǫldungar include Sven Aggesen's *Brevis historia*,[8] Saxo Grammaticus's *Gesta Danorum*,[9] Snorri Sturluson's *Edda* and *Ynglinga saga*,[10] *Hrólfs saga kraka*,[11] and *Bjarkarímur*.[12] Further references are found in numerous miscellaneous works. Each source effectively represents a different variant, although an overall relationship of some kind is not in great doubt.

Analysis and exploitation of this material in order to explain pre-Viking history has been continuous almost since its creation. During the past two centuries, scholarly opinions over these historical legends have varied considerably, regarding them as anything from the virtually unvarnished truth to complete fiction. The chief legacy of this material's study to modern scholarship, however, has come from the works of National-Romanticist scholars in the nineteenth century. Whether or not individual works have stood the test of time, this school's approaches still colour scholars' views.[13] The National-Romanticist approach essentially holds that the Skjǫldung cycle reflects genuine events that took place in pre-Viking Scandinavia, or at least represents autochthonous Scandinavian traditions of considerable antiquity.[14]

This view is little different from that presented in the earliest legendary chronicles and thence adopted in the late eighteenth century by P.F. Suhm.[15] He worked from an impressive range of classical and medieval sources in an attempt to assemble a comprehensive picture of Danish ancient history. He accepted as authoritative the common identification in medieval documents of Lejre as the seat of the earliest Danish kings—an observation doubtless augmented by the presence of numerous prehistoric monuments in Lejre's vicinity.[16] While actual physical evidence for an early ideological

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[7] *Chronicon Lethrense: de antiquissimis Danie regibus*, in *Scriptores minores historiæ Danicæ medii ævi*, ed. by M. Cl. Gertz, Selskabet for udgivelse af kilder til Dansk historie, 2 vols (Copenhagen: Gad, 1917-22), I (1917), 43-53. Instead of the usual *c.* 1170-80 date, Hemmingsen proposed a *c.* 1195-1200 date; Hemmingsen, pp. 176-79.

[8] *Brevis Historia*, 95-141. It dates from the late twelfth century. Hemmingsen proposed a date of *c.* 1198 instead of the usual *c.* 1190 date; Hemmingsen, pp. 176-79.

[9] Completed in the period *c.* 1216-1223; Eric Christiansen, 'Saxo Grammaticus', in *MSE*, pp. 566-69 (p. 567).

[10] Snorri is *Heimskringla*'s assumed author, probably having composed it and his *Edda* sometime in the period *c.*1220-40; Diana Edwards Whaley, 'Heimskringla', in *MSE*, pp. 276-79 (p. 276); Diana Edwards Whaley, 'Snorri Sturluson', in *MSE*, pp. 602-03.

[11] Perhaps composed as late as the sixteenth century, *Hrólfs saga kraki* is preserved in manuscripts from no earlier than the seventeenth century; D. Slay, *The Manuscripts of Hrólfs saga kraka*, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana, 24 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1960), p. 4; *Hrólfs saga kraka*, ed. D. Slay, Editiones Arnamagnæanæ, B.1 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1960), p. xii.

[12] *Bjarkarímur* dates roughly to the fifteenth century, Jónas Kristjánsson, *Eddas and Sagas: Iceland's Medieval Literature*, trans. by Peter Foote (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag: 1988), p. 353.

[13] On National Romanticist influence on scholarship, see Stanley, *Search* and also (a somewhat contentious book, but providing a good overview on many points) Eric Gerald Stanley, *In the Foreground: Beowulf* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1994), pp. 1-38. Accepting legendary history as accurate is Gad Rausing, 'Beowulf, Ynglingatal, and the Ynglinga Saga', *Fornvännen*, 80 (1985), 163-178.

[14] Hemmingsen, pp. 9, 23-25.

[15] Peter Friderich Suhm, *Critisk historie af Danmark: udi den hedenske tid, fra Odin til Gorm den Gamle*, 4 vols (Copenhagen: Berling, 1774-1781).

[16] Suhm concluded Lejre had been founded by Skiold and held later by Roe, Helgo, and Hrolf kraki, Suhm, I, 4, 235; II, 70, 249, 269-70, 282, 253-54; III, 961.

centre at Lejre has appeared only recently,[17] Suhm's conclusions were accepted and enthusiastically elaborated by subsequent scholars eager to recognise a powerful kingdom in pre-Viking southern Scandinavia.

The role played by N.F.S. Grundtvig's identification of *Beowulf*'s Hygelac as the Ch(l)ochilaicus mentioned in Gregory of Tours's *Libri historiarum X* (and in the *Liber Historiae Francorum*) in casting a mantle of historicity over the whole poem—and thereby over the Skjǫldung cycle generally—can scarcely be underestimated (§3.1.4).[18] Francis Magoun, who accepted *Beowulf*'s account as historical, attempted to trace the path of Hygelac's raid, as did G. Storms who suggested that Hygelac's raid was part of the struggle for supremacy between the Ostrogoths and the Franks;[19] neither Magoun's nor Storms's analysis seems very realistic. The *Liber Historiae Francorum* (*c.* 727) locates the raid in the *pagus Attoarius*,[20] though Walter Goffart argued that this information represents an unhistorical guess by the *Liber Historiae Francorum*'s author. The *pagus Attoarius*, Goffart claimed, was too far inland to be a suitable target for sixth-century Scandinavians, and the reflection of this area's name in *Beowulf*'s Hetware, the raid's victims, demonstrates that *Beowulf* must post-date the *Liber Historiae Francorum*.[21] John Haywood, however, saw no reason why the *pagus Attoarius* should be too far inland for a raid.[22] Whether the *Liber Historiae Francorum*'s information about the *pagus Attoarius* is accurate or not, Goffart's suggestion that the *Liber Historiae Francorum* could have been a source for *Beowulf*'s author remains intriguing.[23] There has also been much speculation over the relationship between the *Liber monstrorum* and *Beowulf*, but it seems fair to say that, if there is a relation, *Beowulf* is more likely to have been influenced by the *Liber monstrorum* than *vice versa*.[24] Most scholars have concerned themselves with the relevance of its evidence for establishing *Beowulf*'s historicity, though more recently Andy Orchard

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[17]In the form of the seventh- and tenth-century halls at Lejre; Tom Christensen, Lejre Beyond Legend: The Archaeological Evidence', trans. by Michael Anderson, *Journal of Danish Archaeology*, 10 (1991), 163-85. Most of the 'monuments' at Lejre, however, are either far earlier than the Iron Age, or natural features; see §3.4.1 & §5.2.4. A mound long considered King Fróði's burial mound is no more than a sand-hill.

[18]Grundtvig, 'Bjovulfs', pp. 284-87; *HF*, p. 99 (Book 3, Chapter 3); *LHF*, p. 274 (Chapter 19). Also of note is Gísli Brynjúlfsson's article emphasising links between English and Scandinavian language and literature, particularly in relation to traditions of the Skjǫldungar; Gísli Brynjúlfsson, 'Oldengelsk og oldnordisk', *Antikvarisk tidskrift* (1852-54), 81-143 (p. 130). Concerning Ch(l)ochilaicus, Suhm had noted his existence, listing him as one of the Danish kings Saxo had neglected, and tentatively suggested several possible identifications but—lacking access to *Beowulf*—not *Huglecus*; Suhm, I, 262, 379-80, 408, 508.

[19]G. Storms, 'The Significance of Hygelac's Raid', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 14 (1970), 3-26; Francis P. Magoun, Jr., 'Béowulf and King Hygelác in the Netherlands: Lost Anglo-Saxon Verse Stories about this Event', *English Studies*, 35 (1954), 193-204; Francis P. Magoun, Jr., 'The Geography of Hygelác's Raid on the Lands of the West Frisians and the Hætt-ware, *ca* 530 A.D.', *English Studies*, 34 (1953), 160-63.

[20]*LHF*, p. 274 (Chapter 19); Gerberding, p. 1.

[21]Walter Goffart, 'Hetware and Hugas: Datable Anachronisms in Beowulf', in *DoB*, pp. 83-100 (pp. 84-88).

[22]Haywood, pp. 78-87.

[23]Goffart's other argument suggesting that *Beowulf*'s *Hūgas* derive from Frankish personal name *Hugh*, is rendered unlikely on philological grounds, as the vowel of the former is long and the latter's short; Goffart, 'Anachronisms', pp. 88-100.

[24]*Liber monstrorum*, pp. 258-59; Orchard, *Pride*, p. 109.

has suggested that there are structural similarities between the *Liber monstrorum* and *Beowulf*, and that Hygelac's monstrousness in the *Liber monstrorum* may be related to a perception of his pride, and that this theme may explain Hygelac's appearance in *Beowulf*.

Relating *Beowulf* and its associated legends to history remains a more popular pursuit, however. The eighth- and tenth-century halls recently discovered at Lejre have only fuelled such interests (§3.4.1). Despite an air of cautious scepticism which has marked recent scholarship, one still encounters scholars who might (quite rightly) aggressively downplay the historical value of a literary source such as *Beowulf*, but paradoxically might also defend with equal vigour the aboriginal origins of its material, thereby implicitly connecting such materials with historical processes in Scandinavia.[25]

4.1 EARLY HISTORIOGRAPHY OF SCANDINAVIAN LEGEND

4.1.1 THE PAN-GERMANIC & PAN-SCANDINAVIAN SCHOOLS

In the nineteenth century, study of Scandinavian historical legends was broadly divided into several strands. Among the most significant were pan-Germanic theories, exemplified in the works of scholars like Müllenhoff,[26] which postulated that the legendary material of all the Germanic-speaking peoples stemmed from a common corpus formed in courts of Migration-Age Germanic leaders. This approach was favoured in the then-emerging German polity, and also in England where there was a strong German methodological influence in the wake of Grimm's publications on philology and mythology. Such pan-Germanic theories fell out of favour following the World Wars of the early twentieth century, yet even in recent decades Klaus von See has concluded that the basic substance of 'Germanic heroic legend' represents stylised narratives of Migration-Age events.[27] The robustness of the pan-Germanic theory surely results from the plain fact that many elements in the legends of the Germanic-speaking peoples almost certainly do share a common Migration-Age heritage. On the other hand, it is also just as certain that there are legends which are found only within certain Germanic-speaking groups and not within

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[25]Roberta Frank has shown how scholars' eagerness to draw links between *Beowulf* and the archaeological finds at Sutton Hoo has strengthened a sense of the historicity of that poem, and thereby that of the other legendary sources; Roberta Frank, '*Beowulf* and Sutton Hoo: The Odd Couple', in *Voyages to the Other World: The Legacy of Sutton Hoo*, ed. by Calvin B. Kendall and Peter S. Wells, Medieval Studies at Minnesota, 5 (Minneapolis: University of Minnestota Press, 1992), pp. 47-64. See further §4.1.4

[26]See, for example, K. von Müllenhoff, *Deutsche Altertumskunde*, 1st edn, 5 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1870-1900), and overview in Stanley, *Foreground*, pp. 16-20. In the early twentieth century, Andreas Heusler championed a rather different approach to historical legend. In contrast to the earlier perception that *das Volk dichtet*, Heusler emphasized the roles of individual poets as literary artists, but nevertheless he retained the view that *germanische Heldensage* were indeed based on historical events of the Migration Age; see, for example, Andreas Heusler, *Lied und Epos in germanischer Sagendichtung* (Dortmund: Ruhfus, 1905; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965); see also Stanley, *Foreground*, pp. 25-27.

[27]Klaus von See, *Germanische Heldensage: Stoffe, Problem, Methoden* (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1971), p. 9. For a broad overview of early scholarship from the pan-Germanic school, with many enlightening examples, see generally Stanley, *Search*.

other Germanic-speaking groups. To some extent, pan-Germanic theories require circular argumentation, excluding from the corpus of 'proper' Germanic legend any narratives which did not stem from the Migration Age.

In contrast, the nineteenth century saw prominent Danish scholars develop theories similar in conception to the pan-Germanic theories but informed by Danish, rather than German, nationalism. They believed the Scandinavian historical legends had autochthonic Danish (or sometimes, more generously, pan-Scandinavian), non-German origins.[28] The facts that these theoretically Scandinavian historical legends were filled with obviously non-Scandinavian figures, like Attila the Hun, and were sometimes set in distinctly non-Scandinavian locales were conveniently overlooked. The Danish, or pan-Scandinavian, school's approach surely stemmed not only from simple national pride but from a reaction to the quite real military and political threat posed by Germany. The emphasis then placed on asserting the legends' indigenous qualities is strongly reminiscent of Saxo Grammaticus's tendency to recast narratives in a pro-Danish, anti-German guise.

4.1.2 SOPHUS BUGGE & AXEL OLRIK

One of the first to challenge the pan-Scandinavian approach was Sophus Bugge, who accepted that the Scandinavian legendary material was derived from events of the Migration Age, but not that it had arrived in Scandinavia during the Migration Age as part of a pan-Germanic legendary corpus. Instead, Bugge argued, much of the Scandinavian mythological and legendary corpus was acquired during the Viking Age in the British Isles from both traditional oral narratives and classical literary sources (those having reached Britain from the continent).[29] Bugge's work was greeted, not surprisingly, with little warmth in either the pan-Germanic or pan-Scandinavian scholarly camps. After Bugge's death, little more was heard on this theme, though in the 1950s Dietrich Hoffmann discussed the so-called 'Helgi-lays' and concluded there was still something to recommend

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[28] The strange relationship between the pan-Germanic and the pan-Scandinavian schools, and their bizarre approach to Anglo-Saxon materials, is exemplified in their paradoxical attitudes towards *Beowulf*. Some Germans believed it to be a detached fragment of *German* literature, while its first editor, the Icelander Thorkelin, felt it had a Danish provenance—or even had been written originally in an archaic Danish dialect; see Stanley, *Search*, p. 6, and discussion in Robert E. Bjork and Anita Obermeier, 'Date, Provenance, Author, Audiences', in *A Beowulf Handbook*, ed. by Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), pp. 13-34.

[29] Bugge's theories were set forth in various articles and books. See particularly Sophus Bugge, *Studier over de nordiske Gude- og Heltesagns Oprindelse*, 2 vols (Christiania: Cammermeyer, 1881-89; Copenhagen: Gad, 1896); Sophus Bugge, *The Home of the Eddic Poems: With Especial Reference to the Helgi-Lays*, trans. by William Henry Schofield (London: Nutt, 1899) [this is a revised translation of Bugge, *Studier*, II: *Helge-Digtene i den Ældre Edda: Deres Hjem og Forbindelser*, and the English revision is therefore referred to in this study]; but also Sophus Bugge, *Bidrag til den ældste skjaldedigtnings historie* (Christiania: Aschehoug, 1894); Sophus Bugge, 'Nordiske runeindskrifter og billeder paa mindesmærker paa øen Man', *Aarbøger for nordisk oldkyndighed og historie*, 1899, pp. 229-62 (pp. 247-62). See further Anton Christian Bang, *Völuspaa og de Sibyllinske orakler*, Christiania videnskabsselskabets forhandlinger, 9 (Christiania: Dybwad, 1879).

certain elements of Bugge's theories.[30] In 1969, Wolfgang Butt essayed a complex argument suggesting that *Vǫlospá* originated in eleventh-century England—specifically relating it to the sermons of Bishop Wulfstan of York. Butt raised some interesting points, but the effort to source *Vǫlospá* so precisely was problematic, and his argument was not well received.[31] More successfully, John McKinnell has argued that *Vǫlundarqviða* displays English metrical features, and Rory McTurk has discussed English influence on the development of *Ragnars saga loðbrókar*;[32] there may be further scope for reassessing the role of Anglo-Saxon influences on Scandinavian material even in the period before the conversion to Christianity and introduction of literacy.

Bugge left the Skjǫldung material largely alone except insofar as he felt it was relevant to the Helgi-lays. Discussion of the Skjǫldung legends was taken up by Axel Olrik in his monumental *Danmarks Heltedigtning*.[33] Renowned for his work on the Indo-European origins of Scandinavian myths and wonder-tales, Olrik was influenced by Bugge in many ways and was arguably the Danish scholar most open to diffusionist theories,[34] yet in his work on Scandinavian historical legends Olrik never truly considered the possibility that they might be something other than the outgrowth of native oral traditions, admitting only obviously non-Scandinavian characters as external borrowings. Olrik conceded that development of the Skjǫldung legends within Scandinavian settlements in the British Isles had an important influence on West Scandinavian variants of the cycle, but generally affirmed that the legends stemmed from Danish traditions concerning broadly historical events which had transpired in Migration-Age Denmark.

4.1.3 Wessén's 'Mixed Origins' Theory

What would become a new approach to the Skjǫldung material was initiated, almost accidentally, by Elias Wessén. He developed a 'name shift' theory which suggested the Scyldingas-Heaðobeardan conflict of *Beowulf* reflected a historical Erulian-Danish conflict—in other words, according to Wessén, *Beowulf*'s *Dene* were not modelled on historical Danes at all, but rather *Beowulf*'s Heaðobeardan represented the historical

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[30]Dietrich Hoffmann, *Nordisch-Englische Lehnbeziehungen der Wikingerzeit*, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana, 14 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1955), 114-45.

[31]Wolfgang Butt, 'Zur Herkunft der Vǫluspá', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, 91 (1969), 82-103.

[32]John McKinnell, 'The Context of Vǫlundarkviða', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 23 (1990), 1-27; McTurk, *Studies*, pp. 211-35.

[33]This, Olrik's major work, is unfinished and now somewhat obsolete but remains a lasting influence. See also the earlier Axel Olrik, *Kilderne til Sakses oldhistorie: en literaturhistorisk undersøgelse*, 2 vols, (Copenhagen: Wroblewski, 1892; Gad, 1894) [first volume republishes Axel Olrik, 'Forsøg på en tvedeling af kilderne til Sakses oldhistorie', *Aarbøger for nordisk oldkyndighed og historie* (1892), 1-134].

[34]See, for example, Axel Olrik, 'Om Ragnarok, anden afdeling: Ragnaroksforestillingernes udspring', *Danske studier*, 10 (1914), 1-283.

Danes.[35] He based this theory on his interpretation of information about the Danes and Eruli contained in the works of Jordanes and Procopius. Jordanes mentioned *Suetidi* and then *Dani*, who 'ex ipsorum stirpe progressi, Herulos propriis sedibus expulerunt'.[36] Wessén took these words to mean that the Danes were a small subgroup of Swedes who moved from the region of modern Sweden to the region of modern Denmark (specifically, he suggested, to South Jutland and Fyn by the year AD 500), achieving political dominance over the local Eruli, thought to be native to the area.[37] He suggested that stories about the Danish conquest of the Eruli (as well as other Erulian defeats; see below) were recalled in the Heaðobeardan's assault on the Scyldingas in *Beowulf*.

This much of Wessén's theory was vigorously attacked by R.W. Chambers in the second edition of his well-known introduction to *Beowulf*.[38] Chambers felt there were no grounds for Wessén to dismiss the historicity of tribal identities on which the sources all agreed. Moreover, Chambers noted that according to Procopius the main body of the Ἔρολοι (Eruli) had only just 're-migrated' to Scandinavia, the tribe's ancient home, after 512, when they had suffered a major defeat along the Danube. These re-migrating Ἔρολοι passed peaceably by the Δάνοι (Danes), crossed to Θούλη (Thule, the Scandinavian peninsula), and settled near the Γαυτοι (Götar).[39] This would leave, in Chambers's opinion, little more than a decade for the Danes' conquest of the Eruli to produce the situation, which Chambers considered historical, described in *Beowulf*. This is indeed a problem in Wessén's theory, and not the only one—the benefit of seventy years' further scholarship will reveal more to the modern reader. Nevertheless, it has been pointed out that the

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[35] Elias Wessén, *De nordiska Folkstammarna i Beowulf*, Kungliga Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademiens Handlingar, 36.2 (Stockholm: Akademiens Förlag, 1927).

[36] *Getica*, p. 59-60 (Chapter 3). It is worth recalling Wrenn's seldom-accepted but plausible emendation of the *Beowulf* manuscript's *eorl* in l. 6 to *Eorle*, thus explaining Scyld Scefing as a *Dene* who *meodo-setla oftēah* (seized mead-benches') and *egsode Eorle* ('terrified the Eruli'). Such a reading would be very close to Jordanes's description of the Danes 'unseating' the Eruli; William A.P. Sewell, 'A Reading in Beowulf', *Times Literary Supplement*, 11 September 1924, p. 556; *Beowulf with the Finnesburg Fragment*, ed. by Charles Leslie Wrenn and W.F. Bolton, 5th edn, Exeter Medieval English Texts and Studies (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1996), p. 96 n. to l. 6; *Beowulf*, ed. and trans. by Michael Swanton, Manchester Medieval Classics (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1978), pp. 34-35, 188 n. to l. 6. Most editions, including Klaeber's highly influential one, follow Kemble's emendation to *eorlas*; John M. Kemble, *The Anglo-Saxon Poems of Beowulf, the Traveller's Song and the Battle of Finnes-burh*, 2 vols (London: Pickering, 1833-37), I, 1. Against Wrenn's interpretation, there is no clear example of the Eruli appearing elsewhere in Anglo-Scandinavian legend—yet *Beowulf* is a work hardly lacking in the unique. Moreover, the Anglo-Saxons certainly had access to sources discussing the Eruli, such as *Historia Langobardorum*; Helmut Gneuss, 'A Preliminary List of Manuscripts Owned in England up to 1100', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 11 (1981), 1-60 (p. 32). Grimm suggested emending *Widsið's mid Eolum* (p. 152, l. 87a) to *mid Eorlum* ('with the Eruli'), which Chambers was inclined to accept; Jacob Grimm, *Geschichte der deutschen Sprache*, 3rd edn (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1868), pp. 415-16; Chambers, *Widsith*, p. 216 n. to l. 87. However, *eorl* and *Erul-* are not exact phonological matches; Marvin Taylor, 'The Etymology of the Germanic Tribal Name Eruli,' *General Linguistics* 30.2 (1990), 108-25 (p. 115). For an alternative view on *Eolum* see Kemp Malone, '"Ic wæs mid Eolum"', *Englische Studien*, 67 (1932-33), 321-24.

[37] Jordanes's statement need not mean that the Danes emigrated from Sweden. As Olrik pointed out, it could simply indicate that the Danes and Swedes were closely related tribes; Olrik, *Legends*, p. 34.

[38] R.W. Chambers, *Beowulf: An Introduction to the Study of the Poem with a Discussion of the Stories of Offa and Finn*, 3rd edn, supplemented by C.L. Wrenn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), pp. 430-45. Publication details are similar for the second edition, published in 1932 (first edition in 1921).

[39] Procopius, II, 214-15, 218 (Book 6, Chapters 15.1-14 & 15.25-26).

methodological bases on which Chambers attacked Wessén's theory are often equally applicable to Chamber's own philological-historical approach.[40] What is more, in his critique Chambers never addressed the question of why Wessén felt it necessary to postulate such a radical 'name shift' in the legends.[41]

Procopius's account of the Erulian 're-migration' in fact formed a key part of Wessén's thesis. Wessén had noticed certain arresting similarities between elements in medieval Scandinavian narratives concerning Hrólfr kraki and in the history of the Erulian king Rodulf (Greek *Ῥοδοῦλφος*), as related by Paulus Diaconus and Procopius.[42] The points of similarity Wessén noted were later supplemented and amplified by Lukman and Hemmingsen:[43]

Hrólfr (and Roluo)	Erulian king Rodulf
Similarities in the Sequence of Events:	
The war was caused by king Hrólfr/Roluo's evil sister (Skuld/Sculda) who was married to Hjǫrvarðr/Hiorwarthus ('sword-guardian').	The war was caused by the Langobardic king Tato's evil sister (in *Historia Langobardorum*); Tato may have held the Byzantine rank *spatharius* ('sword-bearer').
Hrólfr/Roluo's vassal Hjǫrvarðr/Hiorwarthus rebelled against Hrólfr/Roluo.	Until the war, the Langobards were dominated by the Eruli. It is unclear how the war began.
Hrólfr/Roluo fell in a last, heroic fight among his men in his headquarters.	Rodulf fell in a last, heroic fight among his men in his headquarters.
The battle was decided by magic: Skuld raised the dead. Hrólfr's men, who could not see for the fire and smoke, were deceived by Óðinn.	The battle was decided by supernatural events: Rodulf's army hallucinated (in *Historia Langobardorum*) or their enemies were hidden in a dark mist (in Procopius).
Hrólfr/Roluo was avenged by Viggo/Vǫggr (or, in *Chronicon Lethrense*, Aki).	Rodulf's slayer was defeated and killed by Waccho.
Vǫggr led the army which retakes Denmark from Skuld; in *Chronicon Lethrense*, Aki became king of the Danes.	Waccho became king of both the Eruli and Langobards.
(In *Chronicon Lethrense*) Aki's successor married Rolf's daughter.	Waccho married a Erulian princess (probably Rodulf's daughter?).
Other Elements of Similarity	
Hrólfr was of slight stature (in *Hrólfs saga*).	Rodulf was of small stature (in Procopius); in *Historia Langobardorum*, Rodulf's brother was of small stature.
Hrólfr's men were berserks, i.e. they fought without armour.	Rodulf's Eruli fought without armour (in Procopius).
They performed individual forays and were hired out.	They performed individual forays and were hired out.
They behaved disrespectfully towards Hrólfr.	They demanded a war and accused their king of cowardice (in Procopius).

These parallels are not all equally strong—for example, Saxo described Roluo as large and powerful. Nevertheless, but for the long-ingrained prejudice against seeing external

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[40]Jane Acomb Leake, *The Geats of Beowulf: A Study in the Geographical Mythology of the Middle Ages* (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), pp. 129-30.

[41]Nor did Chambers worry overmuch about the 'name-shift' between *Beowulf*'s Scylfingas and the Scandinavian Ynglingar which he took for granted in his own analysis.

[42]Procopius, II, 209-12 (Book 6, Chapter 14.8-22); *Historia Langobardorum*, p. 65-69 (Book 1, Chapter 20-21).

[43]Adapted from Hemmingsen, pp. 42-43; based on information in *Hrólfs saga kraka*, pp. 109-25; *Gesta Danorum*, pp. 51-62; *Chronicon Lethrense*, pp. 51-53; *Historia Langobardorum*, pp. 65-68; Procopius, II, 210-11, 266-67.

influences at work on narratives which are widely accepted as stemming from native Scandinavian oral traditions, these correspondences would probably be taken more seriously, and their relative values, more closely assessed. Wessén concluded there was some kind of relationship between the accounts of the Erulian Rodulf and the medieval Scandinavian Hrólfr. In deference to the strength of the pan-Scandinavian school, however, he suggested that legends of the Erulian Rodulf had been combined with native Scandinavian traditions of Hrólfr. Wessén needed a historical model which would provide an appropriate environment for such a process, and he found it in a synthesis of Jordanes's and Procopius's accounts: first the Danes arriving in South Jutland, Erulian refugees bringing Rodulf's tale to southern Scandinavia, then the Eruli then being 'unseated' by the Danes, and finally legends of the Erulian decline being transformed into legends of the strife between the Scyldingas and the Heaðobeardan.

Chambers was right to question the plausibility of this complex chain of events, but in ignoring Wessén's motivation he likewise neglected the strange correspondence between Rodulf's and Hrólfr kraki's downfalls. No truly adequate explanation for this phenomenon has appeared, but to simply reject it as coincidence without further investigation is uncritically rash. It has been pointed out that if one removes from *Hrólfs saga kraka* and the similar narrative in *Gesta Danorum* all the structural elements (in a Proppian sense) which are also found in the history of Rodulf, only the wonder-tale of Bjarki and the story of Hrólfr's visit to Aðils remain.[44] Chambers asked, 'If *Beowulf* be really as historically inaccurate as Wessén's theory compels him to assume, then how can there be any purpose in trying to base upon it the kind of historical investigation which he is making?'.[45] This is both a valid critique of Wessén's theory and a question that might well be turned around and applied to Chamber's own analysis.

4.1.4 Fossilisation Of Research On Historicity

The first edition of Chambers's influential analysis of *Beowulf* was published in 1921, the second edition in 1932. The first of Klaeber's *Beowulf* editions was published in 1922. Olrik's *Danmarks Heltedigtning*, its second volume published in 1910, remains probably the most

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[44]Hemmingsen, p. 41-42; Niels Clausen Lukman, *Skjoldunge und Skilfinge: Hunnen- und Herulerkönige in Ostnordischer Überlieferung*, Classica et Mediaevalia: Dissertationes, 3 (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1943), pp. 68-70. Wonder-tales, such as that of Bjarki, are of similar international pattern and move easily from one culture to another, making it difficult to identify Bjarki's wondertale as specifically Scandinavian. Hemmingsen and Lukman saw Hrólfr's visit to Aðils as a tale originally connected with Attila the Hun, similar to one found in the ninth- or tenth-century *Waltharius*, pp. 1-85; Ursula and Peter Dronke, 'Waltharius-Gaiferos', in Ursula and Peter Dronke, *Barbara et antiquissima carmina*, Publicaciones del Seminario de Literatura Medieval y Humanística (Barcelona: Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, 1977), pp. 29-79 (pp. 66-79) [repr. in Peter Dronke, *Latin and Vernacular Poets of the Middle Ages*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, CS352 (Aldershot: Variorum, 1991)]. But several traditional folktale motifs are relevant to the narrative of Hrólfr's escape from Aðils: Aarne-Thompson, II, 77-78 (D672 Obstacle Flight); V, 290 (R231 Obstacle Flight—Atalanta Type).

[45]Chambers, *Introduction*, p. 445.

thorough analysis of the Scylding-Skjǫldung legends, despite its age and unfinished status.[46] Although Olrik evinced some scepticism concerning overly elaborate historical reconstructions based on the legends, he nevertheless considered them broadly historical. Similarly, Chambers and Klaeber both noted that the legends' historicity cannot be confirmed, but went on to treat them—*Beowulf* particularly—essentially as historical documents. These studies are very much the products of the historical-philological research traditions which had developed under the influence of National-Romanticism during the nineteenth century. They also remain enormously influential and scarcely have been superseded.

A much needed change of attitude was provided by J.R.R. Tolkien's 1936 lecture '*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics'.[47] Tolkien was most concerned to defend the integrity of *Beowulf*'s narrative against critical assaults, arguing that naive attempts to use *Beowulf* as a source for Scandinavian (or Germanic) prehistory and culture had distracted scholars from studying the poem as a poem. In one sense, Tolkien succeeded most admirably, as his essay—probably the most influential single work on *Beowulf*, perhaps even on Anglo-Scandinavian historical legend in general—largely reoriented the direction of scholarship on the poem towards literary criticism. Debate on links between Anglo-Saxon and medieval Scandinavian literature has continued, and most recently Magnús Fjalldal has criticised attempts to demonstrate a 'genetic relationship' between certain episodes in *Grettis saga* and *Beowulf*.[48] He instead offered an explanation of the episodes of *Grettis saga* in question as having been constructed from elements of various other sagas, and he argued that their apparent resemblance to portions of *Beowulf* are simply coincidence.[49] Plausible though the references in *Grettis saga* to other sagas are, Magnús Fjalldal probably cast insufficient doubt on the possibility that *Grettis saga* and *Beowulf* represent independent literary adaptations of a common folktale type (though different scholars may have taken this supposition to more or less reasonable extremes). Nevertheless, Magnús Fjalldal provided an admirable survey of scholarship on the subject and raised many interesting points concerning the willingness of scholars to overlook problems in order to find patterns of similarity where they already expect such (i.e. within Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian 'Germanic' literature). It also might be said that scholars can be equally quick to focus on problems in order to dismiss patterns of similarity where they are not already expected.

On the other hand, discussion and debate over the legends' relative historicity stopped almost dead in Tolkien's wake. Given that the Romantically-informed historical-philological approach had been effectively exhausted, this may have been a good thing. Yet

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[46]Though disagreeing on certain points, Chambers was strongly influenced by Olrik.

[47]J.R.R. Tolkien, '*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics', *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1936), 245-95. See also Stanley, *Foreground*, pp. 37-38.

[48]Magnus Fjalldal, *The Long Arm of Coincidence: The Frustrated Connection between* Beowulf *and* Grettis saga (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

[49]Magnus Fjalldal, pp. 130-34.

the cessation of such debate also effectively fossilised scholarly views on the legendary corpus's historicity—a less beneficial situation. Frank has pointed out how the finds associated with the seventh-century Sutton Hoo ship burial—discovered in 1939, three years after Tolkien's lecture—were eagerly seized upon by scholars in order to illuminate *Beowulf*, perhaps largely on the strength of comparisons between Scyld's and Beowulf's funerals in *Beowulf*, as well as similarities between some of Sutton Hoo's artefacts with objects from contemporaneous Swedish burials.[50] The physical stamp of authenticity that Sutton Hoo seemed to place on *Beowulf* has probably helped confirm the still prevailing opinion that the issue of the Scylding-Skjǫldung cycle's origins is a closed book. Yet given the considerable advances and refinements which have been made concerning other aspects of the legends since the early twentieth century, it is unfortunate that scholars remain equipped with what are essentially nineteenth-century views of the legends' historicity. The few more recent works published on this issue have attracted little interest.

4.2 LUKMAN'S 'EXTERNAL ORIGINS' THEORIES

Although the origin of Scandinavian historical legend seems to have been viewed increasingly as an obsolete topic in the years following Tolkien's lecture, Wessén's ideas about the Erulian Rodulf and Hroþulf/Hrólfr were nevertheless taken up by Lukman. His theories, published in 1943, were very much at odds with the autochthonist pan-Scandinavian school. Essentially, Lukman resolved the conflicts which had beset Wessén by arguing that the Scylding-Skjǫldung legends did not reflect events in pre-Viking Scandinavia but instead were largely the outgrowth of events transpiring among the Migration-Age Goths, Huns, Langobards, and Eruli along the lower Danube. While radical, this re-analysis did allow Lukman to account for parallels between events in southern Europe—as recorded by writers like Jordanes, Procopius, and Paulus Diaconus—and in the Skjǫldung legends without doing violence to the historical record or resorting to Wessén's ethnic and chronological gymnastics.

The timing of Lukman's publication, however, could scarcely have been worse, as his theories successfully alienated everyone in Nazi-occupied Denmark. Anti-Nazi Danes were unhappy to see the heroes of a glorious Danish past branded as foreigners, and the Nazis themselves (both Germans and Danish sympathisers) were angered to see heroes of a glorious pan-Germanic past branded in many cases as non-Germanic, Hunnish foreigners. Lukman's work was almost branded as treasonous in some quarters.[51] Gudmund Schütte carefully distanced himself from Lukman even before the thesis had been published, though he expressed the hope it would provoke renewed interest in Danish heroic

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[50] Frank, '*Beowulf* and Sutton Hoo', pp. 48-52, 56-57. See §3.1.5.

[51] Hemmingsen, p. 36.

legend.[52] In the event, this was not to be, as Lukman's ideas received little attention in Scandinavia or Germany during the war and were largely passed over by post-war international scholarship. This is unfortunate, as some intriguing ideas are buried in Lukman's work, and more critical scholarly attention might have revealed and refined them.[53]

4.2.1 SKJǪLDUNGAR & SKILFINGAR

Essentially, Lukman argued that the Skjǫldungar and Ynglingar-Scylfingas of Anglo-Scandinavian legend had been based on a series of mostly Hunnish (but also Gothic, Erulian and Langobardic) rulers from the Migration Age. Lukman's theories go into considerable detail, but some of the more relevant main points are summarised here in tabular form. Below are simplified genealogies modelled on Lukman's hypotheses; each name which has cognates in another genealogy is shown in bold-face:[54]

SCYLDINGAS-SKJǪLDUNGAR

Beowulf's Scyldingas	Hrólfs saga kraka's Skjǫldungar	Gesta Danorum[55]
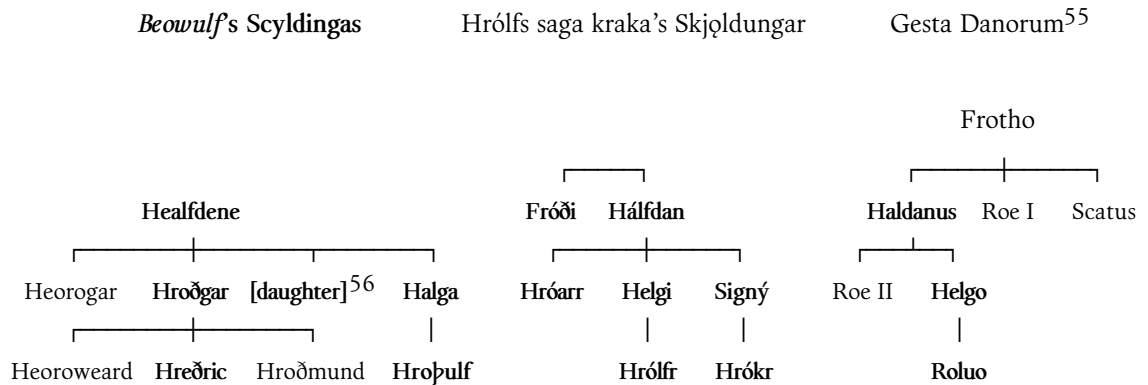
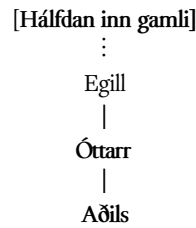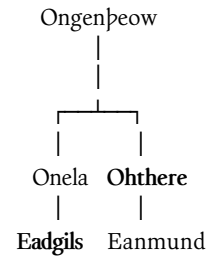[52]Gudmund Schütte, 'Skjoldungasagene i ny Læsemåde', *Danske Studier*, 39 (1942), 81-100.

[53]Actual academic criticism of Lukman's thesis, such as there was, was mixed. Cautious agreement with some elements of Lukman's thesis was expressed by Walter A. Berendsohn (review of Lukman, *Skjoldunge*), *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 57 (1944), 251-55. A sharp rejection was made by Inger M. Boberg, 'Er Skjoldungerne Hunnerkonger?', *Acta Philologica Skandinavica: Tidskrift for Nordisk Sprogforskning*, 18 (1945-48), 257-67, which elicited a curt reply in Niels Clausen Lukman, 'Replik angaaende Skjoldunger', *Acta Philologica Skandinavica: Tidskrift for Nordisk Sprogforskning*, 19 (1950), 141-42.

[54]Modification of charts in Hemmingsen, pp. 36-37.

[55]This chart relies on the version of the story in Book II of *Gesta Danorum*. Saxo largely repeated the story in Book VII, with somewhat different names.

[56]The text in *Beowulf* discussing the person who is presumably Healfdene's daughter (p. 3, l. 62) is corrupt. Many editors have supplied her with the name *Yrsa* through analogy with Scandinavian sources. Such analogies are highly speculative, however, and it would be better here to leave the issue aside. Not all scholars have accepted the Yrsa-emendation. Two alternate views are Kemp Malone, 'The Daughter of Healfdene', in *SiHLaCS*, pp. 124-41 (pp. 139-41), and Heinrich Christoph Matthes, 'Beowulfstudien', *Anglia*, 71 (1952-53), 148-90 (pp. 165-80).

SCYLFINGAS-SKILFINGAR/YNGLINGAR

Scandinavian Ynglingar[57]   *Beowulf*'s Scylfingas

Ongenþeow
|
[Hálfdan inn gamli] |
⋮ |
Egill   ┌──────┴──────┐
| | |
Óttarr   Onela   Ohthere
| | |
Aðils   Eadgils   Eanmund

Several points in these genealogies bear special explanation, intended as they are to outline Lukman's ideas. Lukman assumed that Hálfdan originally had stood at the head of both the Skjǫldung and Scylfing-Yngling dynasties.[58] This equation is made explicitly in *Hyndlolióð* (v. 14-16), where Hálfdan is described as the founder of the Skjǫldung, Skilfing, and Yngling dynasties, as well as of the Ǫðlingar.[59] *Hyndlolióð* is, however, most likely a antiquarian creation of the twelfth or thirteenth century (recorded only in the fourteenth-century *Flateyjarbók*), and although it may incorporate much older material its placement of Hálfdan cannot be relied upon as an old tradition.[60]

Not listed in the charts are further apparently corresponding figures from the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian sources.[61] For example, OE *Onela* has a close match in ON *Áli*, but Onela is a Scylfing while Áli, though appearing in *Ynglingatal*, is not a member of the Yngling dynasty. Other names from the OE dynasties likewise appear to have matches in the Scandinavian legends, although outside the Scandinavian dynasties: *Ongenþeow* with *Angantýr*, *Heoroweard* with *Hjǫrvarðr*, *Hroðmund* with *Hrómundr*. OE *Heremod* finds a match in ON *Hermóðr*, while OE *Froda* and *Ingeld* seem linked with ON *Fróði* and *Ingjaldr*. This last example highlights the fact that the Scandinavian genealogies themselves differ on various points. For example, *Langfeðgatal* lists Hróarr and Ingjaldr as brothers, Fróði's sons.[62] A figure called *Hrœrekr* sometimes replaces Hrókr, and has somewhat different relationships to the other characters.[63]

Moreover, Lukman silently makes many assumptions along with other scholars. The equivalence between *Beowulf*'s Scylfingas and the Scandinavian Ynglingar is

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[57]On Lukman's conception of the Ynglingar, see further in the main text. There seem to be two main variant traditions concerning the Ynglingar dynasty in medieval Scandinavian sources; one is found in *Ynglingatal*, the other in Ari Þorgilsson's Yngling genealogy and the *Historia Norvegiae*; *Skjaldedigtning*, B.I, 7-14; *Heimskringla*, I, 12-83; *Íslendingabók*, pp. 27-28; *Historia Norvegiae*, in *Monumenta Historica Norvegiæ: Latinske kildeskrifter til Norges historie i middelalderen*, ed. by Gustav Storm, (Kristiania: Brøgger, 1880; repr. Oslo: Aas & Wahl, 1973), pp, 69-124 (pp. 97-102).

[58]Lukman, *Skjoldunge*, pp. 72-87.

[59]*Hyndlolióð*, in Neckel-Kuhn, pp. 284-92 (p. 286, v. 14-16).

[60]Anne Holtsmark, 'Hyndlulióð', in *KLNM*, VII (1962) col. 200-01; Jan de Vries, *Altnordische Literaturgeschichte*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1964-67), II (1967), 107-10; Heinz Klingenberg, *Edda: Sammlung und Dichtung*, Beiträge zur nordischen Philologie, 3 (Basel; Stuttgart: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1974), pp. 1-36.
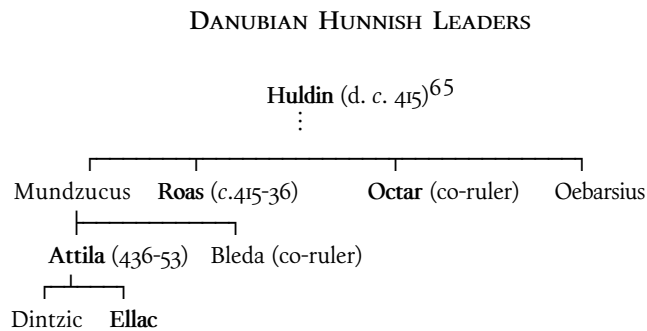
[61]On the relationship—or lack thereof—between the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian sources, see §5.1.3.

[62]*Langfeðgatal*, p. 59.

[63]Olrik, *Legends*, pp. 145, 293-303.

commonly assumed on the basis of a very few similar names in each group, and even Chambers was not unduly bothered by this strange 'name shift'. Also following common practice, Lukman uses medieval Scandinavian sources to 'fill in' information missing from *Beowulf*. As shown in the charts, he viewed Hroþulf as the son of Halga even though *Beowulf* says nothing more specific than that Hroþulf was Hroðgar's nephew. Such assumptions could be justified, but they underline the readiness with which scholars are still willing to use materials from different centuries and cultures to explain and 'correct' each other. Medieval authors and poets were surely scarcely less ready to do likewise, and indeed such practices may stand behind the evident cross-fertilisation from various traditions within the surviving sources.

Lukman identified correspondences between the legendary Anglo-Scandinavian dynasties and fifth-century rulers of the Danubian Huns. Names of rulers are marked with dates in parentheses, and Hunnish names which Lukman believed influenced the names in the Scylding-Skjǫldung genealogies are shown in bold-face in the following table:[64]

<div align="center">

DANUBIAN HUNNISH LEADERS

Huldin (d. *c.* 415)[65]
⋮

| Mundzucus | **Roas** (*c.*415-36) | **Octar** (co-ruler) | Oebarsius |

Attila (436-53)   Bleda (co-ruler)

Dintzic   **Ellac**

</div>

The identifications Lukman wished to make with the Anglo-Scandinavian genealogies are fairly obvious. According to Lukman:

1) Huldin, a Hunnish ruler, was the model for Healfdene/Hálfdan.[66] Thus Lukman's interest in accepting *Hyndlolióð*'s view of Hálfdan (see above).
2) Roas, a later Hunnish ruler, was the model for Hroðgar/Hróarr.[67]
3) Octar, Roas's brother, was the model for Ohthere/Óttarr.
4) Attila, Roas's nephew, was the model for Eadgils/Aðils.[68]

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[64] Modification of chart in Hemmingsen, p. 37. On the Huns, see E.A. Thompson, *The Huns*, rev. edn with afterword by Peter Heather (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) [revised version of E.A. Thompson, *A History of Attila and the Huns* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1948)]; Otto J. Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns: Studies in their History and Culture*, ed. by Max Knight (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); F. Altheim and others, *Geschichte der Hunnen*, 5 vols (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1959-62).

[65] The dotted line from Huldin to Roas and his brothers represents the fact that Huldin shortly preceded Roas and Octar as a Danubian Hunnish leader but that the sources are silent on whether there was any family relationship. Lukman considered Huldin to have been perceived as the father of Roas in legend or by later authors.
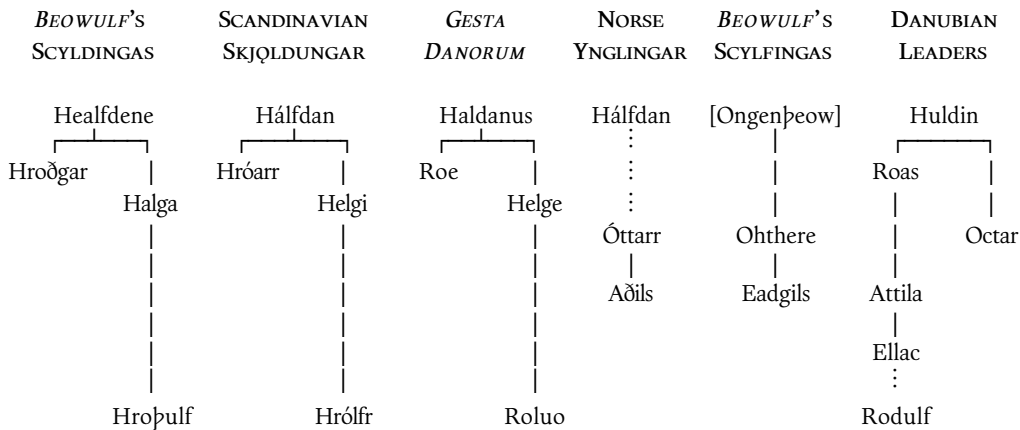
[66] Lukman, *Skjoldunge*, pp. 72-82, 84.

[67] Lukman, *Skjoldunge*, pp. 114-18. On Hroðgar/Hróarr, see §5.2.3.

[68] Lukman, *Skjoldunge*, pp. 38-72, 82-84. On Attila and Eadgils/Aðils, see §4.2.3.

Lukman also suggested Ellac, son of Attila, as the model for Helgi. This suggestion is especially unconvincing, however, and even Lukman hesitated over it.[69] In addition to the Hunnish material, Lukman proposed that Rodulf, the Erulian king, was the model for the Hroþulf/Hrólfr figure (§4.1.3) and that Radagaisus, a Gothic leader against whom Huldin fought, was reflected in Saxo's Roe I, killed by his brother Haldanus.[70]

Thus, the correspondences Lukman saw in the catalogue of rulers on the Danube and from Anglo-Scandinavian traditions, upon which the remainder of his arguments are built, can be summarised as follows (figures whom Lukman saw as equivalent—barring Ellac and Helgi—are lined up horizontally):[71]

BEOWULF's Scyldingas	Scandinavian Skjǫldungar	Gesta Danorum	Norse Ynglingar	BEOWULF's Scylfingas	Danubian Leaders	
Healfdene	Hálfdan	Haldanus	Hálfdan	[Ongenþeow]	Huldin	
Hroðgar	Hróarr	Roe	⋮		Roas	
Halga	Helgi	Helge	⋮			Octar
			Óttarr	Ohthere		
			Aðils	Eadgils	Attila	
					Ellac	
Hroþulf	Hrólfr	Roluo			Rodulf	

Even considering the perhaps irregular placement of Hálfdan at the head of the Ynglingar and unconvincing Ellac-Helgi equation, the remaining parallels are striking. Although there are considerable problems with Lukman's work (see §4.2.3), it might be unduly rash to dismiss all his proposed identifications as coincidence without further investigation.

4.2.2 FRÓÐI, FROTHO, & FRAVITTA

Lukman separately argued that the Scandinavian *Fróðar* depended on traditions of Fravitta, a Romanized Goth in charge of defence along the lower Danube in the late fourth century (§3.2.3).[72] Fravitta was active in the region prior to Huldin, and Lukman saw Fravitta reflected in Saxo's depiction of Frotho I as the Haldanus's father. Lukman, however, understood Fravitta's exploits as standing behind the deeds of Saxo's Frotho III, and the correspondences noted by Lukman (and Hemmingsen) may be summarised as follows:[73]

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[69]Lukman, *Skjoldunge*, pp. 123-28, 152-53.

[70]Lukman, *Skjoldunge*, pp. 89-90, 110-11, 125-45.

[71]Modification of chart in Hemmingsen, p. 38. These charts reflect Lukman's view that Hálfdan belonged at the head of the Scandinavian Skjǫldungar and Skilfingar/Ynglingar alike. Ongenþeow is listed at the head of *Beowulf*'s Scylfingas for completeness, though Lukman did not equate Ongenþeow with Healfdene. The Erulian Rodulf is listed with the Danubian Huns.

[72]Lukman, *Frode*, pp. 13-15.

[73] Adapted from table in Hemmingsen, pp. 49-50. Based on *Gesta Danorum*, III-12, 129-34 (Book 5); Philostorgius, *Ex ecclesiasticis historiis Philostorgii, Epitome, Confecta a Photio Patriarcha*, in *S.P.N.*

Saxo's Frotho III	Fravitta
1) Frotho defended Denmark against an army of Huns who intended to invade Denmark.	1) In 386, Fravitta defended the Danube against Odotheus's army of Goths and Huns.
2) The Huns were starving.	2) Odotheus's Goths were starving.
3) The Huns regrouped for a second attack.	3) The attack of the united Goths and Huns was delayed.
4) The Huns were defeated on land and sea, with the water afterwards so choked with bodies that the ships could not move.	4) The Goths and Huns were defeated, and so many died in the Danube and on its banks that 'the bodies filled up the island of Peuce and the Danube could not get rid of the blood'.
5) After his victory, Frotho took the surviving Huns and their kings into his service and provided special laws for them.	5) After the Gothic invasion of 376, the Goths were settled along the Danube as *foederati*. In 382, Fravitta made a treaty with them.
6) Frotho's army, aiding the *Gothorum rex*, defeated Gunthiovus, son of the Swedish king Alricus.	6) At the Hellespont in AD 400, Fravitta's Gothic army in Roman service defeated Gainas, ally of Alaric.
7) Alrik went to war for revenge.	7) In 401, Alaric attacked Roman forces.
8) Once, Frotho's lieutenant Ericus had defeated an invasion fleet by holing their ships, drowning the men before they could fight.	8) In Fravitta's victory of 400 over Gainas, his ships rammed Gainas's rafts, drowning the men before they could fight.
9) Frotho was succeeded as king in Denmark by Hiarnus.	9) Fravitta was succeeded as governor in Asia Minor by Herennianus (Greek Ἐρεννιανὸς).
Frotho's laws (see #5 in column above) stated:	**Fravitta's treaty of 382 stipulated that:**
Women could refuse to marry the new allies; a woman who married a thrall became a thrall herself.	The Goths could not marry Roman women unless the latter gave up their Roman citizenship.
Oaths were not valid evidence in court.	Only Romans could swear oaths in Roman courts.
The kings became Frotho's vassals.	The Goths became *foederati*, supplying troops under their own leaders.
These vassals paid their soldiers according to a fixed tariff and gave them a pension.	These troops were paid and pensioned according to the Roman regulations.
Some laws corresponded to common Germanic custom.	Otherwise, the Goths lived under their own laws.

Lukman also drew complicated links between *Grottasǫngr*, Fravitta's activities (particularly around the Hellespont), and several associated proper names—he compared names for regions known as Maeonia and Mysia with the characters Menja and Mysingr in *Grottasǫngr*, and the name of Byzantine Emperor Theodosius with that of the giant-maidens' forefather Þjazi (another of their ancestors, Hrungnir, dwelt at *Grjótúnagarðar*, a name Lukman connected with that of the Gothic Greutungi).[74] Lukman's various correspondences between Fróði and Fravitta are interesting, but it is difficult to say whether (if genuine) they do not simply point to Saxo himself having borrowed details from classical sources concerning Fravitta, as opposed to ancient traditions of Fravitta

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Procli, Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani Opera Omnia, ed. by J.-P. Migne, Patrologiæ cursus completus: Series Græca posterior, 65 (Paris: Migne, 1859), col. 459-624 (col. 602-06) (Book II, Chapter 8); Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, in *Socratis Scholastici, Hermiæ Sozomeni: Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. by J.-P. Migne, Patrologiæ cursus completus: Series Græca posterior, 67 (Paris: Migne, 1859), col. 29-842 (col. 675-82) (Book 6, Chapter 6); Eunapius, *Testimonia*, in *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus*, ed. and trans. by R.C. Blockley, ARCA Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs, 6 and 10, 2 vols (Liverpool: Cairns, 1981-83), II (1983), 2-127 (pp. 114-19); Claudius Claudianus, *Panegyricus de Quarto Consulatu Honorii Augusti*, in *Carmina*, ed. by Julius Koch, Bib. Teub. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1893), pp. 110-28 (p. 127); Themistios, Χαριστήριος τῷ αὐτοκράτορι ὑπὲρ τῆς εἰρήνης καὶ τῆς ὑπατείας τοῦ στρατηγοῦ Σατορνίνου, in *Themistii Orationes Quae Supersunt*, ed. by H. Schenkl, rev. by G. Downey and A.F. Norman, 2 vols, Bib. Teub. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1965-70), I, 287-304 (Speech 16).

[74]The discussion is often cursory and difficult to follow, but see generally Lukman, *Frode*, pp. 32-44, 49-62.

preserved in a Scandinavian context. After all, the correspondences Lukman (and Hemmingsen) noted pertain specifically to Saxo's Frotho III, and not other Scandinavian *Fróðar*. Certainly, Saxo made use of extensive classical allusions. Relevant here is Saxo's description of how Hiarnus was given the Danish kingship in return for eulogising Frotho, where he wrote: 'Sed ne Africanus quidem in rependendis operum suorum monumentis munificentia Danos aequavit'. This statement echoes phrases in the writings of Cicero and Valerius Maximus.[75]

Viking-Age evidence suggests that a Fróði-figure was already well-established in Scandinavian contexts. The Rus name *Фудри* (most likely an error for *Фруди*), appearing in the *Russian Primary Chronicle* for the year 944, probably represents Scandinavian *Fróði*.[76] The implication is that *Fróði* was already a relatively familiar Scandinavian personal name. Several tenth-century poets seem to have made reference to information concerning the Friðfróði known also from *Grottasǫngr*. Egill Skallagrímsson said: *glaðar flotna fjǫl við Fróða mjǫl*.[77] Fróði's *friðr* is referenced in Einarr skálaglamm Helgason's tenth-century poem *Vellekla* and, intriguingly, in the Helgi-lays.[78] Eyvindr skáldaspillir calls gold *Fróða fáglýjaðra þýja meldr*; a reference to the story known from *Grottasǫngr*.[79] Thus it seems likely that stories of a Fróði and his *friðr* were well-established among tenth-century Scandinavians. How these Viking-Age Fróði-figures were related to those in the medieval Scandinavian sources seems less clear, however, and the relationship between the Scandinavian *Fróðar* and Anglo-Saxon *Froda* is likewise difficult to determine.[80] Of course, by the mid-tenth century Anglo-Saxon traditions like those found in *Beowulf* already may have become familiar to Scandinavians—and *vice versa*.

4.2.3 CRITIQUE OF LUKMAN'S METHODOLOGY

Lukman's reconstructions sometimes probably stretch the evidence farther than is reliable, and some of his parallels may owe as much coincidence as anything else. This is true not only for *Skjoldunge und Skilfinge* and *Frode Fredegod*, but also for much of his other work. Christopher Tolkien, criticising Lukman's analysis of *Hlǫðsqviða* wrote:

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[75]For references to the classical parallels, see *Gesta Danorum*, p. 143 (Book 6); Davidson-Fisher, I, 162, II, 95 n. 4.

[76]*Повесть временных лет*, ed. by Д.С. Лихачева and В.П. Адриановой-Перетц, 2nd edn, Литературные памятники (Saint Petersburg: Наука, 1996), pp. 23, 160. The spelling with Cyrillic -*u* (= Latin alphabet -*i*) makes it unlikely that the name is a West Germanic *Froda/Frodo*; Struminski, p. 175. The name *Fróði* also seems to appear on several runestones; for example, *SR*, II: *Östergötlands runinskrifter*, ed. by Erik Brate (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1911-18), 144-45 (ÖG 153).

[77]*Skjaldedigtning*, B.I, 33. See also Meissner, p. 228.

[78]*Skjaldedigtning*, B.I, 120; *HHbI*, p. 132 (v. 13). Perhaps significantly, Einarr seems to have been some kind of protégé of Egill's, and Einarr's poetry shows influence from Egill's, perhaps including the use of references to Fróði legends; Edith Marold, 'Einarr Helgason skálaglamm', in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, pp. 158-59.

[79]*Skjaldedigtning*, B.I, 64.

[80]See §3.2.3 & §5.1.3.

I do not think it should need to be said, that to pick about in old histories, looking for names that begin with the same letter or contain one or two of the same consonants as those in one's text, will attain nothing. If heroic legend really evolved in this way, with the most chance and casual accretions and distortions ... then, with our fragmentary materials, the chances against hitting upon the right combinations are so monumental that we may as well give up the game at once; or, at least, admit that it is only a game.[81]

This is a strong, though not necessarily unjustified, condemnation of Lukman's technique—and in the case of *Hlǫðsqviða*, at least, Lukman's reconstructions seem so ingenious that, while possible, they are difficult to accept.[82] Yet many elements of his arguments concerning the reflection of Migration-Age events along the Danube in later Anglo-Scandinavian legend are surprisingly cogent—a fact which, given the environment in which they were first published, may have contributed significantly to their acrimonious rejection—and they probably deserve more serious critical attention. A full reassessment of the Scylding-Skjǫldung cycle would require an analysis both more rigorous and more open-minded than has yet appeared.

There are some clear problems with Lukman's identifications, perhaps the most serious being philological.[83] For example, the form *Aðils* cannot descend regularly from a borrowing of *Attila* into fifth-century Scandinavian, which would have produced *Atli*. This form appears in the Vǫlsung cycle, where Atli is a very clear reflection of Attila the Hun. It is, however, uncertain whether the form *Atli* is an old Scandinavian development or a late borrowing from West Germanic; it is moreover unclear when the Vǫlsung material became known to Scandinavians.[84] On the other hand, *Ēadgils* (from **Auþagīsilaz*) may be a poor match for *Aðils* (which most scholars derive from a form like **Aþagīsilaz*).[85] Likewise, *Hroðgar* ought to be paralleled by *Hróðgeirr* (a relatively common ON name, from **Hrōþagaizaz*), not *Hróarr* (probably from **Hrōþawarjaz* or **Hrōþaharjaz*, which should have produced an Old English ***Hroð(h)ere*).[86] Furthermore, it is unclear why

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[81] C. Tolkien, 'Battle', p. 155.

[82] N. Lukman, 'Goterne i Heidreks saga: en Tradition om Athanaric (†381)?', *Aarbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie*, (1946), 103-20.

[83] Lukman's failure to address philological problems adequately was the chief criticism of a very fair review by Valter Jönsson (review of Lukman, *Skjoldunge*), *Lychnos*, (1944-45), 359-61.

[84] See §2.5.4, §3.4.6, §5.2.1 & §5.3.4.

[85] *NIDN*, I, col. 4-5 (*s.v.* 'Aðill', 'Aðils'), 97-98, 1277; II, col. 125 (*s.v.* 'Auðgísl'); *ANEW*, pp. 2 (*s.v.* 'Aðils'), 18 (*s.v.* 'auð-'); *Sveriges Medeltida Personnamn: Ordbok*, ed. by Roland Otterbjörk with Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademiens Personnamnskommitté (Uppsala Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967-), I: *Fornamn A-E* (1967), col. 16. (*s.v.* 'Adhils').

[86] Scholars sometimes attempt to derive *Hróarr* and *Hróðgeirr* from a common ancestor, but the interpretation seems forced and over-dependent on the belief in a direct connection between the Skjǫldung Hróarr and *Beowulf*'s Hroðgar; *NIDN*, I, col. 580-82 (*s.v.* 'Hróarr'), col. 583-84 (*s.v.* 'Hróðgeirr'); II, col. 469-71 (*s.v.* 'Hróarr'), col. 472 (*s.v.* 'Hróðgeirr'); *ANEW*, pp. 258-59 (*s.v.* 'Hróarr'). It is sometimes said that names in Hroð- were largely unknown to the Anglo-Saxons, but a number of examples (including legendary ones) are cited in William George Searle, *Onomasticon Anglo-Saxonicum: A List of Anglo-Saxon Proper Names from the Time of Beda to that of King John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

Beowulf's Ongenþeow, whose name would be expected to appear as *Angantýr* in Scandinavian sources (probably an alteration of **Anganþér*, from **Anganþewaz*), stands in the place of *Ynglingatal's* Egill.[87] Such problems are comparable to those in Lukman's identifications and yet seldom cause much concern.[88]

The names of the Hunnish rulers themselves represent an insoluble philological problem. What kind of language the Huns spoke is unknown, though it was probably Turkic. It is commonly understood that *Attila* represents Gothic *atta* plus the diminutive suffix *-ila/-ilō* (thus *Attila* = 'Little Father'). While it is possible that the Hunnish leader bore such a Germanic nickname as his birth name, it seems more likely that the form *Attila* derives from a Gothic accommodation of some Hunnish personal name (or represents a quasi-title). Most Hunnish names have clearly been distorted in various ways:

> For every scholar who claims such and such a Hun's name as Germanic, there is at least one other scholar who claims it as Turkish or the like. The names are so numerous, and this variation of opinion so regular, that one is forced to the conclusion that the evidence is simply inadequate to allow us to reach any certainty ... In fact, most Hun names must have reached our Greco-Roman authorities from oral Gothic sources, and so will have undergone a double alteration: they will have been approximated first to Germanic sounds and then to Greek or Roman ones.[89]

This phenomenon is underlined by the multiple forms of Hunnish names in the sources; for example, Roas appears also as Ῥούας, *Ruga*, Ῥούγας, Ῥωίλας, *Rugila*, and Ῥουγίλας.[90] Such problems complicate the philological comparison of Hunnish names with the Anglo-Scandinavian legendary name-forms effectively to the point of impossibility. Lukman referred primarily to the Hunnish name-forms used by Jordanes, whose *Getica* was apparently known in Carolingian Francia;[91] in the eleventh-century, Dudo of St.-Quentin

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1897), pp. 302-03, 562. Names in *Hroð-/Hro-* seem to have been more familiar in England during the Viking Age, but contacts with Francia and Scandinavia even before that period should have kept them from being entirely unknown in pre-Viking times. Moreover, though it is sometimes said that *Hroþulf* could not be re-derived from Scandinavian *Hrólfr* (as the medial *ð/þ* was commonly lost in Scandinavian forms of the name before the ninth century), the existence of medieval forms such as *Hróðólfr* suggests that the relationships between name-forms in *Hróð-* and in *Hró-* might have been understood, if imperfectly; *NIDN*, I, col. 1293; II, 472 (*s.v.* 'Hróðólfr').

[87]*ANEW*, p. 10 (*s.v.* 'Angantýr'). There is no Yngling king Angantýr. Angantýr Heiðreksson of *Hlǫðsqviða* is described by *Hervarar saga* as an ancestor of Swedish kings, however, and *Widsið* names an *Ongendþeow* as a Swedish ruler; *Widsið*, p. 150 (v. 31b); *Saga of King Heidrek*, pp. 59-63. Perhaps *Beowulf* acquired its Ongenþeow from similar sources. There is also the Danish king *Ongendus* mentioned in Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi*, p. 60 (Chapter 9).

[88]Chambers suggested that *Eadgils*, a name familiar as that of the Myrgingas' ruler in *Widsið*, was a replacement for *Ǣðgils*, a form phonologically closer to ON Aðils; Chambers, *Introduction*, p. xvii, n. 2.

[89]Thompson, *Huns*, pp. 278-79.

[90]There have been many inconclusive attempts to explain the names (and their variant forms) belonging to individual Huns, but see discussion in Maenchen-Helfen, pp. 376-443, and individual entries in Gyula Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, 2 vols (Budapest: Kir. M. Pázmány Péter Tudományegyetemi Görög Filológiai Intézet, 1942-43), II, *Sprachreste der Türkvölker in den byzantinischen Quellen* (1943).

[91]Frank, 'Germanic', p. 93. Naturally, that a text was known in Carolingian Francia does not mean it was known in Anglo-Saxon England. There is, however, only fragmentary evidence for which texts actually may have been known in Anglo-Saxon England. The possibility that information derived from written works could be transmitted orally before being re-committed to writing additionally complicates

and William of Jumièges both used material drawn ultimately from Jordanes.[92] It is Jordanes's name-forms which, coincidentally or not, correspond most readily to the names found in the Anglo-Scandinavian genealogies. If the Danubian rulers were, as Lukman suggested, adapted into Anglo-Scandinavian legend, it would not be so surprising if the adapter had provided them with similar-sounding but more familiar names.

Such processes are not uncommon in oral transmission, as folklorists have long recognised. An orally transmitted narrative will commonly display considerable stability at the structural level, while other details may vary relatively freely. In the early twentieth century, Antti Aarne emphasised that in order to classify folktales successfully (as a precondition to their comparison and study) only the most stable features of a folktale should be considered. He issued a list, later revised by Stith Thompson, of the kinds of features most likely to change. This list, based as it is on a considerable body of data, remains an important touchstone for folklorists.[93] In the process of a narrative's oral transmission, it is not uncommon for a narrator to replace unfamiliar entities or objects—including names—with more familiar ones.[94] A change of Erulian *Rodulf* to Old English *Hroþulf* would be scarcely any change at all.

Yet this tendency tochange names complicates the evaluation of Lukman's models as much as it explains them. Recognising that names can be altered so readily also implies the converse: a similarity between two names needs not be more than coincidence. Onomastic similarities such as those Lukman proposed should not be entertained without further correlating evidence from narrative sources. For example, narrative similarities between accounts of Erulian Rodulf and Hrólfr kraki suggest that the parallel perhaps should not be too quickly dismissed, while the lack of agreement between accounts of

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matters. I am grateful, however, to Walter Goffart for offering an opinion to the effect that, although he had not specially re-examined the material, he was 'inclined to say that Jordanes's histories were fairly well known by the *cognoscenti* from the eighth century on. There is a trail of use, notably by Frechulf of Lisieux; there are copies in library catalogues. It wouldn't be surprising to find the *Getica* consulted in later Anglo-Saxon England'; Walter Goffart, 'Re: Knowledge of *Getica*', *Earlymednet-L* [Online], Available e-mail: earlymednet-l@Cardiff.ac.uk (16 March 1999). See §5.3.3.

[92] Dudo, *Dudonis Sancti Quintini: De Moribus et Actis primorum Normanniæ Ducum*, ed. by Jules Lair, Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie, 23.2 (Caen: Le Blanc-Hardel, 1865), pp. 115-301 (pp. 129-31); Dudo of St Quentin, *History of the Normans*, trans. by Eric Christiansen (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), pp. 15-16, 182-83 n. 63, 64, 67, 68, 73; *The* Gesta Normannorum ducum *of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni*, ed. and trans. by Elisabeth M.C. van Houts, Oxford Medieval Texts, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992-1995), I, xxvii, xxxvi-xxxvii, 12-17. William claimed to depend on Dudo's description of Danish history, but the material has actually been reworked to a considerable extent.

[93] Stith Thompson, *The Folktale* (New York: Dryden, 1951), p. 436; Antti Aarne, *Leitfaden der vergleichenden Märchenforschung*, FF Comunications, 13 (Hamina: Suomalaisen Tiedeakatemian Kustantama, 1913), p. 23-39.

[94] There are numerous medieval examples of re-analyzation, mis-analyzation, or complete replacement of names crossing from one speech-community to another; one can see this in Slavic interpretations of Scandinavian names, and conversely in Scandinavian interpretations of Slavic names. Paul Bibire has noted that Scandinavian names were commonly mangled in the ninth century by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle authors (while Frankish names, in contrast, are handled more gracefully), and Gillian Fellows-Jensen has shown English familiarity with Scandinavian names had improved by the eleventh century; Paul Bibire, 'North Sea Language Contacts in the Early Middle Ages: English and Norse', forthcoming; Gillian Fellows-Jensen, *The Vikings and their Victims: the Verdict of the Names,* Dorothea Coke Memorial Lecture in Northern Studies (London: University College London, 1995), p. 17.

Ellac and Helgi indicates their identification may be discarded more readily. Lukman (and Hemmingsen) suggested comparisons between various accounts of Aðils's and Attila's deaths.[95] Even were one to accept these (and the similarity between the roles of Aðils in *Hrólfs saga kraka* and of Attila in *Waltharius*, as noted above, §4.1.3), some very durable elements of the legend have no obvious Danubian models: i.e. the battle between Aðils and Áli on the ice of lake Vænir, which is echoed in Eadgils's and Onela's conflict in *Beowulf*. Such elements most likely represent native Scandinavian traditions.

Lukman was somewhat vague on how he believed the names of Danubian rulers entered Anglo-Scandinavian legend (and how they were then reorganised into two dynasties),[96] but his conceptions were expressed with slightly more clarity in a monograph tracing influence on *Gesta Danorum* from Jordanes's *Getica*.[97] Here Lukman primarily discussed traditions of the Gothic king Ermanaric (Saxo's *Jarmericus*), but the part of his argument concerning the medieval confusion between Denmark (or *Dania*) and Dacia was equally relevant to his ideas about Danubian influence on the Skjǫldung cycle. That the name *Dacia*, which properly belonged to a region roughly equivalent to modern Romania and Transylvania, was often applied to Denmark in Latin documents in the medieval period is well-known.[98] Lukman considered this a means by which medieval authors could misassign (from a modern perspective) information about events which took place in Dacia proper to 'Danish Dacia', i.e. Denmark.[99] The Dacia-Dania problem also was addressed later, though independently, by Jane Acomb Leake. Her study on *Beowulf*'s Geatas is problematic in many ways,[100] but the point remains important that the modern historical-philological understanding of *Beowulf*'s Geatas as Götar (or Jutes) need not have been the understanding of medieval writers.[101] One develops the uncomfortable sense that both medieval and modern understandings are often founded on unsubstantiated (often unsubstantiatible) assumptions and identifications which are then taken for granted and repeated.

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[95]Lukman, *Skjoldunge*, pp. 42-44, 101-02; Hemmingsen, p. 46. For their sources see *Getica*, p. 123-24 (Chapter 49); *Gesta Danorum*, p. 67 (Book 3); *Heimskringla*, I, 59.

[96]Lukman, *Skjoldunge*, pp. 149-60.

[97]N. Lukman, *Ermanaric hos Jordanes og Saxo*, Studier fra Sprog- og Oldtidsforskning udgivne af det Filologisk-Historiske Samfund, 208 (Copenhagen: Branners, 1949), p. 7-25.

[98]Both Dudo of St.-Quentin and William of Jumièges participated in equating Getae, Goths, Dacians, and Danes. See also J. Svennung, *Jordanes und Scandia: Kritisch-exegetische Studien*, Skrifter utgivna av K. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Uppsala, 44:2a (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967), pp. 217-22

[99]See further §4.4.1, and §5.3.4.

[100]See generally criticism also in Stanley, *Foreground*, p. 48; G.V. Smithers (review of Leake), *English Historical Review*, 86 (1971), 346-49; C.L. Wrenn (review of Leake), *Review of English Studies*, 20 (1969), 204-07; T.A. Shippey (review of Leake), *Modern Language Review*, 64 (1969), 851-2; Jackson J. Campbell (review of Leake), *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 67 (1968), 691-94; J.D.A. Ogilvy (review of Leake), *English Language Notes*, 5 (1967-68), 303-05. Leake's main points, however, are broadly accepted in Inge Skovgaard-Petersen, 'Oldtid og Vikingetid', in *Danmarks historie*, ed. by Aksel E. Christensen and others, 10 vols (Copenhagen: 1977-92), I: *Tiden indtill 1340*, ed. by Inge Skovgaard-Petersen and others (1977), 15-209 (pp. 34-36, 43).

[101]Leake, pp. 13-83, 129-133, 139.

4.3 HEMMINGSEN'S 'LATE EXTERNAL ORIGINS' THEORY

Within Scandinavia by the 1960s some acceptance of Lukman's work had been found amongst scholars of the post-war generation. Inge Skovgaard-Petersen referred to Lukman's works as having shown that 'much [in *Gesta Danorum*] can be proved to be based on misconceptions—such as a confusion of mid-European Dacia with Denmark'.[102] Similarly, Bjarni Guðnason wrote: 'It may well be that Hrólfr kraki and King Aðils of Uppsala were originally kings of the Heruli and of the Huns in the fourth and fifth centuries ... as N. Lukman maintained'.[103] These scholars were not studying the origins of the Skjǫldung cycle so much as its later literary history, and their willingness to accept Lukman's theories with little further comment was, perhaps, quite generous. Yet for the most part—among English-speaking scholars, at least—it is simply assumed without comment that the Skjǫldung cycle stems from broadly historical events in sixth-century Scandinavia.[104] Suggestions to the contrary, however moderate, have been not so much refuted as ignored. It seems likely that many contemporary scholars of early Scandinavia—especially in the English-speaking world—are simply unaware that such ideas have been put forward.[105] Continuing concentration on literary aspects of the legends also plays a role.

4.3.1 ORAL & LITERATE INTERPLAY IN TWELFTH-CENTURY DENMARK

Lukman, as noted, did not much discuss the methods by which the material he believed to be of non-Scandinavian origin arrived in Scandinavia. This issue was tackled recently by Lars Hemmingsen, who broadly accepted Lukman's identifications but sought to analyse

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[102]Inge Skovgaard-Petersen, 'Saxo, Historian of the Patria', *Medieval Scandinavia*, 2 (1969), 54-77 (p. 55). Skovgaard-Petersen was ostensibly referencing Lukman, 'Traditions', although this work did little more than mention the fact that Denmark was often referred to as *Dacia*. Skovgaard-Petersen substantially accepted Lukman's main arguments in Inge Skovgaard-Petersen, 'Oldtid og Vikingetid', pp. 23-29, 40-42, 94-96. Aksel E. Christiansen was well-disposed towards Lukman's analysis in Aksel E. Christensen, *Vikingetidens Danmark: Paa oldhistorisk baggrund* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1969), pp. 29-30.

[103]Bjarni Guðnason went on to say that, although the ultimate provenance of the legends may have been events along the Danube in the Migration Age (he referred to Lukman, *Skjoldunge*), he believed Saxo derived much of his information about the legends from Icelandic sources; Bjarni Guðnason, 'The Icelandic Sources of Saxo Grammaticus', in *Danish Medieval History & Saxo Grammaticus: A Symposium Held in Celebration of the 500th Aniversary of the University of Copenhagen*, ed. by Niels Skyum-Nielsen, Niels Lund, and Karsten Friis-Jensen, 2 vols (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press: 1981), II: *Saxo Grammaticus: A Medieval Author between Norse and Latin Culture*, ed. by Karsten Friis-Jensen, pp. 79-93 (p. 84).

[104]See, for example, *The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki*, trans. by Jesse L. Byock, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1998), pp. i-xxxvii (p. xiii).

[105]Recently, Erich Hoffmann has mentioned Lukman's thesis in a not unfavourable light; Erich Hoffmann, 'Historische Zeugnisse zur Däneneinwanderung im 6. Jahrhundert' in *Nordwestgermanisch*, ed. by Edith Marold and Christiane Zimmermann, Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde, 13 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1995), pp. 77-94 (pp. 83-84). Lukman's ideas were also broadly accepted by Krag, pp. 232-34.

them from a folkloristic point of view. Hemmingsen's interest focused on the *Chronicon Lethrense*, the earliest identifiable Scandinavian source handling the historical-legendary material at any length—perhaps along with Sven Aggesen's *Brevis historia*, though Aggesen's work may be slightly younger.[106] Hemmingsen suggested that:

> The *Chronicon Lethrense* was made up from a large number of components: its backbone was a list of assumed Dacian/Danish kings, but there is also a story of Rodulf which ultimately stemmed from Paulus Diaconus and Procopius, some stray information of Leo and Zeno which, like the list of 'Dacian' rulers, must have been picked up in Byzantium; there is some knowledge of Russian chronicling and of English traditions of Danes, there are traces of West Nordic historical legend, and there is a lot of popular tales, motifs and riddles.[107]

Hemmingsen suggested that this list of Dacian leaders could have been acquired from Byzantine sources by Danish crusaders who were in Byzantium and Jerusalem *c.* 1190-92, or from Byzantine officials reportedly in Norway 1194-95.[108] If twelfth-century Danes interpreted such a list of Dacian leaders as a genealogical document—much as Snorri interpreted *Ynglingatal*—that would side-step the problems of explaining how figures as disparate as Fravitta, Rodulf, and Attila could have been linked. Implicit in such an analysis is an understanding of the medieval confusion between Dacia and Denmark.[109]

Hemmingsen brought modern methods of comparative folklore to bear on the *Chronicon Lethrense* (and other early Scandinavian chronicles), performing an exhaustive Proppian structural analysis of the relevant narratives. These narratives, he determined, contain information which seems related to written sources, but also betrays tell-tale evidence of oral transmission. He suggested that knowledge ultimately drawn from written sources 'most often seems to have reached Denmark only through the unreliable medium of human memory and have been made known in Denmark only by word of mouth.'[110] Hemmingsen pointed to evidence indicating that oral performances in various narrative genres were popular amongst the learned and aristocratic élites in twelfth-century Denmark—some of whom probably had a marked interest in the Danish past—and that such events provided an ideal environment for tales to move easily between written and oral traditions.[111] Thus, variants of originally written materials could have been easily produced through oral reproduction, thereby coming to incorporate traditional folktale

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[106]Hemmingsen, pp. 176-79.

[107]Hemmingsen, p. 463.

[108]Hemmingsen, pp. 393, 463-68.

[109]Hemmingsen, pp. 322-89. Hemmingsen devoted a large section of his study to this issue and joined other scholars in criticizing various points of Leake's work, but arrived at broadly similar conclusions concerning the conflation of Danes, Dacians, Getae, and Goths by early medieval authors.

[110]Hemmingsen considered it likely that the works of certain authors were available in written form: Adam of Bremen, Henry of Huntingdon, Dudo, William of Jumièges, Paulus Diaconus, Jordanes, and Procopius and Malchus; Hemmingsen, pp. 57-59. There is, however, little direct evidence for the availability of many of these texts in twelfth-century Denmark.

[111]Hemmingsen, p. 463

narratives and motifs. These oral variants could then have been themselves incorporated into new written works. Essentially, Hemmingsen concluded 'that Danish legendary history was made up in the 12th and early 13th centuries from a mixture of oral traditions and written sources in order to satisfy a demand among Danish nobles'.[112]

4.3.2 Critique of Hemmingsen's Theory

The stylistic influence of classical authors on *Gesta Danorum* has been much discussed in recent decades,[113] and to this issue Hemmingsen added cogent arguments for the informational influence of classical and early medieval authors on the Skjǫldung legends as preserved in various medieval Scandinavian sources. At the very least he provided sounder methodological underpinnings for Lukman's hypotheses than had previously existed. Hemmingsen's arguments were directed towards overturning the common perception that these sources were created simply by transcribing the oral tales of Danish peasants—a theory popularised by Romantically-influenced scholars—and his study focused on the environment which produced the earliest substantial Scandinavian texts known to deal with the Skjǫldungar. Much of the study of folklore is concerned, almost by definition, with studying processes of oral transmission for which there is little written evidence.[114] Yet there has been virtually no folkloristic investigation of Scandinavian legendary history since Axel Olrik, and scholars accustomed to textually-oriented studies may be unsatisfied with an explanation which postulates various sources, such as Dacian king-lists of Byzantine provenance, for which there is not merely a lack of physical evidence but, Hemmingsen suggested, might never have been carried to Scandinavia in written form. It seems very likely that historical legends were told orally among the twelfth-century Danish élite much as Hemmingsen described, but the possible impact of a 'residual orality'

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[112]Hemmingsen, p. 57.

[113]See for example, Karsten Friis-Jensen, *Saxo og Vergil* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 1975); Karsten Friis-Jensen, *Saxo Grammaticus as Latin Poet: Studies in the Verse Passages of the Gesta Danorum*, Analecta Romana Instituti Danici: Supplementum, 14 (Rome: Bretschneider, 1987), and individual essays in *Saxostudier: Saxo-kollokvierne ved Københavns universitet*, ed. by Ivan Boserup (Copenhagen, Museum Tusculanum, 1975) and *Danish Medieval History & Saxo Grammaticus: A Symposium Held in Celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the University of Copenhagen*, ed. by Niels Skyum-Nielsen, Niels Lund, and Karsten Friis-Jensen, 2 vols (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press: 1981), II: *Saxo Grammaticus: A Medieval Author between Norse and Latin Culture*, ed. by Karsten Friis-Jensen

[114]For the non-folklorist, Hemmingsen provided a summary of the relevant methodology in his 'Part II'; Hemmingsen, pp. 56-173. Essentially, this approach is based on techniques developed by Vladimir Propp for analysing the structure of wonder-tales. Propp's methods were adapted by Alan Dundes in order to be applied to traditional narratives in general, and thence by Donald Buchan for traditional ballads (forms similar to historical legend); Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, trans. by Laurence Scott with Svatava Pirkova-Jakobson, 2 edn, rev. by Louis A. Wagner with Alan Dundes (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1968); Alan Dundes, *The Morphology of North American Indian Folktales*, FF Communications, 195 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1964), pp. 32-76, 97-109; Donald Buchan, *The Ballad and the Folk*, 2nd edn (East Linton: Tuckwell, 1997), pp. 51-61, 87-144, 166-73.

in these early written sources, much as has been suggested for Anglo-Saxon contexts,[115] is something which should also be considered. Moreover it is clear that some twelfth-century Scandinavian authors, like Theodoricus monachus, had access to information from *Historia Langobardorum* and *Getica* and could employ this information without associating it with Scandinavian legend (though this does not guarantee that such confusions might not have been made, especially by authors with poorer access to these works).[116]

Another problem which Hemmingsen did not much discuss is the appearance of characters connected with the Skjǫldung cycle in pre-twelfth-century sources, like Viking-Age skaldic poetry or *Beowulf* and *Widsið*.[117] Nor did Hemmingsen discuss the appearance of names from the Skjǫldung cycle in pre-twelfth-century historical sources or in runic inscriptions. For example, the first dateable record of the name *Hálfdan* is as *Halptani* in the Royal Frankish Annals for the year 782.[118] The name is probably represented by the Rus name *Алданъ* in the *Russian Primary Chronicle* for the year 944.[119] A historical figure presumably stands behind the late-ninth-century *Healfdene*, described in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, even if his exploits as a Ragnarsson may be legendary.[120] Persons named *Hálfdan* are mentioned on a variety of Viking-Age and medieval runic inscriptions. Perhaps medieval authors could conflate Hunnish Huldin with Scandinavia *Hálfdanir*, but as a name *Hálfdan* was clearly well-established in Scandinavia before the twelfth century.[121] It seems likely to have originated as a name for some 'half-Danish' person or group. Lukman counted the Anglo-Saxon materials among the sources of the *Chronicon Lethrense*, though he merely suggested that few scholars have realised the chronicle's 'vigtigste Forudsætninger er dels Ælnod [an English priest at Odense *c.* 1100], dels "Beowulf", dels Kongeopregningen i Háttalykills Vers 14-18 og 20-21'.[122]

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[115]It has been suggested that Anglo-Saxon scribes before the late tenth century were still very familiar with the processes of oral composition and could have used such techniques to produce variations when copying written texts; Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[116]Theodoricus monachus, *Theodrici Monachi historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium*, in *Monumenta Historica Norvegiæ: Latinske kildeskrifter til Norges historie i middelalderen*, ed. by Gustav Storm, (Kristiania: Brøgger, 1880; repr. Oslo: Aas & Wahl, 1973), pp. 1-68 (pp. 31-34); Theodoricus monachus, *The Ancient History of the Norwegian Kings*, trans. and annotated by David and Ian McDougall, introduction by Peter Foote, Viking Society for Northern Research: Text Series, 11 (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1998), pp. 23-25, 81-82 n. 153-64.

[117]As is the case with Fróði; see §3.2.3 and §4.2.2.

[118]*(R)RFA*, pp. 62-65 (*sa* 782).

[119]*Повесть*, pp. 23, 160.

[120]ASC-Thorpe, pp. 136-47; ASC-Plummer, I, 70-75 .

[121]Jakob Benediktsson noted the significance of names from the Skjǫldung cycle appearing amongst the Oddaverjar, i.e. the thirteenth-century Hálfdan Sæmundarson; Jakob Benediktsson, 'Traditions', pp. 64-65; Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, 'Nafngiftir Oddaverjar' in *Bidrag till nordisk filologi tillägnade Emil Olson den 9 juni 1936* (Lund: Gleerup, 1936), pp. 190-96. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson thought the declining fortunes of the Oddverjar in the later twelfth and the thirteenth centuries encouraged in them a Romantic predilection for names drawn from the legendary past; Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Sagnaritun*, p. 43-45.

[122]N. Lukman, 'Ælnod: Et Bindeled mellem engelsk od dansk Historieskrivning i 12. Aarhundrede', *Dansk Historisk Tidsskrift*, 11.2 (1947-49), 493-505 (pp. 504-05). Lukman seems to have been using the term '*Beowulf*' as a cipher for 'English traditions of the Scyldingas and Scylfingas'. There seems little reason to believe that the poem we know as *Beowulf* was widely known, although some of the material contained in it may have been.

Hemmingsen concluded that English influences came from a mix of oral and literary traditions brought to Denmark by English clerics in the twelfth century. Indeed, the first work of history concerning Denmark to be written in Denmark was the *Passio Sancti Kanuti regis et martiris*, *c.* 1095, concerning Knútr inn helgi. This work was followed *c.* 1122 by Ælnoth's *Gesta Swenomagni regis et filiorum eius et passio gloriosissimi Canuti regis et martyris* which seems to have been intended as a continuation of the *Encomium Emmae reginae*.[123] Nevertheless, Hemmingsen concluded that the *Chronicon Lethrense* betrayed scant influence from English traditions specifically concerned with the Scyldingas and pointed to differences between the orders of rulers described in *Beowulf* and the *Chronicon Lethrense* as indicating that the chronicle must have had a different source. Hemmingsen was, however, impressed that although the *Chronicon Lethrense* and *Beowulf* place Ingyald/Ingeld at different points chronologically, both identify his father as Froda/Frothi; this father-son connection, he conceded, may have come to Denmark from England.[124]

Such an analysis begs an important question, however: whence come the English traditions of the *Scyldingas* and *Scylfingas*? According to Hemmingsen, 'except for Scyld and Beow *Beowulf*'s Danish kings were modelled on some of the Dacian rulers'.[125] Yet even if the Anglo-Saxon traditions were wholly of non-Scandinavian origin, such traditions can hardly have been unknown to Scandinavians if they had any currency in Viking-Age England. Presumably, Hemmingsen saw *Beowulf*'s Scyldingas, Scylfingas, and Heaðobeardan as the result of a process in Viking-Age England analogous to that which he argued produced the *Chronicon Lethrense* in twelfth-century Denmark. Moreover, the Icelandic **Skjǫldunga saga* might well have been independent of the Danish sources—it was written around the same period, or earlier if Bjarni Guðnason were right in dating it to *c.* 1180—especially if it was built on a tally of Skjǫldung rulers drawn up by Sæmundr Sigfússon in the early twelfth century.

On these grounds alone, it is difficult to accept the Scylding-Skjǫldung cycle as entirely a learned, post-Viking Danish creation—a more complex reassessment may be called for. Of course, any reassessment of the Scylding-Skjǫldung cycle's origins is unnecessary if one believes—as probably most scholars do—that the legends of the Skjǫldungar recorded in Anglo-Saxon England and medieval Scandinavia are simply the reflections of historical events which took place in sixth-century Scandinavia. Yet the arguments raised against this understanding suggest that it may be unwise to accept this simple solution as the article of faith which it long has been. Reduced to their components, these arguments can seem little more than collections of coincidences, some more

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[123] *Passio Sancti Kanuti regis et martiris*, in *Vitae sanctorum Danorum*, ed. by M. Cl. Gertz, Selskabet for Udgivelse af Kilder til Dansk Historie, (Copenhagen: Gad, 1908-12), pp. 62-71, 530-58; Ailnoth, *Gesta Swenomagni regis et filiorum eius et passio gloriosissimi Canuti regis et martyris*, in *Vitae sanctorum Danorum*, ed. by M. Cl. Gertz, Selskabet for Udgivelse af Kilder til Dansk Historie (Copenhagen: Gad, 1908-12), pp. 77-136; *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, ed. and trans. by Alistair Campbell, introduced by Simon Keynes, 2nd edn, Camden Classic Reprints, 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Hemmingsen, pp. 174-76. Hemmingsen discusses English influences generally throughout his 'Part III', pp. 174-318.

[124] Hemmingsen, pp. 392-93, 455-59

[125] Hemmingsen, p. 392.

remarkable than others. The sheer number of these coincidences, however, suggest that where there is smoke, it may be worth considering whether it has been produced by at least a small fire.