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1

Nerthus and Terra Mater: Anglian religion in the first century

Heathen gods are hard to find in Old English literature. Most Anglo-Saxon writers had no interest in them and consequently the reaction of today's scholars to this topic can vary from polite amusement to hostility. What price a few scraps of Germanic antiquity, compared with the learned civilization for which the Anglo-Saxons were so famous? The hunt for pagan survivals might seem futile in comparison. When the italianate sculpture and latinity of Northumbria are considered, the riches of Anglo-Latin and Old English poetry, Alfred's reconstruction of Wessex, or the development of West Saxon prose through Æthelwold, Ælfric and Wulfstan, this reaction is not surprising. Names such as Tiu, Thunor, Frig and Woden do not inspire confidence alongside famous ones such as Aldhelm, Bede or Alcuin. The men represent a literature, the gods a preliterate ideology mostly of the early seventh century. The men are rooted in history, whereas the gods must be discussed with reference to later myths and folktales. Even the names of these gods are misleading: the name *Tiu* is partly based on the Old English name for 'Tuesday' and on glosses; *Thunor* is a modern personification of the Old English word for 'thunder'; *Frig* is a loan into modern scholarship from the thirteenth-century literature of Iceland; only *Woden* survives as an outright personification, and his name is mentioned only in two proverbs, in some placenames, and in regnal lists. Thus it might seem that there is little material to work with, and even less reward to be gained, from studying heathen gods in Old English literature.

I shall try a more productive approach in what follows, by treating Woden and the other aforesaid 'gods' in the sixth and seventh centuries in England as relatively minor elements within a larger natural religion of which the main concern was the renewal of the farming year. With the

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Richard North
Excerpt
More information

exception of Woden, whose literary role I shall introduce in the present chapter, I shall approach the Anglo-Saxon gods only after I have discussed *Nerthus*, an older Germanic deity whose name is cited by the Roman historian Tacitus at the end of the first century and whose worshippers are said to have included the Angles in their continental homeland. Not Woden but Nerthus, a deity whom Tacitus calls 'mother earth', is named in connection with the Angles at this early date. My method is thus to start with Tacitus and to reconsider both his idea of Nerthus and his ethnography in the *Germania* in relation to the names of Scandinavian gods in Old Norse–Icelandic poetry, in order to throw more light on the North Sea Germanic tradition from which the Angles emerged; then to apply my conclusions to passages in Old English literature, in particular to poems of an underlying Anglian dialect and provenance, in order to reconstruct the shape and development of heathen gods in England.

In this introductory chapter I shall explain how Norse evidence can be used in an enquiry into Anglo-Saxon paganism; then, after illustrating the impact of Woden on this field, I shall focus on Nerthus and attempt to show how Tacitus may have misinterpreted this deity as a northern counterpart of the goddess Cybele or Magna Mater. In ch. 2, I shall define *Ing-* as an early Germanic hypostasis of Nerthus and present the Anglian reflex of this name in *Ingui* of Bernicia. In ch. 3, I shall attempt to throw light on Ing in *The Old English Rune Poem* and on the meaning of his *incge-* prefix where it occurs in a letter from Alcuin to Speratus, in the Old English *Exodus* and in the Finnsburh Episode in *Beowulf*. In ch. 4 of this book I shall seek to explain a connection between the witchcraft associated with Nerthus's religion and the magic of Woden, a figure whose cult is likely to have been derived from that of Mercury in Roman Gaul. My conclusion concerning Woden's witchcraft in ch. 4 will be cited in ch. 5 in order to explain how Woden's role in Anglo-Saxon royal genealogy may have usurped that of Ingui or other tribal gods. In ch. 6, I shall focus on two aspects of Ingui: on the suffix OE *-geot* as an epithet of the Ing-hypostasis denoting Ingui's marriage and sacrifice; and on Geat, a politically inspired personification of *-geot* in the genealogy of King Æthelwulf of Wessex (833–58). In a further exploration of Ingui's role in *Beowulf*, in ch. 7, I shall argue that the poet of this work, representing Danish paganism as if the Danes were figures of the Old Testament, identified Ingui or Ing with the devil and either concealed other Scandinavian gods or presented them as euhemerized heroes. I shall also

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Richard North
Excerpt
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argue in ch. 7 that the poet of *Beowulf* was influenced by Danish legends before the Viking Age, and that Æthelwulf later owned a text of this poem from which he or his clergy took names for new West Saxon ancestors allegedly even older than Geat. In ch. 8, a discussion of animism in Anglo-Saxon England, I shall present the evidence for *numina* including Eostre, Tiu and *þunor*; as a preliminary to an attempted reconstruction of the seasonal marriage and death of the Ing-hypostasis in the old Anglian homeland on the southern border of Scandinavia. Ch. 9 concerns some Northumbrian traces of Ingui, the presumed Anglian reflex of this figure, in the language with which Christ is described in *The Dream of the Rood*. I shall conclude, in ch. 10, with a new hypothesis on the last days of Ingui in Northumbria, and on the inspired role of Paulinus in the mission that led to Ingui's defeat.

PROBLEM AND METHOD

The relics of heathen religion are not easy to identify within early Christian vernaculars.[1] Consequently there is an illusion that Anglo-Saxon paganism was weak. To quote one recent commentator: 'Why was Christianity so readily, if at times only superficially and temporarily, accepted by the English? Certainly, the inherent inadequacies of Germanic paganism, its incomplete pantheon and woefully weak and drearily fatalistic religion, had something to do with the easy and rapid spread of the gospel.'[2] The question here is well chosen, better than the statement following, which is misconceived in several ways. Firstly, no faith which is current is likely to be regarded as inadequate by its believers. Secondly, the term 'pantheon', which in any case may be wrong for a natural religion based on animism, cannot refer to a collection of gods which is incomplete. Thirdly, the idea that Anglo-Saxon paganism was fatalistic is based on an old premise that the Anglo-Saxons worshipped OE *wyrd* ('fate') as a god. Yet this premise was challenged more than half a century ago: first by B. J. Timmer, who regarded *wyrd* as a Christian literary abstraction;[3] then by Dorothy Whitelock, who thought that the impor-

[1] North, *Pagan Words*, pp. 1–13.

[2] Brown, *Bede the Venerable*, p. 5.

[3] B. J. Timmer, 'Wyrd in Anglo-Saxon Prose and Poetry', *Neophil* 26 (1940–1), 24–33 and 213–28; repr. in *Essential Articles for the Study of OE Poetry*, ed. J. B. Bessinger and S. J. Kahrl (Hamden, CT, 1968), pp. 124–58.

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tance of this word had been 'exaggerated';[4] and then by E. G. Stanley and Gerd Wolfgang Weber, each of whom confirmed the Christian status of *wyrd* in even closer detail.[5] Lastly, as I shall try to show in my concluding chapter, the fact that Christianity sometimes spread rapidly in England does not necessarily mean that Anglo-Saxon paganism was in terminal decline, but rather that it was probably a form of animism sufficiently widespread, ingrained and powerful to swallow up a new god whenever one appeared. This idea may explain why the Anglo-Saxons converted quickly, yet also why their bishops fought with paganism into the lifetime of Bede (*c.* 675–735).

Between Bede and the Old Norse–Icelandic literature by which I shall eventually try to interpret parts of his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (*c.* 732), there appears at first to be a world of difference.[6] Bede wrote biblical commentaries, theological and computistical treatises, devotional poems and letters all in Latin, had little interest in Anglian paganism and lived in Northumbria more than three hundred years before Icelandic antiquarians even began to make records of their island's pre-Christian past. Iceland, a wild volcanic outcrop in the mid-Atlantic, might also seem to be an odd and faraway place for comparison with the latinate civilization of Anglo-Saxon England. Yet Iceland, also a unique repository of learning with a vernacular literature to rival that of any country in medieval Europe, preserves the mythology by which it is possible to interpret the few but tantalizing references to heathen gods in Old English literature. Iceland was settled mostly by Norwegians in *c.* 890, when King Haraldr *hárfagri* ('fair-hair') of Vestfold (ruled *c.* 885 – *c.* 930) conquered western Norway and forced many dispossessed chieftains to look for new land overseas. With a general assembly in the late ninth century, constitutional reforms in 930 and 960 and Christianization *en masse* in *c.* 999, Iceland remained an independent republic until its

[4] D. Whitelock, *The Beginnings of English Society* (Harmondsworth, 1950), pp. 27–8.

[5] E. G. Stanley, *The Search for Anglo-Saxon Paganism* (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 92–4 and 95–121; G. W. Weber, *Wyrd: Studien zum Schicksalsbegriff der altenglischen und altnordischen Literatur*, Frankfurter Beiträge zur Germanistik 8 (Frankfurt, 1969), 155–8; on the agency of *wyrd* in *ealuscerwen* (*Beo* 769), see North, '"Wyrd" and "wearð ealuscerwen"', pp. 69–82.

[6] Henceforth I shall refer to *Historia ecclesiastica* in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969, repr. with corrections 1991).

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annexation by Norway, which was initiated by King Hákon Hákonarson in *c.* 1262.[7] Icelandic nationalism throughout this period, from the tenth to the fourteenth century, contributed to the survival of native history, poetry and mythology in Icelandic monasteries when traditions of this kind had died out in Norway and elsewhere. Because there is a cognate relationship between the vernacular languages, poetic cultures and hence the heathen traditions of England and Scandinavia, it is possible to recontruct the earliest English religion on the basis of analogues from Old Norse–Icelandic literature.

However, there are problems of methodology in this comparative field. Old Norse–Icelandic literature is notoriously problematic where its record of Scandinavian paganism is concerned. The historical novels or 'sagas' (*sǫgur*) for which thirteenth-century Iceland is famous provide a colourful but incidental and untrustworthy picture of heathen religion in which some authors appear to reconstruct supernatural detail on the basis of saints' lives, Irish folklore, French and German romances and even contemporary fortune-telling.[8] The true pagan cults had died out in Iceland and in Norway not long after these countries were Christianized respectively in *c.* 999 and *c.* 1030. Some poems, longer works rather than individual *lausavísur* ('loose verses'), may go back to a time in Scandinavia before the conversion. Yet it is often hard to judge whether the extant work of a poet said to have lived in the pre-Christian period is genuinely his, or is rather one of the many clever forgeries produced in Iceland in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. There is no internal and little circumstantial evidence for the date of Norse or Icelandic poems, most of which are preserved in the sagas and other prose works written in Iceland in the thirteenth century and surviving in manuscripts datable to the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. These poems are all stanzaic and are usually studied in two categories: as 'Scaldic' or occasional poems which named warrior–poets or *skáld* ('versifiers') composed in *dróttkvætt* ('court-metre') and in other baroque metrical forms, sometimes to commemorate gifts, sometimes to lament the dead, but most often to flatter kings and princes in Norway;[9] or as the anonymous 'Eddic' poems, or mythological and heroic ballads from the 'poetic *Edda*', most of which are found in a

[7] Byock, *Medieval Iceland*, pp. 52–71. On the revised date of the Icelandic conversion, see *Íslendingabók*, ed. Jakob, pp. xxix–lxi, esp. xxxv.

[8] North, *Pagan Words*, pp. 145–76.

[9] Frank, *Old Norse Court Poetry*, pp. 55–70; and Jónas, *Eddas and Sagas*, pp. 83–114.

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Richard North
Excerpt
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collection copied into the Codex Regius of *c.* 1270–80.[10] Each of these poems, whether Scaldic or Eddic, must be dated with probability rather than certainty, for the burden of proof now lies in showing that a Norse poem thought to be pagan is not an antiquarian forgery. Sagas in which the earlier Scaldic poems are quoted fall into two categories. First there are 'sagas of Icelanders' (*Íslendingasǫgur*), which glorify the tenth-century ancestors of the families that commissioned them, partly as a reflection of the intermittent civil war in the thirteenth century (the 'Age of the Sturlungs'), and partly in consolation for the outcome of this war, Iceland's loss of independence to Norway in *c.* 1262–4.[11] Then there are the 'kings' sagas' (*konungasǫgur*) including the 'Garland of the World' (*Heimskringla*), a collection of the lives of the kings of Norway which Snorri Sturluson (1179–1241), an Icelandic historian, landowner and politician, wrote probably in the 1220s with reference to older historical works.[12] From then on until he was assassinated by King Hákon's men in 1241, Snorri also wrote the 'prose *Edda*' in three stages: first, the *Háttatal* ('List of Metres', now known as *Edda* part III), a poem exemplifying Scaldic metres and praising the two rulers of Norway, Hákon and his father-in-law and regent Jarl Skúli, both of whom Snorri visited in 1218–20; second, the *Skáldskaparmál* ('Poetics', now *Edda* part II), a discourse with abundant quotation and paraphrase on the many types of 'kennings' or periphrases to be found in Scaldic poetry; third, *Gylfaginning* ('The Beguiling of Gylfi', now *Edda* part I), a mythography based mostly on quoted and paraphrased Eddic poems in which King Gylfi of Sweden learns of the Norse gods, their creation, adventures and destruction, apparently from three of their descendants; in addition, Snorri or a different author wrote a Prologue to this compilation in which the Norse gods are euhemerized as Trojans who migrated to northern Europe.[13]

[10] Jónas, *ibid.*, pp. 25–82. CR is listed as GkS 2365 quarto in Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, Reykjavík; also preserved in this library are AM 748 I and II quarto, related manuscript fragments containing *Grímnismál* and part of *Skírnismál* which are otherwise in Codex Regius. On specific items of Icelandic literature, see R. Simek, *Lexikon der altnordischen Literatur* (Stuttgart, 1987).

[11] Jónas, *Eddas and Sagas*, pp. 187–223. On the political background, see Byock, *Medieval Iceland*, pp. 31–50 and 71–102.

[12] Jónas, *ibid.*, pp. 147–78, esp. 168–78.

[13] See *Gylf*, pp. xii–xxix, and A. Faulkes, 'The Sources of *Skáldskaparmál*: Snorri's Intellectual Background', in *Snorri Sturluson: Kolloquium anlässlich der 750. Wiederkehr seines Todestages*, ed. A. Wolf (Tübingen, 1993), pp. 59–76; also U. Dronke and

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Richard North
Excerpt
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This prose *Edda*, written by Snorri to keep the indigenous poetics alive in the face of ballads and romances from Europe, is the major source for Old Norse–Icelandic poetry and mythology. Only the first three books of *Gesta Danorum*, a history of Denmark written in sixteen books by Saxo Grammaticus *c.* 1185–1216, offer comparable mythological material; in Saxo's work, however, the Scandinavian gods live in 'Byzantium' and are cited marginally with reference to northern kings and princes. *Edda*, Snorri's name for his mythography, was erroneously given to the poems in Codex Regius when this codex was discovered in an Icelandic farmhouse in 1643: hence the distinction between 'prose *Edda*' and 'poetic *Edda*'.[14] It is also believed that Snorri wrote *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar*, a biography of a tenth-century Icelandic farmer, warrior and poet, probably after he had completed *Heimskringla* and following his second visit to Norway in 1237–9.[15] Snorri's *Edda* and *Heimskringla* preserve the Eddic and Scaldic poems on which I shall base fundamental arguments in this book.

These poems are assumed to come from Norway in the ninth and tenth centuries. In the case of Scaldic verse, there is Bragi's *Ragnarsdrápa* ('Poem in honour of Ragnarr') of the mid ninth century; and towards the end of that century, there is Þjóðólfr's *Ynglingatal* ('List of the Ynglingar'), which celebrates the lives and deaths of the kings of Uppsala and Vestfold, and Þjóðólfr's *Haustlǫng* ('Harvest-long [poem]'), a poem composed in return for the gift of a shield. There is also Eyvindr's *Hákonarmál* ('Lay of Hákon'), a poem composed in *c.* 960 in memory of King Hákon Haraldsson; Eyvindr's *Háleygjatal* ('List of the Háleygir'), a genealogical poem composed in *c.* 985 and apparently modelled on *Ynglingatal*; and other works associated with Hákon Jarl in the Trondheim region. The Codex Regius contains the four Eddic poems on which I shall also partly rely for pre-Christian material: *Vǫluspá* ('Sibyl's Prophecy'), in which a sibylline oracle reveals the history of the Norse gods and their world from its creation to its end; the gods' truth-game *Lokasenna* ('Loki's Flyting'), in which Loki, an *agent provocateur*, subjects

P. Dronke, 'The Prologue of the Prose *Edda*: Explorations of a Latin Background', in *Sjötíu Ritgerðir helgaðar Jakob Benediktssyni*, ed. G. Pétursson and Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavik, 1977), pp. 153–76 (also published in *Myth and Fiction*, no. III).

[14] Jónas, *Eddas and Sagas*, pp. 25–6.

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 265–70; R. West, 'Snorri Sturluson and *Egils Saga*: Statistics of Style', *Scandinavian Studies* 52 (1980), 163–93.

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each Norse god in turn to an illuminating mockery of his or her divine role; *Skírnismál* ('Lay of Skírnir'), in which, apparently for the health of the land and harvest, Freyr sends his servant Skírnir to coerce Gerðr, a giantess, into sex with Freyr; and the Gothic legend *Hamðismál* ('Lay of Hamðir'), in which the brothers Hamðir and Sǫrli try with only partial success to avenge their sister Svanhildr on the Gothic emperor Jǫrmunrekkr. These and other Eddic poems were evidently popular in the thirteenth century even while they contained living or fossilized allusions to tenth-century paganism.

For each Scaldic or Eddic poem of this kind, a tentative case for oral transmission must be made from a historically suitable date at a time between *c.* 890 and *c.* 1000, with composition usually in the Trondheim region, to the early twelfth century in Skálholt, Oddi, Þingeyrar or other ecclesiastical centres in Iceland, where these works were probably transcribed for the first time.[16] In his *Íslendingabók* ('Book of Icelanders'), which he wrote in *c.* 1125–30, Ari Þorgilsson (1067–1148) names one source, Hallr Þórarinsson, who was born in *c.* 985; in theory, with just one other such long-lived informant before Hallr, Ari's knowledge of Icelandic history could have extended as far back as the late ninth century.[17] OIce *Edda*, Snorri's name for his treatise on Scaldic and other poetry, claims the same length of oral tradition. In view of such traditions, Snorri's meaning in *edda* is more likely to be 'great-grandmother' (the literal meaning of this word) than 'poetics' (putatively derived from *óðr*, 'poem') or 'edition' (from Lat *edo* on analogy with Faroese *kredda* from Lat *credo*).[18] If the difference in age between a child and its great-grandmother is about sixty to seventy years, then with only two such periods of transmission Snorri could have access to a human chain of memory lasting nearly one and a half centuries. With three consecutive *eddur*, a family memory of this kind would have amounted to more than two centuries. This is the length of time needed to bridge the gap between the ninth century and the period of the first vernacular writing in Iceland, which probably began in *c.* 1049, when the missionary

[16] Jónas, *Eddas and Sagas*, pp. 89–110. See also Dronke, 'Scope of the *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*', pp. 93–111, esp. 106 (also published in *Myth and Fiction*, no. V).

[17] *Íslendingabók*, ed. Jakob, pp. xx–xxix (Ari's sources). See also Jónas, *Eddas and Sagas*, pp. 120–4.

[18] F. Wagner, 'Que signifie le mot "Edda"?', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 18 (1939), 962–4; for *Edda* as 'edition', see A. Faulkes, 'Edda', *Gripla* 2 (1977), 32–9.

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bishop Hróðólfr or Rúðólfr (who had lived in Iceland from 1030 and later died as the abbot of Abingdon in 1052) is said to have left three monks behind him in a monastery in Bœr in Borgarfjǫrðr.[19] After writing sermons (first in Latin and then in the vernacular), saints' lives and annals for three or four generations, Icelanders in the early twelfth century could thus have written down secular poems or quotations from poems which dated back to the late ninth century. In cases of this kind, the more semantic obscurity or corruption there is in a poem, the less likely is its composition in the Christian period. These are the reasons for treating the mythology in some Eddic and Scaldic poems as genuinely pre-Christian.

A controversy surrounding *Ynglingatal* well illustrates the problem of authenticity. Snorri quotes part or all of *Ynglingatal* in *Ynglinga saga*, at the beginning of *Heimskringla*, claiming that Þjóðólfr of Hvinir composed this Scaldic poem for King Rǫgnvaldr Óláfsson of Grenland (*c.* 850–920), an older cousin of King Haraldr hárfagri. *Ynglingatal* is thus dated to *c.* 890. Yet if *Ynglingatal* is Þjóðólfr's, it cannot be preserved quite as he intended it and was probably revised in the course of oral and scribal transmission. Claus Krag believes that *Ynglingatal* is not Þjóðólfr's poem, but was rather abstracted from a now-lost prose chronicle in the twelfth century. He suggests that the first four stanzas of *Ynglingatal* were contrived to represent the four elements, one stanza for each; and he cites in this poem, as further evidence of twelfth-century scholarship, the kennings for the natural elements 'fire' (*sævar niðr*, 'sea's kinsman', st. 4, and *sonr Fornjóts*, 'Fornjótr's son', st. 23) and 'water' (*Loga dís*, 'fire's ?sister', st. 9).[20] Krag points out a resemblance between these kennings and the personified names of natural elements in ch. 1 of *Orkneyinga saga* ('Saga of the Men of Orkney', *c.* 1200) and in a work derived from this chapter entitled *Hversu Nóregr byggðisk* ('How Norway was Settled').[21] Yet the names of the natural elements in *Orkneyinga saga*, including that of Fornjótr, were based on some mythological expressions for the sea, wind

[19] *Íslendingabók*, ed. Jakob, p. 18 (named in ch. 8); and *Landnámabók*, p. 65 (*Hauksbók*, ch. 21): 'En er Hróðólfr byskup fór brott ór Bœ, þar er hann hafði búit, þá váru þar eptir munkar þrír.' For the general background, see [E. O.] G. Turville-Petre, *Origins of Icelandic Literature* (Oxford, 1953, repr. and corr. 1967 and 1975), pp. 70–101, esp. 72–4.

[20] Krag, *Ynglingatal og Ynglingesaga*, pp. 47–59 and 182–200.

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 100–4; also noted by von See, *Mythos und Theologie*, pp. 76–8. See *Orkneyinga saga*, ed. Finnbogi, pp. 3–5 and *Flat* I, 21–4.

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Richard North
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and waves in Sveinn's *Norðrsetudrápa* ('Poem of the Northern Hunting Grounds'), a text of a poet from eleventh-century Greenland; this poem, as Krag points out, does not have the same tradition of Fornjótr as that to be found in *Ynglingatal*.[22] Therefore, as there appears to be no connection between *Ynglingatal* and ch. 1 of *Orkneyinga saga*, it seems that the kennings *sonr Fornjóts*, *Loga dís* and *sævar niðr* in *Ynglingatal* are not a sign of learned twelfth-century influence, but are rather derived from folktale motifs which Þjóðólfr considered to be a part of his mythology. Edith Marold, in her monograph on early Scaldic kennings, shows that *Ynglingatal* was probably composed by the same author as *Haustlǫng* on the evidence of a unique style of verbal metaphor that both poems share; no-one would claim that the fragmented, incomplete and semantically obscure *Haustlǫng* is a twelfth-century forgery.[23] It should be said that Krag, in his brief commentary on the poem *Ynglingatal*, shows little interest in philology and reduces rather than elucidates the many semantic problems of this poem.[24] Thus it is likely that *Ynglingatal* is largely what Snorri says it is, a poem from the reign of King Rǫgnvaldr (d. 920).

A further complication in the methodology of this book, however, is the use of *Germania* and other texts dating from the first century to the sixth. *Germania* is a brief work of ethnography on Germanic tribes which the Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus wrote for moral–patriotic reasons in *c.* 98. Towards the end of this treatise, Tacitus names the *Anglii* among

[22] See *Orkneyinga saga*, ed. Finnbogi, pp. x–xi; and Krag, *Ynglingatal og Ynglingesaga*, pp. 52–3.

[23] E. Marold, *Kenningkunst: ein Beitrag zu einer Poetik der Skaldendichtung*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte der germanischen Völker, n.s. 80 (Berlin and New York, 1983), 153–210.

[24] Krag, *Ynglingatal og Ynglingesaga*, pp. 99–142. For example, at pp. 105–6, Krag takes Dómaldi's epithet *Jóta dolgi* in *Ynglingatal* 5 ('foe of Jutes') to be 'a wholly conventional periphrasis for a Swedish king which fits the alliteration here' ('en helt konvensjonell omskrivning for en svensk konge, som passer med rimet her'); at pp. 110–11, he renders Dagr's epithet *valteins spakfrǫmuðr* in st. 8 as 'clever-performer of the slaughter-twig' ('val-tenens klokfremmer'), without attempting to explain what this might be; at pp. 70–2 and 122–3, he renders *vitta véttr* in st. 21 as 'magical being' ('trolldomsvesenet'), without analysing these unusual words; at pp. 126–7, he explains the obscure *lagar hjarta*, where Yngvarr is killed in st. 25, as an island 'which was named in the prose-text on which the poem is based' ('som har vært navngitt i prosateksten kvadet bygger på'); and at pp. 142–3 he takes st. 37, the final stanza, to be self-contained and thus 'genuinely scaldic' ('ekte skaldisk').

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