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Author(s): Henry H. Howorth

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## THE EARLY HISTORY OF SWEDEN.

BY HENRY H. HOWORTH, F.S.A.

IN the previous papers which I have had the honour of reading before the Royal Historical Society, I have tried to elucidate the first adventures of the Norse pirates in the west, as related in the contemporary Frank and Irish annals, and have thus laid the foundation for an examination of the earlier story as contained in the Sagas. This is a singularly difficult field of inquiry, and one which has baffled many explorers. I can only hope to throw a few more rays of light into a very dark and perplexed subject. The Sagas are divided by Mr. Laing into two classes, historical (including biographical) and fabulous. Of the former, the most important were the Sagas, included in the works of Saxo Grammaticus, and Snorro the son of Sturle—two works of world-wide repute, and which have been (especially the former) a riddle and puzzle to most inquirers. Before we grapple with the problem before us, we must first dissect these two famous compilations.

The work of Saxo Grammaticus was written by Saxo, called the Grammmarian, on account of his learning. He flourished during the reigns of Valdemar the Great, and his son Knut the 6th (1157-1202). He was provost of Roskilde, and secretary to Absalon, archbishop of Lund. The date of his birth and the particular circumstances of his life are uncertain; but he died in 1204, having spent twenty years in the composition of his history of Denmark from the earliest ages to his own. (Scandinavia, ancient and modern, by Crichton and Wheaton, 163, note.) His famous work has had a singular fate. Throughout the middle ages, and before the days of criticism, it was accepted

as perfectly genuine history, and treated as an authority of almost indisputable value; and we find the mediæval historians of Denmark, one after another, copying its list and order of Kings, and condensing or abstracting its narrative without hesitation, nor did its authority cease with the introduction of criticism into the domain of History. Such famous and learned critics of northern antiquities as Torfæus and Suhm followed Saxo's lead as blindly; and constructed their extraordinary chronologies and narratives from his account. Later, the German method of treating history was applied to Saxo, and his authority speedily gave way. It needs but a very cursory glance at his pages to see how purely artificial the whole arrangement, how full of incongruities and contradictions and how impossible the sequence of events are, and if we pass from an internal criticism to an external one, and try and realize the poverty of the authorities Saxo had before him when he sat down to write in the latter part of the twelfth century, we shall not cease to wonder that amidst so much learning and research his narrative should have held its own so long.

When criticism was duly applied to it, a natural consequence followed. The story which had received everybody's assent was pronounced to be utterly worthless, to be a mere concoction of the old grammarian's, to have no value at all save in its later chapters, where it was more or less contemporary, and a profound scepticism replaced a wide-spread credulity, the pendulum swinging to the opposite extreme.

The latter view seems as erroneous as the former one. Saxo's narrative is apparently not a dishonest one, but is transparently artificial and inconsequent. When he sat down to write at the end of the twelfth century, Christianity had conquered Scandinavia, and the Scalds and pagan poets were pretty nearly, if not entirely, extinct there. Of a continuous history of Denmark there seems to have been none available to him, for the so-called Scioldung Saga, of which the Sogubrot is apparently a fragment, was probably not then composed (*vide infra*). There were available only such

works as Paulus Diaconus, Bede, Eginhardt, Dudo de St. Quentin, and Adam of Bremen, all of whom he used ; as well as some entries in the contemporary Frankish chronicles, a number of detached songs and poems relating to particular events, chiefly battles, and unconnected by any thread, and such portions of Jornandes, the Anglo-Saxon Sagas, etc., as in the eyes of the Provost of Roskilde might fairly claim to relate to his country. These were his materials, and his only materials. He had no regal lists apparently, for all those which are now extant, except the Langfedgatal, which he seems not to have seen, were palpably constructed after his researches, and compiled from his work. He had no scaffolding upon which to build his narrative. He had to construct one for himself, in the best way he could, and to piece together the various fragments before him, into a continuous patchwork. His was not a critical age, and we are not therefore surprised to find that his handiwork was exceedingly rude. A piece of the history of the Lombards by Paul the Deacon, and another taken from the Edda, are thrust in after narratives evidently relating to the ninth century, when Ireland had been more or less conquered by the Norsemen. Icelanders are introduced in the story a long time before the discovery of Iceland. Christianity is professed by Danish Kings long before it had reached the borders of Denmark. The events belonging to one Harald (Harald Blaatand) are transferred to another Harald who lived two or three centuries earlier, and the joints in the patchwork narrative are filled up by the introduction of plausible links. We can thus dissect more or less closely the method of Saxo's handiwork, and to some extent break up again and disintegrate what he has put together, and perhaps when a really critical edition of his work is forthcoming, a work which is sorely needed, we shall be able to detach from its contents the majority of the separate and substantive stories out of which it has been compounded. How bald his story must have been if he had relied on the purely Danish traditions which survived in Denmark, we may gather from

the contemporary and valuable narrative of Sueno Aggeson to which we shall refer presently. Meanwhile, there are two cardinal facts which force themselves upon our attention in Saxo's story. The first is that his chronology is altogether artificial, and the course of events, as he tells it, is utterly arbitrary; jumping from century to century, either backwards or forwards without any notice; separating events which succeeded one another closely, by long parentheses, involving perhaps centuries of time to compass, and bringing together other events which were as widely separated. The other important fact to remember is that our author was patriotic enough to lay under contribution, not only materials relating to Denmark, but to transfer to Denmark the history of other countries. To appropriate not only the traditions of the Anglo-Saxons, the Lombards and the common Scandinavian heritage of the Edda, but also the particular histories of Sweden and Norway, and that a good deal of what passes for Danish history in his pages is not Danish at all, but Swedish, and relates to the rulers of Upsala, and not to those of Lethra; topographical boundaries being as lightly skipped over by the patriotic old chronicler, whose home materials were so scanty, as chronological ones.

Let us now consider shortly the narrative of Snorro Sturleson. Snorro was born in the year 1178 at Huam, in the modern bailiwick of Dale, in Western Iceland. He belonged to the old royal stock of the north, and his father held the hereditary rank of a godar, *i.e.* of a priest and judge, as belonging to a family descended from one of the twelve godars or companions of Odin. Snorro was well-to-do and learned. He visited Norway more than once, was nominated as cup-bearer by Hakon, King of Norway, and after an adventurous and tempestuous life was murdered in September, 1241. He is best known as the author of the famous "Heimskringla." The word means "the world's circle," being the first prominent word of the manuscript that catches the eye, and which has been used by the northern antiquaries to designate the work itself.

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Snorro calls this his *magnum opus* the saga or story of the Kings of Norway, and it extends from the earliest times down to 1178, shortly before his own birth (Laing's "Heimskringla," i. 1 and 2). The copy of the work on which subsequent editions are chiefly based was written in 1230 by Snorro's nephew Sturla (id. 201). Snorro's work, therefore, is nearly contemporary with that of Saxo, having been written only a few years later.

While Saxo lived and wrote where the old traditions of the north had become very largely extinct, and been displaced by Christianity, and had to collect his materials here and there where he could; Snorro lived in the very arcana of Norse traditions and culture, where many scores of old sagas were preserved, where the Scalds still survived as a living element in the community, and where the old traditions had taken shelter when driven out of the Scandinavian peninsula by Christianity. Not only were his surroundings infinitely more favourable, but his materials were also more valuable. There is no reason to doubt that the earlier part of his history, the first saga which relates the history of the Inglings down to the time of "Rognvald Mountain High," was founded upon, and incorporates the famous Inglingatal, composed by Thiodolf-hin-Frode, or the Wise, the Scald of King Harald Fairhair, and that his first saga, therefore, dates as to its matter from the ninth century, and was composed somewhat earlier than the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, as we now have it. Besides this, Snorro no doubt had before him several of the famous biographical sagas, and especially the works of Are-hin-Frode, who was born in Iceland in 1067, and lived till 1148, and according to some till 1158, and whom he specially quotes as an authority.

The passage in which he enumerates the qualifications of Are-hin-Frode is singularly interesting as showing the means of information commanded by that old historian. He says "he was the son of Thorgils, the son of Gellis, and was the first man in this country (*i.e.* in Iceland) who wrote down in the Norse language narratives of events both old and new. In

the beginning of his book he wrote principally about the first settlements in Iceland, the laws and government, and next of the lagmen, and how long each had administered the law, and he reckoned the years at first, until the time when Christianity was introduced into Iceland, and afterwards reckoned from that to his own times. To this he added many other subjects, such as the lives and times of the Kings of Norway and Denmark, and also of England; beside accounts of great events which have taken place in this country (*i.e.* Iceland) also. His narratives are considered by many men of knowledge to be the most remarkable of all; because he was a man of good understanding, and so old that his birth was as far back as the year after Harald Sigurdson's fall. He wrote, as he himself says, the lives and times of the Kings of Norway, from the report of Odd Kollason, a grandson of Hall of Sidu. Odd again took his information from Thorgeir Afradskoll, who was an intelligent man, and so old that when Earl Hakon the Great was killed he was dwelling at Nidaros (*i.e.* Drontheim). Are went when three years old to live with Hall Thorarinson, with whom he lived fourteen years. Hall was a man of great knowledge and an excellent memory; and he could even remember being baptized, when he was three years old, by the priest Thangbrand, the year before Christianity was established in Iceland. . . . Hall had traded between the two countries, and had been in partnership in trading-concerns with King Olaf the Saint, by which his circumstances had been greatly improved, and he had become well acquainted with the kingdom of Norway. . . . Teit, a son of Bishop Isleif, was fostered in the house of Hall of Haukadal, and afterwards dwelt there himself. He taught Are the priest, and gave him information about many circumstances which Are afterwards wrote down. Are also got many a piece of information from Thurid, a daughter of the Godar, Snorro. She was wise and intelligent, and remembered her father Snorro, who was nearly thirty-five years of age when Christianity was introduced into Iceland, and died a year after King Olaf's fall, *i.e.* in 1030. So it is not wonderful

that Are the priest had good information about ancient events, both here and in Iceland, and abroad, being a man anxious for information, intelligent, and of excellent memory, and having besides learnt much from old intelligent persons" (Laing's "Heimskringla." Snorro's preface, 213—215). Of Are's works the Landnama bok, the Islandinga bok, and the Flateyjar Annal, are still extant. But he was not the only author of the eleventh century who wrote history in Iceland. Isleif, already named the first Bishop of Iceland, who died in 1080, is said to have written a history of Harald Fairhair and his successors, down to Magnus the Good, who died about 1047, compiled from ancient sagas, and his son, also a Bishop, is said to have collected and written down histories in the common tongue. Saemund-hin-Frode, who was born in 1056, and was a contemporary of Are, is supposed to have written the "Elder Edda," and to have commenced the Annals known as the "Annales Oddenses." Kolskegg, another contemporary of Are, and Brand, Bishop of Hólen in Iceland, who died in 1206, are also known to have compiled sagas. We thus see that when Snorro wrote his master work, he had abundant materials upon which to found it. It was from Iceland also that Saxo himself had to draw his chief information. "Nor is the industry of the Tylenses (*i.e.* the Icelanders), to be passed over in silence," he says, "who, from the sterility of their native soil, being deprived of every luxury of food, exercise a perpetual sobriety, and turn every moment of their lives to the cultivation of a knowledge of the affairs of other countries, and compensating their poverty by their ingenuity, consider it their pleasure to become acquainted with the transactions of other nations, and hold it to be not less honourable to record the virtues of others than to exhibit their own; and whose treasures in the records of historical transactions I have carefully consulted, and have composed no small portion of the present work according to their relations, not despising, as authorities, those whom I know to be so deeply imbued with a knowledge of antiquity." (*Op. cit.* 30—32).



The facts here mentioned leave us no other alternative than to rely on Snorro and the Icelanders in preference to Saxo. The latter in questions of chronology, the order of kings, etc., is absolutely worthless, and his narrative in these respects is purely artificial. When we have broken up his story into its initial fragments we may, no doubt, find some very valuable matter in them to fill up the gaps in our story; for, as Mr. Laing says, "he appears to have had access to many sagas, either in manuscript or in *vivâ voce* relation, which are not now extant" (id. 32). In this way we shall use him, but not attempt the futile and absurd task of reconciling his narrative with that of the Icelanders, or his arbitrary arrangement and dubious and artificial lists of kings with theirs. Having said this, we must guard ourselves against being supposed to hold the notion that the Icelandic narratives are themselves infallible. Not even contemporary annals written year by year are so, much less sagas handed down traditionally, and not written down till long after the events. Even though their narratives be protected by the artificial language in which they are framed, and by the fact that they embody a common tradition of a school of Scalds which can correct any individual errors.

When the sagas were written down in an orderly fashion, as in the "Heimskringla," etc., we have the further difficulty that the glosses and theories of their writers were incorporated with them, and thus the events of some heroes were transferred to others of the name. An example or two from Snorro's own pages will act as a warning in this respect. In speaking of Ivar Vidfame, Snorro says he subdued the whole of Sweden; he brought in subjection to himself all the Danish dominions, a great deal of Saxonland, all the East country, and a fifth part of England. Now, in regard to England, at all events, this is an anachronism. The phrase "the fifth part of England" means Northumbria in the sagas. Northumbria was not conquered nor ruled by a Norse king before the ninth century, and it is clear that the deeds of Ivar, the son of Ragner Lodbrog, who did

conquer Northumbria, have been transferred to his ancestor Ivar Vidfame. Again, Snorro identifies the Turgesius, or Thorgils, who is named in the Irish annals as having captured Dublin in the year 839, and who occupied us somewhat in the last paper, with Thorgils, the son of Harald Fairhair ("Heimskringla," i. 304). This again is a great anachronism; for Harald Fairhair, according to the best calculations, was not born until about the year 851, so that his son could not have taken Dublin in 839. There are several other anachronisms of this kind, which put us on our guard against trusting Snorro too implicitly. I must now say a few words about a fragment of a saga, known as the Sogubrot, which I shall quote largely presently, and which has been given much too high an authority by Geijer and other inquirers. Suhm, the Danish historian, deemed it a fragment of a lost Scioilding saga, in which the history of Denmark was told in a similar fashion to that of Norway in the "Heimskringla." Müller, in his *Saga Bibliothek*, long ago argued that this saga was written after the days of Saxo, and assigned it to the fourteenth century. In putting it at a late date he is followed by Dahlmann, the famous Danish historian ("Forschungen auf dem gebiete der Geschichte," i. 307). I believe myself it was actually composed by Snorro. It is singular that it contains precisely the same genealogy of Ivar Vidfame as the "Heimskringla;" and what is more curious is that while the latter makes Ivar Vidfame conquer a fifth part of England, thus confusing him with Ivar Beinlaus, the Sogubrot does precisely the same thing, and identifies him and his predecessor, Halfdane of Scania, with Halfdane and Ivar, who succeeded one another in Northumbria. It also makes a pointed reference to King Granmar, whose story is told in the "Heimskringla." It lastly has an almost identical phrase about Sigurd Ring having been succeeded by Ragnar Lodbrog. The first of these statements enclosing a notable anachronism points out the fragment as in fact being far from a contemporary document, and I believe it was written by Snorro himself as a companion to the "Heimskringla."

There is one other document which is looked upon with

especial veneration by Norse antiquaries as the *fons et origo* of their reasoning on the genealogies of the Northern Royal. This is the famous table called the Lanfedgatal. Because it terminates with Harold Fairhair it was treated by Langebek as a work of great antiquity, and it apparently was also so treated and used by Snorro. Yet when we come to examine it closely, we shall find little reason for considering it as of any high authority. It begins the genealogy with Noah and Japhet, showing that it was constructed after Christianity had been introduced into Iceland; it then passes on to Saturn and Jupiter, and then to Memnon and the Trojan war, showing it was also written after the Norsemen not only became Christians, but were also imbued with classical culture. The introduction of the Trojans is probably due, as Dahlmann says, to the author treating Thor as an eponymos; and it is curious that he names him thus: "Tror whom we call Thor." After Thor follow seventeen names, the greater portion of which are taken from the Anglo-Saxon genealogical tables, which is clearly shown when we reach the name of Odin, which is written thus "Voden whom we call Odin" (Dahlmann, *op. cit.* 357—359). All this shows conclusively that the table is not of older date than the tenth century, and more probably of the eleventh.

From these facts it may be gathered that those who lean implicitly on the chief props supplied by the Old Norse literature for the early history and genealogy of the North lean on very unsafe supports. The fact is, we must treat these genealogies and these continuous histories as compilations made up from isolated and detached traditions—epics in which some individual or some battle was described, and in which the links and the connections between the pieces have been supplied according to the ingenuity of the compilers; in which the arrangement and chronology are to a large extent arbitrary; and in which it has been a great temptation to transfer the deeds of one hero to another of the same name.

Under these circumstances what is a modern historian to do? In the first place he must take the contemporary

chronicles—Frank, English, and Irish—as his supreme guides, and not allow their statements to be perverted by the false or delusive testimony of the sagas, and where the two are at issue, sacrifice the latter without scruple, while in those cases where we have no contemporary and independent evidence then to construct as best we can our story from the glimmers of light that have reached us. I propose to take this course in a small corner of our great subject this evening.

I would first postulate two important factors. The Norsemen were an intensely feudal race. Their kings were also their priests, and the royal stock was also a sacred stock, far removed in the popular eyes from the commonalty. Descended from the sacred companions of Odin, claiming kin directly with the Gods themselves, there was in consequence an extraordinary loyalty and devotion towards them. This feeling of caste made it impossible for *novi homines*, those without blood or descent, to rule in the North. Such a thing was there unknown, and, consequently, when we meet with the mention of rulers and leaders in the chronicles, we may be sure they belonged to the royal stock.

Secondly, this royal stock in Scandinavia comprised at least two great branches. The Inglings, who ruled originally at Upsala in Sweden, and the Scioldungs, who similarly ruled at Lethra in Denmark. The theory which I have adopted for explaining the revolutions in the North at the very dawn of history is that there was a continuous feud between these two stocks for supremacy. I shall begin at the point where this feud first seems to have commenced, or perhaps only culminated, namely, with the overthrow of Ingiald the Ill-ruler by Ivar Vidfame, by which feud the family of the Inglings was thrust out of Sweden, and was succeeded there, for awhile at least, by that of the Scioldungs. The history of this event is told in the “*Heimskringla*,” on the authority of Thiodolf, who lived at the court of Harald Fairhair of Norway in the ninth century, and who was therefore a very respectable witness; but I would add that his testimony is corroborated by Sueno Aggeson, the contemporary of Saxo, who in naming Ingild, as he calls Ingiald, says that after his time for many years sons did not

succeed their fathers in the kingdom, but grandsons. This is precisely what took place, since Ingiald was succeeded by his grandson Ivar Vidfame, and Ivar Vidfame by his grandson Harald Hildetand. Sueno also says Ingild was succeeded by Olans, which is in accord with Snorro's statement that Ingiald's son Olaf, the Tree-feller, having fled to Norway, began a new line of sovereigns there, while his grandon Ivar succeeded to the crown of Sweden. It is also supported *pro tanto* by Saxo, for there can be small doubt that his Ingellus is the same person as the Ingiald of Snorro and the Ingild of Sueno. Like Snorro, he makes Ingiald the son of Frotho, and like Snorro, he makes him be succeeded by Olaf, whom he calls his son, while he adds that some old traditions make him his nephew (*Saxo*, by Müller, i. 318). He also speaks of Aasa, whom we shall mention presently, but makes her the sister instead of the daughter of Ingiald. The history of Ingiald's reign, it is no part of my present purpose to describe, and I shall merely deal with the concluding acts of his life as told by Snorro. He says that by his wife, Ingiald had two children, Aasa and Olaf. Ingiald was king over the greater part of Sweden. He married his daughter Aasa to Gudrod, king of Scania. She was like her father in disposition, and brought it about that Gudrod killed his brother Halfdane, father of Ivar Vidfadme; she also brought about the death of her husband Gudrod, and then fled to her father; thence she got the name of Aasa the Evil-adviser.

Ivar Vidfadme came to Scania after the fall of his uncle Gudrod, collected an army in all haste, and moved with it into Sweden. Aasa had before this returned to her father. King Ingiald was at a feast in Raening when he heard that Ivar's army was in the neighbourhood. Ingiald thought he had not strength to go into battle against Ivar, and he saw well that if he betook himself to flight his enemies would swarm around him from all corners. He and Aasa took a resolution which has become celebrated. They drank until all their people were dead drunk, and then put fire to the hall and it was consumed with all who were in it, including themselves, Ingiald and Aasa. Thus says Thiodolf :

“ With fiery feet devouring flame  
 Has hunted down a royal game  
 At Raening, where King Ingiald gave  
 To all his men one glowing grave.  
 On his own hearth the fire he raised—  
 A deed his foemen even praised—  
 By his own hand he perished so,  
 And life for freedom did forego.”

—Laing's “*Heimskringla*,” i. 254.

Ivar now seems to have succeeded to the throne of Sweden and Denmark proper, while, as it would appear, Jutland remained under its own reguli. It has often been noted as a remarkable circumstance that Ivar is not named among the kings of Denmark, as given by Saxo, but the fact is that his narrative at this time is so confused it is impossible to make one's way through it. It would seem, however, that he refers to Ivar as *Alver Suetiæ rex* and as *Alver tyrannus* (*op. cit.* i. 352, 355).

Let us, however, go on with our story. Of the details of Ivar's reign, except of its concluding phases, we know nothing. These are described for us in the *Sogubrot*, and unfortunately that document is mutilated.

The story in the “*Sogubrot*” begins in a broken sentence in the midst of a description of a curious dramatic scene, in which the Swedish king is seen trying to create discord in Denmark. Jutland was then ruled by two brothers, named Rurik and Helge, or Helgius.

It would seem that Helgius had made his way to the Swedish Court, and had there become a suitor for the hand of Audr, the daughter of Ivar. She viewed him favourably, but Ivar urged that there were many other kings better endowed by nature and art than Helgius; and that it had not been the custom with kings' daughters previously, to accept the first suitor. Audr replied, it was no use arguing, as it was clear he had made up his mind. Having summoned Helgius, Ivar said his daughter had told him there was no king's son whom she deemed worthy of herself, and he enlarged

on her pride, ending up with the deceitful statement that he would prosecute the matter further at a more convenient season. Helgius now returned home. Meanwhile, his brother Rurik was urged to marry by his counsellors, who recommended him also to seek the hand of Ivar's daughter. He told them that it was unlikely he could succeed, where his brother who was so much his superior, had so conspicuously failed. They urged that he clearly could not win unless he made a venture, nor would it be a disgrace to him to fail. He, accordingly, determined to try his fortune, and sent Helgius as his ambassador for the purpose. Helgius set out, and was well received by Ivar, to whom he opened his business, demanding the hand of Audr. The king grew angry, and said that the request was inopportune, and that it was not probable Rurik would succeed with his daughter when she had refused him, who was in every way his superior. Helgius denied this last statement, and contended that his brother's qualities were less known than his own, because he stayed at home, and was not so adventurous, and he asked him to name the matter to his daughter. The next day Ivar accordingly summoned Audr, who indignant at the fickleness of Helgius at once agreed that she would marry Rurik. This answer much surprised her father, who reproached her for her waywardness; but as she insisted, Helgius was sent for, and Ivar craftily told him he could not understand how she, who had refused so great a king as himself, now consented to marry Rurik.

It was arranged that Helgius should escort her. When they had travelled beyond the borders of Sweden, they began to talk about how the matter had been arranged, and disclosed what Ivar had said to each of them.

When they arrived in Seland, Rurik sent a cavalcade out to meet them, and arranged a feast, at which he married Audr. That winter Helgius stayed at home in Seland, and the next year set out, as usual, on a piratical expedition.

By Audr, Rurik had a son, named Harald. His eye-teeth were prominent, and of a yellow colour, whence he was called

Hildetand or War-tooth. He was of great stature, and fair to look upon ; and when he was three years old he excelled other boys of ten.

On one occasion when Ivar went with his fleet from Sweden to Reidgothia, he went to Seland, and sent word to Rurik to go and meet him. Rurik told his wife Audr of the invitation he had received. When he went to bed that night he was provided by her with a new couch with new ornaments. This was put in the middle of the room. She asked her husband to take notice of his dreams, and report them to herself the following morning. He reported that in the night a vision appeared to him. There was a fertile plain near a wood ; on this plain a stag was standing, when a leopard with a golden-coloured mane came out of the wood, which having been transfixed in the shoulders by the horns of the stag, fell lifeless to the ground. After this a huge dragon swooped down on the spot where the stag was, seized him with his claws and tore him to pieces. Then came out a she bear with a whelp ; the dragon wished to seize the whelp, but the mother protected it. He then awoke. Audr said, "This is an extraordinary dream ; and when you meet my father, mind he does not circumvent you with his wiles, for it would seem that the animals in your dream were the tutelary genii of kings who are to fight together, and it is to be hoped the stag was not your genius, although it seems very probable."

On the same day a great crowd had assembled together to go and meet King Ivar, and having entered his ship went into the poop and saluted him. When he saw them he did not speak. Thereupon Rurik said he had prepared a feast for him, notwithstanding his enmity towards him. Ivar went on to say that he was enraged because Helgius and Audr had behaved so badly, since it was in the mouths of all men that Harald was in fact the son of Helgius, and that he had gone to make inquiries about the matter. Rurik said he had not heard of it before, and asked Ivar what he should do ? Ivar replied that there were but two courses open to him : he must either kill Helgius or surrender his



wife to him. Soon after Ivar set out for Reidgothia. The following autumn, when Helgius returned home, Rurik was very down-spirited. Meanwhile Audr prepared a grand feast at which different games were arranged. Helgius was much touched by his brother's sadness, and proposed they should play together, and it was agreed they should have a struggle. Rurik thereupon put on his armour, his helmet, cuirass, sword and spear, and mounted his horse; the other horsemen carried poles: Helgius also carried a pole. Rurik now ran up to his brother, with his lance under his shield, and he thrust it into him and killed him. Those who were about galloped up and inquired why he had committed this crime. He replied that there were abundant reasons, and especially that his wife had been unfaithful to him. They all denied it, and declared it to be false. Audr herself was satisfied that the whole thing was a design of her father's, and she set off, with a considerable company, with her son Harald.

Ivar presently returned from the south and Rurik rode to meet him. Ivar professed to be outraged by the murder of Helgius, and ordered his men to make ready their arms to avenge him. He planted some bodies of troops in ambush in a wood, who fell on Rurik and his company and killed them all, and thus Ivar possessed himself of the kingdom, those present submitting to him. Audr escaped towards the south, *i.e.* probably towards Reidgothia, and Ivar not being strong enough to pursue her, returned to Sweden. The same winter having collected all the gold and precious objects which had belonged to Rurik, she sent them to the island of Gothland. She followed her treasures there, and thence went eastwards to Gardariki, that is to the Scandinavian kingdom about the Gulf of Finland. At this time Radbard was king there. He received the fugitives very hospitably, and proposed to marry Audr, who, in the hope of receiving assistance to enable her son Harald to recover his own again, agreed to his proposals.

When Ivar heard that Radbard had married his daughter without his consent, he collected a vast army from all his kingdom, both Sweden and Denmark, and set sail east-

wards for Gardariki, and threatened to devastate it with fire and sword. When he neared the recess of the Carelian gulf (recessus Karialanos, *i.e.* the Gulf of Finland), where King Radbard's dominions commenced, it fell out, we are told, "that one night the king was reposing on the poop of his ship and he dreamt that a huge dragon came out of the sea with its skin shining like burnished gold, and spitting forth a shower of sparks towards the sky, so that the neighbouring shores were lit up with the light. The dragon seemed attended by all the birds which lived in the northern regions. Presently a cloud appeared to rise from the sea in the north, and such a storm of rain and hurricane came on that the neighbouring woods and land were flooded with water, and there was also a violent display of thunder and lightning. Thereupon the dragon just named seemed to rush at the raincloud; but it as well as the birds were speedily hidden by thick clouds. The king heard a great clap of thunder in the south and west, and the ships of the fleet seemed to be converted into sea monsters, and to be gliding into the water. Awaking from his sleep he summoned his foster-parent Hordus (*i.e.* the God Hordr) to interpret the dream, Hordus replied that he was so old that he could not explain dreams. He stood on a rock overlooking the tide, while the king lay sick under the canopy in the poop of the ship, and a conversation began between them. The king urged strongly that he should interpret the dream; but Hordus replied it was unnecessary he should interpret it, for Ivar could himself understand that it meant that shortly the affairs of Denmark and Suecia would receive a new turn, and that he would die. The king bade him join him on the ship and continue his interpretation, but he said he would stay where he was and speak. The king then asked who Halfdane the courageous had been transmigrated into among the Asirs. He is now Balder, he replied, whom the gods regret, and who is most unlike thee. Very well, said the king, and again invited him on to the deck; he again said he preferred to stay where he was. The king continued. Who had Rurik become? He replied Haener the most timid of the Asirs; and

who was Helgius now? Hordus replied that he had been changed into Hermodus, who was endowed with a great mind; and who had Gudrod (*i.e.*, Gudrod, Ivar's uncle, the brother of his father Halfdane) become? Hemidallus, said Hordus, the most stupid of the Asirs. And what shall I be among the Asirs? Thee, said Hordus, I take to be the vilest serpent living, namely, the serpent of Midgard. The king, in a rage, replied "If thou foretellest my coming death, I tell thee that thou shalt not long survive me. Come nearer to the serpent of Midgard, and feel his strength." Thereupon the king threw himself from the poop into the water. Hordus at the same time jumped out from the rock into the sea, and they were seen no more." Surely this is a fierce and wild story; reporting a fitting end to the great pirate chief.

After his death an assembly was summoned on the land, where it was discussed what should be done, and it was decided that Ivar being dead, as his people had no special grievance against King Radbard, that consequently each one should make his way home by the first favourable wind. This was accordingly done. Thereupon Radbard gave his stepson Harald a contingent of troops, which he took away with him to Seland, where he was elected king; thence he passed into Scania, into the kingdom which had belonged to his maternal ancestors, where he was well received and his following was greatly augmented. Thence he went to Suecia and subdued all Swedia and Gothia, which had been ruled by his grandfather Ivar. We are told that a number of petty reguli who had been deprived of their inheritance by Ingiald and Ivar deemed it a fitting opportunity while Harald was so young to recover their own. He was but fifteen years old when he mounted the throne. His counsellors, fearing that on account of his youth he might be undone by some of his enemies, prepared a great incantation or spell, by which he was rendered proof against weapons, and he always afterwards dispensed with body-armour. He fought a great number of successful battles and appointed kings and vicegerents, and levied tribute; *inter alios*, he nominated

Hiormund, the son of Hervard the Ilving, to the throne of Eastern Gothland, which his father Granmar had held before him.

Harald Hildetand was, no doubt, the most prominent figure in Scandinavian history at the close of the heroic period, and he fills a notable space in the very crooked narrative of Saxo. It is a typical instance of the perversity and carelessness of that author that he gives Harald Hildetand two fathers and mothers. In one place he makes him the son of Borkar and Groa, the countess of Alvilda (*op. cit.* 337), while in another place he makes him the son of Haldan and Guritha (*ed.* 361). The former must be discarded as a slip of the pen or mistake, as the sentence in which it occurs is only a parenthetical one, while the latter is part of the narrative, and is found at the beginning of Saxo's account of the reign of Harald Hildetand. We must take it, therefore, that his theory was that Harald was the son of Haldan and Guritha. There seems to be a grain of truth, however, in the former statement. "*Alvildæ comitem Gro nomine,*" is his phrase, and it seems to be built up out of some misunderstood phrase, for on turning to the Hervavar saga, we find it stated that Harald Hildetand was the son of Valdar, King of Denmark, and his wife Alvilda. This Alvilda is surely the same person as the Audr of the Sogubrot. The statement of the latter authority as to the parentage of Harald is supported by the Langfedgatal, which calls him the son of Hraerekr Slavngvanbavgi, and also by an old list, known as the Huersu Noregr bygdest, and by the early poem called Hyndluljod cited in Rafn's notes to the Sogubrot. As the latter ends with Harald Hildetand, it was probably composed not much later than his time. It may be added that the Hervavar saga also calls Alfhilda the daughter of Ivar Vidfadme, and makes her husband a King of Denmark as Hraerekr or Rurik was, and I have small hesitation in accepting the genealogy of the Sogubrot as at least tentatively the most probable. Let us now continue our notice of Harald. Although Saxo's notice of him is long, it will be found to contain scarcely anything about him.

It is filled up with parenthetical stories about other people, referring doubtless to other times altogether, while the stories it contains about his exploits in Aquitania, and Britain, and Northumbria, show very clearly, as Müller has pointed out, that he has confused his doings with those of another, and much later Harald, probably Harald Blaataud (*op. cit.* 366, note 3). It is only when we come to the close of his reign that we have a more detailed and valuable story. This is the account of the famous fight at Bravalla, of which we have two recensions, one in Saxo, and the other in the Sogubrot, and which have preserved for us one of the most romantic epical stories in the history of the north. The story was recorded in verse by the famous champion Starkadr, whom Saxo quotes as his authority, and whom he seems closely to follow. Dahlmann has, I think, argued very forcibly that the form and matter of this saga as told by Saxo is more ancient, and preserves more of the local colour of the original than that in the Sogubrot (Forsch, etc., 307, 308).

And yet the story as it stands is very incongruous, and makes it impossible for us to believe that it was written by a contemporary at all. How can we understand Icelanders fighting in a battle a hundred years before Iceland was discovered, and what are we to make of such champions as Orm the Englishman, Brat the Hibernian, etc., among the followers of Harald? It would seem that on such points the story has been somewhat sophisticated, perhaps, as in the Roll of Battle Abbey, names have been added to flatter later heroes; but let us condense what it has to tell us.

It would seem that Harald's mother had by her second husband Radbard, a son Randver, who, we are told, was married to a Norwegian princess, and by her became the father of Sigurd Ring. When he became an old man, Harald gave Sigurd the command of his army, and after he had lived a long time with him he appointed him his deputy or vicegerent over Sweden and West Gothland, with his capital at Upsala, while he himself retained Denmark and East Gothland. As he grew old and feeble, we are told in the Sogubrot,

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his followers, who feared the realm might go to pieces in his hands, determined to kill him in his bath. Having heard of their plot he decided upon a more glorious death, and wrote to his nephew Sigurd to challenge him to a mortal fight. According to Saxo, Odin himself appeared in the form of Brune, and having the confidence of both kinsmen, he made them fight, Harald willingly consenting. It was better, he deemed, for him to die in battle than on a sick bed, that he might arrive at Valhalla with an ample retinue.

The two relatives now summoned their forces from all sides, and a long list of the champions on either side is recorded—each man by his name and some descriptive epithet denoting his country or some peculiarity, as Orm the Englishman, Ubbo the Friesian, Dal the Fat, Hythin the Graceful, etc. On Harald's side Brunnus was the standard-bearer. There were champions from many quarters and contingents from many lands—Danes and East Goths, Saxons, Norwegians, and Wends, which last, we are told, used long swords and short shields; there were also Berserkers and Amazons. Harald's armament was so vast that it covered all the Sound from Seland to Scania like a bridge.

On the side of Sigurd were the forces of Sweden and West Gothland and many from Norway. Among his champions was the poet Starkadr; Syvaldus, who furnished a contingent of eleven ships; Thrygir and Torwil, who supplied twelve; and Eric the Helsinger, who brought an enormous "dragon," or war galley; together with many famous Berserkers from Telemarken. Sigurd's fleet, as it passed through Stock Sound, where Stockholm now stands, numbered 2,500 ships. He led his army overland, and marched through the Kolmarker Forest, which divides Suithiod or Sweden proper from East Gothland; and when he had come out of the wood to the Bay of Bra he found his fleet waiting his arrival, and pitched his camp between the forest and the sea (Geijer, 11). King Harald's fleet, sailing with a gentle wind, reached Calmar in even days. There seems to have been a fog, which hid the sky from his men, but they kept close in shore; they were guided

by the Scanians, who marched overland. They were joined *en route* by the contingents from the Slaves and Livonians and by 7,000 Saxons. The battle was fought on land. When the two forces came in view of one another we are told that Sigurd bade his men remain quiet till they received the order to join issue. He told them that Harald was feeble with age, and well-nigh blind; that the Swedes were about to fight for liberty, for their country, and their children; while, on the other side, there were but few Danes, but a great number of Saxons and other effeminate peoples; and he excited them by contrasting the vigour of the Scandinavians with the feeble qualities of Germans and Slaves (Saxo, *op. cit.* 386, 387). Harald, on the other hand, according to the Sogubrot, rode in his chariot into the battle, and sent Brunnus and Huda to inquire how Sigurd had planted his men, and, being told in the wedge-shape-formation (*acium cuneatum*), he asked who had taught him this, for he thought no one knew it but Odin and himself. At length the trumpets sounded, and the two armies joined issue. The narrative bristles with Homeric touches about the deeds of single champions, male and female, but we must not detail them, and will conclude the account in the words of Geijer, who has well condensed this part of the narrative:—"At length," he says, "when victory appears to have declared for the foe, King Harald causes his horses to be urged to their utmost speed, seizes two swords, and cuts desperately among their ranks, till the stroke of a mace hurls him dead from his car. Odin himself, in the form of Brune, was the slayer of Harald. The empty chariot tells Sigurd that the old king has fallen; he therefore orders his men to cease from the fight, and searches for the body of his relative, which is found under a heap of slain. Then he causes a funeral pile to be raised, and commands the Danes to lay upon it the prow of King Harald's ship. Next he devotes to his ghost a horse with splendid trappings, prays to the gods, and utters the wish that Harald Hildetand might ride to Valhalla first among all the troops of the fallen, and prepare for friend and foe a welcome in the hall of Odin."

When the corpse is laid on the pyre, and the flames are kindled, and the chiefs of the war walk round lamenting, King Sigurd calls upon every man to bring gold and all his most costly arms to feed the fire which was consuming so great and honoured a king, and so all the chieftains did" (*op. cit.* 11). Saxo says there fell 12,000 men in Sigurd's army and 30,000 in that of Harald (*op. cit.* i. 390). Thus passed away the old king. The battle is one of the most famous in the world's history, and marks a critical point in the chronology of Scandinavia. My friend M. Kunik, who has devoted much time to its discussion, fixes it at about 775 A.D. Harald Hildetand is generally considered to be the "Haraldus quondam rex" mentioned by Eginhardt in his Annals under the year 812.

With the death of Harald, the saga of the Bravalla fight seems to have naturally ended, and we accordingly find that immediately after, our authorities are again at variance. From this point to the reign of Godfred the narrative of Saxo is singularly crooked, taking us back at a long leap to the legends of the Edda and of the Lombards in the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, and being apparently quite regardless of chronology or sequence in its narrative of events. The Sogubrot and northern writers are at least consistent with probability. The former authority says that after Harald's death Sigurd Ring was King of Sweden and Denmark, and this is consistent with the Frankish writers, who, as I have shown in a former paper, make Sigfred or Sigurd the King of Denmark, who was reigning at the end of the eighth century, and who is first mentioned in the year 777 (Eginhardt's Annals, Pertz i. 157—159).

Sigurd Ring, according to the Sogubrot, married Alvilda, the daughter of King Alf, who ruled in the district between the rivers Gotha and Glommen in Raumariki, which was called Alfheim, and by her he had an only son, Ragnar Lodbrog. Sigurd Ring apparently succeeded also to his mother's heritage; for we find in the "Heimskringla" a passage in which it is stated that the Swedish King Eric



Eymundson claimed to have as great a kingdom in Viken as Sigurd Ring or his son Ragnar Lodbrog had possessed, and that was Raumariki and Westfold all the way to the island Grenmar, and also Vingulmark, and all that lay south of it (Laing's "Heimskringla," i. 282). It would seem, in fact, that Harald Hildetand left sons; one of them, Eystein, is pointedly referred to in the saga of Ragnar Lodbrog and the Lod-broker Quida as reigning at Upsala. Another one I believe to have been Halfdane, to whom I shall revert presently, and who may perhaps have been the person referred to by Saxo as Olo. The author says that on Harald's death, Scania was separated from Denmark, and was ruled over by Harald's son Olo. Dahlmann understands this to mean that Sigurd Ring put his cousin Olo, or Halfdane, as I would correct it, over Scania. Meanwhile he was doubtless over-king over both Sweden and Denmark during his life.

I ought to add that Saxo distinctly makes the king who fought against Harald, his nephew, but by a sister who had married Ingeld, a son of Alver, King of Sweden (*op. cit.* 363—367). While he makes "Sivardus styled Ring" (the father of Ragnar Lodbrog), whom he confusedly makes another person, a son of a Norwegian leader of the same name by a daughter of King Gotric or Godfred, and tells us he reigned over Scania and Seland. It is far from improbable that Randver, the father of Sigurd, married a daughter of Godfred, and that the latter, as well as Harald, was Sigurd Ring's grandfather.

Of the facts of his reign we unfortunately know scarcely anything. I have elsewhere detailed the notices of him contained in the Frankish chronicles. Among them the most interesting perhaps is the one contained in the "Annales Laurissenses," where we have under the year 782 the enigmatical statement that Charlemagne, in that year holding a convention at Cologne, envoys went to him from Sigfred—"*Missi Sigifridi regis id est Halpdani cum sociis ejus.*" This phrase has given rise to a great controversy, in which my friend M. Kuink has taken a prominent part, and in which

he maintains that Halfdane is here used as a synonym for Sigfred, and that the phrase ought to be translated the envoys of King Sigfred, that is, of Halfdane. In this view I cannot concur. Not only does the phrase *cum sociis ejus* preclude such a conclusion, but Halfdane was, I believe, historically a different person altogether from Sigfred, and, as I have said, I take him to have been a son of Harald Hildetand. The Sogubrot breaks off abruptly in an account of how Sigurd, when an old man, was asked by his relative, the son of Gandalf, to grant him assistance against King Eystein, who then reigned over Westmar or Westfold, and he says that at this time sacrifices were being held in Skiringsal (*i.e.* in Westfold in Norway) for all Viken. Here it breaks off. This Eystein is probably the Eystein, son of Harald Huitbein, King of Westfold, mentioned in the "Heimskringla" (Laing's *ed.* i. 257). King Sigurd or Sigfred is mentioned for the last time in the Frank chronicles as King of Denmark in the year 798 (Eginhardt Annales, Pertz i. 185; Kruse, 32). This does not mean exactly that he died then. I believe that at this time a great revolution took place in the North. The family of the Inglings, which had been so long in security in Westfold, greatly enlarged its power, and, under Gudrod the Magnificent, whom I have elsewhere identified with the Godfred of the Frankish writers, succeeded in appropriating Denmark and Scania. He continued to rule there till 810. This revolution probably took place on Sigurd Ring's death, and Godfred displaced not only Ragnar Lodbrog, but Halfdane, the son of Harald, who became a vagabond on a large scale, and who, as I have shown before, went with a large fleet in 806, and submitted to the Frank Emperor (Poeta Saxo, Pertz i. 263). Godfred was succeeded by his nephew Hemming, who died two years later, *i.e.* in 812, and thereupon a struggle ensued for the throne between Anulo, by whom Sigurd Ring has certainly been understood by Saxo and nearly all other commentators (*annulus*, of course, meaning a ring; *anulo*, however, is conjugated *anulo, anulonis*). He is expressly called "*nepos Herioldi quondam regis*," by which I understand not the nephew but the grand-

son of Harald Hildetand (*nepos* meaning both nephew and grandson). This Anulo fought on the one side, and Sigurd, the nepos Godofridi (where nepos perhaps means nephew), and who would thus be the brother of Hemming, on the other. The story would then read that on the death of Hemming a struggle ensued for the Danish crown between the family of the Inglings, represented by Hemming's brother Sigurd, and the Scioldings, by Halfdane's son Anulo.

Saxo, as might have been expected, in weaving the sagas before him with the narrative in the Frank Chronicle, identifies Sigurd Ring and Anulo; but this seems impossible, for we are expressly told by Eginhardt that the brothers of Anulo were Harald (*i.e.*, Harald Klak) and Reginfred, who were certainly no brothers of Sigurd Ring, and it would seem that Anulo is the corrupt form of some Norse name, which has only a superficial resemblance to annulus. Saxo further applies the epithet kings to both rivals, calling one "Syvardus cognomento Ring," and the other "consobrimus ejus Ring." According to Saxo, whose account is altogether very suspicious, on the death of Hemming the kingdom was divided between Sigurd Ring and Godfred's nephew, the former taking Scania and Seland and the latter Jutland. He goes on to say that the former not being very popular left home, *peregrina bella civilibus præferendo*, *i.e.* in English, "he preferred the life of a Viking." His rival, taking advantage of his absence, tried to conquer the whole kingdom. The Selanders, however, gathered round Ragnar, Sigurd's son. Sigurd, meanwhile, returned home, and a battle ensued between the rivals (*op. cit.* 439—441), in which Sigurd was killed, and was succeeded by his son Ragnar. Harold and Reginfred, as I have shown in a former paper, were the sons of Halfdane and, according to my theory, grandsons of Harald Hildetand, and, therefore, represented the stock of the Scioldings, who by their victory now regained supremacy in Denmark. This was only transient, however. On the defeat of their party the sons of Godfred went among the Swedes accompanied by a considerable number of the Danish

grandees, and collected a large force. This means doubtless that the Inglings, as represented by Godfred's family, retained their hold upon Sweden although they lost Denmark. They returned in 813 with a large force and drove out Harald and his brother (Eginhardt Annals, Pertz i. 200 ; Kruse, 69), and thus united the two kingdoms once more under the Inglings. I have described elsewhere in detail the struggle that now ensued between Godfred's sons and the exile Harald. From the way in which they are always named it would seem that the former had a joint authority, owing doubtless some kind of allegiance to Eric, who appears for the first time by name in 827.

Godfred had at least five sons. The death of one of them, the oldest, is mentioned in Eginhardt's Annals in the year 814 ; while four others are referred to in 819 by the same author, where he tells us that two of the sons of Godfred were driven out of the kingdom, while two others stayed at home and shared it with Harald (Kruse, 78). In neither instance are any of them mentioned by name. I believe that they divided the empire between them, and that while two of them remained in Denmark two others went to Sweden. The two latter I believe to have been Biorn and Olaf, who occur so conspicuously in the narrative of St. Rembert to be cited presently. This Biorn has been generally identified with the Biorn Hauge, or Biorn of the Hill of the Hervavar saga, and it is very curious that that saga in fact gives him a brother called Eric whom it styles Eric Upsallensis. This theory makes clear why Eric should have been on terms of such close intimacy with the kings of Sweden as is shown by Rembert's narrative, and accounts also for the long-continued peace between the two countries. The Amund of Rembert's narrative I take to have been the son of Biorn, a view supported by Amund's attachment to Christianity. This will appear more clearly later on.

After a silence of some years we again find mention of Sweden in the year 829, and it is a very remarkable notice. We are told that in that year some envoys went from the Swedes to the Emperor Louis, who reported to him that there

were many among them who wished to adopt the Christian faith, and that their king desired that he would send them some priests (Rembert's Life of St. Anskarius, Pertz ii. 696, etc.). We are told that this greatly delighted the Emperor, who set about finding a suitable person to undertake such a mission. He was not long in difficulty ; Anskar, whose journey with Harald I described in a former paper and who had now been living some time on the borders of Denmark, eagerly volunteered to go. Another monk of Corbey named Withmar agreed to be his companion. Anskar left a friend behind in charge of his flock on the Danish March. His was a very strange and a very romantic journey, and it would be interesting to know by which route he went. He seems to have set sail direct for the Malar Lake.

He travelled with a number of merchants who apparently had several ships. It was necessary to go thus in convoy because of the pirates who then frequented the Baltic, but even this was poor protection, as our travellers found to their cost. For when but half-way on their journey, they were attacked by the corsairs. The merchants, we are told, defended themselves vigorously, and at first even beat off the enemy, but afterwards they were in turn beaten and lost their ships and all that they had. It is curious to read of these merchant fleets then traversing the Baltic. We are too apt to consider all the Danes and Norsemen of those days as mere pirates, the fact being that piracy was at that date probably only beginning to develop itself, and that it was only in later days when every seaman in the North Sea and Baltic was also a buccaneer. The great trysting-place of the pirates was probably the Isle of Gothland, and it was probably in the narrow channel between it and the main that the travellers were attacked. The missionaries escaped with their lives, but lost the presents which their masters had sent to the Swedish king, and lost also some £40 of their own which had been collected for their needs. Having reached the land, they had a long and wearying journey overland before they reached the royal port called Birka.

The position of this port has been much contested, and it is only in recent years that its site has been placed beyond all question.

Among the many islets which dot the beautiful Malar Gulf, whose rocky bosses covered with many-coloured lichens and draped with birch and pine form one of the most striking pictures in the memory, is an obscure island still called Biorke, *i.e.*, "the Birch Island." Here, a few years ago, a wonderful mine of archæological treasures was discovered in the site of an old city, strewn with burnt wood, the remains of domestic animals, ornaments and arms, and extending over many acres. This is now being explored by the Swedish antiquaries, and it no doubt represents the site of the ancient mart of Birka.

Let us now revert to our story. Having arrived at Birka, Anskar and his companions were courteously welcomed by the king, who was called Biorn. Who was this Biorn? A number of writers have identified him with Biorn Ironside, the son of Ragnar Lodbrog; but this is chronologically and otherwise impossible. Geijer, with whom I agree, identifies him with Biorn Hauge, or Biorn of the Hill, who is mentioned in the Hervavar saga. I further hold him to have been a son of Godfred.

The Icelanders tell us that Brage the aged, one of the most famous of the old Scalds, lived at his court (Geijer, *op. cit.* 35). Having learnt the object of their mission and consulted with his counsellors, he at length gave them permission to stay and preach the Gospel, and also permitted any to become their followers who pleased. Many listened to them gladly, for the Christian captives who lived there had already tried to share their faith with the Norsemen among whom they dwelt. Many of the latter were baptized. Among others Herigar (*i.e.*, Hergeir), the prefect of the place, and one of the king's chief councillors, who shortly afterwards built a church on his own property, the first Christian temple set up on the mainland of Scandinavia. He afterwards became a zealous furtherer of the faith

(Rembert, "Life of St. Anskar," Pertz ii. 696, 697 ; Kruse, *op. cit.* 110). These events occurred in the year 830. Having stayed in Sweden for a year and a half, Anskar in 832 returned homewards, bearing with him letters for the emperor written in the Swedish king's own hand. Anskar, on his return, was received with a cordial welcome by the emperor, who set about the fixing of some site where a new bishopric might be founded, which should have charge of the evangelization of these northern lands. The land beyond the Elbe had hitherto, it would seem, been outside episcopal jurisdiction. A church had been built there and consecrated by a Gallic bishop named Amalhar in the time of Karl the Great. The district attached to this church had been afterwards assigned to a priest called Heridag, whom the Emperor Karl intended to have consecrated as bishop, but Heridag's death prevented this. Louis, the son of Karl, now determined to enlarge the mere parish, and accordingly with the consent of the bishops, etc., he founded the archiepiscopal see of Hamburg, and subjected to its jurisdiction all the country north of the Elbe, with the especial duty of evangelizing Scandinavia.

To this See Anskar was now consecrated by Drogo, archbishop of Metz, Ebbo, archbishop of Rheims, Hetti, of Treves, and Otgar, of Mayence. At the same time Willeric was consecrated bishop of Bremen, which See, with that of Verden, were made subject to him.

As Hamburg was situated in a dangerous locality from its proximity to the barbarians, and as it was also but small in extent, a certain foundation, called Turholt (now Torout), in Flanders, between Bruges and Ypres, was attached to it, apparently as a kind of endowment (Pertz ii. 698). Anskar having repaired to Rome, received the pall from Pope Gregory, and was nominated Apostolic Legate to the Swedes, Danes, Slaves, and other northern nations. A joint commission was apparently given to Ebbo, Archbishop of Rheims, who had been a very ardent missionary, and to whom the Emperor assigned the little district of Welanas (now called Munsterdorf), on the Stur, to defray his expenses when he should go to those parts (*id.* 699).

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After the consecration of Anskar, it was thought prudent, as Sweden was so far off and so entirely apart, that a special bishop should be consecrated to act as his vicar there. Ebbo accordingly recommended a relation of his (Adam of Bremen calls him his nephew), named Gauzbert, who having been supplied by him and the Emperor with the necessary surroundings (*i.e.* books, vessels, etc., etc.), set out on his journey. The district of Welanas already mentioned was assigned to him as a place of shelter in case of necessity (*id.* 699, 700; Kruse, *op. cit.* 115). It would seem that Gauzbert, at his consecration, took the name of Simeon. He was well received by the King of the Swedes (*i.e.* by Biorn) and his people; and began, with the goodwill of all, to build a church, and publicly to preach the Gospel, and was joined by numbers of converts (Pertz, ii. 700). Meanwhile, Anskar worked ardently in the conversion of his neighbours, and redeemed from slavery numbers of boys who had been captured by the Danes and Slaves, whom he brought up in the service of the Church, retaining some of them by him, and sending others to Turholt, already mentioned, to be brought up.

Rembert then goes on to describe how Hamburg was attacked by the pirates. This happened when the Marquis of the frontier, Bernhard, was dead, and although the bishop tried to inspire his flock with courage, they were overpowered and obliged to flee; he not even saving his cope (*etiam sine cappa sua vix evasit*). Many of the people were killed, and others fled. The pirates captured the town and plundered the neighbourhood; they burnt the cathedral and monastery, and set fire to the library, which had been presented by the Emperor; and his biographer tells us, that although so much of his life's work was thus destroyed, Saint Anskar made no complaints, nor did he revile his enemies, but humbly confessed that it was God who had given, and God might equally take away.

The date of this burning of Hamburg is not very clear. Pertz dates it in 837 (*id.* notes); Kruse, as I think with



much greater probability, in 845 (*op. cit.* 169). The bishop and his people were now vagabonds, and wandered about for some time, bearing with them the precious relics of the saints. About the same time, we are told, the Swedes, seized with diabolical frenzy, began to persecute their bishop Gauzbert, and a number of them broke into his house, and slew his nephew, Nithard. They plundered the house, and drove the rest of the inmates into exile. These things were not done at the instance of the King, but by a popular outbreak (*id.* 701; Kruse, 168-9). This King was probably Biorn. After these events there were no priests in Sweden for a space of seven years. Then Anskar, anxious for the Christians there, and especially for his godson Herigar, determined to send a certain anchorite, named Ardgar, to them. He speedily sought out Herigar and the rest, to whom he distributed the consolations of religion. By Herigar's influence the Christians obtained the royal licence to propagate their faith, and he also protected them from insult, notwithstanding the popular feeling. At an out-of-door assembly, the missionary held a controversy with the Swedes, who lauded the virtues of their gods, and boasted of the blessings they had conferred on them. The missionary, in order to confound them, we are told in the ingenuous phrases of Rembert, invoked a miracle. As a storm was impending, he bade them pray to their gods that the rain might not wet them—he also would pray to his God that it should not wet him; and the test of who was the true God was to depend on the issue of the miracle. They accepted the proof, and we are told, sat down in a body, while he sat apart with a boy. The rain was not long in coming, and it deluged them, while not a drop fell on him. On another occasion, says his much-believing biographer, Ardgar having lamed his leg and being prostrate, the Swedes jeered him and advised him to pray to their gods if he wished to be cured. Goaded into reply he appealed to Christ and was restored to health as before, thus confounding his enemies (*id.* 702).

At this time it happened that a certain Swedish

King, named Amund, having been exiled from the kingdom had sought shelter among the Danes. I am pretty sure from the subsequent narrative, that Amund was a comparatively unimportant person. It seems clear that Olaf was at this time King of Sweden, and Amund was only a king in the Norse sense, that is, a district or subordinate king. I believe, as I have read, that he was Olaf's nephew, and the nephew also of Eric of Denmark.

To continue our story. Amund being anxious to return home, began to collect recruits, promising to reward them handsomely when they returned to Birka, since there were many rich merchants and much wealth and treasure there. Eager to plunder so famous a mart, they supplied him with twenty-one ships, besides which he had eleven of his own. With this fleet he duly set sail from Denmark, and arrived at Birka. The king (? Olaf) was not at home, and there was no force at hand competent to resist him. Herigar, the governor of the town, with some merchants and others were alone. When hard pressed they determined to retire to a city near at hand (probably Sigtuna), and began to offer prayers to their Gods for help. Feeling still weak, they sent away to the invaders to ask for peace. This they at length bought by a fine of 100 pounds of silver. The Danes were not satisfied, and determined to sack the town. The citizens in their distress proposed to immolate a victim to propitiate their gods, a view which was sternly opposed by Herigar, who counselled them to abandon their useless deities and to turn to the Christian God. This they accordingly did, and we are told they offered prayers and alms voluntarily and by one consent in an assembly held in the open air.

Meanwhile, according to Rembert, Amund addressed his followers, and informed them that in this place were the shrines of many powerful gods, including the God of the Christians, who was the most powerful of all, and that they had better beware how they incurred his resentment. They determined to decide the matter by an appeal to necromancy. The answer was that they should not molest the place, and that they should

leave what they had captured. They were not to return home empty-handed, however, but were to repair to a distant city, on the borders of the Slaves. They went there and captured the town, and made a great booty, with which they returned safely home again. Amund returned a portion of the silver (to the Swedes ?), and made a treaty with them and lived there for some time as he wished to conciliate them (Pertz ii. 704). From this account, it would seem probable that Amund was a Christian, and probably a friend of Herigar's. The latter did not let his vantage slip, but seems to have used his triumph for the furtherance of the faith. He died an old man, a Christian, and received the last sacrament from Ardgar (Pertz ii. 704 ; Kruse, 201, 202).

Rembert mentions that among the Swedish converts was a woman called Frideburg or Fretheburg, who resisted all the importunities of her people to sacrifice to idols, etc., and remained a faithful Christian. As she was nearing her term of life, and there was no longer a priest there, Gauzbert being dead ; knowing that Christians before they died consoled themselves by taking the viaticum or last communion, and there being no priest who could duly consecrate the elements, she bought, and set apart some wine, and ordered her daughter to give it to her when she was dying, in the hope that this sacrifice might be acceptable in her difficult circumstances. This was three years before the arrival of Ardgar. She lived on, however, and only died after receiving the sacrament duly from him, and ordering her daughter Calla to distribute some of her wealth as alms among the poor, and in case she found but few poor, she recommended her to take the money to Dorestadt, where there were many churches, priests, and poor, and there to distribute her alms. She went there and performed her mother's behests (Pertz, *op. cit.* ii. 704, 705). After the death of Herigar, Ardgar left Sweden, which was again therefore left without spiritual control.

In 846 Pope Sergius issued a commission to Anskar confirming him as apostle of the Wigmodians, Nordalbingians, Danes, Norveni, Suecii, and whatever nations he should

subject to the faith, and granting him the use of the pallium at his see of Hamburg (Kruse, 176). As I have mentioned, that missionary see on the borders of the heathen was too poor to support itself, and the emperor had accordingly assigned it the revenues of the monastery of Turholt for its support. On the death of Louis the Pious, Turholt fell to the share of his son Charles, while Hamburg belonged, if to anybody, to Louis the German. Charles accordingly detached the monastery from the see and gave it to one Reginar (Pertz ii. 706). The consequence of this, added to the previous ravage of the Danes, was that the see of Hamburg was reduced to desolation. About this time the bishopric of Bremen becoming vacant, it was determined at a synod of bishops, held at Mayence in the autumn of 847, to appoint Anskar to the post, and thus unite Bremen and Hamburg, which was accordingly done. This introduced a new difficulty. Bremen was a suffragan see of Cologne, while Hamburg had been constituted an independent archbishopric.

The Archbishop of Cologne now claimed Anskar as one of his suffragans, which the latter resented. The matter was discussed at a synod at Worms, attended by the two brothers, Lothaire and Louis, and it was determined to remit the matter to the decision of the Holy See. Louis accordingly appointed Salomon bishop of Constance (*Constantiæ civitatis episcopus*) to go there, and Anskar was represented by a priest named Nordfrid, who is described by Rembert ambiguously as *filium suum* (i.e. of Anskar) *fratrem nostrum* (i.e. of Rembert). The matter having been duly brought before Pöpe Nicholas, he issued a bull uniting the two dioceses of Hamburg and Bremen, and constituting them an archiepiscopal see, independent of that of Cologne, while the diocese of Verden, of which Waldgar was bishop, was detached from them (Pertz ii. 706, 708).

Anskar now resumed his efforts for the conversion of the Danes. We are told he endeavoured to conciliate the good will of Eric, who was now sole king of the country, by presents and otherwise, in order to gain permission to preach

the faith, and seems to have had some interviews with him. Anskar also seems to have exerted himself to create a good feeling between the Danes and Franks, and to have been an intermediary in their negotiations. In consequence Eric became much attached to him, and even initiated him in his State secrets. Anskar now introduced the question of Christianity, and tried to persuade Eric to be baptized. He seems to have had considerable effect on the king, and at last persuaded him to allow a church to be built within his borders. The site was fixed at Schleswig, a port, says Rembert, much frequented by merchants, and there was accordingly founded the first Christian temple within the borders of Denmark. The king also granted permission to any of his subjects who pleased to be baptized. The church was duly dedicated to the Virgin, and a priest appointed to it. Rembert says there were already many Christians there who had been baptized at Hamburgh or Dorestadt, among whom were some of the officials of the town, who accordingly encouraged the movement, and many, both men and women, now followed their example (*id.* 709). It will be remarked that Rembert nowhere says that King Eric himself was baptized, nor that he became a Christian. This fact is mentioned by Adam of Bremen, who was a very late and irregularly inaccurate chronicler of the events of this time, and whose authority as compared with Rembert is *nil*. I cannot doubt that if Eric had really become a Christian, that such a proof of the triumphant campaign of his master would not have been overlooked by his scholar and biographer.

Anskar was now much troubled for the condition of Sweden, where there was no longer any priest, and he persuaded King Eric to assist him in the matter. After a conference with Gauzbert, who had been there before, and had been driven away, and who seems to have dreaded similar treatment, it was determined that the latter should go, and Eric sent a letter with him, commending him to the Swedish King Olaf, a proof, as I take it, that Eric and Olaf,

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who were according to my contention nearly related, if not actually brothers, were good friends, and in no sense rivals and enemies. In his letter he referred to him as sent by King Louis, as one anxious to serve the cause of religion, and wishful to spread the Gospel in Sweden. Having set out they reached Birka in about twenty days, where they met the king and a large number of people. Rembert goes on to say that the crowd was much elated about their arrival, for one who claimed to have been sent from the very council of the northern gods, had addressed the crowd in terms like these: "By your zeal for us you have secured our goodwill, and in consequence peace and plenty have flourished in the land. Now you propose to rob us of sacrifices and other offerings, and what we deem even worse, to supplant us by another god. If you wish us to continue propitious to you, continue the old sacrifices, and to pay us the dues as formerly, and do not receive this other god, who denounces us, among you, nor worship him. If needs be that you are anxious for other gods, and that we do not suffice for you, then choose Eric, who was formerly your king, and whom we will unanimously welcome among us to be a god." This Eric it has been argued was Eric of Upsala, who by some is made a brother of Biorn of the Hill, but this is hardly likely. So recent a king would hardly in the north have been suggested as a god. He was rather in all probability some semi-fabulous hero of the Heroic age.

The address just named seems to have greatly excited the mob, who in accordance with it nominated the Eric just named as one of their gods, and thereupon began to offer gifts and sacrifices to him. Bishop Gauzbert now consulted his old friends as to the course he should pursue, and what were the king's sympathies in the matter. They counselled him to withdraw at once, and if he had anything of value about him to present it to the king so as to be permitted to go away alive. Gauzbert refused to comply, and said he was prepared for martyrdom. At length by the advice of his friends he invited the king, who was no doubt the Olaf already

named, to his house, He there offered him hospitality and presents and presented his commission, which had already been named to him by his own friends and by the envoy of Eric of Denmark. The king seemed very gracious, and willing to comply with his wishes ; but he added, " There were priests here before who were driven away, not by the royal mandate, but by a popular outbreak. Before I can or dare confirm your mission I must consult the auguries of our gods, and see what the wish of the people is. Attend the next meeting of the assembly (*placitum*) and I will advocate your cause to the people, and if the gods are willing then your wishes shall be carried, if not then the contrary." This, says Rembert, was according to their custom, for among them matters of public moment were decided by the popular will rather than by the royal wish. Gauzbert consented to this and prepared himself by prayer and fasting for the interview (*id.* 711, 712). The king having assembled his grandees discussed the matter with them, and they proceeded to test by lots what the will of the gods was. The lots were cast on the open field, and they fell that it was the will of the gods that the Christian religion should be established there. This news was taken to Gauzbert by one of his friends, and the latter accordingly prepared to attend the general assembly with confidence. The assembly was held at Birka, and the king having caused the decision just mentioned to be announced there was considerable uproar, when there arose an elderly man who addressed the crowd, saying, " Hear me, king and people. The worship of this God is well known to many of us who have received benefits from Him, for many of us have proved His goodness in perils on the sea. Formerly several of us who have been to Dorestadt have there adopted the faith. Now on account of the many pirates and dangers that infest the way, we hardly ever make our way there." \*

The orator bade his audience attend to their own interests,

\* This is surely a graphic proof of what I have elsewhere urged, that the Norsemen were originally traders and not buccaneers, and that piracy was an accomplishment they learnt later on.

and in those cases where their gods were not propitious to court the favour of this one who was always willing to help those who asked Him. This speech had its due effect, and it was agreed that priests should settle among them, and that the mysteries of Christianity should be practised without hindrance. The king had this conclusion announced to the bishop, but he still withheld his own consent until another *placitum* or assembly had been held in another part of the country. This was probably for Gothland, as the former one was for Sweden proper. This followed the example, and confirmed the decision of the former assembly. The king now proclaimed the decision of the two meetings, granting the right to build churches and to make converts freely. Gauzbert then commended Erimbart, the nephew of Anskar, to the good graces of the king, and asking for his patronage for him. The king thereupon ordered a hall (*atrium*) to be built for an oratory, and the bishop bought another for him to live in. These were both at Birka. The bishop then once more returned home.

About this time Rembert reports an expedition undertaken by the Swedes against the Cori, whom he describes as a people situated a long way off, and who were clearly the Curones or people of Curland. He says they had formerly been subject to the Swedes, but this was a considerable time before (*jam tunc diu erat*).

The Danes having learnt this, determined about the time when the bishop (*i.e.* Gauzbert) was among the Swedes to send a large fleet there to plunder and subdue them. The kingdom of the Cori then comprised five different states (*civitates*), whose inhabitants united together to repel the invaders. They were successful. One half of the Danes were killed, and their fleet was plundered of its gold and silver. The expedition in fact seemed to have been a disastrous failure. King Olaf and the Swedes having heard of this, and wishing to acquire fame, and to compass what the Danes had failed in doing, piqued also, inasmuch as the Curlanders were formerly their subjects, collected a very large force and crossed



the Baltic to Curland to a city then called Seeburg, where there were 7,000 warriors collected. This town some have identified with Seleburg in Sengallia at the mouth of the Duna, others with Segeburg in the south of Livonia (Pertz ii. 714, note 60; Kruse, 227, note 1). Kruse also suggests from the fact of the town having so large a garrison that it was the capital of Curland. Other possible sites are Libau, which from its situation on the coast may have been called Seeburg by the Danes, or, perhaps, Pills Callns near Kapsehden (*op. cit.* 227, note 2).

Having captured, sacked, and burnt the town, they went on a five days' journey to another town, called Apulia, which, as Pertz suggests, was, doubtless, Pillen on the river Windav, in Curland. There were assembled 15,000 warriors, who shut themselves up in the town and defended it bravely.

For eight days the siege was prosecuted with great vigour. The Swedes then began to grow weary, and as they were five days' journey from the port where their ships lay, they were much troubled in their minds as to what they should do, they determined to cast lots and see whether their gods meant to assist them, or intended that they should retire. These lots having been cast, it was found that none of the gods were willing to help them; whereupon a terrible wailing arose in the camp. "What miserable creatures are we!" they said; "our gods have forsaken us, and none of them will support us! Whither must we fly? Our ships are a long way off; if we retire to them, those who follow in pursuit will destroy us. Where, then, is our hope?" In this difficulty, some merchants who were with them, and who remembered the teaching of the bishop, spoke out, and said, "The God of the Christians is mighty in assisting those who seek Him. Let us see if He is with us, and if so, let us obey Him." The lots were again cast, and it was found that Christ was in fact with them. This news greatly raised their drooping spirits. With joyful hearts they again closely beleaguered the town, which it appears began to run short of provisions, and some propositions were made by the garrison, that they wished for peace rather than war, and were ready to make a truce with the

Swedes and to surrender some of the booty which they had captured during the previous year from the Danes. They offered a ransom of half-a-pound of silver for each man in the garrison, to renew the homage they formerly did, and to give hostages, and in future to deem themselves subjects of the Swedish king. Some of the more bellicose Swedes were not for accepting these terms, but rather for insisting upon the capture of the town, and upon its plunder ; but this was overruled by the king and his more prudent counsellors ; and having collected a great ransom, and received thirty hostages, they made their way back to their ships. The delighted Swedes now inquired from the merchants, whose advice they had previously sought, what the God of the Christians would deem a grateful return for the benefits he had conferred on them. It was determined that they should fast for seven days, and then abstain from meat for seven days ; and after an interval of forty days should by a general assembly decree a similar abstention of forty days. After this we are told they were very friendly disposed to Christianity, and adopted the Christian mode of fasting, and the fashion of distributing alms to the poor, and in consequence the priest Erimbart, whom I have mentioned, continued to live among them in peace and quiet (Pertz ii. 714, 715). This is a fitting close to the present paper ; we have carried down the history of Sweden to the date when the battle took place in Denmark, where Eric was killed, and which was the great turning-point in northern history, and I will in conclusion give a short genealogy of the kings before mentioned, in order to make my story more plain.

