Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

A Select Bibliography

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3rd edition, revised by
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University of Cambridge
2004


Further volumes are in preparation

Cover

The ‘Jelling beast’ from the larger runestone at Jelling in Jutland, on which king Harald bluetooth proclaimed his sovereignty over Denmark and Norway as well as observing that he ‘made the Danes Christian’. Variously interpreted as a symbol of either pagan mythology or royal authority, the art-work reflects the Mammen style and is possibly to be dated to the 960s.
PREFACE

This bibliography has been put together for the guidance of students studying the paper ‘Scandinavian history in the Viking age’ in the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, University of Cambridge. Its model and inspiration was the bibliography of the history of Anglo-Saxon England compiled by Professor Simon Keynes, and like its predecessor this bibliography also makes no claim to be anything other than an informal and ephemeral document, in this case providing a bibliographical guide to the sources of, and major themes in, Viking history.

Since the bibliography is intended primarily for the use of students, it includes translations as well as editions of primary written sources, and the emphasis is heavily upon secondary literature in English. When items in languages other than English are listed, the presence of any English summary is indicated by (E.s.). The bibliography accordingly makes no effort to be exhaustive in any respect, and overall concentrates extensively on more modern research; readers are nevertheless encouraged to delve more deeply through the use of bibliographies included in the items cited here.

One final word of warning centres on the terms employed in this bibliography. ‘Scandinavia’ is here defined as a cultural rather than geographical area, encompassing Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Faroe, and Iceland; moreover, even within those limits ‘Scandinavian’ refers to the culture of the Germanic-speaking elements rather than the indigenous Lappish or Sami populations. In chronological terms ‘Viking age’ is employed to refer roughly to a period from around 750 to around 1050; the period before 750 has been called ‘Iron age’, the period after 1050 ‘mediaeval’. These parameters are for pure convenience only, even though it is appreciated that they are an uneasy mixture of English and Scandinavian, or archaeological and conventional historical, conceptions that can rightly be criticised as too rigid, misleading, or simply wrong.

1 October 2001

Martin Syrett

Scandinavian History in the Viking Age: a Select Bibliography was first issued in October 2001. Notification of any errors and suggestions for possible improvements are most welcome, and should be directed to Mr Jonathan Grove, Department of ASNC, Faculty of English, 9 West Road, Cambridge CB3 9DP.

Note for the Cambridge reader

The vast majority of references in this bibliography are (or soon will be) available for consultation in the libraries of the University of Cambridge, and to some extent preference has been given to the inclusion of such items at the expense of others which are not held in those libraries. The bulk of them are naturally only accessible in the University Library, but a fair range of material is also to be located in the libraries of various departments, such as the Anglo-Saxon Norse and Celtic section of the English Faculty Library, the Seeley Library of the Faculty of History, and the Haddon Library of the Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology; references to holding libraries and classmarks will generally be found in square brackets following individual items, with preference given to the University Library. Students are encouraged to help build up the holdings of their college libraries and may well want to purchase some of the more general items in section (A) themselves.

THE DEPARTMENT OF ANGLO-SAXON, NORSE, AND CELTIC

Information on the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, University of Cambridge, including a guide to the ASNC Tripos, is available on the Department’s website.

ISSN 1475-8520
ISBN 0 9532172 9 9
Of the Germanic islands Scandinavia is the greatest, but there is nothing great in it beyond itself

Dicuil, *Liber de mensura orbis terrae* VII:18 (anno 825)
TEXTBOOKS, REFERENCE WORKS, AND WRITTEN SOURCES

A. TEXTBOOKS AND REFERENCE WORKS

Most of the major serial works on Viking-age and mediaeval Scandinavia have been produced in an uneasy mixture of the vernacular Scandinavian languages and are now tending to look somewhat outdated. This applies, for example, to the volumes of the Nordisk kultur series, which nevertheless in some cases remain the most significant guides to various aspects of Scandinavian culture, e.g. (B900-01). A profoundly useful guide to virtually anything anyone could conceivably wish to know on the subject is provided by the Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder fra vikingetid til reformationstid (A70), although with an inevitable drift towards the mediaeval period; for a more recent, although rather less copious, encyclopaedia see (A73).

General textbooks

Due to popular interest in the subject there is a vast array of general handbooks available on ‘the Vikings’, most of which say much the same thing and concentrate extensively on Viking activity abroad rather than Scandinavia. The rise to prominence of archaeology as the most significant discipline in the field means that many of the most useful and more recent contributions are well illustrated; (A14) and (A21) can be particularly recommended as accessible and informative guides. For a faster-paced rollercoaster of a ride through Viking history (A12) has a lot going for it.

The Vikings

[A11] F.D. Logan, The Vikings in history (1983) [UL 592:12.c.95.37]; heavy emphasis on the Viking expansion
[A15] T. Deary, The vicious Vikings, Horrible histories (1994); only for students with serious application

As the subject has split up into separate components or disciplines, so it has become more and more difficult for individual scholars to master the whole of the wide and disparate range of material available. Accordingly, many recent contributions consist of contributions by specialists in particular fields; all of the following are highly recommended.

Viking-age Scandinavia

Relatively less popular attention has been paid to the history of Scandinavia during the Viking age, and a further problem for the English-speaking student is that most of the detailed research has naturally been conducted in the Scandinavian languages. The deceptively named (A33) is still the most comprehensive attempt to address the social history of Viking-age Scandinavia in English, even though it is now outdated on many points; a better place to start would be with the sections devoted to Scandinavia in many of the volumes cited above, especially (A21). For more specific work on Viking-age Scandinavia, as well as references to material concerning the pre-Viking (Iron age) and post-Viking (mediaeval) periods, see section (C).


[A31] L. Musset, *Les peuples scandinaves au moyen age* (1951) [UL 592:12.c.95.6]; a classic study for those willing to tackle a bit of French


Major series

Most volumes of collected papers, including *Festschriften* and conference proceedings, are gathered together at the end in section (O). However, some series are too significant to be relegated as endnotes in this way.

The Viking congresses

The most significant is the series of Viking congresses held every few years since 1950 in various locations of Scandinavian significance. These are of significance not only for showing the development of thinking in the field, but also for providing numerous presentations in condensed form that would otherwise be inaccessible in English.

[A40] *The Viking congress, Lerwick, July 1950*, ed. W.D. Simpson, Aberdeen University studies 132 (1954) [UL 592:12.c.95.2]; with a heavy concentration on the Scottish isles


[A43] *The fourth Viking Congress, York, August 1961*, ed. A. Small, Aberdeen University studies 149 (1965) [UL 592:12.c.95.8]


[A48] *The Viking age in the Isle of Man: select papers from the ninth Viking congress, Isle of Man, 4-14 July 1981*, edd. C. Fell et al. (1983) [UL 480:1.c.95.23]

Other conference series

[A60] Also interesting are the series of symposiums on Viking-age studies held annually in a rotation system around the various Scandinavian countries, beginning with the *Beretning fra første tværfaglige vikingesymposium, Odense universitet 1982*, edd. H. Bekker-Nielsen and H.F. Nielsen (1982) [UL L592.c.25.1]. The contributions (typically three per volume) are naturally largely in the vernacular Scandinavian languages and often concentrate on particular themes; as a result individual articles have been cited separately throughout the bibliography

[A61] Every few years sees another ‘International Saga Conference’, most recently in Sydney in 2000, which include many papers of interest to Scandinavian history as well as Old Norse literature; the proceedings are not normally properly published, but some of the conferences have yielded pre-printed papers which make it into libraries. The papers are however often very compressed or incomplete, and they are frequently published properly elsewhere. Those available in Cambridge are: [a] P.G. Foote et al., (edd.), *Proceedings of the first International saga conference, University of Edinburgh, 1971* (1973) [UL 752:37.d.95.7]; [d] *Fourth International saga conference, München, July 30th-August 4th, 1979* [UL 752:37.c.95.32] (each article independently paginated); [f] *The sixth International saga conference, 28.7-2.8.1985: workshop papers* [UL 752:16.c.95.27]; [g] *The seventh International saga conference: poetry in the Scandinavian Middle ages*, Atti del 12o congresso internazionale di studi sull’alto medioevo, ed. Teresa Pàroli (1990) [UL P532.b.31.16]; [h] M. Clunies Ross and G. Barnes, (edd.), *Old Norse myths, literature and society. The eleventh international saga conference* (2000), online at www.arts.usyd.edu/Arts/departs/medieval/saga

Reference works

Encyclopaedias

[A70] *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder fra vikingetid til reformationstid*, 22 vols (1956-78) [KLN, UL R538.201]; an indispensable companion with articles in a variety of Scandinavian languages


[A73] *Medieval Scandinavia: an encyclopedia*, Garland encyclopedias of the Middle ages 1, ed. P. Pulsiano (1993) [UL R532.50]; a fairly strong emphasis on literary material, but worth consulting for its many articles on aspects of medieval Scandinavian history and archaeology

Bibliographies

[A75] The *Bibliography of Old Norse-Icelandic studies* [BONIS] comprises a selective but extensive list of publications on Old Norse language and literature, runology, and medieval Scandinavian history and archaeology. The Royal Library in Copenhagen produced annual printed editions of *BONIS* for the years 1963-1983. An electronic database covers scholarship from 1984 onward, and is accessible online at http://embla.bib.sdu.dk/bonis/. For a useful introduction, see:

Most of the journals listed under the abbreviations carry some reviews of major recent publications, but this naturally only extends to books. For fuller guidance to recent research, the journal *Nordic archaeological abstracts* [NAA] lists work in archaeology and has recently gone online at [www.naa.dk](http://www.naa.dk); of wider scope is the *International medieval bibliography* [UL R532.18], also available via the cam domain at [www.brepols.net/login/overview.cfm](http://www.brepols.net/login/overview.cfm). Bibliographies devoted to specific subject areas can be found within the relevant individual sections. Otherwise, the reading recommended in some of the more recent handbooks in (A) is a useful place to start; see also:

[A78] S. Gippert et al., *Studienbibliographie zur älteren Skandinavistik*, Berliner Beiträge zur Skandinavistik 1 (1991) [UL 752:01.c.14.1]; concentrates heavily on Old Norse language and literature


**Dictionaries**

[A90] For Old West Norse, i.e. Old Icelandic-Norwegian, the standard dictionary remains J. Fritzner, *Ordbog over Det gamle norske Sprog*, 3 vols (1883-96) [UL R785.I15] along with the supplement, F. Hønnebo, *Rettelser og tillegg* (1972). This is in the process of being updated with the publication of fascicles of *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog/A dictionary of Old Norse prose* from the Arnamagnæan Institute in Copenhagen; so far only the *Registre/Indices* (1989), 1:a-bam (1995), and 2:ban-da (2001) have appeared in print [UL R785.15]. For Old Icelandic specifically, a more useful tool for the English-speaking reader is R. Cleasby and G. Vigfússon, *An Icelandic-English dictionary*, 2nd edn and supplement by W.A. Craigie (repr. 1957) [UL R785.112]. Dictionaries and glossaries devoted to the peculiarities of poetry rather than prose are listed in the relevant sections elsewhere (B572); for skaldic poetry, however, see F. Jónsson, *Lexicon poeticum antiquae linguæ septentrionalis: Ordbog over det norsk-islandske skjaldesprog, oprindelig forfættet af Sveinbjörn Egílsson*, 2nd edn (1931) [UL R785.110]

[A91] For East Norse dialects, the two standard reference dictionaries are: for Danish, O. Kalkar, *Ordbog til det ældre danske sprog* (1300-1700), 5 vols (1881-1918) [UL 794.b.88.1 ff.], and for Swedish, K.F. Söderwall et al., *Ordbok öfver Svenska Medeltids-språket*, 2 vols plus suppl., SSF 27, 54 (1884-1918, 1925-73) [UL R785.S275]

[A92] Dictionaries devoted to Scandinavian Latin are relatively thin on the ground, but any dictionary of mediaeval Latin will prove useful. For Denmark, consult the fascicles of the *Ordbog over dansk middelalderlatin/Lexicon mediae latinitatis Danicæ*, ed. F. Blatt (1987 ff.) [UL R785.L17]. Nothing similar has yet begun to appear for Iceland or Norway. For Sweden, the *Glossarium til medeltidslatinet i Sverige*, ed. U. Westerberg (1968 ff.) has made more progress [UL R785.L44]; still useful also is M. Hammarström, *Glossarium till Finlands och Sveriges medeltidsurkunder jämte språklig infedning*, Handböcker utgivna av finska historiska samfundet 1 (1925) [UL 782.c.92.2]

[A93] At the risk of bombarding the reader with detailed linguistic references, etymological dictionaries can also often prove useful, especially when dealing with issues such as loanwords. Two useful examples are J. de Vries, *Altnordisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 2nd edn (1962; repr. 1977) [UL R785.I16], and Á. Blöndal Magnússon, *Íslensk orðsifjabók* (1989) [UL R785.113]

**Biography and prosopography**

[A95] In the absence of many written sources for Viking-age Scandinavia, there is little prospect of any kind of prosopography. For individuals recorded in mediaeval Scandinavian sources of various kinds, or in the colonies abroad, see (B880 ff.); in many ways more useful are the indices to the diplomatic collections (B717 ff.).

Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

For purposes of comparison

The specific fate of the Vikings outside mainland Scandinavia is addressed in separate sections of the bibliography (G-J), although with the greatest concentration on areas where a Scandinavian culture took root at the expense of those regions where the Viking presence was more ephemeral and absorbed into the local populace. However, an understanding of the history of the neighbouring regions of Northern Europe in their own right is essential to an understanding of both Viking-age Scandinavia and Viking activity abroad, and this brief section is offered merely as a starting point in this direction.

Europe


Recent articles devoted more specifically to individual areas can be found in:


For encyclopaedia guides:

[A106] Lexikon des Mittelalters, 9 vols plus register (1977-99) [UL R532.7]
[A107] Dictionary of the Middle ages, 12 vols (1982-89) [UL R532.12]

England

[A111] M. Chibnall, Anglo-Norman England, 1066-1166 (1986) [UL 541:3.c.95.50]; B. Golding, Conquest and colonisation: the Normans in Britain, 1066-1100 (1994) [UL 541:3.c.95.57]

Scotland, Ireland, and Wales

[A114] D. Ó Corráin, Ireland before the Normans (1972) [UL 554:6.d.95.2]; D. Ó Cróinín, Early medieval Ireland 400-1200 (1995) [UL 554:5.c.95.123]

The Frankish empire and its successors

[A118] E. James, The origins of France: from Clovis to the Capetians, 500-1000 (1982) [UL 560:4.c.95.11]; J. Dunbabin, France in the making 843-1180 (1985) [UL 560:4.c.95.16]; E.M. Hallam,
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age


[A119] E. Searle, Predatory kingship and the creation of Norman power, 840-1066 (1988) [UL 568:2.c.95.120]


Russia and eastern Europe

[A125] In the first instance turn to (J60) and other works cited there; also, J. Martin, Medieval Russia 980-1584 (1995) [UL 586:3.c.95.112]; M. Hrushevsky, History of Ukraine-Rus’. I: From prehistory to the eleventh century, transl. M. Skorupsky (1997) [UL 588:4.b.95.108]

Byzantium


B. WRITTEN SOURCES

As intimated in the preface, this guide to the primary sources is heavily oriented towards written records as opposed to other disciplines. This is partially a result of the fact that Old Norse literature in particular has always attracted the greatest attention from the English-speaking world, but also reflects the recent nature of the development of work in other disciplines such as archaeology, which means that convenient, single-volume summaries of the state of research are not easily to be found. Indeed, the easiest way for the beginner to approach the material culture is probably through the general handbooks listed in (A1 ff.), while studies on specific areas of archaeological research can be found scattered throughout the sections (M-N). This section (B) concentrates for the most part on written sources which have a bearing on Viking-age Scandinavia (including the North Atlantic colonies); materials which have a contribution to make primarily to the history of Vikings abroad elsewhere are included only very selectively, and for further guidance the reader is referred to the separate sections on the Viking expansion (G-J). Brief but useful overviews of the nature of the sources can be found in (A5):12-47 (‘Written sources’), 48-65 (‘Archaeology’); see more recently (A10):8-38

I. ANTHOLOGIES AND SERIES

Given the disparate and uneven nature of the written sources for the history of Viking-age Scandinavia, there is unfortunately no single series or collection which could adequately be said to represent more than a small portion of the available material.

Anthologies

Anthologies relating to a specific geographical area or literary genre can be found under the relevant headings.[B1] R.I. Page, Chronicles of the Vikings: records, memorials and myths (1995) [UL 592:12.c.95.51]; a useful introductory selection of translated sources of various kinds, mostly Scandinavian (including prose, verse, and inscriptions), but with a sprinkling of entries from further afield

Series

Scandinavian sources

[B5] A useful series partially designed for the use of students is the Viking Society for Northern Research text series [VSNR TS], which provide (usually) both texts and translations of a range of relevant historical texts with introductions and notes. It is particularly welcome since the series frequently makes accessible sources that have otherwise either not been edited for many years or never been translated into English; for example Theodoric (B282), Sven Aggesen (B656), or Guta saga (B678)
The basic scholarly editions of the Icelandic family sagas, as well as some selected kings’ saga material, is the Íslenzk fornrit series [ÍF]; these have introductions and notes in modern Icelandic and normalised texts with minimal critical apparatus.

A further series of Scandinavian texts was produced by the Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur [SUGNL]; these old editions have now to some extent been superseded, but cover a wider range than Íslenzk fornrit.

Non-Scandinavian sources

The most significant body of material relating to the Vikings can be found in the huge series Monumenta Germaniae historica [MGH] which was begun in Germany in the nineteenth century. The initial series of edited texts under the heading Scriptores [SS] [UL R560.G101] has now largely been superseded by the Scriptores rerum germanicarum in usum scholarum [SRG] [UL 570:01.c.8.1 ff.] and then the Scriptores rerum germanicarum nova series [SRG n.s.] [UL 570:01.c.10.1 ff.]. Large amounts of other relevant material can also be found under the auspices of MGH; in particular, diplomatic material in the series Diplomata [DD] [UL R560.G118] and correspondence in the series Epistolae [EPP] [R560.G111]

A further useful set of Frankish or German primary sources can also be found in the series Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters [AQDGM] [UL 570:01.c.57.1 ff.], which have the advantage of both Latin texts and German facing translations.

II. NON-SCANDINAVIAN SOURCES

As the Scandinavians were illiterate (in the strict sense of the word, at least) during the Viking age, sources from outside Scandinavia provide the bulk of our written material for this period. Unfortunately, they frequently (and naturally) show a clear tendency to be either mis- or ill-informed and prejudiced, and when combined with the relative paucity of historical evidence relating to Scandinavia itself these factors render such sources rather less informative than we might often wish. The sources gathered here consist largely of histories, chronicles, or hagiography, i.e. texts that seem to have been written for the purpose of preserving historical information for posterity; for documentary evidence such as laws or correspondence, see section (B.VI). For guidance in the bewildering field of mediaeval source materials, see:

Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental (1972 ff.) [UL R532.6]; a series of fascicles examining various kinds of sources for mediaeval European history, mostly in French and naturally very general

R.C. van Caenegem et al., Guide to the sources of medieval history, Europe in the middle ages: selected studies 2 (1978) [UL R532.11]

Many sources, particularly Insular, are also well worth looking up in:

E.B. Graves, A bibliography of English history to 1485 (1975) [UL R542.50]

Classical sources

Written sources from before the eighth century are largely of peripheral interest, and tend to consist of little more than cursory descriptions of Scandinavia and observations on the characteristics and movements of the tribes resident in the region. Accordingly, only a small selection of the vast literature on the subject is given.

The Classical geographers. The earliest written reports of Scandinavia come from the geographers and philosophers of the Classical period. Particularly striking are the reports of the Greek explorer Pytheas of Marseilles, who is said to have reached a place called ‘Thule’ in the northern oceans in the fourth century BC (C10). Pytheas’ accounts were only preserved, and largely disbelieved, in the works of later authors such as a) Strabo. Text and transl.: H.L. Jones, The geography of Strabo, Loeb classical library, 8 vols (1917-32) [UL R707.5 STR.1-8]. Further details were also provided by the Roman scholar b) Pliny. Text and transl.: H. Rackham et al., Pliny, Natural history, Loeb classical library, 10 vols (1938-62) [UL R712.5 PLI.3-12]. The fullest classical geography, which touches on ‘Scandia’, is that of c) Ptolemy. Text: O. Cuntz, Die Geographie des Ptolemaeus (1923) [UL N.47.48].

Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

Transl.: E.L. Stevenson, Geography of Claudius Ptolemy (1932) [UL Atlas.4.93.22]. For commentary, see (C13)


Merovingian period sources

For general guidance:

For specific texts:
[B31] Jordanes the Goth compiled his Getica around 550, which contains some observations on the political geography of the Scandinavian tribes. Text: T. Mommsen, Iordanis, Romana et Getica, MGH AA 5:1 (1882) [UL R560.G117]. Transl.: C.C. Mierow, Jordanes: the origin and deeds of the Goths in English version (1908) [UL 9500.e.195]. For text and German translation of the relevant passages, with full commentary, see (C13)

[B32] Procopius composed his Wars around the middle of the sixth century; the references to Scandinavia are rather oblique and dictated by the wanderings of the mysterious tribe known as the ‘Eruli’ (C12). Text and transl.: H.B. Dewing, Procopius, 7 vols, Loeb classical library (1914-54) [UL R707.5 PRO.1-7]

[B33] Gregory of Tours’ ‘History of the Franks’ does not mention Scandinavia but does include (in III.3) the account of a Danish raid of the early sixth century into Frankish territory led by one ‘Chlochilaich’, long considered to be the same historical figure as the ‘Hygelac’ of the Old English poem Beowulf (B101). Text: B. Krusch and W. Levison, Gregorii episcopi Turonensis, Libri historiarum X, 2nd edn, MGH SRM 1:1 (1951) [UL R560.G113]. Transl.: O.M. Dalton, The history of the Franks by Gregory of Tours, 2 vols (1927) [UL 560:44.c.95.4-5]; L. Thorpe, Gregory of Tours: the history of the Franks (1974) [UL 9560.d.210, repr. Uc.7.7195]

Frankish and other continental sources

This heading covers texts produced effectively anywhere in continental western Europe between the eighth and eleventh centuries which touch on Scandinavian affairs; sources which concentrate exclusively on Viking activity within (or near) the realms of the Frankish empire are only selectively included. The ‘biggies’ consist of the works emanating from the see of Hamburg-Bremen (B70 ff.), but a number of other minor sources are useful and, on occasion, extremely significant. Guidance in tackling this material can be found in (A117); the most comprehensive account remains:

[B35] W. Wattenbach et al., Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen, the original version of which was revised in two distinct parts around the middle of this century. The earlier, dealing with the Classical period up until (and including) the Carolingians, is W. Levison et al. [hence known as Wattenbach-Levison], Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter (1952-73) [UL 570:47.b.95.1-3]; for the later period of until the end of the eleventh century, see R. Holtzmann et al. [so known as Wattenbach-Holtzmann], Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter: deutsche Kaiserzeit (1938-48) [UL 570:83.c.90.2-4]

The major sources can be found in MGH (B10), and many of the most interesting also in AQDGM (B11). For some collected translations, see:


For Viking raids in France, see the following (in Danish translation):
[B38] Erling Albrechtsen, Vikingerne i Franken: skriftlige kilder fra det 9. århundrede (1976) [UL 592:12.c.95.27]
Royal biographies

Of the biographies produced of the Frankish emperors, only those of the Carolingians of the ninth century have much direct information on Scandinavia; for Rimbert’s life of Anskar, see (B72).

[B40] For an anthology with text and German transl.: R. Rau et al., Quellen zur karolingischen Reichsgeschichte. I: Die Reichsannalen; Einhard, Leben Karls des Grossen; zwei ‘Leben’ Ludwigs; Nithard, Geschichten, AQDGM 5 (1956) [UL 570:01.c.57.5]

[B41] Various accounts were composed on the life and deeds of Charlemagne. The standard is that of [a] Einhard (died 840), a court official who composed his Vita Karoli around the 820s. Text: O. Holder-Egger, Einhardi Vita Karoli magni, 6th edn, MGH SRG (1922) [UL 570:01.c.8.26]. Text and transl.: E.S. Firchow and E.H. Zeydel, Einhard: the life of Charlemagne (1972) [UL 560:46.d.95.6]. Text and German transl. in (B40):157-211. Transl.: (B36):24-43 or P.E. Dutton, Charlemagne’s courtier: the complete Einhard (1998). A slightly later life, but containing some interesting observations, is that of [b] Notker balbulus ‘the stammerer’ (died 912), who composed his Gesta Karoli around 887. Text: H.F. Haeffete, Notker der Stammler, Taten Kaiser Karls des Grossen, MGH SRG n.s. 12 (1962) [UL 570:01.c.10.11]. Text and German transl.: (B60a):321-427. Both lives are translated in L. Thorpe, Einhard and Notker the stammerer: two lives of Charlemagne (1969) [UL 9560.d.134]

[B42] For Louis the Pious two further biographies are also relevant, as well as the poetic account by Ernold (B47). [a] Thegan(us) or Theganbert composed his Vita Hludowici imperatoris ‘life of emperor Louis’ in the late 830s. Text: E. Tremp, Theganus: Gesta Hludowici imperatoris, Astronomus: Vita Hludowici imperatoris, MGH SRG 64 (1995) [UL 570:01.c.8.38]. Transl.: (B36):141-55. Text and German transl. in (B40):213-53. [b] There is also a further anonymous life by the ‘Astronomer’, which can be found in Tremp’s edition and (B40):257-381. Transl.: A. Cabaniss, Son of Charlemagne: a contemporary life of Louis the Pious (1961) [UL 560:46.d.95.2]. For commentary, see: E. Tremp, Studien zu den Gesta Hludowici imperatoris des Trierer Chorbischöfs Thegan, MGH Schriften 32 (1988) [UL 570:01.c.3.40]

Verse

Only a small portion of the large amounts of Carolingian verse is cited here; for a general overview with reference to the Norse, see:


[B46] Paul the Deacon (died c. 799) is best known for his history of the Lombards, but he was also the author of some poetry in the late eighth century, most relevant for his comments on the Danish king Sigifrid he was asked to visit on a missionary basis. Text: E. Dümmler, Poetae latini aevi Carolini I, MGH (1881), 51-52 [UL R560.G116]; K. Neff, Die Gedichte des Paulus Diaconus, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters 3,4 (1908) [UL 716:01.c.17.3], 101-05; see also (B45):218-19

[B47] Ernold nigellus or the ‘black’ composed his praise poem in honour of emperor Louis the Pious (the Carmen in honorem Hludowici) in 826; it is of particular interest for Scandinavian history in Book IV, which tells of Louis the Pious setting up the early missions under Ebo, provides some observations on the pagan customs of the Danes, and gives an interesting account of Harald klak’s baptism at Ingelheim. Text: E. Dümmler, Poetae latini aevi Carolini II, MGH (1884), 5-79 [UL R560.G116]. Text and French transl.: E. Faral, Ermold le noir: poème sur Louis le pieux et épitres au roi Pépin, Les classiques de l’histoire de France au moyen age 14 (1932) [UL 560:01.d.1.13]; cf. (B45) for background

Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

**Annals**

Numerous sets of annals were produced in the Carolingian empire, and they provide a fundamental source for ninth-century Denmark in particular. The earliest and in some ways most authoritative set, covering the late eighth and early ninth centuries, is the:


Further annals were compiled as continuations in various monastic houses, but only a couple are as yet readily available in English. For text and German translation of three of the most useful of these, see:


**Histories and chronicles**

The most important historical work for Viking-age Scandinavia is Adam of Bremen’s *Gesta*. Other chronicles tend not to contain much information on Scandinavia, but when they do it is often in the form of priceless historical nuggets.

[B60] **Regino of Prüm** (died 915) composed his *Chronica* covering events up to 906; his work was later continued by Adalbert of Magdeburg until 967. Text: F. Kurze, *Reginonis abbatis Prumiensis Chronicon cum continuatione Treverensi*, MGH SRG (1890) [UL 570:01.c.8.18]. [a] Text and German transl.: R. Rau et al., *Quellen zur karolingischen Reichsgeschichte. III: Jahrbücher von Fulda; Regino, Chronik; Notker, Taten Karls*, AQDGM 7 (1960), 179-319 [UL 570:01.c.57.7]; for Adalbert’s continuation, see (B61a):185-231.

[B61] **Widukind of Corvey** composed his history of the Saxons around 970; it is of great value for its depiction of Harald bluetooth’s acceptance of Christianity a few years previously. Text: P. Hirsch et al., *Widukindi monachi Corbeiensis Rerum gestarum saxonicarum libri tres*, MGH SRG, 5th edn (1935) [UL 570:01.c.8.31]. [a] Text and German transl.: A. Bauer et al., *Quellen zur Geschichte der sächsischen Kaiserzeit: Widukinds Sachsengeschichte, Adalberts Fortsetzung der Chronik Reginos, Liudprands Werke*, AQDGM 8 (1971) [UL 570:01.c.57.8], 1-183.


Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

Merseburg: Chronik, AQDGM 9 (1966) [UL 570:01.c.57.9]. Excerpts also transl. in (B81):347-50 (on the Anglo-Danish kings)
[B64] Dudo of St Quentin composed his history of the dukes of Normandy (or Gesta Normannorum ‘Deeds of the Normans’) in the opening decades of the eleventh century; it is naturally of more use for Norman than Scandinavian history, but has something to say about the Norse origins of the Normans and their later relations with Scandinavia. Text: M.J. Lair, Dudonis sancti Quintini De moribus et actis primorum Normannie duceum, Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie 3. série 3 (1865) [UL P567.b.36.23]. Transl.: E. Christiansen, Dudo of St Quentin: History of the Normans (1998) [UL 568:2.c.95.155]

Hamburg-Bremen

Somewhat artificially, the historical works emanating from the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen have been set aside in a separate section, not only because they far outstrip other contemporary sources in the depth of their coverage of Scandinavia but also because they are in many ways closely interlinked. A basic collection of material with Latin texts and German translations can be found in:

From the early ninth century under Anskar to the early twelfth the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen carried the papal authority to organise the conversion of the Scandinavians; their tale is largely one of fighting against insuperable odds, whether due to the marginal position of Hamburg-Bremen in German politics or the greater influence of missionaries from elsewhere in the field. There is a fair amount of diplomatic material and correspondence from the period which illuminates their efforts (B741-742), alongside two major historical works, each of which deals with Anskar, bishop of (successively) Hamburg, Bremen, and Hamburg-Bremen.

[B72] Rimbert wrote his Vita Anskarii soon after Anskar’s death in 865; although an invaluable source for early missionary activity in Scandinavia, its value as a historical source is compromised by its adherence to the principles of hagiographical rather than historical composition. Text: G. Waitz, Vita Anskarii auctore Rimberto, accedit Vita Rimberti, MGH SRG (1884) [UL 570:01.c.8.17]. Transl.: C.H. Robinson, Anskar the apostle of the north, 801-65 (1921) [UL 9100.d.3208]; further excerpts on Anskar in (B1):227-30. Robinson’s translation can be accessed online at www/fordham.edu/halsall/basis/anskar.html. Text and German transl.: (B70):1-133. For commentary on the historicity of the text and Rimbert’s attempts to portray Anskar as a frustrated martyr, see (L118) and H. Lutterbach, ‘Keine Sühne ohne Blut? Das Martyrium des hl. Ansgar’, Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerordens und seiner Zweige 106 (1995), 79-99. [a] The anonymous Vita Rimberti ‘life of Rimbert’ is largely of incidental interest for Scandinavian history, although it does contain some further observations which carry on from Rimbert’s own life of Anskar, since Rimbert also undertook missionary activity in the north. Text in Waitz’s edition above, 80-100. German transl.: J.C.M. Laurent, Leben der Erzbischöfe Anskar und Rimbert, 2nd edn rev. W. Wattenbach, Die Geschichtsschreiber der deutschen Vorzeit: neuntes Jahrhundert 7 (1889), 103-36 [UL 570:01.d.2.7]

[B73] Adam of Bremen’s Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum ‘Deeds of the archbishops of Hamburg-[Bremen]’ is yet more significant, and provides the only contemporary attempt to produce anything like a history of Viking-age Scandinavia. It was first composed around 1075 and then added to, partly with notes from Adam’s own hand, with a series of scholia in the early 1080s and later. While indispensable as the single most important written source for the (particularly late) Viking age, Adam’s work has come under close scrutiny and heavy criticism for its biased and tendentious approach to many of its subject areas; it was clearly designed to chronicle and then justify the claims of the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen to authority over the Scandinavian Churches. In the early part of the work Adam is heavily reliant on Rimbert for his source material, and can sometimes be seen to select and adapt according to his purposes; a variety of witnesses are cited for the later Viking age, the most celebrated being the Danish king Svein Estrithsen. Text: B. Schmeidler, Magistri Adami Bremensis Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum, MGH SRG, 3rd edn (1917) [UL 570:01.c.8.29]. Text and German transl. in (B70):135-499. Transl.: F.J. Tschan, History of the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen, Records of civilization: sources and studies 53 (1959) [UL 60:8.c.95.3], reprinted with a new
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age


For much of this period the responsibilities of the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen extended more widely to include all the ‘Transalbingians’, ie. the peoples living beyond (to the north and east of) the river Elbe. Although the history and conversion of the Slavic tribes of eastern Europe falls outside the scope of this bibliography, events here are often interesting as comparative material for Scandinavia itself. An interesting text which gives the eastern European perspective, as well as providing the only evidence for Adam of Bremen’s actual name, is:


**English and Anglo-Norman sources**

English and Anglo-Norman sources for Scandinavian history are at once more numerous yet less informative than those from the continent. To some extent this is a matter of preservation and interest; while the German missionaries had Adam of Bremen to record their deeds, the large numbers of English missionaries in the North failed to gain such an audience, rather surprisingly given the large amount of evidence relating the activities of the Anglo-Saxons in Germany in the seventh and eighth centuries. In addition, the close cultural contacts between England and Scandinavia in the late Viking age, particularly during the period of the Anglo-Danish kings in the first half of the eleventh century, means that many texts from the time have much to say about the Norse, but are often irritatingly reticent about their neighbours across the North sea as opposed to their ( unwanted) neighbours next door in England itself.

**Source anthologies and guides**

The following are all useful collections of material, including some Scandinavian verse, in translation:

[B80] M. Ashdown, *English and Norse documents relating to the reign of Ethelred the unready* (1930) [UL 717:1.c.90.3]


**Histories and chronicles**

This group is again only a selection of the available sources, focussing firstly on those which have some contribution to make to the history of Scandinavia itself:

[B85] Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica* ‘ecclesiastical history’, which extends to the year 731, is of minor interest for his comments on the origins of the Angles, Saxons, and particularly Jutes; the origins of the Jutes has long been a controversial issue, and can be tied in with the relations between other tribal groups such as the Danes and the ‘Eruli’ in the pre-Viking period (C12), cf. also (B30). Text and transl.: B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, *Bede’s ecclesiastical history of the English people* (1969; corr. repr. 1991) [UL 716:01.c.2.37; repr. 716:01.c.2.78]. Transl.: L. Sherley-Price et al., *Bede, Ecclesiastical history of the English people*, rev. edn (1990) [UL 9000.d.6988]

[B86] The *Anglo-Saxon chronicle* is a vast, sprawling set of annals in several versions that cover English history up until the middle of the twelfth century (in its latest form, the Peterborough chronicle).
Aside from tales of Viking expeditions in England, it is significant for the (often all too brief) accounts of Scandinavian political history, especially relations with, and between, the Danes and Norwegians in the late tenth and eleventh centuries. Text: The Anglo-Saxon chronicle: a collaborative edition, gen. edd. D. Dumville et al. (1983 ff.) [UL 541:14.c.95.40 ff.] (all the major manuscripts now edited); for more general use: B. Thorpe, The Anglo-Saxon chronicle, according to the several original authorities, 2 vols, RS 23 (1861; repr. 1964) [UL R542.30.23] (second volume contains English translation); C. Plummer, Two of the Saxon chronicles parallel, 2 vols (1892-99; rev. repr. 1952) [UL 717:3.d.95.1-2]. Transl.: (B81):145-261, and (B82):103-215; M.J. Swanton, The Anglo-Saxon chronicle (1996) [UL 541:14.c.95.104]

Æthelweard was an Anglo-Saxon nobleman who compiled a history of the English, largely based on earlier chronicles, around the end of the tenth century; although adding relatively little to the accounts of the Vikings in England, his adaptation of Scandinavian names in particular seems to imply some contacts with, and interest in, the Danes. Text and transl.: A. Campbell, The chronicle of Æthelweard (1962) [UL 716:01.c.2.21]

Royal biographies
The various royal biographies composed in Anglo-Saxon England, occasionally verging on the hagiographical for some kings, are of diffuse value; the earlier ones are naturally most useful in a Scandinavian context for their observations on the Viking invaders, while the later ones provide essential portraits of the activities of the Anglo-Danish kings in the early eleventh century.


Abbo of Fleury composed his Passio sancti Eadmundi ‘life of saint Edmund’ on the king of East Anglia who was killed in 869 by rampaging Danes; it is additionally significant as the major fixed chronological point employed by the earliest Icelandic historians such as Ari (B255) for dating the settlement of Iceland. Text: M. Winterbottom, Three lives of English saints (1972), 65-87 [UL 118:3.c.95.17]. Text and transl.: Lord F. Hervey, Corolla sancti Eadmundi: the garland of saint Edmund king and martyr (1907), 6-59 [UL RC.20.16] (with much other material, including later versions of Abbo transl. into Old English). Commentary: A. Gransden, ‘Abbo of Fleury’s Passio sancti Eadmundi’, Revue Bénédictine 105 (1995), 20-78

The Encomium Emmæ was composed by a cleric in St Omer during the reign of Harthacnut (1040-42) for queen Emma; it is of great value as a source for the Anglo-Danish kings, especially the position of the shadowy king of Denmark Harald Sveinsson, brother of Knut, but is a highly tendentious source in many ways. Text: (B635): II,375-426. Text and transl.: A. Campbell, Encomium Emmæ reginae, Camden third series 72 (1949) [UL 540:01.c.1.239]; repr. with introduction by S. Keynes, Camden classic reprints 4 (1998) [UL 540:01.c.4.4]. For further commentary on the purposes of the author, see F. Lifshitz, ‘The Encomium Emmæ reginae: a “political pamphlet” of the eleventh century?’, Haskins Society journal 1 (1989), 39-50; A. Orchard, ‘The literary background to the Encomium Emmæ reginae’, Journal of Medieval Latin 11 (2001), 156-83.

Hagiography
It is at once both surprising and irritating that there are almost no English sources which talk of missionaries at work in Scandinavia in the late Viking age, even though on other grounds we suspect there must have been many and that their influence on the Scandinavian church was extensive (L132 ff.).

Willibrord, the renowned Apostle of the Frisians, also made a brief visit to Denmark in the early eighth century according to his life by Alcuin. Text: W. Levison, ‘Vita Willibrordi archiepiscopi Traiectensis’, Passiones vitaæque sanctorum aevi Merovingici, MGH SRM 7 (1920), 81-141 [UL R560.G113]. Text and German transl.: H.-J. Reischmann, Willibrord, Apostel der Friesen: seine Vita nach Alcuin und Thiofrid, lateinisch-deutsch (1989) [UL 62:1.c.95.30]. Transl.: C.H. Talbot, The Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Germany, being the lives of St. Willibrord, Boniface, Sturm, Leoba and Lebuin,
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

together with the Hodoeporicon of St. Willibald and a selection from the correspondence of St. Boniface (1954) [UL 44:1.c.8.2]

Verse
Old English vernacular poetry has frequently been plundered by literary scholars hunting for analogues with Norse material, in particular in the light of the supposed ‘heroic’ code exemplified by the material of both cultures. Occasional compositions do also provide some kind of commentary on matters Scandinavian, largely in the form of compositions about Viking activities in England. An anthology of surviving verse in translation is provided by:

Of the individual poems, the two following have the most immediate relevance for Scandinavian history:
[B101] Beowulf, the major epic poem of the Old English corpus, purportedly provides information on the early history of Sweden and has often been invoked as a source for the tension between the two dominant tribal groups of the Svear and Götar (F1 ff., F44 ff.). However, any historical value in the poem is highly dubious. Text: F. Klaeber, Beowulf and the fight at Finnsburg, 3rd edn with suppl. (1950) [UL 717:3.d.95.4]; B. Mitchell and F.C. Robinson, Beowulf: an edition with relevant shorter texts (1998) [UL 9005.c.8854]. Transl.: M.J. Swanton, Beowulf (1978) [UL 717:3.c.95.20]; (B100):408-94


Other sources
[B105] Homiletic material, although not strictly speaking conforming to the definition of this section as ‘historical sources’, often contains observations on the Vikings in England and occasionally some remarks on their customs and habits. Most striking are the works of Ælfric abbot of Eynsham and Wulfstan archbishop of York, who were active at the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh centuries. Of the numerous homilies attributed to these two Anglo-Saxon authors, that on pagan gods, De falsis diis, stands out. Originally composed by Ælfric, it was later rewritten by Wulfstan, and contains many interesting observations on the pagan beliefs of the Danes. [a] Ælfric. Text: J.C. Pope, Homilies of Ælfric: a supplementary collection, Early English text society 259-60 (1967-68), 667-724 [UL 719:01.c.1.230-31]. [b] Wulfstan. Text: D. Bethurum, The homilies of Wulfstan (1957), 221-24 [UL 717:3.d.95.3]

[B106] The Old English translation of Orosius’ world history (Historia adversum paganos) produced at the court of king Alfred in the late ninth century contains (typically) much new material added by the compilers. Of outstanding interest for Scandinavian history is the account included of the journeys and lifestyles of two merchants, one English (Wulfstan), the other Norwegian (Ohthere or Ottar). The Anglo-Saxon author also added some interesting comments of his own on the political geography of northern Europe, but the account of Ohthere in particular is useful not only for that but also for a snapshot of what a ninth-century Norwegian chieftain got up to; see (C16). Text: J. Bately, The Old English Orosius, EETS SS 6 (1980) [UL 719:01.c.6.6]. Transl. excerpts relating to Scandinavia can be found in (B1):45-48. The most useful edition for current purposes, with text, translation, and commentary, is [a] N. Lund and C. Fell, Two voyagers at the court of king Alfred: the ventures of Ohthere and Wulfstan together with the description of northern Europe from the Old English Orosius (1984) [UL 1984.9.957]


Anglo-Norman historians
The early Norman historians of the late eleventh and twelfth centuries have naturally a deal to say in particular about the reigns of the Anglo-Danish kings and the events of 1066 leading to the Norman
conquest of England, but also occasionally contain stray remarks about Scandinavia itself. Only a few of
the major sources are listed here.


[B111] William of Malmesbury is definitely one of the most important Anglo-Norman historians, not only in terms of the breadth of his work but also because he seems to have had access to many source materials now lost; he was active in the first half of the twelfth century. [a] His *Gesta regum Anglorum* ‘Deeds of the kings of the English’ contains a full account of the reign of Æthelstan (924-39), where it mentions relations with a king Harald (presumably Harald fairhair (E30 ff.) of Norway). Text and transl.: R.A.B. Mynors et al., *William of Malmesbury, Gesta regvm Anglorvm: the history of the English kings*, 2 vols (1998-99) [UL 716:01.c.2.94-95]; the relevant excerpts can be found in (B81):303-10. [b] His history of the abbey of Glastonbury is also surprisingly interesting, in that it contains an obituary list of bishops from the reign of king Edgar (959-75) which mentions one Sigfrid ‘bishop of Norway’. Text and transl.: J. Scott, *The early history of Glastonbury: an edition, translation and study of William of Malmesbury’s De antiquitate Glastonie ecclesie* (1981) [UL 479:7.c.95.46]; cf. also (L40)

[B112] John of Worcester wrote his *Chronicon ex chronicis* (formerly attributed to Florence of Worcester) around 1140, and provides some extra material on the period of the Anglo-Danish kings in particular. Text and transl.: P. McGurk et al., *The chronicle of John of Worcester. II: The annals from 450 to 1066* (1995) [UL 716:01.c.2.86]; further excerpts transl. in (B81):310-19 (on the Anglo-Danish kings), (B82):215-28

[B113] Orderic Vitalis wrote his epic *Historia ecclesiastica* in the early twelfth century; it contains some useful observations on Scandinavian history, particularly during the eleventh century. Text and transl.: M. Chibnall, *The ecclesiastical history of Orderic Vitalis*, 6 vols (1969-80) [UL 716:01.c.2.28-33]

Celtic sources
Sources from the Celtic-speaking areas of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales are naturally most informative on the Vikings abroad in the British isles, yet they also occasionally provide extra information on the Scandinavian background. The Irish sources are particularly striking in their rare ability (or simply willingness) to distinguish Danes from Norwegians through the contrast between *Dubgaill* ‘Black foreigners’ referring to the former and *Finngaill* ‘White foreigners’ for the latter. On the other hand, they frequently tend to be disappointingly reticent on the fate of the Viking colonies in the northern and western isles of Scotland, where Scandinavian culture took root most firmly in Britain. Only a selection of sources from the Celtic-speaking areas has been included here; for further guidance, see (I240) and (B125).

Anthologies

Guides

For a survey of Irish perceptions and presentations of the Vikings in a wide range of sources:
The annals of Ireland, most of which are preserved in manuscripts no older than the late mediaeval period, are the most comprehensive source; for guidance within this tricky body of material, see: [B130] G. Mac Niocaill, The medieval Irish annals, Medieval Irish history series 3 (1975) [UL Uc.7.6398]; K. Grabowski and D. Dumville, Chronicles and annals of mediaeval Ireland and Wales: the Clonmacnoise-group texts, Studies in Celtic history 4 (1984) [UL 541:12.c.95.57]; cf. also (B122), ch. 4: ‘The annals’

Ireland

For the early Viking age at least most of the various recensions of annals are closely interrelated, and seem to betray the existence of an earlier ur-chronicle, often called the ‘Chronicle of Ireland’.


[B132] Clonmacnoise. These annals only survive in the form of an English translation made in the early seventeenth century. Text: D. Murphy, The annals of Clonmacnoise, being annals of Ireland from the earliest period to A.D. 1408, translated into English A.D. 1627 by Conell Mageoghagan (1896; repr. 1993) [UL S488:01.b.1.10; repr. 1994:8.1078]


[B135] Inisfallen. Text and transl.: S. Mac Airt, The annals of Inisfallen (MS. Rawlinson B.503) (1951) [UL 733:3.c.95.2]

A large amount of material is preserved in various compilations from the early modern period that seem to have been based on older sources, some of which are now lost.

[B136] The work of the Four masters is among the most comprehensive, put together in the 1630s by four clerics from Donegal. Text and transl.: J. O’Donovan, Annaí na rioghacht Éireann: annals of the kingdom of Ireland, by the Four Masters, from the earliest period to the year 1616, 7 vols, 2nd edn (1856) [UL Acton.b.25.223-29]

[B137] The seventeenth-century scholar Dúald Mac Firbís left a number of useful texts, including some fragments of annals copied from older documents which provide some interesting observations on early Norwegian and Orcadian history in particular. Text and transl.: J. O’Donovan, Annals of Ireland: three fragments copied from ancient sources by Dubhaltach mac Firbisigh (1860) [UL S488:01.c.1.19]; J.N. Radner, Fragmentary annals of Ireland (1978) [UL 554:6.c.95.5]. For background and commentary, see also: N. Ó Muraile, The celebrated antiquary Dubhaltach Mac Firbhisigh (c. 1600-1671): his lineage, life and learning, Maynooth monographs 6 (1996) [UL 488:16.b.95.28]

Scotland

Scottish annals and genealogies are far less copious than the Irish ones, and often interrelated textually; see (B120) for an anthology in translation. For a collection of early chronicles, regnal lists, and much else besides, see:

[B140] Text: W.F. Skene, Chronicles of the Picts, Chronicles of the Scots, and other early memorials of Scottisch history (1867) [UL OP.6.24]. For more recent discussion and some newly edited versions of the texts, see M.O. Anderson, Kings and kingship in early Scotland (1973; rev. edn 1980) [UL 550:1.c.95.6; rev. edn 550:1.c.95.8]

Wales

[B145] The title Annales Cambria reflects various mediaeval Welsh annals. Text: J. Williams ab Ithel, Annales Cambriae, RS 20 (1860; repr. 1965) [UL R542.30.20]. For the oldest versions covering the years up to 954, see: E. Phillimore, ‘The Annales Cambriae and Old-Welsh genealogies from Harleian MS.
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

3859’, Y Cymnrodor 9 (1888), 141-83 (for text); J. Morris, Nennius: British history and the Welsh annals (1980), 44-49 (transl.), 85-91 (text) [UL 541:12.c.95.50]; also transl. A.W. Wade-Evans, Nennius’ ‘History of the Britons’ (1938), 84-101 [UL 179.c.27.36]

Man
[B148] The Man Chronicle has little of independent value until the mid-eleventh century. Text and transl.: P.A. Munch and Rev. Goss, Chronica regum Mannie et insularum: the Chronicle of Man and the Sudreys, 2 vols, Manx Society 22-23 (1874) [UL Kk.5.22-23]; G. Broderick, Chronica regum Mannie et insularum: Chronicles of the kings of Man and the isles (1979) [UL Ub.7.2037]

Sagas and narratives
Ireland
For guidance, see (B122), ch. 9: ‘Eleventh- and twelfth-century histories and compilations’
[B150] The Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh ‘War of the Gaedhil [Gaels or Irish] against the Gaill [Foreigners or Norse]’ was written around the first half of the twelfth century in the form of a historical saga, which heavily exaggerates the Viking invasion of Ireland in order to enhance the reputation of high king Brian Boru in defeating them; aside from the material incorporated from earlier annals, its historical value is slight. Text and transl.: J.H. Todd, Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh: the war of the Gaedhil with the Gaill, or The invasions of Ireland by the Danes and other Norsemen, RS 48 (1867) [UL Rs42.30.48]. Commentary: M. Ni Mhaonaigh, ‘Coe Gáedel re Gallaib: some dating considerations’, Peritia 9 (1995), 354-77, and ‘Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib and the annals: a comparison’, Ériu 47 (1996), 101-26
[B151] The saga of Cellachán of Cashel is a slightly later saga than the Cogadh (B150) with even less claim to any historical authenticity. Text and transl.: A. Bugge, Caithreim Cellachain Caisil, or The victorious career of Cellachan of Cashel, or The wars between the Irishmen and the Norsemen in the middle of the 10th century (1905) [UL 593:01.b.1.71]. Commentary: D. Ó Corráin, ‘Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil: history or propaganda?’, Ériu 25 (1974), 1-69

Wales
[B155] Most mediaeval Welsh tales can safely be said to have little additional useful information on Scandinavian affairs; cf., for example, the bizarre accounts of the Norwegian kings in the genealogy of Gruffudd ap Cynan, transl. D.S. Evans, A medieval prince of Wales: the life of Gruffudd ap Cynan (1990) [UL 1992.8.2328], and cf. (E88)
[B156] The Welsh Bruts contain some information of value on the Viking age, most accessible through a series of texts and translations from T. Jones published in the history and law series by the Board of Celtic studies: Brut y twysogion or The chronicle of the princes: Peniarth MS. 20 version, 6 (1941) and 11 (1952) [UL 485:01.b.1.6, -.11]; Brut y twysogion or The chronicle of the princes: Red Book of Hergest version, 16 (1955) [UL 485:01.b.1.16]; Brenhinedd y Saesson or The kings of the Saxons, 25 (1971) [UL 485:01.b.1.25]

Other sources
[B160] Dicuil was an Irish monk (although working in a Carolingian context), who in 825 completed a book on world geography; while heavily indebted to earlier, classical authorities, chapter 7 in particular contains independent observations on the North Atlantic. Text and transl.: J.J. Tierney and L. Bieler, Dicuili liber de mensura orbis terrae, Scriptores latini Hiberniae 6 (1967) [UL 716:01.b.1.6]

Russian sources
Russian written sources do not begin to appear until the eleventh century, and their value for the early history of the Vikings in the East is doubtful. It is nevertheless important to remember the close connections between Scandinavia and Russia in the eleventh century, as well as the fact that the Russian ‘state’ was developing at the same time as the kingdoms of Scandinavia and often in similar ways; the history of the princes of Kiev can therefore be of great comparative interest.
Anthologies and guides

There are a number of useful anthologies with excerpts in English translation and introductory notes, although those of interest mostly come from the texts listed separately under (B180 ff.).


For further guidance in early Russian literature, see:


[B180] The *Russian Primary Chronicle*, or *Povest’ vremennykh let* ‘Tale of bygone years’, often (though somewhat misleadingly) ascribed to the monk Nestor, is the prime annalistic source for early Russian (or Kievan) history before the advent of local chronicles in the middle ages. It exists in two major redactions, the Laurentian and the Hypatian, and in its current form was put together some time early in the twelfth century; heavily reliant on Byzantine sources for the early period and oral tradition for the later, the extent to which it was based on earlier Russian written chronicles is uncertain. Text and Russian transl.: D.S. Likhachev and V.P. Adrianova-Peretts, *Povest’ vremennykh let*, 2 vols (1950) [UL 586:1.c.95-4.5 or -.96-97], also a further rev. edn (1996) [UL -.415]. Transl.: S.H. Cross, ‘The Russian Primary Chronicle’, *Harvard studies and notes in philology* 12 (1930), 75-320 [UL 779.c.5.11], or S.H. Cross and O.P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, *The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian text*, The Medieval Academy of America publication 60 (1953) [UL 9586.c.274]; excerpts also in (B170-172). Commentary: S. Franklin, ‘Borrowed time: perceptions of the past in twelfth-century Russia’, (O68):157-71. [a] The treaties with Byzantium from the first half of the tenth century are also of great interest. Transl.: (B1):97-100. Commentary: I. Sorlin, ‘Les traités de Byzance avec la Russie au Xe siècle’, *Cahiers du monde Russe et Soviétique* 2 (1961), 313-60, 447-75; J. Lind, ‘The Russo-Byzantine treaties and the early urban structure of Rus’, *The Slavonic and east European review* 62 (1984), 362-70

[B181] Hagiography from mediaeval Russia has little to say about the Vikings, but the traditions surrounding the princes Boris and Gleb, killed by their brother Sviatopolk in 1015 in dynastic feuds, are possibly of great comparative interest; the cults which developed in the middle of the eleventh century may betray influence on (or perhaps from) those of other royal saints, and in this connection saint Olaf Haraldsson of Norway is the most striking candidate, given the close links between the royal houses of Kiev and Norway in this period, cf. (L235 ff.). The first treatment outside the *Primary chronicle* is Nestor’s *Lesson on the life and murder of the blessed passion-sufferers Boris and Gleb* composed in the late eleventh century. This, along with much other interesting material, can be found transl. in: P. Hollingsworth, *The hagiography of Kievan Rus’,* Harvard library of early Ukrainian literature: English translations 2 (1992) [UL 67:7.c.95.164]. Commentary: J. Bortnes, *Visions of glory: studies in early Russian hagiography*, Slavica Norvegica 5 (1988) [UL 67:7.c.95.144]

[B182] Ilarion’s *Sermon on law and grace* of around 1050 is of interest for its presentation of prince Vladimir as the saviour of the Russian people and its arguments for his sanctity; there are echoes here of Adam of Bremen’s treatment of Harald bluetooth a generation later (B73). Transl.: S. Franklin, *Sermons and rhetoric of Kievan Rus’,* Harvard library of early Ukrainian literature: English translations 5 (1991), 3-29 [UL 67:7.c.95.155]

**Byzantine sources**

The vast range of Byzantine sources relating to eastern Europe and hence to the Vikings in Russia and elsewhere cannot be encompassed here. Instead, only a few texts of particular interest have been cited; for further material, see (J52). A general survey of relevant sources can be found in:


[B192] Of the homilies of Photios, patriarch of Byzantium, two refer to the attacks on the city by the Rus’ in 860 and are of some interest for Byzantine attitudes towards their northern neighbours, even if it


[B194] The eleventh-century Byzantine administrator Kekaumenos is best known for his *Strategicon*, but among other fragments associated with him is a text known as the *Logos nouthetetikos pros basilea* ‘Word of advice for the emperor’, which has a very interesting section on Harald hardrada (E85 ff.) among the Varangian guard in Byzantium. Text: B. Wassiliewsky and V. Jernstedt, *Cecaumeni Strategicon et incerti scriptoris de officiis regiis libellus*, Zapiski istoriko-filologieskogo fakulteta Imp. Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta 38 (1896), 91-104 [UL 759.b.6.38]. Excerpt on Harald hardrada transl. (J52):57-58; (B1):104

Islamic sources

There is a vast wealth of material from the Moslem world touching on eastern Europe, particularly due to the keen interest of the Arabic geographers, but only a selection of the most important authors from the Viking age itself are listed here. Emphasis has been placed on texts referring to the Rus’ (J26 ff.), especially when they hint at a Scandinavian background; for material on Viking activity in the western Arabic world, ie. Spain and the Mediterranean, see (I265-266). For background:


Anthologies

Since a familiarity with classical Arabic is not a conventional skill of the average Viking historian, the best way to approach the Arabic material is through selected anthologies. The fundamental collection of excerpts edited for these purposes remains:


This group has been translated into English:


And more usefully, with accompanying notes, into Norwegian:


Further, more selective, collections in translation are:


Individual authors

[B210] Ibn Khurrradadbih was director of ‘posts and intelligence’ in Baghdad and Samarra before his death around 911, a post which fitted him admirably for his geographical accounts, including mentions of the Rus trading in Baghdad. He composed his ‘Book of routes and kingdoms’ around the middle of the ninth century, the first Arabic author to deal significantly with the Rus’. Norwegian transl.: (B204):10-

[B211] Ibn Rusta compiled his ‘Book of precious treasures’, an encyclopaedia with geographical accounts, in the first half of the tenth century. Norwegian transl.: (B204):14-17


[B213] Al-Istakhri wrote a further ‘Book on routes and kingdoms’ around the middle of the tenth century. Heavily reliant on the works of Al-Balkhri from a few decades previously, Al-Istakhri’s account of the Rus’ contains the celebrated division into three groups. His work was then expanded around the 970s by Ibn Hawkal. Norwegian transl.: (B204):26-30, 47-51

[B214] Al Masudi (died 956) was a traveller of the early tenth century, who compiled a number of geographical works, the most significant for the Rus’ being his ‘Meadows of gold’. Norwegian transl.: (B204):30-42. Commentary: A.M.H. Shboul, *Al-Mas‘udi and his world: a Muslim Humanist and his interest in non-Muslims* (1979) [UL Moh.200.c.230]

[B215] Ibrahim ibn Yaqub al-Turtushi composed an account of his travels throughout western Europe around 965, which included on the itinerary a stop at Schleswig (Hedeby) in Denmark; the text is only known through the reports of later writers such as Al-Bakri and Al-Qazwini. Norwegian transl.: (B204):103-04; excerpt also transl. (D7):28. For detailed commentary, see (I266):228-71

[B216] The Arabic poet Al-Ghazal is reputed to have been sent on an embassy to the islands of the Majus ‘pagans’ following the Viking raid on southern Spain of 844, of which a report first appears in the works of the Valencian Ibn Dihyah from around the late twelfth century. This remarkable tale would be of great interest, could it be trusted; however, although there has been much debate as to whether Al-Ghazal visited Ireland or Denmark (or somewhere else), the historicity of this account is highly suspect. For text and transl. see (I266):166-203, cf. also W.E.D. Allen, *The poet and the spae-wife: an attempt to reconstruct al-Ghazal’s embassy to the Vikings*, SBVS 15:3 (1960), with translation and extensive discussion

### III. WEST NORSE PROSE HISTORIOGRAPHY

This section contains various historiographical works from the ‘West Norse’ area of Scandinavia, a linguistic term used here to define Iceland and Norway. The distinction between ‘West’ and ‘East Norse’ historiography is, however arbitrary it may seem, a useful one, since historical writing flourished far more in western Scandinavia than in Denmark or Sweden, and largely employed the vernacular rather than Latin to boot. Rather more dubious, yet still pragmatically reasonable, is the distinction drawn between prose works and Old Norse verse, which is registered elsewhere (B480 ff.).

**Scandinavian historiography**

For general introductions:


Scandinavian History in the Viking Age


And for weeding out all those puzzling ahistorical motifs and topoi:


For more detailed surveys of chronology and the earliest historians:


[**B241**] S. Ellehøj, *Studier over den ældste norrøne historieskrivning*, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana 26 (1965) [UL S752:1.b.1.21] (E.s.)


See also:

[**B245**] K. Hastrup, ‘Text and context: continuity and change in medieval Icelandic history as “said” and “laid down”’, (O40):9-25


[**B247**] S. Tómasson, *Formálar íslenskra sagnaritara á midöldum: rannsókn bókmenntahefðar*, SÁMÍ rít 33 (1988) [UL 752:1.c.5.37]; a classic study on authorial intentions as revealed through prologues


**The Icelandic historians**

Many of the references above such as (B231) or (B240-42) are the most useful places to start for the origins and development of early Icelandic historiography. While the family sagas (B350 ff.) are largely anonymous, the authors of the kings’ sagas (B290 ff.) produced in Iceland are often known to us.

**Anthologies**

[**B250**] G. Vigfusson and F. York Powell, *Origines Islandicae: a collection of the more important sagas and other native writings relating to the settlement and early history of Iceland*, 2 vols (1905) [UL 752:34.c.90.4-7]; almost anything relating to Iceland can be found here, in both Old Norse and (idiosyncratically) translated form

**Sæmund Sigfússson**

The first Icelandic historian known to us, Sæmund seems to have composed various works in Latin; although none of them survive, he is cited as an authority by some later sources, most notably the *Nóregs konungatal* (B560). He was also responsible for the foundation of the influential school at his ancestral seat of Oddi.

[**B252**] H. Hermannsson, *Sæmund Sigfússson and the Oddaverjar*, Islandica 22 (1932) [UL 752:4.c.1.22]

For works produced at the school at Oddi:

[**B253**] E.O. Sveinsson, *Sagnaritun Oddaverja: nokkrar athuganir*, StI 1 (1937) [UL 599:1.c.1.1] (E.s.)

**Ari Porgilsson the wise**

Ari’s only preserved work is the *Libellus Islandorum* or *Íslendingabók* ‘Book of the Icelanders’, a short but authoritative history of the Icelandic Commonwealth down to the early twelfth century, with a heavy emphasis on religious history. Like Sæmundr, Ari also composed material on the kings of Norway (as
well as Denmark and England), which according to the prologue was excised from the final version of Íslendingabók, so causing a spirited debate about the extent to which later sagas were based on his work; cf. (B241) and (B292-93). Ari is also claimed to have had a hand (along with Kolskegg the wise and presumably others) in the composition of the original version of Landnámabók ‘Book of settlements’. However, while there is no reason not to believe this claim, it is clear that the versions of Landnámabók now preserved cannot be held to be indicative of this early work.


[B256] Landnámabók or The book of settlements. The two fullest early versions of Landnámabók now preserved are Sturlubók, composed by Sturla Börðarson (B265) around the central or latter part of the thirteenth century, and Hauksbók, composed by Hauk Erlendsson at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Both of these redactions however contain a good deal of extra material, and Hauk noted that he had used the versions by Sturla and one by Stýrmir Káraon. This latter *Stýrmisbók from the early thirteenth century is now lost, but is widely considered to reflect the most original state of the text that can now be reconstructed; it is represented most faithfully in Melabók of around the early fourteenth century, although unfortunately only in fragmentary form. Text: F. Jónsson, Landnámabók: Hauksbók, Sturlubók, Melabók (1900) [UL 752:34.b.90.4]; J. Benediktsson, Íslendingabók, Landnámabók, ÍF 1 (1968), 29-397 [UL 752:1.c.3.1]. Transl.: H. Pálsson and P. Edwards, The book of settlements: Landnámabók, University of Manitoba Icelandic studies 1 (1972) [UL 599:01.c.5.1], based on the Sturlubók version; further excerpts transl. (B1):59-74. For the textual background, see: J. Jóhannesson, Gerðir Landnámabókar (1941) [UL 752:37.c.90.5]; J. Benediktsson, ‘Landnámabók: some remarks on its value as a historical source’, SBVS 17 (1966-69), 275-92. Further commentary: S. Rafnsson, Studier i Landnámabók: kritiska bidrag till den isländska fristatstidens historia, Bibliotheca historica Lundensis 31 (1974) [UL 531:01.c.14.31] (E.s.); H. Pálsson, ‘A foundation myth in Landnámabók’, MS 12 (1988), 24-28

Snorri Sturluson

The greatest figure in Old Norse literature is widely held to have been responsible for Heimskringla (B322), the prose Edda (B600), and perhaps Egils saga (B413). For more general overviews of Snorri’s life and works:


Note also the proceedings of the following two colloquiums on Snorri:


Sturla Börðarson

One of the most prolific of the Icelandic historians, best known in terms of Viking history for his version of Landnámabók (B256), Sturla also composed contemporary biographies for thirteenth-century kings of Norway (B463) and the Íslendinga saga of the collection known as Sturlunga saga (B465). Sturla appears to be a classic example of how contemporary and retrospective historical writing informed each other in thirteenth-century Iceland.
The Norwegian synoptics

Among the earliest historical works preserved from Scandinavia are a small group of Norwegian histories resembling early kings’ sagas (B290 ff.) known as the ‘Norwegian synoptics’. For the development of Norwegian historiography, see (B290 ff.) and:


Study of the synoptics has tended to concentrate heavily on the textual relationships between the major witnesses, an approach that also characterises much research into the kings’ sagas.


Collected sources

[B275] The two major Latin synoptics (B281-282) and a wealth of minor material, including genealogies and hagiographical material, are found in G. Storm, Monumenta historica Norvegiae: latinske kildefskrifter til Norges historie i middelalderen (1880) [UL 593:01.b.1.19]

[B276] For a Norwegian translation, see: A. Salvesen, Norges historia; Theodricus munk: Historien om de gamle norske kongene; Historien om Danenes ferd til Jerusalem (1969) [UL 592:12.c.95.21]

Individual synoptics

[B280] Ágrip (af Nóregs konunga søgum) ‘Compendium (of the sagas of the kings of Norway)’. The earliest vernacular work preserved on the kings of Norway, this anonymous history is now lacking both beginning and end, but probably originally covered the period from Halfdan the black in the ninth century to the second half of the eleventh century. It seems to have been composed in Norway, quite probably around Trondheim, at the end of the twelfth century. For the place of Ágrip in the synoptic and kings’ saga tradition see (B292). Text: B. Einarsson, Ágrip af Nóregskonunga søgum, Fagrskinna—Nóregs konunga tal, IF 29 (1984) [UL 752:1.c.3.29]. Text and transl.: M. Driscoll, Ágrip af Nóregskonungasögum: a twelfth-century synoptic history of the kings of Norway, VSNR TS 10 (1995) [UL 752:1.d.2.11]


Kings’ sagas (konungasögur)
The composition of material concerning the kings of Norway and Denmark in particular took off in Iceland towards the end of the twelfth century and flourished particularly in the early thirteenth. For bibliographical guidance to older research see:

Guides and general studies
For the broader context, see general works on Icelandic literature (B230 ff.), the synoptics (B270 ff.) and the family sagas (B350 ff.), also Ari’s early ‘lives’ of the kings of Norway, Denmark, and England (B255).
[B290] B. Aðalbjarnarson, Om de norske kongers sagaer, SDNVAO 1937:4 (1937) [UL 500:01.b.4.50]
[B292] T.M. Andersson, ‘Kings’ sagas (Konungasögur)’, in (B233):197-238
[B295] Á. Jakobsson, Í leit að konungi: konungsmynd íslenskra konungasagna (1997) [UL 752:37.c.95.54] (E.s.)

Origins and development
The question of how kings’ sagas developed is an extremely vexed one. On the one hand, it is clearly likely that foreign historiographical models were adapted, and even used as sources; see (B382) and:

On the other hand, it can be seen that as the kings’ saga tradition developed in the course of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, the amount of material these texts contained steadily grew. Skaldic verse (B483 ff.) has often been held responsible for at least some of this additional material, and this can probably be supplemented by indiscriminate conflation of separate traditions or plain invention. It has also often been supposed that much material was derived from older, independent kings’ sagas that have since been lost. This can occasionally be demonstrated, as in the case of *Hryggjarstykki (B460), but becomes a decidedly more dubious procedure when considering sagas relating to events from the eleventh century or earlier. Most editions or discussions of kings’ sagas debate these topics, cf. (B292) and more recently:

Individual kings’ sagas
The composition of royal biographies is most clearly represented by the two heroes of the conversion movement, Olaf Tryggvason and Olaf Haraldsson of Norway.
Olaf’s saga Tryggvasonar or The saga of Olaf Tryggvason
Although it can be suspected that much of the impetus for recording the lives of the Norwegian kings in detail came from the development of the cult of saint Olaf Haraldsson (E70 ff.), it is now widely held that the first individual king’s sagas which deserve the name were composed in Iceland for Olaf Tryggvason (E60 ff.).
[B310] The earliest independent lives of Olaf Tryggvason were put together in the monastery of Æingeirar in Iceland around the end of the twelfth century. The life by Odd Snorrason is now only preserved in an Old Norse translation of the Latin original. Text: F. Jónsson, Saga Olaf’s Tryggvasonar of Oddr Snorrason munk (1932) [UL 752:34.d.90.14]. T.M. Andersson, ‘The first Icelandic King’s saga: Oddr Snorrason’s Olaf’s saga Tryggvasonar or the Oldest saga of Saint Olaf?’, JEGP 130:2 (2004), 147-155. Odd’s prologue presents Olaf Tryggvason as fulfilling the role of John the baptist to Olaf Haraldsson’s Christ, which can perhaps be seen as an attempt to justify the attention paid to him by
Icelandic authors; cf.: J. Zernack, ‘Vorläufer und Vollender: Olaf Tryggvason und Olaf der Heilige im Geschichtsdenken des Oddr Snorrason munkr’, ANF 113 (1998), 77-95. A further Latin life was also composed by Odd’s contemporary Gunnlaug Leifsson; although now lost, this version had a striking influence upon later sagas.

Later compilations include Snorri Sturluson’s version in Heimskringla (B322) as well as briefer accounts in the other compendia (B320 ff.); see (L42) on the use made by Snorri of earlier versions. The end result of the drive towards these compilations in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was the so-called ‘Great saga of Olaf Tryggvason’. Text: Ó. Halldórsson, Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar en mestu, 2 vols, Editiones Arnamagnæanæ A:1-2 (1958-61) [UL 752:1.b.1.1-2]. Transl.: J. Sephton, The saga of king Olaf Tryggwason, Northern library 1 (1895) [UL 752:32.c.1.1]. For a survey of the traditions about Olaf Tryggvason, see: (E60-64); L. Lönnroth, ‘Charlemagne, Hrolf kraki, Olaf Tryggvason: parallels in the heroic tradition’, (O22):29-52

Ólafs saga helga or The saga of saint Olaf

The earliest compilations of material about saint Olaf were probably the skaldic poems composed soon after his death in 1030, a tradition which lasted for quite a while. It is also clear from the spread of his cult that liturgical material must have been put together celebrating his miracles and virtues; some of this material is preserved in the Icelandic and Norwegian homily books (B442).

This liturgical material seems to have provided the foundation for the first vitae or ‘lives’, and Theodoric (B282) mentions a lost translatio as one of his sources; for the early Acta sancti Olavi regis et martyris see (B275):125-44. Of the preserved Latin accounts the most notable are those by Eystein Erlendsson, archbishop of Trondheim (Niðaróss), composed in the late twelfth century in Latin. Text: F. Metcalfe, Passio et miracula beati Olaui (1881) [UL 8.10.71]

The earliest vernacular lives were formerly held to have originated around the late twelfth century, a case which was put together on the basis of various early fragments; however, this argument is now largely discredited. Text: G. Storm, Otte Brudstykker af den ældste Saga om Olav den Hellige (1893) [UL 593:01.b.1.47] Of the separate traditions surrounding saint Olaf in the early thirteenth century, the Norwegian so-called ‘legendary saga’ may reflect clerical rather than secular concerns, although any clear-cut division is impossible to maintain. Text: O.A. Johnsen, Olafs saga hins helga efter pergamentaandskrift i Uppsala Universitetsbibliotek, Delagardieske samling nr. 8 II (1922) [UL 593:01.b.1.100]; text and German transl.: A. Heinrichs et al., Olafs saga hins helga: die ‘Legendarische Saga’ über Olaf den Heiligen (Hs. Delagard. saml. nr. 8,ii) (1982) [UL 752:34.c.95.26]. A text similar in content if not style was used by Snorri for his separate life, which was then revised to produce the version in Heimskringla (B322). The fullest edition, containing all the various interpolations and fragments of other lives such as that by Styrmir Káarson, is O.A. Johnsen and J. Helgason, Saga Ólafs konungs hins helga: den store saga om Olav den hellige efter pergamentaandskrift i Kungliga Biblioteket i Stockholm nr. 2 4to med varianter fra andre håndskrifter (1941) [UL 593:01.b.1.116-17].


Compendia

Following on from the synoptics, the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries saw an escalation in the compilation of kings’ sagas, which were grouped together into large compendia, mostly in Iceland. As in the earlier period, they seem largely to be heavily dependent upon one another.

Morkinskinna occupies a striking position in the kings’ saga tradition. Covering the period from the death of saint Olaf in 1030 up until the mid-twelfth century, it can be seen as the oldest of the great compendia, and therefore the one whose sources are least clear; it is unfortunately only preserved in later, interpolated versions, and has awkward lacunae. Text: C.R. Unger, Morkinskinna: Pergamentsbog fra forste Halvdel af det trettende Aarhundrede indeholdende en af de ældste Optegnelser af norske Kongesagaer (1867) [UL 752:34.c.85.12]; F. Jónsson, Morkinskinna, SUGNL 53 (1932) [UL 752:01.d.2.51]. Transl.: T.M. Andersson and K.E. Gade, Morkinskinna: the earliest Icelandic chronicle

[B321] *Fagrskinna*, also known (confusingly, cf. (B560)) as *Nóregs konungatal*, covers the history of the Norwegian kings from Halfdan the black until the battle of Ré in 1177, and was probably originally composed in the early thirteenth century in Norway. It has striking parallels with the Norwegian kings from Halfdan the black until the battle of Ré in 1177, and was probably originally composed in the early thirteenth century in Norway. It has striking parallels with *Heimskringla* in particular; see (B290 ff.) for discussion. Text: F. Jónsson, *Fagrskinna: Nóregs kononga tal*, SUGNL 30 (1902-03) [UL 752:01.d.2.28]; B. Einarsson, *Agrip af Nóregskonungo sögum*, *Fagrskinna—Nóregs konunga tal*, ÍF 29 (1984) [UL 752:01.c.3.29]. Transl.: *Fagrskinna, a catalogue of the kings of Norway*, transl. with an introduction and notes by A. Finlay, The Northern World 7 (2004). Textual commentary: G. Indrebø, *Fagrskinna*, Avhandlinger fra Universitetets historiske seminar 4 (1917) [UL 752:37.e.90.23]; A. Jakobsen and J.R. Hagland, *Fagrskinna-studier*, Nordisk institutt, Universitetet i Trondheim, skrifter 3 (1980) [UL 752:01.c.9.3]

[B322] *Heimskringla* was compiled by Snorri Sturluson (B260), based upon earlier works; for an excellent overview, see D. Whaley, *Heimskringla: an introduction*, VSNR TS 8 (1991) [UL 752:1.d.2.9]. It is at once the greatest and most frustrating of the kings’ saga compendia; Snorri went out of his way to turn amorphous and conflicting traditions into reasoned history, and succeeded so well that it has a timeless appeal. However, the text clearly drew heavily on earlier but often less historically convincing texts, and reflects a triumph of verisimilitude over verity. Text: F. Jónsson, *Snorri Sturluson, Heimskringla: Nóregs konunga sögur* (1911; repr. 1966) [UL 752:34.c.95.9]; B. Áadalbjarnarson, *Heimskringla I-III*, ÍF 26-28 (1941-51) [UL 752:1.c.3.26-28]. Transl.: E. Monsen, *Heimskringla, or the lives of the Norse kings by Snorri Sturluson* (1932) [UL S592.c.93.2]; S. Laing, *Heimskringla, part one: the Olaf sagas*, 2 vols (1964) [UL 752:34.d.95.3]; L.M. Hollander, *Heimskringla: history of the kings of Norway* (1964) [UL 752:34.c.95.10]. For commentary, textual background, and historical approach, see: L. Lönnroth, ‘Ideology and structure in *Heimskringla*, Parergon 15 (1976), 16-29; S. Bagge, *Society and politics in Snorri Sturluson’s *Heimskringla* (1991) [UL 752:37.c.95.41]; R. Gaskins, ‘Visions of sovereignty in Snorri Sturluson’s *Heimskringla*, *SIH* 23 (1998), 173-88. One of the most valuable aspects of *Heimskringla* is that it traces the Norwegian kings’ ancestry back to the Swedish Yngling dynasty. [a] Although quite probably historically incorrect, this means that it does preserve as the first section the text *Ynglinga saga* which contains the poem *Ynglinga tal*; see M. Ciklamini, ‘*Ynglinga saga*: its function and its appeal’, *MS* 8 (1975), 86-99, and cf. also *Ynglingatal* (B521a)


[B331] *Færeyinga saga* or *The saga of the Faroe islanders* is the title given to a text reconstructed from the sagas of Olaf Tryggvason and saint Olaf Haraldsson, although it is generally accepted that a single original from around 1200 underlies these later compilations. Heavily dominated by the figure of Thrond of Gata, the historical element is subsumed by the love of narrative. Text: F. Jónsson, *Færeyinga saga: den islandske saga om Færingerne* (1927) [UL 752:34.b.90.1]; Ó. Halldórsson, *Færeyinga saga*, SÁM rít 30 (1987) [UL 752:1.c.5.34]. Transl.: F. York Powell, *The tale of Throd of Gate, commonly called Færeyinga saga*, Northern library 2 (1896) [UL 752:32.c.2.2]; M.A.C. Press, *Thrand of Gotu: two Icelandic sagas from the Flat Island book* (1994) [UL 752:34.c.95.49]. Commentary: P.G. Foote, *On the saga of the Faroe islanders* (1965), repr. (O6):165-87; B. Almqvist, ‘Some folklore motifs in Færeyinga saga’, (O54):73-86

[B332] *Grønlendinga saga* or *The saga of the Greenlanders* is another reconstructed saga only preserved in compilations about Olaf Tryggvason in particular; it is nevertheless widely regarded as an earlier version of the similar material found in Eiríks saga rauða (B330). Text: IF 4 (B420):239-69; H. Hermannsson, *The Vinland sagas*, Islandica 30 (1944) [UL 752:4.c.1.30]. Transl.: M. Magnusson and H. Pálsson, *The Vinland sagas: the Norse discovery of America; Grønlendinga saga and Eiríks saga* (1965), 47-72 [repr. UL 660:3.c.95.6]; (B401): I,19-32. See J. Jóhannesson, ‘The date of the composition of the saga of the Greenlanders’, *SBVS* 16 (1962-65), 54-66, and for further commentary items under (B330). A further set of interest is *Grønlendinga þáttur* or *Einars þáttur Sokkasonar*, which is set in the early twelfth century and records the appointment of the first bishop to Greenland: text in IF 4 (B420):271-92, transl. (H5):236-48


**Sagas of the kings of Denmark**

[B335] A fair amount of material was composed in Iceland relating to the kings of Denmark, at roughly the same time as the Norwegian traditions were put together. The basis for the earlier part until the mid-twelfth century seems to have been a now lost text called *Skjöldungasaga*, which is partially preserved in an early modern Latin version; see B. Guðnason, *Um Skjöldungasögu* (1963) [UL 752:37.c.95.9]. It was widely used as a source by mediaeval historians, but the material derived from it is for the most part legendary and without historical value.


[B337] *Knýtlinga saga* ‘the saga of the heirs of Knut’ seems to have been modelled structurally on *Heimskringla* (B322). It begins in the tenth century and covers Danish events down into the late twelfth, with a heavy concentration on saint Knut Sveinsson, who was canonised soon after his death in 1086.

[B338] Jómsvíkinga saga. Usually considered to date from around 1200, this saga purports to tell of late tenth-century Danish affairs, particularly the dealings of the Jomsvikings, a colony of Viking warriors in the town of Junne or Wolin on the south Baltic coast, with Harald Bluetooth of Denmark and earl Hakon of Lade in Norway. Its historical value seems however dubious at best. Text and transl.: N.F. Blake, Jómsvíkinga saga: the saga of the Jomsvikings, Icelandic texts (1962) [UL 752:1.c.4.3]. Transl.: L.M. Hollander, The saga of the Jómsvíkings (1955) [UL 752:34.d.95.5]. See also: J. Megaard, ‘Hvor sto “slaget i Hjørungavågr”? Jomsvikingebetningens stedsnavn og Sæmundr fröði’, Alvíssmál 9 (1999), 29-54 (E.s.)

Material on the Swedish kings
Relatively little is preserved in Icelandic writings on the Swedish kings, and it is notable, for example, that they were not included among the kings’ lives said to have been composed by Ari Þorgilsson (B255). On this apparent reticence see:


[B341] The only major contribution from Iceland to Swedish history in the Viking age is a list of Swedish kings down to the early twelfth century appended to the legendary Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks; for the textual background, see (B241):85-108. Text and transl.: C. Tolkien, The saga of king Heidrek the wise (1960) [UL 752:1.c.4.2]

Family sagas (Íslendingasögur)
The Icelandic family sagas attract immense attention from a literary perspective, and the bibliographical material relating to them in English is too vast to cover here more than fitfully. A large amount of work has been done attempting to pinpoint the origins and development of the genre and the historical conception that underlies them, even before attempting the yet more intractable question of their historicity. It is important to note that although the family sagas look like historical texts, they probably aren’t; and although they look more ‘original’ than many other genres of historical writing in Iceland, again they probably aren’t.

General guides

[B351] H. Koht, The Old Norse sagas (1931) [UL 752:37.d.90.2]

[B352] P. Hallberg, The Icelandic saga, transl. P. Schach (1962) [UL 9752.d.84]

[B353] T.M. Andersson, The Icelandic family saga: an analytic reading (1967) [UL 701:05.b.1.28]


[B358] P.M. Sørensen, Fortælling og ære: studier i islændingesagaerne (1993) [UL 752:37.c.95.42]


[B360] V. Ólason, Dialogues with the Viking age: narration and representation in the sagas of Icelanders, transl. A. Wawn (1998) [UL 752:37.c.95.50]

[B361] J. Glauser, ‘Sagas of Icelanders (Íslendinga sögur) and þættir as the literary representation of a new social space’, (B235):203-220
Origins, composition, and transmission
The vexed questions of how sagas were transmitted as oral narratives (roughly ‘freeprose’) or freely composed in the thirteenth century (roughly ‘bookprose’) have largely fallen out of debate on the grounds that they are effectively insoluble.


The historicity of the sagas
Questions of ‘historicity’ are similarly difficult to tackle, but a particularly striking recent approach treats them from a socio-anthropological perspective as expressions of ideals or mentality that can, to some degree at least, be considered timeless.

[B379] P.M. Sørensen, ‘Historical reality and literary form’, (O72):172-81

Cultural influences
[B382] L. Lönnroth, European sources of Icelandic saga-writing: an essay based on previous studies (1965) [UL 9752.b.3]

Collections and anthologies
[B385] At least some versions of most family sagas are to be found in various large compilations in late mediaeval manuscripts. Striking examples are: V. Finsen et al., Hauksbók udgiven efter de arnamagnæanske håndskrifter no. 371, 544 og 675, 4o, samt forskellige papirshåndskrifter (1892-96) [UL 752:34.c.85.45]; A. van Arkel, Möðruvallabók. AM 132 fol. I: Index and concordance. II: Text (1987) [UL 752:34.b.95.7]

Modern editions
Several of the Íslenzk fornrit series (B6) contain a number of sagas from particular parts of Iceland:
[B390] S. Nordal and G. Jónsson, Borgfirðinga sögur, ÍF 3 (1938) [UL 752:1.c.3.3]
[B391] B.K. Pórolfsson and G. Jónsson, Vestfirðinga sögur, ÍF 6 (1943) [UL 752:1.c.3.6]
[B392] J. Jóhannesson, Austfirðinga sögur, ÍF 11 (1950) [UL 752:1.c.3.11]
[B393] J. Kristjánsson, Eyðfirðinga sögur, ÍF 9 (1956) [UL 752:1.c.3.9]
Modern translations

[B395] G. Jones, *Four Icelandic sagas* (1935) [UL 752:34.c.90.24]


[B397] G. Jones, *Eirik the red and other Icelandic sagas*, The world's classics (repr. 1969) [UL 9752.e.21]


[B400] W.B. Bachman, *Four Old Icelandic sagas and other tales* (1985) [UL 9752.c.334]

[B401] V. Hreinsson et al., (ed.), *The complete sagas of Icelanders*, 5 vols (1997) [UL 752:34.c.95.56-60]; a collection of all the family sagas in one handy series

Individual family sagas

Since it is now largely recognised that the family sagas reflect an often flawed, or even invented, historical perception of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century authors, the amount of bibliographical material has been kept to a minimum to save space and energy, and only a selection of the large amount of vernacular material is included here; for the smaller sagas and þættir, see (B390 ff.) and the *Íslenzk fórрит* volumes (B6). Although a slightly artificial procedure, the sagas of the thirteenth century can be grouped into distinct categories, each of which in turn can be very tentatively ascribed to a particular ‘phase’ of saga-composition; it should be noted however that these divisions have effectively no bearing on the respective texts’ authenticity or historicity.

Epic sagas

This wholly arbitrary division has been taken to contain two of the greatest of the Icelandic sagas, both of which focus in part on the conversion period, the events of which play a central role in the plot.


Poets’ sagas (skáldasögur)

Sagas devoted to the lives of individual Icelandic poets are usually held to be among the earliest in the tradition, mostly dated to the first half of the thirteenth century; they also (naturally) tend to contain large amounts of skaldic verse, although in the form of lausavísur whose authenticity is often doubtful (B500). For articles on various aspects of the Poets’ sagas, see (O85)


Snorri Sturluson och Egils saga Skallagrímssonar: ett försök till språklig författar-bestämning, Sti 20 (1962) [UL 599:01.c.1.4] (E.s.)


Feud sagas
Sagas about regional or dynastic feuds are the largest single group of Íslandingsögur; although they can be vaguely subdivided into groups on the basis of style, content, and (possibly therefore) age, they have all been lumped together here.


[B420] Eyrbyggja saga is particularly interesting for Viking-age history in that its author shows a strong (if apparently often ill-informed) interest in matters antiquarian, particularly paganism. Text: E. Sveinsson and M. Dórðarson, Eyrbyggja saga, IF 4 (1935) [UL 752:1.c.3.4]. Transl.: P. Schach and L.M. Hollander, Eyrbyggja saga (1959) [UL 752:34.c.95.5]; H. Pálsson and P. Edwards, Eyrbyggja saga, rev. repr. (1989) [UL 9000.d.8471]; (B401): V,131-218


[B422] Hrafnskels saga. The tale of Hrafnkel, priest of Frey, contains much information of apparent value to our understanding of pagan cults, but its authenticity has long been called into question as a classic example of free thirteenth-century composition. Text: (B392):95-133; J. Helgason, Hrafnskels saga Freygsøða, 4th edn, Nordisk filologi A: Tekster 2 (1968) [UL 752:01.d.4.2]. Transl.: H. Pálsson, Hrafnkel’s saga and other Icelandic stories (1971) [UL 752:34.d.95.7]; (B397):89-125; (B401): V,261-81. Commentary: S. Nordal, Hrafnskels saga Freygsøða: a study (1958) [UL 752:37.c.95.3]; H. Pálsson, Art and ethics in Hrafnskels saga (1971) [UL 9752.d.248]; H. Kratz, ‘Hrafnskels saga: thirteenth century
Biographical sagas

The composition of sagas devoted to individual heroes, often outlaws, is frequently held to reflect a late development in the Icelandic saga tradition. Although this conception may well have little to recommend it, it is followed here for convenience and because many of these sagas are even more overtly unhistorical than the rest.


[B431] Many other so-called ‘post-classical family sagas’ are clearly of little direct historical value, and often blur the boundary between Íslendingasögur and other genres such as the fornaldarsögur (B470). For those interested, a few examples in translation are: D. Fox and H. Pálsson, Grettir’s saga (1974) [UL 752:34.c.95.20]; A. Boucher, The saga of Hord and the Holm-dwellers (1983) [UL 752:34.c.95.30]; J. Skaptason and P. Pulsiano, Báðar saga, Garland library of medieval literature A:8 (1984) [UL 752:34.c.95.27]; J. Young and E. Haworth, The Fljotsdale saga and the Droplaugarsons (1990) [UL 752:34.d.95.28]

Translating hagiography

Translated hagiography falls outside the scope of this bibliography, except in so far as it can provide extra light on the liturgy in early mediaeval Scandinavia (B780); for a concise guide to preserved texts, see:

Indigenous hagiography

[B442] For West Norse material on the most famous saint of all, Olaf Haraldsson, see (B312 ff.); some further material can be found in the homily books of the late twelfth or early thirteenth centuries. Text: T. Wisén, *Homiliubók: islánda homilier efter en handskrift från tolfte århundradet* (1872) [UL 752:34.b.85.2]; G. Indrebø, *Gamal norsk homiliebok: cod. AM 619 4to* (1931) [UL 593:01.b.1.118]

[B443] There is little of direct historical relevance in the material on the two other major Norwegian saints with supposed Viking-age roots. Saint Hallvard is said to have been a kinsman of saint Olaf who was killed in 1043 while defending a pregnant woman, while saint Sunniva is portrayed as an Irish princess who came to Norway towards the end of the tenth century and took up residence at Selje, later the site of one of the earliest monasteries in Scandinavia. The antiquity of their cults is reflected in early texts such as Adam of Bremen (B73), while Odd Snorrason (B310) included an excerpt on Sunniva in his life of Olaf Tryggvason, the so-called *Seljumanna þáttr*; otherwise, the most significant surviving material is in the form of liturgical offices (B780).

Bishops’ sagas

The earliest account of the first Icelandic bishops is that contained in *Íslendingabók* (B255), but from the end of the twelfth century further material was composed, including independent biographies. This tradition seems to have begun with the life of Iceland’s first saint Þorlák, bishop of Skálholt; see (B451). Most of the vernacular bishops’ sagas composed in Iceland have not been included on the grounds that they deal with events from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. For collections of texts:


For translation:

[B448] D. Leith, *Stories of the bishops of Iceland* (1895) [UL 752:34.d.85.22]; beware, this translation is frequently inaccurate

For commentary on the genre:


[B451] H. Kuhn, ‘The emergence of a saint’s cult as witnessed by the *jarteinabœkr Þorláks biskups*’, *SBVS* 24 (1994-97), 240-54

On Þorlákr’s cult:


[B455] *Hungrvaka* contains accounts of the first five bishops of Skálholt from 1056 to 1176, although largely derived from earlier sources for the first two, Isleif and Gizur. Text: (B446):87-126; (B447):25-115. Transl.: (B448):33-71; (B250): I,420-58

[B456] *Ísleifs þáttr* is a late þáttr found embedded in *Ólafs saga helga* (B315) in Flateyjarbók. Text: (B446):83-86; (B447):13-23. Transl.: (B448):25-32

Conversion narratives

It is convenient, if a bit cheeky, to include here a couple of conversion narratives, the first of which at least seems to have been written specifically to chart the development of Christianity in Iceland; for similar accounts, see in particular (B410-11).
Kristni saga is a thirteenth-century history of the conversion of Iceland sometimes attributed to Sturla Thordarson (B265). Text: (B446):1-57. Transl.: (B250): 1,370-406

Porvalds saga víðförla is a small tale inserted into the greatest saga of Olaf Tryggvason (B311) relating early missionary activity in Iceland by Thorvald and the Saxon bishop Frederick. Text: (B446):59-81. Transl.: (B448):1-24; (B250): I,407-12; (B398):27-40

Contemporary sagas

Sagas produced in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries covering contemporary events and issues may be of no huge significance for Viking-age history itself, but serve as a further introduction to the genre; they useful both for assessing what the authors of the sagas thought made up history, and also for gauging the extent to which these historical genres reflect contemporary society and concerns. In addition, it can be noted that since much of Scandinavian Viking-age history is reliant upon working backwards from the better attested mediaeval period, these sources are often invaluable in showing the stage of development in political, social, and religious terms. The bibliography is however of necessity heavily selective.

Contemporary kings’ sagas

A range of contemporary kings’ sagas were produced from the end of the twelfth century onwards, which is probably why most compendia (B280 ff., B320 ff.) stop around the time of Magnus Erlingsson.

Hryggjarstykki is a now lost saga, which seems to have been composed by the Icelander Eirík Oddsson covering the Norwegian dynastic disputes of the mid-twelfth century, with particular focus on the royal pretender Sigurd slembr. It is referred to, and plundered for material, in later sources, and is particularly interesting in being just about the earliest kings’ saga in the vernacular known to us. See: B. Guðnason, Fyrsta sagan, StI 37 (1978) [UL 599:01.c.1.16] (E.s.)

Sverris saga is particularly interesting not only for its idiosyncratic style, with a heavy use of rhetoric and direct speech that may have well have influenced later kings’ sagas, but also from the perspective of authorship; the prologue attributes the first part of the saga at least to abbot Karl Jónsson of Pingeyrar, but notes that he composed it while in Norway (from 1185-88) under the supervision of king Sverrir himself. Text: G. Indrebø, Sverris saga etter Cod. AM 327 4to (1920) [UL 593:01.b.1.100, 752:34.b.95.6]. Transl.: J. Sephton, Sverrissaga: the saga of king Sverri of Norway, Northern library 4 (1899) [UL 752:32.c.2.4]. Commentary: G.M. Gathorne-Hardy, A royal impostor: king Sverre of Norway (1956) [UL 593:2.c.95.1]; L.H. Blöndal, Um uppruna Sverrissögu, SÁMÍ rit 21 (1982) [UL 752:1.c.5.25] (E.s.); A. Gurevich, ‘From saga to personality: Sverris saga’, (G7):77-87; S. Bagge, ‘Ideology and propaganda in Sverris saga’, ANF 108 (1993), 1-18

Böglunga sögr charts the end of the civil wars in Norway around 1200. Text: H. Magerøy, Soga om Birkibeinar og Baglar: Böglunga sögr I-II, Norrøne tekster 5 (1888) [UL 593:01.b.1.165]

Hákonar saga (gamla) Hákonarsonar is the biography of Hakon the old composed by Sturla Þórðarson (B265); Hakon reigned from 1217 to 1263 before his death while campaigning in Scotland. Text: G. Vigfússon, Hákonar saga and a fragment of Magnus saga, Icelandic sagas and other historical documents relating to the settlements and descents of the Northmen of the British isles 2, RS 88 (1887) [UL R542.30.88]; M. Mundt, Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar etter Stb. 8 fol., AM 325 VIII,4 og AM 304,4, Norrøne tekst 2 (1977) [UL 593:01.b.1.126] plus Rettelser by J.E. Knirk (1982) [UL 593:01.b.1.126a]

Contemporary family sagas

The Icelandic sagas dealing with events from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are commonly (if misleadingly) known collectively as Sturlunga saga.

Other genres

[BA470] Although (sometimes) of great literary interest, the other genres that flourished in the West Norse area, particularly Iceland, are of little historical value for the study of Viking-age Scandinavia; these include the romances (riddarasögur) and the fantastic or legendary tales that (to judge from manuscript transmission) were so popular (such as lygisögur ‘lying sagas’ or fornaldrarsögur ‘tales of the ancient past’). Among this body of material can be included some accounts of the legendary kings of Denmark in particular (B335) but also a couple of sagas about Viking expeditions into the East.

[BA471] Yngvars saga ins viðfórla ‘the saga of Yngvar the widely travelled’ is part fornaldrarsaga, but its tale of a disastrous Swedish expedition into the mysterious east finds some confirmation, at least in the more prosaic essentials, in a large number of runestones from the eleventh century that refer to it, the ‘Ingvar’ stones (J70 ff.). Text: E. Olson, Yngvars saga viðfórla jämte ett bihang om Ingvarinskrifterna, SUGNL 39 (1912) [UL 752:01.d.2.38]. Transl.: H. Pálsson and P. Edwards, Vikings in Russia: Yngvar’s saga and Eymund’s saga (1989) [UL 752:34.d.95.23]

[BA472] Eymundar saga is a further example of this genre, but one of even less historical value (if that is possible). Transl.: H. Pálsson and P. Edwards, Vikings in Russia: Yngvar’s saga and Eymund’s saga (1989) [UL 752:34.d.95.23]. Commentary: R. Cook, ‘Russian history, Icelandic story, and Byzantine strategy in Eymundar þátr Hringssonar’, Viator 17 (1986), 65-89

Annals

No annals are preserved from before the late thirteenth century, and although some scholars have argued that composition began in Iceland (as elsewhere in Scandinavia) in the twelfth century, they lack any independent value for the Viking age.


IV. OLD NORSE VERSE

Old Norse verse is conventionally divided into two genres, although the boundaries are often blurred. On the one hand, skaldic verse refers to poetry composed (usually) by named poets in defined contexts; much of it, especially the most useful historical material, is panegyric in content and fiendishly complex in metre and style. On the other hand, Eddaic verse is (again usually) anonymous, timeless, and deals with mythological or ancient heroic material. Since large amounts of Old Norse poetry are found embedded in sagas of various kinds, many of the general works (B230 ff.) are most useful, but for verse particularly, see also:

[BA480] P. Hallberg, Old Icelandic poetry: Eddic lay and skaldic verse (1975) [UL 752:21.d.95.2]

Skaldic verse

The poetry of the skalds can again be divided (however crudely) into two groups; the lausavísur ‘loose stanzas’ attributed to various characters in the sagas, and the longer praise poems of the court poets of various kings or other rulers. For bibliographical guidance to earlier research, see:

[BA483] L.M. Hollander, A bibliography of skaldic studies (1958) [UL 857.c.752.2]

General guides

[BA485] E.O.G. Turville-Petre, Scaldic poetry (1976) [UL 752:2.c.95.7]
Origins

The origins of the particularly skaldic dróttkvøtt style are possibly significant for our understanding of cultural contacts and influences in the Viking age.

Transmission and function

The authenticity of skaldic verse depends in large part upon our understanding of its transmission from the Viking age to medieval manuscripts. There is currently a broad consensus that court poetry, in the form of long stanzaic compositions such as drápur, has a greater claim to be considered ‘original’ than the loose verses, although like any sweeping statement this has to be assessed in any individual case. For an attempt to define this corpus of court poetry, see (B490). On the transmission of skaldic verse in the poets’ sagas, see (O85).

Editions and anthologies

The collection by Finnur Jónsson (B510) remains the standard edition, which should be consulted in the absence of more recent work; Kock’s edition (B511) follows the same order of individual poets or poems. The bulk of the corpus is preserved in various kings’ sagas (B290 ff.) and Snorri’s Edda (B600), which are therefore also useful for texts and translations. A new comprehensive edition in English of the known corpus of Norse-Icelandic skaldic poetry, including runic inscriptions in metrical form and all other non-Eddaic poetry composed before 1400, is in preparation for publication in 2006-11 (B512-13).

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[B511] E.A. Kock, *Den norsk-isländska skaldediktningen*, 2 vols (1946-49) [UL 752:2.b.90.10-11]; a famous attack on (or antidote to) Finnur Jónsson’s corpus; the edition lacks any notes or critical apparatus, and is founded on a huge series of scattered articles by Kock called the *Notationes Norræne: anteckningar till Edda och skaldediktning*, Lunds universitets årskrift n.f. avd. 1, 19:2-39:3 (1923-43) [UL P500.b.76.17 ff.]


[B513] The expanding database of the new corpus edition, *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages*, is accessible online at skaldic.arts.usyd.edu.au. The site currently incorporates electronic texts of the skaldic corpus in Finnur Jónsson’s edition (B510), together with a full concordance, and links to thousands of digital images of the manuscripts in which the verses are preserved.

**Translations**

[B515] G. Vigfússon and F. York Powell, *Corpus poeticum boreale: the poetry of the old northern tongue from the earliest times to the thirteenth century. II: Court poetry* (1883) [UL 752:2.c.85.3]; contains both texts and translations, although often outdated


**Individual poets or poems**

[B520] Aside from attributions in literary sources, the text *Skáldatal* purports to provide a list of known court poets and the historical contexts in which they worked; for text, see (B515): II.442-46. For the most part, only major court poets are listed, with loose stanzas taking a distant back seat. For the huge problems involved with compiling long poems out of scattered stanzas, which are often in a highly uncertain order or state of preservation, see (B490) and (B493).

**Tenth-century verse**


[B522] Porbjørn hornklofi is said to have been one of Harald fairhair’s poets, and is widely held to have been responsible for *Hrafnsmál*, also known as *Haraldskvæði*, although some manuscripts attribute these verses to Þjóðólf (B521). Text: (B510):22-29. Transl. (B515): I.254-59; (B593):56-62; (B1):106-09. See K. von See, ‘Studien zum Haraldskvæði’, *ANF* 76 (1961), 96-111

[B523] Egill Skallagrímsson is often considered to be the greatest of the Viking-age Icelandic poets, although largely on the basis of his loose stanzas. Text: (B510):34-60; J. Kristjánsson, *Kvöðakver Egils Skallagrímssonar* (1964) [UL 9752.d.583]. Egill’s work is naturally contained in his saga (B413). [a] *Hőfuólæsn* is said to have been composed at the court of Erik bloodaxe, Egil’s bitterest enemy, in York as a ransom for his life; see J. Hines, ‘Egil’s *Hőfuólæsn* in time and place’, *SBVS* 24 (1994-97), 83-104. Text and transl.: R. Poole ‘Variants and variability in the text of Egill’s *Hőfuólæsn*, *The politics of editing medieval texts: papers given at the twenty-seventh annual conference on editorial problems, University of Toronto, 1-2 November 1991*, ed. R. Frank (1993), 65-105. Transl.: (B516):68-73. [b] *Sonatorrekk* details the relationship of Egil with his patron god Odin; although now partially corrupted, it is (possibly) of immense interest as an insight into the pagan mentality. Text and transl.: E.O.G. Turville-Petre, ‘The *Sonatorrekk*, Iceland and the mediaeval world: studies in honour of Ian Maxwell, edd. E.O.G.

[B524] ‘Eiríksmál’. This anonymous elegy for king Erik bloodaxe of Norway (and subsequently York) is preserved only in Fagrskinna (B321), but seems to date from around the middle of the tenth century; it is rather Eddaic in style and tone. Text: (B510):174-75. Transl.: (B515): I,259-61; (B593):63-65; (B1):109-11. Commentary: A. Seeberg, ‘Five kings’, SBVS 20 (1978-81), 106-13

The poets of kings in pre-Christian Norway

The praise poetry connected with the retinues of Harald Fairhair and his tenth-century successors reflects the developing political ambitions of these rulers, and the religious dimension of pagan kingship ideology in Norway. For a discussion, see:


The poets of the earls of Lade

The body of verse emanating from the court of earl Hakon of Lade in the late tenth century is of particular interest, since it apparently reflects an attempt to emphasise, or perhaps even resurrect, the link between sacral and secular rulership and the importance of the pagan cults in terms of prosperity and legitimacy, in reaction to the ; cf. (K75 ff., K81). For an overview see:


And on paganism in skaldic verse more widely:


[B530] Eyvind skáldaspíllir was one of several skalds who composed for both the Norwegian kings and their enemies the earls of Lade. Text: (B510):64-74; text with commentary: A. Krause, Die Dichtung des Eyvindr skáldaspíllir: Edition, Kommentar, Untersuchungen, Altnordische Bibliothek 10 (1990) [UL 752:2.d.95.3]. [a] Hákonarmál is an elegy for king Hakon the good that was heavily modelled on Eiríksmál (B524); transl. (B515): I,262-66; (B593):66-71; (B1):111-15, see also A. Heinrichs, ‘Hákonarmál im literarischen Kontext’, (A61g):427-45. [b] Háleygjatal is a genealogical poem composed to provide a divine ancestry for the earls of Lade; transl. (B515): I,251-54, cf. (K75 ff., K81)


[B533] Hallfreð vandræðaskáld is known from his saga (B416) as court poet to both earl Hakon and Olaf Tryggvason; his loose stanzas in particular are interesting for his responses to Christianity, but are now thought suspect by some scholars. Text: (B510):155-73. [a] Hákonadrápa was composed for earl Hakon; transl. (B515): II,95-96. The remainder of Hallfreð’s praise poems are more or less Christian and composed for Olaf Tryggvason: [b] a first Ólafsdrápa; transl. (B515): II,94-95. [b] a eulogy Erfídrápa (or again Ólafsdrápa); transl. (B515): II,90-94; (B80):126-35. For his verse and life, see C. Wood, ‘The reluctant Christian and the king of Norway’, SS 31 (1959), 65-72; D. Whaley ‘Myth and religion in the poetry of a reluctant convert’, (A61h):556-71

[B534] Gunnlaug ormstunga ‘wormtongue’ is said to have been court poet to earl Erik of Lade, but only faint fragments of his court poetry are preserved, including some for Ethelred of England. Text: (B510):194-97. Much of his poetry as preserved in his saga (B415) seems of dubious authenticity, cf. R.

Other minor poets for earl Hakon include Göpporm (B510):61-63, Glúm (B510):75-78, Kormá (B510):79-91, and Tind (B510):144-47

Less verse is preserved from the court of Hakon’s successor Erik:

Eyjólf dáðaskáld is best known as the author of Bandadrápa celebrating many of Erik’s battles. Text: (B510):200-02. Transl. (B515): II,51-52

Halldór ókristni is known from his Eiríksflokkr. Text: (B510):202-04


The poets of the Christian kings

Following on from the verse composed for the earls of Lade, the material from the reigns of the early Christian kings naturally reflects (albeit to varying degrees) a shift in religious emphasis; not only did some poets eschew the kennings or heiti derived from pagan mythology, but they also employed skaldic verse to highlight new aspects of kingship that entered Scandinavia, or were developed there, in the conversion period. A classic study remains:

W. Lange, Studien zur christlichen Dichtung der Nordgermanen 1000-1200, Palaestra 222 (1958) [UL 779.c.15.142]

For further studies on the Christianisation of skaldic verse:


B. Fidjestøl, ‘Pagan beliefs and Christian impact: the contribution of skaldic studies’, (O72):100-20

B. Fidjestøl, ‘Skaldic poetry and the conversion, with some reflections on literary form as a source of historical information’, (O10):133-50


Darraðarljóð is an anonymous poem found only in Njáls saga (B411); ostensibly on the battle of Clontarf, many scholars think it fits better with a tenth-century date. Text: (B510):419-21. Transl.: (B593):72-75; (B493):116-56 with discussion

Sigvat Þórðarson is one of the most prolific skaldic poets whose work is left to us; he composed for a series of kings in the first half of the eleventh century. Text: (B510):223-75; J. Halldórsson, Kveðakver Sighvats Þórðarsonar (1965) [UL 752:2.d.95.1]. The bulk of his verse was devoted to saint Olaf Haraldsson: [a] The Vikingavisur chart Olaf’s adventures as a young viking, particularly his participation in the raids on England in the opening decades of the eleventh century; for text and transl., see C. Fell, ‘Vikingavisur’, (O32):106-22, also transl. (B515): II,124-27. [b] Nesjavísur celebrates Olaf’s consolidation of Norway after victory at the battle of Nesjar around 1016; transl. (B515): II,127-29. [c] The Austrfararvisur ‘verses on an eastern journey’ relate Sigvat’s adventures on an embassy to southern Sweden. Text: (B515): II,129-33; (B516):151-59; (B1):48-54. Commentary: F. Jónsson, Austrfararvisur, ADNVAO 1931:1 (1932) [UL 500:01.c.13.2]. [d] The Vestfararvisur follow Sigvat into the west and chart his diplomatic dealings with Knut of Denmark on Olaf’s behalf; transl. (B515): II,133-35; (B81):338-39. [e] Ironically, Sigvat also composed a memorial lay about Knut himself, the Tøgdrápa or Knútsdrápa; excerpts transl. (B515): II,135-36; (B81):337-38. See the discussion of Knut’s poets in M. Townend, ‘Contextualizing the Knútsdrápur: skaldic praise-poetry at the court of Cnut’, ASE 30 (2001), 145-79. Sigvat’s last two significant compositions were both put together in the reign of Magnus the good, and are both partially retrospective: [f] Firstly, the Erfidrápa (or Olafsdrápa) was an elegy for Olaf Haraldsson, and that is of great interest in the perspective it gives on the spread of his cult; transl. (B515): II,138-42; excerpts transl. (B81):332-33. [g] Of even more interest are the Bersöglisvisur ‘plain-speaking verses’, which criticise Magnus’s overbearing behaviour in the light of
the models of ideal kingship exemplified by Hakon the good and the two Olafs; transl. (B515): II,145-48; (B516):169-74; (B1):161-64. Various loose stanzas can also be found transl. (B81):339-40

[B547] Óttar svarti ‘the black’ also seems to have composed in a number of different courts, although nothing remains of the verse ascribed to him for Svein forkbeard of Denmark or Anund Jakob of Sweden. Text: (B510):289-99. [a] Only fragments of Ólafsdrápa senska are preserved of his verse for Olaf skótkonung; transl. (B515): II,157. [b] Hfðfólausn was composed for Olaf Haraldsson; transl. (B515): II,152-55; excerpts transl. (B81):333-34. [c] Knútsdrápa was then put together for Knut of Denmark; transl. (B515): II,155-56; (B80):136-39, reproduced (B81):335-36; (B1):155-59. Cf. (B546e); (D112).


[B549] ‘Liösmannaflókkur’ is a poem that purports to date from Knut’s period and perhaps to have been composed by members of his household army, although any attribution is uncertain. Text and trans.: (B510):422-23. Text and transl.: (B493):86-115 with extensive discussion. Transl. (B515): II,106-08; (B80):140-43


[B551] Þórir Særeksson composed the Róðadrápa on saint Olaf, of which only one stanza survives. Text: (B510):327-30


[B554] A large number of further poets are said to have composed for Harald hardrada of Norway, but only small and relatively dull (historically-speaking) snippets survive of their work; they include Íllugi Bryndœlaskáld (B510):384, Bôlverk Arnórsson (B510):385-87, Grani (B510):387, and Valgarð (B510):390-93

[B555] Less survives on Harald’s arch-enemy Svein Estrithsen of Denmark, but there are preserved the remnants of a flokkr by Þorleik fagri, text: (B510):396-99


[B557] Stein Herdisarson composed both the Nizarvisur for Harald hardrada and an Ólafsdrápa for Olaf kyri of Norway. Text: (B510):407-13

[B558] Several fragments remain on Magnus bareleges of Norway, by such poets as Bjørn kreasphendi (B510):434-37, Þorkel hamarskáld (B510):438-39, and an elegy Erfikvædi by Gisl Íllugason (B510):440-44

Post-eleventh century verse

Skaldic verse was still composed for Scandinavian kings, at least Norwegian ones, after 1100, but is largely (naturally) concerned with contemporary events and therefore has mostly not been included here. Of the retrospective compositions, two stand out in importance:

[B560] The genealogical poem Nóregs konunga tal is a particularly significant composition. Although anonymous, it was put together in the late twelfth century for the Icelandic Jón Loptsson and consists of
an annotated list of Norwegian kings that refers for its authority to the work of Sæmundr (B252). Text: (B510):579-89

[BS61] Of poems composed in honour of the cult of saint Olaf, Einar Skúlason’s Geisli ‘sunbeam’ stands out, for text see (B510):459-73

On the maintenance of the skaldic tradition in learned and elite contexts in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Iceland, see:

**Eddaic verse**

By contrast to skaldic verse, Eddaic poetry is largely anonymous, mythological, and timeless; it is extraordinarily difficult to pin down when or in what context the various poems that make up the corpus might have been composed or revised.

**Reference**

For bibliographical guidance to older material, see:

**Glossaries**

The major dictionaries of Old Norse (A90) are often helpful, but see also:
[BS72] B. la Farge and J. Tucker, *Glossary to the Poetic Edda based on Hans Kuhn’s Kurzes Wörterbuch*, Skandinavistische Arbeiten 15 (1992) [UL 752:01.c.10.15]; based on (BS87)

**General guides**

[BS76] J. Harris, ‘Eddic poetry’, (B233):68-156

On transmission and function in particular, see:

**Eddaic verse and mythology**

For more general surveys of Old Norse mythology, see (K1 ff., K20 ff.). A few of the contributions focussing more specifically (if that were possible) on Eddaic verse are:
[BS81] U. Dronke, ‘Eddic poetry as a source for the history of Germanic religion’, (K12):656-84

The poetic Edda (or Sæmundar Edda)

The basic body of Eddaic verse is known as the poetic Edda, and is mostly contained in one precious Icelandic manuscript from the second half of the thirteenth century, the Codex Regius. This manuscript contains twenty-nine poems; only the first ten are mythological, while the remainder are heroic. For other similar material, see (B593).
Texts

Texts and translations
[B590] G. Vigfússon and F. York Powell, *Corpus poeticum boreale: the poetry of the old northern tongue from the earliest times to the thirteenth century. I: Eddic poetry* (1883) [UL 752:2.c.85.2]

Translations
[B593] L.M. Hollander, *Old Norse poems: the most important non-skaldic verse not included in the Poetic Edda* (1936) [UL 752:2.c.90.3]

Commentary
A large number of contributions to various aspects of Eddaic verse can be found in the proceedings of the seventh International saga conference in Spoleto (A61g) as well as many of the editions listed above (R585 ff.); see also:

The prose Edda (or Snorra Edda)
Much Eddaic (although more skaldic) material is also included in Snorri Sturluson’s treatise on poetics known (confusingly) as *Snorra Edda*; this text is also of great interest for Snorri’s treatment of the myths and for the mythological prose narratives also included, some of which are based on preserved verse. It is naturally quite misleading to include a text here which consists largely of prose or skaldic verse, but as the name implies *Snorra Edda* has been linked to Eddaic studies for so long that it appears inevitable.


Írlandskur Háttatal

**Individual poems**

Defining a corpus of ‘Eddaic’ verse is difficult enough, but the problem is compounded by the bewildering variety shown by its various constituents. The various individual poems seem likely to come from a wide range of places, dates, and contexts, and to have filled a wide range of functions. Accordingly, the following definition of sub-groups is necessarily vague; only a selection of collected texts and translations are referred to, but the reader is reminded of the other items in the sections above (B585 ff.).

**Eschatological poems**

Many Norse poems touch on eschatological themes, but only one does it properly.


**Wisdom poems**

A particularly characteristic group are poems which seem encapsulate the ritual sharing of sacred lore in poetic form; these often take the form of contents between the protagonists (usually involving Odin some disguise or other), and can be compared with the ‘flying’ (B611 ff.) poems.

[B606] Alvissmál is now widely thought to date from the mediaeval period, and chronicles a contest of vocabulary between Thor and the dwarf Alvís. Text: (B587), I:124-29. Transl.: (B594):110-16; (B595):90-96; (B596):109-13


[B608] Grímnismál, leaving aside the prose surroundings, consists of a recitation of wisdom by Odin, of particular interest for its details of Valhalla (K55 ff.). Text: (B587), I:57-68. Transl.: (B594):53-64; (B595):46-49; (B596):50-60. See also: B. Ralph, ‘The composition of Grímnismál’, ANF 87 (1972), 97-118

[B609] Hávamál seems to be a composite text of various parts, such as home-spun or proverbial wisdom, reflections upon social interaction, and mythological material, particularly in the form of Odin’s life story. Text: (B587), I:17-44; D.A.H. Evans, Hávamál, VSNR TS 7 (1986) [UL 752:1.d.2.7]. Text and transl.: D.E. Martin Clarke, The Hávamál, with selections from other poems of the Edda, illustrating the wisdom of the north in heathen times (1923) [UL 752:26.c.90.7]. Transl.: (B594):14-41; (B595):11-35; (B596):14-38; further excerpts transl. (B1):139-44, 212-15. Cf. C. Larrington, ‘Hávamál and sources outside Scandinavia’, SBVS 23 (1990-93), 141-57

[B610] Vafþrúðnismál sees Odin again indulging in a wisdom contest, this time with the rash giant Vafthrudnir. Text: (B587), I:45-55; T.W. Machan, Vafþrúðnismál, Durham medieval texts 6 (1988) [ASNC]. Transl.: (B594):42-52; (B595):36-45; (B1):183-91; (B596):39-49. See also (K13):87-106
Flying poems

[B611] Hárbarðsljóð chronicles a debate between Thor and Odin of their respective merits, and is often considered to be a distinctively late Viking-age composition. Text: (B587), I:78-87. Transl.: (B594):74-82; (B595):58-65; (B596):69-77

[B612] Lokasenna gives the celebrated tale of Loki insulting every god and goddess within sight at a feast, thereby picking out the flaws in the divine order that lead ultimately to Ragnarök (K50 ff.). Text: (B587), I:96-110. Text and transl.: (B591):329-72. Transl.: (B594):90-103; (B595):72-84; (B1):195-204; (B596):84-96. Commentary: P.M. Sørensen, ‘Loki’s senna in Ægir’s hall’, (O52):239-59

Narratives

[B613] Hymiskviða contains an account of various deeds of Thor, focussing on his attempt to fish for the world-serpent. Text: (B587), I:88-95. Transl.: (B594):83-89; (B595):66-71; (B596):78-83. Widespread knowledge of this aquatic tale is attested through art-work from the late Viking age, see P.M. Sørensen, ‘Thor’s fishing expedition’, (K8):257-78

[B614] Skirnismál, more properly known as For Skírnis, is a rather misogynistic tale of the god Frey’s infatuation with a giantess Gerðr and the brutal tactics employed by his henchman Skírnir to get her to agree to a match. Text: (B587), I:69-77. Text and transl.: (B591):373-414. Transl.: (B594):65-73; (B595):50-57; (B596):61-68. See also (K75 ff., K81); P. Bibire, ‘Freyr and Gerðr: the story and its myths’, (O42):19-40; G. Steinsland, ‘Pagan myth in confrontation with Christianity: Skírnismál and Genesis’, (O60):316-28


Social or ideological poems

[B616] Hyndluljóð is preserved not in the Codex Regius but in Flateyjarbók, and has often been considered a late composition; the poem deals with ancestry and law, and has often been taken as illuminating social and legal concerns in early mediaeval Scandinavia, especially the importance of óðal (C112 ff.) .Text: (B587), I:288-96. Transl.: (B594):129-36; (B596):253-59. See A. Gurevich, ‘Edda and law: commentary upon Hyndloioð’, ANF 88 (1973), 72-84, and cf. (K75 ff., K81)

[B617] Rígsþula is again not preserved in the Codex Regius but through Snorri’s Edda (B600); it provides a mythological sketch of the origins of three social classes in Scandinavia and the development of the notion of kingship. Text: (B587), I:280-87. Text and transl.: (B591):159-238. Transl.: (B594):120-28; (B1):150-55; (B596):246-52. Cf. J.J. Young, ‘Does Rígsþula betray Irish influence?’, ANF 49 (1933), 97-107; T.D. Hill, ‘Rígsþula some medieval Christian analogues’, Speculum 61 (1986), 79-89; see also (C100)

Heroic Eddaic verse

The heroic style of Eddaic verse evidenced by compositions such as Atlakviða has (aside from fleeting mythological references) no direct reference to Scandinavia and has accordingly not been included. See:

[B618] U. Dronke, The poetic Edda. I: Heroic poems (1969) [UL 752.26.c.95.9]; the last four poems in the Codex Regius

[B619] For the Helgi lays, transl.: (B594):168-202; (B595):104-34; (B596):114-41

[B620] For the Völsung cycle, transl.: (B594):203-321; (B595):135-240; (B596):142-242

V. EAST NORSE HISTORIOGRAPHY

In general terms it can be said that the historiographical traditions of the ‘East Norse’ linguistic area, ie. Denmark and Sweden, were less developed in the mediaeval period than those in Iceland and Norway. However, while this assessment may hold water for the contrast between, for example, Iceland and Sweden, a fair amount of historical compositions pertaining to the Viking age were produced in Denmark; the idea that Norwegian histories are on the whole better informed or more ‘historical’ than Danish ones when applied to the period before the twelfth century seems to have some merit, but is also
likely to reflect the greater verisimilitude in, for the example, the kings’ saga tradition (B290 ff.) when compared with Saxo (B657). For a general survey of East Norse historical writings:


Danish sources
The earliest historical writings emanating from Denmark are linked inextricably to the young Danish church. On the one hand, there are annals and documentary sources from the church of Lund, which was established as the Danish archbishopric in 1104; on the other, the earliest connected pieces of historical prose are characterised by hagiographical works (B645).

Anthologies
For a full collection of the most useful Danish sources, see:

[B635] M.C. Gertz, Scriptores minores historiæ Danicae medii Ævi, I-II (1917-22) [UL 597:2.b.90.1-2]

Mediaeval Danish literature


Hagiography
Aside from the odd minor late Viking-age saint of dubious authenticity, Danish hagiography before the middle of the twelfth century is dominated by accounts of saint Knut Sveinsson. The traditions about Knut were formed in Odense, the site of his cult, in a series of texts from the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. Various pieces are to be found edited in:

[B645] M.C. Gertz, Vitae sanctorum Danorum (1908-12) [UL 111:1.b.90.1]
[B646] Thøger or Theodgarus is said to have been a German missionary who settled at Vestervig in Denmark during Svein Estrithsen’s reign; although he may have been a genuine historical figure, the traditions surrounding his life and cult are perhaps of dubious authenticity, see (B645):1-26
[B647] Knut Sveinsson was king of Denmark from 1080-86, when he was murdered in Odense during a popular uprising (D135). Aside from an inscription and liturgical material, there are two main early sources that refer to his life and cult. [a] The anonymous Passio sancti Kanuti regis et martyris was composed around 1100; text: (B645):62-71. [b] More substantial is Aelnoth’s Gesta Svenomagni regis et filiorum eius et passio gloriosissimi Canuti regis et martyris, composed around 1122, which also contains some interesting observations on the conversion process and the early Scandinavian church. Text: (B645):77-136; Danish transl. by E. Albrechtsen in (D136):25-52. See also T. Gad, Legenden i dansk middelalder (1961), 155-62 [UL 111:5.c.95.1]

Annals
Annals began to be composed in Denmark from the third quarter of the twelfth century, with the earliest collections stemming mostly from the archiepiscopal centre at Lund. Many of them contain material relating to the Viking age in Denmark, but they are wholly dependent upon earlier, foreign materials and have no independent value; much the same even applies to the series from Lund beginning in 1074, although this time they are reliant on twelfth-century Danish compositions such as the Roskilde chronicle (B652).

[B650] Text: E. Jørgensen, Annales Danici medii ævi (1920) [UL 597:2.a.90.1]; a revised edition is provided by E. Kroman, Danmarks middelalderlige annaler (1980) [UL 597:2.c.95.12]. For the textual background, see A.K.G. Kristensen, Danmarks ældste annalistik: studier over lundensisk annal-skrivning
The composition of brief Latin chronicles began at much the same time as that of annals, and they share many common characteristics. The earliest example is the ‘Roskilde chronicle’, which in its original form was composed around 1140; it owes much to Adam of Bremen (B73) for the period before the 1070s, but thereafter seems to reflect local traditions. The slightly later ‘Lejre chronicle’ is rather more tendentious, in that it constructs a legendary Danish kingdom centred around Lejre itself, which gave much impetus to the later history of Saxo Grammaticus (B657). Other Danish chronicles post-date Saxo and have no real value for the Viking age.

[B652] The chronicles can be found edited in (B635); see particularly 1,1-33 for the Roskilde chronicle or Chronicon Roskildense, and 34-54 for the Lejre chronicle or Chronicon Lethrense

Royal genealogies

[B654] For a number of mediaeval Danish kings’ lists, none of which seem to have much independent value for the Viking age, see (B635): I,145-94. The oldest is from the Necrologium Lundense (B760) and originally only began at Svein Estrithsen

Historical works

Major historical works expanding the chronicles began to be composed in the second half of the twelfth century, and are for the Viking age two names dominate.

Sven Aggesen

The Danish nobleman Sven Aggesen is known for two major historical works: the first is a rendition of the mediaeval ‘court-law’, composed around 1180; the second is a brief history of Denmark until around 1185, the Brevis historia regum Dacie. Both texts have a tricky transmission history, and neither seem to be hugely reliable when it comes to events in the Viking age itself.


Saxo Grammaticus

Saxo composed his history of the Danish kings under the encouragement of arch-bishops Absalon and Anders Sunesen of Lund, completing his work early in the thirteenth century. The first half (up until book 8) is largely legendary in tone and content, containing snippets of translated verse and similar stories to those found in other such sources, like Skjoldunga saga (B335). The second half, beginning with the conversion to Christianity in book 9, is widely thought to have been composed first, in the latter part of the twelfth century. Saxo was heavily (if often unscrupulously) dependent upon earlier sources such as Adam of Bremen (B73), Aelnoth (B647b), and the Roskilde chronicle (B652) for the period until the early twelfth century, and is highly tendentious historical writing at best.


As befits Saxo’s status, there is a wealth of literature about his work, of which only a brief snapshot can be included here; for example, a few symposiums:


[B659] K. Friis-Jensen, (ed.), Saxo Grammaticus, a medieval author between Norse and Latin culture: Danish medieval history and Saxo Grammaticus; a symposium held in celebration of the 500th
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

anniversary of the University of Copenhagen II (1981) [UL 597:2.c.95.20]; see particularly B. Guðnason, ‘The Icelandic sources of Saxo Grammaticus’, 79-93


For further commentary, see:


Swedish sources

Historical composition in Sweden developed late, and the majority of high mediaeval historical works have little merit for the Viking age; moreover, what little they do have is largely secondary and derived from Danish sources.

Anthologies

For a wide-ranging, if somewhat dated, collection of Swedish sources, see:

[B665] E.M. Fant and C. Annerstedt, Scriptores rerum Sveciarum medii aevi, 3 vols (1818-76) [UL 595:2.a.80.1-3]

Mediaeval Swedish literature


Hagiography

[B671] There is a fairly large body of Swedish hagiography, both in Latin and the vernacular, but the vast majority of it is focussed on high mediaeval saints. Such material as there is dealing with the conversion period concentrates on a small number of late Viking-age missionaries, such as saints Sigfrid, Botvid, Eskil, and David; for the lives of these saints, see (B665): II. The earliest life seems to have been that of Botvid, but in general these texts are all so late and stereotypical that they lack any genuine historical credibility, cf. (L55 ff.).

[B672] Much of this hagiographical material was again cross-fertilised with liturgical offices (B780); on Sigfrid in particular, see A. Önderfors, Die Hauptfassungen des Sigfridoffiziums, Skrifter utgivna av Vetenskaps-Societeten i Lund 59 (1968) [UL 500:05.c.21.30]

Swedish annals and genealogies

[B674] The composition of annals took off most belatedly in Sweden of all the Scandinavian countries, and they lack any kind of primary historical value for the Viking age; the earliest examples are little more than copies of the dubious Danish material. Various mediaeval annals and chronicles from Sweden are to be found scattered through (B665), but for a more recent edition see G. Paulsson, Annales suecici medii aevi: svensk medeltidsannalistik, Bibliotheca historica Lundensis 32 (1974) [UL 531:01.c.14.32]. For references to Sweden in foreign annals, see (F10-11)

[B675] For Swedish royal genealogies, see (B665): I.i,1-22; again, they seem to be of no genuine historical value for the Viking age. For vernacular kings’ lists, see (B679)

Historical works

It is curious that the few specimens of original historical writing preserved from mediaeval Sweden pertaining to the Viking age seem to be intimately connected to lawcodes; the suspicion that peoples felt
it necessary to explain their origins, and hence the origins of their legal system, can also be posited for the composition of Ari the wise’s *Íslendingabók* (B255), which followed on soon after the first codification of Icelandic law.

**[B678]** *Guta saga*. This parallel is certainly striking for *Guta saga*, which (like *Íslendingabók*) is a history of an island colony (Gotland), charting such themes as the (legendary) origins of its people, the introduction of the Christian church, and the relationships with the political authorities on the mainland. It is widely, although not universally, thought to have been composed, perhaps in conjunction with the codification of the *Gutalagen* (B710a), in the early thirteenth century; for an alternative view, see the extensive study in (B692). Text in (B710a). Text and transl.: C. Peel, *Guta saga: the history of the Gotlanders*, VSNR TS 12 (1999) [ASNC]. S.A. Mitchell, ‘On the composition and function of *Guta saga*’, *ANF* 99 (1984), 151-74; T. Blomkvist and P. Jackson, ‘Alt ir baugum bundit: skaldic poetry on Gotland in a pan-Scandinavian and Indo-European context’, *ANF* 114 (1999), 17-29

**[B679]** *The appendices to the Äldre Västgötalagen*. Appended to the older recension of the lawcode of the West Götar, the Äldre Västgötalagen (B710b), are a series of small lists chronicling the kings, lawmen, and bishops of the region from the late Viking age onwards. They represent an almost unique Swedish contribution to historical writing in the vernacular, but their value as historical sources has often been heavily criticised. The basic edition is: I. Lindquist, *Västgötalagens litterära bilagor: medeltida svensk småberättelsekonst på poesi och prosa*, Skrifter utgivna av Vetenskaps-Societeten i Lund 26 (1941), 9-62 [UL 500:05.c.21.16]

**VI. DOCUMENTARY SOURCES**

‘Documentary sources’ are taken to include materials written for a purpose other than the recording of history; for practical communication, for administration, for the recording events for functional or contemporary purposes. The distinction between these and ‘literary sources’ is naturally rather fleeting, especially for Scandinavia, where any such materials are lacking until after the Viking age and where (therefore) their relevance to Viking-age history is likely to be suspect, if not deliberately retrospective. The chief exception to this absence of material, in the form of runic inscriptions, is dealt with elsewhere (B800 ff.), but these inscriptions by themselves serve to illustrate the fact that even contemporary, utilitarian documents by their very nature impinge their own historical preconceptions and ideals onto themselves.

**Legal material**

**[B680]** ‘Among them there is no king, only law.’ Adam of Bremen’s assessment of the Icelanders in the eleventh century encapsulates much of what we suspect about the organisation of Viking-age Scandinavian society; individual groups basing their collective identity on a common body of law or custom, which was probably also intimately linked to their local cult(s) (C70 ff., K70 ff.). This finds expression above all in place-names, which confirm not only the significance of the local assembly or ‘thing’ (C80) but also the distinctive identification of ‘tribes’ or provinces by reference to their ‘law’ (cf. (I70 ff.)). However, establishing what such laws or customs may have been in the Viking age is tricky given the absence of contemporary written sources (aside again from runic inscriptions). Mediaeval Scandinavia is awash with codes of legal material from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but attempts to identify ‘old’ or ‘authentic’ customs in these documents have foundered against almost insuperable problems of method. How is antiquity to be determined? How similar (or asimilar) do different practices have to be before they can be assumed to have the same (or alternative) origins? For bibliographical guide to older research into ‘West Norse’ material see: H. Hermansson, *The ancient laws of Norway and Iceland: a bibliography*, Islandica 4 (1911) [UL 752:4.c.1.4]

**General surveys**

Apart from the questions of origins and transmission, other (often equally intractable) issues raise their heads. To what extent were kings responsible for determining, maintaining, or enforcing law before the mediaeval period? A further chief issue of concern with some codes turns on the extent to which they are ‘normative’ texts. For general guidance, see:

Language and transmission
Many scholars have tried to identify linguistic criteria which might reveal the age of the various components making up mediaeval law; however, they tend to rely on stylistic divisions that are awkward to justify or on notions of ‘orality’ against ‘literacy’ which now seem outdated.

Foreign influences
Other research has tended to focus more heavily on the possibility that Scandinavian mediaeval lawcodes were founded firmly on contemporary European material and cannot be held to be representative of earlier practices:

Provincial codes
The mainland Scandinavian countries had no national secular lawcodes until towards the end of the thirteenth century; instead, our earliest bodies of material reflect the codification of provincial practices, which may in turn well be understood as reflecting the generalisation of earlier divergent bodies of more local custom. Specifically Christian lawcodes can largely be found in the same editions as the secular ones.

Iceland
The laws of Iceland during the Commonwealth period go (misleadingly) under the name Grágás ‘grey goose’, but do not reflect a single lawcode. Although some fragments survive from the late twelfth century, the major manuscripts date from the middle of the thirteenth or later, and seem to reflect private compilations of material, much of which is already likely to have been redundant by that date.

According to Íslendingabók (B255), the first (at least partial) codification of Icelandic law took place in 1118, the so-called Haftidaskrá; from that point onwards, references are continually made to the employment of manuscripts rather than oral recitation. For the earlier pagan law of Ulfljot, who is said to have brought the Icelandic law from Norway around 930, see (K71)

For the basic edition: V. Finsen, Grágás: Islændernes lovbog i fristatens tid, I-III, Nordiske Oldskrifter udgivne af det nordiske Literatur-Samfund 11, 17 (1852-83) [UL 752:01.d.1.6-7]; V. Finsen, Grágás efter det Arnamagnæanske Haandskrift Nr. 334 fol., Staðarhólsbók (1879) [UL 599:2.c.85.3]; V. Finsen, Grágás: Stykker, som findes i det Arnamagnæanske Haandskrift Nr. 351 fol., Skálholtsbók og en Række andre Haandskrifter (1883) [UL 599:2.c.85.4]

A transl. with useful notes is: A. Dennis et al., The laws of early Iceland: Grágás; the Codex Regius of Grágás with material from other manuscripts, vol. I, University of Manitoba Icelandic studies 3 (1980) [UL 599:01.c.5.3]

Norway
As elsewhere in mainland Scandinavia, the first lawcodes from Norway are provincial rather than national in scope. The traditions recorded in the kings’ sagas (B290 ff.) credit various kings with setting up some of these legal provinces, and the references to Hakon the good’s lawmaking in the Bersoglisvisur (B546g) may confirm a royal interest in legislation by the tenth century. The first Christian law is said to have been introduced by Olaf Haraldsson around the 1020s (E70 ff., L172). However, the manuscripts remaining date from no earlier than the late twelfth century, and secular codes are only fully preserved for two of the Norwegian provinces.

[B700] The basic edition remains: R. Keyser et al., Norges gamle Love indtil 1387 udgivne ifølge offentlig Foranstalting, 5 vols (1846-95) [UL 593:01.b.3.1-5]. Attempts to re-edit some of the codes have begun to bear fruit; see B. Eithun et al., Den eldre Gulatingslova, Nørrøne tekster 6 (1994) [UL 280.c.95.88]

[B701] For the two major secular codes in translation, see L.M. Larson, The earliest Norwegian laws, being the Gulathing law and the Frostathing law, Records of civilization: sources and studies 20 (1935) [UL 280.c.90.14].


Denmark
The three Danish provincial codes are similarly only preserved in thirteenth-century manuscripts, and show the slow growth of royal authority over legislation.

[B705] The series Danmarks gamle landskabslove [UL 597:2.b.90.1 ff.] consists of numerous volumes prepared by a variety of editors, broken down into provinces: first Skåne, I:1 Skånske lov: text I-III (1933) and I:2 Skånske lov: Anders Sunesøns parafrase, Skånske kirkelov m.m. (1933); then Jutland, II Jyske lov: text I, NKS 295 8o (1933), III Jyske lov: text II-IV (1951), IV Jyske lov: text V-VI (1945); and finally Zealand, V Eriks sjællandske lov: text I-II (1936), VI Eriks sjællandske lov: text III-V (1937), VII Valdemars sjællandske lov: arvebog og orbodemål (1942), VIII Valdemars sjællandske lov: ældre og yngre redaktion samt sjællandske kirkelov (1941)


[B707] Of some interest is the Danish ‘court law’ from the late twelfth century, which exists in both Latin and vernacular versions; it claims to reflect the code drawn up by Knut after his conquest of England (D100 ff.) for his household or hird, although this is now thought a bit optimistic. The Latin text comes from the hand of Sven Aggesen (B656) and is known as the Lex Castrensis; text: (B635): I,64-93. For the vernacular Vederloven, see E. Kroman, Den danske rigslovgivning indtil 1400 (1971), 1-5 [UL 280.b.95.10]. A full text, translation, and commentary can be found in (B656)

Sweden
The Swedish provincial codes have come under particular scrutiny in the past due to the assumption that their language betrays a distinctively ancient body of material; this view is now largely out of fashion, cf. (B692) (a key study, with heavy emphasis on the Gutalagen) and (B682).

[B710] The basic corpus can be found in C.J. Schlyter et al., Samling af Sveriges gamla lagar, 13 vols (1827-77) [UL 595:2.b.80.1 ff.]. This rather antiquated edition can be supplemented by more recent editions of individual codes, of which only a selection is given here: [a] H. Pipping, Guta lag och Guta saga, jämte ordbok, SUGNL 33 (1905-07) [UL 752:01.d.2.31]; [b] E. Wessén, Äldre Västgötalagen, Nordisk filologi: texter och läroböcker för universitetsstudier A:9 (1954) [UL 752:01.d.4.9]; [c] S. Henning, Upplandslagen enligt codex Esplunda, SSF 169-70 (1934) [UL 755:1.c.1.63] and Upplandslagen enligt cod. Holm. B 199 och 1607 års utgåva, SSF 240, 242 (1967-69) [UL 755:1.c.1.112]

[B711] A very useful Swedish transl. of all the provincial codes packed with useful introductions and notes is: Å. Holmibäck and E. Wessén, Svenska landskapslagar, 5 vols (1933-46) [UL 280.c.90.17-21]
Charters and correspondence

With the possible exception of runestone inscriptions (B800 ff.), pre-literate Viking Scandinavia naturally lacks either charters or correspondence; the major contribution in this field comes from foreign sources which are usually treated together in secondary discussions. The essential collections are the *Diplomataria* (B717 ff.) and associated works produced by each Scandinavian country, which catalogue surviving (and often non-surviving) material and are an indispensable research aid.

**Scandinavian material**


**Diplomataria and registers**

These registers contain collections of assorted documentary sources, including letters, grants, foreign charters, and much else besides. Although daunting at first sight, those which are registered chronologically provide a superb tool charting almost any kind of written reference to Scandinavian history outside literary sources.

**Iceland**


[B718] B. Þorsteinsson, *Helztu sáttmálar, tilskipanir og samþykktir konunga og Íslendinga um réttindi þeirra og stöðu Íslands innan norska og dansk-norska ríkisins 1020-1551* (1972) [UL 599:2.c.95.16]

**Norway**


**Denmark**

These two parallel series contain texts in Latin and Danish translation of the most important documents as well as copious secondary references.


**Sweden**

The Swedish material has not been as recently edited as that from Norway and Denmark; the Danish registers in particular are often worth consulting first, as they contain most of the material relating to the Viking age.

[B726] J.G. Liljegren, *Diplomatarium Suecanum: Svenskt Diplomatarium*, I: ‘Åren 817-1285’ (1829) [UL 595:01.b.1.1], plus index by K.H. Karlsson (1910) [UL 595:01.b.1.3]
Foreign diplomatic material

Charters and other such documents from western Europe can often be of great significance, particularly for ecclesiastical history in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The Scandinavian *diplomataria* (B717 ff.) are the most accessible guides to the material.

German

Much of the Frankish and later German material, especially royal documents, can be found in MGH DD and subseries (B10). Most useful are documents relating to early episcopal organisation in Scandinavia, particularly Denmark.


English


Papal and ecclesiastical correspondence

Equally useful is papal correspondence with various Scandinavian kings, particularly in the eleventh century (B745). Such letters are registered in the various national series noted above (B717 ff.); a fuller register is:


Hamburg-Bremen

Of particular significance for the conversion of Scandinavia is the role of the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen, which is extensively illuminated by various forms of correspondence. Anskar’s own letter of 865 to Louis on the progression of the missions is recorded by Adam of Bremen (B73) and is also to be found in (736b):163. Assessing the status of the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen is also useful, in that it helps to cast light on the development or stagnation of missionary activity sponsored from there (L110 ff.). For the papal charters in favour of Hamburg-Bremen, the classic studies are:

[B740] J.M. Lappenberg, (ed.), *Hamburgisches Urkundenbuch I* (1842; repr. 1907) [UL 574:7.b.90.2] (for the texts); F. Curschmann, *Die älteren Papsturkunden des Erzbistums Hamburg: eine diplomatische Untersuchung* (1909) [UL A325.33] (for further, more detailed editions of papal privileges and discussion of their respective authenticity)

A more updated version is:


For a more wide-ranging survey of documents pertaining to the diocese, which in essence provides an excellent guide to virtually all events concerning the archbishops, arranged chronologically, see:


**Other documentary material**

This section contains a disparate range of materials indiscriminately lumped together for convenience.

**Treaties and political agreements**

[B750] For the treaties between the Rus’ and Byzantium in the first half of the tenth century, see (B180a)
[B751] For the treaty between Ethelred of England and Olaf Tryggvason in the early 990s, see (B107a): I,220-21; transl. (B81):437-39. On the earlier treaty of Alfred and Guthrum, see [I62]
[B752] For the agreement on mutual rights between saint Olaf Haraldsson and the Icelanders, and its subsequent ratifications under the early Icelandic bishops, see (B700):1,437; for text and Norw. transl., also S. Bagge et al., *Norske middelalders-dokumenter* (1973), 12-15 [UL 593:1.c.95.13]
[B753] A supposed border agreement between Denmark and Sweden from the early eleventh century is now widely considered a forgery. Text: (B679):63-95 (with other documents); see P.H. Sawyer, “‘Landamæri I’: the supposed eleventh-century boundary treaty between Denmark and Sweden”, (O50):165-70

**Land registers and cadastres**

Scandinavian land-registers are only preserved from the high mediaeval period, by which time the pattern of landholding had evolved a long way from the late Viking age.

[B755] **King Valdemar’s cadastre** is the most significant of these; it contains thirteenth-century lists of Danish royal land, which have been used to chart the growth of royal estates in the transitional period of the early middle ages. Text: S. Aakjær, *Kong Valdemars Jordebog. I: Text. II: Kommentar. III: Registre*, SUGNL 50 (1926-45) [UL 752:01.c.1.1-3]; for discussion, see (D238)
[B756] For other material of interest to the Viking age, such as the collection of Swedish royal lands known as the *Uppsala öd*, see the *diplomata* listed above (B720 ff.); one of the earliest accounts of royal taxation can be found in the *Necrologium Lundense* (B760)

**Ecclesiastical lists**

The late development of the church, and the concomitantly late nature of most of the early manuscripts, means that little is available to illuminate the development of the church before the mid-twelfth century.

[B760] **The Necrologium Lundense** is a codex put together at the archiepiscopal centre of Lund in the course of the twelfth century. It is primarily an obituary list of clerics and patrons of Lund cathedral, but also contains other material, such as the text of saint Knut’s donation of 1085, some details of royal taxation such as the ‘midsummer tax’, and much more. Text: L. Weibull, *Necrologium Lundense: Lunds domkyrkas nekrologium*, Monumenta Scaniae historica (1923) [UL 595:6.b.90.1]

**Liturgical material**

The study of mediaeval liturgy is a subject more fitting to a bibliography of mediaeval Scandinavia, but can be illuminating for the Viking age in at least two respects. Firstly, the various offices and masses often contain details about the lives of various Scandinavian saints, in particular royal martyrs such as Olaf Haraldsson; however, these often consist of little more than collections of miracles. More tellingly, they reveal something of the avenues through which Christianity found its way to Scandinavia, in that both form and content (especially in the case of rare or local saints’ cults) can reveal the direction of missionary influence (L175 ff.).
Liturgical texts in Scandinavia are characterised by wide diversity and frequently very fragmentary preservation, at least in manuscript form. Individual dioceses had distinct rites and liturgies right up until (and sometimes even after) the advent of the printed missals and breviaries just prior to the Reformation. For introductory guidance and editions of these printed texts, see H. Johansson, ‘Liturgy and liturgical texts’, (A73):392-93; for lists of saints, see also N.-K. Liebgott, ‘Martyrologies’, (A73):410-11. A number of small fragments of early English missals have been found in Scandinavia, see L. Gjerløw, Adoratio crucis: the Regularis Concordia and the Decreta Lanfranci; manuscript studies in the early medieval church of Norway (1961) [UL 85.c.95.4]; for liturgical influence in the form of saints’ cults, see (L175)

VII. OTHER DISCIPLINES

Inscriptions

Inscriptions in the Scandinavian runic alphabet or ‘futhark’ provide the only contemporary Scandinavian written documents from the Viking age, and are therefore of essential interest. Although often denigrated as terse, stereotypical of no historical value, recent studies have shown that these texts can cast light on numerous aspects of Viking-age Scandinavia, such as religion, social standing, ideals and ethics, and laws and customs. This applies particularly to the large number of runestones from the late Viking age of the tenth and eleventh centuries. The later inscriptions in the Roman alphabet have less to tell us, although the legends on coins are of great significance (C250 ff.).

Runic inscriptions and runology

The runic script seems to have been developed and first used throughout ‘Germania’ at the beginning of the Christian era, but many of the earliest texts in Scandinavia are brief and indecipherable. Only during the Viking age (particularly the latter part) are runic inscriptions to be found in large numbers, particularly on standing runestones. Studies of the broader relevance of inscriptions are to be found in (C90 ff.), while for literacy see (B836 ff.). The various appendices in (C95) contain much useful catalogue information.

Publications

The nature of runic inscriptions lends themselves to soundbites, and they can therefore be found scattered liberally throughout various textbooks and anthologies; a large number, for example, can be found transl. in (B1):55-57, 74-76, 80-91, 166-71.

On function and interpretation:

Publications

The Uppsala database of Viking-age runic inscriptions in machine-readable form can be accessed at www.nordiska.uu.se/forskn/sammord.htm.
Iceland and Greenland

The apparent absence of Viking-age runic inscriptions has always proved a bit of an enigma, especially given their presence in neighbouring Greenland.


Norway

Norway too has surprisingly few runic inscriptions from the Viking age, especially when compared with the colonies in the British isles (B830 ff.); this means that the Norwegian corpus tends to be somewhat left out of the statistical approaches taken by modern scholars (C90 ff.). The standard collection remains:

[B817] Norges innskrifter med de yngre runer, Norges indskrifter indtil reformationen: anden afdeling ved M. Olsen et al., 6 vols (1941-90) [UL 593:01.b.1.66-70b] [Niyr]; covers the various Norwegian provinces in turn throughout volumes 1 to 5, while volume 6 presents some of the mediaeval finds from Bergen


Denmark

The fairly large body of Danish inscriptions numbers in the hundreds from the Viking age, but are particularly interesting in that they seem to reflect the earliest adoption of widespread runic literacy on runestones, possibly stimulated by the royal monument at Jelling (D60 ff.).

[B820] L. Jacobsen and E. Moltke, Danmarks runeindskrifter, 2 vols (1941-42) [UL S760.b.94.1-3] [DR]; the standard corpus


Sweden

The runic tradition, at least in the Viking age, reached its culmination in Sweden, where runestones in particular number in the thousands; for the significance of this material for religious history, see (L165 ff.). As a body of material they naturally reflect the diversity of the various Swedish provinces, but have a further point of interest in the art-work (M170 ff.) carried by many of them.

[B824] The huge series Sveriges runinskrifter (1900 ff.) [UL S760.b.90.1-33 (with gaps)] [SR] has been running now for a century, and many of the older volumes are outdated and in the process of being replaced. Cambridge University Library has most, but not all, of the volumes published so far; to facilitate referencing, the breakdown of classmarks is: 1. Öland [UL S760.b.90.1]; 2. Östergötland [UL - .2]; 3. Södermanland [-.3-4]; 4. Småland [-.5]; 5. Västergötland [-6-7]; 6-9. Uppland [-.8-14]; 11-12. Gotland [only 12, nos 138-222, -.19]; 13. Västmanland [-.21]; 14.i Närke [UL -.31]; 14.ii Värmland [-.32]; 15. Gästrikland [-.33]


[B826] The Swedish inscriptions have been subjected to a series of detailed studies in the Runrönn series published at Uppsala. Among those contributing most clearly to questions of history or literacy, see: J. Axelson, Mellansvenska runristare: förteckning över signerade och attribuerade inskrifter, Runrönn 6 (1992) [UL 763:01.c.3.4]; R. Palm, Runor och regionalitet: studier av variation i de nordiska minnesinskrifterna, Runrönn 7 (1992) [UL 763:01.c.3.5]; M. Åhlén, Runristaren Öpir: en monografi, Runrönn 12 (1997) (E.s.) [ASNC], T. Snædal, Medan världen vakar. Studier i de gotländska runinskrifternas språk och kronologi, Runrönn 16 (2002)
The colonies


[B831] Runic inscriptions from the isle of Man have been edited more recently by R.I. Page, see ‘Some thoughts on Manx runes’, *SBVS* 20 (1978-81), 179-99 and ‘More thoughts on Manx runes’, *Michigan Germanic studies* 7 (1981), 129-37; cf. also (I230 ff.) and for the runic crosses more generally (M155 ff.)


Runic literacy

The guides above (B800 ff.) and studies of the late Viking-age runestone explosion (C90 ff.) provide orientation in the field of runic literacy in Viking-age Scandinavia, which may (or may not) have been quite extensive; our impressions seem to have been coloured by the more widespread casual use of runic script in mediaeval Scandinavian towns.


Non-runic inscriptions


Place-names

The study of place-names has an immense contribution to make to the history of Viking-age Scandinavia; for some of the various applications of toponomastics, see the sections on social organisation (C60 ff.), cult-sites and paganism (K90 ff.), parishes and early churches (L220 ff.), and settlement patterns (M25 ff.). The discipline is however a highly specialised one, where little of the research is conducted outside the Scandinavian languages, which makes an initial approach to the topic seem rather forbidding. For bibliographical guidance, see:


[B821] P. Larsson, ‘Recent research on personal names and place-names in runic inscriptions’, *Onoma* 37 (2002), 46-68
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

The most useful, if in many ways outdated, overall guide to Scandinavia remains:

[B843] M. Olsen, Stedsnavn, Nordisk kultur 5 (1939) [UL 592:01.b.1.2]; contains contributions on various topics and countries

Iceland


Norway

[B850] O. Rygh and A. Kjær, Norske Gaardnavne, 19 vols (1897-1936) [UL 498.9.c.85.1]; the basic reference list of Norwegian farm-names

Denmark

The full collection, organised geographically, is:

For a less unwieldy introduction to Danish place-names, see:
[B857] V. Christensen and J. Kousgaard Sørensen, Stednavnaforsknings, 2 vols (1972-79) [UL 498.c.95.519]

Sweden

[B860] The vast body of material on Swedish place-names is being slowly published in the series Sveriges ortnamn, which was begun at the beginning of the twentieth century and which is organised provincially. Those available in Cambridge include: Älvsborg, 20 vols (1906 ff.) [UL 498.b.90.13 ff.]; Värmland, 15 vols (1922 ff.) [UL 498.b.90.24 ff.]; Skaraborg, 18 vols (1950 ff.) [UL 498.b.95.327 ff.]; Västernorrland, 1 ff. (1955 ff.) [UL 498.b.95.372 ff.]; Östergötland, intermittent [UL 498.b.95.335 ff.]. See also Skånes ortnamn (1958 ff.) [UL 498.c.95.203 ff.]
[B861] More accessible for the non-initiate are a series of smaller volumes presenting the place-names of individual regions; see G. Hallberg, Ortnamn i Blekinge (1990) [UL 498.c.95.362] with references to other volumes

For guides and topical studies:
[B864] H. Ståhl, Ortnamn och ortnamnforskning (1970) [UL 498.c.95.54]
[B865] B. Pamp, Ortnamnen i Sverige, Lundastudier i nordisk språkvetenskap B:2, 5th edn (1988) [UL 498.c.95.353]

The colonies

England

Nowhere has the use of place-names been put to more intensive historical use than in assessing the impact of the Viking raids and settlements in England.

[B870] This can be illustrated by a series of studies from the hand of K. Cameron, see: Scandinavian settlement in the territory of the Five Boroughs: the place-name evidence, Inaugural lecture, University of Nottingham, 1965; ‘Scandinavian settlement in the territory of the Five Boroughs: the place-name evidence, part II, place-names in thorp’, MS 3 (1970), 35-49; ‘Scandinavian settlement in the territory of the Five Boroughs: the place-name evidence, part III, the Grimston-hybrids’, England before the conquest: studies in primary sources presented to Dorothy Whitelock (1971), 147-63; all these are to be
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

found reprinted in: K. Cameron, (ed.), Place-name evidence for the Anglo-Saxon invasion and Scandinavian settlements (1977) [UL 498:8.b.95.1]


Scotland

Place-names have also been extensively quarried for Viking activity in Scotland, especially in the isles, where onomastic material has always provided a strong prop for the argument of Scandinavian cultural dominance; cf. (I).


Personal names

Personal names have a similarly wide range of implications for historical work, although their evidence is somewhat compromised by the lack of evidence from Viking-age Scandinavia. For a general guide see (B841) and:

[B880] A. Janzén, Personnamn, Nordisk kultur 7 (1947) [UL 592:01.b.1.7]

Iceland and Norway

Catalogues of personal names recorded in West Norse literary material can go some way towards providing some kind of prosopography for this part of Scandinavia, although not very far along that road:


[B884] F. Jónsson, ‘Oversigt over det norsk(-islandske) navenforråd før år 900, med tillæg: De norsk(-
islandske) tilnavne fra samme tid’, ANOH 16 (1926), 175-244


Denmark

[B887] G. Knudsen et al., Danmarks gamle personnavne. I Fornavne. II Tilnavne (1936-64) [UL 498:5.b.90.1 ff.]


Sweden

[B890] M. Lundgren and E. Brate, Svenska personnamn från medeltiden, Nyare bidrag till kännedom om de svenska landsmålen och svenskt folkliv 6-7 (1892-1934) [UL 595:01.c.17.10 (6-7)]; contains also E.H. Lind, ‘Svenska personnamn i den norsk-isländska medeltidslitteraturen’, 323-58 on Swedes in West Norse sources
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

The colonies


[B895] For Russia, the treaties with Byzantium (B180a) provide the most useful collection of material

Palaeography
Although palaeography largely falls outside the scope of the bibliography, an awareness of the general background is useful not only for gaining an ability to tackle the written sources directly but also for illuminating avenues of influence on the early Scandinavian church from abroad.

[B902] H. Benediktsson, *Early Icelandic script as illustrated in vernacular texts from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries*, Icelandic manuscripts series in folio 2 (1965) [UL 899.a.1067]

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY

C. SCANDINAVIA
As much work on Viking-age Scandinavia tends naturally to be specific to individual countries, it is in a sense unfortunate that wider studies of the Scandinavian peninsula as a cultural ‘unity’ tend to be marginalized. However, the common perception of the region as something distinct from the rest of Europe has deep historical roots and is still reflected in the close affiliations between the modern Scandinavian states of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. In addition, since these countries are creations of the late Viking age at the earliest, it is to some extent artificial to draw a dividing line between them, or perhaps more accurately to suggest that these divisions are in any way more ‘real’ than others which have since been subsumed.

General surveys
The only significantly useful general surveys of Scandinavia during the Viking age (and before and after) are the textbooks listed in section (A1 ff.); for further studies relating specifically to settlement and archaeology see (M).

Political and cultural geography
For studies on settlement and landscape see (M25 ff.).

Cultural identity and diversity
The idea that Scandinavia can be seen as a cultural unity is in many ways misleading, since material culture in particular reveals a wide range of divergent practices and customs across the region. However, the widespread and usually indiscriminate use of terms such as *Nordmanni* ‘Northmen’ by Christian writers certainly seems to indicate that the Norse were perceived collectively; a common factor in this, at least when contrasted with Christian Europe, was clearly their religion, exemplified through names such as *pagani* ‘pagans’ or *hæðene menn* ‘heathen men’. For the Viking image in western Europe, see:
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

From a Scandinavian viewpoint such common terminology is less easy to identify, but it is striking how many mediaeval authors across the region termed their own speech the *dansk tunga* ‘Danish language’. Even allowing for dialectal variation, language seems likely to have been the strongest single factor which might have allowed for a common Scandinavian identity; see:


**Perceptions of Scandinavia**

**Pre-Viking authors**

The earliest written reports of Scandinavia come from the works of various Classical geographers (B25). Although invaluable in their own way, these authors have (mis-)informed many current ideas of early Scandinavian history, not least in terms of tribal groups.

[C10] Thule. Some of the earliest texts talk of a place called ‘Thule’ (in various spellings), and it is often not easy to work out what part of Scandinavia (if any) they refer to; see the accounts of Pytheas reported with details of the lifestyle of the inhabitants in Strabo’s *Geography* (B25a):II.5.8, IV.5.5, and by Pliny in his *Natural history* (B25b):II.77, IV.16. The later identification with Iceland comes out from later accounts by scholars such as Dicuil (B160) and Adam of Bremen (B73)

[C11] ‘Scandinavia’. Rather more cogent is the very brief account in Ptolemy’s *Geography* (B25c), which isolates ‘Scandia’ as a cluster of islands east of the ‘Cimbric peninsula’, ie. Jutland. It has long been recognised that this must refer to the province of Skåne in the south-western tip of modern Sweden

[C12] Tribal geography. Many of these authors make passing observations on the peoples of Scandinavia and (sometimes) their customs. For example, in his *History of the wars* VI:15 Procopius (B32) reports the wanderings of a tribe called the ‘Eruli’ through Scandinavia and gives a brief account of the peoples living in Thule

[C13] These pre-Viking authors have been subjected to a series of studies by J. Svennung: *Scadinavia und Scandia: lateinisch-nordische Namenstudien*, SKHVU 44:1 (1963) [UL 500:05.c.9.44] (E.s.); *Jordanes und Scandia: kritisch-exegetische Studien*, SKHVU 44:2a (1967) [UL 500:05.c.9.44] (E.s.); *Skandinavien bei Plinius und Ptolemaios: kritisch-exegetische Forschungen zu den ältesten nordischen Sprachdenkmälern*, SKHVU 45 (1974) [UL 500:05.c.9.45] (E.s.)

**Viking-age authors**

The heavy reliance on older authorities in mediaeval geographical work means that the value of many contemporary sources is often inhibited. Some excellent accounts of northern geography are provided by some of the Arabic authors (B202 ff.), but they naturally tend to concentrate on eastern Europe. For contemporary perceptions of the customs of the Vikings abroad, see (C1-2) and (B45).

[C15] Dicuil (B160) chapter 7 contains many interesting observations on the North Atlantic, most notable for the fact that Irish hermits had already discovered Faroe and ‘Thule’ by 825

[C16] The Old English *Orosius* (B106) is particularly useful, in that it records descriptions of northern European political geography by both Othhere and the Old English author. See: A.S.C. Ross, *The ’Terfinnas’ and ’Beormas’ of Ohthere*, Leeds School of English Language and Literature texts and monographs 7 (1940; repr. 1981) [UL 759.c.82.6; repr. 1990.8.1417]; O. Crumlin-Pedersen, ‘Ships, navigation and routes in the reports of Ohthere and Wulfstan’, (B106a):30-42; M. Korhammer, ‘The orientation system in the Old English Orosius: shifted or not?’, *Learning and literature in Anglo-Saxon England: studies presented to Peter Clemoes on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday*, edd. M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (1985), 251-69 [UL 541:14.c.95.79]

[C17] Adam of Bremen’s geographical description of Scandinavia in book IV of his *Gesta* (B73) remains however the most essential account of the political geography of Viking-age Scandinavia. On the routes described by Adam, see: O. Jørgensen and T. Nyberg, *Seljruter i Adam af Bremens danske øverden*, Arkiv 74 (1992) [Haddon]

[C18] Much debate has also turned on the word ‘viking’ and its etymology and appearance in non-Scandinavian sources; see S. Hellberg, *Vikingatidens vikingar*, *ANF* 95 (1980), 25-88 and (C35 ff.)
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age


The world view in mediaeval Scandinavia
Many of the historical works produced by authors such as Saxo (B657) or Snorri Sturluson (B260) in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries also contain geographical and ethnographical descriptions of Scandinavia, although necessarily reflecting mediaeval divisions; a wide ranging discussion can also be found in (G4).


[C21] A.-D. von den Brincken, Fines terrae: die Enden der Erde und die vierte Kontinent auf mittelalterlichen Weltkarten, MGH Schriften 36 (1992) [UL 570:01.c.3.48]; on mediaeval geography more generally


The three ages of Scandinavia
As the title of this bibliography indicates, the conventional periodization of Scandinavian history in the European ‘middle ages’ reflects three divisions; the pre-Viking or ‘Iron’ age, the Viking age, and the ‘mediaeval’ period. Although based heavily on a foreign rather than indigenous perception, this scheme still has many merits, even though many archaeologists prefer to operate with a stripped-down periodization of Iron age and mediaeval period, the transition coming around the turn of the millennium with the conversion to Christianity.

The pre-Viking period
A bewildering multiplicity of terms are employed in various countries and disciplines for the opening three-quarters of the first millennium AD; these range from ‘Roman Iron age’ for the earlier period to ‘Germanic Iron age’ for the latter, along with many others such as ‘Vendel age’ (roughly seventh to eighth centuries) that reflect certain art-styles defined by individual sites. These reflect the uncertain nature of the practice of periodising a region largely through specific aspects of its material culture. For a brief introductory survey, see (A21):22-35 and the individual country sections (D-F).


For recent archaeological approaches see (C70 ff.) and:

[C33] C. Fabech and J. Ringtved, (edd.), Samfundsorganisation og regional variation: Norden i romersk jernalder og folkevandringstid, JASS 27 (1991) (brief E.s. for all articles) [UL S460:01.b.23.41]

The Viking age
Its beginnings
It has been observed that the Viking age is defined by Vikings, and although this seems self-evident, it has not stopped various approaches seeking to identify a distinctive Viking-age culture in Scandinavia. Our understanding of the beginnings of the Viking age has been revolutionised by recent discoveries and interpretations, for example the excavations at Ribe (N185 ff.), the classification of brooches, and dating tools such as dendrochronology.


[C36] F. Hødnebø, ‘Who were the first Vikings?’, (A49):43-54


Scandinavian History in the Viking Age


Its development
The Viking age in the ninth century and early tenth centuries can be characterised by plundering, pillaging, and ploughing; a desire for moveable wealth and immoveable land. The late tenth and eleventh centuries, on the other hand, reveal a different aspect, that of political conquest and consolidation, and it is difficult to say whether both should be judged as part of the same historical phenomenon. For a classic article and discussion on these points, see:

Other features of this period include the growth of towns (N170 ff.) and the concomitant spread of trade to everyday items rather than simply luxuries (N5 ff.). Cf. also:

For an attempt at a revision of the archaeological periodisation:

Its end
The conventional Anglocentric view puts the end of the Viking age in 1066, when Harald hardrada’s Norwegian army was defeated at Stamford Bridge. However, this national invasion had little in common with the Viking raids and settlements of the ninth century, nor was it the last time a Scandinavian king brought (or intended to bring) an army to the British isles. In this light, it then becomes reasonable to ask: was Knut the great (D100 ff.) a Viking? Or saint Knut (D135)? Or Magnus barlegs (E90)? Or even Hakon the old (B463)? Following on from the notion of the ‘two Viking ages’, it might even be argued that the Viking age was coming to an end around the first half of the tenth century, by which time recorded raids were dying away, new colonies such as Iceland (G) were ‘fully settled’, and (most significantly) Vikings abroad seem largely to have cast in their lots and chosen their futures in their new colonial environments, leading inevitably to a slow process of assimilation into the more numerous indigenous populations. From a Scandinavian perspective the key shifts which brought an end to the Viking age can be said to have been the conversion to Christianity, social re-organisation leading to the establishment of recognised kingdoms, and above all a shift away from ‘external’ to ‘internal exploitation’.

The mediaeval period
The history of Scandinavia in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is of extreme importance for the study of the Viking age, since many of the trends and developments can only be identified by working backwards from later, and better attested, periods. Despite this, there is comparatively little in English on the subject; (A35) is the most accessible guide, for an even broader survey see:
[C55] T.K. Derry, A history of Scandinavia (1979) [UL 592:1.c.95.11], espec. chapter 3: ‘Outpost of Christendom’

Scandinavian society
The best place to start exploring social history in Viking-age Scandinavia is through the general textbooks, e.g. the survey in (A10), chap. 4: ‘Scandinavian society’.

Social organisation
It is widely theorised that forms of serious social organisation in Scandinavia (as so frequently elsewhere) are military in origin; the need for population groups to band together for mutual defence.
This applies not only to the first half of the first millennium AD, when votive deposits (D20 ff.) seem to reveal various groups fighting for dominance over available resources, but also for the Viking age itself, when military service seems to be among the earliest demands a king could make of his subjects. See: [C65] A.N. Jørgensen and B.L. Clausen, (edd.), Military aspects of Scandinavian society in a European perspective, AD 1-1300, Publications from the National Museum: studies in archaeology and history 2 (1997) [Haddon]  

The ‘central place’
A model growing in popularity recently is that of the ‘central place’, which consists of focal points in the landscape reconstructed on the basis of various disciplines such as place-names, archaeological finds, and halls. For the further use of place-names to illuminate mediaeval administrative units, see (C230 ff.). [C70] S. Brink, ‘Political and social structures in early Scandinavia: a settlement-historical pre-study of the central place’, *Tor* 28 (1996), 235-81 
[C71] S. Brink, ‘Political and social structures in early Scandinavia II: aspects of space and territoriality; the settlement district’, *Tor* 29 (1997), 389-437 
[C72] L. Lundqvist, ‘Central places and central areas in the late Iron age: some examples from southwestern Sweden’, (O80):179-97 
[C75] C. Fabech, ‘Centrality in sites and landscapes’, (M27):455-73 

The ‘thing’
[C80] The assemblies known as things seem to have served in Viking-age Scandinavia as centres of districts (large or small) for judicial and probably also religious and commercial dealings of all kinds. Things are known most extensively through mediaeval literature and laws, although these tend to concentrate on the larger provincial assemblies which developed in the course of the period. However, from scattered historical references and particularly place-names, it seems clear that the thing was a prime factor in regional organisation and identity at much more local levels, cf. (C70 ff.). The thing’s importance has seemed so self-evident that research tends to focus on aspects developing from it (cf. (G70 ff.)), and there are few general surveys, see the article ‘Ting’ in *KLNM* (A70) 18 (1974), 334-67 and associated articles 367-90

Law
Piecing together Scandinavian law and custom is necessarily a tricky procedure once it is recognised that the mediaeval lawcodes (B680 ff.) do not necessarily preserved older material intact. Still useful is the survey in (A33), chap. 11: ‘Justice’. In the Viking age itself, enforcement of law seems at least partly to have devolved down to the feud (G75 ff.); for other methods of punishment, cf.:  
[C86] K.E. Gade, ‘Hanging in northern law and literature’, *Maal og minne* 1985, 159-83  

On the interesting Forsa ring inscription, often interpreted as Scandinavia’s first legal document from the ninth century, see:  

Runestones and social change
Much recent work has focused on late Viking-age runic inscriptions as evidence of both Scandinavian society but also the great social changes which were taking place in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

centuries. This is largely prompted by the explosion in the number of runestones erected in Scandinavia, particularly Sweden, during this period; cf. also (C210 ff.).

[C90] A. Ruprecht, Die ausgehende Wikingerzeit im Lichte der Runeninschriften, Palaestra 224 (1958) [UL 779.c.15.143]


[C95] B. Sawyer, The Viking-age rune-stones: custom and commemoration in early medieval Scandinavia (2000) [UL 592:12.c.200.1]; a full survey of many aspects of social history illuminated by runestones

Social class

The reconstruction of social class in Viking-age Scandinavia has traditionally been undertaken through surveys of legal material (B680 ff.), but more recently the evidence of burials (M300 ff.) and runic inscriptions (C90 ff., C155 ff., C210 ff.) in particular have added an extra dimension; for a basic survey, see (A33), chap. 3: ‘The free’.

The three classes of society

A division of society into three groups, consisting of priests, warriors, and farmers, has often been posited, and then heavily criticised, for Indo-European society; see (K32). Within Scandinavia, it is the Eddaic poem Rígsþula (B617) that has led the debate; this poem presents a mythological justification for a tripartite division, although on different grounds, with the god Rígr presented as the progenitor of þræll ‘thrall’, Karl ‘farmer’, and Jarl ‘earl’. For a review see:


The free ‘bœndr’

The role and independence of the bóndi (plural bœndr) or ‘free farmer’ has been much debated, especially in the light of the growth of tenancy in mediaeval Scandinavia.


For comparative semantic studies, see:


Land-tenure

[C112] Of particular significance was the mode of landholding known as óðal, which reflected land owned by a family group that conferred a higher status. Most of the research is conducted in the Scandinavian languages; for a handy introduction, see A. Gurevich, ‘Land tenure and inheritance’, (A73):372-73. The high rank of the óðal farmer or hølðr is hinted at in Scandinavian sources, and can be to some extent confirmed for the Viking age by the loanword hold in legal material from the Danelaw in
England, especially the Norðleoda laga; text (B107a): I,458-61, transl. (B81):469-70. On the large ‘magnate farms’ see (M30 ff.) and (D6)

The unfree ‘thralls’
For a survey, see (A33), chap. 2: ‘Slaves’.
[C122] M. Wilde-Stockmeyer, Sklavei auf Island: Untersuchungen zur rechtlich-sozialen Situation und literarischen Darstellung der Sklaven im skandinavischen Mittelalter, Skandinavistische Arbeiten 5 (1978) [UL 752:01.c.10.5]

Children

Women
The recent flourishing of the previously neglected study of the historical position of women has led to a large amount of published material. For a full survey see (A34), also (A35), chap. 9: ‘Women: ideal and reality’.

In literary sources
See (A34):84-175 and:
[C135] H. Kress, ‘Meget samstavet må det tykkes deg: om kvinneopprør og genretvang i sagaen om Laksdølène’, SHT 100 (1980), 266-80 (E.s.)
[C137] N. Damsholt, ‘The role of Icelandic women in the sagas and in the production of homespun cloth’, SJH 9 (1984), 75-90

In law
In the archaeological record
For burials and other archaeological evidence, see also (A34):9-41.


In the runic inscriptions
See also (A34):42-74 and the various references in (C95).


Social ideals and relationships
One of the most fertile approaches recently to the family sagas in particular (B350 ff.) has been to analyse them from the perspective of the mechanisms of social interaction they reveal.

Gift-giving and reciprocity
The importance of gift-giving in Scandinavian society has been frequently emphasised in the context of the ‘luxury-goods’ economy of the early Viking age (N5 ff.), and appears also in some literary sources such as the missionary tactics in Rimbert’s life of Anskar (B72). The Icelandic sagas in particular (B350 ff.) have been quarrried for information in this regard.


Kinship and friendship
Similar anthropological approaches have also been taken towards the relative significance of kinship and friendship.

[C165] R. Bjerke, A contrastive study of Old German and Old Norwegian kinship terms, Indiana University publications in anthropology and linguistics 22 (1969) [UL P847.b.2.5]


[C167] A.C. Murray, Germanic kinship structure: studies in law and society in antiquity and the early Middle ages, Studies and texts 65 (1983) [UL 532:01.c.11.66]


Nið
The importance of nið ‘slander’ comes out strongly from sagas (B350 ff.), mediaeval lawcodes (B680 ff.) and above all verse (C180 ff.). Often involving a sexual element, it can perhaps be seen as implying a transgression of moral self-perception.

[C175] F. Ström, Nið, ergi, and Old Norse moral attitudes, Dorothea Coke memorial lecture in northern studies 1973 (1974) [UL Ub.8.479]

‘Níð’ verse


[C181] B. Almqvist, Nórðn níðvidkning: traditionshistoriska studier i versmagi. II.1-2: Níð mot missionärer; senmedeltida níðtraditioner, Nordiska texter och undersökningar 23 (1974) [UL 752:01.c.3.17] (E.s.)


Kingship and government

The development of what can be termed ‘royal government’ is one of the most striking developments in the late Viking age, but the precise interpretation of how its various aspects developed is heavily debated. For sacral kingship see (K75 ff.); for the cults of royal saints (L235 ff.). For issues surrounding royal succession in the late Viking age, see (D41) and (D126):5-22 for Denmark in differing periods, (E100 ff.) for Norway, (F8) for Sweden. A broad survey can be found in (A33), chap. 4: ‘Authority and administration; chiefs and kings’.


The aristocracy and royal officers

The earliest form of aristocracy in Scandinavia can only really be identified through issues such as landholding (C112), control of trading centres (N140 ff.), and ostentatious displays of status through burials (M300 ff.) and the like. In the later Viking age, runestones (C90 ff.) come to play a role in this, but it also posited that some aristocratic groups to identify themselves by allegiance to a new code of royal authority. For a ground-breaking study, see (D6) and below (C210).


For studies of vocabulary and possible foreign influences:

[C205] D. Hofmann, Nordische-Englische Lehnbeziehungen der Wikingerzeit, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana 14 (1955) [UL S752:01.b.1.10]

[C206] J. Lindow, Comitatus, individual and honor: studies in North Germanic institutional vocabulary, University of California publications in linguistics 83 (1976) [UL 779.b.35.70]

Thegns and drengs

The role and status of the figures identified in runic inscriptions and place-names as thegns and drengs has come under particular focus recently, due to attempts to identify these figures as royal agents in Denmark and south-western Sweden in particular, and so as constituent members of the king’s hirð or court retinue. See (C202):54-72, 130-36; (C95), chap. 5: ‘Society and status’; and:


[C211] A. Christophersen, ‘Drengs, thegns, landmen and kings: some aspects on the forms of social relations in Viking society during the transition to historic times’, MLUHM n.s. 4 (1981-82), 115-34


Military service and the leidang

As noted above (C65), it is widely believed that the right to demand military service was among the earliest royal privileges in Scandinavia. This finds expression in the late Viking age in the form of the
leidang (modern Danish leding), which seems to have represented a military force that could be levied by kings and other local rulers. Although the term appears in court poetry from the late tenth century onwards, the leidang is however basically a mediaeval privilege, and there has been extensive debate about its functions in the Viking age.


[C222] M.G. Larsson, Hamnor, husbyar och le dung, Institute of archaeology, University of Lund, report series 29 (1987) [Haddon] (E.s.)


[C224] N. Lund, ‘Danish military organisation’, (B102a):109-26, and ‘If the Vikings knew a leiding—what was it like?’, (A51):100-05


[C228] B. Varenius, ‘The retinue and the ship: an arch aeo-sociological study of Scandinavia at the turn of the last millennium and the following centuries’, CSA 7 (1999), 173-82

Land-divisions and administration

The earliest forms of administration in Scandinavia are similarly often thought to be military in origin (C220 ff.). From the pre-literate Viking period, place-names are an invaluable tool in identifying manors and other central places, see (C70 ff.). Particular attention has focussed on place-names in Huseby or ending in -tuna, which show a striking correlation with mediaeval royal sites. The wider use of place-names to address the question of how the various land-divisions such as herreds and hundares of mediaeval Scandinavia came into being is an extremely complicated issue; a classic study is:

[C230] S. Tunberg, Studier rörande Skandinaviens äldsta politiska indelning (1911) [UL Uc.7.244]

For further guidance, see the relevant articles in KLNM (A70) and on place-name studies more generally (B840 ff.). On central names:


Denmark


[C238] A. André, ‘Städer och kungamakt: en studie i Danmarks politiska geografi före 1230’, Scandia 49 (1983), 31-76 (E.s. 159-60)

Norway


Sweden

For central Sweden in particular, cf. (F55 ff.).
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

C245 S. Göransson, ‘Viking age traces in Swedish systems for territorial organization and land division’, (O30):142-53
C247 T. Lindkvist, ‘Social and political power in Sweden, 1000-1300: predatory incursions, royal taxation, and the formation of a feudal state’, (O64):137-45

Coinage
The issuing of coins by Viking-age kings seems largely to have been undertaken for ideological rather than economic reasons, since they made up an essential part of the regalia. In the earlier Viking age, the Danish issues from Ribe and Hedeby were modelled on Frankish originals, but by the eleventh century English coins, and often also English moneyers, provided the inspiration. For more general surveys of coin imports, see (N50 ff.).

C252 B. Malmer, The Anglo-Scandinavian coinage c. 995-1020, Commentationes de nummis saeculorum IX-XI in Suecia repertis n.s. 9 (1997) [UL 492:01.b.8.9]

Pre-Christian Scandinavia
Anonymous coins seem to have been struck intermittently in the pre-conversion period in the Danish towns of Ribe and Hedeby.

C256 K. Bendixen, ‘The currency in Denmark from the beginning of the Viking age until c. 1100’, (N50):405-18
C257 K. Bendixen, ‘Sceattas and other coin finds’, (N185): I,63-101; from Ribe

Eleventh-century Denmark
The earliest Danish kings such as Harald bluetooth and Svein forkbeard minted coins with Christian designs on them. Anglo-Saxon models were heavily (and naturally) employed during the reign of Knut (D100 ff.) (see (C252)), and the Danish currency was the first to become something like a national monetary system in the latter half of the eleventh century.

C260 P. Hauberg, Myntforhold og Udmyntinger i Danmark indtil 1146 (1900)
C261 B. Malmer, King Canute’s coinage in the northern countries, Dorothea Coke memorial lecture in northern studies 1972 (1974) [UL Ub.7.1117]
C262 C.J. Becker, ‘The coinages of Harthacnut and Magnus the Good at Lund c. 1040-c. 1046’, (C250):119-74
C263 C.J. Becker, ‘Studies in the Danish coinage at Lund during the period c. 1030-c. 1046’, (N50):449-77
C264 C.J. Becker, ‘The Danish mint at Odense (Funen) during the eleventh century’, (C278):25-34
C265 M. Blackburn, ‘Do Cnut the Great’s first coins as king of Denmark date from before 1018?’, (C278):55-68

Norway
The Christian kings of eleventh-century Norway also made attempts to impose themselves upon the currency, although with little lasting success.

C270 C.I. Schive, Norges Mynter i Middelalderen (1865) [Fitzwilliam Museum]; the standard reference work, although now very dated
Sweden
In Sweden it is the celebrated coinage from Sigtuna in the early Christian period that attracts the limelight.

- B. Malmer, *Olof skötkonungs mynt och andra Ethelred-imitationer*, AArkiv 27 (1965) [AIIT]
- I.O. Lagerqvist, ‘The coinage at Sigtuna in the names of Anund Jacob, Cnut the great and Harthacnut’, *Commentationes de nummis saeculorum IX-XI in Suecia repertis* II, KVHAA handlingar, antikvariska serien 19 (1968), 383-413 [UL 595:01.c.11.9]
- B. Malmer, ‘Sigtunamyntningen som källa till Sveriges kristnande’, (L63):85-113 (E.s.)

D. DENMARK
The pre-eminent role seemingly played by Denmark in Viking-age Scandinavia can be attributed to a number of factors, not least its closer proximity to western Europe (particularly the Frankish empire), its geographical position at the centre of trade routes running across the North and Baltic seas, and the low-lying landscape, which allowed for more intensive cultivation or habitation as well as easier communications. Accordingly political and social developments in Denmark are often see as providing a ‘template’ or pattern which was subsequently followed in the more northerly parts of Scandinavia.

General surveys
- A.E. Christensen, *Vikingetidens Danmark paa oldhistorisk baggrund* (1969) [UL 597:2.b.95.2]
- E. Kroman, *Det danske rige i den ældre vikingetid* (1976) [UL 597:2.c.95.6] (E.s.)
- K. Randsborg, *The Viking age in Denmark: the formation of a state* (1980) [UL 597:2.b.95.8, 9592.c.67]

For settlement patterns in Denmark see (M25 ff.); a useful survey of some significant excavations is provided by:

See also the following useful collections of essays:
- N. Skyum-Nielsen and N. Lund, (edd.), *Danish medieval history: new currents. Danish medieval history and Saxo Grammaticus: a symposium held in celebration of the 500th anniversary of the University of Copenhagen*, I (1981) [UL 597:2.c.95.19]
- P. Mortensen and B.M. Rasmussen, (edd.), *Fra stamme til stat i Danmark. 2: Høvdingesamfund og kongemagt*, JASS 22:2 (1991) [UL S460:01.b.23.27a] (all articles have E.s.)
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

Social history
There are naturally huge problems involved with reconstructing social history from a period undocumented by indigenous sources, but for Denmark in particular the analogies from the Danelaw in England (170 ff.) can be used as comparative material; for Scandinavia in general, see (C60 ff.).

[D15] C. and E. Harding Sørensen, Danmark i vikingetiden: problemer vedrørende den sociale struktur (1979) [UL 597:2.b.95.9]


Iron-age Denmark
Scattered comments on the tribal geography of early Denmark can be found in the works of authors such as Bede (B85) and Procopius (B32), but the focus of early Danish history is naturally on archaeological evidence.


[D20] O. Klindt-Jensen, Denmark before the Vikings, Ancient peoples and places 4 (1957) [UL 598:3.d.95.1]


[D22] B. Jansen Sellevold et al., Iron age man in Denmark: prehistoric man in Denmark III, Nordiske fortdsminder B:8 (1984) [UL T592.a.2.8]


[D26] E. Fonnesbech-Sandberg, ‘Contacts between Denmark and the continent during the Migration period’, (J14):37-48


Alongside archaeology, linguistic evidence has also been employed to examine the ethnic and cultural diversity within Denmark in the Roman and Germanic Iron ages; for guidance, see:


The early Viking age
Many of the items cited immediately above survey the beginnings of the Viking age from a Danish perspective, and are the best introduction to the period; from a more global perspective, cf. also (C35 ff.). One of the most striking aspects of eighth-century Denmark turns on the excavations of the flourishing
market-town of Ribe (N185 ff.) and the coins produced there (C257). The first recorded Christian missions to Scandinavia were planned for Denmark in the eighth century, see (B46, B95). For early central places and manors (C70 ff., N144), and for the legendary (?) royal seat at Lejre:


The Danevirke
The earliest phases of the ‘Danevirke’, the fortified rampart extending across the southern part of the Jutland peninsula, date from the early eighth century. For surveys in English, see (D7):141-46 and (D27), and for more detail:

[D35] V. La Cour, Danevirkestudier: en arkeologisk-historisk undersøgelse (1951)

The ninth century
Denmark emerges into the light of recorded history in the ninth century due to the (usually uneasy) relations with the Frankish empire; the essential sources are the various sets of Frankish annals (B50 ff.), which reveal a bewildering multiplicity of ‘kings’ engaged in various activities.


Godfred
Of particular importance is the role of king Godfred in the first decade of the century, not least in his establishment of the town of Hedeby (N195 ff.). For retrospective assessments of Godfred see (D40, D70 ff.); for recent archaeological excavations:


Horik I

Anskar and Christianity
The other major development in the early ninth century was the beginning of organised Christian missions sponsored by the Frankish emperor Louis the Pious, as recorded by Ermold (B47) and above all Rimbert (B72); see (L115 ff.). For the important correspondence relating to the establishment of Hamburg-Bremen as responsible for these missions, see (B741 ff.); pope Nicholas I’s letter to king Horik of 864 can be found in (B736b):293-94. Scattered remarks on Franco-Danish relations can be found in the general textbooks cited in (A), see also the following collection of essays:


The early tenth century
According to Adam of Bremen (B73) a ‘Swedish’ dynasty established itself around Hedeby at the beginning of the tenth century, but the interpretation of this material is highly debatable. The names of some of these rulers seem to be attested on runestones from the town, while chroniclers such as Widukind (B61) and Thietmar (B63) report the forced baptism of a king Chnuba (Gnúpa) in 934 by Henry I.

The Jelling dynasty

The creation of a kingdom of ‘Denmark’ is usually attributed to the Jelling dynasty begun by Gorm (died c. 958) and continued by Harald Bluetooth (died c. 987). Again according to Adam (B73) Gorm came from Normannia, but it is uncertain what this means.

Jelling

The larger runestone at Jelling informs us that it was raised by king Harald in honour of his parents, ‘that Harald who won for himself all of Denmark, and Norway, and made the Danes Christian’. The whole complex of the royal seat at Jelling is of prime importance, particularly for its expression of Harald’s new conception of Christian government over a unified Denmark. For discussion of the actual inscription on the Jelling runestone, and its historical context, see also the items under (D70 ff.).


Royal power and state-formation

There seems some broad agreement that the foundations for a Danish ‘nation’ were laid in the tenth century, and the reign of Harald Bluetooth is particularly critical. For various reflections of this process, cf. also (C90 ff.), (C210 ff.), (M30 ff.), and general surveys, particularly (D6). Of great interest also is the report of Ohthere (B106) and its implications for Danish political geography at the beginning of the tenth century.


Much controversy has turned on the phrase Danmarkar bótbót in the older Jelling inscription and its implications for Danish state-formation, cf. above (D60 ff.) and:

[D75] B. Stand, ‘Thyre Danebod in Gesta Danorum’, (B659):152-63

[D76] N. Lund, ‘“Denemearc”, “tanmarkar but” and “tanmaurk ala”’, (O62):161-69

See also (C95):158-66 for an imaginative reconstruction

The archaeological record

Tenth-century Denmark is extraordinarily well provided with well-dated, interesting archaeological finds, which can help cast much light on the political and social changes of the time. Prominent among these are the new burial traditions which entered Denmark in this period (M310 ff.). The Danevirke (D35) was also extended around 968 to include Hedeby (N195 ff.) in its defensive structures. The most remarkable are however a series of public works which have been dated by dendrochronology to Harald Bluetooth’s reign

Harald’s circular forts

These include the bridge at Ravning Enge but also a series of circular forts scattered across Denmark that seem to have been built according to a single, and therefore presumably royal, design. The interpretation of these forts has changed greatly since their first discovery, and older articles are for antiquarian interest only, in showing the development of the conception of the forts.

Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

[D82] S.L. Cohen, *Viking fortresses of the Trelleborg type* (1965) [UL 598:3.c.95.1]


On specific forts:


[D89] **Trelleborg** (Skåne). The Beretning fra fjortende tværfaglige vikingesymposium (A60) [UL L592.c.25.14] was devoted to a discussion of a further fort, again named Trelleborg, in Skåne; see particularly B. Jacobsson, ‘Utgrävningen av borgen i Trelleborg, Skåne’, 12-22

**The late tenth century**

Harald Bluetooth was driven out by a rebellion around 986 and succeeded by his son Svein forkbeard; various causes have been mooted for this, including an economic crisis (N70 ff.), a reaction against Harald’s overbearing demands, and the loss of face engineered by the German invasion and occupation of southern Jutland from 974 to 983. See:


On Adam of Bremen’s account of Harald’s reign, see:


Svein forkbeard


**The Anglo-Danish empire**

After a series of ‘softening-up’ raids in the late tenth and early eleventh century, Svein forkbeard achieved a political conquest of England in 1013, only to die almost immediately. His success was promptly followed by up his son Knut, who then ruled over England and Denmark from 1016 to 1035. For a general survey of this period, see the references in (I90 ff.) and:


Knut

[D101] L.M. Larson, *Canute the great 995 (circ)-1035 and the rise of Danish imperialism during the Viking age* (1912) [UL 500:01.d.1.48]

[D102] G.N. Garmonsway, *Canute and his empire*, Dorothea Coke memorial lecture in Northern studies 1963 (1964) [UL Ub.7.670]

Canute as English king
A vital source containing many valuable insights into Scandinavian history are Knut’s letters to the English of 1020 and 1027; see (B107a): 1,273-77 for text, transl. in (B107b):140-53 and (B81):452-54, 476-78; see also (I105 ff.) for the English side.


Knut as Danish king
Much of what we know about Knut as king of Denmark relates to his ecclesiastical policies and can be found in Adam (B73), cf. also his coins (C260 ff.).


[D111] R. Frank, ‘King Cnut in the verse of his skalds’, (D103):106-24


Knútr as Scandinavian emperor
As well as being king over Denmark and England, Knut also had aspirations over Norway (which were eventually realised with Olaf Haraldsson’s expulsion in 1028 (E70 ff.)) and also apparently Sweden.


Particularly interesting, if inconclusive, is the battle at Holy River around 1026:


Early mediaeval Denmark
Knut was succeeded in Denmark (and later also England) by his son Harthaknut, whose death in 1042 sparked a contest between the Norwegian pretender Magnus the good and Knut’s nephew Svein Estrithsen for the throne. The remainder of the eleventh century saw the steady consolidation of the Danish state.

[D125] A.E. Christensen, ‘Denmark between the Viking age and the time of the Valdemars’, MS 1 (1968), 28-50

[D126] E. Hoffmann, Königserhebung und Thronfolgeordnung in Dänemark bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters, Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters 5 (1976) [UL 532:01.c.23.5]; includes discussion of Svein Estrithsen (23-36) and successors


Svein Estrithsen

[D130] The reign and role of this most crucial of Danish kings has been sadly neglected in most English-language scholarship, where Svein tends to be characterised by three tangential points: that he was the son of the disgraced earl Ulf who was defeated (possibly) at Holy River (D118 ff.), leading to the adoption of his mother’s name Estrith (ON Ástríðr); that he was a chief informant of Adam of Bremen (B73); and that he was a fairly ineffectual warleader (in comparison to his rival Magnus), who spent most of his time bleating to the English for martial aid, as recorded in the Anglo-Saxon chronicle (B86). However, once stabilised his reign saw the serious beginnings of ecclesiastical organisation in Denmark (L200 ff.). The major source is Adam along with later twelfth-century chroniclers, but for the interesting
papal correspondence of the period see the register in (B723-24). On the use of numismatic evidence for
the political history of the time see (C260 ff.) and:


Saint Knut

[D135] Of Svein’s various sons it is saint Knut, who reigned from 1080 until 1086, who attracts the most
attention. His life and cult are illuminated through various written sources composed soon after, such as
the work of Aelnoth (B647), but he was also responsible for a set of donations to Lund cathedral in 1085
which gave rise to the oldest Scandinavian charter whose text is still preserved (B273-74). His death
seems to have been prompted by a rebellion against his overbearing royal demands, which has interesting
implications for royal privileges even at this late date, particularly in the form of the leidang (C220 ff.).
For a range of studies see:

(1986) [UL 597:01.b.2.15]

The twelfth century
As ever, an awareness of Danish history in the twelfth century is instructive when considering the late
Viking age; see (A35) and:

[D141] O. Fenger, ’Kirker rejser alle vegne’: 1050-1250, Gyldendahl og Politikens Danmarkshistorie 4
(1989) [UL S592.c.98.31]

E. NORWAY

The particularly distinctive terrain of Norway has traditionally been held to be a factor in the country’s
‘old-fashioned’ social make-up right into the mediaeval period; cf. (E6). For the Viking age itself,
however, it is kings’ sagas (B290 ff.) and skaldic verse (B483 ff.) that constitute the bulk of the direct
written evidence, and these sources can only be asked very different historical questions.

General surveys

[E1] A.O. Johnsen, Fra ættesamfunn til statssamfunn (1948) [UL 593:2.d.90.2]
[E2] P. Sveaas Andersen, Vikings of the west: the expansion of Norway in the early middle ages (1971)
[UL 593:2.d.95.9]
[E4] P. Sveaas Andersen, Samlingen av Norge og kristningen av landet 800-1130, Handbok i Norges
historie 2 (1977) [UL 593:01.c.1.2]
106 [UL 593:1.c.95.35]

Iron-age and early Viking-age Norway

Norway seems to have been the least densely settled region of Scandinavia, at least by Germanic-
speaking cultures, at the beginning of the Christian era. However, there is evidence for cultural links with
western Europe, particularly the British isles, from before the eighth century (N15 ff.), and although there
are few individual sites to compare with the splendid Iron-age trading centres of Denmark and Sweden
(N144, N150 ff.), the onset of the Viking age certainly brought with it an influx of luxury goods (N30
ff.). For the history of settlement patterns and the move into inland regions, cf. (M40 ff.).

(1976) [UL 593:1.d.95.9]
The early chieftainships

On the basis of place-names, excavated ‘court-sites’, and the distribution of luxury items, it is theorised that at the beginning of the Viking age Norway was divided into fairly numerous regions under the leadership of individual chieftains or dynasties; cf. (N233), and for the distribution of luxury goods the studies by Wamers (N35-37). For an extremely interesting personal account by one of these chieftains, see (B106, C16).

Harald fairhair and the Ynglings

Traditionally credited variously as a member of the Yngling dynasty from the region of Vestfold, the first king of all Norway, and the hirsute owner of a fine line in hairstyles, Harald fairhair’s pre-eminent position in Norwegian history has more recently come under some threat, with the authenticity of the accounts of his origins, his achievements, and even his nickname coming under the harsh spotlight of scrutiny. For the retrospective employment of Harald as a founding figure see (E100 ff.) and below on the genealogical links (E40 ff.); for diplomatic relations with England in the early tenth century, (B111a) (also transl. in (B81):308); for the rich burials of Vestfold (M320 ff.).

The Yngling dynasty

The link between the Norwegian royal house and the Swedish ‘Ynglings’ is founded on Ynglinga tal (B521a, see also discussions by Turville-Petre, Faulkes, Krag) and the accompanying prose (B322a); for some of the implications, see also (K75 ff.).
Where was Harald king?
A large debate has recently raged over whether Harald fairhair really was a king of Vestfold, as portrayed in the sagas, or instead had his base in the western fjords, as indicated by skaldic verse such as Haraldskvæði (B522).

The tenth century
In broad (if possibly misleading) terms the tenth and early eleventh century in Norway can be characterised politically by a tension between Christian, progressive kings and the pagan, conservative earls of Lade (Hlaðir); both factions were at various times the leading players in the country, with the latter frequently allying themselves with the kings of Denmark. According to tradition Harald was succeeded first by his son Erik bloodaxe, who was then ousted by another son Hakon.

Hakon the good
Hakon was fostered at the court of king Æthelstan of England and is said to have attempted, somewhat unsuccessfully, to introduce Christianity into Norway, see (L40 ff.); his saga, although naturally dubious on points of detail, at least provides an idea of the sort of values that might be expected to yield his positive nickname, even though his elegy Hákonarmál presents him as a decidedly pagan leader (B530a). It is however striking when saga material about Hakon (B320 ff.) presents him as a great reformer in terms of both legislation and defence (in terms of the leidang (C220 ff.)), and the former at least seems to be confirmed in the poem Bersglisvísur (B546g) from the early eleventh century. It is important to remember that Hakon is effectively the first known Christian king in Scandinavia, and that his upbringing in England may well have prompted him to undertake, or at least encourage, the development of mechanisms of royal government in Norway (however successfully)

Earl Hakon of Lade
Hakon’s successors, the sons of Erik bloodaxe, are also claimed to have been Christian, although their reign is portrayed quite negatively. The impact of the new religion in Norway seems to be confirmed by burial evidence (L150 ff.), and in any case seems to be a necessary prerequisite for the extraordinary outpouring of pagan ideological verse from the court of earl Hakon in the late tenth century (B526 ff.).

The two Olafs
A vast amount of literary material is preserved about Olaf Tryggvason (ruled 995-999/1000) and Olaf Haraldsson (ruled 1014-28/30), both in the various versions of their sagas (B310-15) and also in skaldic verse (B540 ff.). Although much of this material is suspect, their roles in the conversion and the formation of the idea of ‘Norway’ as a kingdom should nevertheless not be underestimated.

Olaf Tryggvason
Olaf Tryggvason seems to have been a Viking warleader who was baptised in England (probably) in 994 under the sponsorship of Ethelred the unready before returning to stake his claim in Norway. A great deal
is reported in the kings’ sagas about his five-year reign, but aside from his role in the conversion the
greatest controversy has probably turned on the manner and location of his death at the battle of Svold.

Lecture delivered in the University of Glasgow 6th March, 1968 [UL Uc.8.1408]


[E64] B. Fidjestøl, ‘Ólafr Tryggvason the missionary: a literary portrait from the middle ages’,
(O10):201-27


**Saint Olaf Haraldsson**

After Olaf Tryggvason’s death at the battle of Svold, the earls of Lade are again said to have governed
Norway under Danish overlordship, and the strength of these ties can be illuminated by the presence of
earl Erik in the armies of Svein and Knut that invaded England in the 1010s [D100 ff.]. This allowed for
the return of Olaf Haraldsson, among whose many contributions to Norwegian history stands out his
codification of Christian laws; see ([L172]). His martyrdom at Stiklastaðir in 1030 was however an even
more telling point; for the sagas see (B312-15), for verse celebrating his cult (B546f, 550a), and for his
supposed baptism in Rouen (B110).

[E70] J. Bruce, (ed.), *Olav: konge og helgen, myte og symbol* (1981) [UL 593:2.c.95.10]; a series of
articles devoted to various aspects of Olaf’s life and reputation, although solely in Norwegian

[E71] G. Svalnström, (ed.), *St. Olav, seine Zeit und sein Kult*, Visbysymposiet för historiska vetenskaper
1979, Acta Visbyensia 6 (1981) [UL 531:01.c.28.6]; lots of useful articles


**The eleventh century**


**The Danish interregnum**

From around 1028 until his death in 1035 Knut of Denmark was overlord of Norway, expressing this rule
through a series of overlordships. For a survey of his first choice, unfortunately drowned in 1030, see:

ADNVAO n.s. 17 (1981) [UL 500:01.c.13.19]

For further references, see (D100 ff.).

**Magnus the good**

[E82] The brief reign of Magnus the good, son of saint Olaf, is characterised by a futile war against
Svein Estrithsen of Denmark (D130), but did also see the composition of some interesting verse,
particularly the *Bersoglisvisur* of Sigvat Þórðarson (B546g), which purports to establish a model of ‘good
kingship’ for Magnus to follow.

**Harald hardrada**

A vast number of traditions pertain to Harald hardrada, largely to do with his semi-legendary career in
the Varangian guard in Byzantium (J52). His policies of cultivating the cult of saint Olaf at Trondheim
and hiring English or French bishops rather than submit to the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen led to
some juicy comments passed by Adam of Bremen (B73).

[E85] E.O.G. Turville-Petre, *Harald the Hard-Ruler and his poets*, Dorothea Coke memorial lecture in
northern studies 1966 (1968) [UL Ub.8.268]

og muntlig tradisjon’, *CM* 11 (1998), 9-31 (E.s.)
On Norse traditions in the Irish sea area in the late eleventh century, and some interesting discussion of royal genealogies, see:


The late eleventh century

The late eleventh century seems to have been a period of fairly rapid development in Norway, with urbanisation and the Church beginning seriously to flourish (L200 ff., N230 ff.). For the continuing ‘Viking’ activity in the west, see:


The twelfth century

For the twelfth century and the onset of the civil wars so deplored by some mediaeval authors, the general guides above (A35, E1 ff.) are the best starting point. For a review of the possible causes that led to the civil war, see:

[E91] B. Sawyer, ‘The ‘civil wars’ revisited’ NHT 82 (2003), 43-73

the standard textbook on early mediaeval Norway remains:


Kingship and succession

The prevalence of joint kingship in eleventh- and twelfth-century Norway is striking, as also are the attempts to historically ‘legitimise’ the Norwegian royal house back before saint Olaf Haraldsson with reference to Harald fairhair (E30 ff.). It has been argued that the role of Harald is so heavily emphasised in kings’ sagas to provide a justification for royal landholding in the mediaeval era.


F. SWEDEN

The history of Sweden in the Viking age stands alone due to the almost complete absence of written sources. This combined with the unevenness of archaeological research into the various regions means that a general overview of Swedish history is as yet unwritten, and this is reflected in the items cited here; for a fairly complicated attempt, (F8).

General surveys

[F1] H. Hildebrand, Sveriges medeltid: kulturhistorisk skildring, 3 vols plus Register, ed. S. Tunberg (1884-1903, 1953) [UL 596:4.b.85.1-4]; still a full and classic study

[F2] B. Nerman, ‘The foundation of the Swedish kingdom’, SBVS 10 (1919-27), 113-31 and B. Nerman, Sveriges rikes uppkomst (1941) [UL 595:2.c.90.6]; Nerman’s work is now heavily dated


Scandinavian History in the Viking Age


**Sources on Sweden**

Written material on Sweden is for some reason extremely scarce, even within the rest of Scandinavia; (F7) is a useful introduction to the mediaeval sources that touch on Swedish history, and for annalistic material, see:


For Icelandic material on Swedish history:


For eleventh-century correspondence:


**Iron-age and early Viking-age Sweden**

The pre-Viking period in Sweden is generally thought of in terms of some spectacular archaeological finds that capture the imagination, such as the cemeteries at Vendel (M335 ff.) that gave their name to the period spanning roughly the seventh and eighth centuries. Extensive foreign contacts during this period are already attested through the links evident at trading centres such as Helgö (N150 ff.), and settlement patterns (M55 ff.) also seem to reveal a fairly stable and prosperous domestic economy.


[F18] A. Sandwall, (ed.), *Vendeltid, Historia i fickformat* (1980) [UL 596:3.d.95.3]


**Legendary early history**

Poetic sources such as *Ynglinga tal* (B521a) and the Old English *Beowulf* (B101), as well as later prose texts such as the works by Saxo (B657), purport to tell of the history of the early Swedish kings of Uppsala (K115 ff.) (and elsewhere), but these are largely legendary in content; on *Ynglinga tal*, see also (C192):55-110.


[F27] L. Gahrn, ‘The Geatas of Beowulf: who were the Geatas? If the Geatas were Gautar’, *SJH* 11 (1986), 95-113


The central Viking age

The tale of Viking-age Sweden in the ninth and tenth centuries is largely one of archaeological and place-name research. In central Sweden among the Svear, the roles of the royal manors (F55 ff.) and the town of Birka (N280 ff.) are of chief importance; further south among the Götar and elsewhere, excavations have been less extensive or concentrated, cf. (F60 ff.). For the model of the ‘central place’ currently being used to illuminate Swedish social organisation, see (C70 ff.).

The ninth century

The most significant written source is Rimbert’s life of Anskar (B72) prompted by the earliest missions to Birka in central Sweden around 830 (L115 ff.). The picture presented is of royal government very much by consensus, but the life does not go much beyond the urban environment.


The tenth century

Sweden does not emerge into the light of any kind of written sources until the end of the tenth century. The reign of Erik the victorious is mentioned by Adam (B73); for another angle see the excavations of Sigtuna (N290 ff.). For the period around 1000 the most illumination is shed by the interaction of Swedish kings with those abroad, particularly the Danes; cf. (F91 ff.). For these kings and a range of other studies see:

[F40] L. Weibull, Kritiska undersökningar i Nordens historia omkring år 1000 (1911) [UL 592:12.c.90.1], repr. in (O2):245-360


On the renowned, if somewhat obscure, battle of FYris, see:


Regional studies

[F44] In the absence of any chronological foundation from written sources, historical research in Sweden has been heavily orientated towards regional studies of material evidence; this is reflected particularly in landscape studies (C60 ff.), but much useful material can also be found in studies of settlement patterns (M55 ff.)

Central Sweden and the Svear

The region of ‘Svealand’ in central Sweden has always attracted the most significant attention, largely due to its visible concentration of prestigious sites including royal manors such as Uppsala (K115 ff.), reports in written sources such as Rimbert (B72), easy trade routes and major trading centres such as Birka (N280 ff.), and rich burials such as the cemeteries at Vendel and Valsgärde (M335 ff.).

[F45] B. Nerman, Gamla Uppsala: svearikets hjärtpunk (1943) [UL 596:3.c.90.11]

[F46] B. Ambrosiani, Fornlämningar och bebyggelse: studier i Attundalands och Södertörns förhistoria (1964) [UL 596:3.b.95.1]


[F52] B. Arrhenius, ‘Kinship and social relations in the early medieval period in Svealand elucidated by DNA’, (O79):45-49
Royal manors
Much attention has been focused on so-called ‘royal manors’, sites exhibiting characteristics of the ‘central place’ (C70 ff.) and certain distinctive place-names (C230 ff.); cf. also (M55 ff.).

Southern Sweden and the Götar
The southern provinces including Väster- and Östergötland have been relatively less extensively studied, although many recent surveys (eg. (F8)) have argued for a more advanced development of royal authority in these regions than in the more obviously prestigious sites of central Sweden.
[F60] H. Wideen, Västsvenska vikingatidsstudier: arkeologiske källor till Vänerområdets kulturhistoria under yngre järnälder och äldsta medeltid, Skrifter utgivna av Göteborgs arkeologiska museum 2 (1955) [UL S592:01.b.8.2] (E.s.)

Extensive Danish influence has often been posited for Västergötland in particular, based on the evidence of runic inscriptions and place-names. See (C210 ff.) and:

Skåne

The Baltic islands
For more general surveys of the Viking links across, and expansion into, the Baltic see (J10 ff.). This section deals only with islands where the culture of a Norse-speaking population can be identified back into the distant past.

Gotland
The position of Gotland has long been recognised as anomalous, characterised by its highly distinctive material culture such as the picture stones (M180 ff.), Gothic-looking dialect, and the vast number of coin hoards discovered there (N60 ff., N110 ff.). It also has its own written history (B678), however dubious its reliability may be on many points. For bibliographical guidance, see:

Further reading is difficult to come by in English beyond the numismatic material:
[F72] I. Jansson et al., Gutar och vikingar, Historia i fickformat (1983) [UL 596:6.d.95.26]; full of useful contributions on various aspects of Gotlandic history, including a survey of the written sources: ‘Källskrifterna om Gotland under vikingatid och äldsta medeltid’, 415-80
[F75] O. Kyhlberg, Gotland mellan arkeologi och historia: om det tidiga Gotland, Theses and papers in archaeology 4 (1991) [UL 596:6.b.95.29]

Öland
The island of Öland similarly participated in the Baltic trade routes on which the Gotlanders grew so fat.
[F77] K. Borg et al., (edd.), Eketorp: fortification and settlement on Öland/Sweden: the monument (1976) and U. Näsmann and E. Wegraeus, (edd.), Eketorp: the setting (1978) [UL 596:3.b.95.6-7]; see in
particular U.E. Hagberg, ‘Öland during the Iron age and early middle ages: an archaeological survey’ in the latter volume, 12-34

Bornholm
The island of Bornholm can clearly not really be considered ‘Swedish’, but is at least in the Baltic and surrounded by water; the ninth-century merchant Wulfstan (B106) recorded that it then had its own king. The material culture is again rich, particularly from the early Viking age and before.


The formation of Sweden

[F90] A vast debate has raged over the course of the century as to when ‘Sweden’ can be held to have come into existence in any meaningful way. Among the various points of contention can be included the growing scepticism with which the various literary sources are interpreted (B341, B101, B679), the sheer diversity of the political geography of Sweden (F44 ff.), and the lack of any institutional definition of Sweden until the establishment of the Church. A major body of source material comes from runic inscriptions (B800 ff., C90 ff.). For surveys of the question see (F1 ff., particularly F7-F8). Earlier scholarship followed mediaeval historians in identifying the heartland of Sweden among the Svear and in dating the formation of a united Sweden to the very beginning of the Viking age, if not before. This view has more recently been replaced by the idea that Sweden cannot be considered any kind of single state until the late twelfth century at the earliest, and that the first moves in this process are to be located instead among the Götar. A compromise view might employ the following arguments. Although mediaeval authors mention the Svear and Götar as separate peoples, they are not recognised as having separate kings; the references to kings specifically of the Götar in papal correspondence imply nothing more than that the term *Gothi* was most familiar to European authors, whose interest was also largely ecclesiastical and confined to the bishopric of Skara in Västergötland; and that when Magnus Nielsen was elected king of the west Götar in the early twelfth century, this did not reflect traditional political divisions, rather the ensuing uproar suggests that it was relatively unprecedented. The question remains fairly intractable, but while there can certainly be no talk of an organised Swedish ‘state’ in the eleventh century, the activities of various kings seem to suggest that there was broad recognition of a single figurehead

Olaf skötkonung

[F91] This is suggested by our reports of king Olaf skötkonung, who reigned (roughly) from 995 to 1022 and who is widely (although not necessarily correctly) credited with being the first Christian king of Sweden; this latter point can to some extent be borne out by his royal Christian town at Sigtuna (N290 ff.) and his Christian coins (C275 ff.). Olaf was clearly a king of, or at least among, the Svear, but also established some form of missionary bishopric at Skara in Västergötland. For his foreign connections, and the possible implications of his nickname as a king tributary to Danish overlordship, see (D100 ff.)
[F92] E. Gamby, ‘Olof skötkonung, Sven tveskägg och Ethelred den rådville’, *Scandia* 56 (1990), 19-29 (E.s. p. 113)

The eleventh-century kings

[F95] Our basic narrative source for the eleventh century is Adam (B73), whose accounts can be supplemented by various regnal lists (B341, B679), but the information contained in these sources often seems ill-informed and confused. The picture presented is one of dynastic shifts and stubborn resistance to royal authority, manifested particularly through the pagan uprising at Uppsala (K115 ff.), but runestones and burials give the impression of a more Christian society than might otherwise be expected (L165 ff., M170 ff.); the runic material is particularly important for understanding Swedish society at this point. On numismatic evidence from Sigtuna beyond Olaf skötkonung under his successor Anund Jakob,
see (C276); for missionary activity from various directions (L130 ff.); for episcopal organisation (or the lack of it) (L210 ff.)

For studies on Emund, who reigned around the 1050s, in particular:


Early mediaeval Sweden
The development of Sweden in the early mediaeval period is of crucial significance, since many older trends can only then be identified; for surveys, see the textbooks in (A), particularly (A35), and (F1, F8).

[F100] J. Rosén, Svensk historia I. Tiden före 1718, 2nd edn (1964) [UL 595:1.c.95.8]

On the incipient feudal tendencies and the development of a Swedish ‘state’, cf. (C247) and:


THE VIKING EXPANSION

G. ICELAND
The settlement of Iceland in the late ninth and tenth centuries has proved a treasure-trove for scholars attempting to chart the development of what may be called the first new recorded society in history. The island has further significance as the repository of the collective Scandinavian historical consciousness, leading to the composition of the much-famed sagas (B290 ff., B350 ff.) and the preservation of Viking-age poetry (B480 ff.). For more general surveys of the whole North Atlantic, see section (H); (H5) is a particularly useful introduction containing translations of many excerpts of source material.

General

[G1] J. Jóhannesson, A history of the old Icelandic commonwealth: Íslendinga saga, University of Manitoba Icelandic studies 2 (1974) [UL 599:01.c.5.2]


[G9] H. Guðmundsson, Um haf innan: vestrænir menn og íslenzk menning á miðöldum (1997) [UL 592:12.c.95.57]


[G12] P. Meulengracht Sørensen, ‘Social institutions and belief systems of medieval Iceland (c. 870-1400) and their relations to literary production’, (B235):8-29


The archaeological record
The material culture of Iceland is heavily based on Scandinavian, particularly Norwegian, models.
Dating and tephrochronology

Iceland has enjoyed (?) a series of volcanic eruptions in recorded history which provide useful dating criteria in the form of the layers of volcanic debris or ‘tephras’ produced. For further references, see (G35 ff.).

The climate

Studies of climatic changes are of great interest, not least in charting the settlement of Iceland; many early farms seem to have been sited in places which were simply not sustainable, due both to the gradual drop in temperature in the early part of the second millennium AD and to the soil erosion caused by intensive grazing of sheep.

The settlement

‘Iceland was first settled from Norway in the days of Harald fairhair, son of Halfdan the black, at the time [...] when Ivar, son of Ragnar Lodbrok, had saint Edmund, king of the English, slain; and that was 870 years after the birth of Christ’. Ari’s dating of the settlement in Íslendingabók (B255) has been shown by recent research based on the traces of the ‘settlement-tephra’ in Greenlandic ice-caps to be extremely accurate. Much controversy has turned recently on the supposed dating of an early farm-site too far earlier than this date; cf. above (G25) and:

[86]
For ecological studies:


**The origins of the settlers**

Ari’s other observation that Iceland was settled ‘from Norway’ has caused yet more controversy, in that numerous cultural and anthropological or genetic studies have suggested that Hiberno-Norse or Gaelic settlers from the British isles made up a large component of the settlers. This contrasts quite heavily with picture painted in the major source on the settlement, *Landnámabók* (B256).


On interaction between the Norse and Celts in general, see:


**Anthropological and genetic studies**

Widespread use has been made of various scientific techniques to compare the genetic make-up of the Icelanders with other European population groups, in an attempt to help to identify their origins.


**The nature of settlement**

*Landnámabók* also provides genealogies of the settlers and often discusses the ways in which the settlement took place; for discussion see the secondary items cited under (B256). More recent work has tended to highlight the notion that social divisions and dependencies were already inherent at the time of settlement itself rather than developing gradually in the course of the Viking age.


The Icelandic Commonwealth

The rather misleading term ‘Commonwealth’, often also called the ‘Republic’, attempts to encapsulate the fact that Iceland lacked a king or similar hierarchy, but instead appears to have been organised around principles of legal co-operation, cf. (B680, C80). Although neither the mediaeval laws nor sagas can be taken necessarily as accurately reflecting the historical conditions of the Viking age, they can be cautiously plundered (and have been) for insights into the social mechanisms of the Icelandic ‘freestate’ before the submission to the Norwegian crown in 1262.

Law and order, feud and arbitration

In the absence of an established authority to maintain law and order, disputes in Iceland seem to have been settled by a variety of mechanisms, such as arbitration through a third party or the blood-feud, often realised through the formal hólmganga or duel; cf. (G8) and (C160 ff.).

The chieftains

The role of the chieftains or goðar, both as quasi-priests and secular leading lights, is of particular interest, not least since they seem to have engineered a situation in which they were responsible for, and could profit from, both the composition and execution of law.

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[70] Ó. Lárusson, *Lov og ting: Islands forfatning og lover i fristatstiden*, transl. K. Helle (1960) [UL 599:2.c.95.2]

[71] M. Stein-Wilkeshuis, ‘The right to social welfare in early medieval Iceland’, *JMH* 8 (1982), 343-52; on hreppar


[76] A. Berger, ‘Lawyers in the old Icelandic family sagas: heroes, villains and authors’, *SBVS* 20 (1978-81), 70-79


The age of the Sturlungs

Although the twelfth and thirteenth centuries do not really belong in this bibliography, an awareness of the social conditions of this period is essential not only for understanding the workings of the Commonwealth but also for interpreting the sources relevant to the period; see also (G10).


H. FAROE, GREENLAND, AND NORTH AMERICA

Research into the various North Atlantic colonies aside from Iceland has been fairly unevenly distributed; while Faroe remains fairly marginalized, extensive work has been undertaken into mediaeval Greenland, and a disproportionate amount of ink has been spent on the Viking discovery of North America and the Vinland question. For a useful introductory survey, see (A21):164-81.

The North Atlantic

[H1] For guidance to research, see: H. Hermansson, The Northmen in America (982-c. 1500): a contribution to the bibliography of the subject, Islandica 2 (1909) [UL 752:4.c.1.2]; R. Bergersen, Vinland bibliography: writings relating to the Norse in Greenland and America, Universitetsbiblioteket i Tromsøs skrifterserie Ravnetrykk 10 (1997) [UL R538.225]


[H3] H. Ingstad, Land under the Pole star: a voyage to the Norse settlements of Greenland and the saga of the people that vanished (1966) [UL 689:4.c.95.20]


[H5] G. Jones, The Norse Atlantic saga, being the Norse voyages of discovery and settlement to Iceland, Greenland, and North America, 2nd edn (1986) [UL 660:3.c.95.29]

[H6] E. Wahlgren, The Vikings and America, Ancient peoples and places 61 (1990) [UL T468.b.1.53]


[H8] C.D. Morris and D.J. Rackham, (edd.), Norse and later settlement and subsistence in the north Atlantic, Occasional paper series 1 (1992) [UL L468.b.147.1]


Faroe

The basic written source for Viking-age Faroe is Færeyinga saga (B331), which is of great literary but minimal historical interest.

[H20] G.V.C. Young, From the Vikings to the Reformation: a chronicle of the Faroe islands up to 1538 (1979) [UL 598:7.c.95.66]


The discovery and settlement

The traditional view of the Norse discovery and settlement of Faroe assumes that in the course of the ninth century Viking settlers, possibly moving on from colonies in the Scottish isles, found an archipelago which had previously been settled by Celtic peoples (as reported in Dicuil (B160)) and which was already full of sheep, hence the name Færeýjar ‘sheep islands’. Many elements of this picture have now been further elucidated by botanical research (H28).

**The archaeological record**

Archaeological attention in Faroe has been focused on excavations of a (fairly limited) number of discovered habitation sites and the role of shielings in the pastoral economy of the North Atlantic colonies. Many studies extend the attention quite broadly through the region, so cf. also (I190 ff.).


**Greenland**

Ari’s basic account in Íslendingabók (B255) of the settlement of Greenland towards the end of the tenth century can be supplemented (if less reliably) by the Vinland sagas (B330, B332). A large number of excavations have revealed a thriving Norse community in Greenland in the mediaeval era, and although clear remains of Viking-age activity are less abundant, there seems no reason to doubt the essential accuracy (in broad terms) of these literary reports.

**The Greenland colony**

[H50] K.J. Krogh, Viking Greenland (1967) [UL 689:4.c.95.31]
[H52] H.M. Jansen, A critical account of the written and archaeological sources’ evidence concerning the Norse settlements in Greenland, Meddelelser om Grønland 182:4 (1972) [UL S592.b.97.21]; contains discussions of many useful sources otherwise unavailable in English
[H53] Ö. Halldórsson, Greeland i miðaldir (1978) [UL 689:4.c.95.45]
The archaeological record

[H60] A. Roussell, *Farms and churches in the medieval Norse settlements of Greenland*, Meddelelser om Grønland 89.1 (1941) [UL 402.b.94.22]


North America

The Norse discovery of North America in the early eleventh century has naturally attracted all kinds of attention. Although the literary traditions enshrined above all in the Vinland sagas have often been called into question (cf. (B330, B332)), the fact that many of the essential points of these traditions are already found in the works of Adam of Bremen (B73) and Ari (B255) lend them some credibility.

[H70] For bibliographical guidance to older research, see: H. Hermannsson, *The problem of Wineland*, Islandica 25 (1936) [UL 752:4.c.1.25]


[H76] B.L. Clausen, (ed.), *Viking voyages to North America* (1993) [UL 660:3.c.95.36]; articles by all the usual suspects

L’Anse aux Meadows

Not until the excavation of an indisputably Norse farmstead complex at L’Anse aux Meadows on Newfoundland was definitive proof discovered of a Viking presence in North America; for further, often clearly fake, forms of material evidence, see any of the general items above.


The Vinland question

Much debate has raged over exactly where *Vínland* or ‘Wine-land’ was; no definitive answer is likely to be found, but for those who accept the tradition at all, somewhere further south of L’Anse aux Meadows looks most likely.

[H85] E. Haugen, ‘Was Vinland in Newfoundland?’, (A47):3-8


[H88] Magnús Stefánsson, ‘Vinland or Vineland?’, *SJH* 23 (1998), 139-52
I. WESTERN EUROPE

Viking activity in western Europe seems to have begun towards the end of the eighth century, and consequently the ‘Viking age’ has always been considered to begin here, see (C35 ff.). The motives behind this activity are traditionally seen as a combination of factors, including the desire for moveable wealth, the recognition of how easy it was to obtain it, and the lust for more fertile land for settlement. It should be noted that following the spirit in which this bibliography has been compiled, the following sections are highly selective; for further guidance, see (A100 ff.).

The Vikings in the west

At the risk of gross simplification, the overall drift of the Viking age in the west can conveniently be divided into various phases. After initial piratical raids of the late eighth and early ninth century, the trickle of Vikings in the west became a flood in the form of (comparatively) great, or at least highly disruptive, armies that swept across the British isles and large portions of the Frankish empire; for the debate on the size of these Viking armies, see (A5):120-76 and (I60). Many of these Norse then took up residence, leading in the tenth century to the creation of social or political structures such as the Danelaw (I70 ff.), the kingdoms of York and Dublin (I30 ff.), and the duchy of Normandy (A119, I260 ff.). The tale of the Viking colonies after the tenth century, much as in the east (J), is then largely one of cultural assimilation with the more numerous indigenous populations, though many regions maintained characteristic Norse features until much later, in particular the northern and western islands of Scotland (I150 ff.). For other overall guides to this activity, see any of the textbooks in (A).


Britain and Ireland

For the admixture of art-styles in the British isles and Ireland, see (M155 ff.).

[110] D.P. Capper, *The Vikings of Britain* (1937) [UL 592:12.d.90.1]
[112] H.R. Loyn, *The Vikings in Britain* (1977) [UL 541:12.c.95.40]
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

The Irish sea melting pot
As is reflected in the range of scholarship cited above, the Scandinavian settlements in the British Isles were often closely tied by dynastic or other alliances, and in many ways the subject is best studied as a whole rather than by recourse to individual regions. This comes out particularly strongly in the tenth century, when ‘kingdoms’ were established whose spheres of activity spanned across the Irish sea from Dublin through Man to York. A whole range of studies can be found in:

[125] B. Ó Cuív, (ed.), The impact of the Scandinavian invasions on the Celtic-speaking peoples c. 800-1100 A.D.: proceedings of the International congress of Celtic studies held in Dublin, 6-10 July, 1959 (1962) [UL 502:45.c.95.2]

For further references, see (117), for example, and:


The kingdoms of York and Dublin
Numerous figures who might be called Viking kings of Dublin are recorded in the later tenth century, and despite the odd blip, such as the major setback for the Norse settlers at the beginning of the tenth century, this persisted into the tenth. During this latter period there were close connections also with the kingdom established in York. For the Vikings’ role in urbanisation specifically, see (N345 ff.).


[132] A. Smyth, Scandinavian kings in the British isles 850-880 (1977) [UL 541:12.c.95.28]


On the bizarre and somewhat legendary career (?) of Ragnar lodbrok:


On the numismatic evidence:

[139] M. Dolley, Viking coins of the Danelaw and of Dublin (1965) [UL OP.3100.70.152]

Linguistic evidence
It has often been noted how little clear burial evidence there is in England in particular for Viking settlers. Accordingly, various kinds of linguistic evidence have been extensively employed to assess the impact of the Scandinavians on the cultures of the British isles. For runic inscriptions, see (B830 ff.); for more detailed English place-name and personal name studies (B870 ff., B893).


Scandinavian History in the Viking Age


**England**

For broad guidance to the history of Anglo-Saxon England, see (A110). Many of the general handbooks cited in (A) have large sections on the topic, and this naturally holds true also for reference works dealing with the British isles as a whole (I1 ff., I10 ff.).


[151] E. Roesdahl et al., (edd.), *The Vikings in England and in their Danish homeland* (1981) [UL 541:12.c.95.48]


The *nineth century*

After the shock of the initial raids of the late eighth century, particularly that on Lindisfarne in 793, Anglo-Saxon sources (B81) record hosts of Vikings sweeping across England in the course of the ninth century culminating in the formation of a cultural block known as the ‘Danelaw’ (I70 ff.).


**Viking settlement**

The question of Viking settlement is usually addressed through linguistic evidence, particularly place-names (I40 ff.).


[166] N. Lund, ‘The settlers: where do we get them from and do we need them?’, (A47):147-71


**The (Dane)law**

The lawcodes of the late Anglo-Saxon kings contain specific sections relating to separate custom or law in the regions of England most heavily settled by Scandinavians, see (B81, B107). The Thirteenth Viking congress [A52] was devoted to the Danelaw.


The Five Boroughs
The five boroughs of Derby, Leicester, Lincoln, Nottingham, and Stamford bounded a hotbed of Scandinavian settlement in the east midlands that was gradually brought under the authority of the English kings in the mid-tenth century.

The kingdom of York
For much of the tenth century the region around York was effectively governed by Scandinavian kings of various backgrounds. For the wider context, see (I30 ff.); for the urban history of York (N345 ff.).

Other regional studies
For a variety of regional studies conducted with place-names see (B870 ff.).

The ‘second Viking age’
Towards the end of the tenth century serious Viking raids in England began again after a distinct gap; see (C45 ff.). It may be no coincidence that this was just when the vast supply of Arabic silver dirhams into Scandinavia was running out (N70 ff.), in which case it could be argued that Scandinavian leaders were seeking an alternative source of moveable wealth.

The Danish conquest
This movement drifted into the idea of what might be termed nationally sponsored invasions under the Danish kings Svein and Knut (D96; D100 ff.) which culminated in the expulsion of the English royal heirs and the foundation of an Anglo-Danish empire; on the levying of the Danish armies, see also (C220 ff.). For surveys of the large payments of ‘Danegeld’ levied from the English by marauding Danish armies, and the heregeld ‘army-tax’ collected by the Anglo-Danish kings, see:
The Anglo-Danish period

Again, most of the useful references are to be found in (D100 ff.). Knut’s lawcodes as king of England can be found in (B107a), while there is a wealth of further Anglo-Saxon material of relatively little interest for Danish history, see the bibliographical guide by Keynes under (A110). The organisation of Knut’s court has proved a topic of much interest, in that many have posited similarities and parallels with the development of Danish royal institutions in the period; see (C210 ff.), for the hird also (B707), and:

[I100] M. Lawson, ‘The collection of Danegeld and Heregeld in the reigns of Æthelred II and Cnut’, *EHR* 99 (1984), 721-38; see also numerous further articles in volumes following, particularly 104-05 (1989-90)

[I101] D. Metcalf, ‘Can we believe the very large figure of £72,000 for the geld levied by Cnut in 1018?’, *Studies in late Anglo-Saxon coinage in memory of Bror Emil Hildebrand*, Numismatiska meddelanden 35, ed. K. Jonsson (1990), 165-76 [UL 492:01.c.13.16]

The Scottish mainland

Scandinavian involvement on the Scottish mainland was naturally heaviest on the coasts alongside the isles where they were most active; the evidence for Viking settlement further south is far less clear.


J.H. Barrat, ‘Cultural contact in Viking age Scotland’, (H11):73-110

For place-name surveys see (B874).


A. Small, ‘Norse settlement in Skye’, (O24):29-37

P. Sveaas Andersen, ‘Norse settlement in the Hebrides: what happened to the natives and what happened to the Norse immigrants?’, (O62):131-47

I. Armit, The archaeology of Skye and the western isles (1996), chap. 10: ‘The Vikings’ [UL 9004.c.2330]

N. Sharples and M. Parker Pearson, ‘Norse settlement in the Outer Hebrides’, NAR 32 (1999), 41-62


The northern isles: Orkney and Shetland

The Scandinavian settlements in the northern isles of Scotland were in many ways the most successful of the Norse colonies in the wider world, with the exception of unsettled territory such as Iceland. The First Viking congress (A40) was heavily dominated by material relating to the Norse settlements in the Scottish isles, while (B120) has a fine selection of sources on the settlement of the isles and the foundation of the earldom of Orkney; this includes interesting material from Duald Mac Firbis (B137) and the Historia Norvegiae (B281). For general surveys of links across the North Atlantic, see (H1 ff.); for runic inscriptions (B830, B832). While place-name research (B875) tends to suggest a wholesale replacement of the indigenous Pictish culture with Norse nomenclature, archaeological excavations have suggested a more balanced (and more reasonable) picture involving a greater degree of continuity and cooperation.

A.W. Brøgger, Ancient emigrants: a history of the Norse settlements of Scotland (1929) [UL 470.c.92.9]; a classic if outdated survey


I. Crawford, ‘War or peace: Viking colonisation in the northern and western isles of Scotland reviewed’, (A47):259-69


G. Donaldson, A northern commonwealth: Scotland and Norway (1990) [UL 550:2.c.95.3]


Orkney

The Orkneyinga saga (B333) provides a narrative account of the establishment of the earldom on Orkney, but as a historical source is suspect for the Viking age. On the significance of place-names, see (B875) and:


For general surveys of Viking-age Orkney:


B.E. Crawford, (ed.), St Magnus cathedral and Orkney’s twelfth century Renaissance (1988) [UL 486:7.b.95.9]; contains numerous useful articles

Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

[1166] B. Smith. ‘The Picts and the martyrs or did Vikings kill the native population of Orkney and Shetland’ NS 36 (2002), 7-32

For aspects of the archaeological record see (I128) and:

[1175] O. Owen, ‘The Scar boat burial and the missing decades of the early Viking age in Orkney and Shetland’, (O89):3-34

The earldom

The basic account of the history of the earldom of Orkney up until the twelfth century is again Orkneyinga saga (B333); for a general survey, see the relevant sections in (I122). The historicity of the accounts contained in this text is frequently open to doubt, and it is particularly irritating that major figures such as the eleventh-century earl Thorfinn are not attested as such in contemporary records from the neighbouring Gaelic-speaking regions.

[1181] P.M. Sørensen, ‘The sea, the flame and the wind: the legendary ancestors of the earls of Orkney’, (A50):212-21

Birsay

A great deal of attention has been placed on the royal manor at Birsay.


Shetland

Shetland tends frequently to take second place to Orkney in discussions of the earldom of the northern isles. It has sometimes been suggested that Pictish or Christian culture survived the Norse settlement to a greater extent here, but most specific research has been archaeological in nature, looking at Shetland from a comparative perspective across the North Atlantic to Faroe, cf. (H20, H35 ff.). For general guides and studies of Shetland’s wider role see:


For archaeological research see again (I128) and:

[1197] B. Smith, (ed.), Shetland archaeology: new work in Shetland in the 1970s (1985) [UL 9001.e.7510]
Ireland

The pattern of Norse activity in Ireland is similar in outline, at least at first, to many colonies elsewhere. The first raids are documented from the end of the eighth century and persisted throughout the early ninth; there appear to have been rival Norwegian and Danish fleets in operation during this period, and many Vikings seem to have hired themselves out to local rulers as mercenaries. The first period of Scandinavian involvement in Ireland can perhaps be said to have ended with the expulsion of many warlords around 902, seemingly helping to prompt a large-scale emigration to Iceland (G40 ff.). The tenth century is characterised by the shifting kingdoms of Dublin and York under supposed descendants of Ivar the boneless (I30 ff.), but the influence of their rulers faded after the middle of the tenth century, culminating in the battle of Clontarf in 1014. In the course of the eleventh century, most of the Viking towns or camps returned to Irish control, and the reign of the last major Viking ruler of Dublin, Sigtrygg silkbeard (from 989 to 1042) signalled the serious assimilation of the Norse settlers. The annals are the most important source for the Viking raids and activities, see (B122):148-59; for texts in translation, (B120): I,255-75 and (B130 ff.). For initial guidance, see (I10 ff.), and the items in (A114).

The Viking raids

The earliest Viking activity in Ireland in the ninth century involved smash and grab raids, the proceeds of which were maintained through a series of temporary, or not so temporary, forts. For surveys of this activity in the Irish sea area, see (I125 ff.) and the more general items in (I10 ff.); for the effects on Irish society, particularly in ecclesiastical terms, also:

The Viking kings

These settlements gradually took on a more permanent nature, with the establishment of towns and the Viking kingdom at Dublin; see (I30 ff.), and for urbanisation more specifically (N350 ff.). The history of these various kings is a highly tangled one, as also is the question of whether figures from Scandinavian history can be reasonably identified with any of the Viking leaders or their dynasties.
The end of Viking Ireland
The battle of Clontarf in 1014 goes some way towards symbolising the gradual end of the Viking kingdoms of Britain. The best overall guides are in (A114).


The Isle of Man
The fortunes of the Norse on the isle of Man are so inextricably linked to the whole Irish sea area that much of the most useful reading is to be found scattered throughout the various earlier sections (I1 ff., I25 ff.). After settlement during the Viking age, a Norse dynasty ruled in Man from the late eleventh century onwards; it is from this point that the island’s history can be charted through (B148). For the splendid runic crosses see also (B831), (I47), and (M155 ff.).

[1230] G. Bersu and D.M. Wilson, Three Viking graves in the Isle of Man, Society for Mediaeval Archaeology monograph series 1 (1966) [UL 474:01.b.3.1]

Wales
The Scandinavian involvement in Wales was on the whole more peripheral than in most other parts of the British isles, and its most visible legacy is the series of Norse place-names for the coastal islands. For a general survey of this activity, see (A115).

[1240] B.G. Charles, Old Norse relations with Wales (1934) [UL 9530.d.99]
[1241] H.R. Loyn, The Vikings in Wales, Dorothea Coke memorial lecture in northern studies 1976 (1976) [UL 9540.b.278]

The Frankish empire
The literature on the Vikings in mainland Europe is extensive; for guidance, see (A117). Since Viking activity on the western European mainland falls outside the scope of the activities of the Department for which this bibliography is intended, only a few key or recent items are included here.


The raids of the ninth century
The Viking raids of the ninth century were aimed for the most part at targets that were either coastal or along navigable rivers. For general surveys, see (I1 ff.).

Normandy and Brittany

Aside from the odd fief granted to Norse warleaders by Carolingian emperors in the ninth century (cf. (D42)), the Scandinavian impact on mainland Europe was not particularly lasting, particularly when compared to England, Ireland, or Russia. The major exception is the duchy of Normandy, for which see first (A119); a fundamental source is (B64), while (B894) is an indispensable reference guide for Scandinavian names.


The Mediterranean world

For the Vikings in the Byzantine empire see (A127) and the references in section (J). Viking activity in the western Mediterranean and Spain is largely recorded in Arabic sources (B200 ff.) from the emirate of Cordoba and elsewhere.

[I265] A. Melvinger, Les premières incursions des Vikings en Occident d’après les sources arabes (1955) [UL 592:12.c.95.4]; an excellent guide to the Arabic sources


For a bibliography on the Vikings in Spain and contact with Arabs see,


J. THE EAST

The eastern Viking age is distinctly less well-documented than the western, but is in many ways equally, if not more, significant, and certainly seems to have lasted longer. The southern Scandinavians were in close contact with the Slavic peoples of eastern Europe throughout the period, and the opening of trades route into the east through Russia led to a vast influx of foreign, mostly Islamic, coins (N60 ff.) that must have transformed the Scandinavian economy. For an introductory survey, see (A21):184-98.

General

[J1] For bibliographical guidance to older research, see S. Wikander, ‘Bibliographia Normanno-Orientalis’, BONIS 1974, 7-16

[J2] H.R. Ellis Davidson, The Viking road to Byzantium (1976) [UL 592:12.c.95.24]


[J4] E.A. Melnikova, The eastern world of the Vikings: eight essays about Scandinavia and eastern Europe in the early middle ages, Gothenburg Old Norse studies 1 (1996) [UL 592:12.c.95.55]


On Scandinavian perceptions of the East, see (B471-72) and:


The Baltic

Scandinavian contacts across the Baltic have a long pedigree, and were clearly close long before the Viking age, as attested by the trade links evident in early market centres; see (N20 ff., N150 ff.). Some of these contacts were clearly of a peaceful, commercial nature, and a remarkable, if semi-legendary, colony of Viking warriors in the tenth century is recorded at Jóm or Wolin in sagas (B338). Other sources such as Rimbert (B72) record military expeditions against the Balts and Slavs, and this comes out also in runestone inscriptions (B825).

[J10] B. Nerman, Grobin-Seeburg: Ausgrabungen und Funde, KVHAA monografi 41 (1958) [UL S592:01.a.4.56]


The eastern trade routes

‘As regards the Rus [...] they have no landed property and no farms or fields. Their only activity is trade in sable and squirrel and other sorts of furs, which they sell to those who buy from them. In payment they take only coins, and these they fasten in their belts’. Ibn Rusta’s assessment of the Rus’ (B211) seems to encapsulate the aspirations of Scandinavians active in eastern Europe and beyond in the Viking age; the drive for commercial gain reflected above all in the vast Islamic coin hoards (N60 ff., N110 ff.), which begin to spread into Russia and Scandinavia from the late eighth century onwards. For theories on the origins and development of these trade routes see (N1 ff.).


The Vikings in Russia

By far the most visible and hotly debated aspect of Viking activity in the east is their involvement in European Russia, their possible element in the composition of the people(s) known as the Rus’, and their influence on the establishment of firstly the trade routes and towns (N320 ff.) and then the principedom of Kiev; this is the so-called ‘Normanist question’. For all aspects of Viking activity in Russia, (J60) is an excellent reference work; for runic inscriptions found in Russia see (B834). An opening survey is provided by:


A more comprehensive study is:

The Rus’
The ‘calling-in of the Varangians’ recorded in the Russian Primary Chronicle (B180) claims a Scandinavian origin for the Kievan ruling house founded by Rurik and his brothers around 860, but this claim is politically a very hot potato indeed.


Other evidence supporting a Scandinavian connection comes from a variety of sources of the ninth and tenth centuries, chief among them the Annals of St Bertin for 839 (B53), Liudprand (B62), and Constantine (B193). These sources are however scarcely conclusive in their own right, and burial evidence (J40 ff.) has often been employed to argue for a much stronger Slavic component.


[J29] O. Pritsak, The origin of Rus’. I: Old Scandinavian sources other than the sagas (1981) [UL 586:1.c.95.205]; a very broad and challenging survey, either bold or eccentric depending on perspective


The archaeological record of Rus’
With the written sources ultimately insufficiently copious to answer the Normanist question, the archaeological evidence comes more strongly into focus. The chief problems concern the methods by which ‘ethnicity’ or cultural identity are to be extrapolated from material remains that may involve a combination of factors such as trading links, influences on art-styles and methods of production, or actual settlement. This section focuses mostly on burial evidence; for early Russian towns see (N320 ff.).


[J40] A.N. Kirpicnikov, ‘Connections between Russia and Scandinavia in the 9th and 10th centuries, as illustrated by weapon finds’, (J28):50-76


[J43] A. Stalsberg, ‘Scandinavian relations with northwestern Russia during the Viking age: the archaeological evidence’, JBS 13 (1982), 267-95


The cemeteries at Gnezdovo have proved a particularly fruitful, or at least tempting, area to explore with regard to questions of ethnic origin.

[J48] D. Avdusin, ‘Smolensk and the Varangians according to the archaeological data’, NAR 2 (1969), 52-62, with comments in NAR 3 (1970), 113-17 and 4 (1971), 65-68; see also (J41), and V.A. Bulkin,
'On the classification and interpretation of archaeological material from the Gnezdovo cemetery', *NAR* 6 (1973), 10-13

**The Rus’ and the Byzantine empire**

Relations between Scandinavians, or the Rus’, and the Byzantine empire are of great interest, not least in terms of the treaties of the tenth century concluded between the two polities (B180a). For the Norse element in the Byzantine emperor’s personal Varangian guard, see [J2] and [J52].


[J52] S. Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium: an aspect of Byzantine military history*, translated and revised by B.S. Benedikz (1978) [UL 523:3.c.95.54]


**The formation of Russia**

Many of the items cited above (J25 ff.) contribute to this question, see also (A125). The Russian Primary Chronicle (B180) records a series of Russian princes and princesses governing a region along the Dniepr in the tenth century, but a close analysis seems to suggest that the realm of the Rus’ at this point was heavily focussed specifically on the urban sites along this river. By the late tenth century, the nomenclature of the ruling house, burial evidence, and the written sources all imply that a Rus’ culture had been shaped with the Slavic element predominating. On the conversion to Christianity see (L90 ff.).


On contacts between Russia and Scandinavia in the late Viking age:


Of particular interest is the ‘Yngvar expedition’, a calamitous Swedish military campaign into the distant east of the mid-eleventh century which has left a legacy in the form of both a mediaeval Icelandic saga (B471) and a large number of runestone inscriptions (B825, C90); see also:


On the strong dynastic contact between Rus’ and Scandinavia throughout the medieval period, see:

RELIATION

K. PAGANISM

The study of Scandinavian ‘paganism’ naturally encompasses a large area, not only the actual beliefs or principles which might be held to be current in pre-Christian Scandinavia but also the practice of religious worship and the social role it might have had.

General surveys

The literature on Old Norse mythology is so extensive, and in some ways so marginal to the current enterprise, that no attempt has been made to be exhaustive. For bibliographical guidance, see:


The following encyclopaedias are also very useful:


Handbooks, collections, and guides

For mythology in particular, see also (K20 ff.).

[K6] E.O.G. Turville-Petre, Myth and religion of the north: the religion of ancient Scandinavia (1964) [UL 1.5.c.95.73]
[K9] H.R. Ellis Davidson, Myths and symbols in pagan Europe: early Scandinavian and Celtic religions (1988) [UL 463:1.c.95.94]
[K10] P.M. Sørensen and G. Steinsland, Før kristendommen: digtning om livssyn i vikingetiden (1990) [UL 592:12.b.95.8]
[K13] J. McKinnell, Both one and many: essays on change and variety in late Norse heathenism, Philologia 1 (1994) [UL 752:16.c.95.47]

Mythology

The basic source for our understanding (if it can be dignified by that term) of Old Norse mythology comes from verse (B480 ff.), although art-history (M130 ff., M180 ff.) and prose texts such as Snorra Edda (B600) and Saxo (B657) are also relevant. The best place to begin is with the general works just cited above (K1 ff.), but see also:

[K22] K. von See, Mythos und Theologie im skandinavischen Hochmittelalter, Skandinavistische Arbeiten 8 (1988) [UL 752:01.c.10.8]
The pantheon

As conventionally defined, the Norse pantheon was divided into two groups; the Æsir, whose functions seem to have been heavily martial, and the Vanir, who were by contrast worshipped for fertility. The validity of such a distinction for Viking-age Scandinavia is naturally slender, but has been seen as a mythic exploration of the tensions between ‘old’ and ‘new’ divinities; it is notable that in verse the Æsir seem to predominate in status, whereas place-names (K90 ff.) paint a much more ambiguous picture.

Odin

As the leading figure in the Norse pantheon, at least according to most literary sources, the role of Odin has come under particular scrutiny. Various factors suggest that Odin’s role in mythological material has been exaggerated: his identification with the Roman Mercury pales when compared to that of Thor with Jove, while reports of cult-sites such as that of Uppsala (K115 ff.) by Adam of Bremen again place Thor in prime position. For Odin’s role in the Valhalla myth see (K55 ff.); for a personal view by a devotee (B523b).

Other mythological figures

It is possible, if bold, to suggest that the pantheon represented the more ‘public’ face of Norse pagan belief, but a wide scattering of (often frustratingly vague) sources confirm the worship of other mythological figures, perhaps the recipients of more localised or private cults.

The giants

The role of giants in Norse mythology is ambiguous; they are at once presented as the ancestors, adversaries, and prospective brides or husbands of the gods.

Elves, dwarves, and disir

The origins and roles of the figures known as elves, dwarves, and disir in pagan mythology are hotly disputed, but they may have been recipients of more local cults; in Sigvat’s Austrfararvisor.
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

(B546c) a reference is made to álfablót ‘sacrifice to elves’ in the context of eleventh-century Västergötland, while feasts to the disir are also referred to a variety of sources

**Death and eschatology**

It seems likely that a large number of competing or complementary beliefs were present in the Viking age.

**The origins of the world**


**The end of the world and Ragnarök**

The most coherent, if not necessarily most authentic, presentation of Norse eschatology is to be found in the Eddaic poem Völuspá (B605), when the crimes of the gods come home to roost and they are for the most part killed by various mythic adversaries before the world is re-born anew.

[K50] J.S. Martin, Ragnarök: an investigation into Old Norse concepts of the fate of the Gods, Melbourne monographs in Germanic studies 3 (1972) [UL 701:4.c.3.3]


**The afterlife**

[K55] The various perspectives on the fate of the individual after death are particularly tricky, since the more varied amount of evidence for this aspect of pagan belief does not point in any single direction. The inclusion of grave-goods in burials (M300 ff.) is usually (and probably reasonably) interpreted as indicating the belief that they would be useful for the individual concerned after death; on the other hand, the single most cogent destination for deceased souls, the warriors’ feasting-hall at Valhalla reflected above all in verse (B524, B530a, B608), does not seem to require much in the way of equipment. Scattered sources such as family sagas (B350 ff.) seem to imply folk-beliefs that the dead stayed resident in their grave-mounds or other features of the landscape, but there are also hints at a number of other divergent ideas, including even sun-worship (B256). Many other aspects of pagan mythology on this point, such as the references to Hel, are of obscure interpretation, and it is distinctly possible that such conceptions changed over time and place; for the clearest mythological statement, see Völuspá (B605), which implies a (possibly Christian-influenced) judgement of the dead according to various moral qualities

[K56] H.R. Ellis Davidson, The road to Hel: a study of the conception of the dead in Old Norse literature (1943) [UL 461:7.c.90.3]


**Paganism in the Icelandic sagas**

A large amount of antiquarian material relating to the pagan past can be found in the sagas of Icelanders (B350 ff.). Much of it is undoubtedly of great antiquity, much else is equally undoubtedly the work of (more or less) educated saga-writers.


[K63] P. Schach, ‘Antipagan sentiment in the sagas of Icelanders’, Gripla 1, SÁMÍ rit 7 (1975), 105-34 [UL 752:1.c.5.10]


[K65] B. McC Creesh, ‘How pagan are the Icelandic family sagas?’ JEGP 79 (1980), 58-66

Cultic society

We are perhaps on more solidly historical ground when considering the nature of pre-Christian or ‘cultic’ society. Some foreign commentators such as Adam (B73), Thietmar (B63), and Al-Turtushi (B215) give scattered reports of cultic activity among the Viking-age Scandinavians; a wealth of further material is to be found also in the family sagas (B350 ff.) and kings’ sagas (B290 ff.), but this is usually of dubious authenticity. Of particular significance is the role of the cult in the social make-up of Scandinavia, as exemplified above all by the use of place-names and various forms of material evidence to reconstruct concepts such as the ‘central place’ (C70 ff.), cf. also below (K100 ff.)

Law and society

The symbiosis between law and religion is reflected in the multi-functional nature of the ‘thing’ (C80). A remnant of the pagan law ascribed to Úlfþjóti (B695) is supposedly preserved in Landnámabók (B256) and versions of Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar (B311), but its authenticity is open to doubt. Probably more telling are the clauses is mediaeval lawcodes (B680 ff.) outlawing various practices such as ‘doing things with sticks’ or ‘putting power into stones’, even if their precise function and interpretation is a bit shaky.


A. Sundqvist, ‘Features of pre-Christian inauguration rituals in the medieval Swedish laws’ (O84):620-50

Hierogamy and sacral kingship

Many sources, particularly Eddaic verse such as Rígsþula (B617), try to provide a mythological background for kingship and class structures in general; other kinds of evidence, particularly skaldic poems such as Ægissísþula (B521a) or the verse of the court of earl Hakon of Lade (B526), imply a link between the ruler and the ruled (in terms of land and people) that has religious foundations. These points have often been linked to the notion of a ‘sacred marriage’ or symbiosis between king and land, and thence to the (often overstated) notion of ‘sacral kingship’.


B. Frense, Religion och rätt: en studie till belysning av relationen religion-rätt i förkristen nordisk kultur,

L. Lönnroth, ‘Dómaldi’s death and the myth of sacral kingship’, (O44):73-93


E. Picard, Germanisches Sakralkönigtum? Quellenkritisch e Studien zur Germania des Tacitus und zur altnordischen Überlieferung, Skandinavistische Arbeiten 12 (1991) [UL 752:01.c.10.12]


L. Motz, ‘Kingship and the giants’, ANF 111 (1996), 73-88


N.S. Price, The Viking Way. Religion and War in Late Iron Age Scandinavia. Aun 31 (2002)[ASNC]
The evidence of place-names
Place-names supply much useful information on pagan cults and society, in terms of ‘theophoric’ names indicating devotion to particular divinities along with cultic elements such as hof or vé which can be used (with caution) to extrapolate practices of worship and beliefs. For broader surveys of place-name material see (B840 ff.).

[K90] M. Olsen, *Hedenske kultminder i norske stedsnavne*, SDNVAO 1914:4 [UL 500:01.b.4.18]


[K92] B. Holmberg, ‘Views on cultic place-names in Denmark: a review of research’, (O60):381-93


[K96] B. Holmberg, ‘Recent research into sacral names’, (A51):280-87

Festivals and worship
Place-names give the impression of widely disparate cults across Scandinavia. Although it should be borne in mind that theophoric place-names can contain the names of different divinities who may have performed similar functions in different regions, it is widely held that pagan beliefs and customs are likely to have varied widely in time and place.

Cult-sites and social gatherings
One of the most visible, or at least easily reconstructed, forms of pagan worship is the communal gathering at cult-sites, often going under the name hof. The frequent translation of this word as ‘temple’ seems to be misleading, in that separate sacral buildings are difficult to uncover in the material record; we seem instead to be dealing with ceremonial buildings or halls which had many functions, including ritual ceremonies, cf. (C60 ff.). For a fascinating recently excavated site, see:


The hofs of Iceland
The ‘temples’ of Iceland were long held as prime examples of cultic buildings in Scandinavia, but the reliance of earlier scholars on accounts in sagas (K60 ff.) has now been tempered by more caution. For surveys of earlier scholarship see (K125) and (G22).


Other famous cult-sites
[K110] On Jelling in Jutland see also (D60 ff.) and E. Dyggve, *Three sanctuaries of Jelling type*, Scripta minora 1959-60:1 [UL P911:36.c.16.16]; Dyggve’s interpretation is now dated, cf. (K125)

[K111] For Lejre see (D31) and the account by Thietmar (B63)

[K112] The seat of the earls of Lade or Hlaðir in the Trøndelag in central Norway may probably be considered a cultic centre; for saga-accounts, see K. Düwel, *Das Opferfest von Lade: quellenkritische Untersuchungen zur germanischen Religionsgeschichte*, Wiener Arbeiten zur germanischen Altertumskunde und Philologie 27 (1985) [UL 500:05.d.5.27]

[K113] The nearby site at Mære in the Trøndelag is also recorded as a cult-centre, which may be borne out by excavations under the mediaeval church, see H.-E. Lidén, ‘From pagan sanctuary to Christian church: the excavation of Mære church in Trøndelag’, *NAR* 2 (1969), 3-32, and cf. (K125 ff.)
Uppsala

Uppsala is worthy of a section in its own right as the most celebrated cult-site in Scandinavia, most famously illuminated by the description of it from Adam of Bremen (B73); for the royal burial mounds, see (M335, M339).

[K115] K. Kumlien, Biskop Karl av Västerås och Uppsala ärkesätes flyttning, Historiskt arkiv 14 (1967) [UL 500:05.c.59.3]


[K118] E. Nordahl, ‘... templum quod Ubsola dicitur ... i arkeologisk belysning’, Aun 22 (1996) (E.s.) [ASNC]


Cult-continuity

A particularly interesting issue that has been vigorously debated recently is the notion of cult-continuity, or the extent to which pagan cult-sites were transformed into Christian centres at the conversion. One of the major problems has traditionally been the difficulty in identifying the physical remains of cult-sites through archaeology; these issues are addressed in many of the excavations noted above, most visibly with (K113). For the perspective looking backwards from the Christian period, see (L11) and (L220 ff.).

[K125] O. Olsen, Hørg, hov og kirke: historiske og arkeologiske vikingetidsstudier, ANOH 1965 (1966) [UL P592.e.26.101] (E.s.); a classic and significant survey, that played a dominant role in revising the views of earlier scholarship on cultic sites and continuity


[Ritual and sacrifice]

The notion of sacrifice as part of pagan ritual is extremely widespread, and can be borne out from both literary reports and archaeological evidence, particularly burials.

[K130] H. Schetelig, ‘Traces of the custom of suttee in Norway during the Viking age’, SBVS 6 (1908-09), 180-208


[K135] A. Gräslund, ‘Living with the dead. Reflections on food offerings at graves’ (O84):222-235
Votive deposits
The most notable examples of votive deposits from the Viking age are probably the small gold foils or gullgubber found at many excavations of rural and urban sites; see also (K145 ff.). For the widespread votive deposits in bogs of the early Iron age, see (D20 ff.) and:


On the theories surrounding the development of the tradition:


Amulets


Magic and shamanism
The practice of magic and shamanism is a tricky one; for an interesting if speculative discussion of its possible role in a major historical event, see (L72). For a recent archaeological perspective on the subject, see (K87).


L. CHRISTIANITY
The conversion of Scandinavia to Christianity seems to have been a long and convoluted process. Beginning with the earliest missions of the eight and ninth centuries, what might be called ‘Christian’ cults and customs spread slowly across Scandinavia before being settled in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Both the conversion and the growth of the Church in mediaeval Scandinavia are included here together, largely because they are indistinguishable in the ‘missionary phase’ which lasted well into the twelfth century. An understanding of the background to these various missions, as well as comparative evidence of the fate of Christianity in other pagan regions, is essential for this topic, which although of prime importance is often irritatingly undersourced in terms of written documents. For the general background, see:


The conversion
The study of the conversion of Scandinavia has become a growth industry in recent years, and hence there is a vast amount of material to plough through. For initial guidance, see the handbooks in (A), also
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

(L2) chap. 11: ‘Scandinavians abroad and at home’, and (L3) chap. 6: ‘Christianity in the North’. To save space, only more recent specific contributions to the debate(s) tend to be included here.

[L.8] B. Sawyer et al., (edd.), The Christianization of Scandinavia: report of a symposium held at Kungälv, Sweden, 4-9 August 1985 (1987) [UL 62:46.c.95.12], includes several articles plus lots of useful discussion


For the response to Christianity and motivations of certain social groups:


On conversion narratives in general:


Regional studies
For each country these items should be complemented with those from the individual sections (D-I). The fundamental contemporary written sources include Rimbert (B72), Adam (B73), diplomatic material (B717 ff.), and runic inscriptions (B800 ff., C90 ff.).
Denmark
For the earliest missions to Denmark under Anskar and successors, see (L115 ff.). According to Widukind (B61), the ‘official’ conversion was accepted by Harald Bluetooth around 965, who was convinced by a miracle performed by the missionary Poppo, cf. (D60 ff.); for the German charters of the tenth century referring to Danish bishops, see (L31) and (L210).


Norway
Missionary activity in Norway is less fully discussed by contemporary European authors, but can be tracked partially through the evidence of burials (L150 ff.) as the battleground for religious debate in the tenth century. On the early Christian kings see (E50 ff., E60 ff.); on the widespread English influence also (L132 ff.).

[L42] T.M. Andersson, ‘The conversion of Norway according to Oddr Snorrason and Snorri Sturluson’, MS 10 (1977), 83-95
[L46] Ø. Walberg, (ed.), For og etter Stiklestad 1030: religionsskifte, kulturforhold, politisk makt; seminar på Stiklestad, 1994 (1994); lots of articles in Norwegian focussing on the conversion around the time of saint Olaf Haraldsson
[L48] B. Solli, ‘Narratives of encountering religions: on the Christianization of the Norse around AD 900-1000’, NAR 29 (1996), 89-114; focuses on the important site of Veøy, see also (M51)

Sweden
The earliest known missions to Sweden are recorded by Rimbert (B72) in the ninth century. Thereafter the written record largely dries up until the eleventh century, but the numerous Christian runestones of this period (B825, C90 ff.) give the impression that Christianity had made a more dramatic impact than might otherwise have been expected. In the Middle ages several missionary saints were venerated who were said to have been active in the field in the eleventh century; Sigfrid, Eskil, and David stand out. They were generally held to be of English origin and the first two are mentioned by Aelnoth (B647b); however, most of the information about them is derived from late mediaeval hagiographies or liturgical sources (B672, 780) that are of no genuine historical value. For Viking-age evidence of Christian worship in towns, see (N280 ff.).

[L56] C.J.A. Oppermann, The English missionaries in Sweden and Finland (1937) [UL 179.c.27.28]
[L57] W. Holmqvist, ‘Was there a Christian mission to Sweden before Ansgar?’, Early medieval studies 8, Arkiv 46 (1975), 33-55
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age


[**L60**] A.-S. Gräslund, ‘Some aspects of Christianisation in central Sweden’, (O64):45-52


[**L62**] S. Brink, (ed.), *Jämtlands kristnande*, Projektet Sveriges kristnande 4 (1996) [UL 62:5.c.95.20]; collected articles with short English summaries on the conversion of the border province of Jämtland, particularly significant for the runestone and cult-site at Frösö: see H. Williams, ‘Runjämtskan på Frösöstenen och Östmans bro’, 45-63; B.-M. Näström, ‘Offerlunden under Frösö kyrka’, 65-85, and much more of great interest besides. Further on Jämtland, see:

[**L63**] S. Welinder, ‘Christianity, politics and ethnicity in early medieval Jämtland’, (O87):509-530


[**L65**] W. Duczko, ‘Real and imaginary contributions of Poland and Rus’ to the conversion of Sweden’, *Early Christianity in central and eastern Europe*, ed. P. Urbanczyk (1996), 129-35


**Iceland**

The conversion of Iceland is typically traced through *Íslendingabók* (B255) and the various later saga narratives (B455, B458-59) that record a brief flurry of missionary activity in the late tenth century culminating in the public agreement to accept Christianity at the Althing in the year 1000 (or less dramatically, but perhaps more accurately, 999). See (L3) chap. 7: ‘The conversion of Iceland’, and:


[**L73**] P.G. Foote, ‘conversion of the Icelanders’, (O6):56-64; in the same vol. ‘Observations on “syncretism” in early Icelandic Christianity’, 84-100

[**L74**] J. Gíslason, ‘Acceptance of Christianity in Iceland in the year 1000 (999)’, (O60):223-55


On the question of Christianity among the early settlers cf. (G40 ff.) and:

[**L77**] J. Hnefill Adalsteinsson, ‘Írsk kristni og norræn trú á Íslandi á tiundu öld’, *Saga* 24 (1986), 205-21 (E.s.)


**Greenland**

For the little known about the conversion of Greenland see the Vinland sagas (B330, B332) and:

The Viking colonies

The fate of the Vikings abroad is of great comparative interest, not least because of the apparent ease with which many communities accepted Christianity. In addition, it might well be assumed that converts in the British isles in particular played a role in spreading the new faith back across the North sea.

The British isles and Ireland

[85] D. Whitelock, ‘The conversion of the eastern Danelaw’, SBVS 12 (1937-45), 159-76
[87] D.M. Hadley, ‘The Vikings’ relationship with Christianity reconsidered’, (O78):59-76

Russia

Although the conversion of the Rus’ cannot really be conceived of as reflecting a Viking response to Christianity, the declaration of public conversion by Vladimir in 988 is of particular comparative interest, in that in terms of chronology and probable motivation it is strikingly similar to royal policy in Scandinavia itself in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries.

[90] L. Müller, Die Taufe Russlands: die Frühgeschichte des russischen Christentums bis zum Jahre 988, Quellen und Studien zur russischen Geistesgeschichte 6 (1987) [UL 62:57.c.95.40]

A further series of conferences held to celebrate the conventional date of 988 for Vladimir’s introduction of Christianity into Kievan Russia contain a sprinkling of interesting articles:


Missionary activity

One of the most frustrating aspects of studying the conversion of Scandinavia is the lack of sources detailing the activities and methods of missionaries; only Rimbert’s life of Anskar (B72) really comes close, and this deals only with the very earliest missions that in many ways can be seen as unrepresentative of the later, more formal, phase of conversion. Comparative material from the Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Germany is often interesting, see (B81). On the practice of ‘primesigning’, see:

[100] Å. Sandholm, Primsigningsriten under nordisk medeltid, Acta Academiae Aboensis A: Humaniora 29:3 (1965) [UL P500.c.165.27]

And on missionary methods more generally:

[101] R. Sullivan, ‘The Carolingian missionary and the pagan’, Speculum 28 (1953), 705-40; for this and further studies, see also the collection of reprinted articles in R.E. Sullivan, Christian missionary activity in the early Middle ages, Variorum collected studies series 431 (1994) [UL 165:3.c.95.65]
Hamburg-Bremen

From Anskar’s time onwards, the responsibility for converting the Scandinavians and laying the foundations for the Scandinavian church rested by papal decree with the (arch)bishops of Hamburg-Bremen. Accordingly, many of our most useful sources such as Rimbert (B72) and Adam (B73) emanated from this see, but were clearly designed to enhance the role of Hamburg-Bremen above other authorities. For the correspondence between the archbishops and the Popes concerning their privileges as appointed papal legates, see (B740-742); among the most important documents are the authorisation of Paschal I for Ebo of 822 (B736a):68-70, Nicholas I’s confirmation of the role of Hamburg-Bremen in 864 (736b):290-93, and Formosus’ re-iteration on the behalf of Adalgar in 892 (736c):367-68

G. Glaeske, Die Erzbischöfe von Hamburg-Bremen als Reichsfürsten (937-1258), Quellen und Darstellungen zur Geschichte Niedersachsens 60 (1962) [UL 535.c.56.44]

W. Seegrün, Das Papsttum und Skandinavien bis zur Vollendung der nordischen Kirchenorganisation, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins 51 (1967) [UL 570:01.c.46.37]

S. Weinfurter and O. Engels, (edd.), Series episcoporum ecclesiae catholicae occidentalis ab initio usque ad annum MCXCVIII, series V: Germania, II: Archiepiscopatus Hammaburgensis sive Bremensis (1984), 1-52 [UL R100.18]; very useful survey of the various bishops by K. Reinecke although in Latin

The Anskarian missions

The primary written source is naturally the biography of Anskar by Rimbert (B72), and most of the items cited above will contain some account and discussion of this period.


J.T. Palmer, The Vita Anskarii and the failure of the ninth-century missions to Scandinavia, Dissertation for the M.Phil. in Medieval History, August 2000 [Seeley 9.2.58]

The eleventh century

This period saw the beginnings of formal ecclesiastical structures in Scandinavia, cf. (L200 ff.). One striking point was the growing demand for local control over the Church and the responses of the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen, see:


On the eleventh-century background:

G. Tellenbach, The church in western Europe from the tenth to the early twelfth century, transl. T. Reuter (1993) [UL 60:8.c.95.56]

Other missionaries

Missionaries not accredited by Hamburg-Bremen tend to receive a fairly negative press in the written sources emanating from Germany, but their impact must have been extensive.

J. Staeccker, ‘Legends and mysteries: reflections on the evidence for the early mission in Scandinavia’, (O80):419-54

English missionaries

Missions from England in particular seem to have been of great significance across Scandinavia, although particularly in Norway, and it is immensely frustrating to run into a wall of silence from Anglo-Saxon sources at this point. They are mentioned frequently, and not always damningly, by Adam of
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

Bremen (B73), appear in various kings’ sagas (B290 ff.), but above all can be traced in the heavy English influence on the vocabulary (L180 ff.), liturgy (L175), and general organisation (L200 ff.) of the mediaeval Scandinavian churches.  

[L132] A. Taranger, *Den angelsaksiske kirkes indflydelse på den norske* (1890) [UL 62:46.d.85.1]; a classic study, always worth consulting despite its great age  

[L133] H.G. Leach, ‘The relations of the Norwegian with the English church, 1066-1399, and their importance to comparative literature’, *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 44 (1909), 531-60  


Missionaries from the East  
The best known example of eastern missionary work comes from the account of the ‘acephalous’ bishop Osmund in *Adam of Bremen* (B73), but further examples crop up from surprising places.  


Women and the conversion  


Various disciplines  
In light of the paucity and unevenness of historical works, the value of archaeological materials is vital. For the early Christian coin issues, see (C250 ff.).  

Burials  

[L150] Identifying ‘Christian’ (or simply foreign) influence on burial customs is often a lot easier than determining any religious viewpoint inherent in the rite. Conventional diagnostic features of Christian as opposed to pagan burial include an avoidance of cremation, east-west orientation, a restriction of grave goods, and a lack of overt markers such as mounds or ship-settings; for burials in general, see further (M300 ff.). However, none of these can prove Christian influence independently, and it is important to seek a combination of these factors along with the final definitive proof, the bunching together of burials in confined Christian cemeteries  


Scandinavian History in the Viking Age


Art


Runestones and inscriptions

The conversion period saw an explosion in the popularity of raised runestones bearing inscriptions, which seem to have had many functions (C90 ff.). One of their most striking characteristics is the great number which are clearly Christian, while even very few of the rest are not distinctively pagan; for further references to the art-work, see (M170 ff.). Alongside testifying to Christian influence otherwise little attested (such as in central Sweden (F95)), the contents of these inscriptions can also tell us about missionary activity (through things like loanwords) and give us a small but unique glimpse into the conception of Christianity among Scandinavians in the conversion period. For a recent overview of the material, see (C95), chap. 6: ‘Conversion’.


[L.169] H. Williams, ‘Vad säger runstenarna om Sveriges kristnande?’, (L63):45-83 (E.s.), also in the same volume ‘Runstentexternas teologi’, 291-312 (E.s.)


Liturgy

The liturgical manuscripts of mediaeval Scandinavia (B780) contain numerous forms of influence from foreign, particularly British, churches.


Christian terminology

The earliest Christian loanwords in Scandinavia can similarly give us some idea of the directions and impact of missionary activities from various sources, as well as providing an insight into the state of
Christianity in Scandinavia during the missionary phase. A chief source for such studies is runic inscriptions, for which see (L165 ff.). For other equally interesting but secular loanwords cf. (C205 ff.).


[L181] C.-E. Thors, Den kristna terminologien i fornsvenskan, Studier i nordisk filologi 45 (1957) [UL 779.c.63.21]


The early Church

[L190] The Church was developing in Scandinavia at precisely the time of one of the periods of greatest change in mediaeval ecclesiastical history. A pivotal figure was pope Gregory VII (in office 1073 to 1085), who undertook reform in many areas, not only to combat abuses such as simony or clerical non-celibacy, but also to counter the practice of secular rulers appointing bishops and other prelates; the so-called ‘investiture controversy’. The efforts of such popes to gain support from the Scandinavian kings has left a moderate amount of interesting correspondence between the papacy and Denmark in particular; for letters of Gregory VII in translation, see (B745b):67-68 for Sven Estrithsen (1075), 136-37 for Olaf kyri (1078), 184-85 for the kings of the West Götar (c. 1081); the two papal letters to Norwegian kings from the late eleventh century can also be found with Norw. transl. in E. Vandvik, Latinske dokument til norsk historie fram til år 1204 (1959) [UL 593:2.c.95.2]. The general handbooks for each country in (D-H) are always worth referring to for ecclesiastical history, especially those which cover the early mediaeval period


[L192] T. Nyberg, Die Kirche in Skandinavien: mitteleuropäischer und englischer Einfluss im 11. und 12. Jahrhundert; Anfänge der Domkapitel Børglum und Odense in Dänemark, Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters 10 (1986) [UL 532:01.c.23.10]; see in particular 11-78 on the early Church


On the distinctive development of the Church in the Scandinavian colonies in the North Atlantic:


Ecclesiastical organisation

The development of ecclesiastical organisation in Scandinavia is really a twelfth-century phenomenon that can only be seriously traced through reference to sources that fall outside the scope of this bibliography. It is nevertheless of crucial importance for understanding the transformation of society brought about by the conversion; a good initial guide can be found in (A35) chap. 5: ‘Christianization and church organization’.


**Episcopal organisation**

[L210] The earliest ‘bishoprics’ are recorded in tenth-century Denmark, see (B730): I,411 and II,440-41 for charters of Otto I (965) and Otto III (988) freeing the Danish bishoprics from duties; the first document lists three bishops, of Sleswig, Ribe, and Århus, and the second adds Odense. These bishoprics are however likely to have been little more (or perhaps not even as much as) missionary centres, and the same applies to most episcopal centres in eleventh-century Scandinavia

For useful catalogues of bishops with biographical notes see:


[L212] H. Kluger, (ed.), *Series episcoporum ecclesiae catholicae occidentalis ab initio usque ad annum MCXCVIII, series VI: Britannia, Scotia et Hibernia, Scandinavia, II: Archiepiscopatus Lundensis* (1992) [UL R100.18]; very useful survey of the history of Lund and its Danish bishoprics, with individual biographies and many references, but in Latin

For actual specific studies:


**Early churches and parishes**

[L220] The earliest churches seem frequently to have been large central foundations, often on royal land, designed to serve as missionary bases. When churches begin to appear in the late eleventh century on a more local basis, they often seem to involve a deal of continuity with earlier cult-sites (cf. (K125 ff., L11)), which seems to reflect the practices of major landowners establishing new religious centres on their own land. Many of these foundations seem accordingly to have been private churches or chapels, and a full parish system could not develop until the development of the tithe, which was gradually introduced into the various parts of Scandinavia at the end of the eleventh but mostly during the twelfth century


Monasticism


Saints and cults

Most of the items cited above will deal with various aspects of sainted missionaries in particular; for saints’ lives in Scandinavia, see (B440 ff., B645, B671).


[L232] M. Cormack, The saints in Iceland: their veneration from the conversion to 1400, Subsidia hagiographica 78 (1994) [UL S100:01.c.1.87]


Royal saints

The development of the cults of royal saints in Scandinavia seems to have begun with saint Olaf Haraldsson in Norway soon after his death in 1030 (E70 ff.); for comparative material and possible inspiration, see in particular (L236) but also (B181). For material relating specifically to the cult of saint Olaf see (B312-315), on saint Knut (B647).


[L236] E. Hoffmann, Die heiligen König in den Anglesachsen und den skandinavischen Völkern: Königseitiger und Königshaus, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins 69 (1975) [UL 570:01.c.46.54]


Church dedications

There are several striking features of the conversion period of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries as regards the cults of saints in Scandinavia. Runic inscriptions (L165 ff.), mostly from Sweden, are very sparing with reference to them, for one thing. Early church dedications can often be revealing:


A particular peculiarity is the widespread celebration of the cult of saint Clement:


ARCHAEOLOGY

M. MATERIAL CULTURE

The material culture of Scandinavia is naturally a wide-ranging subject, and many of the themes are covered elsewhere when appropriate. Archaeological research is a key factor in illuminating the culture of the Viking-age Scandinavians in terms of lifestyle and subsistence, burials, dwellings and settlements, and the like. Since so much of the historical research into the period is dependent on these approaches, most of the general textbooks in (A) are excellent starting points. For the development of the discipline of archaeology in Scandinavia, see:
The domestic economy

The domestic economy of Viking-age Scandinavia was heavily characterised by animal husbandry, although crops such as barley and oats were sporadically cultivated. An interesting description of the lifestyle of a Viking-age Norwegian chieftain is provided by the account of Ohthere in the Old English Orosius (B106). For an overview, see (A14):94-107 (‘Livelihood and settlement’); for a useful demographic survey of Scandinavia, see (C60).

Agriculture

For a basic survey of agricultural techniques, although with a heavy emphasis on Denmark, see (D7). One of the most significant developments at the end of the Viking age was the growing use of the plough, and such greater sophistication may help to explain the long-term stability of farm and village sites from the mediaeval period onwards, cf. (M25 ff.).

Subsistence and diet

Again, the general reference works in (A) are the best place to start; with a focus towards the North Atlantic colonies, useful contributions can also be found in (H7-8). For more general orientation, see:

Fishing and hunting

Aside from animal husbandry, fishing was (naturally) a major part of the Viking-age Scandinavian economy, yielding cod and herring from the sea, and salmon from lakes and rivers. Whaling was also significant; mediaeval lawcodes provide ample evidence of the importance of beached whales, while Ohthere (B106) mentions whaling expeditions. The hunting of walrus and seals in the north was also useful, both for blubber and skins but also walrus ivory.

Environmental archaeology

The growing field of environmental archaeology, which examines such things as the physical remains of flora and fauna at occupied sites, is rapidly gaining ground in Scandinavian Viking-age studies, but the subject is not one for non-experts to tackle lightly. Since the vast amount of preliminary reports and statements of work in progress cannot realistically be included in a bibliography like this one, this recent collection is offered as an entry point into the topic.

Settlement and sites

For basic guides to settlement patterns and excavations, see the handbooks (A) and the individual country sections; for the notion of social organisation around the ‘central place’ (C70 ff.). This section is devoted
to mainland Scandinavia; for the Viking settlements abroad, see the respective sections on each area. One of the most striking aspects of settlement in the Viking age is the mobility of sites, which shift around in search of fresh land until the advent of the medieval era; cf. (M30 ff.). Aside from archaeology, place-names are also an invaluable source; a basic approach to the principles of using onomastic research is provided by:


And for a recent guide to landscape studies and settlement, with a heavy emphasis on the Iron age in general, see:


**Denmark**

The greater concentration of arable land in Denmark has always made the region more conducive to the cultivation of crops than further north in Scandinavia; it also presumably played a role in the relatively early development of village-style settlements, at least by contrast with Norway.


For a recent survey of the contrast between villages and single farmsteads, see:


And for a sample full-length study:


**Norway**

The terrain of Norway is particularly rugged, and settlement patterns tend therefore to concentrate more around single farm-complexes than village systems. Of particular interest also is the internal expansion into previously unsettled highland and forest areas; although really a phenomenon of the Middle ages, this drift can be identified in the Viking age and is frequently associated with the collection of raw resources such as iron.


[M41] T. Sjovold, The Iron age settlement of Arctic Norway: a study in the expansion of European Iron age culture within the Arctic circle. I: Early Iron age (Roman and Migration periods). II: Late Iron age (Merovingian and Viking periods), Tromso museums skrifter 10 (1962-74) [UL 594:3.b.95.1-2]


[M45] A. Holmsen, Gård og gods i Norge i eldre tid (1980) [UL 221.c.98.113]

Scandinavian History in the Viking Age


Sweden

Settlement patterns in Sweden are perhaps more diverse than in the rest of mainland Scandinavia, which is partially a reflection of the great regional disparities in this large area. Swedish surveys are also particularly significant for the interaction with aspects of administration and government (C230 ff.).

[M55] U. Sporrong, Kolonisation, bebyggelseutveckling och administration: studier i agrar kulturlandskapstutveckling under vikingatid och tidig medeltid med exempel från Uppland och Närke, Meddelanden från Kulturgeografiska Institutionen vid Stockholms Universitet B:23 (1971) [UL 595:2.c.95.3]

[M56] Å. Hyenstrand, Production of iron in outlying districts and the problem of Järnbäraland, Early medieval studies 4, AArkiv 46 (1972) [Haddon]


[M60] J. Callmer, ‘To stay or to move: some aspects of the settlement dynamics in southern Scandinavia in the seventh to twelfth centuries A.D. with special reference to the province of Scania, southern Sweden’, MLUHM new series 6 (1985-86), 167-208


Architecture

Relatively little is available in English on Scandinavian architecture in general. The textbooks in (A) contain good overall surveys, while for individual sites see (M25 ff.) and (N140 ff.).

[M70] S. Erixon, (ed.), Byggnadskultur, Nordisk kultur 17 (1952) [UL 592:01.b.1.17]

Halls and houses

For the significance of halls see (C70 ff.).


[M78] H. Schmidt, Building customs in Viking age Denmark (1994) [UL 598:3.b.95.21]


Defences and fortifications
For some of the more splendid physical remains of Viking-age fortifications, see (D35, D80 ff.) and urban excavations (N160 ff.). On marine defence in particular, see:

Ecclesiastical architecture
On pagan architecture, see (K100 ff.). The earliest Scandinavian churches were built of wood and have largely vanished; for examples, see (K125 ff., K113, N160 ff.). They were replaced in the late eleventh but more usually the twelfth century by stone foundations.
[M91] M. Weidhagen-Hallerdt, ‘St Clemens kyrka i Helsingborg’, Medeltiden och arkeologin: festskrift till Erik Cinthio, Lund studies in medieval archaeology 1, edd. A. Andrén et al. (1986), 131-43 [UL S592.c.98.73]; the same volume contains a number of other articles on early church architecture

Stone architecture
The development of stone architecture in the twelfth century largely falls outside the scope of this bibliography; for basic orientation, see the handbooks on art (M130 ff.) and:

Ships
The ship has been called the ‘enduring image’ of the Viking-age, and an under-standing of its evolution and application is vital, in particular the advent of the mast and sail in the eighth century; for the role of the ship in society more broadly, see also (M345 ff.) and (C220 ff.).
[M100] A.W. Brøgger and H. Shetelig, The Viking ships: their ancestry and evolution (1951) [UL 423.b.97.17]
[M101] T. Sjøvold, The Viking ships in Oslo (1979) [UL 9592.c.135]

On the important group of Skuldelev ships dredged from the Roskilde fjord in Denmark:

On ship-terminology in Norse sources:
And for wide-ranging comparative studies with full recent bibliographies:


**Shipbuilding and ship design**

The design of the various kinds of Viking ships naturally reflects their various functions; hence warships had a lower draught than merchant ships, enabling them to beach easily on undefended territory or sail quite a way up river routes.

[M118] A. Binns, ‘The ships of the vikings, were they “Viking ships”?’, (A47):287-94

**Navigation**

The question of the navigational techniques employed by the Vikings is a tricky and hotly disputed one, but probably reflects a combination of factors, including: a knowledge of tides and currents; observing cloud formations and bird-flight; a recognition of key landscape features; a vague estimation of the sun’s passage enabling an approximation of a latitudinal (but not longitudinal) position; and good old-fashioned guesswork and luck.

[M125] A. Binns, ‘The navigation of Viking ships round the British isles in Old English and Old Norse sources’, (A44):103-17

**Art**

A good survey for the beginner can be found in (A13):131-53.

[M130] H. Shteligr, (ed.), *Kunst*, Nordisk kultur 27 (1931) [UL 592:01.b.1.22]

**Art-styles**

Scandinavian art is traditionally defined with reference to a series of distinctive ‘styles’, most of which developed gradually out of the common Germanic animal art. The criteria are both stylistic and iconographical. Although naturally interesting for its own sake, the trends in art-styles are of crucial importance for purposes of dating all kinds of archaeological remains; this also includes decorated runestones, for which see (M170 ff.).

Foreign impulses in Viking art
The question of influence from outside Scandinavia is a huge one, and becomes most pertinent at the end of the Viking age with the introduction of floral motifs into the ‘Urnes’ style; this comes out particularly from art-work in the Scandinavian colonies (M155 ff.).


Viking art abroad
Naturally, a fusion of foreign and Scandinavian art-styles is nowhere attested most fully than in the Scandinavian colonies abroad, and the British isles and Ireland in particular seems to have been a fertile breeding-ground; for the runic crosses of Man, see (I230 ff.) and (I47).


Stone sculpture
Stone sculpture is not well attested from Viking-age Scandinavia, at least not in terms of the plastic arts. The only significant body of stone art-work from the early and middle Viking age is in the form of the Gotlandic picture stones (M180 ff.), although there are numerous decorated runestones from the late Viking age (M170 ff.). For the interesting stone crosses of western Norway, usually dated to the conversion period, see:

[M167] F. Birkeli, *Norske steinkors i tidlig middelalder: et bidrag til belysning av overgangen fra norrøn religion til kristendom*, SDNVAO ns 10 (1973) [UL 500:01.b.4.80]

Runestones
For the spread of the runestone tradition in the late Viking age, see (B800 ff., C90 ff.). The numerous decorated stones are particularly interesting for the Christian ornamentation they show, often combined with apparently older motifs; the prevalence of the snake-band in Sweden is particularly striking, if puzzling.


Gotlandic picture stones


Iconography

The question of the symbolism of much Scandinavian art, particularly during the early Viking age, is a difficult one; animal art in particular is tricky to pin down, and often seems like little more than arbitrary decoration to fill in the abhorred blank space. The Gotlandic picture stones (M180 ff.) are a treasure trove for the ambitious art-historian in this respect. For other pre-Christian iconographical features, see:


On early Christian iconography, see (D60 ff.) for Jelling, for studies of runestones (M170 ff.), and:


Crafts and technology

Archaeological research into tools, crafts, and manufacturing is so vast and specialised a field that only a limited selection is included here; for all aspects of the field, the introductory reader is referred to the handbooks in (A), while much useful material is also to be found scattered throughout items on excavations of rural (M25 ff.) and urban (N160 ff.) sites. For individual aspects the articles in *KLMK* (A70) remain invaluable guides, even if they have sometimes been superseded by more recent discoveries.


Tools


Weaponry

For important surveys of swords found in the East, see (J40 ff.); for Scandinavia, also (M200c). Most excavation reports of rich burials in particular will include comments on weaponry found within; for more general surveys:


[M211] J. Petersen, *De norske vikingesverd: en typologisk-kronologisk studie over vikingetidens vaaben*, SDNVAO 1919:2 [UL 500:01.b.4.23]; remains the classic survey of swords and their chronology
Dress

Urban excavations in particular have added greatly to our understanding of dress in the Viking age; see also (M200d), for textiles more generally (M250 ff.), for jewellery (M235 ff.).

M215 H. Falk, *Altwestnordische Kleiderkunde mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Terminologie*, SDNVAO 1918:3 [UL 500:01.b.4.22]

M216 C. Blindheim, ‘Drakt og smykker’, *Viking* 11 (1947), 1-140


M219 L. Thunmark-Nylén, ‘Dräkt och dräktsmycken på Gotland under vikingatiden’, (F72):153-82

Metalworking

The study of metalworking, whether in iron or imported precious metals such as gold and silver, naturally has ramifications for aspects such as weaponry (M210 ff.) and jewellery (M235 ff.). Aside from the interest of the techniques themselves, the production of iron is also of some significance for the expansion of internal settlement and the opening of trade routes in the early Viking age (M25 ff., N); connections between distant regions can also be illuminated by the spread of styles or artefact-types based on distinctive moulds or crucibles, especially from urban centres such as Helgö (N150 ff.).

M225 W. Holmqvist, *Övergångstidens metallkonst*, KVHAA handlingar, antikvariska serien 11 (1963) [UL 595:01.c.11.5] (E.s.)


M227 T. Capelle, *Der Methylschnuck von Haithabu: Studien zur wikingischen Metallkunst*, Ausgrabungen in Haithabu 5 (1968) [UL S570:01.b.6.5]

M228 I. Martens, ‘Some reflections on the production and distribution of iron in Norway in the Viking age’, (M201):39-46

M229 H. Brinch Madsen, ‘Metal-casting: techniques, production and workshops’, (N185): II,15-189; on the Ribe workshops


M231 W. Duczko, *The filigree and granulation work of the Viking period: an analysis of the material from Björkö*, Birka 5 (1985) [UL S592.b.93.22]


Brooches and other jewellery

For dress more generally, see (M215 ff.). The distribution of the typically Norse oval brooches in particular has been extensively employed to chart the Viking expansion in regions such as Russia (J40 ff.) or Ireland (M240 ff.).

M235 J. Petersen, *Vikingetidens smykker* (1928) [Haddon]


The Hiberno-Norse jewellery has attracted a lot of separate attention:


Weaving and textiles

For dress see (M215 ff.).

M252 L.B. Jørgensen, Forhistoriske textiler i Skandinavien, Nordiske fortidsminder B:9 (1986) [UL T592.a.2.9] (E.s.)

Glass-working and bead-making

Since Scandinavia during the Viking age was not renowned as a producer of glass-ware, most of which was necessarily imported, these references also include surveys of glass imports, especially from mainland Europe and Russia.

M262 L.G. Henricsson, Glas i svensk forntid, Arkeographica 4 (1990) [UL 9002.d.8301]

Bone-working and comb-making

The study of the humble comb is of greater significance than might be suspected, since as a prime export of skilled craftsmen the development and spread of new styles is a useful way to chart long-distance contacts in the Viking world.

M265 A. Christophersen, ‘Raw material, resources and production capacity in early medieval comb manufacture in Lund’, MLUHM n.s. 3 (1979-80), 150-65
M266 K. Ambrosiani, Viking age combs, comb making and comb makers in the light of finds from Birka and Ribe, Stockholm studies in archaeology 2 (1981) [UL 468:01.c.7.2]

Pottery and ceramics

Pottery can not be said to have been the Vikings’ strong point; for the vast importation of European, especially Slavic, pottery into late Viking-age Scandinavia see also (N40 ff.).

M270 D. Selling, Wikingerzeitliche und frühmittelalterliche Keramik in Schweden (1955) [Haddon]

Stoneworking

M275 A. Skjølsvold, Klebersteinindustrien i vikingetiden (1961) [Haddon]
M276 S. Myrvoll, ‘The hones’, (N185): III,115-41; from Ribe

Woodcarving

Some particularly splendid examples of the art have been found in the major ship-burials, see for example [M320 ff.].

M281 E. Fridstrøm, ‘The Viking age wood-carvers: their tools and techniques’, (O38):87-92
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

Burials

Burials play such a crucial role in so many aspects of Viking-age history that the references have necessarily been scattered throughout this bibliography; the sections on religion (L150) and urban cemeteries (N170 ff.) are particularly noteworthy. Overall surveys are uneven in scope and geographical distribution, and the reference works in (A) are again useful starting points. Burials in the colonies outside mainland Scandinavia are included in the relevant sections (G-J). For a recent collection of essays illuminating modern approaches to burial evidence, see:


Denmark

For general surveys see (D6) and:


On individual cemeteries:


A particular feature of interest in the Danish evidence is the revival of overtly pagan burial practices in the tenth century, cf. (D80 ff.); the equestrian burials in particular have attracted much discussion (cf. (M316) for Norway):


Norway


On the major burials of the Vestfold region, see (M345 ff.) and:

[M320] N. Nicolaysen, The Viking-ship discovered at Gokstad in Norway (1882) [UL 594:3.b.95.3, 594:3.a.85.1]


[M322] Centenary of a Norwegian Viking find: the Gokstad excavations, Sandefjordmuseene årbok 1979-80 [UL P909:35.c.1.3]


Scandinavian History in the Viking Age


**Sweden**


For the major cemeteries of central Sweden (cf. (F45 ff.)) see:

[M335] S. Lindqvist, *Uppsala högar och Ottarshögen*, Arkeologiska monografier 23 (1936) [UL S592:01.a.4.29] (E.s.)

[M336] O. Lundberg, (ed.), *Vendel i fynd och forskning* (1938) [UL 596:3.b.90.3]; see H. Arbman, ‘Vendelfynden’, 1-28 (E.s. 78-82); S. Lindqvist, ‘Vendelfyndens innebörd’, 39-46 (E.s. 82-85)


**Ship-burials and ship-settings**

Individual ship-burials are included in the regional survey above; this section focuses on studies devoted to the phenomenon more broadly, in terms of both their precise distribution and interpretation. For the eye-witness account of a Rus’ burial on the Volga by Ibn Fadlan, see (B212).


On royal burials in general see:


Much useful comparative material can be found in:

N. TRADE AND TOWNS

The significance of Viking-age trade for social, political, and religious developments is now well appreciated; it provided not only for extended and deep-rooted contacts with the outside (especially Christian) world, but also helped to fuel the growth of an aristocratic elite that came to dominate and thrive upon the traffic in luxury goods.

Trade

For the Pirenne hypothesis, that the incursions of the Arabs into the Mediterranean in the seventh and eighth centuries forced Europe to look north for its trading contacts:

[N1] H. Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne* (1939) [UL 532:3.c.95.15]


Viking-age commerce

Surveys of trade links in the pre-Viking age are best approached through the general handbooks in (A) and the detailed studies of Iron-age Denmark in particular (D20 ff.). Aside from a growing organisation of commercial activities, it is the extension in the range and quantity of goods carried that tends to mark off Viking-age trade from the traffic of the preceding period.


[N10] M. Bäck, ‘No island is a society: regional and interregional interaction in Central Sweden during the Viking age’, (O80):129-61

For the notion of ‘peace’ as a prerequisite to trading, see (I91).

Foreign contacts

Foreign contacts are illuminated by the studies above and above all by the artefacts found in Scandinavia itself. Burial finds (M300 ff.) and urban excavations (N170 ff.) in particular are a useful source for such material.

The North Sea

It is now widely recognised that Scandinavian links across the North Sea have a far longer pedigree than the Viking age, and these connections seem to have been paramount not only in the beginning of the western Viking age (C35 ff.) but also in the establishment of early commercial centres such as Ribe (N185 ff.); for the artefacts, see (N30 ff.).


The Baltic (and beyond)

Scandinavian links across the Baltic were also extensive before, during, and after the Viking age; most of the relevant material is to be found in (J10 ff.).
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age


[N23] M. Mägi-Lõugas, ‘On the relations between the countries around the Baltic as indicated by the background of Viking age spearhead ornament’, FV 88 (1993), 211-21


For the continuing contacts in the twelfth century:


Foreign artefacts

Insular

Insular artefacts from the British isles are found widely scattered across Norway, but are particularly significant for Norway (E10 ff., E20 ff.); for English coins, see (N95 ff.).


Slavic

For more general surveys of imports from the Slavic regions of eastern Europe, see also (J10 ff., N20 ff.). These important contacts were significant for various aspects of the Viking economy, particularly pottery, but are relatively underrepresented in English-language scholarship.


Imports from further east

Artefacts from the Byzantine empire and Islamic caliphat tend to be rather more restricted in number and distribution; the chief exception is the vast hoards of dirhams, see (N60 ff., N110 ff.). The largest concentrations are to be found in the major trading centres, particularly Birka (N280 ff.).

[N45] I. Hammarberg et al., Byzantine coins found in Sweden, Commentationes de nummis saeculorum IX-XI in Suecia repertis n.s. 2 (1989) [UL 492:01.b.8.2]

Silver and coins

The vast hoards of silver, often in the form of coinage, provide one of the clearest indicators of Scandinavian trading and raiding activity.

Islamic coins

Islamic coins, mostly in the form of silver dirhams, begin to appear in Russian and Scandinavian hoards in the late eighth century; after a steady drift during the ninth century, their numbers reach a climax in the first half of the tenth before fading away abruptly around 960/970. For a useful collection of articles by T.S. Noonan see (O14); on hoards and coin-circulation see (N75 ff., N110 ff.).

The early period

The silver crisis

The cessation in the supply of dirhams just after the middle of the tenth century has been ascribed to various reasons, including the notion of a ‘silver crisis’ in the East, which combined with local political factors meant that the attention in Islamic regions turned to new directions. It is however important to note that the import of coins into Scandinavia had already begun to decline sharply before this crisis affected Russia itself, suggesting additional causes, possibly prompted by the foundation of the princedom of Rus’ (cf. (J60 ff.). It has also often been theorised that this abrupt termination of a silver supply precipitated some kind of economic crisis in Scandinavia, and that it may have played a major role in the beginning of the ‘second Viking age’ in the west; cf. (C45, I90 ff.)

Islamic coins

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Circulation of silver and currency
The circulation of coins and silver in Scandinavia seems to reflect what can be termed a ‘bullion economy’, where coinage was simply regarded as a weight of precious metal rather than having a defined monetary value. When assessing the actual currency of coinage rather than simply its deposition into hoards (cf. (N110 ff.)), numismatists stress the significance of ‘pecking’, i.e. cutting small lumps out of a coin to determine its metallurgical content.

Western European coins in Scandinavia
Coins from western Europe, particularly Germany and England, only begin to appear in large numbers in Scandinavia from the late tenth century onwards, and may reflect a need to fill the gap left by the drop in the supply of Arabic dirhams; cf. (N70 ff.).

Frankish and German coins

Anglo-Saxon coins

Silver hoards
For a useful overview with historical context, see (A5):86-119 (‘Treasure’), also (N119); hoards discovered in Scandinavian contexts in the British isles are noted in the relevant geographical sections of (I).
Weights and measures

Trading places

The development of organised trade naturally required the growth of organised trading places. Excavations have revealed some quite spectacular centres of commerce and production from the Roman Iron age onwards, but although these were an essential precursor to the explosion of commercial contacts in the Viking age, they largely fall out of the scope of this bibliography. A phrase often employed for them is ‘industrial farms’, which captures both the commercial nature of the sites but also the fact that they seem clearly not to reflect genuine ‘urbanisation’. For general guidance, see (C70 ff., D20 ff.) and:

Some of the more spectacular examples from southern Scandinavia include:


[N146] Tissø. L. Jørgensen, ‘Manor and market at Lake Tisø in the sixth to eleventh centuries: the Danish ‘productive’ sites’, (O88):175-207
Helgö
The most significant of all remains however Helgö, which despite a limited population thrived to produce, and trade in, vast quantities of artefacts in the period leading up to the Viking age. For initial guidance see also (N280).

[N150] W. Holmqvist, *Excavations at Helgö*, 3 vols (1961-70) [UL S592:01.a.5.1-3]

Urbanisation
The study of urbanisation in Scandinavia has developed into a growth industry in recent years, sparked above all by a series of extensive excavations in many early mediaeval towns, and its history is of broader relevance to Viking studies than might at first be anticipated. An excellent overall survey is (N166).

Comparative

[N164] H.B. Clarke and A. Simms, (edd.), *The comparative history of urban origins in non-Roman Europe: Ireland, Wales, Denmark, Germany, Poland and Russia from the ninth to the thirteenth century*, BAR International series 255 (1985) [UL L474.b.87.211]

Scandinavia
The significance of urbanisation in Viking-age Scandinavia is huge, and recent excavations at numerous sites have revolutionised our understanding of the processes and motives involved. Definitions of a ‘town’ in this culture vary enormously, but the single most common denominator is a functional definition; an urban population is one that has removed itself from the spheres of agriculture or subsistence and concentrates instead on commerce. A very useful, albeit rather crude, distinction can be drawn between three phases: the early ‘industrial farms’ such as Helgö (N150 ff.) or Dankirke (N143); the Viking-age emporia geared towards trade and foreign contacts, such as Birka (N280 ff.), Kaupang (N240 ff.), and Hedeby (N195 ff.); and the early mediaeval (largely royal) foundations such as Lund (N215 ff.), Trondheim (N245 ff.), and Sigtuna (N290 ff.), whose functions are now widely interpreted as socio-political and religious.

On urban organisation and layout:


Denmark


Ribe

Dated by dendrochronology to around the beginning of the eighth century, Ribe is effectively the earliest ‘proto-town’ in Scandinavia, and to judge from the excavations was deliberately founded in this period to take advantage of quite extensive trade connections across the North sea.

[N185] M. Bencard et al., (edd.), Ribe excavations 1970-76, 4 vols (1981-91) [UL 598:3.b.95.6-9]; the full, and very detailed, presentation of the Ribe excavations with articles on all aspects of its urban life


Hedeby

The Royal Frankish annals report that the town of Slesvig or Hedeby was founded at the beginning of the ninth century by king Godfred (B50), and it rapidly grew into the largest town in Viking-age Scandinavia until its decline as a commercial centre towards the end of the tenth century. For an initial survey see (D7):70-77, and then:

[N195] The full presentation of the excavations at Hedeby is the series Berichte über die Ausgrabungen in Haithabu, 1 ff. (1969 ff.) [UL S570:01.b.16.1 ff.], but these are for reference only; for a summary volume, see K. Schietzel, Stand der siedlungsarchäologischen Forschung in Haithabu: Ergebnisse und Probleme, Berichte 16 (1981) and for the important ship-burial, M. Müller-Wille, Das Bootkammergrab von Haithabu, Berichte 8 (1976) (cf. (M345 ff.))

[N196] H. Jankuhn, Haithabu, ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit, 6th edn (1976) [UL S570.b.97.41]
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age


On the cemeteries at Hedeby:


Århus

German sources of the tenth century mention Århus as a bishop’s seat (L210), and excavations have uncovered traces of settlement going back to that time, although not on the same scale as Hedeby.


Lund

Founded around the end of the tenth century, the town of Lund was one of the most dominant in Scandinavia by the end of the eleventh; some of the oldest churches and Christian cemeteries in Scandinavia have been uncovered here, and it was clearly a royal centre of some significance, as revealed also by the coins emanating from its mint (C260 ff.).


Other early mediaeval towns

Most other mediaeval urban sites have revealed less sign of dense settlement during the Viking age, but they are nevertheless of great interest in revealing the spread and development of Danish royal government and ecclesiastical organisation.


Scandinavian History in the Viking Age

Norway


[N233] A. Christophersen, ‘Ports and trade in Norway during the transition to historical time’, (M103):159-70

Kaupang

The market centre at Skiringssal, known most widely as Kaupang, in Vestfold is the only major commercial centre in Viking-age Norway that can reasonably be claimed to be some kind of ‘town’. It flourished chiefly during the ninth century, and it may well be no coincidence that its founding seems to coincide with that of Hedeby (N195 ff.).


[N242] C. Blindheim et al., *Kaupang-funnene I*, Norske oldfunn 11 (1981) [UL S592.b.98.23] (E.s. for each chapter); the later volumes cover more specific areas of the excavation


[N244] H.G. Resi, ‘Kaupang, før nye utgravninger’ *CM* 13 (2000), 141-64 (E.s.)

Trondheim

According to the kings’ sagas the town of Trondheim was founded at the end of the tenth century by Olaf Tryggvason (E60 ff.). Although dense urban activity at the site only seems to have developed in the course of the eleventh century, it was a major royal site with mint (C270 ff.) and early churches, and rapidly grew as the site of the cult of saint Olaf (E70 ff.).


[N246] A. Christophersen, ‘Royal authority and early urbanization in Trondheim during the transition to the historical period’, (O56):91-133


Oslo

The city of Oslo seems to have developed around the beginning of the eleventh century.


Other early mediaeval towns

Few other towns in Norway show much sign of urban settlement in the Viking age, although some (like Skien) had developed as market centres.


Sweden

Urbanisation in Sweden is currently best attested in the regions of the Svear around lake Mälaren; however, it is likely that further excavations will reveal more clearly market centres and early towns elsewhere in Sweden, cf. (N271).


Birka

During the ninth and tenth centuries Birka was the major commercial centre in Sweden, apparently replacing Helgö (N150 ff.); it is mentioned by Rimbert (B72), and excavations have revealed the intense activity conducted there.

[T280] W. Holmqvist, Swedish Vikings on Helgö and Birka (1979) [UL 596:3.c.95.4]


On the extremely interesting Birka cemeteries:


Scandinavian History in the Viking Age


Sigtuna
The role of Sigtuna as a classic example of the ‘second phase’ or urbanisation has been heavily emphasised; founded around 980 on a royal manor, it developed into the major Christian centre of central Sweden, yielding interesting cemeteries and early churches as well as the only Swedish mint of the time (C275 ff.). The general impression is that the town was planted as a physical manifestation of, and mechanism for, burgeoning royal government. Most of the general reports are in Swedish and are rather inaccessible for the Cambridge reader, although it is hoped that some will be arriving soon; in the interim period, much useful material can be gleaned from the Sigtuna museum web-site at www.sigtuna.se/museer.


Other early mediaeval towns
Of the large number of mediaeval Swedish towns only a sample is included here.


The Baltic
The market towns of the Baltic coastline are of great comparative interest, as well as revealing traces of Scandinavian merchants resident there.


Russia
The early towns of Russia seem essentially to have been what the regions of the Rus’ consisted of (J60 ff.), and Scandinavian artefacts are for the most part clustered around them.


Staraja Ladoga
The oldest evidence of Scandinavian involvement in Russia comes from the market-centre at Ladoga, dating back to around the second half of the eighth century.


Novgorod and Ryurikovo Gorodishche
It has widely been suspected that the major site of Gorodishche, later replaced (or complemented) by the nearby Novgorod, was the city of Hólmgarðr mentioned in mediaeval Norse sagas, and the archaeological record here certainly points towards a stronger Scandinavian component among the population than at most other sites.

[N330] M.W. Thompson, Novgorod the great: excavations at the medieval city directed by A.V. Artsikhovsky and B.A. Kolchin (1967) [UL 588:35.b.95.8]

Kiev
It now seems likely that the foundation of the actual city of Kiev had relatively little to do with the Scandinavian merchants attested further north along the Dniepr.

[N339] For an interesting tenth-century letter from a community of Jewish Khazars in Kiev, and much discussion on the role of the town in the period, see N. Golb and O. Pritsak, Khazarian Hebrew documents of the tenth century (1982) [UL 817:65.b.95.3]

England
For the Viking role in English urbanisation, the best place to start is (N166). The most striking example is the city of York; for the kingdom of York more widely, see (I30 ff., 183 ff.).

York
Ireland

The Norse settlers seem to have been a major catalyst for the development of urban centres in Ireland; see (N166) and then:

[N351] H.B. Clarke, ‘Proto-towns and towns in Ireland and Britain in the ninth and tenth centuries’, (O82):331-80

Dublin

For the kingdom of Dublin more widely, see (I30 ff.).


O. COLLECTIONS OF PAPERS

By a single author

[O2] L. Weibull, Nordisk historia: forskningar och undersökningar I. Forntid och vikingatid (1948) [UL 592:1.c.90.7]; a range of classic studies that helped to set the current direction of the subject
[O4] E.O.G. Turville-Petre, Nine Norse studies, VSNR TS 5 (1972) [UL 752:1.d.2.5]

By different authors (including Festchriften and conference proceedings)

[O20] Early English and Norse studies presented to Hugh Smith in honour of his sixtieth birthday, edd. A. Brown and P. Foote (1963) [UL 719.c.96.24]
[O22] Les relations littéraires Franco-Scandinaves au moyen age, Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l’Université de Liège 208 (1975) [UL 500:05.c.28.192]
[O30] The Vikings: proceedings of the symposium of the Faculty of Arts of Uppsala University, June 6-9, 1977, edd. T. Andersson and K.I. Sandred, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis: Symposia Universitatis Upsaliensis annum quingentesimum celebrantis 8 (1978) [UL 911:01.c.44.8]
[O34] The Vikings, ed. R.T. Farrell (1982) [UL 592:12.c.95.34]
[O83] Europe around the year 1000, Institute of archaeology and ethnology, Polish academy of sciences, ed. P. Urbanczyk (2001) [UL 532:2.c.200.8]
Continuity and change: political institutions and literary monuments in the middle ages; a symposium, ed. E. Vestergaard (1986) [UL 532:26.c.95.79]

Sagnaskemmtun: studies in honour of Hermann Pállsson on his 65th birthday, 26th May 1986, Philologica germanica 8, edd. R. Simek et al. (1986) [UL 752:16.c.95.24.-26]

Structure and meaning in Old Norse literature: new approaches to textual analysis and literary criticism, edd. J. Lindow et al. (1986) [UL 752:16.c.95.28]


Sagnaskemmtun: studies in honour of Hermann Pálsson on his 65th birthday, 26th May 1986, Philologica germanica 8, edd. R. Simek et al. (1986) [UL 752:16.c.95.24.-26]

Structure and meaning in Old Norse literature: new approaches to textual analysis and literary criticism, edd. J. Lindow et al. (1986) [UL 752:16.c.95.28]


Archaeology and the urban economy: festskrift to Asbjørn E. Herteig, Arkeologiske skrifter fra Historisk Museum, Universitetet i Bergen 5 (1989) [Haddon]


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, Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis 13, ed. T. Ahlbäck (1990) [UL 2:01.c.13.12]

People and places in northern Europe 500-1600: essays in honour of Peter Hayes Sawyer, edd. I. Wood and N. Lund (1991) [UL 592:1.c.95.24]

Social approaches to Viking studies, ed. R. Samson (1991) [UL 592:12.c.95.47]


The perception of the past in twelfth-century Europe, ed. P. Magdalino (1992) [UL 532:7.c.95.81]


Church and people in Britain and Scandinavia, ed. I. Brohed, Bibliotheca historico-ecclesiastica Lundensis 36 (1996) [UL 60:01.c.43.36]

The Scandinavians from the Vendel period to the tenth century. An ethnographic perspective, ed. J. Jesch, Studies in Historical Archaeoethnology 5 (2002) [Haddon]


Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Viking age, edd. H.B. Clarke et al. (1998) [UL 532:3.c.95.61]


Skaldsagas. Text, vocation, and desire in the Icelandic sagas of poets, ed. R. Poole, Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 27 (2001) [UL 461:01.c.15.27]
Scandinavian History in the Viking Age


P. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA Acta archaeologica [UL T468.b.1, R.168; Haddon]
AArkiv Antikvariskt arkiv [Haddon]
ADNVAO Avhandlinger utgitt av Det norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo, II: Hist.-filos. klasse
ÁÍF Árbók hins íslenska fornleifafélags [UL P599.b.1]
Alvissmál Alvissmál [UL P592.c.76, T.406]
ANF Arkiv för nordisk filologi [UL P775.c.15]
ANOH Aarbøger for nordisk oldkyndighed og historie [UL P592.c.26, R.65]
ANS Anglo-Norman studies [UL P540.c.64]
APS Acta philologica Scandinavica [UL P775.c.20]
AQDGM Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters
ASE Anglo-Saxon England [UL P474.c.34]
BONIS Bibliography of Old Norse-Icelandic studies [1963-83, UL P752:1.c.11; 1984-present, http://embla.bib.sdu.dk/bonis/]
CM Collegium medievale [UL P532.c.168, T.965]
CSA Current Swedish archaeology (and predecessors) [UL P595.b.1]
DHT Dansk historisk tidsskrift [UL P597.c.2, T.105]
EETS (SS) Early English text society (second series)
EME Early medieval Europe [UL T.971]
EHR English historical review [UL P500.c.17, T.74]
FM Forum Medievale (Middelalderforum)
FSR Fröðskaparrit [UL P911:34.c.1]
FV Fornvänn: journal of Swedish antiquarian research [Haddon]
FS Frühmittelalterliche Studien [UL T532.b.1]
Hikuin Hikuin [UL P597.c.24]
ÍF Íslenzk forrit
JASS Jysk arkæologisk selskabs skrifter
JBS Journal of Baltic studies [UL P589.b.1, T.289]
JDA Journal of Danish archaeology [UL P597.b.6]
JEA Journal of European archaeology [UL P468.c.131]
JEGP Journal of English and Germanic philology [UL P701:4.c.1, W.283]
JMH Journal of medieval history [UL P532.c.68, T.607]
KÅ Kykohistorisk årsskrift [UL P62:5.c.1]
Kuml Kuml: årbog for jysk arkæologisk selskab [Haddon]
KVHAA Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien
LAR Lund archaeological review [UL P592.b.16, R.168]
MGH Monumena Germaniae historica
  MGH AA MGH auctores antiquissimi
  MGH DD MGH diplomata
  MGH EPP MGH epistolae
  MGH PL MGH poetae latini aevi Carolini
  MGH SS MGH scriptores
  MGH SRG MGH scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum
  MGH SRM MGH scriptores rerum Merovingicarum
MLUHM Meddelanden från Lunds universitets historiska museum [UL P592.c.41]
MM Maal og minne [UL P593.c.1, R.78]
MS  Mediaeval Scandinavia [UL P592.b.6]
NAA  Nordic archaeological abstracts [UL P592.c.61]
NAR  Norwegian archaeological review [UL P592.b.11, T.595]
NB  Namn och bygd [UL P498.c.6]
NHT  Norsk historisk tidsskrift [UL P593.c.6, T.100]
NMS  Nottingham mediaeval studies [UL P532.c.43]
Nomi  Nomina [UL L498.b.9, T.627]
NS  Northern studies [UL P592.c.56, T.546]
Offa  Offa [UL P574.c.53]
OPIA  Occasional papers in archaeology
Parergon  Parergon [UL P532.b.51, T.554]
Peritia  Peritia [UL P554.c.41]
Questio  Questio. Selected Proceedings of the Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon Norse and Celtic
RS  Rolls series: rerum Britanicarum medii aevi scriptores
Saga  Saga: tímarit sögufélags [UL P599.c.11]
SAMI  Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi
SAS  Studia anthroponymica Scandinavica [UL P498.c.55]
SBVS  Saga-Book of the Viking Society [UL P592.c.21, R.89]
Scandia  Scandia: tidsskrift för historisk forskning [UL P592.c.16, T.149]
SDNVAO  Skrifter utgitt av Det norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo, II: Hist.-filos. klasse
SI  Scripta Islandica [UL P752:1.c.6, W.105]
SHT  Svensk historisk tidsskrift [UL P595.c.6, T.121]
SJH  Scandinavian journal of history [UL P500.c.661, T.614]
SKHVU  Skrifter utgivna av K. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Uppsala
SOS  Saga och sed [UL P592.c.51, T.203]
SS  Scandinavian studies [UL P752.c.1, W.272]
SSF  Samlingar utgifna af Svenska Fornskriftsällskapet
Stl  Studia Islandica
SUGNL  Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur
Tor  Tor: tidsskrift för nordisk fornkunskap [UL P592.c.66]
TRHS  Transactions of the Royal Historical Society [UL P500.c.130]
Viking  Viking: tidsskrift for norron arkeologi [UL P468.b.45]
VSNR  Viking Society for Northern Research
VSNR TS  VSNR text series