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# Scandinavian way of communication with the Carolingians and the Ottonians

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## 1. Problems in determining the methods used to communicate between continental Europe and Scandinavia in the early Middle Ages

The Spoleto Symposium, held in 2004, was remarkable for the fact that attending historians discussed certain problems of communication in the early middle ages.<sup>1</sup> Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, linguists and philologists have expanded our knowledge of medieval forms of communication,<sup>2</sup> but the proceedings of the Symposium were still able to shed new light on some aspects of how languages functioned in a historical context. Regrettably, however, no articles devoted to Scandinavian cases were published in the proceedings.

Why were Scandinavian cases excluded whenever any problems of communication in the early middle ages were discussed? Some reasons are immediately obvious. First, the Scandinavians communicated with each other in a different language from many other European cultures at this time. What we now call ‘Old Norse’ was the common language throughout Scandinavia at that time.<sup>3</sup> Since it is one of the North Germanic languages, the Scandinavians could—by and large—make themselves understood to those who used Old English or Old German, whereas they had more difficulty in communicating with those who used Romance languages. Second, the Scandinavians used a different script to the Latin alphabet. Their own alphabet was runic, and is now known as the ‘futhark’. According to a recent study, the runes were created in the territory between the Roman world and the Germanic one somewhere around the first or second century CE.<sup>4</sup> The futhark consisted of 24 letters up until the eighth century, when the number of the letters drastically decreased to 16.<sup>5</sup> Third, no contemporary written documents have been transmitted to the present day. The earliest original document extant in Scandinavia is a Danish royal charter issued in 1134,

1 *Communicare e significare nell’alto medioevo* (Settimane di studio della fondazione centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo 52). 2 vols. Spoleto 2005.

2 For example, see Michel Banniard, *Viva voce. Communication écrite et communication orale du IV<sup>e</sup> au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle en Occident latin*. Paris 1992.

3 As a general introduction to the history of Scandinavian languages, Oskar Bandle (ed.), *The Nordic Languages. An International Handbook of the History of the North Germanic Languages*. 2 vols. Berlin & New York 2002–05, esp. ch. VII & VIII.

4 Tineke Looijenga, *Texts and Contexts of the Oldest Runic Inscriptions*. Leiden 2003, pp. 99–101.

5 However the runes still remained in part of the Netherland and the Anglo-Saxon England.

while the earliest copy is a charter granted to Lund cathedral in 1085.<sup>6</sup> If we include the royal charters which Cnut, who reigned both in England and in Denmark, issued in England, then the earliest extant document dates back to 1018.<sup>7</sup> Apart from these documents, runic inscriptions and skaldic verses are the only accessible Scandinavian written sources from early medieval times.<sup>8</sup>

Does this mean that Scandinavia was an isolated region, stuck out on a remote European peninsula in the early middle ages? Did the Scandinavians constitute their own social system, which was exclusive to the outer countries? Recent studies do not support such an outdated view. As the Danish archaeologist Ulla Lund Hansen has found, many Roman products were imported into Scandinavia,<sup>9</sup> and, in addition, a large amount of Roman coins have been discovered.<sup>10</sup> These facts lead us to the assumption that the Scandinavians went over the borders between their countries and the Roman world, probably as mercenaries or merchants, at least until late antiquity. From the eighth century onwards, the Scandinavians at that time, that is the so-called Vikings, invaded western Europe in waves. And after they had left their own lands, the Scandinavians not only ravaged cities and churches for booty, but also traded as merchants, were hired as mercenaries, received baptism, married with native women and even settled in the lands they reached.<sup>11</sup>

For their part, the Carolingians and the Ottonians also wanted to learn about Scandinavia, which was a *terra incognita* for them, and, furthermore, they tried to incorporate it into their own world, that is: *Christianitas*. A new bishopric established in Hamburg in 831 was nothing less than a strategic beachhead for accomplishing this goal<sup>12</sup> Ansgar's missions to Scandinavia, recorded by Rimbert, brought new information about Scandinavia to continental intellectuals.<sup>13</sup> Regular contact with Scandinavia through the missions that succeeded the foundation of this bishopric, and which were supported by the late Carolingian and Ottonian kings, led to the gathering of more information about Scandinavia. Three bishoprics, that is Slesvig, Ribe and Aarhus, were recorded in the territory of Denmark in 965.<sup>14</sup>

Archaeology has long been the mainstream of research into the relationship between Scandinavia and the continent in the early middle ages. The names of the great scholars Holger

6 Sten Skansjö & Hans Sundström (eds.), *Gåvobrevet 1085. Foredrag och diskussioner vid Symposium kring Knut den heliges gåvobrevet 1085 och den tidiga medeltidens nordiska samhälle*. Lund 1988; Curt Weibull, "Bidrag till tolkningen av Knut den heliges gåvobrev till Lunds domkyrka år 1085." *Scandia* 55 (1989), pp. 1–11; Sigurd Kroon, "Knut den heliges forsvunna gåvobrev av 21 maj 1085: ett antedaterat 1100-tals dokument." *Scandia* 55 (1989), pp. 203–43; Minoru Ozawa, "1085 charter in context: considered in terms of the relationship between text and voice in 11th century Denmark." *The Haskins Society Journal*, Japan, vol. 4 in press.

7 M. K. Lawson, *Cnut. England's Viking King*. Stroud 2004, p. 211–13.

8 These two types of historical sources are difficult to apply to historical study. See Judith Jesch, *Ships and Men in the Late Viking Age: The Vocabulary of Runic Inscriptions and Skaldic Verse*. Woodbridge 2001; Minoru Ozawa, "Rune stones create a political landscape: Towards a methodology for the application of runology to Scandinavian political history in the late Viking Age." *HERSETEC: Journal of Hermeneutic Study and Education of Textual Configuration* 1–1 (2007), pp. 43–62 & 2–1 (2008), pp. 65–85.

9 Ulla Lund Hansen, *Römischer Import im Norden*. København 1987.

10 Helle W. Horsnæs, "The coins in the bogs." in: *The Spoils of Victory. The North in the Shadow of the Roman Empire*. København 2003, pp. 330–340.

11 Hans-Werner Goetz, "Zur Landnahmepolitik der Normannen im Fränkischen Reich." *Annalen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 183 (1980), pp. 9–17. Regarding the cases in the British Isles, see, Dawn M. Hadely, "Viking and native: re-thinking identity in the Danelaw." *Early Medieval Europe* 11 (2002), pp. 45–70; id., *The Vikings in England. Settlement, Society and Culture*. Manchester 2006; id., "Viking raids and conquest." in: Pauline Stafford (ed.), *A Companion to the Early Middle Ages: Britain and Ireland c. 500–c. 1100*. Oxford 2009, pp. 195–211.

12 Wolfgang Seeßgrün, "Hamburg-Bremen." in: *Lexikon des Mittelalters* IV (1999), col 1885–1889; Karl Hauck, "Der Missionsauftrag Christi und das Kaisertum Ludwigs des Frommen." in: Peter Godman & Roger Collins (eds.), *Charlemagne's Heir. New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814–840)*. Oxford 1990, pp. 275–296.

13 From the viewpoint of the accumulation of information on terra incognita by the Frankish empire, missionary lives including the *Life of Ansgar* should be reexamined. See James M. Palmer, "Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* and Scandinavian mission in the ninth century." *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 55 (2004), pp. 235–256; Ian Wood, *The Missionary Life. Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe 400–1050*. London 2000, pp. 123–141. As classical studies of the *Life of Ansgar*, H. Dörries, "Ansgar und die älteste sächsische Missionsepoche." *Zeitschrift für niedersächsische Kirchengeschichte* 45 (1940), pp. 81–123; Herbert Jankuhn, "Das Missionsfeld Ansgars." *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 1 (1967), pp. 213–221.

14 Michael Gelting, "The kingdom of Denmark." in: N. Berend (ed.), *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy. Scandinavia, Central Europe and Rus' c. 900–1200*. Cambridge 2007, pp. 77–87.

Arbman and Herbert Jankuhn stand out here.<sup>15</sup> Because of the paucity of written sources, history has been contented with affording Scandinavia only cursory attention, regardless of the existence of classical publications by Johannes Steenstrup,<sup>16</sup> Ferdinand Lot,<sup>17</sup> Albert d'Haenens,<sup>18</sup> J. M. Wallace-Hadrill<sup>19</sup> and Horst Zettel.<sup>20</sup> However, since 1990<sup>21</sup> the situation has changed. Janet Nelson,<sup>21</sup> Simon Coupland,<sup>22</sup> Judith Jesch,<sup>23</sup> Niels Lund,<sup>24</sup> Rodulph Dreillard<sup>25</sup> and Ildar Garipzanov<sup>26</sup> have published, in rapid sequence, important articles focused on the relationship between Scandinavia and the continent. Their contributions based mostly on the testimony found in the chronicles and annals of the Carolingian times have most certainly widened our field of view, but it does not seem to me that the work has given us a deep insight into this fundamental question.

My article is focused on this very issue: how the Scandinavians, the Carolingians and the Ottonians communicated with each other. The next section of this article treats with the concrete issue of negotiations; the third section looks at the contents of these negotiations; and the final section treats the problem of interpreting legal documents by the Scandinavians in the early middle ages. Before proceeding further, I will remark on two restrictions to this discussion. First, we can only cover the negotiations of elites with elites: the common people are excluded. As I have mentioned, Scandinavian merchants and mercenaries had a well-established status from the Roman era onwards. No doubt they would have acquired their own skills of negotiation, in order to collect any necessary information and make themselves known to others. Regrettably, there is very little information about those of lesser status.

Second, our discussion is limited to the relationship between Denmark and the continent. The reason is that geopolitical conditions vary considerably in each region of Scandinavia, consisting of modern-day Norway, Sweden and Denmark. Norway faces the North Sea and Sweden the Baltic Sea, whereas Denmark is situated at the crossroads between the two seas, a place where many different groups moved through ceaselessly. Furthermore, the Jutlandic peninsula of Denmark is the only country neighboring the continental kingdoms. This distinguishes Denmark from the other two Scandinavian countries. Major groups from Roman civilization flowed into Scandinavia through the peninsula, and the boundary between the continent and the peninsula was thus a contact point between the two cultures. This leads to that the situation of the Danes is the one recorded in the contemporary written sources. Taking into consideration these points, we can easily understand that

15 H. Arbman, *Schweden und das karolingische Reich*. Stockholm 1937; Herbert Jankuhn, *Haithabu. Ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*. 6th ed. Neumünster 1986 (1 ed. 1937).

16 J. C. H. R. Steenstrup, *Normannerne*. 4 vols. København 1876–82.

17 Ferdinand Lot, "La grande invasion normande de 852–862." *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 69 (1908), pp. 5–62; id., "La Loire, l'Aquitaine et la Seine de 862 à 866." *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 76 (1915), pp. 473–510.

18 Albert d'Haenens, *Les invasions normandes en Belgique au 9<sup>e</sup> siècle. Le phénomène et sa répercussion dans l'historiographie médiévale*. Louvain 1967; id., "Les invasions normandes dans l'empire franc au 9<sup>e</sup> siècle." *Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo* 16 (1969), pp. 233–98; id., *Les invasions normandes, une catastrophe ?* Paris 1970.

19 J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Vikings in Francia*. Reading 1975.

20 Horst Zettel, *Das Bild der Normannen und der Normanneneinfälle in westfränkischen, ostfränkischen und angelsächsischen Quellen des 8. bis 11. Jahrhunderts*. München 1977.

21 Janet L. Nelson, "The Frankish empire." in: Peter H. Sawyer (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings*. Oxford 1997, pp. 19–47; id., "England and the continent in the ninth century: II, the Vikings and others." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series 13 (2003), pp. 1–28.

22 Simon Coupland, "From poachers to gamekeepers: Scandinavian warlords and Carolingian kings." *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998), pp. 85–114; id., "The Vikings on the continent in myth and history." *History* 88 (2003), pp. 186–203.

23 Judith Jesch, "Vikings on the European continent in the late Viking Age." in: Jonathan Adams & Katharine Holman (ed.), *Scandinavia and Europe 800–1350: Contact, Conflict, and Coexistence*. Turnhout 2004, pp. 255–68.

24 Niels Lund, "Horik den Førstes udenrigspolitik." *Historisk Tidsskrift* 102 (2002), pp. 1–22.

25 Rodulph Dreillard, "Fidélité et protection. Le traitement des ambassadeurs dans le royaume des francs et sur ses marges à l'époque carolingienne (VIII<sup>e</sup>–IX<sup>e</sup> siècles)." in: Claudia Moatti (ed.), *La mobilité des personnes en Méditerranée de l'Antiquité à l'époque moderne. Procédures de contrôle et documents d'identification*. Rome 2004, pp. 591–614.

26 Ildar H. Garipzanov, "Frontier identities: Carolingian frontier and the *gens Danorum*." in: I. H. Garipzanov, P. J. Geary & P. Urbanczyk (eds.), *Franks, Northmen, and Slavs. Identities and State Formation in Early Medieval Europe*. Turnhout 2008, pp. 113–143.

geopolitical situation has given a special historical context to Denmark above all the Scandinavian kingdoms.<sup>27</sup>

## 2. Was Denmark part of western Europe?

I have stated that Scandinavia, and especially Denmark, was not an isolated region, but had regular contact with western Europe. In this section I concentrate on the concrete matter of this communication. Past generations of research have focused mainly on two points of discussion regarding the means of negotiating between the Danes and the Carolingians or the Ottonians. The first demonstrates that the Carolingians invited the Danes to their court and baptized them, as in the case of Harald Klak's visit to Louis the Pious: this is historiography focused on the civilizing of the pagan barbarians.<sup>28</sup> The second demonstrates that the Carolingians and the Ottonians required the Danes to pay tribute after the former won conflicts with the latter: this is historiography in terms of the exploitation of the loser by the winner.<sup>29</sup>

Why did past generations mainly discuss these two patterns of historiography? One of the reasons is to do with the problems of Carolingian and Ottonian historiography: communication between the Danes and the continental kingdoms did not matter to contemporary historians, especially the ones who edited the *Royal Frankish Annals* or the *Fulda annals* in the royal intellectual circle. They described the ravages of the Danes in great detail, and emphasized both the extent of the destruction wrought by the Danes and the influence of their own kings, who were sponsored by the Danes. However, we have to be more conscious of the historiography. Historical sources reflect the interests and attitudes of the historiographers to the events which were happening at the time, and consequently the events which the historiographers are not interested in drop out of the text of the history they narrate: narrative historical text is a construction that is reflection of the interests of a producer of the text.<sup>30</sup> Assuming this is so, we have to investigate Carolingian and Ottonian historiography based on our own interests, and stay away from the contemporary historiographers, in order to understand the nature of communication between the Danes and the continental kings. There are fragmentary pieces of evidence we can use, but few other clues.

I will focus on the case of the peace-making between Charlemagne and Hemmings, king of the Danes, which is recorded in the entry for 811 in the *Royal Frankish Annals*.

Peace was concluded between the emperor and Hemmings, king of the Danes, only by oath of weapons, because of the severe winter which closed the road to and prevented walking to and fro. When the road which was frozen was opened in the spring, 12 magnates of the Franks, and the same number of the Danes, gathered over the Eider River ... and concluded the peace,

27 Physical and geopolitical situations based on the varieties and differences between Denmark, Norway and Sweden should have influenced historical process of each state formation in the late Viking Age. Regrettably comparative historical study from the above-mentioned viewpoint still remained to be done. As an introductory survey of Scandinavian physical situation, see Ulf Sporrong, "The Scandinavian landscape and its resources." in: Knut Helle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia, vol. 1: Prehistory to 1520*. Cambridge 2003, pp. 15–42.

28 Reinhold Rau (ed.), *Quellen zur karolingischen Reichsgeschichte*, Teil 1, Berlin 1955, Theganus, *Das Leben Kaiser Ludwigs*, chap. 33 (p. 234): *Sequenti vero anno erat in palatio regio Ingilnheim, et ibi ad eum venit Heriolt de Danaïs, quem dominus imperator elevavit de sacro fonte baptismatis, et uxorem eius elevavit de fonte domna Iudith augusta. Tunc dominus imperator magnam partem Fresonum dedit ei, et honorificis donis ornavit eum, et cum legatis suis dimisit eum ire cum pace.*

29 On the relationship between the Carolingians and its frontiers, see Timothy Reuter, "Plunder and tribute in the Carolingian empire." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series 35 (1985), pp. 75–94; id., "The end of Carolingian military expansion." in: Peter Godman & Roger Collins (eds.), *Charlemagne's Heir. New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814–840)*. Oxford 1990, pp. 391–405.

30 On the Carolingian historiography, see, for example, Rasamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World*. Cambridge 2004.



made by oath according to their ritual and custom.<sup>31</sup>

After these sentences, 11 Frankish names and 11 Danish ones are recorded.<sup>32</sup> According to the historiographer, two successive rituals of oaths for peace-making—that is, the oath conducted “only by weapons” in winter and the one conducted “according to their ritual and custom”—are made. We cannot recognize the detailed description of the scenes describing the oath ritual in the text, but can accept the fact that a form of communication, or at least of peace-making, through the legal act of oath was established between the Franks and the Danes when anything happened. Of course, as Philippe Buc has suggested, each ritual functions in its own context.<sup>33</sup> This leads us to the assumption that the 811 oath ritual was not the only means of communication between the Danes and the Franks, and, furthermore, that the ritual changed its meaning when the context changed, even if it seems to be the same. If there were more time, I would discuss the process of the peace-making scene and its implications here, but now we must be content with the fact that there was an established form of communication between the two parties. The Carolingians established the way of communication with the Danes in nearly the same way as with other European countries.

Another way of communication can also be testified to by consulting some historical records: this was the exchange of legates. The famous cases of international legation—between the Carolingians or the Ottonians and the Byzantine Empire or the Islamic world—are easily remembered;<sup>34</sup> we should also note that the Carolingians and the Ottonians often dispatched their legates to neighboring, lesser powers, and received the legates of the Danes and the Slavs. For example, during the reign of Louis the Pious, Archbishop Ebbo of Reims organized legates and was sent to the Normans in 823;<sup>35</sup> similarly, the emperor received the legates of the Danes at Frankfurt in 822<sup>36</sup> and Tilonville in 831.<sup>37</sup> This sequence of exchange, and presence of legates in king’s council or in court, continued until the age of the Ottonians. For example, the legates dispatched by neighbouring kingdoms including Denmark as well as Islamic world, the Byzantine empire and the papacy were received in the council of Quedlinburg in 973.<sup>38</sup> This leads us to the understanding that the exchange of legates was a permanent institution that ensured the continuance of the relationship between the Danes and the continent.

This would lead us to the tentative conclusion that the ritual of peace-making and the exchange of legates constituted a form of communication for the Danes in nearly the same way as it did for the

31 Reinhold Rau (ed.), *Quellen zur karolingischen Reichsgeschichte*, Teil 1, Berlin 1955, *Die Reichsannalen*, anno 811 (p. 96–98): *Condicta inter imperatorem et Hemmingum Danorum regem pax propter hiemis asperitatem, quae inter partes commeandi viam claudebat, in armis tantum iurata servatur, donec redeunte veris temperie et aspertis viis, quae inmanitate frigoris clause fuerunt, congregredientibus ex utraque parte utriusque gentis, Francorum scilicet et Danorum, XII primoribus super fluvium Egidoram in loco, qui vocatur..., datis vicissim secundum ritum ac morem suum sacramentis pax confirmatur.*

32 Reinhold Rau (ed.), *Quellen zur karolingischen Reichsgeschichte*, Teil 1, Berlin 1955, *Die Reichsannalen*, anno 811 (p. 98): *Primores autem de parte Francorum hii fuere: Walach comes filius Bernhardi, Burchardus comes, Unrocius comes, Uodo comes, Meginhardus comes, Bernhardus comes, Egbertus comes, Theotheri comes, Abo comes, Osdag comes, Wigman comes; de parte vero Danorum inprimis frateres Hemmingi, Hancwin et Angandeo, deinde ceteri honorabiles inter suos viri, Osfrid cognomento Turdimulo et Warstein et Suomi et Urm et alius Osfrid filius Heiligen et Osfrid de Sconaowe et Hebbi et Aowin.*

33 Philippe Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual. Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory*. Princeton 2001.

34 Michael Borgolte, *Der Gesandtenaustausch der Karolinger mit den Abbasiden und mit den Patriarchen von Jerusalem*. München 1976.

35 Ch. Reuter, “Ebbo von Reims und Ansgar.” *Historische Zeitschrift* 105 (1910), pp. 237–284.

36 Reinhold Rau (ed.), *Quellen zur karolingischen Reichsgeschichte*, Teil 1. Berlin 1955, *Die Reichsannalen*, anno 822 (p. 130): *Ibique generali conventu congregato necessaria quaeque ad utilitatem orientalium partium regni sui pertinentia more solemniter com optimatibus, quos ad hoc evocare iusserat, tractare curavit. In quo conventu omnium orientalium Sclavorum, id est Abodritorum, Soraborum, Wilzorum, Beheimorum, Marvanorum, Praedenecentorum, et in Pannonia residentium Abarum legationes cum muneribus ad se directas audivit. Fuerunt in eodem conventu et legationes de Nordmannia, tam de parte Harioldi quam filiorum Godofridi.*

37 Reinhold Rau (ed.), *Quellen zur karolingischen Reichsgeschichte*, Teil 2. Berlin 1969, *Jahrbücher von St. Bertin*, anno 831 (p. 14): *Tertium vero generale placitum in Theodonis-villa habuit, ibique ad eum legati amiralmumminin de Perside venientes, pacem petiverunt. Qua mox impetrata, reversi sunt. Necnon missi Danorum eadem exorantes venerunt, et feodere firmato, ad propria repedarunt...*

38 János Gulya, “Der Hoftag in Quedlinburg 973.” in: Andreas Ranft (ed.), *Der Hoftag in Quedlinburg 973. Von den historischen Wurzeln zum Neuen Europa*. Berlin 2006, pp. 19–27.

other Christian kingdoms, the Byzantine empire and the Islamic world. Of course, we have to admit that both the ritual and the legation of the Danes to the Carolingians and the Ottonians were not as magnificent as those of the Ottonians to the Byzantine Empire, as described in *Antapodosis* by Liutprand of Cremona,<sup>39</sup> and were different from the ones of Poland or Bohemia neighbouring to the Ottonians.<sup>40</sup> However, the important thing to note is that we have a record of the fact that the Danes, who were supposedly pagan barbarians, were able to establish a standard form of communication with the Carolingians and the Ottonians. This fact should not be overlooked. Denmark, then, was not an isolated region but part of western Europe—if not of *Christianitas*—in the early middle ages.<sup>41</sup>

### 3. Contents of the negotiations: The fixing of boundaries, trade agreements and the permission to convert

#### 3.1. Fixing of boundaries

A king's council was held in Paderborn in 816, at which various neighboring princes gathered. Certain historical sources testify that this council took place, including the *Deeds of Louis the Pious* by Thegan, who relates the following.

In the second year of his reign, Louis held his council in the territory of Saxony. He decided a lot of good things. The legate of the Danes came to him to establish peace, and all the pagan peoples around also came to him. The above-mentioned Bernhardus, who was dispatched to Italy, came to him. Louis confirmed the boundaries between his kingdom and each region and came back to his palace of Aachen, where he passed the winter.<sup>42</sup>

Here we see that some legates, including those of the Danes, arrived at the council of Paderborn, where the emperor decided the boundaries of the Danes in the north, the Slavs in the east and Bernhard in Italy. It is regrettable that detailed process of the transaction was not recorded, and it is unknown whether it was proposed by the Danes or the emperor. However, since the fixing of boundaries is one of the most important problems among different nations, it is supposed that some ritualized transactions would be done.

The belongingness of the territory between the Jutlandic peninsula and the continent remained long in dispute. After 30 years attempt to surrender the Saxons by Charlemagne, Louis the Pious established the bishopric of Hamburg as a beachhead of mission to the North. The Danes, on the other hand, constructed the great wooden wall called Danevirke at the bottom of the Jutlandic peninsula in the eighth century, and repaired it repeatedly.<sup>43</sup> This wall was a notable construction, which divided the kingdom of the Danes and the territory of the Saxons. In spite of this, however, the Danes sometimes invaded Saxony. The destruction of Hamburg in 845 was one of the most

39 Philippe Buc, *ibid.*, pp. 15–50.

40 The state formation of Poland and Bohemia was processed in the much deeper relations to Germany. See Jerzy Strzelczyk, “Bohemia and Poland: Examples of successful Western Slavonic state formation.” in: Timothy Reuter (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History III, c. 900–c. 1024*. Cambridge 1999, pp. 514–35.

41 Denmark became a Christianized state around 960. Accordingly diplomatic attitudes to other countries by Denmark before 960 were different from the ones after 960.

42 R. Rau (ed.), *Quellen zur karolingischen Reichsgeschichte*, Teil 1, Berlin 1955, Thegan, *Das Leben Kaiser Ludwigs*, chap. 14 (p. 214): Alio anno regni sui habuit generale placitum suum in partibus Saxoniae, et ibi multa bona constituit, et legatio Danorum ad eum venit postulans pacem; et omnes qui in circuitu errant paganorum nationum ad eum venerunt; et supradictus Bernharudus ibi ad eum venit, quem dimisit ire iterum in Italiam. Dominus Hludiwicus, postquam confirmavit confinea regni sui illis partibus, rediit ad sedem suam Auisgrani palacio, ibique hiemen transegit.

43 According to Else Roesdahl, the Danevirke functioned in 815, 834, 974, 1043, 1066, 1113, 1131, 1147, 1156, 1171 and 1193. Cf. Else Roesdahl, “Danevirke.” in: Phillip Pulsiano (ed.), *Medieval Scandinavia. An Encyclopedia*. New York & London 1993, pp. 120–121.

remarkable cases.<sup>44</sup> The establishment of a fixed boundary, as related by Thegan, seemed to have been intended to bring temporal stability to the disputed boundary between the Frankish kingdom and the kingdom of the Danes.

### 3.2. Agreement of trade

A description of the king's council of Bürstadt in the entry for 873 in the *Fulda annals* is as follows.

Legates of Sigifrid, king of the Danes, came to conclude peace in the territory between theirs and the Saxons in order that merchants of the two kingdoms could move without danger, transport articles and sell and buy them peacefully.<sup>45</sup>

Here it is stated that Louis the German transacted with the legates of Sigifrid, king of the Danes in order to remain in peace for the sake of trade between Denmark and Germany. This description is one of the rare testimonies that suggest that there were Danish merchants.

Trade was activated in Denmark in 9<sup>th</sup> century. As Herbert Jankuhn stated in his famous book, there prospered Hedeby, the largest trading site which was situated at the eastern edge of the above-mentioned Danevirke, which faces the Baltic Sea.<sup>46</sup> This trading site held the good location at the crossroad of transportation between the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. The prosperity of Hedeby, where a lot of merchants gathered, was described in the ninth century by Rimbert, in his *Life of Ansgar*,<sup>47</sup> it was also described in the Old English version of Orosius' *History*,<sup>48</sup> and also in the travel account made by Ibrahim Ibn Jacbi.<sup>49</sup>

From the account written in the *Fulda annals* we learn the kingship secured the peace of trade between the Danish and continental merchants. In addition, the name of Sigtryg in two rune stones in Hedeby and the name of Swein Forkbeard in the other two rune stones are recorded.<sup>50</sup> Hedeby was deeply connected with the kingship of the Danes.<sup>51</sup> This fact suggests that each king—and particularly the Danish king—regarded the wealth produced by the trade between the North Sea and the Baltic Sea as essential in his efforts to maintain his dynasty, which basically lacked a sufficient number of estates compared to the royal houses on the continent.

Another source describing the trade between Denmark and the continent, and which does not concern the Carolingians and the Ottonians, can be added: the *Deeds of the Norman Dukes*, written

44 Walther Trillmich & Rudolf Buchner (eds.), *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts zur Geschichte der hamburgischen Kirche und des Reiches*. Darmstadt 2000, Rimbert, *Ansgars Lebens*, chap. 16 (p. 50): Verum eum haec in utraque parte laudabiliter et Deo digne agerentur, contigit, ex inproviso pyratas advenientes Hammaburgensem civitatem navigio circumdedisse.

45 R. Rau (ed.), *Quellen zur karolingischen Reichsgeschichte*, Teil 3, Berlin 1960, *Jahrbücher von Fulda*, anno 817 (p. 88): Venerunt quoque illuc Sigifridi Danorum regis legati pacis faciendae gratia in terminis inter illos et Saxones positis et ut negotiatores utriusque regni invicem transeuntes et mericionia deferentes emerent et venderent pacifice.

46 Herbert Jankuhn, *Haithabu: Ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit*. 6 ed. Neumünster 1986. In addition, Joachim Stark (ed.), *Haithabu — Schleswig — Danewerk: Aspekte einer Forschungsgeschichte mittelalterlicher Anlagen in Schleswig-Holstein* (BAR International Series 432). Oxford 1988; Klaus Brandt, Michael Müller-Wille & Christian Radtke (eds.), *Haithabu und die frühe Stadtentwicklung im nördlichen Europa* (Schriften des Archäologischen Landesmuseums 8). Neumünster 2002.

47 Walther Trillmich & Rudolf Buchner (eds.), *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts zur Geschichte der hamburgischen Kirche und des Reiches*. Darmstadt 2000, Rimbert, *Ansgars Lebens*, chap. 24 (p. 80): Quod ille benignissimo concessit affectu et in portu quodam regni sui ad hoc aptissimo et huic regioni proximo Sliaswich vocato, ubi ex omni parte conventus fiebat negotiatorum, ecclesiam illi fabricare permisit, tribuens locum in qu presbiter maneret.

48 Janet Bately (ed.), *The Old English Orosius*. Oxford 1980, p. 16: of Sciringesheale he cwæð þæt he seglode on fif dagan to þæm porte þe mon hæf æt Hæþum, se stent betuh Winedum 7 Seaxum 7 Angle 7 hyrð in on Dene.

49 Andre Miquel, "L'Europe occidentale dans la relation arabe d'Ibrahim b. Ya'qub (Xe s.)." *Annales ESC* 21 (1966), pp. 1048–64.

50 For example, Niels Lund, "Svenskevældet i Hedeby." *Årbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie* 1980 (1982), pp. 114–125; Erik Moltke, "Det svenske Hedebyrige og Danmarks samling." *Årbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie* 1985 (1986), pp. 16–28.

51 From the viewpoint of the relationship between Hedeby and the kingship, Walther Schlesinger, "Unkonventionelle Gedanken zur Geschichte von Schleswig / Haithabu." in: *Aus Reichsgeschichte und nordischer Geschichte. Festschrift für Karl Jordan*. Kiel 1972, pp. 70–91; Egon Wamers, "König im Grenzland. Neue Analyse des Bootkammergrabes von Haiðaby." *Acta Archaeologica* 65 (1994), pp. 1–56.

by William of Jumiege in the twelfth century.

A treaty of continuous peace was then concluded between them, according to which the kings of the Danes and the dukes of the Normans, as well as their heirs in the future, would maintain permanent peace; the Danes would sell their booty in Normandy. If a Dane were ill or wounded and in need of his friends' help he would be securely looked after by the Normans as if he were at home. To ensure that the treaty was firm and lasting both princes sanctioned it on each side by means of oaths. (Trans. E. van Houts)<sup>52</sup>

Here we learn of the treaty concluded by Swein Forkbeard, king of Denmark, and Duke Richard of Normandy around the year 1000. This treaty is recorded not in the original manuscript, but in the later narrative source by William of Jumieges, which has inclined some historians to doubt the authenticity of this treaty.<sup>53</sup> It is, however, undeniable that the Scandinavians, the majority of whom were Danes, had ceaselessly communicated with Normandy as traders long after they first settled there in the tenth century.<sup>54</sup> Rouen was trading center where merchants from the British Isles, the continent and Scandinavia gathered.<sup>55</sup> Normandy under the reign of Richard was in peace during the turmoil caused by the Scandinavians in England, Ireland and the continent.<sup>56</sup> When we take such a situation in Normandy into consideration, it is no wonder that the Scandinavians needed Normandy in order to sell their booty and to give security to the wounded.

### 3.3. Permission to convert

In Book 2, chapter 29 of the *Deeds of the Archbishops of Hamburg*, Adam of Bremen tells us that the archbishop Liaviso sent legates to the Danish king, Swein Forkbeard.

Like his predecessors, he prosecuted his mission to the heathen with great zeal even though he was hindered by evil days. At that time, while King Svein was preparing a fierce persecution of the Christians in Denmark, the archbishop is said through suppliant legates and by frequent gifts to have endeavored to mollify the king's ferocious spirit in regard to the Christians. (Trans. Francis J. Tschan)<sup>57</sup>

If we accept the chronology reconstructed in the *Deeds*, the year of this dispatching of legates is 988, when Otto 2 reigned. As the Jelling rune stones also testify, the Christianization of Denmark had

52 Elisabeth M. C. van Houts (ed.), *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni*. 2 vols. Oxford 1992–5, vol. 1, V–7 (pp. 16–18): Quem cum dux aliquanta mora regaliter tractaret, dum et ipse et milites, tantum post nauigii laborem, recrearentur, pacem inter se firmaverunt continuam, ea uidelicet lege ut per succedentia Danorum regum Normannorumque ducum ac eorum heredum tempora firma perpetualiter inter eos maneret, et que Dani abstulissent inimicis, emenda conferrent Normannis. Si quis uero Danorum inualidus aut uulneratus amicorum indigeret iuuamine, apud Normannos quasi in domo propria sub securitate sanaretur. Que lex ut rata maneret, ab utraque parte sacramentorum tenore illam sanxerunt eorum principes. Quibus rex ad uotum expletis, muneratus cum dignis a duce muneribus, quamtotius ad suos letus regreditur.

53 Elisabeth M. C. van Houts, "The political relations between Normandy and England before 1066 according to the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*," in: R. Foreville (ed.), *Les Mutations socio-culturelles au tournant des 11<sup>e</sup>–12<sup>e</sup> siècles: Actes du 4<sup>e</sup> Colloque internationale Anselmien*. Paris 1984, pp. 85–97.

54 L. W. Breese, "The persistence of Scandinavian connections in Normandy in the tenth and eleventh centuries," *Viator* 7 (1977), pp. 47–61; Lesley Abrams, "England, Normandy and Scandinavia," in: Ch. Harper-Bill & Elisabeth van Houts (eds.), *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*. Woodbridge 2003, pp. 41–62.

55 Lucien Musset, "Rouen et l'Angleterre vers l'an mil. Du nouveau sur le satiriste Garnier et l'école littéraire de Rouen au temps de Richard II," *Annales de Normandie* 24 (1974), pp. 287–90; id. "Rouen au temps des Francs et sous les ducs," in: Michel Mollat (ed.), *Histoire de Rouen*. Toulouse 1979, pp. 31–74.

56 As a general introduction to the history of dukes of Normandy, Johannes Steenstrup, *Normandiets historie under de syv første hertuger, 911–1066*. København 1925; David Bates, *Normandy before 1066*. London 1982; François Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois X<sup>e</sup>–XII<sup>e</sup> siècles*. Rennes 1998.

57 W. Trillmich & R. Buchner (eds.), *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts zur Geschichte der hamburgischen Kirche und des Reiches*. Darmstadt 2000, Adam von Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, II–29 (pp. 264–66): Quo tempore cum magnam Suein rex persecutionem christianorum exercuisset in Dania, fertur archiepiscopus supplicibus legatis et crebris muneribus laborasse, ut ferocis animus regis christianis mansuetum redderet.



started. The most significant figure in the entire program of Christianization was Harald Bluetooth, father of Swein,<sup>58</sup> and as a result of his activities Denmark was a Christian kingdom which had four bishoprics in Slesvig, Ribe, Aarhus and Odense. In spite of contemporary estimation that Denmark remained still in paganism, the church system prepared by Harald functioned even in the reign of Swein Forkbeard who was often recorded as pagan Viking leader.

We should also acknowledge the fact that the archbishopric of Hamburg sent legates to Denmark. According to the schema emphasized by past generations, the Carolingians and the Ottonians baptized the kings of the Danes, Christianized the pagans, and, sometimes, received tribute. However, the description found in the *Deeds* tells a different story, revealing that the legates of the archbishop were dispatched to the court of Denmark with gifts. Here we might remember some other examples of Carolingian and Ottonian missions. Though he followed the baptized Harald Klak, Ansgar was refused entry into Denmark in the first mission to Scandinavia,<sup>59</sup> and, according to the Book 1 chapter 59 of the *Deeds*, Unni, the archbishop of Hamburg, was also denied entry into Denmark.<sup>60</sup> The archbishops of Hamburg did not always succeed in their missions to Scandinavia.

Why did the archbishops of Hamburg Christianize Denmark? Certain reasons present themselves. First, as Arnold Angenendt has insisted, the missions led by the archbishops were supported by the emperors, who regarded themselves as responsible for the Christianization of the pagans (the Carolingians and the Ottonians had a close connection with the archbishopric of Hamburg).<sup>61</sup> Second, as some sources tell us, the archbishops often tried to set Christian slaves free when they encountered them in Scandinavian trading centers. Third, and most importantly, they most probably endeavored to establish new suffragan bishoprics in Denmark. The earliest known names that can be identified as belonging to Danish bishops were recorded in the Ingelheim church council in 948, whilst the earliest testimony of Danish bishoprics is found in the diploma issued by Otto I in 965.<sup>62</sup> Three Jutlandic bishoprics of Slesvig, Ribe and Aarhus are mentioned in the charter. In addition to these three, a new bishopric, Odense in Funen, which was recorded in the diploma by Otto 3,<sup>63</sup> was established by 988, and soon some other important new bishoprics followed, such as those at Roskilde and Lund, which had been established by the year 1000.<sup>64</sup> The 988 diploma makes it clear that all new Danish bishoprics had estates in the neighboring areas.<sup>65</sup> Considering that all of these bishoprics were suffragan churches of the archbishopric of Hamburg, we can readily

58 M. Gelting, "The kingdom of Denmark." pp. 77–87.

59 H. Wolfdieter, "Foris apostolus — intus monachus. Ansgar als Mönch und 'Apostel des Nordens.'" *Journal of Medieval History* 11 (1985), pp. 1–30.

60 Adam von Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* I–59 (p. 228): Postquam vero confessor Dei pervenit ad Danos, ubi tunc crudelissimum Worm diximus regnasse, illum quidem pro ingenita flectere nequivit saevitia; filium autem regis Haroldum sua dicitur predicatione lucratus.

61 Arnold Angenendt, *Kaiserherrschaft und Königstaufe*. Berlin 1984.

62 *MGH Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae I: Conradi I. Henrici I. et Ottonis I. Diplomata* (Hannover 1879–84), no. 294: Quum imperatoriae dignitatis officium esse constat, ut erga diuini cultum officii peruigili cura insistant, et quicquid augmentum sanctae christianae religioni adhibere potuerint, indesinenter in hoc studeant: idcirco nos, interuentu dilecti archiepiscopi nostri Adaldagi, ac pro statu et incolumitate imperii nostri, quicquid proprietatis in marca vel regno Danorum ad ecclesias in honorem Dei constructas, videlicet Sliesuuigensem, Ripensem, Arusensem, vel adhuc pertinere videtur, vel futurum acquiratur, ab omni censu vel servilio nostri iuris absoluiamus, ut et episcopis prescriptarum ecclesiarum, absque ulla comitis vel alicuius fisci nostri exactoris infestatione seruiant et succumbant, volumus et firmiter iubemus.

63 *MGH Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae I: Ottonis III. Diplomata* (Hannover 1893), no. 41: Omnium fidelium nostrorum, tam presentium, quam futurorum piae devotioni pateat, quomodo nos ob petitionem et interventum dilecti nostri Adaldagi, Bremensis ecclesiae videlicet venerabilis archiepiscopi, ac pro statu et incolumitate regni nostri, quicquid proprietatis in regno Danorum ad ecclesias in honorem Dei constructas, videlicet Sliesuuigensem, Ripensem, Arusensem, Othenesuuigensem uel ad hic pertinere videtur, uel in futurum adquiratur, ab omni censu uel seruitio nostri iuris absoluiamus: et ut episcopis prescriptarum ecclesiarum, absque ulla comitis vel alicuius fisci nostri exactoris infestatione seruiant et succumbant, volumus et firmiter iubemus.

64 Michael Gelting, "The kingdom of Denmark." pp. 77–87.

65 See n. 63.

see that the mission, and the corresponding establishment of new churches, led to the expansion of jurisprudence and income enjoyed by the archbishopric. The archbishopric of Hamburg also planned to incorporate Denmark, depending on the behavior of the Ottonians.

#### 4. Was Scandinavia a world without any documentation?

As I have mentioned, certain ways of communicating were established between Denmark and the continent. The fixing of boundaries, the establishment of trade agreements and the granting of permission to convert the populace were all made through the legates of each side, while some rituals for negotiation were observed, particularly in the establishment of trade agreements. Because Carolingian and Ottonian historiographers were not concerned with the political culture of the Danes, we can only find fragmentary data about them in the historical sources. However, many instances of communication between the two worlds would have occurred at that time. Scandinavia in the early middle ages was undoubtedly different from the continent in both language and script, a fact which created marked differences in the social system and in political culture. In spite of these differences, however, a way of communication was found which connected each region together.

Here we have to remember a significant problem arising from the salient difference between the two worlds: the legal documentation system. As I mentioned at the beginning of this presentation, no legal documents exist from Denmark dated earlier than the latter half of the eleventh century. Were legal documents unknown to the Danes, then? I will refer to a suggestive example, although it was not produced in the continent: the treaty determining the boundary between Alfred the Great and Guthrum.<sup>66</sup> This famous treaty, which supposedly established the so-called Danelaw, is transmitted to the present times as a copy.<sup>67</sup> The contents of this treaty were “agreed and confirmed by oath”, which suggests that this treaty was read aloud and probably written down in the presence of the Danes.<sup>68</sup> This document was made in England, but we may imagine a similar situation pertaining in the process of concluding some treaties on the continent. If there were no legal documents in the archive of the kingdom, Carolingian and Ottonian historiographers could not have written down concrete information, as in the case of the above-mentioned trade agreements.

The Danes certainly would not have produced any such complicated legal documents apart from runic inscriptions. However, we cannot also conclude that they did not recognize any documents at all. As already mentioned, the Danes communicated with other civilizations at a time when continental documents were long established, having functioned since the Carolingian age. Danish legates, who attended kings’ councils on the continent, would also have watched how such documents functioned in each particular context. After the creation of the bishoprics in Denmark some legal documents would have been in use, although only in the bishoprics. Having encountered legal documents here and there, then, the Scandinavians would probably have understood something of their importance and function long before the introduction of the Latin documentation system to Denmark in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

Carolingian and Ottonian historiographers were unconcerned about the way in which

66 Paul Kershaw, “The Alfred-Guthrum treaty: scripting accommodation and interaction in Viking Age England.” in: Dawn M. Hadley & Julian D. Richards (eds.), *Cultures in Contact. Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*. Turnhout 2000, pp. 43–64.

67 This treaty is found the Corpus Christi Colledge MS 383, which was edited in Saint Paul in Lodon in the last stages of 11<sup>th</sup> century or in the first of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

68 Felix Lieberman, *Gesetze der Angelsachsen*. Halle 1901, vol. 1, pp. 126–9: Ðis is ðæt frið, ðæt Ælfred cyninc 7 Gyðrum cyning 7 ealles Angelcynnes witan 7 eal seo ðeod ðe on Eastænglum beoð ealle gecweden habbað 7 mid aðum gefeostnod for hy sylfe 7 for heora gingran, ge for geborene ge for ungeborene, ðe Godes miltse reccen oððe ure....

Scandinavians communicated or negotiated with continental magnates. This indifference of the writers to the Scandinavians led to a lack of sources describing the Danish legal system. However, we must accept that there was frequent contact between the continent and the Danes, and also accept that the same Danes who frightened and devastated the Carolingians and the Ottonians eventually entered a world governed by documentation on the continent. Both the memorizing and the forgetting of historical facts depend upon the interests of the historiographer who interprets and selects historical information. Those who are interested in the history of the Scandinavians have to collect concrete facts and reconstruct the most probable history: in this case, by being wary of the attitudes of the Carolingian and Ottonian historiographers.