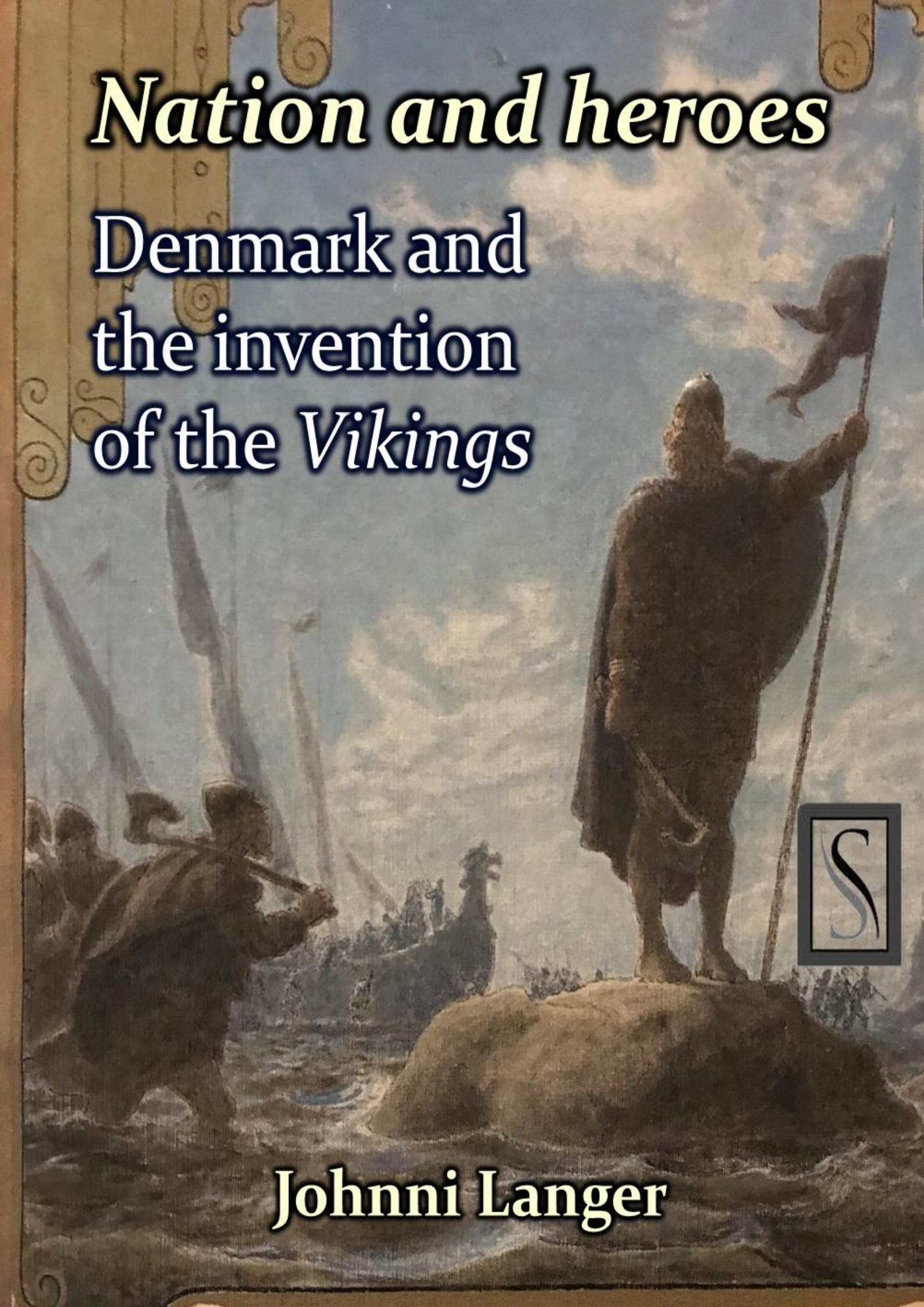
Nation and heroes

Denmark and the invention of the *Vikings*



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Foreword

Dr. Simon Halink, University of Iceland

Few historical phenomena are as tainted by popular misconceptions and ideological appropriations as "the Viking". The construction and cultivation of the modern Viking stereotype – gaining momentum in the early nineteenth century – is riddled with fascinating intellectual paradoxes and reads like a cultural success story, no less exciting than the accounts of the exploits of the historical Vikings themselves. Judging from our own twenty-first-century perspective, this modern *bricolage* has proven of enduring significance as one of the most tenacious "stock images" of our collective, international historical consciousness. And it is the very elasticity and employability of this stereotype – capable of embodying anything ranging from Nordic authenticity to British "gentlemanism", from original chivalry to hyper-masculinity, democratic ideals, white supremacism, primitivism, and repulsive barbarity – that serves to explain its unwavering popularity and sheer tenacity. There is hardly any cultural or ideological/rhetorical narrative in which "the Viking", and everything he could potentially represent, cannot be mobilized in one way or another. In other words: the Viking is still very much *of use* to us today.

In the present study, the inaugural volume in the brand-new *Scandia Monograph Series*, Professor Johnni Langer of the Federal University of Paraiba, Brazil, offers profound and often pleasantly surprising reflections on the historical invention and development of these stereotypical images, be they positive or negative. He clearly demonstrates that their development in post-medieval times has always been inextricably linked with the formulation of collective self-images and national (or supranational) identities. Especially for smaller nations such as Denmark, experiencing political humiliation and profound peripheralization in the nineteenth century, the heroic image of a glorified Viking Age could serve as a kind of comforting compensation, and provide the historiographical "power boast" so desperately longed for by patriots and nationalists.

In Langer's own words, this study aspires to chart the 'process of constructing modern representations of the Vikings, and in particular, the historical idealizations and inventions of

Danish scholars – from antiquarians to archaeologists, from writers to historians' (p. 15). A multifaceted exploration of this nature requires a thoroughly interdisciplinary approach, as well as a profound understanding of early-modern and nineteenth-century debates in the fields of philology, antiquarianism and archaeology, runology, mythology, aesthetics and the arts, museology, historiography, national ideology, and politics. From the following chapters, it will become clear that Langer more than meets these requirements and can thus draw from a wide variety of source materials. By combining his analyses of both written and visual sources, the author provides an important demonstration of 'how visual stereotypes frame people's expectations and also support the construction of popular references about the historical past and society' (p. 16).

Recent years have seen a growing academic interest in the modern reception history of Vikings and the Viking Age. Andrew Wawn's landmark study on the construction of the heroic Viking stereotype in Victorian Britain (*The Vikings and the Victorians*, 2000) paved the way for similar studies in other national contexts and from multimedial perspectives, such as the essays collected by Tom Birkett and Roderick Dale (*The Vikings Reimagined: Reception, Recovery, Engagement*, 2019), as well as more popularizing monographs like Jón Karl Helgason's *Echoes of Valhalla: The Afterlife of the Eddas and Sagas* (2017). Recently, the link between identity formation and heritage from the Viking Age has been addressed by, among others, Sara Ellis Nilsson and Stefan Nyzell (who edited the volume *Viking Heritage and History in Europe: Practices and Re-Creations*, 2024) and, from a comparative museological perspective, Guðrún D. Whitehead (*The Performance of Viking Identity in Museums: Useful Heritage in the British Isles, Iceland, and Norway*, 2025). The list goes on and on, and in the following pages, Langer clearly situates his own contribution within this ever-expanding field of Viking reception studies.

These studies – as well as all the contributions I did not include in this very limited list – serve a very important purpose, which goes far beyond simply pointing out and correcting modern distortions and misconceptions about the Viking Age. Indeed, not unlike publications on Neanderthals and other prehistoric humanoids, every serious engagement with the topic of the *actual* Viking Age is bound to open with several paragraphs or pages of critical engagement with the tenacious stereotypes which blur our common conception of this era. Neanderthals and Vikings, in fact, suffer from a very similar reputation problem. Debunking

portrayals of Vikings as "primitive brutes" on the one hand, or as heroic "noble savages" of the Romantic type on the other, along with myriads of misconceptions and influential mistranslations – especially where "skulls" and "horns" are concerned – is pretty much *core business* for any modern medievalist specialized in the Scandinavian Middle Ages, tiring though it may be. But some of these medievalists – including the author of this book – have grown ever more interested in these stereotypes themselves, their origins and their functions in ideological narratives, thus moving beyond merely *debunking* them towards *analyzing* them as historical phenomena in their own right, and demonstrating how our popular images of the past are always determined by (and adjusted to) the cultural and ideological parameters of our own times.

In the era under investigation in this study, cultural nationalism constituted the primary ideological lens through which different national communities interpreted the Viking past. Paradoxically, it was exactly the bad press Vikings had received since the Middle Ages that rendered them eligible for the role of "national hero" in modernity; their alleged *primitive* character and rebellious spirit resonated – now in positive terms – with Romantic and nativist ideals pertaining to national *authenticity*, individual freedom, and independence. Romantic poets like Adam Oehlenschläger celebrated the Viking Age as the time in which 'it shone from the North' ('da det straalte i Norden') and 'Heaven was on Earth' ('da Himlen var paa Jorden'). A golden age turned through boreal poetry into a 'stick with which to beat the present' (to use Walter Goffart's words): a shining image of what "we" once were, contrasted with a gloomy present, but also containing a promise of future greatness if the honor of "our" ancestors is again respected and restored.

That the glorification of a *heathen* past need not necessarily be problematic for predominantly Protestant nations had been demonstrated by Jacob Grimm, who (for instance in his treatise on *Deutsche Mythologie* of 1835) portrayed the pre-Christian Germanic as a kind of noble proto-Protestants, superior in their pagan worldview to the Catholics forcing their distorted version of Christianity on the Germanic tribes. In Denmark, the influential pastor and author N. F. S. Grundtvig would popularize the idea of Norse mythology as a prefiguration of Christian truths. And in the New World, many Protestants saw in the Norse explorer Leif Eriksson – who actually converted to Christianity – a theologically, culturally, and also *racially* preferable alternative to the 'Southerner' and Catholic Columbus as the

original discoverer of America. In many such identity narratives, the Viking functions as a rhetorically polarizing, quintessentially *antagonistic* figure: *anti*-Southern, *anti*-Catholic, *anti*-foreigner, etc. To borrow Guðrún D. Whitehead's terminology: very 'useful heritage' indeed.

In the Nordic countries, the imagined Viking has played many different roles in the promulgation of collective identities, gravitating between the poles of national exclusivism and pan-Nordic unity. On the one hand, Viking culture was perceived as something the Scandinavian countries had in common. On the other hand, events in the Viking Age could be instrumentalized to proclaim the *superiority* of one Nordic nation over the others; not surprisingly, Icelanders have tended to portray – often in a sarcastic vein – their own ancestors as the *brave* ones who left the comfort of their homes to settle in a brave new and inhospitable world, unlike their cousins, the ancestors of the modern Norwegians, who did not possess that kind of courage and stayed at home. Either way, each one of the Nordic nations developed their own local predilections for certain aspects of "their" Viking heritage, adding *couleur locale* to these reception histories: the so-called *family sagas*, or *sagas of Icelanders* (*Íslendingasögur*) were, for obvious reasons, the preferred genre for national cultivation in Iceland, whereas the *legendary sagas* (*fornaldarsögur*) and the *kings' sagas* (*konungasögur*, especially Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla*) took center stage in Norway and Sweden. As will become clear in the following chapters, the saga about the brotherhood of the so-called Jomsvikings, their legendary Danish leader Palmatoke, and the founding of Jómsburg (*Jómsvíkinga saga*) would exert an irresistible attraction on Danish poets, scholars, artists, and intellectuals of the nineteenth century.

It is in the course of these modern refashionings of the Viking past that the term "Viking" acquires ethnic significance and becomes applicable as a historical ethnic category – not unlike "Romans" or "Greeks" – to Early-medieval Scandinavian culture in general. I will not go into the origin and complex conceptual history of this problematic term, nor its modern development as a floating signifier and marker of "northern" (not even necessarily *Nordic*) character and identity. For this, I refer the reader to the relevant sections in the present study. It suffices here simply to pose the question whether a broad campaign – targeting dictionaries, the media, educators, and scholarly communities – against the uppercase letter V in "Viking", which signals ethnic significance, might possibly help to cultivate general awareness of the problematic, racially-deterministic aspects of this reception history.

In the present volume, Langer focusses first and foremost on the development of a heroic Viking image in Danish national culture, critically engaging (or rather nuancing) for instance Wawn's emphasis on the British origins of this stereotype. In his meticulous analysis of the Danish sources, the author demonstrates how these ambivalent images evolved in resonance with the political developments of this tumultuous age. In aptly-named chapters such as *Vikings and the Slesvig Question*, the interwovenness of the (nineteenth-century) present and images of the past (arising from that same present) is highlighted. Vikings could be presented either as 'stimulators of exemplary behavior for the modern nation' (p. 99) or as reprehensible savages – in the writings of Svend Grundtvig for instance, son of the aforementioned pastor – whose culture was sometimes represented *not* as the cradle of Nordic greatness, but rather as its *decline* and unraveling into barbarism. In a sense, this ambivalence, these two normative extremes of the mnemonic spectrum, are still very much with us today.

What can undoubtedly be called the greatest merit of Langer's study is however its global perspective, and the author's unique ability to link intellectual developments in Europe (and Denmark in particular) to what was happening in the Americas, particularly in Brazil. As the Brazilian "excursion" in the book demonstrates, the interpretation of South American antiquities and alleged runic inscriptions – Brazil had its very 'own Runamo' (p. 69) – was very much influenced by the paradigmatic work of Danish scholars such as Carl Christian Rafn. These little known, to many modern historians probably quite unexpected South American reverberations of Scandinavian antiquarianism, are here made available to an international readership.

I will conclude by thanking the author for the kind invitation to provide a foreword to this important study, which will certainly expand and deepen our understanding of the ideological, historical roots of modern mythologized images of the Viking past. Images that deserve our scholarly attention not just in Europe, but around the globe, now maybe more than ever.

Dr. Simon Halink
University of Iceland

Introduction

Our first exposure to the Vikings came through the movies. As children, we remembered the scene where Kirk Douglas's character, scaling a castle bridge, throwing axes, made his way across the world. From an early age, we were captivated by the imagery of these intrepid warriors and adventurers. We were also soon captivated by Norse mythology. The memories are endless.

In 1998, while pursuing my doctorate in History at UFPR, we conducted extensive research in the collection of the library of the Faculty of Fine Arts in Curitiba, which was located across from our apartment at the time, on Zacarias Square. Amidst numerous encyclopedias, thematic books, and beautiful imported art editions, our contact with the reception of Nordic themes from the nineteenth century began. Initially, this theme was involved with the question of the Vikings in Brazil before European colonization, as part of a doctoral study investigating the history of archaeology in imperial Brazil. This research subsequently yielded our first international article, published in the journal *Viking Heritage* (The Origins of the Imaginary Viking, Langer, 2002). Subsequently, for many years, our efforts were concentrated on the study of primary sources from Viking Age Scandinavia, but since 2018, we have returned to the field of reception. In this work, we revisit the question of the Vikings in Brazil, but this time from the perspective of Danish historiography.

This is the main objective of this book: to investigate the process of constructing modern representations of the Vikings, and in particular, the historical idealizations and inventions of Danish scholars – from antiquarians to archaeologists, from writers to historians. This process has already been deeply analyzed in the literature of the French (Boyer, 1986) and British (Wawn, 2002) regions, but the Danish field is little studied. As our main methodological and conceptual framework, we use reception theory as applied by Scandinavian scholar Margaret Clunies Ross. For her, the reception of a specific theme should be understood as the beliefs of an era, based on social expectations and affecting how the individual received, assimilated, and renewed a given cultural artifact (Ross, 2018b, pp. xxii-xxvi).

A theoretical conceptualization that supports reception is the perspective of the uses of Nordic history. Our main author for this framework is the Danish historian Niels Kayser

Nielsen (2010; 2012), reflecting on how Nordic history was used to promote political ideologies, entertainment interests, identity creation, etc., by both historians and teachers as well as artists, amateurs, and citizens in general. The uses of history, in this sense, would not only be included in academia and teaching but also in people's everyday lives. For Nielsen, the use of history is generally carried out publicly when certain groups attempt to create a particular historical consciousness by selecting, emphasizing, omitting, and systematizing, creating a specific order and interpretation of the past. Thus, for the researcher of the public uses of history, the main interest is to analyze the functions, purposes, and meanings of historical events for specific social and cultural contexts.

Another fundamental concept is that of invention. Here, we do not adopt Hobsbawm and Ranger's framework in their famous book *The Invention of Tradition,* which deals with traditions that were "forged" in the literal sense during the 19th century, but rather with representations of the past, with the understanding of how history was constructed through codes linked to the creative acts of specific individuals in specific historical circumstances. Adopting the concept of invention would thus aim to reconstruct the development of historical consciousness in a given period, whether imaginary, fanciful, or idealized. This approach would support the argument for a continuous and self-critical historiography in contemporary times (Bann, 1994, pp. 13-25).

No less important is our definition involving stereotypes, which emerge in literary, artistic, and sometimes academic representations. Here, we understand stereotypes as simplified, distorted, or deformed representations of reality, with a reductive and subjective character, accepted as truth by a given social group in a given historical context (Edrom, 2018, 93-102; Langer, 2005, 98). Visual stereotypes, on the other hand, are reproduced in the media and art as cognitive tools to be propagated in the social environment, sometimes perpetuating norms and ideologies. Thus, visual stereotypes frame people's expectations and also support the construction of popular references about the historical past and society (Haake, 2009, 55). The stereotype, as a received idea about a group that represents otherness, participates in both the projection of the self and the representation of the other. Here, it is not simply a matter of opposing a supposed "true history" to a "false history" promoted by the reception of modern times, but rather of perceiving resignifications as modified versions, especially those realized

by the visual arts and in art. Before being false, stereotypes are social simplifications (Haver, 2007, 29).

Stereotypes are also based on a part of reality and are a way of understanding the expressions of identity in each era. They are regulatory instruments between national and social groups and are never innocent or gratuitous. One of the main questions historians have about stereotypes is trying to understand how the stereotype acquired official or popular currency and how it was received as truth by its contemporaries. Thus, it is less important to judge the distance between reality and stereotypes than to study the construction by which it was received as truth (Geslot, 2018, 163-176; Edrom, 2018, 93-102).

The primary sources will be explored in depth from 1755 through 1891, comprising the final four chapters. The first chapter of our book provides a concise overview of the Viking issue in medieval sources, while the second discusses the issue in the 17th and 18th centuries. The third through sixth chapters will address references from the 19th century. This division is the main one in our work and was established with two main historiographical landmarks: the first, with the Nordic Renaissance, and the second, with the popularization of the term Viking in the English language, that is, from 1755 to 1891. One detail that should be clear to the reader (and that helped our thematic division) is that there are at least four specific moments of modern Denmark: the 16th and early 17th centuries, with the first research of monuments by antiquarians and the publication of some northern works (Malms, 2018, p. 187-218); the period from 1755 to 1802, forming the initial bases of modern nationalism and the glories of the ancient Norse heroes (Roesdahl, 1994, p. 331); the period from 1802 to 1848, as a consequence of the Napoleonic Wars, the bombardment of Copenhagen by England and the loss of Norway (Hare, 2015, p. 23-29); the years from 1848 to 1864, where ideologies, political tensions and armed conflicts between Denmark's borders with the German Confederation transformed archaeological objects and History into national symbols (Sørensen, 2015, p. 25). These themes will be contextualized in each section that we will analyze in the chapters.

This book is therefore also a historiographical investigation, not only of the historical concepts developed around the ancient Norse (especially the figure of the Viking), but also of how the periodization of history about these peoples was constructed in the 18th and 19th centuries. In the case of our sources, these historical concepts are part of both a *historical culture* (in the sense of historical knowledge developed by artists, writers, and politicians) and a

historiographical culture (the historical knowledge developed by historians, antiquarians, and archaeologists). Alves, 2009, p. 86-89. Here we adopt the framework that every notion of periodization is ideological, historical and cultural (Le Goff, 2015, p. 12; Pomian, 1993, p. 166) and in particular, the adoption of the concept of *chrononyms*: every term involving historical periodization presupposes nationalist conceptions, individual and group values, identities or social paradoxes (Gibert, 2014, p. 14-15).

Thirdly, this research also involved the history of archaeology - the field primarily responsible for the development of the concept of the Viking Age. In this sense, its originality lies in the fact that nineteenth-century Danish archaeology, which specialized in the investigation of the material culture of the Old Norse, was not the subject of detailed investigations, either in Denmark or elsewhere. Our main sources are the works of archaeologist Jens Worsaae, but we will also analyze other publications related to the topic from this period. The main theoretical conceptualizations are works that reflect the practice of Archaeology connected to nationalist issues (Hemmet, 2017, p. 9-32; Hare, 2015; Briggs, 2005, p. 4-25; Gjerløff, 1999, p. 406-445; Hansen, 2000, p. 1-10; Ødegaard, 1994, p. 1-23; Sørensen, 2015, p. 24-47) and the reception of Nordic themes by art and science (Clunies Ross, 2018a, p. 361-369; Roesdahl, 1994, p. 158-172; Svanberg, 2003; Wawn, 2020; Boyer, 1986). Other specific theoretical and methodological reflections will be discussed throughout the text.

Our main research hypothesis suggests that the study of material culture was fundamental to the development of a contemporary conceptualization of the Norse peoples, a concept developed primarily by Danish archaeologists during the 19th century. Thus, we question Wawn's (2002, p. 3) main historiographical basis, which asserts that it was the British of the Victorian period who invented modern conceptions of the Vikings. Throughout our book, we will highlight the diverse representations and stereotypes that first emerged in eighteenth - and nineteenth - century Denmark and were later popularized in England, supporting our framework. In the conclusion, we will provide a systematic overview of this questioning framework.

In this sense, we also intend to conduct a critical assessment of the historiographical production on the subject, especially challenging the conclusions of historian Renan Marques Birro (2013). Some specific points of our critique of the subject are: the main one, that it was the work of literary historian Svend Grundtvig that popularized the term Viking Age, when

his work became known among British academics (Birro, 2013, p. 235); as well as the assertion that the Vikings did not play an important role in the construction of Danish identity during the 19th century (Sørensen, 2015, p. 33). We also disagree with other historiographical points, such as that the Danish term *Vikingatiden* has had a Viking Age meaning since its origins (Birro, 2013, p. 233; Christiansen, 2002, p. 5); that the concept of Viking developed by the arts was immediately assimilated by academic research during the nineteenth century (Birro, 2013, p. 238); the main imagery related to the Vikings (the horned helmet) was created by Wagnerian opera from the 1870s onwards. All these points will be discussed and questioned throughout this book.

For the titles of manuscripts, books, and publications, we have preserved their original designations. For the names of medieval deities and literary characters in Scandinavian languages, we have adopted their English corruption, following a pattern by John Lindow's *Norse Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Heroes, Rituals, and Beliefs* (2001). However, for modern names, we have retained the original spelling. Several designations, terminologies, and proper names will be preserved in their Danish form, respecting the primary sources. For the ethnic group existing in Viking Age Scandinavia, we have adopted the term “Nordic”, and in some cases, Old Norse, recognizing that there are no entirely satisfactory designations (Christiansen, 2002, pp. 1-4). The term "Nordic" here also has a cultural meaning for the modern communities of Scandinavia that had Old Norse as their main language (in the same reference by Halink, 2025, p. 69). For historical themes and content involving the Nordic of the Viking Age, we have used chapters from the book *The Viking World*, edited by Stefan Brink (2008).

In particular, the two main and largest entries in the book, originally published in Portuguese, *Dicionário de História e cultura da Era Viking* (Dictionary of History and Culture of the Viking Age, with a foreword by Neil Price), constituted a kind of laboratory for this present book, providing a wealth of research experience in the Danish region. Three books published in Portuguese by Editora Vozes allowed us to delve deeper and gain diverse academic experience in both European and Danish history: *Dicionário de História das religiões na Antiguidade e Medievo* (Dictionary of the History of Religions in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, 2020), *As religiões nórdicas da Era Viking* (Nordic Religions of the Viking Age, 2023), and especially *Odin: uma história arqueológica da Dinamarca viking* (Odin: An Archaeological History of Viking Denmark, 2024), in which we further specialized in the Danish region. Two

publications also contributed to greater contact with Danish sources: a study published in *Perspective, the art history journal* of the National Art Museum of Denmark (Langer, 2021b), and another in the journal *Nordics.info* of Aarhus University (Langer, 2021d). And finally, we highlight our research in the collections of the National Library of Denmark, in Copenhagen (2018), and in the Lund University Library, in the Scania region, Sweden (2019).

Some considerations about terminology. We've kept the word "Viking" capitalized, following the usual English standard, despite its common ethnic connotation, which will be discussed in Chapter 4. The Norse populations belong to groups of Germanic linguistic and cultural origin, and more specifically, in the Danish region, the *Danes* will be the most prominent ethnic group in this work. We have not adopted the term *Scandinavian* in the ethnic sense, as the term encompasses diverse peoples of distinct, and in some cases, non-Germanic languages. The term Viking in our book has three treatments - as a concept present in medieval primary sources involving a *cultural activity* (which we will discuss in more depth in chapter 1) and over time, it became a *historical and complex aggregator* linked to many other meanings, some totally dichotomous or contradictory: as a nationalist and patriotic hero, a barbarian, an agent of civilization and finally – with Danish Archaeology, it became an *ethnic concept*, which we will delve into in chapter 4 and 6.

Regarding periodization, we demonstrate that chronologies covering the Nordic peoples, from the 17th century onwards, were linked by many Europeans to Antiquity and continue to this day. Therefore, the Viking Age is still considered by many scholars to belong to Ancient History and not to the Middle Ages, as perceived by French historiography and other references (which strongly influenced Brazil). This will be highlighted throughout the book as an important point for reflection.

All translations presented in this book are our own, unless otherwise indicated. We have avoided lengthy quotations and footnotes for ease of reading: all references are indicated using the author-date system and listed at the end of the book in alphabetical order by surname. The final bibliography is divided into two parts: primary sources (publications dated up to 1891) and secondary sources (publications after 1900). Important historical figures (artists, historians, writers, and archaeologists) will have their birth and death dates added immediately after the first mention of their name. For translations from nineteenth-century Danish, we specifically used Groth (1894) and Ferrall (1845.

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1

The Vikings Enter the Scene

Viking. Perhaps no term used in Scandinavian studies has been the subject of so much debate and study. We will now briefly explore some research that attempted to understand the original meaning of this word, dating back to the High Middle Ages. This term has a controversial origin and meaning, discussed by contemporary historiography and used generically with two meanings: *ethnic*, as a synonym for an inhabitant of Scandinavia during the Viking Age; and *occupational*, referring to nautical activities carried out by some Norsemen. The debate over the term's use involves various perspectives on Scandinavian studies, in addition to its popular use in the media and art.

The Origin of the Term

In medieval sources, most current researchers accept the perspective that Viking was an occupational activity without any kind of ethnic identity or synonym for Scandinavian or Norse, especially in historical (non-Scandinavian) chronicles and Scandinavian runic inscriptions, between the 8th and 10th centuries AD. There are several explanations for the origin of the term Viking, concentrated around five main hypotheses:

1. People from the *Viken* region (*Vík* in Old Norse), in southwestern Norway, or simply "men of Viken." According to Eldar Heide (2006), the sources do not objectively indicate a connection with this specific region.

2. People who left the bay (*vik*). It was derived from the feminine term vík, meaning bay, inlet, referring to people who embarked in bays.

3. Someone who is away from their home and would be related to the word *víkja* (to move, walk, trek), which assumes a Viking meaning as someone who is away from their home. In this hypothesis, the masculine *víkingr* is primarily considered.

4. From Old English *wicing* (f.), a person who visited the wic. A contraction of the Baltic word wic –, according to Stefan Brink (2008), a Germanization of the Latin word *vicus* (port, trading place), found in places such as Ipswich, Norwich, and Hamwich. According to Eldar Heide (2005), the term originated in the Merovingian period, while according to Otto Gronvik,

it was borrowed from the Anglo-Frisian word *wítsing* (warrior encamped). This idea is consistent with the fact that many routes were known to warriors. A Viking would therefore be someone who visited these *vicii* or *wics*, later called *wicingas*, *víkingar*. Vik, as a trading place in Northern Europe, was visited by pirates, as many were known as *wic* (trading centers, such as Hamwic in England). As there was significant commercial development from the 8th century onward, these places were initially visited by traders, who later became pirates and plundered these same regions. The expression "go out like a Viking" (*fara í Víking*) may have derived from the locations where pirates were located or where they sheltered before attacking their targets. This is even more relevant if we realize that in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts and Anglo-Latin glossaries from the 10th century (such as in the poem Widsith: *siþþan hy forwræcon wicinga cynn*, since they repelled their Viking relatives), the term wicing is linked to a sense of piracy or plunder (the Saxons themselves were known as archpirata) and was used until the 13th century. However, Christine Fell (1986) notes that this nautical activity was not exclusively related to the Scandinavians, with the semantics of the word being associated more generically, and thus questions the direct association between the words Viking (modern English), *víkingr (*Old Norse), and *wicing* (Old English). At the end of the Viking Age, we have the uses of *víkingr* – in the sense of marauder or pirate; and sea warrior or raider (víking).

5. Derived from the word *vika* (feminine, Old Swedish, unit of nautical distance). This hypothesis was reinforced in 1944 by Fritz Askeberg and later by Clas Brunius in 1982. The basic idea is that the meaning of the word predates the Viking Age, although it was still used by Scandinavians during this period, referring to people who migrated to other regions. In 1983, researcher Av Daggfeldt proposed another interpretation, but still following this hypothesis of its relationship with the Old Norse term *vikja* (shift). For him, the expression Viking meant "the rowers who change shifts," also based on runes found on oars from Greenland, which mention the constant replacement due to fatigue from the activity. The meaning of the expression, therefore, would be much older than the Viking Age and strictly associated with nautical activities during the period of migrations, and would not be exclusively Norse, but Germanic in general (Daggfeldt, 1983, p. 92-94). In 2005, Eldar Heide expanded on this same hypothesis, justifying that the etymological origin (4th century) corresponds to the new technology of sails and oars among the ancient Germanic. Thus, the association of the word "Viking" (man of the oar) with the Scandinavian peoples would be

secondary and later. It was already used, for example, among the ancient Frisians (as in "witzing," 5th century) (Heide, 2005, p. 41-54; Heide, 2006, p. 75-77).

Systematically, we can affirm that the Vikings had two very distinct meanings in the late Middle Ages and early Modern Period: their pejorative representation as brutal and merciless warriors in non-Scandinavian Latin sources (with a greater or lesser Christian religious reference), and, on the other hand, as warriors or pirates in Scandinavian sources (with a positive or negative meaning). Viking violence during the High Middle Ages is currently perceived as a product of its time and of violent societies, both on the part of the plunderers (the Norse) and the plundered (the victims) – the latter creating a discourse that is also a product of their violent daily life, the discourse of the Carolingian elites, and, at the same time, its political use (Rust, 2021, pp. 237-244), or as an ideological and political instrument to legitimize clerical discourses in France (Barrozo, 2020, pp. 127-168). Alleged violent behavior by Vikings during raids (such as rape) is now considered by historians to be a nineteenth-century invention (Sigurdson, 2014, p. 249-267). A rude rapist was certainly an exaggerated invention, but the issue should still involve further investigations into medieval sources in the future.

Vikings in Runic Inscriptions

In runic inscriptions dating from the High Middle Ages, *víkingr* is a masculine term, typically translated as an expeditionary or sea warrior (a person), while *víking* is feminine, meaning military expeditions at sea (the activity). The masculine term, *víkingr*, is used in male personal names in Scandinavian runic inscriptions, or even associated with anthroponyms such as *Toki Vikingr*. In these inscriptions, the word is associated with men who participated in expeditions with others, a collective journey. Certainly, most of these individuals were part of military expeditions, led by a group of warriors (*lið*) under the command of a leader, chief, or king (Jesch, 2001).

The words were generally used to refer to a warrior coming from the sea (*víkingr*, masculine) or to the activity at sea itself (*víking*, feminine). The masculine term was used in inscriptions associated with male and anthroponomic individuals, and the feminine term to refer to expeditions and journeys. Issues such as philology and the origin of the term are highly controversial, and there are also references to the term with words linguistically close to

Viking, used to describe the same actions, but for non-Scandinavians. One of the most common uses of the term Viking in the High Middle Ages is for piracy (Langer, 2018b, 706-709; Lind, 2012, p. 151-170; Brink, 2008, p. 4-7; Heide, 2005, p. 41-54; Daggfeldt, 1983, p. 92-94; Fell, 1986, p. 295-316).

This is exemplified in the runic inscription from Härlingstorp (Vg 61), Sweden, 11th century, which narrates how Toli crossed the West as a Viking (*varþ dauþr a vestrvegum i vikingu*). The Hablingbo inscription (G 370, Gotland) narrates that Helgi had departed West with Vikings (*með vikingum*). Another example is provided by the Bro inscription (U 617), where a woman sponsored the monument for her deceased husband: *saR x uaR x uikika x uaurþr x miþ x kaeti* (who was a guard of Gettir against the Vikings). For Judit Jesch, people of the Viking Age knew of the connection between the noun *víkingr* and the personal name *víkingr*, the latter having positive connotations (Jesch, 2001).

The feminine term, *víking*, indicates the actual expedition, the journey, and only occurs three times in the runic epigraphic corpus: two Danish runestones (D 330 and D 334) and one Swedish (Vg 61). All commemorate men who died departing on the Viking journey (*i víkingu*). The Gardstanga inscription (Sweden, D 330) reports that a group was part of the expedition (*váru víða óneisir í víkingu*, they went far on Viking activities). For Stefan Brink, the most coherent term would be to consider that the Viking (masculine) is the one who was away in Viking (feminine), not having left Scandinavia for a peaceful journey. The semantic component of the warrior sense would be the true origin of the word (Jesch, 2001).

Vikings in Norse Literature

In medieval Norse literature, the term "Viking" began to be used generally from the 7th century in Anglo-Saxon England until the mid-1300s, when it generally disappeared from the Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon languages, with the exception of Icelandic, which used it strictly in the sense of pirate. During this period, it had no ethnic or geographical connotations, being used in Anglo-Saxon and Norse sources to describe any person who engaged in activities such as piracy, sailors, or predators. Thus, in these sources, a Viking was not synonymous with a Scandinavian in general. The chronicler Adam of Bremen recorded the following statement in *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* IV. 6 (1070 AD): *Ipsi enim pyratae, quos illi Wichingos appellant* (They call themselves pirates, nicknamed wichingos).

In Skaldic poetry and Icelandic sagas, the Viking is represented both positively and negatively. In 10th-century Skaldic poetry, we have a few instances of the word being used in a sense of expeditionary forces, but usually referring to "them, the enemies": English, Bretons, or Norse. There are no instances of onomastic usage for the term víkingr in Skaldic poetry. The pejorative context in which the expression is used appears in several poems, usually for enemies or adversaries of a king. The poem *Liðsmannaflokkr*, describing an attack on England, characterizes the Vikings as enemies (hríð víkingar kníðu), as does Markús Skeggjason's *Eiríksdrápa*: "Víking hepti konungr fíkjum" (The king stopped the Vikings with great force). Scandinavians engaged in war with pejorative usage appears in Sighvatr's Víkingarvísur (Faulkes, 2007, p. 47).

But from the 11th century onward, skaldic poetry began to take on a positive meaning, in a very similar way, as for example in the poetry of Egil Skallagrimson. Egil's saga narrates that after the then-boy Egil killed another boy with an axe, his mother Bera declared that he behaved like a true Viking (kvað Egil vera víkingsefni, Lausavísur 3, *Egils saga* 40) and that when he grew older, it would be appropriate to give him a warship, an occupation highly valued in the poetic context. Another poem by Egil has survived, in which he states that he would sail with Vikings on a ship (fara á brott með víkingum, *Egils saga* 40). In the same saga, the term is used again, this time in the prosaic narrative to describe Thorolf's pirate expeditions to Sweden, where the bravery of the warriors is also described in Egil's poetry (gangr vas harðr af víkingum, *Egils saga* 48). Another example of skaldic poetry is the poem *Víkingarvísur*, written by Sigvatr Þórðarson. Although the original manuscript does not contain this name (which was conferred in the 19th century), it contains several references to the activities of the young Olaf Haraldsson (leið vikinga sceiða) while pirating and fighting on the coast of England (Brink, 2008, pp. 4-7; Fell, 1986, pp. 295-316; Lind, 2012, pp. 151-168).

References are also found in Eddic poetry. In Brunhilde's narrative, when she travels to Hel, she is interrogated by a giantess who claims she stained her hand with the blood of men (in her activities as a Valkyrie). To this, Brunhilde responds that she had participated in Viking expeditions (þótt ek værakí víkingu, *Helreið Brynhildar* 3). In the same poem, the hero Sigurd is referred to as a Danish Viking (víkingr Dana, *Helreið Brynhildar* 12). In this sense, medieval Norse literature both uses the term as a synonym for pirate and also highlights martial and heroic aspects of nautical activities, used in conjunction with the same word.

The term also occurs in other Icelandic sagas. In *Olaf's saga Tryggvasonar en mesta* (13th century), Snorri Sturluson uses three variations of the term. First, to describe the piracy of young kings such as Harald and Olaf (vikingum, ch. 15; vikingar, ch. 16; i víking, ch. 52). Second, to characterize nautical actions to the West (vestrviking, ch. 2). And finally, in reference to the famous mercenaries of the Jórmsborg region (Iomsvikingum, ch. 86), also mentioned in Jómsvíkinga saga (Brink, 2008, pp. 4-7; Fell, 1986, pp. 295-316; Lind, 2012, pp. 151-168).

For Lars Lönnroth, the noble hero of an Icelandic saga is never called a Viking (víkingr), the term being tainted with a certain disapproval and typically reserved for unpleasant and brutal behavior, such as berserker or pirates. However, the experience of going Viking would be an obligatory and legitimate experience for the hero protagonist of a saga, after he has left his farm (Lönnroth, 1997, p. 229-230).

Thus, in the medieval prose tradition, the term generally had a pejorative connotation, especially for people who did not have a high origin or social status. This negative view may have been influenced by religious literature, which associated the Viking with paganism. When the Viking was represented in literature with positive connotations (for example, in the Icelandic sagas), it was commonly identified with the protagonist's ancestor (Krüger, 2008, pp. 211-221). However, in any case, the term was never used in an ethnic sense in an Icelandic saga - for example, most of the characters in *Njals saga* do not call themselves vikings (Faulkes, 2007, p. 47).

Vikings in Foreign Sources

In medieval Latin sources, the Viking is almost always a negative figure (Féo, 2022, p. 180). In British and Irish chronicles, contemporary to the Vikings, they are described as pagan, violent, and untrustworthy (Faulkes, 2007, p. 49), and their image as pirates or raiders continued until the 13th century (Christiansen, 2002, p. 2).

Outside Scandinavia, other names for Vikings were commonly used, such as pagans, Norsemen, Danes, Rus, and foreigners. In Anglo-Saxon, the word "wicing" was used among some Germanic tribes before the Viking Age, but during the 9th and 10th centuries, it began to be applied to Scandinavian travelers. In the poem of the *Battle of Maldon* (11th century), the word was used to mean a Norse sailor. There is no consensus that the term "wicing" is directly

related to the term "Viking: was not commonly used in the Viking Age. In France, the Scandinavians were known as *Nordmanni* or *Dani*, and at the same time, in England, they were called pagans or Danes. In Ireland, they were called heathens, and a distinction was made between Norwegians (known as Finngall, "white foreigners") and Danes (Dubgall, "dark foreigners"). In the East, the Swedes were known as *rus´* (Old Swedish: *roþs, rowers) or varjag (from Old Norse væringi). Another common term for Scandinavian was pagan (*paganus*, gentilies, in Latin; majus, in Arabic). It was in ninth-century England (outside Scandinavia) that the term Viking was most commonly applied to the Norse (Brink, 2008, pp. 4-7; Fell, 1986, pp. 295-316; Lind, 2012, pp. 151-168). The term applied to military forces crossing the ocean appears in Old High German and Old English, *sæwicingas*, in a context where the tribe of Ruben crosses the Red Sea (Faulkes, 2007, p. 47).

Regarding the ethnicity of expeditions to locations outside Scandinavia, historian Clare Downham (2002, p. 1-12) notes that the Norse people's origins were a mosaic of ethnicities and local tensions, not always united by the kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden, or Norway. Archaeology reinforces the idea of very strong local ties, concentrated in multiple layers of communities, families, and regions. Regional affiliations were certainly very weak. There are few sources on how the Norse viewed nautical activities outside Scandinavia and, therefore, their perceptions of their homeland. The sources are generally written by foreigners. Another issue is the intense cultural hybridity resulting from the Norse people's contact with peoples from other regions, achieved through successive migrations and giving rise to new identities. The Vikings of Russia and Ukraine merged with elements of Slavic, Baltic, and Eastern society, while in Normandy, they were quickly integrated into Frankish culture. In Dublin, the fusion of Gaelic and Scandinavian cultures was witnessed through onomastics, art, and religion. Cultural hybridization is one of the hallmarks of the 10th century. In other areas, Viking identity persisted longer, such as Iceland and the Faroe Islands.

The Viking Age had a significant impact on many local identities in medieval Europe. Yet, at the same time, this Viking identity was broad and multifaceted, with many local variations and some common structures, such as language. People living in Scandinavia were not aware of our modern periodizations and would not have considered the Vikings crucial factors in their lives, but at the same time, the Viking Age witnessed the Norse diaspora, as well as major cultural, economic, and political transformations across Europe. The success of

the Vikings as a phenomenon was related to their ability to adapt and modify themselves according to local circumstances (Cross, 2014; Downham, 2002, pp. 1-12).

In her doctoral thesis, historian Katherine Cross (2014, p. 47-278) demonstrated that Viking identity was politically utilized in Northern Europe during the Viking Age. During the 9th, 10th, and 11th centuries, the actions of Norse expeditionaries profoundly altered the social, political, and cultural landscape of the medieval world. Essentially supported by genealogical, literary, and historical material from England and Normandy, the historian demonstrates how these two regions differed in their perceptions of Norse heritage and its impact on ethnic relations during the period. The thesis demonstrates the development of a single Viking identity in Normandy (defined in contrast to the Franks), unlike the English area, where Viking and Scandinavian identities developed in different ways and were implemented at different times. But in any case, claims to this identity were not an expression of contact with Scandinavia.

Norman texts define Viking identity within a Frankish context. Genealogical, historical, and geographic boundaries were constructed between Normandy and the Frankish área – but these narratives were not directed at the rest of the Norse world. In England, in turn, Viking and Scandinavian heritage was used to negotiate various forms of relationships. Sometimes it was used to define boundaries within England, but it was also used to delimit the kingdom's inhabitants and external forces. Continuous contact between England and Denmark meant that the meanings of Viking and Danish remained ambiguous and context-dependent. The lack of contact between France and Scandinavia allowed the Normans and their neighbors to impose a consistent meaning on Viking identity (Cross, 2014; Downham, 2002, pp. 1-12).

2

The Vikings and Modern Denmark

The 16th Century and the Old Norse World

After the 15th century, the Viking theme remained circumstantial, with very few literary, historical, or artistic references. During the 17th century, we see a new period of works focused on the Nordic past, especially driven by the surge of patriotism. In Scandinavia, from the 16th century onward, Denmark and Sweden enthusiastically led this trend, precisely because they were in political disputes following the separation of these two countries in 1525 (Menini, 2022, pp. 47-105). The development of nation-states and the prosperity of the urban middle classes renewed historical studies, leading monarchs to seek their identity in antiquity, financing searches, systematizations, and records of monuments. The antiquarian era was born. From the 16th century onwards, Sweden would present the vision of a national history, centering on its territory as the cradle of the ancient Goths (Bauduin, 2019, p. 14). In Denmark, the reign of Christian IV (1588 to 1648) stands out, who, through historical testimonies and folklore, sought an image of greatness for his nation (Trigger, 2004, p. 48-49).

Antiquarians were intellectuals who specialized in the knowledge of ancient art objects and the descriptions of monuments. They were scholars from different backgrounds (from the middle bourgeoisie to the upper aristocracy) and social classes (religious or lay, dilettantes or professionals, doctors, men of letters and science), united by a passion for antiquity and the arts. A new type of antiquarian project emerged at the end of the 16th century: that of national antiquities, affirming the originality of Western civilization. National antiquarians were expected to remain in a given region, seeking to overcome the obscurity surrounding the material past that preceded it (Choay, 2001, pp. 61-94).

The most important Scandinavian antiquarian was Ole Worm (1588-1654), a Danish physician who documented and published a large number of tombstones with runic inscriptions, laying the foundations of modern Runology. In addition to being a professor of Greek at the University of Copenhagen, Worm was also physician to King Christian IV, which explains his involvement in the intellectual and political circles of the court (Bahn, 1996, p. 36-

37). Some of his works contributed to Danish intellectuals' access to medieval works they would otherwise have had no access to, such as excerpts from Icelandic sagas and Eddic poems (Hermann, 2018, p. 722), all of which were translated into Latin. One of the few medieval texts to be translated into Danish in the early centuries of modernity was Saxo Grammaticus's *Gesta Danorum*, produced by Anders Sørensen Vedel in 1575 (*Den Danske Krønicke*). This translation by Saxo can also be understood as a product of the confrontation between Sweden and Denmark in the final years of the Kalmar Union (Bauduin, 2019, p. 14).

In Ole Worm's work, the ethnic term adopted for the people who created the runes was Gothic, but their language was derived from Hebrew. Like the Hebrew letters and Kabbalah, the runes were said to be magical, and Odin was said to be a kind of prophet modeled on the biblical model (Malm, 2018, p. 200). Although Ole Worm's books do not directly mention the word "Viking," they contributed to the creation of some representations of these characters that would later become canonical in nineteenth-century visual culture. One of these is that of the horned warrior. In 1639, a golden horn (originally made during the Migration Period, 5th century AD, to carry drinks) was discovered in Denmark, containing various anthropomorphic figures, symbols, and animals (of controversial significance, but possibly mythical and ritual). After describing images of this object, Worm commented that ancient Danish nobles would wear horns on their helmets, some of various colors (Maxima pars Nobilium nostrorum, fupra cassidem natalitiorum insigniú, cornua gerunt, variis coloribus qvan doq, Worm, 1643, p. 384). This description may have contributed to the future formation of the stereotype of the Viking wearing horns on his helmet, in line with the German iconographic tradition (Frank, 2000, p. 206), which we will examine in chapter 3. Other Danish writers soon followed the model established by Ole Worm and continued with the description of the ancient Norse drinking from skull cups, but this time using them in religious rituals, as in Thomas Bartholin's *Antiquitatum Danicarum*, 1689 (Malm, 2018, p. 206).

Another stereotype that emerges with Ole Worm is one of the barbaric and savage images associated with the Vikings, generated by a translation error: the use of skulls as cups. When the skaldic poem *Krákumál* (12th century, translated into Latin by Magnús Ólafsson in 1632) was inserted into Ole Worm's book *Runer seu Danica Literatura Antiquissima* (1636), it ended up generating the stereotype. The poem *Krákumál* (The Raven's Song), which was composed in the Central Middle Ages and preserved in late manuscripts, contains a

monologue by Ragnar Lodbrok while he is in the snake pit, thrown there by order of King Aella in England.

Ragnar Lodbrok is considered a semi-historical character, possibly an amalgam of several historical and literary figures, with his narratives being one of the most important bases for the romantic figure of the Viking: adventurous, violent, warrior, with a dramatic death (Miranda, 2018c, p. 583).

In the original *Krákumál* poem, one of the phrases alludes to drinking from the horns of bovine skulls, a practice known since antiquity: "Drekkum bjór af bragði ór bjúgviðum causa" (Krákumál, 2017, p. 765) (We will be drinking beer from the curved branches of the skulls). In the Latin translation published in Worm's book, however, the meaning has changed: "Sperabant Heroes se in aula Othini bibituros excraniis eorum quos occiderant" (Worm, 1636, p. 223) (The heroes expected to drink from the skulls of those they had killed at Othinus's court). In other words, from drinking horns, we now have human skulls transformed into drinking cups, one of the main stereotypes that has been perpetuated as an image of violence associated with the Vikings (Faulkes, 2007, p. 62).

The author of the erroneous translation of *Krákumál* in Ole Worm may have taken into account other descriptions, these in the Old Icelandic originals (*Völsunga saga* 25; *Völundarkviða* 24; *Atlamál in grønlenzku* 82) – describing severed heads used as drinking vessels – but which may in turn refer to older stereotypes. The supposed practice of cutting off the heads of enemies and converting them into drinking cups comes from ancient writers (such as Herodotus, Strabo, and Jordanes) and has never been archaeologically proven (Arbman, 1967, p. 14). Thus, we initially have images conceived for Eastern and Asian populations (Scythians, Huns) and which over time were transferred to Western peoples, such as the ancient Germanic, semi-historical personalities of the Middle Ages, or, as in the case we are examining, the ancient Norse.

Over time, the goblet-skull stereotype became an ethnographic truth, also resonating in English-language literature: Thomas Warton (1774) and Joseph Sterling (1789) used it in their works about the ancient Norse (Wawn, 2002, p. 23). The representation also became a canonical image in contemporary visual culture, perpetuated by comics, film, literature, and television series. This representation links the ancient Norse with barbarism, chaos, and the macabre, coming into direct conflict with the classicist values of the 17th and 18th centuries (reason,

sensibility, beauty). How to overcome this tension? The Enlightenment offered two solutions: first, with the idea of the noble savage, with man being good by nature, but civilization corrupting him; second, climate explains human behavior. If they lived in an extremely cold and harsh region, this society would have been harsh (Boyer, 1986, p. 42-45).

The Nordic Renaissance: the return of the Vikings

Objective mentions of the Vikings practically disappear from works related to the Middle Ages or Scandinavia itself during the 16th and 17th centuries, with very little mention or even mention at all. Their full resurgence occurred after the so-called *Nordic Renaissance*, a cultural and aesthetic movement that occurred in the West beginning in 1755, which disseminated and popularized various medieval Nordic themes throughout Europe. The initial concept of the Nordic Renaissance was confined to the Gothic movement and the pre-Romantic era, but was later expanded to the Romantic and post-Romantic eras (Halink, 2025, p. 74).

This initially occurred through translations of the Icelandic Eddas and sagas into modern vernacular languages, promoting the wider dissemination of Norse mythology. The heroes of the sagas are also little known to the general public, but the development of the concept of the Viking was indeed much slower, and at the same time parallel and sometimes dependent on artistic representations of the Norse gods, but generally later. The Viking's popularization as a national hero occurred most concretely in the visual arts and literature, before becoming a topic of interest to academics throughout Europe. The Viking's representation as a national hero among historians and archaeologists was a much later one, as we will see in the following chapters.

The Nordic Renaissance, as an aesthetic expression, was an alternative to the then-predominant neoclassicism, fusing the Enlightenment's vision of the noble savage with the recent pre-Romantic concept of the sublime (Ross & Lönnroth, 1999, pp. 3–28). Sublime art came to be considered within the interest in "barbaric" and archaic poetry of ancient peoples who had not been corrupted by modern civilization, but this ancient literature was now being distorted, readapted, or reinterpreted. Ancient Nordic times were now transformed into perfect times of harmony with nature and the spirit of the people. But despite its populist framework, the ideology of the Nordic Renaissance was initially accepted only by the small

intellectual elite and small circles of the middle class throughout Scandinavia (Filoche-Rommé, 2024, p. 59-74; 2019, p. 59-92; Lönnroth, 1997, p. 234, 235).

The book considered the initial driving force behind the Nordic Renaissance is *Introduction à l'histoire de Dannemarc*, by Paul-Henri Mallet (1730-1807), a Swiss who at the time was a French teacher in Copenhagen. This work was funded by the government, and a novelty for the time was that all inhabitants of northern Europe were to be called Danes (Zernack, 2018a, pp. 281-282). Mallet incorporates several Enlightenment ideals into his work: the noble savage, freedom as a great value, and the idea that Rome would not affect the great North (Spray, 2015, p. 2). Mallet created a model for interpreting Nordic history that combined a European dimension with a strong desire for freedom, placing the North at the center of human evolution. The Old Norse would have loved weapons and war, would be an adventurer, a fighter, a navigator, a comrade, and would meet a glorious death with fame and freedom (Bauduin, 2019, p. 27-29). His view of the Old Norse religion was that it had arisen in the Asian world and that it had originally been monotheistic (Lassen, 2022, p. 10).

In *Introduction à l'histoire de Dannemarc*, we perceive a completely euhemeristic conception of Norse myths (influenced by the preface to Snorri's *Edda*): the god Odin originated in Asia and was an ancient king who arrived in northern Europe in 70 BC. Through him, the ancient religion was introduced to the Danes – they are considered Scandinavians, but along with the Germanic, Gauls, Bretons, and Scythians, they were all members of the Celtic people, explaining the title of a later book by the author (from 1756, in which the mythology of the ancient Scandinavians was considered Celtic, not Norse). Four brief considerations about *Introduction à l'histoire de Dannemarc* are necessary. The first is that there is still no precise chronology of the region's history, nor even details of its material culture and social aspects, appealing to the favorite people of intellectuals at the time: the Celts. The second: within the pattern of replacing neoclassical ideals, but still dependent on essentially Latin sources (the author cites Jordanes several times), the concept of the past (and Antiquity) is inevitably linked to Roman times (Mallet, 1755, p. 13, 46, 51, 178-180).

And third: the main deity highlighted in the text was Odin, seen as the supreme deity of the Celts and Scythians – here, evidently, the author uses the two *Eddas* as his main reference point, where Odin is the most important deity, but this is primarily due to the fact that Eddic poetry was primarily a product of the ancient political-aristocratic elite of the Old Norse, not

because he was the most popular god of the pre-Christian world (Mallet, 1755, p. 192). Mallet clearly wants to create a close bond with his main sponsor, King Frederick V, to whom he dedicates the preface. Another detail that can be perceived in this book was a direct influence of Montesquieu's climate theory. The impetus for war was explained by the harsh climate, with warmongering being the only profession that could be practiced with honor and passion. The courage derived from this practice, in turn, would influence the religion, laws and imaginations of the ancient Norse (Mallet, 1755, p. 252).

Although the term Viking is mentioned in the *Poetic Edda*, it first appears in Denmark through the Icelandic sagas. In a section appended to a Latin translation of the *Saga of Gunnlaug Serpenttongue* (1775), its editor discusses the etymology of the word Viking, based on the Icelandic sagas and Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian chronicles, concluding that the word designates a pirate in a strictly military context. However, at the same time, it could have a meaning of violence and cruelty (Eriksson, 1775, pp. 298-306). Lars Lönnroth points out that this would be the main contradiction in the literary figure of the Viking, from the Middle Ages to the present day – on the one hand, we have great heroes; and on the other, "villains", devoted to all kinds of pirate activity, war, and plunder (Lönnroth (1997, p. 229-230). Thus, we see the emergence of the main paradigm related to the Viking in the Danish area until the first half of the 18th century: it is undoubtedly linked to the main medieval literary body (the Icelandic sagas), rescued by all those who want a heroic past for Scandinavia in general and for Denmark in particular – *but how to remove violence and "barbarism" from their original context? How to create a hero who is not a simple predatory pirate but a warrior with the impetus to be a national hero?*

A partial solution found in the late eighteenth century was to portray those heroes of the Icelandic sagas who did not have a strictly corsair or barbarian role: the kings. And these precisely met the desires of the royalty of the time (from Frederick V to Christian VII), mirroring a majestic past. Thus, we have the poem *Rolf Krage* (1770), by Johannes Ewald (1743-1781), blending Nordic and classical elements, poetically recreating the narrative of one of the country's most famous legendary kings. And within the model of the two main prototypes of male heroes in the Icelandic sagas, the leaders and the warriors (Lönnroth, 1997, p. 231), the eighteenth-century Danes clearly opted for the former.

But another outlet for intellectuals searching for identities lay in Norse deities, which could also be a valuable counterpoint to patriotic and nationalist idealizations. The same writer, Johannes Ewald, authored *Balders Død: Et heroisk Syngespil i tre Handlinger* (The Death of Balder: A Heroic Song in Three Acts, 1784), which was set to music and performed in Copenhagen a few years later. For researcher Julia Zernack, the Eddic poem *Baldrs draumar* constitutes, in its eighteenth-century reception, the counterpoint to the poem *Krákumál* – while the former was a model of virtue and the sublime, the latter appeals to the image of the more violent Viking (Zernack, 2018b, p. 405).

Another Danish history book was published in 1782 (*Historie af Danmark*), this time written by Peter Frederik Suhm (1728-1798). It was the first time a historian included the Norse in a work devoted to an academic reconstruction of the past, written in Danish. Previously, in two works by historian Ludvig Holberg (*Danmarks Riges Historie*, 1735 and *Adskillige store Heltes*, 1753), the historical period begins after the 14th century, that is, at the end of the Christian Middle Ages. It was only with the Nordic Renaissance that Peter Suhm was able to include the Vikings in his work. But unlike Paul-Henri Mallet, who wrote his book based essentially on Norse mythology, Suhm's extensive work (seven volumes in total) encompasses the Icelandic sagas and historical chronicles, especially Saxo Grammaticus's *Gesta Danorum*. Suhm's aforementioned book became the most widely used in the Danish school system at this time (Djudpræt, 2013, p. 8).

Peter Suhm's greatest endeavor was to create a detailed genealogy of his country's ancient royals (in the first volume alone, the term "king" is used 1,751 times), which obviously symbolically reflected the reign of Christian VII. The Viking appears in this book in a dubious context. It can be both negative, killing kings and leaders, and heroic, as in the exemplary narrative of a shield maiden, the famous Hervör, who joins expeditions, or even kings considered Vikings, such as Jokul and Bele, both described as *Helte Viking* (Viking heroes) (Suhm, 1782, pp. 593, 373, 137). But this attempt to heroize these characters was not fully successful, and the problem we mentioned earlier (was the Viking a simple predator or a hero?), ended up having continuity, with the first decades of the nineteenth century giving preference to Norse deities as a patriotic model for the political and intellectual ideologies of Denmark.

Paganism and Historical Periodization

The Nordic Renaissance also contributed to the dissemination of another important concept related to the modern reception of Vikings: periodization, created by the influence of the ancient religious beliefs of the Norse.

Notions of certain types of chronology and periodization have existed since ancient times, including the ancient Greeks and Romans, continuing through the Middle Ages. In particular, the notion of three periods (Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Modern Age) was disseminated by Christoph Keller during the 17th century in several Latin books (Bihan; Matel, 2016, p. 785). In the 18th century, the Middle Ages were seen as a period of regression, with only the first and third periods considered centers of civilization (Pomian, 1993, p. 181-182). The great model for political, moral, and civic examples for modern nations was, in particular, the ancient Roman world: "Knowledge of Antiquity could no longer be separated from the formation of the present" (Ariès, 1989, p. 210). But how could Scandinavian intellectuals follow this tradition if they lacked a Roman past in their lands?

Paul-Henri Mallet, in this sense, was still bound by a framework strictly tied to classical Latin sources. But he would sow the seed of a concept that would become fundamental among Danish intellectuals from the late eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century: the pagan period. In his book *Introduction à l'histoire de Dannemarc*, when commenting on the early periods of Scandinavian history, he gives a very imprecise account of "Temps du paganisme" (Mallet, 1755, p. 157). Soon after, Peter Suhm, in his book *Historie af Danmark* (1782), used the term *hedenske tid* (pagan period) to designate Scandinavia from the time of the Romans until the time of the Danes' invasion of England (Suhm, 1782, p. 81, 208, 490). In the absence of further documentation, historical landmarks, battles, or notable personalities, the periodization is guided by ancient religiosity, separating the two worlds: the one before and the one after the advent of the new religion, Christianity. The word *tid* in this context means an interval of time, a moment (Schiøler, 2018, p. 863), but it is not simply any temporal sequence (as in an everyday situation) but rather an idea of historical duration, defined in relation to what came after (Christianity, *kristelig tid*, as used in Thomsen, 1836, p. 16) by linking it to the word *hedenske*. Thus, in modern Danish, the pagan era becomes a *chrononym* (Gibert, 2014, p. 13), a phrase with a periodizing meaning.

The adjective *hedenske* originates from the Old Norse *heiðinn*, an expression indicating the ancient practitioner of Norse polytheism (Ordbog, 2022). It is worth highlighting here the understanding that Danish authors had of paganism at that time: it was a unified, institutionalized religious practice, with rites and myths common to all society and all the ancient regions of Scandinavia, a kind of philosophical and theological opposite to Christianity, seen as superior. Here, they perpetuate a framework created by medieval writers at the time of the confrontation between the two forms of religion. In summary, we can affirm that the picture was quite different: these pre-Christian religious beliefs in the Nordic world were not homogeneous, either socially or geographically. Although some myths had a pan-Scandinavian scope, the rituals and symbols were very variable for each region and stratum of Viking Age societies (Langer, 2023, p. 125-134; Langer, 2018c, p. 591-592).

Another book by Peter Suhm on Danish history, in fact, incorporates this concept in its title: *Critisk Historie af Danmark, udi den hedenske Tid, fra Odin til Gorm den Gamle* (A Critical History of Denmark in the Pagan Period, from Odin to Gorm the Elder, 1781), whose chronological line is initially demarcated by Odin, a historical king (within the medieval euhemerist view recovered by Mallet), until Gorm the Elder, the last pagan king of Denmark (ninth century AD). A historical study that made no distinction between myths, legends, and history (Tandrup, 2011), all merged with the concept of the Pagan Period.

Viking practice itself is assimilated into this concept, as in the phrase: "Vikinger *eller* hedenske sørøvere" (Paludan, 1822, p. 2) ('Vikings *or* pagan pirates', our emphasis). But above all, the Pagan Period was a time of past glories, in the best style of Roman civilization: "Kun *Hedenold* kan betragtes som nordisk. I den christnede Middelalder pådrog Danmark sig så megen europæisk indflydelse at den nordiske ånd udslettedes" ('Only ancient paganism can be considered Nordic. In the Christian Medieval Era, Denmark was so influenced by Europe that the Nordic spirit was eliminated'. Our emphasis, Christian Molbech, 1816, apud: Gjerløff, 1999, p. 427). The pagan era was transformed into an idyllic and nostalgic time, now within a nationalist perspective of romanticism, where the present sought to rescue the glories of the ancient Scandinavian empires (Mjöberg, 1980, p. 205).

In Molbech's cited text, *Hedenold* is another word to refer to the Pagan Period and was used in parallel with *Hedenske Tid*, as in Petersen, 1876, p. 136, or in Niels Matthias Petersen's book *Danmarks Histori i hedenold*, 1834. Thus, the concept of the pagan period survived until

the mid-nineteenth century, even being interchanged with other periodization patterns that emerged later, until disappearing in the twentieth century. Some translations of Danish and Swedish archaeology manuals still used it in the first half of the nineteenth century (as in hedenske oldsager, pagan antiquities; hedenske tid, pagan period, Thomsen, 1836, p. 57, 32, 37) or even later ('This division of heathen times in the North into three great periods', Montelius, 1888, p. 2).

We have seen thus far how Danish historians established the first form of periodization involving Antiquity. It served as an instrument of glorification of past times, an idealization that approximates the past to a historical and geographical "purity," where Scandinavia would remain isolated from the decadence of the Christian European world, as we saw in Christian Molbech's quote. This process of creating a historical distinction between Denmark and other nations can also be seen in two images, one published in 1756 and the other produced in 1831, both connected by the concept of the Pagan Period.

Figure 1: Anonymous frontispiece illustration, In: MALLET, Paul-Henry. *Edda,* ou Monumens de la mythologie celtique et de la poésie des anciens peuples du Nord. Copenhague: Claude Philibert, 1756, p. 1.

The first is an anonymous illustration used on the frontispiece of Paul-Henry Mallet's 1756 translation of the Edda (figure 1). The first element we highlight is the composition's

central object, a huge block with runic inscriptions. Runic monuments had been part of the Danish national past since the works of Ole Worm during the 17th century, within an antiquarian framework. This type of monument was found throughout Denmark and contained valuable information about the country's history. On the right side, we see two references from the Scania region, in southern Sweden, which belonged to Denmark until the 17th century. The first is an anthropomorphic image riding a beast and holding two serpents. Here, the illustrator drew inspiration from the giantess Hyrokkin, featured in the Hunnestad collection and reproduced in the work *Danicorum Monumentorum* (Worm, 1643, p. 18). But with some changes: the animal has eight legs instead of four; the being depicted now has masculine rather than feminine features. In other words, the illustrator was depicting the god Odin, a mythical figure more in keeping with the ideals of the past and history in this context. At its base, resting on a tree, are two runic staffs, objects known to scholars since the 17th century and preserved in private and public collections in the Scania region (Langer, 2021b, p. 12).

On the left, we see an unidentified female figure, but her attire and sword in hand suggest she is the Roman goddess *Iustitia*, but without the scales. In the foreground, also on the left, a dolmen is depicted. A similar monument can also be seen in the background, at the foot of a hill and surrounded by small blocks. Megaliths, now considered prehistoric remains (emerging in the Neolithic period) and dating back much further than the Indo-European peoples (such as the Celts and Germanic), were interpreted until the 1830s as belonging to this grand concept of the Pagan Period, forming part of the daily life of early populations until the advent of the Vikings. The visual arts would incorporate this ideal, and several paintings combined different periods of Danish history with megaliths (Hedin, 2018, pp. 42-75).

But dolmens, in particular, have been interpreted as sacrificial altars, the center of pagan religiosity, referenced in poems and images and again linked to the god Odin (Langer, 2021a, pp. 15-16). The most interesting element of Mallet's book illustration is three irreverent children playing between the large runic block and the main dolmen. This is certainly an allegory of modern times, in contrast to the moss and grasses that grow on these two monuments, conveying a sense of remote antiquity. Thus, here we have, in the concept of the Pagan Period, everything that intellectuals sought for their idea of nationhood, unifying the present and the past.

Figure 2: Johan Ludvig Lund, *Nordisk offerscene fra den Odinske periode* (Norse sacrificial scene from the Odinic Period), 1831, oil on canvas, 370 × 272 cm, copy of the original from Christiansborg Palace, collection of the Hirschsprung Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark.

The other image is an oil painting by Johan Ludvig Lund in 1831 (figure 2), analyzed in detail in our previous publication (Langer, 2021a, pp. 6-26). Here, we will focus only on its periodization rather than its compositional details. It is part of a set of five paintings reconstructing the religious history of Denmark, commissioned for exhibition at Christiansborg Palace between 1827 and 1843, where they are all currently located. Respectively, they are in chronological order of content: *Solens tilbedelse* (Sun worship, the earliest and most primitive period), Nordisk offerscene fra den Odinske periode (Norse sacrificial scene from the Odinic period, an era covering the Bronze Age up to the Vikings), *Kristendommens indførelse i Danmark* (Introduction of Christianity in Denmark, the moment of Christianization), *Procession ved Kristi Legemsfest fra den katolske tid i Danmark* (Procession on the feast of Corpus Christi from the Catholic period in Denmark), *Luthersk gudstjeneste* (Lutheran service, the 17th century).

The first three are the ones that interest us most. All three contain the motif of the solitary dolmen in the background, on a hillside, or in the foreground—they are the main allegories of the Pagan Period, the symbol of an era whose material culture is still largely unknown and whose temporal demarcations are not yet firmly defined. The second, the one that objectively interests us most at this point (figure 2), blends elements of what we now call the Bronze Age with the Vikings, and its title is illuminating: although the painting (fancifully) recreates a ritual scene for the god Thor, its title alludes to the Odinic period, that is, a period that could be either the arrival of the first Germanic in the Scandinavian region (still in Roman times, before Christ) or the time of the Danish invasions of England (which would correspond in current French historiography to the High Middle Ages).

The pagan period, therefore, became a highly expanded and broad concept that Danish scholars used to try to pinpoint certain moments in their history, due to the lack of extensive research into the relationship between written documents and material sources. But this panorama would gradually change, with the pagan period becoming an increasingly outdated concept over time, particularly with the advancement of archaeology, as we will soon see.

3

The Vikings and Nineteenth-Century Denmark

Denmark's political and social history was extremely turbulent at the dawn of the new century. In 1801 and from 1807 to 1814, Denmark and Norway were involved in a conflict with England and Sweden as part of the Napoleonic Wars. Initially neutral in the great European conflict, Denmark soon came under pressure from British forces in the face of a possible advance of French troops through northern Confederation of the Rhine, heading towards southern Scandinavia. In 1801, the Danish fleet was almost completely destroyed. Hostilities resumed in 1807, with the capital being bombarded for three days, resulting in the total destruction of 300 buildings in the city center, including the University of Copenhagen (Københavns Universitet) and the Vor Frue Kirke (Cathedral of Our Lady), in addition to hundreds of victims (Jørgensen, 2023, p. 277-279).

One of the consequences of the Napoleonic Wars was the near bankruptcy of the Danish state in 1813. In addition to the total loss of the navy and the destruction of maritime trade routes, inflation ravaged the country, and several monetary reforms were implemented, but these negatively affected merchants, businesspeople, and the majority of the population. The government attempted to stabilize the economy, and in 1818, the Nationalbank, a private institution, was created to extend credit to citizens and businesses. In 1814, the Treaty of Kiel was signed, in which Denmark renounced its union with Norway to the king of Sweden, dissolving a 439-year-old political-territorial bond (Lauring, 2015, pp. 206-210).

Because of all this, patriotic sentiments were particularly evident. Immediately after the 1807 bombing of Copenhagen, most buildings displayed flags and banners amidst the smoke. Patriotism manifested itself in literary salons, villages, and homes. The ancient Nordic past, in this sense, functioned as a lost paradise, mitigating the problems and difficulties of the present. Artistic expression reached its peak (*Den danske guldalder*, the so-called Golden Age of Danish art, the first fifty years of the 19th century). Science and technology also improved: Hans Andersen discovered electromagnetism. The sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen revived classicism in sculpture and created the statue Christus in 1833, one of the most emblematic works of this

period, precisely in the newly built Cathedral of Our Lady, destroyed by the bombing of 1807 (Jørgensen, 2023, p. 277-279).

And once again, the Norse deities were used to promote a nationalist identity. In particular, in literature, we highlight the poem *Guldhornene* (The Golden Horns, 1803) by Adam Gottlob Oehlenschläger; *Nordens Mythologi* (Norse Mythology, 1808) by N. F. S. Grundtvig, in which Norse myths were harmoniously integrated into the Christian and Danish nationalist philosophical context; the translation of the *Prose Edda* into Danish by Rasmus Nyerup in 1808 and the *Poetic Edda* by Finn Magnussen in 1822, as well as N. F. S. Grundtvig's translation of Saxo's *The History of the Danes* in 1818.

The 1810s and 1820s also saw the production of highly iconic sculptural works featuring Norse myths as themes in the Danish context: Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg's painting *Balders død* (1817); the sculptures of *Loke* (1822), *Odin* (1827), *Thor* (1829); and the *Ragnarökfrisen* from Christiansborg Palace (1826) by Hermann Ernst Freund. In 1822, an artistic competition on Norse themes took place, involving the entire intellectual elite of Copenhagen at the time, where once again, the deities represented some of the greatest patriotic aspirations (Langer, 2021b, pp. 1-23).

The Old Norse Question in the Early 19th Century

A major issue we must consider at this time, both for Norse myths and for the Viking figure: to what extent are all these aspects generically Scandinavian and to what extent are they regional? This tension was generated precisely by the nationalist impulses of the countries of the Scandinavian region, all involved in reviving their past. This basic tension would generate various types of artistic responses, some even contradictory. In the case of Norse mythology, they were considered expressions of the collective soul and national imagination, and in this sense, all Scandinavians shared a common Nordic spirit (Gerven, 2020, p. 25). A famous example of this was the 1845 student festival, held simultaneously in Copenhagen, Lund, Oslo, and Uppsala, which brought together people from all over Scandinavia around the common celebration of Norse mythology. But despite this general pattern – all studying and promoting ancient deities – each Scandinavian region ended up having nationalistic specificities in this reception. From the late eighteenth century until the 1850s, for example, Denmark publicly emphasized artistic representations of the Norns as

symbols of their nation, a pattern virtually absent in other regions, which clearly preferred deities like Odin and Thor to promote patriotic elements (Langer, 2021b, pp. 1–23).

A second discordant element of the Nordic spirit was the historicist perspective: at various points in history, Scandinavia was divided, fragmented, and disunited, something that the ideal of pan-Scandinavism constantly sought to eliminate. In any case, the tension between the local and the generic was a constant and must be taken into account in any academic approach to this period: "The development of Norse myths and Viking exploits oscillated between national appropriation on the one hand and the elevation of Scandinavian communality on the other" (Gerven, 2020, p. 26). Within all these frameworks, we will now examine the representations of the Vikings in Denmark. As mentioned before, after the Nordic Renaissance, intellectuals faced the question of how to make the Vikings representatives of national heroism.

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Within all these frameworks, we will now examine the representations of the Vikings in Denmark. As mentioned before, after the Nordic Renaissance, intellectuals faced the question of how to make the Vikings representatives of national heroism.

Sagas and Heroes

In the Nordic Renaissance section, we examined how the term Viking resurfaced in Denmark through the Icelandic sagas. Conducting quantitative research on historical and literary works from the late eighteenth century to 1850, we noticed a pattern – the most cited saga in this country was the *Jómsvíkinga saga*. The specific interest of this work is obvious from

its content. It tells the story of the Danish leader Palnatoke, who founded the Jómsviking brotherhood and the city of Jómsborg in the southern Baltic. The Jómsvikings eventually challenged the power of the Danish king Harald Bluetooth and were defeated at the Battle of Hjörungavágr (986 AD). The narrative was translated into Latin in the 16th century by Arngrímr Jónsson and into Danish by Carl Christian Rafn in 1829. The main plot of the narrative was connected to the royal house of Denmark (Allto, 2019, p. 70).

But the Jómsvikings weren't just mentioned in literature. Early in the nineteenth century, an interesting work was published, the first study of the cult of Thor in ancient Scandinavia: *Thor og hans Hammer* (Thor and his Hammer). Its author, Skuli Thorlacius (1741-1815), sought to understand the variety of stones and objects that could be connected to the symbolism of the hammer, within a euhemerist view of this deity while also seeking historical insights from Saxo, Bede, and Adam of Bremen, as well as from an antiquarian perspective. Thus, seeking to understand how the hammer might have been used in rituals, searching for its meaning by studying the weapons and combat techniques present in the Icelandic sagas, he mentions the Jómsvikings several times. They are described as brave and famous (Thorlacius, 1802, p. 70). The book is a good example of how intellectuals of the period combined different types of sources (Icelandic sagas, chronicles, mythological poems), all of which were interpreted as historical. What mattered was their content, describing gods or humans, both with some kind of heroic character. For Ødegaard (1994, p. 4), the study of Danish antiquity between 1810 and 1830 was largely interpreted through readings of Saxo Grammaticus and the legendary sagas.

The "intrepid" Jómsvikings would return in works by two of the most important writers of Danish Romanticism, both published in the same year, 1809. The poet Adam Gottlob Oehlenschläger (1779-1850) wrote a five-act drama, *Palnatoke: Et Sørgespil* (Palnatoke: A Tragedy), and the writer N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783-1872) published a collection of heroic tales in theatrical form, including a dramatization entitled *Harald Blaatand og Palnatoke*. In the latter, in the first dialogue, Palnatoke asserts, angrily and indignantly about some situation (not detailed), that the Jómsvikings had been a band of savages (*vild*), thieves (*røved*), and rapists (*krænked*), compared to the peaceful peasants (*stille Bondemand*). Their dwelling place in the text is defined as a *Vikingsbøl* (*bøl* is an archaic Danish term for a den of animals or unruly people, according to note 3 of the 1891 edition). It was Palnatoke's command that disciplined this disorderly band, under the influence of the god Odin (Grundtvig, 1891, p. 15). In other

words: despite glorifying the honorable leader Palnatoke and his virtues, his warriors still possessed the barbaric reference conferred by eighteenth-century authors. Once again, it is through kings and leaders that some Danish writers attempt to sublimate the problematic of the Viking pirate and warrior.

The translation of the *Jómsvikinga saga* into Danish also followed a similar path in 1829. In the prologue, historian Carl Christian Rafn (1795-1864) defines the sagas as authentic memoirs of Scandinavian history, filled with the "Spirit of the Fathers" (*Fædres Aand*), and something that every educated man and woman, whether scholarly or not, should know. Regarding the Jómsvikings, he defines them as "Daring Heroes" (*djærve Helte*) and their narratives as real events that allegedly occurred in Denmark (Rafn, 1829, pp. iii-iv). Despite being literature, the sagas (along with the Eddas and folklore) were perceived by European Romanticism as authentic historical sources, as they contained the popular spirit of the nations. In the case of the Vikings, this would become a major debate with the emergence of archaeology, with historians on one side perceiving the sagas as historical and archaeologists on the other contesting these sources and considering only material culture. We will analyze this controversy later.

Carl Rafn's work deserves further study. Today, he is well-known among Scandinavian scholars for creating a famous classification of Icelandic sagas, still in use today. But in his time, he became famous primarily for two things: his translations of medieval Norse literature and his theories about the Norse presence on the American continent before Columbus. Rafn was a great enthusiast of the Vikings and the sagas. For him, the literary sources expressed "the Spirit of the Old Norse" (*Oldnordens Aand*), the ancient Norsemen were noble in soul and had numerous honorable deeds (Rafn, 1821, forord). Thus, their history should be rescued. It is also important to highlight that Rafn was one of the founders of the *Det Kongelige Nordiske Oldskriftselskab* (Royal Nordic Society of Antiquaries), which would have an influence far beyond Denmark, as we will see in the section on New England and Brazil.

In his famous book *Antiquitates Americanæ* (published by the aforementioned Royal Nordic Society of Antiquaries), the Jómvikings could not be left out, being cited as the most famous and noble heroes of the Northern region (Rafn, 1840, p. 227). Despite its Latin title, most of the book was written in English, gathering evidence that the ancient Scandinavians had landed somewhere in New England, in the United States. This evidence was of two types:

the Icelandic sagas, which contained evidence proving Norse navigation through the Western Atlantic region; and material remains that served as a kind of marker of this presence (the Dighton inscriptions and the Newport Tower on Rodhe Island, which we now know to be Indigenous inscriptions, and the latter a structure of colonial origin), both in New England. The book had immense repercussions, giving rise to numerous publications and investigations by North Americans, including archaeological fraud. The first record of the term Viking in these parts was due to the influence of Rafn, in a poem by Henry Longfellow in 1841 (Langer, 2012, p. 1-16). Later, we will analyze some aspects of Rafn's interpretations of the Dighton Stone.

But let's return to Scandinavia. Beyond the discussions surrounding the Viking figure that occur in Icelandic sagas, present in the country since the eighteenth century, a new model would emerge in Sweden and influence all of Europe: the Viking as king of the seas. Initially, it emerged in England, with the misinterpretation that the word Viking was a combination of the terms *vi* and *king*, giving rise to the English form sea-king (sea king) (Wawn, 2002, p. 4), which would later be consolidated in a Swedish poem, *Vikingen*. Published in 1811 by Erik Gustav Geijer (1783-1847). In this poem, we see an emphasis on the Norse figure not only as a pirate, but as a warrior who ravages the seas, plundering, robbing, and raping – seen as glorious acts. The seas become the Viking's territory and home, above all else. Furthermore, the poem extols a supposed innate Old Norse capacity for war and adventure, creating a formula for representation in the visual arts and literature: the Viking is an intrepid navigator, reigns over the seas, obtains everything he desires, and his actions are utterly heroicized. But Geijer's poem received limited reception (Langer; Menini, 2020, p. 715).

Geijer's vision would be refined and popularized through another work, this one, in turn, with a far more spectacular impact – it was reprinted in Swedish dozens of times and translated into every major language of the period: we are talking about Esaias Tegnér's (1782-1846) version of *Frithiof's Saga*, the best-known Swedish literary work of the 19th century.. Perhaps the most important is the transformation of Geijer's Viking into a medieval knight: he remains a sea king, but now, instead of raping, he saves maidens; instead of pillaging, he conquers new lands; instead of murdering, he kills with honor. The Viking knight fad was particularly important in France, even creating the idea that medieval chivalry originated in the North (Boyer, 1986, pp. 50-54). Another influence was in the visual arts, propagating

countless images of the Viking anachronistically represented in full armor (Langer, 2021e, p. 141-150).

The poem *Vikingen* was translated into Danish in 1828, and *Frithiof's Saga* in 1826. These repercussions obviously had various effects, but one of the most important was the consecration of the Icelandic sagas as historical sources. This was not limited to Denmark. In 1841, the British antiquarian and philologist George Stephens (1813-1895) translated the Icelandic version of *Frithiof's Saga* into Swedish. Stephens was deeply interested in the Scandinavian past and had a special appreciation for Danish antiquity. He resided in Stockholm from 1834 and, from 1851, was a professor at the University of Copenhagen. From the 1860s onward, he published several studies in English and Danish on extremely important runic monuments. We will return to his fictional work later.

For now, we will focus on the 1841 translation. The medieval version of this saga was important in the nineteenth-century reception because it further popularized the image of the Viking. In a famous passage of the saga (chapter XI), the main protagonist, Frithiof, remained a Viking for four winters and headed for the Bay of Vík (*Men sedan han legat fyra år i viking, for han österut och lade in i Viken*, Stephens, 1841, p. 31). Later, in a poetic passage, the protagonist also identifies himself as a Viking (*Då hette jag Frithjof, När jag for med vikingar*, p. 33). Besides being one of the main sources for the supposed etymological origin of the term Viking (in its reference to the Bay of Vík), the modern translation of the saga contributed to the representation of Frithiof as a warrior-navigator, with Frithiof himself being the son of Thorstein Vikingsson, also a character in another saga. But one detail is crucial in Stephens' edition. It contains several images of monuments, and in particular, an illustration of the so-called Thorstein Vikingsson mound (figure 3). Since Frithiof's narrative originally takes place in Norway and Sweden, the dozens of burial mounds found in these regions were immediately associated with the characters in the sagas. These associations were mistaken, as was Stephens' illustration.

Figure 3: (from left to right): Funeral mound (cairn) identified as being that of King Bele and in the background, the mound of Thorsten Vikingsson (Stephens, 1841, p. 5).

Figure 4: Alignment of stones identified as the place of Assembly (Thing). (Stephens, 1841, p. 1).

Antiquarians were a kind of pre-archaeologist, making important records of monuments and objects that sometimes no longer exist. A classic example is the aforementioned golden horns of Gallehus, discovered in the 17th century and meticulously copied by Ole Worm. They were melted down in 1802, and all current research and reproductions rely on Worm's illustrations. But the antiquarians' interpretations were very limited. First, because they lacked efficient methods for dating and contextualizing the recovered objects, either through excavations (stratigraphy did not exist in this period) or by establishing precise chronologies (periodizations up to the first half of the 19th century were imprecise, as we have seen so far). There were also fanciful analogies: associations were established between materiality and information from literary sources and chronicles. In Worm's time, antiquarians used biblical references, while in Stephens's time, they turned to the Icelandic sagas. When an ancient tomb, an object, or a bog body was found, references were sought in the sagas. Above all, antiquarians were collectors. Some Danish historians had already criticized these practices, such as Eric Werlauff in 1807, who argued that these researchers lacked rigorous mastery of comparative studies of written documents (Gjerløff, 1999, p. 147).

Another antiquarian example in the aforementioned translation of Frithiof's saga is Figure 4, which erroneously identifies the location of the assemblies (things) as a Ship-shaped setting. These monuments are found throughout much of Denmark and Sweden and were originally sites for burials and funerary rites, from the Migration Period until the late advent of Christianity in the Scandinavian region. Some famous alignments, such as that of Ale in Sweden, date back well before the Viking Age. In any case, there is no objective evidence that stone alignments, before and during the Viking Age, were assembly sites (Myrberg, 2009, p. 107).

A final example is the lur, an ancient musical instrument originating from the Bronze Age. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, every lur found was linked to some period of the Pagan Period, even with the Vikings – as we see in Figure 2 (the painting by J. L. Lund enacting a Norse ritual) and in an illustration inserted in the translation of Stephens's Frithiofs saga (1841, p. 23) – which is now considered a historical error. The lur, along with the drinking horn, became a national symbol in Denmark. It was the subject of two works by Lorenz Frølich: an illustration of the god Heimdall, in which he plays the Gjallarhorn in the

shape of a lur (1895), and a mural (a scene from Strandhug, Figure 25), in which a Viking plays this instrument as a city burns, which we will discuss again in the final chapter. And also in the *Lurblæserne* sculpture, in front of Copenhagen City Hall (1914), sculpted by Siegfried Wagner. The artistic reference would later create other fantasy images of the Viking, but this time, much more popular. We are referring to the horned helmet, which we will discuss in the next section.

The Invention of the Viking with Horns and Wings

The various editions of *Frithiof's Saga* by Esaias Tegnér were also accompanied by numerous illustrations, created by Swedish artists Anders Ludquist, Johan Holmbergsson, and Hugo Hamilton in the 1820s and 1830s. They feature the Viking wearing helmets with wings on the sides. This pattern may have been influenced both by the 18th-century Ossian cycle (depicting Celtic heroes with enormous eagle wings) and by the German iconographic tradition, depicting the ancient Germanic with wings on their heads from the 18th to the late 19th centuries (Langer, 2021e, pp. 143-150). In German visual arts, the heroic leader Arminius was especially depicted with this equipment. This would also become a significant trend in Scandinavian art – leaders, kings, heroes, and Odin would wear helmets with large wings. This pattern highlights the main character of the composition, as the other warriors or gods are generally not wearing the same equipment, as we see in the Danish painting by Johan Lund: *Nordisk offerscene fra den Odinske periode* (1831, figure 2, with the Viking leader in the background).

But if the Vikings with wings on their helmets were a Swedish creation, the most important and widespread visual stereotype, the horned helmets, was a Danish invention. Contrary to popular and academic views in general, this stereotype was not born with the German operas of the 1870s. An unpublished drawing is currently in the collection of the National Gallery of Denmark (figure 5). It was created in 1842 by the most famous Danish illustrator of the 19th century, Lorenz Frølich (1820-1908), titled *Frithiof på havet* (Frithiof at sea). Both the medieval prose version (translated into Danish in 1826 and 1838, in addition to the commented Swedish translation of 1841) and Tegnér 's poetic version (dozens of Swedish editions, English translations in 1836 and 1841) have a section on the protagonist's nautical crossing to Orkney, which may have influenced the artist in the theme of this drawing.

Figure 5: *Frithiof på havet* (Frithiof at Sea), Lorenz Frølich, 1842, drawing, SMK, National Gallery of Denmark (KKSgb8130). Public domain: https://open.smk.dk

The central theme of the composition is the representation of Frithiof, who stands proudly on the prow, with one hand pointing out to sea and the other about to throw a spear. He has fair hair and a great nobility in his gaze and bearing. This theme of the hero or leader of the Norse expedition standing at the front of the ship, indicating direction, about to throw a weapon, or simply standing guard, was an iconographic tradition related both to the character Frithiof (in the painting *Frithiof dreper to troll på havet,* Frithiof kills two trolls at sea, by Carl Peter Lehmann, 1826) and to dozens of images of the Vikings in general (*Vikings*

heading for land by Frank Dicksee, 1873; *Nordmennene lander på Island år 872,* by Oscar Wergeland, 1877). This scene, in particular, evokes the ideal of the Viking as king of the seas, triumphant and heroic in his military conquests or discoveries of new lands.

In Frølich's drawing, this is also denoted, but with a twist: he is fighting a danger at sea, which in literary accounts is a sea monster (*Hafs hval*, sea whale, in Esaias Tegnér, 1825; *Stor hval*, great whale, Stephens, 1841, p. 19). The drawing does not objectively characterize this animal, but rather depicts two winged beings, one with bird wings and the other with bat wings, both with diabolical features. Perhaps Frølich was influenced here by Tegnér 's version, when he mentions a pair of trolls (*ett trollpar*). Beside them, two other small, devilish (wingless) beings attempt to climb the ship's railing. Another element that may have contributed to the artist's creation of this malevolent and diabolical atmosphere surrounding the ship is the narrative's description of Frithiof's journey as having been bewitched by two women. Stephens (1841, p. 14) was more faithful to the original manuscript, using the words *Gamla galdra* (ancient enchantment), and in turn, Tegnér was influenced by the late medieval reference, using *Trolldom* (witchcraft), which certainly made all the difference in the production of the image.

Figure 6: *Udkast til Frithiof på havet*, Lorenz Frølich, KKSgb8129, pencil, 180mm (h) x 200mm, SMK Open: https://open.smk.dk/en/artwork/image/KKSgb8129?q=winter&page=1

The vessel is fanciful, both for its diminutive size and its shape, with its draft and bow lines bearing no relation to ancient ships. This is explained by the complete lack of knowledge of the Norse nautical material culture, research into which only began after the discoveries of Nydam (1869) and Gokstad (1880). The crew's clothing, likewise, is imagined based on anachronistic references. The most important detail is the helmets of three crew members, which feature horns, some quite prominent. This is the first iconographic representation of this type of equipment related to the ancient Norse. According to the caption contained in the drawing, it was made in Munich in 1842. Between 1843 and 1846 the artist was completing an

internship and training in the cities of Dresden and Munich, in Germany, where he received instructions directly from teachers who were already producing paintings with the theme of ancient Germanic warriors with horned helmets (Djupdræt, 2022, p. 181-197).

Some research has already indicated that an iconographic tradition associated this type of equipment with Germanic warriors existed since the eighteenth century (Frank, 2000, pp. 199–208). However, Frølich's drawing was never published, and we do not know for sure how it spread. In any case, it must have been extremely restricted to the circle of artists and intellectuals in Copenhagen, as it was produced in Germany and is currently in the collection of the SMK (National Gallery of Denmark). The first widely circulated image associating the Norse with horned helmets was published in a popular book in France on myths in general: *La mythologie illustrée* (1851), which included an illustration of Ragnar Lodbrok wearing a horned helmet, which we analyze in detail in an article (Langer, 2021e, pp. 167–171).

Comparing these two images, we see some differences. The Ragnar of the French illustration denotes an ideal of bestiality, where the hero possesses elements of courage but is barbaric and primitive. Frithiof's helmet, by the Danish artist, lacks horny appendages, but only some members of his crew. Perhaps here, we see a certain tendency on Frølich's part to follow the most influential writers of his country, by differentiating the leadership of his warriors, as we saw in N. F. S. Grundtvig with his Palnatoke and the Jómvikings. Thus, Frithiof retains his nobility, civility, and leadership, while his followers are more disorderly and barbaric. This can be confirmed by a possible sketch or study for this image, also done by Frølich: *Udkast til Frithiof på havet* (Draft of Frithiof at sea, SMK, figure 6). It contains two interspersed images of Frithiof at the bow, one with his hand open and pointing upward, and the other with the same hand holding and pointing a spear (as in the final version we examined). The crew members, however, are different: two are bearded, wearing heavy battle gear, and wearing horned helmets. In the final version, the artist left the warriors beardless and weaponless, all in a state of astonishment. But the idea we follow – a noble leader amid savages – is undoubtedly also present in this sketch.

And comparing the two types of helmets with appendages (horned and winged), we also observe differences. Between the 1820s and 1850s, neither type of equipment was found in the same image of Norse people. While the winged helmet was reserved only for leaders or principal gods, the horned helmet was depicted only on warriors and auxiliaries, never on

leaders, kings, or heroes. This explains, in the Danish area, the dichotomy between nobility and barbarism present in literature. But after the 1860s and 1870s, in all European iconographic traditions, social differences and boundaries no longer existed, with the representation of the horn common to any Norse social category, as in the oil on canvas painting *The First Cargo* by N. C. Wyeth (1910), where the leader and crew members share the same apparatus. Thus, the horn helmet becomes an inseparable element of the Viking as an ethnic category, which we will discuss later.

With the dozens of publications involving sagas and heroes between 1810 and 1850, Old Norse definitely became fashionable among the Danes, and as a result, new word combinations derived from Viking were created: *vikingetog* (Viking expedition), *vikigstelskab* (Viking feast), *vikingeflokke* (band of Vikings), *vikingebravoure* (Viking bravery), *vikingebal* (Viking feast), *vikinghelt* (Viking hero), *vikingetid* (Viking period), among others. Although these terms appeared in journals and books between 1810 and 1850, they were only included in dictionaries in the late 1880s (Larsen, 1888, p. 665). Among all these words, one is special: *vikingetid*. In the next section, we will examine the embryonic process that led to the creation of the Viking Age.

The Emergence of the Viking Period

The first reference to a periodization explicitly using the Vikings was by historian Eric Christian Werlauff (1781-1871). He was a librarian at the University of Copenhagen from 1823 to 1835 and a professor there from 1836 to 1867. None of his four books addressed the issue of the Old Norse language, only in articles.

In 1837, the same year he became rector of the aforementioned university, Werlauff published a study in the journal *Annaler for Nordisk Oldkyndighed* (Annals of Nordic Antiquity) on the ancient Norse presence in the Iberian Peninsula. He initially put forward the idea that migration out of Scandinavia was due to demographic factors that occurred in ancient times (*Hedenold*, which, as we have seen, was another term for the Pagan Period). It is worth noting that Werlauff uses the term Old Norse (*gamle Nordboer*) to describe the various types of Scandinavians who left the region: conquerors (*erobrere*), Vikings (*vikinger*), mercenaries (*leietrop*), merchants (*Kjöbmænd*), a very current concept, with Viking being one of the

occupational activities and not a general synonym for Norse or Scandinavian, so much so that he used the terms *norske vikinger* (Norwegian Vikings) and *vesterviking* (Western Viking).

Commenting on the ancient Germanic as having the same origin as the Norse, Werlauff used the term *Folkevandringens Periode* to refer to the Migration Period. And when commenting on a supposed similarity between the Goths from different parts of Europe, the author notes that it was only in the later Viking Period (*senere Vikingperiode*) that warlike and peaceful connections between the peoples of Scandinavia and Iberia occurred, citing the Crusades as a milestone. Here, Werlauff certainly used the term Viking to refer to warriors who were still active in the 11th century, hence the use of the Crusades as a reference. *Vikingperiode* here does not have a precise chronological meaning. The same word was used again when this author asserts that the Norse incursions into Iberia came solely from sources from this location, occurring in the Viking period, that is, at the time of the nautical expeditions of the 8th and 9th centuries. In the fifth section of the article, he used the term *Vikingtiden* only once: the ancient Norse would have preferred to travel by sea rather than by land to reach the Holy Land, as they did in the Viking era (Werlauff, 1836-37, p. 4, 18, 21, 22, 32, 48).

As we have seen for the concept of the Heathen Period, the noun *Tid* can be used to mean event, time, duration, specific hour, or moment (Ordbog, 2022). In the context of Werlauff's article, it can simply be a synonym for period, the expression (*periode*) he used elsewhere in the text. We must bear in mind that by 1837, there was still no rigorous chronology or periodization covering the piracy, colonization, material culture, or history of the Norse populations between the 8th and 11th centuries AD. *Vikingtide*, in this case, attempted to situate the reader in a more recent history of the Heathen Period, a concept more widely used at that time. Here, we disagree with researchers who have attempted to link the use of this term to the Viking Age, from its beginning in the 19th century (Birro, 2013, p. 233; Christiansen, 2002, p. 5).

Reinforcing our interpretation is the fact that the term *Vikingtiden* was translated into other European languages in the sense we have described: *The time of the Vikings* (Worsaae, 1852, p. xxi); *Viking Period* (Worsaae, 1866, p. 103); *Viking Period* (Stephens, 1866, p. 30, 360); *Époque des Vikings* (Worsaae, 1880a, p. 101); *Temps des Vikings* (Worsaae, 1880a, p. 105). It was only in the late 1880s that the word Vikingetiden began to have a more delimited and specific meaning: *Viking Age* (Montelius, 1888, p. 155, 157, 196); "Viking-tiden (...) The Wiking Age"

(Larsen, 1888, p. 665). As we will see in chapter 6, with some publications in English after 1891, the meaning of Viking Age began to predominate and this meaning became the majority even in Danish, as we can see in current Danish-British dictionaries regarding the term in question (Vikingetiden: the Viking Age, Schiøler, 2018, p. 927).

Returning to Eric Werlauff's article, we see that he had a positive image of the Vikings, as they were part of a major process of connecting the Norse with continental Europe, concluding the text with some of the unions of the Danish and Spanish royal houses of the 13th century (Werlauff, 1836-37, pp. 60-61). But some Danish historians considered the Vikings merely as pagan pirates, troublemakers, and those who brought chaos to the Christian world (Paludan, 1822, pp. 2, 51, 187, 196). This would be a division that would generally persist among Danish scholars throughout the nineteenth century: those who study Antiquity (in the concept of the Pagan Period, the antiquarians) exalt the Old Norse; those who study the Middle Ages (which in Scandinavia in general, as already mentioned, begins with Christianization, after the 11th century) will glorify the heroes, kings, and saints of Christianity and disdain the deeds of the ancient Danes. But from the 1830s onward, a new group of scholars emerged who sought to place the Vikings on a new level, both in terms of research and historic celebration – these are the *archaeologists*. In the next chapter, we will follow the birth of Danish archaeology.

4

The Vikings and Danish Archaeology

Since the 17th century, expeditions had been taking place to collect objects of material culture (such as coins, weapons, and utensils), which increased the organization of private collections related to Danish kings and aristocrats. With the successive influence of the ideals of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment on the middle class, the early nineteenth century in Europe witnessed a new idealization and importance for antiquities – that historical monuments should be preserved by the state. The Romantic Movement and the Industrial Revolution also granted new values to aesthetic sensibility and the environment in which monuments were located. Ruins and ancient buildings became counterpoints to the natural landscape, signs of new picturesque values, symbols of human destiny and moral values. Recent civilizing projects could not ignore their material past: it became imperative that the State create mechanisms for the preservation of ancient monuments, which are in danger due to the advance of progress: "It is the march of history, the idea of progress and the perspective of the future that determine the meaning and values of the historical monument" (Choay, 2001, p. 137).

Precisely in this context, in 1806, historian Rasmus Nyerup published the book *Oversyn over Fædernelandets Mindesmærker fra Oldtiden* (Overview of the Fatherland's Monuments from Ancient Times), in which he called on the government to create a national museum of antiquities to preserve the monuments and ancient objects that were being uncontrollably destroyed. His model was the French museum opened after the Revolution in Paris (Trigger, 2004, p. 73). It is also important to consider the enormous impact of the loss of the two golden horns of Gallehus, containing runic inscriptions and engravings, found in the 17th and 18th centuries and melted down in 1802 by an employee of Christianborg Palace in Copenhagen.

These factors, combined with the great public interest in such remains and the growing nationalist interest in the study and conservation of these objects, gave rise to the *Kongelig Commission til Oldsagers Opbevaring* (Royal Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities) in 1807, with Nyerup appointed secretary. In 1819, the *Oldnorsdiske Museum* (Museum of Nordic Antiquities) was inaugurated, serving as a public facility in the Trinitatis Church in

Copenhagen, and in 1832, it was moved to a building near the royal palace. Within the Danish romantic-nationalist project, there was a tension between the desire to obtain artifacts and the imaginative transcendence of these same objects: artists often interpreted the past more fancifully than historians and archaeologists of the period. Nordic themes, however, were of common interest to those dedicated to art and history (Rix, 2015, p. 435; Monrad, 1990, p. 33).

Thomsen's Periodization

The first research involving an autonomous and systematic study of prehistory within archaeological history was the work of Christian Jürgensen Thomsen (1788-1865). Influenced by early antiquarian research and the evolutionary concepts of the Enlightenment, he is considered a revolutionary in material research. His main basis for a chronological criterion arose from his collections of Roman and Scandinavian coins. Using dating criteria and the artistic styles of these materials, he was able to derive a first criterion for dating. From numismatics, he began to devise chronologies for artifacts in general (Trigger, 2004, p. 71-72).

In 1816, Thomsen was invited by the Royal Committee for the Preservation of Antiquities to catalog the royal collection and prepare it for public display. Among the many problems he faced was dividing chronologically and subdividing the prehistoric period, for which he proposed three phases, known in English as the Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages. He was influenced by Lucretius's three-age scheme, but his notion was not mere speculation but rather a hypothesis based on morphological patterns supported by physical evidence (Trigger, 2004, p. 73).

In this way, it was possible to bring order to chaos, organize objects in sequence, and group them according to a period. His scheme is still used by scholars today and constitutes the first relative dating system in archaeology, but it clearly had limitations at the time. Objects could not be dated with extreme precision, a task that became possible only in the 21st century, with the dating of organic materials through statistical context and using physicochemical methods (absolute dating) (Bahn, 1996, p. 90).

Thomsen only systematized and published his research in 1836, with the book *Ledetraad til Nordisk Oldkyndighed* (Guide to Nordic Antiquities). The work was organized into seven parts: a summary of Old Norse literature (written by historian Niels Matthias Petersen); an overview of Nordic monuments and antiquities; objects from the Pagan Period; the different

divisions of the Pagan Period; inscriptions and writings from antiquity and the Middle Ages; coins; discovery and preservation of antiquities; material from the Royal Nordic Society of Antiquaries.

The first part discusses the importance of Old Norse literature (*Oldnordiske Literaturs*), which would have preserved the oral tradition, originally being a folk literature. Preserving and understanding this material would be important for understanding the religion and history of the inhabitants of the North and ancient monuments, but also for understanding the ancient Germanic people (Thomsen, 1836, pp. 1, 3-4, 8). Niels Petersen rehabilitates the understanding of Danish historians in granting historical importance to the Eddas and the Icelandic sagas, but now he adds a new methodological element – chronology: "*Med Tids regningen fødtes Historien (...) Barnet var blevet til Mand*" (1836, p. 10). (With the passage of time, history was born (...) The child had become a man). History would essentially be formed by narratives of events from a given region, connected and arranged in parts, which the historian should harmonize in a methodical organization (p. 11).

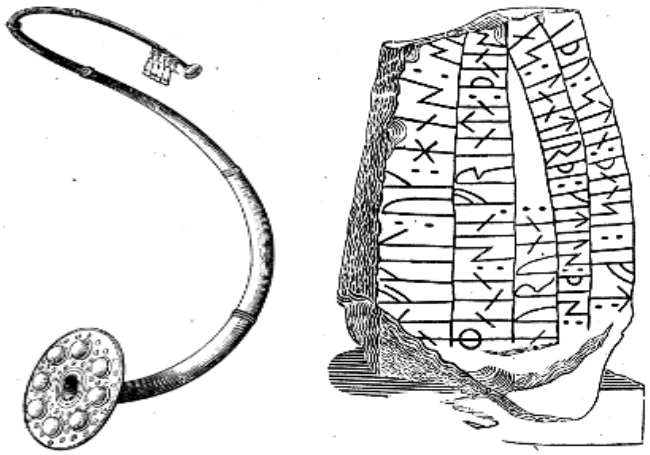


Figure 7 (from left to right): Lur; runestone. Thomsen, 1836, p. 48. **Figure 8**: Egå runestone (DR 107). Thomsen, 1836, p. 76.

Figure 9: Runestone, unidentified. Thomsen, 1836, p. 77. **Figure 10**: Lewis chess piece, Scotland. Thomsen, 1836, p. 67. With the exception of the chess piece, the author did not include the location or region of the artifacts, nor their provenance.

In the second section, Thomsen provided an overview of the monuments and advocated their scientific study. These remains could be used to understand major issues, such as the colonization of Greenland or the first Icelandic settlements, and especially the runic inscriptions. But the main focus is on the burial mounds and burial sites, which preserved countless objects of the most varied types. Thomsen proposes some classifications for these remains. He then also proposes systematizations for the types of stone monuments in general: burials, assemblies, combats, sacrifices, and stone circles, among others. Objects from the Pagan Period were classified according to their composition: stones or metals; ceramic urns; remains related to pagan worship; weapons and war-related objects; and ornaments (Thomsen, 1836, pp. 27-57). In this particular section, the researcher was more interested in presenting morphological patterns than in chronological ones per se. For example, in the subsection on weaponry, he inserted an illustration of a bronze sword next to an iron one, denoting their differences in shape. Regarding the lur, he inserted an illustration (figure 7) and described it as having been found alongside bronze swords, which meant that they were from the earliest period of paganism ("*og henhøre altsaa til Hedenoldens ældre Periode*", p. 48).

In the framework of historiography, the most important section of the book is that on periodization. Thomsen first presented his famous chronological division. Right from the start, he announces that the main demarcation was the Christian period of the Middle Ages,

commenting on Antiquity (p. 57). His demarcation with objects would be merely conjectural, intended for future verification, rectification, or confirmation. The three periods would be: *Steenalderen* (Stone Age); *Broncealderen* (Bronze Age); *Jernalderen* (Iron Age). The noun *alder* denotes a temporal demarcation, a person's age, a period of history, or an epoch (Ordbog, 2022). Its English equivalent is Age and Era (Schiøler, 2018, p. 15). Traditionally, Neo-Latin languages translate Thomsen's periodization (the term *alderen*) as in Portuguese *Idade* e *Era* (*Edad*, Spanish; *Età*, Italian), and in French it is similar to English (*Âge*), and can also be translated as Age or Era. However, in his text, he also describes each division as *tidsaldere* (Thomsen, 1836, p. 57), combining the term *tid* (which we have already discussed) with alder, in the sense of the Latin *Æra*—which in Scandinavian languages was also incorporated with the word *epoke* (Ordbøkene, 2022). Therefore, we understand that the original meaning of his division can be interpreted as both Age and Era, denoting special divisions for the historical period addressed.

Of his three divisions, the most important is the Iron Age, from which he believes the ancient Germanic migrated, bringing this technology from the time of Julius Caesar. Thomsen never defines dates or cites more specific timeframes. For the late Iron Age, he only mentions the fact that the artistic style of the serpent, found on runestones, transformed into the dragon motif in the early Christian era – but at no point does he determine any more specific dating (Thomsen, p. 61, 63). In the section on medieval objects, he illustrates his work with several images of Lewis's famous chess set (figure 10). There is no specific periodization for the Vikings; in fact, they are not even mentioned in the sections on objects from each period, only in the first section on Old Norse literature (p. 16). Two runestones are mentioned in the section on writing and inscriptions, but without any information about their provenance, dating, or Iron Age classification (figures 8 and 9). From the images, we deduce that one of them is the Egå runestone (DR 107), but we haven't identified the other. Thus, the Vikings were included in his book merely as a literary theme, without yet presenting any paradigm or framework for the study of their material culture. This would only be developed with his main disciple, as we will see shortly.

Thomsen intended to demonstrate his new chronological methodology, but without providing further details. His book was crucial because it defined a new way of dating material remains, without necessarily linking them to or relying on literary and documentary sources.

However, research involving the Vikings would only take a more concrete direction with the work of another Danish archaeologist, Jens Worsaae. This would be the beginning of a new phase in archaeological thought and Nordic studies. But another important detail also occurred from the perspective of the history of archaeology: Thomsen was a theoretician, while Worsaae was an empiricist. This made all the difference in the context of that period. And it would take on a very special dimension with the debate on inscriptions, which we will address below.

Inscriptions: The Clash Between Historians and Archaeologists

The Danish scientist Jens Jacob Asmussen Worsaae (1821-1885) is remembered today as the world's first professional archaeologist and one of the first to define modern scientific archaeology. He tested and verified in the field Christian Thomsen's three-age theoretical model, one of the first relative dating methods. Jens Worsaae was interested not only in artifacts and their chronology, but also in their stratigraphical context and in the use of interdisciplinary research – an exceptional standard for the period. He was also the first professor of archaeology at the University of Copenhagen (Trigger, 2004, pp. 78-80).

Worsaae was trained early on by Thomsen, volunteering for research at the then Royal Collection of Antiquities (later transformed into the National Museum of Denmark) during the 1830s. During this period, the study of the country's ancient monuments, such as megalithic structures and tombs, began to intensify (Hare, 2015, p. 17). The first archaeologists involved in the study of Danish antiquity were indeed Thomsen and Worsaae, both affiliated with the Royal Museum – they believed that material remains should speak for themselves, without relying on literature. However, most historians associated with the University of Copenhagen during the 1820s and 1830s argued that antiquity should be studied first through written documents, a view that written history was superior to material culture (Gjerløff, 1999, p. 445).

In this context, ancient monuments were studied in two ways: records and excavations were conducted, using Icelandic sagas and medieval chronicles as the primary basis (by antiquarians, see figures 3 and 4); or, monuments were considered directly based on written records, without the need for field verification (by historians). On the other hand, excavations and records took into account Thomsen's chronological system and stratigraphy (by

archaeologists). This difference led to a major clash in the 1830s: historians rejected the value of materiality, while archaeologists disregarded literary documents. One example was the historian Eric Christian Werlauff, the creator of the Viking Period, who was a professor of Ancient History and Runology at the University of Copenhagen – whose classes focused solely on antiquarian records, chronicles, and sagas. With Christian Molbech's classes, however, we see the opposite: a disregard for the historical value of literary sources and the material study of antiquity as the only reliable basis for identifying the past of the ancient Norse peoples. Interestingly, at this same time and institution, classes on Norse mythology were held alongside this controversial debate, demonstrating the common ground in the reception of Norse themes (Gjerløff, 1999, p. 419-420).

This dichotomy regarding the Norse past can also be glimpsed in the work of other scholars. The professor of Norse languages and historian Niels Matthias Petersen considered the stone axes found centuries ago throughout Denmark to be symbols of the god Thor, while the burial mounds and other material remains were all symbols of Odin; and the runic inscriptions were memorials of legendary times. The main basis for all his assertions came from Snorri Sturluson (Petersen, 1834, pp. 63, 99, 256-257). There was still considerable influence from the euhemerism of eighteenth-century historians, such as Peter Frederik Suhm, who saw the Norse gods as personifications of kings and queens of ancient peoples (Hansen, 2020, p. 6), an author we discuss in the Nordic Renaissance section (chapter 2). The authority and academic recognition of archaeologists was still very low at this time, having been isolated during the 1830s (Ødegaard, 1994, p. 5), but little by little the area became established academically.

In 1835, a human body was discovered in the Haraldskær region of Jutland. It was soon considered to be the remains of the Norwegian queen Gunhilde, murdered by drowning in a swamp, according to the most popular Icelandic saga of the period: the *Jómsvikiga saga*. King Frederick VI, also believing it to be an ancient royal figure, ordered the body to be placed in an elaborate sarcophagus. Jens Worsaae, then 21, quickly disputed this claim in Copenhagen newspapers, stating that not only was the body much younger than the queen described in the saga, but it was also much older and beyond historical identification (Rix, 2005, p. 593; Gjerløff, 1999, p. 429). Many other bodies would be recovered from Danish bogs after 1870, most of them identified as being from the Iron Age, now confirmed by absolute dating. The female

body from Haraldskær was dated to 490 BC (Sørensen, 1990, p. 88). In other words, Worsaae's findings were correct.

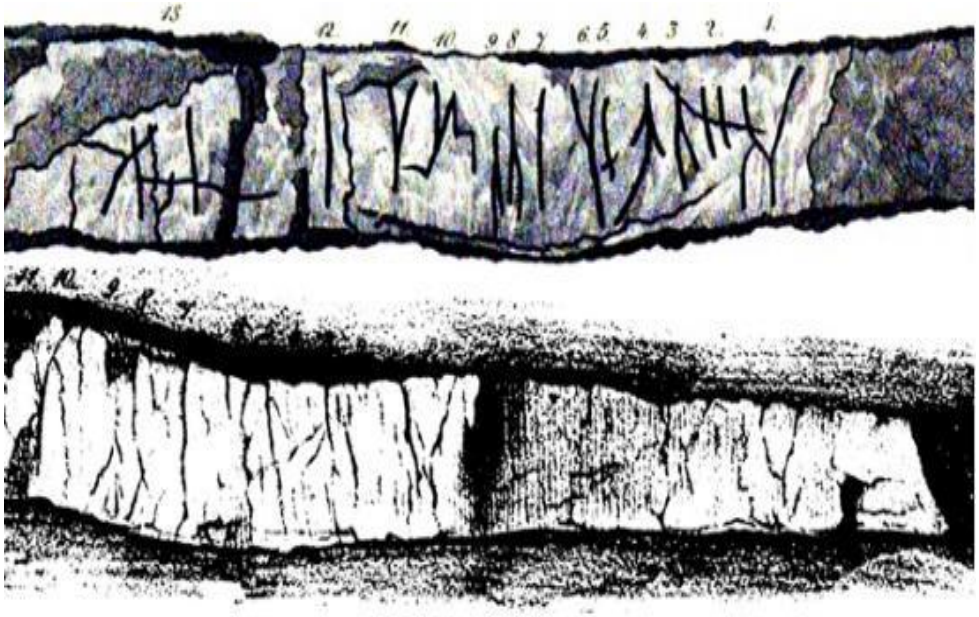


Figure 11: Inscription from Runamo, Blekinge: top figure, ancient reconstruction; bottom figure, reconstruction from Worsaae (Worsaae, 1844b, tavle I; tavle II).

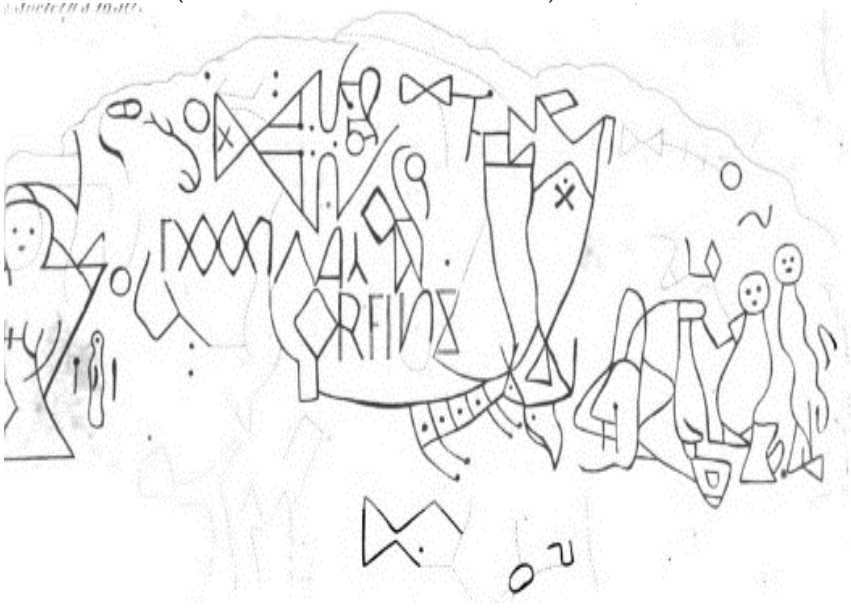


Figure 12: Dighton Stone Inscription (Rafn, 1837, pl. xii).

An event that occurred in the 1830s was even more intense: the *Runamo* controversy. A supposed runic inscription had been known in the Blekinge region (southern Sweden) since Saxo Grammaticus and Ole Worm. It is a flat rock of granite origin, with natural cracks (or marks) on its surface, identified with inscriptions. The name *Runamo* means "cliff of runes" (Rix, 2005, p. 594). In the 16th and 17th centuries, some illustrations of the site were made, creating a tradition that they were runic inscriptions. In 1833, the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters financed an expedition to the site, led by Finn Magnussen, a professor of medieval Icelandic literature and antiquarian, along with C. Christensen. The team concluded that it was an ancient poem in praise of the legendary Danish king Harold Wartooth, and that it was the oldest runes ever discovered.

An article was published in the newspaper *Dansk Ugeskrift* (The Danish Weekly) in 1834, sparking great public enthusiasm and being celebrated by European intellectuals. But soon after, questioning voices arose. In 1836, the Swedish naturalist Jöns Jacob Berzelius challenged this conclusion, claiming that they were natural cracks in the rock, an opinion echoed by fellow naturalist Sven Nilsson in 1840. Both researchers criticized Magnússon's reproduction of the alleged inscriptions (Rix, 2005, pp. 602–604).

However, the final blow was dealt in 1844, with a new book published by Jens Worsaae. In a pamphlet of just 34 pages, he not only presents solid arguments but also an illustration based on plaster casts (figure 11) – replacing the eye with tangible, material evidence that could not be manipulated (Worsaae, 1844b, pp. 35–38). Neither academia nor the public could pursue the runic interpretation of the Runamo cracks. Magnússon's interpretations cannot be seen as mere fantasies, but rather as an ancient tendency to interpret the past in literary terms, clashing with new scientific methods. The legend became a valid field of study only in literature and philology, being excluded from archaeological studies. As antiquarianism came of age, the old paradigm that Magnússon represented ended up cracking like the rock of Runamo itself (Rix, 2005, p. 609).

With the Runamo event, we see a shift in concepts and methods. The idea of a romantic nationalism tied to the past (antiquarianism), influenced by the Enlightenment (where man separates himself from nature), clashes with the new methodologies of modern archaeology. While antiquarianism was firmly rooted in a universal authority present in written texts – especially sagas and chronicles – modern archaeology utilizes methodologies from other

sciences, within the naturalist ideal of cross-referencing empirical data. While the antiquarian looked at the forms of nature (thinking they were anthropic) with the texts in mind, the archaeologist looked at the forms of nature with geology in mind, that is, nature itself. In the next section, we will see how Brazil was involved in this paradigm shift, having its own Runamo, also in the 1830s.

Vikings in New England and Brazil

Here we return to an author already mentioned, Carl Christian Rafn, whose work we discussed in the Sagas and Heroes section of this book. Although a historian, Rafn also followed some of the ideals of Danish antiquarians when reflecting on antiquities: he granted literary sources an indisputable authority. With the Icelandic sagas in mind, he also analyzed the material culture of the New World from this perspective. In contact with New England intellectuals in the United States, he came across Dighton Rock (figure 12), a block containing geometric engravings of native origin, which, since the early nineteenth century, was considered proof that Europeans had visited this location long before the British pioneers. In his book *Antiquitates Americanæ* (1837), he argues that these engravings are of Norse origin.

The translation of the Dighton stone as a runic text was carried out by Finn Magnussen, the same author of the Runamo text, as we examined previously. However, the antiquarian mixed Latin letters with runic ones to obtain a translation (Rafn, 1837, p. 404-405). Some more recent research shows that Dighton's original drawings, which had been sent from Rhode Island to Denmark in the early 1830s (figure 12), were modified by Rafn and Magnússon to obtain a better translation into Old Norse (Hunter, 2015, p. 267). In English, the translation was: “Thorfins and his 151 companions took possession of this land.” (Hunter, 2015, p. 266).

A few years earlier (1822), Jean-François Champollion had deciphered Egyptian hieroglyphics, establishing a veritable fad among antiquarians – more than ever, ancient inscriptions could provide a true gateway to the past, blending the "mystery" evoked by certain themes of the historical past with a certain dose of rationality. As texts written on movable material or other material support, the inscriptions appealed to a notion where the fascination with ancient and "mysterious" civilizations was still very strong. So much so that the term *hieroglyphics* was used in Rafn's book for the drawings on the Dighton Rock (Rafn,

1837, p. 358). Undoubtedly, the impact of Champollion's discovery was still felt in scholarly circles.

Rafn used two basic strategies to prove an ancient Norse presence in the eastern United States. First, he included a series of fragments from Icelandic sagas (translated into Latin and English) telling the story of Thorfinn Karlsefni, who was said to have been the first to explore and settle a region known as Vinland – interpreted as being somewhere in New England. Second, he added a large number of reproductions of various types of graphics, writing, and figurative forms (in the appendices) to create a parallel with the Dighton Rock: three reproductions of Greenlandic runes (including that of Kingittorsuaq); three Bronze Age rock art panels from the Swedish area, including Tanun; magical signs from Iceland to the 16th century; and Latin letters (undated) from Ireland (Rafn, 1837, pl. viii, xii).

Of course, this is a visual collection with completely different themes, whether due to their historical context (some date back over 2,000 years), spatial context, or morphology: some are forms of writing (including authentic North Atlantic runes), and others are simply visual forms of communication (the rock carvings). The goal here was to create in the reader's mind related forms of ancient inscriptions: for Rafn, they were all part of a greater Nordic legacy, now being recovered through antiquarian research.

Carl Rafn enclosed nine reproductions of Dighton's engravings, from 1680, 1730, 1742, 1768, 1788, 1790, 1807, 1812, and 1830, respectively, all showing differences (Rafn, 1837, pl. x, xi, xii). The last reproduction, submitted by the Rhode Island Historical Society, is the only one in which a central inscription can be seen, spelling out the word ORFINS (figure 12). Through recent high-resolution photographs of this block, available online, we can see that this inscription does not exist. Recent studies using 3-D reproduction methods and studies of artistic styles by archaeologist Ellen Berkland confirm that the engravings are native and date back at least 2,000 years (Shapiro, 2017).

This Danish historian aimed to prove the historical existence of Vinland. He maintained contact with several North American intellectuals, who were also interested in the theory that the Norse had discovered America. His book was a major publishing project that relied on financial backers, most of whom were from that country. With this, Rafn hoped to connect Old World Protestants with their descendants in the New World, along the East Coast (Hunter, 2015, p. 248).

Rafn's exchange with North American intellectuals was part of a vast network of global correspondence, linked to the Royal Nordic Society of Antiquaries, of which he was the most prolific representative. His diverse translations into various Western languages also reflected his ambition toward pan-Scandinavism (Simonsen, 2018, pp. 73-98). Brazil's presence is also present within this network of exchange.

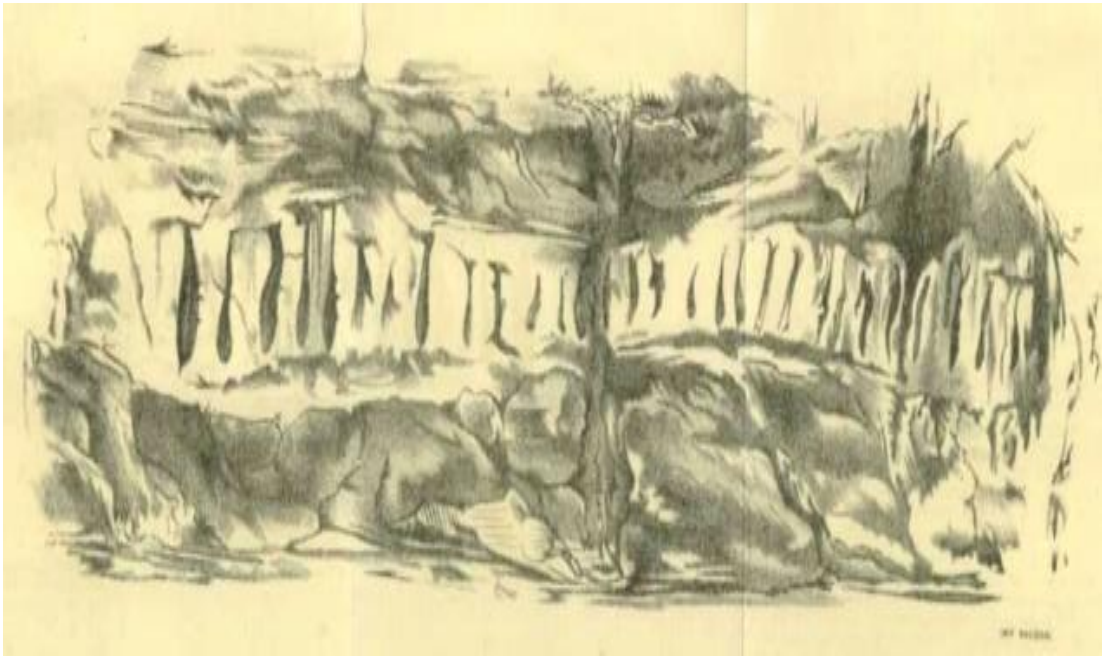


Figure 13: Inscriptions on Pedra da Gávea in Rio de Janeiro (Porto Alegre, 1839, insert between pages 76-77, lithograph by A. de Pinho Lima).

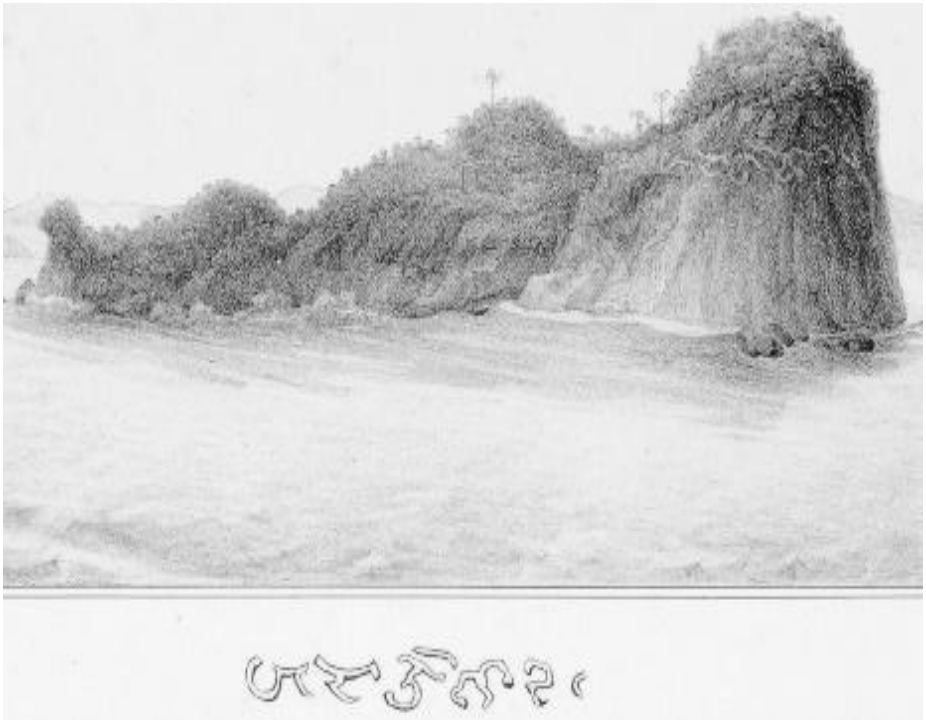


Figure 14: Inscriptions on Ilha do Arvoredo, in Santa Catarina (Debret, 1834-1839, pl. 33, lithograph by Thierry Frères).

Carl Rafn's book, *Antiquitates americanæ*, was summarized in the *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro* (Journal of the Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute, in Portuguese with the acronym IHGB), in 1840. Several academics linked to the IHGB and the Brazilian government believed that both the Gávea rock (in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, figure 13) and other points on your coast had runic inscriptions (figure 14), all influenced by Rafn, with whom they also maintained correspondence.

The possible discovery of ancient texts in almost unknown languages was an image that haunted the intellectuals of Rio de Janeiro in the 1830s, who reproduced the same desires that we have witnessed up to this point with Magnússon and Rafn, as exemplified in this report by Manuel Porto Alegre, antiquarian and member of the IHGB: "A descoberta de uma inscripção é um facto, que póde fazer uma revolução na historia; que pode reconquistar idéas perdidas (...) abrir uma estrada luminosa do passado ao futuro" (The discovery of an inscription is a fact, which can make a revolution in history; which can reconquer lost ideas (...) open a luminous road from the past to the future, Porto Alegre, 1839, p. 98, original spelling).

Just like the work of the Danes, Brazilians also had a great affinity with the recent discoveries of the French Egyptologist: "Conclama-se a aparição de algum champoleon brazileiro (...) para com o facho de seu genio indagador iluminar esta parte tão obscura da historia primeva do nosso Brazil" (The appearance of some Brazilian Champoleon is called upon (...) to illuminate this obscure part of the primeval history of our Brazil with the torch of his inquiring genius, Porto Alegre, 1839, p. 103, original spelling).

The IHGB had been founded in 1838 in Rio de Janeiro, with its main mission being to write the national memory, endowing the country with a single and coherent past, with the idea of continuity as its guiding principle: the association strove to articulate the present, future, and past to support the project of consolidating the Empire (Guimarães, 2002a, p. 380). Several members of the IHGB were enthusiastic about Rafn's theory of the Nordic presence in America before Columbus, and they also became members of the Royal Nordic Society of Antiquaries, with whom they corresponded extensively, including with Dom Pedro II, who was one of the founding members (Guimarães, 1994, p. 499-505).

But what about Manuel Porto Alegre's appeal? Had the so-called "Brazilian Champoleon" emerged? At least according to the standards of the time, yes. After a team from the IHGB copied the alleged inscriptions from Pedra da Gávea in Rio de Janeiro, they were reproduced in the second edition of the IHGB Journal, with A. de Pinho Lima as the lithographer (figure 13). The Institute immediately received a letter from Rochus Schüch (aka Roque), claiming to have deciphered the inscriptions. Schüch was a native of Moravia and a professor of natural sciences in Opava. In 1817, he came to Brazil as court librarian, later serving as curator of the mineralogical cabinet of D. Leopoldina and as German teacher to D. Pedro II (Hillbrand-Grill, 1999, p. 285).

In the letter, the naturalist stated that the aforementioned letters were the work of the ancient Norse:

> "Pela comparação de inscripções (...) na obra moderna, Antiquitates Americana, achei algumas letras, 2 até 3, que parecem serem as mesmas como na ponta da Gavia, e tem alguma probalidade que pertencem aos Runos. O alfabeto rúnico, que chegou a huma época mto anterior à nossa era, tem como o dos Phenicios 16 caracteres, semelhando-se não somente entre si, mas também ao Grego e ao latim" (Schüch, 1839, grafia original).
>
> "By comparing inscriptions (...) in the modern work, Antiquitates Americana, I found some letters, two to three, that appear to be the same as those on the tip of the Gavia, and there is some probability that they belong to the Runos. The runic alphabet, which has survived from a period

> long before our era, has, like that of the Phoenicians, 16 characters, resembling not only each other but also the Greek and Latin" (Schüch, 1839, original spelling). *Note*: here the academic called the Norse as 'Runos', coming from the runic writing, an unusual term, even in studies of this time.

For intellectuals in general in the 1830s, the notion that America had been visited by ancient navigators was a historical fact. On the one hand, it would be possible to discover traces of their visits, and on the other, traces of their ancient civilization in a decadent form could be found in the form of linguistic traits in contemporary native populations: "(...) o dualismo dos índios manáos na província de Pará, que tanto parece ao dualismo dos povos antigos da Iscandinavia, fazem esta suposição ainda mais probavel" (the dualism of the Manáos Indians in the province of Pará, which so closely resembles the dualism of the ancient peoples of Scandinavia, makes this supposition even more likely, Schüch, 1839, original spelling).

In reality, the decadentist thesis of the indigenous peoples of the Americas was much older, dating back to colonial writers and reaching its peak during the Enlightenment, when Eurocentric, racial, colonialist, biblical, and other hypotheses were mixed (Gerbi, 1996, pp. 19-334). In the context of the 1830s, this old school of thought was adapted to recent considerations on inscriptions and the arrival of the Nordic peoples, which at that time was the most current.

Dozens of rock art remains were also being investigated in Minas Gerais (another region of Brazil), particularly through the work of the Danes Peter Lund and Peter Claussen. Rochus Schüch considered them to be of Norse origin: "As inscripções de Minas parecem serem de hum tempo mais moderno, porém também, provavelmente rúnicas" (The Minas Gerais inscriptions appear to be of more modern date, but also probably runic, Schüch, 1839, original spelling).

Whether through natural rock fissures (the Gávea), cave paintings (all figurative), or modern indigenous language, all bear traces of an ancient Old culture – nothing more convenient for the civilizing purposes of the IHGB, which at that time was interested in separating itself from the Portuguese, African, and indigenous past. The Norse would be much more appropriate: they were heroic, navigators, and possessed the main element that defined the intellectual parameters of Antiquity – they possessed *alphabetic inscriptions*. At the end of

his letter, Schüch recommends that the IHGB's members send copies of the characters to the scholars of Vienna for translation.

The search for ancient inscriptions was a great inspiration among scholars. During his travels throughout Brazil, the renowned painter Jean Baptiste Debret was also part of this trend. During a trip to the Santa Catarina coast, he and the crew of the ship reportedly spotted mysterious inscriptions on Arvoredo Island, near Florianópolis, which were reproduced in lithograph form in his famous book *Voyage pittoresque et historique au Brésil* (Picturesque and historical journey in Brazil), published in Paris in 1839 (figure 14).

In the same year, during an IHGB meeting, consideration was given to forming an expedition to further study these remains on the island of Santa Catarina: "(...) o Instituto se apressou a encarregar ao seu socio correspondente Falcão da Frota, a investigação d´este anunciado letreiro" (the Institute rushed to entrust its corresponding member, Falcão da Frota, with the investigation of this announced sign, Barbosa, 1839, p. 279). These supposed signs actually constitute another type of indigenous rock art, but unlike those found in Minas Gerais, they are neither painted nor figurative: they are geometric, abstract, and symbolic motifs engraved directly into the rock, the so-called coastal tradition of our prehistory, which occurs on several islands off the coast of Santa Catarina (Prous, 1992, p. 513).

The study of inscriptions of Norse origin would receive yet another boost in Brazil. The same Institute had published in full a document, called manuscript 512, which existed in the then court library (now the National Library), reporting the discovery of a lost city in the far reaches of Bahia. The document describes the existence of plazas, temples, sculptures, and ruined houses, all in a classicist style, and even includes coins discovered by an 18th-century expedition. But the most fascinating item was the reproductions of the inscriptions found at the site, highlighted in two pages in the first issue of the IHGB Journal. The report on this location soon caught the attention of foreign scholars, among them the aforementioned Peter Lund, who had lived in Minas Gerais since 1825 and is known as the father of Brazilian paleontology and archaeology. Lund was in contact with Carl Rafn, and it was he who instigated the IHGB to maintain correspondence with the Royal Nordic Society of Antiquaries (Guimarães, 2002b, p. 575).

Peter Lund published a Danish translation of manuscript 512 in the journal *Antiquarisk Tiddskrift* in the 1840s, enthusiastic about the possibility that such ruins were of Norse origin.

In correspondence with Januário da Cunha Barbosa, secretary of the IHGB, he stated: "(...) huma descoberta de mais alta importancia para a historia antiga do Brasil (...) em caso de verificar a hypothese de hum ilustre membro do Instituto que derivou esses monumentos dos antigos Scandinavos" (a discovery of the highest importance for the ancient history of Brazil (...) if the hypothesis of an illustrious member of the Institute who derived these monuments from the ancient Scandinavians is verified, manuscript, 1839, Ny Kgl. Samling 2677, Holten & Guimarães, 1997, p. 41). In 1841, the French Scandinavianist Pierre-Victor Lerebours raised the possibility that the lost city was a center of Icelandic origin, with the statue in the description of manuscript 512 being a representation of a Norse deity: "et une *statue de Thor* avec tous ses attributs, son marteau, ses gantelets et sa ceinture magique" (and a *statue of Thor* with all his attributes, his hammer, his gauntlets and his magic belt, Lerebours, 1841, p. 36, author's emphasis).

An investigative commission funded by the IHGB soon set out to explore the interior of Bahia, attempting to locate the said ruins, led by Benigno de Carvalho. Failing in this endeavor, the ruins were dismissed as fanciful in the late 1840s. In further correspondence with Carl Rafn (the secretary of the Royal Nordic Society of Antiquaries), naturalist Peter Lund questioned the credibility of the Bahian location, despite his initial enthusiasm. Besides comparing the animals described in the account with those found in the region, questioning its zoological veracity, he noted that its inscriptions were much more similar to ancient Greek (Lund, 1845, p. 153).

The Norse hypothesis of this lost city was further advanced by the French historian Émile Adêt in the periodical *La Revue Indépendante* (Adêt, 1845, p. 504). It was also cited in a Scandinavian work from the 1870s: *La découverte de l'Amérique par les Normands au Xe siêcle,* but its author mistook Schüch's letter about Gávea as a reference to the lost city (Gravier, 1874, p. 235-237), which demonstrates that the theme was already fully fanciful among intellectuals.

The thesis of a Nordic presence was gradually forgotten in Brazil, but it briefly returned during the late imperial period, written by a naturalist named João Barbosa Rodrigues (1842-1909). Rodrigues was largely self-taught, dedicating himself to research in various fields such as archaeology, ethnography, linguistics, botany, indigenism, chemistry, and pharmacy, becoming one of the most prominent scientists both inside and outside Brazil at the end of the nineteenth century (Sá, 2001, p. 900). Rodrigues' archaeological work was both endorsed and

questioned in his time, with the foundations of his thinking coming from the IHGB, especially the systematic classification and linguistic theories of Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius (Ferreira; Noelli, p. 74).

His theory of the Norse presence was directly influenced by Carl Rafn and was published in the journal *Ensaios de Sciencia* (Science Essays) from 1876 to 1880, all dealing with Amazonian archaeology, the results of a scientific mission carried out from 1872 to 1875. The publications involve three separate studies, divided into the themes of lithic weapons and instruments, ceramic objects, and artificial mounds. In the first and second studies, Rodrigues defends the thesis that the indigenous groups of the Amazon were degenerate descendants of the Danes, who came from Europe via Iceland and the North American colonies. To support this interpretation, he uses the morphology of lithic objects found in the Amazon (especially axes), which would resemble those produced in northern Europe (Rodrigues, 1876a, p. 94, 99); the Amazonian *sambaquis* would have similarities with the sambaquis of Denmark (*kjokkenmöddinges*, Rodrigues, 1876a, p. 98, a *midden* is an old dump for domestic waste); the funerary mounds of the Amazon region very similar to those found in Sweden (Rodrigues, 1880, p. 5); the analogy between images of Amazonian rock art and inscriptions found in North America and interpreted as being of Nordic origin (Rodrigues, 1880, p. 47).

The first thing to consider is the author's extreme confusion with the archaeological remains from Denmark. Since the 1830s, the Nordic past had been studied through the three phases of Christian Jürgensen Thomsen's classification (Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages). Thus, the remains found relating to the Norse from the Viking Period (a late extension of the Iron Age) were already considered distinct from other periods and cultures, such as that of Mesolithic prehistoric man, the creator of the *midden* in Denmark. The point is that Rodrigues read different authors and research in French, German and English from various periodicals and books (especially Carl Rafn, Paul Gaffarel, Gabriel Gravier and Pierre-Victor Lerebours), mixing different eras around an ideal, that of the ancient inhabitant of Denmark, who would have come to America and Brazil, using different expressions throughout the text: "dinamarqueses" (Danes: Rodrigues, 1876a, p. 99), "povo scandinavico" (Scandinavian people, 1876a, p. 100), "normandos" (Normans, 1876a, p. 110), "reis do mar" (sea kings, 1880, p. 48), "filhos de Odin" (sons of Odin, 1876a, p. 125), "companheiros de Odin" (companions of Odin, 1876a, p. 99), "povo de Odin" (people of Odin, 1880, p. 29), "descendentes de Odin"

(descendants of Odin, 1880, p. 76), "sectários de Thor" (sectarians of Thor, 1880, p. 6, all expressions are original to the author).

The term "Danish" (and "Scandinavian people") essentially comes from Carl Rafn, who sought to promote Scandinavianism worldwide and had a fundamentally nationalistic appeal to his country's past (Simonsen, 2018, pp. 73-98). The term "Norman" was very popular among intellectuals of French origin (such as Paul Gaffarel, Gabriel Gravier, and Pierre-Victor Lerebours, all cited by Rodrigues). The term "sea kings" initially emerged from the interpretation of the term "vikings" as "vi-kings" (sea-kings, kings of the sea, reinforced by the Old Norse "sækonungr," kings of the sea, from the Icelandic sagas) in English at the end of the 18th century, quickly popularizing in France and other countries. However, its greatest impact came with the poem V*ikingen* (1811) by the Swedish poet Erik Gustaf Geijer, which was translated throughout most of Europe. Here we have the main key to understanding the Viking as a heroic adventurer who sets out to sea, both to obtain fortune, marriage and social glory (Wawn, 2002, p. 4).

As for the characterizations of the Danes linked to the divine figures of Odin and Thor, this is explained by the immense popularity of Norse Mythology in the West since the beginning of the nineteenth century – which were not yet well known in Brazil at that time, but reverberated in the various texts read by Rodrigues in foreign languages.

However, what does all this indicate in the ideas of this Brazilian naturalist? Besides an inevitable Eurocentrism, what can we deduce from the use of these words in his publications? The idea of civilization. The Nordic presence in Brazil's past was part of an ideal that began in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, in which man was a natural object, his relationship with nature defined by the opposition between barbarism and civilization (Domingues, 2009, p. 167-169). The indigenous people themselves were not civilized, but a degenerate state of a glorious and advanced past, regressing to their technological, moral, and social status prior to the arrival of the Portuguese. Unlike most ethnographers, anthropologists, and archaeologists of Brazil's Second Empire—who were evolutionists (Domingues, 2009, p. 174-175), Rodrigues does not accept this theory (1876a, p. 110). Here the naturalist was much more aligned with the historiography carried out by the IHGB, since in a famous article published in 1845 in the IHGB Journal, Carl von Martius already alluded to the decadentist thesis of Brazilian

indigenous people (Guimarães, 2000), followed by Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagen (Noelli; Ferreira, 2007, p. 1239-1264).

In this sense, Rodrigues distinguishes two basic remains: *monuments* – original works of the Nordic peoples in the Amazon; *lithic objects* and *rock art* – interpreted as works of degenerate peoples. Ceramics were considered solely the work of indigenous customs (in his second study of 1876, on ceramic art, incidentally, there is no mention of the thesis of Nordic origins). Monuments were considered superior works of the human spirit, but they were not simply memorial markers, but pure archaeological remains in the mold of eighteenth-century antiquarianism (Choay, 2001, pp. 17-22). And, more than that, they were proof of the superiority of northern European culture: "o contacto de um povo mais artista e industrioso levou os primitivos habitantes de nossas matta á um gráo de adiantamento superior ao que tem hoje" (contact with a more artistic and industrious people led the primitive inhabitants of our forests to a degree of advancement superior to that which they have today, Rodrigues, 1876a, p. 94). It is also interesting to note that Rodrigues does not have a negative view of the Vikings – but rather a view that the ancient Nordic were objectively a civilized and audacious people who transmitted their 'peaceful values' and their 'sophisticated' culture to the primitives and, on the contrary, it was the Portuguese who brought destruction, slavery and war after Cabral:

> (...) parece que foi a dos que legaram aos nossos selvagens a civilisação extincta, que suas antiguidades ainda perpetuam e que nossos descobridores aniquilaram, fazendo com que, tribus pacificas e laboriosas tornassem-se nomades, inuteis e ferozes (...). A Dinamarca, pois, parece que muito influio na vida do povo de então (Rodrigues, 1876a, p. 98).
> (...) it seems that it was those who bequeathed to our savages the extinct civilization, whose antiquities still perpetuate and which our discoverers annihilated, causing peaceful and hard-working tribes to become nomadic, useless and ferocious (...). Denmark, therefore, seems to have had a great influence on the lives of the people of that time".

Another piece of evidence that the naturalist imagines a sophisticated original culture is the use of runic inscriptions as a temporal and historical demarcation of the moment in which they supposedly arrived in the Amazon: "runic times" (Rodrigues, 1876a, p. 99), also an unusual term among Scandinavian studies, but which in the naturalist's mind also determines a civilizational superiority (given that the indigenous people did not have any form of writing).

Although heavily influenced by Carl Rafn, Rodrigues also differed from the Danish scholar. The latter believed that the archaeological remains of the Norse in North America were purely the work of Europeans, without any interference or interbreeding with the local indigenous peoples. Monumental structures (such as the Ohio burial mounds) and inscriptional evidence (such as the Dighton Stone) were presumably built by peoples older and superior to the natives contemporary with Columbus: the Norse. Rafn's publications helped construct the notion of the United States as a single-race nation that rejected assimilation (white, European), embodying the ideals of evolution and progress, but denying indigenous history (Melton, 2024, pp. 2-6). Rodrigues was already a decadentist: the Amazonian monuments were the work of ancient Nordic people, who mixed with the indigenous people – the history and culture of the Amazonian natives should be studied broadly, but within the notion of an ancient superior civilization (European), which was degenerated.

The idea of religion was also different. In the Icelandic sagas, the first Norsemen to land in North America (in the region known as Vinland) were already Christians, but the reception of Rafn's studies among North American intellectuals generated anti-Catholic sentiment (Melton, 2024, p. 8). For the Brazilian naturalist, the religious theme was ambiguous. On the one hand, he exalts Norse paganism by depicting the Amazonian Viking as a son of Odin or a follower of Thor, but he also exalts the Danes who came to the Amazon as Christians, carrying crosses symbolizing freedom and redemption (Rodrigues, 1880, p. 7).

Over time, Barbosa Rodrigues moved away from the thesis of a Danish presence in the Amazon, becoming the last researcher to defend this idea in Brazilian academia. The supposed inscriptions of Pedra da Gávea, the Brazilian Runamo, survived in the imagination of some dilettantes until the 20th century, whether in the work of Bernardo da Silva Ramos or the French scholar Jacques de Mahieu. However, we now know from various geological studies that the formation is entirely natural. The complex, rich, and varied Brazilian rock art began to be studied systematically after the 1870s, led by archaeologists from the National Museum of Rio de Janeiro. A few dilettante groups today, with supremacist tendencies, still insist today (influenced by Jacques de Mahieu) that the pre-Cabral engravings of Santa Catarina are of Nordic origin, despite scientists' efforts to popularize their native origin. As for North America, the only concrete evidence of an ancient Norse presence is in Canada, with the

dozens of runic inscriptions discovered throughout the 19th century in North America considered epigraphic frauds. The alleged runic inscriptions from Runamo, the United States, and Brazil constitute the boundary between the end of antiquarianism and the beginning of modern archaeology, marking new research perspectives, new methodologies, and innovative concepts. Among them, Viking archaeology originated, which we will discuss in the next section.

The Beginnings of Viking Archaeology

The Vikings become the center of archaeological investigation in Worsaae's work, but they were initially included in a larger systematization of Danish prehistory. In his book *Danmarks Oldtid* (The Antiquity of Denmark), published in 1843, Worsaae followed Thomsen's tripartite temporal division. It is clear that the author differentiates the Bronze Age from the Iron Age: while the former remained less well-known, it was also less important, due to the fact that with the introduction of iron technology, a more complex civilization also began, and also the beginning of Christianization. And it is at this time that the Vikings are highlighted. Commenting on their religion, he immediately describes how pagans were excited by weapons and conflict, driven by their belief in Odin and Valhalla. Cowardice would be considered the greatest crime. Since his youth, the Norseman sought warrior fame (Nordboen efter krigerære), adopting a predatory practice by undertaking warlike actions, gaining glory and spoils, that is, a "true Viking life" (*Det egentlige Vikingelid*) (Worsaae, 1843, p. 38).

Worsaae rarely uses the term pirate for these navigators, and this becomes clearer later, at the end of the section on the Iron Age. Comparing Norwegians, Swedes, and Danes, he states that the first two, due to their mountainous inhabitance, quickly set out on conquering expeditions abroad, while the Danes lived much more in their flat lands, dedicating themselves to agriculture, rarely venturing out for predation. And when they did, they were usually led by kings, conquering nations like England. This image of the Norseman as a warrior, a conquering Viking, is certainly influenced by the representations created by both Erik Geijer and Esaias Tegnér, but follows a positive image of these actions, also traditional in Denmark, as we saw in the Sagas and Heroes section. One detail that certainly reinforces this representation is the fact that Worsaae includes only one image from the Viking period, a sword (figure 15), highlighting only the pommel and handguard. Another element is the

textual description itself, dealing with the morphology of Viking swords in practically two pages.

A very interesting detail is the passage where the author comments that a recent study of ancient monuments would be a sign that Denmark could be more independent and free than other countries in antiquity (Worsaae, 1843, p. 116). An early demonstration of how Worsaae's archaeology, from its beginnings, was related to nationalist issues, a fact that would become increasingly frequent, as we will see later.

Other objects were also quickly analyzed, such as pendants and brooches, demonstrating a refined art form for the period. And while commenting on objects that could have been exported, the author goes into another detail: merchants. Not all objects found in tombs were likely looted, but also obtained through trade, both from distant locations and from nearby regions. The merchant's reputation was not equal to that of the Viking, due to the fact that historical records favor heroic acts: "Kjøbmanden ftob iffe i saa høi Anseelse som Vikingen, og det var derfor naturligt, at dennes Heltegjerninger snarere bleve beskrevne, end hiins fredelige Færd" (The merchant was not held in as high esteem as the Viking, and it was therefore natural that his heroic deeds were described rather than his peaceful journey, Worsaae, 1843, p. 10). 51 At this point, we realize that the archaeologist begins to interpret Old Norse within other activities, not just his warlike conquests. This will be intensified in his next publication, on the Norse remains of the British Isles, as we will see below. But first, let's learn a little more about the political issue of the Dano-German borders, fundamental to understanding the 1840s and 1850s and the representations of the Vikings from this period.

5

The Vikings and the Slesvig Question

The National Question and Borders

Sleswig (*Slesvig* in Danish and *Schleswig* in German) is a region in southern Denmark that became a Danish duchy (in practice, a fiefdom) during the 12th century, but was never truly integrated into the kingdom. In the 19th century, the majority of the population of this region was German-speaking, and culturally and ideologically it was more closely tied to the German Confederation than Denmark. With the liberal revolution of 1848 promulgated by Frederick VII of Denmark, a provisional government was created uniting the regions of Schleswig and Holstein, with its seat in Kiel (in modern-day northern Germany). These pro-Germanists rebelled primarily against the Danish liberals' intention to constitutionally annex the Schleswig region to the Danish kingdom, demanding that it be annexed to the German Confederation. The provisional government requested military aid in Frankfurt, leading to a clash between Prussian and Danish troops in 1848 (*1. Slesvigske Krig*, the First Schleswig War). As a result, an armistice was signed in Malmö (Sweden) and then a peace treaty in Berlin (1850), leaving the region in dispute under Danish guardianship (Jørgensen, 2023, p. 280-286; Allen, 2014, p. 53).

But the situation remained unresolved on both sides, and especially within the region. With the death of King Frederick VII of Denmark in 1863, the heirs to the throne were unsure whether the disputed region would remain part of the kingdom or become part of the German Confederation. Under pressure from liberals, King Christian IX signed a new joint constitution with Schleswig, displeasing the residents of this duchy. Austria and Prussia advanced into the territory of Schleswig and Holstein, forcing Denmark to sign the Treaty of Vienna in 1864 (the so-called War of the Duchies or Second Schleswig War, *2. Slesvigske Krig* in Danish), in which Denmark lost control of the duchies of Holstein and Schleswig to Prussia and Austria (Lauring, 2015, pp. 222-235). Denmark's political, artistic, literary, and scientific production from the 1840s to the mid-1870s was greatly influenced by nationalist ideals arising from these border conflicts (Adriansen; Jenvold, 1998, p. 9). Worsaae published two pamphlets in 1848 and 1849,

both arguing for Denmark's rights over the disputed region, but using historical and archaeological themes.

The first, *Danevirke: Danskhedens gamle Grændsevold mod Syden* (Danevirke: Danishness's ancient border violence against the South, 1848), is a description of Danevirke, which was an extensive wall erected by King Geoffrey during the early ninth century to defend the Danish borders of the Carolingian Empire. It consisted of earth and palisades, later reinforced with stones by King Harald the Blue-Tooth in the tenth century, and was 13 meters wide and 30 kilometers long (Oliveira, 2018a, p. 172).

In his preface, the author states that a thousand years ago the Danevirke had already defended the country against the Germans (*Tydskerne*), and now, new warriors are once again defending Denmark with blood and honor (Worsaae, 1848, p. 1). The Vikings were mentioned in a few specific contexts. First, they are referred to as being primarily northern peoples who would have frequented the space of the then-current German Confederation, solely for plunder: "Vikingeskarer hjemsøgte Tydsklands Flode" (Viking hordes haunted Germany's rivers, p. 6). Occasionally, Norse raids to the south occurred, but "dens" for traders or Vikings were never built ("men det varikke en saadan Rede for driftige Sømænd og Vikinger", but it was not such a nest for enterprising sailors and Vikings, p. 6). In other words, here the author differentiates the German space of the Danish. Thus, the Danes could claim the Schleswig region today, but not the Germans.

King Geoffrey's achievements were considered acts of bravery, despite the German lands (*Tydskland*) sending Christianizing actions, doomed to failure: "Tvertimod vedbleve danske Vikinger og Konger stadig at hærje paa de nordtydske Lande" (On the contrary, Danish Vikings and kings continued to ravage the North German lands, p. 25). Today, the noun *Tysk* is used both for the German language, the German people, and pejoratively (Ordbog, 2022; Rosing, 1853, p. 220-221).

At the end of this book, Worsaae calls for a new Danevirke, explaining that the Vikings were, in reality, champions sent against the German populations: "Allerede efter Carl den Stores truende Angreb i det niende Aarhundrede kunde Danmark udsende talløſe Vikinge skarer; det blev en Seirens og Erobringens Tid, som ingens finde før" (Already after Carl the Great's threatening attack in the ninth century, Denmark could send out countless hordes of Vikings; it became a time of victory and conquest that no one had found before, p. 63). Here,

for the first time, the Vikings become elements of a nationality – where ancient Denmark became a political unit equal to that of modern times – but they are also representatives of military conquests never before seen. In other words, the representation of the Viking no longer as a simple pirate or predator, but rather as a warrior in the service of a nation, originates here.

A year later, Worsaae published another pamphlet, entitled: *Om en forhistorisk, saakaldet "tydsk" Befolkning i Danmark* (About a prehistoric, so-called "German" population in Denmark, author's quotes). The book is quite short (40 pages) and begins by commenting on how the Germans distort history in their favor during the Schleswig War. The perception of history should be comprehensive, above individual opinions or a political moment (Worsaae, 1849a, p. 2). But of course, here the political and individual use of history would be undertaken only by the members of the German Confederation and not by the Danes, yet another example of ideological transference to the figure of the other – Worsaae, for example, cites the works of the Brothers Grimm and the Norwegian historian Peter Andreas Munch (a pro-Germanist) as being "anti-historical" (uhistorisk, p. 3).

Munch had already published an article in Denmark, defending the hypothesis that Germanic Goths lived in southern Denmark during antiquity, giving rise to the Horns of Gallehus – one of Denmark's great nationalist heritages, as we have seen before. And in a period of transition from Gothic until the 8th century AD, the Skoldunges family ruled the Lejre region, the so-called *danevældents tids* (the time of Danish power, another term for the Viking Period), from which the *danske tunge* (Danish language; Munch, 1848, pp. 331-332) originated. In other words, the Goths became Danes when they were in the area of present-day Denmark.

This obviously deeply angered Worsaae, who in his new book directly attacked this interpretation, using the work of another Norwegian historian, Rudolf Keyser, who argued that the Danes (*Daner*) originated after the 5th century from the mixing of "oppressed" Germanic Goths (*tydske Goter*) and the new lords of the region, the Norwegians (*Normændene*). Using references from runestones, Worsaae created a web of interpretations to assert that the Danish language did not originate from the Goths, but rather from a fusion with the ancient Swedish and Norwegian languages. However, the author soon after uses Bronze Age monuments to differentiate Denmark from Norway and Sweden, claiming that it was in the

former country that the most prominent ancient monuments emerged. However, during the Viking Period, we see a reversal: small burial mounds are extremely rare in Denmark, but very common in Sweden and Norway. Thus, for him, the thesis of the Gothic conquest of the country would be unfounded: the same traces would have to be found throughout Scandinavia (Worsaae, 1849a, p. 11-26).

In his first use of the term *Vikingetiden* (p. 24), therefore, Worsaae moves away from a pan-Scandinavian ideal and seeks, for political reasons, to create a representation of a special, regional Danish past, without the same standards for all of ancient Scandinavia, and at the same time, he avoids the hypothesis of occupation by the ancient Goths (here, almost an incarnation of modern Germans). This archaeologist's subsequent works will not concern themselves with regional issues; on the contrary, Worsaae will increasingly study the Vikings from an external perspective, from other nations, within a process of internationalizing the representation of Old Norse. More than ever, the Vikings became popular.

Vikings in the British Isles

Between 1846 and 1847, Worsaae undertook several research trips to Russia, France, Sweden, and the British Isles, with funding from the Danish government. These archaeologist's forays can be viewed from several perspectives: the field of archaeology was increasingly entrenched in the country's academia; the government was increasingly concerned with how this historical past could be used in the Schleswig issue; particularly in the British case (which generated repercussions), a closer political relationship between the country and England, crucial in those times of international disputes.

The journey to the English kingdom was primarily due to an invitation from the Duke of Sutherland to Carl Rafn in 1846, requesting that the Royal Nordic Society of Antiquaries send a specialist to investigate the Nordic archaeological past of this region (Briggs, 2005, pp. 9-10). The British were increasingly interested in the Vikings, particularly in what Denmark was publishing about them.

In 1848, Thomsen's book, titled *Guide to Northern Archaeology*, was translated in London under the care of the Earl of Ellesmere (Francis Egerton). He wrote the preface, and in the very first sentence, he proclaims that English and Danish have a common origin. After a digression on linguistic history, he points out the terms existing in the English language that may have

come from Old Norse, especially the names of pagan deities and entities. He then enumerates the ancient literary and poetic traditions that flourished in the pre-Christian world – undoubtedly, here the author demonstrates his complete fascination with this universe.

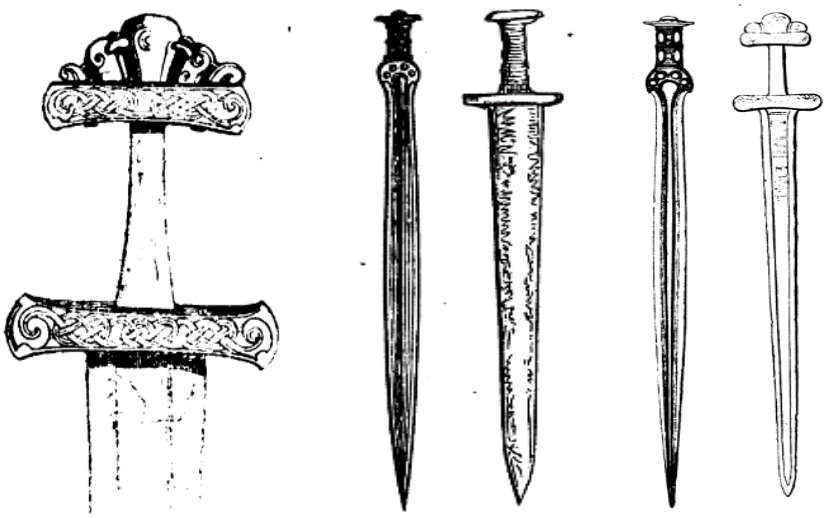


Figure 15: (left to right): Viking sword (Worsaae, 1843, p. 40); **Figure 16:** Figure: Bronze (left) and iron (right) sword (Thomsen, 1836, p. 46); **Figure 17:** Bronze and iron sword (Thomsen, 1848, p. 50);

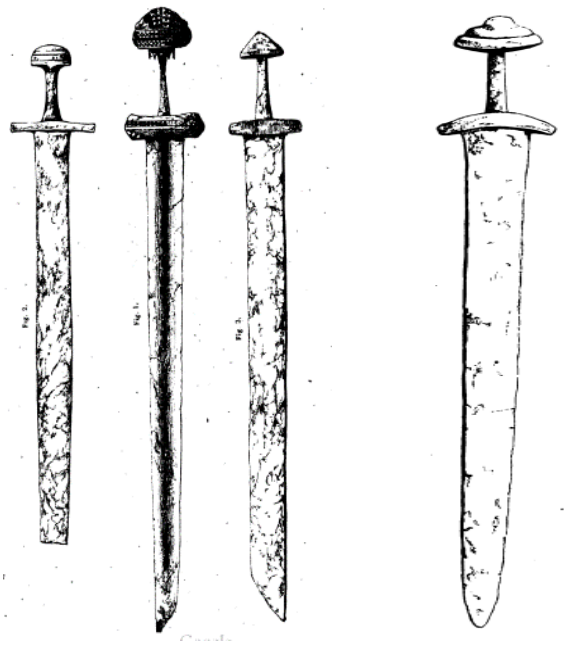


Figure 18: (left to right): Three Viking swords (Worsaae, 1851, p. 406); **Figure 19:** Viking sword (Worsaae, 1851, p. 72).

But the core of the Earl of Ellesmere's arguments was the Danish presence in the British Isles. Although he initially used the term *Danes*, he soon generalized it to the term Northern navigators, describing them as warriors, Vikings, and merchants (Egerton, 1848, p. vii). A considerable part of the preface was devoted to the discussion of Christianity and then the issue of runestones. Of particular note is Francis Egerton's portrayal of the Icelander as a warrior and skald (p. xii). This ideal of the Old Norse as essentially a conquering warrior can be glimpsed in a small detail of this edition of Thomsen's book, which we believe was an editorial change on Egerton's part.

The illustrations of two swords that appeared in the original 1836 book (figure 16) were changed to another (figure 17). While the bronze sword in the British edition has more detail, the Iron Age sword was replaced by one from the Viking Period: the S model (chronology between the 10th and 11th centuries, according to Petersen's classification: Peirce, 2002, p. 19), a sword with a tripartite pommel and a handguard with an inwardly curved shaft. Aesthetically, it is a beautiful sword, easily identified with Vikings, but also very similar to the only Norse sword illustrated in Jens Worsaae's first book, from 1843 (see figure 15).

The Danes had occupied a large region of England during the ninth century, influencing various aspects of the island's culture, political organization, and social structure. After sporadic raids, the region was gradually occupied by colonists, especially in Northumbria, Mercia, and Wessex. The Saxons' measures to contain the advance of these groups and to establish political and cultural relations with the Norse were also significant and complex (Albuquerque, 2018, p. 409-414). The British had long held a special interest in this Norse past: archaeological remains had been discovered in Cumbria since 1822, with correct identifications, but ethnically, they were referred to as Scandinavians by contemporary researchers (Hall, 1995, p. 8). With the new generation of Danish archaeologists, interest in the Danish occupation revived, both at the popular and academic levels.

With the publication of English-language novels in the late 1840s, the term Viking definitively entered fashion, as did its forays into the British Isles. One example was Zavar's 1849 novel, *The Viking: An Epic*, which emphasizes a formula that would later be continued in literature, comics, and film: a pagan Viking named Vali falls in love with a Christian Saxon woman named Edgiva. Gradually, the Norse character becomes Christianized and subjected to the "forces of civilization and behavior" of Christians (Wawn, 2002, pp. 202-203). Once again,

we see that the Viking figure attracts crowds, even in its most brutal and savage aspects, as long as it is subsequently converted to Christian values.

The British antiquarian George Stephens, of whom we have written previously (in the Sagas and Heroes section), was also involved in this process. Already teaching at the University of Copenhagen during this period, he wrote the novel *Revenge, or Woman Love* (1857). The narrative takes place in the reign of King Athelstan, focusing on several Saxon characters, against the backdrop of invasions and quarrels with the Vikings. The novel's structure presents various aspects of a lyrical "crypto-Shakespeareanism," runic references, and Old Norse philology (Wawn, 2002, p. 225-226). Although it does not present a bloodthirsty representation of the Viking, he is still a noble savage, a noble warrior, a pagan: "war-man (...) Wiking-plunder (...) a bay-boy, pirate, sea-royer (...) privateers" (Stephens, 1857, p. 10). 31, 97), that is, this author was still very influenced by the literary representation created by Erik Geijer in his poem *Vikingen*, as we examined previously.

A not very different view is found in Paul Sinding's handbook *Scandinavian Races*, which received dozens of reprints until the end of the 19th century. This Dano-American studied at the University of Copenhagen and, like Stephens, believed that the term Viking came from the cove of vik – an interpretation popularized by *Frithiof saga*. Although he does not include a bibliography, we can trace other influences in his work (Spalding, 1858, pp. 29, 30): that of the Norwegian historian Peter Andreas Munch (the Scandinavians had a Gothic origin); the Viking's warrior mind was connected to his religion and mythology; the Viking was a pirate (Erik Geijer).

But let's return to the Danish archaeologists. In this context of international revaluation of the Nordic past, Worsaae published his most important book in 1851, dealing with the British area. Entitled *Minder om de Danske og Nordmændene i England, Skotland og Irland* (Memories of the Danes and Norwegians in England, Scotland and Ireland), the work begins with two introductory sections on general aspects of the types of Nordic monuments found in the British Isles. The remainder of the work is divided into Danes in England, Norwegians in Scotland, and Irish.

One moment in particular deserves attention. Early in the book, Worsaae differentiates the Vikings by the geography of each region of ancient Scandinavia. Sweden would have produced few experienced sailors due to its physical nature: many valleys, mountains, forests,

and rivers made access to sea navigation difficult. Denmark, on the other hand, being primarily plains, turned to the sea early on, maintaining contact with its neighbors. The departure to the high seas was a consequence of trade (*Handel*) and the demand for 'Warrior's Honor' (*Krigeræren*), making the Dane early a bold Viking (den Danske tidlig en dristig Viking, Worsaae, 1851p. 9). We thus understand that his first notion of Viking is occupational (as when commenting on the Swedes: *Svenske Vikinger*, p. 8), but in this case, Worsaae does not use at this point the most appropriate ethnic term to comment on the inhabitants of this region in the ancient period: *Daner* (from the Old Norse *Danir)* and the Latin *Dani*. In the Jelling runic inscription, we also have this word used to characterize an identity in the 10th century: *auk tani (karþi) kristna* (and made the Danes Christians, Roesdahl, 2008, p. 658). In this case, *Danske* is literally Danish, bringing it closer to the native-language reader in modern times, an obvious strategy in times of extreme nationalism.

Regarding Viking behavior, Worsaae combines Montesquieu's climate theory with Geijer's heroic vision: "Ligesom den nordiske Natur, den friske Vinterkulde havde hærdet Vikingens Legeme til at udstaae allehaande Besværligheder (...) uden Frygt at gaae Faren imöde," p. 11 (Like Nordic nature, the fresh winter cold had hardened the Viking's body to endure all kinds of hardships (...) without fear of facing danger). The Nordic world seen through climate was a trend born with Paul-Henri Mallet, as we see in the second chapter, still finding an echo in an attempt to explain the Viking's difference in relation to other European peoples, in their aspects of courage and ferocity. And it is precisely at this point that Worsaae encounters his greatest problem: how to make the Viking a national hero? And at the same time, how can we make the English admire this representation in their country? What's the point of studying and preserving the history of a plundering and brutal people?

As we have seen, the Viking national question had been a Danish concern since the late eighteenth century, with research into the Icelandic sagas. But now Worsaae, studying the British Isles, has a new asset – *the figure of the merchant*. It was rarely referenced in medieval Norse literary sources, but in the British context, everything changes: for example, the trading center of Kaupang (Norway) was mentioned in the Saxon version of Paulus Orosius's tenth-century book. Thus, even before the excavations of urban-commercial centers in Scandinavia in the 1860s, historical sources on the subject already existed (Ayoub, 2018a, pp. 447, 448).

In the very first paragraph of the first chapter (*De Danske i England*), dealing with the Danes in England, the commercial aspect of the region was highlighted, from Roman times through the process of colonization and establishment of commercial areas by the Norse (Worsaae, 1851, pp. 21, 27-54). But undoubtedly the most important section of the chapter was Handel og Söfart (Trade and Shipping). In it, the author develops his idealization in detail: "De Nordboere, som i Oldtiden gik tilsöes til fremmede Strande, vare langtfra altid Vikinger, der kun vilde röve og plyndre eller erobre sig nye Landstrækninger. De vare meget ofte fredelige Kjöbmænd" (The Norsemen who in ancient times sailed to foreign shores were far from always Vikings who only wanted to rob and plunder or conquer new territories. They were very often peaceful merchants)

Here was born an image that would change the stereotype of the barbarian conqueror of the North, but it would also turn to another simplifying image, especially in the bibliographic production after the Second World War (Brink, 2008, p. 5), certainly influenced by the translations of the Worsaae book into English. Research on the historiographical and archeological representations of the Vikings is still very insubstantial in diverse languages, with the majority of investigations still centered on our literary and artistic references (as already mentioned in Boyer, 1986 and Wawn, 2002). This explains why Caio Féo (2022, p. 192) claim that one of the first theorists of a positive image of the Viking 'pacified by trade' was the Danish archaeologist Johannes Brøndsted in 1959.

Besides pacifism, another element will be highlighted by Worsaae: *honor*. The merchant was a highly valued professional in Norse society. When not on an expedition entirely focused on commercial purposes (*Kjöbmandsfærd*), this "professional" would embark on a Viking journey (*Vikingsfærd*) or be in a royal hall (*Kongens hal*), valued for their sagacity and warrior qualities (Worsaae, 1851, p. 134-135). Although there were Norsemen who specialized in trade, the Vikings were not always solely warriors and pirates, but also acted as merchants. There was an extensive network of commercial relations, both internally in Scandinavia and externally, reaching various Eurasian and Atlantic regions (Vilar Oliveira, 2018, p. 149).

The point here is that Worsaae created a distinction between a type of activity (going Viking), which would necessarily be negative because it included some type of violence, as opposed to engaging in trade, which would be positive because it would involve only peaceful relations or some type of exchange or accumulation of goods. Contemporary studies

demonstrate that violence could also be embedded in commercial transactions (such as slave markets or the acquisition of sexual captives) or in the simple accumulation of precious goods, given the prestigious social relations of the Nordic world (Féo, 2022, pp. 177-207).

Of course, violence here must be understood within the parameters of almost all ancient and medieval peoples. By establishing dichotomies and behavioral criteria, we are establishing anachronistic ideals. Worsaae did this because, in his time, there was a need to study only what was useful to his society: the heroic models, vital to nationalism. And not only in Denmark, but also in England, as we are seeing.

Another strategy the Danish archaeologist used to heroize the Viking and make his representation less violent and barbaric was to study his artistic ability (in the section of his book following that on commerce: *Kunst og Videnskab*, Art and Science). He believed that at the time the Danes conquered several regions of England, art and science were in decline in continental Europe. Christian art was merely a degenerate copy of Roman art, while literature concerned only with theology. In contrast, the Norse were constructing extraordinary vessels, utensils, weaponry, and formidable jewelry (Worsaae, 1851, pp. 152-153).

Thus, we arrive at a concept that becomes the central core of this book by the archaeologist, not so much for its descriptive character of Danish monuments and remains in the British Isles, but for its idealizing character: *the Viking spirit* (*Vikingsaand*), cited five times (pp. 149, 151, 282, 300, 430). For the author, it would be a kind of warrior mentality, replete with elements, that could be inherited by subsequent generations, even Christian or foreign to Scandinavia, not to be confused with a Norse lifestyle *per se*, with a pagan basis (which he calls *Vikingslivet*, pp. 149, 282). The main elements of this Viking spirit would be both shipbuilding technique and the art of navigation, of which the British would be the main heirs, both in the ancient period and in the colonization of the New World (p. 151). Interestingly, the word *Vikingsaand* was preceded in two instances by the adjectives *dristig*, "bold," and in another instance (regarding the population of the still-pagan but rapidly Christianizing British Isles) *djærv*, "intrepid," reinforcing an even more heroic character to the exploits of the supposed descendants of the Vikings. Here, Worsaae was possibly influenced by the Norse spirit framework previously created by N. F. S. Grundtvig in the 1840s (Palmskov, 2018, p. 20).

Two elements will be decisive in illustrating the Viking spirit of the Danes. First, the swords, of which Worsaae provides four illustrations (figures 18 and 19, three featured on a

full page in the book), whose details have been meticulously analyzed (Worsaae, 1851, pp. 405, 408). And several images from the Bayeux Tapestry: two charging knights (p. 88); two foot soldiers (p. 90); a vessel with warriors (p. 148); and a depiction of a ship from Dano-Saxon coinage (p. 344). Illustrations of other objects, such as brooches and axeheads, also appear, but these images are not highlighted. Swords and ships have been part of the most important representations of the Viking since the early 19th century (the ship is an iconic element of the Viking representation, Delgado, 2019, p. 83), as previously analyzed in the drawing of Frithiof by Lorenz Frølich, a tradition also followed by Worsaae. It would soon be copied, but this time by a history professor in Denmark, as we will see below.

A brief final comment on Worsaae's book is necessary. Here his idea of the Viking Period (*Vikingetiden*) begins to become a more precise historical concept, being cited six times, around two basic questions: first, the temporal delimitation of investigated material objects, such as Norse swords (Worsaae, 1851, p. 411) and graves (pp. 409, 410, 321); second, regarding other temporal demarcations or historical issues external to Scandinavia: the Danish conquests in the Baltic during the 12th and 13th centuries (p. 16) and connections between Scotland and Scandinavia (p. 341). It is worth commenting on the adjectives in this last context: *egentlige*, unequivocal, real, indisputable, primordial (Ferrall, 1845, p. 68), in the original sentence: *skulde have fundet Sted för den egentlige Vikingstid* (Worsaae, 1851, p. 341, should have found a place for the real Viking Age). In the paragraph, Worsaae is commenting on Scotland, which was already inhabited before the Norse and later colonized by them. Thus, the concept of *Vikingetiden* is used here to demarcate the interplay between two specific temporal situations; in other words, it begins to become a more common chronological tool among scholars, although it still has a meaning of Period rather than Era (Palmskov, 2018, p. 39). But even so, the concept of *Jernalder* (Iron Age) was still preponderant, being used seven times throughout the book.

Glorifying Voices, Dissenting Voices

The Vikings' success within Danish society was unequivocal during the 1850s, especially after the First Schleswig War. Nationalism was flourishing everywhere, and the Old Norse could not be left out. This widespread dissemination of the Norse past truly took shape with the book *Illustreret Danmarkshistorie for folket* (Illustrated Danish history for the people, 1854),

a manual aimed at both school teaching and historical dissemination for the general public. It was written by the history teacher, historian and priest Adam Kristoffer Fabricius (1822-1902), having a large content of both history and Norse mythology (Langer, 2022a, p. 139-167).

But why would a religious figure be so interested in this last topic? Because of the influence of one of the greatest Danish intellectuals of the period, the writer N. F. S. Grundtvig, whom we already discussed in the Sagas and Heroes section. For him, Norse paganism anticipated Christianity in a series of virtues, behaviors, heroic models for the ancient Danes, and idealisms, even being prophetic regarding some political events in the country. The myths were not historically true, but examples of victory over selfishness and ambition, whether in the past or present, containing human and social meanings long before Christ (Lundgreen-Nielsen, 2018, pp. 4-8).

Adam Fabricius's Handbook was one of the first works to present an illustrated overview of Danish history, from prehistory to the time of its publication. It was also one of the most popular until the early 20th century, with numerous reprints (Fabricius, 1963, p. 65), likely reaching the intellectual elite of the period. The book came in two volumes, the first covering Antiquity and the Middle Ages (615 pages), richly illustrated with drawings by Constantin Hansen and Lorenz Frølich. As with many nineteenth-century publications, there are no bibliographical references of any kind, either in the body of the text or at the end. Any indication of a possible influence on this author will be made by comparison with the book's content.

The first volume has two thematic divisions: "*Oldtiden og Hedenskabet*" (Antiquity and Paganism) and "*Middelalderen indtil Kalmarforeningen*" (The Middle Ages until the Kalmar Union). The first part, influenced by Thomsen, contains three subchapters on the material culture of Denmark in the Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages. Numerous illustrations and descriptions of ancient monuments are presented, especially tombs, megaliths, dolmens, everyday objects, weaponry, and jewelry. The images were reproduced from several of Thomsen's books, Worsaae, and other archaeological publications available at the time. However, the section on prehistoric inhabitants is much shorter than the second part, which deals with the narratives of the Icelandic sagas (*Sagnhistorien*), with drawings by Lorenz Frølich, and the third, on Norse mythology (*Asalæren*), with images by Constantin Hansen. Chapters four, five, and six deal with missionary activities and campaigns, the process of

Christianization, and aspects of city life, law, and education. The second part of the book focuses primarily on dynastic aspects and the lives and works of the Danish monarchs from 1018 to 1397 AD.

In the preface, the author defined his vision of History and constitutes the essence of the entire work:

> "Der har været Tider, da Nordboen med sit Sværd foreskrev hele Europa Love, da han tumlede om fra det yderste Thule indtil Miklegaard Dansken herskede snart over England, snart over Østersøens Bredder indtil de vilde Hedninger mod Øst og snart over Norge og Sverrig; hans sejrrige Vaaben udbredte det danske Navn vidt og bredt og gjorde det frygtet og æret", Fabricius, 1854, p. 1.
>
> "There have been times when the Norse with his sword prescribed laws for all of Europe, when he roamed from the farthest Thule to Miklegaard the Danes, ruling now over England, now over the shores of the Baltic Sea to the wild pagans to the East, and now over Norway and Sweden; his victorious weapons spread the Danish name far and wide and made it feared and honored", Fabricius, 1854, p.

The past here is recovered within a sentimental and nostalgic framework, typical of nineteenth-century Romanticism. And this recorded memory has a moral meaning, impacting the present. Fabricius acts as an apologist for the Danish national cause, which is defined in relation to other Scandinavian nations (such as Norway and Sweden) and European nations. But this opposition is also based on a supposed martial superiority –represented by the Nordic people in general (*Nordboen*) throughout his book, which the author will constantly revisit as a symbol of ancient national integration and unity, in a sense also making Fabricius a kind of "prophet" of this pan-Scandinavian past (Berger, 2007, p. 31).

There is no specific temporal division for the Vikings. They appear at various points in the book: Fabricius used the term in the general sense of a nautical, pirate, or navigator-warrior activity, something well specified in the phrase: *djærve danske Vikinger*, p. 298 (brave Danish Vikings), with an exalting tone. But at other times, Viking activity was seen as something negative: *vilde Viking*, p. 39, 219 (wild Viking), *tappre og vilde Vikinger*, p. 91 (brave and wild Vikings), *raae Vikinger*, p. 217, 248 (raw Vikings), *urolige Vikinger*, p. 214 (restless Vikings). The influence of various Danish writers, who previously encountered a negative view of Viking activities, especially in foreign lands, is perceptible at this point. But one passage in particular points to a different interpretation:

> "Den bestandige Omtumlen i krigerist Færd maatte ofte hærde Nordboens Sind og tillukke hans Hjerte for blidere Følelser. Vi finde derfor ogsaa mange Skildringer af de Grusomheder, som de raae Vikinger begif, naar de hærgede i fremmede Lande. Men ofte træffe vi som Modsætning hertil ædelmodige Vikinger, der ikke tage mere end hvad de behøve til deres egen og deres Mandskabs Underholdning, skaane kvinden og den fredelige Kjøbmand, men angribe andre Vikinger og kæmpe uden egennyttige Hensigter, ikke for Bytte og Vinding, men for Kampens egen Skyld.", Fabricius, 1854, vol. I, p. 248.
>
> "The constant turmoil of warlike conduct must often harden the mind of the Norse and close his heart to gentler feelings. We therefore also find many descriptions of the cruelties that the crude Vikings commit when they ravage foreign lands. But often, in contrast, we find noble-minded Vikings who do not take more than they need for their own and their crew's entertainment, spare the woman and the peaceful merchant, but attack other Vikings and fight without selfish motives, not for booty and gain, but for the sake of the fight itself", Fabricius, 1854, vol. I, p. 248.

Fabricius must have been familiar with Danish publications that presented a Viking who was noble, as opposed to those who were brutal. In the "Sagas and Heroes" section, we see how N. F. S. Grundtvig depicted the leader Palnatoke as a nobleman amidst savagery, while Lorenz Frølich illustrated his Frithiof as a knight modeled on Esaias Tegnér, distinguishing himself from his barbaric crew. As we have also seen, the theme of rape has been present in the figuration of Old Norse since Erick Geijer's 1811 poem *Vikingen*. The Viking as rapist, abductor, and kidnapper received both positive and negative receptions well into the 20th century (Sigurdson, 2014, pp. 249–267), but here in Fabricius's work, it is diminished by the presence of leaders who behave like noble knights. And the reference to the peaceful merchant is certainly an influence from Worsaae's book on the Danes in England, which we discussed earlier.

One final detail about Fabricius's book, but one that is nonetheless crucial. Besides being the most popular work containing references to the Vikings in nineteenth-century Denmark, it was also the most illustrated. It is noteworthy that it includes dozens of drawings by our old acquaintance Lorenz Frølich, most of them involving themes from the Icelandic sagas. The most frequently depicted characters were Rolf Krake and Palnatoke. The former was a legendary Danish king, a member of the Skoldungar dynasty, mentioned in *Beowulf* and various Saxon sources, including Saxo's *The Danish History*, the *Prose Edda*, and Snorri's *Saga of the Ynglings*, as well as the anonymous *Saga of Rolf Krake*. In most of these sources, Krake was described as a magnificent king, brave, just, prudent, and celebrated for his exploits.

Furthermore, he was characterized (especially in his Icelandic saga) as a "noble pagan"—an individual unfamiliar with Christian theology but behaving like a converted Christian. He fights against supernatural forces and the power of magic (Lluch, 2016, pp. 9-19). In other words, he was a character fully consistent with the nationalist ideals that the Danes sought, especially during the Schleswig interwar period.

The illustration "*Rolfs død*" (Rolf's Death) is one of the most important in the book, and we have already analyzed it in a previous publication (Langer, 2022a, pp. 155-156). Here, the tragic and heroic death certainly had great ideological importance for the moment, but the representation of heroes in battle or in warlike situations was also presented in other images in the book, such as the iconic Battle of Bråvalla (p. 70, figure 20), fought between a legendary Gautian king and another Danish king, supposedly taking place in the 8th century (Silva, 2018, pp. 81-82).

Figure 20: *Braavallaslaget*, Scene from the Battle of Bråvalla, illustration by Lorenz Frølich, 1852. Public domain, SMK Open, https://open.smk.dk The main figure in the representation is King Harald Hildetand (Harald Wartooth), carrying a sword and spear. Driving the battle chariot is the god Odin, who had transformed into Bruni, the messenger of the recently deceased Harald. The Battle of Bråvalla is today considered a mythical event, without any historical connotation.

Both Swedes and Danes produced major artistic works about the legendary Battle of Bråvalla during the 19th century, each side attempting to reclaim it as an important event of the past, serving as inspiration or even a model for nationalists to follow. In the Swedish case, we have *Bråvallaslaget*, Hugo Hamilton, illustration, 1830; *Bråvallaslaget*, oil painting, two versions: 1862, 1867-1901, both by August Malmström. In Lorenz Frølich's illustration (figure 20), the central idea is that of an old, elderly, yet implacable king, furiously raising his lance

and utterly fearless against the enemy. Nothing could be more appropriate in times of territorial conflict: an inspiration for the younger generation, who could at any moment be called to the battlefield.

As for Palnatoke in Fabricius's book, we already discussed in the Sagas and Heroes section his early insertion into Danish artistic and historical nationalism. Palnatoke was depicted alongside the Jómsvikings in illustrations of combat actions (p. 179, 183, 193). Other important types of imagery were vessels, important visual references to the Old Norse, appearing in a fantastical and picturesque context (p. 212) or in reproductions of the Bayeux Tapestry (p. 222), a technique already employed by Worsaae in his 1851 book.

The concept of nation presented in Fabricius's book was essentially based on Icelandic sagas, medieval Danish chronicles, and Norse mythology, and possessed several characteristics: he drew on a much older tradition of presenting values, principles, eschatological notions, and traditions through warrior symbols, which evoked the combatants, the people, the homeland, and other elements that could provide various types of identity for that interwar period. This was defined by the author himself at the end of his work (second volume):

> "Vi har levet i en skjøn Tid, fuld af opofrende Fædrelandskærlighed. Slesvig blev desværre ej vundet heelt og holdent, skjøndt haarde Kampe er kæmpede. Kampe staae tilbage, men de skulle – det haabe vi – finde os, ligesom Forfædrene, stedse beredte, naar vi ere besjælede af Fædrelandskærlighed og sammen knyttede ved Enigheds stærke Baand." (Fabricius, 1854, vol. II, p. 559-560).
>
> "We have lived at a wonderful time, full of sacrificial patriotism. Unfortunately, Schleswig was not won completely, although hard battles have been fought. Further battles stand ahead of us, but they will - we hope - find us, like our forefathers, standing prepared, inspired by love of the Motherland and bound together by the strong bond of unity.

The question of the Schleswig region was the main political and social element guiding Danish intellectuals and artists during the 1850s. And its legitimacy as part of Denmark was required by the historical past – the ancestors Fabricius evokes – whether in the form of myths or historical documents, whose figures were important for perpetuating ancient traditions that should be rescued. Cowards should be left aside, and sacrificial patriotism should be remembered in heroic images – especially those who fell in combat. In this sense, the Vikings were role models who served as stimulators of exemplary behavior for the modern nation.

But this framework was not always followed by Danish intellectuals of the time. There were dissenting voices. Among them was that of Svend Grundtvig (1824-1883, ethnographer and literary historian, son of N. F. S. Grundtvig). In the late 1860s, he published the book *Om Nordens gamle literatura* (About the ancient literature of the Nordic countries), which was not a work of fiction, but rather a theoretical study of literature. In the preface, the author discusses a fundamental issue for us: designations, concepts, criteria, and periodization. According to him, there were two conceptual groups to designate literary sources about the Norse in the past (the sagas and Eddas): one as medieval Norse literature (*Nordmændenes literatur i middelalderen*), as they were preserved in documents produced after the 13th century; and another group, as Old Norse literature (*Oldnordisk*), referring to the spoken (and runic) languages of the 9th, 10th, and 11th centuries. Grundtvig (1864, p. 1-2) belongs to this last group, believing that the Old Norse concept refers to the content of literary sources and not only to their forms, influenced by the medieval context in which they were preserved. However, as we will see, he believes that the concept, in reality, is much older than the dating current in his time.

We won't delve into the various linguistic and literary issues Svend Grundtvig addresses in his publication, but rather focus primarily on one debate: *periodization*. Up until that point, this was the book that most frequently cited the term *Vikingetiden*, precisely because the author needed a historical chronology to support his position that the Vikings were not the authors of the Eddas and Old Norse poems. This view ran counter to everything we've seen so far.

The first mention of the Viking Period occurs when he criticizes the Norwegian historian Rudolf Keyser, who claims that the "independent" spiritual development of the Norse began with the Viking Period (*Vikingetiden*). Nothing could be further from the truth, according to Svend Grundtiv (1864, p. 60): the magnificent heroic poetry (*storartede heroiske digtning*) and mythological poetry are said to be much older. The heroic poem *Atlakvide* may have undergone some alteration during the Viking Period (p. 78), but the famous Eddic poem *Voluspä*, which he claims contains a high degree of spirituality, is an example of good taste and literary grace, and is "clearly predates the Viking Age" (*ligger åbenbart forud for vikingtiden*, p. 94).

To date the beginning of this era, the author again turned to Rudolf Keyser, for whom the Viking Period began in 730 AD, after the Battle of Braavalla (p. 93) and would be the time

when the runes were produced (p. 112). Everything Grundtvig most valued as an intellectual, especially Norse mythology (p. 112), would have begun long before the Vikings: "*det hedenske kulturliv forud for vikingtiden havde sin rigeste blomstring*", p. 98 (Pagan cultural life prior to the Viking Age had its richest flowering). But what is the motivation for this reference? Why did Grundtvig follow a completely different path from other intellectuals of his time?

Because he saw the Vikings as ruthless brutes. In the Sagas and Heroes section, we examined how his father N. F. S. Grundtvig called the place where the Jómsvikings gathered a *Vikingsbøl*, a Viking den – that is, here the warriors are compared to veritable beasts. Viking society lacked the skill and competence to create the wonders he perceives when studying the literary sources. Myths, poems, and narratives of high literary value could not have been created in a time of such cruelty: "*Vikingtiden, den yngre jærnalder, (8de-10de årh) adskiller sig bestemt fra de forud gående tidsrum ved en vildere karakter*," Grundtvig, 1865, p. 94 ("The Viking Period, the Late Iron Age (8th-10th centuries), certainly differs from the preceding periods in its wilder character"). But if it wasn't the Vikings, who were the authors of these literary gems? Here he again appeals to the Norwegian historian Rudolf Keyser, who follows the hypothesis of his compatriot and colleague Peter Andreas Munch: it was the Danish Goths (*gotisk-danske*, pp. 111, 106).

But in one aspect, the the ethnographer Svend Grundtvig remained consistent with most Danish intellectuals: the Viking Period still lacks a distinct status, separating itself from Antiquity and the Middle Ages, demarcating a special era. It is still seen as synonymous with the end of the Iron Age, or a late extension of it. But things would change. The time was coming when *Vikingtiden* would become its own moment within Danish history, and consequently, that of all of Scandinavia. It is the consolidation of the concept of the Viking Age. And again, we will discuss archaeologist Jens Worsaae in the next chapter.

6

The Triumph of the Viking Age

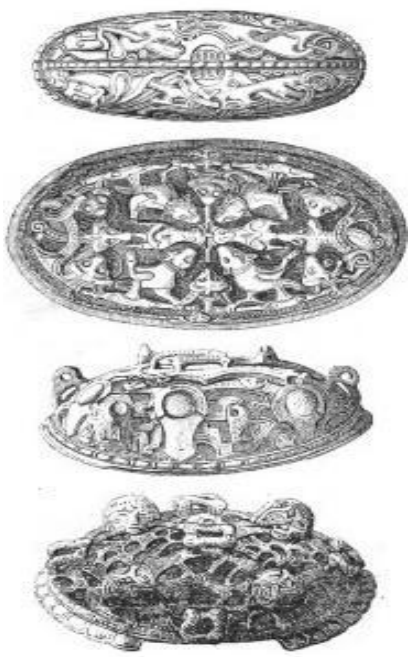
Vikings and the Postwar Period

In 1873, Worsaae published a small, 41-page book entitled: *De Danskes kultur i Vikingetiden* (The culture of the Danes in the Viking Period). Despite its size, the book was important because, on the one hand, it helped to disseminate Viking archaeology and, on the other, it popularized the term "Viking Period." Its analytical content on material culture is still considered valid by Danish archaeologists (Roesdahl, 1994, p. 167). For our part, we will limit ourselves to reflecting on the uses of this material culture in archaeological thought of this period.

From a periodization perspective, the book presents a certain ambiguity on the part of the author. Right in the introduction, he represents the Viking Period, highlighted in the text, as being between the years 800 and 1000 after the birth of Christ, deserving of closer study (Worsaae, 1873, p. 4). It would be during this period that we would have our first glimpses of history, at a time when darkness descended upon past times, when the Danes for the first time played a major role within and beyond Scandinavia. At this point, he also uses the term *Danevældets Tid* (The Time of the Danish power), also highlighted in the text (p. 4). Later, he places the Viking Period within the late Iron Age (700 to 1030), that is, other chronological milestones, different from the first one he listed (p. 12). In any case, whether by its title or its general content, the book was the first manifesto around the primacy of studying a specific segment of ancient history. Here we have fully established what Svanberg (2003, p. 49-51) calls the two central cores of the Viking Age concept: a chronology based on cultural traits and a phase within national history.

The basic and central idea of this book is to demonstrate that the ancient inhabitants of the North (*Nordboerne*) were not a barbaric, uncivilized, or savage people. That the Danes of this period were the first to stand out among civilized countries, with Denmark being the first Scandinavian country to play a significant role in Europe. Worsaae uses antiquity as a model of civilization for the present, at a time when the country was experiencing the loss of Schleswig and the humiliation of the post-war period. In his book, Nordic, Danish, and Viking

received equivalent treatment, we can affirm that this was one of the first archaeological studies to consider the Viking as an *ethnic* (and consequently, positive) *concept*, which would later be popularized through various other means. This trend, generally initiated in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, and particularly in England in the Victorian era, was associated with the glorification and justification of imperial expansion (Halink, 2025, p. 80). The theme of the positivity of the Viking from an ethnic and racial perspective still demands future research regarding the 19th century, not only in Europe but also in the United States and Brazil.



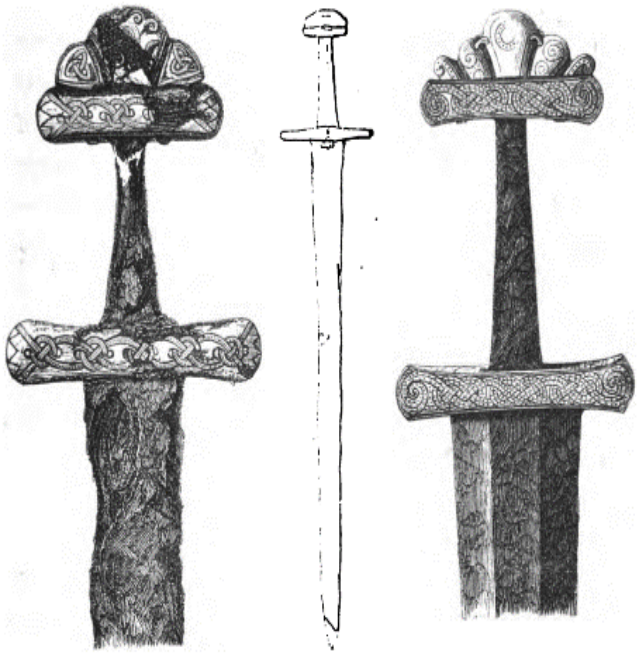


Figure 21: (from left to right): Nordic brooches (Worsaae, 1873, p. 21); **Figure 22:** Viking swords, (Worsaae, 1873, p. 23).

Figure 23: Jelling runestone, face B (Worsaae, 1873, p. 34).

Worsaae's basic strategy for characterizing the Vikings as a civilization was, evidently, to utilize material culture, which we can separate into three elements: everyday artistic objects, weaponry, and monuments.

Objects and art dominate much of the text. Mammem's style was one of the most celebrated, having been defined by an axe found in Jutland (Worsaae, 1873, p. 18). The object is mentioned, but without visual references. This style emerged in the 10th century, emphasizing plant motifs, with the axe's figurations characterized as animals, birds, and spirals (Oliveira, 2018b, p. 71).

Clothing and adornments were the most visually valued objects, such as fibulae, brooches, and rings with runes (Worsaae, 1873, pp. 18-21, figure 21). Worsaae wanted to demonstrate that the ancient Vikings were civilized because they possessed a sophisticated, refined material culture. And since they were warriors, they would also have had sophisticated clothing, but above all, refined weaponry. Swords were illustrated, but unlike in his earlier publications (see figures 19 and 22), now the examples are of much more refined

equipment and with more refined finishes, dominating entire pages of the book. These two swords referenced visually (p. 23, figure 22) belong to the R and S styles, both dated between the 10th and 11th centuries (Peirce, 2002, p. 19). The one on the left has two triquetras (interlocking triangles) on its pommel, with the crossguard featuring motifs of various interlocking knots. The one on the right also has a dotted and interlocking motif, both on the crossguard and pommel.

But without a doubt, the monuments are the main objects to be viewed in the book. At the end, between pages 33 and 34, we have reproductions of all three faces of the great Jelling Stone (DR 42). Erected by Harald Bluetooth, this runestone celebrated the conquest of Denmark and Norway, the Christianization of the region, and paid homage to Harald's parents (Gorm the Elder and Queen Thyra) (Ayoub, 2018b, pp. 435-436). It contains two main figures: Christ in a crucifixion position (face C) and a serpent coiling around a four-legged animal (face B, figure 22). In Adam Fabricius's already commented-on 1854 manual, the great Jelling Stone had already been illustrated, but not with such visual and textual prominence. Worsaae considers this to be the most important runestone, because it commemorates a great achievement, the Christianization of the country by King Harold, but also marks the end of Viking life (*Vikingelivets*, Worsaae, 1873, p. 34), that is, the end of paganism.

The last two paragraphs of Worsaae's book are extremely revealing. The author once again opposes the authority of historical chronicles because they present a negative conception of the Vikings, but praises the Icelandic sagas because they represent a fusion of the pagan and Christian worlds (p. 40). Even in the foreign world, the Vikings continued to perpetuate their "national spirit." Even their looting and destruction of monasteries could not be seen as acts of barbarity and savagery, because they were consequences of their acts of conquest. The "mighty Viking Period" (*mægtige Vikingetid*) needs to be remembered because it possessed the "living and powerful spirit" of the "Danish people" (*livlige og kraftige Aand* (...) *danske Folk*, p. 41). Worsaae represented the last voice within Danish archaeology with such nationalist enthusiasm and dedication. Times were changing, but the Vikings were taking root in local society with their patriotic representations, but now with new, more objective boundaries.

The myth of Viking egalitarianism

The last Danish scholar we will analyze is historian Johannes Christoffer Hagemann Reinhardt Steenstrup (1844-1935). He began his studies as a medievalist, but from the 1870s onwards, he devoted himself almost exclusively to the topic of the Normans in Europe (Gissel, 2004, p. 73). Until the end of the 19th century, he was the Scandinavian scholar who obtained the most systematic view of the Old Norse, due to his extensive research in various European archives in the 1870s (Djupdræt, 2013, p. 12). He was also the only Danish author from the nineteenth century cited in popular history books on Vikings from the 1960s, such as: Arbman, 1967, orig. 1962, p. 161; Sawyer, 1971, orig. 1962, p. 265; Jones, 2001, orig. 1968, p. 434, 435, 436. The 1960s were considered a time of renewal in the problems and research on the Vikings, especially in the English and French languages (Bauduin, 2019, p. 41; Palmskov, 2018, p. 46).

Johannes Steenstrup published a monumental work entitled *Normannerne*, in four volumes, from 1876 to 1882. The first volume was devoted to the study of historical sources on the Normans, as well as a systematization of Normandy, from its origins to the 11th century. The second discussed Viking incursions into Europe; the third dealt with the Danish presence in England; and the fourth with legal history and law in the Norse and Saxon world.

Contemporary Danish historiography considers this work by Steenstrup to be a work of national history (it deals with the Danes), but in a non-chauvinistic nationalist sense, meaning the Vikings were not glorified. Their victories or defeats were placed within a more general framework, taking into account the perspective of other peoples, such as the Irish. The author treated positively any people who promoted laws and culture, regardless of their origin. In any case, King Canute the Great was also viewed very positively, for example. In his publications in newspapers and academic journals, Steenstrup opposed radical nationalists, claiming they were producing a reductionist history (Gissel, 2004, pp. 81-83).

Due to the sheer size of his monumental work, we will focus only on some aspects of Viking conceptualization and considerations regarding periodization. One issue we cannot ignore, initially, is methodology. Steenstrup was the first Scandinavian scholar to cite all sources and authors consulted in detail, in footnotes. But to what extent was he a more rigorous researcher than his predecessor? In the very first paragraph of the preface, he states that the work was published with the intention of correcting the general perception of the Viking Period – that is, he disagrees with something and wants to rectify it. One of the points

he ends up explaining, a few lines later, concerns the Norman invasions: he disagrees that the Norse colonization of Normandy was forgotten or lacked social and cultural consequences in the region, and he calls for a detailed study of legal sources.

This is the guiding principle of his four-volume work: he will challenge the English and French view that the Norse presence had no cultural, political, or "civilizing" consequences. The preface also explains that his methodology will involve analyses of Icelandic sagas and folklore sources, despite historians' objections to this practice (Steenstrup, 1876, pp. v-viii). With this, the sagas regain a historical status in Danish academia, which had been weakened by archaeological publications since the 1840s, as discussed previously.

The Normandy region is located in northern France and is named for its occupation by Norsemen (*Nordmannia*) since the 9th century. After some initial looting, permanent occupations began. There are few historical sources about these settlements and their effects on the Carolingian world, and there is also a lack of archaeological remains, runic inscriptions, and Norse-style burials in Normandy (Queiroz, 2018, pp. 531-532). Precisely for this reason, in France since the 18th century, there has been a debate about the impact of Norse influence on French history, seen by some as positive and by others as negative or sometimes absent (Barrozo, 2020, pp. 28-57; Boyer, 1986, pp. 41-120). For Steenstrup, this debate also involved the question of whether these invaders were pagans, and whether the “victims” or people already existing in the region were Christians (Steenstrup, 1876, p. vii).

An important debate in Steenstrup's work is etymology. After all, what is the best term to use generically for ancient Norse seafarers? Viking, Norman, Dane, Norwegian? As stated at the beginning of the first chapter, this is a debate that never ended in Scandinavian studies and continues to this day. This historian's originality lay in expanding the debate beyond Denmark and England, incorporating Latin sources, not much studied in his own country. According to him, the best option would be the term *nordmænd* (man of the north, northerner) (Steenstrup, 1876, p. 67), but without giving up an ethnic identity for each region of Scandinavia: “(...) de tre nordiske Nationer hed Dani, Northmanni og Sueones’, p. 148 (the three Nordic nations were called Dani, Northmanni and Sueones).

This historian was also very up-to-date in analyzing Latin and non-Scandinavian sources, realizing that in them the term Dani was a general designation for warriors or invaders from various regions, not just Denmark (p. 54). The impact of Steenstrup's concepts

still requires more detailed research, but we can see an example of his influence in another Danish author, Adam Fabricius, who in the 1850s used the terms Dane and Viking, but after 1890, adopted the concept of Norman: Fabricius, 1892, pp. 3-22.

But even with his many advances, Steenstrup also made mistakes, among them a historiographical stereotype that prevails to this day: *he popularized the idea of an egalitarian Nordic society during the Viking Age*. He based his work strictly on a description by Dudo of Saint-Quentin, written in the ninth century, where the Franks supposedly met the Viking Hasting and someone asked him: 'Hvad Navn har Eders Herre?' Svaret lød: 'Intet, fordi vi ere Alle lige' ("What is the name of your Lord? The answer was: Nothing, because we are all equal." (Steenstrup, 1876, p. 278). The historian certainly did not engage in any kind of documentary or contextual criticism, but he also used the concept that all Vikings were part of the same society, without differentiation or hierarchy. This was not far from the way the Vikings were perceived in the nineteenth century. On the one hand, we have the ideal of the Viking as an *ethnic group* (which we have already discussed); and on the other, the view that a military and conquering group would reflect a *completely egalitarian society*. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Viking among Scandinavian intellectuals as a free hero, living nautical adventures and returning home, in a society that is also free and egalitarian (Langer, Menini, 2020, p. 709-737).

This ideal of free peasants and warriors living in a democratic society resonated with the aspirations of Danish society in the second half of the 19th century, with intellectuals seeking rights and freedom for the people, drawing on past historical identities. This romantic image would be popularized in other artistic circles throughout Denmark, but it was also generically used as a framework for all of Viking Age Scandinavia, at least until the 1960s (Brink, 2008, p. 49). However, the social landscape of Viking Denmark was quite different, characterized by diverse hierarchical and social variations - and especially the theme of slavery, servitude and poverty, literally swept under the rug of History.

And the word Vikingetiden itself seems to no longer have the meaning of Period, but rather of Era or Age, for example in the sentences: "(...) *til Normannertidens Historie* (...) *den betydningsfuldeste Periode af Vikingetiden*", 1876, p. vii (the history of the Norman Period (...) the most relevant period of the Viking Age); "(...) *den første Periode af Vikingetiden*" (Steenstrup, 1876, p. 257, The first period of the Viking Age); "*Denne Vikingetidens nye Periode*" (p. 263, this

new period of the Viking Age); "(...) *anden Periode af Vikingetiden*", 1878, p. 8 (second Period of the Viking Age). Here we translate the word Vikingetiden in these sentences as Viking Age, because otherwise they would be redundant on the author's part. Here it becomes very clear that the periodization that was previously only included in the Iron Age, now becomes a time band of its own with internal divisions.

The initial landmark remains the traditional one within Danish historiography: "(...) *at Vikingetiden frembryder som et nyt Stadium i de nordiske Folks Udvikling (...) ved Tiden 800*" (that the Viking Age emerges as a new stage in the development of the Nordic peoples (...) at the time 800), p. 3. The final period would be the generic Christianization from the 11th century onwards, which he demarcates as *Middelalderen* (Medieval Era), p. 1, 54, 56, 106, 133. At no point does the author mention the term *Jernalderen*, Iron Age. Further evidence of this new meaning is the use of the noun *Tidsalder* as a synonym for *Vikingetiden* (Steenstrup, 1878, p. 7, 14, 363), which means Era or Epoch (Ordbøkene, 2022; Ferrall, 1845, p. 326).

The concept of Vikingetiden is no longer merely a belated extension of an important period; it now becomes a temporal demarcation in its own right between the Iron Age and the Middle Ages. It marks the full beginning of the concept of the Viking Age, as we understand it today, based on the framework of Scandinavian studies. It would become more complex and acquire different aspects and meanings for Norwegian and Swedish intellectuals from 1870 onward (Svanberg, 2003, p. 36), which we will not address in this study. And before we move on to the debate on how this new concept came to be used in Anglophone historiography, let us take a final look at representations of the Viking in Denmark, but this time from the perspective of public history (or historical culture).

Vikings and Danish Public Space

After the Schleswig Wars, which caused Denmark to lose a large portion of its territory and heightened its nationalist-patriotic sentiment, the country sought to enter a period of modernization. Industrialization marked the second half of the 19th century, with the creation of railways, factories, industries, and communications (Jørgensen, 2023, p. 306-322). In this context, several works of art were created in the public spaces of the capital, Copenhagen, reflecting ideals of modernity and progress typical of the period, usually made of iron or bronze. They also denoted specific conceptions of Norse history and myths, all integrated

within a nationalist identity. But long before this context, mythology was already part of public space, represented in university entrances, murals and stained-glass windows of institutions, and in statues and city squares. As an example, we can mention the famous *Ragnarokfrisen* (Ragnarok Frieze), created by the Dano-German sculptor Hermann Ernest Freund between 1825 and 1827 for Christiansburg Palace. This frieze was destroyed by fire in 1884, with some remnants remaining in the National Gallery of Denmark.

But Vikings were a novelty in public spaces at this time. It wasn't until the 1880s that the first permanent artwork was created in a government institution: murals executed indoors at Frederiksborg Palace (now the Museum of National History), by Lorenz Frølich, from 1883 to 1886. This 32-meter-long mural, funded by government funds, was created within the artistic style known as *Jugendstil*, a version of Art Nouveau. It features strong, vibrant colors surrounded by floral, animal, or interwoven motifs.

During our visit to the mural in 2018, we noticed a primary detail in our observation of the whole: it was influenced by the Bayeux Tapestry, with sequential images creating a cohesive narrative about the Danish invasion and domination of England. But while the Bayeux work was a moral product, created to intimidate the enemies of Norman domination in England (Alves, 2018b, pp. 665-666), Frølich's mural reflects an ideal of the Danish nation. This narrative was realized in a glorious, epic sense, but also with many irreverent elements, typical of the artist. The mural's chronology covers the period from the first plundering expeditions (8th century) to the reign of Canute the Great (11th century).

Of all the images, Canute's was the most emphasized, appearing in several scenes. Canute the Great was king of Denmark from 1018 to 1035, reigning over Norway from 1028 to 1035 and England from 1016 to 1035. His reign was marked by his embrace of Christianity and the formation of alliances, but also by a strong self-affirmation as a great king, reflected in several literary narratives (Fernandes, 2018, p. 144-145). In a country that longed to be modern and forget the humiliation of Schleswig, nothing could be more obvious than to return to the period when Denmark reached its largest political extent within Europe.

From a general perspective, Frølich's paintings are more historical than the images he produced in the 1840s (see figure 5). The artist was always very attentive to the development of archaeological research, frequenting museums and consulting specialized publications (Ebbesen, 1994, pp. 3-12). We can see this in the clothing and equipment. While his earlier work

was full of errors (such as horned helmets, the use of Bronze Age swords, etc.), in the Frederiksborg mural, all the headdresses are correct, from the infantryman to the royalty. In one specific image (titled: *Kong Knud*), involving three armed warriors from King Canute's court, we notice that the reproduction of helmets, chain mail, swords, spears, and axes is consistent with the weaponry of the period. Some details, however, remain achronic or fanciful, as we will see below with the vessels and lurs. The sum total of the ensemble provides an ideal of heroic glorification of the Danish past. The scene "*Danskes leandgang paa England*" (The Danish Invasion of England) features the leader of one of the invading vessels standing on a small rock in the British harbor, holding an axe and, in his other hand, a standard planted in the ground. This theme of the leader conquering, demarcating, or discovering new lands was a traditional theme of nineteenth-century iconography, as in the dozens of representations of the discovery of America. For the purposes of this book, we will focus on analyzing in detail just two scenes from this immense iconographic ensemble.

Figure 24: Viking ship scene, Frederiksborg Castle, fresco, 90 x 292 cm, Lorenz Frølich, 1883–1886, Museum of National History, Inv. no. A 5057. Hillerød, Denmark.

The first is the mural's opening scene (figure 24). It prominently features the Viking's defining visual motif – the ship – constant since the early nineteenth century and traditional to this day, dominating a wide variety of media (Delgado, 2019, p. 83). The ship in the foreground is highlighted only by its bow, parallel to another vessel in the background, and above the horizon, a third ship is depicted in its entirety. The general idea is the collective power of the invasions, the military superiority of the invaders – in short, the Viking's warrior power.

The shape of the vessel is much more accurate than its 1842 illustration (see figure 5) – the bow and keel are consistent with the then-recent archaeological discovery of the Gokstad ship (1880) on a farm in Norway, which revolutionized everything known about Norse nautical technology up to that point (Maltauro, 2018, p. 315). But one misconception remains: their vessels still have two masts, following the pattern seen in illustrations from earlier this century. Since the Germanic Iron Age, Danish vessels have had only one mast, following a pattern that spread throughout Scandinavia until the end of the Viking Age (Miranda, 2018b, p. 205-206). The second error is the use of Norman-style shields (kite, droplet type), perhaps an attempt to imitate the Bayeux Tapestry. Norse shields were always circular and painted with figurative themes or various colors (Moita, 2018, p. 340), at least until the ninth century: the shield on the left side of the painting, hanging from the side of the hull, contains a kind of griffin or serpentine animal, created by the artist's mind. There is no way of knowing what types of images were painted on Viking Age shields, as they have not survived in the archaeological record.

The central theme of the painting is the leader of the group superimposed over the figurehead: he is bent over, trying to spot the beach or the open lands on the horizon (figure 24), while the crew gesticulates excitedly. This is an iconic element of the Viking visual tradition, the leader leaning or standing on the prow – from Frithiof's first images in the 1820s, through Frølich's 1842 illustration, which we analyzed in chapter 3 (figure 5), to the advent of contemporary images (such as Frank Frazetta's painting "Kane of the Golden Sea", 1977). It perpetuates the representation of the Viking as explorer, conqueror, warrior, and adventurer. Ruling over the seas, conquering distant kingdoms. The Viking as ruler of nature and human riches. This first scene of the mural, therefore, ends up privileging a vision of the Viking already consecrated by artistic and literary representation, going against the governmental interests of that moment and distancing itself from many positions of academic works, such as the aforementioned *Normannerne*, by Johannses Steenstrup, published from 1876 to 1882. Art and Science do not always go together, or in other words, public History does not always converge with historiography.

Figure 25: *Strandhug: Tavistock Klosters Plyndring og Brand* (Strandhug: Looting and burning of Tavistock monastery), fresco scene, Lorenz Frølich, 1883–1886, Frederiksborg Castle, Museum of National History, Hillerød, Denmark.

The second scene in the mural we will analyze is called *Strandhug*, a term that refers to the Norse expeditions that sought supplies and slaves along the European coast (Jones, 2000, p. 202). The scene reflects this idea: a Norseman imprisons a woman and a monk, while in the background the monastery burns in flames (figure 25). The monk walks tied to a rope, head down and carrying a heavy chest, while the woman's clothes are in tatters and part of her body exposed. The Norseman carries a bishop's cap on his head and, with one foot, kicks a barrel of monastery wine, in a mocking and comical pose (typical of Frølich's illustrations). In the background of this trio, dead people, including children, are laid out on the ground. The scene as a whole denotes power – military and warlike – over the region, with the destruction of the monastery; the triumph of paganism over Christianity, with the burning of the sacred site and the persecution of the priest; masculinist, by contrasting the strength of men over women. All these elements reinforce the idea of the Viking as a barbaric, destructive being, but they find

positive reception in this palatial context, due to the glorification of this representation as a conquering hero, from the Danish perspective.

The abduction of women is one of several stereotypes created around the Viking, which began with Erik Geijer's 1811 poem *Vikingen* and would find great success in literature (such as in Zavarr's novel *The Viking: An Epic*, 1849 – Wawn, 2002, p. 204). In the visual arts, the first painting on this theme appeared in 1841, by the Norwegian Frederik Nicolai Jensen, but it would be particularly important in France and England from 1887 to 1897 (Langer, 2022b, p. 15-19). Frølich must have had in mind a theatrical drama (called a melodrama) published in Copenhagen and London by the antiquarian George Stpehens in 1857: *Revenge, or Woman's Love*. In this book, a character named The Wiking is described as brutal and conquering, abducting women: "(…) And the War-man each oar grasps tight, and quickly wildepart, While in her hands the pretty virgin wrings till the blood there out doth start", Stephens, 1857, p. 30.

Finally, we note the use of a *lur* by one of the monastery's looters in the background scene of the Strandhug. This instrument also appears elsewhere in the mural, in the hands of festive warriors. Since the early 19th century, it has been associated with the time of the sagas, the pagan period, and later the Viking period, but from 1846 onward, it was correctly correlated with the Bronze Age by Thomsen and Jens Worsaae. Why does Frølich still identify this musical instrument with the Vikings?

Above all, it was a national symbol, discovered during antiquarian research and elevated to a glory of the Danish past. Along with the Gallehus horns, these objects symbolize the celebration of an idealized past, now permeated by Viking conquests, and nothing can change this association, not even academics. In 1911, the sculptor Siegfried Wagner would create one of the most important monuments in central Copenhagen, *Lurblæserne* (Lur players), next to Copenhagen's old town hall, further reaffirming Frølich's murals. All these works of art can be characterized as monuments and aid in the development of strategies for national memory during the transition from the 19th to the 20th century.

We must consider that most public strategies for creating identity references and preserving social memory have been tied to the concept of nation. We understand nation as a cultural product that emerged especially in Europe in the late 18th century, building a relationship between the new and the old, past and present, tradition and modernity based on national identities: they are fragments of reality, categories for classifying people and spaces,

demarcating borders and boundaries, and demarcating identities (Oiven, 1998, 37). The nation is a space of memory and identification (Fontes, 1998, 4).

It is important to highlight how the social agents responsible for disseminating the ideal of nationhood will construct discourses and strategies to make physical space – the place – an element of national memory identity. This "place" serves as a mnemonic tool, creating symbolic meanings and reinforcing social values. Thus, collective memory is simultaneously referenced by spatial and historical landmarks, and the "place" is demarcated by monuments, sites, commemorations, and public performances. The monument is not only the embodiment of the nation; it is also the object of transmission of mythical narratives and the visual connection with the past, which are also part of the construction of a legitimization of state authority (Osborne, 2002, 4, 16).

The Frederiksborg Palace mural, as a monument, served as a site of memory for the Danish nation, demarcating regional identity through the figure of the Viking. But this demarcation of an idealized Dane in the past was not only tied to the country's space – foreign invasions, especially by England, served as a demarcation of the Danish space in Europe. Citizens who glimpsed the visual narratives of their ancestors' conquests demarcated their role and identity in contemporary Europe itself. References to the past are never outside the time in which they were conceived. And they are also never outside the space in which they were created and preserved. Thus, nationalism served as a representation of the Viking as a model of national identity, but also as a demarcation of the current space of the Danish nation in the West. The Norse of Antiquity as a mirror of the past, but also as a mirror of the present.

The Viking Age in Anglophone Historiography

In 2013, historian Renan Marques Birro published an article on the Viking Age. Despite its pioneering role in Brazilian Scandinavian studies, it contains several errors and misconceptions. The first was that the term Vikingetiden was coined in Norway (Birro, 2013, p. 233), and as we saw in the section "The Emergence of the Viking Period," it first appeared in a study in Copenhagen by the Danish author Eric Christian Werlauff. Second, that this term had the meaning of the Viking Age from its very beginning (p. 234), a claim we have already challenged in that section.

Another point, argued by Birro (2013, p. 235), was that the concept (and terminology) of the Viking Age was incorporated into the English-speaking world through contact with the work of the Danish ethnographer Svend Grundtvig after the 1860s. This researcher presented no objective evidence for this assertion. All the books he listed, which were published after British interest in the Danish writer's works (such as *The Viking*; T*he History of Scandinavia from the Early Times of the Northmen and Vikings to the Present Day*; *The Vikings of the Baltic*; *Vikings Tales of the North*: Birro, 2013, p. 235), do not include the term Viking Age.

In our research, the first English-language work to use this word, but not yet clearly defined, is in a British book from 1877: *The place of Iceland in the history of European institutions*. When mentioning the discovery of Iceland by the Norse, the author uses a phrase on the side of the page: "Age of the Vikings" (Conybeaer, 1877, p. 9). In the bibliography, he cites the translated book by Worsaae, *Danes in England*. What the author did was adapt the original phrase from the translation of Worsaae's book (*The Time of the Vikings*, Worsaae, 1852, p. xxi). But it was still not a very clear and defined concept of periodization.

The Viking Age as a well-defined concept only appears in the English language was a translation of Gustav Oscar Montelius's 1888 book, *The Civilization of Sweden in Heathen Times*. Montelius (1943–1921) was a Swedish archaeologist who began working at the Swedish History Museum in the 1860s. He shared Thomsen's and Worsaae's interest in prehistoric chronology and was heavily influenced by Danish archaeology (Trigger, 2004, pp. 153–155). In 1873, he published *Om lifvet i Sverige under hednatiden* (About life in Sweden during the pagan period), using the term *Vikingatiden*, which had been popularized by Worsaae (but in the Swedish idiomatic version), still in the sense of the late Bronze Age.

The point here is that when this book was published in English, its translator used terminology employed by British archaeology, such as Bronze Age (Woods, 1888, p. vii). Thomsen's periodization was already established in archaeology in general, so it was only natural that the British translation would use the word Age to refer to the three periods proposed by the Danish archaeologist: Stone Age, Bronze Age, and Iron Age. However, in the book, most translations for *Vikingatiden* were Viking Period, with Viking Age appearing only three times: on pages 136, 155, and 157 – we believe the translator used both forms synonymously.

The next book to use the term was *The Viking Age* (1889), written by Paul Belloni Du Chaillu (1831-1903), a French-American anthropologist and explorer. It popularized not only the Danish concept of periodization, but also the Vikings, among the general public and academia. Although the work lacks final bibliographical references, we can trace its influences through the preface: he spent several years at the Royal Danish Library and the University of Copenhagen, and was friends with George Stephens and the then-American ambassador, Rasmus Anderson, all of whom resided in Denmark. The hundreds of illustrations in Du Chaillu's book were taken from Johannes Steenstrup and Oscar Montelius (Du Chaillu, 1889, pp. x-xi) – who, in turn, both replicated illustrations that had already been published with Thomsen and Worsaae. In short, Du Chaillu popularized in English what had already been consecrated by Danish academics.

Despite its title, the book was a comprehensive compendium of Scandinavian material culture, from prehistory to the end of the Viking Age. However, its structure is quite confusing, lacking a clear chronological order. For example, the first chapter deals with “northern civilization," which in this case would be some of the patterns and characteristics of society presented in the sagas, in the case of the Norse, whom he considers "ancestors of the English-speaking peoples." In the same paragraph, he uses the term "life in this period," and on the following page, he again cites the Eddas and Sagas (Du Chaillu, 1889, pp. 1-2). He was certainly thinking of the Norse who colonized England from the ninth century AD onward. But on page 4, he goes back in time and comments on the Norse civilization of Roman times. For this author, northerners were definitely a broad concept that harked back to the most ancient times and extended into the Middle Ages. Chapters II and III deal with Norse antiquity. The third chapter reconstructs Norse settlements in England, and the fourth through seventh chapters deal with Norse mythology. The eighth chapter regresses in time and deals with the Stone Age, the ninth with the Bronze Age, and the tenth with the Iron Age. The following chapters, from XI to XLIV, deal with specific topics, such as runes, burials, laws, duels, religion, etc., all dating back to the periods from the eighth to the eleventh centuries AD.

To further compound his confusing perspective, the author classifies mythological material (the Eddas) as sagas, stating that in his book on the Viking Age, he would use both archaeological remains and sagas (Du Chaillu, 1889, pp. xvii, x). The reader only learns the periodization of what he calls the Viking Age on page 26, at the end of the third chapter: it

began in the second century and ended in the twelfth century, both after Christ. As we have seen so far, this is a chronological pattern not followed by any other author up to that point. Even with these arbitrary divisions, Du Chaillu's book solidified the Vikings in the popular imagination, and his work was reprinted several times until the beginning of the new century. The first image, before the frontispiece, was an illustration reconstructing the Gokstad ship, discovered in 1880. Once again, the Vikings and their vessels become inseparable in our way of seeing their past.

Chaillu attributed the success of England's colonial expansion and the spread of the English-speaking world to the Nordic origins of the British (Bauduin, 2019, p. 32). This ideal of ancestry must have been directly influenced by Danish scholars, especially Jens Worsaae, and was followed by other later British scholars.

In 1891, another book, this one more academic and well-structured, would be published in London and New York: *The Vikings in Western Christendom*, written by British historian Charles Francis Keary (1848-1917). The most cited authors of this book were scholars directly involved in Danish archaeology and history: Jens Worssae, Oscar Montelius, and especially Johannes Steenstrup, both in the original Danish, Swedish, and German versions, and in English translations. The work most discussed in the text and notes was the book *Normannerne* (Keary, 1891, vii, 141-42, 146, 150, 162, 172-73, 192-96, 219, 275, 304, 313, 365, 391, 495), followed by Worsaae's study of the Danish presence in the British Isles (pp. 392, 393, 394, 395, 571).

A first important observation is that in this work, for the first time, we have the objective establishment of a Viking attack on England as the starting point of the Viking Age: the year 789 AD, both in the subtitle and in a chronological table, referring to the Dorset raid (Keary, 1891, p. i, 121, 544). Previously, the criteria for the beginning of the Viking Period/Age were based on *causes internal to Scandinavia* (generalist factors of material culture – 700 AD, Worsaae, 1873, p. 12), historical or semi-historical *events* internal to Scandinavia (The Battle of Bravalla – 730 AD, Grundtvig, 1865, p. 93, endorsing historian Rudolf Keyser) or *generalizations of Nordic raids* across Europe (800 AD, Worsaae, 1873, p. 4).

With the expansion and popularization of the Viking Age concept in the 20th century, especially in the English language, the criteria for defining the beginning and end of this historical period varied widely, but historical events related to England almost always predominated. Eric Christiansen (2002, p. 4-8) provides a critical synthesis of this debate, as

well as a new proposal based on the internal dynamics of Norse society. This is certainly a very important issue that requires much more research, involving both nineteenth-century and twentieth-century historiography, but it goes beyond the scope of this work.

Another interesting point is that Keary's book was divided into two parts: a first section containing a generic systematization of paganism and then Christianization, followed by specific chapters on the Norse invasions of the British Isles, France, and the German Kingdom, concluding with a return to the theme of Christianization. The presence of themes related to religious beliefs was a constant in nineteenth-century works on the history and archaeology of ancient Scandinavia, but it disappeared in twentieth-century Viking Age history manuals and compendiums. The fields of study of Norse mythology and paganism are separated into their own sections within Scandinavian studies. This is certainly another interesting topic of debate within the history of Norse historiography.

As a final point, let's explore some of the historian's concepts about the Viking Age. He believes the term was used very generically, its legitimate use being limited to the migrations that took place between 789 and 888. This would be the true Viking Age (Keary, 1891, p. iv), although Viking expeditions occurred before and after this period, as they were national activities. The warriors and navigators of this period are also conceived within an *ethnic framework*: "The Vikings of this period are for us the whole Scandinavian people," p. iv. The impact of Danish concepts on British historiography has not yet been properly analyzed, but the ethnic framework is still deeply felt among English scholars.

Also at this point, Keary questions the Danish publications that begin their studies in prehistoric antiquity, which he considers unhistorical. Later, he comments that the Viking Age was very important for Universal or European History (Keary, 1891, p. v). In this passage, we understand the disregard for archaeological studies of preceding periods – here, it would not be so much the dichotomous debate between the authority of material culture versus the historicity of the Icelandic sagas (which we examined in chapter four), but rather the contrast between a history of Scandinavia and a history of Europe (considering the British and French connections, of course). In this sense, only the latter would be legitimate. The author's next sentence addresses this issue, explaining why he wrote the first three chapters on Norse paganism (p. v).

Unlike the Danish authors, who considered religious beliefs as memorials of a distant and national past, this British historian considers only the religious confrontation (which he calls the long struggle between paganism and Christianity in northern Europe) that occurred within the time period he established as historical and legitimate: the Viking Age. Once again, it is only legitimate to study a Norse theme when it establishes contact with England or France. Ultimately, Charles Keary establishes as worthy of study that which connects with his region, being himself a nationalist about the Vikings.

Keary was rarely cited in British historiography of the 1960s, one of the most popular after World War II (an example is Jones, 2001, orig. 1968, p. 434). In any case, she helped to publicize and popularize the Vikings as an academic research topic, something that became increasingly frequent in languages other than English, especially German and French. And the Viking Age became a broad and established concept within academia, as exemplified by the classics *The Age of the Vikings* (1962), written by British historian Peter Sawyer; and *Die Normannen der Wikingerzeit und das Ladogagebiet* (1930), by archaeologist Wladislaw Raudonikas.

Without a doubt, Danish publications had a significant influence and impact on this entire process, but more detailed bibliographical and historiographical connections will need to be sought by future generations of researchers. One issue that could be further explored is the discrepancy between Irish and British historiography, even in the nineteenth century: for example, an author before Charles Keary, when studying Scandinavian remains in Ireland, used only regional studies, omitting any Danish bibliography or the concept of the Viking Age (Haliday, 1881). Could this be a local historiographical specificity?

Other questions can be applied to a history of Viking Age historiography, both for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the twenty-first: how were the productions of certain countries and languages tied to Eurocentric, imperialist, and nationalist themes? What were the regimes of historicity of the Viking Age? Would it be possible to develop a history of historiography for the Vikings from a global perspective, as Malerba (2019, pp. 457-472) proposes? The historiographical field still has much to reveal to us.

Epilogue

The main conclusion of this work is that we notice how representations of the Vikings were linked to the development of a national identity in Denmark, contradicting the opposing view of researcher Marie Louise Stig Sørensen (2015, p. 33). From the earliest idealizations after the Nordic Renaissance, linking Old Norse to the prevailing Enlightenment conceptions of the noble savage and peoples influenced by the climate and euhemerist references, nationalism was present (chapter 2). It intensified after the bombing of Copenhagen, also the result of a great moment of artistic creativity and aesthetic idealism, especially reflected in the conception of Icelandic sagas and their heroes (chapter 3). But the moment of greatest glorification and political use of the Viking figure came with the aggravation of the Schleswig issue, transforming the historical theme of Norse antiquity into a major focus of archaeology, both within and outside Denmark (chapters 4 and 5). At the end of the nineteenth century, the exaltation of Viking representation reached its peak, placing it in the Danish public sphere, in the same context in which the concept of the Viking Age reached its full potential (chapter 6).

The 19th century was a period of intense change, in which nationalism occupied a significant place as an ideological and social framework. Art and science played a significant role in the construction of national identities and themes, essential for countries seeking self-affirmation and the delimitation of borders and identities in an increasingly globalized world. In this context, Danish artistic, literary, historical, and archaeological works "invented" the Viking and the Viking Age, in what historian Stephen Bann proposed as a way of representing the past (1994, p. 13-25), creating a specific historical consciousness of the Nordic past, idealized and nationalistic.

History was understood through a series of images, stereotypes, and representations inspired by mythology, Icelandic sagas, and material culture, contributing to awakening in Europeans, in general, an interest in Antiquity and Scandinavian archaeology. The Vikings were a reflection of this historical period, providing a reference to a magnificent past for countries that were humiliated, oppressed, or needed to foster a sense of patriotic pride. And, in this context, visual representations of the Vikings became nationalist icons. The way in

which a representation is formed cannot be separated from the purposes and demands of the society in which it was historically created (Gombrich, 2007, p. 78).

It was in the Danish space that the stereotypes of the Old Norse using enemy skulls as cups (chapter 2) and the horned helmet with side wings (chapters 2 and 3) emerged; the glorious association of the conquering Viking in front of his vessel (chapters 3 and 6); his representation as a peaceful trader (chapter 4); and the Viking as an ethnic concept, an occupational and etymological reference applied to all Scandinavians (chapter 6). And the references for delimiting a chronology related to the Vikings, all created in Denmark: the Pagan Period, the Viking Period, and the Viking Age (chapters 2, 3, and 6).

It was in Denmark that stereotypes emerged about the ancient Norse using enemy skulls as cups (chapter 2) and the horned helmet (chapters 2 and 3); the glorious association of the conquering Viking in front of his ship (chapters 3 and 6); his representation as a peaceful trader (chapter 4); and the Viking as an ethnic concept, an occupational and etymological reference applied to all Scandinavians (chapter 6). And the references for delimiting a chronology related to the Vikings, all created in Denmark: the Pagan Period, the Viking Period, and the Viking Age (chapters 2, 3, and 6).

This book also reaffirms the importance of the history of historiography and reception studies. Only by understanding how our predecessors in academia perceived the past can we better understand this past itself. It is an organic relationship. We do not advocate here the idea that every form of academic study is a discourse comparable to fiction, but rather to understand how our methods and theories are intertwined with previous references, informing likely future directions of research: "(...) the truth is a point of arrival, not a point of departure." (Ginzburg, 2007, p. 14).

The existence of a few historiographical studies on Scandinavian studies reinforces the need for future research, which would help us in comprehending the different directions that the concepts of Vikings and the Viking Age took in the 20th and 21st centuries, both in England and in other countries, all initially influenced by Danish academia, as we saw in chapter 6. Also noteworthy is a recent British article questioning the academic use of the term Viking in an ethnic sense, but with little historiographical basis, limiting itself to the study of terminology in medieval times – and even claiming that the concept of the Viking Age was an invention of the nineteenth-century English (Woolf, 2025, p. 3).

Thus, based on this historiographical framework, we reaffirm the full use of the concepts of Viking and Viking Age. Despite its multiple facets in primary sources and the countless historical, historiographical, and stereotypical resignifications, the term Viking should still be used by Scandinavian scholars, provided they are fully aware of its great historicity (Langer, 2018b, p. 716-717).

There are no neutral terminologies *per se*; they are all part of past social usage. Any type of periodization or use of chrononyms presupposes nationalist conceptions, individual values, or social identities (Gibert, 2014, p. 14-15). Thus, in a scientific work, it is not the adoption of certain terminologies that would make research more neutral, but rather its methodological, theoretical, and analytical context. And the awareness that the historian's work is always tied to the social and historical context of an era.

We hope this book has achieved its goals. It is the result of the current panorama of research into the historiography of Scandinavian Studies, demonstrating that the field is at a level of significant maturity and consolidation. However, it also requires much further research, debate, translation, and publication. Future generations of researchers should also be open to new investigative possibilities, and this book could be a beacon to illuminate the nebulous horizons of the past, both in Antiquity and Modernity.

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