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FORMATION AND RESOLUTION OF IDEOLOGICAL CONTRAST IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF SCANDINAVIA

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This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration.

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SUMMARY

Some recent studies concerning early medieval Europe have suggested that Scandinavia and Francia represented two ideological poles with which other populations within the Germanic world might have intended to align themselves. While such a view sometimes may be useful, it may also over-simplify a more complex situation. Scandinavians must have recognised cultural distinctions between themselves and Christian Europeans, but may not have viewed these distinctions necessarily as emblems of opposition unless faced by a direct political or military threat. Indeed, ideological contrasts concerning the way society was structured and power was wielded may have cut across apparent ethnic boundaries.

Roman influences on early Germanic society may have assisted in the creation of a 'Germanic' identity. Roman pressure also may have affected the development of Germanic governmental structures, encouraging king-centred governmental ideologies that contrasted with possibly older, assembly-centred systems. Scandinavia, never threatened by Roman domination, may have retained assembly-centred structures longer than other Germanic societies. Southern Scandinavia's 'central places' of the Early Germanic Iron Age, such as Gudme, may have had functions comparable with those of the later Old Saxon Assembly and Icelandic Alþingi. Such sites may have provided a focus for an emergent Scandinavian identity. This assembly-centred system may have been disrupted as chieftains struggled to attain the kind of power enjoyed by their counterparts in king-centred societies (much as happened in medieval Iceland), perhaps explaining the poverty of archaeological finds in the region from the Late Germanic Iron Age.

The growing Frankish threat to Scandinavia in the eighth century may have both spurred further consolidation of power in the hands of the élite and, initially, provoked an ideological reaction against Christian Europe. Yet while wary of domination by Christian European kingdoms, the Viking-Age Scandinavian élite may have envied their powerful model of lordship and had an interest in accessing elements of their culture. Such a situation may be reflected in historical legends, particularly the Scylding-Skjǫldung cycle, which perhaps developed during the Viking Age. These legends might represent not source material for historical glimpses of early northern Europe (as is often assumed) but rather Scandinavian attempts at self-definition in relation to the burgeoning and powerful cultures of Christian Europe. Scandinavia's eventual adoption of Christianity and Christian lordship in the course of the Viking Age largely resolved the ideological contrasts that had existed both within Scandinavian society and between Scandinavia and Christian Europe.

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS WORK

Aarne-Thompson	Stith Thompson with Anti Aarne, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books, and Local Legends*, 2nd edn, 6 vols (Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1955-58).
After Empire	*After Empire: Towards an Ethnology of Europe's Barbarians*, ed. by G. Ausenda (San Marino: Boydell, 1995).
AJ	Arngrímur Jónsson, *Rerum Danicarum Fragmenta*, in *Arngrimi Jonae opera latine conscripta*, ed. by Jakob Benediktsson, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana, 9-12, 4 vols (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1950-57): I (1950), 331-456; Arngrímur Jónsson, *Ad catalogum RR. Sveciæ, a quo Danic. Historiæ Norvegicæ compendium incipit, annotanda*, in *Arngrimi Jonae opera latine conscripta*, ed. by Jakob Benediktsson, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana, 9-12, 4 vols (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1950-57): I (1950), 457-74.
ANEW	Jan de Vries, *Altnordisches etymolgisches Wörterbuch*, 2nd edn (Leiden: Brill, 1962).
Annales	P. Cornelius Tacitus, *P. Cornelii Taciti libri qui supersunt*, ed. by Henricus Heubner, Alf Önnerfors, and Josephus Delz, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, 2 vols (Leipzig: Teubner, 1978-83), I: *Annales: Ab excessu divi Avgusti*, ed. by Henricus Heubner (1983).
AoGaL	*The Archaeology of Gudme and Lundeborg: Papers Presented at a Conference at Svendborg, October 1991*, ed. by P.O. Nielsen. K. Randsborg, and H. Thrane, Arkæologiske Studier, 10 (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, Universitetsforlaget i København, 1994).
AoSH	*The Age of Sutton Hoo: The Seventh Century in North-western Europe*, ed. by M.O.H. Carver (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992).
AoMS	*Aspects of Maritime Scandinavia AD 200-1200: Proceedings of the Nordic Seminar on Maritime Aspects of Archaeology, Roskilde, 13th-15th March, 1989*, ed. by Ole Crumlin-Pedersen (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, Roskilde, Denmark, 1991).
ASC-Plummer	*Two of the Saxon Chronicles: Parallel (787-1001 A.D.) with Supplementary Extracts from the Others*, ed. by Charles Plummer after John Earle, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1927).
ASC-Thorpe	*The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle According to the Several Original Authorities*, ed. and trans. by Benjamin Thorpe, Rerum Britannicarum medii ævi scriptores; or, Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland During the Middle Ages, 23, 2 vols (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1861).
Astronomer	*Vita Hlodowici Imperatoris*, in *Scriptores rerum Sangallensium: Annales, chronica et historiae aevi Carolini*, ed. by Georgicus Heinricus Pertz, Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores (in folio), 2 (Hannover: Hahn, 1829), pp. 604-48.
Bellum Gallicum	C. Julius Caesar, *C. Iulii Caesaris commentari rerum gestarum*, ed. by Wolfgang Hering and Alfredus Klotz, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (Leipzig: Teubner, 1964-), I: *Bellum Gallicum*, ed. by Wolfgang Hering, (1987).
BAR	British Archaeological Reports
BARIS471	*Barbarians and Romans in North-West Europe: From the Later Republic to Late Antiquity*, ed. by John C. Barrett, Andrew P. Fitzpatrick, and Lesley Macinnes, British Archaeological Reports: International Series, 471 (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1989).
BAR-IS	British Archaeological Reports: International Series
Beowulf	*Beowulf*, in *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. and commentary by Fr. Klaeber, 3rd edn (Boston: Heath, 1950), pp. 1-120.
Bib. Teub.	Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana
Bjarkarímur	*Bjarkarímur*, in *Hrólfs saga Kraka og Bjarkarímur*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson, Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur, 32 (Copenhagen: Møller, 1904), pp. 109-163.
Brevis Historia	Sven Aggesøn, *Svenonis Aggonis filii Brevis historia regum Dacie*, 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), 95-141.

col.	column(s)
Cleasby-Vigfusson	Cleasby, Richard and Gudbrand Vigfusson supplemented by William Craigie, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon: 1957).
CoS	*The Christianization of Scandinavia: Report of a Symposium Held at Kungälv, Sweden, 4-9 August 1985*, ed. by Birgit Sawyer, Peter Sawyer, and Ian Wood (Alingsås: Viktoria, 1987).
d.	died
Davidon-Fisher	Saxo Grammaticus, *The History of the Danes: Books I-IX*, trans. by Peter Fisher, ed. and commentary by Hilda Ellis Davidson, 2 vols (Cambridge: Brewer, 1979-80).
*Do*B	*The Dating of* Beowulf, ed. by Colin Chase, Toronto Old English Series, 6 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981).
DR	*Danmarks runeindskrifter*, ed. by Lis Jacobsen and Erik Moltke with Anders Baeksted and Karl Martin Nielsen, 2 vols (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1941-42).
DsAl	Arngrímur Jónsson, *Danasaga Arngríms lærða*, in *Danakonunga sǫgur*, ed. by Bjarni Guðnason, Íslenzk fornrit, 35 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1982), pp. 3-38.
ed.	edited/editor
edn	edition
eds	editors
EGIA	Early Germanic Iron Age
ERIA	Early Roman Iron Age
Finnsburuh Fragment	*The Fight at Finnsburg*, in *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. and commentary by Fr. Klaeber, 3rd edn (Boston: Heath, 1950), pp. 245-49.
fl.	*floruit*
FStS	*Fra Stamme til Stat i Danmark*, ed. by Peder Mortensen and Birgit M. Rasmussen, Jysk Arkæologisk Selskabs Skrifter, 22, 2 vols (Århus: Aarhus Universitetsgorlag, 1988-91).
Germania-Anderson	Tacitus, Cornelius, *De origine et situ germanorum, Cornelii Taciti*, ed. by J.G.C. Anderson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1938).
Germania	*P. Cornelii Taciti libri qui supersunt*, ed. by Henricus Heubner, Alf Önnerfors, and Josephus Delz, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, 2 vols (Leipzig: Teubner, 1978-83), II.2: *De origine et situ Germanorum liber*, ed. by Alf Önnerfors (1983).
Gesta Danorum	Saxo Grammaticus, *Saxonis Gesta danorum: primum a C. Knabe & P. Herrmann recensita*, ed. by J. Olrik and H. Ræder with Franz Blatt, 2 vols (Copenhagen: Levin & Munksgaard, 1931-1957), I (1931), ed. by J. Olrik and H. Raeder.
Getica	Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, in *Iordanis Romana et Getica*, ed. by Theodorus Mommsen, Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores: Auctores antiquissimi, 5.1 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1882), pp. 53-158.
GIA	Germanic Iron Age
Hauksbók	*Hauksbók: Udgiven efter de Arnamagnaeanske håndskrifter no. 371, 544 og 675, 4°, samt forskellige papirshåndskrifter af Det Kongelige Nordiske Oldskrift-Selskab*, ed. by Eiríkur Jónsson and Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen: Thiele, 1892-96).
HE	Bede, *Baedae Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, in *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, ed. by Carolus Plummer, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1896), I, 1-360.
Heimskringla	Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, ed. by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, Íslenzk fornrit, 26-28, 3 vols (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1941-1951).
Hervarar saga	*The Saga of King Heidrek the Wise*, ed. and trans. by Christopher Tolkien, Nelson Icelandic Texts (London: Nelson, 1960).
HF	Gregory of Tours, *Gregorii Turonensis Opera*, ed. by W. Arndt, Bruno Krusch, and Wilhelmus Levison, Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum, 1, 2 vols (Hannover: Hahn 1885-1951), I, *Libri historiarum X*, ed. by Bruno Krusch and Wilhelmus Levison (1951).
HHb1	*Helgaqviða Hundingsbana in fyrri*, in *Edda: Die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern*, ed. by Gustaf Neckel, rev. by Hans Kuhn, Germanische Bibliothek: 4th series, Texte, 5th edn, 2 vols (Heidelberg, Winter, 1983), I: *Text* (1983), pp. 130-39.

HHb2	*Helgaqviða Hundingsbana ǫnnor*, in *Edda: Die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern*, ed. by Gustaf Neckel, rev. by Hans Kuhn, Germanische Bibliothek: 4th series, Texte, 5th edn, 2 vols (Heidelberg, Winter, 1983), I: *Text* (1983), pp. 150-61.
Histories	*P. Cornelii Taciti libri qui supersunt*, ed. by Henricus Heubner, Alf Önnerfors, and Josephus Delz, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, 2 vols (Leipzig: Teubner, 1978-83), II.1: *Historiarum libri*, ed. by Henricus Heubner (1978).
Historia Langobardorum	Paulus Diaconus, *Pauli Historia Langobardorum*, ed. by G. Waitz, Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi, 48 (Hannover: Hahn, 1878).
Hlǫðsqviða	*Hunnenschlachtlied oder Hlǫðsqviða*, in *Edda: Die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern*, ed. by Gustaf Neckel, rev. by Hans Kuhn, Germanische Bibliothek: Reihe 4, Texte, 5th edn, 2 vols (Heidelberg, Winter, 1983), I: *Text* (1983), pp. 302-12.
IaSiEVA	*Ireland and Scandinavia in the Early Viking Age*, ed. by Howard B. Clarke, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, and Raghnall Ó Floinn (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998).
Íslendingabók	Ari Þorgilsson, *Íslendingabók*, in *Íslendingabók, Landnámabók*, ed. by Jakob Benediktsson, Íslenzk fornrit, 1 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1968), pp. 1-28.
KLMN	*Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder*, ed. by J. Danstrup and others, 22 vols (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1956-78).
Krause-Jankuhn	Wolfgang Krause and Herbert Jankuhn, *Die Runeninschriften im älteren Futhark*, Abhandlung der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse, 65 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966).
Langfeðgatal	*Langfeðgatal*, in *Alfræði Íslenzk: Islandsk Encyklopædisk Litteratur*, ed. by K. Kålund, Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur, 37, 41 and 45, 3 vols (Copenhagen: Møller, 1908-17), III: *Landlýsningar M. Fl.* (1917), pp. 57-59.
LG	Low German
LGIA	Late Germanic Iron Age
LHF	*Liber Historiae Francorum*, in *Fredegarii et aliorum Chronica, Vitae sanctorum*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores Rerum Merowingicarum, 2 (Hannover: Hahn, 1888), pp. 215-328.
LRIA	Late Roman Iron Age
MCFS	*Maritime Celts, Frisians and Saxons*, ed. by Seán McGrail, Council for British Archaeology Research Reports, 71 (London: Council for British Archaeology, 1990).
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
AA	Auctores antiquissimi
SRG	Scriptores rerum Germanicarum
SRM	Scriptores rerum Merowingicarum
MHG	Middle High German
ModE	Modern (New) English
ModHG	Modern (New) High German
ModIce	Modern (New) Icelandic
MoK	*The Making of Kingdoms: Papers from the 47th Sachsensymposium, York, September 1996*, ed. by Tania Dickinson and David Griffiths, Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History, 10 (Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1999).
MSE	*Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by Phillip Pulsiano, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 934, Garland Encyclopedias of the Middle Ages, 1 (New York: Garland, 1993).
Möten	*Möten i gränsland: Samer och germaner i Mellanskandinavien,* ed. by Inger Zachrisson, Statens historiska museum: Monographs, 4 (Stockholm: Statens historiska museum, 1998).
n.	note(s)
Neckel-Kuhn	*Edda: Die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern*, ed. by Gustaf Neckel, rev. by Hans Kuhn, Germanische Bibliothek: Reihe 4, Texte, 5th edn, 2 vols (Heidelberg: Winter, 1983), I: *Text* (1983).
NG	North Germanic
NIDN	E.H. Lind, *Norsk-Isländska dopnamn ock fingerade namn från medeltiden*, 2 vols (Uppsala: Lindequist, 1905-14; Oslo: Dybwad, 1931).

NIYR	*Norges indskrifter med de yngre runer*, ed. by Magnus Olsen and others, Norges indskrifter indtill Reformation, 2 (Oslo: Dybwad, 1941-).
NwG	Northwest Germanic
ODa	Old Danish
ODEE	*The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, ed. by C.T. Onions with G.W.S. Friedrichsen and R.W. Burchfield, 3rd edn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969).
OE	Old English
OED	*The Oxford English Dictionary*, prepared by J. A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, 2nd edn, 20 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989).
ON	Old Norse
ONaFRaCPN	*Old Norse and Finnish Religions and Cultic Place-Names: Based on Papers Read at the Symposium on Encounters between Religions in Old Nordic Times and on Cultic Place-Names, Held at Åbo, Finland, on the 19th-21st of August 1987*, ed. by Tore Ahlbäck, Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis, 13 (Åbo: Donner Institute for Research in Religious and Cultural History, 1990).
OSax	Old Saxon
OSw	Old Swedish
p.	page
pp.	pages
PG	Primitive Germanic
pre-RIA	pre-Roman Iron Age
repr.	reprinted
rev.	revised
RIA	Roman Iron Age
Rolls Series	Rerum Britannicarum medii ævi scriptores, or Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland During the Middle Ages
(R)RFA	[= *Royal Frankish Annals* & *Revised Royal Frankish Annals*] *Annales regni Francorum inde ab a. 741 usque AD a. 829, qui dicuntur Annales Laurissenses maiores et Einhardi*, ed. Friedrich Kurze, Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi, 6 (Hannover: Hahn, 1895).[1]
RRiS	*Roman Reflections in Scandinavia*, ed. by Eva Björklund (Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1996).
Samfundsorganisation	*Samfundsorganisation og regional variation: Norden i romersk jernalder og folkevandringstid, beretning fra 1. Nordiske jernaldersymposium på Sandbjerg Slot 11-15 april 1989*, ed. by Charlotte Fabech and Jytte Ringtved, Jysk arkaeologisk selskabs skrifter, 27 (Højbjerg: Jysk Arkaeologisk Selskab; Århus: Aarhus universitetsforlag, 1991).
SiHLaCS	*Studies in Heroic Legend and in Current Speech*, ed. by Stefán Einarsson and Norman E. Eliason (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1959).
Skírnismál	*Fór Scírnis*, in *Edda: Die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern*, ed. by Gustaf Neckel, rev. by Hans Kuhn, Germanische Bibliothek: Reihe 4, Texte, 5th edn, 2 vols (Heidelberg: Winter, 1983), I: *Text* (1983), 69-77.
Skjaldedigtning	*Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson, 2 vols, (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1908-15; reprinted Rosenkilde & Bagger, 1967-73).
SnEdHafn	Snorri Sturluson, *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar: Edda Snorronis Sturlaei*, ed. by Jón Sigurðsson and Finnur Jónsson with Latin trans. by Sveinbjörn Egilsson, 3 vols (Copenhagen: Arnamagnæanske legat, 1848-87).
Snorra Edda	Snorri Sturluson, *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen, Gyldendal, 1931).
sa	*sub anno*
SR	*Sveriges runinskrifter*, ed. by Sven Söderberg and others, Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, (Stockholm: Norstedt [and others], 1900-).
sv	*sub verbi*

[1]Kurze placed the original Annales regni Francorum and their revised version (as *Annales qui dicunter Einhardi*, believing it, probably wrongly, to be Einhard's work) on facing pages of this edition. For the purposes of this study it is most convenient to refer to both simultaneously. See the introduction in Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories, trans. by Bernhard Walter Scholz with Barbara Rogers (Ann Arbor: Univeristy of Michigan Press), 1-32.

trans.	translated/translator
v.	verse(s).
vol.	volume
WG	West Germanic
Widsið	*Widsith*, in *The Exeter Book*, ed. by George Philip Krapp and Elliot van Kirk Dobbie, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 3 (London: Routledge; New York: Columbia, 1936), pp. 149-53.
Ynglingatal	Þjóðólfr ór Hvini, *Ynglingatal*, in *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson, 2 vols, (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1908-15; reprinted Rosenkilde & Bagger, 1967-73), B.1, 7-14.

NOTE ON NAMES AND TERMS

This study adheres insofar as is possible to the style guidelines laid down by the Modern Humanities Research Association.[2] These dictate that, for good or for ill, commonly-used 'English' forms of non-English proper names should generally be used in place of their native forms, unless such 'English' forms have become quaint or archaic. It is not always easy to tell when this latter has happened, and so in questionable cases the usage found in contemporary English-language scholarship is adopted; i.e. 'Jutland' is used instead of Modern Danish *Jylland*, but 'Fyn', and 'Sjælland' are used as in Modern Danish (in preference to such older forms as 'Funen' and 'Zealand').

The irregular nature of pre-modern spelling and nomenclature creates considerable difficulties in a study intended for an audience accustomed to standardisation. For the most part, names and terms are reproduced as they appear in the editions of texts which this study uses. In general, that means medieval Scandinavian names and terms appear in a 'normalised Old Icelandic', in so far as such a creation is itself standardised, but where appropriate East Scandinavian names and terms are given in Old Swedish or Old Danish forms. The names of legendary figures, which often appear in different forms in different sources, are commonly spelled as most appropriate to the particular source being discussed (thus use of *Fróði* when discussing *Ynglingasaga*, *Frotho* when discussing *Gesta Danorum*, etc.). Vowel length is generally not marked in names and terms from Germanic languages other than Old Icelandic unless such markings convey relevant linguistic information in a given instance or a substantial quotation from an edition employing such markings is made. All plural non-English terms are given in the appropriate nominative plural form of the source language.

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[2] *MHRA Style Book: Notes for Authors, Editors, and Writers of Theses*, 5th edn (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1996).

INTRODUCTION

In some recent studies concerning early medieval Europe it has been suggested that Scandinavia and Francia represented two ideological poles with which other populations within the Germanic world might look to align themselves.[1] This study, however, seeks to explore some aspects of this ideological contrast's development and its resolution in the course of the Viking Age after which Scandinavia had become effectively part of Christian European culture.

Such issues recall nineteenth-century National-Romanticist interpretations of the 'Germanic' and the 'Roman', the heathen and the Christian, as diametrically opposed concepts.[2] Germanic tribes were understood as actual 'communities of blood'. Some of the more extreme outgrowths of such attitudes found unpleasant politicisation in early-twentieth-century National Socialist movements, and their legacy has directed study away from such Romano-Germanic contrasts. Largely in reaction to Romanticist attitudes, Reinhardt Wenskus developed the influential 'ethnogenesis theory' which argues that individual barbarian tribes, whose members came from diverse backgrounds, were welded into politically and culturally cohesive units through allegiance to a group *Traditionskern* which resided in, and could be manipulated by, a king or an aristocratic clan.[3] Scholars such as Herwig Wolfram and Walter Pohl continue to develop this theory, though it has been criticised for perhaps itself incorporating Romantically-informed assumptions.[4] Recent decades have seen greatly increased interest in ethnicity and identity, though research on the subject seems to have revealed primarily how complex and poorly understood these phenomena remain. Ethnicity may be 'grounded in the shared subliminal dispositions of social agents which shape, and are shaped by, objective

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[1]Lotte Hedeager, 'Kingdoms, Ethnicity and Material Culture', trans. by John Hines, in *AoSH*, pp. 279-300 (p. 288).

[2]See, for example, Charles Kingsley, *The Roman and the Teuton: A Series of Lectures Delivered before the University of Cambridge*, new edn with preface by F. Max Müller (London: MacMillan, 1875). For a discussion of such nineteenth-century attitudes, see generally E.G. Stanley, *The Search for Anglo-Saxon Paganism* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1975).

[3]See the essay collections *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300-800*, ed. by Walter Pohl with Helmut Reimitz, The Transformation of the Roman World, 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1998); *Kingdoms of the Empire: The Integraton of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Walter Pohl, The Transformation of the Roman World, 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1997). See further Herwig Wolfram, *The Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, trans. by Thomas Dunlap (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) [a translation of Herwig Wolfram, *Das Reich und die Germanen: Zwischen Antike und Mittelalter*, Das Reich und die Deutschen (Berlin: Siedler, 1990)]; Walter Pohl, 'Tradition, Ethnogenese und literarische Gestaltung: eine Zwischenbilanz', in *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung: angewandte Methoden der Frühmittelalterforschung*, ed. by Karl Brunner and Brigitte Merta, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, 31 (Vienna: Oldenbourg, 1994), pp. 9-26; Herwig Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, trans. by Thomas J. Dunlap (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) [a revised translation of Herwig Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten: von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts, Entwurf einer historischen Ethnographie* (Munich: Beck, 1979)]; Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen Gentes* (Cologne: Bohlau, 1961).

[4]Patrick Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy: 489-554*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought: Fourth Series, 33 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 13-42.

commonalties of practice' which 'provide the basis for the recognition of commonalties of sentiment and interest, and the perception and communication of cultural affinities and differences'.[5] This definition could, but might not, include conceptions of shared ancestry (real or imagined),[6] though a group's belief in shared ancestry remains a defining ethnic factor for many scholars. Since it is seldom clear that groups labelled 'Germanic' necessarily had or believed in a shared ancestry, Patrick Amory has argued that such labels may not be useful.[7] It is true that the meanings attached to these labels shifted over time, and we must be cautious lest we apply a specific meaning more generically than is justified.[8]

Yet it is also clear that a contrast between 'Germanic' and 'Roman' identification was important from very early times, even if these labels' creations may have been partially artificial and their meanings subject to change and reinterpretation (see §1.1). An illuminating example is provided in the report of Liudprand, bishop of Cremona, who in 968 visited Constantinople in an attempt to arrange a diplomatic marriage between the Holy Roman Emperor Otto II and Theophano, daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus II Phocas's wife (by her marriage to an earlier emperor, Romanus II). The negotiations did not go well. At one point, Nicephorus disparages the martial skills of Liudprand's people and leaders, then adding, 'Vos non Romani, sed Langobardi estis!'. This provokes an inflammatory response from Liudprand which means neither more nor less than, 'Come and say that on the battlefield'. Liudprand also offers his opinions on 'Romans':

> Romulum fratricidam, ex quo et Romani dicti sunt, porniogenitum, hoc est ex adulterio natum, choronographia innotuit; asylumque sibi fecisse, in quo alieni aeris debitores, fugitivos servos, homicidas, ac pro reatibus suis morte dignos suscepit, multitudinemque quandam talium sibi ascivit, quos Romanos appellavit; ex qua nobilitate propagati sunt ipsi, quos vos kosmocratores, id est imperatores, appellatis; quos nos, Langobardi scilicet, Saxones, Franci, Lotharingi, Bagoarii, Suevi, Burgundiones, tanto dedignamur, ut inimicos nostros commoti nil aliud contumeliarum, nisi: Romane! dicamus hoc solo, id est Romanorum nomine quicquid ignobilitatis, quicquid timiditatis, quicquid avaritiae, quicquid luxuriae, quicquid mendacii, immo quicquid luxuriae, quicquid medacii, immo quicquid vitiorum est, comprehendentes.[9]

This outburst reveals two important things about Liudprand's ideology. First, Liudprand clearly valued his identity as a participant in what he considered Roman culture, or being

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[5]Siân Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity: Constructing Identities in the Past and Present* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 128.

[6]Jones, p. xiii.

[7]Amory, pp. 326-331. Similar problems currently beset Celticists, with debate over whether it is meaningful to discuss 'the Celts' or characterise things as 'Celtic'; see discussion in Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Celtomania and Celtoscepticism' in *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 36 (1998), 1-36.

[8]On the concept of 'Romanization', see Jones, pp. 29-39, 129-135.

[9]Liudprand, *Liudprandi relatio de legatione Constantinopolitana*, in *Annales, chronica et historiae aevi Saxonici*, ed. by Georgicus Heinricus Pertz, MGH: Scriptores (in folio), 3 (Hannover, Hahn: 1839), pp. 347-63 (pp. 439-50).

dismissed as 'not a Roman, but a Lombard' would not have so stung him. Second, Liudprand also identified himself with peoples whom we would label 'Germanic', and he had a ready store of invective which his 'Germanic' persona could apply to things 'Roman'. This example encapsulates the complexity of the Romano-Germanic relationship, and not just in Liudprand's time and place. Similar contrasts over ideological affiliation with the 'Roman' and 'non-Roman' spheres seem to have existed for Germanic peoples from the earliest historical times.[10] Such issues of identity—of ethnic, cultural, and ideological affiliation—are increasingly relevant as our own modern societies enter a new century. Many groups find considerable difficulties in both coexisting with their neighbours and expressing their own separate identity.

Work with the 'ethnogenesis theory' has concentrated on Continental European groups, such as the Goths, for whom there is a relative wealth of documentary evidence. Pre-Viking Scandinavia is not so illuminated, and recent archaeological research has been directed more towards investigating processes of state-formation (§2 & §3).[11] Both fields of research, however, have been influenced in recent decades by the work of the Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth, who theorised that an ethnic identity is essentially maintained in opposition to other ethnic identities,[12] and it has been further suggested that expressions of identity are most prominent when different groups are interacting, either competitively or co-operatively.[13] However, in connection with recent work on early Sámi identity, Inger Zachrisson has argued that such an approach may not always be suitable, suggesting discussion of 'cultural identity' or 'cultural affiliation' instead of 'ethnicity', and moreover supported Knut Odner's observations that cultural affiliation could be governed by economic factors as much as anything.[14]

Identity is also recognised as situational. Writing of Germanic tribes in eighth-century Provence, Patrick Geary noted:

> Within the elite a person or faction could be Burgundian by birth, Roman by language, and Frankish by dress. Likewise, someone born of a father from Francia and a mother from Alamannia could properly be termed a Frank or an Alamannian by different authors considering him from

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[10]We must recognize that contrasts between 'Roman' and 'Germanic' are visible largely through Roman media. Similar contrasts between 'Germanic' and other cultures may well have existed before the Romans became the Germanic peoples' most prominent neighbours.

[11]Which is not to say that research on Scandinavian state-formation is wholly divorced from research on ethnogenesis; see Ulf Näsman, 'The Ethnogenesis of the Danes and the Making of a Danish Kingdom', in *MoK*, pp. 1-10.

[12]See Barth's introduction in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, ed. by Fredrik Barth (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969).

[13]Ian Hodder, *Symbols in Action: Ethnoarchaeological Studies of Material Culture*, New Studies in Archaeology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 185.

[14]Inger Zachrisson, 'Samer i syd—så började det', in *Möten*, pp. 9-20 (pp. 11-15); Knut Odner, *Finner og terfinner; etniske prosesser i det nordlige Fenno-Skandinavia*, Oslo Occasional Papers in Social Anthropology, 9 (Oslo: Department of Social Anthropology, 1983).

> different perspectives. His own perception of himself might change during his lifetime, depending on how he viewed his relationship to the Frankish king and his local faction.[15]

Such examples from Central Europe were recorded by classical authors, but similar situations probably existed in Scandinavia. Evidence for an exception to this ethnic fluidity comes from the *Lex ribuaria*, which legislates that *gens* should be determined by an individual's birthplace.[16] The very need for such legislation, however, indicates that ethnic status was easily flexible. As a seventh-century Frankish law code, the *Lex ribuaria* shows considerable Roman influence, suggesting it may have been meant to bring Roman-style order to a less well-defined Germanic milieu.

There is not space in this study to focus specifically on ethnogenesis (or ethnogeneses) in Scandinavia, but such issues are closely related to the development—and eventual resolution—of ideological contrasts between Scandinavia and the Christian European mainstream. Properly, 'ideology' should refer to an articulated thought-system of ideals concerning social and political life, but we are denied access to whatever explicit ideologies developed in pre-literate Scandinavia. However, though caution is required and conclusions cannot be treated as certainties, the reflections of prehistoric Scandinavian ideologies may be detectable through analysis of archaeological finds and such written records as exist, from both contemporary non-Scandinavians and later medieval Scandinavian authors.

This study seeks to investigate prominent trends and forces in Iron-Age and Viking-Age Scandinavian cultural development, particularly with regard to influences from the Roman (and, later, Roman Christian) cultural world, as well as the accommodations of and reactions to those influences. Central to such topics is discussion of pre-Viking Scandinavian social and political developments, about which various theories have been developed through archaeological analysis, and this study considers evidence from a range of sources to offer some possible reinterpretations of such theories. Archaeologists and historians often disagree over whether the Viking Age represents more the endpoint of Iron-Age or the beginning of medieval processes—both are probably correct. Archaeologists point to the Scandinavian élite's efforts to monopolise the maintenance and propagation of ideology in order to legitimise its position during the Iron Age, a process continued in and fulfilled by the adoption of Christianity and Christian lordship in the course of the Viking Age. This process resulted in a considerable ideological shift, with attendant social and cultural changes, which effectively brought Scandinavia into the European mainstream. This is not to say that a specifically Scandinavian identity was lost—quite the opposite. The Viking-Age

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[15]Patrick J. Geary, *Aristocracy in Provence: The Rhône Basin at the Dawn of the Carolingian Age* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1985), p. 111.

[16]*Lex Ribuaria*, ed. by Franz Beyerle and Rudolf Buchner, MGH: Leges nationum Germanicarum, 3.2 (Hannover: Hahn, 1954), p. 87 (Section 35[31]).

Scandinavian élite may have had interests both in accessing the European mainstream and in avoiding domination by established European powers. Their ideologies may be reflected in historical legends—particularly the Scylding-Skjǫldung cycle—which may have developed during the Viking Age. Romantically-informed, historicist scholars treated this legendary material essentially as a historical source for the pre-Viking period, a role to which it may have been poorly suited. Their research, however, has had far-reaching effects on our understanding of the development of Scandinavian culture and ideology—not just for the pre-Viking period, but also for the Viking Age and following centuries. The concluding chapters of this study consider some of the Scylding-Skjǫldung cycle's historiography, particularly regarding recent less well-known research. Certain issues pertaining to the legends' origins and development are considered, and some departure points are suggested for a reassessment of the Scylding-Skjǫldung cycle and its role in Viking-Age Scandinavian ideology.

TERMINOLOGY: NAMES

The propensity of terms and labels to change their meanings over time has been noted. A study such as this depends on deploying convenient and recognisable labels, however, and a brief discussion of their use here is warranted.

Since the nineteenth century, ethnic labelling has been strongly influenced by philological understandings. The modern term 'Germanic' really refers to speakers of a Germanic language, and it is assumed that members of such a linguistic group have, to a greater or lesser extent, a common cultural heritage. Such assumptions have been challenged, and debate on this issue will doubtless continue, but for simplicity's sake they are generally accepted here. It must be emphasised, however, that the modern philological understanding of 'Germanic' is not necessarily congruent with that of ancient authors, such as Tacitus, who included peoples of diverse linguistic groups under this heading; Tacitus' *Germani* were effectively peoples who lived in the region Romans identified as *Germania*.[17] Tacitus names the Inguaeones, Herminones, and Istuaeones as the most significant tribal leagues, deriving their names from sons of Mannus, himself a son of a primary god, Tuisto. Tacitus remarks:

> Quidam, ut in licentia vetustatis, pluris deo ortos plurisque gentis appellationes, Marsos Gambrivios Suebos Vandilios, affirmant, eaque vera et antiqua nomina. ceterum Germaniae vocabulum recens et nuper additum.[18]

The Germanic peoples had no one name for themselves, and the Roman term *Germani* is itself of uncertain origin.[19]

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[17] See further Wolfram, Romans, pp. 10-13.

[18] *Germania*, pp. 2-3 (Chapter 2).

Medieval Scandinavians, however, did recognise themselves as part of a common linguistic community: speakers of the *dǫnsk tunga*, so-called whether its speakers were Danes or not.[20] There are many unresolved questions about the development of the Germanic languages in north-western Europe, but for convenience this study distinguishes between NG and WG after the linguistic changes of the late sixth and early seventh centuries AD. Before that period, this study refers generally to a NwG dialect continuum, though without wishing to imply notions of a Germanic 'koine' (either before or after the NG-WG split) and recognises that considerable variation may have occurred within the NwG dialects.[21]

As a geographic term, 'Scandinavia' is first found in the writings of Pliny the Elder as *Scatinavia*.[22] This term seems to be derived from a Germanic root **Skaðinaujā* which appears later in OE *Scedenig* and ON *Skáney*, both of which seem to refer to the region of modern Sweden now known as Skåne.[23] In this study, 'Scandinavia' is used generally to refer to a region corresponding roughly to that occupied by modern Sweden, Denmark (and the Faeroes), Norway, and Iceland. For simplicity, 'Scandinavians' generally refers to people affiliated with the Germanic-speaking continuum in Scandinavia, as opposed to Finno-Ugric-speaking Scandinavians, while it is recognised that the cultural interface between these two groups itself plays an important role in their mutual development. An effort has been made to avoid overt reference to modern nationalities (i.e. 'southern Scandinavia' is generally employed instead of 'Denmark'), but since some of the labels have been in use for thousands of years—not always labelling the same thing—and moreover have come to distinguish geographical regions, it is awkward to dispense with them completely. Generally, use of a term like 'Norway' refers to the geographical region administered by the modern nation-state, and similar use is implied with terms like 'Danish islands' for Sjælland, Fyn, Lolland, etc. Ethnic inferences should not necessarily be drawn from such labels.

TERMINOLOGY: DATES

In any study covering a broad span of time, it is convenient—even necessary—to divide the timeline up into different periods, although such divisions must be inherently arbitrary. Needless to say, when differing criteria—archaeological and historical, for

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[19]Malcolm Todd, *The Early Germans*, The Peoples of Europe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 9. See further §1.1.

[20]The origins of the term *dǫnsk tunga* have never been satisfactorily explained, but space restrictions prevent exploration of the topic in this study.

[21]There is, unfortunately, no space in this study to discuss philological issues relating to developments in early Scandinavian identity and ideology.

[22]C. Plinius Secundus, *C. Plini Secvndi Natvralis historiae libri XXXVII*, ed. by Ludovicus Janus and Carolus Mayhoff, Bib. Teub., 6 vols (Leipzig: Teuber, 1967-), I, ed. by Carolus Mayhoff (1967), 345 (Book 4, Chapter 96).

[23]See further J. Svennung, *Scandinavia und Scandia: lateinisch-nordische Namenstudien*, Skrifter utgivna av K. Humanistiska vetenskapssamfundet i Uppsala, 44:1 (Uppsala, Almqvist & Wiksell, 1963).

example—are used to identify different periods in time, the results are not always complementary. As the space of time covered in this study of early Scandinavia is largely prehistoric, archaeological criteria have dominated the division of its timeline into relatively easily managed periods. However, scholars from different Scandinavian countries give different labels to what are broadly the same divisions of time. This can lead to some confusion, often prompting pan-Scandinavian publications to print reference charts showing the various names for the pre-Viking periods in different parts of Scandinavia;[24] the situation can be further complicated when German terminology is added to the equation. For the sake of clarity and simplicity, this study uses adaptations of Danish archaeological terminology commonly found in a variety of recent English-language publications on pre-Viking Scandinavia.

In Scandinavia, the archaeological record of roughly the first four centuries AD is dominated by Roman influences, and consequently the period is known as the Roman Iron Age (RIA),[25] split into an Early Roman Iron Age (ERIA) and a Late Roman Iron Age (LRIA).[26] The period immediately following Scandinavia's Roman Iron Age corresponds roughly to the 'Migration Age' (or 'Migration Period') which in this study is sometimes used with reference to Germanic Europe as a whole in the period *c*. AD 375-526.[27] The familiarity of this term makes it useful,[28] though it should not be allowed to imply that migrations could not or did not take place outside this period. In Scandinavia, the period following the 'Migration Age', and followed by Scandinavia's Viking Age, is distinguished from the previous period by various changes in metalwork, pottery, depositional practice, and settlement patterns. It is referred to by various terms, i.e. 'Merovingian Period' in Norway (not equivalent to the German 'Merovingian Period'), and 'Vendel Period' in Sweden. The distinctions implied in these names may be useful,[29] but they may be more appropriate for an archaeologist working within a more closely defined regional chronology. In Scandinavia, the period between the end of the Roman

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[24]*Aspects of Maritime Scandinavia ad 200-1200: Proceedings of the Nordic Seminar on Maritime Aspects of Archaeology, Roskilde, 13th-15th March, 1989*, ed. by Ole Crumlin-Pedersen (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, Roskilde, Denmark, 1991), p. 285.

[25]John Hines, *The Scandinavian Character of Anglian England in the Pre-Viking Period*, BAR, 124 (Oxford: BAR, 1984), p. 17; Ulla Lund Hansen, 'Hovedproblemer i romersk og germansk jernalders kronologi i Skandinavia og på Kontinent', in *FStS*, I, 21-35.

[26]Lotte Hedeager, *Iron Age Societies: From Tribe to State in Northern Europe, 500 BC to 700 AD*, trans. by John Hines (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), pp. 6-14.

[27]Roughly, from the approximate date of Ermanaric's death to the death of Theodoric the Great.

[28]Hines, *Scandinavian Character*, p. 17.

[29]Hines, *Scandinavian Character*, p. 17-18; Birgit Arrhenius, 'The chronology of the Vendel graves', in *Vendel Period Studies: Transactions of the Boat-grave symposium in Stockholm, Febuary 2-3, 1981*, ed. by J.P. Lamm and H.-Å. Nordström, The Museum of National Antiquities, Stockholm: Studies, 2 (Stockholm: Statens Historiska Museum, 1983), pp. 39-70 (p. 64); Ulla Lund Hansen, 'Hovedproblemer', pp. 21-35; Karen Høilund Nielsen, 'Zur Chronologie der jüngeren germanischen Eisenzeit auf Bornholm', *Acta Archaeologica*, 57 (1987), 47-86; Karen Høilund Nielsen, 'Centrum og periferi i 6.-8.årh: Territorielle studier af dyrstil og kvindesmykker i yngre germansk jernalder i Syd- og Østskandinavien', in *FStS*, II, pp. 127-54.

Iron Age and the beginning of the Viking Age is distinguished by native Germanic art and artefact types, providing a general label Germanic Iron Age (GIA), subdivided into an Early Germanic Iron Age and a Late Germanic Iron Age. The Germanic Iron Age in Scandinavia is followed by the Viking Age, a period better illuminated by historical documents than its predecessors. The beginning of the Viking Age has traditionally been dated to the earliest recorded Scandinavian piratical raids in AD 789 and 793. In recent years, however, archaeologists have argued that on stylistic grounds, the artefact types of the Viking Age may date at least as early as AD 750.[30] Considerable debate exists over this issue, but the view that the Viking Age's onset may be dated to the period *c*. AD 750-800 is broadly accepted here, not least to provide better harmony with the earlier, archaeologically-defined periods to which this study also refers.

A summary of this study's dating terminology is summarised below.[31] It is of paramount important to recall that the beginnings and ends of each of these periods should not be considered points, but transitional periods.

Bronze Age		*c*. 1800/1500 BC to *c*. 500 BC
Pre-Roman Iron Age		*c*. 500 BC to *c*. 0/50 BC
Roman Iron Age	Early Roman Iron Age	*c*. 0/50 BC to *c*. AD 180/200
	Late Roman Iron Age	*c*. AD 180/200 to *c*. AD 350/400
Germanic Iron Age	Early Germanic Iron Age	*c*. AD 350/400 to *c*. AD 520/550
	Late Germanic Iron Age	*c*. AD 520/550 to *c*. AD 700/750
Viking Age		*c*. AD 750/800 to *c*. AD 1050/1100

[30]Bjørn Myhre, 'The Beginning of the Viking Age—Some Current Archaeological Problems', in *Viking Revaluations: Viking Society Centenary Symposium, 14-15 May 1992*, ed. by Anthony Faulkes and Richard Perkins (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, University College London, 1992), pp. 186-88, 190-92, 198-99; Ulla Lund Hansen, 'Hovedproblemer', p. 33; Karen Høilund Nielsen, 'Zur Chronologie', p. 69.

[31]Based on the chronologies in Hedeager, *Societies*, pp. 6-14. See also *Roman Reflections in Scandinavia*, ed. by Eva Björklund (Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1996), p. 69.

CHAPTER 1

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ASPECTS OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS IN GERMANIA AND SCANDINAVIA DURING THE ROMAN IRON AGE

1.1 ROME & GERMANIA

1.1.1 EARLY ROMANO-GERMANIC RELATIONS

It is unclear when a people who may be fairly labelled 'Germanic' first appeared. Dates as early as the late Neolithic or early Bronze Ages have been suggested.1 A currently popular theory identifies the earliest Germanic peoples as participants in the Jastorf superculture which emerged c. 500 BC,2 though recent linguistic research on early relations between Finno-Ugric and Germanic languages argues the existence of Bronze-Age Germanic dialects.3 Certainly, however, it may be said that 'Germanic' peoples existed by the final centuries BC, when classical authors began to record information about them.

A fuller analysis of early Germanic society and Romano-Germanic relations would far outstrip this study's limits,[4] but several important points may be touched upon. For the Germanic peoples, Rome could be both an enemy and an ideal—often both at the same time. The tensions created by such contrasts played an important role in shaping Germanic society and ideology. Conflict marked Romano-Germanic relations from the outset. Between 113 and 101 BC, the Cimbri and Teutones, tribes apparently seeking land on which to settle, proved an alarmingly serious threat to Rome.[5] It is unclear whether

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[1]Lothar Killian, *Zum Ursprung der Indogermanen: Forschungen aus Linguistik, Prähistorie und Anthropologie*, 2nd edn, Habelt Sachbuch, 3 (Bonn: Habelt, 1988); Lothar Killian, *Zum Ursprung der Germanen*, Habelt Sachbuch, 4 (Bonn: Habelt, 1988).

[2]Todd, pp. 10, 26; Mark B. Shchukin, Rome and the Barbarians in Central and Eastern Europe: 1st Century B.C.-1st Century A.D., BAR-IS, 542 (Oxford: BAR, 1989), pp. 31-37, 160-161; Barry Cunliffe, Greeks, Romans, and Barbarians: Spheres of Interaction (London: Batsford, 1988), pp. 33-35.

[3]Norbert Strade, 'An Interdisciplinary Approach to the Role of Uralic Hunters and Gatherers in the Ethnohistory of the Early Germanic Area', in *The Roots of Peoples and Languages of Northern Eurasia I*, ed. by Kyösti Julku & Kalevi Wiikpp (Turku: Societas historiae Fenno-ugricae, 1998), 168-179; Norbert Strade, 'Det sydsamiske sprog', in *Möten i gränsland: Samer och germaner i Mellanskandinavien,* ed. by Inger Zachrisson, Statens historiska museum: Monographs, 4 (Stockholm: Statens historiska museum, 1997), pp. 175-85; Jorma Koivulehto, 'Finnland: Sprachliches', in *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, ed. by Johannes Hoops, Herbert Jankuhn, and others, 2nd edn (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968-), IX, ed. by Heinrich Beck (1995), 77-89; A.D. Kylstra, 'Das älteste Germanisch im Lichte der germanischen Lehnwortforschung', *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik*, 21 (1984), 1-7.

[4]On early Germanic peoples, see Wolfram, *The Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*; Kent Anderson and Frands Herschend, *Germanerna och Rom*, Occasional Papers in Archaeology, 13 (Uppsala: Uppsala: Institutionen för arkeologi och antik historia, Uppsala universitet, 1997); Lucien Musset, *Les invasions: les vagues germaniques*, Nouvelle Clio, 3rd edn (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1994); Todd, *The Early Germans*; Heiko Steuer, *Frühgeschichtliche Sozialstrukturen in Mitteleuropa: Eine Analyse der Auswertungsmethoden des archäologischen Quellenmaterials*, Abhandlung der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-Historishe Klasse Dritte Folge, 128 (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1982); E.A. Thompson, *The Early Germans* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965); Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen Gentes* (Cologne: Bohlau, 1961).

[5]Titius Livius, *Titi Livi ab Urbe Condita Libri*, ed. by Guilelmus Weissenborn and Mauritius Mueller, Bib. Teub., 4 vols (Leipzig: Teubner, 1926-1930), IV (1930), pp. 224-26 (Books 63, 65, 67, and 68);

these tribes were Germanic, Celtic, or represented some Celto-Germanic confederation,[6] but the Romans certainly classified them with the Germanic peoples they came to know later. The Cimbric Wars had a powerful effect on the Roman psyche, and half-a-century later Julius Caesar wasted no opportunity to remind his readers about those conflicts when he justified military intervention in Gaul (in part) as a response to the threat posed by a Germanic army crossing the Rhine.[7] Caesar's works contain, in fact, the earliest surviving uses of the term *Germani*.[8] For political purposes, Caesar wished to draw a distinction between the Celts, as peoples who could be successfully Romanized, and the Germani, as hopeless barbarians who were to be excluded from the Roman world. In truth, it is difficult to distinguish archaeologically between Celtic and Germanic peoples of the Rhine valley.[9] Nevertheless, Caesar's choice of the Rhine as a frontier seems to have remained a reality in Roman thought until the advent of Augustus' expansionist policies, and the Rhine frontier would gain added significance after the eventual failure of those policies in Germania.

Germania was one of the Augustan Empire's last acquisitions—and one of its first losses. Between 15 BC and AD 4, all of Germania except the Bohemian plateau (held by the Marcomannic leader Maroboduus) was under direct Roman control.[10] That control ended five years later with a Germanic revolt, led by the Cheruscan noble Arminius, and slaughter of three Roman legions in the *saltus Teutoburgiensis*. The revolt may have been prompted at least partially by the Germanic population's anger at Romanization's rapid pace (especially in the matter of taxes).[11] Afterwards, Rome made some efforts to

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Velleius Paterculus, *Vellei Paterculi Historiarum ad M. Vinicium consulem libri duo*, ed. by W.S. Watt, Bib. Teub. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1988), pp. 20-21, (Book 2, Chapter 12); Flavius Vegetius Renatus, *P. Flavii Vegeti Renati Epitoma rei militaris*, ed. by Alf Önnerfors, Bib. Teub. (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1995), p. 143-44 (Book III, Chapter 10); Lucius Annaeus Florus, *Epitome libri II*, in *L. Annaei Flori Epitomae libri II et P. Annii Flori fragmentvm De Vergilio oratore an poeta*, ed. by Otto Rossbach, Bib. Teub. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1896), pp. 1-182 (p. 168) (Book I, Chapter 38); Shchukin, p. 35; G. Alfödy, *Noricum*, trans. by Anthony Birley (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), pp. 35-38.

[6]Gustav Neckel, Germanen und Kelten: Historisch-linguistisch-rassenkundliche Forschungen und Gedanken zur Geisteskrisis, Kultur und Sprache, 6 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1929), p. 24; Rolf Nierhaus, Das swebische Gräberfeld von Diersheim: Studien zur Geschichte der Germanen am Oberrhein vom gallischen Krieg bis zur alamannischen Landnahme, Römisch-germanische Forschungen, 28 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1966), p. 218, n. 133.

[7]*Bellum Gallicum*, pp. 13-25 (Book I, Chapters 31-54), 52-59 (Book 4, Chapters 1-19).

[8]*Bellum Gallicum*, p. 1 (Book I, Chapter 1). The term *Germani* is thought to have been first used in Posidonius' histories, which are known only through their quotation by later authors. Posidonius does not appear to have associated the Cimbri and Teutones with the Germani, though Caesar certainly did; Shchukin, p. 32.

[9]Cunliffe, p. 117.

[10]On Romano-Germanic relations in the Augustan Age, see Erich S. Gruen, 'The Expansion of the Empire under Augustus', in *The Augustan Empire; 43 b.c.-a.d. 69*, ed. by Alan K. Bowman, Edward Champlin, and Andrew Lintott, 2nd edn, The Cambridge Ancient History, 10 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 148-97 (pp. 178-88); C. Rüger, 'Germany', in *The Augustan Empire; 43 b.c.-a.d. 69*, ed. by Alan K. Bowman, Edward Champlin, and Andrew Lintott, 2nd edn, The Cambridge Ancient History, 10 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 517-34; C.M. Wells, *The German Policy of Augustus: An Examination of the Archaeological Evidence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 3-13, 159-61, 237-38.

[11]*Annales*, pp. 35-36 (Book 1 Chapter 60); Cassius Dio Cocceianus, *Dionis Cassii Cocceiani Historia romana*, ed. by Ludovicus Dindorf and Ioannes Melber, Bib. Teub. 5 vols (Leipzig: Teubner, 1890-1928), III (1928), pp. 228-33 (Book 56, Chapters 18-23); C.M. Wells, pp. 66-67, 154-59, 238-40.

reconquer Germania, but these were swiftly abandoned. By 85 AD, limited advances had secured the *limes* between the Rhine's and Danube's headwaters.[12]

1.1.2 THE EMERGENCE OF GERMANIC IDENTITY?

Roman authors do not seem to have used the term *limes* to denote a frontier boundary rather than a line of advance until the reign of Domitian (AD 81-96).[13] Like Caesar's declaration of the Rhine boundary, the late-first-century *limes* were bureaucratic creations. As noted in §1.1.1, the Rhine basin's archaeology shows no firm dividing line between the cultures on either side of the river, a situation emphasising the Rhine's role as a medium of communication and exchange. C.R. Whittaker stressed the distinction 'between an administrative border*line* and a frontier border*land*' and argued that the apparent line of division formed by the *limes* should not blind us to the existence of broad frontier zones.[14] Yet even though in practice a Romanized zone, perhaps unified in culture and economy, may have existed on either side of the *limes*, the line drawn by river and wall probably exercised a profound psychological effect. A bureaucratic state sees rivers as readily identifiable landmarks suitable for marking administrative boundaries. Roman authors, such as Tacitus, were often most comfortable identifying frontiers through geographic features, even if in reality the *limes* ran beyond them. Indeed, there were Roman outposts beyond the Rhine, but this situation only re-emphasises that the Rhine's role as a boundary was determined primarily on ideological grounds. Likewise, man-made frontier walls, while doubtless helpful for local defence, were not primarily military structures. Both rivers and walls controlled access to markets on the Roman side of the *limes*, however, and W.H. Hanson has noted that this element of control came to emphasise the *limes*' function as delineated boundaries.[15]

In many respects, the consolidation of Germanic society during the Roman period, including perhaps the Germanicization of previously non-Germanic elements in the Jastorf superculture, may be attributable to Roman pressures.[16] Tacitus explicitly identified Roman pressures as causing temporary alliances between otherwise rival Germanic groups.[17] Certainly the development of a recognisable 'Germanic society' in this period, even if only recognised as such in hindsight, would be scarcely imaginable

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[12]Cunliffe, pp. 173-174; H. Schönberger, 'The Roman Frontier in Germany: An Archaeological Survey', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 59 (1969), 144-97 (151-55).

[13]W.S. Hanson, 'The Nature and Function of Roman Frontiers', in *BARIS471*, pp. 55-63 (pp. 55, 57).

[14]C.R. Whittaker, 'Supplying the System: Frontiers and Beyond', in *BARIS471*, pp. 64-80 (pp. 65-66). In the same BAR volume, Michael Fulford made a contrasting argument: that there was little cultural homogenity between the zones on either side of the *limes*, and that the *limes* did, in fact, make an effective economic and cultural barrier; Michael Fulford, 'Roman and Barbarian: The Economy of Roman Frontier Systems' in *BARIS471*, pp. 81-96 (pp. 91-92).

[15]W.S. Hanson, 'Nature', pp. 59-60.

[16]Shchukin, p. 32.

[17]*Annales*, pp. 70-71 (Book 2, Chapter 45).

without such pressures. It is not unreasonable to compare the creation of the modern 'American Indian/Native American' common identity, which seems to depend on Euro-American imperial attitudes for both its labels and the sense that indigenous American peoples form a generic unity. The Romano-Germanic Rhine frontier would become considerably more important in political and ethnic terms in the course of the first several centuries AD,[18] but it might have had marked ideological effects much more immediately. Certainly, the Rhine would play an important role as a boundary marker for centuries after, with the territory adjacent to it forming a debatable zone. Many popular depictions of the Second World War place considerable emphasis on the Allied forces' crossing of the Rhine.[19] In the nineteenth century, Napoleon, echoing Caesar, had extended France's eastern borders to the west bank of the Rhine. Early medieval Frankish sources often use the phrase *gentes ultra Rhenum* to refer to non-Frankish Germanic peoples east of the Rhine. Within the Franks' Romanized, Christianized outlook, the word *gentes* could carry connotations of paganism and barbarism,[20] and similar feelings might have been familiar to Romans of earlier centuries.

Perhaps the best known account of the Germanic revolt and the succeeding campaigns is found in Tacitus' *Annales*, written about a century after the events. The *Annales* present such a frankly admiring picture of the Germanic resistance leader Arminius that it is little wonder nineteenth-century Romantic Nationalists idolised him. The accuracy of Tacitus' depiction may be questionable, but it is valuable in that it represents the views of a late-first-century Roman citizen. In Tacitus' account, a contrast between Romanized Germanic and non-Romanized Germanic attitudes is very clear. It is perhaps best represented by several speeches which he provided in his depiction of Arminius. In one, Arminius is alleged to have said:

> Colerat Segestes victam ripam, redderet filio sacerdotium omissum: Germanos numquam satis excusaturos, quod inter Albim et Rhenum virgas et secures et togam viderint aliis gentibus ignorantia imperi[i] Romani inexperta esse supplicia, nescia tributa: quae quoniam exuerint inritusque discesserit ille inter numina dicatus Augustus, ille delectus Tiberius, ne imperitum adulescentulum, ne seditiosum exercitum pavescerent. si patriam parentes antiqua mallent quam dominos et colonias novas, Arminium potius gloriae ac libertatis quam Segestem flagitiosae servitutis ducem sequerentur.[21]

Similar sentiments are expressed in a debate supposed to have taken place between Arminius and his 'brother Flavus':

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[18]C.M. Wells, p.30; Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans, and Barbarians*, p. 117.

[19]The Rhine had been made part of Germany's western border after the First World War—a legislation significant in itself—though Germany had reclaimed the Rhineland territory west of the river before the start of the Second World War.

[20]Timothy Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages:* c. *800-1056*, Longman History of Germany (London: Longman, 1991), p. 53.

[21]*Annales*, p. 35 (Book I, Chapter 59).

> Flavus aucta stipendia, torquem et coronam aliaque militaria dona memorat, inridente Arminio vilia servitii pretia. Exim diversi ordiuntur, hic magnitudinem Romanam, opes Caesaris et victis graves poenas, in deditionem venienti paratam clementiam ... ille fas patriae, liberatem avitam, penetralis Germaniae deos.[22]

Whether actual Germanic individuals held such proto-nationalistic viewpoints, seventy years after Julius Caesar's imposition of the Rhine frontier, is open to question. Yet it is difficult to come up with good reasons why they need not have. At the very least, Tacitus' passages encapsulate the issues with which the Germanic peoples would have to wrestle for centuries to come: whether to ally themselves with the political, economic, and prestige benefits of Rome (and, later, Roman Christianity) or to maintain an ideological allegiance to a non-Roman viewpoint with whatever attendant benefits this may have offered.

1.2 ROMAN INFLUENCE ON EARLY GERMANIC GOVERNMENT

1.2.1 GERMANIC GOVERNMENT: CONCEPTS & TERMS

Outside the realm of identity and labels, Roman influence may have been particularly significant on the development of Germanic government and the élite. Much debate over Germanic government hinges on the institution of kingship, but what this represented is seldom certain. This confusion arises partially because it is not always clear what the sources meant when they labelled different types of Germanic leaders, but also because in many cases the meanings of given terms—and Germanic governmental structures themselves—seem to have changed substantially during the Roman period.[23] Definitions may therefore be impossible, but some guidelines are suggested. The word 'king' has a specific meaning which refers to a sovereign ruler whose position is based in theory on principles of inheritance, though in practice it more generally refers to a monarchic leader of a 'whole people'. In contrast, a 'chieftain' operates on a smaller scale and is not necessarily sovereign; his power may be independent of heredity and primarily based on the ability to attract popular support.[24]

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[22] *Annales*, p. 52 (Book II, Chapters 9-10).

[23] D.H. Green, *Language and History in the Early Germanic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 102-40; Wolfram, *The Roman*, pp. 14-20; J.M Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971); D.H. Green, *The Carolingian Lord: Semantic Studies on Four Old High German Words, Balder, Frô, Truhtin, Hêrro* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1965).

[24] Anthopologists commonly define a *chiefdom society* as including such features as social stratification with an élite class, specialised means of production, a system for the redistribution of prestige goods, and a leader who probably exercises political and religious functions in concert; Timothy K. Earle, 'A Reappraisal of Redistrubution: Complex Hawaiian Chiefdoms', in *Exchange Systems in Prehistory*, ed. by Timothy K. Earle and Jonathon E. Ericson (London: Academic Press, 1977), pp. 213-29; Elman R. Service, *Origins of the State and Civilization: The Process of Cultural Evolution* (New York: Norton, 1975); Marshall D. Sahlins, *Tribesmen*, Foundations of Modern Anthropology (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968). Many early Germanic societies might fulfil such a definition whatever their leader's actual title. This chiefdom model has formed the starting point for much recent work on early Scandinavian society, but is not without its critics; Tove Hjørungdal, *Det skjulte kjønn: Patriarkal tradisjon og feministik*

1.2.2 TACITUS' DESCRIPTION OF GERMANIC GOVERNMENT

Tacitus distinguished various offices among the Germanic tribes,[25] the most generic of which seems to have been that of *princeps*. *Principes* were marked by their ability to attract and maintain a *comitatus*, and from the *principes* judges were chosen to preside at *consilium*.[26] In practice, candidates for the more distinct offices of *rex* and *dux* must have come from the *principes*. *Duces* were chosen for their military prowess, but it seems likely that a given individual could be simultaneously *dux* and *rex*.[27] *Reges* were ostensibly chosen for their noble lineage (suggesting election from established royal families) though, in accordance with Wallace-Hadrill's dictum 'war-bands are tribes in the making',[28] successful *duces* in times of strife might attempt to transform themselves into *reges*. A *rex* could not exercise absolute or arbitrary power, however, and Tacitus stressed the role of the *consilium* even in tribes with *reges*.[29] Nor were *reges* a given in Germanic society, and Tacitus made special note of tribes, such as the Gotones, that were ruled by *reges*.[30] Kingless tribes seem to have been collectively governed by *principes* through the *consilum*, appointing *duces* as needed.[31] Such understandings can be complicated by the likes of Ariovistus, however, who was recognised by the Roman Senate as a *rex*, though we know nothing about his Germanic status.[32]

In general there is little indication that strong centralised powers necessarily played significant roles in Germanic government before the RIA.[33] Certainly in Scandinavia, archaeological evidence suggests that the kind of social stratification expected for a monarchic society only began to appear in the last centuries BC (see §1.4.1 & §1.4.2). An institution such as kingship may simply have been unnecessary, or it may

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visjon i arkeologien belyst med fokus på en järnålderskontekskst, Acta Archaeologica Lundensia: Series in 8°, (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1991), pp. 55-61.

[25]*Germania*, pp. 6, 9-11; Wallace-Hadrill, *Kingship*, pp. 2-3.

[26]The *principes* are perhaps reflected in the Germanic terms **fraujōn* and **druχtinaz*. Consilum surely represents Germanic **þingam*; see further Green, *Language*, pp. 34-39, 102-12.

[27]These might be variously reflected in Germanic terms such as **kuniŋaz* and **þeudanaz*; Green, *Language*, pp. 121-40; Wolfram, *Roman*, pp. 14-20.

[28]Wallace-Hadrill, *Kingship*, p. 11.

[29]*Germania*, p. 6, 9-11.

[30]*Germania*, pp. 29; Wallace-Hadrill, *Kingship*, p. 7-8, 17.

[31]Compare the structure of Old Saxon society, §2.3.2. In a Scandinavian context, it may be useful to compare models of archaic Germanic societies with more recently recorded institutions such as the Sámi *sii'dâ* (or *sijte*). This seems to have originally been an organization of people in a given hunting- and fishing-territory. It was made up of extended family groups, representatives from which chose a 'president' to represent the *sii'dâ*/*sijte* both internally and externally; Inger Zachrisson, 'Det samiska samhället', in *Möten*, pp. 144-148; Odner, pp. 41, 100.

[32]*Bellum Gallicum*, p. 20 (Book 1, Chapter 43).

[33]Thompson, *Germans*, pp. 32-38; Wallace-Hadrill, *Kingship*, p. 7-8, 17.

have been actively discouraged in a martial society where warriors might follow chieftains but felt that an office wielding greater authority would impose too much on their own freedoms.

1.2.3 THE EFFECTS OF THE ROMAN MILITARY & POLITICAL THREAT

According to Caesar, Germanic tribesmen had little concept of private property, and each year Germanic tribal leaders (whom Caesar labelled *magistratus* and *principes*) portioned out the common tribal land. This practice, Caesar explained, was designed to prevent anyone acquiring a permanent power-base from which to dominate their fellows.[34] Caesar's description stands in sharp contrast to that of Tacitus, a century-and-a-half later, which shows a highly organised Germanic society—divided into noble, free, and unfree classes—headed by chiefs commanding established troops of retainers. Clearly, significant changes had taken place during the early Roman period, with the establishment of these new chieftains who overshadowed the older, more egalitarian system still represented by the *consilium* in Tacitus' time.

The most widely accepted explanation for these changes is that this new Germanic élite's formation, while probably stemming partially from autochthonous processes, was almost certainly accelerated by contact with Rome.[35] E.A. Thompson considered desire for Roman prestige goods the primary motivating factor behind the social changes, but it is equally likely that Roman military and political pressure may have encouraged social reorganisation around the more potent fighting force that a chieftain and his *comitatus* represented. The *comitatus* itself, as a permanently established war-band, may have become far more prominent in Germanic society during the period between Caesar's and Tacitus' reports.[36]

The earliest stages of the Germanic élite's development may owe something to Celtic contacts.[37] Celtic society was dominated by a martial aristocracy, and its chieftains and war-bands probably spurred the creation of analogous institutions amongst their Germanic neighbours. Contact with the Romans, however, may have introduced Germanic societies to warfare on an entirely new scale. Generally speaking, warfare in pre-Roman Celtic and Germanic societies, whether by circumstance or design, seems to have been limited in nature. Though the motivation to wage war could be economic, the emphasis in martial conduct was on the hero and heroic leadership, on risk-taking and the display of strength and skill. Such at least is the picture preserved by the accounts closest

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[34]*Bellvm Gallicum*, p. 52 (Book 4, Chapter 1), 99 (Book 6, Chapter 22).

[35]Thompson, *Germans*, p. 28; Todd, p. 35.

[36]Green, *Language*, pp. 106-07.

[37]Wallace-Hadrill, *Kingship*, pp. 4-5. The borrowing into Germanic of Celtic **rīg-jo-*, cognate with Latin *rex*, may be significant here (though the Germanic reflex only appears as a title in the Gothic *reiks*); Green, *Language*, pp. 150-51; Hans Frede Nielsen, *The Germanic Languages: Origins and Early Dialectal Interrelations* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989), pp. 26-27 [revised translation of Hans Frede Nielsen, *De germanske sprog: baggrund og gruppering* (Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag, 1979)].

to those societies. It is easy to see how a warrior élite, and even petty chieftainships, could form within such societies without necessarily developing into more hierarchical systems.

The Romans appear to have practised a very different kind of warfare which refined concepts inherited from the Greeks. Victor Hanson, supported by John Keegan, has argued that the origins of the common European philosophy of warfare, which emphasises the battle as a crucial process of decision from which no effort toward victory is spared, stemmed from particular conditions of Greek agriculture which allowed only a short campaigning season, and consequently required swift resolution of military disputes.[38] As a result, in the sixth century BC the Greeks developed the phalanx, a densely packed unit of spearmen, as a tool which could quickly inflict what were at the time unusually high casualties, with the consequent risk of accepting such in return. In Greek warfare, however, there was little emphasis placed on following up a victory after one phalanx had broken another. This next step was taken by the Romans who, by the fourth century BC, had developed a professional army dedicated to expanding Roman power. It has been pointed out that the aggressive nature of Roman warfare, while not unmatched in the ancient world, was nevertheless exceptional:

> Few others [besides the Romans] are known to have displayed such ferocity in war while reaching such a high level of political culture … One of the most striking features of Roman warfare is its regularity—almost every year the Romans went out and did violence to someone—and this regularity gives the phenomenon a pathological character.[39]

The Romans, therefore, posed a considerably greater threat to the Germanic peoples than the Celts possibly could have. More perspicacious Germanic warriors probably learned from early Romano-Germanic clashes, as well as from the collapse of Celtic Gaul, that their older social models denied them the strength required to contend with Rome.[40]

1.2.4 HORIZONTAL & VERTICAL GOVERNMENT

Victorian fancies concerning utopian Germanic democracies may be safely dismissed, yet it certainly seems true that Germanic leaders' powers were weaker than those of Roman rulers or later medieval kings. Michael Swanton argued that *Beowulf* reveals conflicts in Anglo-Saxon society between traditional Germanic forms of government and newer

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[38]Victor Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece*, introduction by John Keegan (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1989; Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press, 1990), pp. 4-6, 29-39; John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (London, Hutchinson, 1993), pp. 244-46, 250-52, 264-66.

[39]William Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome*, corrected edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 53.

[40]It seems that new types of weapons were adopted by Germanic peoples during the Roman period, suggesting changes in tactics; Shchukin, p. 273.

continental models based on Roman-Christian doctrines.[41] The former are characterised as 'horizontal', with leaders' power devolving from popular support, and the latter, as 'vertical', stemming from Mediterranean models in which leaders' divinely derived statuses legitimised inalienable control of the ruled. Whether or not *Beowulf* reflects tensions between these ideologies, such tensions themselves seem to go back far earlier than the eighth-century situation with which Swanton was concerned. The conflicts must have been played out at various points in all Germanic societies, as suggested by the clear distinction between the Germanic governments known to Caesar and those of the later Middle Ages. We may contrast the career of Arminius—who, Tacitus asserted, spent a long period eschewing a royal title while promoting an anti-Roman image—with that of Maroboduus, whose conflicts with Rome lacked the anti-Roman/pro-Germanic ideological bent which Tacitus ascribed to Arminius's wars.[42]

Well-acquainted with Roman ways (as was Arminius), Maroboduus had spent his youth in Rome as a favourite of Augustus.[43] In contrast to Arminius, it seems Maroboduus strove to maintain good relations with Rome, consciously emulated Roman models, and acquired the label 'Friend of the Roman People'.[44] His empire-building strategies, however, brought him inevitably into conflict with both Rome and Arminius.[45] After taking up leadership of the Marcomanni in the last decade BC, Maroboduus led them away from Roman pressures on their territories in the Main valley to the conquest of new lands in Bohemia. Having assumed the title *rex*, Maroboduus began drilling his warriors in Roman style with, according to Velleius Paterculus, what the Romans found to be alarmingly successful results.[46] He also managed to extend his rule over various neighbouring tribes. Maroboduus's title and behaviour as *rex* made him increasingly unpopular amongst his subjects, however. This lack of popular support provided an opening for Arminius who in addition to championing the anti-Roman cause also came to represent a rallying point against Maroboduus. After Arminius's success in the *saltus Teutoburgiensis*, from which Maroboduus carefully held aloof, the reduced Roman threat caused some of Maroboduus's subject tribes to feel that their loss of independence under him no longer served a practical purpose. The Langobards and Semnones went over to the side of Arminius, who in AD 17 defeated Maroboduus in battle. The deposed king escaped to exile in Ravenna where he spent the remainder of his life under Roman

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[41]M.J. Swanton, *Crisis and Development in Germanic Society 700-800: Beowulf and the Burden of Kingship*, Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 333 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1982), pp. 12, 15-60.

[42]*Annales*, pp. 59-60, 70, 80, 92 (Book 2, Chapters 26, 44, 62, & 88). That a contrast should be recognized between freedom-fighting and land-seeking Germanic leaders was argued by Walter Schlesinger, 'Das Heerkönigtum', in *Das Königtum: seine geistigen und rechtlichen Grundlagen*, Konstanzer Arbeitskreis fur Mittelalterliche Geschichte: Vortrage und Forschungen, 3 (Lindau: Thorbecke, 1956), 116-21 (pp. 119-21).

[43]Strabo, *Strabonis geographica*, ed. by Augustus Meineke, Bib. Teub. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1852-1853), pp. 398-99 (Book 7, Chapter 1.3).

[44]*Annales*, pp. 80-81 (Book 2 Chapter 63).

[45]See generally Josef Dobiáš, 'King Maroboduus as a Politician', *Klio*, 38 (1960), 155-66.

[46]Velleius Paterculus, pp. 74-75 (Book 2, Chapter 109).

protection.[47] Arminius did not learn from Maroboduus' fate. Attempting to step into the vacuum Maroboduus left, Arminius soon asserted his own kingship but was shortly afterwards slain by his disgruntled compatriots. Such examples underscore Tacitus' observation that Germanic peoples (excluding some of the eastern tribes) disliked the term *rex* and might violently depose those who claimed the title.[48]

There was, however, another lesson which could be drawn from the experiences of Arminius and Maroboduus: groups headed by a strong ruler could compete militarily with Rome. We can only assume that the Germanic élite learned to walk the dangerous path which followed the assumption of a royal title, as many continental Germanic peoples had developed systems of kingship by the sixth century. Even so, the decidedly non-absolute powers of kings among such groups as the Merovingians, Visigoths, and Lombards recall Tacitus' description of similarly limited first-century Germanic *reges*.[49]

1.3 POST-CLASSICAL CLASHES BETWEEN DIFFERING GOVERNMENTAL IDEOLOGIES

1.3.1 LATE ANTIQUE & EARLY MEDIEVAL IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICTS

Conflicts arising from the opposing ideologies of horizontal and vertical government are often assumed to belong solely to post-medieval periods, yet they could certainly occur in ancient and early medieval societies. Besides Tacitus' examples of Maroboduus and Arminius, Procopius, writing in the sixth century, reported that the Eruli slew their king simply because they no longer wished to have one. Procopius expressed shock at this behaviour, adding that the Erulian king had a status scarcely higher than the other tribesmen, who had the right to eat with the king and insult him if they wished.[50]

Several centuries later, the entry for 841 in the *Annales Bertiniani* reported on Frankish king Lothar's effort to placate rebelling Saxons by offering them a return to their own customary law instead of the Frankish written law which they had been given.[51] This rebellion was the *Stellinga* uprising, which the *Annales Fuldenses* described

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[47] *Annales*, pp. 80-81 (Book 2 Chapter 63).

[48] *Annales*, pp. 70, 72-73 (Book 2, Chapters 44 & 48).

[49] Swanton, *Crisis*, pp. 19-22, 156 n. 7.

[50] Procopius, *Procopii Caesariensis Opera Omnia*, ed. by Jacobus Haury with Gerhard Wirth, Bib. Teub., 4 vols (Leipzig: Teubner, 1962-1964), II (1963), 214 (Book 6, Chapter 14.37-42). The Eruli soon decided that they wanted a king again and sent to their relatives in Scandinavia for one, while another was appointed by the Byzantine emperor. The Byzantine appointee's followers eventually deserted him for the Scandinavian import, though the strife touched off a major war in the Balkans.

[51] *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, ed. by Félix Grat, Jeanne Vielliard, and Suzanne Clémencet with Léon Levillain (Paris: Klincksieck 1964), pp. 38-39 (*sa* 841).

as a 'validissimam conspirationem libertorum legitimos dominos opprimere conantium';[52] the name *Stellinga* seems to have meant 'companions, comrades'.[53] Lothar's offer does not seem to have produced the desired results, however; Nithard criticised the attempt.[54] The *Annales Bertiniani* noted of the Stellinga that, 'qui semper AD mala procliues magis ritum paganorum imitari quem christianae fidei sacramenta tenere delegerunt'.[55] Accordingly it was necessary for Lothar's brother Louis the German, in dispute with whom Lothar was coming out the worse, to quell the *Stellinga*:

> Hlodouuicus, peragrata omni Saxonia, conctos sibi eatenus obsistentes ui atque terrore ita perdomuit ut, comprehensis omnibus auctoribus tantae impietatis qui et christianam fidem pene reliquerant et sibi fidelibus tantopere obstiterant, centum quadraginata capitis amputatione plecteret, quatuordecim patibulo suspenderet, innumeros membrorum praecisione debiles redderet nullumque sibi ullatenus refragantem relinqueret.[56]

It has been noted that the *Stellinga* uprising was not a generically Saxon one, but one of Saxon commoners against both the Saxon and Frankish nobility. Reuter identified an element of anti-Christian backlash in the *Stellinga* uprising and compared it to a similar uprising over mixed political and religious issues among the Slavic Liutzi in 983 (against, ironically enough, the Slavs' Saxon overlords).[57] It is hardly surprising, as Reuter pointed out, that uprisings of this sort were of great concern to the nobility or that measures enacted against such rebellions were swift and harsh, as they threatened the most fundamental aspects of the social ideology embraced and propagated by medieval Christian kings.[58]

1.3.2 SNORRI'S 'FRIÐGERÐAR SAGA': MEDIEVAL SCANDINAVIAN IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICT

Medieval sources indicate that support for horizontal governmental ideologies proved very durable in Scandinavia. One dramatic example comes from the *Heimskringla* version of the so-called 'Friðgerðar saga', variants of which also appear in *Fagrskinna*

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[52]*Annales Fuldenses*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Georgicus Henricus Pertz, MGH: Scriptores (in Folio), 1 (Hannover: Hahn, 1826), 337-415 (p. 363, *sa* 842).

[53]*The Annals of Fulda*, trans. and annotated by Timothy Reuter, Manchester Medieval Sources Series: Ninth-century Histories, 2 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 21 n. 6; N. Wagner, 'Der Name der Stellinga', *Beiträge zur Namenforschung*, 15 (1980), 128-33 (pp. 131-33).

[54]Nithard, *Histoire des fils de Louis le Pieux*, ed. by Ph. Lauer, Les Classiques de l'histoire de France au moyen age, 7 (Paris: Champion, 1926), pp. 120-22.

[55]Pre-Christian Old Saxon society seems to have been emphatically kingless, see §2.3.2.

[56]Annales de Saint-Bertin, pp. 42-43 (sa 842)

[57]Annals of Fulda, p. 21 n. 6.

[58]*Annals of Fulda*, p. 21 n. 6; Timothy Reuter, *Germany*, pp. 66-67. See further E. Müller-Mertens, 'Der Stellingaaufstand: Seine Träger und die Frage der politischen Macht', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 20 (1972), 818-42.

and *The Legendary Saga of St Óláfr*.[59] This story concerns a dispute between Óláfr sœnski and Óláfr helgi over territory and a proposed marriage alliance. Snorri's version, essentially an expansion of that in *The Legendary Saga of St Óláfr*, is by far the most complex and colourful. Snorri's version may also incorporate information which he acquired in 1219 when he guested with the widow of his old friend Jarl Hákon galinn Folkviðsson,[60] Kristín (granddaughter of Sweden's St Erik), who had remarried to Æskil laghmaðþær,[61] half-brother of Birger Jarl and Västergötland's lawman; the composition of *Äldre Västgötalagen* is often attributed to Æskil.[62] The situation of Västergötland was central in Snorri's depiction of the conflict between Óláfr sœnski and Óláfr helgi.

In 1018, as told by Snorri Sturluson, a party consisting of Bjǫrn, King Óláfr helgi's marshal, and Rǫgnvaldr, a jarl in Västergötland, wishes to urge Óláfr sœnski to make peace with Óláfr helgi.[63] To this end, they go for advice to Rǫgnvaldr's foster father, Þorgnýr lǫgmaðr of Tíundaland, the most respected lawman in Sweden.[64] Upon hearing their errand, Þorgnýr notes that they cannot hope to succeed with Óláfr sœnski by themselves, and continues:

> Þykki mér þat eigi óvirðilega at vera i bóanda tǫlu ok vera frjáls orða sinna, at mæla slíkt, er hann vill, þótt konungr sé hjá. Nú mun ek koma til Uppsalaþings ok veita þér þat lið, at þú mælir þar óhræddr fyrir konungi slíkt, er þér líkar.[65]

At the Uppsalaþing, Bjǫrn and Rǫgnvaldr both present their cases to Óláfr sœnski but are angrily rebuffed by the king who refuses to make peace with Óláfr helgi. Then Þorgnýr lǫgmaðr stands, and Snorri provides him with a long speech. It begins by praising the virtues of past Swedish kings, to whom Óláfr sœnski compares unfavourably, and

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[59] *Heimskringla*, II, 85-157; *Olafs saga hins helga: Die "Legendarische Saga" über Olaf den Heiligen*, ed. and trans. by Anne Heinrichs and others, Germanische Bibliothek: Reihe 4, Texte (Heidelberg: Winter, 1982), pp. 94-100; *Nóregs konunga tal*, in *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sogum, Fagrskinna, Nóregs konunga tal*, ed. by Bjarni Einarsson, Íslensk fornrit, 29 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1984), pp. 55-373 (pp. 178-80). For a comparison of the versions, see Oscar Albert Johnsen, 'Friðgerðar-saga: en kildekritisk undersøkelse', (*Norsk*) *Historisk Tidsskrift* (Femte Række), 3 (1916), 513-39.

[60] Curt Weibull, 'Snorres skildring av Sveriges samhälls- och författningsförhållanden: Torgny lagman', in Curt Weibull, *Källkritik och historia* (Lund: Aldus/Bonnier, 1964), pp. 241-47; Erik Lönnroth, *Från svensk medeltid*, 3rd edn, Aldus-böckerna (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1964), pp. 16-29.

[61] *Sturlunga saga*, ed. by Kr. Kålund, 2 vols (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1906-11), I, 331-32; Sturla Þórðarson, *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar: Etter Sth. 8 fol., AM 325 VIII, 4° og AM 304, 4°*, ed. by Marina Mundt with James E. Knirk, Norrøne tekster, 2, 2 vols (Oslo: Norsk historisk kjeldeskrift-institutt, 1977-82), I, ed. by Marina Mundt, 23.

[62] *Äldre Västgötalagen*, ed. by Elias Wessén, Nordisk filologi, A, 9 (Stockholm: Svenska Bokforlaget Nordstedts, 1954), pp. vii-ix.

[63] *Fagrskinna* does not describe Rǫgnvaldr as a jarl in Västergötland, though Snorri may have picked up this detail on his visit there; P.H. Sawyer, *The Making of Sweden*, Occasional Papers on Medieval Topics, 3 (Alingsås: Viktoria, 1988), p. 23.

[64] Þorgnýr lǫgmaðr appears only in Snorri's version of the story, though Þorgnýr himself is mentioned in a *Landnámabók* genealogy, and Dag Strömbäck thought his character was likely to have a historical basis; *Landnámabók*, p. 271; Dag Strömbäck, *The Conversion of Iceland: A Survey*, Viking Society for Northern Research: Text series, 6 (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, University College, London, 1975), pp. 8-9.

[65] Heimskringla, II, 114.

continues by making clear that it is *vili várr bóandanna* that Óláfr sœnski make peace with Óláfr helgi. Þorgnýr concludes his speech with an explicit threat, which is applauded vigorously by those attending the *þing*:

> 'En konungr þessi, er nú er, lætr engi mann þora at mæla við sik nema þat einu, er hann vill vera láta … Með því at þú vill eigi hafa þat, er vér mælum, þá munum vér veita þér atgǫngu ok drepa þik ok þola þér eigi ófrið ok ólǫg. Hafa svá gǫrt inir fyrri forellrar várir. Þeir steypðu fimm konungum í eina keldu á Múlaþingi,[66] er áðr hǫfðu upp fyllzk ofmetnaðar sem þú við oss. Seg nú skjótt, hvárn kost þú vill upp taka.' Þá gerði lýðrinn þegar vápnabrak ok gný mikinn. Konungrinn stendr þá upp ok mælti, segir, at allt vill hann vera láta sem bœndr vilja, segir, at svá hafa gǫrt allir Svía konungar, at láta bœndr ráða með sér ǫllu því, er þeir vildu. Staðnaði þá kurr bóandanna.[67]

Lars Lönnroth analysed the political ideologies encapsulated in differing versions of 'Friðgerðar saga', and noted that Þorgnýr's speech does not question a king's right to rule so long as he does not violate established law and custom.[68] After the events described above, Óláfr sœnski reneges on the promise Þorgnýr elicited and Emundr af Skǫrum, *lǫgmaðr* of Västergötland, summons a *refsiþing* in an attempt to instigate a popular uprising against Óláfr sœnski. In the event, however, skilled diplomacy from Óláfr's supporters (who, perhaps significantly, were Uppsvíar rather than Gautar) leads to the confirmation of popular support for the royal dynasty; the assembly elects Óláfr sœnski's son, Ǫnundr Jákob, as king and he arranges for his father to retain the kingship so long as he abides by established law and custom.[69] Lönnroth argued that the description of these events—in which Emundr is described as conniving and deceitful—reveals Snorri walking a careful line, playing to the anti-royalist sympathies of Icelandic land-owners yet with a subtext promoting Snorri's own royalist views as a *hirðmaðr* of the Norwegian king.[70]

The need for such equivocation however suggests that debate over the limits of—perhaps even the need for—royal authority remained alive in thirteenth-century Scandinavia. It also indicates that, at the very least, thirteenth-century Scandinavians

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[66]*Múlaþing* is likely to be a mistake for Uppsala's *Móraþing*, the first *þing* at which a royal claimant need to be acclaimed on the Swedish *Eriksgata þing*-circuit. There was an Icelandic *Múlaþing* at Þingmúli in eastern Iceland.

[67]*Heimskringla*, II, 116-17. A very similar episode appears in *Flateyjarbók*, ed. by Sigurður Nordal and others, 4 vols (Akranes: Flateyjarútgáfan, 1944-45), II (1945), 160-62.

[68]Lars Lönnroth, 'Ideology and Structure in Heimskringla', *Parergon*, 15 (1976), 16-29 (p. 22).

[69]*Heimskringla*, II, 117-57. It may be significant that, according to Adam of Bremen, Óláfr sœnski had initated efforts to convert the Swedes and had attempted to destroy their 'Uppsala temple'. These initiatives came to little, and Óláfr removed to Västergötland where he had established a bishopric at Skarir under the Hamburg-Bremen archbishopric's authority; Adam of Bremen, *Magistri Adam Bremensis gesta Hammburgensis ecclesiae pontificum: Hamburgische Kirchengeschichte*, ed. by Bernhard Schmeidler, MGH: SRG in usum scholarum separatim editi, 2, 3rd edn (Hannover: Hahn, 1917), pp. 95-96, 98-99, 118-19. (Book 2, Chapters 35, 38, 58). Though this act was later celebrated, it may have generated ill-will against him in Västergötland at the time; Emundr af Skǫrum's efforts to depose him would come as little surprise in this context.

[70]Lönnroth, 'Ideology', pp. 28-29.

believed that eleventh-century Swedish kings depended on the support not only of the leading nobles but also of the yeomen, represented by their lawman. Indeed, Snorri's account suggests that Swedish *bœndr* were happiest with a suitably traditional king so long he behaved in a manner acceptable to them, a state of affairs which they were willing and apparently able to enforce.[71]

It is worth noting that *Äldre Västgötalagen* itself confirms the right of the people to elect or depose the Swedish king and also stipulates that the king must be accepted by the *laghmaþær* (OSw 'lawman, law-speaker') at the Aldragöta þing.[72] Any medieval king relied on the support of the great men nearest him, but such provisions as these would have been unthinkable in most nations of Christian Europe. Snorri may or may not have reinterpreted a version of the story he acquired in Västergötland to suit his own ideological purposes, but there seems little reason to doubt his account's generalities. Constitutional limits on royal power were clearly of sufficient current interest to thirteenth-century inhabitants of Västergötland to be included in their law code. From the evidence of a mid-thirteenth-century king-list (appended to *Äldre Västgötalagen* after 1325) it is not clear whether Västergötland itself had been subject to a king in the early twelfth century, when it was described as having been governed by 'goðhær laghmaðþær wæstrægötllandi, oc lanz höffhengiær'.[73]

1.4 SCANDINAVIA INTO THE RIA

1.4.1 SCANDINAVIA BEFORE THE PRE-RIA

The close of the Bronze Age in southern Scandinavia seems to have been marked by changes in land-use patterns, indicated by a shift from communal long-houses to villages of small, individual farmsteads surrounded by their own fields. This new system seems to accord with the methods of Germanic land apportionment Tacitus described in later centuries. The continuity of ritual practices from the Bronze Age, however, hints that a

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[71] It seems many of the eleventh- and twelfth-century kings in Sweden stemmed from Götaland; Sawyer, *Making*, p. 30. perhaps Snorri was foreshadowing this in Emundr af Skǫrum's alleged comment: 'Þér Uppsvíarnir hafið vald til at ráða þessu at sinni, en hitt segi ek yðr, sem eptir mun ganga, at þeir sumir, er nú vilja ekki annat heyra en konungdómr í Svíþjóð gangi í langfeðgaætt, nú munu þeir sjálfir lifa ok játa, þá er konungdómr mun í aðrar ættir koma, ok mun þat betr hlýða'; *Heimskringla*, II, 156.

[72] *Iuris Vestrogotici codex antiquior*, in *Corpus iuris Sueo-Gotorum antiqui: Samling af Sweriges gamla lagar, på Kongl. Maj:ts nådigste befallning*, ed. by C. J. Schlyter and H.S. Collin, 13 vols (1827-77), I, Westgöta-lagen (Stockholm: Haeggström, 1827), 1-74 (pp. 36-37).

[73] *Incerti auctoris variae adnotationes*, in *Corpus iuris Sueo-Gotorum antiqui: Samling af Sweriges gamla lagar, på Kongl. Maj:ts nådigste befallning*, ed. by C. J. Schlyter and H.S. Collin, 13 vols (1827-77), I, Westgöta-lagen (Stockholm: Haeggström, 1827), 283-344 (pp. 300-01). The *goðhær laghmaðþær* was probably Karlli af Ezwæri/Karl Sónason; Sawyer, Making, pp. 26, 29. See also §2.4.4. On the Västergötland lists of lawmen, bishops, and kings, see further Ivar Lindquist, *Västgötalagens litterära bilagor: medeltida svensk småberättelsekonst på poesi och prosa*, Skrifter utgivna av Vetenskapssocieteten i Lund, 26 (Lund: Gleerup, 1941), pp. 1-62.

sense of community remained strong. The sparse grave goods from pre-RIA burials do not seem to have marked social status, and more attention appears to have been placed on collective votive offerings. The most salient change in ritual practice was the introduction of large communal cemeteries, perhaps emphasising the unity of the new villages.[74]

More significant developments in funerary practice seem to have taken place around 500 BC, as the Jastorf superculture was coalescing, when a distinct class of warrior graves appeared. This innovation may have been linked to the roughly concurrent appearance of powerful chieftains among late Hallstatt society in continental Europe. That these warrior burials feature artefacts, like bronze rings, which previously had been used only in votive offerings, suggests a special association between warriors and the ritual environment. Simultaneously, farmsteads and villages grew larger and more complex, and the population may have been increasing.[75]

1.4.2 ROME & THE EMERGENCE OF THE ÉLITE IN SCANDINAVIA

Lotte Hedeager has taken a strongly autochthonist view of the emergence of the southern Scandinavian élite. In contrast to theories such as Thompson's (§1.2.3), Hedeager suggested that, in Scandinavia at least, the new élite's emergence resulted primarily from native, internal developments. The early stages of this process, she argued, are visible in the appearance of larger farmsteads and the new class of weapon graves during the pre-RIA (see §1.4.1).[76] It seems likely that autochthonous processes played a role in the formation of the early Scandinavian élite, but the influence of external forces on their development should probably not be dismissed. It seems clear that there was a degree of Celtic influence on southern Scandinavian society in the pre-Roman period, and Celtic social models, as well as direct military pressures, may have had an impact on Germanic developments.[77]

Scandinavia was hardly beyond the reach of Roman influence, even if never threatened with Roman military domination. Archaeology reveals that southern Scandinavia held an important position in the Germanic world, even relative to Germanic territories better known to classical authors. Trade routes between the Roman Empire and the Baltic converged on southern Scandinavia. One route ran north from the Rhine's mouth around the tip of Jutland. Another, the main amber route, ran from Aquileia on the Adriatic up to Carnuntum in Pannonia, thence through Moravia to the Wisla and on to the

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[74]Hedeager, *Societies*, pp. 78-79.

[75]Cunliffe, p. 29; Hedeager, *Societies*, pp. 79, 218.

[76]Hedeager, *Societies*, pp. 243-44.

[77]Green, *Language*, pp. 148-63; Marianne Görman, 'Nordic and Celtic: Religion in Southern Scandinavia during the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age', in *ONaFRaCPN*, pp. 329-43; Peter S. Wells, 'Interactions between Denmark and Central Europe in the Late Prehistoric Iron Age: The Prelude to Gudme and Lundeborg' in *AoGaL*, pp. 151-59 (pp. 153-56); Herman Ament, 'Der Rhein und die Ethnogenese der Germanen', *Praehistorische Zeitschrift*, 59 (1984), 37-47 (pp. 46-47); Jan de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, 2 vols (Berlin, de Gruyter, 1956-1957), I (1956). pp. 134-39, 143-46.

Baltic.[78] But finds of Roman goods indicate that trade moved along most of the major German river valleys into the North Sea and Baltic, to southern Jutland, Fyn, and Sjælland. Other concentrations of Roman goods are found in Gotland, and there are finds from east and north of the Oslofjord in Norway and from Skåne, Öland, and Mälardalen in Sweden. Roman silver has been found in many parts of Germania, but some of the best examples come from southern Scandinavia.[79] Some—perhaps many—of the trade goods and political gifts which came to Scandinavia were probably brought by Latin-speakers.[80] Classical authors' silence on southern Scandinavia probably reflects the limits of their knowledge rather than a lack of importance for the region.

Processes accelerating the Germanic élite's development through contact with Rome could have filtered northwards towards Scandinavia. The Scandinavian élite might have grown in direct response either to the distant Romans or by being at the end of a 'domino effect' initiated by the reorganisation of their southern neighbours into social structures more capable of responding to Roman pressures. Both class and regional variations in Scandinavia were marked more strongly during the ERIA by different burial forms and grave goods assemblages.[81] Moreover, the communal votive offerings which characterised ritual deposit during the pre-RIA in Scandinavia ceased at the end of the first century BC. Simultaneously, a great assortment of rich goods (especially prestigious Roman imports) began to be deposited in graves—not only in warrior graves like those of the earlier period, but in female and weaponless male graves, too. Such rich burials often lay apart from poorer cemeteries.[82] In the first centuries AD, the richest graves were in southern Jutland and were most commonly weaponless inhumations. Similar distinctions between 'rich burials' and 'weapon burials' appeared at this time in Lolland and eastern Fyn.[83] In contrast, northern and eastern Jutland were more conservative in funerary customs, using few grave goods, few Roman imports, and mixing rich and poor burials in the same area—much as had been common in the pre-Roman period (see §1.4.1). Similarly conservative practices are known from continental Germanic territories on the Rhine's western bank.[84] Tribes there and in northern and eastern Jutland may have retained older patterns of social organisation which lacked the chieftain-*comitatus* model's military strength. The tribes on the Rhine were swallowed into Roman provinces, a threat from which the more distant Jutland groups were safe.

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[78]Green, *Germanic*, pp. 226-27.

[79]Todd, pp. 90-92.

[80]Green, *Germanic*, pp. 222-24.

[81]Hedeager, *Societies*, pp. 98-99, 243 & Figure 3.2.

[82]Hedeager, *Societies*, pp. 79-80, 149-52.

[83]Hedeager, *Societies*, pp. 143-46.

[84]Lotte Hedeager, 'Empire, Frontier and the Barbarian Hinterland: Rome and Northern Europe from ad 1-400', in *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*, ed. by Michael Rowlands, Mogens Larsen, and Kristian Kristiansen, eds, *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*, New Directions in Archaeology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 125-40 (pp. 126-27).

Thus, towards the end of the second century AD Scandinavian society appears to have been increasingly organised around chieftains of some kind: men who possessed imported Roman goods who had under them separate warrior and peasant classes. This situation seems analogous to that which Tacitus described for Germanic societies of western Europe. However much direct Roman influence there was on Scandinavian developments, it must be conceded that the archaeology of many southern Scandinavian regions suggests societies similar to those of continental Germanic groups which were certainly subject to Roman pressures. It seems most likely that conditions conducive to the Scandinavian élite's growth arose from a confluence of external influences and favourable internal developments.

1.5 KINGSHIP IN RIA SCANDINAVIA?

1.5.1 CONCENTRATION OF WEALTH IN FYN & SJÆLLAND

Any anti-Roman sentiment which may have existed in Scandinavia is difficult to detect in the archaeological record. The wealth of Roman prestige goods in Scandinavia suggests that pro-Roman identification may have been fashionable among many of the élite, or at the very least that such exotic goods served as status symbols. Roman silver poured into Denmark duing the ERIA, though there was a sharp drop-off in the 180s probably associated with the general unrest in the Germanic world at the end of the second century AD. On the other hand, gold importation, which had been fairly modest during the first two centuries AD, increased abruptly in the third century (becoming a flood in the fifth and sixth centuries) as did imports of contraband Roman weaponry. Silver coins continued to arrive in northern Germania in the third century and after, but both silver and gold coinage imports consisted mostly of older issues, as economic crisis in the third century saw considerable debasement of the Roman coinage.[85] Burials from the LRIA on Fyn and Sjælland show a great increase in the concentration of wealth, especially in the forms of Roman gold, glass, and miscellaneous accessories such as jewellery. Sets of gold drinking-equipment seem to have been especially popular among the southern Scandinavian élite, and the very richest graves contained gold neck-rings and arm-rings. It seems as if the sheer mass of foreign valuables one could collect contributed considerably to prestige.[86] As burials elsewhere in Germanic Europe reveal fewer

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[85]R.A.G. Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire*, The Library of Numismatics (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 149-69, 239-40; Ulla Lund Hansen, *Römischer Import im Norden: Warenaustausch zwischen dem Römischer Reich und dem freien Germanien*, Nordiske fortidsminder, Serie B, 10 (Copenhagen: Det Kongelige nordiske Oldskriftselskab, 1987), pp. 229-32; Todd, pp. 100-02, 125; Klavs Randsborg, *The First Millennium A.D. in Europe and the Mediterranean: An Archaeological Essay* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 133-38.

[86]Hedeager, *Societies*, pp. 69-70.

imports than the graves on the Danish islands, it may be that Fyn and Sjælland were taking on a leading role in the non-Romanized Germanic world.

1.5.2 STEVNS/HIMLINGØJE: A ROYAL CENTRE ON SJÆLLAND?

By about AD 150 Roman imports appear to have been coming directly to a new trading centre in south-eastern Sjælland near Stevns/Himlingøje. The most impressive objects seem to have stayed there, while the remaining goods went on to other Scandinavian regions. Ulla Lund Hansen theorized that overlords operating at centres like Stevns/Himlingøje took the best goods and passed the remainder on down along a ranked hierarchy of local chieftains throughout Scandinavia.[87] Beside Stevns/Himlingøje, other important RIA southern Scandinavian centres included Sorte Muld on Bornholm, Bejsebakken in Ålborg, and Stentinget in northern Jutland. Stevns/Himlingøje's own function as chief distribution centre was usurped and surpassed by Gudme on Fyn at the end of the third century AD (§2.2.1). Nevertheless, during the first half of the third century Stevns/Himlingøje's central role in the distribution of prestige imports in southern Scandinavia seems to have gone unchallenged. Lund Hansen's view of Stevns/Himlingøje as an overlord's power-base is supported by Hedeager:

> Politically, there now emerged a central power which had a professional army at its disposal. A kingship with a network of vassals around it can be observed on Sjælland, where Roman prestige goods, gold and silver were used as elements in the gift exchange of the central power.[88]

Just as Hedeager saw the RIA élite's origins in internal processes (§1.4.2), she saw this postulated central power's emergence as heavily dependent on the reorganisation of agricultural methods and settlement patterns in southern Scandinavia in the early centuries AD, and argued that only a strong central power would be able to enforce such sweeping social changes.[89] Morten Axboe, however, cautioned that this theory is 'not entirely convincing', and questioned whether a central authority in this period truly would have been strong enough to intervene in peoples' lives at such a fine level, at least without a large degree of tacit support;[90] such support would undermine the significance of any role played by a central power. If we were to accept that only a strong authority could effect such sweeping social changes, we might additionally wonder what central authority it was which instituted social changes with significances at least as great in millennia past—for example, the introduction of agriculture itself during the Neolithic.

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[87]Lund Hansen, *Römischer*, pp. 216-38.

[88]Hedeager, *Societies*, p. 246.

[89]Hedeager, *Societies*, pp. 196-222, 247-49.

[90]Hedeager, *Societies*, pp. 246-50; Morten Axboe, 'Danish Kings and Dendrochronology', in *After Empire*, pp. 217-38 (p. 228).

One function of kingship which was to be important in later centuries is the ability to collect taxes—if not in monetary form, then in goods or labour. Hedeager argued that the construction of defensive works and the relatively large armies implied by the bog weapon deposits suggest the existence of administered territories to defend and the ability to mobilise and control large groups of warriors, indicating the existence of a system of tribute and taxation.[91] Others, however, have questioned whether there are not alternative explanations for such processes.[92] Such armies might have been directed by a temporarily appointed war-leader just as well as by a permanent political overlord.[93] Defensive works could well represent a communal project mandated by such a temporary war-leader or a communal assembly. Both armies and building projects represent group efforts, but the incentive and direction for such efforts might have come from many different quarters.

1.5.3 WRITTEN EVIDENCE FOR KINGSHIP IN EARLY NORTHERN EUROPE?

There is little information about Scandinavian government before the Middle Ages. Tacitus, however, speaks explicitly of kingship among the Suiones (generally identified with the Swedes):

> Est apud illos et opibus honos, eoque unus imperitat, nullis iam exceptionibus, non precario iure parendi. nec arma, ut apud ceteros Germanos, in promiscuo, sed clausa subcustode, et quidem servo, quia subitos hostium incursus prohiberet Oceanus, otiosae porro armatorum manus facile lasciviunt: enimvero neque nobilem neque ingenuum, ne libertinum quidem armis praeponere regia utilitas est.[94]

It is difficult to know what to make of this remarkable statement, utterly unparalleled in any other source concerning the ancient or medieval Germanic peoples. J.G.C. Anderson suggested that Tacitus probably misunderstood his source or received faulty information, and that this perception of a leader's power may be based on the experiences of those who observed some religious festival of the Suiones in which weapons were forbidden and a tribal leader played some sacral role.[95] Such a condition would be reminiscent of Tacitus' description of the Nerthus cult festivities during which 'non bella ineunt, non arma sumunt; clausum omne ferrum'.[96] It is certainly easy to believe that the Suiones

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[91]Hedeager, *Societies*, pp. 170-73; Axboe, 'Danish', pp. 223-24; Ole Crumlin-Pedersen, 'Maritime Aspects of the Archaeology of Roman and Migration-Period Denmark', in *AoMS*, pp. 41-54 (pp. 44-47); Jørgen Ilkjær and Jørn Lønstrup, 'Interpretation of the Great Votive Deposits of Iron Age Weapons', *Journal of Danish Archaeology*, 1 (1982), 95-103 (pp. 95, 100-01).

[92]See comments by David Dumville in Axboe, 'Danish', pp. 245-47.

[93]See §1.2.2 & §2.4.4.

[94]*Germania*, p. 30 (Chapter 44).

[95]See J.G.C. Anderson's commentary in his edition of *Germania*; *Germania*-Anderson, pp. 204-07.

[96]*Germania*, p. 27 (Chapter 40). See §2.2.2 & §3.2.4.

were interested in wealth, as the archaeological evidence bears out,[97] but visitors to a special cult assembly might have seen far more wealth there than was otherwise common.[98] We might further wonder at Tacitus' statement that the ocean served as a defensive barrier, when precisely the opposite seems to have been true for much of Scandinavian history. Swedish culture would be marked in later centuries by a cult assembly and perhaps some kind of ritual kingship, but it is difficult to tell whether similar institutions existed in the ERIA. The possibility that the early Suiones had a strong kingship cannot be ruled out, but we have only Tacitus' word for it. The Suiones dwelt in an area sufficiently distant from Tacitus that he himself was uncomfortable with the relative veracity of information concerning other peoples in the Baltic and beyond.[99]

In the sixth century, Procopius wrote that there were thirteen barbarian nations in Qoúlj, each of which was ruled by a βασιλεύς.[100] Even considering the problems of trusting Procopius' reports about regions so far from his own, this would seem a fair indication that there was an institution of kingship in Scandinavia. On reflection, however, it seems likely these 'kings' are best understood as tribal chieftains. Procopius' report suggests a fragmented political structure without a single multi-tribal overlord such has been postulated by those arguing for the existence of strong central monarchies in Scandinavia during this period. Alternative suggestions, however, have postulated that Scandinavian society was characterised by competing chieftaincies of the sort apparently indicated by Procopius.[101]

Early sources describe the Germanic *adventus* to Britain in terms of small bands led by independent warlords. Although these leaders may have been of aristocratic lineage, it has been stressed that leadership positions were probably open to any with the strength and ability to wield them.[102] Bede labelled these arriving Germanic warlords as *duces* rather than *reges*, and early Anglo-Saxon Chronicle entries uphold such nomenclature, generally terming these men *heretogan* and *ealdormen*, but not *cyningas*.[103] Some regions of Germanic Britain seem not to have had leaders termed *cyningas* until the seventh century, when it appears there were still many small, autonomous chiefdoms.[104] Martin Carver identified kingship *per se* in England as

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[97]More difficult to believe are Tacitus' assertions that the Germanic peoples placed no value on precious metals, which archaeology certainly does not confirm; *Germania*, pp. 4-5 (Chapter 5)

[98]*Germania*-Anderson, p. 206.

[99]*Germania*, pp. 31-32.

[100]Procopius, II, 215 (Book 6, Chapter 15.4-5).

[101]Jørn Lønstrup, 'Mosefund af hærudstyr fra jernalderen', in *FStS*, I, 93-100 (pp. 94-95); Bjørn Myhre, 'Boat houses as indicators of political organization', *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 18 (1985), 36-60 (pp. 50, 56); Bjørn Myhre, 'Chieftains graves and chieftain territories in South Norway in the Migration Period', *Studien zur Sachsenforschung*, 6 (1987), 169-87. See §2.2.2 & §3.1.

[102]Stephen S. Evans, *The Lords of Battle: Image and Reality of the* Comitatus *in Dark-Age Britain* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997), pp. 15-17; John Hines, 'The Military Contexts of the *adventus Saxonum*: Some Continental Evidence', in *Weapons and Warfare in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Sonia Chadwick Hawkes (Oxford: Oxford Univesity Press, 1989), pp. 245-48 (p. 45).

[103]*HE*, pp. 31-32; ASC-Plummer, I, pp. 12-15; ASC-Thorpe, I, 19-29.

[104]Swanton, *Crisis*, pp. 24-26; Evans, *Lords*, p. 22-24, 43; David Dumville, 'The Tribal Hidage: An Introduction to its Texts and their History', in *The Origins of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, ed. by Steven Bassett (Leicester: Leicester University Press. 1989), pp. 225-30.

developing in mid-sixth-century Kent in response to the Frankish kings' expanding power. By the end of the sixth century, the institution of kingship may have spread to neighbouring areas of England, such as Essex and East Anglia, in response both to the Franks and the local Kentish developments.[105] Such examples recall the effect that the Roman threat may have had on Germanic tribes in earlier centuries (§1.2.3 & §1.4.2) and suggest that Scandinavia, not (yet) directly threatened by expansionist neighbours, may have been at least as slow, perhaps slower, to develop centralised kingship.[106]

It seems that kingship was not a universally employed institution in the Germanic societies of north-western Europe into the second half of the first millennium AD. Not surprisingly, evidence for kingship is harder to find among societies further from Roman influence. It may be that the lack of written accounts concerning these regions explains the lack of evidence for kingship, but may also be that kingship was of little benefit to societies lacking pressures which required response. It is difficult to establish firm evidence for formal kingship in Scandinavia itself much before the Viking Age, and discussions of kings and overlords in southern Scandinavia before the eighth century often feel uncomfortably anachronistic.[107]

1.5.4 SCANDINAVIAN CLIENT KINGSHIP IN THE LRIA?

Nevertheless, the possibility that there was a strong central power in southern Scandinavia in the LRIA cannot be ruled out. The large quantity of Roman valuables then entering Scandinavia are suggestive of one means by which such an overlordship might have been established: Roman-sponsored client kingship.

The Roman Empire seems to have reached its practical limits in western Europe during Augustus' reign, yet political influence could reach beyond those limits. Client kingdoms made a better audience for diplomacy than did masses of small, warring tribes. Moreover, though potential enemies themselves, client kingdoms served as buffers against other, more significant foes which might emerge from deeper within *barbaricum*. The frontiers could be strengthened by a web of alliances with polities beyond the *limes* as much as they could by the threat of legions stationed behind it. Such strategies are not unique to the Romans, and their establishment of client kingships may be compared with similar practices in other empires—or with a modern superpower's maintenance of

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[105]Martin Carver, *Sutton Hoo: Burial Ground of Kings?* (London: British Museum Press, 1998), pp. 104-05. Additional evidence for this trend of increased social stratification may be found in declining numbers (absolute and as percentage of total) of Anglo-Saxon weapon graves after the mid-sixth century; Heinrich Härke, 'Early Saxon Weapon Burials: Frequencies, Distributions, and Weapon Combinations', in *Weapons and Warfare in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Sonia Chadwick Hawkes, Oxford University Committee for Archaeology: Monographs, 21 (Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1989), pp. 49-62 (pp. 51-53); C.J. Arnold, *An Archaeology of the Early Saxon Kingdoms* (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 142, 169, 178-80.

[106]See §3.4.

[107]Of over two thousand runic inscriptions in Sweden, kings are mentioned on only three; Sawyer, *Sweden*, p. 9.

satellite states.[108] Client kings could be cultivated with tribute, and might enjoy direct Roman support so that even unpopular client kings could maintain their rule.[109] The frequency with which the Romans intervened in barbarian affairs to restore client kings—or to install replacements—suggests that these rulers often had some level of unpopularity with which to contend.[110]

Although there is no evidence for such an institution in Scandinavia, the creation of a stabilising client kingship in southern Scandinavian could have been quite beneficial to Roman interests in the aftermath of the Marcomannic Wars. It would have provided a degree of influence over a historically important nexus for trade, as well as over potential troublemakers. On the other side of the equation, subsidies (or 'gifts') received from the Romans could have assisted a southern Scandinavian client king in easing the social strains brought about by adverse agro-climatological conditions. Moreover, southern Scandinavians may have been interested in Roman support as an aid to fending off groups like the Saxons, who seem to have been forming and undergoing rapid expansion in this period.

In any event, it seems there was much ado in southern Scandinavia during the RIA. The development of the runic system, the emergence of a new class of princely burials, and the wealth of Roman prestige goods are part of a conjunction of factors suggesting an active, influential and remarkably cosmopolitan élite. The similarities in style between the rich weapon graves of the ERIA and LRIA both in southern Scandinavia and elsewhere in the Germanic world suggest a network of communication, and perhaps a special subculture, among the Germanic élite in general.[111] On the other hand, even in the RIA there seem to have been distinctive cultural differences developing between Scandinavia and the rest of the Germanic world, Romanized or non-Romanized.[112] Although it should be stressed that participants in a distinctly Scandinavian cultural sphere may not have explicitly recognised its existence, such an entity may nonetheless have been emerging in practice in the RIA; its character would become more marked during the EGIA.

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[108]David Braund, 'Ideology, Subsidies and Trade: The King on the Northern Frontier Revisited', in *BARIS471*, pp. 14-26 (pp. 18-19).

[109]David Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King: The Character of the Client Kingship* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), pp. 181-87; Wallace-Hadrill, *Kingship*, p. 7.

[110]As examples, the Romans assisted Catualda in his ousting of Maroboduus and, after Catualda was himself expelled, provided the Suebi with Vannius as king. Vannius himself was then deposed and his successors, Sido and Vangio, established good relations with Rome; the Romans also installed Arminius' nephew Italicus as king of the Cherusci. The Roman establishment of a king over the Quadi during the reign of Antoninus Pius was marked by the issue of commemorative coins. *Annales*, p. 81 (Book 2, Chapter 63); Todd, p. 86-87. Shchukin, p. 254.

[111]Hedeager, 'Empire, Frontier and the Barbarian Hinterland', pp. 130-31.

[112]John Hines, 'Cultural Change and Social Organisation in Early Anglo-Saxon England', in After Empire, pp. 75-88 (pp. 80-81); John Hines, Clasps = Hektespenner = Agraffen: Anglo-Scandinavian Clasps of Classes A-C of the 3rd to 6th Centuries A.D.: Typology, Diffusion and Function (Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, 1993).

CHAPTER 2

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ASPECTS OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SCANDINAVIA DURING THE EARLY GERMANIC IRON AGE

2.1 TRANSITION TO THE EARLY GERMANIC IRON AGE

2.1.1 CHANGING PATTERNS OF WEALTH DEPOSITION

During Scandinavia's RIA, the primary form of wealth deposition had been in burials. With the appearance of strong chieftains and their attendant warrior-bands during the ERIA there was a concurrent growth in the number of weapon graves demonstrating their occupants' places in the hierarchy. This rank-ordering of burials disappeared towards the end of the LRIA, and indeed weapon burials in general decreased during that period until only the very richest graves seem to have contained weapons. Except in northern and eastern parts of Jutland, these high-status graves stood apart from the communal cemeteries.[1] In contrast, the deposition of hoards became increasingly common at the opening of the EGIA. Regarding Danish hoard finds, Hedeager distinguished three different possible kinds of hoards.[2] Two are archaeologically indistinguishable, consisting of a mix of artefact types: these hoards may have been buried for storage or safe-keeping, but equally some may have been buried as offerings. It is even possible that these two motives might have been conflated—a hoard buried for safe-keeping in this world might have benefited its owner in the afterlife if they did not recover it before their death. It is, however, difficult to draw many further conclusions about these two possible hoard groups. The third possible hoard type contains larger hoards with remarkably consistent and distinct artefact sets (which themselves fall into various sub-categories: neck-ring hoards, arm-ring hoards, and bracteate/glass bead/brooch/finger-ring hoards). Hoards of this type are generally found in close geographical association with one another, though there are local variations in content. These hoards are most prominent around central places in south-eastern Fyn (Gudme), south-western Sjælland and Lolland (Stevns/Himlingøje, Neble), and north-eastern and central Jutland (Stentinget), and it may be that they were used in public rituals at such sites.

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[1] Hedeager, *Societies*, pp. 99, 134-35, 151.

[2] Hedeager, *Societies*, pp. 74-76.

2.1.2 SOCIAL CHANGE REFLECTED IN WEALTH DEPOSITION

The marked shift from the investment of wealth in 'princely burials' to votive offerings, if correctly identified, suggests that an important ideological change was taking place in society. It has been postulated that the élite were now sufficiently well-established that they could turn from wealth deposition which promoted their own status to wealth deposition that emphasised their relationship with the gods and ancestors as mediators on the community's behalf.[3]

It may also be that the relative importance of chieftains waned during the EGIA. In this period, the Roman military had disappeared, and chieftains' primary role may have been to serve as community leaders for the consolidated farmsteads and villages which had emerged during the preceding period. The institution of communal votive offerings might suggest a shift of focus away from the élite and towards the community at large, perhaps partially in response to the formation of new, larger, tribal confederations.

Such interpretations may also be supported by evidence concerning changing art styles during the EGIA. Burials in the RIA had most prominently featured imported Roman objects, but locally produced artefacts of Germanic style dominate the hoards of the EGIA.[4] Whereas the élite of the RIA demonstrated status through association with imported Roman objects, in the EGIA items offered to the gods and ancestors were being produced by the local community. The use of native, non-Roman styles on these artefacts may also be significant, perhaps suggesting a conscious effort to establish a native identity.[5]

2.2 EARLY SCANDINAVIAN TRADE & CULT-CENTRES

2.2.1 NEW CENTRES OF WEALTH IN THE DANISH ISLANDS

Centres from which goods were redistributed featured strongly during both the LRIA (exemplified by Stevns/Himlingøje) and the EGIA (exemplified by Gudme). As discussed in §1.5, the situation in the LRIA is far from clear, but it seems at least possible that some kind of overlordship (perhaps held by more than one person) could have exercised authority over a centre such as Stevns/Himlingøje; the prevalence of Roman prestige goods and the possible Roman interest in maintaining a client kingship in southern Scandinavia may be a factor in such an analysis. The third and fourth centuries saw considerable disruptions affecting Europe's social and political map, however, and Roman influences on Scandinavia waned accordingly.

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[3]Hedeager, *Societies*, pp. 80-01.
[4]Hedeager, *Societies*, p. 80.
[5]Hines, 'Cultural', pp. 80-81.

Gudme, on Fyn a few miles from the coast (where another site, Lundeborg, seems to have served as its port), was attracting much of Stevns/Himlingøje's wealth by the end of the ERIA. Gudme's roots lay in the ERIA, but its growth began after upheavals in the Germanic world at the end of the second century. By the end of the third century, Gudme represented the new 'port of entry' for Roman goods into Scandinavia.[6] During the EGIA, Gudme flourished as a site of considerable importance. Many deposits of Roman gold and silver, some of the richest in the Germanic world, have been found in its vicinity.[7] Moreover, archaeologists discovered the remains of an enormous building at Gudme measuring approximately 47 metres by 9 metres.[8]

Lundeborg does not seem to have had buildings more complex than simple huts or booths, though there is evidence for a wide variety of craft activities and trade in Roman imports. The earliest presence dates from *c*. 200, as Gudme's to rise to prominence began, and use of the site seems to have intensified during the fourth century. Lundeborg has yielded some precious metal finds, though most such goods may have been destined for Gudme itself. The quantity of import trade at Lundeborg appears to have slackened in the fifth century, tailing off in the early sixth century, though limited activity persisted until the end of the seventh century.[9]

In contrast to Stevns/Himlingøje, the Gudme complex flourished primarily during the EGIA when wealth deposition practices (§2.1.1) suggest social focus on the general community rather than on its chieftains and their associates. Though Gudme's wealth reflects the importation of Roman precious metals, the objects found in Gudme's hoards are largely of local craftsmanship—Roman gold has been reworked in Germanic styles. These differences suggest that Stevns/Himlingøje and Gudme may have differed subtly but significantly in function.

2.2.2 EARLY GERMANIC CULTS & CULT-CENTRES

Scholars arguing for the establishment of a strong Danish kingdom-state in the early centuries AD have naturally seized on the rich and remarkable finds from Gudme as supporting evidence; like Stevns/Himlingøje, Gudme has been interpreted as the seat of overlords who controlled the distribution of prestige-goods throughout Southern Scandinavia. Klavs Randsborg, however, has cautioned that such interpretations may be

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[6]Per O. Thomsen, 'Lundeborg: A Trading Centre from the 3rd-7th Century AD', in *AoMS*, pp. 133-44 (p. 133); Lund Hansen, *Römischer*, pp. 216-38.

[7]Todd, pp 98-99.

[8]P.O. Nielsen and Palle Ø. Sørensen, 'Jernalderhal udgravet i Gudme', *Nyt fra Nationalmuseet*, 59 (1993), 4-5.

[9]Per O. Thomsen, 'Lundeborg—an Early Port of Trade in South-East Funen', in *AoGaL*, pp. 23-29; Thomsen, 'Trading Centre', pp. 135-36; Per O. Thomsen, 'Lundeborg—en handelsplads gennem 600 år', in *Samfundsorganisation*, pp. 25-32.

anachronistic,[10] and moreover Ole Crumlin-Pedersen has argued that they do not fit with evidence put forward by scholars like Björn Myhre and Jørn Lønstrup, suggesting that EGIA Scandinavia may have been divided amongst various independent local chieftaincies.[11] An alternative interpretation views Gudme and similar sites as cult-centres to which people from all over southern Scandinavia might have brought offerings in exchange for ceremonial objects and where they could engage in more mundane trading with other pilgrims.[12]

The Germanic tribal confederations Tacitus and Pliny described—the Inguaeones, Herminones, and Istuaeones—are often understood as cultic leagues of some kind. Whatever kind of organisations these were, they do not seem to have survived the unrest that gripped the Germanic world at the end of the second century AD. However, traditions of one cult group Tacitus mentioned seem to have survived into the Viking Age:

> Reudigni deinde et Aviones et Anglii et Varini et Eudoses et Suarines et Nuitones fluminibus aut silvis muniuntur. nec quicquam notabile in singulis, nisi quod in commune Nerthum, id est Terram matrem, colunt eamque intervenire rebus hominum, invehi populis arbitrantur. est in insula Oceani castum nemus, dicatumque in eo vehiculum, veste contectum; attingere uni sacerdoti concessum. is adesse penetrali deam intellegit vectamque bubus feminis multa cum veneratione prosequitur. laeti tunc dies, festa loca, quaecumque adventu hospitioque dignatur. non bella ineunt, non arma sumunt; clausum omne ferrum; pax et quies tunc tantum nota, tunc tantum amata, donec idem sacerdos satiatam conversatione mortalium deam templo reddat.[13]

The deity-name *Nerthus* (PG **Nerþuz*) has an exact phonological descendant in medieval ON *Njǫrðr*. There can be hardly any doubt that the two deities are linked, the fact that Nerthus is female and Njǫrðr male notwithstanding.[14] In *Ynglinga saga*, Snorri wrote that Njǫrðr married his own sister, producing Freyr and Freyja.[15] Similarly, in *Locasenna*, Loki accuses Njǫrðr of fathering a child on his own sister.[16] Some scholars have thereby postulated that Njǫrðr represented the male element of a god/goddess pair, similar to that of Freyr and Freyja.[17] Another possibility is that as the PG *u*-stem nouns (such as

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[10]Klavs Randsborg, 'Gudme-Lundeborg: Interpretive Scenarios and Thoughts', in *AoGaL*, pp. 209-13 (p. 209).

[11]Crumlin-Pedersen, 'Maritime', pp. 49-51; Lønstrup, 'Mosefund', pp.94-95; Myhre, 'Boat houses', pp. 50, 56; Myhre, 'Chieftains', pp. 186-87. See §1.5.3.

[12]These two interpretations essentially form the two poles in debate of Gudme's function(s); Randsborg, 'Gudme-Lundeborg', p. 210, 212.

[13]*Germania*, pp. 26-27 (Chapter 40).

[14]There may be some Swedish place-names which used the name *Njǫrðr* in reference to a goddess rather than to a god; Elias Wessén, 'Schwedische Ortnamen und altnordische Mythologie', *Acta Philologica Scandinavica*, 4 (1929-30), 97-115.

[15]*Heimskringla*, I, 13.

[16]*Locasenna*, in Neckel-Kuhn, pp. 96-110 (p. 103, v. 36).

[17]Jan de Vries suggested that a female Nerthus was originally paired with a male precursor of Skaði; de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte*, II, 338.

**Nerþuz*) became exclusively masculine in gender (as they had by the time of the earliest sources mentioning Njǫrðr), the deity's sex had changed to match her/his grammatical gender.[18] Another possible explanation is that Tacitus simply misunderstood his information, reporting a male deity as female. It has been pointed out that Tacitus' own status as a priest would have entitled him to participate in ceremonies honouring Cybele or Magna Mater which involved the lustration of wagons and cows, and that this might have led him to change a male Nerthus into a female earth deity.[19]

Njǫrðr does not figure prominently in the Eddas. Perhaps his importance was waning by the end of the Viking Age; the cults of his offspring, Freyr and Freyja, may have made Njǫrðr redundant.[20] It is also possible that Þórr's and Óðinn's cults were edging Njǫrðr's out. Nevertheless, Njǫrðr's common occurrence in records of toasts, oaths, and appeals indicate that he was once far more important than the surviving mythological material suggests, even though he is often accompanied by Freyr in these circumstances.[21] Snorri Sturluson wrote that Njǫrðr (along with Freyr) was appointed a *blótgoð* by Óðinn, and that Sigurðr Hlaðajarl drank to Njǫrðr (and Freyr) *til árs ok friðar*.[22] *Landnámabók* records an oath, to be sworn on a ring before legal actions can proceed, which includes the phrase *hjálpi mér svá Freyr ok Njǫrðr ok hinn almáttki áss*.[23] Egill Skallagrímsson invoked Njǫrðr (and Freyr, and Óðinn) in a *níð*-verse against Eiríkr blóðøx.[24] In a different poem, Egill stated that his friend Arinbjǫrn was granted his wealth by Njǫrðr (and Freyr), which recalls Snorri Sturluson's statement that Njǫrðr grants prayers to him for wealth in goods and land and that he can be referred to as the *fegiafa* (or *gefianda*) *gvð*.[25] The idiom *auðigr sem Njǫrðr* also associates the god with wealth.[26] Lastly, Njǫrðr's possible title *vagna gvð* strongly recalls Nerthus's wagon-borne perambulations, described by Tacitus.[27]

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[18]It has been suggested that *Heimskringla* and *Locasenna* might preserve a confused memory of a time when the deity's sex was changing from female to male; R.W. Chambers, *Widsith: A Study in Old English Heroic Legend* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1912), p. 70, n. 4.

[19]Eve Picard, *Germanisches Sakralkönigtum?: Quellenkritische Studien zur Germania des Tacitus und zur Altnordischen Überlieferung*, Skandinavistische Arbeiten, 12 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1991), pp. 172-83.

[20]See §3.2.2.

[21]Perhaps originally Njǫrðr stood alone in such contexts, though with the rise of Freyr's cult the two gods' functions were coupled.

[22]*Heimskringla*, I, 13, 168; *Snorra Edda*, p. 31; *SnEdHafn*, I, 96.

[23]*Landnámabók*, in *Íslendingabók, Landnámabók*, ed. by Jakob Benediktsson, in Íslenzk fornrit, 1 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1968). pp. 29-397 (p. 315). Much speculation attends the phrase *hinn almáttki áss*, but what is perhaps most remarkable is the juxtaposition of such a phrase beside the names of Njǫrðr and Freyr, who are not themselves Æsir, but Vanir.

[24]*Skjaldedigtning*, B.1, 46-47.

[25]*Skjaldedigtning*, B.1, 40; *Snorra Edda*, 30, 97; *SnEdHafn*, I, 92, 260.

[26]*Vatnsdœla saga*, in *Vatnsdœla saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, Íslenzkt fornrit, 8 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1939), pp. 1-131 (p. 130).

[27]The R manuscript (Royal Library Copenhagen, Gks 2367, 4to) of Snorri's Edda has the form *vagnagvð*, usually emended to *Vana gvð*. The W manuscript (Arnamagnæan Institute, Copenhagen, AM 242, fol.) has *vanga*, with the *g* marked for deletion by a subscript dot in a later hand; *Snorra Edda*, p. 97 n.

The activity of the Nerthus cult seems to have been focused on a particular site: a holy grove on an island. Such a situation is not unique in a Germanic context. The island of Walachern, near the mouth of the Old Rhine, seems to have been a cult site of some kind as late as the eighth century.[28] Likewise, there are records of an island dedicated to the god called Fosite.[29] It is not clear where the tribes participating in the Nerthus cult lived, but the Danish islands are a strong possibility.

The large Møllegårdsmarken cemetery, in use primarily from the first to fourth centuries AD, attests to the Gudme region's sacral nature even before the third and fourth century growth.[30] The name *Gudme* comes from *Guðheimr*, meaning 'place/home of the gods', and there are several other religiously-oriented place-names near Gudme.[31] It is worth comparing this situation to that at Helgö ('Holy Island') in Lake Mälaren, which seems to have flourished in the sixth and seventh centuries, though activity appears to have begun as early as the fourth century.[32] Of course, identifying the Nerthus cult site which Tacitus described (assuming his description did not conflate several similar sites) is ultimately unimportant. What is important is the evidence for a cult and its central cultic place as an inter-tribal focus in southern Scandinavia.

2.3 CULT-CENTRE & ÞING AS IDEOLOGICAL FOCI

There is no contemporary documentation to tell us whether or not a non-royal cult-centre existed at Gudme during the EGIA.[33] It is, however, worth considering later evidence about other Germanic centres which may have had similar functions. Iceland's Alþingi served as the central focus for a kingless society into the late thirteenth century, and seems to have involved functions of a cultic nature. The relentlessly anti-monarchist Old Saxons held a not dissimilar public assembly at Marklohe until their conquest by Charlemagne, after which the assembly was outlawed. Significantly, while aristocratic élites played important roles in both the Icelandic and Saxon assemblies, neither of these

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6 & n. to l. 16; *SnEdHafn*, I, 260 n. 12. Freyr is also associated with wagons; *Ǫgmundar þáttr dytts*, in *Eyfirðinga sǫgur*, ed. by Jónas Kristjánsson, Íslensk fornrit, 9 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1956), pp. 99-115 (pp. 111-15). See also §3.2.2 & §3.2.3.

[28]Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi Archepiscopi Traiectensis Auctore Alcuino*, in *Willibrord Apostel der Friesen: Seine Vita nach Alkuin und Thiofrid; lateinisch-deutsch*, ed. and trans. by Hans-Joachim Reischmann (Sigmaringendorf: Glock & Lutz, 1989), pp. 43-89 (pp. 66-69, Chapter 14).

[29]Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi*, pp. 60-63 (Chapter 10).

[30]Karsten Kjer Michaelsen, 'Iron Age Cemeteries and Settlement Structure in the Gudme-Lundeborg Area', in *AoGaL*, pp. 48-52.

[31]J. Kousgård Sørensen, 'Gudhem' in *Gudmeproblemer*, ed. by Henrik Thrane, Skrifter fra Historisk Institut Odense Universitet, 33 (Odense: Odense universitet, Historisk institut, 1985), pp. 10-17 (p. 15). There are five other surviving place-names of this type in modern Denmark, and others elsewhere in Scandinavia; John Kousgård Sørensen, 'Gudhem', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 19 (1985), 131-38.

[32]Eva Bergström, 'Early Iron Age', *Current Swedish Archaeology*, 3 (1995), 55-66 (p. 62); Stefan Brink, 'Cult Sites in Northern Sweden', in *ONaFRaCPN*, pp. 458-89 (pp. 479-80). See §3.1.5.

[33]Although Tacitus described strong leaders among Continental Germanic tribal confederations closer to the Roman *limes* (§1.2.4) and provided the strange account of the Suiones' kingship (§1.5.3), he mentioned no chieftains in connection with the Nerthus cult.

involved a king and indeed, seem explicitly to have excluded the concept of kingship.[34] The conservative nature of both societies lends weight to an understanding of sites like Gudme as ideological centres unconnected with an overlordship. Such sites could have provided neutral meeting grounds for competing chieftains and a distinctly non-Roman ideological focus for cult-participants.

2.3.1 THE ICELANDIC ALÞINGI AS CENTRE OF CULT & COMMUNITY

The *þing*, a word of uncertain etymology meaning 'a public meeting of free adult males', was a common feature of Scandinavian society during the Viking and Middle Ages.[35] *Þing* might be local meetings or regional assemblies and were the arenas in which legislative and judicial issues were worked out. They also served as communal foci. A *þing*'s name—like *Gulaþing* or *Frostaþing*—could serve to identify the community of its constituents and, by extension, the territory in which they lived.[36] Medieval Scandinavian *þing* (and the Old Saxon assembly at Marklohe) were part of a long tradition of representative, horizontal government stretching back to the Germanic *consilia* Tacitus described.[37]

Information about *þing* in mainland Scandinavia stems mostly from medieval documents written during a period in which kings had been firmly incorporated into the operation of the *þing*. Both in Norway and Sweden, would-be royal claimants needed to present themselves at regional *þing* if their kingship was to be confirmed. Iceland is notable for having formed an independent and kingless society, and it was the only medieval Scandinavian country to hold a national assembly: the Alþingi.

According to Ari Þorgilsson, a certain Úlfljótr spent time in Norway preparing laws for Iceland (*Úlfljótslǫg*) modelled on those of the Norwegian Gulaþing.[38] Upon Úlfljótr's return to Iceland, the Alþingi was established under his direction, probably

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[34]It is interesting to note that in describing Dan and Angul, the legendary leaders of the early Danes, Saxo says that 'regii tamen nominis expertes degebant, cuius usum nulla tunc temporis apud nostros consuetudinum frequentabat auctoritas'; *Gesta Danorum*, p. 10 (Book 1). This description might represent the memory of a time when southern Scandinavian society was not ruled by kings, perhaps during Gudme's *floruit*. It is difficult to say whether a similar situation is recalled in *Ynglinga saga*, where Snorri said that ancient Scandinavian leaders were titled *dróttnar* rather than *konungar*. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson suggested that Snorri may have acquired this idea from *Ynglingatal*, where Dómaldi is described as a *dróttinn* while his successor Dyggvi is called a *konungmann*; *Heimskringla*, I, 34 n. 1. Green, however, argued that Snorri's distinction 'is not to be dismissed out of hand as an etymological game'; Green, *Language*, p. 129.

[35]Generally, on the subject of *þing*, see Kjell Å. Modéer and others, 'Ting', *KLNM*, xviii (1974), col. 334-66. The term is well attested in NG and WG, though the Gothic cognate *þeihs* meant 'fixed or appointed time', suggesting that the terms in NG and WG might have originally held the sense 'time of assembly'; see *OED*, xvii, 941 (*sv* 'thing').

[36]The term *lǫg* could be used in a similar fashion; *Þrændalǫg* is an example of such usage, referring to a people (and thus the regions in which they lived) governed by a particular custom of laws. *Lǫg* could also be appended to *þing*-names, as in *Gulaþingslǫg*. Interestingly, this kind of geographical use of names with *-lǫg* was adapted for the English term *Danelaw*; prior to the nineteenth century this term referred only to actual laws, and not a region; *OED*, IV, 240, (*sv* 'Dane-law').

[37]*Germania*, pp. 9-11 (Chapter 11-13).

[38]*Íslendingabók*, pp. 6-9, 11-13.

shortly before 930. The Alþingi contained a legislative body (*lǫgrétta*) and also judicial bodies—the *fjórðungsdómar* (dealing with lawsuits from the different *fjórðungar* into which Iceland was administratively divided) and, later, the *fimtardómr* (a kind of supreme court of appeals, which primarily handled issues not resolved in a *fjórðungsdómr*). The officers presiding at these institutions, as well as at local *þing* and in other official functions, were called *goðar*; a *goði*'s officership was termed a *goðorð*. There seem to have been thirty-six or thirty-nine *goðorð* when the Alþingi was established.[39]

The word *goði* is almost always translated into English as 'chieftain', yet its etymology suggests the original meaning was 'priest', as for Gothic *gudja*; these terms are related to ModE 'god'.[40] Three rune-stones on Fyn seem to use *goði* in the compounds **nuʀakuþi** (on two stones) and **sauluakuþa** (dative singular, on one stone),[41] but the term is otherwise found only in Icelandic sources (though *Landnámabók* tells us that one early settler, Þórhaddr inn gamli, had been a *hofgoði* in Norway).[42] Almost certainly, the term *goði* originally designated a person with a religious function, but it is unclear how the Icelandic sense developed stronger connotations of political authority. Early *goðar* seem to have been responsible for overseeing religious affairs in their *goðorð*, and we are told they conducted sacrifices and maintained temples.[43] It is thought that Icelandic *goðar* derived their secular power from their religious authority.[44] Such a process may have been more possible for Icelandic *goðar* than mainland Scandinavian *goðar*, as there was no established hereditary nobility in Iceland (though many Icelandic *goðar* claimed descent from Scandinavian nobility). After Iceland's Christianization, it would have been impossible for *goðar* to maintain their heathen religious roles, and perhaps their secular functions appear additionally emphasised by the fact that all our Icelandic textual sources are Christian-era.[45] Many post-conversion *goðar* had

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[39]Jón Jóhannesson, *A History of the Old Icelandic Commonwealth: Íslendinga Saga*, trans. by Haraldur Bessason (Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 1974), p. 55 [a translation of Jón Jóhannesson, *Íslendinga saga* (Reykjavík: Almenna Bókafélagið, 1956)]. Generally on *goðar* and their functions, see Lúðvík Ingvarson, *Goðorð og Goðorðsmenn*, 3 vols (Oddi: Egilsstöðum, 1986).

[40]*Landnámabók*, p. 307. An exact Icelandic cognate of Gothic *gudja* would be ***gyði*. Such a form is not attested, although a feminine version of this form is, Icelandic *gyðja* (generally translated 'priestess'; it can also mean 'goddess'); Cleasby-Vigfusson, p. 208 (*sv* 'goði').

[41]*DR*, I, 223-25 (225), 226-28 (228), 248-53 (252) (DR 190; DR 192; DR 209). An older form is **gudija**, found on the Nordhuglo stone in Hordaland, Norway, *c*. ad 400/425; Krause-Jankuhn, p. 146 (no. 65).

[42]It is possible that the word *goði* is preserved in some OSw placenames, such as *Gudhaby* and *Lyþguþawi* (the latter possibly including a title which OIce would have rendered **ljóðgoði* or **lýðgoði*, perhaps analogous to *ljóðbiskup* or *lýðbiskup*); K.F. Söderwall and others, *Ordbok öfver svenska medeltids-språket*, Samlingar utgifna af Svenska fornskrift-sällskapet, 3 vols (Lund: Berling, 1884-1973) I, 432 (*sv* 'guþi?'), 771 (*sv* 'liuþguþi').

[43]Archaeological evidence of such temples is hard to come by, and regular dwelling halls may have served as temples, leaving them effectively indistinguishable from other structures in the archaeological record

[44]Jón Jóhannesson, *Commonwealth*, p. 53.

[45]Jón Jóhannesson, *Commonwealth*, pp. 165-66. Conversely, if there were *goðar* in mainland Scandinavia, and their function was entirely religious, then they would have disappeared as a class after the conversion to Christianity while chieftains, as political leaders without religious authority, would have continued their roles within the new religious climate.

themselves ordained as Christian priests, probably in order to maintain their combination of sacral and secular authority. In response to the archbishop of Trondheim's efforts to separate church and state power in Iceland during the late twelfth century, such *goðar* sometimes devolved religious duties to priests who operated under their auspices.[46]

Although modern scholars are accustomed to thinking about the Alþingi primarily in secular terms, its cultic functions are undeniable and appear prominently in the *alþingishelgun* performed by the *allsherjargoði* at the Alþingi's opening. Such practices go back to the time of Tacitus, who describes Germanic assemblies being initiated by priests.[47] The cultic associations of *þing* also can be detected in the term *vébǫnd* for the cords surrounding the legislative bodies of Norwegian *þing*, as well as from descriptions in *Guta saga* of sacrificial feasts at *þing*.[48] Such cultic functions are echoed in Scandinavian mythological sources. *Vǫlospá* describes the Æsir meeting *á þingi*,[49] and in Snorri's Edda, it is said that the gods' chief centre or holy place is beneath the world tree where they hold their *dómr* (or *dómstaðr*) each day. Snorri cited *Grímnismál*'s description of Þórr travelling daily to judgement beneath the world tree.[50] These passages imply links between *þing* sites and religious activity, and the association with the world tree may be significant. Outside mythology, trees, pillars, or groves are strongly associated with Germanic cult sites: Nerthus's island grove,[51] the Uppsala temple tree described by Adam of Bremen,[52] the Old Saxons' 'oak of Jupiter' at Geismar,[53] and the pre-Christian Old Saxons' Irminsul ('mighty pillar', though described alternatively as shrine or idol by the Franks) at Eresburg.[54]

Besides its legal and religious functions, the Alþingi also functioned as an annual fair. *Goðar* were required to attend the Alþingi,[55] but people from all walks of Icelandic life appeared there: merchants, craftsmen, entertainers, vagrants. Business might be transacted, marriages arranged, and the Alþingi was the best chance for folk to hear news from other regions. In short, the Alþingi was the legal, social, and ideological centre of Icelandic society. Mainland Scandinavian *þing* must have fulfilled similar roles. Snorri Sturluson described the Uppsalaþing in terms which emphasise its continuing function as

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[46]Magnús Stefánsson, 'Kyrkjuvald eflist', in *Saga Íslands: Samin að tilhlutan þjóðhátiðarnefndar 1974*, ed. by Sigurður Líndal, (Reykjavík: Sögufélagið, 1974-), II, 55-146 (pp. 86-91).

[47]*Germania*, pp. 9-10 (Chapter 11).

[48]*Guta saga*, in *Guta lag och Guta saga: jämte ordbok*, ed. by Hugo Pipping, Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur, 33 (Copenhagen: Møllers, 1905-07), pp. 62-69 (pp. 63-64).

[49]*Vǫlospá*, in Neckel-Kuhn, pp. 1-16 (p. 12, v. 48).

[50]*Snorra Edda*, pp. 22-23; *SnEdHafn*, I, 68-72; *Grímnismál*, in Neckel-Kuhn, pp. 57-68 (p. 63, v. 29).

[51]*Germania*, pp.26-27 (Chapter 40).

[52]Adam of Bremen, p. 260 (Book 4, Chapter 27).

[53]Willibald, *Vita s. Bonifacii archiespicopi*, in *Scriptores rerum Sangallensium: Annales, chronica et historiae aevi Carolini*, ed. by Georgicus Heinricus Pertz, MGH: Scriptores (in folio), 2 (Hannover: Hahn, 1829), pp. 331-53 (pp. 343-44, Chapter 6).

[54]*(R)RFA*, pp. 32-35 (*sa* 772).

[55]But see §3.1.3.

a social and economic event of considerable magnitude even after being stripped of its pre-Christian religious functions:[56]

> Í Svíþjóðu var þat forn landsiðr, meðan heiðni var þar, at hǫfuðblót skyldi vera at Uppsǫlum at gói. Skyldi þá blóta til friðar ok sigrs konungi sínum, ok skyldu menn þangat sœkja um allt Svíaveldi. Skyldi þar þá ok vera þing allra Svía. Þar var ok þá markaðr ok kaupstefna ok stóð viku. En er kristni var í Svíþjóð, þá helzk þar þó lǫgþing ok markaðr. En nú síðan er kristni var alsiða í Svíþjóð, en konungar afrœkðusk at sitja at Uppsǫlum, þá var fœrðr markaðrinn ok hafðr kyndilmessu. Hefir þat haldizk all stund siðan, ok er nú hafðr eigi meiri en stendr þrjá daga. Er þar þing Svía, ok sœkja þeir þar til um allt land.[57]

The cultic and communal functions exemplified in the Icelandic Alþingi and Swedish Uppsalaþing might also have been present in a communal cult-centre at Gudme.

2.3.2 THE OLD SAXON ASSEMBLY AS CENTRE OF CULT & COMMUNITY

It is often assumed that the Icelandic Alþingi was a unique, innovative development in medieval government.[58] While the Alþingi was doubtless unique in detail, it nevertheless seems broadly similar to the Old Saxon Assembly at Marklohe. There is very little information about this latter institution, in comparison to the Icelandic Alþingi, and it is described best in the *Vita Lebuini antiqua*:

> Regem antiqui Saxones non habebant, sed per pagos satrapas constitutos; morisque erat, ut semel in anno generale consilum agerent in media Saxonia iuxta fluvium Wisuram AD locum qui dicitur Marklo. Solebant ibi omnes in unum satrapae convenire, ex pagis quoque singulis duodecim electi nobiles totidemque liberi totidemque lati. Renovabant ibi leges, praecipuas causas adiudicabant et, quid per annum essent acturi sive in bello sive in pace, communi consilio statuebant. […] Igitur advenerat dies statuti consilii, advenerunt satrapae, assunt et alii, quos adesse oportebat. Tunc in unum conglobati fecerunt iuxta ritum in primis supplicationem AD deos, postulantes tuitionem

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[56]Birgit and Peter Sawyer characterized the Uppsalaþing—known in OSw sources as the *disaþing*—as the only pre-Christian Scandinavian assembly that was not 'converted' by association with Christian festivals. It continued to be held throughout the medieval period. After the conversion Uppsala seems to have maintained a religious role as a Christian cult-centre, becoming an archbishopric in 1164 and continuing as such (though moved slightly from Gamla Uppsala to modern Uppsala) to this day; Birgit and Peter Sawyer, *Medieval Scandianvia: From Conversion to Reformation, circa 800-1500*, The Nordic Series, 17 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), pp. 109, 149; Sawyer, *Making*, p. 18; John Granlund, 'Disting', in *KLNM*, III (1958), col. 111-115.

[57]*Heimskringla*, II, 109 (Chapter 77).

[58]For example, Jesse L. Byock, *Medieval Iceland: Society, Sagas, and Power*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) pp. 51-52, 70-71.

> deorum patriae suae, et ut possent in ipso conventu statuere sibi utilia et quae forent placita omnibus diis. Deinde disposito grandi orbe concionari coeperunt.[59]

At the Assembly, the missionary Lebuin informs the Saxons that God commands them to convert, foretelling that although they have not previously had a king, they will be conquered by one—Charlemagne, of course—if they do not heed God's mandate. The Saxons receive these admonitions poorly. They attack Lebuin, but he is whisked to safety by a miracle.

Though it purports to describe events of the seventh century, the *Vita Lebuini antiqua* was clearly written in the ninth. Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* would surely have been known to Lebuin's biographer, but although Bede touched on the Old Saxons and their kinglessness, he provided a briefer description which lends weight to the *Vita Lebuini antiqua*'s authority as an independent source:

> Non enim habent regem idem Antiqui Saxones, sed satrapas plurimos suae genti praepositos, qui ingruente belli articulo mittunt aequaliter sortes, et quemcumque sors ostenderit, hunc tempore belli ducem omnes sequuntur, huic obtemperant; peracto autem bello, rursum aequalis potentiae omnes fiunt satrapae.[60]

The absence of kings is explicitly noted in both accounts, and Reuter has suggested the system's primary purpose was to prevent a kingly office's emergence.[61]

The *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*, issued by Charlemagne in the early 780s (well before the Saxon Wars were concluded), reads in its final provision: 'Interdiximus ut omnes Saxones generalites conventus publicos nec faciant … et hoc a sacerdotibus consideretur, ne aliter faciat'.[62] The *Capitulatio* moreover prescribes particularly harsh penalties for offences against the king (and his representatives) or Christianity—the Marklohe assembly probably entailed both. Like the Icelandic Alþingi, the Old Saxon Assembly was a clear descendant of the *consilia* Tacitus described, having both governmental and religious functions. While the Icelanders chose to adopt Christianity and subsequently adapted their governmental structure to the new religious system, the Franks Christianized the Saxons by the sword, and no element of the former system could be tolerated. These dire measures deemed necessary by the Franks underline the Old Saxon Assembly's ideological significance. Like the later Scandinavian *þing*, the Old Saxon Assembly helped to reaffirm the community's unity by reinforcing identification

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[59] *Vita Lebuini antiqua*, ed. by Oswald Holder-Egger and Adolfus Hofmeister, in *Supplementa*, MGH: Scriptores (in Folio), 30, 2 vols (Leipzig: Hierseman, 1896-1934), II: *Supplementa tomorum I-XV*, ed. by Adolfus Hofmeister and others (1934), 789-95 (pp. 793-94) (Chapters 4 & 6).

[60] *HE*, pp. 299-300 (Book V, Chapter 10).

[61] Reuter, *Germany*, pp. 66-7.

[62] *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*, ed. by A. Boretius, in *Capitularia regum Francorum*, ed. by A. Boretius and Viktor Krause, MGH: Leges: Capitularia regum Francorum, 2 vols (Hannover: Hahn, 1883-97), I (1883), 68-70 (p. 70).

with the assembly—in other words, the assembly itself served as an ideological focus for the community.

2.4 FACTORS AFFECTING GERMANIC CULT-CENTRES' ESTABLISHMENT

2.4.1 THE SITUATION IN EGIA SCANDINAVIA

If there had been an overlordship in southern Scandinavia during the LRIA which had been in some way dependent on Roman support (§1.5.4), the withdrawal of that support for whatever reason likewise might have spelled the end of the overlordship. David Braund wrote, 'It is an anthropological cliché that the worth of a ruler may be conceived in terms of natural fertility', and noted Ammianus Marcellinus' account of how a Burgundian king (*hendinos*) would be deposed upon crop failures.[63] If Scandinavians were inclined similarly to rid themselves of rulers with the misfortune to preside in inauspicious times, slackening support from Rome in the face of unresolved (or unsatisfactorily resolved) social and agro-climatic pressures could have provided just the excuse they needed to rid themselves of not just a particular overlord but the very office of overlord. Because our knowledge of southern Scandinavia's social organisation during the LRIA remains uncertain, we must not construct a picture of the EGIA's social organisation dependent on a particular understanding of that preceding period. Yet there are good, independent reasons to postulate the emergence of a communal cult-centre as the ideological focus for all of southern Scandinavia during the EGIA.

Regardless of whether or not there had previously been a client king in the region, the archaeological record, as discussed above, suggests considerable changes in both the nature and function of materials being imported into Scandinavia at the opening of the EGIA and perhaps a renewed focus on the community as a whole. Existing cult-centres would have been well-poised to increase their statures in such an environment. If there were communal functions which took place at the Nerthus cult-centre, Tacitus did not describe them. Indeed, the Nerthus cult as described by Tacitus appears to have been one in which the sacred was brought out into the wider community, as Nerthus' chariot travelled among the tribes, as opposed to one in which members of the community gathered for rituals at a sacred centre.[64] A combination of the *consilium*'s and cult-centre's functions, however, would have made an unquestionably powerful social focus. In fact, the dual religious and legal functions of the Icelandic Alþingi and Old Saxon Assembly indicate that combinations of this kind indeed took place at some point—moreover, the prominence of Njǫrðr (and his son Freyr) in Icelandic legal oaths suggest a

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[63]David Braund, 'Ideology', pp. 14, 18-19; Ammianus Marcellinus, *Ammiani Marcellini rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, ed. by Victor Gardthausen, Bib. Teub., 2 vols (Stutgardt: Teubner, 1967), II, 154 (Book 28, Chapter 5.14). See §2.4.4.

[64]A similar approach may have existed in the later cult of Freyr; see §3.2.2.

combination of the *consilium* with Nerthus's cult itself. As northern Europe's climate was getting colder and wetter in the LRIA and GIA,[65] a fertility cult such as Nerthus's could have been powerfully attractive as climatological pressures made agricultural fertility an issue of great import.

2.4.2 THE ICELANDIC ALÞINGI'S RELATIVE UNIQUENESS

Some have suggested that societies developing from an isolated fragment of a parent society may, through looking inward, develop new and remarkable features that could not have developed in the original, mainstream parent society; this theory has been used to explain the medieval Icelandic Commonwealth's apparently unique development. Icelandic society, it has been argued, developed its particular forms in an environment where law had a greater influence than kinship or traditional community structures.[66] Yet we may question whether this was so. After all, many prominent early Icelandic settlers seem to have shared kinship.[67] Furthermore, Scandinavian kingship was developing towards its medieval forms at the same time that the Icelanders were establishing their Alþingi; the Icelanders themselves cherished the belief that they formed their society as a reaction to the tyranny of the Norwegian king Harald hárfagri. In some senses, the Icelandic Commonwealth was no more a new society than were other Scandinavian societies—though the other Scandinavian societies were more strongly influenced by the continental models which underlie our opinions about what is mainstream.

Other arguments suggest that Icelandic society's development was strongly influenced by an environment which dictated a thinly settled land of nucleated farms and estates. This environment in itself does not seem reason enough to cause the establishment of a kingless society, but the mix of immigrants from various different regions of Scandinavia—each with its own laws and customs—may well have spurred the establishment of a single set of Icelandic laws and customs as a convenience. It may be significant that the Icelanders referred their society as *vár lǫg*.[68] Iceland was starting not so much from a blank slate, as is sometimes suggested, as a slate scribbled on by many hands. As with the Icelandic Alþingi, an EGIA cult-centre might have served to unify disparate micro-cultures from all around southern (and coastal) Scandinavia.

Yet in the end, most attempts to explain Iceland's kingless society start with the assumption of its uniqueness, and therefore require unique circumstances with which to

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[65]Hedeager, *Societies*, pp. 206-09.

[66]Richard S. Tomasson, *Iceland: The First New Society* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), p.4; Louis Hartz, *The Founding of New Societies* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1984), pp. 4, 6. It must be said that attempts to separate the influences of law and kinship on Icelandic society seem to be making a somewhat unreal distinction; as elsewhere in Scandinavia, issues of law and kinship seem to have been intricately interwoven in Iceland.

[67]Jón Jóhannesson, *Commonwealth*, p. 38.

[68]Jón Jóhannesson, *Commonwealth*, p. 40. See §3.4.5.

explain its formation. The existence of the Saxon Assembly however, shows that whatever unique aspects Iceland's society might have had, kinglessness and the use of a communal assembly as an ideological focus were not among them. Given the scanty evidence for conditions in the EGIA there is a danger of circular argumentation, but it is possible that the Icelandic Alþingi was intended as a deliberately archaic re-creation of a communal cultic assembly.

2.4.3 ORIGINS OF THE OLD SAXON ASSEMBLY & THE ICELANDIC ALÞINGI

Saxony was not a harsh, remote land newly settled by recent immigrants, so if such conditions were an influence on the Icelandic Alþingi's establishment, the Old Saxon Assembly was clearly formed without them. However, the amalgamation of various older tribal formations into a new Saxon tribal league, which spent most of its recorded history expanding, may have produced a need for a common legal and ideological focus. Such a situation would not be dissimilar to that which Iceland may have faced (§2.4.2). Whether the Saxon expansion was primarily the result of military conquest or a more peaceful process of 'cumulative Saxonicity' (or both) is uncertain, but there is no indication that the Saxons had ever been politically united under an overlord. Had they been, that office had disappeared without trace by the seventh century, replaced with the Assembly at Marklohe. Saxon chieftains may have found a general assembly a more tolerable means of unification than a single overlord. The Old Saxon Assembly's power to appoint a temporary war-leader recalls Tacitus' distinction between Germanic *reges* ('ex nobilitate … sumunt') and *duces* ('ex virtute sumunt').[69] It may be that there was never sufficient military pressure on the Saxons for a temporary war-leader to transform himself into a permanent king, though Widukind, the Saxon leader in the wars with Charlemagne, may have had such aspirations (§3.1.3).[70] Such a move would recall the actions of Arminius and Maroboduus (§1.2.4).

More is known about the establishment of the Alþingi than of the Old Saxon Assembly, though the exact motivations for and the circumstances of the Alþingi's establishment are not entirely clear. Ari Þorgilsson wrote that Grímr geitskǫr (foster-brother of that Úlfljótr who prepared the *Úlfljótslǫg*) 'kannaði Ísland allt at ráði hans [Úlfljóts] áðr alþingi væri átt', and also that before the establishment of the Alþingi at Þingvǫllr there was a *þing* established at Kjalarnes by Þorsteinn Ingólfsson (son of Ingólfr Arnarson, Iceland's 'first settler').[71] According to *Landnámabók*, the successors

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[69] *Germania*, p. 6 (Chapter 7).

[70] Ian N. Wood, 'Pagan Religion and Superstition East of the Rhine from the Fifth to the Ninth Century', in *After Empire*, pp. 253-79 (p. 263).

[71] *Íslendingabók*, pp. 6-9. Ari's strange passage about the murder of the thrall Kolr on land later set aside as *allsherjarfé* as common land for use during the Alþingi is difficult to interpret, but may dimly recall a sacrifice associated with the Alþingi's establishment.

to Þorsteinn's chieftainship continued to perform the ritual *alþingishelgun*,[72] suggesting that the Kjalarnes *þing* functioned as the Alþingi's immediate antecedent. Jón Jóhannesson suggested that Þorsteinn Ingólfsson wished to establish a unifying assembly for Iceland and that Grímr's exploration was intended to select a site more suitable than Kjalarnes.[73] The need to unite populations of disparate origin and the lack of any severe external military threat may have characterised both the Icelandic and Old Saxon societies and may have influenced the establishments of their respective communal assemblies.

2.4.4 ORIGINS OF AN EGIA SCANDINAVIAN CULT-CENTRE?

Though this study argues that Gudme's primary function was that of community cult-centre, the possibility that some kind of kingly office was associated with the site should not be ruled out. Charlotte Fabech suggested a compromise position of sorts, in which Gudme's status as a sacrosanct site and sacred refuge depended on the protection of a powerful individual wielding considerable politico-military strength.[74] It could be argued that such an arrangement was unnecessary for the Icelandic Alþingi, but Iceland was rarely threatened by pitched battles until the *Sturlungaöld* in the thirteenth century. In contrast, war-booty sacrifices from the fourth and fifth centuries show that a number of battles were fought in Scandinavia during this period.[75] Concentrations of such offerings along the shores of Lille Bælt, in Skåne, and on Bornholm might hint at the boundary zones of a power block centred on the Danish islands. Gudme's role in the redistribution of goods suggests that it functioned as the centre of activity for a much wider area than politico-military influence wielded from it may have reached. Perhaps some kind of local leader did maintain power on Fyn (and perhaps Sjælland), deriving considerable status from his custodianship of the cult-centre which attracted people from a much larger region. Perhaps such a leader even played some ceremonial role in the cult centre's function,[76] as did the Icelandic Alþingi's *allsherjargoði*. Such situations would fit a

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[72] *Landnámabók*, p. 145.

[73] Jón Jóhannesson, *Commonwealth*, pp. 35-39.

[74] Charlotte Fabech, 'Reading Society from the Cultural Landscape: South Scandinavia between Sacral and Political Power', in *AoGaL*, pp. 169-83 (pp. 176-77).

[75] The character of the finds indicates that these battles were conducted largely by Scandinavians against Scandinavians, and though it is not always clear whether these deposits represent the war-booty taken in a single battle—some sites were certainly used more than once—the numbers of weapons recovered from individual Iron Age war-booty deposits are usually sufficient to equip several hundred men. For comparison, it has been suggested that although chieftains in Sturlung Iceland could command armies of up to 1200-1400 men, fatal casualties sustained in battle were comparatively light, perhaps *c*. 350 Icelanders all told during the *Sturlungaöld*; Charlotte Fabech, 'Booty Sacrifices in Scandinavia—A History of Warfare and ideology', in *RRiS*, pp. 135-38; Charlotte Fabech, 'Booty Sacrifices in Southern Scandinavia: A Reassessment', in *Sacred and Profane: Proceedings of a Conference on Archaeology, Ritual and Religion, Oxford 1989*, ed. by P. Garwood and others, Oxford University Committee for Archaeology: Monograph, 32 (Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1991), pp. 88-99; Axboe, 'Danish Kings', pp. 224-25; Helgi Þorláksson, 'Sturlung Age', in *MSE*, pp. 615-16.

[76] The *Vita Anskarii* seems to suggest that in ninth-century Sweden, the king's presence was necessary for an assembly to take place; Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii*, in *Vita Anskarii auctore Rimberto, Accedit Vita*

general pattern suggested by Germanic assembly institutions known from historical sources.[77] What such a leader's office would have represented is uncertain, though we may consider the case of Karlli af Ezwæri/Karl Sónason in twelfth-century Västergötland whom different sources variously describe as *laghmaðþær*, jarl, and king.[78] Another suggestive model might be found among the Burgundians, who appear to have had two kinds of 'kings' working in tandem: the *hendinos*, who were responsible for the fortunes of the tribe, and the *sinistus*, who functioned as a kind of high priest.[79]

The conditions which prevailed in Saxony and Iceland—populations of diverse but related origin and no serious military threat—may have prevailed also in Southern Scandinavia during the EGIA. Though the Roman Empire might have been considered a potential military threat by southern Scandinavians in the first centuries AD, it could hardly have represented one by the late fourth century. The third and fourth centuries had seen the Romans busy coping with various internal problems, and the appearance of the Huns, driving the Goths before them, at the end of the fourth century led to the disintegration of the Western Empire (administratively split from the Eastern Empire during Diocletian's reign, AD 285-305) in the course of the fifth century.[80] Spoils (and salaries) acquired by Germanic mercenaries in conflicts of this period may have contributed to Scandinavia's impressive wealth. It may also be that the ongoing Roman crisis led to a slackened interest in Roman prestige goods among Scandinavians and contributed to the dominance of items of native style and manufacture which gives the EGIA its name.

A powerful Frankish polity was only just emerging at the time of Clovis *c*. 500, and there are no indications that it posed much of a concern to Scandinavians until the

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Rimberti, ed. by G. Waitz, MGH: SRG in usum scholarum separatim editi, 55 (Hannover: Hahn, 1884), pp. 13-79 (pp. 39-44, 57-59; Chapters 19, 27). The reliability of the Vita Anskarii's information about Scandinavian customs is, however, often questionable; Ian Wood, 'Christians and Pagans in Ninth-Century Scandinavia', in *CoS*, pp. 36-67.

[77]These possibilities raise the difficult issue of so-called 'sacral kingship', which is not discussed here partially because there seems to be little agreement on what 'sacral kingship' means (or meant), but moreover because one questions how likely it was that early Germanic leaders were not inherently sacral at some level, given that the distinction between the sacral and the profane—the supernatural and the natural—seems a concept that belongs rather more to our society than theirs. But see further Rory McTurk, 'Scandinavian Sacral Kingship Revisited', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 24 (1994), 19-32; Rory McTurk, 'Kingship', in *MSE*, pp. 351-52; Eve Picard, *Germanisches Sakralkönigtum?: Quellenkritische Studien zur Germania des Tacitus und zur Altnordischen Überlieferung*, Skandinavistische Arbeiten, 12 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1991); John Stanley Martin, 'Some Aspects of Snorri Sturluson's View of Kingship', *Parergon*, 15 (1976), 43-54; Rory McTurk, 'Sacral Kingship in Ancient Scandinavia: A Review of Some Recent Writings', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 19 (1975-76), 139-69; Folke Ström, 'Kung Domalde i Svitjod och "kungalyckan"', *Saga och sed* (1967), 52-66; Walter Baetke, *Yngvi und die Ynglinger: Eine quellenkritische Undersuchung über das nordische 'Sakralkönigtum'*, Sitzungsberichte der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig: Philogisch-historische Klasse, 109.3 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964).

[78]Sawyer, *Making*, pp. 26, 29; *Incerti auctoris variae adnotationes*, p. 296.

[79]Wolfram, *Roman*, p. 17; Ammianus Marcellinus, II, 154 (Book 28, Chapter 5.14).

[80]On Rome's history during this period, see Roger Collins, *Early Medieval Europe 300-1000*, Macmillan History of Europe (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1991), pp. 1-93; A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284-602: A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey*, 3 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1964); *Imperial Crisis and Recovery: A.D. 193-324*, ed. by S.A. Cook and others, The Cambridge Ancient History, 12 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univeristy Press, 1939);

sixth century, when there were Scandinavian raids on Francia, such as that of Ch(l)ochilaicus, and when king Theudobert I, Ch(l)ochilaicus's defeater, claimed dominion over peoples called *Eucii* (Jutes?) and *Norsavi*, who were perhaps Scandinavians.[81] Likewise, the growth of kingship in Anglo-Saxon England, perhaps partially spurred by the Frankish threat, does not seem to have taken place until the later sixth and early seventh centuries.[82] The Old Saxons provided a buffer zone against any real Frankish threat to southern Scandinavia, and besides the mysterious Ch(l)ochilaicus there is little solid evidence for Scandinavian kings until *c*. 700.[83] The first Scandinavian king whose strength is readily appraised was the early-ninth-century Danish Godefrid;[84] Haraldr hárfagri followed in Norway during the latter part of that century.

The establishment of a judicial and legislative centre linked with a pre-existing cult would have been an effective force for the ideological unification of southern Scandinavia without necessitating an overlord. It is even possible that, as the Icelandic Alþingi was prefigured by the Kjalarnes *þing*, an initial southern Scandinavian assembly could have been established at one existing centre (such as at Stevns/Himlingøje) and then moved to another more central location, as Gudme might have been. Other southern Scandinavian 'central places' might also have been cult-centres, perhaps even functioning as regional complements to a primary cult-centre at Gudme, much as Icelandic regional *þing* were subordinate to the Alþingi.

2.5 HORIZONS OF GERMANIC & SCANDINAVIAN HISTORICAL LEGEND

2.5.1 EARLY GERMANIC LEGENDS?

It would be unusual if the early Germanic peoples did not tell stories of their gods and heroes. Tacitus wrote that the Germanic peoples' understanding of their past was informed by *carminibus antiquis*; presumably the myth of Tuisto and his sons which Tacitus described originated in such material. Tacitus also mentioned Germanic songs of 'Hercules' (presumably the *interpretatio Romana* for some Germanic figure) whom the Germanic peoples considered the greatest of heroes.[85] Such poverty of information, however, does not allow much comparison with other material from Germanic tradition.

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[81] *HF*, p. 99 (Book 3, Chapter 3); *Epistolae Austrasicae*, ed. by W. Gundlach, in *Epistolae Merowingici et Karolini aevi*, ed. by Wilhelm Gundlach, Ernestus Duemmler, and Karl Hampe, MGH: Epistolae, 3-7, 5 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1892-1928), I, ed. by Wilhelm Gundlach and Ernestus Duemmler (1892), 110-53 (pp. 132-33, Letter 20). Venantius Fortunatus seems to have claimed that the Danes and Jutes where subordinate to Chilperic I; Venantius Fortunatus, *Ad Chilpericum regem quando synodus Brinnaco habita est*, in *Venanti Honori Clementiani Fortunati presbyteri Italici*, ed. by Fridericus Leo and B. Krusch, MGH: AA, 4, 2 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1881-85), I, *Opera poetica* (1881), 201-05 (p. 203, ll. 73-76). See §3.1.4.

[82] Carver, *Kings?*, pp. 104-05.

[83] See §1.5.3.

[84] See §3.4.2.

[85] *Germania*, pp. 2-3. (Chapters 2 & 3). Tacitus' knowledge of such material was almost certainly not first hand and might have come from a variety of sources. J.G.C. Anderson suggested that Tacitus may have ultimately derived these descriptions from the now lost histories of Posidonius and then fashioned his

Tacitus also mentioned Germanic songs about the Cheruscan leader Arminius.[86] As Tacitus wrote several decades after Arminius' death, when the Cherusci's status had decreased substantially, narratives of Arminius must have been a well-established part of Germanic popular tradition. It has, therefore, been a vexation to more recent scholars that no clear trace of Arminius remains in Germanic myth or legend. Some scholars, perhaps most notably Otto Höfler, have attempted to identify Arminius with the medieval Germanic hero *par excellence*, Sigurðr-Siegfried.[87] Höfler's arguments rested chiefly on a suggested link between **χerut-* ('hart', the Germanic root probably lying behind the name *Cherusci*), some hart/hind motifs in Sigurðr-Siegfried cycle, and also the element *Segi-* (ON *Sig-*) which appears in the names of several of Arminius' close relatives. Ultimately, however, these correspondences remain unconvincing.

The earliest relatively datable figure of Germanic legend is Ermanaric, a mid-fourth-century ruler of the Gothic Greuthungi believed to have died *c.* 375.[88] Reliable historical information about Ermanaric is well-concealed behind the legends which seem to have grown up around him very quickly. Versions of his story, or references to him, appear in the works of the near-contemporary Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinius,[89] the sixth-century *Getica*,[90] later Anglo-Saxon poetry (*Widsið*, *Deor*, *Beowulf*),[91] and medieval German chronicles.[92] Eventually Ermanaric was worked into the various narratives comprising the Scandinavian Vǫlsung cycle, starting with one of the earliest surviving Old Norse poems, *Ragnarsdrápa*.[93] The Vǫlsung cycle appears to be a complex assemblage of stories, and attempts to wring historical matter from it are confounded by its use of characters who appear out of chronological sequence with their historical antecedents—not that there were necessarily any real connections between their historical antecedents to begin with.[94] Such are the characteristics of historical legend.

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presentation on Herodotus' description of Scythian origin legends; *Germania*-Anderson, ix-lxiv, (pp. xxi-xxii, xxx).

[86]*Annales*, p. 92 (Book 88, Chapter 2).

[87]Otto Höfler, *Siegfried, Arminius und die Symbolik: mit einem historischen Anhang uber die Varusschlacht* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1961); A. Beneke, *Siegfried ist Armin!* (Dortmund: Ruhfus, 1911); Gudbrand Vigfusson and F. York Powell, 'Sigfred-Arminius', in *Grimm Centenary. Sigfred-Arminivs, and Other Papers* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1886), pp. 5-21.

[88]An excellent general survey of the Ermanaric legends is that of Caroline Brady, *The Legends of Ermanaric* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1943).

[89]Ammianus Marcellinius, II, 237-38 (Book 31, Chapter 3.1).

[90]*Getica*, pp. 91-92.

[91]*Widsið*, pp. 149, 150, 152, 153 (ll. 8, 18, 88, 111); *Deor*, in *The Exeter Book*, ed. by George Philip Krapp and Elliot van Kirk Dobbie, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 3 (London: Routledge; New York: Columbia, 1936), pp. 178-79 (ll. 21-27); *Beowulf*, p. 45 (l. 1201a).

[92]*Chronicon Wirziburgense*, in *Chronica et annales aevi Salici*, ed. by Georgicus Heinricus Pertz, MGH: Scriptores (in folio), 6 (Hannover: Hahn, 1844), pp. 17-32 (p. 23).

[93]Bragi enn gamli Boddason, *Ragnarsdrápa*, in *Skjaldedigtning*, B.1, 1-4.

[94]Historical antecedents for Sigurðr-Siegfried have been sought by many, and an overview of these efforts is included in *The Saga of the Volsungs*, ed. and trans. by R.G. Finch, Nelson Icelandic Texts

2.5.2 GOTHS & HUNS

Despite Ermanaric's perennial popularity in Germanic legend, he does not appear in one of the oldest—if not the oldest—surviving artefacts of Germanic legend: the poem *Hlǫðsqviða*, around which the end of *Hervarar saga* is built.[95] This absence is all the more surprising given the Goths' central role in this poem, which tells of a colossal battle between Goths and Huns. Christopher Tolkien suggested that the poem's narrative origins might depend on traditions concerning the earliest clashes of the Goths and the Huns before the collapse of Ermanaric's fabled kingdom.[96] Indeed, in *Hlǫðsqviða* the Goths defeat the Huns.

Some variant of this tale may have been known to the composer of *Widsið*, which on line 116 mentions:

> Heaþoric ond Sifecan, Hliþe ond Incgenþeow.[97]

This is followed on lines 119-122 by:

> Wulfhere sohte ic ond Wyrmhere; ful oft þær wig ne alæg,
> þonne Hræda here heardum sweordum
> ymb Wistlawudu wergan sceoldon
> ealdne eþelstol Ætlan leodum.[98]

The Old English names *Heaþoric*, *Sifeca*, *Hliþe*, *Incgenþeow*, and *Wyrmhere* bear a striking resemblance to the Old Norse names *Heiðrekr*, *Sifka*, *Hlǫðr*, *Angantýr*, and *Ormarr* found in *Hervarar saga*. The linguistic correspondences are not all exact but the similarities are highly suggestive.

It is, however, surprising to see *Widsið* describing conflict between the Goths and Huns taking place *ymb Wistlawudu*.[99] Tacitus and Pliny knew of Goths—Gotones or Gutones—who seem to have lived near the lower Wisla.[100] These early Goths were perhaps connected with the Wielbark cultural assemblage, which formed in the mid-first century AD and slowly spread into the northern Ukraine by the decades around 200.

(London: Nelson, 1965), pp. xxxii-xxxvi; E.O.G. Turville-Petre, *Myth and Religion of the North: The Religion of Ancient Scandinavia* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), pp. 198-205.

[95] *Hervarar saga*, pp. 45-58.

[96] Christopher Tolkien, 'The Battle of the Goths and the Huns', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 14 (1953-57) 141-63 (p. 141); *Hervarar saga*, pp. xxi-xxviii.

[97] *Widsið*, p. 153.

[98] *Widsið*, p. 153. OE *Hrædas* (or possibly *Hræde*) means 'Goths'; compare OE *Hreðgotas*, as well as ON *Reiðgotaland* and runic Swedish **hraiþmaraʀ**; Chambers, *Widsith*, pp. 252-53. The phrase *Ætlan leodum* need not refer to people led by Attila, but could, as it seems to do here, simply mean 'Huns'; C. Tolkien, 'Battle', p. 154.

[99] *Widsið*'s location of the Goths *ymb Wistlawudu* recalls the forest Mirkviðr which lay between the Goths and Huns in *Hlǫðsqviða*.

[100] *Germania*, pp. 29 (Chapter 44); C. Plinius Secundus, I, 346-47 (Book 4, Chapter 99-100).

During the third and fourth centuries, however, the Wielbark culture seems to have lost its cohesion, though it has strong connections with a newer assemblage then forming north of the Black Sea, identified as the Černjachov culture. As with the Wielbark culture, there seems to be a strong correlation (if not equation) between the Gothic peoples and Černjachov culture.[101] Thus, if *Widsið* preserves a memory that Gothic peoples lived in the Wisla valley, this must be a very old memory indeed, as there is little evidence for Goths in the Wisla valley after the Marcomannic Wars in the late second century. In such a case, *Widsið* could only have confused this memory with the later struggles between the Goths and Huns, as the Huns did not encounter the Goths until the fourth century AD, when some of the Gothic peoples were located just north of the Black Sea.

Linguistic fossils suggest that *Hlǫðsqviða* has a very long oral tradition behind it. It has been noted that *Harvaðafjǫll* ('the Carpathians') derives, by regular sound changes, from an original form **karpat-*, through an early Germanic **χarfaþ-*.[102] Something similar may be at work in the name *Danparstaðir* (in the phrases *á Danparstǫðum* and *á stǫðum Danpar*).[103] The name *Danpr* is used of a legendary figure mentioned in *Ynglinga saga*, *Rígsþula*, and Arngrímur Jónsson's epitome of *Skjǫldunga saga*,[104] but is also linked to the river Dnieper, which appears in *Getica* as *Danaper*. Probably the hero took his name from a misunderstanding of what the river's name signified.[105] The river Dnieper is more commonly named *Nepr* in ON, appearing so in a twelfth-century *þula* of river names, *Kristnisaga*, and *Heimslýsning*.[106] This form seems to point back to an East Slavic **Dněpr*, not older than the mid-tenth century. In contrast, Jordanes's form *Danaper*, if not Gothic, may be borrowed from Greek Δάναπρις, itself probably loaned from early Slavic **Dъněprъ* (before loss of medial -ъ-).[107] Rather than a learned borrowing from Greek (or from Jordanes), ON *Danpr* more likely represents the syncopated descendant of an original form similar to Jordanes's *Danaper*; if so, it must have entered Scandinavian dialects no later than the seventh century.[108]

In contrast, it is difficult to know whence *Widsið*'s composer derived his information. Some of *Widsið*'s names and its identification of Goths as 'Hrædas' could

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[101]Peter Heather, *The Goths*, The Peoples of Europe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 11-25.

[102]C. Tolkien, 'Battle', p. 142.

[103]*Hervarar saga*, pp. 46, 49; *Hlǫðsqviða*, pp. 304 (v. 9)

[104]*Heimskringla*, I, 34; *Rígsþula*, in Neckel-Kuhn, pp. 280-87 (p. 287, v. 48); AJ, p. 336; *DsAl*, p. 9.

[105]Arngrímur associated Danpr with *Danpsted*; AJ, pp. 336-37; *DsAl*, p. 9. Tolkien also suggested that *staðir* pointed back to a Gothic *staþ*, used by Wulfila to mean 'bank/shore'; C. Tolkien, 'Battle', pp. 142-43, 156-58.

[106]*Skjaldedigtning*, B.1, 667 (v. 4); *Kristnisaga*, in *Hauksbók*, pp. 126-49 (p. 144); *Heimslýsning ok helgifræði*, in *Hauksbók*, pp. 150-77 (p. 150).

[107]Bohdan Strumiński, *Linguistic Interrelations in Early Rus': Northmen, Finns, and East Slavs (Ninth to Eleventh Centuries)*, Collana di filologia e letterature slave, nuova serie, 2 (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1996), pp. 162-63, 211-12.

[108]Einar Haugen, *The Scandinavian Languages: An Introduction to Their History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 142, 150-60.

have been borrowed from Scandinavian sources (in the Viking Age or earlier), while the location of the Goths *ymb Wistlawudu* could have been separately acquired from classical ethnographic sources locating the Gotones near the Vistula.[109] Thus it is uncertain whether *Widsið*'s association of the 'Hrædas' with the Wisla represents ancient folk-tradition or learned knowledge.

2.5.3 TRACES OF ROME & CAESAR

Very little in the surviving Germanic legends predates the EGIA, but perhaps most surprising of all is the virtual absence of any reference to Rome in surviving Germanic legendary material. Presumably the songs of Arminius described by Tacitus did not fail to mention Arminius' chief foes. The massive Roman presence in the Germano-Scandinavian archaeological record demonstrates that contacts with Rome were of supreme importance to Germanic culture in the early centuries AD. Yet even surviving legends concerning the Goths dwell primarily on their conflicts with the Huns and never mention Rome, which is remarkable considering Rome's importance in Gothic history—not least in such Gothic triumphs as slaying a Romano-Byzantine emperor along with most of his army at Hadrianople in 378, and the sack of Rome itself in 410.

After Ermanaric, the most famous of all Goths must be Theodoric the Great, who seized control of Italy in 493. His legendary reflex appears in *Hildebrandslied*, in *Deor* and probably *Widsið*, the Waltharius legends, as well as the Sigurðr-Siegfried cycle; he is probably the **þiaurikʀ** mentioned on the Rök rune-stone in Östergötland, Sweden from *c*. 800.[110] It may even be significant that Theodoric is mentioned on a stone from Götaland, as the Götar are often thought to have been associated with the Goths; in any event, there is some evidence for contacts between the Goths and the Götar into the sixth century.[111] Theodoric's familiar eke-name relates to the city of Verona (thus *Dietrich von Bern*/*Þiðrekr af Bern*) where his armies defeated Odoacar—not Ravenna, whence his Italian realm was administered. The legendary Theodoric never has any Italo-Roman associations, however, and 'Bern' is presented without any Roman context.

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[109]Wulfstan names the Wisła as the *Wisle*; *The Old English Orosius*, ed. by Janet Bately, Early English Text Society: Supplementary Series, 6 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 16. The form *Vistla* is used in C. Plinius Secundus, I, 346-47 (Book 4, Chapter 99-100). Jordanes uses *Vistula* (*Getica*, pp. 58, 62, 63) or *Viscla* (pp. 63-82).

[110]*Hildebrandslied*, in *Die kleineren althochdeutschen Sprachdenkmäler*, ed. by Elias von Steinmeyer, *Kleinere althochdeutsche Denkmäler* (Berlin, Weidmann, 1916), pp. 1-15 (p. 3, ll. 19-26); *Waldere*, in *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ed. by Elliott van Kirk Dobbie, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 6 (London,: Routledge; New York: Columbia, 1942), pp. 4-6 (p. 5, l. II.4b); *Waltharius*, ed. by Karl Strecker, in *Nachträge zu den Poetae Aevi Carolini*, ed. by Karl Strecker with Otto Schumann, MGH: Poetae Latini medii aevi, 6.1 (Weimar: Böhlaus, 1951), pp. 1-85; *Widsið*, p. 219; *Deor*, in *The Exeter Book*, ed. by George Philip Krapp and Elliot van Kirk Dobbie, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 3 (London: Routledge; New York: Columbia, 1936), pp. 178-79 (p. 178, v. 18a); Chambers, *Widsith*, pp. 40-41; Sophus Bugge, *Der Runenstein von Rök in Östergötland, Schweden* (Stockholm: Hæggström, 1910), p. 127. For an alternative view, see Kemp Malone, 'The Theodoric of the Rök inscription', in *SiHLaCS*, pp. 116-23.

[111]Birgit Arhenius, 'Connections between Scandinavia and the East Roman Empire in the Migration Period', in *From the Baltic to the Black Sea: Studies in Medieval Archaeology*, ed. by David Austin and Leslie Alcock (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 118-37 (pp. 119, 134); Heather, *Goths*, p. 27.

Widsið places various figures from classical and biblical history in the same context as Germanic heroes, though most of these come from learned sources. *Casere* ('Caesar') is mentioned twice: in line 20, and in line 76 as the ruler of *Creacas* ('Greeks'). The form *Cāsere* may be early, as it seems to show the regular transformation of WG *ai* (from Latin *ae*) to OE *ā*, and its original ending replaced by a more familiar OE *-ere* suffix.[112] That Caesar should be described as ruling the Greeks is not surprising; the Byzantine emperor was the only 'Caesar' for most of the Anglo-Saxon period. The form *Crēacas* (dative *Crēacum* in the poem) is strange—*Crēcas* would be more regular—but may be similarly early.[113] It shows the substitution of Germanic *k* for Greek g or Latin *g*, reflecting the lack of a back voiced stop in Germanic (except in *ŋ* or Gothic *gg*).[114] If this form had been a later literary borrowing, a form closer to Latin *Graeci* might have been expected. The eastern orientation of OE *Casere* suggests that information on him is unlikely to predate Diocletian, more likely to post-date Constantine I, and perhaps even more likely to post-date the end of the Western Empire in 476. 'Caesar' also appears in an eighth-century East Anglian royal pedigree as *Caser*, son of Woden.[115] This form could also be early, though the compositional date and juxtaposition with Woden complicate an understanding of its origin. None of the OE forms of 'Caesar' were necessarily borrowed before the Germanic *adventus*, though they may well have been borrowed before the conversion to Christianity.

There also seems to be a trace of Caesar in ON, preserved in the name of *Kíarr* or *Kjárr*, usually a king of the *Valir*, itself a term meaning essentially 'foreigners' and generally applied to Celtic- or Romance-speakers;[116] Snorri, mysteriously, describes Kiar as *af Avðlinga ætt*.[117] *Kíarr*/*Kjárr* is generally recognised to stem from Latin *Caesar*, though how this word arrived in NG is unclear. It may have come directly from Latin-speakers or from other early NwG dialects, but early Scandinavian links with Gothic regions suggest it also could have come from Greek kaîsar, perhaps through Gothic *kaisar*. The diphthong in the first syllable would have been monophthongized early: **kēsar* > *Kíarr* > *Kjárr* (ON *járn*, alongside *ísarn*, probably had a similar development from PG **īsarnam*).[118] The only other potential hint of early Roman contacts may survive in the ON element *Rúm-* (alongside *Róm-*) in terms like *Rúmverjar*, and *Rúmveg* (and *Rúm* itself); the form with *-ú-* could have been borrowed into Germanic during the

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[112]A. Campbell, *Old English Grammar*, corrected edn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), pp. 203, 206.

[113]See Kemp Malone, *Widsith*, Anglistica, 13 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1962), p. 135; Chambers, *Widsith*, pp. 166, 192 n. to l. 20.

[114]Campbell, *Grammar*, p. 199.

[115]David N. Dumville, 'The Anglian Collection of Royal Genealogies and Regnal Lists', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 5 (1976), 23-50 (pp. 33, 40 n. 2).

[116]*Vǫlundarqviða*, in Neckel-Kuhn, pp. 116-23 (pp. 116, 119 v. 15); *Atlaqviða in grœnlenzca*, in Neckel-Kuhn, 240-63 (p. 241 v. 7); *Flateyjarbók*, I, 26; *Hervarar saga*, p. 46. A recent article on this topic. which unfortunately I was not able to access, is Marina Mundt, 'ór hǫll Kjárs', in *Helsing til Lars Vassenden på 70-årsdagen*, ed. by Johan Myking, Helge Sandøy and Ivar Utne (Bergen: Nordisk institutt, 1994), pp. 117-21.

[117]*Snorra Edda*, p. 183; *SnEHafn*, I, 522.

[118]*ANEW*, p. 312 (*sv* 'Kjárr'). A perhaps less likely alternative is borrowing from Old Irish *cíar* ('brown'); Ásgeirr Blöndal Magnússon, p. 458 (*sv* 'Kíarr').

early centuries AD.[119] Nevertheless, these dim echoes only emphasise the fact that there is virtually no trace of Rome in any surviving Germanic literary context until after the conversions to Christianity.

2.5.4 DISCONTINUITY IN GERMANIC LEGEND & RELIGION

Traces of early Scandinavian legend concerning Scandinavia itself are extremely scarce; most of the early legends are external to Scandinavia. The shadowy Kíarr/Kjárr suggests something Roman, now lost. *Hlǫðsqviða* relates to possibly pre-fifth-century Goths and seems likely to have reached Scandinavia before the sound-changes into NG took place. The Vǫlsung-Niflung cycle has historical horizons in fifth-century Burgundy and may have first gained a wider audience when the Franks conquered the Burgundians in the sixth century, but it is uncertain when it arrived in Scandinavia.[120] Roberta Frank has noted that there is no actual evidence—in skaldic poetry or artwork—demonstrating that the Vǫlsung cycle was known in Scandinavian contexts before the late tenth century,[121] though this lack does not rule out the possibility that the legends were known in Scandinavia at an earlier date, as it seems likely that Scandinavians were aware of Frankish trends during the Migration Age (§3.1.5). If the form *Kíarr* which appears in the Vǫlsung-cycle poem *Atlaqviða in grœnlenzca* is a genuine fossil belonging to that narrative, and not a late insertion, that would suggest an early date for knowledge of the Vǫlsung cycle in Scandinavia.[122] Associated with pre-Viking Scandinavia itself is the legendary Skjǫldung cycle, though this material presents special problems of its own (§4 & §5).

Traditions are often assumed to evolve at a relatively slow and steady rate, but while traditions are doubtless undergoing constant slow evolution, in practice it seems that particular periods of political upheaval and social reorganisation see the evolution of traditions greatly accelerated. In the Germanic world successive periods of social change seem to have progressively erased previous traditions while simultaneously encouraging the acquisition or generation of new bodies of legend. The discontinuity in Germanic legend indicated by the dearth of Roman remembrances and the more general paucity of legendary material predating the mid/late fourth century AD may reflect such processes. This pattern may be not least true for Scandinavia, where the beginning of the GIA saw the introduction of native styles which were to supplant Mediterranean styles,[123] and the

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[119]Compare Gothic *Rūma*, from Greek HRømj or Latin *Rōma*.

[120]*The Poetic Edda*, ed. and commentary by Ursula Dronke (Oxford: Clarendon: 1969-), I: *The Heroic Poems*, 29-38.

[121]Roberta Frank 'Skaldic Verse and the Date of *Beowulf*', in *Do*B, pp. 123-40, pp. 130-31.

[122]*Atlaqviða in grœnlenzca*, p. 241 (v. 7).

[123]The bracteates and Salin's Style I both seem to have originated as particularly Scandinavian innovations, developing relatively rapidly away from the classical iconography and motifs which they creatively reinterpreted within a Germanic context. Both are thought to have served as a medium for the Germanic élite to express their status; Märit Gaimster, *Vendel Period Bracteates on Gotland: On the Significance of Germanic Art*, Acta Archaeologica Lundensia: Series in 8°, 27 (Lund: Almqvist & Wiksell,

spread of the runic system,[124] as well as major changes in practices of ritual deposition.[125] In GIA Scandinavia, the growth of new tribal confederations, and perhaps the reorientation of society towards a communal cult-centre,[126] could have seen the disappearance of traditions associated with previous institutions which had become obsolete. Such processes may have been repeated during periods of social change in the LGIA (§3) and again in the Viking Age (§4 & §5). Something similar seems to have taken place in England following the Norman Conquest, where a stock of native narratives and performance styles was, eventually, replaced by new models. Similar changes again affected medieval Scandinavia itself, i.e. the replacement of Eddic-style poetry by ballad forms.

It seems likely that such processes would have been reflected not only by changes in the legendary corpus but also in the mythological corpus and more generally in religious beliefs and practices. This effect may be best expressed in the Viking-Age conversion to Christianity, when social and political realignments saw the replacement of those aspects of heathen religion which most conflicted with the requirements of medieval Christianity—those of 'public' cult practices—while elements at the level of 'private superstition' for which Christianity did not have replacements lingered on in 'folk belief'.[127] But similar processes surely operated in earlier pre-Christian contexts. Although there is little information about Germanic religion of the Roman period, it is remarkable how well the Nerthus cult seems to be reflected in information, approximately a millennium younger, concerning Njǫrðr and the Vanir. Although clearly waning within late heathenism, Nerthus/Njǫrðr's cult is perhaps better represented than

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1998), p. 216; Märit Gaimster, 'The Scandinavian Gold Bracteates', in *RRiS*, pp. 218-21; Kent Andersson, 'Nordic Gold Jewellery Production in the First Centuries A.D.', in *RRiS*, pp. 185-87; Hedeager, *Societies*, p. 156; Karl Hauck, 'Fünens besondere Anteil an den Bildinhalten der völkerwanderungszeitliche Brakteaten (Zur Ikonologie der Goldbrakteaten XLIX)', Frühmittelalterliche Studien, 26 (1992), 106-48; Morten Axboe, 'Guld og Guder i folkevandringstiden: Brakteaterne some kilde til politisk/religøse forhold, in *Samfundsorganisation*, pp. 187-202; Eliza Fonnesbech-Sandberg, 'Guldets funktion i ældre germansk jernalder', in *Samfundsorganisation*, pp. 233-44; Anders Andrén, 'Guld och makt—en tolkning av de skandinaviska guldbrakteaternas funktion', in *Samfundsorganisation*, pp. 245-56; Morten Axboe and others, *Die Goldbrakteaten der Völkerwanderungszeit: Ikonographischer Katalog*, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften, 24 (Munich: Fink, 1985-); Mogens B. Mackeprang, *De nordiske guldbrakteater: brakteatstudiets historie, brakteattypernes udvikling, geografiske fordeling, kronologi, motiver og praegningsteknik*, Jysk arkaeologisk selskabs skrifter; 2 (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlaget 1952), pp. 20-21; Bernhard Salin, *Die altgermanische Thierornamentik: typologische Studie über germanische Metallgegenstände aus dem IV. bis IX. Jahrhundert, nebst einer Studie über irische Ornamentik*, trans. by J. Mestorf, 2nd edn (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1904) pp. 214-45. Both the bracteates and Style I also may have served to express Scandinavian cultural affiliation, but restrictions on the length of this study preclude discussion of these issues.

[124]Glancing at any catalogue of runic finds (i.e. Krause-Jankuhn) and their approximate dates reveals that most runic finds older than *c*. 400 are from southern Scandinavia, after which finds are spread more widely (but not universally) through the Germanic world. As with the bracteates and Style I, it is possible that use or display of runes demonstrated cultural affiliation with the Scandinavian world, but space restrictions on this study prevent the presentation of this matter.

[125]See §2.1.1.

[126]See §2.4.

[127]An analogous process seems to have taken place duing the Reformation, as practices associated with medieval Catholicism lingered at the popular level long after public ritual had been replaced in Protestant countries.

the cults of deities such as Týr or Ullr, for whom place-name evidence implies a far larger role in earlier times than medieval literature suggests.[128] Changes in the religious environment, reflecting social changes, are probably responsible for these shifts. Likewise, though stemming from ancient roots and probably being widely established in the Germanic world by the fourth century, Óðinn's cult seems to have become increasingly important in late Scandinavian heathenism and may reflect growth in the status of the élite from the LGIA. Some Óðinn place names in Denmark (i.e. Odense: ON *Óðinsvé*, sometimes construed as *Óðinsey*) may have been connected to royal sites, strengthening an understanding of Óðinn as a god particularly connected with the heathen aristocracy and perhaps particularly with kingship.[129] The early stages of this growth may be reflected first in the EGIA bracteates which Hauck linked with Óðinn's cult.[130]

[128]Kristian Hald, *Vore Stednavne*, 2nd edn (Copenhagen: Gad, 1965), p. 250-53; Further on Óðinn placenames in Scandinavia, see de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, II, 50-54 & Karte 1.

[129]Kristian Hald, 'The Cult of Odin in Danish Place-Names'. in *Early English and Norse Studies Presented to Hugh Smith in Honour of His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. by Arthur Brown and Peter Foote (London: Methuen, 1963), pp. 99-109 (pp. 108-09).

[130]Hauck has numerous publications on this topic, but see, for example, Karl Hauck, 'Zwanzig Jahre Brakteatensforschung in Münster/Westfalen (Zur Ikonologie der Goldbrakteaten XL)', in *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 22 (1988), 17-52; Karl Hauck, 'Zur Ikonologie der Goldbrakteaten, IV: Metemorphosen Odins nach dem Wissen von Snorri und von Amulettmeistern der Völkerwandrungszeit' in *Festschrift für Siegfried Gutenbrunner: zum 65. Geburtstag am 26. Mai 1971 überreicht von seinen Freunden und Kollegen*, ed. by Oskar Bandle, Heinz Klingenberg, and Friedrich Maurer (Heidelberg: Winter, 1972), pp. 47-70; and further in bibliographies in volumes of Axboe and others, *Goldbrakteaten*.

CHAPTER 3

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ASPECTS OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SCANDINAVIA DURING THE LATE GERMANIC IRON AGE AND EARLY VIKING AGE

3.1 THE LATE GERMANIC IRON AGE: DARK AGES & GOLDEN AGES

Archaeology has revealed no large deposits of wealth, either hoards or burials, of the LGIA from Jutland or the Danish islands. Metalwork finds are largely limited to brooches found in a limited number of modest graves or as small, contextless finds from bogs and dry land.[1] Likewise, few if any runic inscriptions belonging to the LGIA have been found in Denmark; those which may qualify for inclusion fall on the cusp of the Viking Age. This situation is in dramatic contrast with Denmark's EGIA, which was rich in runic inscriptions, as well as in precious metal depositions, especially of gold objects. Gudme has yielded over seven kilograms of gold, more than any other area in Scandinavia, most of it belonging to the EGIA.[2] While there are indications of continuing activity at Gudme in the LGIA, 'om det var med samme karakter/funktion som i ældre germanertid, er andet spørgmål'.[3] Outside southern Scandinavia, however, this period saw the appearance of rich cremation burials in Sweden's Uppland and eastern Norway, as well as rich inhumation burials on Gotland.[4] England and the Continent also reveal rich burials from this period.[5] Clearly, significant changes took place in southern Scandinavia at the end of the EGIA.[6]

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[1]Hedeager, *Societies*, p. 69.

[2]Hedeager, *Societies*, p. 65.

[3]Henrik Thrane, 'Gudmeundersøgelserne', in *FStS*, II, 67-72 (pp. 70-71).

[4]Bjorn Myhre, 'The Royal Cemetary at Borre', in *AoSH*, pp. 301-13 (pp. 308-11); Birger Nerman, *Die Vendelzeit Gotlands: im Auftrage der Kungl. Vitterhets-, historie- och antikvitetsakademien*, Kungl. Vitterhets-, historie- och antikvitetsakademien: Monografier (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1969-).

[5]H. Steuer, 'Helm und Ringschwert: Prunkbewaffnung und Rangabzeichen germanischer Krieger, eine Übersicht', *Studien zur Sachsenforschung*, 6 (1987), 189-236.

[6]Analysis of tree-rings and ice-cores has revealed that the years around ad 535-45 were marked by a period of unusually low temperatures, a situation corroborated in contemporary European and Asian records of inexplicable cold and darkness. It is thought that this situation was the result of a 'dust-veil' which reduced Earth's insolation—perhaps the result of volcanic eruption, a comet/asteroid impact, or a passing interstellar cloud. It has also been noted that the 535-45 dust-veil event seems to coincide with archaeologically detectable periods of change on a European—perhaps global—scale; see further Heinrich Härke, 'Bede's Borrowed Eclipses', *Rastar* (October 1991), 12 [*Rastar* = the newsletter of the Reading Astronomical Society]; M.G.L. Baillie, 'Dendrochronology Raises Questions about the Nature of the AD 536 Dust-Veil Event', *The Holocene*, 4.2 (1994), 212-17; M.G.L. Baillie, *A Slice through Time: Dendrochronology and Precision Dating* (London: Batsford, 1995), pp. 83-107 & Figure 6.9. Morten Axboe suggested that the effects of the dust-veil might have caused the Scandinavians to sacrifice 'every scrap' of gold in an effort to alleviate the situation, perhaps explaining the cessation of gold hoards around this time simply because there was little gold left afterwards; Morten Axboe, 'Re: The 536 dust-veil - how did Christians react?', in *ANSAXNET Discussion Forum* [Online], Available archive:

3.1.1 BRIGHTENING THE SOUTHERN SCANDINAVIAN 'DARK AGE'

The 'hole' in the archaeological record for Jutland and the Danish islands between the mid-sixth and mid-seventh centuries has been filled somewhat in recent decades, but the overall picture remains unaltered; in 1991 there were no seventh-century precious metal finds from this region,[7] a situation which has not as yet changed.[8] These facts have created no little consternation among archaeologists arguing for the emergence of the 'Danish state' between the third and fifth centuries, as precisely the kinds of evidence which suggest wealth and power disappear just when they are needed to confirm the continuance of a 'Danish state' into historical times. 'In the LGIA the whole business seems to come to a stop: neither graves nor votive hoards show anything more than the slightest trace of a social elite, perhaps because the social, political, and economic situation was relatively stable'.[9] This analysis effectively summarises the remarkable solution that has been proposed to address the problem created by the archaeological 'hole'. The rich environment of earlier periods has been explained as symptomatic of a society in which the emergent élite first signalled their status through rich burials (RIA) and then employed votive offerings to maintain good relationships with the supernatural (EGIA). The LGIA's poor archaeological environment is argued to reveal a mature society in which the élite were firmly established, making displays of wealth and prestige objects unnecessary.[10] The corollary to such arguments is de-emphasis of LGIA centres elsewhere in Scandinavia, reducing them from a role as the period's leading lights to one of upstarts on the fringe.

Karen Høilund Nielsen has closely analysed Germanic animal art styles and female jewellery of the LGIA in an effort to uncover information about their production, distribution, and the socio-political messages they may have conveyed.[11] She concluded that most variations of Salin's Styles II (and III) originated in Denmark, whence they were copied more widely within the Germanic world. This, she argued, demonstrates 'at Sydskandinavien—Danernes kongerige—er den dominerende skandinaviske magtfaktor i 7. årh.'.[12] Høilund Nielsen's analysis has been criticised for over-relying on a linear, aesthetically-oriented model of artistic development which understands the use of repeated motifs and widespread duplication as indicative of a low-value, uncreative

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<http://www.mun.ca/Ansaxdat/>, Available email: <ansax-l@wvnvm.wvnet.edu> (13 May 1998). This offers a potentially fruitful line of inquiry, but more research on the nature of the dust veil would be required.

[7]Peter Vang Petersen, 'Nye fund af metalsager fra yngre germansk jernalder: Detektorfund of danefæ fra perioden 1966-88', in *FStS*, II, 49-66 (p. 52).

[8]I am grateful for the comments of Morten Axboe, 'Re: Ethnogenesis', *ONN* [Online], Available archive: <http://www.hum.gu.se/arkiv/ONN/>, Available e-mail: <onn@hum.gu.se> (4 June 1999).

[9]Hedeager, *Societies*, p. 81.

[10]Ulf Näsman, 'Det syvende århundrede—et mørkt tidsrum i ny belysning', in *FStS*, II, 165-78.

[11]Karen Hølund Nielsen, 'Centrum og Periferi i 6.-8. årh.: Territoriale studier af dyrstil and kvindesmykker i yngre germansk jernalder i Syd- og Østskandinavien', in *FStS*, II, 127-54.

[12]Hølund Nielsen, 'Centrum', p. 151. On Salin's Styles II and III see, Salin, pp. 245-90.

artistic milieu, and it has been suggested moreover that the development of Scandinavian art styles in the LGIA should be seen within a wider European context.[13] Identifying the centres of creation and production is further complicated by the possibility that itinerant craftsmen played a key role in the development and spread of new styles. Yet even if Germanic art styles of the LGIA did originate in southern Scandinavia, this 'centre-periphery' interpretation may read too much from the theory that prestigious objects functioned as a medium of political ideology.[14] It seems most plausible that art styles and prestige objects did express ideological messages at a variety of levels—most human fashion trends do—but the élite may have been at least as likely to harness existing trends as they were to create them. Linking artistic creation directly to the exercise of political power requires a bold conceptual leap.

The theory that a lack of prestige objects implies a strong and stable political power, while not impossible, sits uncomfortably with most historical examples from other medieval societies.[15] One is hard-pressed to find examples of political institutions so secure that they did not wish to advertise their strength, which suggests that the need for such advertisement is continuous. This observation casts doubt on models explaining regions rich in prestige goods as peripheral. The preponderance of prestige goods in northern Francia and the Rhine valley, accompanied by other signs of élite activity such as royal burials and the establishment of religious centres, suggests that the region between the Seine and the Rhine actually formed a *Schwerpunkt* for Frankish activities. This region of northern Gaul represented the area most heavily settled by Germanic-speaking Franks, and it was here that Clovis based his operations, at Tournai. Northern Gaul was also a focus for the sixth-century Neustrian and Austrasian courts, in conflict with each other as much as with non-Frankish groups. Though Clovis was buried in Paris and, in the seventh century, Dagobert I moved his court there, northern Francia continued to be a centre of activity, being particularly associated with the Arnulfing family's rise.[16] In contrast, Hedeager's centre-periphery model of Francia seems to be centred on Tours, unquestionably a city of great importance, but while there was certainly Frankish activity and involvement south of the Seine it may reasonably be questioned whether this region was the Frankish élite's primary focus.[17] Within Scandinavia, signs of status-display in regions like Swedish Uppland, south-eastern Norway, and Gotland may indeed indicate the emergence of new centres eager to advertise and legitimise their power. The lack of status-display in southern Scandinavia, however, may simply indicate a lack of status to display.

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[13]Gaimster, *Vendel*, pp. 226-36.

[14]Axboe 'Guld', 187-202; Fonnebech-Sandberg, 'Guldets funktion', 233-44; Andrén, pp. 245-56.

[15]There is, however, evidence for a seventh-century cremation burial on Sjælland; see §3.4.1.

[16]Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms: 450-751* (London: Longman, 1994), p. 38-70; Patrick J. Geary, *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 80-83, 117-23, 151-62. See also Gaimster, *Vendel*, pp. 228-33.

[17]Hedeager, 'Kingdoms', p. 294-96, Figures 53 & 54.

Such a situation would be hardly unnatural or surprising—perhaps far less so than the smooth development of a 'Danish state' from the third century to the present. Axboe, while generally agreeing that the roots of the 'Danish kingdom' may lie in the RIA, has cautioned:

> Such a generalized picture must be taken with a pinch of salt. Evolution may have gone fast at times and suffered reverses at others which we cannot discover … We must keep in mind that what we see as a 'process' leading to 'the kingdom of Denmark' is a construct—our construct.[18]

Yet the very use of a term like 'reverses' underscores the deterministic attitude which can hardly but prevail in the study of state development where, as Axboe has pointed out, the end result is known: states do eventually develop. Without such states, the Scandinavian nations would not exist to fund research programs studying their origins.[19] Patriotism is seldom deeply submerged in Scandinavian studies, a fact which might encourage the anachronistic projection of more modern institutions and constructs into periods where they may not belong. Though research into state development is vital to our understanding of this period, we must guard against letting our knowledge of that story's end obscure wider issues in the development of Scandinavian society, culture, and ideology.

3.1.2 ÉLITE ATTITUDES

A strong, centralised Danish kingdom may have existed in southern Scandinavia during the LGIA, though the existing evidence does not guarantee that it was so. As Hedeager and Näsman have rightly pointed out, analyses of southern Scandinavian settlement patterns and environmental conditions during the LGIA undermine simplistic theories of agrarian crisis and depopulation.[20] Continuous settlement and steady population levels on their own, however, are hardly proof of economic prosperity or extensive political influence. Nor should we assume that a region prospered in a particular period simply because there is evidence for such prosperity before and after that period.

In contrast with theories focusing on the establishment of kingdoms, this study suggests that Scandinavia's EGIA was characterised by a community of chieftains whose activities revolved around central places (such as Gudme) which functioned as cult-centres and communal foci (§2). The bracteates, if strongly connected with an aristocratic Óðinn-cult as Hauck suggested, may have functioned as a special badge of élite interests,

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[18]Morten Axboe, 'Towards the Kingdom of Denmark', in *MoK*, pp. 109-18 (p. 116).

[19]Denmark's 'Fra Stamme til Stat' project was set up to further investigate the results of earlier research which seemed to suggest early state development. See John Hines's commentary accompanying Axboe, 'Danish', pp. 249-50. Complementing Denmark's 'Fra Stamme til Stat' project are Sweden's 'Svealand i Vendeltid' project and, in Norway, Bjørn Myhre's Borre-project.

[20]Hedeager, *Societies*, pp. 180-223; Ulf Näsman, 'Det syvende århundrede', in *FStS*, II, 167-68.

perhaps contrasting with a communal cult primarily concerned with fertility aspects exemplified in the Nerthus/Njǫrðr deity. One may compare suggestions that the apparent supremacy of Óðinn in the medieval Scandinavian sources may reflect not just the influence of classical models, but the popularity of Óðinn's martial cult among the Viking-Age Scandinavian élite. More contemporary sources, such as Adam of Bremen, imply that Freyr's cult (and Freyja's) may have been at least as strong as Óðinn's during the Viking Age, while that of Þórr may have enjoyed the widest popularity. Indeed, it has been suggested that the so-called 'war of the Æsir and the Vanir' could reflect actual tensions between the cults which came to be characterised by Óðinn and Njǫrðr/Freyr, respectively.[21] Though it must remain the purest speculation, it is noted that, if there is any credibility to that idea, the religious environment this study suggests existed in Scandinavia's GIA would be highly conducive to the production of inter-cultic tensions which, though perhaps unlikely to have resulted in actual warfare, might have been remembered in myths of divine conflict. It is remarkable that, according to Snorri, the Æsir, led by Óðinn, received Njǫrðr in the exchange of hostages which ended the war.[22]

3.1.3 ICELAND & SAXONY AS EXAMPLES

There is little in human history to demonstrate that the acquisition of power does not most commonly engender the desire for yet more power. It may be assumed that the GIA Scandinavian élite were no exception to this rule and that they jockeyed among themselves for position. Favourable conditions could lead to more power accumulating over time in the hands of progressively fewer individuals and, perhaps, the eventual establishment of large, centrally-ruled kingdoms, much as seems to have happened in Anglo-Saxon England. Similar models are sometimes proposed for Scandinavia, but such a process need not have been smooth, as the history of the Icelandic Commonwealth suggests.

Classic studies of the Commonwealth's history, as that of Jón Jóhannesson, have been criticised for being too quick to dismiss non-contemporary sagas' accounts as a-historical, thereby painting an overly peaceful picture of Icelandic history up through the twelfth century.[23] While early Iceland probably saw feuding much as the sagas describe, the Icelandic political situation seems to have changed considerably by the end of the Commonwealth period. These changes perhaps may be detectable first in the eleventh century with the establishment of *ríki*. Originally this term denoted a *goði*'s authority

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[21]See, for example, H.W. Stubbs, 'Troy, Asgard, and Armageddon', *Folklore*, 70 (1959), 440-59; Karl August Eckhadt, *Der Wanenkrieg*, Germanenstudien, 3 (Bonn: Röhrscheid, 1940); Robert Höckert, 'Vǫluspá och vana krieget', in *Festskrift tillägnad Vitalis Norström på 60-årsdagen den 29 januari 1916* (Göteborg: Wettergren & Kerber, 1916), pp. 293-309.

[22]*Heimskringla*, I, 12.

[23]Gunnar Karlsson, '*Goðar* and *Höfðingjar* in Medieval Iceland', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 19 (1977), 358-70 (pp. 360-362).

over a district, much like *goðorð* and *mannaforáð*, but eventually came to denote a territorial dominion. The term *ríki* particularly designated a dominion made up of two or more *goðorð*. The formation of *ríki* seems to have accelerated in the twelfth century when many of the *goðorð* came into the hands of six leading Icelandic families; modern studies aptly title the *goðar* who administered such *ríki* as *stórgoðar*.[24] Not surprisingly, as they were able to mobilise more resources from their constituents over whom they had come to wield territorial lordship, the *stórgoðar* employed increasingly aggressive tactics against each other. Laws prohibiting an individual from administering *goðorð* in more than one *fjórðungr* were routinely disregarded. The final phase of the Commonwealth's history, the *Sturlungaöld*, saw the *stórgoðar* contending in what was effectively intermittent civil war, bringing grievous hardships to the Icelandic population.[25] The power of the *stórgoðar* had become such that they no longer needed to heed the Alþingi, and many did not bother to attend it; the Alþingi did not meet at all in 1238, such was the unrest. The Alþingi's declining status cleared the way for the eventual consolidation of power into a single individual's hands. In the event, this was not to be an Icelander, but the Norwegian king, Hákon gamli Hákonarson, who had been acting as an *agent provacateur* among the *goðar* and gaining influence in Iceland as various chieftains bartered *goðorð* to him in exchange for royal backing. By the mid-thirteenth century Hákon controlled most of the *goðorð*. The *bændr*, encouraged by the Church, had come to see acceptance of Hákon's direct rule as a means to end the wars of the *stórgoðar*. Hákon first appointed Gizurr Þorvaldsson, a *stórgoði* of the Haukdœlir family, as jarl over Iceland in 1258. In 1262-64 agreements in which Icelanders accepted the Norwegian crown's sovereignty were ratified, and the Icelandic 'free state' ceased to exist.[26]

This Icelandic example may be compared with the end of the Old Saxon 'Commonwealth'. Saxon nobles may have been interested in expanding their power at the Assembly's expense, and they may have welcomed Frankish intervention (which, in the end, certainly increased the status of the nobility in Saxony).[27] Charlemagne perhaps intended to exploit this situation in order to extend his power over Saxony with aims not so unlike those in Hákon gamli's fomentation of strife among the Icelandic chieftains.[28] The Saxon resistance leader Widukind may have hoped, in the event of victory, to

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[24]On this process see especially Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Fra goðorðum til ríkja: Þróun goðavalds á 12. og 13. öld*, Sagnfræðirannsóknir, B.10 (Reykjavík: Menninggarsjóður, 1989).

[25]On the *Sturlungaöld* see especially Jesse L. Byock, 'The Age of the Sturlungs', in *Continuity and Change: Political Institutions and Literary Monuments in the Middle Ages, a symposium*, ed. by Elisabeth Vestergaard (Odense: Odense University Press, 1986), pp. 27-42; Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *The Age of the Sturlungs: Icelandic Civilization in the Thirteenth Century*, trans. by Jóhann S. Hannesson, Islandica, 36 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1953).

[26]Jón Jóhannesson, *Commonwealth*, pp. 247-87.

[27]Reuter, *Germany*, pp. 66-67.

[28]Louis the Pious seems to have been heavily involved in the ninth-century struggles among the Danish nobility, perhaps with hopes of exerting political control in southern Scandinavia; K.L. Maund, '"A Turmoil of Warring Princes": Political Leadership in Ninth-century Denmark', *The Hasksins Society Journal: Studies in Medieval History*, 6 (1994), 29-47 (pp. 36-38). See §3.4.2.

transform his status into a bid for kingship, paralleling Arminius's career (§1.2.4).[29] Widukind's capitulation and baptism in 785, well before the end of Saxon resistance, may have been his attempt to ensure a position in the new Frankish order which he may have come to see as inevitable; in this at least, he seems to have been successful, as his descendants were not without significance in later Saxon society.

Similar processes could have taken place in GIA Scandinavia. The evidence of war-booty deposits from the RIA up until *c*. 500 suggests that local warfare was endemic in Scandinavia until at least this time. These deposits' cessation could signal a change in ritual practice at least as well as a period of peace and stability. Later Scandinavian history clearly demonstrates that widespread unrest need not have been marked by war-booty sacrifices.

Medieval Iceland was to a certain degree economically dependent on Norway, and the struggle for power amongst its chieftains facilitated an expansion of the Norwegian king's influence in Iceland. Something similar may have happened in GIA southern Scandinavia, when Theudobert I and Chilperic I seem to have been described as having Scandinavian groups within their spheres of influence.[30] Nevertheless, much of LGIA Scandinavia would have been outside the Merovingians' reach, particularly regions north of Jutland and the Danish islands where élite status-display continued or emerged in the LGIA: Bornholm, Gotland, Mälardalen, southeastern Norway. These regions may have positively benefited from élite warfare in southern Scandinavia and the attendant collapse of communal foci there.

The overall picture revealed in both the late Icelandic Commonwealth and pre-conquest Saxony is one of societies in which élite power-struggles led to social destabilization which neighbouring groups were able to exploit in various ways for their benefit. A similar process may partially explain the 'hole' in the southern Scandinavian archaeological record in the LGIA, when new centres elsewhere in Scandinavia may have come to the fore.

3.1.4 LGIA SCANDINAVIA IN WRITTEN SOURCES

Few historical sources mention sixth-century Scandinavia, but those that do provide information not incongruent with the picture suggested in this study. Both Jordanes and Procopius refer to Scandinavian 'kings', but these may have been leaders of tribal groups.[31] There is no suggestion of overlords ruling multi-tribal confederacies or large areas. Jordanes particularly mentions a Scandinavian king Roduulf of the Ranii, who 'contempto proprio regno ad Theodorici Gothorum regis convolavit et, ut desiderabat, invenit'.[32] What Roduulf desired is uncertain, though Jordanes's words could reveal a

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[29]Had Widukind succeeded in both leading a successful rebellion and assuming political authority, such a move also would have recalled—ironically—the twentieth-century career of Charles de Gaulle.

[30]*Epistolae Austrasicae*, pp. 132-33 (Letter 20); Venantius Fortunatus, *Ad Chilpericum*, p. 203 (ll. 73-76).

[31]Procopius, II, 215 (Book 6, Chapter 15.4-5).

[32]*Getica*, p. 60.

situation paralleling that of Heriold (Harald Clac, Klakk-Haraldr), apparently an unsuccessful claimant to royal power in ninth-century Denmark. In 826, Louis the Pious sponsored his baptism and granted him land in Frisia.[33] Perhaps Roduulf too had come out the worse in an intensifying power struggle among the Scandinavian élite.

Another historical source mentioning Scandinavia in this period is Gregory of Tours' *Historiarum Libri X*,[34] which describes a raid on Frankish territories during the reign of the Frankish king Theudoric made by people Gregory names 'Danes' and led by a 'king' Ch(l)ochilaicus. Hedeager has argued that Gregory's description of Ch(l)ochilaicus as *rex*, a term which he did not use for the leaders among peoples subordinate to the Franks, demonstrates the existence of a powerful Danish kingdom.[35] Nevertheless, we cannot be sure whether Ch(l)ochilaicus was a king in this medieval sense or simply a war-leader of some kind. The raid he led would have taken place between 511 and 533, possibly before 525,[36] and was defeated by the Frankish prince Theudobert.[37] Ch(l)ochilaicus's raid is also mentioned in the *Liber Historiae Francorum* (*c*. 727) which appears to have drawn on Gregory's account.[38] Ch(l)ochilaicus is probably reflected in the *Liber monstrorum de diversis generibus* by the *rex Higlacus* who—not described as a 'Danish' king—ruled the Getae (*imperauit Getis*). He was slain by the Franks, and his bones were displayed on an island at the Rhine's mouth.[39] All this information has received much attention from literary scholars, as Ch(l)ochilaicus has commonly been identified with *Beowulf*'s Hygelac, king of the Geatas, who is described as having prosecuted a disastrous raid on Frisia.[40]

Beowulf offers many tantalising hints which seem to illuminate GIA Scandinavia. Among others, it tells of an overbearing king Heremod who had oppressed the *Dene*

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[33]*(R)RFA*, pp. 169-70 (*sv* 826); *Annales Xantenses*, in *Scriptores rerum Sangallensium: Annales, chronica et historiae aevi Carolini*, ed. by Georgicus Heinricus Pertz, MGH: Scriptores (in folio), 2 (Hannover: Hahn, 1829), pp. 217-35 (p. 225, *sv* 826); Ermold le Noir, *Carmen in honorem Hludowici*, in *Po˘me sur Louis le Pieux et épitres au roi Pépin*, ed. by Edmond Faral (Paris: Champion, 1932), pp. 144-90 (ll. 1882-2513); *Vita Anskarii*, pp. 26-29 (Chapter 7). See §3.4.2.

[34]*HF*, p. 99 (Book 3, Chapter 3). It was written *c*. 575-94; Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (ad 550-800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 124.

[35]Lotte Hedeager, 'Mellem oldtid og middelalder: Europa i folkevandringstiden', *Carlsbergfondet, Frederiksborgmuseet, My Calsbergfondet: Årsskrift* (1992), 39-45 (p. 40).

[36]John Haywood, *Dark Age Naval Power: A Re-assessment of Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Seafaring Activity* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 78-87.

[37]See beginning of Chapter 4.

[38]*LHF*, p. 274 (Chapter 19); Richard A. Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), p. 1.

[39]*Liber monstrorum de diversis generibus*, ed. and trans. by Andy Orchard, in Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the* Beowulf-*Manuscript* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1995), pp. 254-317 (pp. 258-59). The *Liber monstrorum* may have been composed by an Insular author *c.* 650-750 though it survives in ninth- and tenth-century Continental manuscripts; Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the* Beowulf-*Manuscript* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1995), pp. 86-7; Michael Lapidge, '*Beowulf*, Aldhelm, the *Liber Monstrorum* and Wessex', *Studi Medievali*, 3rd series, 23 (1982), 151-92 (pp. 162-79).

[40]*Beowulf*, pp. 46, 94, 109-10 (ll. 1202-14a, 2490-2509, 2911-21). This identification has been widely accepted since first proposed by N.F.S. Grundtvig, 'Om Bjovulfs Drape eller det af Hr. Etatsraad Thorkelin 1815 udgivne angelsachsiske Digt', *Danne-Virke, et Tids-Skrift* 2 (1817), 207-89 (284-87).

severely,[41] and suggests that after Heremod's exile the *Dene* remained 'aldor(le)ase lange hwile' before the legendary Scyld appeared to rule them.[42] Following the Frisian raid, Hygelac's widow 'bearne ne truwode, þæt he wið ælfylcum eþelstolas healdan cuðe, ða wæs Hygelac dead'.[43] After Beowulf's death, Wiglaf also mused on the legacy of Hygelac's raid:

> […] Nu ys leodum wen
> orleg-hwile, syððan under[ne]
> Froncum ond Frysum fyll cyninges
> wide weorðeð. Wæs sio wroht scepen
> heard wið Hugas, syððan Higelac cwom
> faran flot-herge on Fresna land
> […] Us wæs a syððan
> Merewioingas milts ungyfeðe.[44]

Such details fit neatly into the pattern of Scandinavian history from the LRIA to the LGIA suggested in this study. Nevertheless, it can hardly be stressed enough that doubt surrounding the origins of *Beowulf*'s narrative argues strongly against the use of it (and related materials) as a historical source.[45] Nothing in the poem, except Hygelac's raid itself, is corroborated by any vaguely historical documents.

Yet even if the details *Beowulf*'s composer(s) supplied represent the purest speculations, the general picture presented concerning Hygelac's raid is very much that which might have been expected to attend Ch(l)ochilaicus's raid. The ambiguity of the evidence does not really allow identification of Ch(l)ochilaicus's ethnicity—especially considering the uncertainty over what the terms *Dani*, *Getae*, or *Geatas* signified—but it certainly seems that a large Scandinavian expedition and its leader came to grief in Frankish-administered territory during the early sixth century.[46] Casualties among the southern Scandinavian élite in such a military disaster might have severely altered the balance of power within a society of competing chieftains organised around a cult-centre, such as might have existed since the EGIA (§2). Struggles amongst the remainder of the southern Scandinavian élite may have intensified as they vied to fill the vacuum left by Ch(l)ochilaicus and their other fallen competitors. Perhaps the victorious Theudobert's

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[41] *Beowulf*, pp. 34, 64 (ll. 898-915, 1705-23).

[42] *Beowulf*, p. 1 (ll. 4-16a).

[43] *Beowulf*, p. 89 (ll. 2370b-72).

[44] *Beowulf*, pp. 109, 110 (ll. 2910b-15, 2920b-21).

[45] See discussion of issues concerning the Scylding-Skjǫldung cycle's historicity in Chapters 4 and 5.

[46] Another Scandinavian raid, made in conjunction with Saxons, on Frankish-administered territory seems to have been defeated *c*. 570; Venantius Fortunatus, *De Lupo Duce*, in *Venanti Honori Clementiani Fortunati presbyteri Italici*, ed. by Fridericus Leo and B. Krusch, MGH: AA, 4, 2 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1881-85), I, *Opera poetica* (1881), pp. 159-61 (p. 160, ll. 49-58).

milts was indeed *ungyfeðe* if he later took advantage of the unrest to exert authority over any southern Scandinavian groups.[47]

3.1.5 LGIA CENTRES IN THE BALTIC, SWEDEN, & NORWAY

If élite competition had erupted into strife at a level which brought hard times to Scandinavia's south, élite status-display in other regions suggests a certain level of economic prosperity. Prestige-good finds from Gotland and Bornholm cross-over from the EGIA to LGIA. At Sorte Muld on Bornholm, less wealth was deposited in the LGIA than in preceding centuries, but the transitional period saw considerable activity with the deposition of over twenty-three hundred *guldgubber* (representing more than eighty-nine percent of all known *guldgubber*).[48] The *guldgubber* are small pieces of gold foil stamped with various, usually human figures. Their iconography seems to have drawn on Late Antique and Merovingian influences, though in this they are part of the GIA Scandinavian artistic tradition. Whether Sorte Muld was a cult-centre, chieftain's seat, or both, metalwork finds on Bornholm suggest continuing élite activity at a significant level until the Viking Age—a stark contrast with the Danish islands and Jutland.[49] Bornholm's élite seems to have been very aware of Frankish trends during the sixth century. They enjoyed imports from Alamannic and Frankish regions, and élite burial forms on Bornholm seem to have closely followed customs of the Merovingian élite.[50] Such communication with Merovingian Francia is suggested by similar burial forms on Gotland and in central Sweden.

The Swedish Uppland-Mälardalen region's LGIA sites are well-known,[51] though they have been the subject of much recent reanalysis which will undoubtedly continue with further prosecution of the 'Svealand i Vendeltid' project. The earliest ship-burial yet discovered in Scandinavia is of a woman at Augerum in Sweden from the late sixth century. Gamla Uppsala's sixth-century burial mounds are surrounded by numerous smaller mounds, the dates of which stretch into the Viking Age. A number of gold deposits, perhaps of a votive character, have been found at Gamla Uppsala. The seventh-century burials at nearby Vendel and Välsgarde also indicate continuing élite activity in

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[47]*Epistolae Austrasicae*, pp. 132-33 (Letter 20); Venantius Fortunatus, *Ad Chilpericum*, p. 203 (ll. 73-76).

[48]Margrethe Watt, 'Kings or Gods? Iconographic Evidence from Scandinavian Gold Foil Figures', in *MoK*, pp. 171-83 (p. 174).

[49]Margrethe Watt, 'Sorte Muld: Høvdingesæde og kultcentrum fra Bornholms yngre jernalder', in *FStS*, II, 67-72 (pp. 70-71). It has been suggested that the lower numbers of status-display finds from the late seventh-century indicate the emergence of central kingship on Bornholm. While such an explanation is possible, there is no documentary evidence for kingship on Bornholm until the late ninth century; *Old English Orosius*, p. 16.

[50]Lars Jørgensen, 'Våben grave og krigeraristokrati: Etableringen af en centralmagt på Bornholm i det 6.-8. årh. e.Kr.', in *FStS*, II, 109-25.

[51]See articles in *Arkeologi och miljögeologi i Gamla Uppsala*, ed. by Władysław Duczko, Occasional Papers in Archaeology, 7, 11, 2 vols (Uppsala: Department of Archaeology, Uppsala Univeristy, 1993-96); and in *Vendel Period Studies: Transactions of the Boat-grave symposium in Stockholm, February 2-3, 1981*, ed. by J.P. Lamm and H.-Å. Nordström (Stockholm: Statens Historiska Museum, 1983).

the region. They attest to a level of wealth seeming to match that in contemporary Frankish burials and the East Anglian Sutton Hoo burials; finds from Sutton Hoo appear to have stylistic links with contemporary Swedish finds.[52] Material from Helgö on Lake Mälaren is notoriously difficult to date, but the site seems to have flourished in the sixth and seventh centuries.[53] Helgö has revealed far fewer precious metal finds than Gudme in its heyday, but objects from as far away as Egypt and India testify to Helgö's status as an international trade centre with a role perhaps not unlike those of earlier southern Scandinavian sites.

The Norwegian finds of the LGIA are not as spectacular as those from Sweden, but they likewise suggest growing wealth and power. Based on the distributions of fifth- and sixth-century settlement patterns and the placement of boathouses in southern and western Norway, Bjørn Myhre has suggested that a society of small competing chieftaincies existed during the fifth and sixth centuries.[54] Of special interest is the Vestfold region in eastern Norway where mound burials began to appear in the mid-sixth century. At Borre, although lacking the richness of contemporary Swedish burials, there are large mounds of the mid-seventh century. Whether these Yngling traditions have any historical accuracy is highly questionable,[55] but it is interesting to note *Ynglingatal*'s claims that the Norwegian dynasty stemmed from the ancient kings of Uppsala and that the Norwegian Yngling king Eysteinn was buried *þars ... Vǫðlu straumr at vági kømr*, which Snorri says is *á Borró*.[56]

If southern Scandinavia indeed fell on hard times in the LGIA, perhaps new groups and dynasties struggling for recognition sought to legitimise themselves by establishing centres which they hoped would be seen as the successors of earlier cult-centres, such as perhaps had existed at Gudme (see discussion in Chapter 2). Such a process might explain the strong connections between the Vanir cult and the Uppsala dynasties revealed in the medieval sources.

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[52]M.O.H. Carver, 'Sutton Hoo in Context', in *Angli e sassoni al di qua e al di là del mare: 26 aprile - 10 maggio 1984*, ed. by Raoul Manseli and others, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 32 (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro studi, 1986), 77-123; R.L.S. Bruce-Mitford, 'The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial: Some Foreign Connections', in *Angli e sassoni al di qua e al di là del mare: 26 aprile - 10 maggio 1984*, ed. by Raoul Manseli and others, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 32 (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro studi, 1986), 143-218.

[53]Axel Christopherson, 'Big Chiefs and Buddhas in the Heart of the Swedish Homeland: Barter and Social Organisation at Helgö during the Migration and Vendel Periods, a Proposed Reinterpretation', in *Thirteen studies on Helgö*, ed. by Agneta Lundström, trans. by Helen Clarke and Clifford Long, Museum of National Antiquities, Stockholm: Studies, 7 (Stockholm: Statens historiska museum, 1988), pp. 51-59; Ola Kyhlberg, *Helgö och Birka: kronologisk-topografisk analys av grav- och boplatser*, Arkeologiska rapporter och meddelanden från Institutionen för arkeologi, särskilt nordeuropeisk, vid Stockholms universitet, 6 (Stockholm: Institutionen för arkeologi, Stockholms universitet, Akademilitt., 1980); Karin Calissendorff, 'Helgö', *Namn och Bygd*, 52 (1964), 105-51 (pp. 147-51); Mårten Stenberger, *Det forntida Sverige: svensk förhistoria i korta kapitel* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1964), p. 633. See §2.2.2.

[54]Myhre, 'Boat houses', pp. 50, 56; Myhre, 'Chieftains', pp. 186-87.

[55]See §3.2.2. Knut Helle, 'The History of the Early Viking Age in Norway', in *IaSiEVA*, pp. 239-58 (pp. 256-57).

[56]*Ynglingatal*, p. 13 (v. 31); *Heimskringla*, I, 77-78.

3.2 LATER REFLECTIONS OF NERTHUS'S CULT

3.2.1 NERTHUS & NJǪRÐR AGAIN

Some of the links between the first-century Nerthus and that deity's Viking-Age form *Njǫrðr* (East Scandinavian **Njærðr*) have already been discussed (§2.2.2). We are ill-informed about the history of this deity's cult during the millennium which lies between Tacitus and the medieval Scandinavian sources, though with adequate supporting evidence place-names can provide some clues to the cult's popularity.[57] Generally speaking, many of the Njǫrðr place-names seem either to label bodies of water, or to be located near bodies of water. The bulk of Njǫrðr place-names are in the Swedish lake regions or in Norway, along the west coast or in the Oslofjord region. These locations are difficult to reconcile with Tacitus' probable location of the Nerthus cult-centre somewhere in southern Scandinavia; the cult's activities appear to have shifted focus. Widely separated from the Norwegian and central Swedish Njǫrðr place-names are two in Skåne, and two on Fyn—one of the latter is *Nærå*, from Old Danish *Niartharhøghæ*, very near Gudme.[58] The existence of a few strongly pre-eminent southern Scandinavian sites associated with Nerthus-Njǫrðr may have discouraged use of the deity's name in naming neighbouring locations of lesser status during the EGIA. In the LGIA, new centres elsewhere in Scandinavia might have begun to reference Njǫrðr as a means of associating themselves with the prestige once enjoyed by then-declining southern Scandinavian cult-centres. According to John Kousgård Sørensen, 'there is no reason to believe this god [Njǫrðr] was worshipped in the last centuries of heathendom', and he argues that place-names in *Nær-* would not have been parsable as theophoric during those times.[59] Njǫrðr's cult may have been in abeyance during the LGIA and Viking Age, though Kousgård Sørensen's view is difficult to reconcile with Njǫrðr's relatively strong presence in the written sources, as well the existence of Njǫrðr place-names in Iceland. There are, for example, three place-names *Njarðvík* in Iceland which are unlikely to pre-date the ninth century and probably reflect an active cult.

3.2.2 FREYR, YNGVI-FREYR, & ING

Freyr and Freyja ('Lord' and 'Lady') are described in medieval mythological sources as Njǫrðr's children, and it seems that their cults, which appear to have been closely allied in nature to Njǫrðr's, may have been overtaking that of their parent. The cognates of their

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[57]Magnus Olsen, *Hedenske kultminder i norske stedsnavne*, Videnskabsselskapet i Kristiania Skrifter: II, Historisk-filosofisk Klasse, 1914:4 (Kristiania: Dybwad, 1915), pp. 50-62; Jørn Sandnes and Ola Stemshaug with Kolbjørn Aune, *Norsk stadnamnleksikon*, 1st edn (Oslo: Samlaget, 1976), pp. 234 (*sv* 'Njærheim'), 238 (*sv* 'Nærøy').

[58]de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte*, II, 194-99, 201.

[59]John Kousgård Sørensen, 'The Change of Religion and the Names', in *ONaFRaCPN*, pp. 394-403 (p. 399).

names in other Germanic languages are used as secular titles, rather than divine appellations,[60] suggesting that the specific association of these titles with particular deities may be a late development in Scandinavia. Some other deities named in medieval sources originally may have been doublets of Freyr or Freyja, or this pair may have absorbed a variety of local deities under their more generic identities. Freyja, whom Snorri described as having many names,[61] may have been related to apparently minor goddesses (such as Gefn, Gefion, or Iðunn), and even identified with Gerðr and Frigg.[62]

Freyr is commonly identified with the Fricco whom Adam of Bremen named as one of the three gods worshipped at the 'Uppsala temple'.[63] Whether any such building existed is questionable,[64] but Gamla Uppsala was probably an important heathen cult-centre from the LGIA (and continued later as a Christian centre, being made an archbishopric in 1164).[65] Adam's description of Fricco's idol as *cum ingenti priapo* is usually considered proof enough to equate Fricco with Freyr, in his role as a fertility god.[66] There have been many ingenious attempts to explain the curious name-form *Fricco*, though perhaps the simplest explanation is that *Fricco* could be a LG name, perhaps of an old deity, which either Adam (or an informant) substituted in place of the Scandinavian deity's name.[67] According to Saxo, the heathen Swedes held an annual sacrifice (instituted in ancient times by a certain Hadingus) called *Frøsblot* honouring the god Frø (OSw **Frōr*, OIce *Freyr*).[68]

Of Freyr, Snorri's Edda says:

> Freyr er hin agætazti af asvm; hann ræðr firir regni ok scini solar ok þar með avexti iarþar, ok ahann er gott at heita til ars ok friþar; hann ræðr ok fesælv manna.[69]

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[60]*Freyr* is a strong noun (from **fraujaʀ*), contrasting with its cognates in the other Germanic languages which are weak (i.e. OE *frea*, from **fraujōn*).

[61]*Snorra Edda*, p. 38; *SnEdHafn*, I, 114.

[62]Hilda Ellis Davidson, *The Lost Beliefs of Northern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 71, 108.

[63]Adam of Bremen, p. 258-59 (Book 4, Chapters 26-27).

[64]Else Nordahl, … templum quod Ubsola dicitur … *i arkeologisk belysning*, Aun, 22 (Uppsala: Department of Archaeology, Uppsala University, 1996), pp. 54-62.

[65]Sawyer and Sawyer, *Medieval Scandianvia*, p. 109.

[66]Adam of Bremen, p. 258 (Book 4, Chapter 26). Adam's description of Fricco is eminently applicable to a statue found at Rällinge, Södermanland, Sweden. For this reason the statue is commonly assumed to depict Freyr.

[67]Grimm notes personal names *Fricco*/*Friccho*/*Friccheo* and an eleventh-century place-name *Fricconhorst* (modern *Freckenhorst*), though he connects the latter with a goddess *Freke*; Jacob Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, ed. by Elard Hugo Meyer, 4th edn (Berlin: Dümmler, 1875-78), I, 176 n. 1, 252-53; III, 92.

[68]*Gesta Danorum*, p. 29.

[69]*Snorra Edda*, p. 31; *SnEdHafn*, I, 96.

This description recalls Sigurðr Hlaðajarl's toasting Njǫrðr and Freyr *til árs ok friðar*.[70] Various medieval Icelandic sagas appear to reference Freyr, his cult, and its adherents.[71] Though the details they provide must be held suspect, such passages probably testify to Freyr's genuine popularity in pre-Christian times.

Freyr is several times called a leader of gods: *fólkvaldi goða* in *Skírnismál*,[72] and (by Njǫrðr) *ása iaðarr* in *Locasenna*.[73] These descriptions recall Snorri's description of Freyr's kingship over the Swedes, following the reign of his parent, Njǫrðr. After Óðinn's death:

> Njǫrðr af Nóatúnum gerðisk þá valdsmaðr yfir Svíum ok helt upp blótum. Hann kǫlluðu Svíar þá dróttin sinn. Tók hann þá skattgjafar af þeim. Á hans dǫgum var friðr allgóðr ok alls konar ár svá mikit. at Svíar trúðu því at Njǫrðr réði fyrir ári ok fyrir fésælu manna. Á hans dǫgum dó flestir díar ok váru allir brenndir ok blótaðir síðan … Freyr tók þá við ríki eptir Njǫrð. Var hann kallaðr dróttin yfir Svíar ok tók skattgjafar af þeim. Hann var vinsæll ok ársæll sem faðir hans. Freyr reisti at Uppsǫlum hof mikit ok setti þar hǫfuðstað sinn, lagði þar til allar skyldir sínar, lǫnd ok lausan eyri. Þá hófsk Uppsalaauðr ok hefir haldizk æ síðan. Á hans dǫgum hófsk Fróðafriðr. Þá var ok ár um ǫll lǫnd. Kenndu Svíar þat Frey. Var han því meirr dýrkaðr en ǫnnur goðin sem á hans dǫgum varð landsfólkit auðgara en fyrr af friðinum ok ári. Gerðr Gymisdóttir hét kona hans. Sonr þeira hét Fjǫlnir. Freyr hét Yngvi ǫðru nafni. Yngva nafn var lengi síðan haft í hans ætt fyrir tígnarnafn, ok Ynglingar váru síðan kallaðr hans ættmenn.[74]

Other than following *Skírnismál* in identifying Gerðr as Freyr's spouse,[75] it is not clear whence Snorri derived the information in this section—whether he simply made it up, was depending on oral or written poetry or prose, or was even drawing on traditions learned during his trip to Sweden (see §1.3.2). For the bulk of *Ynglinga saga*, Snorri relied on the poem *Ynglingatal*. Its authorship is traditionally assigned to a named skald, Þjóðólfr ór Hvini, and though in the Eddic *kviðuháttr* metre it makes heavy use of kennings in the skaldic style. *Ynglingatal* is commonly dated to *c*. 900, but recently Claus Krag argued that the Ynglingar traditions were first synthesised by Ari Þorgilsson and

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[70]*Heimskringla*, I, 13, 168.

[71]*Gísla saga Súrssonar*, in *Vestfirðinga sǫgur*, ed. by Björn K. Þórólfsson and Guðni Jónsson, Íslenzk fornrit, 6 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1943), pp. 1-118 (pp. 55, 57); *Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða*, in *Austfirðinga sǫgur*, ed. by Jón Jóhannesson, Íslenzk fornrit, 11 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1950), pp. 97-133 (pp. 99-100); *Víga-Glúms saga*, in *Eyfirðinga sǫgur*, ed. by Jónas Kristjánsson, Íslenzk fornrit, 9 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1956), pp. 1-98 (pp. 16, 34, 66, 87-88); *Landnámabók*, pp. 336, 397; *Vatnsdœla saga*, pp. 30, 33, 151, 158.

[72]Recalling the name of the Frisian king Fin Folcwalding in *Widsið*, p. 150 (l. 27a); *Skírnismál*, p. 69 (v. 3).

[73]*Locasenna*, p. 103 (v. 35).

[74]*Heimskringla*, I, 23-24.

[75]See Paul Bibire, 'Freyr and Gerðr: the Story and its Myths', in *Sagnaskemmtun: Studies in Honour of Herman Pálsson on his 65th Birthday, 26th May 1986*, ed. by Rudolf Simek, Jónas Kristjánsson, and Hans Bekker-Nielsen (Vienna: Böhlaus, 1986), pp. 19-40.

that consequently it may date as late as *c*. 1200.[76] Krag's analysis would cast doubt upon Snorri's equation of Freyr and Yngvi, and would complicate an understanding of Freyr's relation to other Germanic traditions concerning gods or divine heroes whose names contain the *Ing*- element. Krag raised many cogent points about the likelihood that early medieval Scandinavian authors may have been synthesising and rationalising disparate material, but his arguments have not been widely accepted, perhaps in part because even if the information we possess concerning Ynglingar was to some degree a product of the twelfth-century, it may nonetheless go back to much earlier traditions. There are numerous place-names referring to Freyr (and to Vanir deities generally) in east-central Sweden,[77] and, with the combined testimonies of Snorri, Saxo, and Adam of Bremen, the evidence indeed seems to point to a connection between Freyr's cult and Gamla Uppsala. Though Snorri describes the Ynglingar as an ancient dynasty of kings at Uppsala, he explicitly asserts that their rule there ended with the defeat of Ingjaldr inn illráði by Ívarr víðfaðmi (allegedly from Skåne).[78] Such information may represent genuine traditions but cannot be treated as historical, and we have little information about what a term like *ynglingr* might have meant, if anything, to the Swedes. That it—or some related term—did mean something of note, however, may be suggested by the preponderance of *Ing*- and *Yngv*- personal-names,[79] as well as the place-name *Inglinge* in Uppland.[80]

The term *ynglingr* probably stems from **iŋuliŋaʀ* (perhaps **iŋwaliŋaʀ* originally, with *-w-* vocalised to *-u-* before the consonant), itself a combination of a weak noun **iŋulē* (a name?) with the *-ing-* suffix; **iŋulē* would be a diminutive form of **iŋwanaʀ* (**iŋw-* + adjectival suffix) which produced the ON name *Yngvinn*) using a variant of the early *-ila*-type suffix found also in names like *Attila* (§4.2.3).[81] Thus, *ynglingr* means something like 'person associated with someone (or something) with the attributes of Yngvi'. *Ynglingr* is unlikely to be a dynastic title derived directly from *Yngvi* as Snorri stated and Ari implied, though the forms are clearly related. *Yngvi* itself comes from **iŋwōn*, a weak form of **iŋwaz*, the PG form from which all these *Ing*-/*Yng*- forms probably stem. Though of obscure etymology, **iŋwaz* may spring from an Indo-European root **eng*^{w}-, denoting 'groin'.[82] Whether terms like **iŋwōn*, **iŋwanaʀ*, and **iŋulē* would

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[76]Claus Krag, *Ynglingatal og Ynlingasaga: En studie i historiske kilder*, Studia humaniora, 2 (Oslo: Rådet for humanistisk forskning, NAVF, Universitetsforlaget, 1991), pp. 33, 165-66, 210-11, 218-19. For earlier discussion on *Ynglingatal*'s date, see Walter Åkerlund, *Studier över Ynglingatal*, Skrifter utgivna av Vetenskaps-societeten i Lund, 23 (Lund: Ohlsson, 1939), pp. 1-79.

[77]de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte*, II, 195-203, 308-11 & Karten 7-8, 10.

[78]*Heimskringla*, I, 71-73.

[79]Elias Wessén, *Studier till Sveriges hedna mytologi och fornhistoria*, Uppsala universitets årsskrift: Filosofi, Språkvetenskap och historiska vetenskaper, 6 (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1924), pp. 64-67.

[80]Eric Elgqvist, *Skälv och Skilfingar: Vad nordiska ortnamn vittna om svenska expansionssträvanden omkring mitten av första årtusendet e.Kr.* (Lund: Olin, 1944), pp. 68-74.

[81]*ANEW*, p. 678 (*sv* 'ynglingr', 'Yngvi'). Another possible meaning for the word *ynglingr* is simply 'youngling'. Krag considered this more suitable than de Vries's 'pure speculation', but his explanation of why such a term would be suitable for designating a king is not very convincing; Krag, pp. 208-11.

[82]Compare Latin *inguen*; Julius Pokorny, *Indogermanische etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Bern; München: Francke, 1959-69), p. 319 (*sv* 'eng^{u}-').

have been personal names or titles is unclear, but originally *ynglingr* is perhaps as likely as not to have designated someone of prominent position within a fertility cult. What the name *Ingunar-Freyr* used in *Locasenna* and in *Óláfs saga ins helga in sérstaka* meant is uncertain,[83] but it further strengthens Freyr's association with other *Ing-*/*Yngv-* names and terms. Whether *ynglingr* was a dynastic appellation or, as suggested here, perhaps more likely a title,[84] it might well represent the interests of LGIA chieftains in claiming legitimacy through association with well-known institutions of earlier times. In this context, it is remarkable that Snorri identifies Freyr, Njǫrðr's son, as the Uppsala-centre's founder.[85]

Evidence for figures and institutions linked with PG **iŋwaz* is at least as old as the RIA, as this element is found in the name of the Inguaeones, the cultic league mentioned by Tacitus and Pliny which seems to have been located in roughly the area that had been the Jastorf superculture's heart.[86] Such a position would have put them in close contact with the tribes of the Nerthus cultic league, and there may even have been some overlap. *Beowulf* describes Hroþgar as *eodor Ingwina* (l. 1044) and *frea*[*n*] *Ingwina* (l. 1319).[87] *Ingwine* may represent a folk-etymology of Inguaeones, and it is possible that information derived from Tacitus was known to *Beowulf*'s composer(s).[88] Richard North argued that a cult centred on Ing played a dynamic role in early Anglo-Saxon England,[89] and traditions of some kind of fertility cult may stand behind the Anglo-Saxon myth of Sce(a)f or Scyld (see §5.1.3). Though it is difficult to be sure how old the rune-names may be, the name of the twenty-second rune in the older fuþark (ᛜ, in England ᛝ) is commonly reconstructed **inguz*. In the Anglo-Saxon Rune Poem, the ᛝ-rune is accompanied by the following verse:

ᛝ wæs ærest mid East-Denum
gesewen secgun, oþ he siððan est[90]
ofer wæg gewat; wæn æfter ran;

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[83]*Locasenna*, p. 103 (v. 35); *Heimskringla*, II, 421; *ANEW*, p. 678 (*sv* 'ynglingr', 'Yngvarr', 'Yngvi'). See further recent discussion in Picard, *Sakralkönigtum?*, pp. 192-219.

[84]See §5.2.1.

[85]*Heimskringla*, I, 23-24.

[86]Shchukin, p. 33; *Germania*, pp. 2-3 (Chapter 2); C. Plinius Secundus, I, 345 (Book 4, Chapter 96). See §2.2.2.

[87]*Beowulf*, pp. 39, 50.

[88]Roberta Frank, 'Germanic Legend in Old English Literature', in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. by Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 88-106 (pp. 93, 104). *Germania* was known in Carolingian Francia; see §4.2.3 and §5.3.3.

[89]Richard North, *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 22 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[90]It has been suggested that the poem's *est* ('eastwards') may be an error for *eft* ('afterwards'').

ðus Heardingas[91] ðone hæle nemdun.[92]

Freyr is likewise associated with wagons. *Qgmundar þáttr dytts* recounts the tale of a Norwegian, Gunnarr helmingr, who meets a priestess travelling on a ritual procession around the Swedish countryside in a wagon containing an effigy of Freyr.[93] Gunnarr overcomes the god by wrestling with the idol, and takes his place in the wagon; the Christian Icelandic author was able to poke fun at the Swedes, whom he considered credulous heathens, describing them as well-pleased when 'Freyr' is able to talk and feast with them—and impregnate their priestess. But behind this comic tale probably lies a memory and understanding of genuine heathen rites, else the humour would not make sense. Moreover, the perambulation of Freyr's idol in a wagon strongly recalls the similar rites of Nerthus,[94] as well as Njǫrðr's possible description as *vagna gvð*,[95] and Freyja's use of a *reið*.[96] Wheeled vehicles seem to have been popular amongst the Vanir,[97] and it may be speculated that such associations go back to the small RIA wagons found at

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[91]The Heardingas may be related to the Scandinavian Haddingjar. Hadingus's association with the *Frøblot* in *Gesta Danorum* has been mentioned; *Gesta Danorum*, p. 29. Some scholars believe these names are related to ON *haddr*, seeming to mean 'a woman's hair-style'. Adam of Bremen characterise rites at Uppsala as having an effeminate nature. See further Georges Dumézil, *From Myth to Fiction: The Saga of Hadingus*, trans. by Derek Coltman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973) [originally published as Georges Dumézil, *Du mythe au roman: La Saga de Hadingus (Saxo Grammaticus, I, v-viii) et autres essais* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970)]; de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte*, II, 166, 175-76, 248-49.

[92]*The Old English Rune Poem: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Maureen Halsall, McMaster Old English Studies and Texts, 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), pp. 86-93 (p. 90); *The Anglo-Saxon Rune Poem*, in *Runic and Heroic Poems of the Old Teutonic Peoples*, ed. by Bruce R. Dickins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915), pp. 12-23 (pp. 20-21); George Hickes, *Linguarum Veterum Septentrionalium Thesaurus Grammatico-criticus et Archaeologicus*, 2 vols (Oxford: Sheldonian Theatre, 1703-05; repr. Menston: Scolar Press, 1970), I.1: *Institutiones Grammaticae Anglo-Saxonicae et Moeso-Gothicae*, p. 135. A new critical edition is being prepared by Raymond I. Page.

[93]*Qgmundar þáttr dytts*, in *Eyfirðinga sǫgur*, ed. by Jónas Kristjánsson, Íslensk fornrit, 9 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1956), pp. 99-115 (pp. 111-15).

[94]*Germania*, pp. 26-27 (Chapter 40).

[95]*Snorra Edda*, p. 97 n. 6 & n. to l. 16; *SnEdHafn*, I, 260 n. 12. See §2.2.2.

[96]*Snorra Edda*, p. 31; *SnEdHafn*, I, 96.

[97]Wheeled vehicles may have been associated generally with Germanic (and Celtic) fertility deities. Þórr, not without fertility associations, like Freyja had a *reið*; *Snorra Edda*, p. 29; *SnEdHafn*, I, 88-90. Gregory of Tours described the idol of a goddess *Berecinthiae* being drawn through the fields and vineyards with much celebration; Gregory of Tours, *Liber in Gloria Confessorum*, in *Gregorii Turonensis Opera*, ed. by W. Arndt, Bruno Krusch, and Wilhelmus Levison, MGH: SRM, 1, 2 vols (Hannover: Hahn 1885-1951), II, ed. by Bruno Krusch (1885), 744-820 (pp. 793-94, Chapter 76). Such customs continued in Christian times with the perambulation of idols of the Virgin Mary or saints; Pamela Berger, *The Goddess Obscured: Transformation of the Grain Protectoress from Goddess to Saint* (London: Hale, 1988).

Dejbjerg, Jutland,[98] the southern Scandinavian chariot burials of the pre-RIA,[99] and even the Bronze-Age 'sun-wagon' model found in Trundholm Mose, Sjælland.[100]

3.2.3 FRÓÐI

Another figure associated with ritual wagon processions is Frotho, in *Gesta Danorum*. Saxo described Frotho's body being transported around Denmark after his death in hopes of 'extending his life', perhaps meaning that his beneficent influence on the land would be prolonged; close links with the other wagon rites are clearly apparent.[101] This description is similar to Snorri's description of Freyr's death. He asserted that Freyr's closest followers buried him in a howe, but told the other Swedes that Freyr was still alive so that they kept bringing tribute to Freyr's howe.

> Þá helzk ár ok friðr … Þá er allir Svíar vissu, at Freyr var dauðr en helzk ár ok friðr, þá trúðu þeir, at svá myndi vera, meðan Freyr væri á Svíþjóð, ok vildu eigi brenna hann ok kǫlluðu hann veraldargoð, blótuðu mest til árs ok friðar alla ævi síðan.[102]

As noted above (§3.2.2), Snorri described Freyr's reign as coinciding with the *Fróða friðr*, though not until discussing Freyr's son Fjǫlnir does Snorri mention Friðfróði himself, who *var at Hleiðru*.[103] The reign of Saxo's Frotho III was likewise marked with peace and prosperity, and he is commonly identified with Friðfróði, while the similarity of Frotho III's and Freyr's deaths suggests some link between these figures; Fróði is often thought to have been a hypostasis of Freyr.

The figure—or figures—of Fróði may be more complex, however. Skaldic poetry attributed to the tenth-century seems to know a legendary Fróði,[104] referring to his *friðr* as well as a story explaining gold as *Fróða mjǫl* and a story associating Fróði with the

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[98]Johannes Brøndsted, *Danmarks Oldtid*, 3 vols (Copenhagen, Gyldendal, 1957-60), III (1960), 68-73.

[99]Ole Harck, 'Zur Herkunft der nordischen Prachtwagen aus der jüngeren vorrömischen Eisenzeit', *Acta Archaeologica*, 59 (1988), 91-111; Peter S. Wells, 'Interactions', pp. 153-56; Klaus Raddatz with Ulrich Schaefer, *Das Wagengrab der jüngeren vorrömischen Kaiserzeit von Husby, Kreis Flensburg*, Untersuchungen aus dem Schleswig-Holsteinischen Landesmuseum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte in Schleswig, dem Landesamt für Vor- und Frühgeschichte von Schleswig-Holstein in Schleswig und dem Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte an der Universität Kiel: Neue Folge, 20 (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1967).

[100]The elaborately carved Oseberg wagon may also have fulfilled some ritual function; Haakon Shetelig and Hjalmar Falk, *Scandinavian Archaeology*, trans. by E.V. Gordon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), pp. 156-57 & Plate 25, 282-83 & Plate 47.

[101]*Gesta Danorum*, p. 143 (Book 6). See Axel Olrik, *Danmarks Heltedigtning: en oldtidsstudie*, 2 vols (Copenhagen: Gad, 1903-10), II: *Starkad den Gamle og den yngre skjoldungrække*, 239-49.

[102]*Heimskringla*, I, 24-25.

[103]*Heimskringla*, I, 25.

[104]*Skjaldedigtning*, B.1, 33, 64, 120. See also Rudolf Meissner, *Die Kenningar der Skalden: Ein Beitrag zur skaldischen Poetik* (Bonn: Schroeder, 1921; repr. Hildesheim: Olm, 1984), p. 228. Fróði's *friðr* is also mentioned in *HHb1*, p. 132 (v. 13). See further §4.2.2.

giant maidens known from *Grottasǫngr*.[105] Somehow related may be *Beowulf*'s Froda, described as a leader of the Heaðobeardan and as Ingeld's father.[106] By the medieval period, genealogical traditions were becoming complex and heavily interwoven, perhaps explaining the four *Fróðar* each in *Langfeðgatal*,[107] and in Arngrímur Jónsson's epitome of **Skjǫldunga saga*.[108] These *Fróðar* seem condensable to two main types: a 'peaceable Fróði' (i.e. Friðfróði, Fróði inn friðsami, Old Danish: Frothi hin frithgothæ) and a 'valiant Fróði' (i.e. Fróði inn frœkni).[109] Saxo, in *Gesta Danorum*, spread elements of Friðfróði across his *Frothones* I and III, while splitting Fróði inn frœkni between *Frothones* II and III.[110] P.A. Munch noted that one of Saxo's *Frothones*—Frotho IV—seems to have been borrowed from a Froda in Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*, who in turn had been created through a mistranslation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's description of Constantinus as *se froda* in the *Battle of Brunanburh*;[111] a similar borrowing may have influenced the twelfth-century *Chronicon Roskildense*'s Frothi.[112] Niels Lukman argued that the ultimate source for Saxo's Frotho III was a Migration-Age Gothic leader called Fravitta, a Romanized Goth in charge of defence along the lower Danube in the late fourth century AD.[113] However, while Lukman made an interesting case for the

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[105]*Grottasǫngr*, in Neckel-Kuhn, pp. 293-97.

[106]*Beowulf*, p. 76 (l. 2025b). See further §4.2.2 and §5.1.3.

[107]Friðfroðe, Froðe (no eke-name), Froðe friðsami, and Froðe frækni; *Langfeðgatal*, 58-59.

[108]Frode fridgode, two *Frodones* without eke-names, Frodo magnus vel celebris, and a further Frodo as his grandson; AJ, pp. 334-44; *DsAl*, pp. 5-23 (Chapters 3-11).

[109]These two separate *Fróðar* may stem from separate sources. Origins in both a mythical Fróði, linked to a Scandinavian Njǫrðr-Freyr-Yngvi cult, and in a historical king Froda of the Heaðobeardan were suggested by Erik Björkman, *Studien über die Eigennamen im Beowulf*, Studien zur englischen Philologie, 58 (Halle: Niemeyer, 1920), pp. 41-47. This view was accepted by Malone, *Widsith*, p. 164. Axel Olrik suggested that there had been two competing strands of Fróði-traditions in Scandinavia, one favoured in West Scandinavian traditions and another in Danish traditions, and that Saxo used both though mostly the latter. Both strands, Olrik asserted, must have stemmed from a single original figure in early Scandinavian legend; Axel Olrik, *The Heroic Legends of Denmark*, trans. by Lee M. Hollander, rev. with Axel Olrik, Scandinavian Monographs, 4 (New York: American-Scandinavian Foundation, 1919), pp. 446-71. [This book represents a revised version of *Danmarks Heltedigtning*, I, and therefore is referred to in this study. Certain sections of *Heroic Legends of Denmark* represent summaries of the Danish version, however, and any references to those sections point to both the English and Danish versions.]

[110]Davidson-Fisher, II (1980), 72, n. 1.

[111]ASC-Plummer, I, p. 108; ASC-Thorpe, p. 204-05; *The Battle of Brunanburh*, in *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ed. by Elliott van Kirk Dobbie, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 6 (London,: Routledge; New York: Columbia, 1942), pp. 16-20 (p. 18, l. 37-40a); Henry, Archdeacon, of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum: The History of the English People*, ed. and trans. by Diana Greenway, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 300, 313; P.A. Munch, 'Om den foregivne Kong Frode i Jylland paa Harald Blaatands Tid', in *Norsk Tidsskrift for Videnskab og Litteratur*, 5 (1851-52), 46-55. See also Niels Lukman 'Angelsaksiske krøniker', in *KLNM*, I (1956), col. 140-43; Anne K.G. Kristensen, *Danmarks ældste annalistik: Studier over lundensisk annalskrivning i 12. og 13. arhundrede*, Skrifter udgivet af Det Historiske institut ved Københavns universitet, 3 (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1969), p. 123 n. 14; Lars Hemmingsen, *By Word of Mouth: The Origins of Danish Legendary History, Studies in European Learned And Popular Traditions of Dacians and Danes before A.D. 1200* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Copenhagen, 1995), pp. 242-52.

[112]*Chronicon Roskildense: incerti auctoris historia Danorum, ab a. 826 ad a 1140 (1157)*, 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), 14-33 (p. 17).

[113]Niels Lukman, *Frode Fredegod: Den gotiske Fravita*, Studier fra Sprog- og Oldtidsforskning, 299 (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanums Forlag, 1981). Lukman also suggested that elements of Saxo's Frotho

possibility that Saxo drew on classical materials discussing Fravitta, seeing this figure as a general source for the legendary Scandinavian *Fróðar* remains problematic.

The medieval traditions are clearly confused, though to what extent is uncertain. Nevertheless, reference to Fróði's *friðr* in Viking-Age skaldic poetry brands this motif as a relatively early legendary element. In the Middle Ages, Fróði's *friðr* was commonly linked to the period surrounding the birth of Christ, an idea first suggested by an Icelandic chronological note of 1137 which hints that the idea may have originated with Sæmundr inn fróði.[114] The note certainly asserts that Sæmundr identified the reigns of Friðfróði and Fjǫlnir as contemporaneous, a fact which itself may have depended on *Ynglingatal*'s description of Fjǫlnir's death as having taken place *þars Fróði bjó*.[115] Ari Þorgilsson and Snorri may have relied on Sæmundr's authority as well as *Ynglingatal* for the association of Friðfróði and Fjǫlnir.[116] Snorri does not quite follow Ari's Yngvi-Njǫrðr-Freyr-Fjǫlnir genealogy, instead equating Yngvi and Freyr while describing Njǫrðr as Óðinn's son, but either way the source for Fjǫlnir's descent from Freyr is unknown, as no other mythological source provides Freyr with a son. Fjǫlnir is a name of uncertain etymology, but may be connected with ON *fjǫl-* ('many') and is most often used as an Óðinn-name.[117] As it seems Óðinn may have acquired a number of his many names from now forgotten deities (perhaps due to his aristocratic followers' interest in promoting their patron's power), it may be that Fjǫlnir was once a fertility deity identical to, or who became identified with, Freyr. Moreover, despite considerable confusion over the origins of the *Fróðar*, Friðfróði's similarities with Freyr suggest that they too may be related, or became so. Freyr is dubbed *inn fróði* in *Skírnismál*.[118] The adjective *fróðr* came to have the sense 'wise' in OIce, but this meaning seems to have developed from an earlier meaning 'fruitful'.[119] If not actual names, Fjǫlnir, Fróði, and Freyr all might have been titles which belonged to a fertility deity.

III may have been inspired by Geoffrey of Monmouth's Arthur; N. Lukman, 'Saxos kendskab til Galfred af Monmouth', *Dansk Historisk Tidsskrift*, 10.6 (1944), 593-607 (pp. 605-07); N. Lukman, 'British and Danish Traditions: Some Contacts and Relations', *Classica et mediaevalia*, 6 (1944), 72-109, (pp. 99-108). See §4.2.2.

[114]Stefán Karlsson, 'Fróðleiksgreinar frá tölftu öld', *Afmælisrit Jóns Helgasonar, 30. júni 1969*, ed. by Jakob Benediktsson and others (Reykjavík: Heimskringla, 1969), pp. 328-49 (332-36, 341-47). See §5.3.1.

[115]*Ynglingatal*, p. 7 (v. 1).

[116]*Íslendingabók*, p. 27. Unless *Ynglingatal* really is twelfth-century rather than tenth-century, but even in that case it would seem that Friðfróði and Fjǫlnir were linked at least as early as Sæmundr's time.

[117]*Grímnismál*, in Neckel-Kuhn, pp. 56-68 (p. 67; v. 47); *Reginsmál*, in Neckel-Kuhn, pp. 173-79 (p. 178; v. 18); *Snorra Edda*, pp. 10, 28; *SnEdHafn*, I, 38, 86, 340. *Fjǫlnir* is commonly used as an Óðinn-name in skaldic poetry.

[118]*Skírnismál*, p. 69 (v. 2). *Skírnismál*'s age is unclear, and dates from the tenth to twelfth centuries have been reasonably proposed.

[119]There are several apparently related Swedish dialect words such as *froda* ('to fatten'), *frode* ('fat'), and *frodlem* ('genitalia'); *Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon*, p. 210 (*sv* 'fróð(u)r').

3.2.4 'SLEIT FRÓÐA FRIÐ FIÁNDA Á MILLI'

David Dumville has noted that it is not uncommon for a 'whole epoch [to be telescoped] into one generation or into the reign of a single ruler. This last process may also occur with reference to the period of the foundations of a dynasty or a nation: the first, or the greatest, of the founding rulers may come to stand for the whole founding era.'[120] This tendency opens a question of whether the legendary *Fróða friðr* could have any kind of historical kernel. The chief problem with such a view is that—barring the possibility that southern Scandinavia was dominated by a stable kingdom in the LGIA—there seems no period of southern Scandinavian history during the first millennium which deserves the label 'peaceful'; even the undoubtedly wealthy EGIA was marked by endemic warfare, as the war-booty deposits demonstrate. Leaving aside Lukman's suggestion that Fróði's *friðr* reflected the rule of Fravitta in Gothic south-eastern Europe, it would seem that the *Fróða friðr* could be wholly fantastical. Yet this is an unsatisfactory conclusion, as legendary elements seldom exist without some reason, even if the reason often eludes us.

One possible explanation of Fróði's *friðr* would be that it combines memories of a period of prosperity with a tradition of prohibiting weapons at some cult-centres. Such customs were, according to Tacitus, practised by the Nerthus cult: 'non bella ineunt, non arma sumunt; clausum omne ferrum; pax et quies tunc tantum nota'.[121] Similar customs were known at the Icelandic Alþingi where weapons were banned from the law-court, and peace-breaking of any kind was likewise forbidden. These regulations seem to have been explicitly set forth at the Alþingi's opening, perhaps forming part of the cultic *alþingishelgun*.[122] For this reason the Alþingi's final day on which arms restrictions ceased to operate was termed *vápnatak*.[123] Such *þingskǫp* were clearly not universal, however, since Tacitus referred to the clashing of weapons to indicate approval at *consilia*, and Snorri reported the same practice at the Uppsalaþing.[124] Perhaps assembly arms control customs originally had been associated with certain cults, such as Nerthus's, which were retained by the Icelandic Alþingi while the rise of a military aristocracy in mainland Scandinavia led to their abandonment at Uppsala. It may be noted that as unrest in medieval Iceland grew and the Alþingi lost power, the rules prohibiting weapons in the law-court were increasingly flouted. If élite power-struggles brought sufficient unrest to

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[120]David N. Dumville, 'Kingship, Genealogies and Regnal Lists', in *Early Medieval Kingship*, ed. by P.H. Sawyer and I.N. Wood (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1977), pp. 72-158 (p. 87); see also D.P. Henige, 'Oral Tradition and Chronology', *Journal of African History*, 12 (1971), 371-89 (p. 375).

[121]*Germania*, p. 27 (Chapter 40). Compare also Anderson's suggestion that Tacitus' description of the Suiones' arms control measures reflect those of a cult-assembly; *Germania*, p. 30 (Chapter 44); *Germania*-Anderson, pp. 204-07. See §1.5.3.

[122]Weapons (and drinking) are banned from the Alþingi in a sixteenth-century formula for opening the Alþingi; 'Lögsumannatal og lögmanna á Íslandi: með skýríngargreinum og fylgiskjölum', ed. by Jón Sigurðsson, in *Safn til sögu Íslands og íslenzkra bókmenta að fornu og nýju*, 6 vols (Copenhagen: Møller, 1856-1939), II (1886), 1-250 (pp. 184-86).

[123]However, *vápnatak* could also mean 'the expression of consent by brandishing weapons' (and, thus, 'to pass a resolution at a *þing*'); Cleasby-Vigfusson, p. 685 (*sv* 'vápnatak').

[124]*Heimskringla*, II, 117; *Germania*, p. 10 (Chapter 11); Green, *Language*, pp. 37-42. See §1.3.2.

southern Scandinavia in the LGIA, with concomitant economic decline and the collapse of cult-centres and assemblies, this period might have been recalled in later legends as the breaking of Fróði's peace.

The suggestion that southern Scandinavia was torn apart by internal strife during the LGIA is unlikely to find much favour among those arguing that the Danish state grew continually and smoothly from the RIA into historic times. Yet the very strife postulated in this study for the LGIA may have played a key role in the creation of the medieval Danish kingdom. It would have represented an intense phase of élite competition which, as was broadly the case in medieval Iceland and Anglo-Saxon England, led to the accumulation of power in the hands of progressively fewer individuals who exercised influence over progressively larger social and territorial blocks. This culmination of the process might be seen in the late Viking Age when most of the region which would make up medieval Denmark was brought together under one king, perhaps under Haraldr blátǫnn, or later under Knútr inn ríki. The centuries leading up to such a point are unlikely to have progressed smoothly. There were probably periods of relative stability when a particularly skilled individual acquired considerable control, and also periods of relative chaos when several factions struggled for dominance; this is very much the picture of southern Scandinavia in the early historical period.[125]

3.3 NORTH SEA RELIGION, TRADE, & POLITICS

3.3.1 POLITICAL MISSIONS

In the course of the sixth century, Byzantine Christian missionary activity became an important diplomatic tool for the Byzantine state. Successfully implanting Christianity within previously pagan (or heretical) neighbouring groups—such as the Slavs and Bulgars—brought these peoples into the Byzantine cultural sphere and could transform them from potential enemies to allied subject populations.[126] A similar technique was soon in use in Western Europe, where Pope Gregory I sent the first major mission to the Anglo-Saxons in 596. Gregory had spent some years in Byzantium, where he may have learned something about evangelization's political value, and perhaps he even intended the English mission to bolster Rome's standing against the Byzantine Church.[127] Gaul had a long history of missionary activity in one form or another, but the first 'political missions' seem to have been the work of Amandus in the early seventh century. Amandus enjoyed Dagobert I's royal support, and even became godfather to the Merovingian king's (illegitimate) son Sigebert, emphasising the pragmatism of

[125]Maund, '"Turmoil", 29-47 (pp. 46-47).

[126]Richard Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe: From Paganism to Christianity 371-1386 AD* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), pp. 332-68; Collins, Europe, pp. 2 19-24.

[127]Collins, *Europe*, pp. 219-20, 234; *HE*, pp. 42-47 (Book 1 Chapters 23-24); Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Continental Influence at Bath Monastery in the Seventh Century', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 4 (1975), 1-10.

Amandus's politics. In return, Amandus seems to have undertaken evangelising missions to areas in which the Franks hoped to gain or consolidate power: among the inhabitants of the Scheldt valley, the Slavs, and the Basques.[128] Towards the end of the seventh century, Insular missionaries found the Continent a profitable mission-field. In the 690s Willibrord won approval from the Pope and the Frankish *maior domus* Pippin II alike for his efforts to convert the Frisians. The Frisians, however, were largely unreceptive, perhaps because they had already become familiar with Frankish efforts to subdue them by military means.[129]

3.3.2 FRANKS & FRISIANS

Pippin had good reason for wishing to bring the Frisians under a Frankish yoke. Frisia's *terp*-region (centred between the Rhine and Weser deltas) grew in importance from the late sixth and early seventh centuries, as the appearance of large quantities of Frankish pottery, imported gold, and other prestige goods from that period reveals. These goods may have been the result of alliances with the Franks, perhaps reflected historically in such Franco-Frisian efforts as the defeat of Ch(l)ochilaicus's early-sixth-century raid. Success, however, seems to have brought an expansion of Frisian power into Frankish territory.[130] Around 650, the Frankish-held strong-points of Dorestad (which included a mint) and Utrecht in the Rhine delta came into Frisian hands. Dorestad must have been able to generate considerable revenues for whoever controlled it, and Pippin II managed to regain that control before *c*. 695.[131] The Frisians continued to menace Frankish holdings, however. They may have recovered Dorestad by 716 when Radbod, the Frisian king who had rebuffed Willibrord's attentions, took a Frisian fleet up the Rhine to threaten Cologne, causing considerable mayhem.[132] Charles Martel mounted a major, and

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[128]Fletcher, pp. 147-54; Collins, *Europe*, pp. 234-38.

[129]Fletcher, pp. 197-201.

[130]Anthonie Heidinga, 'The Frisian Achievement in the First Millenium AD', in *MoK*, pp. 11-16; Danny Gerrets, 'Evidence of Political Centralization in Westergo: The Excavations at Wijnaldum in a (supra-) Regional Perspective', in *MoK*, pp. 119-26.

[131]*Chronicarum Fredegarii continuationes*, in *Fredegarii et aliorum Chronica. Vitae sanctorum*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, MGH: SRM, 2 (Hannover, Hahn, 1888), pp. 168-93 (p. 172, Chapter 6); *Annales Mettenses priores*, ed. by B. de Simson, MGH: SRG in usum scholarum separatim editi, 10 (Hannover; Leipzig: Hahn, 1905), pp. 13, 17 (*sa* 691, 692, 697). On Franco-Frisian relations in this period see further Gerrets, p. 119; Wood, *Merovingian*, pp. 293-310; Reuter, *Germany*, p. 69; Haywood, pp. 87-89. Richard Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: The Origins of Towns and Trade, A.D. 400-1000*, New approaches in archaeology, 2nd edn (London: Duckworth, 1989), p. 39.

[132]*Chronicarum Fredegarii continuationes*, pp. 173-74 (Chapter 9); *Annales Petaviani*, in *Scriptores rerum Sangallensium: Annales, chronica et historiae aevi Carolini*, ed. by Georgicus Heinricus Pertz, MGH: Scriptores (in folio), 1 (Hannover: Hahn, 1826), pp. 7-18 (p. 7, *sa* 716); *Annales Mosellani*, ed. by J.M. Lappenberg, in *Annales aevi Suevici*, ed. by Georgicus Heinricus Pertz, MGH: Scriptores (in folio), 16 (Hannover: Hahn, 1859), pp. 494-99 (p. 494, *sa* 716).

apparently successful, expedition against the Frisians *c*. 734.[133] Yet it was clearly difficult to exert much authority over the Frisians' marshy coastal territories; there is mention of a Frisian *rex* in the 740s.[134] Frisian economic activities continued to grow in scope and power under the Frankish kings, and it was largely under a Frankish eye that Dorestad grew into a north-western European trading centre of great importance in the eighth and ninth centuries.[135] Resistance to Christianity remained strong through the eighth century, however, and some Frisians fought as Saxon allies against Charlemagne.

The Christian missions' political role must have placed a sharply ideological cast on the Franco-Frisian struggles. Perhaps it is also no coincidence that Frisian metalwork styles show their strongest affinities with the English and Scandinavian spheres.[136] It is almost certainly wrong to see a hostility towards Christianity *per se* among the Frisians, Saxons, and other non-Christian peoples in the early medieval Germanic world. The Christian God was probably as acceptable as any other, and the example of the East Anglian king Reduald, who worshipped Christ alongside more familiar gods, fits within an expected pattern—it was beneficial to secure the favour of a new and efficacious deity.[137] Radbod granted Willibrord permission to preach, and his rejection of baptism was probably strongly influenced by his awareness that accepting Christianity was tantamount to accepting Frankish domination, the engaging tale of his concern to spend eternity with his heathen ancestors notwithstanding.[138] Ideological concerns also may have influenced the fate of the 'two Heuualds', English monks on a mission to the Old Saxons who ran afoul of a growing gulf between the Saxon nobility and commons. According to Bede, the commoners feared the local satrap might be converted by the Heuualds, thereby forcing Christianity on them, too. Accordingly, they slew the missionaries. The angered satrap had the commoners killed and their village burned. The Saxons in this period seem to have been encroaching on the Franks even more strongly than the Frisians. Pippin II was swift to capitalise on the propaganda value of the Heuualds' martyrdom, having their bodies buried in Cologne with considerable pomp and circumstance,[139] though a strong military response was wanting until (as with the

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[133]*Chronicarum Fredegarii continuationes*, p. 176 (Chapter 17); *Annales S. Amandi*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Georgicus Heinricus Pertz, MGH: Scriptores (in folio), 1 (Hannover: Hahn, 1826), pp. 6-14 (p. 8, *sa* 733); *Annales Mettenses*, pp. 27-28 (*sa* 734, 736).

[134]*Chronicarum Fredegarii continuationes*, p. 181 (Chapter 30).

[135]Detlev Ellmers, 'The Frisian Monopoly of Coastal Transport in the 6th-8th Centuries AD', in *MCFS*, pp. 91-97.

[136]Gerrets, p. 125.

[137]*HE*, pp. 116 (Book 2, Chapter 15).

[138]*Vita Vulframni episcopi senonici*, in *Passiones vitaeque sanctorum aevi Merovingici*, ed. by B. Krusch and W. Levison, MGH: SRM, 3-7, 5 vols (Hannover: Hahn, 1888-1920), v (1910), pp. 657-73 (pp. 668, Chapter 9). Which is not to say Radbod's alleged concern over post-baptismal relations with his ancestors need not have represented genuine heathen attitudes. Similar concerns were encountered during efforts to convert the Sámi; Håkan Rydving, *The End of Drum-Time: Religious Change among the Lule Saami, 1670s-1740s*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Historia religionum; 12 (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1993), p. 86.

[139]*HE*, pp. 298-303 (Book 5, Chapters 10-11).

Frisians) the time of Charles Martel, who initiated offensives against the Saxons in 718.[140] The English missionary Boniface's efforts began in earnest the following year, and the evangelization of the Saxons would occupy a central place on his agenda.[141]

3.3.3 FRANKS & SAXONS

The Saxons' origins are obscure, but they seem to have been one of the confederations which formed in the early second century AD and expanded steadily from (probably) Schleswig-Holstein east to the Elbe valley and south towards the Rhine, absorbing various other groups through peace or war.[142] Early on, Saxons were frequently found operating in conjunction with other piratical groups, including the Franks.[143] Some Saxons appear to have settled in Gaul while others, of course, settled in Britain. In the sixth century, the Saxons appear to have been loosely subject to a Frankish hegemony. In the early seventh century, the Saxons are said to have yielded an annual tribute of five hundred cattle to the Franks until these payments were remitted by Dagobert I. The Franks were beset with political and military difficulties in the latter part of the seventh century, perhaps cueing renewed Saxon expansion. By the early eighth century, the Saxons had pushed their frontiers into the Lippe valley. It would not be surprising if the Saxons exerted similar pressures on their Frisian, Slavic, and Scandinavian neighbours, though Frankish chroniclers mentioned none. Groups of Frisians and Wends sometimes joined the Saxons against the Franks, and the Danes provided refuge for the Saxon resistance leaders during the wars with Charlemagne.[144] If there was one power about which any of these groups worried, it was the Franks.

In 718, Charles Martel began a series of campaigns against the Saxons, the last of which took place in 738. Charles's sons Carloman and Pippin III continued the program after their father's death in 741, despite being distracted by problems elsewhere.[145] A campaign in 747 forced the Saxons to recommence the annual tribute of five hundred

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[140]*Annales S. Amandi*, p. 6 (*sa* 718); *Annales Petaviani*, p. 7 (*sa* 718); *Annales Tiliani*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Georgicus Heinricus Pertz, MGH: Scriptores (in folio), 1 (Hannover: Hahn, 1826), pp. 6-8 (*sa* 718); *Annales Laureshamenses*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Georgicus Heinricus Pertz, MGH: Scriptores (in folio), 1 (Hannover: Hahn, 1826), pp. 22-39 (p. 24, *sa* 718).

[141]Fletcher, pp. 204-13.

[142]Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, p. 550; Chadwick, *Origins*, pp. 87-97; Martin Lintzel, 'Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des sächsischen Stammes', *Sachsen und Anhalt*, 3 (1927), 1-46 (pp. 4-8, 16). Martin Lintzel produced a large quantity of work specifically on the Old Saxons and much (including the cited article) is conveniently collected in Martin Lintzel, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, 2 vols (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961), II, *Zur altsächsischen Stammesgeschichte*.

[143]Ian Wood, 'The Channel from the 4th to the 7th Centuries AD', in *MCFS*, pp. 93-97; M.O.H. Carver, 'Pre-Viking Traffic in the North Sea', in *MCFS*, pp. 117-25.

[144]Roger Collins, *Charlemagne* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1998), pp. 43-47; Reuter, *Germany*, pp. 65; Haywood, p. 89.

[145]*Chronicarum Fredegarii continuationes*, pp. 177, 180-83 (Chapters 19, 27, 31, 35); *(R)RFA*, pp. 4-9, 16-17 (*sa* 743, 744, 747, 748, 758). On the early Saxon campaigns see Collins, *Charlemagne*, pp. 45-47; Wood, *Merovingian*, pp. 285-92, 304-21; Reuter, *Germany*, p. 65.

cattle, a figure apparently increased in 753. A further campaign in 758 exacted a tribute of three hundred horses. An ideological element to these conflicts may be revealed by indications in letters from Gregory and Boniface that missionary work was intended to accompany Charles Martel's 738 campaign and by the baptism of defeated Saxons following the 744 and 747 campaigns.[146]

The renewal of campaigns against the Saxons under Charlemagne in 772 ushered in a bloodier phase of conflict.[147] Roger Collins has noted that whereas chroniclers described most of the earlier Saxon campaigns as punitive expeditions to quell Saxon rebelliousness, the 772 campaign was not so marked, perhaps implying the Franks were on the offensive.[148] That could have been so, but it seems likely that the Franks and Saxons, both expanding societies, seldom needed excuses to attack each other.[149] A more significant fact may be revealed in the sources' emphasis on the campaign's target: a Saxon frontier stronghold at Eresburg in the Diemel valley containing the Irminsul shrine. This, Charlemagne destroyed and despoiled of its gold and silver treasures. It may be no accident that in retaliation the Saxons targeted a Frankish church, Boniface's foundation at Fritzlar.[150]

To a certain extent, Christian churches formed an obvious target for the Saxons simply because they offered sources of valuable loot; if Saxon shrines were similarly endowed, as we are told Irminsul was, they would have made equally practical targets for the Franks. It is, in any event, clear that the Christian Franks were more than happy to raid each other's churches in the course of their internal disputes.[151] Yet specifically targeting centres of religious ideology does not seem to have been previously an important feature of Franco-Saxon conflict, underscoring the weight the chronicles placed on it in the early 770s.[152] Moreover, Irminsul's position represents the known high-water mark of Saxon expansion against the Franks. It seems unlikely that Irminsul had been a Saxon shrine for long, and its frontier position suggests it may have functioned as a symbol of Saxon power and as an ideological rallying point against the Franks. Likewise, Christian centres must have been recognised by the Saxons as bases for the missionary work which served as an ideological weapon against them. It would almost certainly be wrong to identify religious differences as the cause of Franco-Saxon conflict. Yet religion seems to tap deep wells of human emotion and moreover provides

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[146]Collins, *Charlemagne*, pp. 46-47.

[147]On Charlemagne's Saxon Wars, see Collins, *Charlemagne*, pp. 47-57; Reuter, *Germany*, p. 65-69; Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians: 751-987* (London: Longman, 1983), pp. 61-63.

[148]Collins, *Charlemagne*, p. 47; *(R)RFA*, pp. 32-35 (*sa* 772).

[149]Reuter, *Germany*, p. 65; Einhard, *Einhardi Vita Karoli Magni*, ed. by G.H Pertz, G. Waitz, and O. Holder-Egger, MGH: SRG in usum scholarum separatim editi, 25, 6th edn (Hannover: Hahn, 1911), pp. 9-10 (Chapter 7).

[150]*(R)RFA*, pp. 32-38 (*sa* 772, 773).

[151]Timothy Reuter, 'Plunder and Tribute in the Carolingian Empire', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society: Fifth Series*, 35 (1985), 75-94.

[152]Collins, Charlemagne, p. 48.

ready-made ideological symbolism. It comes as little surprise to find the border disputes of these two expanding societies transformed into religious war.

Charlemagne made the conflict's ideological character explicit in 775, when we are told he 'consilium iniit, ut perfidam ac foedifragam Saxonum gentem bello adgrederetur et eo usque perseveraret, dum aut victi christianae religioni subicerentur aut omnino tollerentur'.[153] One might speculate as to whether this change owed something to the concept of *jihād* espoused by the Franks' Islamic foes. The new crusading emphasis seems revealed in the intensification of military efforts against the Saxons from 776, in which year the Saxons 'spoponderunt se esse christianos et sub dicione domni Caroli regis et Francorum subdiderunt', making explicit the connection between political and religious submission.[154] Widukind, the Saxon resistance leader, was first mentioned in 777 when he went *ad Sigifridum Danorum regem*, taking refuge *in partibus Nordmanniae*.[155] This information also marks, effectively, Scandinavia's entrance into a historically illuminated period, dim though that illumination remains for some time to come. That Scandinavians had become involved in the Saxon Wars is not without significance.

3.3.4 SCANDINAVIANS IN THE PRE-VIKING NORTH SEA WORLD

It is sometimes suggested that the Frankish conquest of the Frisians—who are characterised *gentem dirissimam maritimam* in the continuation of Fredegar—ended Frisian naval domination of the North Sea, leaving it open to Scandinavians and thus helping usher in the Viking Age.[156] While this is possible, John Haywood has noted that, however important the Frisians may have been to North Sea trade, there is little evidence that they constituted much of a naval power. Apart from Radbod's riverine attack on Cologne, firmer indications of Frisian naval prowess date only from the late ninth century.[157]

It is difficult to gauge how active the Scandinavians were in the North Sea world's politics before the end of the eighth century. The testimony of the *Freswæl*-narrative, in the 'Finnsburuh Episode' of *Beowulf* (ll. 1068-1159) and the apparently self-contained *Finnsburuh Fragment*, describes a conflict erupting between Danish and

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[153]*(R)RFA*, pp. 40 (*sa* 775); Scholz, p. 51

[154]*(R)RFA*, pp. 46 (*sa* 776).

[155]*(R)RFA*, pp. 49 (*sa* 777).

[156]*Chronicarum Fredegarii continuationes*, pp. 176 (Chapter 17); J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Barbarian West*, 4th edn with revised bibliography (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 152; J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Vikings in Francia*, The Stenton Lecture, 1974 (Reading: Univeristy of Reading, 1975), pp. 16-17; F.M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, Oxford History of England, 3rd edn, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), p. 240; Georges Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy: Warriors and Peasants from the Seventh to the Twelfth Century*, trans. by Howard B. Clarke, World Economic History (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974), p. 113; Chadwick, *Origins*, p. 88 n. 2.

[157]Haywood, pp. 89-90.

Frisian nobles related by marriage.[158] The Danish leader, Hnæf, is described in the *Beowulf* manuscript as *hæleð healf dena hnæf scyldinga* (l. 1069). Without emendation, this line appears to mean 'hero of the Half-Danes, Hnæf of the Scyldingas', discussing a figure, *Hnæf*, who is connected with both the Scylding dynasty and a group known as the Half-Danes. J.R.R. Tolkien vacillated over whether to accept this reading or whether to emend the passage to *healf dene*, viewing it as an eke-name for the hero Hnæf.[159] Either rendition could mean that, as Tolkien thought, Hnæf belonged to a branch of the Danish nobility which had established itself in Jutland at the expense of the native Jutes.[160] Tolkien identified Hnæf's lieutenant, Hengest, with the Hengest known from Bede and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as one of the early Germanic leaders in Britain.[161] Bede characterised Kent's settlers as Jutes, and Tolkien accordingly identified Hengest as a Jute, believing his presence with Hnæf in Frisia caused him to be seen as a 'collaborator' by other Jutes driven to Frisia by the Danes.[162] Tolkien's editor, Alan Bliss, offered a different explanation, identifying Hengest as an Angle, but similarly locating the character's motives in tribal politics. He pointed to *Gesta Danorum*'s description of 'Danish' kings exterminating the Jutish royal line and suggested the 'Danish' kings were probably Angles whom Saxo had relabelled 'Danes'.[163]

Both Tolkien's and Bliss's interpretations may place too much faith in historical legend's accuracy (and consistency). None of the events connected with the *Freswæl* are corroborated elsewhere, and it may be that *Beowulf*'s more detailed account derives from an imaginative interpretation of some version of the *Finnsburuh Fragment*'s original narrative.[164] In the *Finnsburuh Fragment*, the name *Finn* appears only in the compound *Finnsburuh*,[165] and one wonders if Finn's identity in *Beowulf*'s 'Episode' was derived from something like *Widsið*'s Frisian king, Fin Folcwalding.[166] No ethnic groups are mentioned in the *Fragment* (barring Sigeferð, *Secgena leod*), not even Frisians. Danes, Half-Danes, and Scyldingas are likewise absent from the *Fragment*. Much of Tolkien's and Bliss's reconstructions depend on information found solely in *Beowulf*, a complex

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[158]*Beowulf*, pp. 40-44; *Finnsburuh Fragment*, pp. 245-49; George Hickes, *Linguarum Veterum Septentrionalium Thesaurus Grammatico-criticus et Archaeologicus*, 2 vols (Oxford: Sheldonian Theatre, 1703-05; repr. Menston: Scolar Press, 1970), I.1: *Institutiones Grammaticae Anglo-Saxonicae et Moeso-Gothicae*, pp. 192-93. Various 'normalised' names have been given to the fragment, but this study essentially reproduces the form in Hickes's transcription: Fınnɼbuɲuh.

[159]J.R.R. Tolkien, *Finn and Hengest: the Fragment and the Episode*, ed. by Alan Bliss (London: Allan & Unwin, 1982), pp. 37-45, 94. A verse in *Grottasǫngr* contains a possible reference to 'Half-Danes': *mun Yrso sonr við Hálfdana hefna Fróða*; *Grottasǫngr*, p. 300 (v 22). I am, however, grateful for Clive Tolley's commentary on problems with this verse, drawn from his work on forthcoming volumes of *The Poetic Edda* with Ursula Dronke, which suggests the verse may be a late interpolation.

[160]Tolkien's suggestion that the poem's *eotena* (genitive plural) are 'Jutes' rather than 'giants' seems reasonable; Tolkien, *Finn*, p. 37.

[161]ASC-Plummer, p. 12-15; ASC-Thorpe, p. 18-23; *HE*, pp. 30-32 (Book 1, Chapter 15).

[162]Tolkien, *Finn*, pp. 159-62.

[163]Tolkien, *Finn*, pp. 168-80; *Gesta Danorum*, pp. 76-92.

[164]The *Finnsburuh Fragment* is known only from Hicke's transcription and consequently is almost impossible to date.

[165]*Finnsburuh Fragment*, p. 246 (l. 36a).

[166]*Widsið*, p. 150 (l. 27a).

creation of exceedingly doubtful historicity. Moreover, Bliss's 'Anglian' kings in *Gesta Danorum* derive this ethnicity from the identification of their names (Vigletus, Vermundus, Uffo) with those of Wihtlæg, Wærmund, and Offa who stand at the head of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's Mercian genealogy.[167] However, Saxo's information about these kings could itself be entirely of English origin,[168] making any historical interpretation based on them highly speculative. Tolkien and Bliss both used Hengest's appearance to date the *Freswæl* to the fifth century, but given Germanic legendary figures' propensity for appearing in chronologically inappropriate places, even this must remain suspect.

The kind of events described in the *Freswæl*-narrative, as Tolkien and Bliss understood it, might well have been typical for the fifth-century North Sea world, though Frisia seems to have been poor and depopulated then, remaining so up until the late sixth century.[169] Frisia may have offered Ch(l)ochilaicus's early-sixth-century raid little in the way of loot. Perhaps its real target was Frankish and farther up the Rhine: Nijmegen or, as with Radbod in 716, Cologne. Smaller-scale Scandinavian raids during this period may have been endemic, as Haywood suggested,[170] but we know nothing of them and cannot assess their natures or motives. John Hines has convincingly argued that Scandinavia was in contact with Britain and the remainder of the North Sea world at this time,[171] and it is clear that Scandinavians remained aware of Frankish trends throughout the LGIA (§3.1.5). Nevertheless, it is possible that Scandinavian political activity did not follow their wider ranging mercantile interests and was directed largely towards internal affairs. If there was a powerful, stable kingdom in southern Scandinavia we know nothing about its politics—except that various Frankish kings claimed hegemony over tribes in that region.[172]

3.4 THE EARLY VIKING AGE

3.4.1 RE-EMERGENCE OF THE SOUTHERN SCANDINAVIAN ÉLITE?

The first known foreign mission to Scandinavia was Willibrord's Frankish-supported effort to evangelise the *ferocissimos Danorum populos* through their *rex*, Ongendus.[173] Perhaps the number of chieftains vying for power had become sufficiently small that

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[167]ASC-Plummer, I, 50 (*sa* 757); ASC-Thorpe, pp. 86-87 (*sa* 755).

[168]Inge Skovgaard-Petersen, 'Fra sagn til historie og tilbage igen', in *Middelalder, metode og medier: Festskrift til Niels Skyum Nielsen på 60-årsdagen den 17. oktober 1981*, ed. by Karsten Fledelius, Niels Lund, and Herluf Nielsen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 1981), pp. 297-319; Hemmingsen, pp. 147--73.

[169]Heidinga, p. 12.

[170]Haywood, p. 84.

[171]Ole Crumlin-Pedersen, 'Boats and ships of the Angles and Jutes', in *MCFS*, pp. 98-116; Hines, *Scandinavian*, pp. 270-301.

[172]*Epistolae Austrasicae*, pp. 132-33 (Letter 20); Venantius Fortunatus, *Ad Chilpericum*, p. 203 (ll. 73-76).

[173]That *populos* is plural suggests a multiplicity of 'Danish' groups. Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi*, p. 60 (Chapter 9); Fletcher, p. 201.

southern Scandinavia was stabilising—meaning that a sufficiently small number of competitors were left in the power-struggle—and only at this point was such a mission worthwhile. Ongendus is said to have welcomed Willibrord, as had Radbod. Also like Radbod, Ongendus declined to convert, perhaps for similar reasons. Nothing further is heard of Scandinavians in written sources until the Saxon Wars, but the archaeological record indicates there was much afoot in Scandinavia at the time of Willibrord's visit

Towards the end of the seventh century a number of sites in Jutland and on the Danish islands, though yielding little in the way of rich treasures, offer indications of power-consolidation among the élite.[174] The Danevirke's earliest phases, low banks fronted by shallow ditches, may belong to the mid-seventh century while a more robust palisade was added in 737.[175] At roughly the same time, a large maritime defensive work seems to have been built in the Schlei fjord.[176] The almost kilometre-long Kanhave Canal cutting across Samsø dates to 726, and it may have been intended to facilitate military navigation.[177] A series of navigation barriers at Gudsø Vig range in date from *c*. 690 to *c*. 780.[178] Doubtless, this period of construction was partly inspired by internal conflicts, but it also seems no accident that it dates from the time of Charles Martel's campaigns against the Frisians and Saxons from 718 to 734.[179] The southern Scandinavians may well have been protecting themselves against the Frisians and Saxons, as well as from each other, but demonstrations of Frankish power must have caused considerable alarm.

Perhaps less military in nature, the market-place at Ribe in western Jutland (not far from an earlier centre at Dankirke) appears to have been deliberately planned and founded in the first decade of the eighth century.[180] Somewhat earlier, and on Sjælland, is the mid-seventh-century burial mound of Grydehøj which, though apparently robbed long ago, is the only LGIA 'princely' burial yet discovered in Denmark. It has yielded traces

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[174]I am grateful to Morten Axboe for bringing to my attention the references accompanying his recently-published summary of these issues in Axboe, 'Towards', pp. 115-16. See also Axboe, 'Danish', pp. 221-22.

[175]H.H. Andersen, 'Nye Danevirke-undersøgelser', *Sønderjysk Månedsskrift*, 11 (1993), 307-12.

[176]Anne Nørgård Jørgensen, 'Sea defence in Denmark AD 200-1300', *Military Aspects of Scandinavian Society in a European Perspective, AD 1-1300: Papers from an International Research Seminar at the Danish National Museum, Copenhagen, 2-4 May 1996*, ed. by Anne Nørgård Jørgensen and Birthe L. Clausen, The National Museum Studies in Archaeology and History, Copenhagen: Publications, 2 (Copenhagen: National Museum of Denmark, Department of Archaeology and Early History, 1997), pp. 200-09 (p. 207); W. Kramer, 'Ein Seesperrwerk des 8. Jahrhunderts in der Schlei', *Archäologie in Deutschland*, 3 (1994), 20-21.

[177]Nørgård Jørgensen, p. 207; Axboe, 'Danish', pp. 222, 239-41; O. Olsen, 'Royal Power in Viking Age Denmark', in *Beretning fra syvende tvaerfaglige vikingsymposium*, ed. by Hans Bekker-Nielsen and Hans Frede Nielsen, Beretning fra Det Tvaerfaglige Vikingesymposium, 7 (Højbjerg: Hikuin, Afdeling for middelalder-arkæologi ved Aarhus universitet, 1989), pp. 7-20.

[178]Axboe, 'Towards', p. 116; Nørgård Jørgensen, p. 207; Flemming Rieck, 'Aspects of Coastal Defence in Denmark', in *AoMS*, pp. 83-96 (pp. 93-96).

[179]There seems to have been another Saxon campaign in 738; *Chronicarum Fredegarii continuationes*, pp. 174-77 (Chapters 11, 17, 19); *Annales Mettenses*, pp. 26-28, 30 (*sa* 718, 719, 734, 736, 738); Collins, *Charlemagne*, p. 45; Haywood, p. 88-89.

[180]Steen Wulff Andersen, 'Lejre—skibssætninger, vikingegrave, Grydehøj', *Aarbøger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed och Historie* (1993), 7-142 (p. 113); Stig Jensen, 'Dankirke-Ribe: Fra handelsgård til handelsplads', in *FStS*, II, 73-88.

of a rich cremation burial.[181] Most impressive is the recently excavated complex at nearby Lejre, with a series of halls dating from *c*. 700 into the late tenth century. The largest measures 48.5 metres long and 11.5 metres wide at its widest point—slightly larger than Gudme's EGIA hall.[182]

Lejre is traditionally identified as the seat of the legendary Skjǫldung-Scylding dynasty, and the speculations about *Beowulf*'s Heorot and Hrólfr kraki's hall—in England and Scandinavia, respectively—which resulted from these finds were entirely predictable.[183] The fact that the Lejre-complex's seventh and eighth century dates conflict violently with the imaginatively reconstructed dates for figures belonging to the Skjǫldung legends is often overlooked; had Hroþulf/Hrólfr kraki been the contemporary of Hygelac/Ch(l)ochilaicus, he would have been nearly two hundred years old when the Lejre hall was first built. The overall picture drawn by the Scandinavian legends whose historical horizons are commonly assigned to the LGIA—including those of Haraldr hilditǫnn and Ívarr víðfaðmi—is one of considerable warfare among the élite, a picture not in any way at odds with the model suggested in this study. Even so, the legends may represent very poor historical sources, and considerable further study and evaluation are called for.[184]

Speaking of ninth-century Danish history, Maund has noted:

> There are periods for which we cannot identify any leaders at all, and others in which it is very uncertain how influence was distributed between multiple rulers … One thing is clear: it is almost always the case that political power was held by more than one man at a time and, even when we known the name of only one leader, it is dangerous in the extreme to allow ourselves to think in terms of monarchy.[185]

It seems unlikely that the situation had been much different a century earlier. There may have been 'Danes' who called themselves 'kings', but we are probably still unjustified in speaking of 'the kingdom of Denmark'; it is not clear that a political entity which included both Jutland and the Danish islands existed until the late tenth century. Given the difficulty of being sure what 'Dane' meant in the GIA—if indeed it did not have more than one meaning—it is probably best to shy away from discussing a 'Danish kingdom', too. Nevertheless, the southern Scandinavian kings encountered in Charlemagne's time were clearly strong enough that they felt capable of treating with the Frankish king, even while harbouring Saxon resistance leaders. Scandinavian leaders cannot have failed to recognise that they had a vested interest in the survival of an independent Saxon region

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[181]S.W. Andersen, 'Lejre', pp. 103-26; Steen Wulff Andersen, 'Vikingerne i Lejre', *Historisk årbog fra Roskilde amt*, 2 (1977), 11-23 (p. 22).

[182]Tom Christensen, 'Sagntidens kongsgård', *Skalk*, 1996.5 (1996), 5-10; Tom Christensen, 'Lejre Beyond Legend: The Archaeological Evidence', trans. by Michael Anderson, *Journal of Danish Archaeology*, 10 (1991), 163-85 (p. 172-73).

[183]See discussion at the beginning of Chapter 4 and also in §5.2.4.

[184]See further discussion of Chapters 4 and 5.

[185]Maund, pp. 31-32.

between themselves and the Franks. The Frankish expansion would have been worrying enough, but the crusading character which Charlemagne's Saxon campaigns took on must have sounded further alarms. The Scandinavians could well imagine they were next on Charlemagne's agenda.

3.4.2 FRANKS, SAXONS, & SCANDINAVIANS

By the late 770s, the Saxon Wars were reaching a level of savagery which may have seemed unprecedented to the participants. Judging from the Frankish records, both sides regularly committed fearful atrocities against each other. In 778, we hear of the Saxons destroying every settlement and sparing no one between Deutz, on the Rhine, and the Moselle, as well as molesting nuns.[186] In 782, we hear that Charlemagne had forty-five hundred Saxon prisoners beheaded.[187] Perhaps deciding victory was impossible, Widukind and his immediate followers accepted a promise of immunity, surrendered, and submitted to baptism in 785. Conflict seems to have abated for some years, though in 793 the Saxons rebelled once more and destroyed a Frankish army. Warfare continued each year until 798 when all except northernmost Saxony seems to have been pacified. Pockets of resistance remained in Wihmodia and Nordalbingia until 804, but afterwards there was no further overt rebellion reported in Saxony until the Stellinga uprising of 841 (§1.3.1).

The Saxon Wars' final decade coincides with the first records of 'Viking' raids. The earliest raids were directed against Britain, though an expedition was attempted against the coast of Aquitaine in 799.[188] The Royal Frankish Annals and *Annales Fuldenses* both provide information on Franco-Scandinavian relations in the first decades after 800.[189] We first hear of the Danish king Godefrid in 804, arriving at Sliesthorp for a summit meeting with Charlemagne concerning the return of 'fugitives', perhaps fleeing Saxon rebels. In the end Godefrid declined to meet with Charlemagne, and the negotiations were conducted by legates. In alliance with several Slavic groups, Godefrid attacked Charlemagne's Abodrite allies (Slavs themselves) in 808 and is said to have made two-thirds of them tributary to him. In the same year he sacked the Baltic port of Reric and transplanted its merchants wholesale to Hedeby, which in time became north-western Europe's leading commerce-centre. Perhaps this move was inspired by Charlemagne's translocation in 804 of the Saxon population from Wihmodia and the region east of the Elbe, turning these territories over to the Abodrites. Godefrid seems to have been willing to play risky diplomatic games with Charlemagne, as in 809 he called a meeting with the Franks, assuring them that his actions against the Abodrites had been defensive; meanwhile, Godefrid's men killed an Abodritic leader at Reric. In 810, a large

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[186] *(R)RFA*, pp. 52-53 (*sa* 778).

[187] The prisoners appear to have been handed over by the Saxon *primores*, presumably members of the largely pro-Frankish Saxon nobility; *(R)RFA*, pp. 62-65 (*sa* 782).

[188] Alcuin, *Alcuini Epistolae*, pp. 309 (Letter 184).

[189] See chronological summary and references in Maund, pp. 33-42.

Scandinavian fleet descended on Frisia, defeating the locals, and exacting tribute from them. Perhaps it had been sent by Godefrid, but he was assassinated in the same year by his own men. Maund suggested they might have found his attitude towards the Franks too aggressive for safety. Godefrid's successors swiftly concluded a peace with the Franks in 811.[190] Subsequent years saw a struggle for power in southern Scandinavia, primarily between Godefrid's sons and Harald Clac (Heriold, Klakk-Haraldr).[191] Harald seems to have generally come out the worse, despite having enlisted Louis the Pious's support. Louis sent a Frankish army into Scandinavian territory in 815 to support Harald, but it accomplished little. In 826, Harald and his household were all baptised, and Louis granted him land in Frisia.[192] Harald was promptly ejected from Scandinavian territory by Godefrid's sons the following year and never regained power there. The leading figure in southern Scandinavia from this point seems to have been Horic I, one of Godefrid's sons. Horic may have inherited a capacity for equivocation from his father and was perhaps emboldened by the Franks' less aggressive stance during Charlemagne's later years and after his death. By that time it had become clear that the Franks possessed little effective defence against Scandinavian raiding. Frankish sources regularly catalogued Scandinavian raids, accompanied by records of Horic's blithe assurances that he had nothing to do with them. It is difficult to credit Horic's protestations, especially considering that the *Annales Bertiniani* assert that Horic himself sent out a raiding fleet in 845.[193]

3.4.3 EXPLAINING THE VIKING AGE

Medieval theories could explain Scandinavian invasions as expressions of God's wrath or as the effects of over-population brought about by promiscuous Scandinavian habits. As one of the most commonly repeated modern explanations for the Viking Age has likewise pointed to overpopulation, it seems there is still much room for improvement. Bjørn Myhre has challenged the view that an agrarian crisis in the LGIA created population pressures which, in turn, helped instigate the Viking Age.[194] He explained farm-desertions during this period (much as they have been explained for Denmark in earlier periods) in terms of the introduction of new agricultural methods and social reorganisation,[195] leading to the formation of 'strong petty kingdoms' in the seventh and eighth centuries. Myhre noted that deserted farms on Norway's marginal land were not

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[190]Maund, pp. 33-36.

[191]Ian Wood, 'Christians', pp. 36-67.

[192]*(R)RFA*, pp. 169 (*sa* 826); *Annales Xantenses*, pp. 225 (*sa* 826); Thegan, *Vita Hlodowici Imperatoris*, in *Scriptores rerum Sangallensium: Annales, chronica et historiae aevi Carolini*, ed. by Georgicus Heinricus Pertz, MGH: Scriptores (in folio), 2 (Hannover: Hahn, 1829), pp. 585-603 (p. 597, Chapter 33); *Astronomer*, p. 629 (Chapter 40); *Vita Anskarii*, pp. 26-29 (Chapter 7); Ermold le Noir, pp. 144-90 (ll. 1882-2513).

[193]*Annales de Saint-Bertin*, p. 49 (*sa* 845).

[194]Bjørn Myhre, 'The Archaeology of the Early Viking Age in Norway', in *IaSiEVA*, pp. 3-36 (pp. 8-19).

[195]Hedeager, *Societies*, pp. 180-223; Ulf Näsman, 'Det syvende århundrede', in *FStS*, II, 167-68.

reoccupied until after the Viking Age, suggesting that population pressures in the LGIA and Viking Age were not so great as to require earlier reclamation. Of course, the very process of such reorganisation may have caused some unrest and encouraged those dissatisfied with the situation to try their luck elsewhere. It has been suggested that the effort farming sometimes required may have seemed unattractive in comparison to the opportunity to plunder almost unimaginable wealth only few days' sail distant.[196] In this context, progress in Scandinavian naval architecture may have been significant.[197] Perhaps such activities are reflected in possible evidence, as yet poorly understood, for Scandinavian activity in the Northern and Western Isles of Scotland in the eighth century, perhaps even in the seventh century.[198]

Nevertheless, while such processes may have played a role in initiating Scandinavian raiding and migration, these are likely to have resulted from the conjunction of multiple factors. It has been suggested that Scandinavian interest in the situation of Christian Europe may have been intensified by political developments there.[199] Myhre has suggested that, besides a simple desire to acquire loot, the Scandinavian raids and invasions may have resulted from ideological conflict between heathen Scandinavian culture and Roman Christian cultures in England and on the Continent.[200] Myhre's is a radical point of view, as the possibility of any ideological motivation in the Scandinavian raids and invasions is commonly downplayed or dismissed. It would surely be wrong to brand every raid and piratical action perpetrated against a Christian target as ideologically motivated—major ecclesiastical establishments were the repositories of significant wealth which might have attracted any raider untroubled by the possibility of provoking the Christian God's ire. But the role which religion had begun to play in the Franks' conflicts with the Frisians and, more pointedly, with the Saxons suggests that ideological contrast should not be ruled out as one of the factors which could have encouraged widespread Scandinavian raids and invasions.

3.4.4 SCANDINAVIAN RELIGION & POLITICS IN RELATION TO CHRISTIAN EUROPE

It has often been assumed that late Scandinavian heathenism was moribund, facilitating rapid Christianization, but such an approach is strongly contradicted by the available

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[196]Peter Foote and David M. Wilson, *The Viking Achievement: The Society and Culture of Early Medieval Scandinavia*, Great Civilizations Series, 2nd edn (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1984), pp. 13-14.

[197]Myhre, 'Beginning', p. 189; Crumlin-Pedersen, 'Boats', 98-116.

[198]Myhre, 'Beginning', pp. 188-92.

[199]Torgrim Titlestad, *Kampen om 'Norvegen': Nytt lys over vikingteden fra år 500 til 1050 e.Kr.* (Bergen-Sandviken: Skjalgsson, 1996); John Hines, 'Tidlig kontakt over Nordsjøen og de bakenforliggende årsaker', in *Nordsjøen: handel, religion og politikk: Karmøyseminaret 1994 og 1995*, ed. by Jens Flemming Krøger, Helge-Rolf Naley (Karmøy: Vikingfestivalen; Stavanger: Dreyer Bok, 1996), pp. 18-30.

[200]Myhre, 'Archaeology', p. 27; Myhre, 'Beginning', pp. 195-99.

evidence;[201] people weary of a moribund religion are seldom willing to kill or die for it, as we are told some heathens eventually were. Scandinavians seem to have been in contact with Christian cultures for most of Christianity's history. Elements of Christianity and other foreign religions must have been known in Scandinavia from the RIA and may have influenced native beliefs and practices. It is possible, even likely, that some Scandinavians became Christians (or semi-Christians) before the Viking-Age 'conversion period'; Harald Clac's case offers one example of how this might have come about. Yet Scandinavia remained overwhelmingly non-Christian even after outsiders' explicit efforts to change that began *c*. 700. Surviving evidence suggests that heathen beliefs and practices were an integral part of everyday Scandinavian life, and the term 'heathen religion' which we of necessity employ probably reveals more about modern conceptions of what constitutes 'religion' than it does about pre-Christian Scandinavian understandings.[202] It seems questionable whether such a religious system, unfixed in form, an indivisible part of its society, and part of a continuous evolution to suit that society's needs,[203] could become moribund. Two-and-a-half centuries separate Willibrord's mission to Ongendus from the point at which Haraldr blátǫnn could claim he **t(a)ni (karþi) kristną**,[204] with several more decades before the militant evangelization of Norway. Heathen ritual at Uppsala is thought to have continued until *c*. 1100, and, if we credit *Sverris saga*,[205] some people in the Scandinavian interior remained heathen until *c*. 1200—half a millennium after the first recorded mission. Christianity had spread through the whole Roman empire in less time. Clearly, heathen beliefs and practices suited the Germanic-speaking Scandinavian peoples well enough.[206]

Yet there is little evidence of hostility to Christianity *per se*. Scholars disagree on how antagonistic the relationship between Christianity and heathenism became,[207] but it

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[201]Gro Steinsland, 'The Change of Religion in the Nordic Countries—A Confrontation between Two Living Religions', *Collegium Medievale*, 3 (1990), 123-35 (pp. 123-28).

[202]Compare remarks by Turton on modern African religious situations in discussion over Wood, 'Pagan Religion', pp. 273-74. Likewise, for the Sámi the concept 'religion' *per se* remains associated with Christianity rather than indigenous Sámi beliefs and practices. Though subject to aggressive evangelization in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Sámi's native religion is, arguably, 'not entirely extinct'; Rolf Kjellström, 'On the Continuity of Old Sámi Religion', in *Saami Religion: Based on Papers Read at the Symposium on Saami Religion, Held at Åbo, Finland, on the 16th-18th of August 1984*, ed. by Tore Ahlbäck, Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis, 12 (Åbo: Donner Institute for Research in Religious and Cultural History, 1987), 24-33 (p. 33).

[203]John McKinnell with Maria Elena Ruggerini, *Both One and Many: Essays on Change and Variety in Late Norse Heathenism*, Philologia, 1 (Roma : Il Calamo, 1994), pp. 20-27.

[204]Erik Moltke, *Runes and Their Origin: Denmark and Elsewhere* (Copenhagen: Nationalmuseets Forlag, 1985), p. 207 [a revised translation of Erik Moltke, *Runerne i Danmark og deres Oprindelse* (Copenhagen: Forum, 1976)]; *DR*, I, col. 79 (DR 79).

[205]*Sverris saga etter Cod. AM 327 4°*, ed. by Gustav Indrebø, reprinted edn with errata list (Oslo: Kjeldeskriftfondet, 1981), p. 12. Credulous heathen Swedes are something of a topos in West Scandinavian literature, though the Christianisation of more remote areas of Scandinavia may indeed have lagged somewhat.

[206]Neither did their Finnic-speaking neighbors seem to feel much desire to convert, and indeed resisted fiercely when conversion was brought upon them—probably for much the same reasons.

[207]Steinsland, 'Change', 123-35 (pp. 129-33); Else Mundal, 'Kristinga av Noreg og Island reflektert gjennom samtidig skaldedigtning', *Collegium Medievale*, 3 (1990), 145-62; Stefan Brink, *Sockenbildning och sockennamn: Studier i äldre territoriell indelning i Norden*, Acta Academiae Regiae Gustavi Adolphi,

seems likely that attitudes differed from situation to situation.[208] If we may trust accounts of the early missions, Scandinavian leaders welcomed missionaries, gave them leave to preach—and, like Radbod, in general declined to convert. The élite may have had their own reasons for flirting with Christianity (§3.4.5), but Scandinavian heathenism seems to have been a strongly inclusive system, willing and able to accommodate new beliefs and practices. The Icelandic settler Helgi enn magri, *blandinn mjǫk í trú*, worshipped both Christ and Þórr without violating any heathen orthodoxies, largely as there could be none.[209] Writing of Haraldr blátǫnn's pre-conversion court, the Saxon chronicler Widukind (descendant of the Saxon resistance leader), wrote: 'Danis affirmantibus Christum quidem esse deum, sed alios eo fore maiores deos'.[210] In contrast with Scandinavian heathenism, Christianity is an exclusive, evangelising religion requiring for the most part firm adherence to its basic precepts; it could not legitimately tolerate such blended beliefs as Helgi's. Accordingly, heathen hostility towards Christianity seems to have become a problem only as heathens became aware of Christian ideology's incompatibility with their own.[211] Evangelists offering new and intriguing cosmological insights might have been quite acceptable, but zealots keen to desecrate local shrines understandably seem to have been less popular.[212]

Such troubles, though they were surely real enough, seem to have functioned largely at a local level. Scandinavian heathenism was more a way of life than a credo, and the idea of a Scandinavian heathen dedicating his life to the defence, maintenance, and spread of his religious ideals in the manner of a Christian missionary might border on the absurd. Yet Scandinavians must have been aware of the situation in Frisia and Saxony, where Christianity was explicitly connected with political domination by the Franks. Scandinavian leaders of the eighth and ninth centuries would have had good reason to view Christianity with the same suspicion that the Frisians and Saxons had, a situation which hardly can have encouraged conversion. Attacking Christian Europe's ideological centres—both political and religious, insofar as there was a meaningful difference—would have been a logical response to the threat. It may be noted that the earliest

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57, Studier till en svensk ortnamnsatlas, 14 (Uppsala: Gustav Adolfs akademien, 1990), pp. 17-67; Gro Steinsland, 'Pagan Myth in Confrontation with Christianity: Skírnismál and Genesis', in *ONaFRaCPN*, pp. 316-28. See also Premysław Urbańczyk, 'The Meaning of Christianization for Medieval Pagan Societies', in *Early Christianity in Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. by Premysław Urbańczyk, Christianity in East Central Europe and its Relations with the West and the East, 1 (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper, 1997), pp. 31-37 (pp. 32, 33, 35).

[208]On various aspects of conversion in Scandinavia, see the essays in *The Christianization of Scandinavia: Report of a Symposium Held at Kungälv, Sweden, 4-9 August 1985*, ed. by Birgit Sawyer, Peter Sawyer, and Ian Wood (Alingsås: Viktoria, 1987).

[209]*Landnámabók*, pp. 250-53.

[210]Widukind, *Widukindi monachi Corbeiensis rerum gestarum Saxonicarum libri tres*, ed. by H.-E. Lohmann and Paul Hirsch, 5th edn, MGH: SRG in usum scholarum separatim editi, 60 (Hannover: Hahn, 1935), p. 140 (Book 3, Chapter 65).

[211]Jón Hnefill Aðalsteinsson, *Under the Cloak: The Acceptance of Christianity in Iceland with Particular Reference to the Religious Attitudes Prevailing at the Time*, Studia Ethnologica Upsaliensia, 4 (Uppsala: Uppsala University Press; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1978), pp. 74-75.

[212]Adam of Bremen, pp. 118-19, 122 (Book 2, Chapters 58 & 62).

Scandinavian attacks were on the British Isles rather than Francia. The Irish and Anglo-Saxon kingdoms can have posed no political or military threat to Scandinavia, but their ecclesiastical centres might have been seen in a different light. It had been primarily English missionaries who had been active among the Frisians and Saxons—Willibrord, the first missionary to Scandinavia, had been English. Even Irish ecclesiastical centres had played a role in this process as, according to Bede, one of the first to conceive the idea of evangelising the continental Germanic peoples was Ecgberct, an English cleric in Ireland.[213] Ecgberct did not personally undertake missionary work, but one of the missionaries he dispatched to the Continent was Willibrord. Perhaps the Scandinavians considered attacks on English, and even Irish, ecclesiastical centres to be useful blows against an opposing ideology, while carrying less risk of retaliation than would similar attacks against Frankish centres. As the Franks' military power waned, it became safe to direct attacks against them, too; Francia seems to have borne the brunt of the raiding until the invasion of England by the 'Great Army' in 865. Not every Viking raid could have resulted from merely ideological motives, but to dismiss the possibility may be to give insufficient credit to the Scandinavian leaders' grasp of their situation's realities—a grasp which all the evidence suggests they had. Perhaps they were even able to harness the abilities of existing pirates and *sækonungar* to serve as 'privateers', directing them towards the economic opportunities available overseas.

Though Scandinavia's material culture was distinct from that of Merovingian Francia, Scandinavians were also aware of Frankish trends and willing to adopt those which suited them (§2.5.4 & §3.1.5). An ideological contrast between Francia and Scandinavia may have been recognised and used by the seventh-century East Anglians—or the eighth-century court of the Northumbrian king Aeðelred whom Alcuin accused of aping fashions of the 'pagans', almost certainly meaning 'Scandinavians'—yet there is no certainty that LGIA Scandinavians felt themselves to be ideologically opposed to the Franks.[214] On the other hand, the political environment of the eighth and ninth centuries, with the threat of Frankish conquest and Christian conversion, easily might have transformed an existing sense of Scandinavian ethnicity into an ideological rallying point.

3.4.5 CHRISTIANITY & THE SCANDINAVIAN ÉLITE

The immediate Frankish military threat to Scandinavia faded after the partition of Charlemagne's empire, but Frankish rulers in the form of 'Saxon emperors' would again

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[213] *HE*, pp. 296-99 (Book 5, Chapter 9-10).

[214] Martin Carver, 'Conversion and Politics on the Eastern Seaboard of Britain: Some Archaeological Indicators', in *Conversion and Christianity in the North Sea World*, ed. by Barbara E. Crawford, St John's House Papers, 8 (St Andrews: Committee for Dark Age Studies, University of St Andrews, 1998), pp. 11-41; Carver, *Sutton Hoo*, pp. 104-05; Hines, *Scandinavian*, pp. 293-94; Alcuin, *Alcuini Epistolae*, in *Epistolae Karolini aevi*, ed. by Wilhelm Gundlach, Ernestus Duemmler, and Karl Hampe, MGH: Epistolae, 3-7, 5 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1892-1928), II, ed. by Ernestus Duemmler (1895), 18-481 (p. 43, Letter 16).

menace southern Scandinavian independence in the tenth century. Haraldr blátǫnn might have converted specifically in order to stave off the threat of German invasion.[215] A second, discrete phase of ideological conflict may have arisen as Scandinavia's leaders began to embrace the more powerful model of vertical government offered by Christian kingship. Such models had been available since Roman times, but seldom had there been such an incentive in Scandinavia to adopt them. The Old Saxons' fate at Charlemagne's hands provided a dramatic example of the consequences to be faced by societies falling foul of an increasingly militant Christianity. The situation may be directly comparable with the development of chieftain-*comitatus* structures among Germanic societies as a response to the Roman threat in the RIA (§1.2.3). Post-conversion Scandinavians would themselves play a prominent role in crusades against their pagan Baltic neighbours during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries;[216] clearly it had become obvious to Scandinavians that it was better to give crusades than to receive them.

The role of the Scandinavian élite in facilitating the conversion process can scarcely be underestimated,[217] though their comparative willingness to accept Christianity may disguise this process's traumatic effect on society's lower echelons. If the Scandinavian élite wished to increase their power at home, adopting the model of European lordship was one obvious solution. This model's successful implementation required that subjects accept both a strong central political authority and the new religion which accompanied it. The new kingship found—eventually—a firm foothold. Such was the story's 'end', seen from hindsight, but it was not a simple process. True conversion to Christianity can only have represented a significant social and ideological break with mainstream heathen society. Perhaps even more so than the Old Saxon conversion, the forcible conversion of the Finns exemplifies the kind of long-term social trauma which accompanied Christianity's imposition through political domination.[218] Scandinavian leaders must have become aware that attempts to introduce Christianity could undermine their popular support.[219] Popular resistance may have forced Hákon góði to abandon attempts at Christianising Norway and instead to come to an accommodation with his heathen subjects. As we are told he received a heathen burial and a heathen eulogy, he may have found it advisable to mitigate his personal Christianity as well.[220]

Signs of religious strife within Scandinavia, beyond the level of doing away with overzealous missionaries, were usually accompanied by conflicts over wider political

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[215]Fletcher, pp. 404-07.

[216]Eric Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades: The Baltic and the Catholic Frontier, 1100-1525*, New Studies in Medieval History (London: Macmillan, 1980).

[217]Birgit Sawyer, 'Scandinavian Conversion Histories' in *CoS*, pp. 88-110 (pp. 107-09)

[218]Pirkko-Liisa Lehtosalo-Hildander, 'The Conversion of the Finns in Western Finland', in *CoS*, pp. 31-33.

[219]Though conversion's social trauma probably in some ways faciliated imposing the new governmental model.

[220]*Heimskringla*, I, 166-73, 192-97; *Ágrip af Noregskonunga sǫgum*, in *Ágrip af Noregskonunga sǫgum, Fagrskinna, Noregs konunga tal*, ed. by Bjarni Einarsson, Íslenzk fornrit, 29 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1982), pp. 1-54 (pp. 8, 11).

issues. Accounts of Iceland's conversion emphasise the importance placed on having one law and one set of customs: *hǫfum allir ein lǫg ok einn sið*.[221] It seems that Christians were effectively unable to take part in Icelandic public affairs, so bound up were these with heathen life.[222] With the heathen and Christian parties about to come to blows at the Alþingi, constitutional acceptance of Christianity was the only way to accommodate Iceland's Christian population.[223] Icelanders probably benefited from having no king to declare and enforce conversion to Christianity, but they later claimed that the threat of such from Óláfr Tryggvason played a key role in the decision to convert. In the campaigns of Óláfr Tryggvason and Óláfr helgi, the efforts to win political control of Norway and to Christianise its population were effectively inseparable—and resistance to one constituted resistance to the other. We may perhaps imagine something similar in Denmark as, on the same monument on which he claimed to have Christianised the Danes, Haraldr blátǫnn claimed to be **sa haraltr [:] ias : sąr · uan · tanmaurk**.[224] Information about Swedish politics is hard to come by, but the Swedes' deposition *c*. 1080 of *vel kristinn* Ingi Steinkelsson in favour of his brother-in-law, Blót-Sveinn, so that they could continue their *átrúnaðr á heiðnum goðum* and *forn siðr* suggests that religion had come to serve as a political symbol in Sweden, too.[225]

3.4.6 LATE HEATHEN 'RENAISSANCE'

Problems offered by outright conversion may have encouraged Scandinavian efforts to remodel heathen society and culture, consciously or unconsciously, in response to the example and challenge of Christian culture.[226] Christian sacral kingship may have been imitated by late-heathen kings at Uppsala.[227] There seem to have been similar examples in late-pagan Slavic societies,[228] and analogous situations are known from the

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[221]*Íslendingabók*, p. 17.

[222]Jón Hnefill Aðalsteinsson, pp. 72-74, 88-89. Wood has suggested that in earlier continental Germanic areas, Christianity primarily replaced the public aspects of heathen belief and practice, while private aspects lived on as 'superstitions', many of which are still familiar to us; Wood, 'Pagan Religion', pp. 261-64. Christians were discouraged from having dealings with heathens: thus the practice of the *prima signatio* (adapted into ON as the verb *prímsigna*), a pre-baptismal rite making heathens technically Christian catechumens with whom commerce was permitted; Foote and Wilson, p. 415; Fletcher, pp. 372-74.

[223]Strömbäck, *Conversion*, pp. 28-29, 31-37.

[224]*DR*, I, col. 79 (DR 79).

[225]*Hervarar saga*, p. 62; *Flateyjarbók*, III, 23-26; *Heimskringla*, III, 263.

[226]Bjørn Myhre, 'Beginning', p. 198; Mundal, 'Kristinga', pp. 159-60.

[227]It is, however, argued that actual Christian kingship in Sweden's medieval period probably cannot be linked back directly to such a heathen kingship; Thomas Lindkvist, 'Kungmakt, kristnande, statsbildning' in *Kristnandet i Sverige: Gamla Källor och nya perspektiv*, ed. by Bertil Nilsson (Uppsala: Lunne, 1996), pp. 217-41 (pp. 224-25, 235-37).

[228]Christian Lübke, 'Heidentum und Widerstand: Elbslawen und Christliche Staaten im 10.-12. Jahrhundert', in *Early Christianity in Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. by Premysław Urbańczyk, Christianity in East Central Europe and its Relations with the West and the East, 1 (Warsaw: Semper, 1997), pp. 123-28.

introduction of Christianity in nineteenth-century colonial contexts.[229] Within Scandinavia, Odner noted Sámi efforts to incorporate Christian symbols of power into their own culture, as by doing so they could access the sources of that power but within a familiar Sámi context.[230]

Likewise, Christian culture may have been a primary catalyst contributing to Viking-Age Scandinavia's apparently vigorous heathen culture.[231] Poems like *Vǫlospá*, *Rígsþula*, and *Skírnismál* may represent heathen creations informed by an awareness of Christian concepts.[232] Óðinn's ordeal upon Yggdrasill to gain the runes may be compared with the Passion of Christ,[233] and Þórr's 'recyclable' goats (after being eaten, then revived through hallowing with Mjǫllnir) may reflect an understanding of the Christian Eucharist.[234] Amulets of various types had long been popular in Scandinavia, but the marked fashion for so-called 'Þórr's hammers' in the tenth century may have been inspired by Christian cross amulets.[235] Influence need not have been limited to the strictly religious sphere. There is evidence suggesting that English culture—including

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[229]Fletcher, pp. 126-29.

[230]Odner, p. 65.

[231]Christianity seems to have played a similar role inspiring a revitalization of late Sámi religious culture; Håkon Rydving, *The End of Drum-Time: Religious Change among the Lule Saami, 1670s-1740s*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis: Historia religionum, 12 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1993), p. 83.

[232]*Poetic Edda*, Dronke, II, 93-98, 202; Steinsland, 'Pagan Myth', 316-28; McKinnell, *Both*, pp. 120-27; Ursula Dronke, 'Pagan Beliefs and Christian Impact: The Contribution of Eddic Studies', in *Viking Revaluations: Viking Society Centenary Symposium, 14-15 May 1992*, ed. by Anthony Faulkes and Richard Perkins (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1993), pp. 121-27; Helmut de Boor, 'Die religiöse Sprache der Vǫluspá und verwandter Denkmäler' in Helmut de Boor, *Kleine Schriften*, ed. by Roswitha Wisniewski and Herbert Kolb, Kleinere Schriften zur Literatur- und Geistesgeschichte, 2 vols (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1964-66), I: *Mittelhochdeutsch Literatur*, 209-83 (pp. 281-83) [originally published in *Deutsche Islandforschung 1930, mit unterstutzung der Notgemeinschaft der deutschen Wissenschaft*, ed. by Walther Heinrich Vogt and Hans Spethmann, Veroffentlichungen der Schleswig-Holsteinischen Universitätsgesellschaft, 28, 2 vols (Breslau: Hirt, 1930), I: *Kultur*, ed. by W.H. Vogt, 68-142]. See also Anders Hultgård, 'Old Scandinavian and Christian Eschatology' in *ONaFRaCPN*, pp. 344-57.

[233]Konstantin Reichardt, 'Odin am galgen', in *Wächter und Hüter: Festchrift für Hermann J. Weigand zum 17. November 1957*, ed. by Curt von Faber du Faur, Konstantin Reichardt, and Heinz Bluhm (New Haven: Department of Germanic Languages, Yale University, 1957), pp. 15-28; Elard Hugo Meyer, *Germanische Mythologie*, Lehrbucher der germanischen Philologie, 1 (Berlin, Mayer & Muller, 1891), pp. 250-51; Wolfgang Golther, *Handbuch der germanischen mythologie*, von Wolfgang Golther (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1895; repr. Essen: Phaidon, 1996), pp. 348-50; Sophus Bugge, *Studier over de nordiske Gude- og Heltesagns Oprindelse*, 2 vols (Christiania: Cammermeyer, 1881-89; Copenhagen: Gad, 1896), I, 289-541. [the first volume was translated into German as Sophus Bugge, *Studien über die Entstehung der nordischen Götter- und Heldensagen*, trans. by Oscar Brenner (Munich: Kaiser, 1881-89)]. Bugge suggested the depiction of Óðinn's ordeal was dependent on learned Christian and classical influences. An attempt to shift attention to influence from popular Christianity was made by Ferdinand Ohrt, 'Odin paa træet', *Acta Philologica Scandinavia*, 4 (1929-30), 273-86 (pp. 273-79). Attention has also been directed to parallels with shamanic practice amongst the Sámi and other circumpolar groups; Rolf Pipping, *Oden i galgen*, Studier i nordisk filologi, 18.2, Skrifter utgivna av Svenska literatur sällskapet i Finland, 197 (Helsinki: Mercator, 1926); A.G. van Hamel, 'Oðinn Hanging on the Tree', *Acta Philologica Scandinavia*, 7 (1932-33), 260-88; see discussion in *Hávamál*, ed. by David A.H. Evans with Anthony Faulkes, Viking Society for Northern Research: Text Series, 7, 2 vols (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, University College London, 1986-87), I, ed. by David A.H. Evans, 29-34.

[234]Paul Bibire, 'Myth and Belief in Norse Paganism', *Northern Studies*, 29 (1992), 1-23 (p. 13).

[235]Lotte Motz, 'The Germanic Thunderweapon', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 24 (1997), 329-50 (pp. 338-340); Peter Paulsen, *Axt und Kreuz in Nord- und Osteuropa* (Bonn: Halbert, 1956), pp. 190-221. A soapstone mould capable of casting both 'Þórr's hammer' and cross amulets was found in Trendgarden, Jutland, Denmark; James Graham-Campbell, *Viking Artefacts: A Select Catalogue* (London: British Museum Publications, 1980), pp. 128, 282 (Plate 429).

Roman Christian learning—may have exercised a strong influence on the evolution of skaldic styles.[236] It is even possible that the wording of some heathen legal formulas was influenced by Christian contacts.[237] The runic system's sudden reform at the beginning of the Viking Age, followed by an apparent renaissance in rune-use, also might have resulted from renewed interest in ethnically Scandinavian cultural expression. Likewise, the emergence of skaldic court poetry might represent a self-conscious expression of Scandinavian identity, as well as marking the Scandinavian élite's special culture.

It is also clear that Scandinavians were willing to 'naturalise' borrowed foreign elements in a legendary context. As noted (§2.5.4), the Vǫlsung cycle stems from Burgundian sources, though eventually proving popular throughout the Germanic world. The Scandinavians went a long way towards 'naturalising' it, however.[238] *Vǫlsunga saga* identified Sigmundr Vǫlsungsson as a king *á Frakklandi*, but had him spend a long while in Denmark and, after his death, portrayed his wife remarrying Álfr, son of the Danish king, so that her son by Sigmundr, Sigurðr Fáfnisbani, grew up in Scandinavia.[239] Moreover, Sigurðr and Brynhildr's daughter, Áslaug, is said to have married the legendary Ragnarr loðbrók, from whom various Scandinavian royal genealogies were sometimes traced.[240] Jesse Byock has suggested that medieval Norwegian kings promoted Sigurðr as not only their own supposed dynastic ancestor, but as a Scandinavian analogue to St Michael in a form of political and ecclesiastical resistance to both the Danes and the Holy Roman Empire.[241]

As discussed in §2.5.4, periods of political upheaval and social reorganisation are highly conducive to the replacement of bodies of traditional narrative; Viking-Age

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[236]See Frank, 'Skaldic Poetry', p. 179, and references there.

[237]Jón Hnefill Aðalsteinsson, pp. 34-36; Peter Foote, 'Observations on "Syncretism" in Early Icelandic Christianity", *Árbók Vísindafélags Íslendinga* (1974), 69-86 (pp. 79-81); *Landnámabók*, pp. 313, 315.

[238]Peter Foote has noted that the survival of the Sigurðr story within post-conversion Scandinavia is not evidence of Christian-heathen syncretism, as the primary importance of the Sigurðr story was not in its heathen religious aspects; Peter Foote, 'Observations', p. 71. This point is well made, but neglects the likelihood that the Vǫlsung cycle's heroes were originally based on Christian persons in continental Europe and that the heathen Scandinavian elements must have been added after the legends became known in a Scandinavian context. The medieval *Þáttr Þorsteins skelks* places Sigurðr Fáfnisbani in hell—a harsh fate if he had indeed begun his legendary career as the Burgundian king St Sigismund (516-523); Hans Kuhn, 'Heldensage und Christentum', *Zur germanisch-deutschen Heldensage: Sechzehn Aufsätze zum neuen Forschungsstand*, ed. by Karl Hauck, Wege der Forschung, 14 (Bad Homburg: von der Hohe; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1961), pp. 416-26 (p. 419); *Þáttr Þorsteins skelks*, in *Flateyjarbók*, I , 462-64 (p. 463).

[239]*Saga of the Volsungs*, pp. 19-23. The 'Danish' king, however, had the name *Hjálprekr*, answering to Frankish *Chilperic*.

[240]Ragnarr was also at some point provided with a fictitious descent from the Skjǫldungar; *Alfræði íslenzk*, III, 55-59. In the form in which he came to be known, Ragnarr was a composition of various mythological and legendary elements; see Rory McTurk, *Studies in* Ragnars saga loðbrókar *and its Major Scandinavian Analogues*, Medium Aevum Monographs, New Series, 15 (Oxford: Society for the Study of Mediaeval Languages and Literature, 1991), pp. 1-50.

[241]Jesse L. Byock, 'Sigurðr Fáfnisbani: An Eddic Hero Carved on Norwegian Stave Churches', in *Poetry in the Scandinavian Middle Ages: The Seventh International Saga Conference, Atti del 12o Congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto Medioevo, Spoleto, 4-10 settembre 1988*, ed. by Teresa Pàroli, Atti dei congressi/Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 12 (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro studi, 1990), pp. 619-28 (pp. 619-21).

Scandinavia certainly provided such conditions. Items like *Hlǫðsqviða* show that legends of considerable antiquity could survive, if in a highly mutated form,[242] while material such as that concerning Ragnarr loðbrók and his sons demonstrates that new legends were produced.[243] It must be assumed that a far larger body of traditional material existed during the Viking Age than survived to be recorded in later centuries.[244] The Vǫlsung cycle may in some ways be considered emblematic of the Viking-Age Scandinavian élite's interests. It took material from the world of the European Christian aristocracy and transformed it into an image of the Scandinavian past acceptable to the Scandinavian élite—an image which apparently could remain acceptable during the Christian period. The concluding sections of this study consider the function of the Scylding-Skjǫldung cycle within the context of Viking-Age ideology. This group of legends has commonly been considered to bear largely historical information about pre-Viking Scandinavia. There is, however, reason to suppose that the Scylding-Skjǫldung cycle in the form we know it is a complex creation of the Viking Age. In nature and formation it may be comparable perhaps to the legends of King Arthur or Robin Hood. Much of the Scylding-Skjǫldung cycle's material may derive from diverse Scandinavian sources, though some of its form—and perhaps some of its content—may depend on Scandinavian contacts with Anglo-Saxon England and even on Christian learning.

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[242]Linguistic changes in North Germanic during the pre-Viking period, such as syncope, must have required the abandonment or substantial re-composition of poetic narratives. Similar effects would have been at work in the development of OE from West Germanic.

[243]On Ragnarr loðbrók generally, see McTurk, *Studies*; this figure is also discussed in Hemmingsen, pp. 232-40, 272-305.

[244]For example, the Rök rune-stone inscription references a variety of legendary (and mythological?) material now almost wholly inexplicable.

CHAPTER 4

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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

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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. Hro`wulf, Hro`ulf, 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., Hro`ulf, 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 fornbr˘fasafn*, ed. by Jón Sigurðsson and others (Copenhagen: Møller, 1857-), I (1857-76), 501-06.

[5]Snorri Sturluson mentioned it in *Ynglinga saga*; *Heimskringla*, I, 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.

prominently in the late twelfth-century *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

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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 *Do*B, pp. 83-100 (pp. 84-88).

[22]Haywood, pp. 78-87.

[23]Goffart's other argument suggesting that *Beowulf*'s *Hūūgas* 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.

historicity, though more recently Andy Orchard 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

[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*.

groups and not within 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

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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).

something to recommend 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 Ἐρολοι (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 Ἐρολοι 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

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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).

been pointed out that the 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

[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

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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.

the most 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.

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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.

Yet 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

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

[51]Hemmingsen, p. 36.

Danish heroic 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]**		
								Frotho	
	Healfdene			**Fróði**	**Hálfdan**		**Haldanus**	Roe I	Scatus
Heorogar	**Hroðgar**	**[daughter]**[56]	**Halga**	**Hróarr**	**Helgi**	**Signý**	Roe II	**Helgo**	
Heoroweard	**Hreðric**	Hroðmund	**Hroþulf**		**Hrólfr**	**Hrókr**		**Roluo**	

[52] Gudmund Schütte, 'Skjoldungasagene i ny Læsemåde', *Danske Studier*, 39 (1942), 81-100.

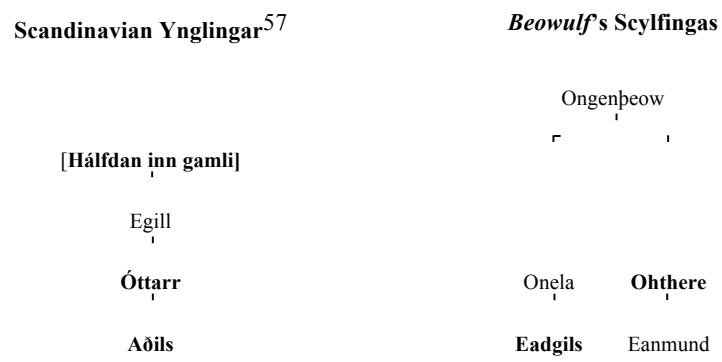
[53] Actual academic criticism of Lukman's thesis, such as there was, was mixed. Cautious agreement with some elements of Lukman's thesis was expressed by Walter A. Berendsohn (review of Lukman, *Skjoldunge*), *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 57 (1944), 251-55. A sharp rejection was made by Inger M. Boberg, '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



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 Qðlingar.[59] *Hyndlolióð* is, however, most likely an 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 *Hrærekr* 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.1, 7-14; *Heimskringla*, i, 12-83; *Íslendingabók*, pp. 27-28; *Historia Norvegiæ*, 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.

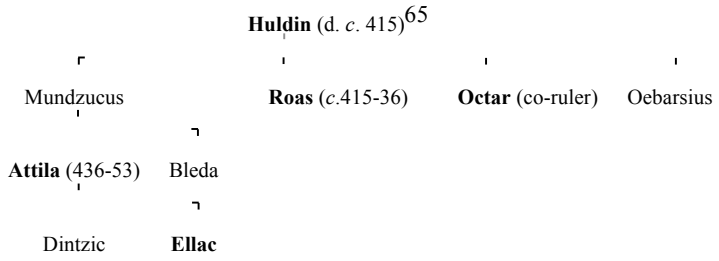
[62] *Langfeðgatal*, p. 59.

[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]

DANUBIAN HUNNISH LEADERS



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).

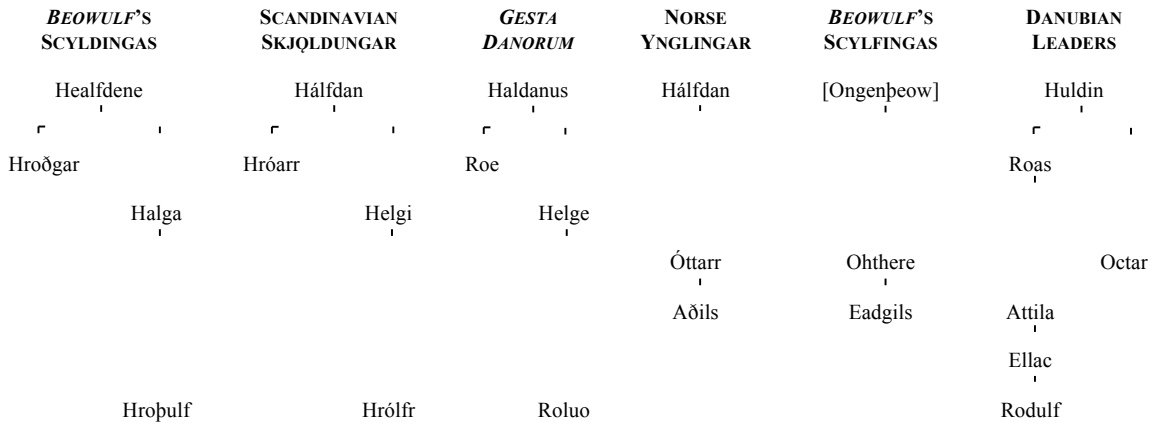
[65] The dotted line from Huldin to Roas and his brothers represents the fact that Huldin shortly preceded Roas and Octar as a Danubian Hunnish leader but that the sources are silent on whether there was any family relationship. Lukman considered Huldin to have been perceived as the father of Roas in 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]



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. Ongen`eow is listed at the head of *Beowulf*'s Scylfingas for completeness, though Lukman did not equate Ongen`eow 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*, 111-12, 129-34 (Book 5); Philostorgius, *Ex ecclesiasticis historiis Philostorgii, Epitome, Confecta a Photio Patriarcha*, in *S.P.N. 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 11, 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

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

(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] *Пóвесть временны́х 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.1, 33. See also Meissner, p. 228.

[78]*Skjaldedigtning*, B.1, 120; *HHb1*, 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.1, 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]

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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*

Furthermore, it is unclear why *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,

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Proper Names from the Time of Beda to that of King John (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 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 *Hro ulf* 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 *Ongend eow* as a Swedish ruler; *Widsið*, p. 150 (v. 31b); *Saga of King Heidrek*, pp. 59-63. Perhaps *Beowulf* acquired its Ongen`eow 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 *Æðgils*, 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

Dudo of St.-Quentin 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

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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 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.

between accounts of 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

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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

traditional folktale 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

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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 Comunications, 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.

'residual orality' 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] Hemmingsen concluded that English influences came from a

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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]*Пóвесть*, 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 Óláfur Sveinsson, 'Nafngiftir Oddaverjar' in *Bidrag till nordisk filologi tillägnade Emil Olson den 9 juni 1936* (Lund: Gleerup, 1936), pp. 190-96. Einar Óláfur 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

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

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reason to believe that the poem we know as *Beowulf* was widely known, although some of the material contained in it may have been.

[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.

more 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.

CHAPTER 5

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REASSESSING THE SCYLDING-SKJǪLDUNG HISTORICAL LEGENDS

If the Scylding-Skjǫldung legends need not represent a simple historical tradition, certain questions remain: What are the Scylding-Skjǫldung legends? How did they come to be? Why did they come to be? A full reassessment of the Scylding-Skjǫldung cycle in the space of this chapter would be impossible; any such attempt would surely require space well in excess of that given to this entire study. Without some discussion of such subjects, however, it would be inappropriate to dispense with the legends as essentially historical sources—as this study does—and difficult to consider their significance within Viking-Age Scandinavia's ideological framework.

5.1 SOURCES FROM THE VIKING AGE

5.1.1 THE ANGLO-SAXON SOURCES

Dating the Anglo-Saxon sources which concern the Scylding-Skjǫldung cycle can be a thorny problem. Simply dating *Beowulf*'s manuscript is not without bitter controversy, but it seems fairly safe to say that most scholars currently agree that it was written sometime in the vicinity of AD 1000.[1] As for the date of composition, learned arguments have been advanced for dates between the seventh and eleventh centuries, though all such attempts boil down to scholarly speculation. For the purposes of this study, the fact that the poem was set in writing *c*. 1000 is enough to allow description of *Beowulf*'s conception of the Scylding legends as a 'Viking-Age' one, regardless of the original composition date. Of course, *Beowulf*'s version need not have been the only one, nor the most commonly held.

The dating of *Widsið* seems to engage less inflammatory scholarly passions than does that of *Beowulf*. If *Widsið*'s manuscript is earlier than *Beowulf*'s, it may not be much earlier, possibly of the late tenth century.[2] It was long thought that the poem itself, or the greater part of it, was of considerable antiquity, but this seems uncertain at best. As with *Beowulf*, it seems safest to recognise that *Widsið* need not be significantly older than its manuscript,[3] though all or part of it could be.

Figures connected with the Scylding-cycle appear in various genealogical sources concerning West-Saxon kings. Asser's *Life of Alfred* lists a *Sceldwea* amongst Alfred's

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[1]Agreeing generally with Ker's dating 's. X/XI'; N.R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, supplemented edn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), p. 281. See also David N. Dumville, '*Beowulf* Come Lately: Some Notes on the Paleography of the Nowell Codex', *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Litteraturen*, 255 (1988), 49-63.

[2]'s. X²' in Ker, p. 153.

[3]Gösta Langenfeldt, 'Studies in Widsið', *Namn och bygd*, 47 (1959), 70-110 (pp. 70-75).

ancestors, while the genealogy for Æþelwulf under the year 855 in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle lists a *Sceaf* and a *Sceldwea*.[4] Similarly, the tenth-century *Chronicle of Aethelweard* includes a *Scef* and *Scyld* in its West-Saxon genealogy; names with identical spellings appear in *Beowulf*.[5] These genealogical sources may be considered products of their time, the ninth and tenth centuries, when the West-Saxon dynasty's pedigree appears to have been being extended backwards in response to contemporary ideological concerns.[6] Post-conquest, William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum* notes a *Sceldius*, son of *Sceaf*, amongst the West-Saxon kings' ancestors .[7]

5.1.2 THE SCANDINAVIAN SOURCES

Elements from the Skjǫldung legends appear in various kinds of poetry, some of which may date to the Viking Age. The complex structure of skaldic poetry may help to prevent much post-compositional alteration, and scholars often follow Snorri Sturluson's lead in accepting as accurate many of the attributed datings for skaldic poems, though they survive only in much later medieval manuscripts.[8] Of course, here our understandings depend on not only which poems survived, but on which legends skalds found best-suited to kennings.

Eddic poetry is generally considered to have been more mutable than skaldic poetry, making it difficult to be sure how a given poem might have changed before it was written down in the medieval period, if it was not largely a medieval composition in the

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[4]Asser also mentions *Seth* (son of *Noe*), possibly confused with *Sceaf*; Asser, *Asserius de rebus gestis Ælfredi*, in *Asser's Life of King Alfred: Together with the Annals of Saint Neots Erroneously Ascribed to Asser*, ed. by William Henry Stevenson with Dorothy Whitelock, supplemented edn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1959), pp. 1-96 (p. 3). Also amongst Æ`elwulf's ancestors is *Heremod*; the same name appears in *Beowulf*, and has a Scandinavian cognate, *Hermóðr*; ASC-Plummer, I, p. 66-67; ASC-Thorpe, pp. 126-29. *Sceafa* [*weold*] *Longbeardum* according to *Widsið*, p. 150 (l. 32b); see further §5.1.3.

[5]*The Chronicle of Aethelweard*, ed. by A. Campbell (London: Nelson, 1962), p. 33. Scef, according to Æ`elweard, came to the island *Scani* as a child in a boat. Something similar seems to have been understood of Scyld Scefing in *Beowulf*, pp. 1-2 (ll. 4-46).

[6]Kenneth Sisam, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 39 (1953), 287-348 (pp. 332, 339-45); Dumville, 'Kingship', p. 95. A figure from these genealogies called *Beaw* (ASC-Plummer, I, p. 66; ASC-Thorpe, pp. 126-29) or *Beo* (*Aethelweard*, p. 33) may also have been meant to be represented in *Beowulf*'s 'Beowulf I' (*Beowulf*, pp. 1, 3, ll. 18a, 53b) who holds a similar genealogical position; see §5.1.3; Chambers, *Introduction*, p. 42. See further David N. Dumville, 'The West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List and the Chronology of Early Wessex', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland*, 4 (1985), 21-66; David N. Dumville, 'The West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List: Manuscripts and Texts', *Anglia*, 104 (1986), 1-32. A convenient comparison of the relevant genealogies is in Chambers, *Introduction*, pp. 198-204.

[7]William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum: The History of the English Kings*, ed. and trans. by R.A.B. Mynors with R.M. Thomson and M.Winterbottom, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), p. 176.

[8]Jón Helgason, 'Norges og Islands digtning', in *Litteraturhistoria*, ed. by Sigurður Nordal, Nordisk Kultur, 8, 2 vols (Stockholm: Bonnier; Oslo: Aschehoug; Copenhagen: Schultz, 1943-53), B: Norge og Island, 3-179 (pp. 143-45, 151-53).

first place. No Eddic poetry deals directly with the Skjǫldung cycle, though certain aspects of the so-called 'Helgi-lays' may be related. The extant forms of the Helgi-lays may date from the thirteenth century, though it has been thought that there may have been earlier versions drawing on 'Danish traditions'. *Ynglingatal* is in the Eddic *kviðuháttr* metre but makes heavy use of kennings in the skaldic style and its authorship is traditionally assigned to Þjóðólfr ór Hvini, *c*. 900.[9] *Grottasǫngr*, a poem in the *fornyrðislag* metre preserved in some manuscripts of Snorri's Edda,[10] tells a story centred around a quern called *Grotti* and explains how Fróði's peace ended as well as how the sea became salty through the incorporation of several motifs common to international folklore.[11] Parts of *Grottasǫngr* may be as old as the Viking Age, though it is difficult to tell when the poem received its final shaping. Jan de Vries argued that this was not until the twelfth century in Iceland.[12] As for the written sources surely composed after the Viking Age, some are thought to have existed by the early thirteenth century, but others may be rather later; the surviving manuscripts are medieval or post-medieval in any case.[13]

In some instances, the relative familiarity of particular names associated with figures from the legends at different dates can be inferred from the appearance of those names in runic inscriptions or in relatively contemporary European written sources.

5.1.3 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE ANGLO-SAXON & MEDIEVAL SCANDINAVIAN LEGENDS

Vast effort has been expended over the last two centuries in attempts to identify and explain relationships between the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian Scylding-Skjǫldung legends. Olrik's *Danmarks Heltedigtning* is largely devoted to this issue, as is Chambers' *Beowulf: An Introduction*; it would scarcely be possible to summarise even a tithe of such works here, much less the host of shorter pieces discussing aspects of the subject. In any event, despite gargantuan effort, no clear consensus on the matter truly can be said to have been reached.[14] That the Anglo-Saxons and medieval Scandinavians knew differing

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[9]See §3.2.2.

[10]*Grottasǫngr*, pp. 293-97.

[11]Aarne-Thompson, I, 195 (A1115.2, Why the sea is salt); II, 279-80 (D1601.20-21.1, Self-grinding mill/Stone salt-mill/Wish mill); III, 111, 153, 230 and (F451.5.1.5.1, Dwarf king turns mill which produces gold; F531.5.10.2, Giant maidens grind gold, peace, soldiers, salt, etc. on large stone mill; F871, *Kalevala* Sampo).

[12]Jan de Vries, *Altnordische Literaturgeschichte*, 2 vols, Grundiss der germanischen Philologie, 15-16 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1941-42), I, 95-98. A version of the story known in *Grottasǫngr* was still current in nineteenth-century Orkney; Alfred W. Johnston, 'Grotta Söngr and the Orkney and Shetland Quern', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 6 (1908-09), 296-304.

[13]See, for example, discussion in Theodore M. Anderson, 'Kings' Sagas', in *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: a Critical Guide*, ed. by Carol J. Clover and John Lindow, Islandica, 45 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 197-238.

[14]Another older (and briefer) effort was made in Oscar Ludvig Olson, *The Relation of* Hrólfs Saga Kraka *and the* Bjarkarímur *to* Beowulf*: A Contribution to the History of Saga Development in England and the*

versions of the same basic legendary cycle is clear. For the purposes of this study, however, the most important consideration is whether it is possible to suppose a wholly Scandinavian origin for the Anglo-Saxon traditions. According to Chambers (speaking of Olrik's interpretation), the Anglo-Saxon and medieval Scandinavian Scylding-Skjǫldung legends 'interlock, dovetail into one another and make a connected whole which, though it leaves details obscure, seems in its main outlines established beyond doubt'.[15] With doubt cast on the Scandinavian provenance of certain elements from the Skjǫldung cycle, however, similar doubt is cast on many of the assumed relations between the Anglo-Saxon and medieval Scandinavian narratives. The main outlines may indeed interlock, but the obscuring of details makes it difficult to be sure, as Chambers was, that the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian variants indeed represent parallel branches stemming from a common origin in pre-Viking Scandinavian history.

The surviving Anglo-Saxon material concerning the Scylding-Skjǫldung cycle is so cursory (and idiosyncratic) that it is probably dangerous to assume that it provides an accurate picture of the state of the legends in Viking-Age Britain. The considerably larger body of medieval Scandinavian sources demonstrates that a number of variants were current simultaneously in Scandinavia from the end of the twelfth century. It is possible that additional Anglo-Saxon variants have been lost, but perhaps it is more likely that the aristocratic Scandinavian orientation of the legends made them more popular in Anglo-Scandinavian oral environments than in literate clerical Anglo-Saxon circles (where it seems most likely that the Anglo-Saxon materials were committed to writing.[16] Early or late, the variants known in *Beowulf* and *Widsið* might be only tangential to a Scylding-Skjǫldung legendary matrix in Viking-Age England.

There are, in fact, fewer certain agreements between the Anglo-Saxon and medieval Scandinavian versions than is commonly assumed. In fact, an extremely strict analysis provides only the following correspondences:

1) Hroðgar/Hróarr and Halga/Helgi were brothers (except in the *Chronicon Lethrense* where the positions of Ro [= Hroðgar] and Haldanus are reversed).
2) They were the sons of Healfdene/Hálfdan (except in the *Chronicon Lethrense*).
3) Hroþulf/Hrólfr was a nephew of Hroðgar/Hróarr (except in the *Chronicon Lethrense*).
4) These figures were members of a dynasty or tribe known as the Scyldingas/Skjǫldungar (but, except in *Beowulf*, not in surviving sources earlier than Snorri Sturluson).
5) A character called Heoroweard/Hjǫrvarðr appears.

Scandinavian Countries, Publications of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study, 3.1 (Urbana, IL: Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study, 1916). A new overview of the relevant narratives and their interrelations seems long overdue.

[15]Chambers, *Introduction*, p. 427.

[16]Patrick Wormald, 'Bede, *Beowulf* and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy', in *Bede and Anglo-Saxon England: Papers in Honour of the 1300th Anniversary of the Birth of Bede, Given at Cornell University in 1973 and 1974*, ed. by Robert T. Farrell, BAR, 46 (Oxford: BAR, 1978) pp. 32-95 (pp. 52-57) Lapidge, '*Beowulf*, Aldhelm, the *Liber Monstrorum* and Wessex', pp. 156-57.

It should be noted that *Widsið* substantiates only point 3:

> Hroþwulf ond Hroðgar heoldon lengest
> sibbe ætsomne suhtorfædran,
> siþþan hy forwræcon wicinga cynn[17]
> ond Ingeldes ord forbigdan,
> forheowan æt Heorote Heaðobeardna þrym.[18]

This passage does not even confirm that Hroþwulf and Hroðgar were *Dene*; *Beowulf* is, in fact, the only Viking-Age source which confirms that point or points 1, 2, and 4, above.[19] Thus, most of the further assumed correspondences between Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian sources are based on *Beowulf*, a poetic monument of disputed origin and doubtful historical accuracy. The Anglo-Saxon sources do not even confirm that Hroþulf was Halga's son, and certainly do not indicate he is the product of an incestuous relationship. Nor is Hroþulf's fall—a primary feature for the medieval Scandinavian legends—foreshadowed in the Anglo-Saxon sources.[20]

There are several more general points worth making about the relationships (or lack thereof) between the Viking-Age Anglo-Saxon sources and the medieval Scandinavian versions of the legends; certain issues are treated in greater detail in later sections.

Widsið's passage focuses on Hroþwulf and Hroðgar's strife with Ingeld and the Heaðobeardan. *Beowulf* elaborates on this theme, adding that Ingeld is the son of Froda. Certain details of this feud seem to be echoed in *Gesta Danorum*.[21] Moreover, in the Scandinavian legends, the character Hálfdan is often depicted in conflict with his brother Fróði; sometimes Hálfdan's brother (or half-brother) is Ingjaldr, and they are instead both Fróði's sons. Ingjaldr and Fróði are Skjǫldungar in the Scandinavian sources, not

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[17]Exactly what the poet meant—or believed he meant—by *wicingas* is unclear. See discussion and references in Chambers, *Widsith*, pp. 205 n. to l. 47, 208 n. to l. 59; Malone, *Widsith*, p. 209; Wessén, *Folkstammarna*, pp. 17-27, 38.

[18]*Widsið*, pp. 150-51 (ll. 45-49).

[19]An eleventh-century skaldic verse designates Sveinn Úlfsson as *atseti Hleiðrar* (*Skjaldedigtning*, B.1, 377), but this cannot prove Lejre was linked with the Skjǫldungar as, with or without them, Lejre seems to have been an important ideological centre in the tenth century; Thietmar of Merseburg, *Die Chronik des Bischofs Thietmar von Merseburg und ihre Korveier Überarbeitung (Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon)*, ed. by Robert Holtzmann, MGH: SRG, Nova series, 9 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1955), pp. 23-24 (Book 1, Chapter 17); see §3.4.1 & §5.2.4. Frodo IV is said to have dwelt at *Ringsted* (in central Sjælland) in AJ, p. 341 *DsAl*, p. 17 (Chapter 9). This name may be echoed in the *Hringstaðir* held by Helgi in *HHbI*, pp. 131, 134, (v. 8, 58); Olrik, *Legends*, p. 326. Fróði is described as a king at Hleiðrar (i.e. Lejre in Denmark) in *Grottasǫngr*, p. 300 (v. 20); and at Hleiðra in *Ynglinga saga*; *Heimskringla*, I, 25.

[20]Medieval Scandinavian sources universally agree that Hrólfr was Helgi's son (by his own daughter), and this is presumbly the source of the common opinion that Hro`ulf is Halga's son in *Beowulf*. If we had only *Beowulf*, however, Hro`ulf might be the child of any of Hroðgar's siblings. Hemmingsen, arguing that Hrólfr's fall reflected that of the Erulian Rodulf, suggested that the incest motif had been added to the story to explain how a heroic king, in contrast to the normal structure of traditional narratives as identified by Propp and Dundes, had suffered defeat; Hemmingsen, pp. 128-32. Such irregular parentage is a motif commonly found in connection with legendary heroes; for example: King Arthur and Sigurðr Fáfnisbani. It is even possible that Hrólfr's incestuous origins were inspired by such models.

[21]*Beowulf*, pp. 76-77 (ll. 2020-2069a), *Gesta Danorum*, pp. 157-80 (Book 6).

Heaðobeardan; few traces of this latter tribe can been seen in the Scandinavian legends.[22]Yet though there are considerable differences between the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian accounts concerning Ingeld/Ingjaldr and Froda/Fróði, they must be related in some fashion.

Beowulf is also the primary source of information about the Scylfing dynasty, whose name is cognate with Scandinavian *Skilfingar*. A number of the Scylfingas appear to have counterparts in Scandinavian legend, and Eadgils's fight with Onela (in *Beowulf*) broadly reflects the battle between Aðils and Áli on the ice of lake Vænir, which is mentioned in many (but not all) of the Scandinavian sources. Strangely, the Ongenþeow who stands at the head of *Beowulf*'s Scylfingas—and seems to be echoed in *Widsið*'s phrase *Sweom Ongendþeow* [*weold*], though without reference to any Scylfingas—is unknown in the Scandinavian sources, though an *Egill* sometimes appears in his place.[23]

In fact, a number of prominent details from the Anglo-Saxon sources are unknown in the Scandinavian sources. Several members of *Beowulf*'s Scyldingas are missing from the Skjǫldungar, and there is no hall-name corresponding to *Heorot* (or any hall-name at all).[24] Many scholars have seen *Beowulf* and *Widsið* as hinting that Hroþulf will kill Hroðgar's son Hreðric to claim the kingship for himself. Kenneth Sisam challenged this view, maintaining it read too much into the texts.[25] His views are not universally accepted, but his criticisms seem valid.

Certain elements were developed further in Anglo-Saxon contexts than in Scandinavian ones. The name *Sceldwea* first appears in a ninth-century West Saxon genealogy which provides him with a father *Sceaf*; this pair recurs in a tenth-century West Saxon genealogy as *Scyld* and *Scef*,[26] and these forms are very similar to the *Scyld Scefing* found in *Beowulf*.[27] Based on *Beowulf*'s description of Scyld (and William of Malmesbury's related tale of Scef), Scyld and Scef have often been interpreted as vestigial figures from an agricultural myth in which a divine hero brought prosperity to men. The name *Sceaf*/*Scef* is linked with OE *sceaf* ('sheaf'), and the association is

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[22]Restrictions on space in the study prevent the presentation of wider discussion on parallels in narratives concerning the Scyldingas and Heaðobeardan, Helgo and Hothbroddus in *Gesta Danorum*, and the Eddic Helgi-lays, but see Picard, *Sakralkönigtum?*, 131-58; Davidson-Fisher, II, 43-44 (n. 33, 35); Otto Höfler, 'Der Sakralcharacter des germanischen Königtums', in *The Sacral Kingship: Contributions to the Central Theme of the VIIIth International Congress for the History of Religions (Rome, April 1955)*, Studies in the history of religions, 4 (Leiden, Brill, 1959), pp. 664-701 (pp. 674-76); Jan de Vries, 'Die Helgilieder', *Arkiv for nordisk filologi*, 72 (1957), 123-54 (pp. 141-54); D. Hoffman, *Nordisch-Englische*, pp. 114-45; Otto Höfler, 'Das Opfer im Semnonenhain und die Edda', in *Edda, Skalden, Saga: Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Felix Genzmer*, ed. by Hermann Schneider (Heidelberg: Winter, 1952), pp. 1-67; Kemp Malone, 'Hagbard and Ingeld' in *SiHLaCS*, pp. 63-81; Kemp Malone, 'Agelmund and Lamicho', in *SiHLaCS*, pp. 86-107; Olrik, Legends, pp. 303-04; Bugge, *Home*, pp. 141-96, 271-90.

[23]*Widsið*, p. 150 (l. 31); *Beowulf*, pp. 89-90, 93, 110-13 (ll. 2379a-2395, 2472-89, 2922-98).

[24]See §5.2.4.

[25]*Widsið*, 150-51 (ll. 45-46); *Beowulf*, pp. 44, 38, 45 (ll. 1013-19, 1163b-68a, 1180b-87); Kenneth Sisam, *The Structure of* Beowulf (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), pp. 35-39, 80-82.

[26]*Asserius*, p. 3; ASC-Plummer, I, p. 66-67; ASC-Thorpe, p. 126-29; *Aethelweard*, p. 33. *Scyld* appears to be a strong form of the name *Sceldwea*.

[27]*Beowulf*, pp. 1-2 (ll. 4-46).

strengthened by reference in *Beowulf* to Scef's grandson *Beow* (*Beaw* or *Beo* in the West Saxon genealogies), as OE *beow* means 'barley', related to ON *bygg*, and is sometimes thought to be echoed in *Locasenna*'s Byggvir.[28] The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle identifies Sceaf as a son of Noah, born on Noah's ark, and this is often thought of as an attempt to rationalise an old myth about a ship-born (or ship-borne) child with Christian learning. Certainly, it seems likely that West Saxon genealogists were keen to establish pedigrees linking their kings to prestigious Christian traditions.[29]

The name *Sceaf* has no close cognate in Old Norse (perhaps only *skauf*, 'a fox's brush'), and when borrowed from Anglo-Saxon genealogy for Snorri's Edda it was mangled to *Seskef*,[30] which means nothing at all. Furthermore, *Widsið* names a *Sceafa*, a weak form of *Sceaf*, as ruler of the Langobards.[31] This usage is particularly interesting given the suggested parallels between the Erulian-Langobardic struggle and fall of Hrólfr kraki in Scandinavian legend and the suggestion that Scyld Scefing *egsode Eorl*[*e*] ('terrified the Eruli').[32] Perhaps Scef and Scyld, as we know them, were learned creations of Anglo-Saxon genealogists combining information from continental sources, Germanic myth/legend, and Christian learning. In any event, it seems that Scyld was eventually adopted into Scandinavian legend as Skjǫldr (absent from Viking-Age skaldic poetry, his first Scandinavian appearance is in *Brevis historia*) while Scef remained an English feature.

5.2 SOME ISSUES CONCERNING THE LEGENDS' EARLY EVOLUTION

5.2.1 THE DYNASTIC TITLES

Widsið does not mention the names *Scyldingas* (or *Scylfingas*) even when discussing Hroþwulf and Hroðgar. *Beowulf* provides the earliest surviving record of these terms' use in a dynastic sense.[33] It is commonly assumed that *Beowulf*'s Scylding dynasty reflects

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[28]Beow and Byggvir may be echoed in the Finnish *Pekko*; de Vries, *Religionsgeschichte*, II, 204-06; Chambers, *Introduction*, pp. 68-88; Olrik, *Legends*, pp. 381-445; Olrik, *Heltedigtning*, I, 226-48; II, 249-65; *Aethelweard*, p. 33; ASC-Plummer, I, p. 66; ASC-Thorpe, p. 126-29; *Beowulf*, pp. 1, 3 (ll. 18a, 53b); *Locasenna*, p. 105 (v. 43-46). Dumézil, however, has argued that *Pekko* is the diminutive form of *Pietari* ('Peter'); Dumézil, *Myth to Fiction*, pp. 132-33.

[29]Thomas D. Hill, 'Scyld Scefing and the "Stirps Regia": Pagan Myth and Christian Kingship in *Beowulf*', in *Magister Regis: Studies in Honor of Robert Earl Kaske*, ed by Arthur Groos with Emerson Brown, Jr. (New York: Fordham Univeristy Press, 1986, pp. 37-47; Thomas D. Hill, 'The Myth of the Ark-Born Son of Noe and the West-Saxon Royal Genealogical Tables', *Harvard Theological Review*, 80 (1987), 379-83; Craig R. Davis, Beowulf *and the Demise of Germanic Legend in England* (London: Garland, 1996), pp. 58-63. See also Lapidge, '*Beowulf*, Aldhelm, the *Liber Monstrorum* and Wessex', pp. 184-88.

[30]In the Codex Regius manuscript, presumably from an Old English source reading *se Scef*. Codex Upsaliensis has *Sefsmeg* (*Snorra Edda*, p. 4) while Codex Wormianus has *Cespheth*; *SnEdHafn*, I, p. 24.

[31]*Widsið*, p. 150 (l. 32b).

[32]See §4.1.3.

[33]*Beowulf* is remarkable in associating these names not only with the ruling Danish and Swedish dynasties, but also with the tribal groups *Dene* and *Sweon* ruled by those dynasties.

old Scandinavian traditions, but if so, there is no surviving Viking-Age Scandinavian evidence of a Skjǫldung dynasty. If Sæmundr Sigfússon composed a tally of Skjǫldungar comparable to Ari's tally of Ynglingar, that suggests an understanding of the Skjǫldungar as a legendary dynasty, comparable to *Beowulf*'s Scyldingas, among Icelanders by the early twelfth century.[34] However, roughly contemporaneous use of the term in Denmark by Sven Aggesen and Saxo Grammaticus suggests that a dynastic understanding may not have been widespread at that time. Sven Aggesen, speaking of the legendary Skiold, says: 'A quo primum modibus Hislandensibus skioldunger sunt reges nuncupati'.[35] Saxo Grammaticus wrote of Skyoldus: 'tantaque indolis eius experimenta fuere, ut ab ipso ceteri Danorum reges communi quodam vocabulo skioldungi nuncuparentur'.[36] It is not clear that Sven or Saxo understood the term *skjǫldungr* as anything more than a *heiti* for 'king' which referred especially to Danish kings—a kind of honorific—despite their (erroneous) derivation of the term from the legendary Skjǫldr's name. Roughly contemporaneous is the *Chronicon Lethrense*, the earliest substantial Scandinavian narrative source for figures commonly identified as Skjǫldungar. It does not mention any 'Skiold' nor does it use the term 'Skioldunger'. The earliest sure dynastic use of *skjǫldungr* in a Scandinavian context comes from Snorri's thirteenth-century Edda.[37]

It is commonly recognised that the legendary Skjǫldr is a back-formation from the term *skjǫldungr*, a standard skaldic *heiti* for 'king, leader', much in the way Sven and Saxo demonstrated.[38] Erik Björkman suggested *skjǫldungr* derived from an early LG word **skalda* (MLG *schalde*),[39] apparently a kind of punt used on the Continent's North Sea coasts, and that **skalding* (meaning 'boatman') became a label for Scandinavian sailors. Much more likely is that *skjǫldungr* meant 'person associated with a shield'.[40] The meaning 'shield-bearer' is often put forward, though a meaning connected with the Germanic custom of raising a leader on a shield—best known from the Merovingian examples—might not be impossible.

Frank has noted that skaldic poetry of the early eleventh century uses *skjǫldungr* largely as a 'king' *heiti*, describing the kings Knútr inn ríki, Óláfr helgi, and Magnús góði. She suggested a connection between these kings' exploits in England and the use of

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[34]*Íslendingbók*, pp. 27-28. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson suggested that Ari modelled his tally of the Ynglingar on a similar tally of the Skjǫldungar; Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Sagnaritun*, pp. 15-16.

[35]*Brevis historia,* pp. 96-97 (Chapter 1). Editors commonly capitalize the variants of the term *skjǫldungar* as used by Sven and Saxo in accordance with the common understanding of the term's dynastic use. I have modified the quotations from their published versions slightly to avoid drawing possibly unwarranted attention to a dynastic interpretation of the term's use.

[36]*Gesta Danorum*, p. 11 (Book 1).

[37]'Þaðan er sv ætt ko[min, er] Skioldvngar heita; þat erv Danakonvngar'; *Snorra Edda*, pp. 6, 135; *SnEdHafn*, I, 26, 374.

[38]Given the difficulty of dating *Beowulf*, it is impossible to say whether or not figures such as Sceldwea, in the tenth-century Anglo-Saxon genealogical sources, are older or younger than the composition of the poem. Skjǫldr did not figure strongly, or necessarily appear at all, in the medieval Scandinavian narratives. The evidence does not rule out the possibility that Sceldwea/Scyld/Skjǫldr may have been largely an Anglo-Scandinavian hybrid creation; see §5.1.1 and §5.1.3.

[39]Erik Björkman, 'Two Derivations', *Saga Book of the Viking Club*, 7 (1912), 132-40.

[40]*ANEW*, p. 496-97 (*sv* 'skjǫldr' & 'skjǫldungr').

skjǫldungr to describe them.[41] The Icelandic skald Óttarr svarti seems to have used the term in a slightly wider sense when he described Óláfr helgi as a *skjǫldunga þopti* and as holding the *þjóðskjǫldunga góðra ... veldi*.[42] In these instances, *skjǫldungar* (plural) seems to refer to Óláfr's retinue, or perhaps intends to describe Óláfr figuratively as 'in the company of kings'. Use of *skjǫldungar* to describe a sub-ethnic collective may be indicated in the mid-tenth-century *Historia de sancto Cuthberto*, where the 'Danes' (a term which need not mean anything more specific than 'Scandinavians') are referred to as *Scaldingi*.[43] Likewise, Olrik noted the legendary hero Helgi and his retinue were collectively termed *ylfingar*.[44] Frank's arguments attempted to assess whether the appearance of similar topics and usages both in skaldic verse and *Beowulf* suggested a Viking-Age compositional date for the latter. These proposals are somewhat problematic, but it may be significant that a dynastic use of *skjǫldungr* is absent from extant Viking-Age Scandinavian material.[45]

Indeed, there is scant evidence for Scandinavian use of any terms in the *-ing-/-ung-* suffix to imply genealogical descent—as is known from Frankish, Anglo-Saxon, and Gothic contexts—before the twelfth century.[46] The most common use of the *-ing-/-ung-* suffix in ON is within words denoting people from a particular place or kind of place, i.e. *Íslendingar*, *útlendingar*.[47] Snorri listed a number of skaldic *heiti* for 'leader' employing the *-ing-/-ung-* suffix, and explained them as dynastic titles modelled on a founder figure's personal name.[48] As with Skjǫldr, many of the founder figures may be late back-formations of some kind.[49]

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[41]Roberta Frank, 'Skaldic', pp. 126-27. The line *veþrs skiolldunga valldi* appears in a verse attributed to Gísli Súrsson (tenth century). Before the twelfth century, however, *ǫ* and *a* rhymed fully; the metrical requirement for a half-rhyme here means the verse is most likely late; *Skjaldedigtning*, A.1, 104; B.1, 98-99.

[42]*Skjaldedigtning*, B.1, 270, 272. The element *þjóð-*, in *þjóðskjǫldungar*, might be translated 'national', but 'great, excellent' is in some ways more plausible; the word *þjóðkonungr* would normally be translated 'great king'. Óttarr used *ynglingr* as a 'king' *heiti* in reference to Ólafr in the same stanza as he uses *skjǫldunga þopti*. Notably, the *Beowulf* poet describes Hro`ulf and Hroðgar as *eodscyldingas*, a very similar term to *þjóðskjǫldungar*; *Beowulf*, p. 38 (l. 1019a); Frank 'Skaldic', pp. 126-27.

[43]*Historia de sancto Cuthberto*, in *Symeonis monachi opera omnia*, ed. by Thomas Arnold, Rolls Series, 75, 2 vols (London: Longman, 1882-1885), I (1882), 196-214 (pp. 200, 202); Frank, 'Skaldic', p. 127, n. 15 & 17; Björkman, 'Two', pp. 132-40. W.H. Stevenson considered *Scaldingi* a corruption of *skjǫldungar*, though he assumed the legendary dynasty was historical; Stevenson, *Asser's Life*, p. 218 n. 1.

[44]Olrik, *Legends*, p. 439; *Helgakviða Hundingsbana I*, p. 135 (v. 34).

[45]The first certain Scandinavian use of an *-ing-/-ung-* term in a genealogical sense is post-Viking, introducing Ari Þorgilsson's Yngling genealogy: 'Þessi eru nǫfn langfeðga Ynglinga'; *Íslendingabók*, p. 27.

[46]The early-ninth-century Rök stone in Östergötland preserves two names on this pattern: **marika** (*Mæringa*, genitive plural), and **igoldga** (*Ingoldinga*, genitive plural). The Rök inscription seems to betray familiarity with material from continental contexts, however. It is difficult to know whether possible use of the *-ing-/-ung-* suffix to imply genealogical descent in these words is an isolated borrowing or not; Bugge, *Runenstein*, p. 127; *SR*, II, 130 (ÖG 136); Otto von Friesen, *Rökstenen: Runstenen vid Röks kyrka, Lysings härad, Östergötland* (Stockholm: Bagge, 1920), pp. 47-48; *Deor*, p. 178 (v. 18-19); Elias Wessén, *Runstenen vid Röks kyrka* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1958), pp. 44-45.

[47]On the *-ing-/-ung-* suffix, see further Green, *Language*, pp. 130-33.

[48]These included: *hildingr*, *davglingr*, *ðlingr*, *bragningr*, *bvðlvngr*, *siklingr*, *skioldvngr*, *lofþvngr*, *volsvngr*, *ynglingr*, and *skilfingr*; *Snorra Edda*, p. 181-85; *SnEdHafn*, I, 516-28.

[49]On the forms *Yngvi* and *ynglingr*, see §3.2.2.

Snorri derived the heiti *skilfingr* from a legendary *Skelfir*, a back-formed figure about whom there is little more to say.[50] Of the Scandinavian Skilfingar dynasty, Snorri says only that they came 'from Eastern lands'. *Skilfingar* is cognate with the name of *Beowulf*'s Scylfingas, the Swedish dynasty paralleled in Scandinavian sources by the Ynglingar. Assumptions about *Beowulf*'s historicity stand behind the common equation of the Scylfingas, Ynglingar, and Skilfingar. As noted in §4.2.1, such a name-shift is rather difficult to explain and likewise the lack of scholarly comment on it.[51] Only three figures with broadly similar names are found in connection with both *Beowulf*'s Scylfingas and the Scandinavian Ynglingar: Ohthere/Óttarr, Eadgils/Aðils and Onela/Áli (and Áli is not himself an Ynglingr). The term *skilfinga nið* is used once in *Ynglingatal* to describe Egill, father of Óttarr, whose son was Aðils.[52] Here *skilfingar* simply may have meant 'leaders'; as with *skjǫldungr*, there is no clear dynastic use of *skilfingr* from the Viking Age other than *Beowulf*'s Scylfingas.

Some of the 'king' *heiti*, however, were certainly dynastic titles, but borrowed from originally non-Scandinavian legends. *Vǫlsungr*, *buðlungr*, and *niflungr* are derived from well-attested legendary dynasties in the Vǫlsung cycle—the families of Sigurðr, Atli, and Gunnarr—and are ultimately of continental origin.[53] If the Frankish or Anglo-Saxon dynastic use of *-ing-*/*-ung-* suffixed words influenced similar usage in Scandinavia, it would be difficult to date.

Though it seems most likely that *skjǫldungr* was not originally a dynastic appellation, efforts to assess the early use of such terms are hampered by the limitations of the surviving evidence. Any conclusions must be tentative, but the evidence which does survive is not incompatible with an interpretation in which the term *skǫldungr*, denoting 'leader' (and perhaps by extension 'leader's retinue') acquired a dynastic sense during a process of the legendary narratives' evolution in an Anglo-Scandinavian context. Although *Beowulf*'s use of *Scyldingas* suggests that a dynastic meaning for such terms may have been current in Scandinavian contexts at some point during the Viking Age, the evidence of Sven Aggesen and Saxo Grammaticus suggests *skjǫldungr* may not have been automatically understood in a dynastic sense throughout twelfth-century

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[50]Snorri also gives *skilvingr* as *heiti* for Óðinn and 'sword', probably meaning 'shaker'; *Snorra Edda*, pp. 28, 201; *SnEdHafn*, I, 86, 566; Cleasby-Vigfusson, p. 546 (*sv* 'skilfingr'). There is evidence for a place-name *Skialf* in Uppland for which an association with the Ynglingar has been suggested; Elgqvist, *Skälv*, pp. 68-74. *Ynglingatal* mentions a *Skjálf*, who according to Snorri strangled her husband Agni, who had slain her father, Frosti, a Sámi leader; *Skjaldedigtning*, B.1, 9; *Heimskringla*, I, 37-38; Erik Björkman, 'Skalf och Skilfing', *Namn och Bygd*, 7 (1919), 163-81; Kari Ellen Gade, 'Skalf', *Arkiv for nordisk filologi*, 100 (1985), 59-71. *Skjálf* is also listed as one of Freyja's names; *SnEdHafn*, I, 557; Picard, *Sakralkönigtum?*, pp. 192-219. The histories and relations of these various name-forms appear complex.

[51]For example, Grundtvig merely noted the existence of the apparent Scylfingas-Ynglingar correspondence with little further comment; Grundtvig, 'Bjovulfs', p. 283, n. Most recently, Krag argued that information about the Swedish dynasty was synthesized by Ari Þorgilsson, who himself attached the name *Ynglingar* to it, based on his understanding of their descent from Yngvi. Krag considered *Skilfingar* the original name, accepting *Beowulf*'s authority; Krag, pp. 33, 165-66, 210-11, 218-19. But see §3.2.2.

[52]*Skjaldedigtning*, B.1, 10.

[53]See §2.5.4.

Scandinavia. At the very least, it may be rash to assume that terms like *skjǫldungr*, *ynglingr*, or *skilfingr* were borne as dynastic appellations by Scandinavian rulers of the GIA.

5.2.2 BJARKI & *BJARKAMÁL*

Bjarkamál is the name commonly given to the long Latin poem concerning the fall of Roluo in *Gesta Danorum*, taking the form of a dialogue between the heroes Biarco and Hialto.[54] Saxo claimed to have adapted his poem from a vernacular original, and certain short verses preserved in Icelandic sources (see below) have often been considered fragments of this original poem, commonly referred to as **Bjarkamál in fornu* (or *Húskarlahvǫt*).[55] Axel Olrik attempted to reconstruct the 'original' *Bjarkamál* but, while Olrik's Danish version was a remarkable creative achievement, his results must be considered highly speculative at best. More recently, Karsten Friis-Jensen has suggested that Saxo himself was largely responsible for the bulk of his *Bjarkamál*'s content.[56] If there was a long **Bjarkamál in fornu* in the Viking Age,[57] Saxo's *Bjarkamál* should not be considered a reliable guide to its nature.

Several fragments attributed to **Bjarkamál in fornu* are preserved in Icelandic sources (and conveniently collected in *Skjaldedigtning*). The most relevant, from *Heimskringla*, read:

> Dagr 's upp kominn, dynja hana fjaðrar,
> mál's vílmǫgum at vinna erfiði;
> vaki ok æ vaki vina hǫfuð,
> allir enir œztu Aðils of sinnar.
>
> Hár enn harðgreipi, Hrólfr skjótandi,
> ættumgóðir menn, þeirs ekki flœja;
> vekka yðr at víni, né at vífs rúnum,
> heldr vek ek yðr at hǫrðum Hildar leiki.[58]

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[54] *Gesta Danorum*, pp. 53-63 (Book 2).

[55] *Heimskringla*, II, 361-62. A performance of *Bjarkamál in fornu* before the Battle of Stiklastaðir is also mentioned in *Olafs saga hins helga*, p. 182; and *Fóstbrœðra saga*, in *Vestfirðinga sǫgur*, ed. by Björn K. Þórolfsson og Guðni Jónsson, Íslenzk fornrit, 6 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1943), pp. 119-276 (p. 261).

[56] Friis-Jensen pointed especially to the influence of Gautier de Châtillon's *Alexandreis* and Virgil (particularly the *Nyctomachia* in Book 2 of the *Aeneid*) on Saxo's *Bjarkamál*; Friis-Jensen, *Latin Poet*, pp. 15-16, 64-101. See also Friis-Jensen, *Saxo og Vergil*, pp. 88-91.

[57] The surviving **Bjarkamál* fragments may themselves be largely post-Viking creations; Klaus von See, '*Húskarla hvǫt*: Nochmals zum Alter der Bjarkamál', in *Speculum Norroenum: Norse Studies in Memory of Gabriel Turville-Petre*, ed. by Ursula Dronke and others (Odense: Odense University Press, 1981), pp. 421-31 [repr. in Klaus von See, *Edda, Saga, Skaldendichtung: Aufsätze zur skandinavischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, Skandinavistische Arbeiten, 6 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1981), pp. 272-82.]

[58] *Skjaldedigtning*, B.1, 170-71; *Heimskringla*, II, 361-62. Another possibly relevant fragment is 'Hniginn er j hadd jardar/Hrölfur hinn störlati' which comes from an early-modern version of Snorri's *Edda*; *Two*

In theme at least, these verses are similar to the opening of Saxo's *Bjarkamál*, seemingly exhorting warriors to rouse themselves and prepare for battle. It is odd, however, that warriors who presumably should belong to Hrólfr kraki appear to be referred to as 'companions of Aðils'. This quirk is commonly explained with reference to a version of the story in which Hrólfr had sent his warriors to assist Aðils in the Swedish king's battle with Áli. This tale may first have been written in *Skjǫldunga saga*, whence Snorri acquired it and repeated it in his Edda and in *Ynglinga saga*, and whence it also came to *Bjarkarímur*. It does not appear in *Hrólfs saga kraka*, nor in the early Danish sources.[59] Olrik rejected the authenticity of this story as a West Scandinavian addition to the Skjǫldung cycle, along with the battle between Áli and Aðils itself.[60] In order to explain the apparent description of **Bjarkamál in fornu*'s warriors as companions of Aðils, Olrik suggested that the phrase *aðils of sinnar* might be interpreted 'companions of a noble' (postulating an ON **aðill* on the model of OE *æðele*) or that an older version of the poem might have used an ODa term *aðalsinnar* ('excellent companions').[61] It might be, however, as plausible to view the *Bjarkamál* fragments in *Óláfs saga helga* as unconnected with legends of Hrólfr kraki. Hrólfr skjótandi, who appears in the *Óláfs saga helga* fragment, can hardly be identified with Hrólfr kraki, though his appearance in an originally separate Bjarki-tale might have encouraged its linking with legends of Hrólfr kraki.[62] The extant fragments of **Bjarkamál in fornu* mention no characters from the later Skjǫldung cycle, not even the presumed speaker Bjarki. Bjarki—variously known as Bǫðvarr-Bjarki, Bǫðvarr, or Bodwarus in the medieval Scandinavian sources—might easily have had a separate early existence.

Narratives concerning Bjarki, whose name is likely to be a short form of *Bjǫrn* or a name in *-bjǫrn*, largely take the form of wonder-tales concerning his status as the son of a bear (in Bjarki's case, an ensorcelled prince named Bjǫrn) and a human woman. This motif appears to have been a popular one in Scandinavian, as well as wider European, traditions.[63] An allied tale appears in *Gesta Danorum*, where Sveinn Úlfsson's paternal grand-father Thrugillus Sprakeleg is said to have been the son of a bear and a girl it

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Versions of Snorra Edda from the 17th Century, ed. by Anthony Faulkes, Rit (Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi), 13, 2 vols (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1977-79), I: *Edda Magnúsar Ólafssonar (Laufás Edda)* (1977), p. 265, 272. The passage might refer to Hrólfr kraki himself, but also might have been composed quite late. Moreover, it is difficult to know what to make of the other *Bjarkamál* fragments included in *Skjaldedigtning* (not quoted here) from Snorri's *Edda*; *Snorra Edda*, p. 143; *SnEdHafn*, I, 400-02. They do not discuss Skjǫldungar or Ynglingar, alluding mostly to the Vǫlsung cycle and—perhaps barring two late, uncertain lines—have no obvious relation to Saxo's *Bjarkamál*. These verses could, in short, be from almost anywhere and their late recording in Snorri's *Edda* does not allow more to be said with any confidence.

[59]Saxo wrote 'Ab Athislo lacessiti Rolvonis ultionem armis exegit eumque victum bello prostravit' in Book Two, but later described Athisl drinking himself to death while celebrating Roluo's downfall in Book Three; *Gesta Danorum*, pp. 51, 67; Davidson-Fisher, p. 55. This is not Saxo's only internal contradiction.

[60]Olrik, *Legends*, pp. 348-53.

[61]Olrik, *Legends*, 196-97.

[62]Hemmingsen, pp. 45-46.

[63]Olrik, *Legends*, 370-75. Though Olrik considered the 'bear's son' aspects late additions to legends of a historical Bjarki.

abducted in the woods.[64] The motif also seems to have been known in late- and post-Anglo-Saxon England, particularly in Scandinavian contexts. The *Gesta Herewardi*, a legendary account of the post-Conquest English folk-hero Hereward the Wake, tells how Hereward slew a great bear, the offspring of a famous Norwegian bear—equipped, according to 'Danish fables', with human hands, feet, intelligence, understanding of speech, and skill in battle—which had fathered the Norwegian king Biernus on a girl it had encountered in the woods.[65] These examples are very close to descriptions of Bjarki's origins in *Hrólfs saga kraka* and *Bjarkarímur*. Olrik identified similar elements at work in the story of Sivard, an eleventh-century Danish earl of Northumberland, whose father was said to have been Beorn Beresun, the son of a bear and a human woman (compare Bjarki's human mother, Bera).[66]

Bjarki's bear-like qualities have led some scholars to identify him with Beowulf.[67] The links are fairly tenuous, but it is nevertheless remarkable that both Bjarki and Beowulf, in their respective narratives, mediate between the concerns of the Danish and Swedish dynasties. It might not be impossible that the character of Beowulf is in some way a literary reflection of the oral combination in Viking-Age England of tales concerning Bjarki, the Swedish dynasty, and Hroþulf/Hrólfr kraki. Olrik noted that the name *Boduwar Berki* seems to appear, alongside numerous other names of Scandinavian origin, in a twelfth-century list of benefactors of the church of Durham.[68] The occurrence of this name suggests that tales of Bjarki were popular in Anglo-Scandinavian England, and perhaps remained so into the time when the Skjǫldung cycle was being first committed to writing in Scandinavia.[69] The Bjarki found in medieval Scandinavian sources may represent an amalgamation of several legendary strands.

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[64]*Gesta Danorum*, pp. 287-88 (Book 10, Chapter 15).

[65]*Gesta Herewardi*, in Geffroi Gaimar, *Lestorie des Engles solum la translacion Maistre Geffrei Gaimar*, ed. by Thomas Duffus Hardy and Charles Trice Martin, Rolls Series, 91, 2 vols (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1888-89), I, 339-404 (p. 343).

[66]Axel Olrik, 'Sivard Digri of Northumberland: A Viking Saga of the Danes in England', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 6 (1910), 212-37 (pp. 212-13, 218-20, 233-34).

[67]Resemblances between Beowulf and Bjarki were perhaps first noted by Gísli Brynjúlfsson, 'Oldengelsk', p. 130. Beowulf's status as a 'bear's son' was famously discussed by Friedrich Panzer, *Studien zur germanischen Sagengeschichte*, 2 vols (Munich: Beck, 1910-12), I: *Beowulf*, 16-29, 254-75. There is considerable debate on these subjects, but see also Olrik, *Legends*, pp. 247-51; *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. and commentary by Fr. Klaeber, 3rd edn (Boston: Heath, 1950), pp. xxi-xiv; Chambers, *Introduction*, pp. 54-61; Orchard, pp. 147-48; Fjalldal, pp. 88-95.

[68]Olrik, *Legends*, pp. 256-57; *Liber Vitae ecclesiæ Dunelmensis: nec non obituaria duo ejusdem ecclesiæ*, ed. by Joseph Stevenson, The Publications of the Surtees Society, 13 (London: Nichols, 1841), p. 78.

[69]Hroþulf himself may appear as *Rudolphus* in a post-Conquest list of popular English heroes (in British Library, Cotton MSS, Vespasian D IV, fol. 139b); see references in Chambers, *Introduction*, p. 252 n. 2; Chambers, *Widsith*, p. 254.

5.2.3 HROÞULF & HRÓLFR

Apparent references to Hrólfr kraki in Viking-Age kennings are primarily concerned with his sowing treasures behind him to slow his pursuers, a motif later known in connection with his escape from Aðils across the Fýrisvellir. Snorri related this story, and explained that because of it gold may be called 'Kraki's seed', and he quoted examples from poems attributed to Eyvindr skáldaspillir and Þjóðólfr Arnórsson: Eyvindr called gold *Fýrisvalla fræ*, while Þjóðólfr called it *ǫrð Yrsu burðar* and *ljósu Kraka barri*.[70] Eyvindr's kenning only relates gold to the Fýrisvellir, but *Ynglinga saga* mentions several battles there besides Hrólfr's, including one involving a king Hugleikr perhaps connected to the Hygelac of *Beowulf*.[71] Þjóðólfr's kennings are more informative as, though they do not mention Fýrisvellir, they seem to know Hrólfr kraki as Yrsa's son. These kennings strongly suggest that elements known from medieval narratives of Hrólfr kraki were already operative by the tenth or eleventh century.

It has been noted that the story referenced by these kennings conforms closely to a wonder-tale type found also in Waltharius's escape from Attila,[72] and that objects dropped to inhibit pursuit feature in several international folktale motifs.[73] Such issues complicate an assessment of the legend's development considerably, as such a wonder-tale of Hrólfr could have had a Viking-Age existence entirely separate from whatever other elements of the legends then existed. The story is absent from the Anglo-Saxon sources.

5.2.4 HEOROT & LEJRE

Of Lukman's many proposed connections between classical sources and the Scylding-Skjǫldung cycle, one of the most intriguing concerns Hroðgar's hall, named in *Widsið* and Beowulf as *Heorot* or *Heort*. This name is usually interpreted as meaning 'hart, stag'. This is certainly the simple translation of OE *heorot*, though there is little in *Beowulf* to explain such an interpretation. Sarrazin speculated, unconvincingly, about hart-cults and 'hart-halls'.[74] Hroðgar's Heor(o)t is unique among royal halls of Germanic legend in that it is named.[75]

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[70]*Skjaldedigtning*, B.1, 64, 345. In the same verse Eyvindr also referenced Fróði and his *friðr*. See also Meissner, p. 228.

[71]*Heimskringla*, I, 43, 45, 57. More historically, it was also on the Fýrisvellir that Styrbjǫrn sterki was defeated by Eiríkr sigrsæli, probably in the 980s. Finnur Jónsson, however, dates Eyvindr's poem somewhat earlier, to *c*. 965; *Skjaldedigtning*, B.1, 64.

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

[73]See §4.1.3.

[74]G. Sarrazin, 'Die Hirsch-Halle', *Anglia*, 19 (1897), 368-92.

[75]Only the halls of the gods, as described in the Eddas, have names, and these names may be late-heathen or post-conversion innovations; Rudolf Simek, *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*, trans. by Angela Hall (Cambridge: Brewer, 1993), p. 263 (*sv* 'Residences of the Gods') [a revised translation of Rudolf Simek, *Lexikon der germanischen Mythologie* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1984)].

Olrik was clearly troubled that Lejre lacked archaeological evidence of Hrólfr's royal centre and went to some effort finding an explanation.[76] Recently, the picture has changed with the discovery of large halls from the eighth and the tenth centuries at Lejre.[77] Clearly there was an ideological centre of some kind there at those times, and this finding gives added credence to Thietmar of Merseburg's early-eleventh-century description of a cult assembly at Lejre, which Olrik had concluded was more fabulous than historical.[78] Perhaps significantly, a name corresponding to Lejre does not appear in *Beowulf* or *Widsið*, nor do medieval Scandinavian sources have any name for the Skjǫldung hall they place at Lejre.

Lukman suggested a link between Hroðgar's Heor(o)t and a stronghold held by the Hunnish leader Roas which Priscus named Καρσώ.[79] This may have been the same place Jordanes described as *Herta*,[80] and which was known to the Romans as *Carsium*,[81] likely to be identified with the modern Romanian town spelled alternately Hârßova or Hîrßova. What this name originally meant is difficult to say. Lukman suggested a link with Turkish *hirz* ('stronghold, asylum').[82] The name might also be cognate with early Turkic *karşi:* ('[royal] palace', possibly a loan-word from the synonymous Tocharian B *kercc̄ye*).[83]

The connections between Καρσώ and *Herta* depend more on geography than narrative, and, although a Gothic-Latin *Herta* could have been interpreted as an OE *Heort*, Lukman's proposed link between Καρσώ and Heorot depends primarily on the association of Roas and Hroðgar. Nevertheless, that Hroðgar's hall has a name, and a name very similar to that which belonged to Roas's headquarters, is quite remarkable even if it seems coincidental. Any suggestions must remain contentious, yet it could be that the Heor(o)t of *Beowulf* and *Widsið* reflects Anglo-Saxon awareness of large halls at Lejre—of either the seventh or tenth century—but that these were given a name drawing on information about strongholds in Dacia (perhaps influenced by its occasional confusion with Denmark). The *Chronicon Lethrense* agrees broadly with *Beowulf*, ascribing an enrichment of Lejre to Ro as *Beowulf* ascribed the building of Heor(o)t to Hroðgar.[84] If the name *Heor*(*o*)*t* was a learned Anglo-Saxon borrowing, however, it

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[76]Olrik, *Legends*, 324-47.

[77]Tom Christensen, 'Sagntidens', pp. 5-10; Axboe, 'Danish', p. 229; S.W. Anderson, 'Lejre', pp. 103-26; Tom Christensen, 'Lejre', pp. 172-73; S.W. Andersen, 'Vikingerne', p. 22.

[78]Thietmar, pp. 23-24 (Book 1, Chapter 17).

[79]Priscus, p. 226; Lukman, *Skjoldunge*, p. 103-04, 115; Hemmingsen, p. 40-41.

[80]*Getica*, p. 135 (Chapter 58).

[81]Jan Burian, 'Carsium', in *Der neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike*, ed. by Hubert Cancik und Helmuth Schneider (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1996-), II (1997), col. 997.

[82]James William Redhouse, *A Turkish and English Lexicon: Shewing in English the Significations of the Turkish Terms* (Constantinople: Boyajian, 1890), pp. 775-76 (*sv* 'hirz').

[83]Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), p. 664 (*sv* 'karşi:'); Julius Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Bern; München: Francke, 1959), pp. 584-85 (*sv* 'kert-, kerət-, krāt-').

[84]The *Chronicon Lethrense* also ascribes the foundation to Roskilde to Ro, explaining the name as 'Ro's Spring'; *Chronicon Lethrense*, p. 46; *Beowulf*, pp. 3-4 (ll. 64-85). Olrik, however, noted that the earliest

would have seemed inauthentic to Danes, if they heard it, and probably would have been rejected, perhaps explaining the absence of any similar name in the Scandinavian legends. Memory of a historical hall and cult centre at Lejre might have continued in Scandinavia, however, and Sven Aggesen noted Lejre's former importance even though in his time it lay 'scarcely inhabited among quite the meanest of villages'.[85]

5.3 ENVIRONMENT FOR THE LEGENDS' DEVELOPMENT

5.3.1 POST-CONVERSION LEARNED CORRECTIONS TO OLD LEGENDS

It is a perennial concern among field folklorists that versions of a narrative which they have collected from Region A, after being published and made generally accessible, will influence formerly indigenous versions of the same basic narrative as told in Region B. Such a process would create a possibility that the folklorist could subsequently collect versions of the narrative from Region B which they themselves would have unwittingly caused to be 'unnaturally' influenced by the published versions from Region A.[86]

Likewise, it is possible that learned corrections to the Skjǫldung legends might have spread throughout literate Scandinavian circles, leaving us unable to distinguish between what belonged, respectively, to the 'original' legends and to the 'corrected' legends, owing to the simple truth that our surviving sources are all written ones dating from a period after the introduction of Christian learning to Scandinavia. The very fact that sources like the *Chronicon Lethrense* were the earliest written works suggests that their composers, rather than entirely synthesising new legends themselves, might have been using the fruits of Christian learning to 'correct' versions of historical legends they already knew.

We can be sure that in some cases this very process did take place. The association of Friðfróði with the period surrounding the birth of Christ must be such an example.[87] This association is made in *Upphaf allra frásagna* (itself perhaps derived from *Skjǫldunga saga*),[88] Snorri's Edda,[89] *Gesta Danorum*,[90] Arngrímur Jónsson's

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mention of Roskilde is in an eleventh-century skaldic verse as *Hróiskilda*, suggesting derivation from a name **Hróirr* rather than *Hróarr*; Olrik, *Legends*, p. 295. Similar attested forms like *Hrói* would correspond with forms such as *Roe*, though the relationship of such forms with *Hróarr* is unclear; *NIDN*, I, col. 585-86, 1293; II, 472 (*sv* 'Hrói').

[85]*Brevis historia*, p. 97; *Works of Sven Aggesen*, pp. 49, 106 n. 13.

[86]Cautionary tales of such instances circulate among contemporary folklorists virtually as modern academic legends in their own right. Doubtless some folklorist will eventually collect them and publish an analysis, thereby continuing the process.

[87]See §5.2.3.

[88]*Upphaf allra frásagna*, in *Danakonunga sǫgur*, ed. by Bjarni Guðnason, Íslenzk fornrit, 35 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1982), pp. 39-40.

[89]*Snorra Edda*, p. 135; *SnEdHafn*, I, 374.

[90]*Gesta Danorum*, pp. 141-42 (Book Five).

epitome of *Skjǫldunga saga*,[91] and an Icelandic chronological note from 1137.[92] This last may hint that Sæmundr prestr (inn fróði) was the originator of the idea; if the note's self-dating is accepted, then it was written a mere four years after Sæmundr's death. It should be noted that Sæmundr had studied in *Frakkland* ('Frank-land', perhaps designating the Rhine valley rather than France proper) during the late eleventh century where he would have had every opportunity to encounter the mainstream scholarship of Christian Europe.[93] As noted previously, Sæmundr is also credited with drawing up a tally of Skjǫldung rulers.[94]

We can be sure that an association between Friðfróði (whatever this figure's origins) and the birth of Christ is a learned, post-conversion 'correction' to whatever native Scandinavian concepts of pre-history may have existed earlier.[95] Whether or not this idea originated with Sæmundr, it had become a commonplace within learned Scandinavian scholarship by the late-twelfth and early-thirteenth centuries, the period in which *Skjǫldunga saga*, *Gesta Danorum*, and Snorri's *Edda* seem to have been composed.[96] From this example it is also clear that modifications to Scandinavian legendary history based on non-native sources were taking place before the composition of the Danish legendary chronicles.

Such modifications would have become more likely as learned, literary sources from Christian Europe became more widely available in Denmark—and Iceland—from the twelfth century onwards.[97] Their impact is clearly visible in the 'learned pre-history' of Snorri's works, where the explanation of Scandinavia's early history draws on a blend of Anglo-Saxon, classical, and biblical traditions which is synthesised with knowledge of Scandinavian myth and legend.[98] Similar elements had already appeared in Ari

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[91]AJ, I, 335; *DsAl*, pp. 5-6 (Chapter 3).

[92]The relevant portion of the Icelandic chronological note reads: '[A]ugustus keisare Fridadi ad fyrer setnïng Gudz um allann heïm þä er christur var borinn. Enn vier hyggium ad ï þann tïd væri Fridfrödi konungur ä Danm(ork)u Enn Fiǫlner ï Svïþiödu sem Sæmundar prestur ætladi'; Stefán Karlsson, 'Fródleiksgreinar', pp. 332-36, 341-47.

[93]I am grateful to Peter Foote for clarification on Sæmundr and *Frakkland*, on which see Peter Foote, 'Aachen, Lund, Hólar', in Peter Foote, *Aurvandilstá: Norse Studies*, ed. by Michael Barnes, Hans Bekker-Nielsen, and Gerd Wolfgang Weber, Viking Collection, 2 (Odense: Odense University Press, 1984), pp. 100-20 (pp. 114-18, 120); Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Sagnaritun*, p. 8; Halldór Hermansson, *Sæmund*, pp. 33-35.

[94]See discussion at the beginning of Chapter 4 in this study and Halldór Hermannsson, *Sæmund*, p. 41; Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Sagnaritun*, pp. 12-16. Einar Óláfur Sveinsson also suggested that *Skjǫldunga saga* was originally composed by an author connected with the Oddaverjar. There are various medieval Icelandic genealogies concerning the Skjǫldungar; see 'Skrá um Ættartölu', pp. 501-06; *Flateyjarbók*, I, 22-29.

[95]In *Brevis Historia*, *Grottasǫngr*, and *Vellekla*, Fróði is associated only with peace and prosperity, and not with the birth of Christ or reign of Augustus; Skovgaard-Petersen, 'Saxo, Historian', p. 64-65.

[96]Interestingly, in *Heimskringla* Snorri draws a link not between the the reign of Friðfróði and the birth of Christ—as he did in his *Edda*—but does link the reigns of Friðfróði and Freyr (in Sweden); *Heimskringla*, I (1941), 25 (Chapter 11); *Snorra Edda*, p. 135; *SnEdHafn*, I, 374.

[97]On external currents in eleventh- and twelfth-century Icelandic scholarship, see G. Turville-Petre, *Origins of Icelandic Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953), pp. 70-212, and de Vries, *Literaturgeschichte*, I, 322-59; Peter Foote, 'Observations', pp. 72-77. On Scandinavianization of wonder-tales, see Halldór Hermansson, *Sæmund*, pp. 45-47, 51-52.

[98]See generally Andreas Heusler, *Die gelehrte Urgeschichte im altisländischen Schrifttum*, Abhandlungen der Königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften Philos.-hist. Klasse, 1908.3

Þorgilsson's *Íslendingabók*, where Njǫrðr, at the head of the Yngling dynasty, was called *Tyrkjakonungr*, which in medieval parlance implies a Trojan origin.[99] Saxo Grammaticus seems to have utilised a wide range of classical, biblical, and contemporary European models in order to place Danish history on a pan-European footing.[100] As noted in §5.1.1 and §5.2.3, the history of the development of royal genealogies in Anglo-Saxon England shows that an interest in the same kind of synthesis must have been at work there; medieval Scandinavian royal genealogies may have been composed with similar goals.[101] *Widsið* collected Germanic legend together with classical and biblical learning, and *Beowulf* may have been similarly influenced.

The Skjǫldung legends may well contain historical elements, and their picture of violent aristocratic competition may fit broadly what is known of the LGIA (§3.3.4). Nevertheless, it is clear that their narratives should by no means be treated as historical documents or as keys to pre-Viking Scandinavian history. The search for a 'historical Hrólfr kraki' can be no more conclusive than similar attempts with figures such as Robin Hood or King Arthur.[102]

5.3.2 LATER MEDIEVAL LEARNED CORRECTIONS TO OLD LEGENDS

It is clear that Scandinavian interest in 'correcting' older legends continued into the later medieval period. The Swedish *Vetus chronicon Sveciæ prosaicum* (or *Prosaiska krönikan*) was completed in the mid-fifteenth century,[103] and claims to have been compiled from various *gambla foreldrna Krönokar* concerning the history of the people who were originally called *gethe*, later *götha* or *gotha*, and finally *swenske*; it clearly equates the Getae, Götar, Goths, and Swedes much as Leake discussed.[104] It also includes a list of Swedish kings which seems closely related to those appearing in the *Historia Norvegiae*, but makes some noteworthy 'corrections' of its own:

> Domaldrs son heth attila han vart konung j Swericæ och wan danmark oc tysktland och thogh skath aff dænom sidan k: haldan hans frende var dræpin i danmark och fik them sidhan en Rakke till konungh och epthr rakke k: sætte han dænom læes jätte dreng till konungh han heth k. snyo

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(Berlin: Reimer, 1908). Also Anthony Faulkes, 'Descent from the Gods', *Medieval Scandinavia*, 2 (1978-79), 92-125 (pp. 110-24).

[99] *Íslendingabók*, p. 27.

[100] Skovgaard-Petersen, 'Saxo, Historian', 70-71, 74-77.

[101] Faulkes, 'Descent', pp. 95-106.

[102] Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*, the extremely popular and influential if not overly accurate history of the British Isles, was written *c*. 1136, several decades before the earliest surviving written sources on the Skǫldung cycle. It was probably known to Saxo; Lukman, 'Galfred', pp. 593-607.

[103] *Vetus chronicon Sveciæ prosaicum*, in *Scriptores rerum Svecicarum ex schedis praecipue nordinianis, collectos dispositos ac emendatos*, ed. by Ericus Michael Fant and others, 3 vols (Uppsala: Zeipel et Palmblad; Palmblad; Berling, 1818-76), I.1, ed. by Ericus Michael Fant (Zeipel et Palmblad, 1818), pp. 239-51.

[104] *Vetus chronicon*, I.1, 240; Leake, pp. 22-23, 101.

> værre konungh finghe dænir a aldrigh man finder i manghom androm krönikiom aff mange stora gerninghæ som thenne samma attila k: giorde i thytzland walland och flere landh attila doo i wpsale gantz gamall
>
> Diguer attilæ son doo i wpsale hans son dagr varth sidhan konungh.[105]

Based on *Historia Norvegiae*, Diguer would be expected to follow Domaldr—to complicate matters *Vetus chronicon* has an *Adhel*, *Oktar*'s son, in the expected place for Athisl.[106] Moreover, there is a medieval Swedish version of the *Chronicon Lethrense* which seems to have served as an appendix for the *Vetus chronicon* and was probably translated from a Latin original.[107] It provides the name *Attilia* in place of the *Chronicon Lethrense*'s *Athisl*. The *Vetus chronicon* and its appendix both include the stories about Attila/Attilia's appointments of Rakke and Snyo as Danish kings, a role which certainly belongs to the *Chronicon Lethrense'*s Athisl.[108] Thus, the *Vetus chronicon*'s compiler can only somehow have conflated the figure of Aðils/Athisl with the name and deeds of Attila the Hun.[109]

5.3.3 GERMANIC LEGEND IN FRANCIA & ANGLO SAXON ENGLAND

Traditionally, modern scholarship has considered Germanic heroic poetry to have been preserved in orally transmitted songs composed shortly after the events thought to stand behind them; such songs might have been passed relatively freely from one Germanic tribe to another (linguistic barriers of varying strengths notwithstanding), contributing to a common body of Germanic legend. Such a view is in many ways an outgrowth of the pan-Germanic school and found vigorous exposition in the works of Heusler.[110] As Frank has pointed out, however, all the information concerning Germanic 'oral literature' in classical and late antique sources indicates nothing more than that 'eulogistic poetry was widely known and practised' amongst the Germanic-speaking peoples.[111] Frank went on

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[105] *Vetus chronicon*, I.1, 243.

[106] *Historia Norvegiæ*, pp. 98-101; *Vetus chronicon*, I.1, 243. Compare the *Vetus chronicon'*s Oktar (= Óttarr of *Ynglingatal*) with Jordanes's Hunnish Octar, whom Lukman suggested stood behind Óttarr/Ohthere. The author of the *Vetus chronicon* certainly used Jordanes as a source (naming him *Ardan*); *Vetus chronicon*, I.1, 240.

[107] *Vetus chronicon*, I.1, 247-50. Lukman first noted this late Swedish version of the *Chronicon Lethrense*, which is discussed further by Toldberg; Lukman, *Skjoldunge*, pp, 12, 39, 172-73 n. 3 to p. 12; Helge Toldberg, 'Stammer Lejrekrøniken fra Jakob Erlandsøns: Valdemarernes eller Knud den stores tid?', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 79 (1964) 195-240 (p. 204-08); Hemmingsen, pp. 394-409. Snyo (Snio in *Gesta Danorum*, pp. 235-38) is often equated with Snær, a figure found in some unusual origin-legends in *Hversu Nóregr byggðisk*, in *Flateyjarbók*, ed. by Sigurður Nordal and others, 4 vols (Akranes: Flateyjarútgáfan, 1944-45), I (1944), 22-25; and *Orkneyinga saga*, in *Orkneyinga saga*, ed. by Finnbogi Guðmundsson, Íslensk fornrit, 34 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1965), pp. 1-300 (p. 3). Hemmingsen, however, suggested a link between Snyo and the Byzantine emperor Zeno; Hemmingsen, pp. 390-94, 449-53.

[108] *Vetus chronicon*, I.1, 243, 248-50; *Chronicon Lethrense*, pp. 48-51.

[109] Ironically, Fant cautioned that one should not confuse the *Vetus chronicon*'s *Attilia* with Attila the Hun; *Vetus chronicon*, I.1, 248 n. 1.

[110] See, for example, Heusler, *Lied und Epos*.

[111] Frank, 'Legend', pp. 90-91.

to argue that it is anachronistic to assign an awareness of the concept 'Germanic' to the early Anglo-Saxons before perhaps at least 800. Growth of interest in information about the wider 'Germanic' world in Anglo-Saxon England, she suggested, may have been linked to developments in Carolingian France where the establishment of Charlemagne's 'multi-cultural empire', in which Germanic-speaking groups had a strong presence, led to renewed interest in the legends of these various peoples, even the legends of peoples who had almost ceased to exist, such as the Goths.[112]

The statement of Charlemagne's biographer, Einhard, that the Frankish emperor commissioned the collection of *barbara et antiquissima carmina* concerning *veterum regum actus et bella* and also initiated a Frankish grammar, is well known.[113] Charlemagne also had a statue of Theodoric the Great moved from what had been the Ostrogothic king's seat in Ravenna to his own capital at Aachen. Such acts imply Charlemagne's personal interest in such matters. While Charlemagne did pursue an aggressive policy of conquest and Christianization against his neighbours, it should be noted that most of the 'old kings' who provided models for the heroes of Germanic legend would have been Christian themselves (if probably of Arian persuasion). There would be no dichotomy in enjoying tales of the Christian Goths' deeds whilst doing one's best to eradicate the heathen Saxons. During the early 790s, whilst engaged in the Saxon Wars, Charlemagne also conducted extensive campaigns against the pagan Avars. A nomadic steppe people who had established an empire in Pannonia around 560, the Avars were regarded as akin to the Huns, and this identification may have contributed to a renewed interest in the exploits of 'old kings' against the Huns.[114]

It is worth re-emphasising that 'Germanic legend' in this sense earns its label 'Germanic' more through accident than design. Such macro-ethnic classifications were not necessarily recognised by the peoples whom modern scholarship labels 'Germanic'. Most earlier authors preferred to consider East Germanic peoples like the Goths and Vandals as 'Scythians', despite Tacitus' description of the Gotones and Vandilii as 'Germanic'.[115] Conversely, despite the possibilities for cultural influence from the Goths whom they absorbed, by modern standards the Huns would not be considered Germanic. Yet within Germanic legend the Huns are portrayed no differently from the tribes identified by modern scholarship as 'Germanic', and in many contexts it is a figure

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[112]Frank, 'Legend', pp. 90-94, 104. Michael Hunter has argued that the Anglo-Saxons view of the past was one 'in which many traditions were variously confused' and that to perceive a conscious preference among the Anglo-Saxons for appeal to either the Germanic or Roman past is anachronistic (though he noted that Offa might have appealed to Germanic antiquity as a source of legitimisation in response to Charlemagne's Roman pretensions); Michael Hunter, 'Germanic and Roman Antiquity and the Sense of the Past in Anglo-Saxon England, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3 (1974), 29-50 (pp.48-49).

[113]Einhard, p. 33 (Chapter 29). See further Friedrich von der Leyen, *Das Heldenliederbuch Karls des Grossen: Bestand, Gehalt, Wirkung* (Munich: Beck, 1954).

[114]Pritsak, p. 37.

[115]Wolfram, *Roman*, p. 5.

modelled on the historical Attila who emerges as an ideal 'Germanic' king.[116] Moreover, the Anglo-Saxons not uncommonly handled classical and biblical material within a framework provided by native poetic forms. If most of the material in the Germanic legendary corpus concerns events among Germanic-speaking peoples, that may be because there simply happened to be a large number of Germanic-speaking peoples in Europe, and not because of any special Germanic cultural continuum.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that it was probably easier for cultural artefacts to move between peoples who spoke similar languages; the runic system, for example, seems to have spread fairly widely through the Germanic-speaking world—eventually—and there is little evidence that the runic system had much impact outside that cultural sphere. Likewise, barring active ignorance, it would have been difficult for a learned or well-travelled person in Carolingian Europe to have failed to notice the basic relationship between the various Germanic dialects and languages. Paulus Diaconus (writing *c*. 790) seems to have understood the Langobards, Bavarians, and Saxons as essentially sharing a common language.[117] Similarly, a roughly contemporaneous Carolingian text groups the speech of the Franks, Langobards, and English together under the heading *theodisca lingua*. This grouping might simply distinguish vernacular speech from Latin, without further qualifications, though a mid-ninth century Frankish text uses the term *gens teudisca* more clearly to refer collectively to all Germanic-speaking peoples.[118] This term reflects a markedly different situation from that which had existed only a century or so before. In keeping with the traditions of classical ethnography, Isidore had made no connection between the Goths and Franks, while Fredegar's Frankish history saw Theodoric the Great as more Macedonian than Goth, and the early-ninth-century *Liber historiae Francorum* provided the Franks themselves with a classically inspired Trojan pedigree. In contrast, Frechulf of Lisieux (*c*. 830) provided the Franks with a Scandinavian ancestry, presumably using as a model that of the Goths in Jordanes's *Getica*.[119] The emergence of a seemingly 'pan-Germanic' perspective under the Carolingians could itself owe something to classical Roman influence on Frankish thought, since the ethnographic classification of peoples as 'Germanic' is itself a concept Roman in origin.[120]

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[116]In some senses, Attila was a 'Germanic' king, as (besides being best known by a Germanic name) he exercised lordship over various Gothic groups; see Heather, *Goths*, pp. 109-29.

[117]*Historia Langobardorum*, p. 81 (Book 1, Chapter 27).

[118]These and other references to apparently 'pan-Germanic' usages from this period are collected in *Der Volksname Deutsch*, ed. by Hans Eggers, Wege der Forschung, 156 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1970), pp. 406-07.

[119]See discussion and references in Frank, 'Legend', pp. 93-94; Frechulf of Lisieux, *Freculphi episcopi Lexoviensis chronicon tomi duo*, in *Gregorii IV, Sergii II, pontificum Romanorum, Jonaem Freculphi, Frotharii, Aurelianensis, Lexoviensis et Tullensis episcoporum, Opera Omnia*, ed. by J.-P. Migne, Patrologiæ cursus completus: Series Secunda, 106 (Paris: Migne, 1851), col. 915-1258 (col. 967). Frechulf here used the term *theotisc* almost in the sense of 'Germanic'.

[120]Reuter, who downplayed the use of terms suggestive of a early 'pan-Germanic' consciousness, suggests that terms like *theotisc* were uncommon in vernacular usage, the earliest direct example being

It is difficult to say whether the Anglo-Saxons themselves may have come to perceive themselves as belonging to a wider 'Germanic' cultural sphere. Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* in some senses projects an idea of unity among the Germanic-speaking peoples of Britain, though Bede was writing from a clerical perspective, and it might have been easier, in a politically fragmented society, for a churchman than a king to hold such a view. Even so, it might be that the eighth-century English did have some perception of a common identity, rooted in their shared language. Patrick Wormald has stressed the importance of the church itself in providing a sense of cultural unity in England from at least the eighth century, and on archaeological grounds John Hines has argued that 'the conditions for the emergence of a conscious common English identity' existed as early as the sixth century. English cultural unification, Hines suggested, would have almost necessarily preceded the political unification which took place during the tenth century in the wake of the Viking invasions.[121] As for the Germanic world beyond Britain, as early as the eighth century English churchmen could advocate missions to the Old Saxons based on a sense of shared origins. Bede writes of this common English-Old Saxon heritage as a factor inspiring missionary work, and Boniface claimed that the Old Saxons themselves characterised their relationship with the English in the phrase, 'De uno sanguine et de uno osse sumus'.[122]

In any event, this apparent interest in Germanic legend amongst the Carolingians may well have been transmitted to the Anglo-Saxons, as Anglo-Saxon clerics and scholars were deeply involved in the 'Carolingian renaissance'.[123] Alcuin's irate reference to clerical enjoyment of tales of Hinieldus dates from this period, after all.[124] Alcuin may not have been interested in old legends, but many of his contemporaries in the English church clearly were. It seems likely that a variety of relevant texts—*Getica*, *Historia Langobardorum*, even Tacitus' *Germania* were known to the ninth-century Franks and could have been accessible to the Anglo-Saxons.[125] Copies of *Historia Langobardorum* are known to have existed in Anglo-Saxon England,[126] and Alcuin himself wrote to his Frankish colleague Angilbertus requesting a copy of Jordanes's histories.[127] Although there is in fact no direct evidence demonstrating that *Getica* was

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from *c*. 1000, Reuter, *Germany*, p. 52. Whatever 'pan-Germanic' consciousness may have existed in the Carolingian period probably had the greatest importance among the élite and the intelligentsia, whose conceptions may have stemmed from Roman models.

[121]Patrick Wormald, 'Bede, Bretwaldas and the Origins of Gens Anglorum', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J.M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. by Patrick Wormald with Donald Bullough and Roger Collins (Blackwell: Oxford, 1983), pp. 99-129 (p. 125); Hines, 'Cultural', p. 83-84.

[122]*HE*, p. 296 (Book 5, Chapter 9); *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius and Lullus*, ed. Michael Tangl, MGH: Epistolae selectae, 1 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1916), pp. 74-75 (Letter 46).

[123]Dronke suggested the Weland story may have reached England in this way in the eighth century, at which time the evidence of Gotland picture stones suggests it was also known in a Scandinavian context. The narrative itself seems to have a continental provenance, possibly ultimately Gothic; *Poetic Edda*, Dronke, II, 269-72, 280.

[124]Alcuin, *Alcuini Epistolae*, p. 183 (Letter 124).

[125]Frank, 'Legend', pp. 93, 104. See §4.2.3.

[126]Gneuss, p. 32.

[127]Alcuin, *Alcuini Epistolae*, p. 365 (Letter 221); J.D.A Ogilvy, *Books known to the English, 597-1066*, Publications (Mediaeval Academy of America), 76 (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1967), p. 185.

known widely in Britain, certain parallels between *Getica*'s Amal genealogy and *Widsið* may strengthen the possibility that it was. If Heather was correct in his suggestion that there was no historical Gothic king Ostrogotha and that this figure was Jordanes's invention, it seems likely that *Widsið*'s Eastgota could not have sprung from oral traditions, but rather betrays a familiarity with material drawn from *Getica*.[128] A mixed oral-literary environment might be envisioned for the transmission of such material.

5.3.4 LEARNED INFLUENCE ON PRE-LITERATE SCANDINAVIAN HISTORICAL LEGEND?

Even a fairly sceptical, if brief, analysis suggests that elements of the Skjǫldung cycle did enjoy some popularity in the Viking Age. It is not clear what shape these legends then took, if they had any cohesion as a cycle at that time, but they may have stemmed from diverse sources. They seem to have undergone considerable development during the period from the eighth to the eleventh century. Such a view is broadly similar to that accepted by Olrik and itself has important implications for understanding Viking-Age Scandinavian ideology. However, the possibility that non-Scandinavian sources could have affected surviving versions of the Skjǫldung cycle has not been entirely ruled out, and such a possibility offers further insights into the resolution of ideological contrasts which marked Scandinavia's entry into the European cultural mainstream during the Viking Age.

It is clear that medieval Scandinavian authors were eager to align conceptions of Scandinavian history with the classical and biblical traditions endorsed by the remainder of Christian Europe. Might their pre-literate, even pre-Christian, predecessors have had similar interests? It might be argued that heathen Scandinavians would not have valued ties to such traditions, particularly those associated with Roman Christianity. Such an argument is weakened, however, by the evident willingness of Scandinavian culture to adopt and adapt external cultural artefacts, both tangible and (in all likelihood) intangible, from the earliest periods. The Viking Age must have been a period particularly marked by such processes, resulting as it did in the emergence of the Scandinavian nations as Christian kingdoms on the European model. It is scarcely conceivable that such events could transpire without first a period of experimentation and some degree of acceptance for mainstream European cultural artefacts and ideology (§5.5.5).

While the Vǫlsung cycle acknowledges its continental origins, however Scandinavianized it became (§5.5.6), the Skjǫldung cycle gives the appearance of being

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[128]I am grateful to Peter Heather, who also affirmed that there is strong evidence indicating *Getica* was well-known on the continent from Charlemagne's time, for the substance of this argument; Peter Heather, '*Getica*', e-mail to Carl Edlund Anderson [Online], Available e-mail: cea20@cus.cam.ac.uk (19 March 1999); Peter J. Heather, 'Cassiodorus and the Rise of the Amals: Genealogy and the Goths under Hun Domination', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 79 (1989), 103-28 (pp. 106, 108 n. 18, 110, 127-28); *Getica*, pp. 76-78, 81, 83; *Widsið*, pp. 152-53 (ll. 109-14). Wolfram, however, accepted Ostrogotha as historical; Wolfram, *Goths*, p. 24.

wholly native. It was Olrik's contention that the Skjǫldung legends had an autochthonous origin in events of pre-Viking Denmark, that the versions reflected in *Beowulf* and *Widsið* represented an early and short-lived off-shoot, and that Viking-Age Scandinavian communities in the British Isles played a significant role in the legends' development, especially in developing the strands which Olrik classified as characteristically West Scandinavian.[129] His analysis was founded on the fact that the surviving documents all centre the Skjǫldung legends on Denmark. Since Olrik's time, however, it has been made clear that it was at least possible for information concerning Dacia to become attributed to Denmark; the *Chronicon Lethrense* explicitly equates the two names, and its legend of Danish migration from Sweden probably owes its origin ultimately to Jordanes, through intermediaries like Dudo or William of Jumièges, if not directly.[130] This misidentification depends on access to traditions stemming from classical and medieval ethnography; hence Hemmingsen's identification of twelfth-century Denmark as an ideal environment for the Dacia-Dania confusion to influence the growth of historical legend. As noted, however, while processes such as those Hemmingsen suggested may have been at work in twelfth-century Denmark, his analysis does not account for evidence pertaining to the historical legends' development in contemporary Iceland, let alone in the Anglo-Scandinavian world of previous centuries.

Certainly it was possible for Christian scholars in Viking-Age Francia and England to make the Dacia-Dania identification, even if it was not a universal. Since the Dacia-Dania confusion is a manifestly literate phenomenon, it might be argued that it could not have affected the views of illiterate, heathen Scandinavians of the Viking Age or earlier. However, the strong evidence provided by the extant mythological poetry suggests that presumably illiterate Scandinavians had the kind of access to information concerning Christian religion which would otherwise normally be attributed to literacy (§3.4.6). There is no reason to suppose that Scandinavians in the late heathen period could not acquire such information orally from clergy or laymen well-versed in such matters. Moreover, it should probably be assumed that the Scandinavians first became familiar with legendary material such as the Vǫlsung cycle, whether they did so in the tenth century or much earlier, in an oral environment. Frank pointed out:

> People with a professional interest in the past—historians, scholar-clerics, kings and vernacular poets—tend to talk to each other. A degree of literacy at some level is all that is needed to ensure a measure of influence for the written word.[131]

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[129]Olrik, *Legends*, 484-507.
[130]See §4.2.3.
[131]Frank, 'Legend', pp. 93-94.

The evidence suggests that pre-conversion, illiterate, Scandinavians did take an interest in foreign cultural elements, which could be reinterpreted within a Scandinavian context.[132] Conversely, the incorporation of apparently Scandinavian elements within material such as the West Saxon regnal lists, *Widsið*, and *Beowulf* suggests that Christian scholars were acquiring and making use of Scandinavian traditions. It is, therefore, possible that Scandinavians exchanging information about the past with Christian scholars might have acquired information in narrative form concerning Dacia, yet have been under the impression (as may have been those providing the information) that it concerned Denmark.[133] It must be stressed that there seems no way to determine whether such a process actually took place, but to assume that it did not is as dangerous as stating that it did.

Olrik was surely correct in suggesting that the extant Skjǫldung legends had evolved considerably in the course of the Viking Age. It is possible that the significance he placed on Britain's role in the development of the cycle could be broadened. Rather than early narrative dead-ends, the versions of the legends in *Widsið* and *Beowulf* might be viewed equally well as tangential branches from a rich legendary matrix in Scandinavian Britain. Indeed, it seems possible that Britain itself might be viewed as in some senses the cycle's 'home' since, much as Bugge suggested, it was there that learned continental traditions might have interacted most easily with oral Scandinavian traditions.[134] It may not be possible to prove whether or not apparent parallels between elements of the Skjǫldung legends and of Dacian, Gothic, or Langobardic materials are the results of such a process. Nevertheless, that heathen Scandinavians with an interest in the past, with an interest in foreign cultural elements, and with an interest in setting their past within a wider European context with which they were becoming familiar could have acquired these external historical legendary elements in such a way remains a plausible possibility.

This possibility is important for our understanding of the Skjǫldung cycle's significance, even while a further investigation of the issues remains wanting. Such an understanding underscores the dangers accompanying the use of historical legends as sources for Scandinavian pre-history. It also provides a new approach for exploring changes in Scandinavian ideology during the Viking Age. The Skjǫldung cycle may indeed be, in certain senses, an early 'national myth', even as nineteenth-century Romanticists identified it. Yet rather than a simple derivation from an imaginary, pre-Viking past, the cycle's Viking-Age development may have reflected the interests of Scandinavians coming to terms not so much with the existence of a wider, more cosmopolitan world and its radically different ideology—for it is clear that Scandinavia

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[132]Consider the gold bracteates, and development of Style I. This study's space restrictions prevent discussion of these issues, but see §2.5.4.

[133] Moreover, the fact that works like *Getica* and *Historia Langobardorum* traced the descent of their respective peoples from Scandinavia may have reinforced a tendency to assign information related to those works to a Scandinavian past.

[134]Another possible location for such activity would be Normandy, though it is seldom considered, perhaps partly because little Scandinavian influence is detected in later Norman literature. Normandy's possible role as a point of contact betwen heathen Scandinavian culture and Christian European culture deserves further consideration, but space restrictions preclude it.

was never unaware of these elements—but rather their merger with that world and the final resolution of many ideological contrasts which had previously distinguished Scandinavia from Europe.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Scandinavian attitudes towards neighbouring groups and their ideologies seem to have depended on the amount of pressure felt from these groups at any given time—and whether or not particular Scandinavian groups felt they could gain from resisting such pressures. Archaeology reveals substantial Roman impact on Scandinavian material culture during the RIA, and there may have been a corresponding impact on less tangible cultural elements. As there seems to have been little direct Roman pressure on Scandinavia, however, we must be cautious in drawing parallels between Scandinavian and other Germanic societies. Given the minimal evidence for 'kingship' in pre-Viking Scandinavia (see Chapter 1), this study suggests an interpretation of Gudme and similar EGIA 'central places' as centres of cult and community around which a truly Scandinavian identity could coalesce (see Chapter 2). The EGIA saw reinterpretations of Roman cultural artefacts within a Scandinavian idiom that spread widely within Scandinavia and elsewhere in the Germanic world, which perhaps functioned as markers of an emergent Scandinavian identity. In contrast to the EGIA, the LGIA is marked by relatively poor finds in southern Scandinavia, perhaps indicating a time of unrest as struggles between power-seeking chieftains disrupted society. Groups in central and western Scandinavia may have used such an opportunity to shed their peripheral status and establish new centres (see Chapter 3). Such a process could explain why, if the East Anglians used cultural affiliation with Scandinavia to mark their independence from Christian Francia, their closest links may have been with Swedish Uppland.

Yet while Scandinavians themselves may have recognised a contrast between their ideology and that of Christian Francia, they need not have considered these ideologies inherently opposed. Scandinavians seem to have been aware of cultural trends in Christian European culture in the pre-Viking period. On the other hand, the appearance of combined political and ideological threats in the late eighth century may have spurred self-conscious opposition to Christian European culture among Scandinavians, even as they continued to draw upon it for inspiration. The powerful model of Christian lordship may have encouraged the Scandinavian élite to adopt and adapt Christian European cultural elements, much as their EGIA ancestors had done with Roman cultural elements. Although further study is needed, such a process could have been at work in the formation of the Scylding-Skjǫldung cycle. These legends might represent, therefore, not source material for historical glimpses of early northern Europe but rather Scandinavian attempts at self-definition in relation to the burgeoning and powerful cultures of Christian Europe during the Viking Age (see Chapters 4 & 5).

Scandinavia's eventual adoption of Christianity and Christian lordship in the course of the Viking Age largely resolved the ideological contrasts that had existed both within Scandinavian society and between Scandinavia and Christian Europe. Scandinavians caught up in this process of resolution sought to maintain their distinctive identity while functioning effectively in an increasingly globalised world—a challenge which remains familiar for many nations and societies today.

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[1] In OE names, *æ* is alphabetized as *ae*. In non-Scandinavian names, *ä* is alphabetised with *a*, and *ö* is alphabetised with *o*. In Finnish names, *aa* precedes *ab*.

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