

# Essays

on Questions Connected with  
the Old English Poem of

## Beowulf.

With One Hundred and Twenty-eight  
Illustrations and Two Maps.

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Vol. III.

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Knut Stjerna



ESSAYS  
ON QUESTIONS CONNECTED WITH  
THE OLD ENGLISH POEM OF  
BEOWULF

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

AE	Alt Englisch.
AfdA.	Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum, Berlin, 1876 (-1912).
Ags.	Anglo-Saxon.
AT	Altgermanische Tierornamentik, by B. Salin, Berlin, 1904.
ATS	Antikvarisk Tidskrift för Sverige. Stockholm. 1863 (-1912).
B	Beowulf (the poem of).
BDS	Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Litteratur. Halle, 1874 (-1912).
BM	British Museum, London.
Cbl	Centralblatt für Anthropologie. Brunswick, etc., 1896-1912.
Ho	Beowulf, ed. F. Holthausen, Heidelberg, 1908-9.
HS.	Beowulf, ed. M. Heyne and L. L. Schücking. Paderborn, 1908.
KS.	Kulturgeschichte Schwedens, von Oscar Montelius, Leipzig, 1906.
Mbl.	Kungl Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademiens Månadsblad, Stockholm, 1903, etc.
ON	Old Norse.
SFT	Svenska Fornminnesförenings Tidskrift, Stockholm, 1870 (-1912).
SHM	The State Historical Museum at Stockholm.
SOM	Studier tillägnade Oscar Montelius af lärjungar, Stockholm, 1903.
Sw.	Sweden.
Sz.	Sarrazin, Beowulf-Studien, 1888.
Vedel	Efterskrift til Bornholm Oldtidsminder og Oldsager, Copenhagen, 1897.
ZPh.	Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie, Halle, 1869 (-1912).

## ALTERATIONS, CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS.

Page 2. *Finnsburg-fragment*, v. 30. Stjerna evidently refers to Hickes' reading *bārhelm*, which is followed in Heyne's earlier editions, and by Bugge, BDS. xii, 26, but is now superseded by the conjecture *bānhelm*.

- „ 12, line 21, for 'swa' read 'swā.'
- „ 15, line 2, for *togl̃d* read *tōglād*.
- „ 19, line 17, omit 1551.
- „ 23, line 22, for 1677 read 1023.
- „ 25, line 19, for 3220 read 322.
- „ „ line 23; p. 32, line 15 and elsewhere, for 'Helge' read 'Helgi.'
- „ 36, line 11, for 2562 read 2262.
- „ 44, line 21 (on foot, v. 2544). Stjerna's inference seems to be based on some mis-translation of the text.
- „ 91, line 19, and p. 92, line 2, for *utan* read *ūtan*.
- „ 102, last line, for 'customs' read 'custom.'
- „ 111, line 12, for 'Angerum' read 'Augerum.'
- „ 117, line 6, take out comma after *bil.lstenar*.
- „ 130, line 15, 'Higelace' should be 'Higelāce.'
- „ 131, line 9 from bottom, add 'of' after 'spoken.'
- „ 134, line 12, omit comma after Skåne.
- „ 136, line 10, omit comma after vague.
- „ 137, line 21, 'omige' should be 'ōmige.'
- „ 137, line 11 from bottom, 'frod' should read 'frōd.'

## INTRODUCTION.

---

This translation of the various essays by the late Dr. Knut Martin Stjerna on points (mainly archæological) connected with the Anglo-Saxon poem of *Beowulf*, was undertaken by me at the request of his literary executor, Dr. Almgren, who both preceded and succeeded him as Lecturer (Docent) in Northern and Comparative Archæology at the University of Upsala, and with the hearty approval of Prof. Oscar Montelius, the well-known Director of the State Historical Museum in Stockholm. Both these gentlemen informed me that it was a strongly cherished wish of the author that his papers relating to *Beowulf* should be collected and published in English.

During his academical career Dr. Stjerna won for himself a brilliant reputation in his own country as a scholar of unusual industry and thoroughness and of active imagination. That career was, unhappily, a very short one. Born at Malmo in 1874, his student life was passed at the University of Lund, and from thence he was appointed to the post of Lecturer in Archæology at Upsala—a post which he held for about three years, exhibiting during that time a restless activity which no doubt contributed to undermine his health. He died in 1909, and his funeral at Malmo was the occasion of a remarkable demonstration of sympathy on

the part of a large body of savants, students and other friends, who mourned the loss of a gifted scholar and a most lovable comrade.<sup>1</sup>

The essays here translated were all published between the years 1903 and 1908, and came under my notice, at a later stage than I could have wished, while I was engaged in revising my translation of the *Beowulf*,<sup>2</sup> and they arrested my attention at once as dealing with a side of the Beowulf problem which had previously been left almost untouched, and as providing a most welcome addition to the critical apparatus of the poem. For the contemporary historical material which has come down to us is meagre and of doubtful value, and what can be gathered from the department of folk-lore is, and probably always will be, conjectural. But here we have something concrete and tangible to go upon, to wit, the very armour worn by the chiefs of Beowulf's time and country, the rings they used as money, and the trappings of their steeds. Here, surely, we are on more solid ground than when we discuss the possible connection of one saga with another, and make guesses as to whether two different forms of some very simple story were derived from a common source, or arose independently of one another.

It is the great value of these essays that in them Stjerna has collected all the material bearing on the poem of *Beowulf* which archæological research has yielded in the three Scandinavian countries up to the present time.

They are practically exhaustive, and the archæological information which they contain should prove a veritable armoury for Beowulf students. That information has so far

<sup>1</sup> A short obituary notice, by Mr. Reginald Smith, was inserted at pp. 46, 47 of the Viking Club's Year Book for 1909-1910. Longer articles (in Swedish) appeared in *Upplands Fornminnesförenings Tidskrift*, Vol. xxvi. (1910) pp. 117-126, by Professor Erdmann, of Upsala, and in *Historisk Tidskrift för Skåneland*, Vol. iii. pp. 316-330, by Doctor Almgren. A complete bibliography of Stjerna's works will be found at the end of this book.

<sup>2</sup> *Beowulf, a translation into modern English prose*. Second Edition, London, G. W. Allen & Co. 1911.

been virtually inaccessible to the great majority of such students, in consequence, firstly, of the essays having been written in a language with a very restricted geographical distribution, and, secondly, of their having appeared in a miscellaneous collection of learned reviews, volumes of transactions, Festschriften, and so forth, some of which are out of print, so that a complete set can only now be obtained (if at all) with much expense and difficulty.

I am sure that they deserve some better fate than to be thus hidden away. The archæological knowledge which they exhibit is most extensive, the industry remarkable, and the theories put forward ingenious and stimulating, whether one agrees with them or not. Here is matter of interest, not only for the Beowulfist, but for the archæologist, the folklorist, the historian, and the ethnologist.

Before referring in detail to the subjects of the various essays, it will not be out of place for me to say a few words about the poem of *Beowulf*, with which—such has been the neglect of Anglo-Saxon studies in this country—many educated persons are not as familiar as they might be.

That poem has come down to us in only one manuscript—dating from the tenth century—and it is considered on philological grounds that it probably belongs, in the form in which we have it, to about the year 700 A.D. On other grounds one would be disposed to put it somewhat earlier. It narrates the adventures of one Beowulf, a chief of the country of the Geats, in the south of Sweden, consisting of successful encounters with a monster and her offspring (Grendel), and a fire-dragon, the hero dying after he has given the latter his quietus. The scene of the Grendel adventures is in Denmark, at the court of the king, Hrothgar; and that of the fire-dragon's adventure is in Beowulf's own country. It may be taken for granted that Beowulf was a historic personage and flourished during the earlier decades of the sixth century. He lived during the reigns of Hygelac (the Chochilaicus of Gregory of Tours)

and Heardred, whom he himself succeeded as king of the Geats.

The poem has considerable literary merit, but its greatest value lies in the picture which it gives of the manners and customs and society of the time, and in its being the earliest extant poem of importance in any non-classical European vernacular. Besides this it is the only (primarily) heathen poem of any length which we have in Anglo-Saxon, for although it contains numerous Christian passages and expressions, these are due to a not very careful Christian recension of heathen material, and do not go down into the vitals of the poem.

It is also notable on account of the large number of questions to which it has given rise. It has indeed furnished almost as busy a cockpit for theorists as the Homeric poems. The fiercest combatants, and many of their theories, have been buried years ago, but there are still plenty of problems left for those who have a mind for such things.

It will, no doubt, be asked to what extent Stjerna's researches are calculated to help us towards the solution of these problems, and to this we may make the following answer :

He has shown beyond all doubt that the English poet not only derived his stories from Scandinavia—as has been generally recognized—but retained to a large extent the original setting, the foreign customs, and the very “properties” of the characters, without alteration. If the poem is read in the light of the evidence which Stjerna has marshalled in the essays as to the profusion of gold, the prevalence of ring-swords, of boar-helmets, of ring-corslets and ring-money, it becomes clear how strong the distinctively Scandinavian colouring is, and how comparatively little of the *mise-en-scène* must be due to the English author. We may, at the same time, infer that the objects mentioned in the poem which are not referred to elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon literature, and of which no examples have been actually found in England, were not altogether unknown



here, on the ground that the English poet would presumably have altered any expressions which would have been unintelligible to his public.

Altogether, though he had many good points, he seems to have been a person lacking in some of the higher arts of literary alchemy. Except where it is common form, he no doubt uses his own language, and we must give him credit for the excellencies of it; but the raw material on which he worked is too much in evidence, and he was either not careful or not skilful enough to smooth out the inconsistencies and discrepancies with which it abounded.

Another point which Stjerna brings out is the important bearing of the downfall of the Geatic kingdom on the Beowulf date-problem. He is, I think, a little early in his date for that occurrence (about 500 A.D., see pp. 89-93), but if it took place at any time in the first half of the sixth century, there seems to be good ground for assigning the primary lays about Beowulf to a considerably earlier date than I have suggested in the Introduction to my translation (*i.e.*, about A.D. 600), and the probability of the lays having been brought over to England by the Angles in the latter half of the same century is increased.

For suppose we take A.D. 504 as the date of the birth of the Geatic prince Heardred, 515 as that of the death of his father, King Hygelac, in the historic raid against the Frisians, and 520 as that of the death of (King) Heardred and the accession of Beowulf to the throne. Let us assume also that the statement that Beowulf reigned fifty years is a poetical exaggeration (notwithstanding that it is made twice, at verses 2209 and 2733),<sup>1</sup> and give him twenty. This brings

<sup>1</sup> Fifty is evidently a favourite number with the Beowulf-poet. Hrothgar reigns fifty years too (v. 1769), Grendel's mother rules over her mere for fifty years (v. 1498), and the dragon which Beowulf quelled was fifty feet long (v. 3042). Or fifty may simply have been inserted in the two places referring to Beowulf's reign because the poet wanted a word beginning with *f* for alliterative purposes. Numerals higher than two occur in *Beowulf* in thirty-seven places, and alliterate with other words in at least thirty-three of these.

us to A.D. 540. Very soon after that the Geatic kingdom is conquered and annexed by the Swedes. On its downfall a Geatic scōp journeys to Denmark<sup>1</sup> to escape from the unsympathetic and unremunerative society of the conquerors. Here he would be able to sing freely about the last hero of his race, giving the first place to an adventure in Denmark, for some details of which he may have had recourse to local tradition, and, speaking of the Danes, his paymasters for the time being, in flattering terms. After singing his lays threadbare at the Danish court, he moves on to the territory of the Angles, and finally migrates with members of that tribe to the new El Dorado beyond the sea, which he reaches about A.D. 550, when the last Anglian invasion of England is generally supposed to have taken place. A later date, say A.D. 560, or even 570, is not impossible, for although it is said by Bede that the entire Angle tribe deserted their own country for the English shores, we are not bound to assume that the movement was absolutely complete by A.D. 550.

It may be said in favour of this scheme that it affords some explanation of the irrelevant Danish introduction, of the topical allusions in the fire-dragon part of the *Beowulf*, which have every appearance of having originated from a contemporary or contemporaries, and of the more professional style of the Grendel part. In the one part we seem to see more of the patriot, and in the other more of the paid singer.

Some other points as to which Stjerna has contributed elucidative material are mentioned in the following brief summary of the essays.

Taking them in the order of their publication, as is done in the present work, the essay on *Helmets and Swords in the Beowulf*, which appeared in 1903, comes first, and in this

<sup>1</sup>In the *Introduction* to my *Beowulf*-translation I allowed at least thirty years in order for legend and fable to gather round the person of Beowulf. But distance in space will do just as well for this purpose as distance in time. Besides which, the adventures in Denmark would have happened quite thirty years before the scōp sang of them in that country.

Stjerna shows how applicable the descriptions of these objects in the poem are to actual Northern remains belonging to the sixth and the beginning of the seventh century.

The *Archæological Notes* were published with the view of supporting Stjerna's thesis that the presumed Scandinavian lays which formed the basis of our *Beowulf* poem must have been composed during the period just referred to, by illustrations from other objects.

The next two essays—*Vendel and the Vendel Crow* and *Swedes and Geats during the Migration Period*—are more historical than archæological. Few will dispute Stjerna's contention in the first of these papers, that the Swedish King Ongentheow was the original "Vendel Crow," and that in spite of the geographical references of the untrustworthy Snorre to the Liimfjord, etc., in chapter 31 of the *Ynglinga Saga*, the Vendel referred to was situated in the region of Uppland, Sweden. The conclusion that the chieftain Wulfgar, who is mentioned in *Beowulf*, was connected with the same district, is much more doubtful. In fact I think the evidence is decidedly in favour of his belonging to Vendsyssel.<sup>1</sup>

In the second article, Stjerna brings out in a very interesting way how the Geats, as a Gothic tribe, took part in the great movement towards the South of Europe, and how the consequent drain on the fighting strength of the tribe, and the introduction of Southern culture led to the overthrow of the Geatic kingdom by the Swedes. The important point for the *Beowulf* student is the suggestion that East Götland, rather than West Götland, was the main seat of the Geatic power, and that the island of Öland may have been the political centre of the kingdom. If Stjerna is right, the theatre of the first part of the *Beowulf* must be removed from Zealand to Skåne, because *Beowulf*'s sea voyage from his own home to the scene of his first adventure in Denmark—

<sup>1</sup> See Chambers' *Widsith*, (Cambridge University Press, 1912) p. 208, who thinks it also not impossible that the *Vandali* may be referred to.

which in those days included Skåne—is said in the poem to have only taken one day; and that of the second from the coast of West Götland to that of East Götland or of Öland.

But although the references in the poem to Skåne (Scedeland, Scedenig) are rather in his favour, I do not think the theory should be accepted on the evidence at present available. The Geats are no doubt to be identified, as he holds, with the Gauts, Gautar or Gautigoths,<sup>1</sup> a tribe which, according to the late Professor Tamm, derived its name from the river Gaut (*i.e.*, the modern Göta), and were the Goths living near that river. This would place them in West Götland. Professor Schück, of Upsala, points out, moreover, that the geographical features of Öland do not agree with the indications in the poem, which require a rugged, indented coast-line with steep cliffs, such as we find along the seaward boundary of West Götland, Halland, and Bohuslän, which were all included in his view (as in that of Stjerna), within the limits of ancient Geatland. He also observes that, so far as is known, the inhabitants of the island of Öland were never called Gautar (*Folknamnet Geatas*, 1907; see especially pp. 9, 13, and 45).

. It may be observed here, that notwithstanding the great value of archæological evidence, we must be on our guard against looking upon it as necessarily conclusive. Some of the results arrived at from archæological material alone, especially if that material is scanty, are obviously liable to be upset by fresh discoveries. The magnificent gold collars of the multiple type (Figs. 102, 106, and 116), which are taken to indicate the high-water mark of Geatic wealth and culture, may be referred to as an illustration of this. The fact that out of the three collars which have come to light up to the present time, only two have been found in West Götland and one in Öland, is, taken by itself, of very little value as an argument against Stjerna's theory of the pre-eminence of Öland in the Geatic kingdom.

<sup>1</sup> In his Essay, Stjerna seems to have used the name Geats (*geater*) when referring to the tribe in connection with this poem, and Gauts (*götar*) when considering them generally from the historical or chronological point of view.

One great objection to the theory is that the hall Heorot, the scene of Beowulf's encounter with Grendel, must probably be located at or near Leire, a little village hard by Roeskilde, Zealand, which has been identified with Hleithra, the ancestral seat of the Danish kings as far back as Hrolf Kraki (the Hrothulf of Beowulf) and possibly further back still. (See Sarrazin, in *Anglia*, xix, 368, and *Englische Studien*, xlii, 6; also Olrik, *Danmarks Heltedigtning* i, 188-200). Another is that even assuming Beowulf to have travelled direct from Öland to Skåne by sea instead of passing over the Geatic mainland, the language of *Beowulf* does not seem appropriate to a coasting voyage.

The essay entitled *Scyld's Funeral Obsequies* is concerned with the detailed examination, from the archæological point of view, of *Beowulf*, verses 26-52, and contains much information about ancient burial customs in general, and boat-burials in particular.

Whether men lead an active or a passive life after death seems to have been an open question, the active theory being more natural to the energetic Northerner and the passive being imported from the South of Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Stjerna connects the former view with the idea of a journey of the dead (pp. 103, 106), and gives a most

<sup>1</sup> Browning, in the nineteenth century, treats this question as an open one still:

"There's a fancy some lean to and others hate—  
That, when this life is ended, begins  
New work for the soul in another state;  
Where it strives and gets weary, loses and wins;  
Where the strong and the weak, this world's congeries,  
Repeat in large what they practised in small,  
Through life after life in unlimited series;  
Only the scale's to be changed, that's all."  
"Yet I hardly know. When a soul has seen  
By the means of Evil that Good is best;  
And through earth and its noise, what is heaven's serene—  
When our faith in the same has stood the test—  
Why, the child grown man, you burn the rod,  
The uses of labour are surely done;  
There remaineth a rest for the people of God,  
And I have had troubles enough, for one."

—*Old Pictures in Florence*, xxi, xxii.

interesting description of the various developments of the voyage idea. There seems, however, to have been a good deal of inconsistency in practice (see especially pp. 100, 101, 118, 119, of the Essay and pp. 209-219 of that on *Beowulf's Funeral Obsequies*), and after a custom had once been started for any reason, it was probably followed—subject to various degrees of degeneration—with very little, if any, thought as to its inner meaning. This Stjerna himself thinks to have been the case as regards the Scyldings (p. 133). Those who wish to pursue the subject further might read with advantage the observations of Mr. H. M. Chadwick, on pp. 50-56 and 393-415 of his new book.<sup>1</sup> He thinks, as regards the theory that there was first an age of burning and then one of barrows, that these practices were originally opposed to one another, the first being connected with the idea of the departure of the spirits of the dead to a distance, and the second with that of the continued presence of those spirits near the place of burial, but that later on they obtained concurrently, all idea of the distinction having been lost. He also connects the first with the cult of Odin, whose Valhalla was “a glorified copy of a military king’s court,” and the second (not so closely) with that of Thor.

As to the *Dragon's Hoard*, Stjerna's essay is directed to showing that the *Beowulf* includes two inconsistent accounts, one of a much earlier date than the other. In dealing with this subject he has much of interest to say about the development of the snake-form as an element in early Scandinavian ornamentation.

I have divided his next essay—as to Fixed Remains (“*Fasta Fornlämningar*”) into two, as it was of excessive length compared with the others, and naturally falls into two divisions, quite separable from each other.

The first of these divisions, which I have entitled *The Double Burial in Beowulf*, refers to verses 1114-1118 of the poem, and suffers from the author having followed an inter-

<sup>1</sup> *The Heroic Age*, Cambridge University Press, 1912.

pretation of the original text which is now generally (and, I have no doubt, rightly) discarded, but it is of great value for the rich material it contains in reference to the mutual obligations of foster-brothers, etc.

The second, which is headed *Beowulf's Funeral Obsequies*, is occupied with a detailed inquiry into the references in the poem to Beowulf's funeral, and draws attention to the close agreement between the description in Beowulf and the testimony of the remains discovered in the burial mound at Old Upsala known as Odinshög. It forms, in many respects, a companion essay to that on *Scyld's Funeral Obsequies*, with which it should be read.

I do not expect that the skilled reader, especially if he is conversant with the latest results of Beowulf scholarship, will always agree with the conclusions at which the author arrives. These are sometimes based—as I have already mentioned in the case of the *Double Burial*—on readings or interpretations of the text which are now rejected by the best authorities, and sometimes on too slender or too doubtful foundations. The Beowulf text which Stjerna used seems to have been Heyne's first edition (1864), and the Swedish translation that by Wickberg (1889), and much water has passed under the bridges since these appeared. He is, moreover, too much impressed by the disintegrating theories of Müllenhoff, ten Brink and Möller, and too apt to handle established or even assumed facts in such a way as to bring them into line with his theories. Although, however, I am in disagreement with, or doubtful as to certain parts of his essays, I have thought it better to give them as they are, and not to attempt recasting them; first, because of a repugnance (which I suppose most people would feel) to altering the work of a writer who has passed away; and, secondly, because I cannot lay claim to the archæological knowledge necessary for effectively meeting some of his points. I hope, however, that where the objections to Stjerna's theories are not such as would occur to the general

reader or the archæological expert, the notes which I have inserted in the body of the work will be found to give all the help that is necessary. For those who have made a study of the *Beowulf* some of them will no doubt be superfluous. Others would, I feel sure, have been unnecessary if the author himself had been spared to collect and prepare his scattered contributions for publication in one volume.

That is enough by way of criticism. In any case, we owe Stjerna a deep debt of gratitude for his fine work as a pioneer, and even when we feel disposed to dissent from his opinions, we must recognise that his point of view is generally worth stating, and that few students of Northern antiquity are likely to rise from the perusal of his essays without feeling that they have added substantially to their store of facts.

The beauty and originality of the objects figured in the illustrations—which, I should say, are not strictly limited to the *Beowulf*,—will, I think, be a revelation to those who are not acquainted with the products of early Northern art. The shield-boss shown at p. 98 (fig. 23) and the bridle (pp. 243, 244, figs. 109, 110) would have delighted the eye of a Greek. No one who reads his *Beowulf* carefully can have failed to notice how the poet revels in cunning and beautiful workmanship; and here we have portrayed for us the various kinds of things which were a joy to him and his contemporaries.

Of all the objects illustrated, the Gundestrup vessel (figs. 12 and 13) will probably attract most attention, on account of its general air of vivacity—the friskiness of the horse, the correct pose of the rider, and the perky attitude of the foot-soldier, who might almost pass for a twentieth century recruit, proudly shouldering his rifle for the first time. But, alas, it cannot be proved with certainty that this particular object is due to a Northern artificer, and in any case the features which it exhibits are not distinctively Northern, but can be traced to foreign influence. The graceful figure of a serpent (fig. 31 on p. 155) and the snake-pendant (fig. 44),



which might serve as a model for a Bond Street jeweller, are also of foreign origin.

Unquestionably Northern, however, are the more conventional representations (on metal) of two similar figures, which we find reproduced at pp. 8 (fig. 2) and 41 (fig. 20). Here it is remarkable how the impression of a general resemblance is preserved, although a close examination reveals differences of detail between the two figures in almost every possible respect.

Of the same stiff character are two metal plates, forming part of the ornamentation of helmets, which present very curious features. The first (fig. 21) shows an armed rider, the bridle of whose horse is being held by a retainer, the latter being shown as a dwarf in order that one may have a full view of him from top to toe.<sup>1</sup> The other (fig. 91) is stranger still, and contrives to show us two different stages of a duel in one picture. First we are given to understand that the combatants threw javelins at one another from a distance, and then that there was a hand-to-hand encounter with short swords.

The wonderfully ingenious way in which animal forms are made to serve as elements in symmetrical designs, is well brought out in several of our illustrations, such, for instance, as figs. 94 and 95, and some of the snake-figures in the *Dragon's Hoard* essay, and it is remarkable how significant the smallest details often are. This will be especially evident to any one who has a general acquaintance with Salin's *Altgermanische Tierornamentik*, and such a one will recognise that in Stjerna's explanation of the little figure 93, in the essay on *Beowulf's Funeral Obsequies*, he has not gone too far, and that the apparently meaningless lines can be traced back to some definite animal feature.<sup>2</sup> This applica-

<sup>1</sup> Another explanation is suggested by Stjerna on p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> The following note will serve to make the explanation on p. 225 clearer:—The head and eye occupy the top of the cut, towards the left hand. The neck runs along the upper right hand border of the picture and ends in a C-shaped shoulder about half way down the right hand side of the cut. From this shoulder the body goes horizontally first to the left and then to the right, ending in a hind leg which is represented by a curl at the lower right hand corner. Of the lips, which are of inordinate length, the upper one curls over and under the body, to the left, and the body keeps the other (as it should) from joining on to the hind leg.

tion of "degenerated" animal forms to the construction of symmetrical designs of singular gracefulness is one of the most striking things in the art of the time, and although the partiality for a certain kind of conventionalism is most clearly and frequently shown in this direction, it can be observed in other forms also. The bracteates, for example, are not mere clumsy imitations of classical coins, but they are rather classical designs which have been poured into the mould of the characteristic conventionalism of the North; see, for instance, figs. 57 and 58, and, as evidence of success in using conventional and, one would think, uncongenial material to indicate actual features, figs. 30 and 103. This is, indeed, only one side of an artistic genius which contrives to get extraordinary variety out of one theme, and which is well exemplified in the collection of snake-figures (Nos. 44 to 54) in the *Dragon's Hoard* essay, which we have already mentioned.

This use of animal forms is exhibited, moreover, in various degrees of degeneration. We see the animal faithfully and completely reproduced in figs. 55 and 56, for instance. In fig. 106, however, on the left hand, near the vertical rib, three similar figures of what is evidently intended for a lizard, may be observed, but they tail off into an ornament which has no connection with the animal; and in fig. 95 the animal has all but faded away into the dead ornament. The helmet-comb (fig. 6) gives us an example of both stages. The man's head at the end of the nose-piece is definite enough, but the open-work—which is particularly graceful—gives us only the faintest suspicion of two animal figures.

The licence in the treatment of animal forms which Northern artists allowed themselves broadened out in some cases into extravagance and downright freakishness, as we can see from figures 49, 51 and 52, but we may say generally that whether it was exercised in the direction of the beautiful or in that of the grotesque, the originality displayed was

most remarkable. Some of these old artists had in them the making of a Caran d'Ache or a Gaston le Bourgeois.

As a crowning example of successful daring in the use of subjects from the animal kingdom, I may refer to the introduction of human heads and bodies as decorative units in an elaborate scheme, which will be observed in figs. 6 and 106.

Lastly, attention may be drawn to the ingenuity and success displayed in combining series of geometrical forms into an artistic whole, in which the hardness of those forms is lost in a general impression of gracefulness. Of this, the best example among our illustrations is fig. 102, but figs. 97 and 106 may also be referred to. These figures, like figs. 9, 14 and 15, also testify to the fondness of the men of the North for objects of elaborate and artistic workmanship and costly material.

In order to make the present work as useful as possible to students of *Beowulf*, the Index of Things contained in the last edition of my translation of the poem has, with the permission of the publishers, Messrs. G. W. Allen and Co., been reprinted in full at the end of the book, with a few alterations and corrections. In it I have given a reference to the few dissertations, etc., on archæological questions connected with the poem which have appeared up to the present time.

For the purposes of the Index referred to, I originally followed the classification into archæological periods which is associated with the name of Professor Sophus Müller, of Copenhagen; but as Dr. Stjerna has adopted the somewhat different arrangement favoured by Professor Montelius, I here insert, as more explanatory of his essays, a table, kindly prepared by Dr. Almgren, showing that arrangement and giving examples illustrative of each period.

The more important of the various notes of time to be found in the Essays are collected in the subjoined chrono-

# TABLE OF ARCHÆOLOGICAL PERIODS.

Date.	Central Europe.		Northern Europe.			Date.	Examples.
B.C. At least 5000	Palæolithic Period		Ice Period			B.C. At least 5000	
About 2000	Neolithic Period		Neolithic Period			About 1800	
About 900	Bronze Age		Bronze Age				Tumulus at Haga, near Upsala (see p. 60) about 1000 B.C.
About 500	Early Iron Age	Hallstatt Period	Pre-Roman Period			About 500	
A.D. 1		La Tène Period	Early Iron Age	Period of Roman Influence	Earlier	A.D. 1	Silver vessel of Gundestrup (figs. 12 and 13). Ring corslet of Öremölla (fig. 16).
	Roman Period.				Later	About 200	Moor-finds of Vimose. Thorsbjerg, Nydam, Kragehul, Skedemosse, Finnestorp, etc. Double burials of Kabbarp, Kälder and Havor (pp. 172-185). Gold horns of Gallehus.
About 400	Middle Ages		Later	Migration Period		About 400	[Richest gold period begins in Southern Scandinavia]. Moor-find of Porskjär ; Lake-find of Sjøröd (Finja). Gold hoards of Gudme, Sköfde, Tureholm, Narfveryd, etc. Gold collars. Odinshög (tumulus) at Gamla Upsala. All the grave-finds mentioned at pp. 209-234
Iron Age				Vendel Period		About 600	Boat-graves of Vendel (i, xi, xii, xiv), Ultuna and Lackalänge. Sword of Vallstena, and Bronze plates of Torslunda.
				Viking Period		About 800	Boat-graves of Vendel (ix), Tuna and Sala. Ship-graves of Oseberg, Gokstad and Möklebust. Tumuli at Jællinge. Town of Birka (modern Björkö). Stones of Stenkyrka, Levede and Högbro (figs. 24, 25 and [27]).
					Middle Ages		

logical conspectus, the figures in which should be read with generous latitude. One must not attempt to draw too hard a line round a nebula !

A.D.

**200** (about). Introduction into Scandinavia of the view that the soul was separated from the body after death, and lived in some far-away place. 97, 99, 119.

Gundestrup silver vessel ?

200-300. Runic writing introduced into Scandinavia. 102.

250 (about). Great Scandinavian moor-deposits begin. 147. (Vimose, 149, 150).

**300** (about). Earliest damascened swords observed. 27. Thorsbjerg find. 9, 149.

350 (about). Older Nydam find. Havor grave No. 136. 183.

350-400. Idea of a journey by water after death introduced into Scandinavia from Southern Europe. 102. Double-grave of Kälder. 176.

**400** (about). Germanic tribes' first great victories in Southern Europe. Influx of gold to North, and " gold-finds " begin (69, 147, 154), but coined gold is still rare in Norway and North Sweden. 70.

First occupation of Skåne by the Danes ? 134.

Kragehul find. 149.

400-500. Lays not relating to person of Beowulf (*e.g.*, as to Scyld), which were incorporated in the poem of B. composed on Scandinavian ground. 137, 170.

400-450. Later Nydam find. 16.

450 (about). Great Scandinavian moor-finds end. 147. [Anglo-Saxon invasion of England begins.]

**500** (about). Flourishing time of Uppland begins. 54, 62, 72. Odinshög, Upsala, constructed. 111, 234. Danes at war with Heathobards. 71. Swedish invasion of Geatland. 89, 93. Flow of gold to, and develop-

ment of native types of objects in Öland ceases, and it passes under Swedish rule. 74, 95, 239.

Benty Grange helmet. 17.

500-600. Swedes overrun Gotland and Bornholm. 88, 95.  
(About A.D. 550, p. 74). Frankish idea that island of  
Brittia was the place of departed spirits. 103.

Linked gold rings common as currency (also occur  
earlier and later). 34.

Boar-images common on helmets (also occur earlier  
and later). 17, 18.

500-550. Lays relating to the poem of Beowulf composed  
on Scandinavian ground. 169.<sup>1</sup> Peoples of Northern  
Scandinavia upset the old traditions of Southern  
Scandinavia. War between Franks and Goths.  
Hygelac's raid. (515 A.D.?). 75.

Reign of Swedish king Ingjald? 96.

550 (about). End of great flow of gold from S. Europe and  
of 'gold-find' period. 69, 147.

550-600. Ring-swords (and later). 27. Boat-graves in  
Finland, with burnt bodies. 111.

600 (about). Some parts of the Helgi poetry deal with  
events of this period. 32.

Boat-graves, with unburnt bodies, begin in  
Scandinavia (side by side with burnt graves). 111.

Oldest Vendel graves (Montelius). 16.

600-650. Ring-swords (and earlier). 27.

Boar-images on helmets (and earlier). 17, 18.

800 (about). Danish invasions of England begin.

900 (about). Winged dragons first appear in Scandinavian  
art and literature. 39.

950-975. *Ynglingatal* composed in England (Bugge,  
Schück). 79.

My grateful thanks are due to Dr. Almgren for having

<sup>1</sup>This must be regarded as Stjerna's final view, and as superseding the  
statements on pp. 33 and 40.

gone through the whole of my translation in draft and in proof, and given me the greatest assistance in numerous other ways,<sup>1</sup> and to other kind friends, notably Professor Erdmann, of Upsala, and Miss A. C. Paues, Ph.D., of Cambridge, who have rendered great help with individual essays. On some archæological points Mr. E. Thurlow Leeds, of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, has furnished me with valuable information.

I am also under a deep obligation to the Royal Swedish Academy of Literature, History and Antiquities, and their Secretary, Professor Montelius, for lending me the blocks for the great majority of the illustrations. For the loan of others I am indebted to Messrs. P. A. Norstedt and Sons, and Mr. Hugo Geber, publishers, of Stockholm.

Several illustrations have been added to those appearing in the original publications, for the sake of greater completeness, and the Index of Things has also been enriched by some further figures.<sup>2</sup> The maps, which have been specially drawn for the present work by Mr. K. E. Sahlström, a pupil of Professor Stjerna, form another addition.

As the essays were originally published at different times, in different periodicals with different usages and different printers, the treatment of proper names, and of quotations from the Icelandic, etc., has varied very much as regards spelling and typography. I have made many alterations in the direction of uniformity, but am sorry that a few inconsistencies escaped my notice until it was too late to put them right.

It remains to be said that a liberal contribution by the brothers of the author towards defraying the expenses of publication has facilitated the issue of this translation in the handsome garb in which it now appears.

J. R. C. H.

*July, 1912.*

<sup>1</sup> In particular, the notes bearing the initials *O.A.* were furnished by him.

<sup>2</sup> In the List of Illustrations at the beginning of the book I have given the present home of the objects, so far as I could ascertain it.





# HELMETS AND SWORDS IN BEOWULF.

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## I. THE HELMET.

In the poem of *Beowulf*, helmets belong to the ordinary equipment of the king's retinue. The fourteen followers of Beowulf, who accompanied him on his journey to King Hrothgar, all wore helmets (vv. 304, 334), and so did King Beowulf's body-guard, as appears from its members being twice referred to as 'brave helmet-bearers,' (*hwate helmberend*, vv. 2518 and 2643). Moreover we see from verses 2867-9 that the king used to give helmets as presents to the æthelings at his court.

At Beowulf's death his funeral pyre was hung round with helmets (v. 3140)—either those which he had given away himself and which were thus restored to him, or those which he had won in fighting before his death—for we observe that many helmets were found amongst the dragon's treasures (v. 2762). All this, with the statement about famous swords, that they often clave the helmet (vv. 1287, 1526), points to helmets as being relatively numerous. Yet we must at the same time bear in mind that *Beowulf* is a poem about kings and nobles, in which the common people hardly appear, even as a background, so that what we have observed only proves that helmets were commonly worn by æthelings of

higher or lower degree. Perhaps such epithets as *hwate helmlberend* even indicated noble lineage, or membership of the chief's retinue.

These helmets were very artistic and costly objects, of highly complicated and considerably diversified construction. It appears from vv. 2762, 3, that the framework was of iron, for it is there stated that many rusty (*ōmig*) helmets were among the dragon's treasures, and the expression *brūnfāgne helm* at verse 2615 points to the same metal, the word *brūn* being met with elsewhere in speaking of the blades of swords (vv. 1546, 2578), which were also of iron.<sup>1</sup> Most of the helmets which are described were adorned at the top with representations of boars (vv. 303, 1111, 1286, 1450. *Finnsburg fragment*, v. 30). Their agreement in this respect has previously been pointed out by many scholars—Roach Smith, Hildebrand, Bugge, Lindenschmidt and others. Yet as regards one helmet which is described in detail, it is not stated that it had any such ornament, and from this we may infer that it had none. The description of this helmet runs thus:—

Ymb ðæs helmes hrōf    heafod-beorge  
wīrum bewunden    walan ūtan heold  
ðæt him fēla lāfe    frēcne ne meahton, &c.

(1030—2).

*Wīrum* is usually translated 'spiral rings,' which are however impossible on a helmet. I take the word to refer to the metal bands in parallel rows which occur on helmets, from classical times onwards, and in which the rows are riveted obliquely or transversely over each other (see Fig. 1). For *walan* Sievers (BDS. x, 15) and Bugge (BDS. xii, 369) read *walu*, i.e., some convex object. Thus the right translation would be "Upon (or along)

<sup>1</sup> It is most probable that in the early poetry Ags. *brūn* had no reference to colour, but merely indicated metallic lustre. Hence 'bright, shining, gleaming.' See Willms, *Farbenbezeichnungen in der Poesie Altenglands*, Münster, 1902, p. 56, for examples in Old and Middle English literature.—Ed.

x Bärhel . Mit harnen und it län hale

the crest of the helmet the *walu* (a convex plate) guarded the head outside, surrounded by metal bands." We must suppose that there was an inner head-covering of cloth, leather or the like—which would be necessary for many reasons—and that this was fastened to an outer convex plate, from the edge of which sprang the ribs of metal above referred to.

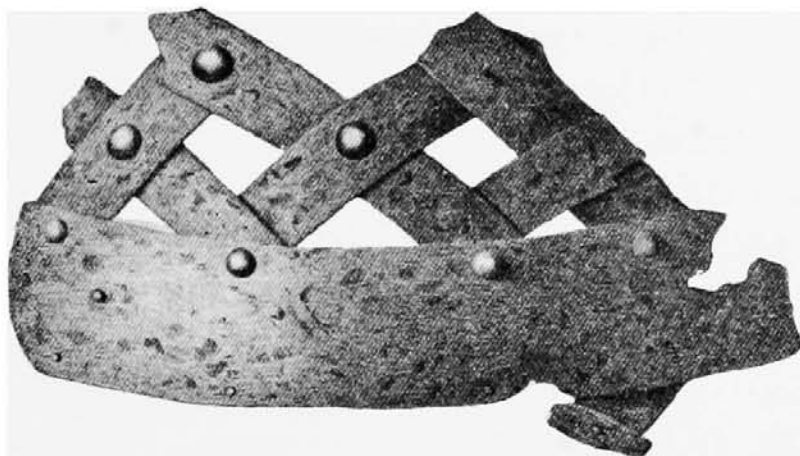


FIG. 1.

Fragment of iron helmet, showing lattice work; from a grave, Ultuna, Uppland, Sweden. <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>

A helmet of another kind is mentioned at lines 1448—1454.

sē hwīta helm . . .

since geweorðad

befongen frēawrāsnum, swā hine fyrndagum

worhte wæpna smið, wundrum tēode,

besette swīnlicum ðæt hine syððan nō

brond<sup>1</sup> ne beadomēcas bītan ne meahton.

"The white helmet . . . adorned with gold, belted with lordly bands, as in past days the weapon-smith had wrought it—fashioned it wondrously and adorned it with swine-figures, that after that nor fire nor battle-knife could ever bite it."

Hence these helmets were surmounted by boar-

<sup>1</sup> The reading *brond* is retained (by Schücking) in Heyne's last edition, but Cosijn's excellent emendation *brogdne beadomēcas* (brandished battle-blades) has been adopted by most recent editors. If *brond* is correct, moreover, the meaning would probably be 'sword' and not 'fire.'—*Ed.*

images. The helmet was encircled by a band ('a lordly band') which may be referred to by the singular form *sinc*, and the name of which (*frēawrāsn*) certainly indicates costliness. The helmet was, at least to some extent, over-laid or covered with white metal.<sup>1</sup>

Line 2487, where it is said that a helmet was cleft asunder (*tōglād*) by the stroke of a sword, gives us further light on the question of the construction of helmets. As a sword stroke can hardly have been so powerful as to cleave the helmet and consequently the skull in twain, this shows that the framework of the helmet consisted of two parts, the joints of which would presumably be covered by a crest or a band.<sup>2</sup>

The helmet not only protected the skull but the face. When Beowulf's company of Geats enter Hrothgar's hall, one of his warriors steps forward and asks (vv. 333, 4) "Whence have ye brought these plated shields, these gray hauberks and visored helmets (*grīm-helmas*)?" The *grīma* was some object for the purposes of disguise, and can thus only mean a covering for the face. We meet with the expression on many occasions in *Beowulf* (vv. 396, 2049, 2257, 2605) in the compounds *beadogrīma* and *heregrīma*, and in all these places it signifies the face-protection or 'visor' of the helmet. As to its appearance in at least one case verse 2605 gives us an indication:—Beowulf's lieutenant, Wiglaf, saw his sovereign suffering from the heat under his battle-mask. This helmet must thus have had openings through which the face could be observed, and this points to a sort of trellised construction such

<sup>1</sup> Chemical analysis has shown this metal to be tin, where it is not silver. But it must be remembered, as regards the above quoted passage, that Ags. *hwīt* often=bright, shining, in poetry.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> Here I think Stjerna pins his poet down too tightly. If in the *Chanson de Roland* the hero could, with his trusty sword Durendal, cleave at one stroke the helmet of the pagan Chernuble, his skull and his body, and bury his sword in the horse on which the latter was riding, we may allow Eofor (a Geat, too!) to cut through Ongentheow's helmet without bothering about the joints.—*Ed.*

as that above referred to in relation to the protection for the crown in the helmet described at verse 1030-3.<sup>1</sup>

The picturesque expression "hardy (or brave) under his helmet," which is met with three times (at verses 342, 404 and 2539) as a sort of *leitmotiv* on Beowulf's appearance, is more intelligible if we take into account both the hard crown of the helmet and the hard iron lattice behind which the hero spoke.

How the 'vizzor' was joined to the upper part of the helmet we are not told, but we may assume that it was not intended to be taken off separately. That would obviously have made the fastening and unfastening of the helmet very troublesome. It is noticeable that the Geats who went into Hrothgar's Hall on their introduction, laid down their shields and lances but kept their helmets on their heads (line 396). At lines 1629-30 it is related how, after the fight with Grendel's mother, Beowulf's helm and byrnie were loosened (*āl̥ysed* v. 1629), and how, after his fight with the dragon, Wiglaf undid (*onspeon*) his wounded lord's helmet (line 2723), notwithstanding that a little later (line 2809) he was not too exhausted to take off his neck-ring himself. These circumstances indicate that a man could not take off his helmet alone and without help.<sup>2</sup>

Besides being made up of different parts, helmets were of different materials. It has already been stated that the body of the helmet was of iron, and as iron was not itself a very decorative material it is probable that the other materials were fastened on to the body of the helmet. The solidity and strength of iron

<sup>1</sup> This inference is based upon a too precise interpretation of the conventional epic phrase *under heregrīman*. Compare its use at line 2049.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> This is hardly contradicted by vv. 671, 2, for a ring-corslet must also have been awkward for a man to take off himself. [If we take this last passage as literally as our author takes some others, it tells strongly against his view.—*Ed.*]

caused it to be employed to protect the head, and the parts of the helmet surrounding the skull would thus have been of that metal, either solid or, for the sake of lightness, divided up into ribs interlacing with one another and riveted together. The boar-image on the crest of the helmet was also of iron, at least in certain cases, for at verse 1112 we hear of an 'iron-hard boar' (*eofer īren-heard*). The passage above cited, in which it is stated (line 1454) that the weapon-smith beset the helmets with swine-figures in such wise that neither sword-stroke nor fire could have any effect on them, also points to the boar on the top of the helmet being of iron.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the same view is supported by the statement (in verse 304) that the boar-images, covered with gold, shone, glittering and fireproof<sup>2</sup> (*gehroden golde, fāh ond fȳrheard*). *Gehroden golde* shows clearly that the framework of the helmet was of some other material than gold, and again the last word, *fȳrheard*, can only refer to iron (cp. verse 1454).

Sometimes, however, the frame of the helmet was covered with some other material than iron, and this was occasionally of a white colour; in other cases it might have been bronze or gold. That the boar-images were plated with gold appears from v. 1111 (*swīn ealgylden*=entirely covered with gold). It is also possible that the 'lordly band' (*frēawrāsn*) which ran round the circumference of the helmet was likewise of some costly material. A plating of gold on a helmet is mentioned at vv. 2255, 6) *sceal se hearda helm hyrsted golde fætum befeallen*)—"the hard gold-adorned helmet shall be deprived of its overlayings"; and in another verse (2811) the helmet is definitely

<sup>1</sup> Stjerna has not observed here that the passage refers to one helmet (Beowulf's). It is the only one in the *Beowulf* or elsewhere in which a helmet is spoken of as having more than one boar-image on it. As to 'fire' see note on p. 3.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> Ags *fȳrheard* does not mean fire-proof, but hardened by fire.—*Ed.*

described as 'gold-mounted.' That the helmets were high, conspicuous objects is evident from the epithet 'towering in battle,' which occurs in two places (vv. 1245, 2153). The boar-crest is described at v. 1110, and perhaps also at v. 3156, as widely visible on the funeral pyres of deceased warriors.<sup>1</sup> It is probable, at the same time, that the shape and position of the helmet helped to make the impression of its height stronger. We know what a false idea the eye gives of the height of a top hat !

It is natural that such artistic and costly objects should, in that ornament-loving time, have attracted a very large amount of attention, and it is not improbable that in the oft-recurring expression *helm* for kings (verses 371, 456, 1321, 2381, 2705) the word implies something more than the bare idea of 'protector.' We may suppose that there was a direct and natural association of ideas between this word and the concrete helmet, the splendid head-gear of princes, which, on account of its elevated position and its lustre, was well fitted to be the symbol of a chieftain. The Lord of Heaven is, moreover, called *helm heofena* at verse 182, an expression for which the simple meaning of 'protector' is hardly suitable.

At the same time, helmets did not always come up to the mark as regards their protective power, in spite of what is said in a few places about their hardness. It happened once in a while (verse 1287) that the hammer-forged sword cut off the boar image on the helmet; and the famous sword *Hrunting* cleft the helmet many times. The Swedish king Ongentheow cleft asunder the helmet on his adversary's head (verse 2973) without, however, succeeding in slaying him, and soon afterwards the famous battle with the Geats was

<sup>1</sup> Ags. *ēðgesȳne* means rather *easily seen*, *plainly seen*. The reference to v. 3156 seems to be a mistake.—*Ed.*

brought to an end by the Geatish hero, Eofof, shattering Ougentheow's helmet (verse 2487) and causing his death.



FIG. 2.



FIG. 3.



FIG. 4.



FIG. 5.

Bronze plates from Torslunda, Öland, Sweden. <sup>1</sup>.

The descriptions which are given of the helmets of the time in *Beowulf* are, as we see, very copious, and we are fortunate in being able also to produce archæological parallels to them without difficulty. As the descriptions referred to related to Norsemen, and the contests in which they took part were between Northern tribes, or between such tribes and foreigners, we must in the first place turn to Scandinavia for examples. In the find of Thorsbjerg (Schleswig), on



the outskirts of Scandinavia, which dates from about 300 A.D., two helmets came to light, one of which was

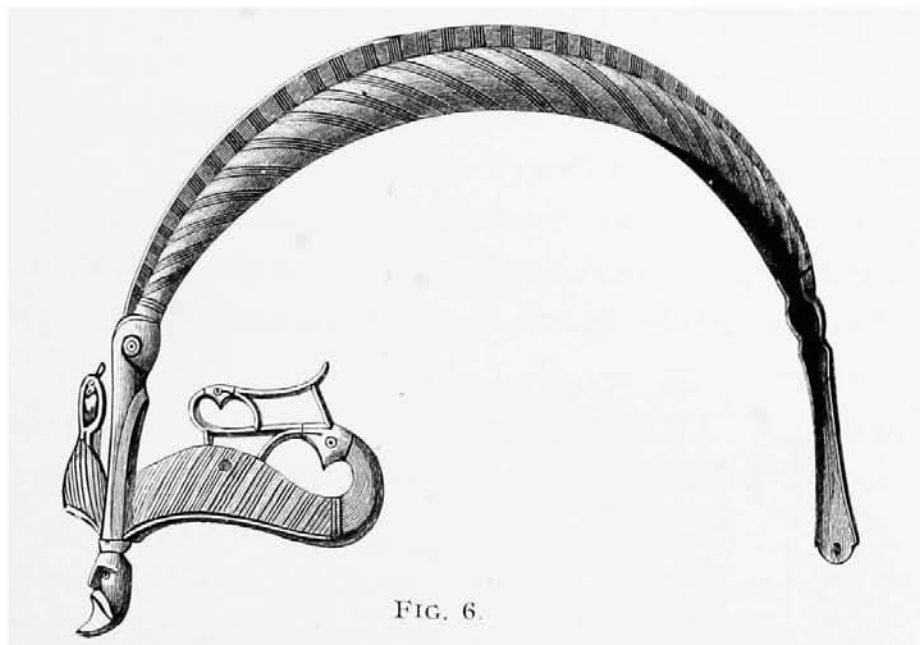


FIG. 6.

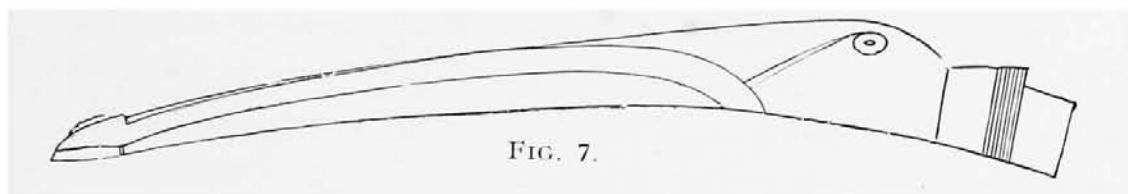
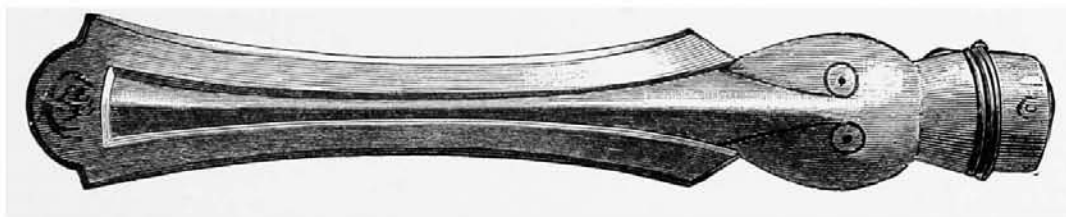


FIG. 7.

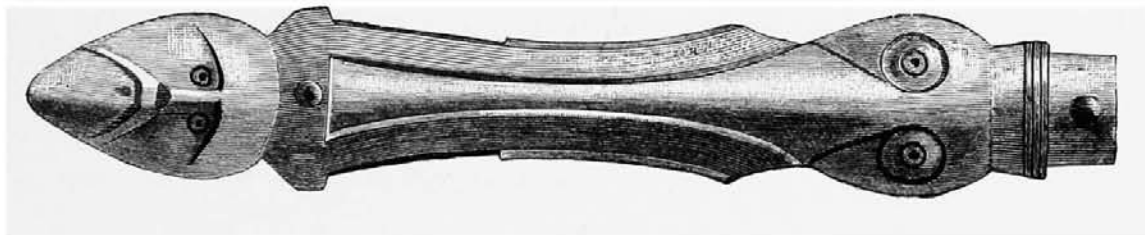


FIG. 8.

Remains of a helmet of bronze and iron from Grave No. 1, Vendel, Uppland, Sweden. 6= $\frac{1}{2}$ . 7 and 8= $\frac{1}{1}$ .

of Roman and the other at least partly of Germanic construction. The latter, which is the only one which concerns us in this connection, is of silver, partly gilded over, and has a mask for the face. The remaining features of the helmet and its place in time do not agree with those in the *Beowulf*.

The other known Scandinavian helmets are, so far as I am aware, the following (subsequently referred to by the numerals given in the margin against their description), viz. :—

#### HELMETS.

- 1 and 2. Shown on the figures of two warriors on the march, on one of the Torslunda plates (see Fig. 2). These helmets are exactly alike.
3. Shown on another of the Torslunda plates (Fig. 3) is a figure of a leaping warrior, also helmeted.
4. Part of a helmet from one of the graves at Ultuna (Fig. 1).
5. Remains of a helmet from Vendel grave No. 1 (Figs. 6, 7 and 8).
6. Fragment of the comb or crest of a helmet from Vendel grave No. 11.
7. Remains of a helmet from Vendel grave No. 12.
8. A helmet (Fig. 9) from Vendel grave No. 14.
- 9 and 10. On a plate of the helmet in Vendel grave No. 1 there is a figure of a horseman with a helmet; and on another plate a figure of another helmeted rider (Figs. 21 and 59).
- 11, 12, and 13. Figures of helmets (not alike) on two warriors on the march are to be found on a plate on the helmet from Vendel grave No. 14 (Fig. 20), and on another plate on the same helmet several warriors are shown with helmets of which the details are indistinct.

- 14, 15, Fragments of a helmet from Skåne and of  
and 16. two helmets from Gotland.
17. Fragment of a helmet from Norway (*Aars-beretning*, 1894, p. 128).
18. Helmet of a different style (tiara-like construction) from Benty Grange, Derbyshire, England (Fig. 10).<sup>1</sup>
19. Helmet from Cheltenham, England (Roach Smith, *Collectanea Antiqua*, ii, 238).<sup>2</sup>

Helmet 13 and fragments 6, 14, 15, 16, and 17, furnish us with no facts as regards construction. Complete boar-images on the top of helmets are found on Nos. 1, 2 and 18. Such images

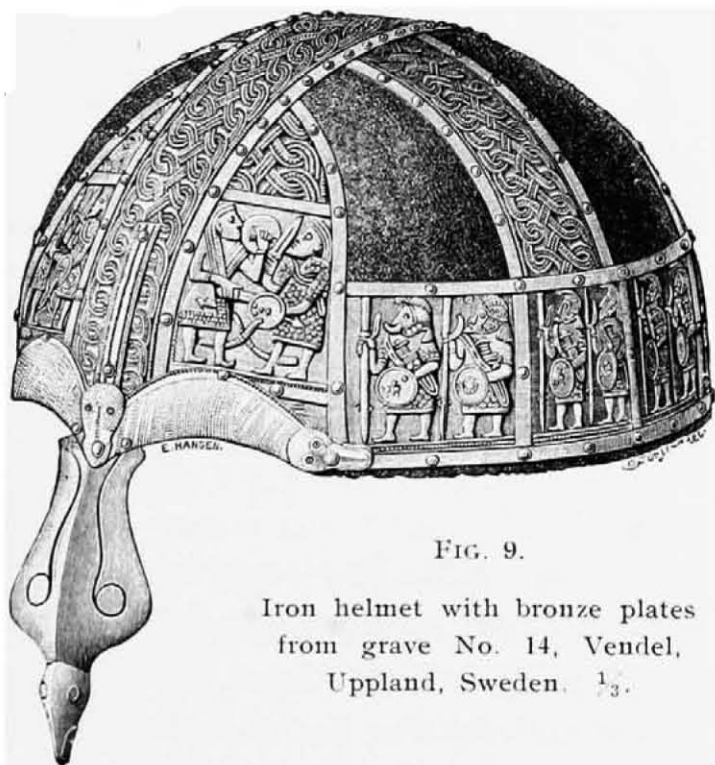


FIG. 9.

Iron helmet with bronze plates  
from grave No. 14, Vendel,  
Uppland, Sweden. 13.

are wanting on helmets 3, 8 and 19. The upper part of the crest or

<sup>1</sup> This helmet is described by Roach Smith as having been formed "of ribs of iron radiating from the crown of the head, and coated with narrow plates of horn, running in a diagonal direction from the ribs, so as to form a herring-bone pattern: the ends were secured by strips of horn, radiating in like manner as the iron ribs, to which they were riveted at intervals of about an inch and a half: all the rivets had ornamental heads of silver on the outside, and on the front rib is a small cross of the same metal. Upon the top or crown of the helmet is an elongated oval brass plate, upon which stands the figure of an animal, carved in iron, now much rusted, but still a very good representation of a pig; it has bronze eyes. There are also many smaller decorations, abounding in rivets, all which have pertained to the helmet, but which it is impossible to assign to their proper places."—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> "Mr. Gomonde found on Leckhampton Hill, near Cheltenham, on the skull of a skeleton, what appears to be the framework of [a helmet].

comb of helmets 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 12 consists of some sort of animal representation. Stolpe, in *Uplands forn. f. tidskrift*, III, 107, maintains that this is a relic of the practice of putting a boar-figure on the helmet, which was not reproduced in its entirety for a practical reason, viz.:—so as not to add too much to the already necessarily heavy weight of the helmet.

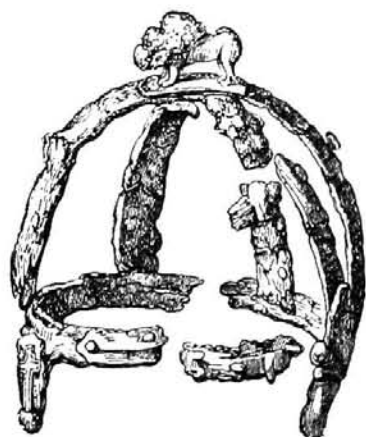


FIG. 10.

Iron helmet from Bentley  
Grange, Derbyshire,  
England.

It is worthy of note that the helmets shown on the metal plates exhibit relatively larger animal figures than those on the helmets to which they are attached. The explanation is that the craftsman evidently represented something from an earlier time,—a time when the helmets still bore more prominent boar-images. We may refer to the wording of the passage at verses

1451-2 of *Beowulf*—‘*swā hine fyrndagum worhte wæpna smið; besette swīnlicum.*’ We recall that the boar was in certain cases of gold-plated or gilt iron. On helmet 18 the boar is of iron, but rusty, and it cannot now be ascertained whether it, and those on helmets 1 and 2, were covered with gold. The later helmet-crests are of bronze.<sup>1</sup> Here again we can draw attention to the above quotation from *Beowulf* about

It is in thin bronze, and represented in the annexed cut. The knob at the top finished in a ring, and a complete chin-chain, it is said, was attached to the circular band at the base.” C. Roach Smith. *Coll. Antiqua*. II. 238. (W. H. Gomonde is referred to at p. 208 as author of *Notes on Cheltenham, Ancient and Mediæval*, 8vo, 1849). There is another description in the *Archæological Journal* (III., 352) also illustrated. It seems very doubtful whether it is an Anglo-Saxon helmet at all. I cannot trace what has become of it.—Ed.

<sup>1</sup>There are two curious little bronze boar-figures in the British Museum collection, which may have come from helmets. They are referred to, and illustrated, on pp. 135, 136 of Mr. Reginald Smith's *Museum Guide to the Antiquities of the Early Iron Age*.—Ed.

the weapon-smiths of former times, who fixed boar-images on the helmets, so that they could withstand both fire <sup>1</sup> and sword.

As regards the relation in time between the objects and the poem, we may draw the conclusion that certain of the events which are described occurred at a time when the helmets had high boar-images of iron, but that the lays concerning them were composed somewhat later, *i.e.*, when the boar-image remained only in a rudimentary form, or had entirely disappeared.

The 'splendid band' (*freāwrāsn*) has also its analogue among our helmets in the band which runs round the lower part of the body of the helmet. Helmets Nos. 4, 18 and 19 are not sufficiently well preserved to furnish us with any elucidation of this feature. The many old figures of helmets (Nos. 1 to 3, and 9 to 13) are not shown in sufficient detail to exhibit the band, although it may possibly be represented on No. 3 by the pieces from the sides which project over the eyes. It is found on the few helmets the greater portion of which has been preserved (Nos. 5, 7 and 8), and must thus have been customary. This band was, as its name implies, the chief adornment of the helmet and consisted, in Nos. 5 and 8, of rectangular bronze plates with impressed and pictorial representations of important scenes from actual life or from sagas, and in No. 7 of several conventional animal forms.

Masks for the face occur on actual helmets as well as on those in the poem. On No. 1, and even more clearly on No. 2, we can discern round the eyes of the man a border which indicates the edge of the opening made in the face-mask for the eyes. This mask, which over the ears and posterior part of the under jaw consisted of iron ribs arranged crosswise (as to which cp. what was observed on p. 4 as to verse 2605) is further

<sup>1</sup> See note on p. 3

noticeable on account of the projecting chin-guard. Whether helmet No. 3 was provided with a mask is not clear, but a comparison of the face of the leaping man and the (unprotected) faces of the men shown on the other Torslunda-plates (Figs. 4 and 5) makes it probable that the craftsman wished to represent it as covered by a mask. Helmet No. 8 had a plate of iron to protect the face, No. 9 seems to have only had protection for the cheek and nose, No. 10 a complete mask for the face, and No. 11 only a guard for the cheeks. On the other helmets no trace of a protection for the face has been preserved.

With regard to the special form of helmet which is described at verses 1030-3, I must now draw attention to helmet No. 5. That helmet had a rib or comb running up it to its whole height and down again at the back, and this must have been the part of the helmet which is spoken of as the *walu*. The plural form, *walan*, although rejected by the scholars previously mentioned, is not altogether improbable. According to Bugge it may refer to the small ridges which are made on a metal object by the blows of some tool, and may in that case be compared with the lines on the combs of several of the helmets in our list. (See especially Fig. 6).

The protective framework for the head (*heafodbeorh*) issued from the comb of the helmet on both sides, consisting for the most part of a lattice of iron ribs, riveted together (*wīrum bewunden*), which evidently enclosed an inner and softer head-covering. The form of the helmet and its comb shows clearly what a graphic and correct expression 'around the crown' (*hrōf*) of the helmet was in reference to the *walu*.

It is evident that all these helmets were, on the whole, thoroughly good pieces of defensive armour. If, however, a specially powerful blow were aimed at the covering of the skull, it might cause the rivets which

fastened the comb to the iron lattice to become loose, and the helmet would thus be split open (*tōglād*). We have already mentioned an instance of such an occurrence.

From the language of *Beowulf* it is evident that the framework of the helmet was of iron. We cannot, obviously, confirm this statement by a reference to the helmets which we only know as representations; and as iron perishes more quickly than bronze, the parts of actual helmets which have come down to us, and which were of iron, have either altogether disappeared or have only been preserved in parts. It has already been mentioned that the frame of helmet No. 4 was of iron. The same was the case with Nos. 5 and 7, as well as with the still fairly well preserved No. 8, to which the expression *brūnfāgne helm* (verse 2615) is applicable. Helmet No. 18 was composed of a framework of iron ribs, and No. 19 of bronze ribs.

The presence on our helmets of the kind of fittings described in *Beowulf* need not be demonstrated in words. Some of these fittings show, on the better preserved helmets Nos. 7 and 8, traces of gilding, such as the epos lays stress upon. The statement in the poem as to the white<sup>1</sup> colour on Beowulf's fine helmet is the only one for which we have no example among our specimens. Of these, in their present condition, there is only one which shows white colour in parts, and that is No. 18, the heads of the rivets which show on the outside being silvered over. The Thorsbjerg helmet (p. 8) is evidence that at an earlier date white helmets were in use, and the lavish employment of silver on various objects at as late a date as that of the oldest of the Vendel graves (No. 1) makes it probable that even during that period the same material may have been employed also in the embellishment of helmets.

<sup>1</sup> See note on p. 4.



FIG. 11.

Helmeted head, in silver, from  
a chape found at Nydam,  
Sleswig. <sup>21</sup>

In the later Nydam find, which belongs to the earlier half of the fifth century, a very elaborately decorated chape of the sheath of a sword occurs.<sup>1</sup> On this we find two human heads figured, both helmeted and generally

similar. The helmets are of silver, with a decorative border inlaid with niello. (See Fig. 11).

According to the observations made on the original in Flensburg by Miss J. Mestorf, the ribs are clearly marked on the helmets. Over the ears and chin there runs another broad band with impressed star-like ornaments, which seems to show that that part of the head-gear, which in all probability extended also over the crown, under the silver-plated ribs, was of leather. Thus we have here a white helmet which agrees quite well with the descriptions in the poem, but with the important exception that it has no comb.

Montelius has pointed out (in *SFT.*, Vol. x.) that the oldest Vendel-graves belong to the beginning of the 7th century, and according to the opinion verbally communicated to me by Bernhard Salin, objects of the 6th century were found in grave No. 1. Helmet No. 5, which belongs to this grave, can thus not be later than the beginning of the 7th century. I have already explained why I consider that helmets with complete swine-figures must be somewhat earlier, and thus belong to the 5th century. At the same time a certain gradation is noticeable amongst these. The figure of the boar on helmets 1 and 2 already sinks somewhat into the crown of the helmet, while that on helmet No. 18 stands erect on a plate fixed on the top of the helmet, so that, regarded as a type, it must be older

<sup>1</sup> See the illustration of this beautiful chape in *Nordiske Fortidsminder*, Vol. I, plate 30.—*Ed.*



than the others. Unfortunately there are no representations of the objects with which it was found, so that for the present we have no guide for fixing its age. I should put this helmet with the two figured on the Gundestrup vessel, which also exhibits on its top a very clearly marked boar (see Figs. 12 and 13). If this grouping is correct, we have the following series:—

<i>Style.</i>	<i>Date.</i>	<i>Characteristics.</i>	<i>Examples.</i>
<b>A</b>	Before A.D. 500.	The helmet is furnished at the top with a complete boar-figure, which is ornamental only. The cap is hemispherical and the details of construction are not known to us. Face only protected by a nose-guard.	The Gundestrup vessel. (Figs. 12 & 13.)
<b>B</b>	Probably about A.D. 500.	Top of helmet as in A. Cap hemispherical with short cylindrical base. Face protection more complete (apparently). Constructed with few ribs.	Helmet 18. (Fig. 10).
<b>C</b>	Sixth century.	Top furnished with a boar-figure, but without feet, and joined directly to the cap, which it helps to hold together. Cap somewhat prolonged, and formed of many interlaced and riveted ribs. Full face protection.	Helmets 1 and 2 (Fig. 2).
<b>D</b>	Early seventh century.	Boar-figure half sunk in the crown of the helmet, helping to form the comb; becoming quite rudimentary at last. Cap of extended form, constructed like the foregoing (Nos. 4, 9, 10? and 12) or else consisting of a hemisphere of iron (Nos. 7 and 11). Cheek-guard on Nos. 9 and 12. Complete face protection on No. 11.	Helmets Nos. 4, 7 & 9 to 12. (Fig. 59.)
<b>E</b>	Close of seventh century	No boar-image. Cap lower and consisting of an iron bowl. Extent of face protection unknown. <sup>1</sup>	Helmet No. 8 (Fig. 9).

As regards material, about the year 300 A.D. silver was employed, at least in some cases. In the sixth century it was used more sparingly (see helmet 18), and afterwards, in the seventh century, probably, went out of use.

It is clear that the *Beowulf*, as we have the poem, is not the work of one man; nor can we fix its date within narrow limits. That the greater part of the

<sup>1</sup>There is at least a nose-piece on the example quoted.—*Ed.*



FIG. 12.



FIG. 13.

Helmeted figures from a silver vessel found at Gundestrup. Jutland. <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>.

poem originated from a time when boar-images were still to be found on helmets, or when the remembrance of them was still fresh, *i.e.*, during the sixth century and the earliest years of the 7th century, agrees entirely with the purely historical chronology.

We have no helmets of the Viking age, whether complete or fragmentary, and the head guards which are shown, *e.g.*, in the various Sigurds rock-carvings, have neither boar's heads nor face-masks on them. (See *Nordisk tidskr.*, 1903, pp. 193 ff, and Montelius, *Östergötland under hednatiden* in SFT. xii. p. 10, fig. 4). At the same time the helmet is described in the Icelandic poems as *hildisvin* or *hildigoltr* (= war-swine or war-hog), which shows that this poetical terminology goes back to the time of the Beowulf-poetry, that is, to the sixth century. During this later period there are also references to the *frēawrāsn*, viz.: *hjǫlmum áringreyþom*<sup>1</sup> (*Atlakv.* 16): *hjalmi hringreifðum* ('with ring-fitted helm,' *Hlodskv.* 2.). The word 'battle-steep' (*heaðostēap*), moreover, suits helmets of the period before the middle of the seventh century (*e.g.*, helmet No. 7), while it would be inapplicable to later helmets, such as No. 8.

<sup>1</sup> The meaning of this word is much disputed, the reading being almost certainly corrupt.—*Ed.*

## II. THE SWORD.

Of all weapons and ornaments, swords were those which were of the greatest value, and they were consequently the best legacy which a prince could leave behind him. A certain sword is, at verse 1559, called an ornament of fighters, and another, at verse 1458, the chiefest of ancient treasures.

From its very nature the sword has in all ages been simpler in construction than the helmet, and the descriptions of it are thus usually limited to an adjective which testifies generally to its trustworthiness or beauty. We have, however, in the poem many valuable indications of its outward appearance. That the blade was of iron—a natural circumstance, since the Iron Age began a thousand years or more before the time of Beowulf—is explicitly stated in many passages (verses 673, 1285—by the expression, *hamere geðuren*, i.e., hammer-forged; 1459, ~~1458~~, 1697, 2638, 2987—in the two last by the expression, *heard sweord*; cp. above as to helmets; 2829—by the expression, *homera lāfe*). In one place (verse 1546) the blade is called *brūnecg*. From this and from the expression *ecg wæs iren* (verse 1459) Heyne has drawn the inference in the first edition of his *Beowulf* (pp. 140, 152) that sword blades were of bronze, which is absurd. On the contrary, the word *brūnecg* shows that *brūn* did not mean 'brown' in the passage in question, but the more vague 'murky,' 'dark,' 'swarthy' (cp. *brūnfāgne helm* above).<sup>1</sup>

Both two-edged and one-edged swords are mentioned in *Beowulf*. The one-edged variety was short and broad (v. 1545 f.). We meet with the plural of *ecg* in

<sup>1</sup> See note on p. 2.

many places (vv. 1145, 1287, 1558, 2485, 2564, 2614) where the reference is to a single sword only, and thus indicates that the sword was two-edged. The words *bil* and *mēce* seem to have been used of two-edged, *seax* of one-edged swords, and *sweord* of both kinds. The two-edged sword seems to have been the most highly prized. Thus the famous sword *Hrunting* is two-edged, as well as that with which Beowulf killed Grendel's mother, and that which was used in the fight with the Swedish king Ongentheow. As in the days of the Roman Empire, it would seem that both a one- and a two-edged sword were necessary for complete armour. For instance, Grendel's mother was equipped with two swords, one two-edged and the other one-edged, and the same is the case with Beowulf in his fight with the dragon. One of the swords was carried on the byrnie (v. 2704).

Of the blades, some were damascened.<sup>1</sup> The expression, *atertānum fāh* = shining or gleaming with poison-streaks (v. 1459) can only be explained as indicating that the false damascening of the blade was supposed to have a miraculous poisoning power. Real poison-stripes could hardly glisten, and a belief in the virtue of damascening might easily arise in lands where damascened blades were not manufactured. As Lorange points out, in his work *Den yngre jernalders sverd*, the art of damascening was unknown to the Northmen and Anglo-Saxons. The same sword *Hrunting*, about which this expression is used, is also (v. 1488) called a

<sup>1</sup> We must here distinguish between true and false damascening. The former consisted in cutting into the metal fine furrows of the intended design, and then hammering gold or silver threads into them, the blades being afterwards filed and polished; and the second of ornamenting the surface of the blades with a watered pattern, produced by a process of welding, soldering and corrosion. According to Lorange it is the art of 'false' damascening which was unknown in the North, and if he is right one would suppose that the swords—or at least the blades—which are referred to as exhibiting this kind of work must have been of foreign origin. The hilts, which show strong Northern characteristics, make one feel somewhat doubtful about this.—*Ed.*

wavy sword, which must refer to the wave-like inlaid work in the damasked blade. Ibn Fadhlān, in his noted book of travels, says that the Northmen's damascened swords were ornamented with a wavy pattern (cp. Lorange, *l.c.* 8, v. 46). Damascening is also referred to in the expression *broden*, when used about a sword-blade. (v. 1616).

We have a sure proof that these poison-stripes really signify damascening, when we compare this passage with the description of a sword which occurs in the last lines of *Brot af Sigurðarkviðu*, viz. :—

eldi vóro eggjar  
útan ggruar,  
enn eitrdropom  
innan fáðar.<sup>1</sup>

The outer parts (border) of the blade (*eggjar*) were thus of hardened steel, and the inner surface glittering with poison-drops. As, in order to be of any use, real poison should have been applied to the edge, whilst the poison-drops mentioned in the passage gleamed on the inner surface of the blade, we must assume these to refer to the spurious damascening which always had its place down the middle of the blade. The expression is also interesting as being an obvious survival from the time of the *Beowulf*-poem.

One sword-blade is described as having been hardened in blood of battle (*āhyrded heaðoswāte*, v. 1460) on an occasion when it could not have been stained with blood.<sup>2</sup> A sword, 'gleaming with blood' (*swāte fāh*),

<sup>1</sup> "Its edges outside were wrought in the fire, but the inner part (of the blade) was stained with drops of venom." Vigfússon and Powell's trans. in *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, Vol. I., p. 309.

<sup>2</sup> "Sprinkling with poison or snake's blood was supposed to make the blade specially hard—cp. the Eddic song, *Brot af Sigurðarkviðu*, 20, 4, and Hjalmar's death-song in the *Hervarar saga*, 2, 8 (*Eddica Minora*, p. 52). Human blood served the same purpose. In the *Njáls saga* (130, 48) Kári Solmundarson says that he will harden his dulled sword in the blood of the incendiaries of Bergthorshval." Note from Hugo Gering's (German) translation of *Beowulf*, p. 109.—*Ed.*

is said in another place (v. 1286) to have shorn off the crest of the helmet, and thus, as it would seem, before it can have been dyed with blood. In the *Helgakviða Hjörvarðssonar*, 10, it is related about a sword that a snake gleaming with blood lay along the blade (*liggr með eggio ormr dreyrfáðr*); and another sword is called *blóðorm buinn*—the decorated blood-snake in *Helgakviða Hundingsbana* I, 8. This red snake-annulation on the blade indicates its damascening. In Cassiodorus *Var. V.*, 1, it is said about swords which the Vandal king Trasamund gave King Theodoric the Great that the blades seemed to be covered with small snakes (*spathæ harum media pulchris alveis excavata quibusdam videntur crispari posse vermiculis*), and this undoubtedly indicates damascening. It is added immediately afterwards that the shades of the partly-raised work were so well-balanced, that the blades seemed to gleam with various colours. Perhaps this peculiarity gave rise to the above-quoted expressions, although the precise mention of the blood-red hue only seems rather to suggest that the blade was actually coloured by some red substance. The word *wyrmfāh* (v. 1698) may possibly also indicate damascening. It is used about a sword after the blade had gone, and while King Hrothgar held the hilt in his hand and meditated upon it, so that the situation seems rather to suggest that *wyrmfāh* referred to the hilt, and not to the blade.<sup>1</sup>

That the beautiful damascened sword-blades were supposed to have a superhuman origin is easy to explain. They are said, more often than other objects, to have been made by giants (vv. 1558, 1562, 1679, 2616 and 2979). We have a late echo of this in the legend that Regin, the smith of the Sigurd-sword, who had in other respects purely human characteristics, belonged to the race of giants.

<sup>1</sup> It seems more likely that the word *wyrm-fāh* refers to some such twisted pattern as is shown on the hilt of Fig. 15. See p. 29.—*Ed.*

As a weapon of attack the sword, as appears from the descriptions of helmets, was superior to the helmet as a weapon of defence. Only the mere-wife's hard skull (v. 1524), the mysterious dragon's bony frame (v. 2578), and, on one occasion, Beowulf's corslet (v. 1552), were proof against the stroke of swords.

The descriptions in the poem usually dwell more upon the hilt than the blade of swords, no doubt on account of the more ornamental character of the former. When a sword is said to be adorned (*hýrsted*, v. 673) with gold (?),<sup>1</sup> we must assume the hilt to be referred to. Similarly the poet has the hilt in mind in expressions such as *maððumsweord* (treasure-sword, v. 1677), *geatolic* splendid, v. 2154), or *wrætlic* (curiously wrought, v. 1489).

The more detailed expressions which follow are of greater value to us than these general ones. When King Hrethel's sword is said to have been beset with gold (*golde gegyrede*, v. 2192) this probably means that the cross-guards<sup>2</sup> of the hilt were of gold. About another sword it is said expressly that it had a hilt of gold (*gylden hilt*, v. <sup>1523</sup>~~1527~~). One of the cross-guards is the subject of a graphic illustration:—"On it was graven the rise of the primeval strife, what time the flood, the stormy deep, destroyed the brood of giants." The representation was thus of a giant, *i.e.*, a titan or monster in some combat, probably a duel.<sup>3</sup> The expression *wreoðenhilt and wyrmfāh* (v. 1698) is used about the same hilt. 'With twisted hilt' (*wreoðen-hilt*)

<sup>1</sup> Compare line 2255 —*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> Stjerna here translates the Ags. *hilt* by the Swedish *hjalt*, which, like the same word in Icelandic, is in strictness a plural, meaning the two cross-guards above and below the grip of what we now call the hilt (the pommel being perhaps included with the upper cross-guard). The use of the plural *hilt(u)s* is not uncommon in Ags. and Middle English too. In this translation the word *hilt* is used in its modern signification of all that part of the sword which is not blade, and *cross-guards* as the English equivalent of the Swedish *hjalt*.—*Ed.*

<sup>3</sup> This is pure conjecture.—*Ed.*

may be assumed to mean that the cross-guard was wound round the hilt, or that the latter was provided with an ornament of twisted bands.

It is also said to have been *wyrmfāh*, or snake-adorned, snake-gleaming.<sup>1</sup> Now concerning the damascened sword in *Helgakv. Hjörvarðss.*, v. 10, it is said *enn á valbǫsto verþr naðr hala*.<sup>2</sup> The expression has been misunderstood, through being connected with the above-cited lines *liggr með eggio*, etc. The latter expression relates, as has been already affirmed, to the damascening of the blade, while *naðr á valbǫsto* must indicate snake-ornament on the (lower ?) cross-guard.

In reference to the lines which we have quoted from the Edda, Bugge has pointed out many analogies (*Helgedigtene*, p. 299), but groups together passages which undoubtedly relate to damascening with those which really refer to the snake-ornamentation on hilts. I will draw attention to the last of these passages only. In *Cormac's Saga*, ch. 9, we are told of a sword from the hilt of which a serpent's tongue issued forth.<sup>3</sup>

In the Cymric story of Rhonabway's Dream (*Mabinogion*, trans. by Lady Guest, London, 1877, p. 306) it is said about Arthur's sword—"The similitude of two serpents was upon the sword in gold, and when the sword was drawn from its scabbard, it seemed as if two flames of fire burst from the jaws of the serpents." In the Irish legend "*Le chopur in dá muccida*," which is related to the old Northern heroic tradition, we read in one MS. (dated A.D. 1414) of "a sword which had a golden hilt and shapes of serpents fashioned in gold and precious stones"; and similar statements are to be found in other Irish stories also.

<sup>1</sup> See the ornamentation on the cross-guards of the sword in Fig. 15.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> "But o'er (or round) the back the snake throws his tail."

<sup>3</sup> The passage runs thus in Collingwood and Stefánsson's trans. (Viking Club, 1902) "Hold the edge of the sword toward thee and blow on it. Then will a little worm creep from under the hilt. Then slope thou the sword over, and make it easy for that worm to creep back beneath the hilt."



The ornament of swords which is most often mentioned, however, and which was regarded as characteristic of the sword of a chief, was the hilt-ring.

That this ring, which is invariably mentioned in connection with the sword, was certainly fixed to the hilt (not the scabbard), appears from the word *fetelhilt* (linked hilt, v. 1563). The ring was of gold (*bunden golde*, v. 1900) and considered as a treasure (*wrættum gebunden*, v. 1531).<sup>1</sup> It is clear from the circumstances that the words *bunden* and *gebunden* must not be taken as meaning that the sword was bound to the sheath or the armour by means of the costly ring; for Beowulf throws the sword, '*wrættum ge'unden*' as it is, to the ground. Thus the ring constituted an ornament on the hilt of the sword; and it is evident from these passages (vv. 1521, 1564, and 2037) where the word *hringmæl* is used for the sword, besides others where the epithets *hringiren* (v. 322), *hæftmēce* (v. 1457), and *heorubunden* (v. 1286) occur, that this ornamentation was intimately connected with the idea of a sword for a distinguished personage. There is a hilt-ring also on Helge Hjorvarðsson's sword (v. 10, *Hringr er i hialti*). That it, or perhaps the hilt itself, was of gold, appears from the following words:—'*ok varið gulli*.'

Our investigation as to the helmets in *Beowulf* indicates for us where we must look for the group of swords which may properly be associated with the descriptions in *Beowulf*. Professor Montelius has given us a review of the swords of relevant type which were found in 1872, in *Hallands Fornminnesförenings Årskrift* for that year, and as for our purposes the principal interest attaches to those swords which have a ring in the hilt, I give a list here of the swords and

<sup>1</sup> It is only said at v. 1900 that the sword was bound round with gold, in the poem. Similarly the reference is to the sword generally at v. 1531 — *Ed*

fragments of swords known to me which have that adornment. There are seventeen altogether.

#### SWEDEN.

Vendel, Uppland, grave No. 1.

Väsby, parish of Hammarby, Uppland.

Kvicksta, parish of Toresund, Södermanland.

Endrebacke, parish of Endre, Gotland. (2)

Vallstenarum, parish of Vallstena, Gotland (Fig. 14).

Snösbeck, parish of Karleby, West Götland.

#### NORWAY.

Kjærstad, par. of Vestby (*Aarsberetning*, 1875, p. 74).

Hedemarken (*Aarsberetning*, 1891, p. 64).

#### DENMARK.

Gudme (3).

Albjerg, Funen.

#### ENGLAND.<sup>1</sup>

Gilton, Kent.

Faversham, Kent.

#### ITALY.

Necropolis at Nocera Umbra (2).

Besides these, a sword of this kind is figured on one of the Torslunda tablets (Fig. 2) and two (? similar) on the Vendel-helmet (Fig. 9).

These 'ring-swords'—to borrow the expression in *Beowulf*—belong to a large group of swords which are represented in Sweden by more than 20 examples, besides three in Norway, six in Denmark, five in England, (not more than) ten in Germany, and two in Italy. The oldest of the group are without the ring, and belong to

<sup>1</sup> For illustrations of the Gilton sword, see J. Y. Akerman, *Remains of Pagan Saxondom*, pl. xxiv, fig. 2, and *Archæologia* XXX, 135, and pl. xi; and of the Faversham sword, Roach Smith, *Collectanea Antiqua* VI, pl. xxii, fig. 1, and Salin, *AT*, fig. 249. Salin shows two other English examples of ring-swords (figs. 250 and 251), viz. (1) Sarre, Kent (grave 88) figured and described in *Archæologia Cantiana* VI, 172, and (2) Bifrons, Kent (grave 39), *Arch. Cantiana* X, 312.—Ed.

the fifth century. During the following century a small loose ring appears, but only on one example (from England). About the close of the sixth century the ring is fixed, increases in size and is (in some examples) ornamented. These peculiarities persist during the greater part of the seventh century, and then disappear. Thus the swords described in *Beowulf* belong to the sixth and seventh centuries, or approximately to the period between A.D. 550 and 650. This agrees with what has already been stated with respect to the helmets.

Swords may be either one-edged or two-edged. A sword of each kind was often included in the burial-equipment of a dead warrior during this period; in Vendel-grave No. 1, and Vallstenarum, and many graves at Bækkegaard, Bornholm, for instance. Both thus formed part at the same time of the armour of the warrior. On one of the Torslunda plates (Fig. 4) a warrior wears at the same time a two-edged sword and a dagger-like one-edged sword.

Damascened swords are found in Scandinavia from about A.D. 300, and continue until the end of the heathen period. We have few examples of damascened swords belonging to the type now under consideration, as very frequently the hilt or portions of the hilt are the only parts of the sword which have been preserved. The finest example that we have in respect of this feature is from Bildsjö, Zealand. The inlaid work in the damascened swords is often of wavy lines, but whether any part of it was coloured cannot now be ascertained on account of the present condition of the blades.

The sword was carried on a loose shoulder-belt, over the corslet; see Torslunda plate (Fig. 2) and the tablet on the helmet from Vendel-grave, No. 14 (Fig. 9). Cp. Salin,  *Finds from the shore of Lake Finja, Skåne*  (*Mbl.* 1894, p. 99.)

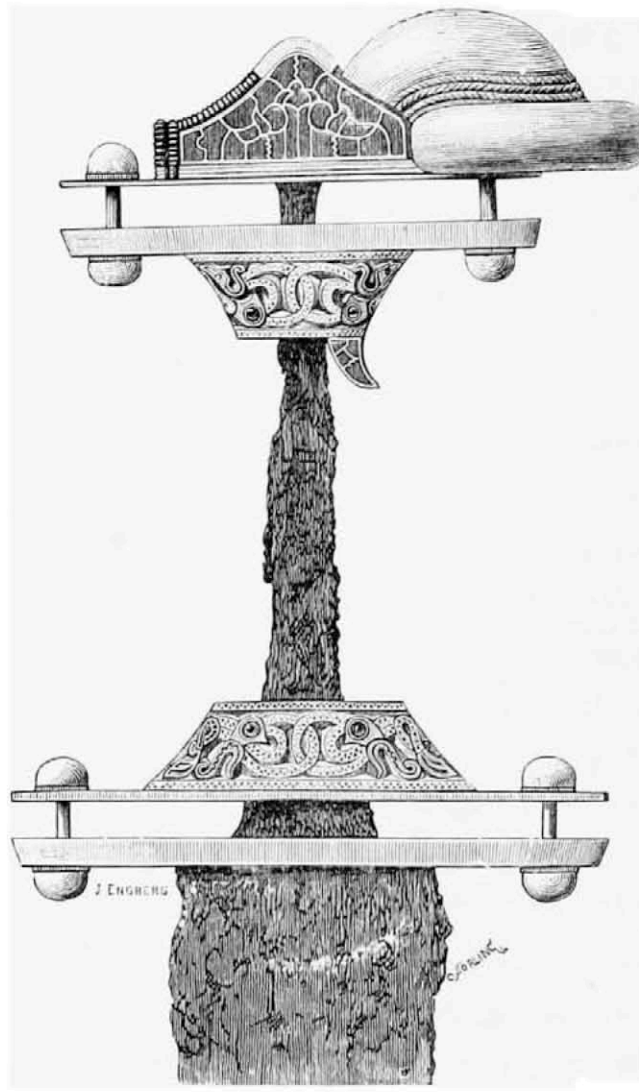


FIG. 14.

Sword hilt of gilt-bronze, gold and silver, with inlaid garnets,  
from a grave at Vallstenarum, Gotland, Sweden.  $\frac{2}{3}$ .

The hilts of the swords which belong to this group are very elaborately finished, and more decorative than those belonging to any other prehistoric period. The pommel is in many cases of gold, silver-gilt, or gilt bronze, inlaid with garnets, the ring of gold, or of gilt, or, more rarely, plain bronze. The cross-guards have generally disappeared to a great extent, but we can see that the upper cross-guard of the Vallstenarum sword (Fig. 15) was partly of gold. The cross-guards are occasionally ornamented with interlaced work (*wreoðenhilt*) see, *e.g.*, the Ultuna sword (Fig. 15).

The animal-designs on the sword-hilts shown in



FIG. 15.

Sword hilt and sheath-mountings of gilt-bronze, from a grave at Ultuna, Uppland, Sweden.  $\frac{2}{3}$ .

Figs. 14 and 15 deserve special remark. Whatever the typological origin of these may be, their likeness to serpents is evident. I connect this embellishment with the word *wyrmfāh* in *Beowulf*, and the analogues mentioned above from Bugge (p. 24.) Only for the duel which is said to have been portrayed on the sword which Beowulf captured from Grendel's mother have we no archæological counterpart, although we know that the duel was a favourite subject at the time, both from the Torslunda plates and the *freawrāsn* on two of the Vendel helmets. As in the *Beowulf* one of the

combatants was a giant, so is it the case in many examples which have come down to us that one was a monster.

One of the Torslunda plates gives us also indirectly an explanation with respect to the characteristic sword-ring, for we see that the first of the warriors on Fig. 2. has a ringed sword, while the sword of the man behind him has no ring. The ringed sword is also shown to be superior to the other by the three small bosses at the top of the sheath. It follows that the ringed sword is intended to mark out the first warrior as a more distinguished person.

The plates deserve notice also on account of another peculiarity. The subjects of the reliefs are not borrowed from *Beowulf*, as the Anglo-Saxon poem relates his adventures, but the main idea—a fight between a hero and one, or two, monsters, (wolves—*heorowearh* v. 1267) is the same as the main idea in *Beowulf*. That the lay, or lays, tell exactly the same story in England as in Öland is in the highest degree improbable; but at the same time the Öland figures give one the impression that they are illustrations to songs in some way parallel to the *Beowulf* story.

Countless examples can be found in literature of a story which is the same in substance, being treated at the same time in a somewhat different fashion in various places, so that we now have it in different versions. The Bible, the cycle of legends about Troy, the Balder myth and the Sigurd saga all furnish us with examples. The artist who modelled the Öland tablets was contemporary with the bards of the *Beowulf*-cycle; he has illustrated the same subject as that which they loved to describe, and the theme for both his and their representations was similar. There was certainly some connection between the material of the stories which they depicted.

On one of the plates (Fig. 3) a man fights with an armed she-wolf. The latter seems for the moment to have got the upper hand, for the man is trying to escape, whilst the monster is drawing her sword. Beowulf fights with Grendel's mother, who is explicitly called a (she-)wolf at vv. 1506, 1518 and 1599. In the short account of the fight which Beowulf gives in the presence of King Hrothgar, he says that he saw on the wall (v. 1662) the sword with which he afterwards overcame the monster, while in the more detailed description which precedes it, we are told that Beowulf, after he had struck the she-wolf so that the sword sang a war-song on her head (*on hafelan agōl gūðlēoð*, vv. 1521-2), was overpowered by his adversary and threw away his sword. Then the she-wolf drew her sword and struck at the prostrate Beowulf's corslet. During the struggle Beowulf succeeds in raising himself up, and he observes among the armour (*on searwum*, cp. v. 323) a splendid sword, with which he deals a death-blow at the she-wolf's neck.

Now it cannot be an original feature of the story that during this hot encounter Beowulf should take the opportunity of jumping aside to the wall and taking down a sword which was hanging there. In the original saga the she-wolf was in all probability clad in full armour, with one sword in her belt or her hand, and the other hanging from her byrnie (*on byrnan*). When Beowulf was able to get up after his hard wrestle with her, he grabs at the she-wolf's sword which she is not using. The fact that the monster wore armour explains the expression that she 'drew her sword,' and Beowulf's hug during the struggle, in which he seizes the unused sword on her armour, and finally, why he directed his blows first at her head and then at her neck. For, as in the relief on the Torslunda plate, the she-wolf did not wear a helmet. As a contest between an armed

man and an armoured but helmet-less she-wolf, who had the mastery at a certain stage of the fight, is a theme which perhaps occurs in art and literature only in these two synchronous examples, their similarity is evidence for a basic connection between the traditions on which the Anglo-Saxon skald and the Öland artist worked.

Finally, our inquiry yields a result which is of great importance, but which I can only touch upon here. We have seen how close is the agreement between the objects of a certain class which we possess, and which come to us from the sixth and seventh centuries, and those which are portrayed in *Beowulf*. Equally close is the likeness between the sword which Svava shows Helgê at Sigarsholm and those which we have discussed above. I have already mentioned the damascening (*ormr dreyrfáþr*) which is usual on swords for more than five hundred years, and which is therefore of no use as evidence. Some of the other features—such as rings—are however peculiar to swords of our period, and others, such as the golden hilt and the snake-like ornamentation on the hilt, are at least very rare on swords of later date. If one compares the Vallstenarum sword with the description in the Eddic poem, we see how close the resemblance is.

Thus we have conclusive evidence that certain parts of the Helgê poetry deal with events of the period about A.D. 600, *i.e.*, centuries earlier than one is disposed to think on purely philological grounds. The designations of helmets during the Viking period furnish us, as has been shown above (p. 18), with confirmation of our theory.

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# ARCHÆOLOGICAL NOTES ON BEOWULF.<sup>1</sup>

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In *Beowulf* we are told in many places of helmets surmounted by swine-figures, and of swords ornamented with rings, and as both these objects belong to a period extending roughly from A.D. 550 to A.D. 650, it is evident that the *Beowulf*-lays in their original form were composed within that limit of time.

The objects referred to are found very sparingly in England, but in greater numbers in Scandinavia, and as the lays treat of Northern events, we may look for other archæological illustrations with the *Beowulf*-text within the limits of Scandinavia, as well.

According to *Beowulf*, the Swedish king Ongentheow fought a disastrous battle against the Geats under king Hygelac. During this battle Ongentheow has to defend himself in person against two warriors of the Geats' army. He strikes one to the ground, but is immediately afterwards killed by the other. His body is plundered, and the Swedes, who had not long before been victorious, and who are looked upon in *Beowulf* as the most formidable enemies of the Geats, suffer a complete defeat. It is consequently not to be wondered at that the king of the Geats rewards the slayer of his adversary in a princely fashion. He gives him his daughter, and *hund ðūsenda landes and locenra bēaga*

<sup>1</sup> This collection of notes is in no way intended to be exhaustive, but should be regarded only as scattered contributions to the archæological study of *Beowulf*.

(vv. 2994,5). These hundred thousand evidently consist of a number of the current units of weight and value, that is to say, 'marks' (= *libra*, pounds).

The two last-quoted words are taken in all translations into modern languages as meaning twisted or plaited rings. The word *locenra* (gen. pl) is derived from *lucan*, to wind, enclose, intertwine, and is used also in *Beowulf* in *locene leoðosyrca* (vv. 1505, 1890), and *handlocen gūðbyrne* (v. 320), to describe the construction of the war-corslet. These corslets consisted of rings, which were not individually plaited or twisted, but of plain rings, intertwined with each other (see Fig. 16). As we have no instance of any other meaning of the word, we may assume that here also

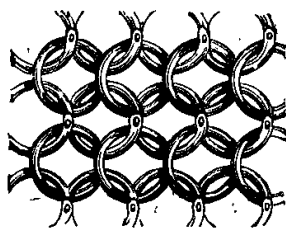


FIG. 16.

Portion of a ring-corslet of iron, showing arrangement of rings: from a grave at Öremölla, Skåne.  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

it signifies rings which are intertwined or linked together. In order that these rings should be of high value—as would seem to be required by the context—they must have been of gold. In the Scandinavian museums are to be seen very numerous examples of gold rings, which are considered to belong to the sixth century and the time before and after it, and of which some are still, and others have been, interlocked, so that they form a sort of chain. Figure 17 shows such a chain from Narfveryd, in the parish of Vallerstad, East Götland. It is unnecessary to give a catalogue of such finds, since rings of this kind are found throughout the whole Scandinavian territory. The

theory, long since accepted by archæologists, that these rings constituted a medium of exchange, thus receives literary support in this passage.



FIG. 17.

Linked gold rings, from Narfveryd, East Götland.  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

Interesting is the thought that even as early as (about) the year 600, real property could be bought, although in consequence of the poetical exaggeration of the sum mentioned, we cannot form any idea of the relative value of land and monetary-rings at that time.

A ring of quite another kind is described in another passage of the *Beowulf*. The queen of the Danes, Wealhtheow, appears in the festal hall, *under gylðnum bēage* (v. 1163), by which it is evidently meant that she wore a golden diadem. Numerous finds of rings which may be regarded as head-rings, are extant from various periods of the Iron Age. Rings of a certain size may, however, have served equally well as neck-rings, head-rings, or, when twined in a spiral, as arm-rings. Finds of diadems of the period after the commencement of the fourth century after Christ are very doubtful. I may, however, refer to a well-authenticated case from Bornholm,<sup>1</sup> in which a bronze ring (Fig. 18) stood

<sup>1</sup> Vedel, p. 67; cp. also SHM. inv. 618, of gold.

edgewise round the skull of a skeleton. The find originates from the sixth century. It is probable that many other rings of this period were also circlets for the head.

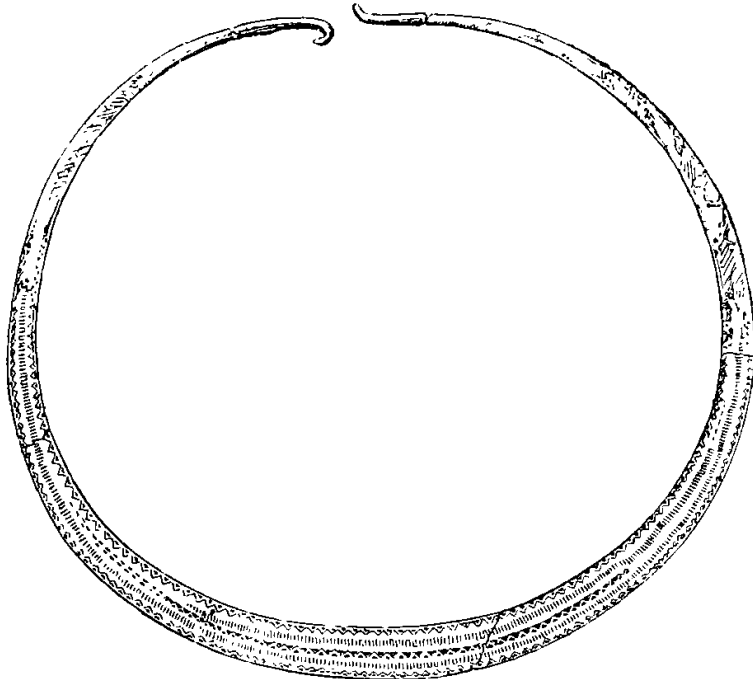


FIG. 18.

Bronze diadem from a grave at Saltuna, Bornholm.  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

We are carried back to a date certainly not earlier than that just referred to by a plaintive cry in the poem. In the presence of a sad bereavement a chieftain sings of the pleasures of this passing life—"There is no joy of harp, no good hawk (*hafoc*) sweeping through the hall, nor does the swift steed paw the castle yard" (vv. 2462 ff). The expression about the hawk shows that the bird was tame. The word *hafoc*, like the Icelandic *haukr*, had therefore a wider meaning than 'hawk' and included also, *e.g.*, the falcon. In the third Vendel-grave remains of an eagle-owl and a gerfalcon were discovered, which shows clearly that falcons were tamed in Sweden as far back as the seventh century, probably for the chase, so that in this respect also *Beowulf* reflects Northern custom during that century.

It is remarkable how many agreements with things described in *Beowulf* are furnished by the same graves—the older Vendel-graves. These falcons, ringed-swords and helmets are illustrations of the great Anglo-Scandinavian poem from the domain of archæological fact.

One thing—a treasure-cave—is however mentioned in *Beowulf*, of which no example has ever been found, or ever will be found among the Scandinavian remains from the seventh century. Beowulf ends his life in fight with a fiery winged dragon, which watches over a hoard of treasure, but the statements as to where the contest took place are inconsistent with one another. It is quite obvious from the description in vv. 2241ff. that the poet conceived the hoard to be hidden in a grave-mound. On one occasion the place is stated to have been a high mound of stones or a stone barrow (*stānbeorh*, v. 2213). As a grave-mound might consist either wholly or partly of a cairn, these statements need not necessarily be regarded as conflicting. The word *beorh*, which is used several times to indicate the place where the treasure was buried, must in that case always mean ‘grave-mound.’

In entire opposition to this stand the statements that the dragon, who brooded over the gold in a cave under the ground (v. 2410 f.), spewed fire through an arch of stone when awaiting attack (2545); that he lived in a huge treasure-house (2279) supported by stone arches, resting on pillars or columns (2718); and finally, that the exterior of the dragon’s abode is several times called a wall (*weall*).

These statements, which agree as between themselves, but differ from those previously mentioned, can only be explained on the assumption that an old lay was subsequently worked over, and that additions were

made to it.<sup>1</sup> Of the two ideas it is natural to suppose that the one of a grave-mound as a hiding-place for treasure was the earliest, partly because of its greater simplicity, and partly because, so long as burials in mounds obtained, reports of treasures being buried with the dead must always have been current.

The other idea of a huge subterranean hall, with vaulted openings in the wall, and an arched roof of stone, resting on pillars, which on account of the weight of the super-incumbent arches must also have been of stone, is much more complicated, and consequently later in time. Nor can it have arisen in Scandinavia, for stone vaulting of this kind was not known there during the pre-Christian time. On the other hand, it is easily explainable if it originated in England, which had been occupied only two centuries before by the vault-building Romans. The construction of the hall is stated, at v. 2717, to have been the work of giants. We have here an instance of the belief, common in all European lands, that the older inhabitants of the country, who erected monuments of unusually imposing dimensions, were of another race—dwarfs, trolls, or giants. Now on several occasions giants appear in *Beowulf* as the makers of artistic swords, which were then still employed, but which were not manufactured in the country, but in the lands to the South.<sup>2</sup> The Anglo-Saxon conception of giants was that of a strange, remote, half legendary people, of high technical skill. When the Romans evacuated England, they drew away to the South for ever, and it was natural that the monuments they left behind them should be regarded as the work of a race which had disappeared from England and who were endowed with extraordinary technical powers. Moreover, if we leave out of con-

<sup>1</sup> This question is further discussed in the Essay *On the Dragon's Hoard in Beowulf*. See *post.*—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> Lorange, *Den yngre jernalders sverd*.

sideration the easily explained confusion between the races which then and previously inhabited the Roman provinces in the South, the idea had some historical justification. The French epic poetry of the Middle Ages embodies a like conception of the Roman architectural remains.<sup>1</sup>

The Beowulfine lays, which related to the fight at the grave-mound, were thus expanded and blended in England with other lays, in which a certain awe at the Roman remains, with their wonderful vault-construction, is exhibited.

The winged dragon with whom Beowulf fights for the hoard has also no archæological counterpart in the North during the time about or soon after A.D. 600. We know the like of Grendel and his mother, whom Beowulf overcame, from the Torslunda plates and one of the Vendel-helmets,<sup>2</sup> and these monsters no doubt already had their place in the lays, before they migrated from Scandinavia to England. Serpents also occur in the art of the North.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand winged dragons first occur towards the year 900, and then in numbers, probably through Anglo-Saxon influence, literary and artistic. Hence the dragon fight in *Beowulf* must belong to Anglo-Saxon, and not Northern, tradition.

Whether the original form of the saga—that as to a fight at a grave-mound—is Northern, is difficult to decide on the scanty indications we possess. Similar contests occur later in Northern literature, and the occurrence of such a theme is easily explained. As the traditions about a hero always end with the death of the hero, we may assume that this story of a fight occurred in some Northern saga, although in another form.

<sup>1</sup>*Histoire littéraire de France par les religieux Bénédictins, etc.*, XXII., 648f.      <sup>2</sup>See Fig. 22.      <sup>3</sup>See Figs. 31 to 59. Vedel, Figs. 77, 78, 92. Montelius, *SHM. Kort beskrifning*, 1901, p. 72, No. 154.

The archæological material which we have made use of has helped us to determine that the Beowulf-lays (we are not concerned here with the Scandinavian name of the hero) existed in the North during the sixth century and the period about A.D. 600, and that after the migration to England the lays about the hero's last fight were expanded and re-cast in accordance with Anglo-Saxon conceptions.

A weapon which is employed both in war and the chase is mentioned at verses 1437,8. Strange sea-beasts are hunted by a company of Danes and Geats. One is struck by an arrow and rendered insensible. Then he is attacked with war-barbed boar-spears (*eoforspreotum heorohōcyhtum*).<sup>1</sup> The kind of spear was evidently that for throwing—a javelin; and its name shows that it was used both in boar-hunting and war. Lastly, the second word explains to us that it was provided with hooks or barbs.

There are, as far as I am aware, no well-authenticated finds of the sixth and seventh centuries which furnish us with examples of such-like spears, which cease with the moss-finds. We turn back therefore, to our classic source, the Vendel-graves. The helmet from grave No. 14 shows two warriors engaged in single combat (Fig. 19). The darts have evidently been thrown from a distance, and the warriors have afterwards closed on each other with swords. Javelins of this kind might evidently, in view of their relative handiness (cp. for example the lances on the other Vendel-plates or the Torslunda-plates) have been used both in the chase and—as in the example before us—in war. They are, as in *Beowulf*, furnished with barbs, and we thus have here another parallel between that poem and the Vendel find.

<sup>1</sup> *Heorohōcyht* is not war-barbed, but keenly-barbed.—*Ed.*





FIG. 19.

Decorative (bronze) plate from a helmet (Fig. 9), found in grave No. 14, at Vendel in Uppland. <sup>11</sup>.

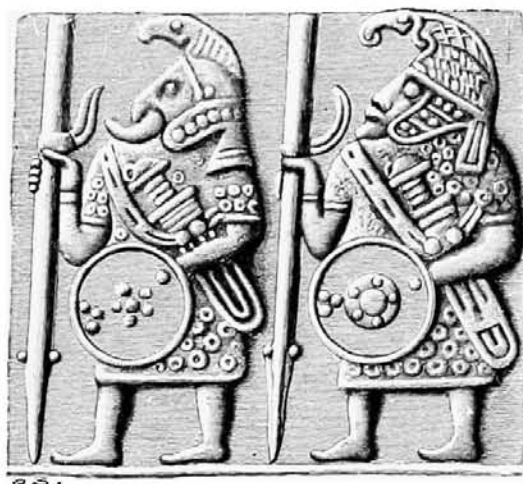


FIG. 20.

Decorative (bronze) plate from a helmet found in grave No. 14, at Vendel in Uppland. <sup>11</sup>.

The *Beowulf* contains a fine and graphic sketch of the Geatish warriors marching in a body, with Beowulf at their head, towards Hrothgar's hall (vv. 303-5, 320-335):—

“ Boar shapes glittered  
o'er the cheek-guards ;    gilt and gleaming,  
hardened by fire.” . . .

- 320    “ The street was stone-paven ;    together they went  
with the path as their guide,    and each war byrnie shone—  
each bright iron ring    hard and linked by the smith  
sang out in their ranks    as they hied them along  
on their way to the hall    in their war-harness dread.
- 325    They put up their shields    these sea-weary men  
against the house wall,    —their buckles right hard.  
Then bent they to bench    the men's byrnies rang—  
their harness of war.    The javelins stood,  
the mariner's arms,    in a heap by themselves—
- 330    ash-wood grey at the tip    —for the iron-clad troop  
with weapons was brave.    There, then, a proud chief  
asked the warrior-troop    to what stock they belonged.
- ‘ Whence have ye brought    these plated shields,  
these corslets gray    and visored helms—
- 335    this heap of war-shafts ? . . .

It should be noticed with what gusto the court-poet describes the martial procession, a spectacle which was peculiarly attractive in that ornament and armour-loving time. Translate this description into the art of the period, and we get the picture on one of the Torslunda tablets, or still better, on one of those from the helmet of Vendel-grave No. 14 (Fig. 20). We see the warriors marching on after each other in procession, with boar-helmets and face-guards, war-byrnies and ring-swords, attached loosely, so that they would klink against the byrnies as they went, with shields and lances. There must have been many such like processions which had gladdened the eyes of the poet and the artist. Otherwise one would almost be tempted to believe that it is the procession of the plucky Geats to King Hrothgar's hall, which is portrayed in the reliefs.

If we attempted to trace the original Northern form of the saga about the dragon fight, we should arrive at a result reminding us very much of a bit of Northern folk-lore. I quote here a version of this story as it is found in Öland<sup>1</sup>:—

“Fire from a dragon appears from time to time issuing from one spot or another in the ground near a cairn or similar object. Some treasure lies concealed in the cairn, and the problem is how to get at it, for the dragon is not easy to tackle. When one has got sufficiently near, one should throw a knife with a steel blade or one's right shoe into the fire, and then cast oneself prostrate on the ground with the legs crossed. The object of this procedure is that the dragon immediately rushes towards the person whose property has been thrown into the fire in order to kill him, but the sign of the cross keeps him off, and he hurries away from his treasure, which is then taken by the treasure-hunter.”

<sup>1</sup>Th. Engström. *Öland, dens historia, land och folk*, p. 120.

There are two points to be specially noted in this contest for the treasure. The first consists in the throwing of the steel knife into the flame of the dragon, and the second in the making of the sign of the cross, which decides the matter in favour of the man.

The appeal to another power is evidently Christian in this version, and it must thus have had a different form in the original saga. In the *Beowulf*-poem, Beowulf first attacks the fire-dragon with his sword, but does not succeed in killing the monster. Then Wiglaf, Beowulf's companion in war, joins with his lord in finishing the business. As the dragon is not stated in the story to have been winged,<sup>1</sup> it is probable that its form was that of a serpent—a form which, as I have already observed, occurs in Northern archæological monuments. Cairn, hoard, fire, dragon, contest, the unsuccessful attack, help and victory, are common to *Beowulf* and the Öland account, which cannot be presumed to have been influenced by the Anglo-Saxon poem.

We may suppose the popular conception to have been taken up into heroic poetry. The treasure-hunter becomes a prince, and his helper an ætheling. The fight is with a serpent either upon or hard by a cairn.

Now let us turn back again to the Vendel-graves. On the helmet in grave No. 1 the rectangular plates round the helmets contain two repeated pictures. One exhibits an armoured chieftain riding, his horse being led by a man. The latter is figured on a smaller scale than the horse and rider, evidently in order to show his lower rank—a feature which constantly appears in

<sup>1</sup> I suppose Stjerna is referring to the Öland story which he has just quoted from Engström. (Cp. p. 39). In the *Beowulf* the dragon's wings are often referred to, and we may note also the frequent use of the classical loan-word *draca*, side by side with the native *wyrn*.—Ed.

primitive art.<sup>1</sup> Behind the rider's head two birds are flying (Fig. 21). Possibly there may have been birds in front of the head also. The other picture represents a rider dressed in the same way, and also with two birds, but aiming at a serpent with his lance.

It was evidently the intention of the craftsman here to illustrate two episodes from the same saga. In the first picture we have the king starting out on his fight against the serpent and accompanied by a person on foot, who, as the artist has specially included him in the picture, will also presumably have taken some part in the contest.

The second picture shows us the king riding on his way to the fight with the serpent. In the *Beowulf* the course of the fight is that the king first begins the attack on the dragon alone, but when he suffers a reverse, Wiglaf, a Scyfling noble—who answers to the man on foot in the picture—goes to his help.<sup>2</sup> It is not stated whether Beowulf was on horseback when he began the fight, which at a certain point he seems to have engaged in on foot (v. 2544), but it is probably to be explained by supposing that the artist wished to show the serpent as the object of a ride.

This interpretation of the plates as illustrating some Northern prototype of the Beowulf-saga, does not accord with the usual view that the rider is the god Odin. But there are some considerations which tell against this latter view. What the object of the artist was appears from the figure of the snake which is found in the border of one of the pictures. It is the saga about the fight with that snake, who turns an open mouth towards the rider, which has formed the motive

<sup>1</sup> More probably, I think, the small scale is a naïve device for getting an uninterrupted full-length portrait of the man into the scene.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> But the man on foot in the picture is apparently of lower degree than Wiglaf. The latter is said to have had a shield, sword, corslet and helmet when he accompanied Beowulf (vv. 2610, 2659, etc.).—*Ed.*

for both pictures. Now we are nowhere told of a fight between Odin and a serpent, and it is inconceivable that the memory of such a (mythical) fight against the Father of the gods should have been entirely lost.

The illustrations on the Vendel helmets and the contemporary or somewhat older Torslunda-plates can in no case be certainly interpreted as representations of gods. One of the plates undoubtedly reproduces an important scene in the Beowulf-saga, and the men in armour, in procession, etc., who are represented, evidently belong to hero-sagas or actual facts. Thus we may assume the same about the figures on the helmet now in question, which there is no reason to regard as occupying an exceptional position.

Finally, Odin has no followers in any of the Odin-legends. The grounds on which Odin can be identified with the chief figure on the helmet are evidently that he is going out on horseback and equipped with a lance, and that he has birds following him.

Whether Odin was a rider in the Uppland version is uncertain. In Southern Scandinavia he has certainly been so regarded, and probably also along the West Coast of Sweden. In Iceland and Norway however he appears nearly always as walking. His picture in the temple at Upsala seems not to have been the representation of a rider. It is possible that the rider of the Gotland bas-reliefs is intended for Odin, although on these we principally meet with illustrations from the sagas and not from myths relating to the gods. At any rate the horse in these representations has eight legs, which certainly indicates Sleipnir, whilst the horse of the Vendel-pictures has only four. The lance by the rider's side is not characteristic of that personage, for most of the other warriors on the Torslunda and Vendel-plates also carry a lance. That a king or captain should be depicted as riding and armed is not very remarkable

in itself. More important are the two birds, in which one is inclined to see Odin's two ravens, Hugin and Munin. Whether these birds, which belong to Icelandic mythology and are of a somewhat abstract character, entered also into the Swedish conception of Odin, we know not. But these ravens do not fit in with the situation figured on the plates. They are symbols of Odin's memory and wisdom, and fly away every morning to bring him news. In the pictures we see a fully-armed man going out to fight, and the birds must thus be a symbol for the coming contest, for we know that in the Northern conception birds of prey were the inseparable accompaniment of warfare. In the Northern poetry eagles and ravens fly round foreboding war and slaughter, and exulting in it. They show themselves even at the birth of a war-hero (*Helgakv. I.*); they hover hungry and exultant over the battle-fields that are to be, and they follow him from battle to battle. In the *Hrafnsmál* the Valkyria meets a raven with a piece of carrion in its beak and asks it whence it comes. The raven wipes its blood-stained beak and replies, "We follow Harold, Halfdan's son, ever since we broke from the egg." This was undoubtedly the idea of the artist with the birds he figured, and thus did his public understand his meaning. Where a battle is impending, thither flock eagles and ravens, and follow the prince to the place of slaughter; for birds have the prophetic instinct.<sup>1</sup> It seems to me that this explanation is more natural, since we are dealing with so primæval and naïve an art, than the current one, which presupposes for the seventh century an iconographic ritual like that of the Middle Ages. The place where the serpent, the hero's adversary, was finally killed bears in the poem the name of Eagles' Ness (*Earnanæs*).

<sup>1</sup> *Nord. tiddsskr. f. filologi* III., 129, 131; Bugge, *Edda, Fafnesmål*, 41 f. note II. SFT, x, 175.

With the explanation I have put forward, the pictures of serpents to which I have referred above (p. 39) also become intelligible. On three of them, besides yet another which was found in Gotland and stands outside the series just mentioned, a great bird is depicted, which kills or devours a serpent. They are not very different in date from the Vendel helmet, and all belong to the eastern part of Scandinavia. Moreover, the custom

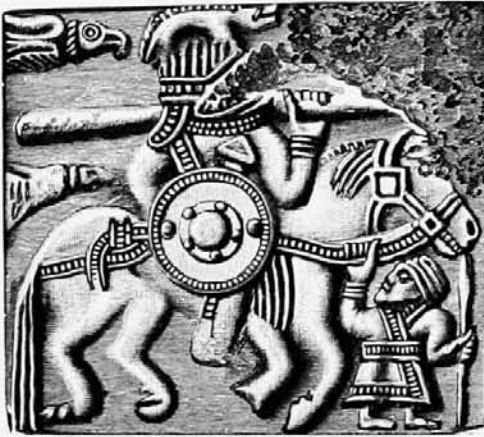


FIG. 21.



FIG. 22.

Decorative (bronze) plates from a helmet found in grave No. 1 at Vendel, Uppland.

of putting figures of birds on helmets is probably connected with the idea which has been put forward as to the significance of the birds. They perched on the fore part of the helmet, so as to be turned towards the adversary, the idea being that they inspired fear and portended his fall.

The agreements which I have found between the Vendel helmet and the *Beowulf*, as we have it, are thus the following :—In both cases the fight is one between a prince and a serpent ; the prince has a coadjutor of lower rank, and the flying birds (as well as the fights between serpents and birds in the ornaments above referred to) have a certain parallel in the name of the serpent's death-place (*Earnanæs*).

Perhaps the remark may be made that the helmet

was found at Vendel, in Swedish territory, while the *Beowulf* is a Geatish saga; but there is no reason why this saga should not have been current in that territory in some form or other. Besides, the fact that the helmet was found in a grave in Uppland is no proof that it was manufactured there. In many passages of the *Beowulf* we are told of weapons, etc., changing owners by way of gift or as booty. No doubt they often changed ownership in still larger numbers in the way of commerce, although a heroic poem naturally takes no account of such things. The pictures on the helmets exhibit a marked family likeness to the Torslunda-plates, which also implies a connection as regards the manner and place of fabrication. One of the plates represents a man with an axe taking a chain off the neck of a bear (Fig. 5). Exactly the same figures, in the same position and with the same surroundings, are to be found on the oldest Vendel-helmet, with the sole difference that the man is differently clad.<sup>1</sup> On the helmet in grave No. 14 are compartments, on which are figured two armed warriors in Indian file, and we find the same combination on one of the Torslunda-plates.

These cannot have been mere chance coincidences. According to a view put forward by O. Sörling, the

<sup>1</sup> I cannot agree with Schück's view (SFT, xi, 138 ff) that this figure illustrates the saga of Ragnar Lodbrok (*i.e.*, Ragnar with the shaggy trousers). There is no episode in that saga answering to the picture, and the only point of resemblance is to be found in the material of the trousers. There are, among the fragments of helmets in the Vendel-grave No. 1, pieces of stamped plates depicting exactly the same scene in the same saga (see Fig. 22). As the man in that figure is clothed quite differently, and lacks the shaggy trousers, these particular garments were evidently of no importance in the saga which the artists (or artist) wished to illustrate, whilst in a graphic representation of the Lodbrok saga they would have been essential. The art of the time is rude but robust, and delights in variety. All the persons on the plates and the fragments of the helmets are more or less differently clad, and the rough trousers on the figure of the man in question need therefore only be regarded as one of the customary variants in the style of clothing. The technique which is employed in order to reproduce the peculiar material of the trousers is not met with in representations of hides of beasts, but is on the contrary found in those of ring-corslets.



artist, which, one may say, has been generally accepted, the Öland plates were models ; and as objects of this kind cannot be supposed to be of any interest to others than those who with their help fashioned objects of a kind of which the helmet gives us an indication, it is quite inconceivable that they should have been manufactured at any distance from the place where they were found. But in that case the Vendel helmets, which have on them pictures agreeing with the representations on the model plates, must have been made by persons who used such plates with figures belonging to the same series as those from Öland. In saying this, we do not affirm that they were certainly made in Öland, but that the plates which were used must have had Öland artists as their authors, or at least persons standing in intimate relation with the art of Öland.

One of the model-plates, that which represents an armed she-wolf, reproduces a scene from the Beowulf-saga. And if the above conclusions are correct, two of the three pictorial representations on the Vendel helmet from grave No. 1 also belong to the Beowulf-saga, and it is the third picture on the same helmet which agrees most closely with the picture on another of the Öland-plates.

Thus we have an episode of the Beowulf-saga in its popular form (fire-dragon and contest) circulating in Öland, and a scene from the same episode reproduced on a helmet, which gives evidence in another way of originating from an Öland artist's hand, and finally, we have also from Öland a portrayal of another scene from the Beowulf-saga.

These concatenations seem to me to furnish us with certain indications concerning the geography of the *Beowulf*, which I shall endeavour to make use of on a further occasion.

## VENDEL AND THE VENDEL CROW.

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In Vol. 12 of Paul and Braune's *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* (p. 16), Bugge instituted a comparison between the battle in which the Swedish king Ongentheow died in fight against the Geats, as the *Beowulf* describes it, and that in which the Swedish king Ottar fell, according to the *Ynglinga saga*, at Vendel in Jutland.

Bugge's remarks were as follows:—

“The statements in *Beowulf* about the fall of Ongentheow are more closely comparable with the lines of the *Ynglingatal* about the death of Ottar, which we find included in chapter 31 of the *Ynglinga saga*, than with the prose description in the saga: for the writer of the saga may have framed a detailed description from the brief indications of the *Ynglingatal*. An important difference between the *Ynglingatal* and the Ags. poem is that in the former Ottar (hence, according to Ari, Egil, the father of Ottar) fell in Vendel, Jutland, but in the latter Ongentheow fell in his own land. On the other hand I find agreement in the circumstance that Ottar (or, according to the legend known to Ari, the father of Ottar) was not killed by the Danish king, but by two Jutish *jarlar*, as Ongentheow was by two followers of the Jutish king. That the *jarlar* were brothers, like Wulf and Eofor in the *Beowulf*-epos, is not said either in the saga, or in the *Ynglingatal*, but is stated, on the other hand, in the *Hist. Norv.* (p. 101), no doubt after an indication in Ari fróði. The English

names (Wulf and Eofor) are however quite different from the Northern ones (Vottr and Fasti). While Wulf and Eofor are in the service of the Jutish king Hygelac, the king of Vott and Fasti is on the other hand Frodi, who lived at Hlethra in Zealand. Here, as in other cases, a saga about a Jutish king seems to have been transferred to an East Danish king after the incorporation of Jutland in the Danish kingdom. In the *Ynglingatal* it is specially said that the corpse of the Swedish king was torn in pieces by eagles. The same idea obviously lies at the base of his nickname—the Vendel Crow:—he was torn in pieces in Vendel by eagles, like a dead crow. With this we may compare *Beowulf* vv. 2939-2941. Ongentheow threatens that he will glut the birds of prey with the corpses of Jutes, and according to the Northern account he himself met with the same fate as that with which he threatened the Jutes in the English poem.

The father of Ohthere is called Ongentheow in Ags., and the father of Óttarr, Egill in ON. Ongentheow and Egill are etymologically quite distinct. Perhaps in primitive Norse there was, besides a name which answered to the Ags. Ongentheow, a familiar form \**Angila* (formed like primitive Norse *Mārila*, *Frōhila*, *Niūwila*) and in later times, as diminutives in *-ila* (masc.) went out of use in the old Norse language, \**Angila* might easily become \**AngilaR*, *Egill*, in the saga.

If I am right in supposing that Ari fróði was acquainted with an earlier tradition as to the Swedish king Egill and his son Ottar than that which appears in the *Ynglingatal*, the point is certainly not unimportant for the criticism of that poem, as regards its authenticity and its historical value.

The Norweco-Icelandic account of Egill and his son Ottar is not derived from Swedish but from Danish

folklore, for it would be Danes, and not Swedes, who would use the mocking expression 'Vendel Crow.'

On this hypothesis, the nickname *enn upplenzki* may have been given by the Danes or Norwegians to Áli in order to distinguish him from the other heroes of saga who bore the name of Áli."

Bugge's object is, amongst other things, to produce evidence by means of this comparison in favour of the identity of the Geats and Jutes. But even without accepting this theory, the similarity of the two battles is very important, and the coincidences which Bugge pointed out cannot be fortuitous. If the ordinary hypothesis is correct, that Snorre's prose is in such a case as this based on older poetical or prose sources, the statements in which Snorre embellished with matter of his own, attention may be drawn to a few other resemblances between the *Ynglinga saga* and the *Beowulf*. In both cases the Swedish king is the attacking party, and the Swedes are at first superior in numbers, the result of the battle being consequent upon the arrival of reinforcements for their enemies (*en svá sem lið fell af Dönum, kom annat meira þar ór heruðum*).<sup>1</sup>

I will thus start from the assumption that both battles were really identical in some older tradition. Bugge considers it as "an important difference between the *Ynglingatal* and the description in *Beowulf*, that the theatre of the struggle has been shifted in the former from Ongentheow's own land to Jutland." This divergence is, however, sufficient to upset the whole of his well-planned theory. It is evident that the sobriquet 'Vendel Crow' is a primitive one. It cannot have originated at some date long after the battle, as a result of literary craftsmanship, but must have been

<sup>1</sup> "But as the folk of the Danes fell, more came in their stead from the country-sides around." *Heimskringla*, 31, in Magnússon and Morris' trans.

attached to the dead king's name immediately after his fall, and then have been disseminated by the common talk of the people. Hence Ongentheow must undoubtedly have fallen in Vendel.

Now the poet of *Beowulf*, whose trustworthiness cannot be called in question, tells us that Ongentheow fell in his own land, that is, in Sweden, or, to speak more precisely, in Svealand. The historic king Ongentheow must thus have died at the same time in Vendel and in Svealand, or, in other words, the Vendel which is referred to in the opprobrious epithet 'Vendel Crow' and in the verses of the *Ynglingatal*, was situated not in Denmark but in Svealand.

Nothing is stated in the *Ynglingatal* as to the geographical situation of Vendel, and the comparatively detailed description in Snorre's prose is not of such a nature that it could have previously existed in verse. There is thus no obstacle from that quarter to locating the field of battle in the land mentioned in *Beowulf*. A battle cannot very well be called after a large territory like the Jutish Vendel, but might very properly be named after a definite spot. That the battle should later on be localised by the Danes in the Vendel which they knew best, is consistent with a habit which is observable everywhere in historical sagas.

As regards the Swedish Vendel, we have a few further particulars. It is evident that the name 'Vendel Crow' must have arisen and become current among the victors—not among the defeated Swedes. In order to obtain a permanent footing among a foreign people this name must have been associated with a place which was known outside the borders of Sweden for other reasons, and which must consequently have been a place of importance.

It is true that we have in the name Sven Grathe an example of a king being called after a fairly unimpor-

tant place, which was the scene of his violent death, as Vendel was of that of Ongentheow. But at the same time it is to be observed that the heath known as Grathe lay quite close to Viborg, the seat of justice and capital of Jutland, and that King Šven fell among his own countrymen, who gave him the additional name.

The important place known as Vendel was situated in Uppland. One of King Ongentheow's sons, Onela (*Áli*) is called in the *Ynglingatal* '*enn upplenzki*,' which has long been taken as referring to Uppland in Sweden. I take the explanation of this singular name to be that Onela, during his conflicts with his nephews, contrived, until killed by Eadgils, to keep a foothold in Uppland, and thus to retain the sovereignty over the Swedes. Uppland was thus the most important region in the Swedish kingdom during the time between A.D. 500 and A.D. 700, and this entirely agrees with the circumstance that grave-finds of this period are more numerous and richer in Uppland than in all the other provinces of the Swedish mainland put together (see Montelius' *Statens Hist. Museum, Kort beskrifning*, Stockholm, 1901, pp. 66-72). In *Beowulf* the position is that the Swedish king, hard pressed, retreats to his fastness (*fæsten*, v. 2950). We may take it for granted that the latter was situated in his central province, that is to say, in Uppland. An indication of this is to be found in the use of the word *ufor* (v. 2951) in relation to Ongentheow's march to Vendel.<sup>1</sup>

We may hence consider the existence of an important fortified place called Vendel, belonging to the Swedish kings and situated in Uppland, to be established. The reason why this place is altogether left in obscurity in the literature which has come down to us about the

<sup>1</sup>This is doubtful. It is not clear whether *ufor* means 'further off' or 'to higher ground' in this passage.—*Ed.*

affairs of Sweden, is probably that at the time of the conversion of the country to Christianity, Upsala, as a more important place, attracted the saga-traditions to itself, and also that the literature of Western Scandinavia in later times took the statements which may have been current as to Vendel in Uppland as referring to Vendel in Jutland, which was more familiar to those who, in the regions near the Skager Rack and the North Sea, committed the sagas to writing.

Vendel in Uppland seems, notwithstanding this, to have been referred to in the older tradition in a few instances, besides that which we have already mentioned. One of King Hrothgar's chiefs, Wulfgar, is called *Vendla leod* in *Beowulf* (v. 348). Now in the event of the Geats being Jutes, it is not possible that *Vendla* should refer in this passage to Vendel in Jutland (*i.e.*, to Vendsyssel) which forms an integral part of the Jutish peninsula. Wulfgar comes forward and asks as to the nationality of the Geatish chief and his troop, which he could not have helped knowing if he had himself belonged to the same country.

Although, however, if the Geats are not Jutes one difficulty disappears, another arises in its place, namely, that Wulfgar must then be regarded as the Danish lord over the district of Vendel, and the poem of *Beowulf* knows nothing of such stadtholdership over regions or provinces, the king's earls being endowed instead with the ownership of lands (vv. 2607, 2994f). In order to escape from these difficulties various editors have taken refuge in the expedient of explaining *Vendla* as referring to the Vandals, an expedient which is scarcely convincing, since traces of the Vandals as a tribe are not to be found in northern Europe after the middle of the third century. We have, on the other hand, a simple explanation if we take this Vendel lord (see *e.g.*, as to '*Wiglāf, leod Scylfinga*,' v. 2602) as a person

belonging to one of the noble families residing in the Uppland Vendel. *Beowulf* furnishes us with examples on other occasions, where persons who belong to the royal family in one country are received as exiles in another country (Ecgtheow, Beowulf's father, was thus received by the Danes, vv. 463 ff), and there, like Wulfgar, enters the king's service. So Weohstan among the Geats (vv. 2612 ff. See Müllenhoff, AfdA III, 176 ff.).

This Wulfgar, from Vendel in Uppland, belongs to the Swedes. The name alliterates with Wægmund, Weohstan and Wiglaf, who all belong to the same family, a branch, probably on the female side, of the Swedish line of the Scyldings (v. 2602). Olrik has in his *Danmarks Heltedigtning* (pp. 22 ff) lately dwelt in detail upon the circumstance—first observed long ago—*e.g.*, in Dahn's *Urgeschichte der germ. Völker* (II., 2, p. 147) that the names in the same Germanic clan alliterated with each other in the centuries after Christ. It is therefore a possibility that Wulfgar, a prince of the Vendels, belonged to Weohstan's line, which may have been driven out of Sweden after Eadgils succeeded to the throne. It is interesting to observe that Wulfgar, Wiglaf, etc., not only alliterate with each other, but also with Vendel, where at least one of the families had its home. Similarly the name Upsala alliterates with the names of the Swedish kings in the poem, and Heorot, Hleire and Hringstad with those of the Danish kings.

The *Skjöldunga saga* relates that the ruler over Sweden and Denmark, King Ring, meets the brothers Alf and Yngve from Vendel, the sons of King Alf (*For-naldarsögur* I, 387; *Aarböger f.n. Oldk.*, 1894, p. 132). As the Norwegian tradition gives the names of two brothers, Alf and Yngve, both of whom are kings (*Ynglinga saga*, chap. 21), these pairs of brothers are



certainly identical. Saxo (*ed.* Holder, pp. 248, 249) tells us that King Alberus had three sons, of whom two were called Olavus and Ingo, *i.e.*, Alf and Yngve, and both in Saxo and the *Ynglinga saga* these brothers belong to the Swedish royal family. The brothers in the *Skjöldunga saga*, who are identical with them, are thus Swedish kings from Vendel, and this Vendel, as we are told in the *Skjöldunga saga*, must be the Swedish, *i.e.*, the Uppland, Vendel, not Vendel in Jutland.

In the *Helgakviða Hundingsbana* II, 35, Dag offers his sister Sigrun, as compensation for her husband's murder.

oll Vandilsvé  
ok Vígdali.

Finn Magnussen considers the first of these place-names to refer to Vendel in Jutland. Helge is, however, represented as being king over the whole of united Denmark (Bugge, *Helgedigtene*, ch. XI.), and Dag as belonging to a foreign royal family, which could thus not have been in possession of North Jutland. Dag is introduced into the poem somewhat abruptly, and the circumstance of his friendship with the other heroes, who are not Swedish kings, has evidently been brought in merely to explain his being Helge's murderer. A man with the name of Dag is mentioned in the *Ynglinga saga* (caps. 21-24) as a Swedish king. If Vandilsvé is taken as meaning the Uppland stronghold Vendel with the territory appertaining to it, the offer becomes intelligible. It must however be borne in mind that the name Dag appears on other occasions as that of a king—for example in the *Hyndluljóð* and in Saxo, *ed.* Holder, pp. 156-159—in the last case the king not being a Swede.

The comparisons which we have now made between the various references show us that Vendel was a

stronghold belonging to the Swedish king, in which he took refuge in extreme peril. Thus the name Vendel Crow is completely explained. Ongentheow, who threatens to annihilate the exhausted Geats, is himself killed instead, and that in the stronghold of his chief province, where his body is cast out as quarry for the birds of prey. The name of the Swedish king's fastness now passes into a term of reproach, with which the Geats, whose existence had lately been threatened, keep alive the memory of the fall of their dreaded enemy and of the victory they won on his own ground. One can fancy the harsh laughter which greeted the rough joke of the Norseman who first uttered it among the victorious troops.

Now let us turn from literature to geography. Vendel is at the present time the name of a church-village in northern Uppland, from three to four Swedish miles north of Upsala.<sup>1</sup> If we follow the valley of the Fyris northwards for about one and a half Swedish miles, we shall come to a place, Lena, where the Fyris, flowing from the north-east, receives a tributary stream. Far to the north we can find no really settled country near the river Fyris, which is flanked by wooded heights and by swamps, until we reach as far up as Dannemora, and even that place has to thank the iron industry of many centuries later for its importance. Now if we turn instead to the tributary river Vendel, from the north-west, we shall see that this branch must have been the main stream in ancient times. Ascending this river we pass continuously through extensive inhabited tracts on both sides, until we reach the Vendel Lake, where the settled area widens out, and somewhat further on dwindles away and ceases altogether. Close to this lake lies the

<sup>1</sup>See the map (p. 63) for the situation of this and the other places mentioned. A Swedish mile is equivalent to 6.6423 English miles.—*Ed.*

hamlet of Vendel (see Topographical Staff Maps, sheet Örbyhus). That place, which is now quite inconsiderable, was in the Middle Ages by no means unimportant, as may be seen from (amongst other things) the unusually fine church, a building belonging to the beginning of the fourteenth century. During the period of the Union (see Styffe, *Skandinavien under Unionstiden*, and *Uppland, land och folk* Vol. 1, p. 316) Vendel was the chief place in the district of Vendel, which was still called Vendil as late as 1312-1317, and embraced at that time a much larger extent of land than the present district of Örbyhus. We have no written sources going further back than the dates just mentioned.

If we wish to investigate the causes of the importance of Vendel, we must turn to the archæological finds of the district, which I can only touch upon cursorily here.

Supposing that we follow the waterway just described in a boat, from the mouth of the Fyris at Lake Mälär to Vendel, we should have, as is usual in the but slightly elevated water partings of southern Canada, to carry the boats, or in some cases their contents, over the space between Vendel Lake and the river Temnare, which is barely one Swedish mile long. And here we may note that since the period with which we are dealing, that part of Uppland has become appreciably higher above sea-level (A. G. Högbom, *Uppland, land och folk* I., 48 ff), so that the distance by land intervening between the two rivers might have been less then than it is now. Along the broad and considerable river Temnare we pass—again by boat—to its point of discharge in Löfsta Bay, close to the boundary of Gestrikland.

Along this course notable archæological finds have occurred, extending from the earliest days of the Bronze

Age (at Tierp) and the fourth period of that Age (at Håga) along to Christian times, although no doubt with many gaps, while along the Baltic coast of Uppland the finds are few and unimportant. Commercial traffic between the Gulf of Bothnia and Lake Mälär and the southern part of the Baltic must thus have followed the course we have just described. We know, indeed, that communication along these lines existed as far back as the Stone Age. Especially interesting for our purposes are a few finds on the lower Dal-elf—in which there occur at least one fibula from Gotland (of about A.D. 600) and one from the Baltic provinces (Hildebrand, *Mbl.*, 1874, p. 182)—memorials of a connection, during the period which we have under consideration, between the lands round the southern Baltic and a tract lying some few miles from the mouth of the Temnare. This explains the importance of Vendel, that place being situated at the terminal point of the water for things coming from the south, and of the land for those coming from the north. This explains also the name, for Vendel, *i.e.*, 'water,' 'place by the water,'<sup>1</sup> was a natural appellation for a place where the traveller, after a trying journey overland, could again place his boats on the much-longed-for water. What an important district Vendel and the region round it was during the Iron Age is evident from the exceptionally numerous cemeteries (for the most part not yet examined) which lie close by each other along the banks of the river (Hildebrand, *ATS* VIII. (1), 36).

The principal one of these cemeteries lay quite close to the churchyard at Vendel (Stolpe, in *ATS* VIII., Hildebrand, *ibid* ; Stolpe, *Upplands Fornminnes-*

<sup>1</sup> For a comparison of the Danish *Vendel* and other words with an Indo-European root *ven* = water (cp. especially the Lithuanian *vandil*, water), see Hellquist in K. F. Johansson's *Beitr. zu griechische Sprachkunde*, p. 149 ; also *Etymologische Bemerkungen*, IX.

*förenings tidskr.*, Vol. III.; Salin, in *Uppland, land och folk*, Vol. I., 185 ff). The oldest parts of this grave-place belong to the time when the *Beowulf* was composed, *i.e.*, about A.D. 600, and among the objects found in it there are helmets and swords and other things which agree exactly with those described in the *Beowulf* (see pp. 10 to 49). If graves have also existed belonging to the sixth century, these must have been destroyed on the laying out of the churchyard, on the border of which the older graves were situated.

This grave-place, which consists of boat-graves, is on the whole the finest we possess in Northern Europe belonging to the period in question, which points to a powerful chieftain's family having been buried there. An important circumstance, which makes this assumption a certainty is, that while the other grave-areas contain indiscriminately men's and women's graves, we have not among the fourteen known graves which this particular area contains, found a single woman's or child's grave. It was therefore a sacred princely or royal line which was buried here, the sons after the fathers.

Hildebrand (ATS. VIII (1), p. 37) has drawn attention to two properties lying close to the church at Vendel, which bear names of very ancient date — Husby and Hofgårdsberg.<sup>1</sup> Near Husby is a mound no less than thirty feet high,<sup>2</sup> that is, of dimensions comparable with that of the largest of the royal mounds at Gamla Upsala. This property lies at the intersection of cross-roads, where the country road skirting the river Vendel meets the similar road coming from the direction of the Temnare, and hence probably just at that point where those who in ancient times followed the course which

<sup>1</sup> Husby is an old name in Central and South Sweden for an estate known or assumed to have been a royal manor in heathen or mediæval times. Hofgård, in Hofgårdsberg, means an estate (gård) connected in some way with a heathen temple (hof).—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> A Swedish foot is slightly less (0.9742) than an English foot.—*Ed.*

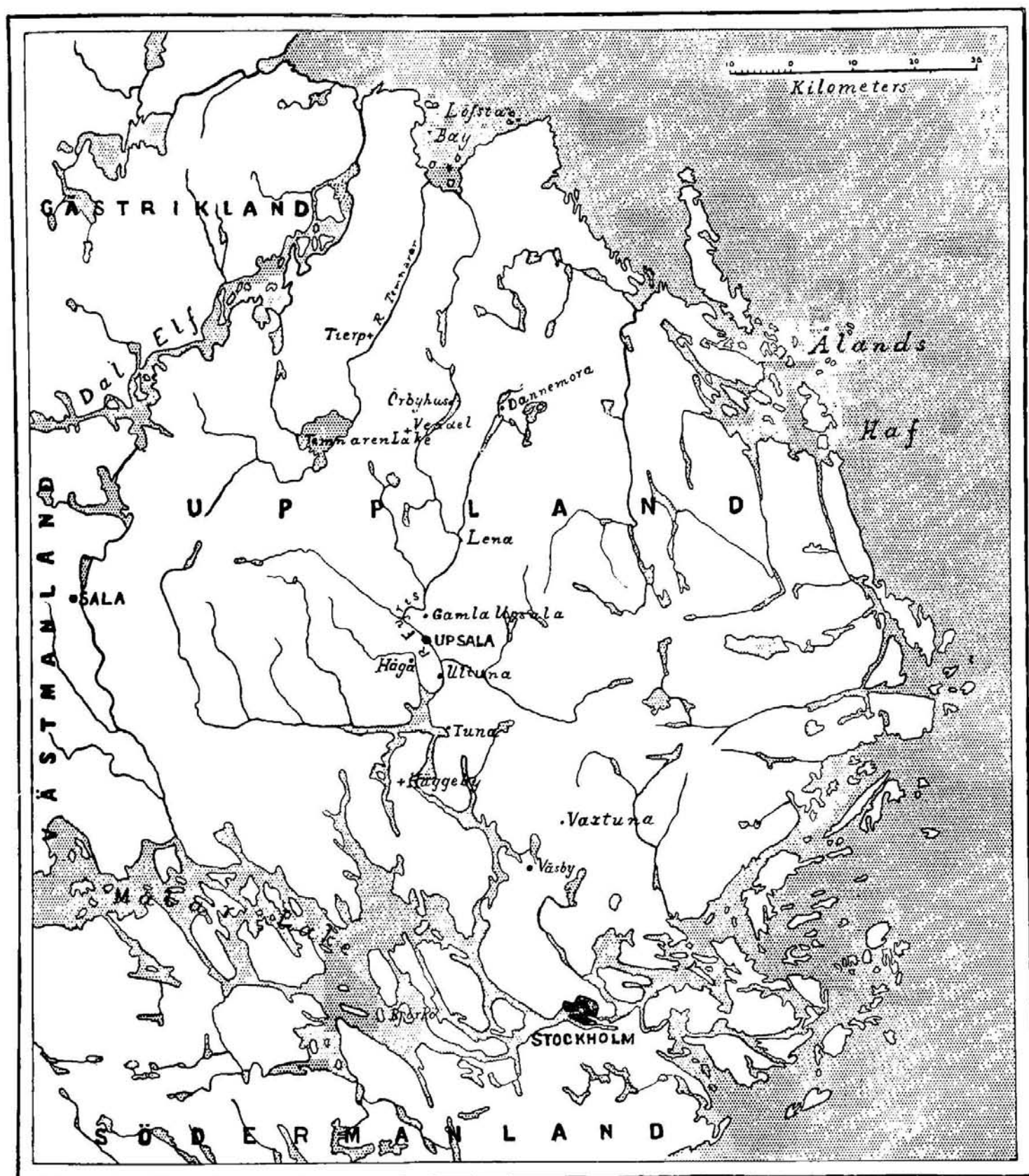
we have described above, would reach the district of Vendel.<sup>1</sup>

As it appears from a comparison of *Beowulf* with the *Ynglinga saga* that there must have been a stronghold at Vendel, which the Swedish king owned or commanded, it is interesting to learn that in the Middle Ages Husby was (as its name implies) a royal demesne.

From what we have already adduced it is clear that Vendel was a notable place during a period immediately before the Viking Age. A. G. Högbom (*l.c.* 32f) pointed out that all the more important places in the central part of Eastern Sweden lay along the banks of rivers or on the slope of a gravel ridge. It may be observed that one of the elucidating "lines of culture" which Högbom, who did not know of these conclusions of mine, drew across Uppland on account of this consideration, passes directly over Vendel.

As a result of what has gone before I consider that from about the year A.D. 500 there was an important royal fortress at Vendel in Uppland, that a Swedish royal or princely family resided there, that it was in that place that King Ongentheow died, and that the place was also of importance for other reasons.

<sup>1</sup>The author has not mentioned that this mound is now popularly known as Ottar Vendilkråka's mound. He evidently supposed that this was a modern name of literary origin, but since he wrote it has been observed in a record of the 17th century that the name King Ottar's mound was current at that time.—O. A.



K. E. Sahlström, del.

MAP OF THE PROVINCE OF UPPLAND, SWEDEN,  
AND THE SURROUNDING COUNTRY.

# SWEDES AND GEATS DURING THE MIGRATION PERIOD.<sup>1</sup>

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It has long been established that the descriptions of the feuds of the Northmen which are contained in the old Anglo-Saxon poem of *Beowulf* refer to events which happened in the North during the Migration Period. In the measure in which investigation has succeeded in separating the older from the younger parts of the ancient Northern poetry, it has discovered that epic poetry belonging to the Migration Period forms the groundwork for various poems which are preserved for us in the shape which they assumed in the Viking period, or even later. But at the same time as one places the origin of these poems further back in time, one's feeling of security as regards the accuracy of the extant poetry, and its relation to the facts which it describes, becomes lessened. The reason is, that while men possessed as regards the Viking Period, to which, in the absence of a longer perspective backwards, they ascribed the sources of pretty well all the older Northern literature of earlier, and sometimes even later, origin, an amount of material which was comparatively speaking very rich, and which illuminated various sides and shades of Northern culture, they were still quite at

<sup>1</sup> In a prefatory note to this essay, the author stated that as it was drawn up as a concise statement of the results of his studies, he had not generally given references to authorities, but that these would be found in the other essays included in this collection, in the monograph on the Tribal History of Bornholm during the Iron Age, and in a similar monograph relating to Öland (which, however, he did not live to write); and that quotations and discussions had purposely been avoided as far as possible.—*Ed.*



sea as regards the period before the ninth or tenth centuries.

In consequence of the productive labour which has been spent of late, especially by Swedish archæologists, upon the question of assigning dates to Northern remains, we have now a very complete picture, archæologically speaking, of the Migration Period in the North, as well as of the succeeding times up to the Viking Period. We have in this way obtained a trustworthy clue to the time when the Northern poems originated, but as a consequence, the problems which those poems present in themselves, so to speak, must in many cases be looked at from new points of view, and not only that, but fresh problems become associated with them.

In a comparison of the poems with the results which have been obtained by antiquarian research, it is of the first importance to get a general idea of the archæological position during the Migration Period, for if we only take account of agreements between details of form in objects and expressions in the poems, or of identity as regards the locality of archæological finds and the theatre of events described in the poem, we may easily be led to hasty conclusions, since forms which are in some respects similar, or the same localities, may play a part in, and consequently be described at, various points in time.

Before the commencement of the Migration Period proper, that is to say before about the year 400 A.D., the Danish islands had for a couple of centuries constituted beyond comparison the richest and most important part of Scandinavia. The population of those islands stood at that time in very active communication with Southern culture, and absorbed in succession a whole series of new elements of culture which were quickly extended from thence to the other

parts of Scandinavia. This state of things ceased at the end of the fourth century, and Eastern Scandinavia became of greater importance, the two large Baltic islands of Öland and Gotland becoming in the following years more than the equals of the Danish islands, if we may judge by the general archæological conditions. This change in the circumstances is connected with the fact that the old communications along the Elbe declined in significance, and that new and very important ones were being opened up along the line of the Vistula.

Some centuries before the Christian era a series of migrations from Eastern Scandinavia to the continental coast of the Baltic east of the Oder had already taken place, and the emigrants and the Scandinavians who had been left behind formed an ethnic whole—the East Germans.

Not only the objects which have been found, but the burial customs of the time, prove that the Scandinavian and Continental East Germans continued to be in touch with each other. Long before the commencement of the third century, large bodies of the continental East Germans moved down into Southern Russia, and occupied parts of the territory on the north coast of the Black Sea. During the third century and about the year 300 A.D., the country between the lower Oder and the Vistula was deserted, and the inhabitants went to help their kinsmen in the South in the attack which the latter were making on the Roman Empire. The East Germans who lived in the neighbouring parts of Scandinavia, were involved in the same movement, although not to so great an extent. As regards Bornholm, it can be shown how the greater part of the population followed their migrating kinsfolk southwards, and the same state of things no doubt obtained, although in a less degree, with the population of

Öland and Gotland, and of Southern Scandinavia generally.

In the period before and after the year 400 A.D., the advantage in the long feud between the Romans and East Germans was with the latter, and one after another of the various East German tribes took possession of Roman provinces on the Danube, the Rhine and the Mediterranean. During these struggles further reinforcements of warriors from the Scandinavian fatherland poured down to help their brethren. Types of objects belonging to the period between (say) 400 A.D. and 550 A.D., whose earlier forms belong to Scandinavia, exhibit themselves in later forms in the South.

A common trait among the East German chieftains was their tendency to collect gold in enormous quantities, and to conceal it in covered treasure-chambers. Memorials of these huge hoards have been preserved in history as well as in poetry; in the former we hear of treasures of the Ostrogoths, the Visigoths and the Vandals, and in the latter of treasures of the Ostrogoths and Burgundians, which, like those mentioned in history, undoubtedly had their counterpart in fact.

The East German kingdoms flourished and increased in power until the middle of the sixth century; but before that time two had already come to grief, first that of the Heruli and then that of the Burgundians. After that the Vandals and the Ostrogoths were overthrown, and it was only the Visigoths, who were protected by the Pyrenees and the sea, who succeeded in retaining their independence.

The migrations from Scandinavia to the South thus took place between about the beginning of the fourth century and the middle of the sixth. Of these two hundred and fifty years the first hundred were taken up with strenuous wars, and the remainder are those of

the domination and the gold-collecting propensities of the invaders. The reaction which these migrations had on the North is palpably evident at the present time, and although a detailed examination has only been carried out in certain directions, there is no question about the main features of the picture.

The most important result of the migrations was the same in Southern Scandinavia as in north-eastern Germany—a decrease in the population. From the close of the Bronze Age to about the year 300 A.D. it is possible to observe in many places in Southern Scandinavia, how continuous the succession of graves in the same grave-yard is, and the number of graves does not diminish in any appreciable degree in the latter part of this period. After about the year 300, however, there begins to be a very decided decrease in the number of graves. Those which are known to be of the period immediately following that year form a comparatively small percentage in relation to those of the period immediately preceding it. The hitherto permanent burial-traditions are succeeded by complete confusion. The discontinuance of great grave-yards cannot be entirely explained by the supposition that men began to adopt other fashions in sepulture. Such an explanation might hold good if we only had to do with isolated graves, but we know of grave-fields belonging to the period before the fourth century, each containing many hundred, and some few over a thousand graves; after that, however, the burials do not continue in the same proportion. As regards south-west Scandinavia it is the case that generally speaking the burial customs of the subsequent period have only been exhibited to a trifling extent, but as regards other regions of Southern Scandinavia it is known how graves were made at that time. The greatly diminishing number of graves and objects bears witness to the continued reduction of the

population. The point of time when the decline began is naturally not the same everywhere. The Scandinavian tribes which we are referring to belonged to different stocks of the East Germans fighting in the South of Europe, and the supply of reinforcements from the North would be governed by the shifting fortunes of their kinsfolk in the South.

This decrease in population forms the negative side of the picture; but it has a not less important positive side.

In exchange for reinforcements the southern kinsmen sent the only property which it was possible to transport—namely, gold. We have a sort of parallel—naturally not very close—in the case of our present-day emigrants. The gold was partly coined, but to a much greater extent uncoined. About the year 400 A.D., after the Germans' first great victories, begins the period of Scandinavian early history which was richest in gold. The store of that metal which has been unearthed in Southern Scandinavia must be considered together with the vastly greater hoards which, as we have said above, were amassed by East German chieftains in the South. About the middle of the sixth century, when the East German kingdoms came to an end, the exportation of gold to the North ceases.

It was by their superior military ability that the Germans succeeded in overthrowing the Roman Empire. The war they were carrying on consisted as much of sieges as of actual battles, and they got to learn the importance of scientific fortifications. The old dwelling-places in Gotland, locally called 'giant's graves' (*kämpagrafvarne*), in the construction of which greater regard was paid to defensive protection than was the case with earlier buildings on the island, belong to the third century, or some later period. Whether the castles in Öland also belong to the same

time is still uncertain, although archæological finds give some indication that they do. There is at any rate no reason for assigning them to the close of the Iron Age. Fortifications of that kind belong only to Eastern Scandinavia, so far as is known. The same observation will apply to the coined gold, of which by far the greater part has been found in Gotland, Öland and Bornholm, whilst the uncoined gold seems to have been far more evenly distributed.

It follows from what has been said, that Eastern Scandinavia played a very important part in the history of the time, and the cause of this may be found in the circumstance that communication with the Germans of the South went principally by way of the Vistula. The objects from Gotland, Öland and Bornholm also give evidence of very strong influence from the tracts lying to the south of the sources of the Vistula.

Thus the migrations affected Scandinavia in two ways. On the one hand they caused a great thinning of the population ; on the other, they brought about an acquaintance with the civilization of the southern lands, and a great increase in wealth. It must, however, be observed in this connection that the archæological illustrations of these features are confined to Southern Scandinavia. The succession of burials continues uninterrupted in Norway during this period, in the same measure as before, and if we may judge from the more thinly scattered finds in Swedish Norrland it would seem that the same state of things obtained there. Coined gold is of the greatest rarity in Norway and Northern Sweden during the period after (*circa*) 400 A.D., and even as regards uncoined gold in ingots, rings, etc., these regions are far behind Southern Scandinavia. Stone buildings of the character referred to above are not known in Northern Scandinavia.

Thus we find that during these 150 years there was

a sharp contrast between the North and the South, the dividing line running approximately through the great lakes from Wener to Mälar. The boundary was naturally a shifting one, however, and certain regions—West Götland for instance—seem to have occupied an intermediate position between Norway and East Götland. South of this boundary there lived a comparatively sparse population, weakened by repeated migrations, which was in touch with the most powerful states of Europe, was strongly influenced by southern culture, and was possessed, in addition, of great wealth. North of the boundary there were Northern tribes having little or no communication with the South, undiminished in numbers, and, although not poor, yet devoid of other sources of wealth than those which had been usual up to that time. Thus Scandinavia presented during that period a picture in miniature of West Europe at the beginning of the Migration Period:—wealth, high culture and feeble power of resistance, in the South; a slight improvement on the hitherto customary simplicity of material circumstances, less high culture but much attacking force, in the North.

The results were the same in both cases. The more numerous and poorer populations of the North moved southwards and made themselves masters of the lands occupied by the less populous but richer races of the South.

The circumstances of the regions which were subsequently included in the Danish kingdom are not so clear. The Danes, who originated from some district in Sweden, were already in possession of Skåne in the fifth century, and in the course of their advance westwards were fighting, about the year 500 A.D., against the Bards.

The circumstances are on the other hand much more clear as regards the eastern part of the South Scandi-

navian region—Södermanland, East Götland, Gotland, Öland, Blekinge and Bornholm. In the whole of this region development of the old types of objects ceases not later than about the middle of the sixth century, contemporaneously with the stoppage of the gold-influx, and those types are superseded by others which had developed north of our imaginary boundary-line. The clearest evidence of this is derived from those most important areas from the archæological point of view, Gotland, Öland and Bornholm. In Bornholm the contrast affects archæological phenomena generally, cult-places, grave-yards, burial customs, objects, communications and even place-names; in Gotland and Öland, besides objects, communications and possibly grave-yards; in Gotland and probably also in Öland the manner of fortifying.

All this shows that during the earlier part of the sixth century the old traditions of Southern Scandinavia were violently and completely broken with, and that it was the peoples of Northern Scandinavia who affected the change.

These northern peoples had not up to that time figured in history, and in particular those which belonged to the eastern part of the country, *i.e.*, those which lived on the Mälar, the Sea of Åland and the Gulf of Bothnia, played a comparatively unimportant part during the part of the Iron Age which preceded the Migration Period. The attack upon the South compelled them to concentrate in Uppland, and from the sixth century inclusive up to the end of the pre-historic period the dearth of finds which had previously existed is followed by an over-abundant wealth of them. The prototypes of the objects whose forms now become the ruling ones in eastern and southern Scandinavia are however not found in Uppland only, but also in Norrland. The lines of communication going through



Uppland from north to south, along the rivers Temnare, Vendel and Fyris, with the easternmost limits of the Mälar, become thenceforward the most important, and here—at Vendel, Upsala, Ultuna, Håga, Tuna and Häggeby (Bjorkö)—the greatest and most striking finds have been made, and the religious and political headquarters grew up. This sudden increase in wealth was the result of the victorious extension of the power of the Swedes over the more southerly and richer borderlands, and their great influence was gained at the expense of the downfall of the independence of the Gauts.<sup>1</sup> The overthrow of the latter was thus the great event in which the movements of the Migration Period resulted for Scandinavia.

Nothing is known in the previous history of the Scandinavian peninsula which resembles the tribal war between the Swedes and the Gauts, and the subjugation of the latter. The Gauts were from ancient times an important people, who entertained friendly relations and communications with the mighty empires of the South. It is not inconceivable that they may have been in political alliance with them. During the first decade of the sixth century the Ostrogoths and the Visigoths were engaged in a hard struggle with the West Germanic Franks, and the latter were attacked by the Gautic king by way of the sea, after the death of their king Chlodwig (511). Peace seems never to have been concluded between the Franks and the Goths, and a decade later the war broke out again. The Gauts were able to resist the Swedes all the more firmly in consequence of the wealth which their connection with the Germans of the South supplied, and of their higher culture—possibly from the military point of view as well as the social one. Thus the defeat

<sup>1</sup> In this essay I have generally translated the author's '*götar*' by the English *Gauts*, and his '*geatar*' by the English *Geats*. See Introdn.—*Ed.*

had in all probability been preceded by bitter conflicts.

The theatre of these struggles was determined by the position of the Gautic mainland, although after that had been conquered, it is evident that the struggle need not have finally ceased. As we have already observed, it was during the period between the close of the fourth century and the beginning of the sixth, that communication with the Germans of the South reached Scandinavia by way of the great islands of the Baltic. Of these islands Öland was the most important. There a larger quantity of coined gold of the fifth century has been found than in all the other parts of Scandinavia put together. Besides this we have other gold-finds—a rich store of objects partly exhibiting independent development, and some of which are of great costliness and beauty. If the great strongholds belong also to that period, Öland must be acknowledged to be far ahead of all the rest of Scandinavia. The island had great advantages as a consequence of its position. Being surrounded by water on all sides, it possessed convenient communication with various points, and while it lay closely flanking the Gautic mainland, it was also the nearest part of all the Gautic territory to the mouths of the Vistula, along which river the most important lines of communication with the South ran. Against this island, rich in treasure and castles, the most important part of the Gautic possessions, the Swedes first directed their attack. About, or immediately before, the year 500 A.D., the flow of gold, and the development of native types of objects, suddenly ceases. The downfall of Gautic power in the island must thus have happened at that time; and Gotland and Bornholm follow about fifty years later. Immediately after the loss of Öland communication with the South passes over for a short time to Gotland. Bornholm had never been a Gautic island, but it nevertheless

shared the fate of the rest of south-eastern Scandinavia.

The Migration Period was in the North, no less than in the South, the time of fabulous riches, of great feats and political upheavals. In the South the changeful times gave rise to numbers of heroic lays, which, by a continuous transformation and perpetual hybridization, were united into extensive cycles, which were still being sung and recast centuries afterwards in the princely seats of the continent. The sculptural remains of the Migration Period show that as regards the humanities the northern races did not lag behind their southern kinsfolk, and that in both North and South poem and saga gave artists material to work upon, the unusual greatness of conflicts and riches everywhere arousing the spirit of poetry to life.

The peoples who took part in these far-reaching wars were the Swedes, the Gauts, the Danes and the Bards. The only certain indication we have of the existence of heroic poetry among the Swedes is furnished by fragments of their sculpture; of the vanquished Bards we know nothing; but as regards the Gauts and Danes we are in a much better position. As regards the Gauts and the Swedes we have archæological memorials, and with respect to Gauts and Danes we also have literary remains of the highest importance. The northern lays were never included in long poems, forming an organic whole, or in cycles of poems, and the historical traditions of the time must thus be sought for in various directions in the literature. Closest to historical fact stands the *Beowulf*; more remote, and overgrown with additions from later history and foreign saga-themes, are the traditions, as they have come down to us in northern literary remains—the poetic *Edda*, the (lost) *Skjöldunga saga*, Saxo, the *Ynglinga saga*, etc. It has already been partly established by scientific investigation, (1) that in these records it was round the heroes of the Migration Period

that later material from sagas or history grouped itself, whilst the oldest lays, which stood nearest to historic truth, were still so popular as to absorb freshly imported themes, and (2) that through this combination historic accuracy in narration disappeared more and more as time went on.

In order to determine the relation between the poems and the facts, and thus to try and settle what historic events gave rise to the original lays, we must make the archæological discoveries our starting-point,—those discoveries of which I have already sketched the main features, so far as the Migration Period is concerned. We may rest assured that our original poems, like those of Southern Europe, dealt with contemporary events.

In the records in question the Swedes always play an important part, and this accords with the circumstance that during the Migration Period the Swedes were the advancing and conquering people. If this does not appear in the poetry it is because the lays were composed by the adversaries of the Swedes:—the Danes and the Gauts.

As regards the *Beowulf*, this is stated directly. The poem always follows the fortunes of the Geats, and the Swedes only appear in it so far as they stand in relation to the Gauts.

In the *Ynglinga saga* also the events are portrayed from an inimical standpoint. Here is a brief catalogue of the combats which are described in the *Ynglinga saga* after the period of the mythic kings, and setting aside internecine quarrels.

XXV. Huggleik, king of the Swedes, fights against Haki and Hagbard; Huggleik falls and the Swedes are beaten.

XXVII. Eric and Jorund, Swedish kings, attack Haki with superior force, Eric falls;

Jorund and the Swedes take to flight,  
Haki is victorious, but dies.

XXVI. Eric and Jorund, Swedish kings, attack  
the Halogaland king, Gudlaug, on Danish  
land, defeat him and hang him,

XXVIII. but Jorund is attacked afterwards on  
Danish territory by Gudlaug's son,  
defeated and hanged.

XXIX. Ani, a Swedish king, is attacked by  
Halfdan, king of the Danes, defeated  
and put to flight. After the death of  
Halfdan Ani returns, is attacked by the  
Danish king's son, Ali, defeated and  
put to flight.

XXX. Egil, a Swedish king, is attacked by a  
thrall, defeated and put to flight, but  
returns with a company of Danes and  
defeats the thrall and his Swedes.

XXXI. Ottar, a Swedish king, attacks the Danes,  
is defeated and ignominiously killed.

XXXII. Athils, Swedish king, ravages the Saxons'  
and land, is afterwards attacked by the

XXXIII. Danish king and defeated; is pursued  
by the Danish king Rolf, for whom he  
lays an ambush, but is deceived, and  
Rolf escapes.

XXXV. Eystein, a Swedish king, is attacked by  
Solvi, a king in Jutland, defeated and  
killed; is succeeded by Solvi, who loses  
his life through the treachery of the  
Swedes.

XXXVI. Yngvar, a Swedish king, attacks the  
Esthonians and is killed,

XXXVII. but avenged by his son Onund, king of  
the Swedes.

XXXVIII.) Ingjald, king of the Swedes, kills, by a  
 XLIV.) series of treacheries, a line of kings in  
 Sweden and Götland, but falls before  
 Ivar (of Skåne).

The primary source of the *Ynglinga saga*, i.e., the *Ynglingatal*, has always been supposed to have been a Swedish national lay. As to this, it may be observed, first and foremost, that the enumeration of kings in the form of a lay is quite unique, and it is unreasonable to suppose that primitive epic poetry, which always develops itself in quite another way, and has an entirely different object than to supply such a dry catalogue of kings, should, in the case of the *Ynglingatal*, have followed unusual rules.

It is equally improbable that such a lay should have been composed by Swedes. It records nothing but defeats of their nation. In one of the few cases when a victory was won (by the brothers Eric and Jorund, against Gudlaug) vengeance pursues the Swedes, and the Swedish king suffers the same death as the brothers had previously prepared for Gudlaug. On other occasions on which it seems as if the Swedes were really victorious—as in the cases of Eric and Jorund against Haki, Athils against Rolf, the Swedes against Solvi, Ingjald against Granmar and Hjorvard, the account is sympathetic towards the vanquished. Either the Swedes are directly defeated at the first (as by Haki), or they are deceived as a result of their own covetousness and the cunning of their adversaries (e.g., Rolf), or their victory was the outcome of deceit and treachery (as against Solvi, Granmar and Hjorvard).

It cannot have been a Swede who sang how after their king's downfall his adversaries sent them a wooden crow, with the remark that their king was not worth more than that (previously noted by Bugge), how they incessantly suffered defeat, and sometimes

when they were in superior force, how they would lay an ambush for a foreign king, but were so befooled by their own greed that they let him slip off unscathed, and how their king, when he did get a victory, did not get it in fair fight, but through traps and breaches of faith. Nowhere in the world do we meet with a popular poem which constantly recurs in this way to the theme of the military inferiority of the poet's own race as compared with their nearest neighbours, and which seeks to minimise victories by explaining them as due to treachery. As it is quite impossible that the *Ynglinga saga* should have been composed by Swedes (putting aside the lists of the early kings), the question comes next—What nation supplied the *milieu* which gave the saga the form in which it lay before the compilers who are known to us? The concise statement of its contents which I have given above furnishes us with no uncertain answer. The Swedes were victorious over the Saxons and Esthonians, but were always defeated by the Danes. Either the victor is a Danish king—so most frequently—or a Swedish king with a Danish following. As the *Ynglinga saga*, from Aní to the fall of Ingjald inclusive, has come down to us, it has the character of an account of exploits of the Danes, achieved at the expense of the Swedes.

At the same time this “saga” was not developed in Denmark. As Bugge observed, and Schück has subsequently made still more clear,<sup>1</sup> the *Ynglingatal*, which constituted the chief actual source of Snorre's account, was composed between A.D. 950 and 975 in Britain, where there was at that time a Danish public with traditions from their fatherland. Of these traditions the scald of the *Ynglingatal*, in composing his patriotic lay, only incorporated in his verses those which related to the contests with the Swedes, and in

<sup>1</sup> *Studier i Ynglingatal*, Upsala. 1905.

this way he compiled his scholarly poem about the proceedings of the Swedish kings from anti-Swedish popular poetry, his work being afterwards used as the basis for an introduction to Norsk (and Swedish) history. Thus he himself drew from Scandinavian sources only.

Yet we have no right to affirm that all these traditions were originally Danish. If we compare the traditions which have been preserved for us in the *Ynglinga saga* with those which are recorded by Svend Aagesson and Saxo, we shall find that the agreement is very slight, and that Saxo, who collected Danish lays more industriously than anybody, knew nothing of many of the battles in which the Danes of the *Ynglingatal* defeated the Swedes. A list of Swedish kings drawn up by Olrik from Saxo's *Danish History* consists from beginning to end of other names than those mentioned in *Ynglinga saga*. If Saxo had known—and this is almost the same as saying, if anyone in Denmark had known—of this catalogue of Danish victories over the Swedes, he would certainly not have omitted to insert them in his history.

When the *Ynglingatal* was composed in England the Danes had already made their home in that country for something like a hundred years, and they could thus hardly have escaped acquaintance with the poetical traditions there existing, or in other words, with the current Anglo-Saxon heroic poetry. Now among these poems there was a whole series which dealt with the Danes themselves, with the Swedes, and with the conflicts of the latter with the Geats. To these newly-arrived Danes, of whom a large part were Jutes, and who had a vivid recollection of the continual and desperate struggles with the Swedes, the nationality of the Geats was distinct enough. They appear in the poems as allied with the Danes and as the implacable



enemies of the Swedes, and it was thus quite natural that they should be identified with the Jutes. How "danified" the Anglo-Saxon tradition had become by the time that it was taken in hand by the Scandinavian heroic poet, appears from the interchange in the use of the expressions Danes and Jutes, where, in the Anglo-Saxon sources from which his predecessor drew, the Geats must evidently have been in question. In the verses about Ottar the enemies of the Swedes are Danes, in those about Eystein they are "Jutes." The same observation applies to the appellation of the Swedish kings alternately as Scylfings, according to the older Anglo-Saxon tradition, and Ynglings, as in the Norsk Viking Period. In the verses about Egil the Swedish king is called a Scylfing, in those about Athils and Ingjald an Yngling. The idea that the Geats were the same as the Jutes even caused Jutland to be often considered as the theatre of the events, especially as place-names similar to place-names in Jutland existed in the original Anglo-Saxon poems, *e.g.*, in prose, as regards the victory of Jorund and Eric, in verse as regards Jorund's downfall, in prose and verse as to Ottar. The Öland which had been mentioned in some Anglo-Saxon source, is danified into Frode's Öland (*i.e.*, Zealand) in the *Ynglinga saga*, in the verses about Ottar. The transformation which the Anglo-Saxon traditions underwent, explains how various features in them so completely disappeared. Thus Hygelac is introduced to us as king in Swealand, while elsewhere so many Geatic exploits become Danish. But according to a Danish tradition King Hugleik suffered a decisive defeat by two "sea-kings."

Besides using these danified Anglo-Saxon traditions, the composers of the *Ynglingatal* and those who subsequently used it as a basis, have called into their service traditions which were originally Danish and

possibly also Norwegian, but these, in which the same Danish kings figured as those which are mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon lays, had, at the time when the poem was composed, become blended with those which the Danes had learnt in Britain. The order of development was thus somewhat as follows:—About the middle of the ninth century there existed in Britain collections of lays which had for their subject the wars between the Swedes, the Danes, and the Geats (and possibly also the Bards). When the Danes, with the Jutes, came to Britain, they brought with them a national collection of sagas which related to the wars of the Danes with (*inter alia*) the Swedes. During the next hundred years this Danish collection of sagas was reinforced by the traditions about Danish and Geatish wars (the Geats being taken to be Jutes) which the Danes picked up from the inhabitants of the country. A Scandinavian scald who lived in Britain, sets to work to compose a poem about the former kings of the Swedes. He collects all the information he can from the Danish lays and accounts which are ready to hand, and puts it together in the form of a genealogical poem.

This result gives us a fixed chronological starting point. The lays about Swedish affairs, which are also embodied in the Anglo-Saxon cycle known as *Beowulf*, were imported into Anglo-Saxon literature before the middle of the seventh century. There is no ground for supposing that the Northern lays passed over to Britain between that time and the Viking Period. Consequently the oldest Anglo-Saxon sources for certain parts of the *Ynglinga saga* date from the period before the middle of the seventh century.

We are now able to fix dates for the persons who appear in the literature more definitely. If we compare the subjects of the Anglo-Saxon sources of the *Ynglinga saga* with those of the lays in *Beowulf* we

shall find sometimes partial agreement and sometimes downright identity. Aní's contemporary in Denmark, Halfdan, is mentioned also in *Beowulf* (as Healfdene); Ottar is identical in name with *Beowulf's* Ohthere, Hugleik with Hygelac; Ottar's great battle with the Danes in Vendel is identical with the great fight in Swealand between the Swedes and Geats which is referred to in *Beowulf*; Athils is the same as Eadgils, Helgi as Halga, Hrothulf as Rolf Kraki, Onela as Ali. There are many statements in the *Ynglinga saga* about the affairs of the Swedes besides those which the Anglo-Saxon scald has included in the *Beowulf*. But it is obvious that the object of the composer of the *Ynglingatal* was to seek as far as possible for what would furnish material for his poem, and this would not have been necessary to the relater of *Beowulf's* fortunes in any way. Moreover, most of what the *Ynglinga saga* has to tell us about the group of Swedish kings whose names alliterate between themselves by means of an initial vowel, falls in the period after the death of *Beowulf*, with which the Anglo-Saxon poem closes, and hence it would not be possible for any Anglo-Saxon poems which may have been extant relating to the later Swedish kings to have been included in the *Beowulf*, although this does not prove that such poems did not exist. In *Beowulf* we have a series of lays about Northern affairs which include numerous allusions involving a knowledge of later events, such as the strife between Hrothulf and his royal cousins, that between the Bards and the Danes, and the final struggle between the Swedes and the Geats—matters which the poet assumes to be to a certain extent within the knowledge of his public. Certain of the events, such as the battle of Ravenswood and the fight of *Beowulf* and the mere-wife, appear in varying versions, which must thus have originally been

derived from independent poems. It is consequently evident that the lays which were absorbed by the Beowulf-poems only formed a small part of the collection on Northern subjects which were current among the Anglo-Saxons during the sixth century and the earlier part of the seventh century. The events described in the Beowulf-lays were versions of actual happenings in the Northern Migration Period. The parts of the *Ynglinga saga* which agree with them certainly relate the history of the same period, and so, in all probability, do the remaining parts up to and inclusive of Ingjald.

It is an acknowledged fact that these lays cannot have been originally composed by Anglo-Saxons in their primitive form, but that they were composed in the North by races which had actually engaged in the great conflicts which the poets had to celebrate. And now comes the question which of these Northern races are responsible for the composition of the lays which were later on imported into Britain.

As regards the great majority of the Beowulf lays, there seems to be no room for any doubt. Beowulf himself is represented as a Geatish hero. After an uneventful youth (the well-known 'Dummling' idea), he performs great deeds, the most noteworthy of them amongst foreign peoples. This feature is not by any means unusual. The importance of a deed is magnified, and it gains in popularity when it has been performed among a strange people, and this certainly contributes to transfer a part of the hero's fame to the people of his origin. Finally Beowulf falls in fight for the welfare of the Geats. In the episodic descriptions of the war between the Swedes and the Geats, the point of view is always that of the Geats, and the same is the case as regards the descriptions of the attack on the Franks. In the first it is the dread of the Geats that they will be

swallowed up by the Swedes which is depicted ; it is the Geats who carry off the victory, and it is a Geatish hero who wins 'the Princess and half the kingdom.' The internal arguments are thus decidedly in favour of acknowledging the claim of the Geats as the first composers of the lays.

But among the Beowulfine lays, poems having another origin are also distinguishable. "We have heard of the glory of the Danish warrior-kings from bygone times," is the first note struck in the poem, and it is followed by an introduction which exclusively relates the fortunes of the Danes. This proud foreword is entirely out of keeping with the rest of the poem, which is concerned with the glory and achievements of the Geats and not the Danes. Hence the introduction would seem most likely to have been derived from a Danish source, and there are other shorter passages in the poem which exhibit acquaintance with Danish lays.

The Anglo-Saxon share of the *Beowulf* was first and foremost that of working up the original lays into a single poem ; but besides this, certain parts of the poem exhibit Anglo-Saxon alteration of the original material. At first hand this is true of the description of the fight with the dragon, where archæological monuments of Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon character are mentioned in turn, while as regards language a decided difference has been observed between this and those other parts of the poem which have not the stamp of the Anglo-Saxon mind.

Although the great bulk of the primitive lays, even when they relate to the person of Beowulf, must, before their chemical combination into the epic which we have, be regarded as Geatish, it does not follow that the rest of Scandinavia had no part in the poetical conception of the central figure—Beowulf.

Graphic representations which remind us of the

armed she-wolf with whom Beowulf fought have been found in Norway, Öland and North Germany; others reminding us of the fight with the dragon (in the older and Northern form of the poem) in Uppland and Öland, as regards the earlier stage of the struggle, and as regards the final stage, in Uppland, Gotland and Bornholm; others which exhibit a fight with two monsters at the same time, in Öland, the southernmost part of the Jutland peninsula, and the north of France. I do not here inquire how far any of the memorials extant on the Continent are of Northern origin. It may be added that the very name of the hero does not appear only as that of a Geat, but is also used to designate a Danish king, whose name is evidently interpolated in a Danish royal line which is otherwise provided with names of homogeneous construction.

From the foregoing it would seem that the same saga-exploits were sung in more or less the same form in various parts of the North. Just as the hero was probably accounted a Swede or a Dane respectively by those races, he was a Geat among the Geats, and finally even a Geatish king. The lays current among the people about this central hero became adulterated with matter from the popular lays of the Geats with reference to the exploits of the latter during the Migration Period. Notwithstanding the continuous fusion of these lays, the amalgamation (we may say fortunately, from the historiographic point of view) never became absolutely perfect. The Geatish protagonist did not perform any historic achievements of importance.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, according to our view, certain exploits which are described in *Beowulf* were at an earlier period sung in extensive regions of Scandinavia. The lays, as they

<sup>1</sup> That is, so far as we know from the *Beowulf*, although he is said to have taken part in Hygelac's campaign against the Frisians. He may, however, have done great things as a historical personage, which are not related in the poem for political reasons.—*Ed.*

were current among the Geats, were combined with that nation's own historic lays of the Migration Period. The Geatic lays, with several Danish ones belonging to the same time, were carried over to Britain, where they were subjected to a further amalgamating process. In *Beowulf*, the *Finnsburg Fragment* and the *Ynglinga saga*, the lays have been preserved in the final form which is known to us, and besides these lays of mainly Geatish origin we have reproduced in Saxo Upper Northern and Geatish and (especially) Danish traditions of the same period, and with these we may couple the lays of general Scandinavian origin in the *Eddas*, the (lost) *Skjöldunga saga*, the *Rolfs saga*, etc.

The material of the descriptions in the historic parts of the *Beowulf*, as well as in the historical paraphrases of the Scandinavian lays, is made up of the conflicts between the kings of different peoples, and of internecine struggles between members of the same royal house. The events which form the real background of the poem happened during the fifth and the earlier part of the sixth century. As this was the period of the Swedes' victorious advance southwards, it must have been accounts of the wars by which this gradual conquest was affected which are reproduced—no doubt from the standpoint of the enemy—in the primitive lays. Moreover the conflicts between the kings are really conflicts between the peoples, and the same is the case as regards the quarrels between members of the same royal house. These last are especially calculated to throw light on the political dissensions of the various Northern tribes. When a branch or a member of a royal family came off second best in his attempt to secure the kingly power, he would betake himself to the king of some neighbouring people and continue the contest with his help. Thus a branch of the Scylfing stock, represented by Weohstan and Wiglaf, escapes

from the Swedes to the Geats and is afterwards employed against the Swedes, and a member of the ruling line of the Scylfings (Eadgils) goes to the Geats for help, and returns to Swedish territory with a victorious Geatish army. It is hinted in the *Beowulf* that the Scylding Hrethric will receive protection among the Geats from the usurper Hrothulf, and the Scylding Heorowearð returns with a Geatic or Swedish force and kills the same king (Rolf). This "intervention principle" may be afterwards traced down to the Middle Ages—the most notable example being that of Magnus Ladulås and Waldemar—but with the difference that the Geats no longer take a part in history.

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*

In order to make a joint consideration of the archæological and poetical sources really profitable, we must first attempt to settle the old dispute about the nationality of the Geats. As will have appeared from what has gone before, the archæological remains furnish us with good starting points for arriving at an answer.

Our archæological information gives us a picture of the fifth century as one during which the Northern races moved southwards, overrunning the lands of the Gauts—Öland and Blekinge among the first, and lastly, in the sixth century, Gotland, among other places. The written sources show the same century to have been a time of great disturbances—full of bloody feuds between the Swedes and Geats. The Danes seem to have usually taken the side of the latter, but they were principally occupied with their own movement of expansion towards the west. Whilst King Hrothgar still had his seat in "Scedenig" (=Skåne),<sup>1</sup> one of his immediate successors, Rolf, builds Leire in Zealand

<sup>1</sup> See *Beowulf* v. 1686. Another reference to Skåne (Scedeland, Scedenig) may be observed in the (Danish) "preface" to the poem, at v. 19, in connection with an earlier legendary king.—*Ed.*



and continues a victorious campaign against the Bards.

It is evident from the *Ynglinga saga* and the *Beowulf* that the war between the Swedes and Geats did not consist of a single sharp conflict, but that it was continued from generation to generation. Of the Swedish kings Ongentheow, (Ottar), Onela, Eystein and Ingjald take part in the struggle, as well as the Geatish kings Haethcyn and Hygelac (and ? Beowulf), and the close of the poem refers to a renewal of the fighting. In the lays which are preserved in *Beowulf* we only hear of Geatish victories. But this is easily explained, for the lays were partly the work of Geats, and in the series of battles which they recalled, the bards in the king's hall would naturally dwell entirely on the brighter features, as most redounding to the praise of the royal giver of rings. Moreover, the poem breaks off before the final overthrow of the Geats happened.

Some serious reasons must have existed for these long-continued feuds. It is difficult to conceive why the Swedes and (say) the Jutes should attack each other time after time on lands so widely separated. On the other hand it is quite natural that the Swedes should attack and subjugate the rich but comparatively weakly-defended territory of the Gauts. That this actually happened, and happened furthermore just about the close of the fifth century<sup>1</sup> has already been demonstrated. Thus, according to our view, it is the earlier of these conflicts, when the Gauts, supported by their southern kinsfolk, could still offer a strong opposition to the attacking Swedes, which are described in the *Beowulf*.

<sup>1</sup>This is a little too early, A.D. 540 would be nearer the mark. The one certain historical fact in *Beowulf* is that King Hygelac and his men went from Geatland about A.D. 512 on an expedition across the sea, against the Frisians and Franks. Our author does not overlook this—see his next paragraph—and from his observations there and on p. 74 (at line 26) it might perhaps be taken that he intended to say that the *first* attack of the Swedes took place (on Öland) about the date mentioned. On the other hand he assumes (pp. 91, 92) that Öland was still in possession of the Geats at the time of Beowulf's death.—*Ed.*

lays and in the corresponding parts of the *Ynglinga saga*.

In particular there is one episode in these wars which furnished material for the Geats to be proud of, and which they made the subject of lays of which no less than three versions have come to our knowledge. The Swedes had begun their attack on the Geats—they would not keep the peace at Ravenswood—and the two young kings of the Geats retort by an attack themselves. They march into Uppland and drive the Swedish king further north, until he is compelled to make a halt at one of the Scylfing ancestral seats, Vendel. Here, in the heart of the Swedish kingdom, they gain the victory and kill the Swedish king. This battle, which must have been nearly contemporaneous with that by which the conquering Goths in the south drove back the onset of the Franks, sets the bands of the Geatish king free, and he now undertakes an incursion into the land of those enemies of the Goths, but this adventure ends in misfortune. The king is killed and the expedition is an entire failure. If later on the Geats are reminded, on an occasion disastrous for their country, that the Merovingians must also be accounted among their enemies, this is quite what one would expect from the political situation. This reminder is much more applicable to the northern kinsmen of the Frankophobe Goths than to the inhabitants of the Jutish peninsula during the sixth century. To the Geats this reverse meant the beginning of a series of defeats which were inflicted upon them by the more powerful Swedes. But in their subsequent sad plight the last victory which they won over the race which became the rulers of their land, would stand out all the more clearly in their memory.

The kingdom of the Geats, which reached from the North Sea to the Baltic, had, as we have already said, its centre of gravity towards the east, and the island of

Öland in particular played an important part in its affairs. This agrees also with what we learn from *Beowulf*. On the land, near Ravenswood, in the great border forests, forays occur from time to time. But when the Swedes and Geats measure their strength in earnest, the encounter happens on the water. The Swedish and Geatish kings are thus constantly called 'sea-kings'—an epithet which could not have been given to the Geats after the inland seas of Wener and Wetter. When the Swedes and Geats attack each other—*ofer sǣ* (B. 2380); *ofer wīd wæter* (B. 2473)—this must refer to a sea, and hence the Baltic, which was the only sea by which the voyage to Swedish territory could be made. The fleet of the Geats must thus have assembled on the coasts of East Götland and Öland, and perhaps also on those of Gotland.

The poem of *Beowulf* itself contains an allusion to Öland in the introduction to the fight with the dragon. He was harried '*leoda fæsten ealand ūtan eorðweard ðone*' (vv. 2333-4)<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, the strongholds of princes, the island from without, the possession of the land. In an old Norsk description of a sword<sup>2</sup> it is said

eldi vóro eggjar  
 útan gǫruar,  
 enn eitdropom  
 innan fáðar

and the *ūtan* here shows us how we are to understand the same word in Anglo-Saxon. Just as the edges of hardened steel form the outer part of the sword-blade, the outer part of Öland consists of *eorðweard ðone* opposite the *leoda fæsten*. The expression, like the comparison we have just made with the sword, gives a good idea of the configuration of Öland. Above the

<sup>1</sup>The reading of this passage is much too doubtful to form a safe basis for any argument. Even if *ealand* is correct, it may, as Bugge pointed out in BDS xii, 5, simply mean coast-land, land by the sea.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup>Quoted also at p. 21.

outer, fertile, part of the long narrow island (*ealand* *utan*) where the settled country is situated (*eorðweard* *ðone*) the Alvar rises in the middle and is dotted with castles (*leoda fæsten*). The very expression *ealand*, like *eyland*, in the verses about Ottar, reproduces the actual name of Öland.

It is said in the poem that the Geats' royal castle was situated near the sea, and that the Geats reached Denmark by sea from their own country in exactly one day. Both these geographical requirements are met in Öland. With a vessel of the Nydam type and a good wind one could get to Stenshufvud in Skåne, from the southernmost point of Öland, in much less than twenty-four hours—a space of time which would however be required if the voyage ended at some point further away on the south coast of Skåne, or began from the northern part of Öland.

Beowulf directs that his grave-mound shall be constructed on Hronesness—that is, on Whale's Ness. This would seem to tell against Öland as the principal province of the Geats, for the waters round Öland are not frequented by whales. At the same time there is in Öland (in the parish of Löt) a point called Hvalsnäs, where grave mounds have been found and where others possibly still exist belonging to the fifth century. In the neighbourhood is Löts castle.

Moreover, the people are called Weder-Geats (= "Weather-Geats") and their land the Wedera Land or Wedermark. This epithet also suits the character of Öland. The higher, central part of the island is a *vindmark*, and is still at this day bordered by numbers of windmills.

During his swimming race with Breca, Beowulf was carried to the land of the Finns. A tradition about a swim to Finland could easily have arisen in Öland, and it may be observed that in the earlier portions of the

*Ynglinga saga* the Finns and their country are already enveloped in legend, and that objects discovered prove that during the sixth century there was much communication between the Finnish and Swedish coasts of the Baltic. For Breca on the other hand the localities lay westwards, as was natural enough for a Danish swimmer. Out of two swimming-stories, a Danish and a Geatish, arose a legend among the Geats of a competition between representatives of the two peoples. Naturally it is the Geat who wins.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the information which we derive from the archæological circumstances is in agreement with that which we obtain from the literature; and in order that the agreement may be complete it is necessary that the downfall of the Geats, which we are led by the remains to assign to a date somewhere about 500 A.D., should be also shadowed forth in the poetry.<sup>2</sup>

This is clearly done in the *Beowulf*. The hero has fallen, and Wiglaf<sup>3</sup> describes the position of affairs in the country. He refers briefly to the oversea expedition against the Franks, and passes on to the feud with the Swedes: "I do not expect peace or fair dealing from the Swedish nation" (B. 2922,3). Then he recounts in detail the fight at Vendel, and continues (vv. 2999-3032):—

3000 "Such then is the feud and the enmity such—  
       deadly hate of the men— of the folk of the Swedes,  
       the Scylfings' brave race, that I have little doubt [fall'n  
       they will march against us since their champions have

<sup>1</sup> This is of course pure conjecture. It is much simpler to suppose that there was only one story, see my *Beowulf*, p. 246. "Although the sea drove Breca and Beowulf apart, it is to be assumed that the current took them somewhat in the same direction, but carried Beowulf much further than Breca, who only (!) got as far as the Heathoreamas land."—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> The date of Beowulf's death cannot reasonably be put earlier than A.D. 540 (note 1, p. 89), and if he reigned fifty years, as stated at v. 2209, we should have to put it at about A.D. 570. This raises a difficulty which is not met by Stjerna's suggestion that the prophecy of vv. 3002-4 was composed after the event.—*Ed.*

<sup>3</sup> Not Wiglaf, but a messenger sent by him to the camp.—*Ed.*

when once they have heard that our master is gone—  
 is departed from life— who held in the past  
 our treasure and land against unfriendly men,  
 who advanced the folk's weal and performed furthermore  
 the exploits of an earl. Now hasting is best  
 that there we should gaze on the king of our race  
 and bring on his way to the funeral pyre  
 3010 him who gave us our rings. Nor shall this or that  
 with the hero be burnt; but there, dearly bought,  
 is a hoard of rich things —gold that no man may tell,  
 and now at the last he has got us these rings  
 with his very own life,— the fire shall eat these<sup>1</sup>  
 the flames swallow them up. No chieftain shall bear  
 a jewel as keepsake, nor radiant maid  
 shall have on her neck an adornment of rings,  
 but bereft of her gold and mournful of mood  
 she shall tread exile's land many more times than once  
 3020 now the leader of hosts has laid aside laughter  
 and frolic and joy. Many times shall the spear  
 for this reason be held cold at morn in the grip—  
 be lifted by hand,— and no sound of a harp  
 shall awaken the brave, but the raven, dark hued,  
 all alert for the slain shall busily talk  
 and the eagle will tell how at feasting he sped  
 when, confronting the wolf, he took toll of the dead.”  
 Thus the valiant man was a teller abroad  
 of tidings most dread; nor was he far out  
 3030 in his facts and his words.  
 Then arose the whole band  
 and sadly they went below Eagles' ness  
 brimming over with tears to see the strange sight.

There can be no doubt as to the meaning of all this.  
 The most illustrious man among the Geats<sup>2</sup> foresees  
 that the great ones of his nation will fall in battle or be  
 driven into exile, and the context makes it clear that it  
 is the Swedes who are expected to be the cause of the  
 calamity. The prophecy was, as often, composed after  
 the event, and the poet hints at this when he says that

<sup>1</sup> That is, the treasures won from the dragon in Beowulf's last fight.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> *i. e.*, Wiglaf, but see note on p. 93.—*Ed.*

the speaker "was not much amiss in facts or words."

But the memory of the Swedish invasion is also preserved in the accounts of the battle of Bråvalla in the *Ynglinga saga* and the (lost) *Bjarkamál*. The traditions about the fight on Bråvalla heath are as confused as they can be; century after century has added new features to them; but through it all the situation of the field of battle (by the Baltic coast of the Swedish territory) remains the same. It may, however, be open to question whether such a battle ever took place, and if so, whether it was one of a decisive character.<sup>1</sup> The battle of Roncevaux, which was the centre of the poetry of its age, was in reality only an inconsiderable rear-guard action.

The information in the *Bjarkamál*, as that poem is given by Saxo, is more definite. A banished member of the Danish royal house escapes to Öland (according to the (lost) *Skjöldunga saga*). From thence he returns to Denmark with an army of Swedes and Geats, and defeats and kills his powerful rival. Thus Öland must have been already at that time conquered by the Swedes, who even felt themselves strong enough to intervene in the affairs of Denmark, and the battle must have taken place about 500 A.D. A few decades later the conquerors of Öland actually took possession of Bornholm.

The conclusion of the traditional history of the expansion of Swedish power may be gathered from the *Ynglinga saga*. The Swedish king, Ingjald, draws all the power into his own hands and subjugates all under-kings. The position in the saga is the same as in the *Beowulf*. In the latter also there exist men in Swea-

<sup>1</sup> Since Stjerna wrote this article some archæological discoveries have been made which throw further light on this question. In the Vikbolandet (East Götland), south of the Braviken estuary, where tradition places Bråvalla, strongholds have been found containing finds from the fifth century. These finds show that the strongholds had long been occupied, and that the neighbourhood was probably the theatre of a protracted war.—O.A.

land with the name of king ; but the Swedish kingdom (*Swiorice*, B. vv. 2383, 2495) is one, notwithstanding, and acknowledges the supremacy of the king at Upsala.<sup>1</sup> The work of Ingjald may thus be compared with that of Louis XI. in France, and the saga, which takes the losing side, and especially the side of the defeated Geatish kings, has also attributed traits to Ingjald which remind us of the prince of the dawning Renaissance. If Hjorvard, son-in-law of the East Geatic king Granmar, who was the last victim of Ingjald's statecraft, was the same as he who opposed King Rolf, we may place Ingjald's reign in the first decades of the sixth century.

The lays which treated of the fall of the Geats, spread from Geatland to England, and had there taken their permanent shape before the middle of the seventh century. It is, however, too early to attempt to fix the time and course of their transference to British soil from archæological data. Certain forms of variable objects which are indigenous in Southern Norway, Dalsland, and West Götland, also occur in the eastern parts of Britain, where examples have also been found of types, which, in their earlier or later stages, belong especially to Central Sweden, although they are also found in south-east Norway and the Danish Islands. The British examples belong to the close of the fifth century and the first half of the sixth.

<sup>1</sup>There is no mention of Upsala in the poem ; but everything in it points to the Swedish, Geatish and Danish peoples each having only one king.—*Ed.*



## SCYLD'S FUNERAL OBSEQUIES.

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The conception which was current in the latter part of the Bronze Age of the dual character of man's nature,<sup>1</sup> and which expressed itself in the burning of corpses and the burial of the clean<sup>2</sup> burnt bones, was one which the Northmen did not manage to retain in the period which succeeded it. Almost simultaneously with the introduction of iron, the old view about (the complete) man continuing to live in the grave begins to appear again, and to set its stamp upon the burial customs of the time (Stjerna, *Bidrag till Bornholms befolknings-historia under järnåldern*, pp. 5-31), and during the period about the year 200 A.D. this view—which must be considered as representing a step backwards—was the prevailing one. Men were consequently regarded as having in the life to come the same occupations as in the present, and since strife and warfare, as appears from the grave-finds of the time, constituted a great part of the business of this life, they were supposed to play a similar part in the next.

But about A.D. 200 the older conception of the future life came suddenly to the front again. The East Germans, who dwelt by the Black Sea, travelled northwards about that time, and settled on the shores of the Baltic. They

<sup>1</sup> That is, as consisting of a body and a soul, which were separated at death.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> That is, the bones which had not been left in contact with the burnt embers (charcoal, etc.) as was common in later times.—*Ed.*

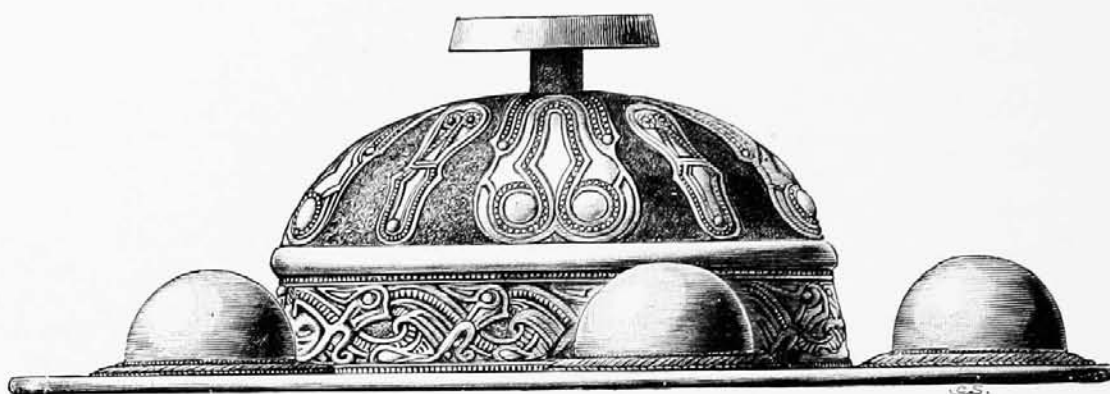


FIG. 23.

Boss of shield (iron and bronze, partly gilt). From grave No. 11, Vendel, Uppland.  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

had during their stay in the South imbibed the same ideas about the life to come which had once before made a way for themselves to the North. In the lands about the Eastern Mediterranean, men still believed that the human soul was separated from the body after death, and lived in some far away place with other souls which had already arrived there.

This view rapidly took root in Scandinavia, with the many other new elements of culture which invaded the North at the same time (Stjerna, *ibid*, pp. 84, 85, with the authorities there cited), and consequent upon it there came a rapid change in the burial customs. As in the Bronze Age, and for the same reason, the body was burnt, and the clean burnt bones were deposited in the grave, the liberated soul departing to the realm of spirits. According to the views current in Southern Europe, the souls led an inactive life in the other world, not characterized by martial exploits, and when the Southern conception was introduced into the North, this negative side of the notion of immortality seems at the outset to have gone with it, as would appear from the remains of precisely those Germanic races which invaded Northern territory about the beginning of the third century, and of whose graves we have examples in Mecklenburg and Southern Zealand. These graves are without weapons, although they are otherwise well-equipped, and are thus in contrast to what we know of male graves in Southern Scandinavia during the times immediately preceding.

Before the spirits arrived at another land it was supposed that they had to travel a fairly long distance,—an idea which is usually associated with the primitive notion of a common abode for all the dead (Poulsen, *Nordisk Tidskr.* 1905, p. 55). This journey is of various kinds, according with the various physical conditions under which the respective peoples lived.

Among people who lived far from great expanses of water the notion of a journey on horseback or in a sledge was current; if the land was cut up by small water courses, creeks and rivers, the journey was performed by boat across the river, but in the case of countries bordering on the sea or on great lakes, the soul was conveyed in a ship over the sea to the far land. The conception of the way in which the dead person made his journey was usually based on that in which the living actually travelled.

In the view which the foreigners from the South took with them to the North, there were two principal features—the journey from this world to the place of the dead, and the sojourn there, to which we may attach as a subsidiary feature the inactive character of that sojourn.

Of these features the last stood in the sharpest contrast to the picture of the circumstances which the dwellers in the North had hitherto conceived, which was that the dead man took his weapons with him into his grave in order to attack and to defend himself in the future life, which was as active and full of fighting as the one he had left. This view, which had prevailed for centuries, was not easily superseded, and thus it is that only in Bornholm and the greater Danish islands do we clearly observe a general and consistent application of the new idea in the burial-custom of interring burnt bones without contamination by ashes.<sup>1</sup>

Even then the old tradition left its mark to such an extent that the great moor-finds must evidently be regarded as memorials of the Northern conception.<sup>2</sup> In certain of these moor-finds the objects have been found in the same position as they occupied at the close of

<sup>1</sup> See note on p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> The significance of these moor-finds is discussed in detail by Stjerna in his *Mossfynden och Valhallstron*.—*Ed.*

battles (Sophus Müller, *Vor Oldtid*, p. 559 f), and in others they had subsequently been arranged in order on the field of battle. The objects must thus be assumed to have been deposited for the continuance of his warfare after the death of the deceased man. In certain cases they had been exposed to fire, like the body itself. This idea of the dead man's continued warfare in another world occupies a place intermediate between the fundamental notions of the North and the South. The dead warriors are collected into one heap, as in the Southern view. But the very battles which the dead men fight, and their localization at the place of death are evidence of the Northern conception. There is a dim idea of a world of spirits, but that of a journey is not realized, and its character is absolutely terrestrial. The notion of the dead man's fights of which we have such striking memorials in the moor-finds is thus to a certain extent Northern.

In order to understand the cause of this, we must take note of the origin of the deposited objects. They are mostly of a foreign stamp, and would thus have belonged to the invaders from the south-east. The distinction between Northern objects and those from foreign is difficult to observe with certainty during this period, and perhaps some of the objects were deposited by the original inhabitants and others by the new comers.

The conception of a journey to the world of spirits is found among these foreigners themselves, and they had it in the Greek form. In one of their weaponless graves in Zealand a 'Charon's coin' was found stuck in the dead man's mouth, after the Greek fashion (*Den danske samling, Folkevandringstiden*, 259, 260). A similar find, belonging to the fourth century, was discovered at Kälder, in Gotland (Almgren, *Studier till. Oscar Montelius*, pp. 89, ff). This circumstance

should be considered in connection with the fact that the types of objects which the stream of culture during the third century conveyed to the North, belong essentially both in form and ornament to the Romano-Greek provincial culture, and that the Runic writing which was imported at the same time is of Greek origin. In Greek countries a coin was given to the dead person in the same way in order that he might pay for his passage over a river, or, to speak more generally, over the water. Thus we see how the idea of a journey by water after death made its appearance in the North as early as the fourth century, motivated as it was by the stream of culture which flowed from the regions about the Black Sea.<sup>1</sup>

The grave in which the coin was found, was, like a large number of the Gotland graves of the same period, a skeleton-grave. This point is important. The goal of the journey after death must have been the spirit-world. The idea of a journey for the soul and of a world of spirits did not thus cause a renewal of the corpse-burnings of the Bronze Age everywhere in the North. In places where the custom of burying unburnt corpses continued, other means of expressing the idea were used. What was the cause of this want of uniformity in burial-customs which express the same idea, I cannot say ; but perhaps it is to be sought in the original prototypes of the South. In any case it is certain that as early as the fourth century the idea of a common realm for the habitation of spirits and a journey to it was associated with the burial both of burnt and of unburnt corpses. The circumstance that the grave at Kälder was a weapon-grave, shows that not

<sup>1</sup> Several scholars see in the Greek 'Charon coin' the relic of an earlier habit of burying more valuable property with the dead. This does not interfere with the view taken above. In the case supposed by those scholars the myth has shown itself strong enough to furnish another interpretation of the original idea of the deposit of a coin, and it is in this altered form that the custom reached the North.

even in a case where the Southern precedent was closely followed, did the view about the inactivity of the future life penetrate through it.

The custom of burying in a ship no doubt originated with the idea that the vessel would discharge some function in the future life, as has already been pointed out by many scholars ;<sup>1</sup> but before I go further I think it will be well for me to give a short review of the conceptions which were connected in the minds of non-Scandinavian peoples with the notion of a sea-voyage of the soul beyond the grave, based on what is contained in Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 3 ed. I, 479, 487 ; Rink, in *Aarbøger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed*, 1868, p. 202 f ; Hildebrand ; Zemmrich, *Toteninseln und verwandte geographische Mythen*, Leyden, 1891, 2 ff, 18 ff ; Hackman (Anutschin) and Olrik, *Danmarks Heltedigtning* I, 223 ff :—

More than 5000 years ago the Egyptians located the home of the dead in a remote island, and a similar view was current in Babylonian tradition. Their idea was that the sea of the dead lay on the other side of the ocean. Other peoples of antiquity also represented the place of abode of the dead as being on islands in the ocean, west of Africa ; and Ulysses travelled over the sea to the under-world.

In the sixth century races subject to the Franks believed that the land of departed spirits was situated on the island of Brittia, and the same belief still obtains in Brittany. On the French coast it was believed that the inhabitants of certain places accompanied the souls of the departed to England. In the commune of Plonguel the dead are conveyed by a circuitous route

<sup>1</sup>Montelius, SFT, VI, 149 ff. Hildebrand, *Folkens tro om sin döda*, 50 ff ; Anutschin, *Säni ladjá i koni kak prinadljčžnosti pochorónova obrjádja* (quoted by Hackman in *Finskt Museum* 1897, pp. 66 ff, 81 ff.) ; Almgren in *Nordiska Studier tillägnade A. Norcen* pp. 310 ff ; Schück, *Studier i Nordisk litteratur och religions historia* II, 285 ff.

to the churchyard over a channel which is called the "*passage de l'Enfer*."

We find the same notion existing in Irish mythology. Far away in the west lies the land of the departed, the Delectable Land, a hundred times larger than Ireland. This thought lies at the bottom of the name "the other shore" given to the place of the dead by the peoples of the Hebrides. An ancient Irish lay relates that the daughters of the King of the Dead carried off the king's son, Condla, in their boat; and the British king Arthur, mortally wounded, bids men bear him to the strand, where a queen and her ladies-in-waiting take him on board and row away with him to Avalon, the castle of the immortals. Far into the Middle Ages even, the people of Spain and Portugal conceived of a large, fortunate island, the island of the seven towns, and there dwelt, so they believed, the dead king Sebastian, who was to free Portugal. And the idea of a phantom ship which conveys the dead in it, and causes the destruction of all who cast eyes on it, is found on the coasts from Normandy to the mouth of the Elbe.

The souls of the aborigines of Chile and of the Malays were also supposed to travel by sea to the land of the dead, and the same idea is found among the Sioux and the Indians in Colombia. The Algonquins travel over sea after death in canoes of white stone to the land of the spirits, and during the voyage the wicked perish in storms while the others land at length on a fair island, where beautiful trees grow and nothing evil is found. According to the Ojibways, an Algonquin tribe, there are souls not only of men and animals, but also of axes, trees and household vessels, which journey after death to the Great City on the other side of the water.

The heathen Greenlanders believed that the passage



for the dead, whether to the over-world or the under-world, was over the sea, the over-world being the place of existence for the bad, and the underworld for the good. The Australians believe in a journey over water to the Island of spirits, and thither the dwellers in all the Oceanic Islands, in Tasmania, the Nicobar Islands and the Malay peninsula, also suppose that they go.

The instances I have quoted so far relate to a voyage across the sea or other open water, but in many cases we find the same view prevailing as regards rivers. According to the Greek view, Styx and Acheron were rivers of the dead, across which the departed spirits journeyed to the world below, and the belief in a river of the dead is still found among the Greeks of the present day. The same view is generally prevalent among the Indians in America, being found among the Ojibways, the Thlinkit and many other tribes. The Chibchas of New Granada, believed that the dead were carried in a cobweb over a river till they came to the centre of the earth; the Indians of Brazil that the death-journey was over many rivers, the last being of enormous width—the boundary stream between the world of the living and the dead; the Cree Indians fancy the same journey to take place over rapid torrents and stinking water, and the Choctaw Indians believe the wicked spirits fall into a frightful river of vast depth, and thus enter the land of hunger and misery.

In the national epos of the Finns the idea of a river or channel of the dead, across which the journey is made in a rowing boat, comes up time after time, and we meet with the same idea in many parts of India, among the Buddhists of China and Japan, among some of the Siberian tribes, and lastly in Africa among the negroes of the Gold Coast.

The idea of a journey of the soul over a sea, a sound or a river, is thus common to many peoples, in various

parts of the world. It is not restricted to any particular zone, or to the sea-coast. Wherever the land is water-washed, whether on the sea-coast, or by lakes, or on the banks of streams, it has occasion to make itself felt, and it crops up in all parts of the world, sometimes among indigenous races and at others through the influence of foreign tribes.

As the dead man had to go on a voyage, the living had to give him the means for making it. And here we can distinguish three typical stages.

I. The dead man is laid in a boat and this is pushed out from the shore, it being left to the Higher Powers to settle what his fate shall be (*cp.* the belief of the Algonquin Indians in the different results of the sea voyage as regards the good and the bad spirits). This form is the oldest type, which is most closely connected with the primitive conception.

“In certain parts of Australia it was usual to lay the corpse in a canoe with some food, and this was pushed out from the shore in order that being driven by the trade winds it might find its way to the island of spirits . . . But in earlier times small children, who could not manage a boat, were buried in the ground. This latter method of burial became afterwards the more usual one, but the idea of a voyage in a canoe was still not altogether given up, for when the body was buried in the ground, a very small canoe was placed on the water, loaded with cocoanuts, or else the dead man was laid in his vessel and then buried.” (Hildebrand, *l.c.* p. 51).

“In the province of Pegu, in Further India, the king's body is placed on a funeral pyre, laid on the top of two boats bound together. The pyre is set on fire and the burning boats are pushed out to sea” (Anutschin, quoted by Hackman). In Japan at the beginning of the nineteenth century, feasts of lanterns were held in memory of the dead. “The spirits which

return to their earthly home are welcomed at the burial places with large numbers of lighted lanterns. After three days the people march in processional order to the sea-shore, small boats of straw are set alight and put in the sea with song and music, to be committed to the winds and the waves, with their light freights of spirits and burn for a time or else go out immediately." (Hallman, *Svensken i Soluppgångens land*. Stockholm, 1904, p. 48). "The Lady of Shalott in the romance of *Lancelot*, orders her body to be laid on a ship, richly adorned, and that the ship shall be allowed to drift whither the wind carries it, without any helm." (Olrik, *l.c.* p. 253). On rivers however it was usual to let the body drift down stream. About the year 1100 A.D. it was the custom in the districts bordering on the Rhone for the Frankish notables and priests to lay the bodies in boats, or in chests caulked with pitch, which drifted down the stream; they always used to come to shore, however, near the mouth of the river, and were buried by the priests at Arles, who received money as "soul gifts."<sup>1</sup> The place is called Elysium Campus in Gervase of Tilbury, and is still known as Aliscamps. (Usener, *Die Sintfluthsagen*, p. 216). "A blind man was praying one afternoon on one of the islands, when he heard a vessel row down the Rhone: on asking who it was he received the answer, 'It is Ebroin' (the name of the man who blinded him), 'we are going with him to the place of punishment in Etna.'

"There is a legend connected with the Rhine, that when Saint Marternus died in Cologne, people wished to keep his body in that city, but the men of Treves claimed it because he was their bishop: it was agreed to let the body drift where God willed, and so it drifted for an hour against the stream and the men of Treves

<sup>1</sup>This is the literal translation of Stjerna's '*själagåfva*.' But Gervase of Tilbury has "*pecunia sigillata, quae caemeterio tam sacro, nomine eleemosynae confertur*" (Liebnecht's edition, p. 43).—Ed.

got their bishop" (Olrik, *l.c.*). The Santals in India, the Chinooks and a few tribes in Borneo leave their dead to drift with the stream (Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, I, 222 f.).

The practice of burning corpses is thus of no importance in relation to the theory of a journey of the dead. The custom of letting the dead person make the voyage in his own vessel is independent of the question whether the ritual prevailing on the spot required burning or not. In the one case the boat was launched into the sea or river in a burning state, and in the other untouched by fire.

II. A later type is evidenced by the custom of burying the dead and his ship in the ground, or hanging them up in a tree. Here we are evidently further from the primitive idea in so far that it is left to the Higher Powers not only to steer the ship on the sea, but also to convey it from the land. The examples of this custom are especially numerous. We have already quoted one from Australia (p. 106). "We find the same custom along the whole of the north-west coast of North America. Along the Nootka Sound the dead are laid in canoes, which are fastened to branches of trees. The Araucanians of South America laid the corpse in a canoe, which is hung up in the house until the burial takes place, or else buried it in the canoe. Even after this practice was given up a trace of the old custom was preserved by the putting up of a canoe close by the grave; such was the custom, for instance, in New Zealand" (Hildebrand). The Egyptians were buried with their vessels. "The Malays often give their sarcophagi the form of a boat, or bury small models of boats in the grave. In East Finland graves have been found in which the corpses have been laid in hollowed out trunks of trees of the same form as those which are still used as punts there in many places. Schwindt

met with two graves of this kind in a field on the hill of Tontinmäki on the island of Hovinsaari, in the parish of Räisälä, not far from a grave-field of the latest heathen times (*i.e.*, about the thirteenth century). One of the skeletons was destitute of any equipment, but the other was provided with a pair of top-boots. At Kalmaluotoholm on lake Suurijärvi (Heinavesi psh, Viborg district) remains of a hollowed out boat, containing human bones, were found under some large stones. According to A. Rahkonen, coffins in the villages on the Karelian waste were made only twenty years ago<sup>1</sup> of a single tree-trunk, and were called *ruuki* (punts). The same custom obtained among the Lapps and Cheremisses, and the Ostiaks used to lay their dead in small boats, round which they built small block-houses. Another reminiscence of this practice is that prevailing in many parts of Russian Karelia, of covering over the grave with an old overturned boat''<sup>2</sup> (Hackman).

III. In the third stage the survivors have given up providing the dead with any means of transport. The Higher Powers are now left to look after everything. In lands where the Greek civilization was current men still gave the dead the means of paying for their journey. In other respects they seem to have lost faith in their power to facilitate the journey of the dead by outward means. Even in lands where the belief in a voyage over sea still persisted, the dead were buried without any provision for it. This development had its cause in the growing spirituality of the times. The

<sup>1</sup>This was written about 1875.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup>I have not included the modern Eskimos in the above review, although, as is known, they like to have their kayaks with them after death. The reason is that the kayak must, at least in some cases, be regarded as a means of getting a livelihood, the dead thus having the opportunity to fish. The kayak is, moreover, only provided for men, and not for women (Crantz, *Grönland*, p. 301). As to the more ancient and heathen Greenlanders see p. 104.

more clearly men recognised their impotency in relation to the soul of the dead, and to its fate, the more completely they left him to the control of the Higher Powers.

There is also a kind of development which is merely due to the altered outward circumstances of the culture of the period. Men retained the conception of a voyage across the water, but as in real life a ferry over a channel or a river could be superseded by a bridge, this became the case also in the other world. Even at a very late period this was the idea in North England as well as among non-Christian peoples (see Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, 495).

The phenomena in Northern Europe, both as regards theories and burial-customs, must be considered in connection with these beliefs, which were so widely spread in the world.

Among the three stages of development it is clear that graves cannot furnish us with any examples of the oldest. Of the vessels which were launched out into the sea, freighted with a corpse and provisions, we have no hope of finding any remains, whether they were set on fire, or committed to the waves unharmed by fire.

On the other hand the stage of development in which the vessel remained on the land must evidently be that which left—whether in the North or elsewhere—the most numerous and clear traces. Grave-finds of Southern Scandinavia, which certainly belong to the fifth century, are unfortunately very rare, and on that ground alone we cannot expect to find any *points d'appui* enabling us to affirm what visible expression this development of the belief in the journey of the dead assumed. But as regards the sixth century, in which the number of known graves is greater, the material for an investigation becomes richer.

At "Odins Hög" near Upsala (belonging to the

period about A.D. 550<sup>1</sup>) there was found a rivet which may probably be taken as representing a burnt vessel (Montelius, *l.c.*) In Finnish graves of the close of the sixth century, and of later date, rivets have been found, belonging to a vessel, which had been burnt with the dead body (Hackman, *l.c.*) Thus during this period only burnt graves of this kind are so far known.

Beginning from about the year 600, however, a very large number of boat-graves with unburnt bodies has been discovered, the most important of which are the graves at Vendel and Ultuna, in Uppland, and from ~~A~~ugerum in Blekinge, and (later) many graves in Norway, in Tuna (Uppland) and Sala. Burnt graves of the period about A.D. 600 and later are known at Ultuna, in Öland, Skåne and Norway.

Boat-graves are also known in Russia. A grave at Ust-Ribjjsna in the government of St. Petersburg, containing about 100 rivets, must certainly be regarded as belonging to this class, as well as many graves which contain rivets in larger or smaller numbers. This class of grave is evidently of Northern, or, to be more precise, of Swedish origin.

Finally, we must class as belonging to the type of boat-graves the collections of grave-stones arranged in the form of a ship<sup>2</sup> which are particularly numerous in Sweden and Bornholm, and which also occur in Norway and Denmark.

Within their own class the boat-graves are of very various dates. The oldest graves of this type, which date from the sixth century and about the year 600, belong to Uppland and Finland; during the seventh century they show themselves also in Blekinge, and during the eighth in Skåne and Norway. To judge by

<sup>1</sup> Further consideration led Stjerna to fix this date about fifty years earlier. See Essay on Beowulf's Funeral Obsequies.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> For illustration see Montelius, *Civilization of Sweden in heathen times*, fig. 200.

the actual finds the custom of burying in a boat must thus have first come into vogue in the coast regions by the Sea of Aland and the Gulf of Bothnia, and afterwards travelled thence southwards and westwards. Its appearance in the south agrees in time with the occurrence of objects of a northern type in Southern Scandinavia.

Let us now pass from the archæological monuments to the literary. The oldest form of the conception has left many unmistakable traces, which we may thus look upon as the literary prototypes of the actual ship-graves which have been unearthed. I will take in the first place the instances in which there is a reference to the burning of the corpse. The best known is the description of Balder's cremation in *Gylfaginning*, cap. 49. The dead hero was burned with his ship. Men exerted themselves to get the vessel off the slip, and at last the burning vessel moved out to sea. In the *Ynglinga saga* we are told that King Haki was borne out when dying to his ship, and that this was set on fire and pushed out from the shore, like Balder's. The *Skjöldunga saga* has a similar story about Sigurd Hring. He also was, at his own request, placed in his vessel when dying, and it was committed to the waves after being set on fire.

In evident connection with this is Odin's enactment in the *Ynglinga saga* that "the ashes of the dead must either be cast into the sea or buried in the earth." Thus if the dead were not buried in a vessel, their ashes might be cast into the water. In both cases the god of the sea—or the wind—provided for their passage to the other world.

Men who were buried unburnt, but did not find rest in their graves, were taken up at a later time and burnt, their ashes being afterwards cast into the sea. Evidently this custom was the more common one in



earlier times, as appears from Odin's law. A parallel to this can be found in Italy, at about the same time. The Prefect of Rome, as is well known, caused Arnold of Brescia to be hung in the year 1155. After the body was taken down, it was burnt and the ashes were cast into the water. Arnold, like the spirits in the North, was considered to be a particularly dangerous subject.

More rare are the references to the sea-journey of unburnt corpses. The journey to Odin is often spoken of without any indication of how it was effected. In *Grimnismál*, 21, it is stated as regards the great stream outside Asgård, that it seemed very (or too) great for the *valglaumi* to wade over.

“árstraumr þykkir  
of mikill  
valglaumi at vaða.”

If the *valglaumi* mean those killed by weapons, we have here an echo of the belief in a piece of water which the dead have to pass over. The object of referring to the passage as difficult is however obscure. Have we here an answer to the question why the dead should be provided with a boat? <sup>1</sup> Connected with this is the idea of Narstrand—a shore of corpses—which answers to the conception of “the other shore” still extant in the Hebrides (*Gylfaginning*, cap. 7, *Völuspá* 37). We do not, however, find in these passages from Icelandic literature any statement as to whether burning of the corpses took place in connection with the journey of the dead. The journey of Sinfiötli and Scyld are the only ones which give us more distinct indications. “Sigmund bore Sinfiötli's body in his arms and journeyed far with it until he came to a long

<sup>1</sup>The somewhat grotesque idea of wading over the river of the dead finds a parallel among many of the Polynesian races, who imagined the same water as being swum over, and also among the Greeks (Zemmrich l.c. p. 6; cp. Radermacher, *Das Jenseits im Mythos der Hellenen*, p. 88).

and narrow fjord, where a little boat lay with a man in it, who offered to ferry Sigmund across the fjord. But when Sigmund carried the body out into the boat it was fully loaded, and the man said Sigmund must go round the fjord. Then he pushed the boat off and immediately disappeared."

It is an ancient feature that the father should carry his son's body down to a boat which waited at the shore, and no doubt it happened thus in real life. But in this account later elements are associated with it.<sup>1</sup> The boat and ferryman are evidently of no ordinary kind, such as are met with in the case of ship-burials of unburnt bodies;—they both have a supernatural character.

The oldest stage is exhibited unaltered in the description of Scyld's decease, which we must consider in detail later on.

As an intermediate stage I have mentioned the custom of letting the vessel stay on land. A "ship-bale-fire" is described in several places in literature—in the *Ynglinga saga*, as Noreen points out, as regards Vanland and Visbur; in Saxo, as regards Harold Hildetand's death; and lastly, in Ibn Fadhlan's account of the Swedes in Russia. How general the custom was is evident from the circumstance that in Frode's noted laws, burial of this kind is prescribed for the warriors of high birth. Isolated direct references to ship-burials without corpse-burning are collected by Montelius in SFT. vi, 149-150. They are referred to in *Haakon the Good's saga*, (twice) in the *Landnåma bók*, once in *Gisle Sursson's saga*, once in the *Vatnsdæla saga*, and once in the *Laxdæla saga*.

As early as at this stage there are indications that

<sup>1</sup> This northern variety of Charon has analogies not only in Greenland but also in Babylonia and Polynesia (Zemmrich, *l.c.*). Various local Greek sagas seem originally to have had different names for the ferryman, and perhaps we find traces of him again in the mediæval saint Christopher.

men were beginning to look at the sea-journey from a more spiritual point of view. In *Gisle Sursson's saga* we are told that a man anchored the dead man's vessel with a stone, so that it could not be shifted and taken out to sea, and Stolpe has pointed out, as an archæological parallel to this, that in one of the boats buried in the Vendel graves there lay a very large stone as an anchor. It is evident that a death-journey could not have been readily taken on such a boat as that. The grave is one of the latest in the local group, and probably belongs to the tenth century.

The latest typological stage cannot have been reflected in burial customs; we only find it in poems. Men had now left off providing the dead with any means of transport, but left the arrangements for the soul's journey entirely to the Higher Powers. The supernatural appears already in the story of Sinfiötli, who disappears at once in the ferryman's wonderful boat. It is more prominent in the legend of Nagelfar, the boat of the dead, which, like its Dutch analogue the Flying Dutchman, has the function of carrying the dead to the other world. The death-foreboding corpse-ship existed in the folklore of the North right into the nineteenth century (cp. Thiele, *Danmark's Folkesagn*, ii, 173), and we have archæological parallels in many sculptures in Gotland (Nordin, *SOM*, 148-150; Schück, *Studier i nordisk litt. och religions historia* ii, 286<sup>1</sup>). These are divided horizontally into compartments. In the lowest of these we see the corpse-boat sailing across the sea, in the upper ones how it comes to land, and how the dead man is received into the new world (Fig. 24). Another analogy is furnished

<sup>1</sup> Sculptural representations of a death-ship are not peculiar to the North. One can be seen on a well-known tomb at Athens (figured in Harrison and Verrall, *Mythology, etc., of ancient Athens*, p. 585) belonging to the post-Christian era, others on some ten Greek gravestones (Usener, *l.c.* p. 217), and again others on the ancient Christian sarcophagi at Arles (Le Blant, *Étude sur les sarcophages chrétiennes antiques de la ville d'Arles*).

to us by the gravestones referred to on page 111. The imitations by stones of the outlines of corpse-ships, like the carvings on the stones, are symbolic of the voyage of the dead.

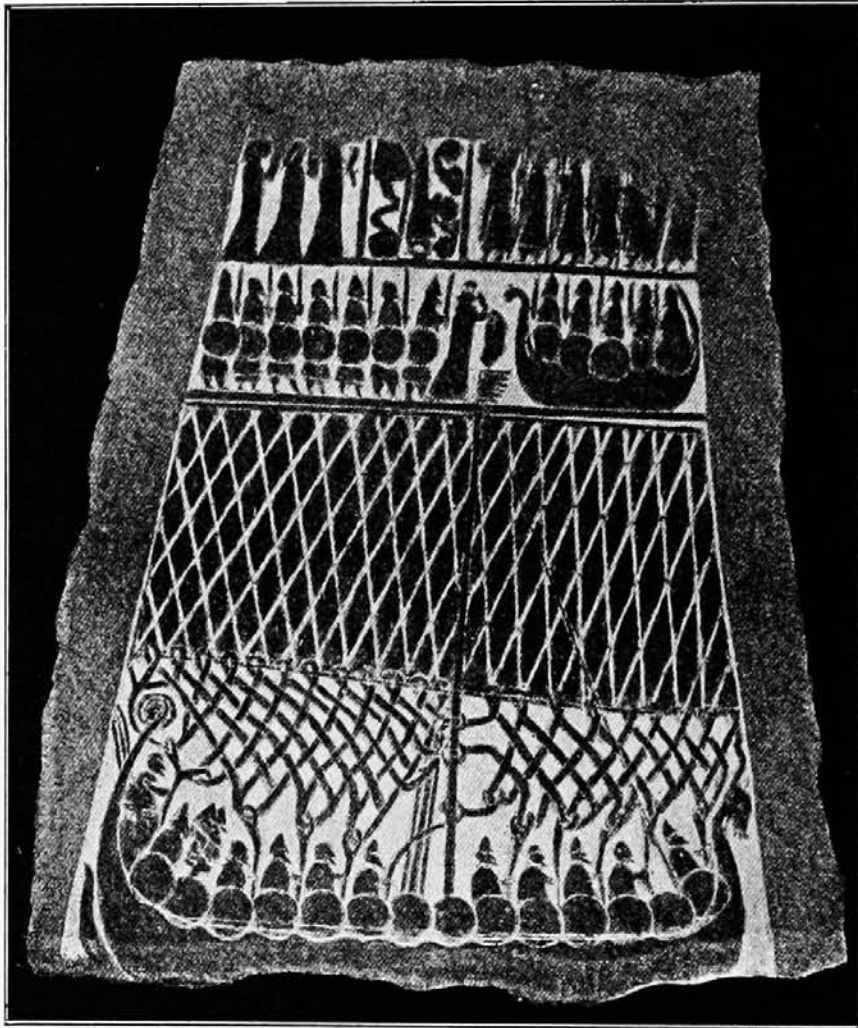


FIG. 24.

Sculptured stone from Stenkyrka, Gotland.

But while men still had materialistic ideas about the soul's sea-journey, they conceived of the passage over the water as being accomplished in a more comfortable way. The bridge "Bifrost" is constructed across the river of Asgård, and souls pass over it by riding, driving or walking. When Hermodr is to "*riða á Helveg*," he first rides for nine days through dark valleys, and then comes to the river Gjöll. He then rides over the bridge

of Gjöll and comes to the gate of the kingdom of Hela. Over this bridge companies of dead men keep passing (*Gylfaginning*, ch. 3). Has this thought any connection with the peaceful industry which characterized the late Viking period, the time of the road-making Jarlabanke? On the later *bildstenar*, with runes such as those at Ockelbo and Levede, journeying on a waggon takes the place of voyage by boat (Fig. 25). This does not exclude the possibility of the journey being across water. In Saxo it is stated that Harold Hildetand was burnt with his vessel, and in the *Sögubrot af fornkonungum* that a waggon, horse and saddle were placed with him in the mound. Moreover, this double means of transport is not unknown in the earlier conception. There are occasions in the Vendel-graves, for instance, where horses as well as a vessel were placed with the dead (see fig. 26). We can obtain an explanation of this from the Gotland *bildstenarna*—the first stage of the journey is on the sea, and then the chieftain mounts his horse and rides to the Valhalla (Fig. 27).

In certain purely heathen conceptions the land of the dead was some region of the present world, situated in the far distance. In other and later conceptions it was raised above the earth. Odin's Wild Hunt takes place in the clouds, he himself rides through the air when he visits the earth, and the Valkyries rush down through the air on horseback from the halls of the dead to seek for a dead hero.

A conspectus of the various stages in the imaginings of the Northern peoples as regards the journey of the dead over the water, which have been previously referred to, gives the following results:—

The view of the ingathering of the dead into another world by means of a journey undertaken by the departed souls, which prevailed in the later times of the Bronze

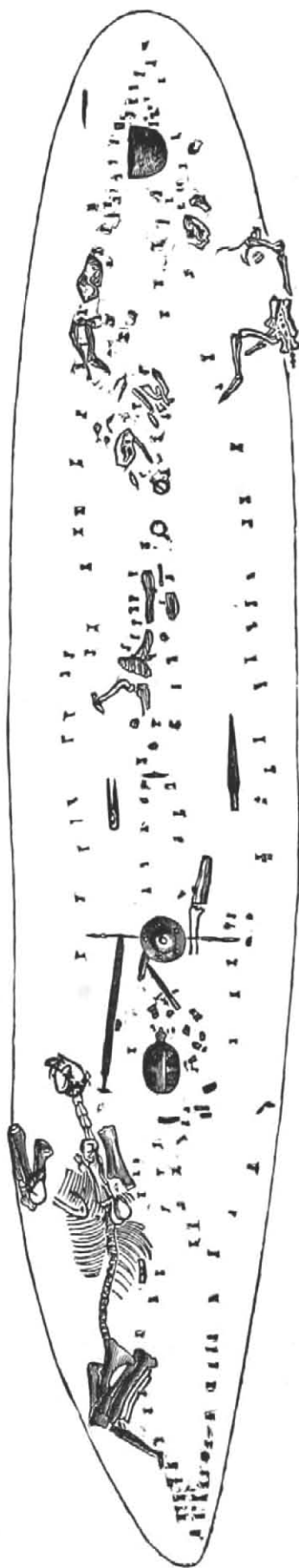


FIG. 26.  
Ground plan of grave  
No. 14, Vendel, Uppland.



FIG. 25.  
Sculptured stone from Levede, Gotland.

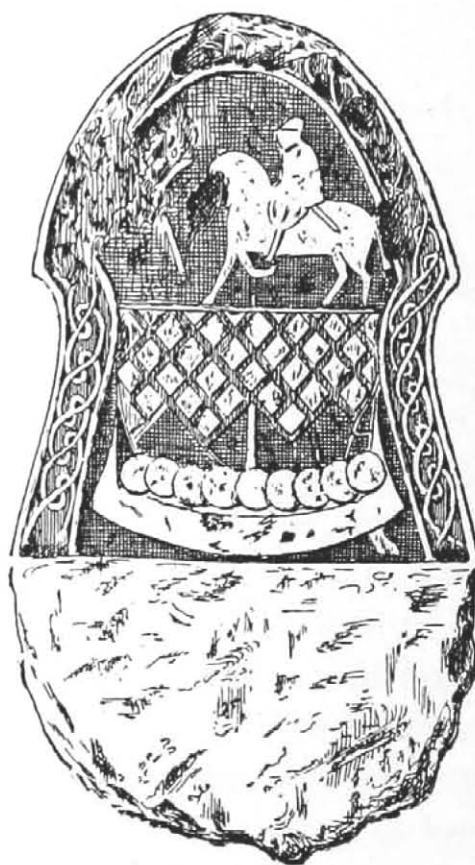


FIG. 27.  
Sculptured stone from Högbro,  
Gotland.

Age in consequence of Southern influence, became weaker about 500 B.C., and men reverted by degrees to the primitive belief in the continued existence of the dead somewhere in the neighbourhood of their burying places.

About the year 200 A.D. races which had been impregnated, in the lands round the Black Sea, with the Greek idea of a kingdom of the dead—a Hades or a Tartarus, an inactive life of the dead in common on the other side of the water—moved northwards, and in consequence of the active intercourse which then arose with the south, these revolutionizing ideas were also introduced, although the Norsemen never adopted the idea of the future life being bare of feats and deeds.

In its first manifestations in the North, as for instance in regard to the fee of Charon, in the fourth century, the northern view was still a close copy of the Greek. But this view, which implies decidedly higher conditions of culture, naturally did not hold its ground for long. For the rest, many variations of the notion of a sea-voyage for souls have been found in Greek lands (Usener, *l.c.* pp. 115 ff, 214 ff), and we may be sure that the more particular feature of a Charon was not the only one which found its way to the North. The simple Northerner, having learned that the abode of spirits lay beyond the sea, treated the dead in the same way as many other people with whom the same belief obtained; he laid him in a boat, and put it in the sea. If he burnt it, he either did the same thing or strewed the ashes in the sea.

Probably under the influence of a more spiritual conception of the matter, he gradually gave up this quaint method of burial. He continued to believe that the spirits reached their home by way of the sea, but he no longer placed the vessel of the departed one in the water, and at last he substituted in imagination a supernatural ship for the earthly vessel.

These types have their analogues outside Europe. As Haki's sea-voyage has its parallel in that of the Pegu chiefs, the supernatural vessel has its counterpart in the fragile little straw-boats of the Japanese, in the iron canoes of the Dyaks, and in the cobweb-boats of the Chibcha Indians.

A sequence of religious conceptions cannot be so exactly assigned to periods as can the development of types of archæological objects. A burial custom, based on an ancient conception, may persist among the inhabitants of a particular district long after their neighbours have adopted new customs on account of further spiritual development, or of external influence. Even in this case one may, generally speaking, assign certain limits of time, although these limits must be more vague and the exceptions more numerous.

As regards the oldest of the stages of development above referred to, the starting point can hardly be fixed earlier than the end of the fourth century, and for the other, the middle of the sixth century. These approximate indications of time must however only be taken with the important reservations which I have mentioned.

I will now proceed to deal with the special case of Scyld, to which the following lines of the Beowulf-poem refer :—

- 1 List! We, of the Spear-Danes in days that are past  
have heard,—of the fame of their warrior-kings;  
the deeds that they did, these men of high birth.  
Scyld, child of the Sheaf, took mead-settles oft
- 5 from parties of foemen, from many a tribe.  
The earl inspired fear; from the time that they found him  
Unfriended, he got compensation for all.  
Waxed under the welkin, and prospered in fame  
Till each of the peoples that dwelt round about
- 10 O'er the path of the whale had to bow to his word,—  
To render him tribute. A good king was he!  
To him there was born, in process of time,  
a son in the castle, and him had God sent



- to the folk as a solace. He knew the dire need  
 15 which in past times they suffered, while lacking a lord,  
 for many a long day. So the Lord of Life gave him—  
 the Wielder of Glory— renown in this world.  
 Beowulf was famed; his repute spread abroad—  
 Descendant of Scyld— throughout all Scedeland.  
 20 So should a man in youth compass in noble wise  
 by lavish money gifts among his father's friends  
 that later in life there may stand by his side  
 willing comrades in turn, when the tide of war comes,—  
 the people do service. Deeds worthy of praise  
 25 will make a man prosper with all of the tribes.  
 So Scyld parted from life at the pre-ordained hour—  
 journeyed forth, skilled in war, to the fold of the Lord.  
 They bore him away, to the swirl of the sea—  
 his comrades beloved— as he prayed them himself  
 30 while he, Friend of the Scyldings, still wielded his words.  
 Dear lord of his country he long had held sway.  
 There stood at the haven with rings on its prow,  
 all sheeny and eager the Etheling's bark:  
 Then laid they adown the ruler belov'd,—  
 35 the giver of rings — in the lap of the ship;  
 the chief by the mast. They brought there, more-above,  
 great store of things costly, of treasures from far.  
 I never heard tell of a keel fitted out  
 more fairly with weapons and trappings of war,—  
 40 with bills and with byrnies. There lay on his breast  
 of treasures a many, and these were to go  
 far away, as a prize for the ocean, with him.  
 They furnished him forth with less gifts not a whit,  
 with less tribal treasures than those did who once  
 45 sent him out on his way at the spring-tide of life  
 alone o'er the waves being yet but a child.  
 And they set him thereto a banner of gold  
 high over his head, let the sea bear him off.  
 They gave him to ocean in sadness of soul,  
 50 and mourned in their spirits. No mortal can tell—  
 can say of a sooth — no ruler in hall,  
 no brave under heaven— who that burden received.

Of the Anglo-Saxon sources which give us information about Scyld, *Beowulf* is the oldest and most primitive. It is, however, improbable that the

introduction to the Beowulf-epos which we have just quoted reproduces the Northern Scyld-saga in its original form. Verses 6 and 7 are of quite a different character from the other descriptive matter, which is proud and warlike. They represent the king as being found helpless. This idea of a foundling, for which we have an analogy in the reference to Beowulf's unpromising youth (the "Dummling" idea), is developed, as Olrik pointed out, much further in the Anglo-Saxon poem (vv. 2183-2188), and puts the conception of the hero in a new aspect. There is nothing similar in the Northern accounts of Skiold. He is portrayed to us in all these accounts as a born warrior. We may therefore confidently set this idea aside, and consider the Northern form under which the figure of Scyld appears.

Moreover, the interpolated passage about his descendant Beowulf's youth and capabilities can hardly have been based on a primitive tradition. Looked at from the saga-historical point of view, Scyld and Beowulf have no connection, and scholars nowadays seem to be also agreed that he must be excluded from the line of Danish kings, both historically and saga-historically.

If, with this necessary reservation, we consider what the introduction to *Beowulf* has to tell us about Scyld, we shall find that it is in reality made up of statements of the same kind as those which have come down to us about the Swedish kings in the *Ynglingatal*—a description of the manner of his death, interlarded with allusions to his importance. In our particular case the time of death cannot be distinguished from the time of burial. "At the fated hour, Scyld, full of exploits, departed, to go into the keeping of the Lord; and they, his fast friends, carried him to the water's edge, as he himself had asked, when, etc." As regards

Haki, Vanland, and Visbur, the *Ynglingatal* takes the form of a description of the hero's burial, and, as in the case of Scyld, the burial is in a boat.

Here, therefore, we have the original nucleus of the myth about Scyld.<sup>1</sup> As there were funeral lays about the oldest heroic Swedish kings, so there was a similar one about the Danish hero Scyld. Verses 26-52 of the *Beowulf* reproduce this lay in Anglo-Saxon—a parallel lay to the poems out of which the scald of the *Ynglingatal* fashioned his artistic strophes.<sup>2</sup>

The man who took occasion to combine the verses about Scyld with the other Beowulf-lays, was conscious of their different character. Like the poet of the *Ynglingatal*, he put the original dirge before the historic descriptions.

The death-journey, the description of the dead king's voyage, is thus the matter of primary importance. It is that which the poem is intended before all things to portray for us, and it lies in the most intimate connection with the religious conception which obtained in Scandinavia at the time.

In his exposition of the Scyld legend, Olrik puts forward a theory which conflicts in essential points with what I consider to be the legitimate results of a comparison of the relevant archæological and saga-historical data. As that distinguished scholar does

<sup>1</sup> My view about the relatively separate status and original contents of the Scyld-lay, hence agrees generally with that of A. Kohler in *ZPh.* ii, 305 ff, taken together with H. Möller's reconstruction in *Das AE Volksepos in der ursprünglichen strophischen Form*, ii, 10.

<sup>2</sup>This gives us an insight into the methods of this scald, or perhaps those of a possible predecessor. He evidently had before him lays about the deaths of the earliest, non-historic, Swedish kings. In England he met with considerable material in addition, which was suitable for treatment as a contribution to the Yngling genealogy. He took the death-lays known to him, and with these as a model he composed the subsequent lays, for which he also employed the Anglo-Saxon-Danish material. (See the preceding essay). It is evident that this was the process followed from (*inter alia*) the circumstance that he places the mythic kings, concerning whom dirges existed, at the beginning, and does not mix them up with the historic ones.

not stand alone in his view, and as his investigation of the question of the importance of Scyld and Scaef in relation to each other yields results which are certainly to some extent in the right direction, it is necessary for me to state the grounds on which I feel unable to accept some of his conclusions.

Olrik does not recognise any connection between ship-burials and the Scyld-saga. He finds support for this in the fact that in the Scyld-saga the death journey takes place without fire being employed, while most of the notices of boat-burial which occur in literature describe a burning of the boat and the corpse. In his view the voyage of the dead was never a religious conception in Scandinavia, but only on the Atlantic coasts of Western Europe, and this representation of immortality only influenced the Northern poem in so far as it furnished the latter with a new saga-theme. As a consequence he regards the arrival of Scyld as the first point in importance, and the death-journey as secondary, the boat-burial having, as he thinks, been only a means of rendering the funeral rites imposing, and exclusively based on Frode's law.

The question of the significance of the boat-burial is most important. We have seen that the idea of a voyage of spirits across the sea was widely spread over the world, and that in many places it naturally expressed itself by means of burial in a boat. The denial of a connection between the foregoing conception and the phenomenon as regards the North alone is a matter which requires to be supported by evidence. The same idea is found in the lands of south-eastern Europe, from whence, during the third century, the Scandinavians derived the richest impulses in various directions, and it appears here in the North, as a consequence of such impulses, as early as the fourth century, under the same outward form as it did at the same time, and

earlier still, in the South (see the well-known tenth dialogue in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead*).

As against the theory just referred to, the view has often been propounded that the boat only took its place in the grave along with the other possessions of the deceased. This is however opposed to the fact that there are no examples of any form of ship-graves from olden times, when the dead were also buried surrounded by necessary belongings. Olrik refers to an influence from the Celtic lands on the Atlantic, in which he thinks that this form of belief in a sea-voyage of the dead was particularly characteristic of the peoples. But after the older La Tène period, even if then, one cannot, except as regards a few isolated and imported objects, point to direct Celtic influence on Scandinavia in any direction, and between that time and the appearance of boat-graves in the North there lies an interval of seven or eight hundred years. After the invasion of the culture characteristic of southern lands, however, we have a consistent development, of which the grave-finds and the ship-ristningar (carvings) on the Gotland sculptured stones are the sign-posts.

It is hardly correct to regard the miniature representations of vessels which occur in Italian graves as a symbol of the wealth of the deceased. There are illustrations of such, for example, in Montelius, *La civilisation primitive de l'Italie depuis l'introduction des métaux* Vol. II. pl. 143, 2b (from Novilara), pl. 188, 2 a, b, (from Vetulonia) and pl. 143, 9 (from Cervetri). There are, as I have already remarked, examples of this custom from Greenland; and analogues of it can be adduced from Scandinavia in the form of drawings of ships on one of the stones at the Kivik grave, and on the Villfara stone, but they only appear as unimportant items in a detailed representation, and they are separated from the time of the boat-graves by a period

of about two thousand years, which was characterized by many changes in men's ideas of life and their burial customs.

With the caution which distinguishes that savant, Montelius, when he first compared the finds of boat-graves which had then been made, did not venture to draw extreme conclusions from the circumstances, as no female bodies had then been found in the buried vessels. Since then, finds of such bodies have occurred in Blekinge, Uppland, Västmanland, Jämtland and Southern Norway. That is conclusive evidence that the burial custom in question is based on a belief in a sea-voyage of spirits, for otherwise there would have been no object in providing female graves, which for the rest contained only articles of female adornment, with such means of locomotion (cp. *Sveriges Historia*, i, 201). "Frode's law" prescribes boat-burial in conjunction with corpse-burning, for the great. An enactment of this kind, preserved by oral tradition, was naturally, like the above-named statute of Odin, and so many of our codified laws of the earlier Middle Ages, nothing more nor less than the expression of a current custom.

That this custom was not confined to the great; or only intended to make the funeral obsequies imposing, is clear from Ibn Fadhlān's remark about the Swedes, on which Almgren lays stress:—If a poor man dies, they make a little boat for him, put him in it and burn it. Almgren also connects this important observation with the large number of graves for common people with few boat-rivets, which obtain in the coast-provinces bordering on the Baltic. Particularly unpretending are also the later Finnish graves with punts.

The fact that Scyld was not burnt is of no great importance, and we know, both from literature and from actual finds, of numerous boat-graves with

unburnt bodies. The stage which preceded that characterised by these graves, and in which, as in the legend of Scyld, the dead or dying were lain in a vessel ready to take the sea, would thus also have furnished examples of such burial without corpse-burning—a practice which we meet with in other regions which are widely separated from each other. The introduction of the custom of burying bodies with the ship had the effect of diminishing the significance of obsequies in which fire took a part. The original idea of burning was that it facilitated the passage of the dead to the other world. But the vessel which was buried with the corpse clearly had the same object. It is therefore easy to explain why we meet with burnt graves and skeleton-graves of this class in the same neighbourhood, and occasionally in the same graveyard (as at Ultuna), and that sometimes there was no burning at all, as at Vendel; sometimes the body was burnt but the boat was buried unburnt, as in some graves in Norway, and sometimes both boat and corpse were burned, as at Möklebust and Karlevi.

On the grounds I have put forward I look upon the passage in *Beowulf* as a faithful description of the Northern idea of a chieftain's funeral rites, and as portraying a burial custom which was actually in vogue in the North. The case of Scyld is to be classed as typologically belonging to the first stage of ship-burial.

It is obvious that archæology can never furnish us with direct counterparts to the description. The known Swedish boat-graves with unburnt bodies—those at Vendel—do however offer the closest parallels we can get, with, of course, the exception that the boat and body were left resting on the land.

From the description in *Beowulf* it appears that Scyld's body was placed in the boat, without any human companions, somewhere about the middle, with the

back to the mast. Now Vendel-grave No. 9, which had fortunately not been disturbed, and in which Stolpe could thus determine the original position of the body, contained a boat of 32 Swedish feet<sup>1</sup> in length. Thirteen feet from the prow of the ship a man's skeleton was found, lying with the feet toward the prow, and stretched out flat. "There are, however, these special points, first, that the head lies in the middle of the chest, with the crown turned towards the pelvis, and secondly, that the left shin-bone is turned round, so that the lower end lies four inches to the side of the knee, and the upper end, with the kneecap, where the foot would otherwise be. These circumstances can only be explained by supposing that the body was originally in a sitting posture, with the right leg stretched out and the left bent at a right angle. On decomposition, the head fell down a little, and as the ligaments of the knee were loosened, the left tibia fell with its upper end foremost." (Stolpe in *ATS* 8 (1), 32). The corpse was thus sitting upright, but it would need some support in order to retain that position, and this was probably the mast, which, as we see from the carvings (*ristningar*) on the Gotland stones, was usual on small ships of this period on the Baltic. The mast rotted away, like the rest of the wood of the ship, but before that happened the chieftain's head had decomposed, and the skull had fallen forwards over the chest in consequence of there being still support remaining at the back.

Scyld carried with him to his burial his sword and his corslet. These belonged to the ordinary equipment of a chief, and occur also in the Vendel-graves.

þær wæs mǣðma fela  
of feorwegum      frætwa gelæded:  
.....  
..... ...him on bearme læg  
mǣðma mænigo,      ðā him mid scoldon  
on flōdes æht      feor gewitan (*Beo.* vv. 36, 37, 40-42).

<sup>1</sup> See Note on p. 61.



Thus other valuable objects were put with him besides the sword and corslet; some of them brought "from far-off ways." Such objects have also been found in the older graves at Vendel—objects which cannot be classed as belonging to actual weapons of war. Amongst these valuables the glass beakers which have been found are certainly the most precious.<sup>1</sup> These fragile wares of English origin had been conveyed a long distance

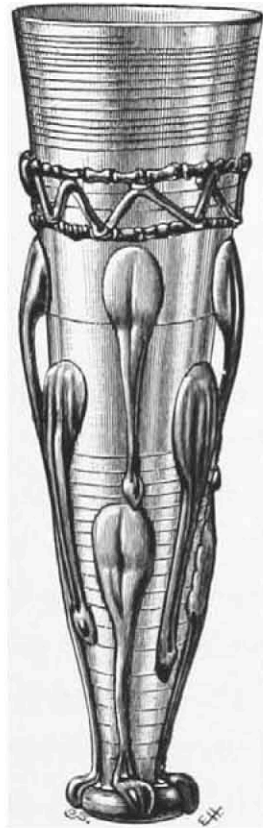


FIG. 28.

Glass beaker from grave No. 12,  
Vendel, Uppland. <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>



FIG. 29.

Eagle's head (ornament on helmet  
or part of standard) from Vimose  
moor-find, Funen. <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>

by sea, and when we take into consideration the state of commerce at that time, it is evident that this must have made them especially costly. The above quoted lines from the Anglo-Saxon poem have, curiously enough, their literal justification in the equipment of these graves. Among the valuables buried with him there would no doubt be that particular treasure which gave the family and its chief their name, that

<sup>1</sup> For illustration see fig. 28.

is, the shield. The most splendid Scandinavian shield-bosses we possess have been taken out of the older boat-graves at Ultuna and Vendel (see *e.g.* fig. 23.)

Among the treasures which accompanied Scyld to the other world there was also his banner<sup>1</sup> as chief. There, as here, he would lead his Scyldings to victory under the assembling banner:—

þā gyt hie him āsetton    segen gyldenne  
heah ofer heafod    (vv. 47, 48).

So the standard of the king, who was placed in a sitting position, was fixed high over his head; somewhat as armies were led forward in battle under the war-banner:—

ðā wæs æht boden    Sweona leodum  
segn Higelāce    . . .    (vv. 2957, 8.)

It was fastened to a long pole, which in certain cases had a hilt at the lower end (*hilde-cumbor*, v. 1022). At Scyld's funeral obsequies, this was probably made fast to the mast, by which means it obtained support and was in its proper place above the king's head. War-banners were very costly and were either partly or wholly of gold (v. 2767). That in the dragon's hoard seems to have had rings (v. 2769, and cp. the expression '*leoðo syrce*') —<sup>2</sup> a feature which is nowhere else described. But what was the banner itself? Beowulf receives such a battle-standard as a gift, and it is called a boar's head banner (*eoforheafodsegn*, v. 2152).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Ags. *segn* is derived from the Latin *signum* and is one of the few classical loan-words found in *Beowulf*. As to the suggestion on p. 132 about Roman standards or eagles, see Index of Things. *s.v.* Banner.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> This interpretation of *leoðo*—as having to do with the meshes or rings of an object in the words *leoðocræft* and *leoðosyrce*—is no doubt taken from an early edition of Heyne. The reference is however to limbs or parts of the body, and so the first word means 'skill of limb,' 'deft handiwork,' and the second 'limb-sark,' 'corslet which covered the limbs,' (the latest edition of Heyne retains the old interpretation, but I believe it stands alone).—*Ed.*

<sup>3</sup> This is probably right; although some scholars think the expression refers to a head-crest (on a helmet) in the shape of a boar.—*Ed.*

Nothing has yet been found, so far as I know, to which this description would be appropriate.

I will however refer, although with a certain hesitation, to some of the objects found in Vendel grave No. 1 whose use has hitherto been an enigma. Probably it was in the disturbed middle portion of the grave that fragments were found of large figures of birds, partly plated with gold,—altogether not less than four pieces, or two pairs, which were placed over, or just opposite each other. From the pieces which have been preserved it seems most likely that the birds were intended for eagles (*cp.* pp. 46, 47). Now bird-figures (eagles) appear in the earlier times up to the seventh century, alternating with the boar. Even as early as the time of the Gundestrup vessel the helmets are adorned indiscriminately with birds and boars. In the Vimose find (Engelhardt, *Vimose Fundet*, pl. IV. 1.) an eagle's head<sup>1</sup> was found which seems to have been placed on the front of a helmet. We know that the custom of putting the figure of an eagle on a helmet was a common one, partly because the heads of the horsemen on certain bracteates of the period about the year 500 are equipped with helmets decorated in this way (Salin, *ATS* 14 (2), pp. 59 ff,) and partly because the figures of birds on helmets undergo exactly the same rudimentary development as the boar-figures on helmets (see p. 17). This alternation of boar-figures and eagle-figures may explain why we hear the wild-boar crest spoken *of* in *Beowulf* as a standard, while the Vendel grave yields us eagle-figures. As a symbol of war the eagle was in itself a suitable subject for such a purpose. The eagle's head found at Vimose can be traced back to Roman, and probably to Eastern-Roman origin. Is it possible that the eagle-figures in the Vendel grave are

<sup>1</sup> This is the object which has also been thought to form part of a standard. See fig. 29; and, as to bird-figures on helmets, figs. 20 and 59.—*Ed.*

late descendants of the Roman standards or eagles, and in that case, was that view of the meaning of the eagle introduced into the North with the rich stream of culture which we associate with the third century—the century to which the eagle-figures of Vimose belong?

The similarity of the journey of Scyld and the Vendel prince to the realms above is thus very close. The prince's body is placed in a boat in which there is no other human being, his back is propped up against the mast of the boat, he is clad in his byrnie, and has with him his sword of battle and other valuables, some of which were contributed by foreign lands, and over his head there shone an ensign of gold.

Scyld was not the name of any real person. It was, as earlier scholars have happily discovered, only the name of the fictitious first ancestor of the Scyldings, the Danish royal line. These Scyldings really derived their name from the shield (Ags. *scyld*) just as the Helmings did from the helmet (*helm*) and the Saxons from the short sword (*seax*). The shield was also, as can be seen from fig. 23, a very prominent feature in the armour. That it was a striking object in the eyes of the North-dwellers we may see from a little ornament representing a warrior, on a gold collar of the fifth century, which was found in West Götland (see fig. 30). It is clear that the name Scylding merely indicated the warlike character of the tribe.

No doubt many Scyldings made their departure hence in the same fashion as the hero in *Beowulf*. But the friends of the dead pictured to themselves the land to which he was travelling as the original fatherland from which the tribe had once come. The birth of a king is with primitive peoples always more or less supernatural. But here we have the case of a king who was also the warlike founder of the Scyldings' tribe, and who first

led the Danes to victory—a fiction in its origin, but for the Danes themselves an unquestionable truth of the past.

The Scyldings sadly provided for their prince's funeral, and the dead Scylding sailed on his weapon-adorned bark to the other land. There he would meet his father and his grandfather who sailed there before him, and Scyld himself. Then among the survivors a poem would naturally be composed about the founder of the race, who first made the long journey. That journey, which they then saw enacted before their own eyes, provided a groundwork for their conception as to how their first ancestor once came to their own land.

Fully armed, like the Karna of the Hindoos, the Athene of the Greeks, and the Vali and Helgi of the Northmen, fully armed as he sailed away, did he come to the Danes in his vessel. To the question why a Scylding should be armed when he died, and why he should be put in a boat, there would come the pious answer—because Scyld came thus and departed thus. And it is this answer which is given us in the verses from *Beowulf*.<sup>1</sup>

It has caused some difficulty that boat-graves are not found in Denmark. But that is only true of Denmark as it now is. In Skåne, which was the most important province of the kingdom at the time of the older Scyldings, a boat-grave has been found (at Lackalänge) with a burnt body and valuable objects, inlaid with enamel. These are probably of as late date as the eighth century, and we may say that on the whole boat-graves, even where the vessel is only represented by rivet-nails, must be regarded as very rare in that region. But the Danes themselves were not indigenous

<sup>1</sup> The idea that the land of the dead, across the water, is the abode of the gods and the original home of the race is found among the Greeks (Usener; Radermacher) as also among the people of Central America (Zemmerich, *l.c.* p. 4).

in Skåne either. According to Procopius they "sprang from a Swedish stock," and starting from Sweden they took possession of Denmark, driving the Heruli out of it. Whether the Heruli in their turn were the original rulers of Denmark cannot be discussed in this connection, and the only point of interest for us is when the Danes and Heruli came into conflict. During the latter part of the fifth century the Danes, as appears from the *Beowulf*, were undoubtedly masters of Skåne, and they must thus have arrived in that land by the middle of that century, at the latest. On the other hand the objects from Skåne, which are earlier than the fourth century, belong to types which agree with those usual in Zealand and Bornholm. Even during the fourth century objects agreeing with those known in Zealand, Öland and the West Coast of Sweden, are found in graves in Skåne. Of the fifth century we have a great find from Sjörröd, on the Lake of Finja (described in detail by Salin, Mbl. 1894). The objects in that find belong to a cultural movement which originated in Hungary, and left its most definite traces in Bornholm, Öland and Gotland, and they do not accord with Swedish types. The development of types of objects which resulted from the movement in question ceased in Öland about the close of the fifth century, and in Bornholm and Gotland somewhat later. These considerations make it most probable that the Danes invaded Skåne during the earlier part of the fifth century.

This agrees also with the foregoing investigation with respect to the typological place of the burial custom we have been considering. The oldest known Swedish boat-graves with unburnt bodies may be assigned to the close of the sixth century or its transition to the seventh century, and the oldest graves with burnt bones to a somewhat earlier date.

We have already assigned the custom of sending the dead forth under sail to the two centuries immediately preceding. During that time the Danes who observed this custom moved from Sweden downwards into Skåne, and in Skåne they subsequently retained in the religious poetry a recollection of the beliefs they had in their earlier and more northerly homes.

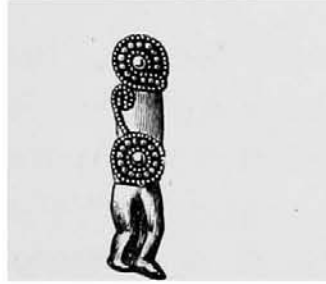


FIG. 30.

Ornament from gold collar. Möne, West Götland.  $\frac{3}{4}$

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# THE DRAGON'S HOARD IN BEOWULF.

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The great battle between Beowulf and the fiery dragon, which ended with the death of both, had as its object the possession of the treasure over which the dragon watched. The subject of a dragon which keeps guard over a hoard of treasure is not confined to Northern poetry only; although, at the same time the hoard is usually spoken of in quite general terms, without any detailed description of its contents. In the traditions of the early Middle Ages the descriptions are so vague, that one cannot get a clear idea of the classes of things of which the treasure consisted. In the *Beowulf*, on the other hand, we have many clear indications of the nature of the objects belonging to the hoard, but as far as I am aware, this circumstance has not so far tempted any one to a close inquiry as to how far actual relics exist answering to the descriptions in *Beowulf*.

The first condition for the reception of any clue in this respect is the chronological one. In the event of the objects in the dragon's hoard described by the poet being considered by him to belong to his own time, we must evidently look for examples in the domain of archæology from the same period as most of the others which are described in *Beowulf* (*i.e.* from the close of the fifth century to the middle of the seventh century; *cp.* the first and second essays of this series.) If however the hoard and the objects found in it are regarded



in the poem as being very old we must of course seek for their archæological counterparts further back in time.

Our first task must thus be to consider the notes of time relating to the dragon's hoard, which are given us in the *Beowulf*. It has twice the epithet 'heathen' ('*hæðen gold*' v. 2276; '*hæðnum horde*' v. 2216), which shows that the compiler of the version of the Beowulf-cycle which we have, regarded the treasure as belonging to a bygone age. The same thing is expressed even more clearly in the poem in another way. The hoard consists of things which once belonged to a number of men, who are said to have lived in past times (*fyrnmana fatu* v. 2761; *hie deað fornam ærran mælum* vv. 2236, 7; *iūmanna gold*, v. 3051). Of these expressions the first-quoted seems especially to indicate some time in the remote past.

This extreme age is clearly emphasized, although with variations. For instance, the helmet, partly of iron, which was one of the articles in the hoard, is called 'old and rusty' (*eald ond ðmig*, v. 2763), the sword completely eaten through with rust (*ðmige, ðurhetene*, v. 3049). In a few passages we even find direct statements of age. The dragon, who watches over the treasure for three hundred years (*ðreo hund wintra*, v. 2278) is said to be 'old in years' (*wintrum frōd*, v. 2277), and the treasure itself is said in another place to have lain in the earth a thousand years (*ðūsend wintra*, v. 3050). This last expression of course only means a considerable time,—sufficiently long for the memory of the deposit of the treasure to be in course of fading away at the time of the Beowulf-poetry.

These quotations as to age show us that even if hoards answering to the dragon-hoard in *Beowulf*, and of so late a date as the fifth century,—the oldest certain period for any Beowulf-lays—can be found, the time when the habit of concealing such collections of objects

was prevalent, must as a general rule be sought in some previous epoch. This date must however not be pushed too far back, because it is evident from the language of the poem that the use to which the various articles mentioned were put, was still perfectly well understood.

After this estimate of time, approximate, indeed, but important for our purposes, we may pass to an examination of the extent of the hoard. It was, as we shall see from the following quotations, enormous:—

- 2231, 3    ðær wæs swylcra fela . . . ærgestreona, swā . . .  
 2234       eormenlāfe.  
 2757       māððumsigla \*fela.  
 2762       helm monig.  
 2763       earmbeaga fela.  
 3011, 2    māðma hord, gold unrīme.  
 3051, 2    ðonne wæs ðæt yrfe eacencræftig, iūmonna gold.  
 3134, 5    wunden gold . . . æghwæs unrīm.

Thus the extent of the hoard is constantly emphasized, either by general expressions like *fela*, *monig*, or by extreme superlatives like *eormenlāfe*, *eacencræftig*, *unrīme*.

Besides this it required eight men (whether at one journey or more is not said) hastily to load waggons with the treasures, notwithstanding that the less valuable of them seem to have been left where they were.

The strong expressions as to the untold greatness of the hoard may no doubt be ascribed to a love of quantitative exaggeration, which appears in other of the Beowulf-lays, although it is to be observed that similar exaggeration does not appear, *e.g.*, in the description of Hrothgar's wealth, and of the treasures which were given to Beowulf. The statements about the huge size of the hoard must thus be taken into account, when we have to compare it with actual finds.

Although the various statements in the poem with respect to its age and size are consistent, they differ in

a high degree from one another as regards other points, viz.:—(1) the place where it was deposited; (2) the nature of the objects composing it; and (3) the original depositors.

I. As regards *place*, it is impossible to harmonize the various statements. Verses 2241 ff. tell us that the treasure was placed in a grave-mound. The word *hlāw*, *hlāw* (vv. 2276,<sup>1</sup> 2411, 2773), which denotes the hiding place of the treasure, seems in other passages of *Beowulf* to betoken a grave-chamber with its immediate covering (vv. 1120, 2802, 3157, 3169). At vv. 1119-20 it is related how the corpse-fire roared *for hlāwe*, which could hardly apply to a completely finished grave-mound; and at verses 3156 ff. we are told how the Geats first made a *hlāw*, and at a later time covered it over with earth. Afterwards the poet refers back to the time before the grave-chamber was covered in, for he makes the Geats deposit valuables in the grave and then ride round it (*ymb hlāw*, v. 3169). Beowulf had previously, through Wiglaf, desired the Geats to construct a *hlāw* for him, which should rise conspicuously by the sea and be called *Biowulfes biorh*.

In the above instances there is thus a general agreement in the description of the place of deposit. The treasure had been carried to an already constructed grave-chamber and left lying there.

Among the conflicting descriptions in the poem however there stand out two, one in which the treasure is stated to be open or bare (*opene*, v. 2271),<sup>2</sup> and the other in which it is described by Beowulf as lying under the grey rock (*under hārne stān*, v. 2744). Of these two versions the last may possibly agree with the passages in which a grave-chamber is mentioned. At

<sup>1</sup> Modern editors all adopt the reading *hord* at line 2276.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> I think that, looking to the context, the word *open* simply means "accessible" here, and that Stjerna's supposition of an open field must rest entirely on the somewhat vague word '*wong*' at v. 3073.—*Ed.*

the same time it seems fairly incongruous that a large number of valuables should be deposited open to view, in an empty grave which had not been covered in. The exposed treasure thus calls for some other explanation, which we will consider after we have dealt with the constituent parts of the hoard.

Meanwhile we may observe that there is one statement which accords well with the idea of an exposed hoard. The person who trespassed upon (or rifled) the field where the treasure was (*sē ðone wong strāde*,<sup>1</sup> v. 3073) was to be placed under a curse. The word *wong* cannot be applied to a grave-mound, but rather to a large open space.

There are thus exhibited side by side in *Beowulf* two different conceptions of the place which contained the dragon's hoard. According to the first the treasure was deposited in a covered grave-chamber, and according to the other in an open field, an *eorðsele*.<sup>2</sup> There is also a third and later tradition, as to which see p. 37 of my Archæological Notes on *Beowulf*, *ante*.

II. The most important point in our investigation is that relating to the *composition* of the hoard.

Twice in the poem we have a summary description of the contents of the hoard. The dying Beowulf asks Wiglaf to go and look at the treasures. Then Wiglaf goes forth to the place of the hoard and there beholds its marvellous wealth. Amongst the objects were :

1. Gold ornaments.
2. Vessels, of which some were overlaid with some ornamentation.
3. Many helmets.

<sup>1</sup> This is the MS. reading, but *strāde* (=rifled) is no doubt right.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> The author must here have had in mind the idea put forward by some scholars that in local names, such as *e.g.* Upsala, the syllable *sal* may have meant an open field. O.A. [*-sele* in *eorðsele* however undoubtedly means 'hall, chamber,' as in *hringsele*, p. 143.—*Ed.*]

4. Many arm-rings.

5. A standard or banner (v. 2767 ff).

When Beowulf was dead, the people assembled round the monster and the treasures, and on that occasion we hear of

1. Vessels of various kinds.

2. Swords (v. 3047 f).

The contents of the hoard are referred to in yet another place. A man of rank is represented as carrying the treasures to the place where the dragon subsequently stood guard over them (vv. 2247-2266):—

“ Now hold thou, O Earth, since heroes could not,  
the ownings of earls. Lo, these did brave men  
get aforetime from thee. Death in war has ta'en off—  
2250 the dread bale of life— every one of the men,  
the folk of my tribe, who gave up this life,—  
their hall-joy was past. I have none to bear sword  
or to burnish for me the overlaid bowl,—  
drinking vessel of worth. Otherwhere are my men.  
2255 The helmet so hard embellished with gold  
shall be shorn of its plating; the furbishers sleep  
whose office it was to polish the war-masks.  
Moreover the war-dress which stood in the battle  
the bite of the sword-blades amid the shield-clashings  
2260 decays with its owner; nor may the ringed byrnie  
go far on its travels along with the chieftains—  
attendant of heroes. No harp gives out gladness,  
the glee-wood no pastime.  
No good hawk sweeps  
around the hall nor no swift horse  
2265 the court-yard paws. The bale of death  
has banished hence hosts of our race.

The language gives one the impression of an elegy, composed in view of the deposited treasure. The speaker looks with sorrow on the things spread out before him, he enumerates one kind after another, and as his eye rests on one or other of the objects, it becomes connected in his thoughts with all the glory with which it was associated during the life of the deceased heroes.

The ring-corslet which covered the warrior's body during his long journeys, and had endured the bite of swords, was now to come apart; the horse was never again to paw the castle yard, as it did so often in past years. It may possibly be supposed that the singer thus gradually passes from picturing the buried objects into a complaint that all which gave lustre to his own life must now dwindle away. In that case the last members of the catalogue—the harp, the hawk and the horse, must not be regarded as part of the hoard. This view seems improbable, however, on account of the closing words of the lay, which immediately follow their mention, viz.: "Death the destroyer has banished hence many of the race of men." This seems, after the manner of a refrain, to knit the whole together into one general idea. Horse and hawk must thus be reckoned as parts of the hoard, with the swords and corslet, and it will then consist, according to this account, of

1. Swords.
2. Vessels.
3. Helmets.
4. A ring-corslet.
5. A harp.
6. A hawk.
7. A horse (v. 2247 ff).

It will be seen that this third statement about the contents of the hoard accords fairly well with the previous ones, although mention of all the same articles is naturally not repeated in each of the different versions.

On other occasions the constituents of the hoard are described in a way which indicates that they were of another kind. We are told, for instance, that the hall was full (*i.e.*, the treasure consisted) of *wrætta* and *wira* (v. 2413). The word *wræt* denotes valuables, or

ornaments; and it is used once (v. 1531) in reference to the golden ring on a sword. *Wīr* seems to have the meaning of 'band' (so at v. 1031), and is perhaps used in that passage, for alliteration's sake, in the sense of 'ring.' In another place the whole of the hoard is referred to as the ring-hoard (*beah-hord*, v. 2826) and in two passages the place of the hoard is called the ring-hall (*hringsele*, vv. 2840, 3053). When Wiglaf invites the Geats to look at and collect the treasures, he calls them *beagas ond brād gold* (v. 3105) *i.e.*, rings and thick gold, or, to use a happy expression of Professor Björkman, 'rings and gold ingots.' When the hoard is to be loaded on a waggon and carried away, its contents are said to be costly ornaments (*dýre mādmas* v. 3131), and immediately afterwards twisted gold (*i.e.*, rings) in untold numbers (*wunden gold æghwæs unrīm*, v. 3135 f).

In this respect the statements in the poem are evidently conflicting. On some occasions we have various objects, such as a standard, rusty swords, animals, etc., included as component parts of the hoard, and on other occasions it is said to consist exclusively of gold, either in the mass or in rings, the medium of currency at the time.

III. As regards the depositors of the hoard, the statements are no more in harmony with each other than those about its contents. The elegy which we have already quoted from the *Beowulf* is put in the mouth of one man, as in other similar cases, and this person is pictured as being identical with the concealer of the treasure. A collection of such magnitude as is described in *Beowulf*, and consisting of objects of the kind specified in the poem, can evidently not have been concealed by a solitary person. We must consequently assign the original prototype of the elegy to a much more remote period; a period, moreover, in which the

articles deposited had a value not only as a medium of exchange. It must have been composed at a time when the authors were still so well acquainted with the custom of hiding these huge collections of objects, that they regarded them in their original and natural importance as weapons of attack and defence, and as direct helps to the enjoyment of life. At a time like that, when men still knew as matter of fact of these great collections of all sorts of things as having been strewn on the ground, they could not have arrived at the conception of one man only depositing such a great hoard as we have under consideration. We shall therefore pass by the statement to this effect for the present.

If Heyne's interpretation of the passage is correct,<sup>1</sup> another and certainly more primitive statement is given at v. 3069 f.—“The noted chiefs (= *mære ðeodnas*) who put the treasures there, had,” etc. This view, that many men of high rank deposited the treasures, fits in well with the information we have as to its owners, for the statements agree as to the objects having belonged to many highly born persons. They constitute the enormous legacy of a noble race (*æðelan cynnes*, v. 2234) the property of nobles (*eorla æhte*) who had died in battle and had ‘seen hall-joy’ (vv. 2248 ff), and they are thus called ‘lordly treasures’ (*eorlgestreona*, v. 2244). The owners had all died in battle. “Death in war, horrid carnage, took away every one of the men of my tribe who yielded up this life” . . . . “The noble warriors have departed to another place”. . . . “The bale of death has banished hence many of the race of men” . . . . (vv. 2249-2266, see p. 141) “Death had carried them [the noble race] all off in times past,” (vv. 2236,7). But not only had the chieftains passed away but their followers too, who bore the swords, who

<sup>1</sup> It is the usual one.—*Ed.*



fetch<sup>1</sup> the beaker and cleaned the battle-mask. It follows unmistakably from the general association of ideas in the elegy, that the hiding of the great hoard was the sequel to some bloody battle.

There may be two reasons for the various conflicting statements about the dragon's hoard. Either versions from several different sources have been blended together in the composition of the lays; or, in the time which elapsed since the oldest lays appeared, the poem may have been altered during its development-period, in accordance with the facts which obtained in the actual life of the time. These two views in no way exclude each other, for we may suppose that the lays, while they were being re-shaped in conformity with altered circumstances, also incorporated some unfamiliar impressions. In order to get at a conclusion as regards this question we must examine how the various theories harmonize according to the different points of view from which we regard the hoard.

The poem sometimes represents the hoard as an exceptionally large collection of very varied objects, and sometimes merely as a huge gold-find.

As regards the question of the deposit and ownership of the hoard, the first view, as we have already pointed out, can only be connected with that which supposes that there were both many owners and many depositors. And as regards the question of place, the same view cannot be harmonized with the theory that the objects lay 'under a grey rock' or in a grave-mound, but it will go very well with the theory that they lay on an open field.

The other view—that of a great gold-hoard,—is best connected with the idea that there was only one

<sup>1</sup> The reading now adopted is *feormie*, so we must translate 'polished the beaker.' It would thus seem to have been of some metal.—*Ed.*

depositor, and that the hoard was hidden under a boulder, and, in the popular conception also, with that of a grave-mound as hiding-place.

The first view gives us the following picture of the circumstances :

In a great battle which took place at some time long past, a noble clan lost their lives, both chiefs and followers having fallen. After the battle the objects which belonged to the dead men, were laid out on the ground, byrnies, swords, helmets, standards, gold in rings and ingots, horses and domestic utensils of various kinds.

The piece of ground on which this rich collection of relics was left, was in consequence placed under a ban. No one ventured to trespass on the field, and a sad remembrance of the decayed glories was only retained in poetry.

This conception of the nature of the hoard is that which is portrayed in the most vivid colours.

Side by side with it we find another, according to which a store of gold was deposited, either in a covered or uncovered place, and finally there appears the idea that a collection of valuables was hid in a grave-mound.

We may now ask ourselves the question whether among actual remains, there are any which agree in place and time with the indications given in the poem.

Traditions about a hoard concealed in a grave-mound are not in themselves characteristic of any particular time or country. Such mounds, with considerable collections of objects in them, have existed in quite diverse lands and ages. In southern and central Scandinavia large grave mounds with rich contents are only met with in very restricted areas during the Early Iron Age before the third century. During the next following period also this custom is pretty rare,

becoming more common in the fifth century and later. It is thus most reasonable to suppose that this variant of the tradition arose after the commencement of the third century, although it is not altogether impossible that traditions were current about hoards existing in mounds belonging to the Bronze Age.

The period for gold finds is more restricted. As regards Scandinavia these belong to a time somewhere between the close of the fourth century and the middle of the sixth. The lays were evidently composed while the practice of burying collections of gold objects 'under the grey rock' was still in full swing. No solitary find of a collection of gold articles could ever have been the means of introducing a theme of this sort into the *Beowulf*-poem. It is said (v. 2249) that "the brave men certainly found the treasures in the earth"<sup>1</sup> which they subsequently used, and this expression is easily explained, for gold-finds would evidently have been more frequent in times when depositing was the custom, than afterwards, when the places of deposit were forgotten. The idea of a gold-hoard undoubtedly points to the earlier version of the *Beowulf*-poem having originated in Scandinavia. No such "gold-period" ever existed in Britain. The same thing is true in a still higher degree as regards the most important account of the composition of the treasure. Finds of exposed objects of the sort and quantity mentioned in *Beowulf* have never occurred in Britain, while there are many examples in Scandinavia. Of these we will now give a short list.

The great Scandinavian moor-finds belong to the time between (say) A.D. 250 and A.D. 450; a period of about 200 years. Among these moor-finds the most important are:

<sup>1</sup> The correct translation of the passage is "Brave (or good) men formerly acquired (or won) it from thee."—*Ed.*

## 1. SCHLESWIG.

Nydam (2 finds).  
Thorsbjerg.

## 2. JUTLAND.

Vingsted Mölledam.  
Dallerup Sö.  
Porskjær.  
[Tranebjerg mose.]  
Hedeliskær.  
Trinnemose.

## 3. FUNEN.

Vimose.  
Illemose.  
Kragehul.  
Krogsbolle.

## 4. BORNHOLM.

Römeremose.  
Balsmyr.

## 5. SKÅNE.

Sjöröd.

## 6. ÖLAND.

Skedemosse.

## 7. WEST GÖTLAND.

Finnestorp.

As compared with each other these finds are very dissimilar. The Thorsbjerg find, for instance, consists of all sorts of gold, silver, iron, brass and wooden articles, with portions of skeletons, etc., while on the other hand the find from Sjöröd consists of silver objects. At Vimose entire objects were deposited, whilst at Porskjær only certain parts were found, such as chapes from the sheaths of swords, probably as representing whole objects. A grouping of the finds into classes according to the above peculiarities leads to the result that one group, consisting of finds of whole objects and objects of various kinds, embraces, amongst

others, the older Nydam find, and the finds from Thorsbjerg, Vingsted Mølledam, Vimose, Illemose, Römermose, Balsmyr and Skedemose, while the other group, consisting principally of parts of things, and those of few kinds, includes such finds as the later Nydam, and those from Porskjær and Sjøröd.

The finds of Kragehul and Finnestorp occupy an intermediate place.

A division such as the above will also agree with the mutual relation of the finds as regards time. The oldest great find, that of Vimose, originates from the period just before or about the year A.D. 250; that of Thorsbjerg is about fifty years later, and the older find at Nydam is fifty years later than that. To the same period belong also the remaining moor-finds of the "first group." To the first half or middle of the fifth century belong the finds which we have classed as the second group. Lastly, the Finnestorp find may be assigned to the fifth century, and that of Kragehul to about A.D. 400.

The various types of moor-finds are thus in reality links in a chain of development. In the earliest times everything was deposited which one of the armies or companies had left behind them on the battle-field. Later on only certain kinds of things were deposited, more particularly objects of value.

The period after the commencement of the fifth century was also, as we have said, a treasure-depositing time, and it is difficult to say, as regards two of the above-mentioned finds,—those of Nydam and Sjøröd,—to which category they may most properly be assigned.

The deliberate and complete wrecking of the costly objects at Sjøröd may perhaps stamp this find as a late offshoot of the moor-finds proper.<sup>1</sup>

As finds of large collections of objects are not known

<sup>1</sup> The point is that the systematic wrecking of objects is more characteristic of this earlier group,—O.A.

before the third century, the great moor-finds are the oldest to which we can turn in order to seek for parallels to the dragon's hoard in *Beowulf*. The remote age which is ascribed in that poem to the hoard also points us to the same period—that of the moor-finds proper. The oldest known of these finds, that of Vimose, belongs, as we have already observed, to somewhere about the year 250.<sup>1</sup>

In that case the “treasure” would apparently have been known and embodied in traditions for about two centuries and a half. And this lapse of time, *i.e.* from 250 A.D. to 500 A.D., would bring us to about the time of the earliest *Beowulf* poetry.

The continually repeated offerings will also have kept alive a knowledge of the character of the buried objects, and this agrees with the descriptions in *Beowulf*, for in these, traditions as to the original deposit are obscurely visible, and the most lengthy of the descriptions shows, in spite of the intervening time, no ignorance of the nature of the objects which went to make up the hoard.

The strong expressions in the poem about the size of the hoard agree completely with the facts of the moor-finds. At Vimose more than four thousand objects were found, and in other of the finds several hundreds.

The locality agrees also with what one of the versions above quoted depicts. The articles had once been placed in an open field. In this respect the *Beowulf*, which by the way furnishes us with the only literary analogies, provides us with a direct clue. Verses 3052-4 are as follows :—

“iūmanna gold    galdre bewunden  
 þæt ðām hringsele    hrīnan ne mōste  
 gumena ænig,    nefne—”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sporadic objects of a later type may possibly indicate that people continued to deposit things on the site right along until about A.D. 500.

<sup>2</sup> “The gold-store of men of old, hedged round with a spell, so that no man might touch the treasure-chamber, unless    ”—*Ed.*

Here follows a Christian interpolation.

The same idea is repeated more emphatically at vv. 3069-3072.

“swā hit oð dōmes dæg    diope benemdon  
     þeodnas mære,    ðā ðæt þær dydon  
     þæt sē secg wære    synnum scyldig  
     hefgum geheaðerod,    hellbendum fæst.”<sup>1</sup>

Here also the Christian interpolator was about. Unfortunately we do not know what were the words he supplanted by the expressions about sin and hell-bonds.<sup>2</sup>

Thus the gold was put under a spell which prevented men from touching the “chamber of rings,” and the very spot was placed under a ban, so that misfortune should befall every one who trespassed on it. This imprecation has left its mark to this day upon the name of the site of one of the finds—Vimose,<sup>3</sup> and in the same way Dallerup Sö and Vingsted Mölledam, the sites of two other bog-finds, were connected in traditions with hell (Thiele, *Danske Folkesagn*, ii, pp. 6, 16).<sup>4</sup> The ban will perhaps explain to us also why these places have been subjected to different treatment to the surrounding land, where the spade of the agriculturist has not been hindered by unseen powers of vengeance.

Among the objects in the great hoard which are mentioned in *Beowulf* are the following, against which are given notes of their actual occurrence in moor-finds:

1. *Swords*. These were found, sometimes in great quantities, whole or only in parts, in pretty nearly all

<sup>1</sup> “So the great chiefs, who put it (the treasure) there, had laid on it a deep curse until doomsday: that the man who should plunder that place should be guilty of sin, be shut up in devil's haunts and bound in hell-bonds.”—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> When an army, consisting of Germans and Gauls, annihilated a Roman army, they destroyed and threw away the property of the vanquished *nova quadam atque insolita execratione*.—Orosius V, 16.

<sup>3</sup> *i.e.*, Sacred moor. <sup>4</sup> A not altogether analogous example of how a strong feeling of the sanctity of buried treasure persists is given in SFT, xii, 27; and even towards our own time the concealment of treasure was connected with certain less powerful enchantments. (*cp.* Nyland, *Samlingar utgifna af Nyländska afdelningen 2. Nyländska fo'ksagor* Hel-singfors, 1887, pp. 113 ff).

the moor-finds in our list, the latest as well as the earliest.

2. *Helmets*. Two were found at Thorsbjerg, and there were possibly others at Nydam and Vimose.

3. *Ring-corslets*. Found at Thorsbjerg and Vimose.

4. *A standard*. Possibly at Vimose (Engelhardt, *Vimosefyndet* pl. 4, fig. 1; and see pp. 129-132, *ante*).

5. *Gold rings* ("twisted gold"). Many at Thorsbjerg. Also at Vingsted Mølledam, Hedeliskær and Finnestorp.

6. *Vessels*. These are frequently mentioned, perhaps because in consequence of later offerings the tradition of them was specially well preserved. Kragehul, Römeremose (bronze); Finnestorp (earthenware, glass); Thorsbjerg, Nydam, Vimose, Kragehul (earthenware, wood).

7. *Harp*. Nondescript pieces of wood have formed part of many of the finds, but it is very doubtful whether they belonged to any instrument.

8. *Horses*. Skeletons or parts of skeletons of these have been found at Vimose, Nydam, Skedemosse and many other places.

9. *Hawks or Falcons*. Many bones of animals, which have not been particularly defined, occur in various finds.

10. *Miscellaneous ornaments*. In most of the finds ornaments of bronze, silver or gold have been discovered.

The agreement between the finds and the classes of objects described in *Beowulf* is thus specially good. As regards the harp which is spoken of in the poem, it is easy to understand that the bard who used the harp in the recitation of this and other lays, would not forget to include it.

The moor-finds comprised many other objects besides those which are mentioned in *Beowulf*. So varied are the finds, that it would not have been



surprising if one had been discovered containing the same classes of things as we read of in the poem. But it was not the poets' object to give us an exact catalogue of the contents of a moor-find. The age rejoiced in weapons and gold, and here as elsewhere the less noteworthy implements and household utensils were passed by without remark. According as the scop's eyes, or his memory, rested on the more prominent objects, he inserted them in his artistic and poetical enumeration, in the state in which they were then—as rusty and decomposed as when they were taken up fifteen hundred years afterwards.

Besides this, modern investigation of the moor-finds has brought to light an important agreement between them and the statements in *Beowulf*. The great hoard was first put together after a destructive battle, and its contents had belonged to champions—to chiefs and their followers—who died in fight. The same view with respect to the origin of the actual moor-finds is now shared by all Northern archæologists. Beyond that, however, we have in the poem a statement that the articles were deposited by the comrades of the slain (vv. 3069,70). This conflicts with the current opinion about the moor-finds, which is that they were remains of trophies of victory, offered to the gods, and were thus entirely due to the victors for their existence. But as I have observed on two previous occasions there exist strong reasons for another view<sup>1</sup> about the origin of the moor-finds, a view which sorts well with the version in *Beowulf*.

Hence agreements between representations in *Beowulf* about the dragon's hoard and the moor-finds have been shown to exist in relation to age, magnitude,

<sup>1</sup> In *Bornholm's befolkning under järnåldern*, p. 30, note 2, and at pp. 100,101 *ante*. The view is that the deposited objects were presents to the spirits of the fallen warriors, and intended to be used by them in the exercise of their profession in another world.—*Ed.*

place of deposit, the nature of the objects, and the circumstances preceding the deposit.

Our knowledge of the geography of the *Beowulf*—if it is presupposed that the theatre of its action lay in Scandinavia—is not rendered more definite by these identifications. The dragon's hoard was situated within the confines of Geatish territory. The moor-finds belong to the southern part of Scandinavia, and, amongst others, to just those various provinces in which the principal seat of the Geats has been sought, namely. Jutland, West Götland and Öland.

The other view of the dragon's hoard—that it was a gold-hoard—also points to Southern Scandinavia as its site. In Denmark and South Sweden, finds of gold, in rings and in ingots, as in *Beowulf*, have been discovered in the ground on many occasions, by the side of some conspicuous rock, or in some similar position. Certain finds of this kind, such as those at Sköfde, at Gumme (Funen) and Narfveryd (East Götland) answer well enough to the Beowulfian description *hringsele* (pp. 143, 150). The oldest of these finds are of the same period as the latest of the moor-finds, such as Porskjær and Sjøröd.

We see now in what way the archæological facts give an indication of the manner in which the inconsistencies in the *Beowulf*-lays in this respect may be reconciled. The oldest lays, such as the elegy above referred to, were concerned with a true moor-find, like that, for instance, at Vimose. As men gradually ceased to deposit objects in this way, they began to substitute for them a limited number of costly articles. About the same time the deposit of isolated gold-hoards began to come into fashion. The poem reflected the customs of the age. In it the many owners are succeeded by the solitary hider of treasure, the great quantity of objects for warlike and domestic use by a hoard, valued

according to its worth as gold, the open field by a hiding-place under a rock. Nor is this procedure peculiar to the *Beowulf*-lays. The popular pictorial representations of Christian religious scenes, for example, followed the same course. The comparatively short period of time during which the *Beowulf*-poetry was developed meanwhile allowed the primitive features to show through with unmistakable clearness.

Side by side with this legend, which was based on the moor-finds, and which was modified according as actual customs changed, there existed traditions about treasures stored away in grave-mounds. Such traditions got about in former times as well as (unfortunately) in our own. The numerous unsuccessful hunts after treasure supposed to be buried in grave-mounds have not had the effect of destroying the belief that these mounds conceal precious objects. The conception of a grave-hoard which is contained in *Beowulf* is not an original one. What is said about its composition is derived from a knowledge of moor-finds and of deposits below the ground.

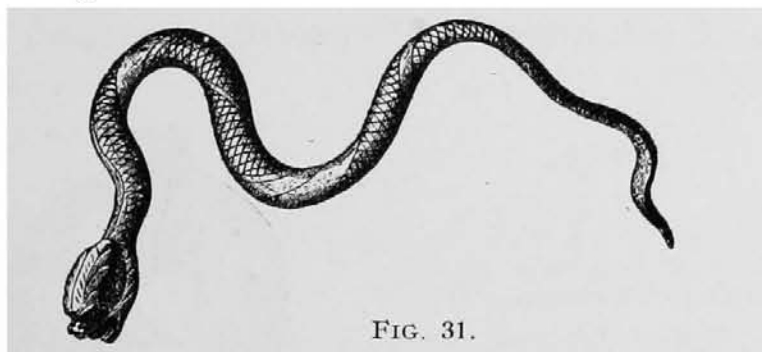


FIG. 31.  
Snake in bronze, from Thorsbjerg, Sleswig.  $\frac{1}{3}$

As the treasure in the lays is watched over by a dragon, it would be somewhat remarkable if we did not find parallels to this circumstance among archaeological remains. I have already (see p. 39) stated how the dragon of Anglo-Saxon literature takes the place of an earlier serpent, that is, of an animal which, unlike a dragon, is not provided with wings, or even with feet.

As the oldest lay about the dragon's hoard cannot be much younger than the moor-finds, and the Scandinavian snake-figures should originate from the same period as the poem, we must look for them during the course of the fourth century and later.

Figures of serpents are known in Scandinavia in no small numbers even as early as the Bronze Age (Ekhoff, SFT. viii, 106), but as graphic representations of them practically disappear after that period we do not know how far, or in what respect, the serpent plays any part in Scandinavian sagas during the following (Early Iron) Age. Pictorial representation first became usual again with the stream of culture which came from the south-east during the third century after Christ, and at this time snake-figures—which are known during the La Tène period on the Gundestrup vessel—begin to appear on figures from Scandinavia. The oldest known example of a snake-figure is probably an imported one. It occurs in the Thorsbjerg find (Fig. 31). This snake-figure shows on the reverse side traces of having originally formed part of some larger object, possibly, as Engelhardt thought (*Thorsbjerg mosefund*, p. 23), a helmet.



FIG. 32.

Ornament on a round plate  
(silver). Thorsbjerg.  $\frac{1}{2}$



FIG. 34.

Gold bracteate from  
Denmark.  $\frac{1}{2}$



FIG. 33.

Gold bracteate from  
Lyngby by Ebeltoft,  
Jutland.  $\frac{1}{2}$



FIG. 35.

Ornament from gold collar  
of Karleby, West Götland.  $\frac{3}{4}$

The types which are shown in figs. 32 and 33 are not of much importance. The first belongs to a large plate from the Thorsbjerg find, and the other to a Danish bracteate. To what extent such isolated snake-types prompted the Scandinavian inclination for copying is uncertain. Snake-figures like that in fig. 33 are observable on the Gallehus horn found in the year 1639. Figures similar to fig. 32, which are of the simplest kind conceivable, may be recognized again in bracteate illustrations (*e.g.* Fig. 34). The desire for symmetry, which became later on a ruling feature of Scandinavian ornamentation, already at this early period adapted such simple figures to its purpose.



FIG. 36.

Gold bracteate from  
Wingham, Kent.  $\frac{1}{4}$



FIG. 37.

Detail of  
fig. 36.



FIG. 38.

Gold bracteate (locality  
unknown).  $\frac{1}{4}$

Fig. 35 gives an example of this, and another is afforded by the bracteate, fig. 36, in which the same snake-motive enters into a bi-symmetrical ornamentation.<sup>1</sup> But on the whole these types of snake-figures seem not to have played any important part in the North.

We are in a more fortunate position as regards other types. On both the Gallehus horns figures of snakes are observable, which curl about without any inter-

<sup>1</sup> Related to this, but not belonging to the same series in development, are such ornaments as that shown in fig. 38.

section of the bends and coils (Fig. 39). This kind of

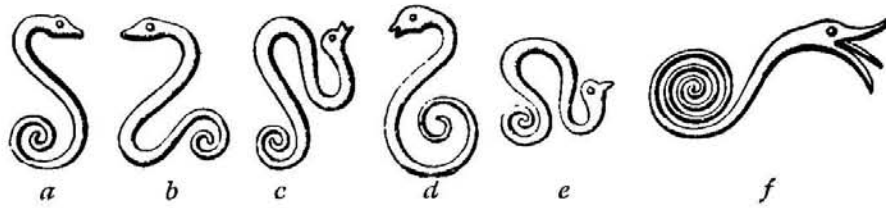


FIG. 39.

Ornaments from the (gold) horn of Gallehus, Sleswig.  $\frac{1}{2}$

illustration, which was no doubt originally occasioned by the difficulty of reproducing with a regard for perspective the parts of the snake's body which rested on the ground, occurs in classical art and is observable on a coin of Northern workmanship belonging to the fourth century and found in Gotland (Fig. 40; Almgren SOM, pp. 89. ff), on bracteates (Figs. 41, 42 and 43) and, apparently, on stone (sculptured) so late as the seventh century or about 700 A.D. (*cp.* fig. 24 topmost row). Probably it is the same figure which



FIG. 41.

Ornament from a bracteate (fig. 61) Tufvasgården, Halland.  $\frac{1}{4}$



FIG. 40.

Gold coin from Kälder, Gotland.  $\frac{1}{4}$



FIG. 42.

Ornament from a bracteate, Skovsholm, Jutland.  $\frac{1}{4}$



FIG. 43.

Gold bracteate from Rosendal, Gotland.  $\frac{1}{4}$



FIG. 44.

Silver pendant from Björkö, Uppland.  $\frac{1}{4}$

reappears with feet in the horse-shaped mounting shown (not quite completely) by Sophus Müller in

*Vor Oldtid* (Fig. 377). Long afterwards the form was adopted, presumably under the influence of Southern lands (see *e.g.* fig. 44, and *cp.* Rygh, *Norske Oldsager*, fig. 690).

On one of the large gold collars,—that from Öland,—a recumbent, backward looking animal (apparently not intended for a snake, see Salin, *AT*, p. 212) appears repeatedly (Fig. 45, *a* and *b*). The collar is probably of the period immediately before the year 500. The original of fig. 46, which was a regular develop-

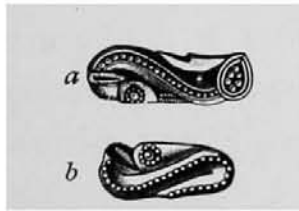


FIG. 45.

Ornaments from a gold collar, Färjestaden, Öland.  $\frac{2}{3}$

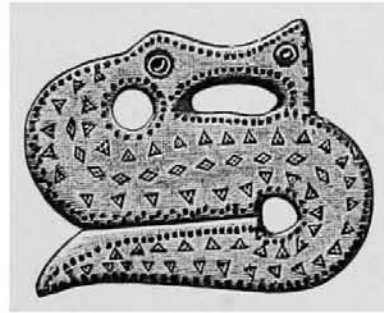


FIG. 46.

Bronze fibula from Öland.  $\frac{1}{2}$

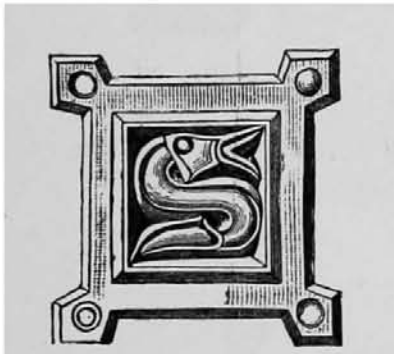


FIG. 47.

Plate (gilt-bronze) from Vallstenarum, Gotland.  $\frac{1}{2}$



FIG. 48.

Snake-figure from a helmet-plate (fig. 59). Grave No. 1. Vendel, Uppland.  $\frac{1}{2}$

ment of this form, belongs to the sixth century or the period about A.D. 600. The same animal-form comes before us again in fig. 47 as a surface ornament. Thus we cannot, in this series, discern any connection with the snake-figures. The original of fig. 48, which is a true snake-figure and is most nearly akin



to figs. 41-43 (from Uppland, date about A.D. 600) belongs to a type somewhat similar in appearance.

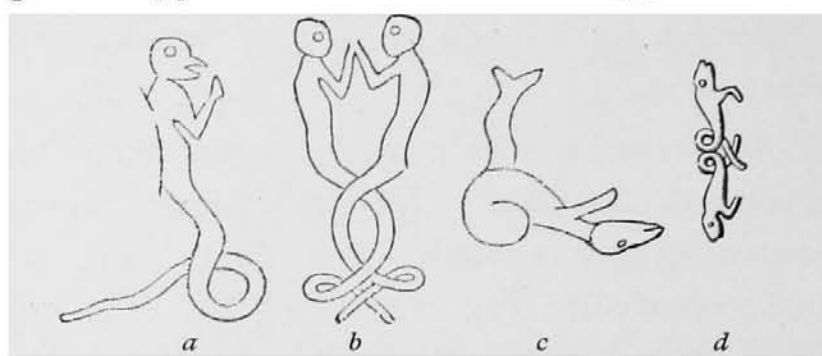


FIG. 49.

Ornaments from the gold horn  
of Gallehus, Sleswig.  $\frac{1}{2}$

The first horn found at Gallehus has on it several curious beings with something like a human head, small arms attached near the head, and snake-like bodies curling themselves in convolutions which are occasionally repeated (Fig. 49, *a-d*). These convolutions do not follow any fixed rule; sometimes the upper part of the body lies over, and sometimes under, the lower.



FIG. 50.

Ornament from a  
bracteate (fig. 57)  
Lundeby, Öland.  $\frac{1}{4}$



FIG. 53.

Ornament from a  
bracteate (fig. 58)  
found in Denmark?  $\frac{1}{4}$



FIG. 54.

Ornament from a  
gold collar, Färjestaden,  
Öland.  $\frac{2}{3}$

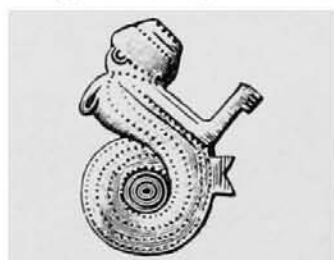


FIG. 51.

Ornament from a silver  
fibula, Meilby, Jutland.  $\frac{1}{4}$



FIG. 52.

Ornament from the  
horn of Gallehus,  
Sleswig.  $\frac{1}{2}$

The course of development is still undetermined, somewhat later, as may be seen from fig. 50. Meanwhile an important series of forms was developed from such figures, which had no doubt in their turn descended



from classical prototypes. The same peculiar animal-form with the human head and bent arms comes up in the fourth century as a separate ornament attached to a silver fibula from Jutland (Fig. 51). The way in which the snake-like body is curled, is reproduced in the period about A.D. 400 on the Gallehus-horn above referred to; the body takes a curve backwards behind the head, then goes downwards, bends backwards at its lowest point, then turns upwards, leaving a space between the anterior and posterior curves, passes under the upper part of the body forwards, and ends immediately after coming into view again (Fig. 52). There is the important difference between this figure and its prototypes, however, that a serpent's head is substituted for the unfamiliar head of classical origin.

Not much later is a figure from a bracteate (Fig. 53) with the same characteristics, but approximating in other respects to the fibula-ornament just mentioned.

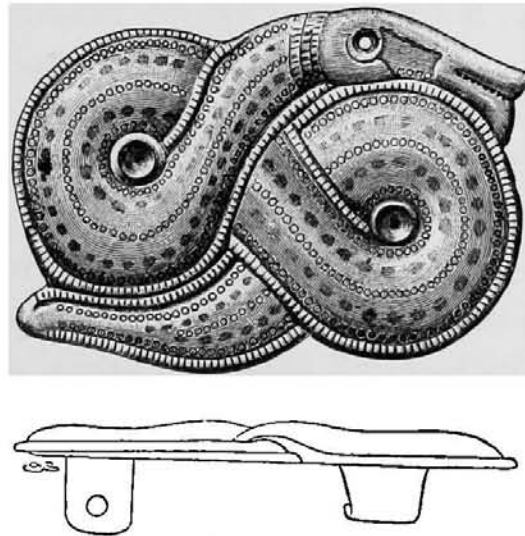


FIG. 55.  
Bronze fibula from Öland.  $\frac{1}{4}$

The same snake-figure is also observable on the Öland collar (Fig. 54; about A.D. 500) and continues after that to be very popular. The next step in development is that for the sake of increased symmetry the loop is shown double. In this form the ornament is known in the shape of fibulæ in remains from Öland (Fig. 55),

Gotland, Uppland, Finland and Bornholm. Later on the head is also shown double (in specimens from Gotland, and from Finland—for the latter, see fig. 56). This form dates from about A.D. 600.

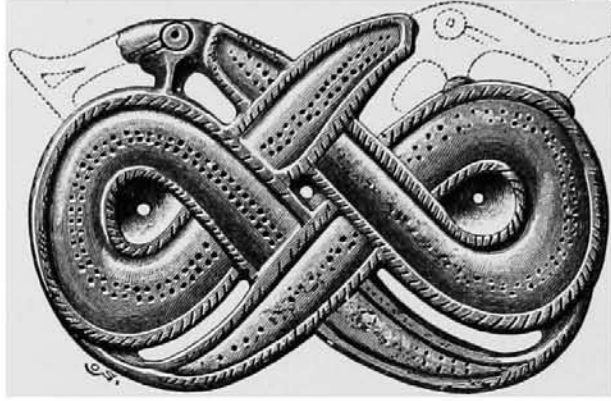


FIG. 56.

Bronze fibula from Gammalgarn, Gotland.  $\frac{1}{2}$

Thus it appears that the snake-design is by no means uncommon in South and Central Scandinavia, and it is important to observe that its occurrence answers in time to that of the later moor-finds and of the Scandinavian lays which went to make up the *Beowulf*-poem. Its popularity during that period is shown by its giving rise, in spite of its simplicity of form, to certain characteristic series which persisted for a considerable time, and by its bending to its use other and originally quite different designs.

This agreement in time and place is worthy of consideration. But side by side with the snake-idea, a number of other new ideas gained a foothold in the industrial art of Scandinavia at the same time. In the event of an agreement being observable between the serpent of the poem and that of art, we can only make use of it if it occurs in cases where the snake-figures appear in surroundings which afford some analogy with the statements in the poem.

Fortunately we are not entirely without examples of this kind. The original of fig. 50 forms part of a bracteate from Öland (Fig. 57), and that of fig. 53 of a Danish bracteate (Fig. 58). On both these bracteates the serpent is facing a rider who is advancing towards it. The intention becomes clear when one takes into account the connection in which the original of fig. 48 appears (see fig. 59).



FIG. 57.

Gold bracteate from Lundebj, Öland. 11



FIG. 58.

Gold bracteate (from Denmark?) 11

In that example space permits of the entire scene being represented. The rider is on his way to fight against the snake, who is raising his head towards the approaching enemy in expectation of an attack. Hence it seems natural to assume that the two bracteate-scenes, with the rider and a serpent turned towards him, are

attempts to reproduce the same occurrence. These bracteates belong to the fifth century, or the period about A.D. 500,—in other words, to the time when the *Beowulf*-lays flourished on Scandinavian ground.



FIG. 59.

Helmet-plate of bronze, from  
Grave No. 1, Vendel, Uppland.  $\frac{1}{4}$

Salin has put forward the opinion (in *ATS* 14 (2), pp. 90 ff.) that the subject which the bracteates illustrate is to be sought for in the domain of religion, and not in that of history, and I quite share this view. But between the worlds of religion and history there lies a third,—that of the sagas. A subject of an originally religious nature is constantly being impregnated with new matter of a historical or quasi-historical character, or with matter of a legendary kind which is current at the moment. This seems to me to have been the case here. The original fight with the serpent—and the bracteates do not give us illustrations of anything else—has numerous parallels in Northern mythology, especially in the legends about the “destruction of the gods.” But with every new subject which is added, the primitive account sinks down more and more towards the level of the saga, and it is in this modified form that we find it in the *Beowulf*-lays and in the

presentments on the Vendel plates (cp. Mbl. 1903/5 ; pp.436, ff). These last (Figs.21 and 59) give us pictures of the ride to fight the monster at two different stages, with relatively unimportant features—the man who is holding the horse, and the birds accompanying the rider. This detailed ornamentation shows us that the picture has lost the hieratic character which it had in the bracteate form.

It must not be supposed that in what has gone before I have wished to infer that the Northern peoples called the person who is represented on the bracteates and the Vendel plates by a name which we find reproduced in Anglo-Saxon as Beowulf. I have only intended to affirm that lays were current at the same time in the North about the deposited collections of objects which we call moor-finds, and about the fight with the serpent.

Intimately connected with this is the question whether in the primitive Scandinavian form of the lays the fight with the serpent was about a treasure hoard, and whether the pictures which I have referred to are consequently connected with the poem which dealt with the subject of the costly treasures.

I think this question may be answered in the affirmative on the general grounds that the serpent (*lindorm* or dragon) appears in all the older North-European poetry as a custodian of treasure, an idea which is only modified under a more human or chivalrous influence, in the sense that in later times the coveted treasure consisted of a woman.<sup>1</sup>

As an exception, the fighting serpent has for obvious reasons another mission in the saga relating to Ragnarök. Even at the present day traditions are current about snakes as guardians of treasures, both

<sup>1</sup> I may mention as a curious fact that even now in several places children are told that a snake watches over the sweetmeats for the Christmas trees. Such was the case in my own home.

in grave-mounds<sup>1</sup> and under the natural surface of the ground.<sup>2</sup>

As we thus know, that the fighting snake of the North is a treasure-guarding beast, that lays and pictures whose main theme was that of a fight with a dragon were current in the North at the same time as lays about deposited treasures, and also, lastly, that in Anglo-Saxon, we have lays in which the contest is about treasures watched over by a serpent, we have good reason to believe that the Northern lays which refer to a fight with a snake, and which are illustrated in contemporary Northern art, had as their subject a fight about the treasure watched over by the serpent.

With this result in view, we can understand the partiality which the art of the North shows, during the hoard-depositing period, for the serpent-theme, the relative frequency of the types, and their obstinate persistence.

Our material gives us but little information respecting the regions over which the Scandinavian form of this part of the Beowulf-saga extended. The snake-types in the art of the time belong to the same area as the moor-finds and the great gold-finds—that is, to Southern Scandinavia. Remarkably numerous are the snake-figures from Öland and Gotland.

When the snake-idea was altered so that the ornament came to be composed of two intertwined serpents,

<sup>1</sup> Even since all idea of treasure has disappeared, it still happens that dragons live in grave-mounds (v. Nicolovius, *Folklifvet i Skytts härad i Skåne*, etc., 2nd ed., p. 92), and it is interesting to the student of *Beowulf* that the mound-inhabiting dragon in this case, like that in *Beowulf*, is a "fire drake" who threatens to burn up a parsonage.

<sup>2</sup> Now-a-days the treasure over which the serpents watch consists mostly of money. The traditional account has thus continued to undergo modifications so as to keep pace with the altered conditions of the age. The catalogue of articles in the moor-finds was supplanted by collections of gold objects, and these, later on, by the usual media of exchange. The watching serpents are often surrounded by flames, but these have lost all importance as regards the development of the action (cp. *Nyland II*, pp. 111, 114).

in order to meet a desire for more complete symmetry (as in fig. 56), it is evident that it had lost its connection with the saga.

The real significance of the pictures which we have referred to in the foregoing pages is to be sought for in Northern myth and saga, but the graphic representations of the time which have come down to us give evidence, in the great majority of cases, of the influence of the products of Roman industrial art. The starting point for the earlier part of our period, *i.e.*, that in which bracteates occurred, has already been shown by research to lie in the lands bordering on the Black Sea, and the neighbouring regions under the sway of Rome. It is by no means improbable that the subject itself—



a

FIG. 60.



b



FIG. 61.

Gold coin of Constantius II.  $\frac{1}{4}$

Gold bracteate from  
Tufvasgården, Trön-  
ninge, Halland.  $\frac{1}{4}$

that of the rider and the serpent—has also been borrowed from thence. Thus we have a coin of Constantius II. with a snake under the equestrian figure of the emperor (Fig. 60), and we can point to a resemblance to this in a bracteate which we have already mentioned (Fig. 61 and *cp.* fig. 41). The horse-shaped mounting previously referred to (at p. 158) is undoubtedly connected with the same subject. On the Byzantine coin the artist, following a custom of the time, has symbolised a defeated enemy by means of the snake-figure, but such an abstract symbol would certainly have been almost unintelligible to the Northmen, and,

as has often happened in other cases, the picture was altered so as to make it a suitable means of portraying a scene imagined by the Northmen themselves. Looked at from the point of view of form only, the Northern pictures are probably derived from East Roman prototypes, but an inquiry as to whether the conceptions which were associated in the North with pictures which represent serpent-fights, were also influenced by ideas prevailing on the coasts of the Black and Ægean Seas, falls outside the limits of the present essay.

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## THE DOUBLE BURIAL IN BEOWULF.

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In order to arrive at an understanding of the place in time of the poetry of Beowulf, and of the manner of its composition, it is important to acquire as accurate an idea as possible of the facts which are portrayed in it.

I have already, in the Essay on *Helmets and Swords in Beowulf*, fixed the *terminus ante quem* at the middle of the seventh century, with the help of the forms of swords and helmets as described in the poem; and the investigation of the form of other objects and of customs mentioned in the poem have made it possible to fix this limit of time more definitely as being about a century further back, *i.e.*, about the middle of the sixth century (see *Archæological Notes* and the *Dragon's Hoard* Essay). This date only holds good as regards the Beowulf-poetry in its Scandinavian home, and does not take into account the additions and alterations which the lays—probably not combined into a whole until they had passed over to English soil—first underwent in connection with their incorporation in an Anglo-Saxon poem, and subsequently in their new home in Britain.

As the forms of fixed remains,—especially graves—are in general less subject to alteration than those of separate objects, I have thought it best to put off treating of them until the limits of time within which

the Scandinavian lays in question originated could be fixed with the help of other archæological features to which we have allusions in *Beowulf*.

The lays which relate to king Scyld's funeral, and the oldest of those respecting the dragon's hoard, must necessarily, as I have previously observed, have had their origin at a time when the traditions of the fourth century were still in full vigour, and hence about the year 400 A.D., or the first part of the fifth century; other parts originate from the fifth century or the earlier part of the sixth century. The limits of time for the genesis of the basic lays are thus the close of the fourth century and the beginning of the sixth, and it is within these limits that we must seek for resemblances to the burial-customs which are described in *Beowulf*.

Burning on a bale-fire is the custom of the time. It is said about one of the Danish warriors, Æschere, whose body was carried off by a monster, that the Danes could not 'burn him with fire, or lay him on the funeral pyre' (v. 2126). No other mode of burial seems thus to have been thought possible. On other occasions when funeral obsequies are described, it is always in connection with burning; and in particular one bale-burning of considerable size is described among the Danes. The expedition which Hnæf led against Friesland ends after much slaughter on both sides with the victory of the Danes.<sup>1</sup> Among the fallen are Hnæf, and Hildeburh's two sons. After the victory had been won and a treaty had been concluded, the fallen Danes were buried. A huge funeral pyre is constructed; upon it Hnæf is laid first of all, his swine-adorned helmet being seen far and wide, and on the same pyre (*æt ƿæm āde . . . manig*, 1110 ff) the rest of the ethelings, amongst whom were Hildeburh's sons,

<sup>1</sup> It seems to have been a drawn battle rather than a victory for either side.—*Ed.*

who were placed beside each other, arm on shoulder.<sup>1</sup> Then the pyre is burnt with the numerous dead bodies, which thus find a common grave.

It can hardly be suggested that this lay was composed in Friesland. Among the Danes, the author knows of Hildeburh (as the daughter of Hoc), Hildeburh's sons, Hengest, Guthlaf and Oslaf, besides the name of a person, Hunlaf's son, or a sword, Hunlafing;<sup>2</sup> while of the Frisians he only knows Finn, the son of Folcwalda. Thus he shows himself more familiar with the personnel of the Danes than with that of the Frisians, and similarly he only describes the various feelings of the Danes, and not those of the Frisians. The treaty obligations of the Frisian king, and the subsequent breach of treaty by his people are fully described, and the Frisians are viewed generally from a hostile standpoint. Analogues to the helmet-decoration are, as I have previously shown,<sup>3</sup> to be found in an example in England and in numerous others in Scandinavia, while none such are known in Western continental Europe. The burial custom of which an account is here given, must thus have been Scandinavian, and not Frisian.

The cremation *en masse* which took place after the Danish battle in Friesland lacks archæological parallels in Northern Europe. It is true that a not inconsiderable number of common graves belonging to the Iron Age has been found in Finland and in the Russian provinces bordering on the Baltic, but none of anything like such proportions as would indicate a previous battle.

<sup>1</sup> Stjerna has shown so much learning and skill in this essay that I am sorry to have to raise two serious objections to his theory. First, that it appears from the text that only one son was committed to the flames; and secondly, that the translation 'arm on shoulder' is by all consent wrong. The passage is admittedly obscure, but in any case 'arm on shoulder' will not do. There is however a very tempting emendation of v. 1117 by Holthausen, '*cāme on eaxle*' i.e., by the shoulder (or side) of his uncle — *Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> Hunlaf's son is right. See an article in *Modern Language Notes* (xxv, 113). — *Ed.*

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 1-18, *ante*.

Similar graves are also found within the present borders of Sweden, in Gotland, (cp. Gustafson, *ATS*, 9 (6) p. 94), but in one and the same grave some of the bones are burnt and others unburnt, and thus no comparison is possible with the military graves described in *Beowulf*. Still the possibility of the existence of such graves in the North during the prehistoric period remains. Until quite recently no graves of the kind belonging to the Middle Ages were known, but now the great common grave outside Wisby testifies to the existence of such a custom, quite apart from any literary documents. For the period now in question, however, we must still await the grave-finds which the future may bring to light.<sup>1</sup>

The question of the placing of the two brothers side by side, arm on shoulder, is meanwhile of special interest, inasmuch as it seems to afford an explanation of some noteworthy archæological finds. Since (as will be explained in more detail later on), most of the graves of which we know belonging to the region now in question were burnt-graves, which do not show whether one or two corpses were burnt together, or what was the relative position of the bodies on the pyre, we must, in order to glean some information on the point, investigate the archæological phenomena forming the ground-work of the type which in its developments extends into the fifth century.

In each of three graves belonging to the fourth century, two men were laid side by side. The graves were found respectively at Kabbarp, in the parish of Tättarp, Skåne; at Kälder in the parish of Linde, and at Havor in the parish of Hablingbo, Gotland.

The grave in Skåne, which was excavated by T. J. Arne, who kindly placed fig. 62 at my disposal, belonged

<sup>1</sup> For other periods also examples are rare. Cartailhac (*La France Préhistorique*, p. 155) describes some interesting common graves of the Neolithic Period, containing men who had fallen in battle.

to a burial ground containing a rich find which must undoubtedly be ascribed to the fourth century (Mbl. 1901-1902, pp. 100, 101). In it were found two skeletons

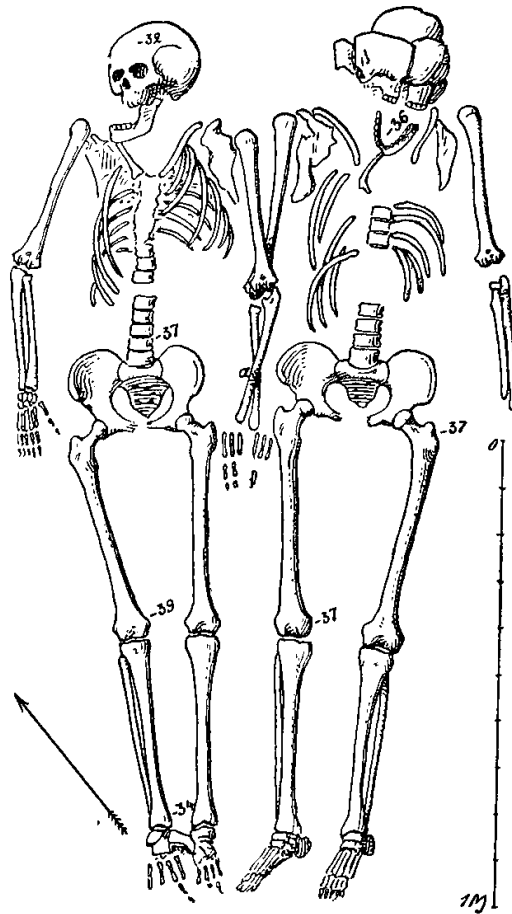


FIG. 62.

Ground plan of a grave at Kabbarp, Skåne.

of full grown men, laid side by side. Both men had evidently been placed in the grave at the same time, and in such a position, that the left arm of one man lay over the right arm of the other. On the two lower arms at the point where they lay across each other, or on one of them, at *a* on the figure, the only metal object found with the dead had been located, for here verdigris and a blackish pigment are distinguishable (perhaps from a band of leather for joining the arms together?). The bed of the grave was evidently arranged at one and the same time for both corpses. It has become a little uneven, and some inequalities are

met with about the heads, while the trunks of the bodies remained on exactly the same level.

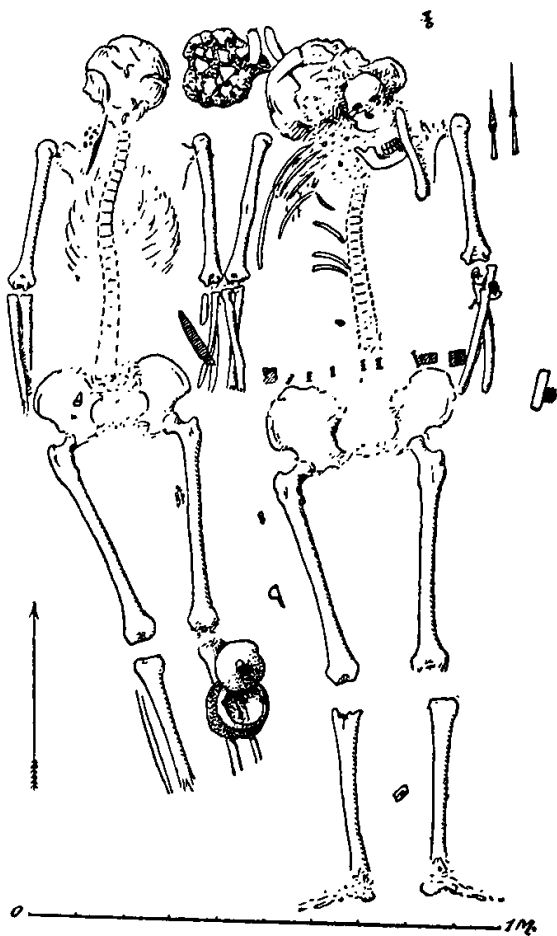


FIG. 63.

Ground plan of a grave at Kälder, Gotland.

The grave at Kälder has already been described in detail by Almgren (SOM, pp. 89, ff), and in it also two full-grown men had been laid at the same time (Fig. 63). The bodies had been fitted out in pretty much the same way; the clothing in both cases had been fastened by a belt, richly adorned with bronze; they had been provided with two spears and two shields as weapons<sup>1</sup>; but one of them had with him the coin for paying the fare of both to the other world,<sup>2</sup> and they

<sup>1</sup>One of the spear-heads was apparently intended for a lance, and the other for a javelin, the two forming the usual equipment for one man at the time. It will be seen from the figure that they lay close together in the grave. What Stjerna took to be two shields was a single shield-boss which had come apart into two pieces.—O.A.

<sup>2</sup>Fig. 40 is an illustration of the reverse of this coin.

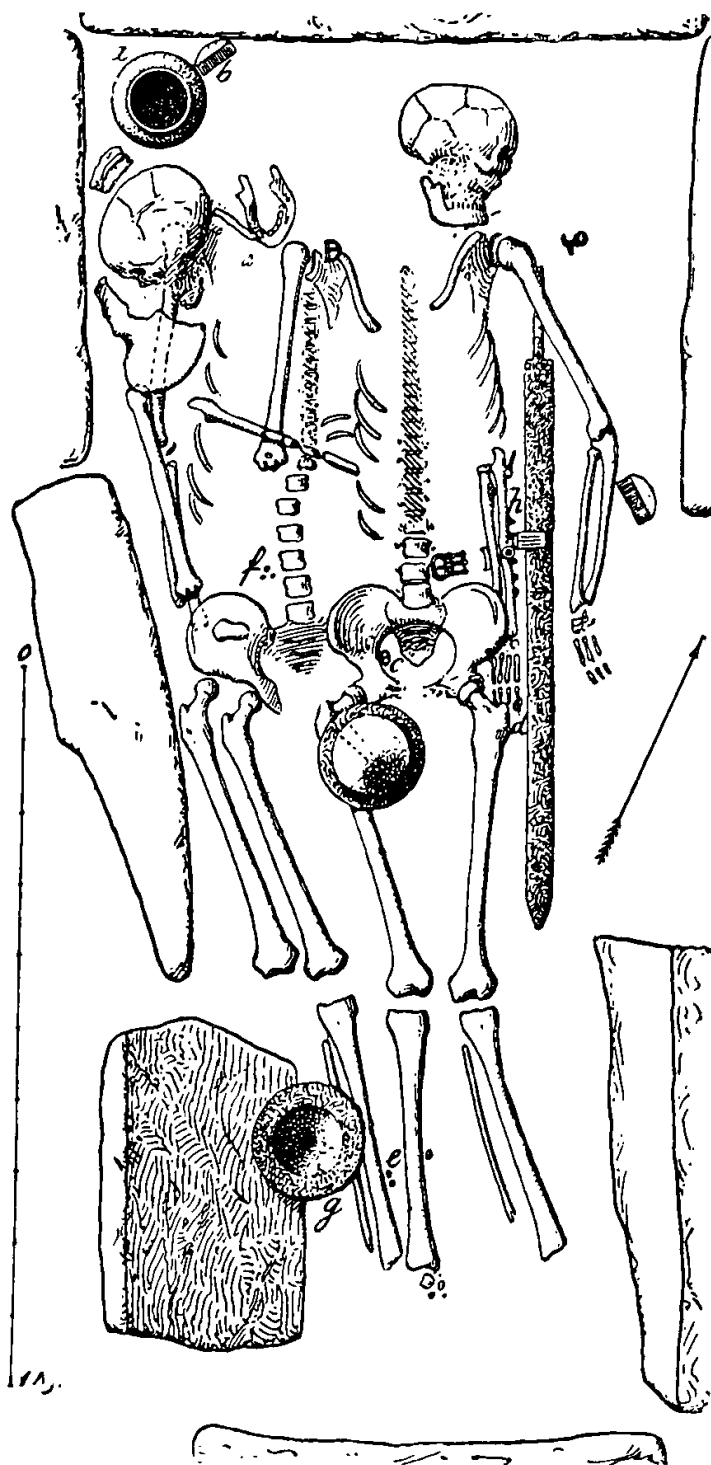


FIG. 64.

Ground plan of grave No. 158. Havor, Gotland.

shared the provision for the journey out of the same earthen vessel. Supported by previous investigations by Montelius, Almgren has assigned this grave to the middle or latter half of the fourth century.

As regards the grave at Havor (Fig. 64) the circumstances are different, but it is not of less interest, when viewed in the light of the customs to which the before-mentioned graves of the fourth century bear witness. Here also two skeletons were found side by side, but one body had been put in the grave at a later date than the other, and as a consequence parts of the skeleton belonging to the body which was first buried have been displaced. The skull has been pushed to one side, and only the bone of the lower jaw has retained its original position. The bone of the upper arm on the left side, and the left half of the pelvis, lay on the right side of the chest of the skeleton. The bone of the left heel had been thrown on the right half of the pelvis, and the left femur lay on the right side of the right femur, and parallel with the latter. The left lower arm and hand had at the same time remained undisturbed, and they can be observed on the figure under the left side of the skeleton of the last-buried corpse, close by the sword. Fortunately, the objects belonging to both skeletons are of such characteristic forms, that we can fix the dates of burial with tolerable accuracy.<sup>1</sup>

At the head of the skeleton which was buried first, stood a black shiny earthenware pot (*a*), of a type which marks it out as belonging to Gotland in the fourth century (Fig. 65 *a-c*). The ear and upper part of the vessel are richly decorated, the ornamentation being of an entirely unusual kind. That of the upper part reminds one in certain details of the decorative work

<sup>1</sup> For chronological studies of the fourth century in Eastern Scandinavia see Montelius, SFT, ix, 215; Salin Mbl, 1896, p. 25; Almgren, as above, and in *Cbl. für Anthropologie, etc.*, 1900 (5); Stjerna, ATS, 18 (1), 57, 102; Hansson, ATS, 18 (2), 8 f.



on an earthen vessel from one of the Vallstena graves (Gustafson, *ATS*, 9 (6), p. 53, fig. 39) which, as it was found with the special form of mounting of a drinking horn which is shown in fig. 37, is to be placed approximately at the beginning of the fourth century. For the ornament on the ear of the Havor-crock I cannot for



FIG. 65a.



FIG. 65b.

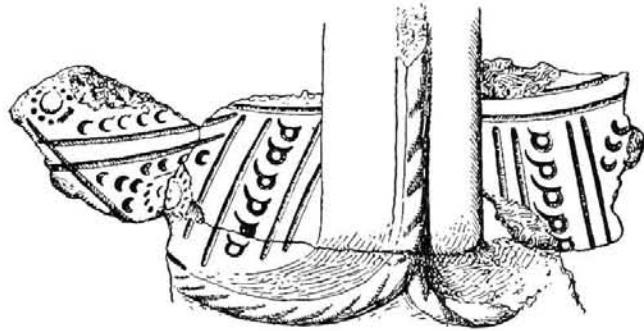


FIG. 65c.

Earthenware pot from Havor grave No. 158. *a.*  $\frac{1}{3}$  *b.c.*  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

the moment recall any parallel. Lying across the fragments of pottery a comb of a type usual in the fourth century was found (*b* in fig. 64). To the same skeleton the plain buckle with a rectangular border (Fig. 66) probably belonged, which will be observed on the figure within the central opening of the pelvis of the other skeleton (at *c*), and which also has numerous replicas in Gotland belonging to the same century. On the finger of the left hand nearest to the sword (at *d*) was a double-edged ring, like that shewn in

fig. 61, of a type which was prevalent in Denmark during the third century and persisted for some time during the earlier part of the fourth century.

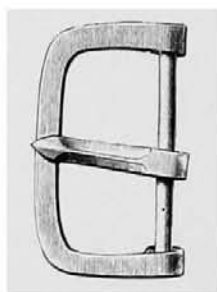


FIG. 66.

Bronze buckle from Havor  
grave No. 158.  $\frac{1}{4}$

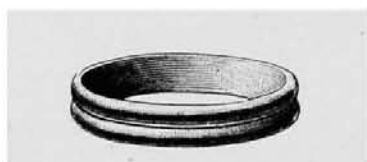


FIG. 67.

Gold finger-ring from Etebols,  
Gotland.  $\frac{1}{4}$

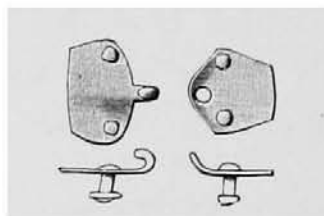


FIG. 68.

Bronze fastening from Havor  
grave No. 158.  $\frac{1}{4}$

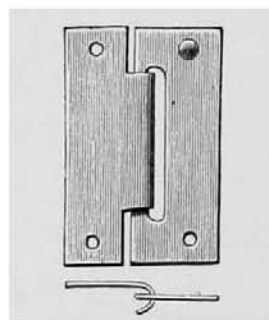


FIG. 69.

Bronze fastening from grave  
No. 17, Vallstenarum, Gotland.  $\frac{1}{4}$

Scattered in three different places were discovered a number of small bronze objects—hooks of unusual shape, and small eyes (fig. 68), similar to those which Gustafson found in a grave at Vallstena in their proper place. They served there as fastenings for leathern gaiters (Gustafson, *ATS* 9 (6), 33), and there is no doubt that the objects found in the Havor-grave had some similar function. Some of them may be observed on the figure (at *e*) by the right leg, where they were found on the occasion of the examination of the grave, and others at *f* immediately above the undisturbed part of the pelvis and by the side of the vertebral column. They had evidently been shifted into this position when the second body was deposited in the grave. The bone of the left tibia had then been thrown upwards in the grave, the heel-bone had fallen off in the act of throwing, and tumbled down

on the pelvis, and the bronze fastenings, which followed the leg-bone a little further, thus came to rest in the singular position in which they were afterwards discovered. In the Vallstena-grave four whole clasps were found on one leg and four whole and one half of a clasp on the other. In the Havor-grave ten whole clasps were found, the hooks of which are of two kinds, both of a different shape to the Vallstena-clasps (Fig. 69).<sup>1</sup> The date of the Vallstena-grave (No. 17) is fixed as within the fourth century by a buckle which was found in it (*l.c.* fig. 24), and it belongs, moreover, to a small group (Nos. 16 and 17) which must be assigned to the earlier part of the century on the ground of the earthen vessel, a fibula and a strap-mount shown in figs. 21, 31 and 18 of the same article respectively.

Of iron articles there were found a knife and the boss of a shield, the latter having possibly been overturned when the grave was re-opened for a second burial. The types are not sufficiently characteristic to afford more definite chronological information. The comb, the form of the earthen vessel, the buckle and the boss of the shield fix the time of burial as the fourth century, and

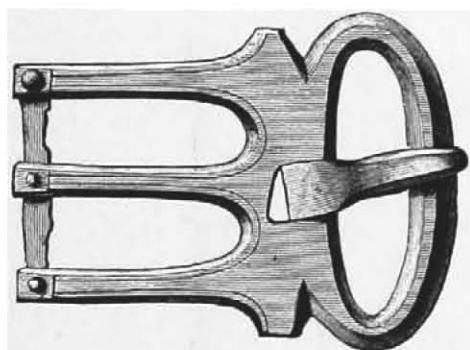


FIG. 70.

Bronze buckle from grave No. 158,  
Havor, Gotland.  $\frac{1}{4}$



FIG. 71.

Bronze finger-ring from grave  
No. 136, Havor, Gotland.  $\frac{1}{4}$

<sup>1</sup>Of the "gaiters," one (*h*) was fastened round the left lower arm and one round the left tibia. As exactly ten pairs of clasps were found in the grave, answering to one pair of gaiters, it is not likely that the right leg and arm were clad in gaiters at the time of burial. In another Havor-grave (No. 126) the arms of the corpse had been clothed in arm-gaiters with two buckles each.

the ring, the clasps and the ornamentation of the vessel limit it further to the commencement of the century.

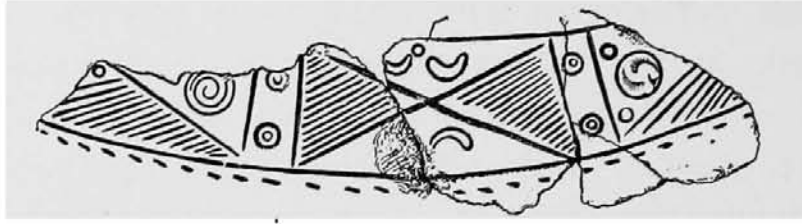


FIG. 72.

Ornament on an earthen vessel from grave No. 136,  
Havor, Gotland.  $\frac{1}{2}$

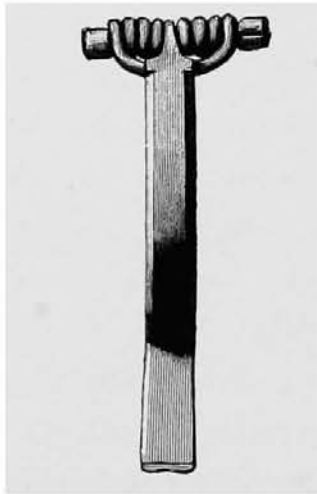


FIG. 73.

Bronze fibula from Grave No. 136,  
Havor, Gotland.  $\frac{1}{4}$

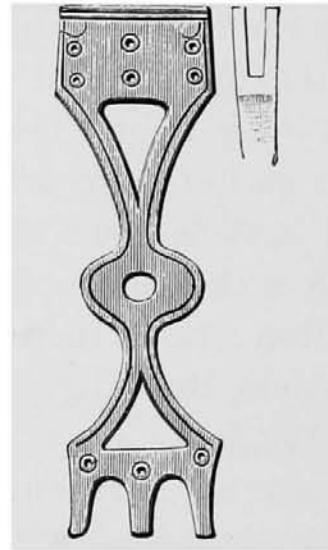


FIG. 75.

Bronze fastening (for a strap)  
from Grave No. 136, Havor,  
Gotland.  $\frac{1}{4}$

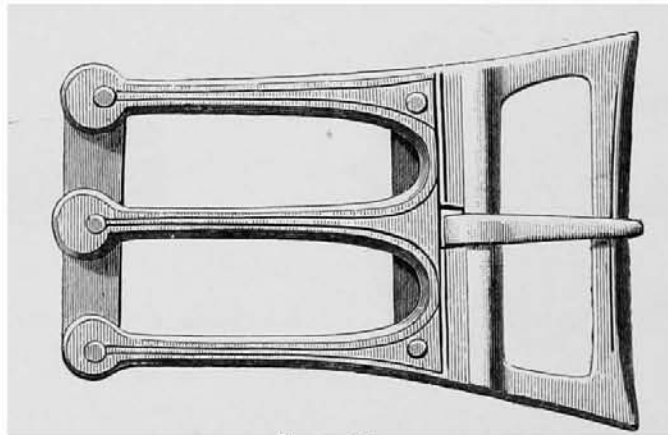


FIG. 74.

Bronze buckle from Grave No. 136,  
Havor, Gotland.  $\frac{1}{4}$

The other skeleton was found in an undisturbed state, so far as can be judged from the illustration, except as regards the lower part of the right arm, and so far as

this skeleton also is concerned, the objects which accompanied it admit of a fairly accurate conjecture of date. Above the right shoulder may be noticed a plain iron buckle with a semi-circular border; and above the pelvis, left of the vertebral column, another strap buckle of bronze, with an oval border and three-pronged back piece (Fig. 70). Under the rounded ends of the prongs there was a thin cross-piece of bronze, similar to another on the anterior end of the back-piece. These two strips of bronze were fastened to the main body of the buckle by means of five rivets with silver heads. A somewhat similar buckle has been found in another grave at Havor

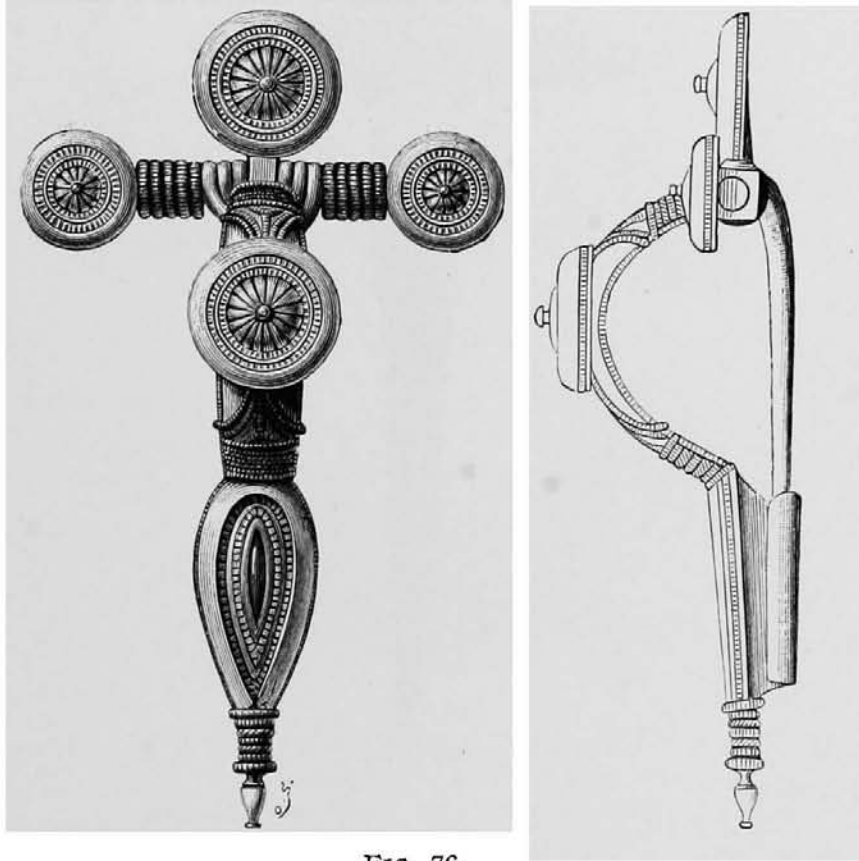


FIG. 76.

Fibula of silver-gilt, with inlaid glass, from grave 136,  
Havor, Gotland.  $\frac{1}{2}$

(grave No. 136), whose place in time can be fixed by some very characteristic objects (Figs. 71 to 76). One fibula in this later grave gives us a particularly good chronological landmark. It agrees very closely in construction, form and details with a fibula from grave No.

19 at Vallstena (Fig. 77), and a resemblance to the decoration on the upper surface of the bow is found, although in a much simpler form, in (amongst others) the gold fibulas from Sanderumgård (SFT. ix, 233). As both these fibulæ must be assigned to the period about A.D. 300 (Montelius, *l.c.*), that now in question, which cannot have been much later, must have belonged to the first half of the fourth century. The three-ribbed bronze ring (Fig. 71), which belongs to a group preva-

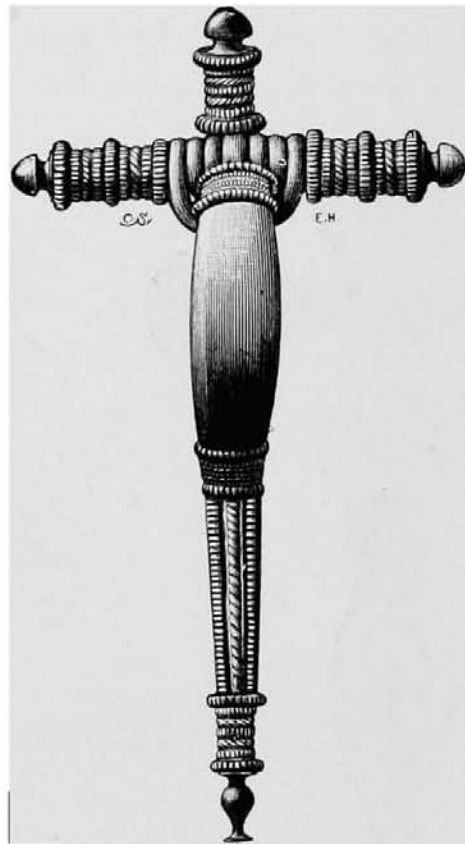


FIG. 77.

Fibula of silver-gilt, from grave No. 19,  
Vallstenarum, Gotland. 14

lent immediately after the time of the two-ribbed rings just described, must clearly be ascribed to exactly the same period. This three-ribbed type appears to have been particularly short lived, which increases the chronological value of the example. The earthen vessel is of fourth century type. The triskele-like ornament on

the latter, which is shown in fig. 72, seems to have appeared in Gotland during the fourth century, where it persisted until the Vendel-period. (See ATS 15 (3), pp. 55 and 134 ff).

We have in the double-grave at Kålder something akin to the plain fibula in the Havor-grave 136 (Fig. 73) although much simpler (see Almgren, *l.c.*). The leather buckle and strap-mount belong to a form of perforated bronze plate common during the period; and if we compare the buckle from the double-grave at Havor

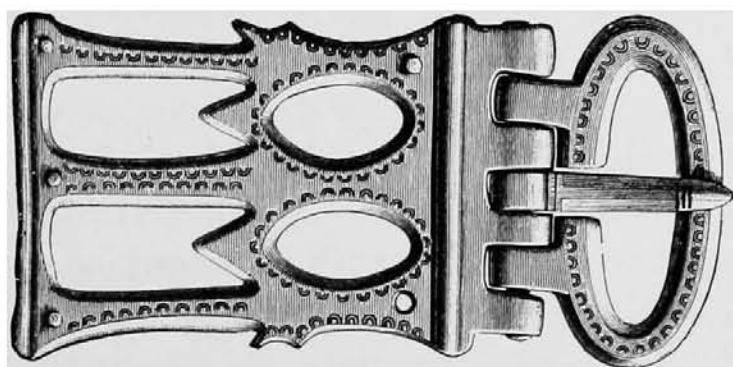


FIG. 78.

Bronze buckle from Litslena,  
Uppland.  $\frac{1}{4}$



FIG. 79.

Bronze plate belonging to a  
sword-sheath from grave  
No. 158, Havor, Gotland.  $\frac{1}{4}$

with those from grave 136 and from Litslena (Figs. 70, 74 and 78) which belong to the latter part of the fourth century, we shall find a uniform series, in which a regular advance in elegance and firmness of design is observable. Havor-grave No. 136 must, in view of the objects enumerated here, be put about, or shortly before, the middle of the fourth century, and the



articles accompanying the later deposited body in Havor-grave No. 158 are somewhat older.

In the last-named grave there were found besides a two-edged sword with a bronze plate belonging to the sheath (Fig. 79), a fourth-century comb, and the boss of a shield like that from Kälder, etc.

In view of what has here been said we deduce as follows with regard to the double-grave at Havor:— At some date among the earliest years of the fourth century a man was killed or died a natural death. Then they dug a grave in the great burial-place of the district, and set it round with limestone slabs. It was, however, not intended for the dead man alone, but was made wide enough for two. The corpse was, in accordance with the usual custom, clad in its garments, including a belt and shoes with high buskins or gaiters, and was provided with a knife and shield as weapons. It was let down into the grave a little to one side of the medial line, and we do not know whether it was covered with a skin, or wood, or a layer of earth. One or more decades passed away, and another man died and was buried in the same grave and between the same walls. He, too, was buried in his clothes, with his girdle, shoulder-belt and sword, in the empty half of the already-formed grave and in the hollow made for both the corpses, but as his body was deposited in the grave, and his shield was laid over his right side, they pushed aside the remains of the previously buried and already decomposed corpse which lay nearest.

It is clearly important to define the interval of time between the two burials. The minimum is obviously represented by the time which was occupied by the decomposition of the first body; but it is to be observed that decomposition is very rapid in the calcareous soil of Gotland, and also that the leather or skin which



covered the lower part of the leg was not altogether decomposed, for in that case it is not likely that any of the fastenings would have accompanied it to the side of the back-bone. It would seem from this, and from the objects found, that the interval cannot have been very great. That is all which our present knowledge of the archæology of the period allows us to say.

It may be of interest to remark also, that both the dead men must here, as in the case of those buried in the Kälder grave, have been of a similar station in life. In the Kattarps grave, as we have already stated, no objects were buried with any of the corpses.

Double graves are not altogether unknown in the prehistoric period. We know of such graves in the rest of Europe during palæolithic times (*e.g.*, the *Grotte des enfants* at Mentone) as well as during the Neolithic Period. In the Iron Age there is an example at Rondsén in West Prussia, unless indeed it is a case of two graves of burnt bodies overlapping. (Anger, *Gräberfeld zu Rondsén*, fig. 6), and we know of double graves during the later pre-historic times in Scandinavia, both in literature and in actual finds. (Cp. Almgren in *Nordiska Studier tillägnade A. Noreen*, p. 323; Saxo ed. Holder., p. 27). In some isolated cases children have been buried together; in others a man and a woman. A species of double grave which is found at Björkö (among other places) in which a man and woman were buried side by side, and thus possibly one after the other (Stolpe, *Mbl.* 1878, p. 671) had already a sort of parallel during the Early Bronze Age, in that there were discovered in one and the same Halland grave-mound at Eldsberga (Montelius, *KS.*, p. 131) a man's grave and a woman's grave arranged symmetrically. In a Bornholm grave of the seventh century (Lousgård No. 24) the skeleton of a man lay at the bottom, and over it, in an earthen vessel, there were

burnt human bones with female ornaments, all under the same heap of stones (Vedel, p. 146).

In the instances above given the dead were of equal rank, but there are also examples, from Scandinavia, as well as, roughly speaking, from all the rest of the world, where a master was furnished with a following of one or more servants for his journey to the other world.<sup>1</sup> (It is not always easy to distinguish a mistresses grave from that of a serving-woman).

At bottom, the same idea lies behind all these related

<sup>1</sup> As to this custom see, *inter alia*, Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 3 ed. i, 458 f; Hildebrand, *Folkens tro om sina döda*, p. 54 f; Montelius, *La civilisation en Italie depuis l'introduction des métaux* I (text), 291; F. B. Jevons, *An introduction to the History of Religion*, 1896, p. 200. A. Bobrinsky, *Révue Archéologique*, 1904, p. 11 (cp. Cbl. 1903, p. 130), Fustel de Coulanges, *La cité antique*, 1890, p. 9; Montelius, SFT. vi. 153; Vedel p. 57; Heyerli, *Urgeschichte der Schweiz*, p. 148; Stjerna, ATS, 18 (1) 129; Almgren, *Nordiska Studier, etc.*, p. 323; Morel, *Mémoires de la Société de la Marne*, 1874-5, p. 77 (cp. *Revue des Sociétés Savantes*, 6th Series, iii, 320, and S. Reinach, *Guide du musée de Saint Germain*, 1899, p. 36); *L'Antropologie*, 1901, p. 274 (Naef), and 1903, p. 167; Sophus Müller, *Nordiske Fortidsminder*, p. 145 (Fig. 22); Bosteaux - Paris, *Compte - rendu de l' Assoc. française pour l'avancement des Sciences*, Paris 1900, ii, 746; Cp. Homer, *Iliad*, XXIII; Herodotus, IV, 71; Procopius, *de Bello Gothico*, II, 13.

Figs. 80 and 81 give us a clear representation of a grave (from the oldest La Tène period) at Gorge-Meillet in France (Marne) where a servant was buried with his master. In fig. 80 and the lower part of fig. 81, we see the chieftain in the remains of his war-chariot, well furnished with weapons, food and ornaments, and in the upper part of fig. 81 his charioteer, who only seems to have been supplied with a sword. Cp. the equipment in our double graves of the fourth century. A grave which should be considered in this connection is Lousgård (Bornholm) No. 47. The grave contained the finest collection of objects of the Later Iron Age on the island, and was situated at the highest point of the grave-yard. At the bottom of the grave was a collection of stones over which lay a bed of black earth, 8 to 12 inches thick. On this bed, which consisted probably of decomposed articles of clothing, lay a skeleton and some fine ornaments, evidently belonging to a woman. Somewhat above this skeleton, within an enclosure of stones, lay a further human skeleton, with which the only metal object was an iron knife. At the same level as this latter skeleton there lay the skeleton of a horse. The whole was covered by a slightly arched layer of stones not less than thirty feet broad. It is evident that this layer was added in honour of the distinguished lady, not of the upper skeleton, whose existence here cannot be ascribed to any secondary burial. Thus we have in this grave a Northern example of a noble lady being buried with a servant and a horse. In an adjoining grave (No. 48) we find a similar arrangement—a man in a stone enclosure, over which was another stone enclosure with a male skeleton and, level with that and at the side of it, the skeleton of a horse (Vedel, p. 148).

cases:—it was not well for a husband or a chief to be alone in the next world any more than it is in this. Hence the person or persons who stood in the most

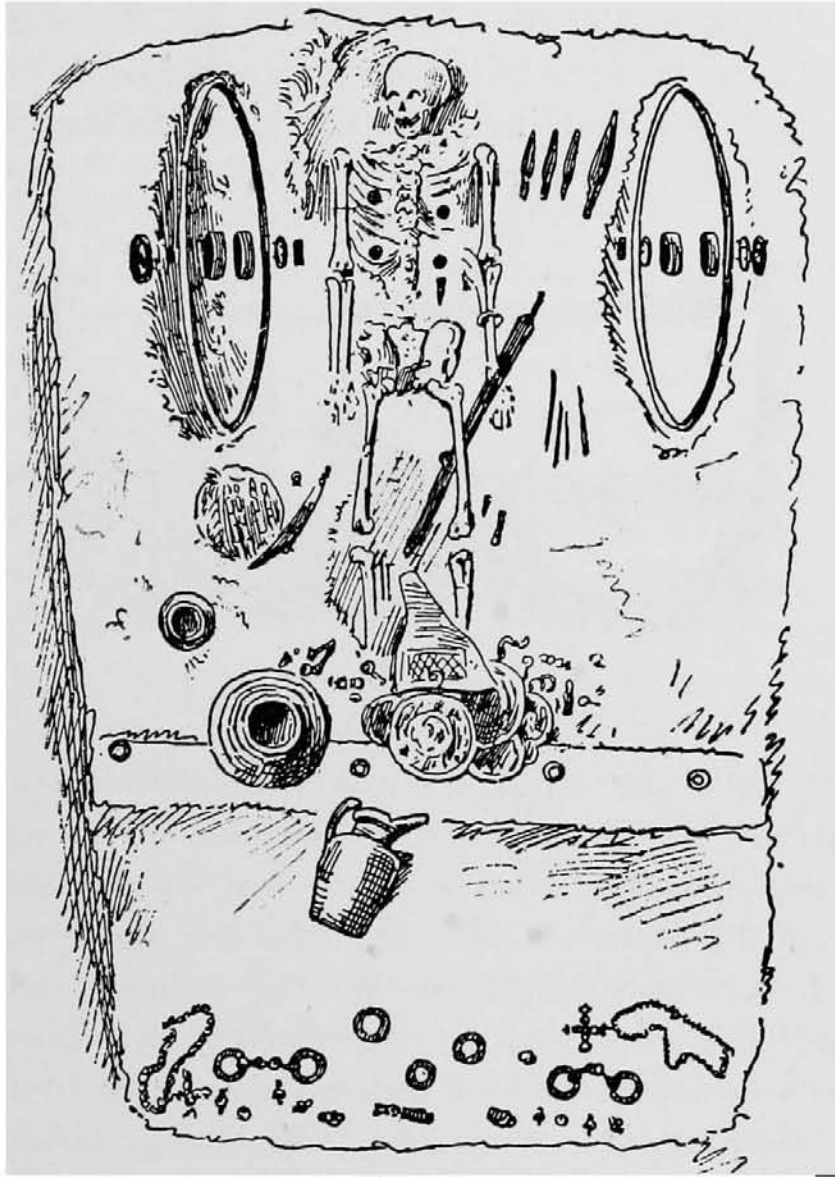


FIG. 80.

Ground plan of grave at Gorge Meillet, Marne, France.

intimate relation to him followed him after death. Now let us look at this custom in the light which the double graves previously described afford us. The two men may have been connected with each other in life in some such close way as that of a man and his wife. In other words we may have here a special case of the same general type as those of man and wife or chief and follower. The objects in the graves show that the case

was not one of a man and his wife, or of a master and his servant. The latter is the more improbable, since, if there is any difference in the costliness of the articles buried with each of the two corpses in the Havor-grave, it is the last buried which is the best equipped. Hence these graves, containing two bodies from the beginning, call for some other explanation.

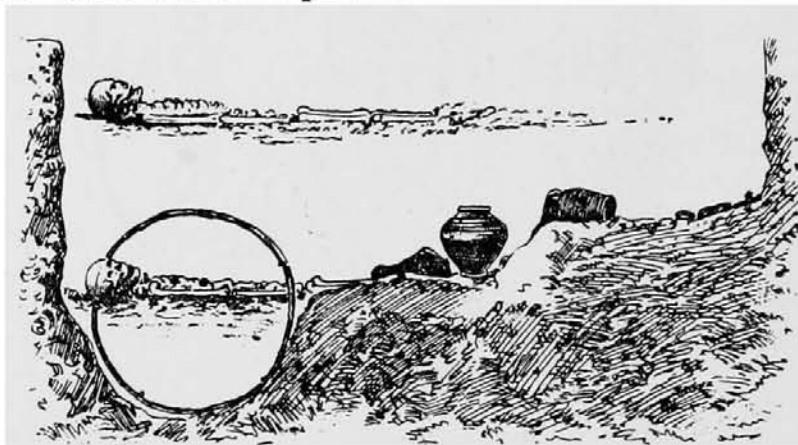


FIG. 81.

Section of grave shown in fig. 80.

The only one which one would *a priori* be inclined to accept, is that indicated in *Beowulf*. Two sons of the same parents killed in battle are laid out side by side on the same funeral pyre. Had not the custom of the fifth century required that the bodies should be burned, the poem would in all probability have described to us a burial of the kind which we know of from the fourth-century double graves. The change to burning did not alter the custom of providing two brothers with a common grave. The agreement between the description in the poem and the grave-finds up to the present is not however so complete, that we have any example of a double grave containing two brothers, of whom one has his arm laid on the shoulder of the other.<sup>1</sup> The man who was first buried in the Havor-grave was, however, so placed that in the event of his comrade having

<sup>1</sup> In a grave of the Viking period in Bornholm (Kobbeâ No. 31) there lay two men, of whom one had his arm under the other's neck. This find, which is too late to be here taken into account, is so far unique.

been buried earlier, his left arm would have rested under and partly round the back of the latter.

What circumstances led up to the double burials already referred to—whether both the men had fallen in a previous fight, or whether the death of one had caused in some way the death of the other,—just as a widow's death was so often the sequel to her husband's,—we cannot say with certainty. In the *Beowulf*, the brothers had fallen in the same fight, but at Havor this cannot have been the case, as one body was buried some time after the other. Probably double graves of this kind were in use in Scandinavia during the fifth century and previously, both for men who died together, and at different dates. But before we fully accept the above explanation of these Northern double-graves, we must consider how far any indication has been preserved which would justify us in assuming that the lives of the brothers were bound to each other somewhat in the same way as those of a married couple. We cannot expect to have a record of ancient family-customs of this kind, although we have good accounts of the ordinances which concern—not indeed the natural brotherhood, but its artificial parallel—foster-brotherhood.

To a *Festskrift* for P. Melsted (*Þrjár Ritgjörðir*, etc., Copenhagen, 1892, pp. 29, ff), Valtýr Guðmundsson has contributed a comprehensive study of the laws of foster-brotherhood, and as to the foster-brother's obligations he says (*inter alia*):—

1. In the oldest period of all it was the surviving foster-brother's duty towards the dead, either to be placed alive in the mound with him or at least not to survive his decease without, if necessary, committing suicide. As an example of the first case we can cite Saxo's saga about the two Norsk kings' sons,—Asmund, son of king Alf of Hedemarken, and Asvid, son of king

Björn of Viken; and for the latter we can point to the saga of Eyvind Sörkve, who not only took his own life when he heard of the death of Ingemund the Old, but moved his friend Gaut to do the same, which in fact he did (*Vatnsdæla Saga*, 39; *Landnámabók*, 186). Another instance is contained in Saxo's account of Hadding the Danish king, who hanged himself in the sight of all the people, when he heard of the death of Hunding, king of the Swedes.

2. Later on a modification of this custom was introduced, and the first step was that the foster-brother who lived longest should cause a mound to be constructed for the other, and that so much property should be deposited in it, as seemed suitable to the rank of both. After that, the survivor had to sit in the mound<sup>1</sup> by the dead man three days and nights, and he could then leave it if he chose to do so, (*Fornaldars.* iii, 375-376). As an example of how a man in this way allowed himself to be buried with his foster-brother's body only in appearance, the account in Egil's and Asmund's saga may be adduced (*Fornaldars.* iii, 378) as to Aran's death and Asmund's remaining in the mound with him. In this case it is said that Asmund sat three days and nights in the mound, but after that time had elapsed, he left it, taking with him the valuables which lay in the mound. The saga observes, however, that this did not happen without disturbance, for Aran appeared again and Asmund had many hard struggles with him before he escaped from the mound. Aran did not wish to let either his property or his foster-brother go, as he considered he had a right to both.

3. Both stages in the history of this obligation which have been described, belong to a hoary antiquity, which history does not reach, but even in the saga-period itself, other practices took their place. We

<sup>1</sup> There was a wooden chamber in the mound, in which the dead man was placed in a sitting posture, and with him the survivor sat.—O.A.

constantly find in the sagas, that foster-brothers bound themselves to avenge their dead foster-brother "if he died by the sword" (*Fornmanna sögur*, iii, 213, *Flateyjarbók*, i, 525), "if he was killed by a weapon" (*Fornaldarsögur*, ii, 445), "if he lost his life by a weapon or by the agency of man" (*Bjarnar saga Hitdælakappa* 58) "*uter ferro perisset alterum alterius ultorem fore*" (Saxo). Besides this it was the survivor's business "to see to the dead brother's burial with the highest possible honours, and to erect a grave-mound over him" (*Gisle Sursson's saga*, 23, 107).

4. After Christianity had been adopted, it seemed inconsistent with the teaching of the new religion for a man to promise unconditionally that he would avenge another's death, so that one man should kill another's murderer, as it was equivalent to binding oneself to commit a sinful action. Hence the obligation was so altered that a man promised either that he would avenge the death of his foster-brother by killing his murderer, or that, as representing the dead man, he would proceed either by imposing terms of reconciliation at his own choice, or by going to law and demanding payment of a *wergild*; the latter courses being considered more suitable for Christian men.

Thus the foster-brother had to kill himself on his brother's death, or suffer himself to be buried with him.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No inquiry into the age of the Havor-skeletons has been possible, as they still lie in their grave; but the skeletons in the Kabbarp and Kälder graves have been examined by Prof. F. Clason, who has kindly placed the following communication at my disposal:—"Both the Kabbarp skeletons are of about the same age—not much over 40, and both very tall, the one slightly taller than the other, without however being noticeably stouter. According to Mannouvrier's table the taller skeleton, with a length of femur of 50.5 cm., must have been 179.0 cm. high. As the average height of the Swedish conscripts is 169.5 and of the general population only 160.8, this height is very remarkable. The length of the other bones answers roughly to that of the femur. The shorter skeleton was 50.2 in femur-length;—quite an inconsiderable difference."

The Kälder skeletons do not admit of any measurement, but they differed a good deal from each other in length. The age of both corpses was between twenty-five and forty years, but no closer estimate was possible.

The custom evidently arose from the general view of the advantage of companionship after death.

In proportion as the significance of such old customs becomes obscured, the outward signs of the customs may be observed in characteristic degrees of degeneracy. In the above quoted lines Guðmundsson has referred to two such series touching the obligation of foster-brothers to follow each other to the grave or avenge each other's death. The decline of the first series seems to have followed the following order:—

1. The foster-brother took his own life, and his body was laid in his dead foster-brother's grave.
2. The foster-brother gave himself up to be put in the dead man's grave, but subsequently broke out of it.
3. The foster-brother gave himself up to be put in the dead man's grave for a fixed (but short) time.

Similar stages have been observed in the customs as to the surviving widow's fate. Although the Brahmins forbade the burning of widows, they ordained that she should sit on the pyre by her husband's body, and then they said to her; "Arise up, O woman, and come back to the life of the world; you lie there near one whose life is over; come to us. You have fulfilled your duty towards the man who once took your hand and made you a mother." Then she was led away by a near relation or a faithful servant. That is a symbolical offering of the wife, just as our last king's favourite horse which was led in his funeral procession, was a relic which has been preserved during many Christian centuries of the ancient practice of offering up of a horse at the grave. The Kwakiutls of North-west America require that the widow shall lean her head against her husband's body while the pyre is being set alight; but when the flames get the upper hand, they pull her out, but she has to take charge of her husband's ashes for three years;



and almost exactly the same is related of the Taculli Indians. The Ossetes of the Caucasus content themselves with leading the widow and the dead man's horse three times to the grave, and after that no one may marry the widow or mount the horse. Although they are allowed to live, they are regarded as belonging to the dead (Hildebrand, *Folkens tro om sina döda*, 59 f.). Grandidier tells how the remains of a Hova woman, who was during life married to several men one after the other, had to pay visits of several months long to the graves of her quondam husbands in turn. Her bones, which had remained for a certain time with those of her last husband but one, were finally separated from them and placed in the grave of her last husband when the woman who succeeded her in the previous husband's affections, died, and thus required a burying place by his side. (Cartailhac, *La France préhistorique*, p. 157, and, as to the Awemba, cp. *Anthropological Journal*, London, xxvi, 157).

In the last instance the woman died a natural death and was then joined to her husband. A similar practice may have obtained in the burial arrangements at the Björkö-graves already described, and the Eldsberga-grave mound. The same may apply to the double grave at Havor, but the early date of this grave during the period in question makes the explanation, which implies that there was already a weakening of the idea of the obligations of foster-brotherhood, hardly probable.

Traces of the custom of making the servant accompany his lord are more rare, but there is one from Sweden. According to the *Flateyjarbók* (i, 403) Olaf Tryggvesson relates that when the Swedes laid "king Frey" in the burial mound, they poured gold and silver and copper coins into holes in the mound, and caused two wooden images to be made for Frey's gratification,

which they carried into the mound. Afterwards they were taken out and venerated, and one was kept for religious purposes, the other being sent to Trondhjem. The story is evidently incorrect in this form. It is not likely that the wooden idols which Frey was supposed to delight in would be taken out of the mound, for that would have been to rob him of his comrades and these would moreover have been very unsuitable objects for worship. It was not unusual to make wooden images of Frey, and there was a tradition of the burial of the wooden idols, and thus this story was probably concocted in a form more suitable in relation to the conversion of the people to Christianity. But the very circumstance, that two wooden figures were put with the dead man for company, is interesting, as we can see in it a reminiscence of the custom of placing flesh-and-blood servants in the mound with their lord. The account says explicitly, that the wooden figures were made because no man would voluntarily give the king his company in the mound.

Similar customs are known to have existed in Egypt, Mexico, China and Japan. In the year 1903 was found among the burial places around the pyramid of Cheops, a large grave-chamber for the priest Zaschas, in which had been placed several stone figures of the dead man's servants, represented as occupied in laying a meal for him.<sup>1</sup>

Guðmundsson also gives a sketch of the decline, step by step, of another custom—that of the avenger of blood. Nothing prevents us from seeing in the Havor corpses two brothers, of whom one survived the other in order to avenge him, and who then followed him into the same grave; but we can of course not be certain that this was the case.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Rawlinson, *History of Herodotus*, iii, 49; A. Evans, *Cretan Pictographs*, 130. *Bulletin Soc. Anthropol. Bruxelles*, 17, 406.

The present investigation furnishes us with good *points d'appui* as regards the time when the views were prevalent on which the system of foster-brotherhood was based. As early as the La Tène period foster-brothers followed each other in death among the Gauls (Cæsar, *De Bello Gallico*, iii, 22). With us in Sweden, the graves already mentioned are the earliest memorials of the system. This agrees also with the form of the names which the oldest (more or less) legendary foster-brothers had—Asmund and Asvid; Hedin and Högni; Hadding and Hunding. These are in fact brothers' names from the time when the names of members of the same family alliterated between themselves. At the beginning, the idea of foster-brotherhood was based on that of brotherhood (Guðmundsson, *l.c.*; Pappenheim *Die altdänischen Schutzgilden, Ein altnorwegisches Schutzgildestatut*) and foster-brothers took over the obligations of brothers, as for example, that of avenging a brother's blood. The names above quoted takes us back to a time when foster-brothers named themselves after each other to a certain extent. Asmund's father was called Alf, Högni's daughter Hild, which shows that in the family to which one of the foster-brothers belonged, the name alliterated with the same letter (A and H). Thus Asvid and Hedin formed their names as if they were actually brothers to Asmund and Högni.

But this fashion of giving alliterative names is fortunately peculiar to a certain period. The oldest Burgundian chieftains, who marched out against the Romans in the third or fourth century, formed their names on this principle, and so did the reigning house of Scandinavia in the protohistoric Beowulf-period (*i.e.* the fifth century), which was exactly the period of the graves in Gotland and Skåne of which we have spoken. Of the foster-brothers we have just named, Hadding

dies for Hunding, and Asmund was placed in Asvid's grave. The coincidence in time between the graves and the custom as regards the names indicates when these practices were in vogue.

*Beowulf* gives us a literary, and the South Scandinavian graves an archæological example of the custom of placing brothers and foster-brothers in a common bed in death.

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## BEOWULF'S FUNERAL OBSEQUIES.

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The body of Beowulf, king of the Geats, was burnt, and his funeral obsequies and grave are described in more than one passage of the poem which bears his name. Immediately before his death he himself gives instructions for his burial. These are repeated later by Wiglaf, and finally the entire funeral ceremony is exhaustively described. If we put together the details of these three descriptions,—although as will be seen they are not absolutely consistent with each other,—we shall obtain the following general representation of the king's funeral arrangements.

Wiglaf, who seems to have taken command of the Geats after Beowulf's death, gives orders that men should go to the forest and bring thence wood in quantities to the place of burial. To that place also others carried the king's body on a bier from the place where he died. On a height,—a ridge on a hill situated on a headland—is erected the pyre with the wood which had been felled and brought thither. The body is laid in the midst of the pyre, with a large quantity of arms and weapons. The bale-fire is kindled, and whilst the flames blaze up and the smoke ascends to the skies, a woman (the widowed queen?) with her hair bound up in token of grief, gives voice to a series of dirges, and the bystanders burst out into wailing. When the fire has burnt itself out, and the body and the accompanying treasures have been consumed, the Geats set to at

the serious work of constructing a huge cairn on the place where the pyre stood. This they covered with earth, at the same time depositing in the mound a quantity of valuables. Finally twelve nobles ride round the mound with expressions of grief and of eulogy.

Now does this description contain within itself evidence of original truth? There is one point which strikes one immediately. Costly articles were placed with the corpse on the funeral pyre, and when the grave was constructed, the same was done. This seems too much of a good thing, and the matter calls for some explanation.

In neither case is it the usual class of objects which is put with the body, *i.e.*, provisions and other requisites for the coming life, but both the great collections of gifts placed with the dead chief were treasures. Verse 3138 says the Geats made a substantial pyre on which they hung "helmets and shields of war and shining byrnies," and vv. 3165 ff. that they laid "rings and ornaments" in the grave-mound, and it is added that everything was included which the dragon's hoard comprised. So this second unburnt treasure was the dragon's hoard. But the custom of burning a collection of weapons in honour of the dead is elsewhere hardly known in literature, and the next question is what the first treasure which was burnt on Beowulf's pyre really was.

We derive no help from the explanation given after the account of the hanging on the pyre of costly armour that Beowulf himself gave directions to that effect (*swa hē bēna wæs*, v. 3140). On the contrary, Beowulf congratulates himself, when he kills the dragon, that he has had the good fortune, even at the price of his life, to procure treasure for his people (*mīnum lēodum*, v. 2798). In that case the deposit in the grave-mound of at any rate the second treasure, which was certainly

none other than the dragon's hoard, cannot have taken place. The inconsistency is however more apparent than real. In spite of the speech of Beowulf just quoted, which is perhaps merely an indication of his generosity, Wiglaf gives unequivocal directions, in the most emphatic manner, that all the valuables of the hoard shall, without exception, be burned (*meltan*) with him who won them (v. 3011, ff). This cannot relate to the ornaments eventually placed in the grave-mound, but only to the armour and other things which were actually put with Beowulf on the pyre. Wiglaf's direction is ascribed in the lay or by the Geats to Beowulf himself, and we find it again as Beowulf's command in the right place—at the burning of the armour at Beowulf's pyre. But there, too, the burning armour is the dragon's hoard itself, and the latter thus comes twice to Beowulf's grave. No compromise,—that they first burnt a part of the hoard and then laid the rest in the grave-mound,—is possible, for in the first place it is stated expressly that the whole hoard was to be burned and that no precious thing should be taken from it, and secondly the same thing is said equally positively about the unburnt valuables which were afterwards buried in the mound—namely, that they comprised the whole hoard (*eall swylce hyrsta swylce on horde . . . genumen hæfdon*; vv. 3164, 5). Thus in both cases the entire hoard is referred to; once it is burned at Beowulf's pyre, and again it is laid unburnt in his grave.

A fundamentally different description of the hoard is at the same time given in the two places referred to. The treasure which is burned consists of helmets, corslets and shields; the other of "*bēg ond siglu*" (3163) *i.e.*, rings and sun-shaped ornaments (bracteates?) or speaking generally, of a collection of gold objects. I have pointed out (pp. 140 ff.) that the dragon's hoard

consisted originally of a number of miscellaneous articles, especially such as were used in war, but that they were gradually transmogrified in the story into a collection of gold objects, answering to the gold-finds usual at the time. The descriptions of Beowulf's burial thus give us two phases in the development of the tradition, an earlier one, answering generally to vv. 2757 and 3048 (but not so old as v. 2248) and a later one.

This theory evidently presupposes that the lays about Beowulf's burial were composed on two different occasions, and consequently that the last 90 verses of *Beowulf* are made up from two lays, both dealing with the Geatic king's obsequies. That the case stood thus, may moreover be deduced directly from the contents of these verses. While the pyre burns with Beowulf's body and the treasures, the Geats and their queen break forth into loud lamentations. After that the grave is prepared, treasure is placed in it and the wailing begins afresh. We have here an example of the duplicate lays which are not uncommon in *Beowulf*, as *e.g.* in the cases of the prediction about the decline of the Geatic power, Beowulf's fight with the she-wolf and the battle of Ravenswood.

One of the lays in question described the whole course of the funeral obsequies, and when they are ended and the work of constructing the grave is completed, the other begins, or to speak perhaps more correctly, what we have left of the other. The combination of the two is very loose, for in the latter the gold hoard is simply laid in the completely finished grave-mound, after which the ceremony of lamentations begins. As in the first lay the character of the hoard is more conformable to the older conception, so also the description of the lamentation and customs gives a far more archaic impression: at the sight of the flames, which consume the beloved chief's body, there is a



general outburst of grief and wailing. In the other lay the Geatic chiefs ride round the closed mound and extol the dead man's virtues. This last-added fragment of a lay is thus evidently the more recent. The number of the king's cavaliers—twelve—makes it not unlikely that it also was composed on Scandinavian ground. The number twelve often refers in the older Northern poetry to brothers or foster-brothers who go on warlike expeditions in company, or to sworn confederates (Saxo. ed. Holder, pp. 173, 254, 265, etc.), but also occurs as the number of the king's bodyguard (*e.g.* Rolf Kraki's, in the *Skjöldunga saga* and Haki's, in the *Ynglinga saga*). This has, no doubt, some connection with the well-known part which numbers play in Germanic legal affairs; and it may be added that it is after Northern prototypes that groups of twelve or twenty-four persons come to be usual at the courts of the Cymric kings.

The description of the treasure in Beowulf's grave-mound contained in the last-mentioned lay, is moreover quite in accordance with actual custom. This appears from other places in *Beowulf* (according to one version, the dragon's hoard itself lay in a grave-mound); examples abound in the Icelandic sagas and in Saxo, and they appear also in various other regions in which grave-mounds exist. The poet has here sought to account for the then presumed presence of treasure in grave-mounds, and a similar passage occurs in the account of Frey's burial in the *Ynglinga saga*. This fragment of a lay is of interest from an archæological point of view as embodying the earliest literary evidence of such traditions about treasure, and also possibly of the plundering of grave-mounds in the North.

Even in the older and more primitive version, in which the treasure put on the pyre consisted exclusively of war-harness, the connection between the buried objects and the dragon's hoard seems to show slight

indications of coming apart. The epithet 'shining' is applied to the corslets hung round the pyre (*beorhtum byrnum*, v. 3141), while the same objects are in other allusions to the dragon's hoard, referred to—more in accordance with the truth—as rusty and mouldering. There is also the possibility that while the lay was still current, this epithet, which suited admirably in poetry, fell from the lips of the singer with pardonable carelessness, through old habit.

It is not usual, in early Northern literature, that great riches, not of direct value to the dead man in this present life, should be burnt with him. The reason is, no doubt, that the plundering of graves of burnt bodies gave poor results, and there was nothing to stimulate the imagination in stories of such treasures, which would of course lose a great part of their value in the burning.

In sources two hundred years later than the "burning-age" in the North, however, we find accounts of the burning of valuables. Saxo (ed. Holder, p. 264) relates about King Ring, that while the bale fire was consuming Harold Hildetand's body, he went round and urged the nobles to provide fuel for the flames by casting on the fire weapons, gold and any other costly things they had, so as to give honour to so great and universally respected a king.

This exhortation—which, so far as its object is concerned, viz. : to exhibit honour and reverence (*ueneracio*) towards the dead,—reminds one very much of the burial custom of these later times, with its profusion of flowers, is an expression of a later conception than that which Snorre speaks of, about the same time as Saxo, as a decree of Odin:—that the dead man's property should be laid on the bale-fire, so that he may enjoy it in Valhalla. Both the above statements of Saxo and Snorre are archaising exaggerations. According to Ibn Fadhlān's ethno-

graphic description of the Swedish people, only a third part of the dead man's movable property was laid on the pyre, the rest being divided up as the family inheritance, and to meet the expenses of the burial-feast.

The exaggerations are however by no means excessive. A steadily increasing luxury in the appointments of graves is clearly discernible in the course of the last pre-Christian centuries,—a luxury which extends to things which could scarcely have profited the dead man in the life to come. In the older Vendel graves, that is, those dating from the year 600 A.D. or soon after, a powerful and noble family is buried, as is evident from the costliness of the objects found with the bodies. But those bodies were, in the instance in question, still laid in boats which, as regards size, were suited to the funeral obsequies of an individual chief. The burial custom thus stands in direct contact with the simple faith in a journey of the dead man over the water. Later on, however, in the Viking period, dead chieftains are provided with large vessels and with costly equipment intended also for other persons who were not buried with the corpse. I may refer in particular to the great find at Möklebust, where the corpse was burned on board a vessel. There, among the numerous objects which were found, were many bows and spear-shafts, and no less than thirty bosses of shields.

One is tempted to see in this an analogy with Beowulf's bale-fire and its wealth of war-harness. The reason of the large number of shield-bosses was, however, that the ship's gunwale was decorated with shields in order to give it the appearance of going out on an expedition. There is indeed no parallel here for the description in *Beowulf*, nor does any other late find afford such a parallel, any more than the statements of Snorre and Saxo already quoted. It is the capture of

the dragon's hoard which accounts for the burning of the great heap of weapons on Beowulf's pyre, and as we never find large unburnt stores of gold in grave-mounds, so we can have no hope of finding remains after any corpse-burning such as is described in *Beowulf*. The only conclusion we can draw from the description in this regard is, that at the time of the composition of the poem of *Beowulf* very important personages were burnt with valuable personal belongings. As we shall see, this conclusion is not without its importance.

Of great positive value for us are the statements which we possess about the grave-mound itself, its situation, dimensions and construction. Beowulf directs his people to raise his grave-mound 'on a projection by the sea' (*æt brimes nōsan*, v. 2803) and he fixes the place more precisely as 'the Whale's headland' (*on Hrones næsse*, v. 2805). To that sea-promontory he is thus borne after death by Geatic notables (v. 3142). A site by the sea is not peculiar to Beowulf's grave-mound; the newly-constructed barrow in which the dragon's hoard was previously placed, according to one version, was situated on a headland (*wæter-ȳðum neah . . . be næsse*, vv. 2242, 3; *holmwylme nēh*, v. 2411).

Moreover Beowulf himself gives reasons for the position of the grave-mound ("so that seafarers who urge their tall ships over the spray of ocean, shall thereafter call it Beowulf's barrow," vv. 2806-8). These lines have a more natural ring about them than those of the artificial, half-romantic explanation in the *Ynglingatal*—that the sea should sing to the delight of the buried man. *Beowulf* stands much nearer the truth, not only historically and archæologically, but psychologically. As the hero directed, so it was arranged, and his burial place was widely visible to those who ploughed the waves (*wægliðendum wide gesyne*, v. 3158).

In order to accomplish this object, that is, to attract

the notice of seafarers, and by that means to be known to foreigners as well as his countrymen, Beowulf's mound must have been of considerable size. So he ordained himself:—it was to be “conspicuous” “towering high,” (*beorhtne*; *hēāh hlīfian*, vv. 2805-6), and it was in fact made “high and broad,” (*heah ond brād*; v. 3157). When Wiglaf repeats Beowulf's directions, he exhorts his hearers to make the barrow “lofty, great and magnificent,” (*hean, micelne ond mærne*), because, he adds, the dead chief “was of men on the wide earth the worthiest warrior,” (ll. 3097-9), and this is, as far I can recollect at the moment, the only passage in literature where the size of a burial-mound stands in direct relation to the importance of the person to be buried in it. Nor is the grave-mound imposing merely on account of its own size. In order to make it additionally conspicuous it is erected on a natural eminence of the ground—a hill or a ridge. The warriors light the funeral pyre “on a mount,” (*on beorge* v. 3143), and afterwards construct the barrow “on a bluff,” (*on hliðe* v. 3157). Hence the barrow has its height emphasised to the eyes by the additional elevation of the cliff, so that the grave-mound attracts to itself the more easily the notice of those who journey past it.

The greatest importance, however, attaches to the information which is given us about the construction of the burial-place. Fortunately the text of our poem gives us detailed particulars of this. When the bale-fire had burnt itself out, and the charred remains no doubt lay in a heap, a grave mound was constructed on the actual site of the funeral-pyre. Such were Beowulf's own orders, (*æfter bæle*, v. 2803), thus does Wiglaf repeat his directions (*in bælstede*, v. 3097), and thus are they carried into effect; that is to say, the grave-mound is constructed round or upon the burnt remains (*bronda be lāfe*, v. 3160). The heart of this mound

would consist of a cairn of stones, for this is what the word '*hlǣw*' (l. 3158), precisely means.<sup>1</sup> I have pointed out (p. 139) that the word as used in this place cannot refer to the completed grave-mound, but only to the inner core of it. The same interpretation of the word provides us with an explanation of another passage in the poem, from which it appears that in order to get at the dragon's hoard, the searchers had to go to a "*hlǣw under hrūsan*," (v. 2411) an expression which is usually translated by 'the vaulted grave,' or 'a hole under the earth'.<sup>2</sup> Now hardly any of the stories about treasure-hoards in any region relate to graves under the natural surface of the ground, but we hear in many about hoards in grave-mounds, and it is evident from other details in the description, that we have an example of the latter class in the present instance. We find that the grave-mounds which are mentioned in *Beowulf*, have two constituent parts, an inner *hlǣw* and an outer *hrūse*. The latter has the primary signification of the surface of the earth or ground, and thus comes to mean the outer envelope of a grave mound or hillock, over the surface of which one passes. On the other hand the *hlǣw* must mean the grave-chamber and its covering taken together. Beowulf directs (v. 2802) that the Geats should, after the bale-fire has burnt out, make a *hlǣw*, which evidently means more than a mere grave-chamber; and in the subsequently added final lay, it is stated that Geatish notables rode round the *hlǣw* (*ymbe hlǣw*, v. 3169), in which the great gold-treasure was deposited. Hence the *hlǣw* betokens the grave and a covering, which must have been of another nature

<sup>1</sup> The etymology of the word *hlǣw* does not warrant us in saying more than that it should be a mound or elevation. It might be hollow inside or not (see p. 139, and Skeat, *Etym. Dict.* s. v. 'Low'). In Gothic, *hlaiw* is used at Mark, xv. 46, for the tomb hewn out of a rock.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> Earle (*Deeds of Beowulf*, p. 79) translates 'a tumulus roofed with mould'.—*Ed.*

than the outer earthy envelope, and which, as appears from the last quoted passage, could itself serve as a grave-mound. This signification of a kind of mound agrees also with the etymology of the word. Such an inner envelope can only be the nucleus of the grave-mound; *i.e.* the cairn, and thus the expression *hlāw under hrūsan*, denotes the cairn under the earthy covering, and refers to a grave made up of a cairn of stones and a super-added layer of earth. The meaning 'cairn' is equally evident in the verses which relate to the construction of the dragon-slayer's own grave-mound.

After the bale-fire has been mentioned, the poem continues (vv. 3156-3162):—"Then the Wedergeats people raised a cairn upon the cliff,—a cairn high and broad, and visible from far by voyagers on sea; and they constructed in ten days the veteran's memorial on the remnant of the burning, and covered it with a mound, in such sort as skilled men could plan most worthy of him."

There can here be no question of any wooden chamber, or of anything else than a huge heap of stones. It is erected on the place of burning, it takes ten days to build it, it is high and broad and visible from far, and lastly, it is the real memorial of the burnt hero. When it has been constructed, it is covered with earth, and thus the grave-mound is complete. Beowulf's grave is a royal grave, and the other grave-mound, in which the vast treasure lay and which was of the same construction ("*hlāw under hrūsan*"), must also have been very imposing. The graves which are described in *Beowulf* as being constructed in this way, are thus graves of the very highest order.

The statements in the poem about the formation of graves for other than chiefs are not of importance. It is only said, quite cursorily, that a "*hlāw*" was also

made for men of noble birth (vv. 1120), but as nothing is said about its position, dimensions or construction, the observation is of little value.

Other statements about the burial customs of the period, although not numerous, are of interest. When Beowulf fears that he may fall in combat with the Danish monster, in which case he expected to be devoured, he gives, in presence of King Hrothgar, some short instructions about his property (vv. 445-455). As regards Beowulf's body, the king will have no occasion to trouble, *i.e.*, he will not have to bury him; but Hrothgar is to send his splendid armour to his Geatish lord. Whether this points to the provision in Geatland of a cenotaph in honour of the dead warrior, in the shape of a grave with armour deposited in it, as the corpse of the departed man was wanting, cannot be settled from the indications in the text.<sup>1</sup>

Now to what extent do the statements in *Beowulf* agree with the results of archæological research?

In order to answer this question in a fairly satisfactory way it is absolutely necessary for us to begin with a brief review of all the Scandinavian material relating to the burial customs of the period. Solitary coincidences, looked at without reference to their surroundings, will be likely to lead us seriously astray. If, on the other hand, our knowledge of the concrete results of archæological investigation yields us evidence of a general custom extending over a more or less extensive area, we obtain a very solid basis for the determination of the local conditions in the Beowulf-poem, and

<sup>1</sup> As to cenotaphs of the Iron Age, see Nordin, SFT, vii, 49; Gustafson, ATS, 9 (6), 71; Stjerna, ATS, 18 (1), 123; Almgren, *Meddelanden från Östergötlands Fornminnesförening*, 1905, p. 25, and H. Hanson, ATS, 18 (2) 7. The cenotaph at Kylvær, Gotland, examined by Hanson, belongs to the fourth or fifth century. In cenotaphs in Bornholm complete suits of armour have been found.



consequently an aid to fixing the geographical distribution of the peoples to which it relates.

Unfortunately, the material so far available to us is marked by very great *lacunæ*, for the fifth century is as poor in graves known to belong to it as it is rich in costly remains. We have, however, for certain of the most important regions a sufficient number of very instructive grave-finds to give us an idea of the prevailing burial customs, and as regards other parts of Scandinavia the absence of such finds speaks no less eloquently.<sup>1</sup>

As regards the province of MEDELPAD the diggings of the last decade have yielded us many valuable finds (Mbl. 1897, p. 39; 1898/9, pp. 183 ff; 1900, pp. 1 ff.) Kvarndalen grave No. 1 was a mound 1·5 metres high, with a grave of the fifth century. Färsta grave No. 2—a mound 2·3 metres high—probably belongs to the same period, and possibly grave No. 4 at Kvarndalen, which is nearly as high, besides No. 1 at Rude (1 metre); No. 6 (1·6 metres) at Vattjom; perhaps also No. 5 (1·5 meters) at Vattjom. All these graves had the form of more or less stony barrows, and some, as for instance Kvarndalen No. 1, Färsta No. 2, and the two Vattjom graves, consisted of well-marked stone-heaps which were covered in some instances by an appreciable thickness of earth, and in others by a thin layer of turf. In the two first-named grave-mounds the actual grave contained burnt bones, deposited in an earthenware vessel, and this was probably also the case as regards Rude grave No. 1. No covering for the burnt bones had been preserved in the case of the No. 4 grave at Kvarndalen, and in the two Vattjom graves the bones lay under shield bosses having their convex surface upwards. Thus all the graves exhibit

<sup>1</sup>The map at the end of the volume shows the boundaries of the provinces referred to in the following paragraphs.

cremation, and an earthy mound with a more or less well-marked cairn under it. There are earlier finds in the same province of cairns or stony mounds certainly belonging to the same century (fifth), but the reports of the finds are not accurate enough to be of help (Hildebrand, *ATS.* 2, 243 ff). The fibula figured in *SFT*, vol. x. (fig. 127) was found in a mound at Hälljom (parish of Njurunda), and that of which an illustration is given below (fig. 82) was found with about a hundred beads of glass and amber in a cairn at Tjufholmen near Sundsvall; the objects show no signs of having been burnt.

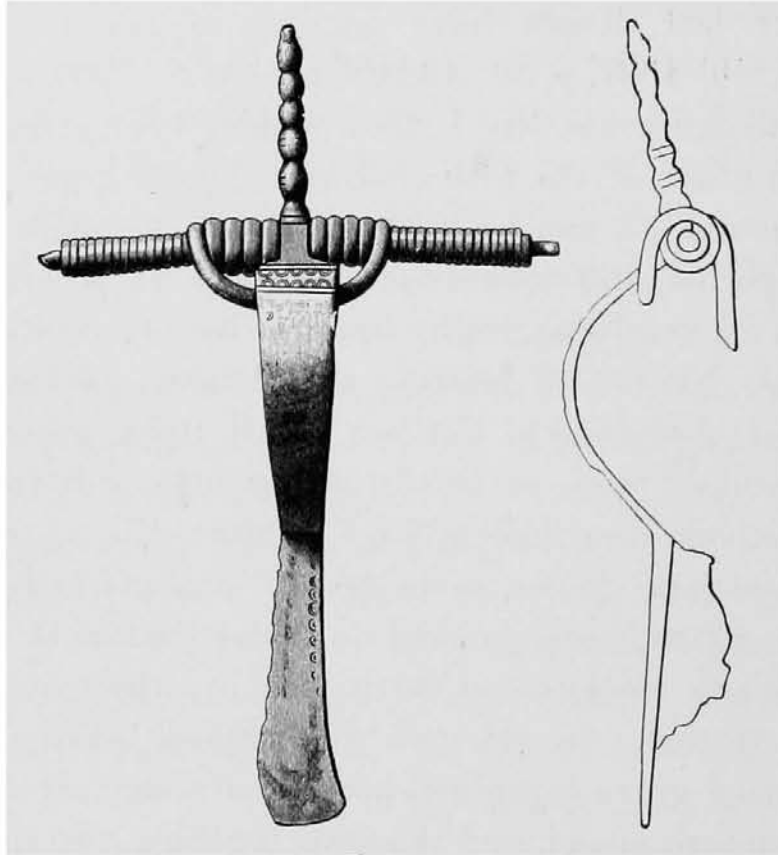


FIG. 82.

Bronze fibula from Tjufholmen. Sundsvall.  $\frac{1}{4}$

In HELSINGLAND the cases have not been so carefully observed (Montelius, *Hur gammal är bygden i Helsingland*, p. 15 ff). The fibula which appears as fig. 41 in Montelius' paper is said to have been found at the side of an (unburnt) skeleton. The remaining objects (of

the fifth century or thereabouts) do not seem to have been injured by fire, but the facts relating to the find are too doubtful to give us any certain guidance.

IN GESTRIKLAND graves of the sixth century and later have been found (Hildebrand, *ATS.* 2; Frödin, *Mbl.*, 1903-5, 452; and in *Meddel. af Gästr. Forn.-fören.* 1905); but graves of the fifth century are entirely wanting.

I will refer later on to the case of UPPLAND.

A grave-find is known from Selaön in Mälar, SÖDERMANLAND, which ought probably to be ascribed to the close of the fifth century (Salin, *Mbl.* 1895, p. 77). It contained a barbarous imitation of a gold solidus of Theodosius II. (*Mbl.* 1892, page 127), with flat draughts of bone, and some burnt bones, in a cairn of considerable size.

It is not certain that any of the EASTGÖTLAND graves are of the fifth century (Montelius, *SFT.* xi. and xii.), but a skeleton grave in a mound, and a burnt-grave under a covering of stones, belonging to the sixth century, have been discovered (Arne, *Meddel. fr. Östergötlands Fornminnesförening*, 1905, p. 4; Almgren, *ibid.*, 1906, p. 15.)

As regards ÖLAND, we are more fortunately placed, although with regard to this province it is also true, that by far the greatest number of objects have come from finds which have been imperfectly recorded. Certain fifth century fibulæ, now in the State Historical Museum at Stockholm (*e.g.* SHM. 5544 and 8881) show, however, decided traces of having been on the bale-fire, from which we may conclude that the practice of burning the corpse obtained at that time. A very large grave-find from the "Kallhög" in the village of Sättra (SHM, 9793) consists of many bronze objects, not damaged by fire, together with fragments of pottery, glass, beakers

(such as SFT vol. x, figs. 202, 203), and draughts, all injured by fire; another collection from a grave-find (SHM, 9585) consists of a ring and some fibulæ of bronze (fig. 83), with beads damaged by fire. These were found in a cairn at Sättra (No. 1), Gärdslösa parish. Of these two finds, one was thus deposited in a cairn or an earth-mound.

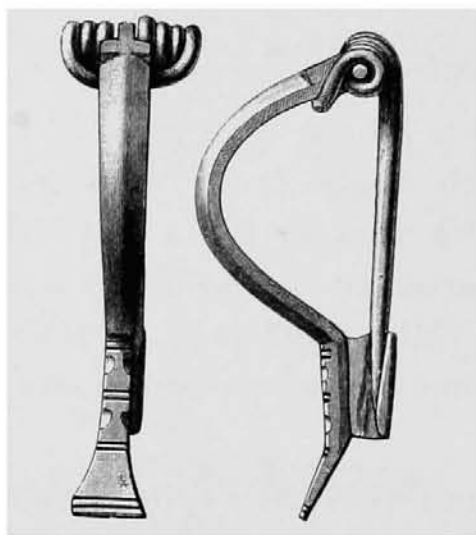


FIG. 83.

Bronze fibula from Sättra, Öland.  $\frac{1}{4}$

The same burial-custom seems also to be indicated by a few finds of coins. Roman gold coins of the fifth century (SHM, 2103, 2355, 2872, 4098), have been found under a flat stone on the occasion of the levelling of a gigantic mound at Hvalsnäs (parish of Löt), and of the same period a gold coin in a stone heap at Ramsättra (in the parish of Köping; SHM, 1983). Hence we can confidently affirm, as regards Öland, that it was the practice to burn the corpses, and to construct grave-mounds over them, of which at least some took the form of cairns. It is true that we have also from the island a very great number of objects which have not been injured by fire, and which undoubtedly formed part of the equipment of graves, but this does not prove that the practice of burning the dead was not generally

prevalent. The find from the village of Sättra, which is mentioned above, as well as similar finds from Bornholm and Norway hereinafter referred to, show us that, although the body was burnt, the objects which accompanied it were, to a large extent, and probably by design, excepted from the burning.

GOTLAND, which is astonishingly rich in grave-finds of the fourth century, is very poorly represented in this respect during the fifth. As, moreover, objects occur more rarely in graves of the latter century, we must chiefly rely on the typological development of the burial customs. During the fourth<sup>1</sup> century the practices of burying with and without burning existed side by side, but the practice of not burning was more common in earlier times. During the course of the same century the burning of corpses, however, became more general, and we may thus evidently assume a continuation of the same burial custom during the fifth century. Before that it was usual to lay the unburnt corpses in cists, and men continued to build them, even after the burning of corpses had become the predominant custom ; but as time went on they became much smaller, and square, and placed alongside of each other. Such was the position at the commencement of the fifth century.

During the fourth century the graves were still covered by mounds, but at the end of the century men ceased to construct them, and the small cist-pits for the burnt bones were disposed under the natural surface of the ground. Graves of this construction, *i.e.*, small cist-pits, without any mound, adjoining each other, and occasionally arranged after a sort of system, are found in some places in Gotland (cp. Hanson, *ATS.* 18 (2), p. 8). One of the graves at Havor (No. 176) must, on the ground of the objects found in it, be assigned to the fifth

<sup>1</sup> The original has 'sixth,' but this is evidently a misprint.—*Ed.*

century (fig. 84). Here, under an irregular layer of cobbles, turf and earth was found a comparatively shallow grave-bed with rich remains. Hence the burial customs vary, but the graves are generally characterised by comparative insignificance, and consist of a layer of burnt matter with or without an enveloping cist, and without a grave-mound.



FIG. 84.

Fragments of bronze fibula from grave No. 176, Havor, Gotland. <sup>23</sup>/<sub>3</sub>

In at least two places on the island of BORNHOLM (Gudhjem and Kannikegård), there are graves of the fifth century. At Gudhjem Möllebacken, two grave-mounds of the Migration Period have been found. Of these one (No. 1) exhibits corpse-burning, the burnt bones being deposited in an urn covered with stones, and precious objects which had not been burnt being placed round the urn. In the other grave there were found, besides objects belonging to the period in question, certain parts of a skeleton, but these must be regarded as belonging to a secondary grave of the seventh century, evidence of this being furnished by a rostriform fibula which was found with it (*Aarbøger*, 1868, p. 135; *ATS*. 18,(1),233). At Kannikegård were found some twenty or thirty graves of the fifth century. None of these have grave-mounds, but a few have irregular paving at the natural surface of the earth, and consist of places—usually poor in objects of interest—where there has been burning, and others were urn-graves. Hence they are

most closely related to the Gotland graves, but with the difference that they are not arranged according to any system.

As regards SMÅLAND, BLEKINGE, SKÅNE, HALLAND, the DANISH ISLANDS and JUTLAND, I know of no recorded grave-finds of the period. This is easily explainable as regards graves similar to the above described Bornholm type, as they are calculated to escape notice, or it is difficult to assign them to a particular period.

From BOHUSLÄN at least three graves of our period are known. In a mound in the parish of Svarteborg there was found many years ago a bracteate of the fifth century, together with some burnt bones in a cinerary urn (Mbl. 1900, p. 144), and a fibula (shown in SFT, vol. x, fig. 132), was found at Röra (Orust), in an earthenware vessel full of ashes and fragments of bone. In Gisleröd (Tanum parish) objects of the same period (*e.g.* fig. 85),

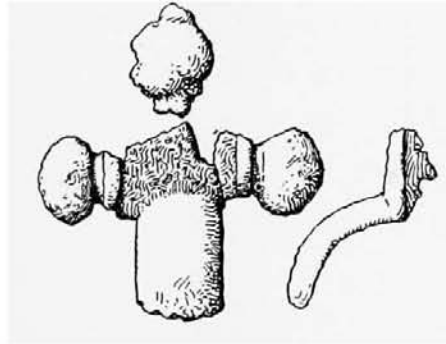


FIG. 85.

Fragment of bronze fibula from Gisleröd, Tanum, Bohuslän.  $\frac{2}{3}$

have been found in a large oblong mound, with remains of burnt bodies scattered in various places.<sup>1</sup> A fibula given at fig. 127 in SFT. vol. x, was found in a grave-mound in the neighbourhood of Strömstad.

A number of grave-finds are known from WEST GOTLAND of which none exhibit objects which have been damaged by fire. Nor does any report of a find

<sup>1</sup> Found in 1904 during the examination of the fixed remains in the district of Tanum, carried out under the auspices of the Gotenburg and Bohuslän Antiquarian Society by Almgren, Frödin and Hallström.

suggest corpse-burning, as far as I am aware. Of tolerably good grave-finds with data concerning burial-customs, I only know two. The one exhibits a fibula and a pin (figs. 86 and 87, SHM. 7591, 4-5), found with a skeleton at Tyskagården, in the parish of Näs; the other, consisting *inter alia* of a fibula (fig. 88, SHM. 8823), originates likewise from a skeleton grave at Nygård, in the parish of Varnhem. To the period about the year 400 A.D., belongs also a skeleton-grave

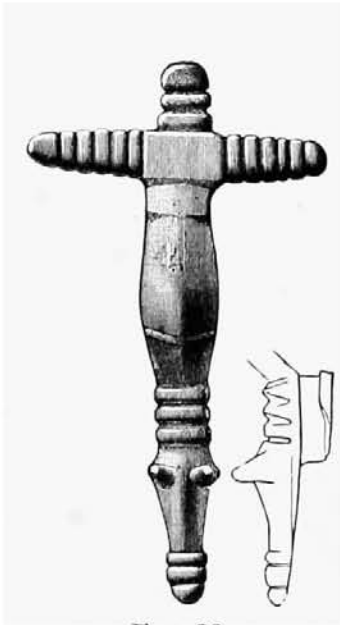


FIG. 86.  
Bronze fibula from  
Tyskagården, Näs,  
West Götland.  $\frac{1}{4}$

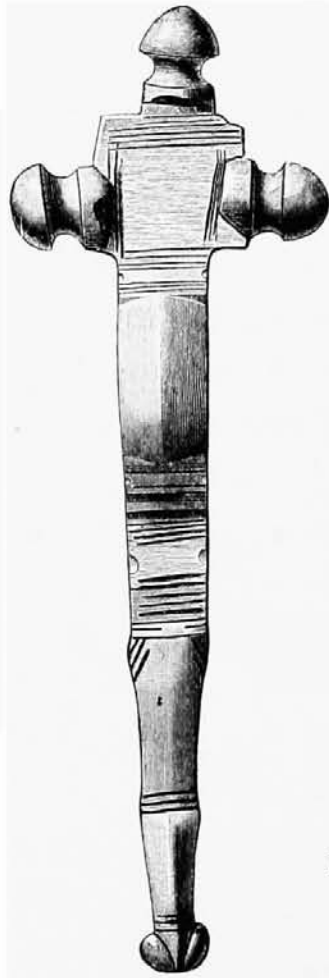


FIG. 88.  
Bronze fibula from Nygård,  
Varnhem, West Götland.  $\frac{1}{4}$



FIG. 87.  
Bronze pin from Tyska-  
gården, Näs, West  
Götland.  $\frac{1}{4}$

at Sjögersta Humlegården, in the parish of Sjögersta (Montelius, SFT. vi, p. 83). This last-named somewhat earlier grave was covered by a mound, but the two other (fifth century) graves seem to have been placed under the natural ground-level.



In WERMLAND, objects of the fifth century have been discovered in a grave-mound (Montelius, SFT. x, p. 117), undoubtedly with a skeleton.

As is well-known, NORWAY possesses a vast number of grave-finds, but since that part of Scandinavia has hardly any connection with the original Beowulf-poem, I consider it unnecessary to go through the Norwegian material in detail. The usual custom as regards the more important graves seems to have been that a sepulchral chamber was excavated and surrounded with stone slabs, within which the unburnt body was placed. Side by side with this custom, which was general over the whole country, the burning of bodies often obtained, especially as regards less important personages. This seems to have been particularly the case in the tracts bordering on Bohuslän and Dalsland, as well as, for instance, in the Bratsberg district. In certain cases also grave-chambers or cists have been employed as receptacles for the burnt bones, and in others the bones have been covered over with stone slabs, or left without any covering of stones. On certain occasions the bones have been deposited in vessels of bronze or clay. The graves are always covered by mounds or cairns of varying dimensions.<sup>1</sup>

If we set on one side the imperfectly recorded finds from Helsingland we get the following general view of burial customs in Scandinavia during the fifth century.

In the Eastern part of the Scandinavian peninsular north of lake Mälär, corpse-burning with grave-mounds or grave-cairns was usual; in Gotland corpse-burning without any kind of grave-mound. In Öland the practice was as in North Sweden; in Bornholm there was corpse-burning with grave-mounds at one point,

<sup>1</sup> The above synopsis of the Norwegian grave-customs of the time has been made from reports of finds in *Aarsberetninger*, etc., in *Bergens museums Aarbog* (partly under the direction of Schetelig in *Aarsb.* 1905, and Montelius in SFT, x).

and in another part without grave-mounds. The southernmost parts of the Scandinavian peninsula and Denmark furnish us with no archæological information of value. West Götland has skeleton-graves without mounds; Bohuslän burnt graves with mounds; Norway burnt-graves and skeleton-graves with cairns or mounds.

As regards Danes and Geats alike the *Beowulf* only mentions corpse-burning and—at any rate as regards the Geats—the use of burnt graves in a mound or a cairn also. The territory of the Geats has been sought in (1) Gotland, (2) Jutland, and (3) West Götland.

In Gotland, corpse-burning was the custom, but we find no grave-mounds. Thus Gotland is excluded.

Whether bodies were buried with or without being burnt is uncertain as regards the peninsula of Jutland. But here we must take into consideration that the burial-custom of Jutland during the whole of the later Iron Age differs from the Scandinavian practice in this; that there bodies were buried, without burning, in graves pointing east and west, *i.e.* in accordance with the Western custom. From the Viking Period we have (excluding the quite exceptional mounds at Jellinge,—skeleton graves in wooden chambers,—and a class of graves the construction of which is considered by all antiquarians to be referable to the influence of the regions north and east of the Skager Rack), only graves under the natural ground-level. After the close of the fourth century there existed, as a matter of fact, no custom of raising grave-mounds in Jutland. For this reason alone, it is impossible that Jutland can have been the home of the *Beowulf* poem;—the Jutes cannot have been the Geats of *Beowulf*.<sup>1</sup> At the same time West Gotland's archæological conditions do not

<sup>1</sup>This is quite certain for other reasons. See the essays on *Vendel and the Vendel Crow*, and *Swedes and Geats during the Migration Period*.

agree with those described in *Beowulf* either. Instead of corpse-burning and grave-mounds, we have skeleton-graves under the natural ground-level.

Of the regions which we have to take into account, we must exclude Norway and the neighbouring parts of Sweden, and, as far as the Geats are concerned, the country north of Lake Mälär. Of the remaining districts there is only the eastern part of South Scandinavia,—to be more precise, Öland, Södermanland (on the evidence of one grave), and, in part, Bornholm, which exhibit conditions such as we find in *Beowulf*, namely, grave-mounds and the burning of corpses.

This archæological evidence is of very great importance. In the essay on the Swedes and Geats during the Migration Period I have brought out that various other circumstances strengthens the assumption that this island, so extraordinarily rich at that time, was in many respects the most important point in the Geatish dominion. This must not be misunderstood to mean that the Geats only possessed the Island of Öland. Various Geatic tribes, which co-operated with each other and probably formed a political unit, certainly possessed the whole of East and West Götland, besides a great part of the present Swedish Baltic coast south of Lake Mälär. To all parts of the coast of Öland were transported the enormous riches which alliance with their related tribes, who at that time were on the way to making themselves the masters of Southern Europe, brought the Swedish Goths. The remains of the Öland strongholds afford evidence that here the Geatic king concentrated his people's military forces in order to preserve communication with other nations, as against the powerful Swedes. It was among the Geatic king's servants and warriors on the island that the political

songs about the Geats and Swedes' "blood-track" (*Beo.* v. 2946) first arose. The burial custom which was practically known to the scopers themselves in Öland provided a model for the description in the poem. The lays bear the stamp of having been produced in connection with an actual king's burial. Has the grave-mound described therein been destroyed or can we identify it anywhere?

We have in Sweden a royal burial-mound of the period in question; it was not however constructed by Geats, but by Swedes.

In the short review of the burial customs of the fifth century, which has gone before, I left over the circumstances of UPPLAND, because these are of quite exceptional interest. The known graves in that province which we now have to consider, are three, one at Vaxtuna, one at Vallensjö, and one at Gamla Upsala. On the 8th June, 1724, von Schantz took in hand by the king's orders the examination of a very important grave-mound, at Vaxtuna (in Orkesta parish and the division of Seminghundra). During four days, forty soldiers were employed in digging through the mound, which must consequently have been of considerable size. Indeed, to judge from a rather poorly executed section which is preserved in the antiquario-topographical archives, it must have been about eight metres high. The outer coat was of earth, and it covered a large cairn consisting of stones and earth mixed, which may have reached a height of six metres. At the bottom of the middle part of the cairn, somewhat to one side of the centre of the mound, a large jar full of bones was found, covered over by a stone. The grave-mound was surrounded by smaller graves, some of which were of the Viking Period. (*Acta litteraria Sueciæ*, 1725, p. 34). Dr. Almgren kindly drew my attention to this find.

At Vallensjö, (Fresta parish, Vallentuna division) a bronze fibula has been found (see fig. 89) with burnt bones, in a cairn (SHM. 8745).

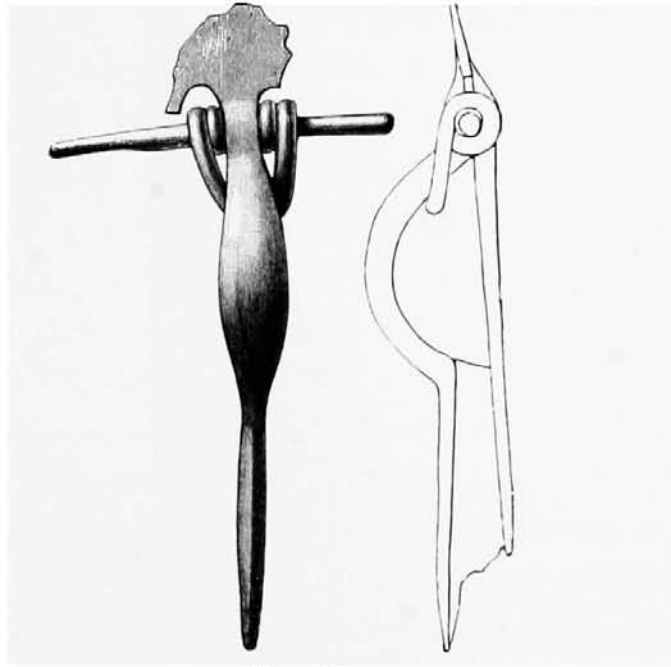


FIG. 89.

Bronze fibula from Vallensjö, Fresta, Uppland.  $\frac{1}{4}$

The third mound is Odinshög, Gamla Upsala. As to this I may quote B. E. Hildebrand's report on the find (Mbl. 1876, p. 252), excluding some matter which is unimportant for our present purpose. (Fig. 90 is a diagrammatic section of the mound, based on the description.)

"After we had penetrated (along the line *a-b*) 20·2 metres into the mound, we came upon a wall (*c-d*) 1·2 metres high, carefully built of large granite blocks laid in bond (*i.e.* the opening between each pair of stones was covered by one overlaying stone). The joints between the stones were stopped with hard rammed vegetable mould. This wall encircled an even bed, spread over a natural mound, and consisting of a bottom of fine sand, over which was a 30 cm. thick layer of hard rammed clay, on which burning took place. Over this bed a convex heap of large and small stones (*c, e, d*) had been massed, about 48 metres in circumference, rising

considerably over the roof of the gallery made by the excavators.

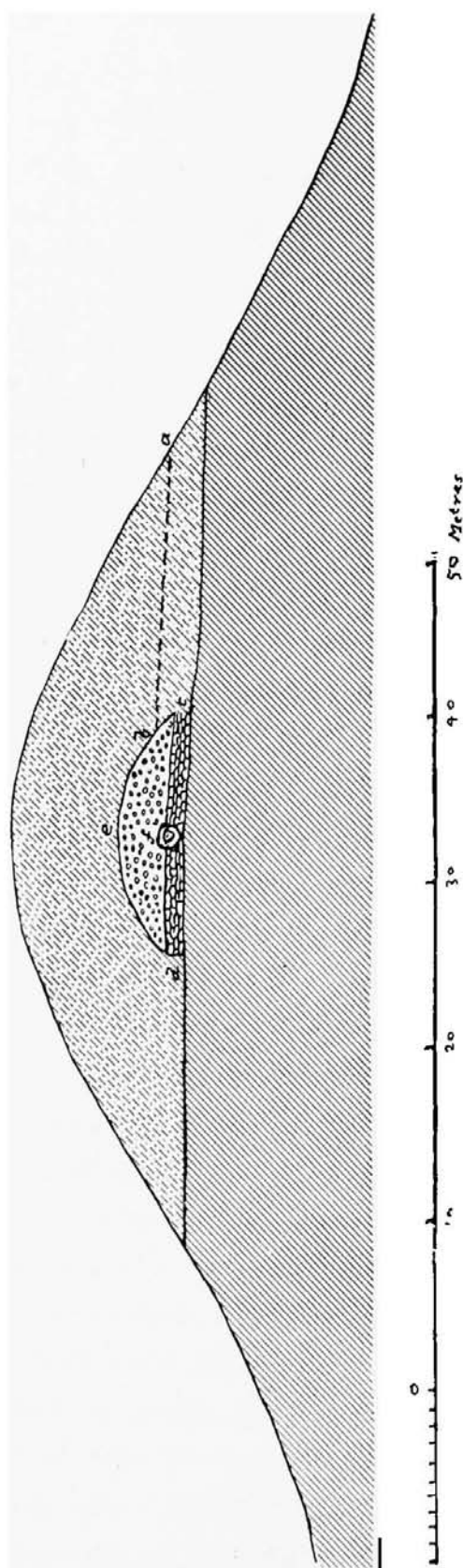


FIG. 90.

Section of Odinshög, Gamla Upsala, Uppland.

“When our gallery had penetrated 7 metres into this heap, an opening was made by means of a side-gallery 2·4 metres broad on the left, so as to get at the middle of the clay bed. Here we found a heap of burnt bones and ashes (*f*) about 1·8 metres in diameter, and 30 cm. high, covered over with small bits of stone partly chipped, or disintegrated by fire. Under this heap of bones there stood, in a depression of the clay bed, a cinerary urn, imbedded in fine sand, covered with a stone slab, and surrounded by great stones. The urn, which was of dark grey earthenware, not very hard burnt, of simple form, 18 cm. high, 22 cm. across at the top and a little less at the bottom, had been cracked in many places through the pressure of the cairn. It was full to the brim of the bones of men and animals, ashes, charcoal from pine and other trees, three iron rivets, bits of thin, simply worked, copper ornaments which had been burnt to pieces, bone buttons, pieces of a bone comb, etc. Among the bones lay a piece of a man's under-jaw, with a large tooth still remaining in it. To this jaw were firmly attached bits of rib-bones and other scraps of bone, an iron nail and a little figure of a bird in bone. Among the bones of animals were observed half the skull of a dog, bones of a horse, and the claws of some bird. For the purpose of deposit in the urn, those bones seem to have been carefully selected which were not blackened by fire. The collection of bones in the heap over the urn was carefully scrutinized. The bones which were generally hard burnt, were examined by Professors A. Retzius and F. E. Sundevall, who found remains of men and domestic animals,—a great many dogs, horses, oxen or cows, sheep, swine, poultry and probably also cats.

“Partly in this layer of bones, and partly in the clay bed outside it, were found iron rivets from one to three inches long, fragments of two gold bracteates, exhibiting

filigree work on one side, the first with interlaced embellishment, and the other decorated with fine lines and rings, eight half-spherical bone-buttons, each with two round holes bored in the flat under-side, fragments of bone-combs and thin bronze ornaments, lumps and drops of melted glass, clay beads, a whetstone, broken into many pieces, a thin lamina of stone, etc., all showing signs of very great heat. In the clay bed stood one large vertical pole of pine-wood, and a few smaller ones, all burnt at the upper ends. In the moist earthy clay there lay a lock of human hair of a dark brown colour, tending somewhat to red."

Our first task must naturally be to fix the position of this grave in time, and fortunately some of the objects which it contained are such as to admit of chronological treatment. This is the case with the bone-draughts and the two gold objects.



FIG. 91.

Damaged bronze fibula  
from Boberget, East  
Götland.  $\frac{1}{2}$

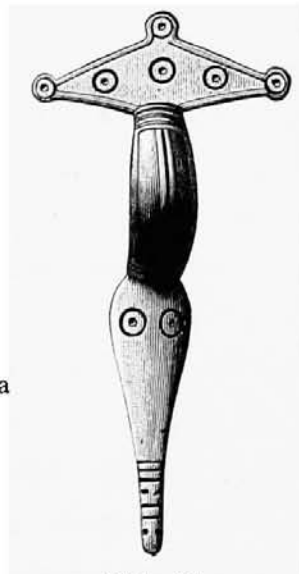


FIG. 92.

Bronze fibula from  
Stenåsa, Öland.  $\frac{2}{3}$



FIG. 93.

Fragment of a gold plate  
(forming part of a sword-  
sheath?) from Gamla  
Upsala, Uppland.  $\frac{3}{4}$

Similar draughts with two holes on the under side have been found among the remains on an ancient inhabited area at Boberget on Vikbolandet (Almgren, *Meddel. från Östergötlands Fornminnesförening*, 1906, p. 16), where, among other objects, a fibula (fig. 91)



was also found. In the ornamentation of the bow, this fibula most resembles one found at Stenåsa, Öland, (fig. 92) belonging to a group of fibulæ of the fourth and fifth centuries, which has been previously mentioned, and which is characteristic of the Scandinavian islands in the Baltic. One can hardly place the East Gothic fibula later than A.D. 500, but as the inhabited area may have been occupied for a long time, one cannot at present draw any certain conclusions as to the date of the draughts.

The gold objects are much more helpful to us. The first (thin) gold plate (fig. 93) is an ornament in gold filigree, representing a recumbent animal. One can make out the head, bent backwards and downwards, the neck bent almost to an arc of 90°, the shoulder, the body first bending like a S and then going straight on, and the upper part of the hind leg. The beast's eye is bounded below by a straight line. The ring round the upper part of the eye resolves itself immediately into lips, of which the left one goes down over the beast's body, then turns backwards, goes under the body and finally takes a sweep similar to the lower half of an inverted S. The right one goes straight under the body in the direction of the hind leg. If an ear originally existed, it is missing, as are both the feet.<sup>1</sup> The ornament is without



FIG. 94.

Part of a gold scabbard, from Mellby, West Götland.  $\frac{1}{4}$

question to be assigned to Salin's style I., but has not a complete resemblance to any of the ornamental animals pictured in his A.T. (pp. 222 ff). Its nearest analogues are the ornament on the mount-

<sup>1</sup> See also the Introduction (p. xxix.) as to this figure.—*Ed.*

ings of a sword-sheath from West Götland (fig. 94), and that on the mounting of a hilt and sheath from the Tureholm-find (fig. 95). The degree of degeneration in the representation of the animal is about the same as



FIG. 95.

Mounting (gold) of a scabbard. from Tureholm, Södermanland.  $\frac{1}{2}$

in the West Gothic animal. On the other hand, we do not find in this animal the characteristic anterior eye-bordering which we see on the Tureholm sword-sheath and the Norwegian examples (cp. Salin, *l.c.* figures 515, *o.* and *p.*). The close of the period for Salin's style I. characterized by a far more exaggerated intertwining of the limbs, and by more pronounced degeneration, seems to fall about the middle of the sixth century. The Tureholm-find, which exhibits somewhat more degenerate forms than the gold plate from Gamla Upsala, is considered to belong to the fifth century or



FIG. 96.

Fragment of a gold plate (forming part of a sword-sheath?)  
from Gamla Upsala, Uppland.  $\frac{1}{2}$

somewhere about A.D. 500. Hence the last possible time for the latter will be somewhere about A.D. 500.

The other gold plate (fig. 96) exhibits filigree-orna-

ment also, but of another kind. The surface of the remaining fragment is divided by means of bands into eleven narrow parallel fields, embellished with decorations. The bands, which give the impression of plaiting, are of a type very usual for this period. They are met with in silver both in the South and in the North of Europe during the fourth century, and in gold, during the two subsequent centuries in Scandinavia. As regards technique see the left-hand edge of fig. 97. The uppermost field, (like the other odd fields), consists of

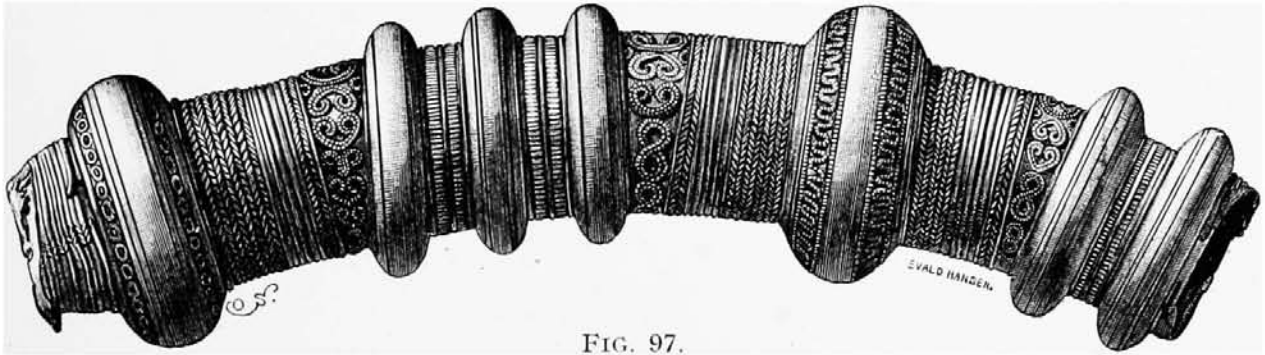


FIG. 97.

Piece of a gold ring, from Köinge. Halland. 14

two superimposed rows of uniform rings, the next below, like the fourth, sixth, and so on, consist of ornaments similar to a recumbent S. The decoration with small rings like those occurring here, has its origin from the settings in silver-filigree with which, during the fourth century, it was usual in the South as well as in the North to surround and cover stones, coloured bits of glass or heads of rivets in silver-work. On the fibula fig. 98 we see rings of this kind both as settings and as independent ornaments. This early example shows to what uses such small rings could be applied even then. The Germans in the South had a fashion of adorning their jewels, more particularly the outside of round fibulæ, but not infrequently heads of pins, metal beads, etc., with figures in filigree of generally uniform pattern. As the composition was often somewhat indefinite, and the figures not always of small dimensions, there were here and there black spaces which, as usual,

were not liked, and which it therefore became the custom to fill up with small rings. Examples of this, which are met with in England and the whole of the continental Germanic region—especially in the lands about the Danube and the Rhine, are also known in the North,

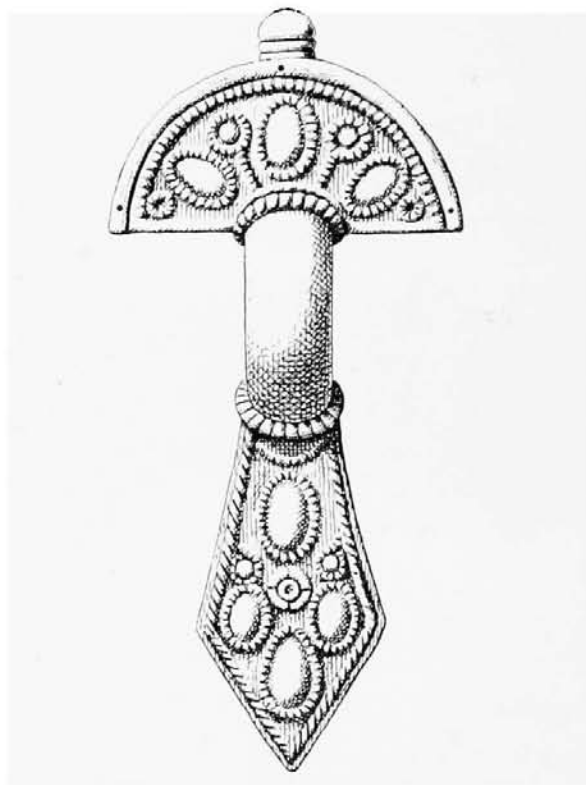


FIG. 98.

Fibula of silver with inlaid glass, from the Crimea.  $\frac{1}{4}$

as in the lower part of the Skåne fibula, fig. 495, AT; in fig. 99, over the surface of which the rings are pretty indifferently distributed (cp. the French fibula, AT., fig. 61); and in some bracteates (cp. Rygh, figs. 294, 295,) etc. More rarely it happens that the rings are joined together to form an ornamentation. It is true that in the case of a brooch from the district of Mayence (fig. 100), as in that of the gold plate of Upsala, a certain number of rings are arranged in two parallel rows, but this coincidence is certainly accidental. On the other hand, we find that they learned in England (see fig. 101) and the North, to get a little decorative advantage by introducing in suitable places a number of such-like rings in single or double rows, marked off



FIG. 99.

Silver fibula found near Stavanger, Norway. 11



from each other by a band. The oldest of the large Swedish collars has decoratively arranged rings on both sides of the first tranverse bar on the left-hand (see fig. 97). The Öland gold collar (fig. 102), has likewise



FIG. 100.

Fibula of bronze, silver, bone and glass,  
from Oberolm, near Mayence.  $\frac{3}{4}$

an ornament of rings in rows, and in the latest of the gold collars (West Götland, fig. 103), the artist has contrived to show a sort of corslet-skirt by means of rings placed in regular rows.

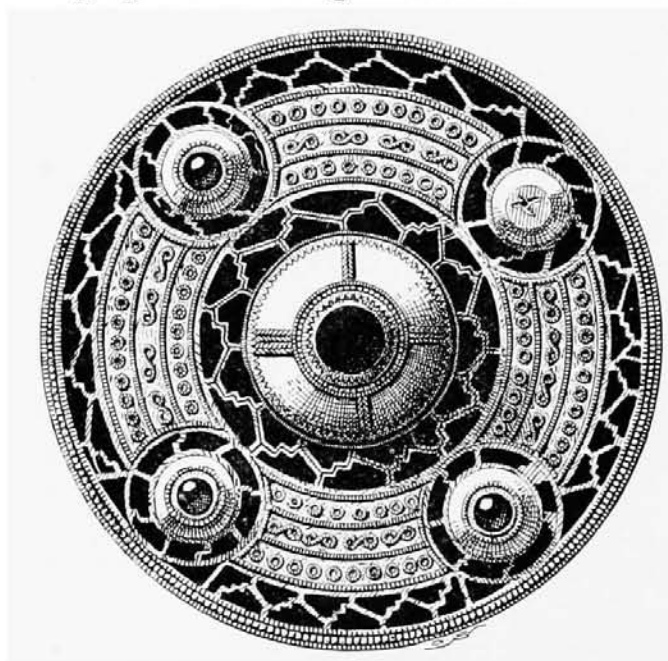


FIG. 101.

Gold fibula with garnets and ivory, from  
Sarre, Kent.  $\frac{1}{4}$



FIG. 103.

Figure from gold collar  
from Möne, West  
Gotland.  $\frac{2}{1}$

The S-like figure which fills up the alternate fields of our gold-plate, is no rare feature in Germanic ornamentation either. According to Salin (*l.c.* p. 157), it is

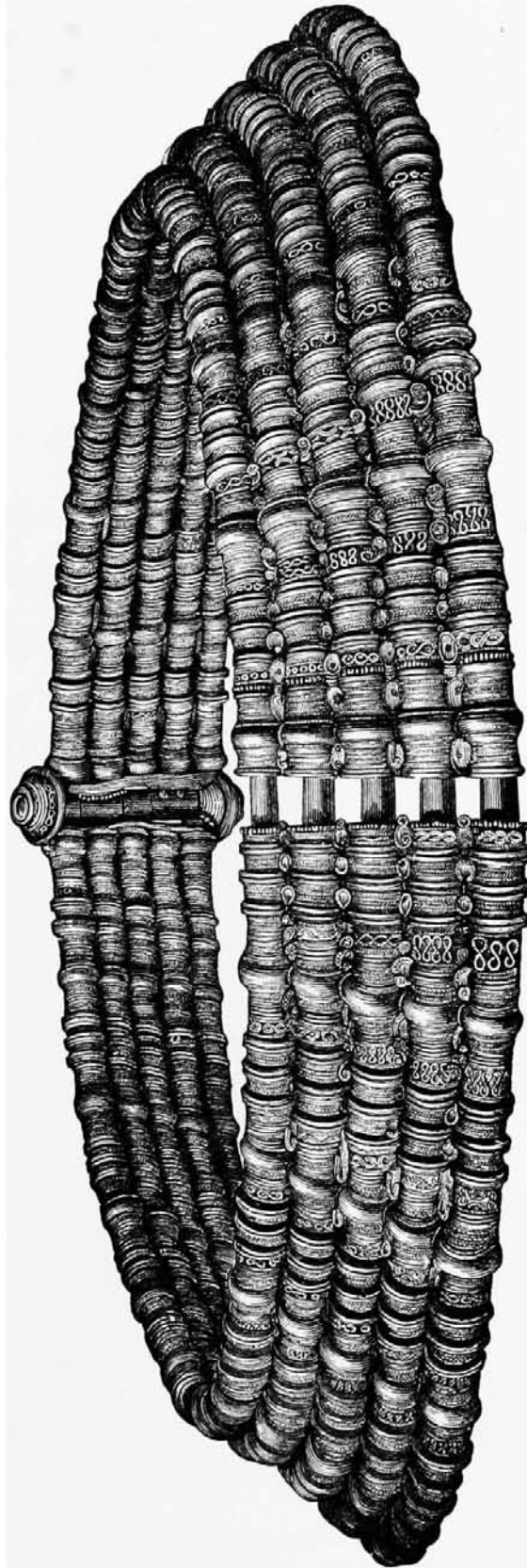


FIG. 102.  
Gold collar from Färjestaden, Öland.  $\frac{3}{4}$

derived from the classical spiral ornaments. Figures in filigree occur very frequently, sometimes like an upright S, sometimes like a recumbent one, in the same class of objects as those which are covered with the above-mentioned ring ornamentation, but this S-figure occurs also in other objects, such as bow-fibulæ, in niello on silver, or cast in one with the fibula, sometimes filling up the central parts of the surface, and at other times

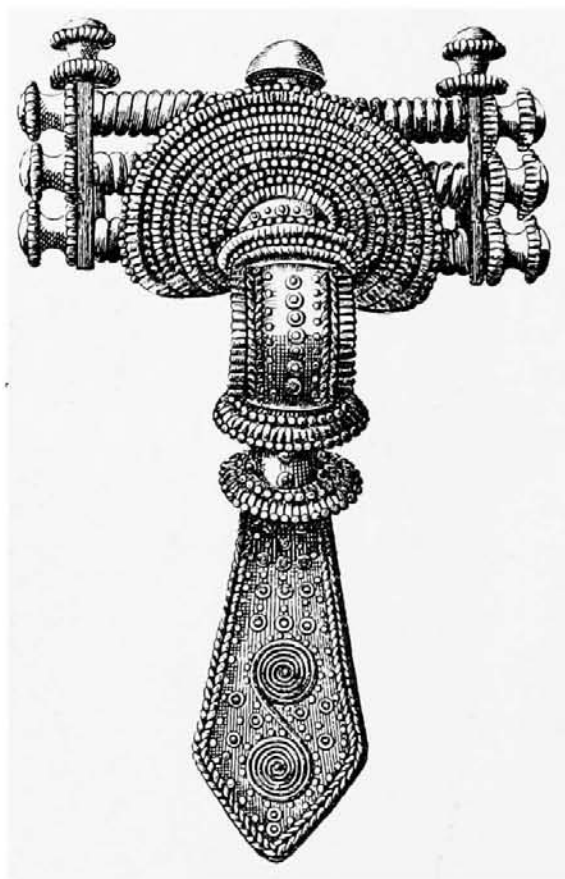


FIG. 104.

Fibula (silver and gold) from Sackrau, Silesia. <sup>1</sup>

running along its borders. On its way to the North from its classical home, we find it at first in the Sackrau find (Silesia) of the fourth century in a particularly fine form, the ends being coiled many times (fig. 104), and after the fashion had made its way into the technique of filigree-work in Scandinavia, it seems never to have been entirely dropped.



In England (fig. 105), and in the North, this S figure has been employed in like manner as in the above-mentioned rings by placing a number of units on a level with each other, and thus forming longer or shorter rows. As examples we may quote, amongst others,

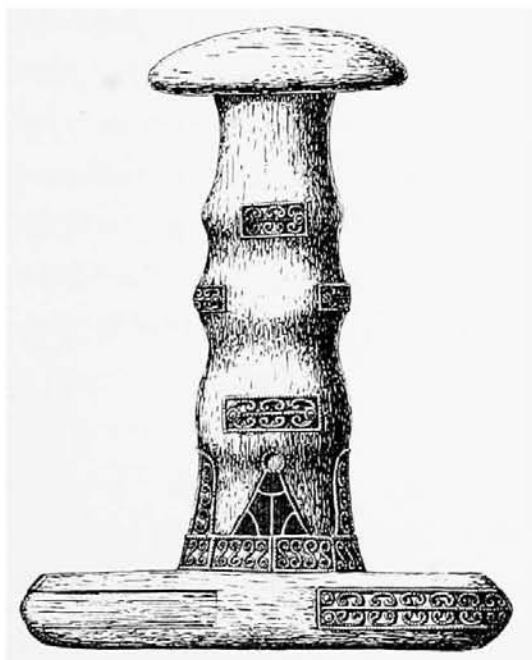


Fig. 105.

Wooden sword-hilt, ornamented with gold and garnets. Northumberland.

a gold mount from the Tureholm-find (Montelius, *Antiquités Suédoises*, fig. 418), the Dödevi bracteate, AT. fig. 508, and the older West Götland collar (fig. 106).

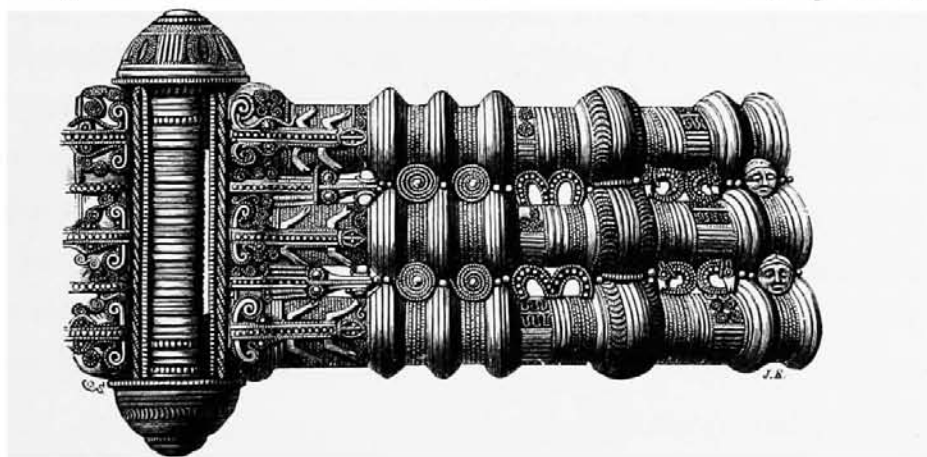


FIG. 106.

Section of gold collar from Karleby, West Götland.  $\frac{1}{1}$

The round English brooch shown in fig. 101, exhibits a resemblance to the Upsala-plate in this,—that small

fields, enclosed by lines and adorned with various decorative forms, have rings and figures of eight alternating with each other. A similar variation between two kinds of very simple groups of ornaments is not usual in the North. At the same time the entire principle of the ornamentation of the later gold collars gives us a striking example of the same thing. In particular the outer ornamentation of the articulations in the Öland gold-collar (fig. 107), exhibits an alternating repetition of small fields bordered by lines and embellished with simple ornament, — a decoration which agrees in principle with that of the Upsala plate.



FIG. 107.

Detail from Färjestaden gold collar (fig. 102).  $\frac{1}{2}$

Thus we may also fix the date of the latter plate. The ornaments with which they are adorned occur already in the fourth century, and after that, but in isolation, or not in any regular order. We see them in combination, in a general scheme of decoration, on the older gold-collars, and on the Öland collar we find a similar principle of decoration to that of the Upsala plate. I do not know of any later examples than these from the region under consideration where there is a combination of the same principles and elements in decoration. The gold-collars belong to the fifth century, the last (West Götland) collar, to the beginning of the sixth century (cp. *ATS.* 18 (1), 149). So the gold-plate from Odinshög belongs to the period just before, or about, the year 500.

Our study of the objects found at Odinshög thus leads us to a definite result. That grave-mound must have been constructed during the last decades of the fifth century, or somewhere about the year 500 A.D.

Now let us recall to mind the construction of the grave in *Beowulf* and compare it with the Odinhög. In both cases sites were chosen lying near waterways; the Swedes by a wide part of the most important river in their land; the Geats on a headland by the sea, past which there was shipping traffic. The Swedes made use of a natural eminence on the ridge<sup>1</sup> at Gamla Upsala as a basis for the royal barrow; the Geats, the top of a headland by the sea. On the highest point of the hog's back at Gamla Upsala the Swedes constructed a foundation of stones for the bale-fire, which must thus have been particularly imposing, and on the funeral-pyre costly objects of various kinds accompanied the body, which was burnt, and remained on the site of the pyre with the bones of the dead, which were afterwards collected. The Geats were sent out to fell trees in the neighbouring woods for the bale fire, which was made up *on beorge*—which may mean either the ridge of the headland or else the stone foundation-wall,—and they took the king's body and the valuables and put them on the fire. On the place of the pyre, and covering the remains after the burning, the Swedes erected a cairn forty-eight metres in circumference, a heavy and tedious piece of work, since some of the great mass of stones must certainly have been transported thither from long distances. On the "remains of the burning"—the Geats construct a cairn. The time this work took—ten days—is specially mentioned, and marks it out as most important. The Swedes scooped out a dyke across the ridge in order to cover the cairn with a thick layer of earth. The Geats put the finishing touch to their

<sup>1</sup>This natural ridge is a long, low, narrow 'hog's back' of gravel, rising slightly above the level of the surrounding plain, and Odinhög and the other mounds mentioned on p. 237, were constructed in a row on the top of it, the ridge being cut through transversely in places in order to increase the dip between the mounds. Dr. Almgren tells me that the names of gods (Odin, Thor, etc.) were not attached to the mounds until the eighteenth century.—*Ed.*

grave-construction by covering the noted warrior's great monument with earth.

In the burial rites we have to point out a material difference. In the Upsala-mound the bodies of various kinds of animals, and perhaps of men, were buried with the dead king. They had evidently been put with him on the bale-fire, and the burnt bones had been afterwards collected with his. The case is the same as that of (for example) the older Vendel graves, where a number of animals also accompanied the chief, with the difference however, that at Vendel both he and the animals were buried unburnt. Nothing like this is recorded as regards Beowulf's burial. But did this difference exist originally? I have shown (pp. 127 ff) that in its *ensemble* as well as its details complete agreement prevails between Scyld's journey to the other world and that of the Vendel chiefs, but neither does the *Beowulf* say about Scyld, that horses and animals used for food were buried with him.

The reason why we have no statement about the offering up of living creatures on the grave is no doubt the same in all these cases, namely—the Christian revision. If we compare the references to the past in Snorre and in *Beowulf* the difference is clearly apparent. Snorre and the Icelanders in general are anxious to retain the heathen atmosphere as far as possible, and are not even averse to exaggeration in their statements. In the *Beowulf*, on the other hand, there is a tendency to conceal the heathen element. In that poem, heathen conceptions and practices are either suppressed altogether, or supplanted by Christian matter, which sometimes presents a striking contrast to them.<sup>1</sup> The former is the case in these instances;—the heathen

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Chadwick puts the position more correctly, I think, when he says that although the poem "abounds in expressions of Christian sentiment, yet the customs and ceremonies to which it alludes are uniformly heathen." *The Heroic Age*, Camb. Univ. Press, 1912, p. 52. — *Ed.*

ritual of sacrifice, which would be abhorrent to Christians, is entirely excluded, although it should have been a prominent feature in the narrative, and the story goes on without it.

We have thus established a complete identity between the funeral customs in use by the Swedes at the burial of their king, and those which the Geats followed in honour of Beowulf. Now we have to consider to what this identity leads us.

In the first place, then, the similarity in the construction of the two royal grave-mounds is of importance. This similarity is no matter of chance. At Gamla Upsala, there are a number of grave-mounds of inconsiderable size. There are the Tingshög and the so-called mounds of Odin, Frö and Tor, all in a line with each other. Of these the first-named is without importance for our purpose, in that, even if it is a grave-mound, it is of too small dimensions, only rising quite inconsiderably above the natural surface of the ground, to be compared with the huge royal-mounds. Among the latter Odinshög is the oldest, and Tors hög the youngest, Frös hög being no doubt between the two others in time, as it is in position. In construction, Odinshög alone answers to the Anglo-Saxon poet's description. Frös hög has no walled enclosure for the bale-fire, and the cairn is of smaller stones and not so prominent. In Tors hög there is no such walled enclosure either, and the cairn consisted of a little heap of stones, of which the biggest was only the size of a man's head. Although the youngest mound is the greatest, the internal construction of the mounds exhibits progressive degeneration. The Geatic king's grave-mound can thus not be later than the oldest of the royal mounds at Upsala. Of the other grave-mounds which have been examined it is only that of Vaxtuna, the date of which is uncertain, which offers resemblance

to Odinshög in the respects here mentioned. The description in *Beowulf* will not suit any of the older graves of the Early Iron Age. The grave-mound of the Geatic king must thus have been very nearly contemporary with the Odinshög.

But we must also give attention to the dimensions of the grave-mounds. Grave-mounds of the size in question have not been constructed since the days of the Bronze Age, and hardly during those days either. During the Early Iron Age the graves were not conspicuous as regards the outer envelope and the position. Then these enormous mounds came suddenly upon the scene, placed by the great waterways in order to attract attention and inspire awe, and to bear witness to the importance of him who had his lodging-place within. As *Beowulf* was illustrious, his grave-mound must be huge and famous, and be called *Beowulf's barrow*. A new era has begun for the North. Communications increase with marvellous rapidity, gold is amassed as it had never been before, castles are built, tribes develop into kingdoms. A desire to do mighty deeds and gain honour is aroused, and the grave becomes a monument to the dead. This state of things, arising in the Migration Period, continues until the end of heathen times. On the flat graves ships of stone are constructed; instead of cenotaph-graves, cenotaph-monuments, bauta-stones<sup>1</sup> and rune-stones came into use, remembrances of heroes who had fallen afar off. During the short archæological period known as the Migration Period, kinsmen of Northern tribes overthrew the southern Empire of Rome, the Danes made incursions on the Frisian coasts, the Geats attacked the Merovingians, and the Swedes set about the conquest of Geatland.

On the occasion of *Beowulf's* death the approaching downfall of the Geatic power is twice prophesied in the

<sup>1</sup> These belong to the same class as the Celtic *menhir*. *Ed.*

most precise and emphatic language, and the prophecy seems to be repeated at the bale-burning itself. The royal mound, the construction of which the poet describes, was thus erected whilst the Geats were still in possession of the important island of Öland and the neighbouring coast of Sweden; but they were in the last days of their rule, and perhaps Beowulf was the last king of a still undiminished Geatland. About the year A.D. 500 the development of the series of fibulæ and collars and the rich stream of gold objects characteristic of Öland is checked. It is evident that this last feature does not have its cause in the closing of the Vistula route, because then the stream did not diminish, but was turned aside to Gotland and Bornholm. Besides which the cutting short of the rich native development of the ornaments is a phenomenon from which we can archæologically deduce the fall of the Geatic kingdom. On the other side we have Odinshög, which inaugurates the long series of magnificent finds of the Iron Age in Svealand, the oldest monument which witnesses to the importance of Sweden,—an importance won at the cost of the Geats. Very near to it in time is the stately grave of the Geatic king, perhaps the last whose power extended 'between the seas' before the kingdom came to an end.

Odinshög at Gamla Upsala is a monument of a great episode in the history of Scandinavia, the victory of the Swedes and the extension of their power over the Geatic territory in the east. At the same time the Geats raised a second monument to the memory of their saga-renowned king, in the shape of a poem, which has remained the finest memorial of their lost dominion.





## INDEX OF THINGS MENTIONED IN THE POEM OF BEOWULF.\*

Under some of the following headings references will be found to monographs dealing with the articles to which the heading relates. For a more general survey of the antiquities of the period the reader may refer to the following works, viz.:—In English, Engelhardt's *Denmark in the Early Iron Age*, 1866 (a little early); Hildebrand, *Industrial Arts of Scandinavia*, 1883; Worsaae, *Industrial Arts of Denmark* (Chapman and Hall, London), 1883; du Chaillu, *The Viking Age*, 1889 (a popular account); and Montelius, *Civilization of Sweden in Heathen Times*, 1888; in German, Sophus Müller, *Nordische Altertumskunde*, vol. ii., 1898; Salin, *Die Altgermanische Thierornamentik*, 1904; Montelius, *Kulturgeschichte Schwedens* (Seeman, Leipzig), 1906, and Olrik, *Altnordisches Geistesleben*, 1908; and in Danish, Sophus Müller, *For Oldtid*, 1897, and Gustafson, *Norges Oldtid*, 1906.

**Armour**, see War.

**Augury**, see 204 and note.

**Banners**, see War.

**Bed, bedding.**

bed (always used figuratively or as=bedding), 140, 676, 1240, 1791; dēaðbed, 2901; hlimbed, 3034; legerbed, 1007; morðorbed, 2436; wælbed, 964.

sealma, selma (couch? or perhaps sleeping place, bed chamber, Ho., HS.), 2460.

bolster, 1240; hleorbolster (cushion, pillow), 688. See also Disposal of the Dead.

**Building**, see House. (To build is 'timbran,' 307, 3159).

**Burial**, see Disposal of the Dead.

**Callings**, see Trades.

**Clothing**, no article of civil clothing is mentioned in B., except perhaps the 'hrægl,' which may have signified mantle, cloak, at 1195, 1217. See Wülker, *Anglia Anzeiger*, viii., 168, and Lehmann, *Brunne und Helm*, 13.

For Armour, see War.

\* Reprinted, with slight alterations and a few additions, from the Editor's *Beowulf, a translation into Modern English Prose*, London, G. W. Allen & Co., Second Edition, 1911.

**Disposal of the Dead.**

**Bier**, *bær*, 3105. This was probably a portable bed, somewhat like that apparently intended for the body of the dead Viking which was found in the Gokstad ship (see fig. 108). [*'Grabatum'* is translated *'bedbær'* in the Lindisfarne Gospels, John v. 8, 12].

**Bale**, *balefire*, etc., *bæl*, 1109, 1116, 2126, 2803, 2818; *bælfyr*, 3143; *bælwudu*, 3112; *bælstede*, 3097.

**Barrow** (only in Part II. of the poem), *beorh*, 2241 (*wæterȳðum nēah*, *nearocræftum fæst*), 2299, 2304, 2322, 2524, 2529, 2546, 2559, 2580, 2755 (*beorges hrōf*), 2807 (*hēah on nasse*), 2842, 3066, 3097 (*hēah*, *micel*, *mære*), 3163.

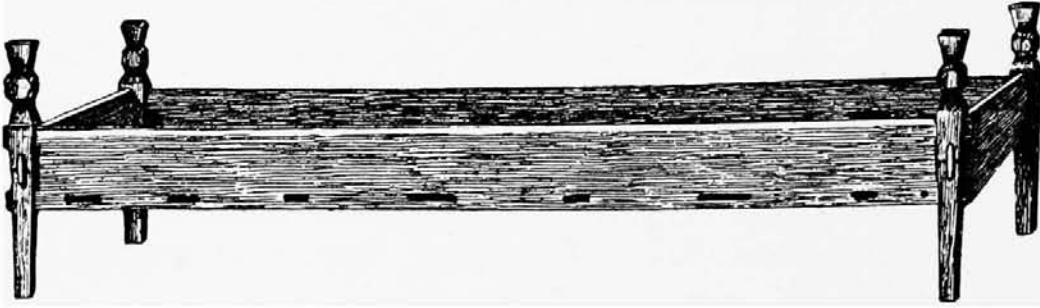


FIG. 108.

Bed found in a ship-grave at Gokstad, Norway (Viking Age).  $\frac{1}{2}$  in.

*stānbeorh* (*stēap*), 2213.

*hlāw* (see also *Grave*, and pp. 139, 206 *ante*), 1120, 2802 (*beorht*), 3157 (*hēah*, *brād*, *wæglīðendum wīde gesȳne*), 3169; *heaðohlāw*, 2212.

*Funeral pyre*, *ād*, 1110, 1114, 3138; (*comp.*) *ādfaru*, 3010.

*Grave*, *sepulchral chamber*, *hoðma*, 2458.

*hlāw* (see also *Barrow*, and fig. 90), 2296, 2211 (*under hrūsan*, *holmwylme nēah*), 2773.

**Domestic Utensils**, see *Vessels*.

**Drinks.**

*Ale* (*ealu*), only in compounds, *i.e.*, *ealubenc*, 1029, 2867; *ealuwæge*, 481, 495, 2021; *ealodrincende*, 1945; *ealuscerwen*, 769.

*Beer* (*bēor*), 480, 531, 2041, and in compounds *bēor-ðegn*, 117, 617; *bēorsele*, 482, 492, 1094, 2635; *bēorscealc*, 1240.

*Mead* (*medu*), 604, 2633; *medu-ful*, 624, 1015; *-scenc*, 1980; *-benc*, 776, 1052, 1067, 1902, 2185; *-seld*, *-setl*, 5, 3065; *-ærn*, 69; *-heall*, 484, 638; *-stīg*, 924; *-wong*, 1643; *-drēam*, 2016.

Wine (wīn), 1162, 1233, 1467; (comp.) wīn-ærn, 654; -reced, 714, 993; -sele, 695, 771, 2456.

Mead was a rarer drink than beer, and wine than mead. (Montelius, *Kulturgesch. Schwedens*, 292.)

There are two other words for fermented liquor—(1) *lið*, in 'liðwæge,' and (2) *wered*. It is possible that the latter of these words refers to a drink remains of which, in the form of sediment, have been found in graves in Lolland (Juellinge fundet, about 200 A.D.) and Zealand, Denmark. Professor Bille Gram found that this sediment contained husks of barley, fragments of the cowberry and cranberry, with glandular hairs from the catkins of the bog-myrtle, and that the drink had been fermented. *Lið* seems to have stood for any kind of strong drink.

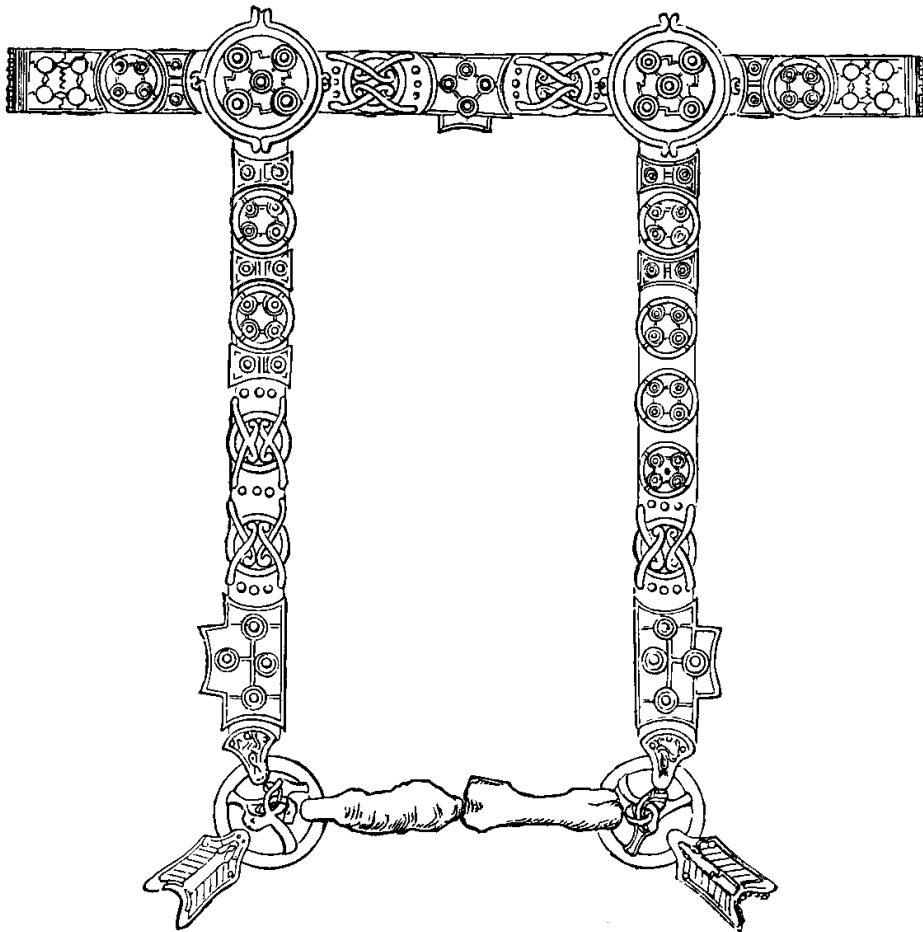


FIG. 109.

Bridle and bit of a horse, from grave No. 3, Vendel, Uppland.  
(Eighth century).  $\frac{1}{2}$

#### Fire.

Bale-wood, *bǣlwudu*, 3112.

Firebrand, torch, *ǣledlēoma*, 3125.

Fortifications, see War.



FIG. 110.  
Detail of fig. 109 (lower corner, left hand).  $\frac{1}{4}$

**Funerals**, see Disposal of the Dead.

**Furniture**, see House, Bed.

**Gallows**, see Punishment.

**Helmet**, see War.

**Horse.**

*Bit, bridle* (inferred from gebæted, 1399). See fig. 109 (the bit was between the two lower rings).

*Head-gear generally* (inferred from fætedhlēor, 1036).

See figs. 109 and 110.

*Saddle*, sadol, 1038 (searwum fāh, since gewurðad); (comp.) sadolbeorht, 2175.

**House; building; dwelling-place.**

The following succinct description of an ancient Scandinavian dwelling, and more particularly of a Royal Hall, is translated from a note at page 225 of Dr. L. Simons' *Beowulf vertaald in stafrijm*, Ghent, 1896, with a few alterations and additions, some of which have been kindly suggested to me by the author himself. In order to make the description clearer, I have added two (quite conventional) diagrams (figs. 111 and 112).

The Scandinavian dwelling was rectangular. The roof was supported by four rows of pillars. The two outer rows were close to the external walls, the two others, more to the interior, being separated from the outer ones by about one-third of the breadth of the building, so that the room was divided into a nave and two side-aisles. In the middle division was an open hearth. The two side-aisles were covered by a long wooden planking, which was raised usually by two steps, towards the wall, and this served for seats. Of these tiers of seats the set to the right of the entrance at the east end (3, 4 in Fig. 111) was the more honourable. Exactly in the middle of each tier were the two places of special honour (A, B, C, D) of which the upper ones were the most distinguished. The space was enough for several persons (1188-1191; 2011-2013). The highest place (A) was always taken by the chieftain to whom the house belonged. In the case of our poem this would be Hrothgar. Unferth, who sat 'at the feet of the lord of the Scyldings' (v. 500) would be at B on the lower tier. The second highest place—C on the opposite rank—was given to the most notable guest. Hence Beowulf was placed in this position on his visits to Hrothgar and Hygelac (1977-8; 2013, etc.). The loose tables—probably nothing more than planks similar to those forming the seats, but movable and supported by trestles—

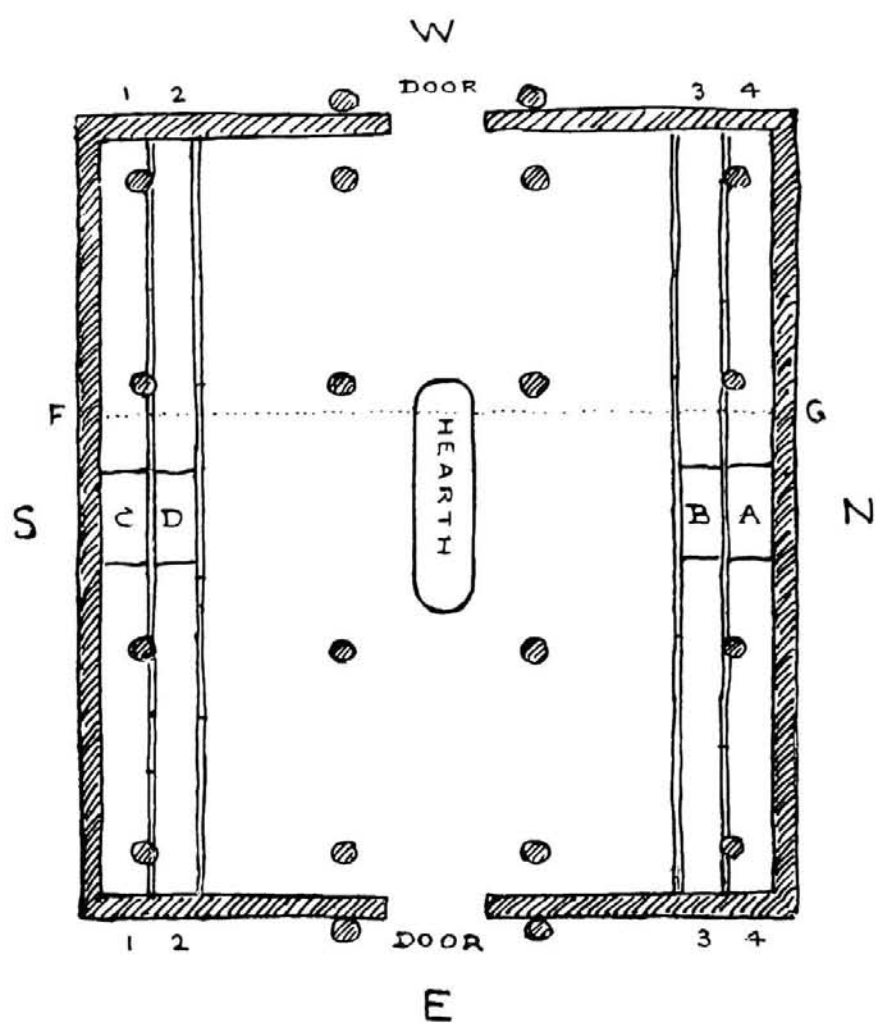


FIG. 111

Plan of Scandinavian hall.

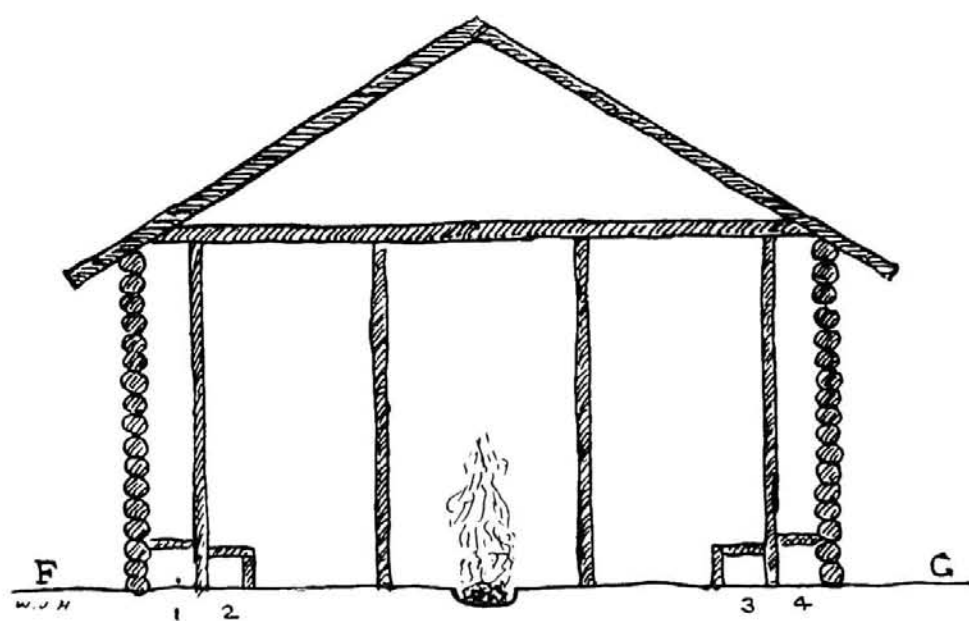


FIG. 112.

Section of hall, across line F G.

were placed in front of the raised seats. On the latter the Geats and Danes slept after the tables or bench-boards (486, 1239) had been stored on the floor of the middle aisle.

Further details as to the ancient Scandinavian house are contained in the second edition of *Paul's Grundriss der germ. Philologie*, Part XII., pp. 432 and 433, and Holmberg's *Nordbon under Hednatiden*, Stockholm, 1871, which contains, opposite p. 129, a lithograph of an ancient dwelling-house.

*Dwelling place* (or enclosure containing a dwelling place).

wíc, 125, 821, 1125, 1304, 1612, 2589, 3083.

wordig, 1972.

geard (only in pl., and referring to the enclosures containing the dwellings of chieftains), 13, 265, 1134, 1138, 2459.

hām, 124, 194, 374, 717, 1127, 1147, 1156, 1248, 1407, 1601, 1923, 2325, 2366, 2388, 2992.

hof, 312 (torht), 1236, 1507, 1836, 1974, 2313 (beorht).

eodor (pl.), 1037.

*Building, house.*

in(n), 1300.

bold, 997 (beorht, irenbendum fæst), 1925 (betlic), 2196, 2326 (sēlest; = hām); foldbold, 773 (fæger; = wīnsele).

hūs, 116 (hēah); 146, 285, 658 and 935 (sēlest); 1666, [eorðhūs, 2232].

ærn, 2225?; healærn, 78 (māst); hordærn, 2279, 2831; medoærn, 69 (micel); ðrȳðærn, 657; wīnærn, 654, [renweard, 770].

reced, 310 (foremærost), 326, 412 (sēlest; = sele), 720, 724, 728, 770 (= wīnsele), 1237, 1572, 1799 (gēap, goldfāh), 3088; heal-r., 68, 1981? horn-r., 704; wīn-r., 704 (= goldsele), 993 (= gestsele).

*Temple (heathen).*

hearg (herg), 3072; hærgræf, 175.

*Hall, (public) chamber.*

heall, 89, 389, 487, 614, 642, 663, 927, 1009, 1087 (= flet), 1151, 1214, 128, 1926 (hēah; = bold); gif-h., 838; medu-h., 484, 638.

sæl, 167 (sincfāh), 307 (timbred, geatolic, goldfāh), 2075, 2264.

sæld, seld (= setl; see also *s.v. Seat*) 1280; medu-seld, 3065.

sele (sometimes of natural or artificial cavities), 81 (hēah, horngeap), 323, 411 (= reced), 713 (hēah), 826, 919 (hēah), 1016 (hēah), 1640, 1984 (hēah), 2352, 3128. bēah-s., 1177 (beorht), bēor-s., 482, 492, 1094, 2635.

dryht-s., 485 (=meduheall), 767, 2320 (dyrne).  
 gest-s., 994 (=wīnreced). Like dryhtsele, gestsele =  
*domus comitum*. Neckel BDS. xxxii., 565-7; Förster,  
*Anglia Beiblatt*, xiii., 167. gold-s., 715 (=wīnreced),  
 1253, 1639, 2083; grund-s., 2140 (Ho. gūðsele);  
 gūð-s., 443. hēah-s., 647; hring-s., 2010 (of Heorot),  
 2840 and 3053 (of the dragon's hole); hrōf-s., 1515  
 and nið-s., 1513, both of Grendel's subterranean lair;  
 wīn-s., 695, 771 (=reced), 2456.

flet (also=floor, *q.v.*), 1025, 1036, 1086 (=heall), 1647,  
 1949, 1976, 2017, 2034, 2054. [fletræst, 1241].

*Room, (private) chamber.*

būr, 140, 1310, 2455; brydbūr (women's apartment), 921.  
*Interior of a house*, heoðu? (another reading in heorð =  
 hearth), 404.

*Roof.*

hrōf, 403, 836 (gēap), 926 (stēap, golde fāh), 983' (hēah),  
 999.

*Wall.*

weall, 326, 1573.  
 wāg, 995, 1662.

*Floor.*

flet (also=hall, *q.v.*), 1540, 1568.  
 flōr, 725 (fāh), 1316.

*Column, pillar, support.*

stapol, 926, 2718.

*Decoration.*

(a) external, of roof, etc., by antlers; horngēap, 82;  
 hornreced, 704; bānfāg, 780.  
 (b) internal, by tapestry; web æfter wāgum, 995 (goldfāh).

*Door.*

duru, 389, 722 (fyrbendum fæst). (*door-hinges*) heorras,  
 999.

*Sill.*

syll, 775.

*Seat.*

benc (for more than one), 327, 492, 1013, 1188, 1243;  
 ealu-b., 1029, 2867; medu-b., 776, 1052, 1067, 1902,  
 2185.

setl (for one or more persons), 1232, 1289, 1782, 1786, 2013,  
 2019; medusetl, 5.

*High seat, seat of honour, throne.*

hēahsetl, 1087.  
 bregostōl, 2196, 2370, 2389, gifstōl, 168; gumstōl, 1952.  
 yppe, 1815.

*Table*, only in comp. bēod-genēatas, 343, 1713 (see Sz. 19).



**Implements and Tools.***File.*

fēl (= fēol), 1032.

*Hammer.*

hamer, homer, 1285, 2829 (see fig. 113).

**Metals.***Gold.*

gold, 304 (helm, gehroden), 552 (līcsyrc, gegyrwed), 777 (medubenc, geregnad), 927 (hrōf, fāh), 1028 (māðm, gegyred), 1054, 1093 (fæted), 1107 (icge?), 1193 and 1382 (wunden), 1484, 1694 (scīr, sweord), 1900 (sweord

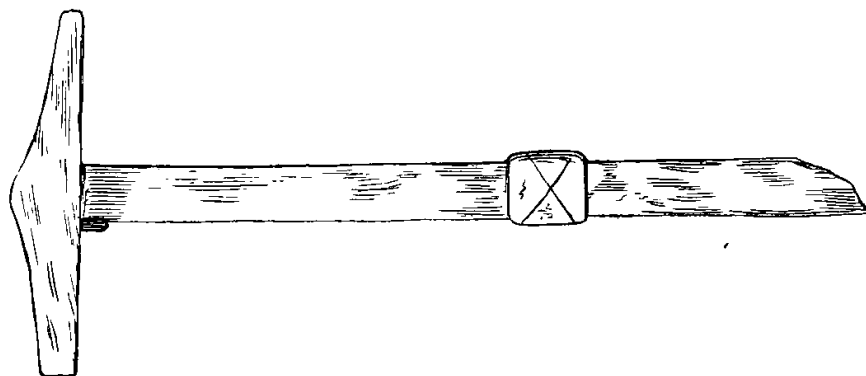


FIG. 113.

Iron hammer (18 cm. long) from Aska, East Götland. (Viking Age).  $\frac{1}{3}$

bunden), 2102 (fæted), 2192 (sweord, gegyred), 2246 (fæted), 2255 (helm, hyrsted), 2276 (hæðen), 2301, 2536, 2758, 2765 (=sinc), 2793, 2931, 3012 (unrīme; =māðmas), 3018, 3052, 3105 (brād), 3134 (wunden, unrīm), 3167; fæt gold (=plated gold), 1921.

fæt (=gold-plate), 716 (fāh), 2256.

goldfāh, 308 (sæl), 994 (web), 1800 (reced), 2811 (helm).

gold-hroden, 614 and 640 (Wealhðēow), 1948 (Ðrȳð; 2025 (Frēawaru); [-hwæt 3074, -wlanc 1881].

goldmāðm, 2414; -æht, 2748. [-gifa, 2652; -sele (see under *Hall*); -weard, 308; -wine, 1171, 1476, 1602, 2419, 2584].

gylden, 47 and 1021 (segn), 1163 (bēag), 1677 (hilt); 2809 (hring, of healse); ealgylden, 1111 (swȳn); 2767 (segn).

There is no mention of *silver* in the poem, unless (see pp. 4 and 15) the epithet 'hwīta' in 'sē hwīta helm,' 1448, refers to it.

*Iron.*

īren always=sword when used as a substantive. See *Sword*.

hring īren (=iron ring, in a corslet), 322 (scīr).  
 īrenbendum fæst, 774 (searoðoncūm besmiðod), and 998  
 (both times of Heorot).  
 īren (adj.), 1459 (ecg, hæftmēces), similarly 2788;  
 eallīren, 2338 (wīgbord).  
 īrenheard, 1112 (eofer).  
 [īren-byrne, īsern-, 671, 2986; -scūr, 3116, -ðrēat, 330].  
*Metal band*, wrāsn, only in comp. frēawrāsnūm (befongen),  
 1451 (of a helmet). See pp. 4, 6, 13, 18.

#### Wire.

wīr, 1031 (wīrum bewunden—of a helmet, probably =  
 metal strips here; see pp. 2, 14, 143, and fig. 1), 2413  
 (pl. = ornaments).

#### Money, treasure, valuables, personal property.

*Money* (or rather *wealth*, as there was no proper coinage,  
 the nearest approach being the bēagas, hringas, or  
 rings). Fig. 17 (p. 35) shows clusters of rings which  
 were apparently intended to be used in this way. The  
 clearest passage as to rings being used as a definite  
 measure of wealth is at lines 2994-5, where Eofor and  
 Wulf are each said to have had a hundred thousand in  
 land *and twisted rings* given to them ('hund ðūsend  
 landes ond locenra bēaga'). See pp. 33-35.  
 sceattas, 1686; gīfsceattas (=tribute), 378.  
 bēagas, hringas (see under Ornaments).  
 gombe, 11 (=tribute).

*Treasures, valuables.* The wealth of the times consisted  
 in valuable objects: (1) of utility, such as drinking  
 vessels, or (2) of adornment, such as collars, bracelets,  
 armlets. See especially 1089-94. Like the Latin  
*pecunia*, 'sceatt' and 'feoh' refer back to the time  
 when wealth consisted in cattle; and the etymology  
 of 'māðm' points to the idea of a medium of ex-  
 change.

feoh, 156, 470, 1380 [-gift, 21, 1025, 1089; -lēas, 2441].  
 geatwe, 3088; ēoredgeatwe, 2866 (=māðmas).  
 gestrēon, 1920 (=frætwe, fætgold), 2037, 3166; ær-  
 gestrēon, 1757 (=māðmas), 2232; eald-g., 1381 (feoh),  
 1458 (hæftmēce); eorl-g., 2244; heah-g., 2302 (gold);  
 hord-g., 1899, 3092; long-g., 2240; maðm-g., 1931;  
 sinc-g., (see sinc); ðēod-g., 44, 1218.  
 hord (a collection of valuables, usually of various kinds),  
 887, 912, 1108, 2212, 2216, 2276, 2283, 2284 (bēaga),  
 2319, 2369, 2509, 2547, 2744, 2768, 2773, 2781, 2799

- (māðma), 2955, 3004, 3011 (māðma), 3056, 3084, 3126, 3164; bēag-h., 894, 921, 2826; wyrm-h., 2221.
- hord-ærn, 2279, 2831; -burh, 467; -gestrēon, 1899, 3092; -māðm, 1198 (=healsbēag); -wela, 2344; -wynn, 2270; [-weard, 1047, etc.; -weorðung, 952].
- māðmas (pl.), 36 (=frætwe), 41, 385, 472 (eald), 1027 and 1048 (=segn + helm + byrne + sweord), 1482 (=sinc), 1756, 1784, 1860, 1867, 1898, 2103, 2143, 2146, 2166 (as at 1027), 2236 (dēore), 2490, 2640, 2779, 2788, 2799, 2865, 3011 (gold unrime), 3131 (dēore); dryht-māðmas, 2843; gold-m., 2414; ofer-m., 2993; māðm-æht, 1613 (hafela? + hilt), 2833; -gestrēon, 1931; -wela, 2750.
- māðm (sg.=any valuable object), 169 (=gifestōl?), 1052 (=yrfelāf), 1528 (=sweord; dēore), 1902 (=sweord, yrfelāf), 2055 (=sweord?) 3016; hord-māðm, 1198 (=healsbēag); sinc-m., 2193 (=sweord), wundor-m., 2173 (wrætlic;=healsbēag).
- māðm-fæt, 2405 (mære); -sigle, 2757; -sweord, 1023 (mære).
- sinc, 81 (=bēagas, 607, 1038 (sadol since gewurðad), 1170, 1204, 1450 (helm, since geweorðad;=frēawrāsn-um befongen), 1485, 1651 (hilt since fāh), 1882, 1922, 2023 (nægled;=ealuwæge), 2071, 2217 (fāh), 2383, 2428, 2431, 2746, 2764 (=gold); sinc-fæt, 622, 1200 (? casket, but see Klaeber, *Journal of (English and) Germanic Philology*, vi., 194), 2231, 2300; -gestrēon, 1092 (fættan goldes), 1226; -māðm, 2193 (sweord); -fāh, 167 (sæl); [-gifa, 1012, etc.; -ðego, 2884].

### Musical Instruments.

#### *Harp.*

- hearpe, 89, 2107 (=gamenwudu, 2108, 1065), 2262 (=glēobēam), 2458, 3023.

#### *Horn.*

- horn, 1423, 2943; gūðhorn, 1432.

#### *Trumpet.*

- bȳme, 2943.

### Ornaments.

*Adornments generally (jewels, gems, valuables).*

fæt (see under *Metals*).

- frætwe, 37 (of feorwegum;=māðmas), 214 and 896 beorhte), 962, 1207 (=eorclanstānas), 1921, 2054, 2163, 2503, 2620 (=bill ond byrne), 2784, 2794, 2919, 2989, 3133. [frætwan, gefrætwian, 76, 96, 992.]
- geatwe (see under *Money, Treasure*).



FIG. 114.

Finger-ring of gold, from Orminge, East Götland.  $\frac{1}{4}$



FIG. 115.

Gold collar from Fagernäs, Södermanland.  $\frac{1}{3}$

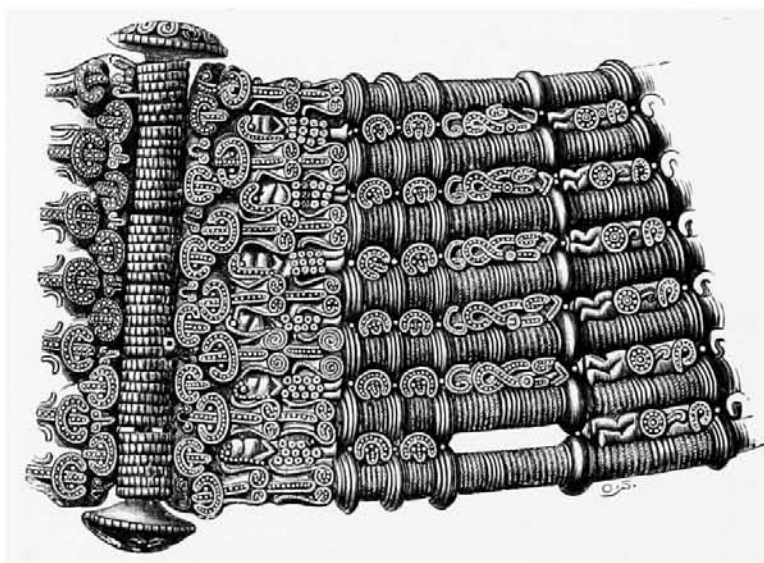


FIG. 116.

Piece of gold collar from Müne, West Götland.  $\frac{1}{4}$

gim, only figuratively—at v. 2072—and in comp.

searogim, 1157 (=sigle, 2749 (swegl?).

hrēad, only in comp. earmhrēad, 1194.

hyrste, 2762 (fatu, hyrstum behrorene), 2988 (=byrne +  
+sweord + helm), 3164 (=bēagas + siglu).

wīr (see *Metals*).

wræt, 1531 (wundenmæl wrættum gebunden), 2413  
(wrætta ond wira), 2771?, 3060? See pp. 2, 14, 142,  
143.

*Ring, circlet, diadem.*

bēag, 1163 (gylden)=diadem here and possibly at 2812  
(Earle, *Deeds of Beowulf*, p. 92). See p. 35 and  
fig. 18. Finger-rings were common (see figs. 67, 71,  
and 114).



FIG. 117

Arm-ring of bronze, Lousgård, Bornholm.  $\frac{2}{3}$

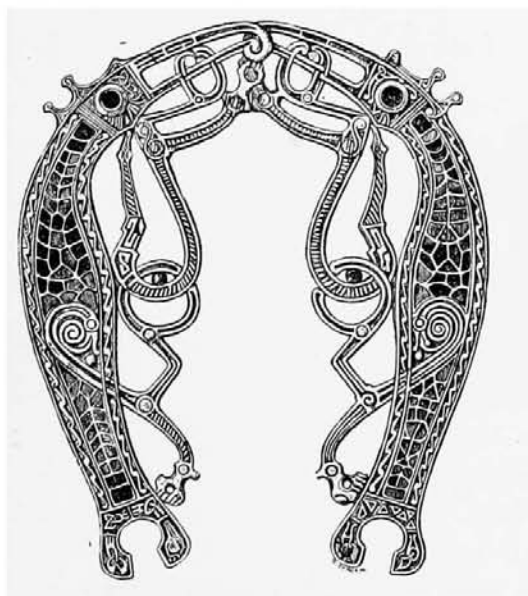


FIG. 118.

Breast ornament of gilt bronze, with inlaid garnets, from grave No. 47,  
Lousgård, Bornholm. (Eighth Century).  $\frac{1}{2}$

(=healsbēag), 1211, 1216, and possibly at 2041.

bēahwriða, 2018. [bēaghroden (of Wealhtheow), 623.]

*Rings.*

bēagas (pl.) often used as money (see *Money*), and

(A) referred to in that sense (2995), or as costly objects; (1) regarded as things given, 35, 80, 352, 1487, 1719, 1750 (fætte=plated), 2370, 2635, 3009; (2) as things acquired, 3014; (3) as possessions, 523 (+burg), 2370 (+bregostöl), 2284 (bēaga hord), 3105 (+brād gold).

(B) referred to as personal ornaments; 3163 (ond siglu). bēalhord, 894, 921, 2826. [-gyfa, 1102; -sele, 1117; -ðegu, 2176.]

hringas (=money, valuables, decorations), 1091, 1195, 1507, 1970, 2245, 2345, 3034. [hringsele, 2010.]

*Necklet, collar, carcanet.* See Figs. 97, 102, 106, 115, 116

bēag, 1211, 1216, 2041? (see *s.v.* *Ring*).

healsbēag, 1195 (mæst), 2172.

hring, 1202 (=Brōsinga mene), 2809 (gylden).

mene (of the Brisings' necklace only), 1199.

*Bracelet, armllet.* See fig. 117.

earmbēag, 2763 (searwum gesæled).

earmhrēad, 1194.

*Breast decoration.*

brēostweorðung, 2505. [Possibly a pendant of bracteates, hanging from a collar. (So HS.) Or it might well have been something similar to the eighth-century ornament shown in fig. 118, which was actually found on the breast of a skeleton].



FIG. 119.

Sun-shaped ornament of gold,  
Dref, Smaland.  $\frac{1}{4}$



FIG. 120.

Gold bracteate, from Rolfsered,  
Herrestad, Bohuslän. Sw.  $\frac{1}{4}$

*Sun-shaped ornaments, bracteates.* See Figs. 119 and 120.  
sigle, 1157 (=searogim), 1200 (of the Brōsinga mene),  
3163.

māðmsigle, 2757.

*Precious stone.*

eorclanstān, 1208 (topaz? pearl?).

*Casket? Setting of jewels?*

sincfæt, 1200.

**Punishment, instruments of.***Gallows.*

galga, 2446.

galgtrēow, 2940.

**Roads.***Street, path, way.*

stræt, 320 (=stīg; stānfāh;=paved with stones after the Roman fashion). Heyne, *Heorot*, 15. Earle, *Deeds of Beowulf*, 119; with many-coloured stones; *Beowulf*, ed. Heyne-Schücking, *Bosworth-Toller's Ags. Dict.*, 916 (fealu;=dull-coloured), 1634 (=foldweg). [lagustræt, 239; merestræt, 514.]

weg, only in comp. foldweg, 866, 1634 (=stræt).

pæð, only in comp. (pl.) ānpaðas, 1410 (enge=stīge nearwe).

stīg, 320 (=stræt), 1409 (nearo;=enge ānpæð), 2213; medostīg, 924.

The 'stræt' would be a causeway, artificially made, but 'weg,' 'pæð,' 'stīg,' might be only beaten tracks, such as were no doubt the waldswaðe (forest tracks) of line 1403.

**Shipping.** [See especially Schnepfer, *Schiffe u. Schiffsteile im Altenglischen*. Diss. Kiel, 1908.]*Ship, boat.*

scip, 35, 302 (sīdfæðmed), 896 (=sæbāt), 1154, 1895, 1916 (sīdfæðmed). [sciphære, 243.] bāt, 211 (=flota), sæbāt, 896 (=scip). [bātweard, 1900.]

naca, 214, 295 (niwtyrwed), 1896 (sægēap;=hringedstefna), 1903; hringnaca, 1862.

brenting (high ship), 2807.

cēol (*lit.* keel.=long ship), 38, 238 (bront; cp. brenting), 1806, 1912.

fær, 33 (=hringedstefna).

flota, 210 (=bāt), 218 (fāmigheals, fagle gelicost), 294, 301 (=scip); wēgflota, 1907.

lida, only in comp. yðlida, 198 (gōda) and possibly sundlida, 223 (so Ho.).

sægenga, 1882, 1908 (fāmigheals).

stefn (*lit.* stem, prow, see *Stem*), in comp. bunden-stefna, 1910; hringedstefna, 32 (īsig, ūtfūs;=fær), 1131, 1897 (=naca); wundenstefna, 220.

wudu, 216 (bunden;=naca, flota, wundenstefna, 298 (wundenhals;=naca), 1919 (wynsum).

sæwudu, 226; sundwudu, 208, 1906.

*Anchor.* See fig. 121.

ancor, 303, 1883.

ancorbend (anchor-rope), 1918.

*Gangway?* (Schnepper, 23, 63).

bolca, 231.

*Rope, cable, hawser, painter.*

sāl, 302, 1906.

bend, only in comp. ancorbend, 1918.

rāp, only in comp. wælrāp, 1610.

*Sail.*

segl, 1906 (=merehrægl). [segldrād, 1429.]

*Stem, prow, stern.*

stefn, 212.

*Tar.*

teoru, only in comp. nīwtýrwed, 295.



FIG. 121.

Anchor from ship-grave at Oseberg, Norway. (Viking Age).

**Spears, standards, swords,** see War.

**Tapestry,** see House.

**Tools,** see Implements.

**Treasure, valuables,** see Money.

**Vehicles.**

Waggon, wain.

wæn, 3134.

**Vessels.**

*Vessels generally.*

fatu, 2761 (fyrnmanna; = orcas); sincfatu, see Money.

dryncfæt, see cup, drinking vessel.

māðmfæt, 2405 (mære).

wundorfæt, 1162 (of wine-flagons).



*Flagon, tankard.*

orc, 2760, 3047.

*Cup, goblet, drinking vessel.* See fig. 28, p. 129.

būne, 2775, 3047.

dryncfæt, 2254 (dēore;=wæge), 2306 (dēore), 1015  
seleful, 619.

ful, 615, 628, 1025, 1169, 1192; medoful, 624.

scenc, only in comp. meduscenc, 1890 (=līðwæge).

wæge, 2253 (fæted;=dryncfæt), 2282 (fæted), ealuwæge,  
481, 495 (hroden), 2021 (=nægled sinc), līðwæge, 1982  
(=meduscenc).*Dish.*

disc, 2775, 3048.

**War.***Armour, accoutrements, weapons (generally).* See, as to  
weapons, Keller, *Weapon names in Anglo-Saxon*.  
Heidelberg, 1906.

eorlgewæde, 1442.

geatwe (see *Money*), in comp. gūðgeatwe, 395, 2636;  
gryregeatwe, 324. hildegeatwe, 674 (=byrne+helm  
+sweord), 2362? wīggeatwe, 368.gewæde, 292, gūð-gew., 227 (=syrce), 2617, 2623, 2730,  
2851, 2871.

hildesceorp, 2155 (=segn+helm+byrne+sweord).

hildewæpen, 39 (=bill?).

hyrste, see *Ornaments*.hrægl, 454 (=beadusrūd); beado-hr. (=licsyrce), 552;  
fyrd-hr. 1527 (=helm).sēaro, 249, 323, 329 (=gāras), 419, 1557, 1813, 2530,  
2568, 2700; fyrd-s, 232 (=randas); 2618 (fūslic;=  
gūðge-wæde); gūð-s, 215 (geatolic;=beorhte frætwe),  
328 (byrnan).*Earthwork, entrenchment, mound.*weall, 785?, 2307, 2323, 2526, 2542, 2716, 3060, 3103,  
3160; eorðweall, 2957, 3090.*Coat of mail, corslet.*byrne, 40, 238, 327, 405 (b. scān, searonet sēowed  
smiðes orðancum), 1022, 1245 (hringed), 1291 (sīde),  
1629, 2153 (hār), 2260 (byrnan hring), 2524, 2529,  
2615 (hringed), 2621, 2673, 2704, 2812, 2868, 3140  
(beorht); gūð-b., 321 (g. scān, heard, hondlocen, cp.  
405 and 551); heaðo-b., 1552 (=herenet); here-b., 1443  
(h. hondum gebroden, sīd, searofāh); īren-, īsern-b.,  
671, 2986.

syrce, serce, 226 (=gūðgewæde), 334 (græg), 1111;

beadu-s., 2755 (brogden;=bringnet); here-s., 1511;  
 hioro-s., 2539; leoðo-s., 1505 and 1890 (locen;=fyrd-  
 hom, hringnet); līc-s., 550 (heard, hondlocen).  
 net, in comp. brēost-n., 1548 (brōden); here-n., 1553  
 (heard;=heaðobyrne); hring-n., 1889 (=leoðosyrce);  
 2754 (=beaduserce); searonet, 406 (sēowed smiðes)  
 orðancum).  
 wāde, gewāde, in comp. heaðo-w., 39 (=byrnan);  
 here-w., 1897; breost-gew., 1211, 2162.  
 ham, hama in comp. fyrd-h., 1504 (=leoðosyrce);  
 scīr-h., 1895.



FIG. 122.

Corslet of ring-mail. from Thorsbjerg, Schleswig.  $\frac{1}{10}$

hrægl in comp. beado-hr., 552 (broden, golde gegyrwed).  
 hring, 1503 (synecdoche); 2260 (byrnan hring); hring-  
 net, 1889 (leoðosyrce), 2754; beadusyrce; hring-īren,  
 322 (=iron rings of the corslet); [-Dene, 116, 1279,  
 1769].  
 pād in comp. herepād, 2258.

rēaf in comp. heaðorēaf, 401,  
scrūd in comp. beaduscrūd, 453.

The corslet of ring-mail, so often referred to by the Beowulf-poet was composed of small, fine iron rings, which were so arranged that every ring was inter-locked with four others (see figs. 16 and 122). A complete corslet of this kind found at Vimose (Funen) was made up of about 20,000 rings, and it is estimated that it must have taken a man something like a year to make it. From this the high value and comparative rarity of such corslets can easily be understood. Sophus Müller, *Nordische Altertumskunde*, ii, 128. See also Lehmann, *Brünne und Helm*, 1885.

*Helmet*. See pp. 1-18, with the illustrations, and Lehmann, *l.c.*

helm, 342, 404, 672, 1022, 1245 (heaðostēap), 1286 (swīn ofer helme), 1290, 1448 (se hwīta h. since geweorðad, befangen frēawrasnum, swā hine fyrndagum wæpna smið wundrum tēode, besette swīnlīcum), 1526, 1629,

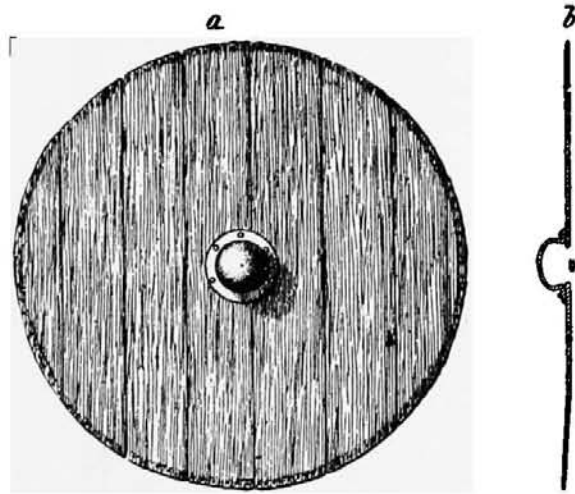


FIG. 123.

Shield of linden-wood, from Gokstad, Norway. (*b* is a section across the middle of the shield).  $\frac{1}{20}$

1745, 2153 (heaðostēap), 2255 (heard, hyrsted golde, fætum befeallen), 2539, 2615 (brūnfāg), 2638, 2659, 2723, 2762 (ōmīg), 2811 (gold-fāg), 2868, 2973, 2979 (entisc), 2987, 3139; grim-h., 334; gūð-h., 2487.  
grīma in comp. beado-g., 2257; here-g., 396, 2049, 2605.  
cheek-pieces, hlēorberge, 309 (eoforlīc scionon ofer hl.).  
rim or roll (on the outside of the helmet)?, wala, 1301 (wīrum bewunden). See pp. 2 and 14.

*boar-images* (on crest of helmet). See illustrations on pp. 8-18.

eofor, 1112 (īren-heard), 1328; -lic, 304 (gehroden golde, fāh, fȳr-heard).

swīn, 1111 (ealgylden), 1286; -lic, 1453.

*Shield* (wooden). See Pfannkucke, *Der Schild bei den Angelsachen* (Diss. Halle, 1908) and fig. 123; also figs. 19, 20, 21, 23 and 59. Exceptionally, Beowulf's shield in his fight with the dragon was entirely of iron (so as to be fireproof), 2337-9.

bord, 2259, 2524, 2673; hilde-b., 397, 3139; wīg-b., 2339 (ealliren, wrætlic); bord-hrēoða, 2203; -rand, 2559; -wudu, 1243 (beorht;=hilderand); [-hæbbend, 2895].

byrduscrūd (covering or ornamentation of a shield—a doubtful word, see Keller, 267), 2661.

lind (*lit.* linden-wood), 2341, 2365, 2610 (=rand) [-hæbbend, 245, 1402; -gestealla, 1973; -wiga, 2603].

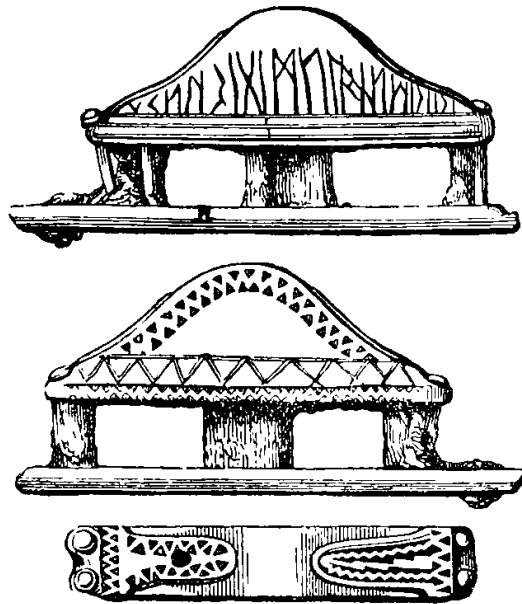


FIG. 124.

Sword-hilt, showing runes. Ash next Sandwich, Kent.

rand 231 (beorht), 326 (regnheard);=scyld), 656, 682, 1209, 2538, 2566 (stēap) 2609 (=lind), 2653, 2673. [-hæbbend, 861; -wīga, 1298, 1793.] bordrand, 2559; geolo-r., 438 (=scyld); hilde-r., 1242 (=bordwudu); sīd-r., 1289.

scyld, 325 (sīd;=rand), 333 (fāted), 437 (=geolorand), 2570, 2675, 2850.

scyldweall, 3118. [scyld-freca, 1033; -wiga, 288.]

*Sword.* (See pp. 19-32, and figs. 14, 15, 105, 124, and 125).

sweord, 437, 539 (heard, nacod), 561, 567, 574, 586 (fāh), 672 (hyrsted), 679, 884, 890, 1040, 1106, 1286 (heoru bunden, hamere geduren), 1289 (=heardecg), 1558 eald, eotonisc), 1560, 1605, 1615 (=broden mæl), 1663 (ēacen), 1696 (wreoðenhilt, wyrmfāh; wæs on dæm scennum scīran goldes ðurh rūnstafas gemearcod, hwām, ðæt s. geworht wære), see fig. 124; 1808 (=īren), 1901 (bunden golde), 2193 (golde gegyrede), 2252, 2386, 2492 (lēoht), 2499, 2509 (heard), 2518, 2562, 2610, 2616 (eotonisc), 2638, 2659, 2681 (grægmæl), 2700 (fāh, fāted), 2880, 2904, 2936, 2961, 2987 (heard, hylted), 3048 (dýre, ðmig, ðurheten); gūð-s., 2154 (geatolic); maððum-s., 1023 (mære); wæg-s., 1489 (wrætlic).

bil, 40, 583, 1144, 1557 (=sweord), 1567, 2060, 2359, 2485, 2508 (=sweord), 2621, 2777 (ecg wæs īren); gūðbill, 803, 2584 (nacod), hilde-b., 557, 1520, 1666 (=brogden mæl), 2679; wīg-b., 1607 (=sweord).

mēce, 565, 1765, 1812, 1938, 2047, 2614, 2685, 2939, 2978 (brād;=sweord); beado-mēce, 1454; hæft-m., 1457 (ecg wæs īren, ātertānum fāh, āhyrded heāðo-swāte); hilde-m., 2202.

īren, 673 (cyst;=sweord), 802 (cyst;=gūðbill), 892 (dryhtlic;=sweord), 989 (ærgōd), 1697 (cyst;=sweord), 1848, 2050 (dēore), 2259, 2586 (ærgōd;=gūðbill), 2683, 2828 (hamera lāf).

ord, 556 (=hildebill); 1549 (=sword-point).

brond, 1454?

secg, 684.

heoru, 1285 (hamere geduren;=sweord) [heoro-sweng, 1590; -drync, 2359].

mæl, see below.

*Sword-blade, sword.*

ecg, 483, 805, 1168, 1459 (īren), 1524, 1575, 1763, 1772, 2140 (eacen), 2506, 2508 (billes), 2577 (brūn), 2772, 2778 (īren), 2828 (īrenna), 2876.

*One-edged sword, knife.*

seax, 1545 (brād, brunecg); wælseax, 2703 (biter, beaduscearp, ðæt hē on byrnan wæg). [seaxben, 2905.]

*Sword-hilt.*

hilt, 1574, 1614, 1668, 1677 (gylden), 1687 (on ðæm wæs ōr writen fyrngewinnes), fetelhilt (synecd. for sword), 1564.

adj. hilted, 2987; wreoðenhilt, 1698.

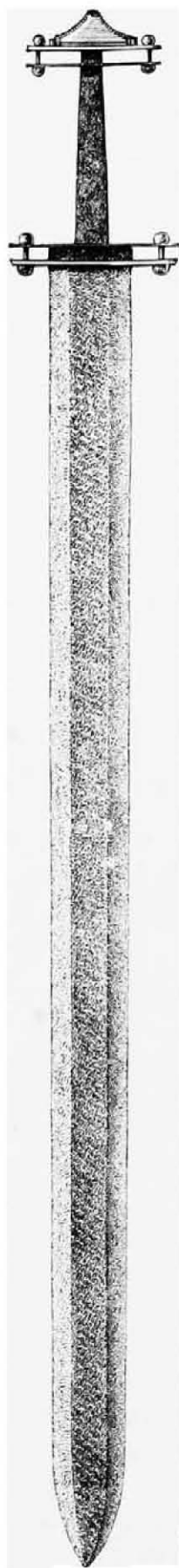


FIG. 125.  
Damascened sword, from  
Skåne.  $\frac{1}{5}$



FIG. 127.  
Barbed spear from  
Hjälpås, West Götland.  
 $\frac{1}{2}$



FIG. 126.  
Spear from grave No. 1,  
Vendel, Uppland.  $\frac{1}{3}$

scenne (pommel of the hilt? or plate of metal on the pommel?), 1694 (scīran goldes).

*Markings on swords.*

The word 'mæl' is used (1) to indicate various kinds of marking or damascening on swords, as in fig. 125; (2) as an epithet for the sword itself; and (3) as an indication of colour (von Grienberger, BDS. xxxvi, 90); brōden mæl, 1616, 1667; hringmæl, 1521, 1564; sceaden mæl, 1531 (wrættum gebunden).

*Spear, javelin.* See Wegner, *Die Angriffswaffen der Anglesachen*, and figs. 126 and 127. Diss. Königsberg, 1890). gār, 328 (=æscholt), 1075, 1765 (gāres fliht), 1846, 2440 (=flān), 3021 (morgenceald), bongār. 2031 [frumgār (lat. *primipilus*), 2856.] gārholt, 1834. [-Dene, 1, 601, 1856, 2994; cēne, 1058; -cwealm, 2043; -wiga, 2674, 2811; -wigend, 2641.] æsc, 1772; æsc-holt, 330 (ufan græg; =gār). [æscwiga, 2042.] sceaft (=1. shaft of a spear—or arrow, as at 3118; 2. spear) in comp. heresceaft, 335; walsceaft, 398. wudu, 398; mægenwudu, 236; ðrecwudu, 1246 ðrymlīc). sprēot in comp. eoforsprēot, 1437 (heorohōciht). See fig. 127.

*Dart.*

darod, 2848.

*Bow.*

boga in comp. flānboga, 1433, 1744; hornboga, 2437.

*Arrow.*

flān (see also sceaft), 2438, 3119 (feðergēarwum fūs), sceaft (see *s.v.* *Spear*), 3118 (=shaft of the arrow, where 'flān' = the barb); stræl, 1746, 3117; herestræl, 1435 (heard); isernscūr, 3116 = shower of arrows.

*Banner.* [See pp. 130-132 *ante*. As to the suggestion that the Roman *aquila* may have been introduced into the North during the Migration Period, it may be observed that *aquila* is never given as the Lat. equivalent of a standard in the Ags.-Lat. glosses which have come down to us, nor is the Ags. *earn* ever used in that sense.]

segn, 47 (gylde), 1021 (gylde; = hiltécumbor), 1204, 2767 (eallgylde, hondwundra mæst, gelocen leoðo-cræftum), 2776 (bēacna beorhtost), 2958.

cumbol, cumbor, 2505; hilde- (hilde-?), 1022 (hroden;  
=segn).

bēacn, 2777 (beorhtost;=segn).

**Writing.**

*Runic characters, letters.*

rūnstafas, 1696. See fig. 124.

*to engrave.*

writan, 1688.



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K. E. Schirmer, del.

MAP OF SOUTHERN SCANDINAVIA.



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