

which eight of them have pronounced, and let those who are outvoted each pay six half-marks." On general grounds it is highly probable that the thegns of this passage are identical with the thegns on whom the wapentake relied for the presentment of evil-doers. In any case, the passage is interesting as an illustration of the climate of thought which lay behind the practice of the Danelaw courts. It is the first assertion in England of the principle that where opinions differ that of the majority must prevail" (*Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 503-4. For the Danelaw in general see the same work, pp. 494-518). Finally there are the lawmen (*lagemanni*), familiar to us from Scandinavia, and more especially Iceland, mentioned in connection with Cambridge, Stamford, Lincoln, York, and Chester, where they appear to have constituted a judicial body (normally of twelve) who gave verdicts in appointed cases.

Despite the basic research of Cameron and Jensen in place-name studies, and of Dolley in numismatics, problems remain. But there is no need to wait on a general conclusion regarding the Danelaw: 'The Scandinavian impact on England resulted in a thorough enrichment of the community. Intensification of agrarian effort brought it about that by 1066 Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk ranked high among the prosperous shires of England. Scandinavian contribution to the political life of the country had been great at all levels, from the monarchy itself, where Cnut ranks as one of the most successful of English rulers, to the minor administrative divisions of the Danelaw and the hustings and courts of doomsmen of London, York, and Chester. The opening up of the North Sea to regular commerce proved permanent and was not disrupted by the Norman Conquest. Above all the impact of these active seafaring north-erners on the early life and stabilization of the towns of north and eastern England was tremendous. York appears in saga stories as an impressive town where the Scandinavian language and institutions were fully familiar. [For York see A. Hall, *Viking York and the North*, 1978; and the York 'The Vikings in England' Catalogue, 1981-2.] The importance of the Scandinavian element in London has probably been underestimated.' When to this we add the blending of English and Scandinavian art, especially the sculpture in stone, and the Scandinavian share in the English language, the historian's final sentence is a just one. 'Regionally and generally the influx of the Scandinavians made a vital contribution to the inner nature of the English communities of the Middle Ages.' (H. R. Loyn, *The Vikings in Britain*, pp. 136-7.)

The importance of the new Danelaw to the Norsemen back home, save as a temporary outlet of population, awaits a full determination: i.e. its part in christianizing first Denmark and then Norway and Iceland; its influence on visual art in Scandinavia; on coinage and currency, and on such military and quasi-political institutions as the *leidangr* and *hirð*; and on the concept of monarchy itself. Its influence may well have been considerable in these and other spheres.

III. A Rus Ship-Burial on the Volga

[During the years 921-2 the Arab Ibn Fadlan served as secretary of an embassy from the Khalif of Baghdad to the Bulgars of the middle Volga. About one-fifth of his account of his journey (the *Risala*) relates to the Rus whom he met at the camp and trading-post, later the town, of Bulgar. We have already noted his witness to certain of their social and trading habits (pp. 164-5, 197 and n. 2 above). His account of a Rus funeral is the most celebrated part of the *Risala*. It is here quoted in the version of H. M. Smyser, which takes account of the translation into German of Ahmed Zeki Validi Togan and that into French of M. Canard. The passages in roman type are based on the manuscript of the *Risala*, probably of the eleventh century, discovered at Meshed in Iran in 1923 by Zeki Validi. Those in italics are based on Amin Razi's version of the *Risala* (AR), of 1593, which is thought to derive from a good early MS. and to preserve many valuable details not found in the Meshed MS. (see the references to A. Zeki Validi Togan, Canard, and Smyser on p. 164 n. 2 above).]

87. I had heard that at the deaths of their chief personages they did many interesting things, of which the least was cremation, and I was interested to learn more. At last I was told of the death of one of their outstanding men. They placed him in a grave and put a roof over it for ten days while they cut and sewed garments for him.

If the deceased is a poor man they make a little boat, which they lay him in and burn. If he is rich, they collect his goods and divide them into three parts, one for his family, another to pay for his clothing, and a third for making *nabid* [an intoxicating drink, perhaps beer], which they drink until the day when his female slave will kill herself and be burned with her master. They stupefy themselves by drinking this *nabid* night and day; sometimes one of them dies cup in hand.

(AR: They burn him in this fashion: they leave him for the first ten days in a grave. His possessions they divide into three parts: one part for his daughters and wives; another for garments to clothe the corpse; another part covers the cost of the intoxicating drink which they consume in the course of ten days, uniting sexually with women and playing musical instruments. Meanwhile, the slave-girl who gives herself to be burned with him, in these ten days drinks and indulges in pleasure; she decks her head and her person with all sorts of ornaments and fine dress and so arrayed gives herself to the men.)

When a great personage dies, the people of his family ask his young women and men slaves, 'Who among you will die with him?' One answers, 'I'. Once he or she has said that, the thing is obligatory; there is no backing out of it. Usually it is the girl slaves who do this [i.e. volunteer].

88. When the man of whom I have spoken died, his girl slaves were asked, 'Who will die with him?' One answered, 'I'. She was then put in the care of two young women, who watched over her and accompanied her everywhere, to the point that they occasionally washed her feet with their own hands. Garments were being made for the deceased and all else was being readied of which he had need. Meanwhile the slave drinks every day and sings, giving herself over to pleasure.

89. When the day arrived on which the man was to be cremated and the girl with him, I went to the river on which was his ship. I saw that they had drawn the ship on to the shore, that they had erected four posts of birch wood and other wood, and that around it [the ship] was made a structure like great ships' tents out of wood [Canard: and that around these posts they had arranged some kind of great scaffolding of wood]. Then they pulled the ship up until it was on this wooden construction. Then they began to come and go and to speak words which I did not understand, while the man was still in his grave and had not yet been brought out. (AR: The ninth [ZV; Canard: tenth] day, having drawn the ship up on to the river bank, they guarded it. In the middle of the ship they prepared a dome or pavillon à coupole (kunbad) of wood and covered this with various sorts of fabrics.) Then they brought a couch and put it on the ship and covered it with a mattress of Greek brocade. Then came an old woman whom they call the Angel of Death, and she spread upon

the couch the furnishing mentioned. It is she who has charge of the clothes-making and arranging all things, and it is she who kills the girl slave. I saw that she was a strapping old woman, fat and louring.

When they came to the grave they removed the earth from above the wood, then the wood, and took out the dead man clad in the garments in which he had died. I saw that he had grown black from the cold of the country. They had put *nabid*, fruit, and a pandora in the grave with him. They removed all that. The dead man did not smell bad and only his colour had changed. They dressed him in trousers, stockings(?), boots, a tunic [*qurtaq*], and caftan of brocade with gold buttons. They put a hat of brocade and fur on him. Then they carried him into the pavilion [*qubba*] on the ship. They seated him on the mattress and propped him up with cushions. They brought *nabid*, fruits, and fragrant plants, which they put with him, then bread, meat, and onions, which they placed before him. Then they brought a dog, which they cut in two and put in the ship. Then they brought his weapons and placed them by his side. Then they took two horses, ran them until they sweated, then cut them to pieces with a sword and put them into the ship. They took two cows, which they likewise cut to pieces and put in the ship. Next they killed a rooster and a hen and threw them in. The girl slave who wished to be killed went here and there and into each of their tents, and the master of each tent had sexual intercourse with her and said, 'Tell your lord I have done this out of love for him.'

(AR: The tenth day, they brought the deceased out of the ground and put him inside the pavilion [*qubba*] and put around him different kinds of flowers and fragrant plants. Many men and women gathered and played musical instruments, and each of his kinsmen built a pavilion [*qubba*] around his pavilion [*qubba*] at some distance. The slave-girl arrayed herself and went to the pavilions of the kinsmen of the dead man, and the master of each had sexual intercourse once with her, saying in a loud voice, 'Tell your master that I have done the duty [or exercised the right] of love and friendship?' And so, as she went to all the pavilions to the last one, all the men had intercourse with her. When this was over, they cut a dog in two halves and put it into the boat, then, having cut the head off a rooster, they threw it, head and body, to the right and left of the ship.)

90. Friday afternoon they led the slave-girl to a thing that they had made which resembled a door frame. She placed her feet on the

palms of the men and they raised her up to overlook this frame. She spoke some words and they lowered her again. A second time they raised her up and she did again what she had done; then they lowered her. They raised her a third time and she did as she had done the two times before. Then they brought her a hen; she cut off the head, which she threw away, and then they took the hen and put it in the ship. I asked the interpreter what she had done. He answered, "The first time they raised her she said, 'Behold, I see my father and mother.' The second time she said, 'I see all my dead relatives seated.' The third time she said, 'I see my master seated in Paradise and Paradise is beautiful and green; with him are men and boy servants. He calls me. Take me to him.' " Now they took her to the ship. She took off the two bracelets which she was wearing and gave them both to the old woman called the Angel of Death, who was to kill her; then she took off the two finger rings which she was wearing and gave them to the two girls who served her and were the daughters of the woman called the Angel of Death. Then they raised her on to the ship, but they did not make her enter into the pavilion.

Then men came with shields and sticks. She was given a cup of *nabîd*; she sang at taking it and drank. The interpreter told me that she in this fashion bade farewell to all her girl companions. Then she was given another cup; she took it and sang for a long time while the old woman incited her to drink up and go into the pavilion where her master lay. I saw that she was distracted; she wanted to enter the pavilion, but put her head between it and the boat [sic.] Then the old woman seized her head and made her enter the pavilion and entered with her. Thereupon the men began to strike with the sticks on the shields so that her cries could not be heard and the other slave-girls would not be frightened and seek to escape death with their masters. Then six men went into the pavilion and each had intercourse with the girl. Then they laid her at the side of her master; two held her feet and two her hands; the old woman known as the Angel of Death re-entered and looped a cord around her neck and gave the crossed ends to the two men for them to pull. Then she approached her with a broad-bladed dagger, which she plunged between her ribs repeatedly, and the men strangled her with the cord until she was dead.

(AR: *After that, the group of men who have cohabited with the slave-girl make of their hands a sort of paved way whereby the girl, placing her*

feet on the palms of their hands, mounts on to the ship. After that, they give her a hen, which she throws into the ship after tearing off its head. Then she drinks a cup of an intoxicating drink and pronounces many words, and, thrice standing on the palms of the men, she comes down and mounts again to the ship and recites many things [Canard: sings some snatches]. She goes into the pavilion [qubba] in which her husband [Mann; mari] has been put, and six of the relatives of her husband go into the pavilion and unite sexually with this wife in the presence of the dead man. When they have finished these duties of love, the old woman who, according to the belief of these people, is the Angel of Death arrives and lays the wife to sleep beside her husband. Of the six men, two seize the legs of the slave-girl, and two others her hands, and the old woman, twisting her veil, puts it around her neck and gives the ends to the two other men so that they can pull it so tight that the soul escapes from her body.)

91. Then the closest relative of the dead man, after they had placed the girl whom they have killed beside her master, came, took a piece of wood which he lighted at a fire, and walked backwards with the back of his head toward the boat and his face turned (toward the people), with one hand holding the kindled stick and the other covering his anus, being completely naked, for the purpose of setting fire to the wood that had been made ready beneath the ship. Then the people came up with tinder and other firewood, each holding a piece of wood of which he had set fire to an end and which he put into the pile of wood beneath the ship. Thereupon the flames engulfed the wood, then the ship, the pavilion, the man, the girl, and everything in the ship. A powerful, fearful wind began to blow so that the flames became fiercer and more intense.

92. One of the Rus was at my side and I heard him speak to the interpreter, who was present. I asked the interpreter what he said. He answered, "He said, 'You Arabs are fools' " "Why?" I asked him. He said, "You take the people who are most dear to you and whom you honour most and you put them in the ground where insects and worms devour them. We burn him in a moment, so that he enters Paradise at once." Then he began to laugh uproariously. When I asked why he laughed, he said, "His lord, for love of him, has sent the wind to bring him away in an hour." And actually an hour had not passed before the ship, the wood, the girl, and her master were nothing but cinders and ashes.

Then they constructed in the place where had been the ship which they had drawn up out of the river something like a small round hill, in the middle of which they erected a great post of birch wood, on which they wrote the name of the man and the name of the Rus king and they departed.

Supplementary Booklist in English, 1984

- I. *Scandinavia and the Movement South-West*: K. Cameron, 'The Significance of English Place-Names', Proceedings of the British Academy, 1976. *Place-Name Evidence for the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian Settlements. Eight Studies*, English Place-Name Society, 1975. G. Fellows Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the East Midlands*, Copenhagen, 1978. R. A. Hall (ed.), *Viking Age York and the North*, 1978. H. R. Loyn, *The Vikings in Wales*, 1976; *The Vikings in Britain*, 1977. Else Roesdahl, *Viking Age Denmark*, 1982. P. H. Sawyer, *Kings and Vikings. Scandinavia and Europe AD 700-1100*, 1982. Th. Andersson and Karl I. Sandred (eds), *The Vikings*, Uppsala, 1978.
- II. *The Movement East*. H. R. Davidson, *The Viking Road to Byzantium*, 1976. K. R. Schmidt (ed.), *Varangian Problems*, Scando-Slavica Supplementum, Copenhagen, 1970.
- III. *The Movement West*. Eleanor Guralnick (ed.), *Vikings in the West*, Chicago, 1982. 'Historical Evidence for Viking Voyages to the New World' (Gwyn Jones); 'The Lost Norse Colony of Greenland' (Thomas H. McGovern); 'The Discovery of a Norse Settlement in America' (Helge Ingstad); 'The Norse Settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows' (Anne Stene Ingstad); 'Norsemen and Eskimos in Arctic Canada' (Robert McGhee); 'Viking Hoaxes' (Birgitta Wallace). H. M. Hansen, *A Critical Account of the Written and Archaeological Sources' Evidence concerning Norse Settlement in Greenland*, MoG, Copenhagen, 1972. A. S. Ingstad and H. Ingstad, *The Discovery of a Norse Settlement in America*, Vol. I, *Excavations at L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland*, Vol. II, 1984. Oslo. Jón Jóhannesson, *A History of the Old Icelandic Republic: Islendinga Saga*, trans. Haraldur Bessason, Winnipeg, 1974.
- IV. General. R. T. Farrell (ed.), *The Vikings*, 1982. J. Graham-Campbell (ed.), *The Viking World*, 1980. D. M. Wilson (ed.), *The Northern Lands*, 1980. Reviews and articles in *Saga-Book of the Viking Society for Northern Research*, London, and in *Medieval Scandinavia*, Odense, *passim*.

Select Bibliography

The Bibliography is presented in six sections: 1, A short list of books in English, introductory to the subject; 2, General and national Scandinavian history; 3, Pre-viking Scandinavia; 4, The vikings overseas; 5, The Scandinavian community; 6, Sources.

The lists are alphabetical, except that books in English precede those in other languages.

The sections are not exclusive of each other.

I. An introductory list of books in English:

1. Bertil Almgren (ed.), *The Viking*. 288 pp. C. A. Watts. 1966. A general survey, impressively illustrated with plates and drawings.
2. Holger Arbman, *The Vikings*. Trans. Alan Binns. 212 pp. Thames and Hudson. 1961. Brief but authoritative, with an emphasis on archaeology and art. Handsomely illustrated.
3. Johannes Brøndsted, *The Vikings*. Trans. Kalle Skov. 347 pp. Penguin Books. 1965. Excellent on the background and life in the Scandinavian homelands. Light on political history and the vikings overseas.
4. R. W. Chambers, *Beowulf. An Introduction to the Study of the Poem*. With a Supplement by C. L. Wrenn. 628 pp. Cambridge University Press. 1959. The classic statement in English of the Geat-Swedish and other heroic problems.
5. Gwyn Jones, *The Norse Atlantic Saga*. 246 pp. Oxford University Press. 1964. The Norse voyages of discovery and settlement to Iceland, Greenland, and America, with a translation of the more important early documents.
6. T. D. Kendrick, *A History of the Vikings*. 412 pp. Methuen. 1930, repr. 1968. A full-scale history in English of the Vikings at home and abroad. Comprehensive and stimulating, but needs revision.
7. Axel Olrik, *Viking Civilization*. 246 pp. Allen and Unwin. 1930. A translation by J. W. Hartmann and H. A. Larsen of Olrik's *Nordisk*