

THE POET AND THE SPAE-WIFE

AN ATTEMPT TO RECONSTRUCT
AL-GHAZAL'S EMBASSY
TO THE VIKINGS

BY

W. E. D. ALLEN

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EDITORS' PREFACE

The account of the visit of the Moorish ambassador, al-Ghazal, to the court of the Majus in the ninth century has interested orientalists and Norse scholars for a long time. It is, in the first place, a splendidly vivid story, and it throws unexpected light on the manners and mode of life of the Majus described in it. It is now generally agreed that these Majus were Scandinavian vikings, but, while some have believed that their court was in Denmark, others have held that it was in Ireland in the days of the viking ruler Turges.

Mr. W. E. D. Allen, a member of the Society, already known as a student of the history and traditions of the Near East, has now re-examined all the original sources, Arabic, Irish and Norse, and in this thorough and original work he offers his own conclusions. He has taken full advantage of recent studies and interpretations of the Arabic texts, and it may be expected that his work will provide the basis for any future study of this fascinating record. It is in the belief that members will find it a stimulating contribution that we have devoted the whole of the present part of the *Saga-Book* to Mr. Allen's work.

Mr. Allen's monograph has also been published as a separate book in a limited edition by Allen Figgis and Co. Ltd. of Dublin, in association with the Viking Society for Northern Research.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- AU* *Annals of Ulster* (cf. note 72).
- CDIL* *Contributions to a Dictionary of the Irish Language*.
- CMH* *Cambridge Medieval History*.
- Cogadh* The text of the *War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*; see Todd, *War*.
- EI* *Encyclopædia of Islam*.
- FM* *Four Masters: Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters* (cf. note 14).
- IHS* *Irish Historical Studies*.
- IQ* *Islamic Quarterly*.
- JRAS* *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*.
- JRSAI* *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* (see *TKAS* below).
- PRIA* *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*.
- SPAW* *Sitzungsberichte d. K. Preussischen Akademie d. Wissenschaften*.
- Todd, War* *War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (Rolls Series; 1867).
- TKAS* *Transactions of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society*, 1849-55; subsequently, to 1867, *Journal of Kilkenny and South-east of Ireland Archaeological Society*; subsequently, 1868-89, *Journal of the (Royal) Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland*; and from 1890 *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* (cf. *JRSAI* above).
- VA* *Viking Antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. H. Shetelig (Oslo 1940-54).
- War of the Gaedhil* See *Todd, War*.

Chapter One

PROLOGUE: THE VIKINGS IN AQUITAINE AND SPAIN, 843-6

IN a recent paper on 'The Muslim Discovery of Europe',¹ Professor Bernard Lewis recalls that "The earliest reports we have purporting to describe a Muslim diplomatic mission to the north is the well-known and oft-cited story of the embassy of al-Ghazal from Cordova to the land of the Vikings in about 845. The late M. Lévi-Provençal cast doubt on the authenticity of this charming story, suggesting that it is a later fabrication based on the authentic account of al-Ghazal's mission to Constantinople."²

Contrary to the view of Lévi-Provençal, Scandinavian and English specialists of the Viking period are in general agreement in accepting the validity of the report of al-Ghazal's embassy to the north. They have received support from the well-known Byzantinist, A. A. Vasiliev. There are differences of opinion only in locating the scene of the embassy. Some favour the court of the Danish king Horik in Zealand, while others have preferred the seat of the Norwegian conqueror of Ireland, Turgesius (Ir. Turgeis, probably O.N. Þorgestr, possibly Þorgils (-gísl)). None have given more than passing attention to the evidence.³

The purpose of the present essay is to review the evidence for the authenticity of al-Ghazal's embassy to the Vikings: to affirm that the first Viking attack on the emirate of Cordova in 844 was a Norwegian adventure undertaken by way of the Biscay coast from original bases in Ireland; and that al-Ghazal was sent by the amir Abd-al-Rahman II to the Norwegians in Ireland where he encountered Turgeis and his wife Ota.

Further it is suggested that some details of al-Ghazal's earlier embassy to Constantinople (840) preserved in Lévi-Provençal's anonymous manuscript from Fez,⁴ may relate to the embassy to the Vikings. The two accounts cast a new light on some aspects of the social state of the Vikings in Ireland and confirm Irish sources; and while al-Ghazal's romantic and often salty anecdotes fit into the free and easy atmosphere of a princely Viking camp, they can scarcely be said to reflect the standards which ruled the imperial court of Theophilus and Theodora. It is possible indeed to accept the observation of Lévi-Provençal: "Sans doute, la démarche insolite de l'Empereur de Byzance à Cordoue et la descente audacieuse des Wikings sur le territoire espagnol, qui comportaient l'une et l'autre certaines données romanesques, finirent-elles par s'amalgamer en Andalousie dans la croyance populaire et y favoriser la naissance d'une légende commune, qui devait peu à peu déformer la réalité historique."⁵ But conclusions can be drawn directly contrary to those of the distinguished historian of Muslim Spain.

A lack of precision among chroniclers contemporary with the Viking wars has not helped modern historians to distinguish between the national or regional elements among the Vikings. For instance, so good a historian as Vasiliev takes Kunik to task for describing 'the Normans' who captured Seville in 844 as 'Swedish Russians' (*schwedische Rodsen*) when they were "Danes and to some extent Norwegians".⁶ As a matter of fact there is no evidence that Danes took part in the expedition and in this particular case the raiders are described in contemporary sources as *Westfaldingi* (Norwegians from Vestfold, round the Oslo fjord).⁷

The Muslims described 'heathens' as *Majus*. The name *Majus*=Magians was originally used of the Zoroastrians. It was then extended to other unbelievers, together with the associations of the term— e.g. incest and

fire-worship.⁸ Among the Muslims of the west the same name was applied to the heathen Scandinavians who were believed to be fire-worshippers. The great fire festivals of northern Europe (which were not confined to Scandinavia), or even the seasonal burning of the heather, may have suggested this Magian connotation.⁹ In later Arab sources the name *al-Ordomaniyun* is used; it is borrowed from the Latin forms *Normanni*, *Nordmanni*, *Lordomanni*, *Lormanens*, *Leodomanni*.¹⁰ The toponym *Murman* which still survives for the extreme north-eastern peninsula of Scandinavia belongs to this group.

In Byzantine and Russian sources the names *Ros*, *Rus'* were applied to Scandinavians, mostly of Swedish origin, who had penetrated down the rivers of eastern Europe. Some of the Muslim geographers realized that the Swedish *Rus'* were kin to the Danes and Norwegians and al-Yakubi writes of the attack on Seville in 844: "into this city broke in the Majus who are called *Rus'*."¹¹

The name Viking itself is reviewed in detail by Kendrick who prefers to define it as 'one who fares by sea'; it early came to have the pejorative sense of 'robber' or 'marauder' among the Anglo-Saxons and Frisians.¹² Sometimes the chronicles preserve specific regional names: as *Westfaldingi* or the Anglo-Saxon Northmen 'of Hereða lande' which is found in the Irish forms *Hirotha* and *Irruaithe*.¹³ But in general the chronicles are seldom specific and often inaccurate. In referring to the Viking attacks, the *Annals of Ulster* call the invaders *Genti* ('gentiles'); 'the Four Masters' who compiled the *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland*, use the term *Gaill* ('foreigners'). O'Donovan, the editor of the Four Masters, attributes the raids round the south coast of Ireland from 807 onwards to the *Danair* (Danes).¹⁴ He cites the seventeenth-century English recension of the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, but this work calls all Vikings in Ireland 'Danes'. The great Irish scholar, Geoffrey Keating, also writing in the seventeenth-century, states that "others

say that it was when Airtre, son of Cathal, reigned in Munster (792-802), the *Lochlonnaigh* (*Lochlannaigh*) began to come to plunder Ireland. And in this they are right." Although *Lochlannaigh* is generally taken to mean Norwegians, Keating states that "it is not a specific name for any particular tribe" but applies to "the inhabitants of the countries of northern Europe". Keating adds: "True also is the statement of those who assert that the Lochlonnaigh came to Ireland in the reign of Olchobhar over Munster (d. 849), but the tribe who came hither then were the *Dainfhir* or Danes from Dania, that is Denmark, and it is these are called *Duibhgheinnte* ('black gentiles') or *Dubhlochlonnaigh* ('black foreigners') in the old books of the *seanchus*, while the Norwegians are called *Finnghheinnte* ('white' or 'fair' foreigners) or *Fionnlochlonnaigh* ('white Lochlanns')." ¹⁵

The name *Lochlannaigh* has been explained as 'men of the lochs' with reference to the Norwegian *fjords*.¹⁶ The reason for the distinction between 'white' and 'black' foreigners is also obscure. The explanation that the Danes were darker than the Norwegians is not confirmed by anthropology; but a distinction in the colour of the armour of the Vikings may be valid. Colour symbolism in the middle ages had a significance which is not always clear. There was Red, White and Black Russia; the Golden, Blue and Apricot Hordes among the Tartars; and the Black and White Sheep Turkomans. There were 'Blues' and 'Greens' in Byzantium; and 'Red' and 'White' in the Wars of the Roses. The differentiation by colours may, indeed, have been casual and spontaneous, as in the modern example of the Red, White and Green armies during the Russian Civil War.¹⁷

Halphen, following Steenstrup, has recognised clearly enough the distinctive characters of the Swedish, Norwegian and Danish contributions to the Scandinavian epos.¹⁸ Again, Shetelig, in a brief and brilliant 'Summary Analysis', has described the pattern.¹⁹ The Swedish

expansion round the coasts and up the rivers of the East Baltic lands had begun in the seventh century; indeed, it seems that the movement from southern Sweden was a sequel to the earlier spread of the Goths towards the Black Sea.²⁰ Different in character, a westerly movement across the open seas out of the Norwegian *ffjords* began to be marked in the last decade of the eighth century.²¹ It took the form of a migration directed at first toward the Scottish Isles and, through the first half of the ninth century, into Ireland. The peculiar social structure and perennial tribal warfare in Celtic Ireland encouraged Norse settlement in force.²² During the ninth century, in the Orkneys and Hebrides, in Ireland and Man, were formed the first Scandinavian communities overseas — half a century earlier than in Iceland and the English Danelaw, more than a century before the duchy of Normandy, and two centuries before the Norman kingdom of Sicily. The strategic position of Ireland in the north Atlantic favoured the sea-kings. Later generations were to contend with Danes and Saxons for the mastery of Northumbria; but in the earlier decades the Norwegians raided the Welsh coast and struck south along the western seaboard of France — particularly up the great rivers, Loire and Garonne. The first Norwegian raid on Aquitaine from Ireland was recorded in 799.²³

The movement out of Denmark had, again, a different character. In Shetelig's view, the Danish expeditions during the years 834-7 were intimately connected with the civil wars between the successors of Charlemagne.²⁴ Then the deterioration in conditions in the Frankish empire after the battle of Fontenay in 841 tempted the Danes — and the Norwegians in the west along the Atlantic coast of France — to become armies of professional *condottieri*.²⁵

The first Viking attack on Spain in 844 may be explained as an accident of the civil wars in France. On the Loire in 843, a Frankish adventurer, Count Lambert, had

combined with Duke Nominoé of Brittany against the representative of Charles the Bald, ruler of West Francia. On 24th May the royalists were defeated at Messac. Lambert entered Nantes but was expelled by the citizens within two weeks. In the second week of June a Viking fleet was observed off the mouth of the Loire. The visitors established a base on the island of Hero (Noirmoutier) which had been the seat of the Monastery of St. Philibert — abandoned by the monks because of recurrent Viking raids during the past twenty years.²⁶ As a point of call for barks engaged in the Breton salt trade, “Noirmoutier was doubtless well known to the northern adventurer merchants, and it was this place which became the first goal of northern pirates in Atlantic waters.”²⁷ It was characteristic of the Vikings that trading was combined with raiding and, according to the author of *Les Miracles de St. Martin de Vertou*, the citizens of Nantes did not even shut their gates when sixty-seven Viking ships hove up the river. They supposed that the Vikings had come to trade at the great annual fair of St. John and allowed them to enter the city with arms concealed. A slaughter then took place in the streets and in the cathedral where the frightened people tried to defend themselves (24th June). After ravaging the country to the south of the Loire, the Vikings withdrew with their loot and captives to the island of Noirmoutier. The crisis favoured Lambert who was now admitted into the ruined city by the inhabitants.²⁸ The historians of Charles the Bald, Lot and Halphen, have exonerated Lambert from collusion with the Vikings on the ground that the *Chronique de Nantes* records that the pirates dared not pursue fugitives who escaped from Noirmoutier ‘through fear of Lambert’. But this restraint of the Viking crews does not exclude the possibility of an understanding between Lambert and their leaders.²⁹ Indeed, the fact that in the following summer (844) the Vikings sailed up the Garonne towards Toulouse, where

the political allies of Lambert — Pepin II, the Aquitainian pretender, and Count William of Septimania — were fighting Charles the Bald, suggests that a military understanding existed between the Vikings and the Frankish rebels. This possibility is confirmed by a concatenation of dates: Charles raised the siege of Toulouse at the end of July or the beginning of August; the Vikings appeared on the north coast of Spain during the first half of August. It is a reasonable assumption that they withdrew from the Garonne under agreement with Pepin II, and probably after receipt of a substantial contribution.³⁰

It is a fortunate chance that the *Annales angoumoisines* preserved the regional name of the Viking host which captured Nantes. They were *Westfaldingi* = Norwegians from Vestfold.³¹ And they had come from 'the Britannic Ocean' — the name then generally applied to the Irish Sea.³² The author of *Les Miracles de St. Martin de Vertou* states that "Lambert had visited the Normans and Danes and persuaded them to cross the Ocean and come to Nantes." Lot and Halphen prefer to treat this story as "a legend deriving from the hatred of some Nantais for Lambert."³³ At that time contact was frequent and easy between the Viking posts on the Atlantic coast of France and the recently occupied Viking strongholds in Munster. No practical reason prevented Count Lambert from maintaining fairly rapid communications with the Irish Vikings.³⁴

Whether or not Count Lambert summoned the Vikings to attack Nantes, there is circumstantial evidence for believing that the *Westfaldingi* came from Ireland and that they formed part of the large host which had for some years been engaged in ravaging that country under Turgeis who was himself a Vestfold prince.³⁵ By 844, Turgeis — with great strategic insight — had established his main base on Loch Rí in the centre of Ireland. He was already master of "Conn's Half" — the whole of

Ireland north of the Shannon and of the two great centres of Irish culture at Armagh and Clonmacnois. From the mouth of the Shannon, his fleets were active round the coasts of Kerry and Cork. "There came great sea-cast floods of foreigners into Munster", writes the author of *The War of the Gaedhil with the Gail*, "so that there was not a point thereof without a fleet." The presence of a fleet of threescore and five ships at Dublin is mentioned in the same context and this number corresponds closely with that of the fleet which sailed into the Loire in June 844.³⁷

When the Westfaldingi withdrew from the Garonne, it seems that they returned to Noirmoutier and from there set sail 'to their own country'. However, they were beset by a violent north wind which carried them towards the coast of Galicia. They made a landfall near Coruña and disembarked — perhaps only with a view to replenishing supplies. They were in the kingdom of Asturias and were sharply attacked by the levies of King Ramiro I — themselves of mixed Celtic and Germano-Suabian blood and well inured to war. The Vikings suffered a bloody repulse, losing through enemy action or, partly perhaps through continuing bad weather, seventy of their ships. Fifty-four warships survived, with an equal number of attendant craft, carrying at most 3,000 fighting men.³⁸

On 20th August this fleet lay in to Lisbon, They were now comfortably in the Portugal Current and the fine dry weather of early autumn usual on this coast. "One might have said they had filled the ocean with dark red birds," wrote ibn-Idhari in an allusion to the characteristic colour of the warships of the Vestfold kings.³⁹ At Lisbon the Muslims offered stout resistance and after thirteen days the Westfaldingi sailed south. While some of their crews raided and plundered Cadiz and Medina Sidonia, the bulk of the fleet (some eighty vessels including auxiliary craft) moved up the Guadalquivir

(*wadi-el-kebir*). Marshy Captal, a few miles south-west of Seville, offered the insular base which Vikings always sought. The rich city amid its olive groves and gardens lacked defensive walls; troops were few; and the governor fled to Carmona. After some skirmishing, the Westfaldingi entered Seville and sacked it with much slaughter. During October they scattered in raiding parties over the countryside. This normal tactic of the Vikings proved fatal in a land with a well-organised and active government used to waging war. By November Abd al-Rahman II, had gathered strong forces and, on the 11th of the month, the Westfaldingi were badly beaten at Tablada — where Seville aerodrome is now situated. Their leader and over a thousand men were killed and four hundred taken prisoners. Thirty empty warships were abandoned to the Muslims.⁴⁰

The survivors were in a desperate situation. But they were mobile and they were able to trade their numerous captives against food and clothes.⁴¹ They withdrew down the Guadalquivir, but they still had spirit to raid up the Tinto and the Guadiana and to make a descent on Arcila in Morocco.

These minor operations occupied the turn of the year 844-5. The Vikings were last seen by the Muslims off Lisbon.⁴² Modern historians have not traced in detail their subsequent movements. Indeed Lot and Halphen, generally so accurate, fixed the dates of the visit to the Garonne basin and the raid on Andalucia too late.⁴³ Nothing is heard of the Vikings for some months until, in the course of the year 845, they regained the coast of Aquitaine and landed between Bordeaux and Saintes. The *Chronique de Nantes* expressly states that they had come on a westerly wind from Galicia.⁴⁴ It would seem clear then that they had wintered and spent the spring refitting in one of the lonely *rias* of the Galician coast (which Elysée Reclus has aptly compared to the Norwegian fjords).⁴⁵ It was only in the early autumn of

845 that they resumed offensive action — perhaps after some reinforcements had reached them.

Séguin, the Frankish duke of the Gascons, who was holding lower Aquitaine for Charles the Bald, was defeated and beheaded by the Westfaldingi. They then took and pillaged the towns of Saintes and Bordeaux. These events took place in October/November 845 — exactly a year after the expedition against Seville. According to the *Chronique de Nantes*, the Westfaldingi, loaded with pillage, then returned to their own country — ‘greatly longed for’ (*valde desideratam*).⁴⁷ But it is apparent from the *Chronicon Aquitanicum* that the Viking fleet — or a great part of it — stayed on the Aquitainian coast until the middle of 846.⁴⁸ In July 846 the Westfaldingi came to Noirmoutier; and here they set fire to their base and took to the sea. The fact that they destroyed a stronghold where they had been masters for ten years implied, in the view of Lot and Halphen, that they had no hope of return.⁴⁹ Lot and Halphen concluded that the Vikings “set sail for the Baltic and that a crisis in the Danish state took them back to their own country”.⁵⁰

In fact there is no evidence for a crisis in the Danish state in the summer of 846. There was, however, a serious crisis in the affairs of the Norwegian Vikings in Ireland. Turgeis had been killed, sometime in 845, or, as I shall suggest later, in 846. Something comparable to ‘Sicilian Vespers’ flared up against the Norwegian conquerors in Ireland, and in 846-847 they suffered a series of defeats at the hands of the Irish.⁵²

These disasters were followed by a calculated offensive of the Danes to displace the Norwegians from Ireland and Aquitaine and to secure the hegemony of the coast round the western ocean. It would appear to have been a call for reinforcements by the hard-pressed Norwegians in Ireland, which caused the Westfaldingi to evacuate Noirmoutier in July 846, and that fear of their base falling into the hands of Danish rivals may have prompted them to destroy it.⁵³

It was against the background of the events of 845 and 846 that the twenty-month odyssey of al-Ghazal to the Vikings took place.

Neither the Westfalingi nor the Muslims can have found the campaign in Andalusia as strange as some historians have assumed. More than four decades had passed since the Norwegians had first raided the coasts of Aquitaine; Irish monks for two centuries had had some knowledge of the Spanish scene; and it is clear that the Vikings had a general idea about the peninsula before they descended on it. They found in Seville a population which was still largely Gothic and Romano-Spanish.⁵⁴ The Gothic elements were important in the Andalusian amirate.⁵⁵ The amir's household troops were composed of non-Arabic speaking 'mutes' — partly negroes and partly 'Slavs'.⁵⁶ Again, there were in Spain thousands of slaves imported from the eastern borders of the Frankish empire, many of them taken in the Carolingian wars, Saxons, Slavonic Wends, and, doubtless, Danes. Some of these men had become freemen and had risen to good positions in service or in trade. The Westfalingi seem to have had no difficulty in finding interpreters and in making themselves understood.⁵⁷

These aspects are important in considering the background of the embassy which, according to Arab sources, was despatched by the Vikings to Abd al-Rahman II. The factor of bringing aid and comfort to some of the bands scattered about the Algarve and the Gaditanean hinterland may have entered in.⁵⁸ But it is hardly necessary to recall the strong trading interest of the Vikings. In their case trade followed the sword; and to these keen and reckless venturers, who had already pillaged Seville, Andalusia was a marvel of attraction as the richest and most famous part of Western Europe. On the other hand, the Muslims were interested in the products of northern Europe — all the way from the Atlantic to the Volga. Particularly attractive to them

were rare furs and strong barbarian slaves. The blonde women were favoured in Andalusian households and the men were sought after as mercenaries and labourers. The Vikings were great fur trappers in the northern lands and seas and, like their remote descendants in England and America, ruthless slave traders.⁵⁹ Relations with the Vikings could offer to the Andalusian merchants the opportunity of penetrating the markets of northern Europe round the oceanic flank of the Frankish empire. For the Muslims, it is suggested that there was also a political interest. Abd al-Rahman II was in a state of war with Charles the Bald, himself so hardly harassed by Scandinavian attacks. In the first decade of the ninth century, the Franks had taken Barcelona from the Muslims, and intermittent campaigns for the control of Catalonia had followed.⁶⁰ The weakness of the Frankish monarchy after Fontenay (841) had offered the occasion to the army of Abd al-Rahman to ravage Cerdagne and to raid as far as the outskirts of Narbonne in 843 — the year before the Viking attack on Seville.⁶¹ On the other hand, the Christian subjects of the amirate of Cordova were in a ferment; risings were frequent and significant — as in Merida (828-38) and Toledo (831). There were many indications of a political and religious revival among the peoples of the peninsula — still Christian or only recently converted to Islam.⁶² 'The fire worshipping *Majus*' — formidable enemies of the Christians and of the Frankish monarchy — were clearly of interest to Abd al-Rahman and his advisers.

There were indeed valid circumstantial reasons for an exchange of embassies between Cordova and the Vikings and the choice of al-Ghazal as ambassador underlined the importance which Abd al-Rahman attached to the mission. A poet of quality, a man of fashion and a celebrated wit, Yahya bn-Hakam el Bekri al Djayani (=of Jaen) was known as *al-Ghazal* for his notable good looks. In 840, he had been sent on a mission to

Byzantium to return an embassy which the Emperor Theophilus had despatched to Cordova earlier in the same year. He was in the confidence of Abd al-Rahman and was clearly the leading diplomat of Cordova. In 845, al-Ghazal had the experience of his fifty years; and he was still ardent, quick-witted and adventurous: a perfect choice for the perilous voyage to the Viking north.⁶³

Chapter Two

THE SOURCES

THE original source for the embassy of al-Ghazal to the Vikings was Abu-l-Kattab-Umar-ibn-al-Hasan-ibn-Dihya, who was born in Valencia in Andalusia, about 1159, and died, almost an octogenarian, in Cairo, in 1235. The facts and anecdotes in the story were derived from Tammam-ibn-Alqama, vizier under three consecutive amirs in Andalusia during the ninth century, who died in 896. Tammam-ibn-Alqama had had the details direct from al-Ghazal and his companions. The only manuscript of ibn-Dihya's work was acquired by the British Museum in 1866: it is entitled *Al-mutrib min ashar ahli'l Maghrib* ('An amusing book from poetical works of the Maghrib'). The Arab text of the story of the embassy with a few omissions was first published by Reinhart Dozy, *Recherches* 3rd ed., II, appendix, lxxxi-lxxxviii, then by A. Seippel, *Rerum normannicarum fontes arabici*, Oslo, 1896, 13-20; and in Norwegian by Birkeland. A French translation by Dozy was reprinted by Fabricius in 1893 (see note 3). There was also a German translation by Georg Jacob, *Arabische Berichte von Gesandten an Germanische Fürstenhöfe aus d. 9 u. 10. Jahrhundert*, Berlin/Leipzig, 1927, 37-42. Jón Stefánsson published in English an abbreviated version of Dozy's French translation in *Saga-Book*, VI, 1908-9, 37ff.⁶⁴ Before Dozy's work, only excerpts from ibn-Dihya in incomplete shape had been known from the writings of the seventeenth-century Maghribi man of letters, al-Maqqari, whose "immense compilation of historical and literary information, poems, letters and quotations very often taken from works now lost has", in the words of Lévi-Provençal, "an inestimable value" and is "in the first rank for our sources of Muslim

Spain" (*Encyclopædia of Islam*, III 174). Al-Maqqari's chief source for historical and literary anecdotes of the earlier period in Andalusia was ibn-al-Khatib Dhu-l-Wizaratāin (= 'holder of two vizierates'), 1313-74, the celebrated encyclopædist of Granada who has been described as "the greatest and the last important author, poet and statesman of Granada, if not of the whole of Arab Spain" (C. F. Seybold, *EI*, II 206).

The account of the embassy, therefore, rests on ibn-Dihya, writing nearly four centuries after the events described and deriving his information, including the many circumstantial details, from the unidentified work of Tammam-ibn-Alqama, a contemporary of al-Ghazal. His version is cited by two of the leading literary men of the following centuries, who may be assumed therefore to have credited it. Dozy did not doubt the authenticity of the story and later historians accepted his authority, although there were different views as to whether the embassy had visited Ireland or Scandinavia.

In 1937, Lévi-Provençal published an article in *Byzantion*, XII, in which he referred to the discovery of new texts forming part of an anonymous Arab chronicle in a wing, long unexplored, of the library of the great mosque of al-Karawiyin at Fez. This chronicle, the name of the compiler of which Lévi-Provençal was unable to identify, relates to the Umayyads of Spain in the ninth century. The compilation is in the form of annals cited from older chroniclers, including Mufarriq and Isa bn Ahmed ar-Razi, living at the end of the tenth century.⁶⁵ The information furnished by these chroniclers complete and confirm each other. An important event described in detail was the exchange of embassies between the Byzantine emperor Theophilus and the amir Abd al-Rahman in the year 839-40. Yahya-bn-Hakam al-Ghazal was named as head of the mission which was sent to Constantinople. The author of the anonymous chronicle reproduces from the lost work of ar-Razi the full text of

the communication which al-Ghazal bore to the emperor Theophilus. He also includes a number of anecdotes and a poem which resemble closely details of ibn-Dihya's account of al-Ghazal's embassy to the Vikings.

The fact that the chroniclers cited by the anonymous Fez manuscript refer to the Viking attack on Andalucia but do not mention the subsequent exchange of embassies with the Vikings leads Lévi-Provençal to the conclusion that "le récit d'Ibn Dihya . . . n'est qu'une contamination postérieure du voyage officiel d'al-Ghazal à Constantinople."⁶⁶ Lévi-Provençal promised to publish later the text of the anonymous chronicle in *Documents inédits d'histoire hispano-umaiyade* but I have been unable to ascertain whether this work has appeared since 1937. In 1950, in his *Histoire de l'Espagne musulmane*, I 253-4, he confirmed his earlier view: "il s'agit là d'une fable inventée de toutes pièces".⁶⁷ The views of this distinguished Arabist, weighed against those of specialists in Viking history, merit respect, and I shall return to the detail of his objections.

Scandinavian and Irish sources for the mid-ninth century make no mention of an embassy from Cordova to the Vikings. The earliest reference to the presence of Spanish Moors in Ireland is to be found in the *Three Fragments* of Dubhaltach Mac Fírbisigh (Duald Mac Fírbis), the third of which relates to the Viking attack on Andalucia in 959-60, and the subsequent bringing of Moorish prisoners, known as 'blue men' to Ireland.⁶⁸

The Scandinavian sources are late and sparse for this period. In the *Heimskringla* (*Haralds saga hárfagra*, ch. 33), Snorri refers to a Þorgísl, son of Harald Fairhair, who ruled in Dublin, but there is no certainty that he is to be equated with Turgeis. An identification of Turgeis with Ragnar loðbrók, proposed by Halliday and discussed by Todd, has not been accepted by later historians.⁶⁹

The Irish sources are important for the history of the Norwegian invasions of Ireland and, indeed, of the whole

of the Viking age. Shetelig conceded that "we are indebted to Irish writers for a considerable amount of authentic information concerning the history of the Viking period . . ." Again, "the Irish annals give us a glimpse of historical facts left in deep obscurity by Norwegian sources, viz. the relations between Norway and the Viking kingdom about the middle of the ninth century . . . The Irish annals also shed light on Viking history in Scotland, and in the Hebrides and Man."⁷⁰

The principal source for the career of Turgeis and for the solitary reference to his wife Ota is the work known as *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* ('The War of the Gaedhil (Goidil) with the Gaill ('foreigners)'). This has survived in a fragment bound in the Book of Leinster — dated by Todd to about the middle of the twelfth century; in a manuscript found by Eugene O'Curry in 1840, originally in the possession of Edward Llwyd, the celebrated eighteenth-century Celtic scholar — believed by Todd to have been copied in the fourteenth century; and in another manuscript in the Burgundian Library, Brussels, transcribed from the lost *Book of Cúchonnacht O'Daly* — which Todd attributed to the first half of the twelfth century. Internal evidence indicates that the original was compiled by a contemporary of King Brian Borumha at the beginning of the eleventh century, and the accuracy of the account of the battle of Clontarf in 1014 was confirmed by a remarkable calculation checking the state of the moon and the tides in Dublin Bay on 23rd April 1014 (Todd, *War*, xxvi, xxvii).⁷¹

The author of the *War of the Gaedhil* was writing just over a century and a half after the period of Turgeis: and he was a near contemporary of Mufarriq and ar-Razi. The brief reference to Turgeis and Ota in *The Annals of Ulster*, *The Annals of Clonmacnois*, and *The Four Masters* appears to have been based on the *War of the Gaedhil*; indeed, as Todd observed, "the Four Masters have occasionally transferred its very words to their pages" (Todd, *War*, xix).⁷²

In 1185, Giraldus de Barri (Giraldus Cambrensis), a noble ecclesiastic of Norman-Welsh origin, visited Ireland and, in his *Topographia Hiberniae*, left his curious description of the career and death of Turgeis and his equally curious discussion of Gurmundus, 'who came to Ireland from Africa'. The adventures of Turgeis were apparently still 'common talk' in Ireland. Giraldus, again, implies that he had some acquaintance with the Irish histories; and his attribution of abandoned forts and earthworks to Turgeis is evidence that in the twelfth century the memory of the Norwegian conqueror was as alive in Ireland as is that of Cromwell now three hundred years after his death.⁷³

The seventeenth-century historians, Duaid Mac Firbis (1585-1670), in his *Chronicon Scotorum*, and Geoffrey Keating (c.1570-1644), in his *History*, used the *War of the Gaedhil* for their references to Turgeis. Keating, in Todd's view, embroidered Giraldus's account of the death of Turgeis, and English historians, contemporary with Keating, gave versions which have been treated as based on Giraldus. But there is evidence to show that the historians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had access to a common source, known to Giraldus in the twelfth century, since they go into details which need not necessarily be attributed to imaginative licence. Keating certainly used material for the later history of 'the sons of Turgesius' which is neither drawn from the annals nor lifted from Giraldus and which must derive from a source still available in his time — perhaps a lost section of the work surviving in the *Three Fragments*.⁷⁴

Chapter Three

THE TEXT

Note: I am indebted to Professor Bernard Lewis of the University of London for his courtesy in placing at my disposal his translation of the text of ibn-Dihya which forms part of his forthcoming book, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, to be published by Messrs. Allen and Unwin. It is reproduced by their kind permission.

WHEN the envoys of the king of the Vikings came to Sultan 'abd ar-Rahmān to ask for peace, after they had left Seville, had attacked its surroundings and had then been defeated there with the loss of the commander of their fleet, 'abd ar-Rahmān decided to reply accepting this request. He commanded al-Ghazāl to go on this mission with the envoys of their king, since al-Ghazāl possessed keenness of mind, quickness of wit, skill in repartee, courage and perseverance, and knew his way in and out of every door. He was accompanied by Yahyā b. Habib. He went to the city of Shilb (Silvès), where a fine, well-equipped ship was prepared for them. They bore a reply to the message of the king of the Vikings and a gift in return for his gift. The envoy of the Viking king embarked on the Viking vessel on which he had come, and sailed at the same time as the ship of al-Ghazāl. When they were opposite the great cape that juts out into the sea and is the westernmost limit of Spain, that is, the mountain known as Aluwiyah, the sea grew fearsome against them, and a mighty storm blew upon them, and they reached a point which al-Ghazāl has described as follows:—

Yahyā said to me, as we passed between waves
like mountains
And the winds overbore us from West and North,

When the two sails were rent and the cable-loops
were cut
And the angel of death reached for us, without any
escape,
And we saw death as the eye sees one state after
another—

“The sailors have no capital in us, O my comrade!”

When al-Ghazāl was saved from the terror and dangers of those seas, he arrived at the first of the lands of the Vikings, at one of their islands, where they stayed several days and repaired their ships and rested. The Viking ship went on to their king and they informed him of the arrival of the envoys. At this he rejoiced, and sent for them, and they went to his royal residence which was a great island (or peninsula) in the Ocean, with flowing streams and gardens. It was three days' sail, that is, three hundred miles, from the mainland. In it are Vikings, too numerous to be counted, and around the island are many other islands, large and small, all peopled by Vikings. The adjoining mainland is also theirs for a distance of many days' journey. They were heathens, but they now follow the Christian faith, and have given up fire-worship and their previous religion, except for the people of a few scattered islands of theirs in the sea, where they keep to their old faith, with fire-worship, the marriage of brothers and sisters and various other kinds of abomination. The others wage war against them and enslave them.

The king ordered his people to prepare a fine dwelling for them, and sent out a party to greet them. The Vikings thronged to look at them, and they wondered greatly at their appearance and their garb. They were then led to their lodgings in an honourable manner and spent a day there. After two days the king summoned them to his presence, and al-Ghazāl stipulated that he would not be made to kneel to him and that he and his companions would not be required to do anything contrary

to their customs. The king agreed to this. But when they went to him, he sat before them in magnificent guise, and ordered an entrance, through which he must be approached, to be made so low that one could only enter kneeling. When al-Ghazāl came to this, he sat on the ground, stretched forth his two legs, and dragged himself through on his rear. And when he had passed through the doorway, he stood erect. The king had prepared himself for him, with many arms and great pomp. But al-Ghazāl was not overawed by this, nor did it frighten him. He stood erect before him, and said: "Peace be with you, O king, and with those whom your assembly hall contains, and respectful greetings to you! May you not cease to enjoy power, long life, and the nobility which leads you to the greatness of this world and the next, which becomes enduring under the protection of the living and Eternal One, other than whom all things perish, to whom is the dominion and to whom we return" (Quran 28/88). The interpreter explained what he had said, and the king admired his words, and said: "This is one of the wise and clever ones of his people." He wondered at al-Ghazāl's sitting on the ground and entering feet foremost, and he said: "We sought to humiliate him, and he greeted us with the soles of his shoes. Had he not been an ambassador, we would have taken this amiss."

Then al-Ghazāl gave him the letter of Sultan 'Abd ar-Rahmān. The letter was read to him, and interpreted. He found it good, took it in his hand, lifted it and put it in his bosom. Then he ordered the gifts to be brought and had the coffers opened, and examined all the garments and the vessels that they contained, and was delighted with them. After this, he permitted them to withdraw to their dwelling, and treated them generously.

Al-Ghazāl had noteworthy sessions and famous encounters with them, when he debated with their scholars and silenced them and contended against their champions and outmatched them.

Now when the wife of the Viking king heard of al-Ghazāl, she sent for him so that she might see him. When he entered her presence, he greeted her, then he stared at her for a long time, gazing at her as one that is struck with wonderment. She said to her interpreter; "Ask him why he stares at me so. Is it because he finds me very beautiful, or the opposite?" He answered: "It is indeed because I did not imagine that there was so beautiful a spectacle in the world. I have seen in the palaces of our king women chosen for him from among all the nations, but never have I seen among them beauty such as this." She said to her interpreter, "Ask him; is he serious, or does he jest?" And he answered: "Serious indeed." And she said to him: "Are there then no beautiful women in your country?" And al-Ghazāl replied: "Show me some of your women, so that I can compare them with ours." So the queen sent for women famed for beauty, and they came. Then he looked them up and down, and he said: "They have beauty, but it is not like the beauty of the queen, for her beauty and her qualities cannot be appreciated by everyone and can only be expressed by poets. If the queen wishes me to describe her beauty, her quality and her wisdom in a poem which will be declaimed in all our land, I shall do this." The queen was greatly pleased and elated with this, and ordered him a gift. Al-Ghazāl refused to accept it, saying "I will not." Then she said to the interpreter: "Ask him why he does not accept my gift. Does he dislike my gift, or me?" He asked him — and Ghazāl replied: "Indeed, her gift is magnificent, and to receive it from her is a great honour, for she is a queen and the daughter of a king. But it is gift enough for me to see her and to be received by her. This is the only gift I want. I desire only that she continues to receive me." And when the interpreter explained his words to her, her joy and her admiration for him grew even greater, and she said: "Let his gift be carried to his dwelling; and whenever he

wishes to pay me a visit, let not the door be closed to him for with me he is always assured of an honourable welcome." Al-Ghazāl thanked her, wished her well and departed.

Tammām ibn 'Alqama said: "I heard al-Ghazāl tell this story, and I asked him: 'And did she really approach that degree of beauty which you ascribed to her?' And he answered: 'By your father, she had some charm; but by talking in this way I won her good graces and obtained from her more than I desired'."

Tammām ibn 'Alqama also said: "One of his companions said to me: 'The wife of the king of the Vikings was infatuated with al-Ghazāl and could not suffer a day to pass without her sending for him and his staying with her and telling her of the life of the Muslims, of their history, their countries and the nations that adjoin them. Rarely did he leave her without her sending after him a gift to express her good-will to him — garments or food or perfume, till her dealings with him became notorious, and his companions disapproved of it. Al-Ghazāl was warned of this, and became more careful, and called on her only every other day. She asked him the reason for this, and he told her of the warning he had received. Then she laughed, and said to him: 'We do not have such things in our religion, nor do we have jealousy. Our women are with our men only of their own choice. A woman stays with her husband as long as it pleases her to do so, and leaves him if it no longer pleases her.' It was the custom of the Vikings before the religion of Rome reached them that no woman refused any man, except that if a noblewoman accepted a man of humble status, she was blamed for this, and her family kept them apart.

When al-Ghazāl heard her say this, he was reassured, and returned to his previous familiarity."

Tammām says: "Al-Ghazāl was striking in middle age; he had been handsome in his youth, and was for this reason nicknamed al-Ghazāl (the Gazelle). When he

went to the land of the Vikings, he was about fifty, and his hair was turning grey. He was however in full vigour, straight of body and handsome of aspect. One day the king's wife, whose name was Nūd, asked him his age, and he replied jestingly: 'Twenty'. And she said to the interpreter: 'What youth of twenty has such grey hair?' And he replied to the interpreter: 'What is so unlikely about that? Have you never seen a foal dropped that is grey-haired at birth?' Nūd laughed and was struck with wonder at his words. And on this occasion al-Ghazāl extemporised:—

'You are burdened, O my heart, with a wearying
 passion
 With which you struggle as if with a lion.
 I am in love with a Viking woman
 Who will not let the sun of beauty set,
 Who lives at the limit of God's world, where he
 Who goes towards her, finds no path.
 O Nūd, O young and fair one,
 From whose buttons a star rises,
 O you, by my father, than whom I see
 None sweeter or pleasanter to my heart,
 If I should say one day that my eye has seen
 Any one like you, I would surely be lying.
 She said: "I see that your locks have turned white"
 In jest, she caused me to jest also,
 I answered: "By my father,
 The foal is born grey like this."
 And she laughed and admired my words
 —Which I only spoke that she might admire.'

Had this poem been composed by 'Umar ibn abī Rabi'a or Bashshār ibn Burd or 'Abbās ibn al Ahnaf or any other of the (Eastern) classical poets who took this path, it would have been highly esteemed. But the poem is forgotten, because the poet was an Andalucian. Otherwise it would not have been left in obscurity, for such a

poem does not deserve to be neglected. Have you seen anything more beautiful than the line: 'Who will not let the sun of beauty set', or as the first line of this piece, or as the description of the exchange of jests? Are they not strung pearls? And are we not wronged and treated unjustly?

But let us return to the story of al-Ghazāl. When he had recited his poem to Nūd, and the interpreter had explained it, she laughed at it, and ordered him to use dye, Al-Ghazāl did so, and appeared before her next morning with dyed hair. She praised his dye and said it became him well, whereupon al-Ghazāl recited the following verses:

'In the morning she complimented me on the black-
ness of my dye,
It was as though it had brought me back to my youth.
But I see grey hair and the dye upon it
As a sun that is swathed in mist.
It is hidden for a while, and then the wind uncovers it,
And the covering begins to fade away.
Do not despise the gleam of white hair;
It is the flower of understanding and intelligence,
I have that which you lust for in the youth
As well as elegance of manner, culture and breeding.'

Then al-Ghazāl left them, and, accompanied by the envoys, went to Shent Ya'qūb (St. Iago de Compostella) with a letter from the king of the Vikings to the ruler of that city. He stayed there, greatly honoured, for two months, until the end of their pilgrimage. Then he travelled to Castile with those who were bound for there, and thence to Toledo, eventually reaching the presence of Sultan 'Abd ar-Rahmān after an absence of twenty months."

Chapter Four

COMMENTARY

The text of ibn-Dihya is a matter-of-fact, and in some parts, detailed story of a journey, interspersed with anecdotes, some original, others in traditional *genre*. There is, indeed, little flavour of the 'marvels' usual in travellers' records of the period.

The account of the itinerary and adventures of the ambassador is straightforward and in keeping with the character of ibn-Dihya's book which was in the class of *belles lettres* and intended to 'amuse' the reader, as the title indicates. In contrast to the embassy to Constantinople described in the anonymous Fez manuscript, no documents are cited illustrating the political objects and results of the mission.

A The Journey Out

From the opening sentences of ibn-Dihya it is clear that 'the ambassador of the king of the Vikings' arrived at the headquarters of Abd ar-Rahman II after the defeat at Tablada and the abandonment of Seville by the Vikings — that is during the last half of November. He came to propose not merely a cessation of hostilities but peace between the two monarchs. Abd ar-Rahman decided to accede to this request and he ordered al-Ghazal to return as an ambassador with the envoy of 'the king of the Vikings'. From this sequence of events, it is reasonable to conclude that 'the ambassador' who attended on Abd ar-Rahman was not a deputy of the invading force seeking an armistice but a plenipotentiary from the ruler to whom the invaders owed allegiance. Thus, it may be assumed that after the capture of Seville in September, the leader

of the Vikings in Andalus had sent back a ship to report, either to Noirmoutier or, more probably, direct to Ireland. This ship could have reached the south-west coast of Ireland before the end of September 844. The envoy, sent by the Viking king to the army in Spain, could have left Ireland in October and have arrived in time to witness the disastrous events of early November. As I have suggested earlier, the fact that Abd ar-Rahman sent al-Ghazal, the former ambassador to the Byzantine emperor, on the return embassy to Ireland indicates that, in spite of the aggression against Seville, the court of Cordova attached great importance — political and commercial — to the development of relations with the Viking sea-king who was master of the north-western approaches to France and Spain.

There was no delay in the despatch of the return embassy. While sporadic fighting along the Sidonian coast was still continuing between the Muslims and the Vikings, al-Ghazal, accompanied by a certain Yahya-ibn-Habib, repaired to Silves on the southern coast of Algarve (*al-Gharb*). Lévi-Provençal identifies Yahya ibn-Habib as the inventor of a sort of clock which had earned him the surname of *sahib al-munaikila*. Yahya, then, may be taken to have been a specialist in mathematics and astronomy and, perhaps, in navigational theory, and it is likely that he was attached to the mission for scientific observation of conditions in the northern seas.⁷⁵

At Silves, 'a fine well-equipped ship' had been prepared to accommodate the two Yahyas.⁷⁶ 'The ambassador of the king of the Vikings' embarked in the ship in which he had reached the Spanish coast, and the two vessels sailed together. Al-Ghazal's poem on the storm which overtook the voyagers soon after their departure from Silves contains some interesting particulars of the conditions under which he sailed. The reference in the last line — "The shipmen have no capital in us, my friend" — seems to infer that the envoys were travelling as passengers of

the Vikings. Again, the indication that the ship carried two sails makes it clear that it was not one of the fast longships of the Vikings, used for inshore and up-river raids. These carried one square sail only — as shown on the Bayeux tapestry of the Norman invasion of England two centuries later. They were mainly dependent on oar-power. It would seem rather, from al-Ghazal's reference to the two sails, that the mission had embarked in two ships of the type known as *knörr* (or *hafskip*). These ships, "used on the big viking expeditions overseas", were different craft from the longships, "being shorter, sturdier, and carrying a higher freeboard and having a great beam and a wide bottom". Their crews relied almost entirely on sail, and oars were used only as auxiliaries if the wind fell. The *knörr* was capable of travelling about 75 miles a day. It has been calculated that some of these ships had a displacement of fifty tons or thereabouts.⁷⁷

The date of the departure of the embassy may be calculated. Ibn-Dihya says that al-Ghazal arrived back in Cordova after an absence of twenty months. He had reached Santiago de Compostella two months before the end of the pilgrimage which falls in the last week of July. If a fortnight is computed for a journey by leisurely stages from Compostella to Cordova, we can reckon that al-Ghazal started his journey from Silvès twenty months before early August 846 — that is during the last half of December 844; or perhaps the first half of January 845, if allowance be made for delays between Cordova and Silvès and for embarkation at Silvès.

"Opposite the great cape which juts out into the sea and is the westernmost limit of Spain, that is, the mountain known as Aluwiyah," the ambassadors were overtaken by a tempest. Dozy identified this promontory, perhaps rightly, as St. Vincent.⁷⁸ "Off this coast gales from between north-east and south-west are most dangerous, as there is not a single harbour or refuge where a vessel,

overtaken by them, can find refuge." The cape may, however, have been Finisterre, which is actually the most westerly point of the Iberian peninsula. The flanks of Finisterre are rugged and run steeply to the summit which has several peaks. "Gales of force 7 or above may be expected off this part of the coast on about 7 days a month from December to March and gales of force 8 or more on about 5 days a month." The most frequent gales are from south-west.⁷⁹

Alexander Bugge has suggested that al-Ghazal's ships made for Noirmoutier after rounding the great Galician headland. He was supported (tentatively) by Nansen.⁸⁰ Jacob does not attempt identification. I do not believe that the Vikings, with their experience of the more formidable open sea passage between Norway and the north of Ireland would have flinched from making a winter course across the ocean from Cape Finisterre to the south-west coast of Ireland. It is a mistake to believe that the old seafarers hugged the coasts; and the Westfaldingi had recent memories of the perils of an on-shore gale along the mountainous coast of Galicia. The distance from Finisterre to Noirmoutier across the Bay of Biscay is more than 300 nautical miles and it is rather more again from Noirmoutier to the south-west coast of Ireland. The direct run from Cape Finisterre to the Kerry coast is little more than 400 nautical miles — a shorter and less dangerous passage across the open seas. It seems reasonable to propose, then, that the ships bearing al-Ghazal and his escort set their course for the bays of the Kerry peninsula. The voyage can have taken from five to ten days according to the weather.⁸¹

B The Kerry Coast and Clonmacnois

"Al-Ghazal arrived at the first of the lands of the Vikings, at one of their islands; where they stayed several days and repaired their ships and rested. The Viking ship

went on to their king and they informed him of the arrival of the envoys." It is clear that landfall had been made at an island in Viking occupation where there was a settlement, some amenities and some kind of repair yard. To identify the island, it is necessary to examine the extent of the Viking establishment round the south-west coast of Ireland which had been built up during the preceding four decades.

The first reconnaissance raids had been made between the years 807 and 812. Strategic points had been selected with a sure experienced eye: Inis Labrainn, an island at the mouth of the Cashen river, in north Kerry, to the south of the estuary of the Shannon; and Dair Inis, Oak Island, now Valentia, a fine position commanding the entrances to the great bays of the Kerry coast and shipping rounding the headlands.⁸² An attempt to penetrate inland in force ended in disaster near Loch Léin (now the lake of Killarney) when the Vikings were defeated by the powerful Eoganacht and left 416 dead to be recorded by the annalist.⁸³

Attacks were renewed only in 822; their range extended right along the south coast of Ireland and up the east coast as far as Wexford (*Víksfjörðr* — later to become a leading Viking settlement). Valentia was again raided and along the Cork coast, Ros Máláin, Corcach (Cork) and Cluain Uamha (Cloyne) were attacked. In 824, the remote hermitage in the isle of Sceleg Michil, six miles south-east of Bray Head, Valentia, was raided, probably by ships returning from these operations.⁸⁴ In the same years, 822-24, took place the massive invasion of Ulaidh (Ulster), which had the aspect of a conquest intended to be permanent.⁸⁵

There followed a decade of intensive attacks when the weight was directed against the north and east of Ireland. But at the same time there was a systematic occupation of the islands and penetration of the estuaries round the south-western and southern coasts. There were raids on

Inis Eoghanáin (now Inis-Shannon, up the Bandon river), on Dundermuighe (now Dunderrow near Kinsale), on Disert Tipraite (perhaps Ardmore) and on Kilmolash and Lismore up the estuary of the Blackwater.⁸⁶ The first reconnaissances up the main stream of the Shannon were undertaken (Mungret and Kilpeacon).⁸⁷

Concentration on the Shannon continued. A base was set at Inis Sibhtonn (=King's Island). Luimnech — the name for the great stretch of the river between the later city of Limerick and the sea — was occupied along both the Clare and Kerry shores where the Vikings met with tough resistance and a defeat at the hands of the Uí Chonaill Gabhra (834).⁸⁸

“There came after that”, wrote the author of the *War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*, “a great royal fleet into the north of Ireland”, commanded by Turgeis “who assumed the sovereignty of all the foreigners of Ireland” and occupied the whole of Leth Chuinn — ‘Conn’s Half’ — the northern half of the country.⁸⁹ Keary has described Turgeis as ‘a man of genius’.⁹⁰ He certainly applied a brilliant amphibious strategy which derived from the intelligent use of his special instrument: the light-draught longship which could penetrate the network of inland waters and dominate the extensive lakes which gave access to the inner provinces of the country. The Irish, divided into small political units and involved in a protracted internal struggle for supremacy between the kings of Ulster and Munster and the spiritual centres of Armagh and Cashel, could offer little effective resistance.

Turgeis pursued his conquests with the aid of three fleets. One in Lough Neagh, dominated central Ulster along the line of the river Bann and gave him control of the great cult centre at Ard Macha (near the site of Armagh). The second, based on Carlingford Lough, threatened the east coast. A third fleet rounded the north-west coast of Ireland and sailed up the Shannon into Loch Rí (Ree). On Loch Rí, Turgeis established his

operational headquarters — probably about the year 839.⁹¹ The choice was genial. With his fleet on this great stretch of inland water half-way up the course of the Shannon, the conqueror could retain control of Ulster and Connacht and strike east at Meath and Leinster or south and west at Munster. A few miles to the south of Loch Rí, at Clonmacnois, the second of the four great shrines of Ireland, his wife Ota, held her court. "It was on the altar of the great church she used to give her answers."⁹²

Meantime the northern third of Kerry, Ciarraighe Luachra, from the strand of Tralee (Tráigh Lí)⁹³ to the estuary of the Shannon, was in the hands of the Vikings. In the inland forests stretching back to the Killarney lakes and in the wild ranges along the Kerry Peninsulas the Irish held their own. But the survival of Scandinavian family names and place-names round the coast and in the islands affirms continuing Norse settlements from the time of Turgeis. Skellig is a name of Norse origin; so is Heystone and Bolus Head and Smerwick.⁹⁴ Nearby Smerwick are the *clachan na Lochlannach* — 'the stone houses of the Norwegians'.⁹⁵ In Ventry survives the legend of a great battle on the strand which seems to recall an occasion when the mountain Irish rallied to repulse a Viking landing.⁹⁶ The old name for Dingle was *Cuan damh dearg* — Red Ox Haven — which may recall a favourite prow-head and ship-name of the Vikings.⁹⁷ South of Valentia, not far from Ballinskelligs Bay and Bolus Head is a curious structure known as Staigue Fort. It has been suggested that this name is a corruption of the Old Norse *stígr, stigr*, meaning a 'path' or an 'ascending path'.⁹⁸ A headland on Valentia itself, called on the Ordnance Map, Beenakrykaka probably combines the Ir. *benn*, with Scandinavian, *kria*, the tern, and *reki*, seawrack.⁹⁹ There are numerous stone fortifications on Valentia which can be attributed to several periods. One was still known in the nineteenth century as 'the

refuge of the Danes'.¹⁰⁰ The island takes the name Valentia from Irish *Béal insi* — 'the mouth of the sound.'¹⁰¹ Its older name, Dair Inis, 'Oak Island,' derived from the oak woods for which the island was once famous.¹⁰² A writer of the eighteenth century records that "the harbour is justly esteemed the best in these parts, and almost the only one, besides Dingle, of tolerable safety, after a ship has passed the river of Kenmare."¹⁰³

It is likely that here was the haven of al-Ghazal's first stop. There are alternatives. Clear Island (*Insula Sancta Clare* or *Inis Damphly* (= *Daimhli*) also has its Doonagall — 'fort of the foreigners' — a south-east anchorage, and a creek on the north-west side of the island giving protection from the prevalent southerly gales.¹⁰⁴ In Bantry Bay, Beare Island again has a 'fort of the foreigners' and a haven with entrants from west and east of the bay — well protected from storms from the seaward side. "Beare and its island are richer in memories than in remains", and it has legends of remote invasions. Dursey Island (*Bea Insula*) was too exposed to attract preference in settlement.¹⁰⁵

But at Valentia, the Vikings had everything: a sheltered haven with alternative entrants according to the prevailing winds; a secure insular retreat with abundance of cattle and other supplies, and timber for repairs. To the north-west they had a passage through the Blasket Sound — "easy to navigate in moderate weather".¹⁰⁶ Giving a wide berth to the exposed Brandon Bay and the dangerous Seven Hogs, the Vikings could make Fenit harbour on the north side of Tralee Bay. Fenit lay within Ciarraighe Luachra which they had already been occupying for some years in 845. Or they could run straight for the estuary of the Shannon, past Kerry Head and their first settlement at the mouth of the Cashen river. The Shannon is tidal as far as Limerick and the Arab travellers might well gain the impression that they were cruising among islands

and peninsulas until they reached Inis Sibhtonn (King's Island) — which the Vikings had held since 831 and which was destined to become the site of the city of Limerick.¹⁰⁷ The fall of water in the Irish rivers was heavier in the ninth century and al-Ghazal might even retain the impression of cruising through an archipelago as the two ships passed the wooded islands in the stream of the Shannon, and entered the wide waters of Loch Derg. Beyond, they would continue to row upstream on a river which is still broad and spacious. A dozen miles below the outflow of the Shannon from Loch Rí, on an open slope above the river, lies Clonmacnois, with the ruins of its churches, shrines and tall round tower. In the ninth century there were the countless stone cells of the monks and students and the wattle huts of the people. And since Turgeis and his queen Ota were accustomed to pass time there, al-Ghazal would see some of the timber-built longhouses of the Norse chieftains with their shingle roofs and finely carved portals.

Clonmacnois (properly *Cluain mhic Nóis* — 'the city of the son of Nóis') was, after Armagh, the greatest of the monastic centres of Ireland; in some periods it surpassed Armagh as a centre of learning and literature. "It was not without deep and clear insight into Irish feelings and facts that the astute Norseman, Turgeis, presided at Armagh and set his wife over Clonmacnois; he had his hand on the head and heart of the Irish church. One must think of Clonmacnois as a complex 'city of God', not as a cloister . . . It was . . . a primitive Oxford; a city, see and colleges. The city of Kieran was in a central position, on the main waterway and safest road of the island, and accessible by water from all the monasteries of the Shannon and its tributaries."¹⁰⁸

In the eleventh century, Clonmacnois was famous for its gardens, approached by paved causeways. They still existed at the beginning of the thirteenth century and beyond them lay the spacious orchards of the bishop.¹⁰⁹

Al-Ghazal's memory of 'flowing streams and gardens' is reflected, indeed, in a couplet from an old Irish poem:

"Clonmacnois is the city of Ciaran,
A place of bright dewes and red roses."¹¹⁰

C Ireland in 845

"The king ordered his people to prepare a fine dwelling for them, and sent out a party to greet them. The Vikings thronged to look at them, and they wondered greatly at their appearance and their garb. They were then led to their lodgings in an honourable manner and spent a day there."

It may be supposed that the northern rig of the Vikings — close fitting trousers and jerkins over open shirts — was in marked contrast with the flowing robes of the Arab envoys. Yet another Muslim writer, who records that "the inhabitants (of Ireland) have Norman (Majus) habits and clothes", states that "they wear *burnus*, of which the worth of a single one can be a hundred gold pieces, and the nobles wear *burnus* set with pearls."¹¹¹ Here, the comparison with the *burnus* recalls the ancient Irish rather than Norse costume. This consisted of *léine* and *brat*. The *léine* was "not unlike the galabeeah worn by the natives of modern Egypt"¹¹² The *brat* was worn over the shoulders like a shawl. It could be pulled over the head, as shown in a sketch of a 'wild' Irishman in a manuscript book of Lucas de Heere in the Library of Ghent University, where the subject has a remarkable resemblance to a poor *bedû*.¹¹³ This costume of *léine* and *brat* was the dress of persons of quality shown on the crosses of Clonmacnois and Monasterboice and "may be taken as the contemporary costume of the more aristocratic classes in everyday life in the tenth century A.D."¹¹⁴ The author of *Old Irish and Highland Dress* finds that "the *brat* and *léine* costume is not at all what one would have expected to find in Northern Europe,

being loose fitting and of Southern or Mediterranean type, in fact little different in its elements from the dress of the ancient Greeks and Romans, the *peplos* and *chiton* of the Greeks, and the *sagum* and *tunica* of the Romans. The nearest people among whom analagous costumes survive today are the Berbers and Arabs of North Africa, Syria and Egypt."¹¹⁵ One may add, perhaps, the Ethiopians.

Another undertone of the life of Ireland which may have attracted the notice of the Arab envoys were the ovoid or circular stone-roofed buildings and the round wattle huts of the people. In the seventeenth century, O'Flaherty described the *clachans* of the Aran islands as "so ancient that nobody knows how long ago any of them was made."¹¹⁶ Estyn Evans observes that similar structures "are found either in ruins or serving as shelters . . . in south France, especially in and around the Central Plateau, in Spain, Portugal and Majorca, in the heel of Italy, in the western Balkans and in Crete where the mountain dairies appear to be very similar to the stone booley huts and shielings of Ireland and the Hebrides . . . Villages of houses with domed or conical stone or mud-brick roofs are a feature of south-east Italy and Syria, and of the dry belt stretching eastward to India."¹¹⁷ In Gaul, the wattle form of circular house — from which the stone types derive — is recorded on a *bas relief* in the Louvre, known as the Column of Antoninus.¹¹⁸ In north Africa, it was the characteristic dwelling of the Berbers in Roman and later times. There was a mobile type of wicker-work hut which could be moved on a wagon and which itself was a development of the nomad's tent.¹¹⁹ The wattle or wicker-work *tukul* is still the usual dwelling in the Ethiopian highlands. It is a commonplace of ethnology that cultural phenomena sometimes survive in unaltered forms on the peripheries of an area of dispersion; and there is certainly a remarkable resemblance in detail between the Ethiopian *tukul*, the Berber *mapalia*, or *attegia*, the Gaulish huts shown on the Column

of Antoninus and the Irish *teach filthe*, the construction of which is described in literary sources.¹²⁰ Discussing the stone forms of circular hut, Estyn Evans finds that "whether or not the origin of this style of building in western Europe should be placed, as I am inclined to believe, in the megalithic period, there can be no doubt that it represents, in various parts of the Mediterranean-Atlantic route, the survival of an ancient method of building."¹²¹

Eleven hundred years ago, the people of Ireland lay in point of time almost half way between the present century and the fourth century B.C. when Pytheas wrote of Ierne.¹²² And it would seem that in the ninth century A.D. elements and traditions in architecture and costume were surviving which have since disappeared. The 'Mediterranean' stratum in Ireland had already been overlain by several Celtic migrations from central Europe; and when al-Ghazal was in the country the Scandinavian intrusion from northern Europe had begun since half a century. There were already varied ethnic types in Ireland; and those which may be identified as 'Iberian' (shrine of St. Manchan and Book of Kells) and even as 'East Mediterranean' (shrine of St. Moedoc) were more in evidence than they were on the monuments of a few centuries later after the Anglo-Norman conquest.¹²³

D 'The Great Island in the Ocean'

Al-Ghazal's account of the country where he had arrived is brief but replete with information. It was "a great island (or peninsula) in the Ocean with flowing streams and gardens. It was three days sail, that is, three hundred miles from the mainland. In it are Vikings too numerous to be counted, and around the island are many other islands, all peopled by Vikings. The adjoining mainland is also theirs for a distance of many days' journey." Jacob, who finds 'gaps' (*Locken*) in Dozy's

translation, has: "Between it (the island) and the mainland were three stretches of water (*Wasserläufe*) and they measure three hundred miles". Jacob adds that syntactically the sentence can be construed as "it (the island) measures three hundred miles".¹²⁴

Observing that there is only one word in Arabic to render 'island' and 'peninsula', Jacob finds the island can be either Sjælland (Zeeland) or Jutland; and Fabricius, followed by Stefánsson, suggests that the seat of the king is Lejre (Hleiðr) in Sjælland.¹²⁵ Kendrick, who finds that the correspondence of the names of al-Ghazal's 'queen Noud' with that of Turgeis's wife Ota is flimsy evidence for the location of the embassy in Ireland writes that "it seems on the whole most likely, on the grounds of the geographical description of the lands of the *majus*, with their territory on the adjacent mainland (Scania) that Ghazal was sent to the Danish Court."¹²⁶

Jacob's amendment of the text of ibn-Dihya would make the situation of 'the great island in the ocean' more puzzling and would not strengthen the view of Kendrick that the 'mainland' or 'continent' can be Scania, since early geographers, including the Arabs, regarded the Scandinavian mainland as an 'island' or 'peninsula' (*jezireh*).

Both Ireland from Fair Head to Dursley Head and the extreme length of the Danish peninsula from the Skagerak to the estuary of the Elbe can be said to measure roughly three hundred miles. Again, three stretches of water separate Jutland — but not Sjælland — from Scania.

If the thesis that al-Ghazal in fact encountered the Viking king and queen somewhere on the Shannon be considered, it may be contended that a journey up river is not indicated in the text. But the broad stream of the Shannon together with the wide Loch Derg and the approach past islands and peninsulas could well have given the impression to a stranger that he was still travelling through an archipelago even as far upstream as Clonmac-

nois — which lies a few miles below the entrance to another broad stretch of water in Loch Rí. Clonmacnois has been suggested as the place of meeting because Nūd (= Ota) is known from Irish sources to have been in residence there in 845. But if the meeting was in fact lower down the Shannon on Inis Sibhtonn — where the Vikings had already established a base which was to become in twenty years the city of Luimneach (Limerick), then indeed al-Ghazal would have had no experience of a river voyage at all. Again, if we accept the calculation that al-Ghazal can have reached the Viking court in early spring, the impression of ‘flowing streams and gardens’ would relate to south-western Ireland rather than to Denmark. In March the Irish coastlands are already glowing with gorse; and in May the whole island is white with hawthorn blossom — the sacred bush of the ancient Irish. These wild shrubs scattered over the landscape display an unforgettable grace of colour. At Clonmacnois, particularly, the monks had had their own well-cultivated gardens before the Vikings came there.¹²⁷

Dozy’s interpretation of the text that the island was ‘three days journey from the continent’ and that ‘the continent also belongs to them’ explains the relation of Viking Ireland to western France rather than of Sjælland to Scania. Moreover, Jacob’s amendment — “Between it (the island) and the continent there are three stretches of water” — could describe very well St. George’s Channel between Wexford and St. David’s Head in Wales, the outer waters of the Bristol Channel across from St. David’s Head to Land’s End, and the approaches to the English Channel between the Cornish and Breton peninsulas.

The following passage presents difficulties in the context of both Danish and Irish conditions in the year 845:

They were heathens but they now follow the Christian faith, and have given up fire-worship and their previous religion, except for the people of a few scattered islands of theirs in the sea, where they keep up their old faith, with fire-worship, the

marriage of brothers and sisters and various other kinds of abomination. The others wage war against them and enslave them.

If related to the Danes, this text might be read in terms of Tammam-ibn-Alqama's information towards the end of the ninth century. But even at that date the Danes were still pagan. The only Danish prince who had become a Christian before the middle of the ninth century was the unpopular king Harald who had been expelled from his country and courted the favour of the emperor Louis the Pious (826). The first Christian missions to the Scandinavian courts were failures, and, in the words of Kendrick, "heathendom must have seemed established in unassailable strength when, at the end of twenty years of Christian endeavour, a huge Danish fleet under Horik siezed Hamburg (845) and drove Anskar, now an archbishop, from his archiepiscopal seat." The conversion of the Scandinavian peoples was late in the history of European Christendom and it was carried through only by strong kings against the fierce opposition of powerful elements.¹²⁸

Individual chieftains, early in the Scandinavian epoch, were not above accepting conversion if they saw that they could procure political advantage or if they felt themselves becoming isolated within a Christian society which they had entered as conquerors; thus, King Harald in Denmark, and some of the Scandinavian princes in Dublin later in the ninth century. But there was backsliding, as in the case of the aristocratic migrants from Dublin to Iceland; equivocation as with Hákon the Good of Norway; and even apostasy, as with Pepin II of Aquitaine, a great-grandson of Charlemagne who had made alliance with the Vikings.¹²⁹ The position of Turgeis, in this respect, remains obscure. He had begun as the great scourge of the Irish church, but about 840 he assumed the abbacy of Armagh, with all its great prestige as the patrimony of St. Patrick, and its ecclesiastical and

civil jurisdictions. It is not clear whether he practised — or caricatured the practice of — the Christian religion in Armagh, while his wife chose to celebrate pagan rites in Clonmacnois.¹³⁰

In his introduction to the *War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*, xliii-ix, Todd discusses at length the political and religious differences between the princes and prelates of Ulster and Munster in the period when Turgeis was invading Ireland. In Cashel, Feidhlimidh (Felim), the priest-king of Munster, was as great a scourge of the northern prelacy as Turgeis himself. In 826, and again in 833, he had spoiled the *termon* lands of Clonmacnois, and he repeated this exploit in 846, following the death of Turgeis. Todd, followed by Keary and Kendrick, believed that Turgeis intended “the establishment of the national heathenism of his own country, in place of the Christianity which he found in Ireland.”¹³¹ I suspect that the Vikings, like the Mongols, had little interest in proselytising the conquered. Their own beliefs were emotional, unintellectual, aristocratic and exclusive. Superstitious like all seafarers, they were sustained, not by faith, but by their superb vitality; they believed in luck, comradeship, and were resigned always to fate.¹³²

The motives of Turgeis were political; and he seems to have been a greedy, calculating man with a cynical sense of the possible. I prefer to follow Westropp in thinking that Turgeis — after assuming the abbacy of Armagh and the pretensions of *coarb*, or successor, of St. Patrick — may well have aimed at conciliating the north Irish clergy who had for some years been suffering the assaults of king Feidhlimidh.¹³³ The readiness of Turgeis to negotiate with the Muslims, immediately after his aggression against Seville is, again, a reflection of the same practical and cynical mind: comparable, indeed, to the mind of a Mongol conqueror coping with the religious establishments of the old world.

The impact of the Norse invasions had intensified a social and religious crisis in Ireland which was tending towards a dissolution of the old traditional society.¹³⁴ It created an impoverished and uprooted underworld who began to revert to paganism and who were ready to join the pillaging bands of the invaders. These were the *Gaill-Gædhil*, 'the foreigner Irish'. The *Three Fragments* describe them as a people who had renounced their baptism, and they were usually called Northmen (*Normannaigh*), for they had the customs of Northmen, and had been fostered by them; and although the original Northmen were bad to the churches, these were far worse, in whatever part of Erin they used to be.¹³⁵

Thus, the reference to a chronic state of war and slave-raiding in al-Ghazal's 'island' can be related rather to Irish than to Danish conditions in the year 845.

E The Reception of al-Ghazal

Two days after his arrival at the Viking court al-Ghazal was received in audience by the king. In the Middle Ages long delays were frequently imposed on ambassadors and in this case the early audience indicates a sense of the urgency of al-Ghazal's mission.

Before the audience, al-Ghazal, with his earlier experience in Byzantium, was careful to make conditions with regard to his own protocol. The story of the entrance being made low in order to compel the ambassador to crouch on his knees as he made his entry is the second point of correspondence in the details of the Byzantine and Viking missions.¹³⁶ It is possible that the story was invented by al-Ghazal or his entourage to emphasise the care and ingenuity with which the precedence of the amir Abd ar-Rahman had been guarded in a barbarous land. The story seems scarcely in keeping with the fastuous ceremony of the Byzantine court nor with the desire of the Emperor Theophilus, evident in his correspondence,

to conciliate the friendship and secure the alliance of the amir. Yet the story might express the mixture of arrogance and almost boyish buffoonery which was the humour of the Vikings. Another version of the story of compelling a crouching entrance was current in Spain about the widow of king Roderic, the Gothic Queen Ailo, who, when married to Abd al-Aziz ibn-Musa, made herself unpopular by imposing this form of entrance on persons seeking audience of her husband who was then ruling in Seville.¹³⁷ There is, again, the story of the persistent contest for precedence between Æthelstan of England and Harald Fairhair of Norway, which ended in Harald imposing by trickery his bastard, Hákon, as a foster-son on the English king, whose inferior situation was thereby implied.¹³⁸ The Vikings were 'protocol-conscious' and were not above sardonic tricks in their diplomatic relations. We may, therefore, relate the story of the crouching entrance, if it had a basis in fact, to the Viking or Visigothic rather than to the Byzantine milieu.

The particulars given in ibn-Dihya's account reflect the detail of princely Viking life as reflected in the sagas and confirmed by archæology. (The following brief description is based on du Chaillu, see reference in note 140.) Every prominent chieftain lived surrounded by his family, followers and servants. The collection of buildings they occupied was called *bær*; they were of different styles and varied in numbers according to the power, wealth and taste of the owners. The buildings seem often to have been far apart from each other; every house was known by a different name. They were built so as to form a large quadrangle, the front facing an open space or grass plot called *tún*, the whole being surrounded by a fence called *garðr*, through which entrance was by a gate, *grind*, or gateway, *hlið*.

The finest buildings were called *höll* (hall) and were only built by kings or jarls. "It was customary to have

large halls at the *bær*, at which people sat before long fires in the evening; tables were placed in front of the men, who afterwards slept alongside the walls, away from the fires. During the daytime the women carded and spun wool in these halls."¹³⁹ The halls were sometimes richly ornamented with wood carvings of mythological and heroic themes. There were two doors; one for the men and the other for the women. The walls were hung with tapestry, made by the wives and daughters of the family, which might represent the deeds of their forefathers or of their lord. Here also hung shields and stands of arms — making a brilliant background with their gold and silver and enamel inlays. It would seem that these stands of arms particularly struck the eye of al-Ghazal (text, p. 21). Stands of arms were not a decorative feature of the elegant palaces of the Byzantine emperors.

There was a special building, *salr*, which seems to have been of the same proportions as the *höll*, reserved for guests. There were separate buildings, *skemma* or *útiskemma*, sometimes used as sleeping apartments, where the women of the household dwelt or remained during the daytime, with their maids or attendants, and occupied themselves with all kinds of work.¹⁴⁰ This arrangement gave the women a good deal of privacy and freedom and would clearly make easy the exchanges which ibn-Dihya records between the queen and al-Ghazal.

The king awaited al-Ghazal 'in magnificent guise'. There are many details in the sagas of the splendid clothes and equipment of the Viking chieftains. During the audience of al-Ghazal, the king would probably be wearing the *slæða* (-ur) — "a trailing gown of costly stuff embroidered with gold and ornamented with bands". The international range of the Vikings is indicated by their affectation of *baldakin*, a stuff from Baghdad, silken caps, ornamented with lace from Garðaríki (Russia), doubtless originating from Byzantium, and *valskikkja* (French or Welsh, literally 'foreign', cloaks). Later,

following the contacts between the Vikings and Andalusia, Cordovan hose came into fashion.¹⁴¹

Ibn Dihya's statement that al-Ghazal took part in debates and fencing matches with his hosts is again characteristic of life among the Vikings. There was rough fare and hard drinking and, often, bloody quarrels at the Viking feasts, but the chieftains were fond of discussion, story-telling, recitations, riddles and puzzles.¹⁴² It is clear from Ibn Dihya's text that al-Ghazal spent much time in telling the queen about the Muslims, their history and the countries which they inhabited. And it would seem not unlikely that the intelligent Turgeis, with his interest in the ecclesiastical politics of Ireland, may have stimulated, for his own amusement and information, debates between the distinguished Muslim savant and some of the Irish poets and clerics.

The Vikings, themselves, were scarcely the uncultured barbarians depicted in the contemporary Christian chronicles. Every young man with pretensions to rank and respect in society was expected to acquire certain intellectual and physical accomplishments known collectively as *íþróttir*. The most important of these were: the skilful handling of all kinds of weapons, riding, swimming, running on snow-shoes, rowing, wrestling, working in wood and metal, and the playing of the harp; to which should sometimes be added skill in training and managing dogs, falcons and hawks. Necessary intellectual attainments included knowledge of runes, laws, the art of poetry, so necessary for remembering the deeds of the heroes, eloquence, skill in draughts or checkers, chess and the use of foreign tongues.¹⁴³ Weapon exercises, including fencing and wrestling, were held in high esteem among the Vikings, but in view of the age and distinction of al-Ghazal it would seem probable that the ambassador's matches with their champions would have been limited to archery contests.¹⁴⁴

F Queen Nūd

The name of the Viking queen, recorded by ibn-Dihya, is introduced quite casually in the conversation of Tammam ibn-Alqama: "One day, the king's wife, whose name was Nūd, asked him his age." It is repeated again in the poem improvised by al-Ghazal to Nūd — 'a Viking woman'. Lévi-Provençal comments: "La souveraine s'y appelle Nūd: ne seraient-ce pas, avec la confusion graphique entre *n* et *t* si courante en arabe, les trois premières lettres de la transcription du nom de Théodora?"¹⁴⁵ In 'Poème d'al-Ghazal sur le prince Michel et l'impératrice Théodora' cited by Lévi-Provençal from the anonymous Fez manuscript, the lady is described as 'fille des Césars'.¹⁴⁶

The name of the wife of Turgeis is only given once in the Irish sources. The oldest reference is in the fragment of the *War of the Gaedhil* contained in the remains of the Book of Leinster which date from the middle of the twelfth century. Here it is stated that "after this Turgeis came upon Loch Rí . . . Cluanmicnois was taken by his wife. It was on the altar of the great church that she used to give her answers. Ottar was the name of the wife of Turgeis." In the later recensions of the *War of the Gaedhil*, the reference is: "the place where Ota, the wife of Turgeis, used to give her audience was upon the altar of Cluain MicNois."¹⁴⁷ In a footnote (xcix, 2), Todd, the editor of the *War of the Gaedhil*, proposed that "the Scandinavian name of this lady was probably Audr or Auda. She is not mentioned, so far as the editor knows, in any of the sagas." The correspondence Ota = Auðr (or Uðr, Unnr,) = Nūd was accepted by Steenstrup (1878), Alexander Bugge (1910) and others,¹⁴⁸ but not by Marstrander and Shetelig. On philological grounds there is in fact every reason to suppose that Ot(t)a represents a O.N. personal name in Odd- (Oddkatla, usually written Ott- in Icelandic sources, or even Odda).¹⁴⁹ It is also noteworthy that the name Auðr was not common among Scandinavian women, although compounds in Auð- are

common.¹⁵⁰ There was another Auðr in the contemporary Irish scene: Auðr Djúpúðga or Djúpauðga, 'the deep minded' or 'the deeply wealthy'. This Auðr was a daughter of Ketill Flatnef, jarl of the Sudreys, and a wife to Óláf the White, Norse king of Dublin after 853. Although the cognomens might make it tempting to identify her with Ota, the wife of Turgeis, there are chronological as well as philological difficulties since, according to the *Laxdæla saga*, Ketill Flatnef's daughter settled in Iceland, still in full vigour, after 890.¹⁵¹

It is clear from the brief reference in the Irish sources that Ota, at Clonmacnois, had certain sybilline functions. *Völur* or spae-wives were common among the Scandinavians at all social levels. Frequently they emerged from the aboriginal Finnic people, famous for magical practices and 'second sight'.¹⁵² But ladies of noble and princely families in Scandinavia and among the Germans and Celts sometimes revealed prophetic gifts. C. F. Keary was the first to perceive the significance of Ota's attributes to which the Irish sources refer. He wrote:

The succession of these seeresses among the Teutons is in apostolic succession, with no break, no essential change of character, only such change as time must bring, from the day of the wife of Ariovistus, of Velela or Aurinia, through the days of a certain spae-wife, Ota, whom we discern in the dim light of the Viking period seated upon the high altar of an Irish minster, and 'giving her answers' therefrom, or of the last of the wise women among the old Germans, of whom we discover some traces in a chronicler of the ninth century Thiota by name. She was a contemporary of Ota.¹⁵³

Discussing the role of the seeress in the life of the Teutonic peoples, Keary believed that "at stated times such an one came among the people."

Taking her "high seat", she sat at festivals as Ota on the high altar at Clonmacnois, and people came one by one before her to consult the oracle. There is no talk of any special frenzy like that of the Delphic priestess. But the seat of prophecy was a special one, capable apparently of imparting some virtue to the Vala (= *Völva*) Sometimes she went from place to

place in her car, and the days of her coming were days of festival; altogether the picture is not unlike the picture of Nerthus drawn round on her triumphal course; the Vala may be considered as the visible representative of the goddess, for Nerthus herself, as we know, was always hidden from view. There can be little doubt that Nerthus was a partner in the mysteries, and like her human representative especially gifted in the magic arts It would, one can imagine, give no small prestige to a king or leader could he secure one of these prophetesses for a wife.¹⁵⁴

The transformation of the early Teutonic (or perhaps pre-Teutonic) goddess Nerthus into the later god Njörðr presents difficulties. The identity has been favoured by Keary, Chadwick and other writers.¹⁵⁵ Njörðr was worshipped as the god ruling the course of the winds and had it in his power to still the sea and to control fire. It was profitable to make vows to him for sea-faring and fishing. He came to be conceived as a god of wealth.¹⁵⁶ Again, the richly carved cart found in the Oseberg ship, as part of the funeral gear of a woman, believed to have been the Vestfold queen Ása, indicates the sacerdotal functions of a princess who was a near contemporary of Turgeis and Ota. It recalls sharply the ritual carts of the priestesses of Nerthus described by Tacitus and recorded again in the *Dáttur af Ögmundi dytt ok Gunnari helming*.¹⁵⁷

As a prophetess and priestess of Njörðr, 'Queen Nūd' may have been identified by al-Ghazal's interpreter with the name of the god. In the same way, it has been suggested that Turgeis, O.N. Thorgestr, was known to the Irish in the form Thorgils, 'the servant of Thor'.¹⁵⁸

G Conversations with the Queen

Dozy expressed the opinion that ibn-Dihya's account of the embassy of al-Ghazal contained little information on the Norsemen — and that very vague.¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless the anecdotes about al-Ghazal's conversations with Queen Nūd contain some precious details of the psychology

and way of life of aristocratic Viking women — which are confirmed from other sources.

The reference to the retention of the 'old faith', with fire-worship and the marriage of brothers and sisters, recalls perhaps the Persian practises which the Arabs had transferred to the Vikings together with the name Majus. Again, it can reflect the perception of the incestuous or, perhaps, endogamous tradition of the northern pantheon which derives from the older stratum of the Vanir.¹⁶⁰ Njörðr's children, the son Freyr and the daughter Freyja, were the fruit of Njörðr's union with his sister, whose name is not mentioned.¹⁶¹ Freyr and Freyja, also, were lovers. The cults of these fertility gods expressed the sexual theme. In Uppsala, Freyr is depicted *cum ingente priapo* and is called *Fricco*, 'lover', a name which appears to derive from an IE root, *prij*, 'love', to which the names Freyja, Frigg and Priapus are also related.¹⁶² The hero Hadingus is seduced by his foster-mother who reasons, "c'est avec moi que tu dois coucher, te marier, parceque je t'ai donné le sein comme une mère."¹⁶³

Georges Dumézil has observed: "C'est une vaste et importante étude que de classer les thèmes où intervient l'inceste dans les anciennes littératures de l'Europe, notamment chez les Celtes et chez les Germains."¹⁶⁴ Among the Scandinavians and Celts of the Viking Age, incest had long come to be regarded as a crime or a tragic accident, although in the Irish tales, as in the sagas, a famous king or hero is born sometimes from the forbidden union.¹⁶⁵

From the background of the fertility cults derived the freedom which women enjoyed in the pagan societies of northern and western Europe — a freedom which declined with the spread of the Christian discipline and the gradual evolution of a more settled, proprietorial and feudal way of life. But already in the Viking Age relations between the sexes were complex and the position of women was not so ideal as du Chaillu has indicated in his two chapters

on the subject.¹⁶⁶ The independence and authority often attained by women of the period had its economic undertones since, during the seafaring absences of husbands, wives were frequently left in control of large and isolated estates. Separations were long; divorce could be easy on the initiative of a wife who had powerful kin ready to see her make a better match. Among the princely families marriages were often made and broken for political reasons.¹⁶⁷

Queen Nūd's remarks to al-Ghazal are in keeping with the setting of her life: "We do not have such things in our religion, nor do we have jealousy. Our women are with our men only of their own choice. A woman stays with her husband as long as it pleases her to do so, and leaves him if it no longer pleases her."

The words ring as if they were spoken today by some free-loving 'modern' hoyden; indeed they express the same spirit after the wearing away of a thousand years of Christian disciplines. They carry the flavour of the old pagan tales, recalling the genial thought of the god Njörðr: "It is a little ill whether women take a husband or a lover, one or the other."¹⁶⁸ It is a view of life which could hardly have been invented by al-Ghazal, coming from the closed *harim*-court of Cordova. Nor does it, with other anecdotes of the embassy, fit into the fastuous environment of the Byzantine court.

We may accept the view of Lévi-Provençal that there possibly was, in later literary tradition, a certain amalgamation of anecdotes deriving originally from one or other of the two embassies.¹⁶⁹ How to combine or differentiate these incidents, and which incidents may we properly assign to the embassy to the Vikings?

During the dinner with the emperor Theophilus, there is al-Ghazal's successful manœuvre to retain as 'a souvenir' the jewelled gold cup.¹⁷⁰ As the ambassador of a master with whom the emperor was seeking alliance, al-Ghazal could permit himself this insolence. At the

Viking court, however, he refuses the gift offered by Queen Nūd and asks instead the permission to visit her at all hours.¹⁷¹ It is again an insolent gesture but one made to a barbarian queen on whom he realised that he had made an emotional impression. For a bold and quick-witted man, each action could pass with the occasion.

Al-Ghazal is not the only retired diplomat who has regaled his friends with stories of his successes with royal ladies. Such stories are never easy to check. The descriptions of the impression which he made on the empress Theodora¹⁷² and on queen Nūd correspond rather closely.¹⁷³ The one clearly derives from the other. al-Ghazal's technique is as old as human relations. Astonished admiration can even be observed in the first encounter of a stallion and a mare. But does the nocturnal visit of the empress to al-Ghazal's ambassadorial lodging correspond with what we know of the character of Theodora?¹⁷⁴ The emperor Theophilus was a rigid and even disagreeable husband. He had, on one occasion, ordered to be confiscated and sold a cargo which the empress had chartered from Beirut on her private account. A fervent iconoclast, he interfered in the intimate devotions of his wife and encouraged the palace dwarf to spy on her icons. During her married years, the empress displayed a mild and yielding disposition: later, as regent, she was careful to conform to the proprieties of her august situation.¹⁷⁵

In this psychological and institutional setting, it would have been odd for the empress to have brought her little boy to pass the night drinking with the Muslim ambassador. Even Lévi-Provençal admits a difficulty here since the boy, who was afterwards known as Michael the Drunkard, can have been scarcely three years old at the time of al-Ghazal's mission to Constantinople. Yet the opening lines of the poem attributed to al-Ghazal on this occasion would seem to describe a boy of eight or ten years old.¹⁷⁶

On the other hand, the custom of fosterage which existed among the Vikings (and the Irish) could explain well enough a visit of Queen Nūd with her son to al-Ghazal. "He who of his own free will set another's child on his knee or on whose knee another child was set without having previously obtained leave" became foster-father to that child. "To bring up 'the knee-set child' was the bounden duty of him on whose knee it had been set . . . A foster-father was looked on as a rule as an inferior in rank and position to him whose child was fostered."¹⁷⁷

The sole authority for the fact that Turgeis had sons is a reference, seemingly erroneous, in the seventeenth-century Irish historian, Geoffrey Keating; but there is some slight evidence that Turgeis did leave sons and it seems reasonable to assume that Queen Nūd was the mother of some of them.¹⁷⁸ To try to impose fosterage of one of her boys on al-Ghazal would have been a diplomatic manœuvre, and an appropriate and humorous response to al-Ghazal's clever avoidance of going on his knees at his reception by the Viking king.¹⁷⁹ Again, the idea of sending one of her sons to be educated at the court of Cordova, where there were many Gothic and northern military men in service, may have been attractive to queen Nūd, both as a mother and as a politician. Al-Ghazal knew how to meet the trick and composed a very charming poem as his answer.¹⁸⁰

Then there is the salty discussion on circumcision recorded in the Fez manuscript and, also, after ibn-Haiyani in the *Analects* of al-Maqqari.¹⁸¹ It seems scarcely a subject on which the conventional empress Theodora would touch in conversation with a Muslim ambassador, nor is it likely that the practice would be previously unknown to a lady born in the Levant. But the theme of circumcision might well arouse the curiosity of a Viking queen who had perhaps become aware of the phenomenon for the first time.

We need not linger over the anecdotes about the age of

al-Ghazal and the dyeing of his hair.¹⁸² This frank and refreshing badinage, characteristic of lovers of different ages, does not occur in the anecdotes related to the embassy to Byzantium. On the other hand, the story of the pearl necklace, given by the empress as an endowment for al-Ghazal's daughters and said to have been 'the foundation of his great fortune' has no counterpart in ibn-Dihya's story of the embassy to the Vikings.¹⁸³ Indeed, before leaving Cordova for the northern seas, al-Ghazal, always the solicitous parent, had exacted from the amir Abd ar-Rahman pensions for these same daughters.¹⁸⁴

Dozy complains that ibn-Dihya's story contains "absolutely nothing on the object of the embassy and on the nature of the relations which were established between the two princes."¹⁸⁵ Al-Ghazal knew how to keep his own counsel — as most diplomats do to this day. The secrets of 'the ruling few' are not for the gossips; and men prefer to forget the tensions which have become the dust of history and remember the amusing incidents which can recover youthful and sophisticated ardours. And al-Ghazal committed only the hint of an indiscretion. Tammam ibn Alqama said "I heard al-Ghazal tell this story, and I asked him: 'And did she really approach that degree of beauty which you ascribed to her?' and he answered: 'By your father, she had some charm, but by talking in this way I won her good graces and obtained from her more than I desired'."¹⁸⁶

The answer is equivocal but in a man of al-Ghazal's worldliness, these words might be taken to imply the success of his mission rather than a flattering triumph with a barbarian princess. What did he obtain beyond what he desired? The development of trade relations between Cordova and the Irish Vikings — of which there is some evidence during the following decades?¹⁸⁷ A combination against Charles the Bald — which can have taken the form of the formidable assaults on the Frankish realm

during the years 845-846?¹⁸⁸ The destruction of the dangerous Turgeis — who met his death not long afterwards? The answer must remain an enigma in the present state of the evidence. Yet if the thesis be acceptable that al-Ghazal's embassy to the Vikings was set in Ireland between the first months of 845 and midsummer 846, some indications may be adduced from the details to suggest a new interpretation of events in France and Ireland during a period which saw catastrophic happenings in each of those countries.

Chapter Five

EPILOGUE, 845-846:

THE SACK OF PARIS AND THE END OF TURGEIS

THE end of the unusually hard winter of 844-845¹⁸⁹ saw movement along the coast of the narrow seas all the way from Brittany to Jutland. In March 845 a Viking fleet of a hundred and twenty ships sailed up the Seine and attacked and pillaged Paris. About the same time another fleet, said to have numbered six hundred ships, entered the Elbe and sacked Hamburg; but in a land battle these Danes were repulsed by the Saxon allies of Louis the German, brother of Charles the Bald. It has been assumed by most historians that the attacks on the Seine and the Elbe were related operations directed by the Danish king Horik. But there are some obscure passages in the narrative of events which can imply that the Seine expedition was undertaken by independent leaders and was neither controlled by King Horik nor in keeping with his designs.¹⁹⁰

At the beginning of March the Viking ships appeared at the mouth of the Seine and began to work up the river. Lot and Halphen state that the fleet was formed of 'pirates danois' who had arrived after devastating some islands — 'sans doute sur la côte de Zélande'.¹⁹¹ At the same time, it is clear from the author of *Les Miracles de St. Riquier*, that panic was caused at the monastery of Centulum (St. Riquier) near Abbeville on the Somme by the presence of the pirates in the Seine, and Lot and Halphen remark that neither Prudentius nor the *Translatio Sancti-Germani Parisiensis* record any news of the pirates along the coasts of the Channel before their arrival in the Seine.¹⁹² It is probable that St. Riquier and Ponthieu were threatened on the return of the pirates

from their raid on Paris and not on their arrival in the mouth of the Seine. 'The islands of the sea' which they plundered may indeed have been the Channel islands rather than the inshore islands of the Frisian coast which they attacked and found strongly defended when they were cruising along the coast towards Denmark after the sack of Paris.¹⁹³ There is a case then for suggesting that the Seine fleet had not arrived directly from Denmark, but was composed of elements already wintering on the French coast and perhaps reinforced from the Viking settlements in Ireland.

The name of the leader of the Vikings in the Seine has been recorded in the Frankish chronicles as Raginerus, Ragneri.¹⁹⁴ He has been identified by modern historians with the celebrated hero of the sagas, Ragnar loðbrók.¹⁹⁵

As had happened four years earlier, Rouen was taken without a fight and put to the sack.¹⁹⁶ The objective of the invaders was Paris — not yet a capital but a city already famous for its wealth and situation. The leisurely and complex world of the Frankish court seems to have been surprised by an attack which was unexpected. About the middle of March the young king Charles the Bald proclaimed a hosting. Many rallied but lack of forage before the end of May delayed the concentration from the provinces of the detachments of feudal cavalry — the best fighting element among the Franks. Charles made his base at St. Denis, to the north of Paris and east of the Seine. His advance guard at Bourgival feared to face the enemy. On 28th March the Vikings landed from their ships in the river and on the following day, Easter Sunday, entered Paris and pillaged the city which was already deserted by the terrified inhabitants. The French army at St. Denis refused to engage the enemy and on the advice of his nobles Charles offered to buy the withdrawal of the Vikings. An epidemic had struck the invaders and the Viking leaders were probably — as in the raids on Nantes and Seville in 844 — embarrassed by dispersion

and indiscipline. Ragnar came to interview the king at St. Denis and against a payment of 7000 pounds in silver took an oath not to penetrate further into the kingdom.

The Vikings returned to the coast towards the end of April. Lot and Halphen believe that they encamped along the lower course of the Seine, awaiting the collection of the ransom money. The *Translatio* emphasises that their withdrawal was imposed by the epidemic, an act of God, believed by modern commentators to have been dysentery. Later, the greater part of the Vikings took to their ships and cruised along the Frisian coast to Denmark. In the view of Lot and Halphen, some detachments remained round the mouth of the Seine on pillaging expeditions until the end of 845 or as late as May 846.¹⁹⁷

The ships which reached Denmark had a bad reception from King Horik. Lot and Halphen believe that the Vikings who raided the Seine had acted without the king's consent and he may have resented their failure to rally to the invasion of the valley of the Elbe since their reinforcement might have saved him from the repulse by the Saxons.¹⁹⁸ When Ragnar's fleet arrived, German envoys were at Horik's court negotiating peace. The Danish king was not impressed by Ragnar's exploits; and, indeed, in view of his own check on the Elbe, he may have been envious of the astounding success at Paris. Ragnar's crews and prisoners had brought the epidemic with them and the king, from superstitious fear, sent to Louis the German the Christian prisoners and a part of the treasures taken from the banks of the Seine. In the autumn of 845 Horik's envoys attended the Diet of Louis the German at Paderborn.¹⁹⁹ Ragnar returned to the west where he died a mysterious death soon afterwards. The protagonist of the famous capture of Paris — an event which had resounded throughout the western world — disappears from the historic scene in an atmosphere of doom and fatality. His end is interpreted by the monkish

chroniclers as the vengeance of God and in the sagas as the fate of a hero.²⁰⁰

Ragnar Loðbrók remains one of the most enigmatic figures of the early phase of Viking history. His fame, recorded in the sagas of several centuries later, depends indeed on the reputation of his alleged sons who can be identified as historical figures in the contemporary records of England and France. Outside the saga literature and the legendary material of Saxo Grammaticus, the name of Ragnar is only attested in the Frankish chronicles for his Paris campaign of 845. "The whole environment of Ragnar is obscure",²⁰¹ not least the place and manner of his death. According to the *Annales Xanthes*, he fell in France in 845.²⁰² The story of his death in a snake-pit in Northumbria as the prisoner of the Saxon king Ælle is, in the view of Alan Orr Anderson, 'probably a literary fable'.²⁰¹ According to *The Chronicle of King Eric*, Ragnar, "having conquered many countries was at length killed in Ireland."²⁰³ Halliday believed Ragnar to have been identical with Turgeis. The date of the disappearance of the two Viking heroes from history certainly corresponds closely enough — the end of 845 or the first part of 846.²⁰⁴

Ragnar has been credited with a number of wives and five sons who became famous in the sagas and in western historical sources. The only reference to sons and a daughter of Turgeis is to be found in Keating.²⁰⁵ This is the story, perhaps derived from the source of which the *Three Fragments* formed part, of the death of three 'sons of Turgeis' (*clann Tuirgeis*) in a sea-fight off Dundalk. But this event is dated to the middle of the tenth century.²⁰⁶ One suspects here a second Turgeis with his sons active on the Irish scene. He could have been the son of Harald Fairhair, called Þorgísl, who Snorri says was living in Dublin.²⁰⁷ On the other hand it is possible that 'Tomrar and Turges', referred to in the oldest fragment of *Cogadh* preserved in the Book of Leinster, were sons of the first Turgesius.²⁰⁸ According to the

Annals of Ulster, in a victory gained over 'the foreigners' at Sciath Nechtain (a site near Castle Dermot in County Kildare), earl Tomrair, heir of the king of Lochlann (*Tomrair erell tanise righ Laithlinne*), fell with twelve hundred of his men.²⁰⁹

Halliday proposed to explain the difference in name between Turgeis and Ragnar on the ground that Turgesius was the Latin form of the Norwegian Þorgils, which he inaccurately renders 'the servant of Thor'; and Tomrair, Tomar or Thormodr he interpreted as 'Thorsman' or one devoted to Thor. "Such names might have been assumed by, or applied to Ragnar and his successors as worshippers of Thor . . . in contradistinction to Christmen or followers of Christ."²¹⁰ This argument of Halliday might have some validity if applied to the descendants of Turgeis, but there is evidence that names derived from Thor were not current among families who claimed descent from Ragnar; a single exception seems to have been Þorstein, son of Ólaf the White and Aud the Deepminded.²¹¹

On the strength of references to his royal fleet and to his assumption of kingship in the northern parts of Ireland, modern historians have identified Turgeis as a prince of the royal house of Vestfold. As for Ragnar, we may perhaps accept the view of Hodgkin that "he owed a part of his fame, both in his lifetime and later, to the fact that he had links with more than one of the Scandinavian peoples; that while he came of a Danish dynasty, he had been brought up in Norway; that he had wives in many ports; and that his large family of sons inherited or forged connections with most of the countries of the north, from Ireland to the Baltic lands . . . The most plausible conjecture connects him in some way with Harold and Rorik, the fugitive Danish kings baptised by Louis the Pious. It is possible that he was a bastard brother of theirs, or a nephew."²¹²

The background proposed by Hodgkin could explain the suspicion and reluctance with which Ragnar, the

victor of Paris, was received by King Horik of Denmark, the successful rival of Harold and Rorik.²¹³ The Norwegian connection could also explain an alliance of Ragnar's Seine host with Turgeis and the Norsemen in Ireland. And perhaps the omen of this combination of leaders of the Vikings in the west can have provoked, in the years 849-51, the determined onslaught of the Danes against the Norwegians in Ireland.²¹⁴

Turgeis was trapped and subsequently drowned by Maelsechlainn of the Uí Néill, king of Meath. The *Annals of Ulster* give the date under 844 = 845. Todd in his edition of *Cogadh* followed this dating, although he observed in reference to another context that "it is difficult to give much weight to these chronological notes."²¹⁵

If the reading of events which I propose is valid, it becomes necessary to advance the date given in the annals of Ulster for the capture and death of Turgeis by one year: 844 = 845 would then read 846. I am aware that this involves other related events recorded in the Annals for 844 = 845 and 845 = 846. But the sequence of events during those years remains obscure in the admission of the compilers of the contemporary records and modern scholars have called for some revision of the chronology.²¹⁶

The death of Turgeis, like the death of Ragnar, became the subject of legend. The twelfth-century version of Giraldus Cambrensis is the earliest surviving. At the end of the sixteenth century both Edmund Campion and Meredith Hanmer repeated the story of Giraldus Cambrensis with embellishments, and in 1662 Lynch devoted three bulky volumes to the refutation of all his statements about Ireland. In the nineteenth century, Hennessy, editor of the *Annals of Ulster*, believed "the silly story to be without any foundation whatever".²¹⁷ But Keating's version differs from the Cambrensiian tradition in essential details and suggests access to a lost source which may well have been the manuscript of which the *Three Fragments* are the surviving parts.²¹⁸

Todd summarized the account of Giraldus Cambrensis as follows: "Turgesius being enamoured of the daughter of king Maelsechlainn, it was arranged that she should receive him at a banquet, in an island on Loch Uair (now Loch Owel), where she appeared, surrounded by fifteen beardless youths in female attire. They carried arms, however, concealed under their garments, and when Turgesius, who had also fifteen attendants, advanced to embrace them, they suddenly drew their daggers and slew him with his followers."²¹⁹

The more detailed version of Keating represents Turgesius as receiving Maelsechlainn's daughter and her attendants in his castle — perhaps Rintown = Ir. Rinndun on St. John's Point at the narrow neck of Loch Rí, facing across the waters of the lake Maelsechlainn's lands in Westmeath.²²⁰ Further, Keating makes it clear that Turgeis was overpowered by the Irish youths dressed as girls who also got possession of the piled arms of the other Vikings about to partake in the festivities in the castle. Maelsechlainn then entered the castle with his men and slaughtered "the chiefs and underlings of Turgeis". The Viking leader himself was taken to the '*duinlios*' of Maelsechlainn, "where they kept him for a time in captivity". He was drowned only later after the Lochlannaigh had suffered numerous defeats and had been banished from Ireland, "except a small remnant of them who remained under the rule of the Gaels." "After they were banished, Maoilseachlainn drowned Turgesius in Loch Ainninn (now Loch Ennill south east of Loch Owel), and this deed led to the nobles of Ireland choosing with one accord Maoilseachlainn as high king of all Ireland, since the country had been freed by him from the slavery of the Lochlonnaigh."²²¹

In the story of the end of Turgeis, there are elements which hint at the pagan practices of the Vikings and recall the ceremonies and excesses reflected in the cult of Nerthus/Freyr. Fifteen boys and fifteen girls took part

in the ritual of the *Völur*.²²² The Irish youths dressed as girls recall the *Haddingjar* who have been described as those who wore the coiffure of women.²²³ A lake is the familiar background of the Nerthic cult; and even the drowning of Turgeis may have had a ritualistic connotation.²²⁴ While the story may have been embroidered with these motives derived from dim memories of the rites of Viking paganism, it is within the limits of probability that there is a historical basis for the picture of Turgeis, surprised and captured by a band of Irish youths during lakeside orgies connected with the cult of Freyr. In his death-song Ragnar compared himself to an old boar.²²⁵ Well may Turgeis, whom Keating in his version pictures so well as the ageing satyr, have mimed the god Freyr with his porcine attributes, the progenitor of the Yngling race,²²⁶ who was depicted in Uppsala *cum ingente priapo*, and whose worship was celebrated with orgies and religious prostitution.²²⁷ In this connection, we may recall the story of the Norwegian Gunnar Helmingr who gave himself out to be the god Freyr and drove about in a sacred wagon, dressed in the god's clothes and accompanied by a beautiful girl.²²⁸ In Uppsala, also, "they used to plunge a man living into the water and if he disappeared they drew a favourable omen."²²⁹ It may have been that this practice suggested to the sardonic humour of Maelsechlainn the mode of making an end of Turgeis.²³⁰

Down to the end of the nineteenth century, festivities connected with the taking of a bride were celebrated in Sweden on the Eve of St. John (23rd June). They seem to have been a remote reflection of the midsummer cult of Freyr; the practise of ritual drowning was also connected with this day. It may be suggested, indeed, that the orgy which proved fatal to Turgeis took place on the Eve of St. John.²³¹ Now the only date specifically indicated for an event in the Irish annals for the years 845 — 846 was the attack by earl Onphile (? Halfdan) on

the Irish gathered for the great fair at Ros Creda (usually Ros Cré, Roscrea in Co. Tipperary) on the feast of Paul and Peter (29th June). This attack would seem to have been a direct reaction to the capture of Turgeis by the Irish and intended as the beginning of an offensive against Maelsechlainn and the kingdom of Meath. It ended in the death of the earl and disaster for the Norsemen.²³² This was the second setback suffered by the Norsemen during the year, for earlier, and apparently before the death of Turgeis, they had been beaten by Aedh son of Niall, King of the Northern Uí Néill and *ardri* of Ireland, at Magh Itha — a place situated in the present barony of Raphoe, Co. Donegal. An effective Irish victory here could threaten the communications of the Norsemen with the Islands and Norway.²³³ I submit that these events — the battle of Magh Itha, the capture of Turgeis by Maelsechlainn, and the fighting at Roscrea — fell in the year 846 and not in the year 845. For if the chronology of al-Ghazal's embassy to the Vikings in Ireland is acceptable, it is apparent that al-Ghazal cannot have left Ireland on his voyage to Compostella before the end of May 846. At that date Turgeis was still a king in authority, since ibn-Dihya records that "al-Ghazal left them, and, accompanied by the envoys, went to Shent Yakub (St. Iago de Compostella) with a letter from the king of the Vikings to the ruler of that city."²³⁴

Without needing to accept the identity of Turgeis and Ragnar as proposed by Halliday, it is not unreasonable to admit the possibility of an alliance between the Vikings of Turgeis in Ireland and the fleet of Ragnar on the Seine for an attack on Paris. The alliance could give point to the implication of al-Ghazal that his embassy had been more successful than he could have desired. It would also explain his long sojourn at the court of Turgeis and Ota. Again, his intimate daily attendance on the queen is the more easily understood if we accept the probability that Turgeis himself could have been absent for some time on

the Seine expedition. And if Turgeis' force had been decimated by the epidemic which the Frankish sources record, the fact must have become evident to the Irish on his return to Ireland in the late summer or autumn of 845. The weakness of the Norse king's situation could have suggested to the Irish *ardri* the attack on his communications in the north and to Maelsechlainn the prospect of a successful revolt against the Norse hegemony.

It is useful to examine the extent to which the sparse entries in the Frankish sources can help to confirm this reconstruction of events. In the month of May 846 — which I have proposed for the departure of al-Ghazal from Ireland — the monks of St. Germain who had taken refuge at Esmans, near Montereau, returned to their abbey after an absence of a year and two months. Lot and Halphen believed that this event could imply the withdrawal of the last contingents of Vikings from the mouth of the Seine.²³⁵ And I suggest that this withdrawal can be correlated with the need for reinforcements in Ireland following the defeat of the Vikings by the *ardri* Aedh at Magh Itha. During the month of July 846, the Westfalingi, who had attacked Seville in the autumn of 844 and who had been operating against Saintes and Bordeaux in October and November 845, came to Noirmoutier, set fire to their base and took to the sea.²³⁶ The arrival of these men as reinforcements in Ireland could be related to a change of the military situation in favour of the Vikings during the year 847. It was a bad year for the Irish. The south was ravaged. Maelsechlainn was involved in an ugly servile war in Meath. But during the winter 847-848, the Norsemen evidently were becoming exhausted.²³⁷ Irish victories followed during 848. Maelsechlainn triumphed at Farrach in Co. Meath, and Olchobar, king of Munster, won a victory at Sciath Nechtain (near Castle Dermot in Co. Carlow) when Earl Tomrarr 'tanist of the king of Lochlann' was killed.²³⁸ This last event was probably

fatal to the Norse situation in Ireland.²³⁹ Prudentius, who laments the tributary situation of the Irish in 847, records that in 848 “the (Irish) Scots attacked the Northmen, and, winning victory, by aid of our Lord Jesus Christ, cast them out of their territories. Hence the king of Scots (Maelsechlainn) sent messengers with gifts to Charles, for peace and friendship, requesting that the way of going to Rome might be granted to him.”²⁴⁰

NOTES

¹ *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XX, 1957, 411-12.

² *ibid.*, citing E. Lévi-Provençal, 'Un échange d'ambassades entre Cordoue et Byzance au ix^e siècle', *Byzantion*, XII, 1937, 15-16 (= *Islam d'Occident*, Paris, 1948, 95-8). And see further Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire de l'Espagne musulmane*, Paris, 1950, I 253-4. In an earlier *art.* 'Majus', published in *EI* III 101, L-P accepted the authenticity of al-Ghazal's embassy to the Vikings.

³ In his magistral work, *Normannerne* (4 vols., 1876-82), J. C. H. R. Steenstrup was the first to propose Ireland, ii, iii ff; he was followed by Alexander Bugge, *Norges Historie*, Christiania, 1909-10, I 2, 80. Haakon Shetelig (*Viking Antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland*, in 6 parts, Oslo, 1940-54), concluded that "Ireland is the only country that agrees sufficiently well with the tale" (I 138, n. 4). Allen Mawer, *The Vikings*, Cambridge, 1913, and *Cambridge Medieval History*, III 317, favoured Ireland, as also G. Turville-Petre, *The Heroic Age of Scandinavia*, 1951, 69, who suggested "the court of Turges at Armagh." A. Fabricius, who published Reinhart Dozy's French translation of ibn-Dihya's Arabic account of the embassy, *Actes du 8e. Congrès Internationale des Orientalistes, tenu en 1889 à Stockholm et à Christiania*, Leiden, 1893, 'L'ambassade d'al Ghazal auprès du roi des Normands', II 121-31, decided that the king "must have been Horik of Denmark", p. 128. He was followed by Jón Stefánsson, 'The Vikings in Spain from Arabic (Moorish) and Spanish Sources', in *Saga-Book of the Viking Club*, VI, 1908-10, 33 ff. and by Georg Jacob, *Arabische Berichte*, Berlin/Leipzig, 1927, 38, n. 5. Shetelig recalls that Eyvind Kvalén tried to show that the country visited was some part of Norway, Viken or perhaps Hordaland, *VA*, I 138, n. 4. T. D. Kendrick, *A History of the Vikings*, London, 1930, 202, regards the evidence for Ireland as 'flimsy' and believes that "Ghazal was sent to the Danish Court". Alexander Vasiliev, *The Russian Attack on Constantinople in 860*, Cambridge, Mass, 1946, 44-45, did not consider Ireland and favoured Jutland. Although he gives full and valuable bibliographical notes, the veteran Byzantinist omits reference to Lévi-Provençal's negative view in *Byzantion*, XII, 1937, 15-16, cited above.

I. I. Y. Krachkovsky, *Izbrannye Sochineniya*, IV, 1957, 133-4, follows Fabricius and Jacob. He finds the views of

Lévi-Provençal "hypercritical". (For his observations on al-Ghazal's poetical works and return through St. Iago, see *ibid.* II, 483-4). D. M. Dunlop, *Islamic Quarterly* IV, 1957, 1 and 2, p. 14, thinks the evidence indicative.

⁴ Lévi-Provençal, *Byzantion*, XII, 1937, 4, 12-14.

⁵ Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire de l'Espagne Musulmane*, I, 1950, 254.

⁶ Vasiliev, *Russian Attack*, 36; and citing E. Kunik, *Die Berufung der schwedischen Rodsen durch die Finnen und Slaven*, St. Petersburg, 1845, II 285-320.

⁷ Shetelig, *VA*, I 19, 57, 111; and Kendrick, *Vikings*, 199, n. 2. On p. 43 of his work, Vasiliev makes three slips in half a paragraph. He writes that the Vikings "passed the straits of Gibraltar" before attacking Cadiz, Medina Sidonia and Seville. Further that they held Seville only until the beginning of October, when in fact they remained until the middle of November. Again, after their defeat, he states that they sailed north, although they remained off the coast for some time and made several more raids (see pp. 8-9 above).

⁸ Communicated by Bernard Lewis: The word *Majus*, derived like English *Magus* through Greek *magos*, from Old Persian *magush*, is discussed in its various implications by V. P. Buchner and E. Lévi-Provençal in *EI* (III 97 ff.). Again, the Muslims of the west described Spaniards who remained Christian as *adjam*, that is "Persians" — a term used in the east for non-Arab muslims, usually of Persian origin; cf. Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire*, I 77, 130.

⁹ cf. J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 3rd ed., London, 1913, Part VII, (= *Balder the Beautiful*, I), 106 ff., particularly 171-2; also George Henderson, *Survivals in Belief among the Celts*, Glasgow 1911, 208 ff.

¹⁰ Listed by Vasiliev, *Russian Attack*, 3. As Shetelig observes, *VA*, I 16, the forms of "Norman" are of Norwegian origin. "The classical example is to be found in Alfred's writings from about 880-890, when the Norwegian Ottar is his source on this matter. Ottar speaks of the whole country, from Vestfold to Finnmark, as being 'Norðmanna land' or 'Norðweg'." It is of interest that while the Saxons were fighting the Danes, both Alfred and Æthelstan had Norwegians in the royal circle (Shetelig, *ibid.*, 17, 19).

¹¹ Vasiliev, *Russian Attack*, 3 and n. 5. The other name, *Varyag*, *Varang*, applied to Scandinavians in the east need not be discussed here.

¹² Kendrick, *Vikings*, 1 ff. "To go *í viking* was their accustomed expression for the favourite enterprise of plundering and trading

across the waters". E. Björkman, in a paper on the names *Scaldingi* and *Wicing*, *Saga-Book*, VII/2, 139, suggests that Viking may have been a word of Frisian origin (= O. F. *Witsing*, *Wising*).

¹³ For Westfaldingi, see my note 31 below; for *Hereða land*, C. Plummer, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, I, 1892, 54-55; for *Hirotha* and *Irruait*, Todd, *War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*, = *Cogadh Gaedhil re Gallaibh*, London, 1867, xxxiv, n. 1; also Bugge, *On the Fomorians and the Norsemen*, Christiania, 1905, 15, n. 1; R. Th. Christiansen, *The Vikings and the Viking Wars in Irish and Gaelic Tradition*, Oslo, 1931, 68, 417 ff.

¹⁴ John O'Donovan (ed.), *Annala Rioghachta Eireann: Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters*, Irish text and English translation, in six vols., 2nd ed., Dublin, 1856, I 432, note y.

¹⁵ Geoffrey Keating, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn: The History of Ireland*, Irish text and English translation edited by Rev. Patrick Dinneen, in four vols., London, 1901-13, III 154-7 (Vol. I edited by David Comyn).

¹⁶ cf. Todd, *War*, xxx-xxxI and notes. Marstrander, *Ériu*, V 250, suggested that the origin of the name was to be found in a rendering of Norse *Rogaland*, as *l* and *r* are often interchanged. See discussion in Christiansen, *Vikings*, 416-7, who finds that "the question of the origin of the name is unsettled". It remains to observe that Duald Mac Firbis identified the Lochlannaigh with the Fomorians (*Fomhoraigh* or *fomhoir* — "sea-demons, giants or pirates") of an earlier period of Irish history. In the *Three Fragments* the same author refers to Danes as *Aunites* (*Aunites. i. Dainfir*, 158). His editor, O'Donovan, in a footnote (158, note n) suggests that "this name is, perhaps, a corruption of *Afnitae* or *Hafnitae*, from *Hafnia* (*Höfn*, the haven) called afterwards *Kaupmannahöfn* ('merchants' haven') now Copenhagen." Again, the Scandinavian settlers in Ireland were often known as *Ostmen* (i.e. 'East-men' or 'men from the east'). The name *Gaill* (= nom. pl., *Gall* = nom. sg.) was given "to all strangers who spoke a foreign language and was therefore at first confounded with *Galli*, or *Gaul*, the foreigners best known to the aboriginal Irish" (Todd, *War*, xxix, n. 3). From the twelfth century, the term *Gaill* was applied to the Anglo-Normans. The *Gaill-Gaedhil* were the mixed Celto-Norse people of the Orkneys and Galloway. Groups of apostate Irish who had reverted to paganism and attached themselves to the Vikings were also known as *Gaill-Gaedhil* ('foreign Goidels'). The whole complex of the nomenclature of the Scandinavian and Celtic peoples in the ninth century illustrates the hazards of comparing

tribal names for periods for which even less documentation exists.

¹⁷ Recently, George Vernadsky has suggested that the origin of the terms 'Black Russia' and 'White Russia' may be due to the conquest of the basins of the upper Niemen and of the western Dvina and upper Dnepr by Black and White Vikings. He believes that the respective colours represented different corporations or fraternities of Vikings: "the Blacks apparently predominated among the Danes and the Whites among the Norwegians. Both corporations might have existed among the Swedes." cf. *A History of Russia*, III, (*The Mongols and Russia*), Yale, 1953, 236-7, and *The Origins of Russia*, Oxford, 1959, 246-7. "On the Oseberg textiles there is a representation of a warrior with a white shield", *Mongols and Russia*, 237, citing Björn Hougen, 'Oseberg-funnets billedvev', *Viking* IV, 1940, 104.

¹⁸ Louis Halphen, *Les Barbares*, 4th ed., 1940, 299 ff., with excellent bibliographical notes. Steenstrup, *Normannerne*, I 49 ff., was the first to examine thoroughly the origin of the names *Norman* and *Dane*. See also R. H. Hodgkin, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, Oxford, II 473 ff., with useful map of the main Viking routes; and F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, Oxford, 2nd ed., 1950, 237 ff.

¹⁹ A paper read at the Viking Congress at Lerwick, July 1950, and published in a volume, *Viking Congress*, Edinburgh/London, 1954, 130-41: 'The Viking Movements: a Summary Analysis'. For a useful periodization, see Kendrick, *Vikings*, 6-9.

²⁰ cf. Shetelig, *VA*, I 10. Later research tends to push the date for Swedish expansion east of the Baltic further back. See, for instance, Christopher Tolkien, 'The Battle of the Goths and Huns', *Saga-Book*, xiv/3, 1955-6, 141-63.

²¹ The first recorded landing of Scandinavians in England was made in the reign of King Beohtric of Wessex (786-802) by Norwegians from Hordaland ('Norðmanna of Hereðalande') on the Dorset coast which some decades later became the hunting ground of the Danes (Shetelig, *VA*, I 3). It is probable that these raiders, like those who explored the Welsh coast in 795, had come from the Irish Sea rather than through the straits of Dover.

²² For an appreciation of the original character and 'wonderful richness of colour' of Irish society in the ninth century, by a non-Irish historian, see Axel Olrik, *Viking Civilization*, English ed., London, 1930, 107 ff. He believed that the Irish had a great influence on Scandinavian decorative art and on the development of the saga form.

²³ Shetelig, *VA*, I 13-14. The Vikings were following traditional sea-routes which had long been open between Ireland

and western France. The theme has been studied in detail by H. Zimmer in *Sitzungsberichte d. K. Preussischen Akademie d. Wissenschaften*, XIV, XX, XXI, LI, 1909, 1910: 'Über direkte Handelsverbindungen Westgalliens mit Irland im Altertum und Frühen Mittelalter'. Archibald Lewis, *The Northern Seas*, Princeton, 1958, 62-76, has adduced evidence for Irish and Saxon attacks round the coasts of western Gaul and as far as Spain as early as the fifth century A.D. Arne Kelvinger, *Les premières incursions des Vikings en Occident d'après les sources arabes*, Uppsala, 1955, puts forward arguments, mostly based on a new interpretation of the chronology of Arabic manuscripts, for an earlier dating (eighth century) of the first Viking incursions into southern France and the Mediterranean.

²⁴ Shetelig, *VA*, I 14; *Viking Congress*, 142: "The Danes invaded Frisia as the allies of Lothar in his war against his father Louis the Gentle (= 'the Pious'). After the war Lothar granted to the Danish King Harald the fief of Walcheren as a reward for his inroads in Frisia against Louis the Gentle. Harald himself is mentioned as one of the chieftains in Lothar's army in 842."

²⁵ cf. Shetelig, *Viking Congress*, 140: "The large armies operating for years on the Continent were certainly joined by adventurers from all Scandinavian peoples, and others, Irishmen, Frisians, and Slavs. When a renowned chieftain prepared an enterprise on a grand scale, such as the invasion of England in 850 or Hasting's raid on Morocco and Italy in 860, warriors and pirates would gather from all parts."

²⁶ For the incidents round Nantes, see Ferdinand Lot and Louis Halphen, *Le Règne de Charles le Chauve*, I 77 ff. (= Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Etudes, Sciences Historiques et Philologiques, 175e fasc.); for Messac, 77, for Lambert and citizens of Nantes, 79 n. 1. St. Philibert, the founder of Noirmoutier in the seventh century, had Irish connections, see Kenney, *Sources for the Early History of Ireland*, I 491. His *Life* contains an incidental allusion to Irish commerce with the Loire: "Not much later an Irish ship filled with various merchandise came to shore, and supplied the brothers with an abundance of shoes and clothing." *ibid.* 495.

²⁷ Kendrick, *Vikings*, 193 ff. The Vikings arrived on a west wind. Lot/Halphen, 82 n. 1, citing *Chronique de Nantes*, ed. Herlet, 13. This would have been a favouring wind from the south coast of Ireland, cf. *Bay of Biscay Pilot*, 1956, 28. For appreciation of topography of Noirmoutier, see A. R. Bridbury, *England and the Salt Trade in the later Middle Ages*, Oxford, 1955, 56 ff.

²⁸ Lot and Halphen, 80 ff., 79 n. 3, for discussion of original sources. See also Keary, *Vikings in Western Christendom*, 249 ff.; Kendrick, *Vikings*, 199 ff.

²⁹ See Lot and Halphen for detailed discussion, 82 n. 1. But Kunik, *Die Berufung*, 2er Abteil., 292-3, cites *Fragmenta Historiae Armoricae*, ed. Martène, for the information that disputes over the rich spoils of Nantes had provoked disturbances among the Vikings on Noirmoutier ('*Unde inter eos magna seditione commota*'). It was the disturbances which enabled the captive Nantais to escape.

³⁰ Charles the Bald began the siege of Toulouse during the first fortnight of May 844 (Lot and Halphen, 99). On 14th June, his reinforcements were broken by the Aquitanian rebels at Angoumois (*ibid.* 113). About the same date, the royalists were defeated by Count Lambert in the region of the lower Loire (*ibid.* 117). During the same weeks, the Breton duke, Nomenoé, invaded Neustria, advancing to Le Mans on the Sarthe with scarcely any resistance from the royalists. He was suddenly forced to retire by "a shameful irruption of the Normans" into his own lands (*ibid.* 119 and n. 1, citing *Annales Bertiniani*, 31). In this case 'the Normans' were probably Danes from the Seine.

³¹ Lot and Halphen, 81 (n. 3 to p. 79). "*Les Annales angoumoussines*, copiées par le *Chronicon Aquitanicon*, le *Chronicon Engolismense*, Adémar de Chabannes, nous apprennent que ces normands étaient des 'Westfaldingi'. Il semble que ce terme doivent s'entendre des Norvégiens du sud." cf. Shetelig, *VA*, I 16, n. 4, 57. (The *Annales angoumoussines* were later lost. Lot and Halphen, 187, n. 1).

³² See Zimmer, *SPAW*, XIV, 1909, 393.

³³ cf. Lot and Halphen, 82 n. 1.

³⁴ cf. my n. 23 above, and see further the Commentary, Section A, above.

³⁵ cf. Kendrick, *Vikings*, 115, 276 n. 1. The archaeological evidence stresses the early and close connection of south-west Norway with Ireland. "Of a great number of antiquities of the Viking age found buried in Norwegian ground . . . the Celtic personal ornaments form by far the largest group, containing 122 specimens found in 110 graves." Of these, a substantial proportion belong to the first half of the ninth century and derive from Vestfold and the adjacent Vestland districts round the coast: Agder, Rogaland, Hordaland, Sogn, with some further north in Møre and Trøndelag. Jan Petersen, *British Antiquities of the Viking Period found in Norway*, *VA*, V, 7, 8, 10.

³⁶ Todd, *War*, II, 15; and *ibid.* n. 2, where the editor prefers the reading 'Munster' to 'Erinn'.

³⁷ *ibid.* 13, para. xii of text, which follows immediately after the statement, para. xi, that Ota, wife of Turgeis, used to give her audiences upon the altar of Clonmacnois.

³⁸ Lot and Halphen, 186, citing *Chronique de Nantes*, VII, ed. R. Merlet, 20, *et volentes inde (ab Herio insula) ad regionem suam navigare, ventus aquilo violentia usque ad Galliciam deduxit*. Along the mountainous coast of northern Spain, "squalls which occur in summer may be of considerable violence, especially near the coast where very hot and sultry weather prevails; small sailing vessels . . . have been wrecked as a result of them, generally because in hazy weather the first warning signs of their approach are not apparent until the squall is imminent . . . A fairly large proportion of the infrequent strong winds which occur in summer are from about north." *Bay of Biscay Pilot*, London, 1956, 30. All this helps to explain the poor showing of the Westfaldingi in the fighting round Coruña; and the high figure for ships lost. They can have left Noirmoutier for the Irish coast with a large number of auxiliary boats loaded with captives, stores and loot. They can have made the landfall on the Galician coast very much the worse for wear and under the necessity of refitting and foraging for supplies. The *Chronique de Nantes* says that they lost all but thirty of their ships. This is an exaggeration or a miscalculation, since Arab sources confirm that the Majus appeared off Lisbon with fifty-four fighting ships and as many auxiliary vessels, Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire*, I 219. Since the attack on Nantes the previous summer, their fighting strength was reduced by thirteen ships. If the figure for loss of seventy ships at Coruña is to be accepted, it would seem that the Vikings had lost by storm, or abandoned to the Galicians, sixty or more auxiliary vessels. These latter would probably be the Breton-type luggers, commandeered or built with Breton hands round Noirmoutier, low in the stern and liable to be pooped when running before a gale — particularly if over-loaded with prisoners and loot. (cf. T. C. Lethbridge, *Boats and Boatmen*, London, 1952, 58 ff.) If the Vikings had failed to replenish supplies and had lost most of their spoils at Coruña, and if the north wind were holding, it may have been desperation rather than planning which imposed on them a continuation of the voyage south.

³⁹ Stefánsson's translation, *Saga-Book*, VI 35. For the red ships of the Vestfold Kings, see Brøgger and Shetelig, *The Viking Ships: Their Ancestry and Evolution*, Oslo, 1953, 180, and Shetelig's fine rendering of the verse from Þorbjörn Hornklofi's *Haraldskvæði*:

Methinks you know the King?
 Dwells at "Kvinne"
 Head of the Norsemen
 Master of deep keels
 Red prows
 and scarlet shields
 tarred oars
 and spray-drenched boards.

Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire*, I 220, refers to 'les voiles brunes des filibustiers'. For weather conditions, cf. *West Coasts of Spain and Portugal Pilot*, 3rd ed. 1946, 7-8, 21-22.

⁴⁰ The Muslim sources for the Viking attack on Andalusia in 844 were first translated and published by Reinhart Dozy, *Recherches sur l'Histoire et la Littérature de l'Espagne pendant le Moyen Age*, 2 vols., Leiden. There were three editions, all now rare. I have used the second (II 271-89). Dozy's researches were the basis of the accounts of Steenstrup and later historians. In 1908-9, an abbreviated but useful translation in English was published by Jón Stefánsson in *Saga-Book*, VI 31-46. Lévi-Provençal used newly recovered sources in his *Histoire de l'Espagne Musulmane*, I 218-25. I have followed his dating and account of the military operations.

⁴¹ Stefánsson, *Saga-Book*, VI 34, citing ibn al-Kutiya: "When they arrived a mile (league) below Seville, (the) Majus shouted to the people, 'Leave us in peace if you wish to buy prisoners of us'. People then ceased to throw stones at them, and they allowed everybody to ransom prisoners. A certain sum was paid for most of them, but (the) Majus refused both gold and silver. They took only clothes and food." cf. Dozy, *Recherches*, II 285.

⁴² Dozy, *Recherches*, II 277-8, and Stefánsson, *Saga-Book*, VI 37, citing Nowairi. cf. also Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire*, I 224.

⁴³ Lot and Halphen, I 186-7. "A la fin de 844 ou au début de l'année 845."

⁴⁴ *ibid.* 187 n. 1, citing *Chronique de Nantes*, ed. Merlet, 20.

⁴⁵ Elysée Reclus, *Universal Geography*, ed. Ravenstein, I 454.

⁴⁶ This event is dated by a letter of Loup de Ferrières to Ganelon, archbishop of Sens, cited by Lot and Halphen, 187, n. 1 and 2. The authors amend the *Chronique de Nantes* in placing the capture of Bordeaux after the capture of Saintes.

⁴⁷ Lot and Halphen, I 187 n. 1, citing *Chronique de Nantes*, ed. Merlet, 20, under year 845.

⁴⁸ *ibid.* n. 5, citing *Chronicon Aquitanicon*, under year 846.

⁴⁹ *ibid.* 187. After the Viking practice for standing camps, the

Noirmoutier base can have contained longhouses, hutments, storehouses, repair yards and forges — all the plant potentially useful to a rival fleet expected on the coast.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹ Shetelig, *VA*, I 112 ff.; Kendrick, *Vikings*, 203 ff.

⁵² cf. Todd, *War, Cogadh*, paras. xxi, xxii.

⁵³ See notes 237, 239 below.

⁵⁴ cf. Lévi-Provençal, *L'Espagne Musulmane au Xe siècle*, 36; *Histoire*, I 78.

⁵⁵ Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire*, III 184 ff. Musa al-Qasi, who took a leading part in the defeat of the Vikings at Tablada, belonged to a powerful *muwalad* family of Gothic descent.

⁵⁶ *ibid.* III 73 ff. 'Slav' (= *Sakaliba*) became a name which covered Germans and Franks as well as Wends.

⁵⁷ See note 41 above; and for the multilingual character of Andalusian culture, Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire*, III 182 ff.

⁵⁸ Scattered bands of Vikings had been cut off in the districts east and south-east of Seville. Eventually they capitulated and became Muslims. They took to dairy farming in the valley of the Guadalquivir and for long continued to supply Seville and Cordova with famous cheeses. Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire*, I 224. It may be noted that in the fourteenth century the best rowers in the Castilian fleet came from the *marismas de Seville* (see F. E. Russell, *The English Intervention in Spain and Portugal in the time of Edward III and Richard II*, Oxford, 1955, 232.).

⁵⁹ Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire*, III 314 ff.; *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, Cambridge, 1952, 162, 271, 272. The vast European slave trade was largely in the hands of Jews and Syrians. It even had its amenities. As in nineteenth-century Turkey, promising slaves were carefully educated — in philology, literature, calligraphy, astronomy and the exact sciences (*Histoire*, III 317). The Vikings traded their own slaves. "In *Laxdœla Saga* we hear of Melkorka, an Irish princess, who was exposed for sale with eleven other women at a market in Norway. The slave-dealer, a man known as Gilli (Ir. Giolla) 'the Russian' was in all probability a Scandinavian merchant from Ireland who had carried on trade with Russia." Sometimes the Norsemen, after defeats, were themselves sold into slavery, like 'the slaves ignorant of Gaelic' given as tribute to Irish kings. (See A. Walsh, *Scandinavian Relations with the Irish during the Viking Period*, Dublin, 1922, 32-3, 72-3). English slaves were sold into Ireland 'by merchants and pirates' as late as the twelfth century. After the Normans took Dublin, English bondsmen were manumitted by decree of the Synod of Armagh with a view to conciliating

Strongbow, *Holinshed's Chronicles*, (1808 ed.) VI, Ireland, 148.

⁶⁰ Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire*, I 178 ff.

⁶¹ *ibid.* 212.

⁶² *ibid.* 222 ff. In 828, Louis the Pious had written to the people of Merida encouraging their revolt and promising armed aid (*ibid.* 227). Unrest among the Christians and Mozarabs of Cordova came to a head in 850-1 (*ibid.* 232 ff.).

⁶³ For the personality of al-Ghazal, see Lévi-Provençal, *Byzantion*, XII 10ff.; *Histoire*, I 249 ff.; III 283, n. 1, for his introduction into Andalucia of a species of fig called *doñegal*; *ibid.* 443, for his objections to chess; *ibid.* 492 for his gift for satire.

⁶⁴ I have summarised the bibliographical information on ibn-Dihya from Vasiliev, *First Russian Attack*, 1946, 43 and n. 4-5; he gives more details but omits reference to Lévi-Provençal's contribution to the subject in *Byzantion*, XII, 1937. Add also: H. Birkeland, *Nordens Historie i Middelalderen etter arabiske Kilder*, in *Skrifter utg. av det Norske Videnskaps Akademi i Oslo*, Hist.-fil. Kl. 1954, Nr. 2.

⁶⁵ cf. Lévi-Provençal, in *Byzantion*, XII 7, 10; also his short notice of Isa-bn-Ahmed ar-Razi in *EI* III.

⁶⁶ *Byzantion*, XII 16.

⁶⁷ *Histoire*, I 253-4.

⁶⁸ The *Three Fragments*, copied from ancient sources by Dubhaltach Mac Firbisigh (*anglice*, Duaid Mac Firbis); and edited with a translation and notes from a manuscript preserved in the Burgundian Library at Brussels, by John O'Donovan, Dublin, printed at the University Press, for the Irish Archaeological and Celtic Society, 1860.

Duaid Mac Firbis was the last of a long line of *seanachies* or hereditary historians of Connacht. During the Parliamentary Wars, he was reduced to great poverty and much of his work took the form of translations of Irish manuscripts for Sir James Ware, an early English patron of Irish letters. In 1670, at the age of 85, he was murdered by a drunken member of the Crofton family.

⁶⁹ For discussion of the equation of Turgeis and Ragnar loðbrók see pp. 58-60 above and note 204.

⁷⁰ Shetelig, *VA*, I 48, 55.

⁷¹ For detailed discussion of these manuscripts, see Todd, *War*, introduction, 1 ff. For a modern view of *Cogadh*, often critical, see A. J. Goedheer, *Irish and Norse Traditions about the Battle of Clontarf*, Haarlem, 1938. The author believes that *Cogadh* borrowed from the *Annals of Ulster*, but the latter only gives one reference to Turgeis (*s.a.* 844) and none to his wife, Ota. The

accounts of events in Ireland, following the capture of Turgeis, show substantial difference of treatment in *AU* and *Cogadh*.

⁷² *The Irish Annals*. There is controversy among scholars as to the composition and chronology of the several Irish 'annals' and 'chronicles' which were kept in different monasteries. But there seems to be a degree of common agreement that the various bodies of annals stemmed from an original 'Ulster Chronicle' which was compiled in east Ulster, probably in the monastery of Bangor, c. 740 (cf. T. F. O'Rahilly, *The Two Patricks*, 1942, 11; *Early Irish History and Mythology*, 1946, ch. XIII — particularly 253 ff.; Rev. Dr. J. Ryan, in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, Oct. 1942, 247; Bieler, *IHS*, VI 24, 1949, 248). This 'Ulster Chronicle' comprised 'world history' drawn from Greek and Latin sources and Irish records based on older materials. The *Annals of Ulster* (properly the *Annals of Senat Mic Maghnusa*, an island on Lough Erne) descend from the 'Ulster Chronicle' in a direct line; the edition translated and edited by Hennessy in the 1840's was taken from a late fifteenth-century transcript. *The Annals of Inisfallen* (on Lough Léin = Killarney), preserved in a manuscript of 1215, derive from an intermediate exemplar of the 'Ulster Chronicle'. *The Annals of Clonmacnois* survive only in an English translation of the sixteenth century; they too derive from the same source as 'Inisfallen'. The *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland*, usually known from the number of the compilers as 'The Four Masters' was completed in the seventeenth century from the older existing annals.

The nineteenth-century editors and translators of the several 'annals' — O'Curry, O'Donovan, Todd, Hennessy and Whitley Stokes — have come in for a fair share of criticism from their successors in the twentieth century (notably from the late R. A. S. MacAlister). But these critics fail to agree among themselves. For the complicated problems of the dating and chronology of the Irish annals, reference may be made to a number of articles in recent years in *Ériu* and *Irish Historical Studies*. See particularly *IHS*, II 8, 1941, 355-75, the (late) Fr. Paul Walsh, 'The Dating of the Irish Annals' — 'presented by the chronology sub-committee of the Irish Committee of Historical Sciences and prepared for publication by the Rev. Professor O'Doherty'; also *IHS*, VI 24, 1949, 247-260, Ludwig Bieler, 'Sidelights on the Chronology of St. Patrick'. In the view of Fr. Walsh, for the *Annals of Ulster*, one year should be added for the period 712-1012, thus reading 713-1013. For the period 805-904 Hennessy's dates in his edition of *Chronicon Scotorum* are correct.

For the methods used in compiling and dating the annals, see

Fr. Paul Walsh, *The Four Masters and Their Work*, Dublin, 1944. "In earlier parts of the Four Masters' Annals the margin of error is as much as five years," p. 32.

⁷³ For Giraldus, I use the handy Irish edition of John J. O'Meara, *The First Version of the Topography of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*, Dundalk, 1951, 102 ff. Giraldus' attribution of abandoned forts and earthworks to the Vikings was defended by T. S. Westropp in *JRSAI*, XXXIV, 1904, 313-45.

⁷⁴ The Irish text of *Chronicon Scotorum* from a manuscript in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, was translated and edited by W. M. Hennessy, Dublin, 1866.

The best edition of *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* (The History of Ireland) by Geoffrey Keating, was edited with Irish text and translation by David Comyn, (Vol. I) and Rev. Patrick Dineen, (Vols. II-IV) for the Irish Texts Society in 4 vols. (IV, VIII, IX, XV of the series), London, 1901-14. Vol. IV contains an index (pp. 159-479) which is invaluable as a dictionary of Irish and anglicised name forms. The English commentators on Turgeis were: (i) Edmund Campion (1540-81), who had access to Irish manuscripts in the possession of his patron, the elder Stanihurst. Campion's work was first edited by Richard Stanihurst in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, 1587; then by Sir James Ware in his *History of Ireland*, 1633. Duald Mac Firbis was Ware's guide to Irish sources. (ii) Meredith Hanmer (1543-1604), a clergyman of disreputable character but scholarly attainments, who lived the last thirteen years of his life in Ireland. His *Chronicle of Ireland*, 'a work of merit and learning', was published by Sir James Ware in 1633.

⁷⁵ For Yahya bn-Habib, *Byzantion*, XII 7; Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire*, I 252. For Viking navigation and knowledge of astronomy, see *Old-Lore Miscellany of Shetland, Caithness and Sutherland*, London, X 7, 1946, 293-320, Carl V. Sølvér, 'Leiðarsteinn: The Compass of the Vikings'.

⁷⁶ For an account of Shilb (Silvès), in the twelfth century, see Lévi-Provençal, *La Péninsule Ibérique au moyen-âge*, Leiden, 1938, 129-32. "Silvès est entourée d'un rampart solide et possède à ses abords des plantations et des vergers. L'eau potable est fournie à ses habitants par sa rivière: celle-ci baigne Silvès du côté méridionale. La mer se trouve à trois milles de Silvès à l'ouest. Elle possède un mouillage sur la rivière et un chantier de constructions navales." According to *West Coasts of Spain and Portugal Pilot*, 3rd ed., London, 1946, 207-8: "The town of Silvès, situated on Rio Silvès, about seven miles from the entrance of Rio Portimao, can be reached by vessels from 40 to 50 tons."

The entrance to the river was well protected by a bar which under favourable conditions "can be crossed at high water by vessels drawing up to 14 feet." "Ships' boats should not attempt to cross the bar without a pilot: even in fine weather, the breakers are heavy and dangerous." In the conditions of maritime warfare of the ninth century, the site of Silvès was well chosen.

⁷⁷ In the description of the *knörr*, I have followed Kendrick, *Vikings*, 76. See also E. Magnusson, 'Notes on Shipbuilding and Nautical Terms in the North', *Saga-Book*, IV 1, 1905, 182-237 (for a description of the *knörr*, see p. 222); and G. J. Marcus, 'The Navigation of the Norsemen', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 39/2, 1953, 112-31 where on p. 114 the author makes the point that the *hafskip* ('ocean-ship') of the Viking age was not much smaller, if at all, than 'the two Barkes' with which John Davis, in 1585, went in search of the North-West passage. For speeds and distances, see *ibid.* 119 ff.: from Norway to Iceland, 7 days sailing; from Iceland to Ireland, 5 days. I am also indebted to Mr. Michael Mason for a valuable memo on Viking ships and seafaring.

From his reading of the text Professor Bernard Lewis has informed me that he believes that al-Ghazal travelled in an Arab ship, provided at Silvès. He may be right. There is evidence that in the mid-ninth century the Andalucians already had experience of navigating in the Atlantic, cf. D. M. Dunlop, 'The British Isles according to Mediaeval Arabic Authors', *The Islamic Quarterly*, IV/1 2, 1957, 15, 18, 22-24, for the expeditions of Khaskhash and the Lisbon 'Adventurers'. But near-contemporary Muslim authors, al-Battani (c. 902) and al-Maredi (in *Muruj adh-Dhab*, 943) cited by Dunlop, pp. 16-19, imply that the Arabs had usually little taste for the 'Encircling Ocean'. I feel that the danger of separation at sea, which threatened sail down to a much later period, and the fact that they were to voyage across unknown waters, controlled by the Vikings, would have inclined the Arab envoys to entrust themselves to their more experienced hosts.

⁷⁸ Dozy-Fabricius, 122. cf. also Dunlop, *loc. cit.*, 13 n. 4. The reference to 'The great cape . . . the westernmost limit of Spain' seems to rule out rather definitely Lévi-Provençal's implication that al-Ghazal's poem referred to a storm which overtook him during his voyage to Constantinople (*Byzantion*, XII 10). A ship sailing from Silvès towards the Straits of Gibraltar would have run before the north-westerly gale described in the poem. Again travellers would hardly have chosen to embark from Silvès for Constantinople but rather from a Murcian port, as indeed al-Ghazal did on the occasion of his Byzantine embassy, cf. Lévi-Provençal, *Byzantion*, XII 10.

⁷⁹ *West Coasts of Spain and Portugal Pilot*, 3rd ed., 1946, 204, for St. Vincent; 86, 26, for Finisterre.

⁸⁰ Bugge, *Norges Historie*, I 2, 80; Fridtjof Nansen, *In Northern Mists*, London, 1911, II 202. Jacob, *Arabische Berichte*, does not attempt to identify this island.

⁸¹ For the twelfth century, Giraldus Cambrensis mentions three days as customary for the voyage to Spain from Ireland. Prince John and his accompanying troops made the voyage from Milford Haven to Waterford in less than twenty-four hours, "the wind being at east and blowing a good gale", *Holinshed's Chronicles*, 1808 ed., VI, Ireland, 219.

Lethbridge recalls that in 1385, Portuguese ambassadors made the run from Portugal to a Cornish port in four days, *History of Technology*, II 583.

⁸² Todd, *War*, xxxvi, n. 2; *Cogadh* (text), 5, 222.

⁸³ *ibid.*, and Keating, III 156. This was the first of several defeats suffered by the Vikings when they left their ships along the river banks and got themselves entangled in the thick woods which covered much of the country in the ninth century. ("The first name which was given to Ireland was *Inis na bhfiodhb-hadh*, that is to say 'Island of the woods' for the first comers found it to be all one forest-wood", Keating, I 97). The annalists complain of the advantage of the Vikings in arms and armour, but the lighter-armed Irish, knowing the woods, could prove a match for the sea-farers from the waterways.

⁸⁴ Todd, *War*, xxxviii; *Cogadh*, 7, 222.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*

⁸⁶ *ibid.* xxxix; 7, 223.

⁸⁷ *ibid.* xl.

⁸⁸ *ibid.* xli; 9, 224. For the identification of Inis Sibhtonn with King's Island, see *TKAS*, 1899, 227.

⁸⁹ Todd, *War*, xlii; 9, 224.

⁹⁰ C. F. Keary, *The Vikings in Western Christendom*, A.D. 789 to A.D. 888, London, 1891, 174 ff. Keary gives a good running account of the career of Turgeis. This book, published nearly seventy years ago, still remains, in the opinion of T. C. Kendrick, "the one important English book concerned with the Vikings: a fine work of real beauty and a masterpiece of expository style."

⁹¹ Todd, *War*, xlii; 9, 224-5.

⁹² Thus the older recension of the manuscript of *Cogadh*, see Todd, *War*, 226. The later recension has 'audience', *ibid.* 13.

⁹³ Todd, *War*, li; 15, 227; and cf. Keating, lv, 210. For topography of *Ciarraighe Luachra*, and other parts of the Kerry coast, the best source remains the series of papers by Thomas

Johnson Westropp on 'Promontory Forts in Northern County Kerry' in *JRSAI* XL, Dublin, 1911, 6 ff.

⁹⁴ Miss Hickson, 'Names of Places and Surnames in Kerry', *JRSAI* XXI, 1890-91, 685 ff.; *ibid.* XXII 389 ff. The names Crookhaven (O. N. *Krókr*, "crook, hook, barb, trident"), Dunmanus (= Dun Magnus) and Bere or Beare (cf. O. Frisian, *barre*, "clamour, shouting") may also be of Norse origin. The last is, perhaps, a rationalisation of the name of the Irish goddess Bea.

⁹⁵ *JRSAI* XXI 690.

⁹⁶ Westropp, 'Some Promontory Forts and similar structures in the County Kerry', *JRSAI* XL, 1910, 274-6.

⁹⁷ cf. Brøgger and Shetelig, *Viking Ships*, 219: "King Olaf called his only great ship the *Bison*; on the prow it had a gold-embellished ox-head and at the stern a tail. Both these, together with the neck, were gilded over. In the ballad on King Olaf his ship is called the Ox. Several ships have that name. The last we know of is King Hakon Hakonsson's *Ox*, which was not a great ship."

In view of Worsaae's theory that King Ólaf Tryggvason was baptised in Sceleg Michil, and not in the Scilly Isles, (see *JRSAI* XXI, 1890-91, 695, citing J. J. E. Worsaae, *An Account of the Danes and Norwegians in England, Scotland and Ireland*, London, 1852, 353) the connection of Dingle with the Red Ox is interesting.

⁹⁸ Miss Hickson 'Old Place Names and Surnames', *JRSAI* XXII, 1892, 396-7: "Staigue Fort stands on the level summit of a hill between four and five hundred feet above the sea, open to the sea on the south with a gradual descent to it." (The editor of O'Curry's *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, I ccc-cccvi, O'Sullivan believes the name to be comparatively modern, and to have been introduced by Sir Valentine Browne's colonists from Lancashire, where the form *stee* or *steig*, meaning "ladder" was current.)

⁹⁹ *JRSAI* XXII, 1892, 396. "The point is a well known haunt of the *Sterna arctica*, a noisy restless bird."

¹⁰⁰ Westropp, 'Notes on the Promontory Forts and Similar Structures of County Kerry', *JRSAI* XLII, 1912, 298.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.* 291; and further for survey of monuments of Valentia. See also M. J. Delap, 'Some Holy Wells in Valencia and Portmagee', *Kerry Archaeological Journal*, 1910-11, 406 ff.

¹⁰² *JRSAI* XL, 1910, 266. There were other "Oak Islands" — in Wexford Haven and at the mouth of the Blackwater, see Keating, IV 247-8, under *Dairinis*.

¹⁰³ Charles Smith, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Kerry*, Dublin, 1773, 357.

¹⁰⁴ Charles Smith, *The Ancient and Present State of the County and City of Cork*, 2 vols., Dublin, 1750, I 286 ff. (At pp. 278-80, the author gives an interesting account of a raid on the neighbouring coastal harbour of Baltimore by two 'Algerine rovers' on the 20th June, 1631. The pirates carried off into slavery 100 English settlers. As late as the following March, the whole coast was alerted and expecting a further attack 'from the Turks'.

¹⁰⁵ For Beare and Dursey, see the fine papers by Thomas Westropp in *JRSAI*, L, 1920, 140 ff., and LI, 1921, 1 ff.; also Smith, *Cork*, I 291 ff.

¹⁰⁶ *Irish Coast Pilot*, 1941, 216.

¹⁰⁷ Rev. Timothy Lee, 'The Northmen of Limerick', *JRSAI*, 1899, 377. Todd, *War*, 274, n. 1: "The Four Masters (under 965, 969) call this place Inis Ubhdonn, whence some have conjectured that its real name was given to it by the Scandinavian settlers, and was Inis Odinn or Woden, corrupted by the Irish to Inis Ubhdonn and Inis Sibhtonn."

¹⁰⁸ T. J. Westropp, 'A Description of the ancient Buildings and Crosses at Clonmacnois, King's County'; *JRSAI*, XXXVII, 1907, 277ff.; also a summary in the form of a lecture, 329 ff. Westropp's work still remains the best description of Clonmacnois. But cf. also R. A. S. Macalister, *The Memorial Slabs of Clonmacnois: with an Appendix of the Materials for a History of the Monastery*, Dublin, 1909. For many bibliographical details and interesting discussion of sources, James F. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland, I, Ecclesiastical* (all published) 1929, 376 ff.

The monuments now standing date from the tenth century or later, with the exception of the South Cross opposite Teampul Hurpáin which is attributed to the early ninth century and may have been in its present position in the time of Turgeis. The pedestal of the High Cross, too, shows two fine panels — the upper of three horsemen riding southward, the lower of two charioteers driving northward. They hardly seem to relate to the scenes from the Scriptures which decorate this *cross na screaptra* and the carvings on the pedestal are more weather-worn and may be older than the monument which stands upon it. (For a drawing by Westropp, see above, 294.) An immediate predecessor of Forannan, Fland Róí, "who took the Abbacy by force and who is not mentioned at mass", is stated to have "urged on the dogs out of the chariot so that he was deposed from the

coarbship of Patrick", see H. J. Lawlor and R. I. Best, 'The Ancient List of the Coarbs of Patrick', in *PRIA*, XXXV, Sect. C., No. 9, 1919, 324-5, 349. The only fortifications standing are McCarthy's Tower, 'an unusually perfect example of the Irish round tower', built in 1124, and the Norman castle (1212).

According to *Cogadh*, the fleet of Turgeis first appeared on Loch Rí in 839, Todd, *War*, 9, cap. IX of *Cogadh*. *AU* and *Chron. Scotorum* state that a host of foreigners (with Turgeis) burned Clonmacnois in 844-845. In the oldest (Book of Leinster) fragment of *Cogadh*, this second operation of Turgeis on Loch Rí is described as follows, cap. XI under years 838-45: "After this came Turgeis upon Loch Rí and from thence were plundered Meath and Connacht, and Cluainmicnois . . . Cluainmicnois was taken by his wife. It was on the altar of the great church that she used to give her answers." The greater detail seems to justify preference for the evidence of *Cogadh*. The fact that Queen Ota apparently took Clonmacnois as a personal appendage and set up residence there indicates that the city was plundered rather than burnt. Timber houses in the Norwegian style would have been constructed with little delay for Ota and her court.

¹⁰⁹ *Annals of Clonmacnois*, under year 1026; also *JRSAI*, XXXVII, 1907, 300. The gardens were badly spoiled by the soldiers of William Burke in 1212 — "Wast and voyde, like an empty chaos without any manner of thing but their empty and foot-troden grounds", *Ann. Clon.* for 1212. In 1216, the Bishop procured compensation from King John for the destruction of his orchards during the building of the castle in 1212, *JRSAI*, XXXVII, 1907, 304.

¹¹⁰ Brash, *The Ogam inscribed Monuments of the Gaedhil*, London, 1879, 324, citing an Old Irish poem from Bodleian manuscript Rawlinson 406.

¹¹¹ Kazvini, citing al-Udhri, printed by Jacob in *Arabische Berichte*, 26. The rest of the section on Ireland is occupied with details of whale-hunting—a pointer to Arab interest in the fisheries of the northern seas. For discussion of the lost work of al-Udhri, see Lévi-Provençal, *Péninsule Ibérique*, xxiv and n. 2. Also Dunlop, *Islamic Quarterly*, IV, 1/2, 17-18. Al-Udhri flourished in the first half of the eleventh century. Dunlop finds that "it cannot be shewn that he is dependent on the narrative of Yahya al-Ghazal", but the statement that "the Norsemen have no capital (*qa'idah*) save this island in all the world" seems to reflect the conditions of the mid-ninth century rather than a later period. Possibly al-Udhri drew on some lost record of the adventures of Khashkhash, one of the commanders of the Muslim fleet which

operated in the Atlantic against the Norse invaders of Spain in 859; he later made a remarkable raid into 'the Encircling Ocean' from which he returned with much booty, Dunlop, pp. 15 and 18.

¹¹² H. F. McClintock, *Old Irish and Highland Dress*, Dundalk, 2nd ed., 1950, 2.

¹¹³ *ibid.* Plate 21.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.* 3 For the varied colours and rich embroideries of these ancient Irish costumes, see further *ibid.* 13-18; and for many curious details and references see Eugene O'Curry, *On the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, 3 vols., London/Dublin, 1873, I, W. K. Sullivan's introduction, xxxlvii ff., III 87-211, 'On Dress and Ornaments'.

¹¹⁵ McClintock, 16.

¹¹⁶ Estyn Evans, *Irish Folk Ways*, London, 1957, 115, citing R. O'Flaherty, *Westor H'Iar Connaught*, 1684, 68. On the other hand, as recently as 1952, I recall questioning a girl about one among a small group of *clachans* on the Dingle peninsula, and her replying, 'Oh, grandfather built that one'.

¹¹⁷ Estyn Evans, *ibid.* 115-16. The author adds: "The corbelled buildings of Vaucluse, in the mountains behind Avignon, are both round and rectangular, the latter bearing a striking resemblance to Irish oratories of the type of Gallarus, Co. Kerry, which is believed to date from the sixth or seventh century."

¹¹⁸ O'Curry, *Manners and Customs*, I ccxvii ff., with two drawings reproducing the huts.

¹¹⁹ Stephane Gsell, *Histoire ancienne de l'Afrique du Nord*, (8 vols., 1921-28), II, 2nd ed., 1929, 217-24. The author discusses the round and oblong varieties of the primitive *mapalia*, both in wattle and stone. He believes that the circular form with conical top originated in the Sudan, 222. For this hut, he finds names in the classical authors 'which are not proper to Africa': Greek, *kalubai*; Latin, *tuguria*; and "le mot très rare *atlegiae*, dont Juvenal, xiv, 196, se sert à propos des Maures, est d'origine inconnue", 220-1. In Irish, the word for 'house' is *tech*, *teg*; for 'householder,' *aithech tigh*; for 'wicker-work house', *teach fíthe*, *Contributions to a Dictionary of the Irish Language, T — tnuithaigid*, arranged by David Greene and E. G. Quin, Dublin, 1943, cols. 95-96. See also O'Sullivan in O'Curry, I ccxcviii-ix (cf. note 114 above). The form recorded in Latin *tuguria* may be compared with Ethiopian *tukul*. The building of a wickerwork hut is described in the life of St. Colman, O'Curry, *Manners and Customs*, III 31 ff. The wooden oratory of St. Molaise, erected by Gobbán Saer, was mobile and could be everted, *ibid.* 36. Gobbán Saer, the legendary first builder in Ireland, was son of Tuirbhi, "the

rusty-faced, black, big fellow Though Tuirbhi in his land in the south was strong, it is not known of what stock was his race. Unless he was of the Mystical black race . . ." *ibid.* 41.

¹²⁰ O'Curry, III 31 ff. For an Ethiopian *tukul*, see the fine coloured plate 26, in *The Fountain of the Sun*, by Douglas Busk, London, 1957, and compare with Sullivan's drawings of the huts on the Antomine Column in O'Curry, I cxcvii-ix.

¹²¹ Estyn Evans, *Irish Folk Ways*, 117.

¹²² Pytheas, reference by (Pseudo-) Aristoteles, *de Mundo*, 3, cited by Richard Hennig, *Terrae Incognitae; Altertum bis Ptolemaus*, Leiden 1944, 2nd ed., 159.

¹²³ McClintock, Plate 10 for shrine of St. Manchan; Plates 6 and 7 for 'Iberian' types from the Book of Kells; Plates 8 and 9 for the shrine of St. Moedoc. Compare the Viking types and costumes of the soldiers on the Cross of Muiredach, Monasterboice, Plate 1; and the north European physiognomies shown in the manuscript of Giraldus Cambrensis, Plates 11 to 14, and in the later drawings of Dürer (Plate 17) and Lucas de Heere (frontispiece).

¹²⁴ Jacob, *Arabische Berichte*, 38 and n. 2. Throughout this paper I am following the new translation of ibn-Dihya, kindly placed at my disposal by Professor Bernard Lewis. I cite the earlier translations of Dozy and Jacob in order to examine the arguments of those who have preferred to locate the embassy in Denmark rather than in Ireland.

¹²⁵ Jacob, *ibid.* 38, n. 1; Dozy/Fabricius, 130; Stefánsson, *Saga-Book*, VI 40.

¹²⁶ Kendrick, *Vikings*, 202.

¹²⁷ See note 110 above.

¹²⁸ Kendrick, *Vikings*, 136, 137. "It was King Harald Gormson (d. 986) 'who made the Danes Christian', as he declares himself on the Jellinge stone; it was King Olaf Tryggvason who in the five amazing years before the tenth century closed bullied his Norwegian subjects into accepting the new faith . . . ; it was King Olof Skotkonung (995-1022), who no less energetically, though much less successfully, sought to convert the Swedes." For the survival of pagan practise in Connacht and some of the Irish islands in the twelfth century, see *Giraldus Cambrensis, Topography of Ireland*, (ed. O'Meara), 92 ff.; also n. 61.

¹²⁹ Du Chaillu, *The Viking Age*, 1889, I 465, citing *Landnáma*, v, c. 15 (*Íslendinga sögur* I, 1847, 321); *ibid.*, 464-7, citing *Fornmanna Sögur*, I, c. 22, 23. Léonce Auzias, *L'Aquitaine carolingienne* (778-987), Toulouse/Paris, 1937, 324 n. 56, citing *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 864: "Pippinus, Pippini filius, ex monacho laicus et apostate factus, se Normannis conjungit et ritum eorum servat."

¹³⁰ cf. Todd, *War*, 224-5, citing manuscript (*Book of Leinster*, 12th c.): "Turges himself took the Abbacy of Armagh; and Forannan, Abbot of Armagh, was driven away and went to Munster . . . and Turges in Ardmacha, and the power of the north of Erin was with him. It was then that the prophecy of Berchan, the chief prophet was fulfilled . . .

"There shall be an abbot of them over this my church,
He shall not attend to matins,
Without Pater, without Credo,
Without Latin, and only (knowing)
a foreign language."

The special status of the powerful abbesses of the shrine of St. Brigit of Kildare may even suggest an Irish precedent for the sacerdotal function assumed by Ota at Clonmacnois, cf. Kenney, *Sources*, I, 356-8.

¹³¹ Todd, *War*, xlvihi; Keary, 179, follows Todd but (mistakenly) implies co-operation between Turgeis and Feidhlimidh; Kendrick, *Vikings*, 277.

¹³² Thus:

"An age of axes, an age of swords:
Shields are cleft;
An age of winds, an age of wolves,
Ere the world winks
No man will spare
Another man."

Völuspá, cited by du Chaillu, I 41. Or for a brilliant expression of nihilism, with a strangely modern ring, see *Völsunga saga*, ch. 32, cited by du Chaillu, I 438.

¹³³ For citation of Westropp's view, see Commentary, p. 34 above and note 108.

¹³⁴ The conflict between the ecclesiastical centres in Armagh and Cashel has not, to my knowledge, been studied in relation to the reformist movement of the Culdees (= *Céli Dé*, 'Companions of God'), which spread in Ireland in the eighth century. It is possible that iconoclastic themes, with puritanical and radical undertones, were introduced by Armenian and Coptic priests and masons as early as the sixth century. (For Culdees, see Kenny, *Sources*, 468 ff). It is curious that Rathau, where Mlle Henry noted remarkable Armenian influences in the architecture, was the seat of the Culdee Uí Shuanaig. And there was an Armenian bishop at Cill Achid, some twenty miles from Rathau. (Françoise Henry, *La Sculpture Irlandaise*, Paris, 1933, 173, n. 2, and passim).

¹³⁵ The *Three Fragments*, 139. The phenomenon continued

throughout the period. In the *Three Fragments*, 237, for the year 909 there is the curious entry: "In this year there came a great muster of the Brefnians (into Meath) to commit depredations Then the King of Erin said, 'It is the end of the world that is come', said he, 'when plebians like these dare to attack noblemen . . . They had never before seen a muster of Attacotts, and though they had no king at their head, they attacked the King of Erin with hardihood." Here, it is interesting to find the term 'Attacott' — which some historians have discussed as a tribal name, applied to 'Jacquots'. On 'Attecotti', see further Eoin MacNeill, *Phases of Irish History*, Dublin, 1920, 144-9.

¹³⁶ The first point of correspondence in the stories of the Byzantine and Viking journeys is the storm at sea. See p. 19 and n. 78 above. For the protocol and incident, see Lévi-Provençal, *Byzantion*, XII 11.

¹³⁷ Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 3rd ed. revised, London, 1943, 503, gives an indication that this practise was in the tradition of Visigothic royalty. The Lady Ailo (or Egilona, in Hitti) ended by having such a low entrance built to her private chapel "that Abd al-Aziz himself had to bend on entering as if in an act of worship". Rumours that he was a convert to Christianity led to his murder in 716.

¹³⁸ du Chaillu, II 466 ff., citing *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar (Fornmanna Sögur I, Kaupmannahöfn 1825, 17)*: "King Æthelstan had Hakon baptized and taught the true creed, good habits and all kinds of courtesy. He loved him more than anyone else, kinsman or not." Hakon 'the Good', later became King of Norway (c. 946-63).

¹³⁹ du Chaillu, II 242, citing *Grettis saga*, ch. xv.

¹⁴⁰ The above three paragraphs have been summarised from du Chaillu, II 241-73.

¹⁴¹ du Chaillu, II 293, 295, 299. See also Alexander Bugge, 'Costumes, Jewels and Furniture in Viking Times', *Saga-Book VII/2, 1912, 141 ff.* Bugge recalls that cordwain, or 'Spanish leather', a speciality of the Andalucian Moors, derives its name from Cordova (the first literary reference dates from 1128 — Ordericus Vitalis, *Hist. Eccles.*, II 453). Bugge, again, proposes that the foreign saddles (*a sadlaici allmarda*), plundered by the Irish when they took Limerick from the Norsemen in 968, were of Spanish (Moorish) origin. *Hessens Irisches Lexikon*, fasc. i, 45, renders *allmarda* as "transmarine, foreign, uncouth, savage". Here, *allmarda* could be almost exactly rendered by the French *d'outremer*.

¹⁴² For riddles and puzzles, see du Chaillu, II, 396, ff.

¹⁴³ Summarised from du Chaillu's two chapters on *iþróttir*, II 369 ff. The harp is mentioned in *Völuspá*, which dates probably from the tenth century (*ibid.* 395, and see also *Saga-Book*, VII/1, 44). The hero Gunnar "played his harp with such skill that even champions were moved. He could also play with his toes and charm snakes with its tones" (du Chaillu, II 395). On the familiarity of the Viking aristocracy with foreign languages, du Chaillu, II 45, cites *Völsunga saga*, ch. 13. "He taught him *idrottir*, chess and runes, and to speak many tongues, as then was the custom with king's sons, and many other things." We learn from Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire*, I 492, that al-Ghazal, rather surprisingly, objected to chess. The game was unknown to the Prophet who had given no indication as to whether it was permissible to Muslims. During the first two centuries of Islam, there was much controversy on the subject of whether chess came under the condemnation of *maisir* (lots) and *ansab* (images). See H. J. R. Murray, *A History of the Game of Chess*, Oxford, 1913, 186 ff. Prof. Bernard Lewis has queried Murray's reading of *ansab*, images, as *ashair*, arrows.

Professor Turville-Petre has kindly written me that he does not think that chess came to Scandinavia before the twelfth century. He finds that "chess given as a translation of *tafl* by du Chaillu is not exact. *Tafl* was a board game rather like fox-and-geese, cf. F. Lewis, *Transactions of the Hon. Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1941, 185 ff." In *Acta Archaeologica*, IV, København, 1933, 85-104, H. O'Neill Hencken discusses 'A Gaming Board of the Viking Age', made of yew wood, found at Ballinderry, Co. Meath (in the territory of the southern Uí Néill) which he dates to the third quarter of the tenth century, 93, and which he believes to have been a product of Celto-Norse art, 96. This board was made for an early game on the principle of fox-and-geese, 104.

There are, however, in early Irish sources several references to a board game which has been taken to be chess. In the Book of the Dun Cow (*Leabhar na h Uidre*), of which 138 folios survive in a manuscript of c. 1100 in the library of the Royal Irish Academy, there is a reference to a silver chess-board with golden chessmen and pawns (*ferbolga*) of plated wire of *Creduma* (copper or bronze). (cf. Eugene O'Curry, *Manners and Customs*, I, cccci; II, 190; III, 165; see also for *Leabhar na h Uidre*, *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History*, Dublin, 1861, 21, 30, 182 ff. For other Irish literary references see Murray, 746, n. 20.) The game played on a board is an integral part of the ancient story of 'The Courtship of Etain', but the twelfth-century copyist may have embellished the original into

a game of chess. In *Cormac's Glossary*, dated to about the year 900, the definition of the game *Fidchell* (*Fithchill*) recalls chess. Cormac: "féth-ciall, fáth-ciall, i.e. it requires sense (*ciall*) and *fáth* ('learning') in playing it . . . in the first place, the *fidchell* is four-cornered, its squares are right-angled, and black and white are on it, and, moreover, it is different people that in turn win the game." (cf. *Cormac's Glossary*, translated and annotated by the late John O'Donovan, edited with notes and indices by Whitley Stokes, Calcutta, 1868, 75). The editor proposes Ir. *Fidchell* = Welsh *gwyddbwyll*, mentioned in *Mabinogion*. As Murray, 746, and Hencken, 102, have observed there is nothing to imply that there was any differentiation of piece other than that necessary to distinguish the one side from the other. Only the Irish literary references indicate grades of pieces. The *fidchell* board described by Cormac certainly differed from the fox-and-geese board found at Ballinderry and illustrated by Hencken. The earlier *fidchell* may have resembled draughts and have been interpreted by later copyists as chess. But does draughts require 'the sense and learning' stipulated by Cormac? There seems to be a possibility that before the year 900 chess had reached Ireland from Gaul or Muslim Spain. Professor Myles Dillon has also referred me to the important articles: Gerard Murphy, 'The Puzzle of the Thirty Counters', *Bealoideas* XII, 1942, 1-28; and Eoin MacWhite, 'Early Irish Board Games', *Éigse: A Journal of Irish Studies* V/1, 1945, 25-35.

¹⁴⁴ As Jacob, *Arabische Berichte*, 39, suggests: "schoss er mit ihren Helden um die Wette und stach sie ab." For an archery match, see du Chaillu, II 381-2; for sword exercises, *ibid.* 383-4.

¹⁴⁵ Lévi-Provençal, *Byzantion*, XII 16. Dunlop, *IQ*, 1/2, 14, proposes Thüd, Theuda.

¹⁴⁶ *Byzantion*, XII, 13.

¹⁴⁷ Todd, *War*, 226, 13.

¹⁴⁸ Steenstrup, *Normannerne*, II 113 and n. 1; Bugge, *Norges Historie*, II 81.

¹⁴⁹ cf. C. J. S. Marstrander, *Bidrag til det norske sprogs historie i Irland*, in *Skrifter utg. av det Norske Videnskaps Selskap i Oslo*, Hist.-fil. Kl. 1915, Nr. 5, 53, 153.

¹⁵⁰ See the forms recorded by E. H. Lind, *Norsk-isländska dopnamn*, Uppsala 1905-15.

¹⁵¹ R. L. Bremner, *The Norsemen in Alban*, Glasgow, 1923, 77 ff., citing Muriel Press, *The Laxdale Saga*, London, 1899. It is at the same time curious that, in the disposal of her property, Aud, in Iceland, states that: "I have given the man named Erp, son of earl Meldun, his freedom, for far away was it from my

wish that so high-born a man should bear the name of thrall." Bremner, 81 n. 1, conjectures that "this earl Meldun was Maelduin, son of Muirghes, 'royal heir apparent of Connacht', slain in battle by the troops of Thorgest in 840. (*AU*, 837; *War of the Gaedhil*, xlix, 13). Erp must therefore have been about sixty years of age." To have been the widow of Thorgest/Turgeis, and the hostess of al-Ghazal, this Aud the Deep-Minded could hardly have been less than thirty in 845. In the decade 890-900, she would have been between seventy-five and eighty-five. But for the complicated problems involved in the identification and chronology of Ketill Flatnef, Aud the Deep-Minded and Olaf the White, see Alan Orr Anderson, *Early Sources of Scottish History*, A.D. 500 to 1286, 2 vols, Edinburgh, 1922, index under names.

¹⁵² du Chaillu, I 385 ff; Keary, 54 ff.; McCulloch, *The Celtic and Scandinavian Religions*, London, 1948, 128, 149, 151; G. Turville-Petre, *The Heroic Age of Scandinavia*, London, 1951, 61 and 104 (for instances of temple-priestesses in Iceland).

¹⁵³ Keary, 54-5, citing Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, i, 50 (for the women of Ariovistus: but here there seems to be no direct reference to either of his two wives acting as seeresses, see *ibid.* 53); also Dio Cassius, xxxviii, 48; Tacitus, *Histories*, iv, 61 (for Veleda); *Annales Fuldenses*, s.a. 847, for Thiota. (Referring to the Cossacks in the seventeenth century, Dr. Samuel Collins wrote: "These people are much devoted to witch-craft, and count it an extraordinary piece of learning practiced by the chief Woman in the Country." *The Present State of Russia*, London, 1671, 43).

¹⁵⁴ Keary, *Vikings*, 55-7.

¹⁵⁵ Keary, *Vikings*, 58; Chadwick, *The Origin of the English Nation*, Cambridge, 1924 (reprint), 225 ff.; and cf. McCulloch, 113 ff.; Gudmund Schütte, in 'The Cult of Nerthus', *Saga-Book*, VII/1, 1913, 29 ff., finds that "Nerthus, main goddess of the Angles, is identified with Niaerth, or Njörðr, main god of some Scandinavian tribes. The first name is the exact older linguistical stage of the latter." Alexander Bugge, in 'Celtic Tribes in Jutland,' *Saga-Book*, IX/2, 1914-18, 355 ff., believes that the etymology of the name Nerthus cannot be explained from the Germanic languages. He connects it with O. Irish *neri*, O. Cymric, *nerth*, 'power', 'strength'.

More recently *neri* in its varying forms has been much discussed by philologists, cf. A. W. Bailey 'Analecta Indoscythica, I', *JRAS*, 1953, 3/4, 103 ff., on root *nria-*. "Outside the Indo-Iranian, the Greek ἀνήρ, Phrygian *avap*, Armenian, *ayr*, *ain*, Italic *neriosus* are well-known. The Celtic has retained old

values in Gaulish *ner-to-*, *Nerto-maros*, Irish *nert*, 'strength' and 'military force', Welsh *nerth*, 'force, strength' and 'host'. In early Welsh poetry *ner* 'lord', plur. *nyr*, *neredd* are frequent." The corresponding Irish word *ner* probably meant 'man, warrior' originally; the usual meaning 'boar' is thought by Professor Myles Dillon to be due to glossators. "The preceding evidence makes certain that a verb *ner-*: *ner* existed in Indo-European It became particularly the word to express the force of man." In discussing the Narts, mythical giants and heroes of the Caucasus, Bailey proposes to postulate "*nrθtra-*, with *-θtra-* to suit the active meaning. The word may then be rendered by 'actively exhibiting *nar*-force' as a noun either of action or of agent. This activity of *nar-* is that of vigorous or violent men (or gods conceived as men)", *ibid.* 114. See also H. Hartmann, *Das Passiv. Eine Studie zur Geistesgeschichte der Kelten, Italiher und Arier*, 1954, 60 and *passim*. In my own view, the concept of Nerthus is pre-Germanic and derives from remote Celto-Cimmerian contacts in the Ponto-Danubian area.

¹⁵⁶ For the aspects of Nerthus/Njörðr as a sea-deity, see E. Magnússon, 'Notes on ship-building and nautical terms of old in the North', *Saga-Book*, IV/1, 1903, 191 ff., 206 ff. As a god of wealth cf. Turville-Petre, *Heroic Age*, 104.

¹⁵⁷ See *Osebergfundet*, edited by A. W. Brøgger, Hj. Falk, Haakon Schetelig, Bind III, Kristiania, 1920, plates iv-vi and figs. 18-36 for details of carvings on wagon. (I am indebted to Mrs. Shane Jameson of Tourin, Co. Waterford, for the loan of the fine volumes of *Osebergfundet*). See also H. Shetelig, 'Queen Asa's sculptors', *Saga-Book*, X/1, 1919-20, 13-56, citing, 51, A. W. Brøgger who believed that the wagon, archaistic in style and recalling earlier work of the seventh century, was "destined exclusively for certain divine ceremonies." The *þáttr* is printed in *Fornmanna Sögur* II, Kaupmannahöfn 1826, 62 ff.; *Flateyjarbók* I, Christiania 1860, 332 ff.

¹⁵⁸ Charles Halliday, *The Scandinavian Kingdom of Dublin*, Dublin, 1862, 129 ff.; also Todd, *War*, lii, 1v. The latter suggestion is improbable on philological grounds.

¹⁵⁹ Dozy, *Hist. Litt.*, 3rd ed., II 278.

¹⁶⁰ cf. E. Magnússon, in *Saga-Book*, IV/1, 1905, 191, 204, 206. An early half-forgotten name of Freyja, daughter of Njörðr was Vanadís, *Gylfaginning*, ch. 35 (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar*, ed. F. Jónsson, 1931, 38). For a possible connection of the Vanir with the Veneti, see Magnússon, *ibid.* 206 ff.

¹⁶¹ *Ynglinga saga*, ch. 4: "While Njörðr was with the Vanir, he had had his sister to wife, for it was lawful there so to do, and their children were Frey and Freyja."

¹⁶² Proposed by Gudmund Schütte, *Our Forefathers, The Gothic Nations*, Cambridge, 1929, I 224, citing Adam of Bremen, IV, 26; cf. also the English words *frigg*, *freck*, *frike*, *frisk*; and possibly *prick* (see *New English Dictionary*, VII 1345; V 17a and b).

¹⁶³ Georges Dumézil, *La Saga de Hadingus (Saxo-Grammaticus, I, vi-viii): du Mythe au Roman*, Bibl. de l'École des Hautes Etudes: Sciences Religieuses, lxxvie vol., Paris, 1953, 66.

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.* 57 n. 2.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.* for examples.

¹⁶⁶ du Chaillu, *The Viking Age*, II, chapters 1 and 2. For a more recent view see R. George Thomas, 'Some exceptional women in the sagas', *Saga-Book*, XIII/5, 307 ff.

¹⁶⁷ For political marriages during the Viking period in Ireland, see Eleanor Hull, 'The Gael and the Gall: Notes on the social condition of Ireland during the Norse period', *Saga-Book*, V/2, 1908, 378 ff.

¹⁶⁸ Dumézil, *Hadingus*, 56. Queen Nūd's reply to al-Ghazal recalls 'the very witty remark' recorded by Dio as having been made to Julia Augusta by the wife of a Caledonian chieftain. "When the empress was jesting with her, after the treaty, about the free intercourse of her sex with men in Britain, she replied: 'We fulfil the demands of nature in a much better way than do you Roman women; for we consort openly with the best men, whereas you let yourselves be debauched in secret by the vilest.' Such was the retort of the British woman." Dio's *Roman History*, lxxvii, 16 (translation by Ernest Cary on the basis of the version of H. B. Foster, in the Loeb Classical Library).

¹⁶⁹ Lévi-Provençal, *Byzantion*, XII 16.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.* 11.

¹⁷¹ Above, text, 22.

¹⁷² Lévi-Provençal, *Byzantion*, XII 12.

¹⁷³ Above, text, 22 ff.

¹⁷⁴ Lévi-Provençal, *Byzantion*, XII 12-14, n. 1, for translation of the text of the anecdote in the anonymous manuscript of Fez.

¹⁷⁵ For the story of the cargo from Beirut, see N. Jorga, *Histoire de la vie Byzantine*, 3 vols., Bucarest, 1934, II 83; for the incident of the dwarf, Campbell Bonner, 'A story of Iconoclastic times', *Byzantion*, XXII, 1952, 237-241; for an appreciation of the character of the empress Theodora as regent during the minority of Michael III, A. A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes: tome I, La Dynastie d'Amorium*, Bruxelles, 1935, 191 ff.

¹⁷⁶ Lévi-Provençal, *Byzantion*, XII 14 and n. 1: 'Il semble impossible que Michel ait eu plus de quatre ans en 840.'

Vasiliev, *La Dynastie d'Amorium*, 191, allows Michael six years at his accession in 842. I. I. Tolstoy, *Vizantiiskiia Monety*, St. Petersburg, 1914, 1022, states that Michael was born in 839.

For the Arabic text of the poem see Lévi-Provençal, *Byzantion*, XII 24; for French rendering, 13-14. The expression 'fille des Césars' in this poem may be compared with the compliment 'queen and daughter of a King' in the conversation between al-Ghazal and queen Nūd. Both expressions owe something to poetic licence. The empress Theodora was not of imperial blood. Nūd may have been a daughter of one of the petty kings in Norway.

¹⁷⁷ Eiríkr Magnússon, *Heimskringla*, IV, Index, London, 1905, 337.

¹⁷⁸ Geoffrey Keating, *History*, III 222-31. 'The sons of Turgesius', *clann Tuirgéis*, Sitric and his brothers Tor and Maghnus, were drowned in a sea-fight off Dundalk. There was also a daughter, named (Ir.) *Béibhionn*, *ibid.*, 222, 224. But the reference is probably erroneous since it is in the context of events of the mid-tenth century. See text, p. 58 and my notes 206, 208 below.

¹⁷⁹ Above, text, 21.

¹⁸⁰ cf. poem edited by Lévi-Provençal, *Byzantion*, XII 13-14.

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*, 12, n. 1.

¹⁸² Above, text, 23 ff.

¹⁸³ Lévi-Provençal, *Byzantion*, XII 12, n. 1.

¹⁸⁴ Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire*, I 275.

¹⁸⁵ Dozy, *Hist. Litt.*, 3rd ed., II 278.

¹⁸⁶ See above, text, 23. Jacob, *Arabische Berichte*, 40, renders the last sentence: "Sie war schon in der Tat ganz nett (*fiha halawe*), aber ich erwarb durch solche Rede ihre Zuneigung und erlangte von ihr mehr als ich wollte." Dozy/Fabricius, 125, gives: "Elle n'était pas mal, mais à vrai dire, j'avais besoin d'elle et en lui parlant de la manière dont je le faisais, je gagnais ses bonnes grâces et j'obtenais encore plus que j'avais osé espérer".

¹⁸⁷ cf. A. Walsh, *Scandinavian Relations with Ireland during the Viking Period*, 30-31.

¹⁸⁸ As Kunik suspected, *Berufung*, 290, n. 1.

¹⁸⁹ *hiems asperrima*, according to Prudentius, at beginning of 845, *Annales Bertiniani*, p. 32, cited by Lot and Halphen, 130, n. 1.

¹⁹⁰ For the Seine and Elbe operations in 845, see Steenstrup, I 153-6; Vogel, 104-5; Lot and Halphen, 130-41; Keary, 254-63; Kendrick, 203-4; Shetelig, *VA*, I 112; Hodgkin, II 503.

¹⁹¹ Lot and Halphen, 132-3. *Ann. Bertin.*, 32, s.a. 845, and *Ann. Fuldenses*, 35, s.a. 845, call the pirates *Nordomanni*, *Nordmanni*.

¹⁹² Lot and Halphen, 132, n. 1, citing original sources.

¹⁹³ *ibid.* 132 and n. 2, citing *Translatio*, chs. 2-4. "Illis autem e finibus suis cum magna egressis superbia, coeperunt praedando per diversas insulas discurrere maris quo usque fluvium Sequanae ingrederentur." For the attack on the Frisian coast after the Paris operation, see Lot and Halphen, 139.

¹⁹⁴ Lot and Halphen, 132, n. 1, citing *Miracles de St. Riquier*; Vogel, 104, n. 1, citing *Chron. Fontan.*, s.a. 845, "Ragneri dux Nortmannorum", and other sources.

¹⁹⁵ For these historians see n. 190 above.

¹⁹⁶ For the account of the Seine operation and the sack of Paris, I follow Lot and Halphen's text and notes. Keary's description, factual and interpretative, remains the most readable.

¹⁹⁷ The Frisian coast was a part of the dominion of the Emperor Lothar, brother and often rival of the other Carling monarchs, Charles the Bald and Louis the German. For dates of Viking movement round the mouth of the Seine, see Lot and Halphen, 138-9 and 139 n. 1; also Vogel, 115.

¹⁹⁸ Lot and Halphen, 140.

¹⁹⁹ *ibid.*; cf. also Vogel, 113-5.

²⁰⁰ Lot and Halphen, 140, n. 1, indicated that they proposed to discuss the death of Ragnar Lodbrok in the second part of *Le Règne de Charles le Chauve* (1909). I cannot trace that this part ever appeared; it is not included in the bibliography of *Cambridge Medieval History*, III, Chap. 2, 1930, where reference is made only to part I. cf. also Vogel, 115.

²⁰¹ Alan Orr Anderson, I 293-301.

²⁰² Anderson, I 294, n. 3, citing *Mon. Germaniae Hist.*, II 228; for other references to original sources, see Lot and Halphen, 140, n. 1.

²⁰³ Charles Halliday, *The Scandinavian Kingdom of Dublin*, Dublin, 1882, 29, n. 3, citing Langebek, *Chron. Reg. Danorum*, I 156.

²⁰⁴ *Ragnar Loðbrók and Turgeis*. John O'Donovan, the editor of the *Three Fragments* (1860) first proposed that Ragnar Lodbrok was "probably the Turgesius of Irish history", *Three Fragments*, 124, n. o. Todd, *War*, liii, n. 2, recalled that O'Donovan had "borrowed the opinion" from Charles Halliday, the noted antiquary and historian of the Scandinavian kingdom of Dublin. Todd discussed Halliday's "very acute and ingenious arguments" at some length (Introduction to *War*, liii-lv and notes), without coming to a positive conclusion. Steenstrup, *Normannerne*, I 104-5, rejected Todd's exposition of Halliday's theory. It was not until 1882 that Halliday's researches were edited after his

death by John Prendergast. Halliday treated as legendary the accounts of Ragnar's death in Northumbria — a view which the Scots scholar Anderson seems to have reached without reference to Halliday (*Sources*, I 308, n. L). Hodgkin, *Anglo-Saxons*, II, 1935, 526-7, was inclined to credit the story of "the great vengeance" by the sons of Ragnar Lothbrok on king Aelle of Northumbria; as also Allen Mawer, 'Ragnar Lothbrok and his sons', *Saga-Book*, VI/1, 1909, 88. In my own view, Halliday's arguments against the death of Ragnar in England are valid (Halliday, 24-8). Again, the details of Ragnar's activities in Ireland between the years 832-5 show some coincidence with the career of Turgeis. But according to Irish sources, Turgeis' activity in Ireland over the period was continuous while, in the Scandinavian sources, the interest of Ragnar in Ireland seems to have been sporadic. (Halliday, 28-31, for detailed citation of sources).

²⁰⁵ Keating (Dineen ed.), III 223-31.

²⁰⁶ To the time of Donnchadh son of Flann Sionna, *arví*, 919-44, (Todd, *War*, 5, 37, 246; also Fr. Paul Walsh, *The Ua Maelechlainn, Kings of Meath*, Dublin, 1941, 2); of Ceallachán, king of Munster (Todd, *War*, 3); and of Cinnéide son of Lorcán, heir of Cashel, d. 949 (Todd, *War*, 45).

²⁰⁷ *Havalds saga Hårfagra*, ch. 33, cited (as ch. 35) by Sir Henry Howorth in 'Harald Fairhair and his ancestors', *Saga-Book*, IX/1, 1920, 223, 243. cf. p. 16 above.

²⁰⁸ Todd, *War*, 231.

²⁰⁹ *AU* at 847 = 848; see also *Four Masters* at 846.

²¹⁰ Halliday, 32. In his edition of the *Four Masters* (1867), O'Donovan had already recalled that earl Tomhráir's ring was preserved by the Danes (*sic*) at Dublin in the year 994, when it was carried off by Maelsechlainn II, High King of Ireland, and he expressed the view, perhaps also derived from Halliday, that "there are strong reasons for believing that he was the ancestor of the kings of Dublin" (*Four Masters*, I 475, n. (b)). The descent of the Dublin kings presents many obscurities. Alexander Bugge (*Contributions to the History of the Norsemen in Ireland; I The Royal Race of Dublin*, Christiania, 1900, 13-14) suspected that there was "consanguinity between the Dublin and Vestfold kings" but found it "impossible to decide" whether the Dublin kings were also connected with Turgeis. Allen Mawer, *Saga-Book*, VI/1, 1909, 80-82, believed Ivar the Boneless, who was king in Dublin with his brother (?) Olaf intermittently between 852 and 873, to have been identical with a son of Ragnar Lothbrok. For exhaustive discussion of the relationship and

descendants of Olaf and Ivar, see Todd, *War*, Appendix D, 'Genealogy of the Scandinavian Chieftains named as leaders of the Invasions of Ireland', 263-302; also, for a more recent approach, Anderson, *Sources*, I, parts IX-XIII, 276-391, and W. Hunter Marshall, *The Sudreys in Early Viking Times*, Glasgow, 1929, ch. 3, 'Olaf the White'.

²¹¹ For Thor names, see Miss Phillpotts in *CMH*, II 482-3; for putative descent of Olaf the White from Ragnar, see Anderson, *Sources*, I 307, table showing descent of Olaf the White.

²¹² Hodgkin, *Anglo-Saxons*, II 504, 502.

²¹³ In passing, it may be noted that king Horik had attacked the dominions of Louis the German on the Elbe. He had no quarrel with Charles the Bald. On the other hand, Louis had been the sometime patron of Harold and Rorik of Friesland who, Hodgkin suggests, may have been closely connected with Ragnar Lothbrok.

²¹⁴ *AU* at 848 = 849, 849 = 850, 850 = 851; *Cogadh* at 851; cf. also Kendrick, 276-9; Shetelig, *VA*, I 51-3.

²¹⁵ Todd, *War*, lxxiii, n. 5.

²¹⁶ Under year 845, after the account of the battle of Roscrea, the author of *Cogadh* continues: "Much evil and distress was received from them and received by them all which is not written here" (Todd, *War*, 227). A learned discussion on Irish chronology is to be found in *AU*, IV, Introduction, i-clxxxii, by Rev. B. MacCarthy, D.D. (1901). According to A. O. Anderson, *Sources*, I, lxxvii, the position may be summarised as follows: "As a survival of their origin in annotated paschal calendars, Irish annals indicated the years by data copied from a calendar; such as the number in the week of the 1st of January (the ferial number) and the age of the moon on that day (the epact); and sometimes the concurrents, and the Dionysian Golden Numbers . . . But copyists often omitted these data, and indicated a new annal solely by the abbreviation K or Kl, i.e. 'Kalends of January'. Years entered in this way without events were in danger of being omitted altogether by later copyists. When several years in succession were entered without events, errors were sometimes made in the number of K's transcribed. The result is that the sequence is an insufficient indication of the years intended . . . Irish annals have hardly yet received the editing that they deserve."

If the dating of the capture of Turgeis to 846 instead of 845 is valid, it involves revision of the dating of the death of Feidhlimidh, King of Munster (*ob.* 846 = 847, *AU*); also the election to the High Kingship of Maelsechlainn of Meath (*AU*, 846 = 847); and

of his death. But Anderson has already observed (*Sources*, I 282, n. I) that: "Maelsechlainn died, according to *AU*, I, 372, on Tuesday, 30th November, 861 = 862, in the sixteenth year of his reign: but 30th November was Monday in 862, Tuesday in 863. (This point was first noted by O'Donovan, *Three Fragments*, 151, n. b; cf. also Todd, *War*, lxix, n. 4.) By his '6th year' the Fragment means probably 852; but the year-section begins by an event placed by *AU* in 848 = 849." On this basis, the first year of Maelsechlainn as High King of Ireland would, according to *AU*, fall in 848; according to the *Three Fragments* in 847. On Anderson's revised reading of Maelsechlainn's regnal dates from *AU*, I propose the following sequence of events: 846: Turgeis taken prisoner by Maelsechlainn and afterwards drowned in Loch Ainninn (Keating, III 183; in Loch Owel, *AU*, *Cogadh*); "the year before the drowning of Niall Caille" (*Cogadh*, also *AU*), 847; "the second year before the death of Feidhlimidh" (*Cogadh*, also *AU*), when "Maelsechlainn begins to reign" (as High King of Ireland), (*AU*), 848. This last date, 848, corresponds with that of the effective defeat of the Norwegians in Ireland and the despatch of an embassy by Maelsechlainn to Charles the Bald (cf. Anderson, *Sources*, I 279, citing Prudentius of Troyes, *Annales*, s.a. 848). The accidental death of the Ulster prince, Niall Caille, and the disappearance from the scene of the formidable Feidhlimidh, king of Munster, doubtless eased the way of Maelsechlainn of Meath to the High Kingship in 848.

On Feidhlimidh, Todd (*War*, xlvi, n. I) wrote: "The sacrilegious life of this plundering bishop-king did not prevent his being regarded as a saint after his death." He suggests that the latter years of his life may have been spent in retirement and penitence and that there must be some mistake in the date assigned to his death in *AU*. (See also my note 239.)

²¹⁷ For text of Giraldus Cambrensis, see O'Meara's ed., 1951, 104-5; for Campion, *Holinshed's Chronicles*, 1808 ed., VI 89; for Hanmer, *Ancient Irish Histories*, II, Dublin, 1809, 169; cf. also Lynch, *Cambrensis Eversus*, Kelly's ed., 3 vols, Dublin, 1848-52, III 297 ff.; Hennessy, *AU* I 350, n. 6.

²¹⁸ Campion and Hanmer follow Cambrensis in giving "the wily question of the King of Meath", which Keating does not repeat. Although Keating is familiar enough with the work of Cambrensis and frequently quotes him, it is clear that his account of Turgeis and Maelsechlainn is based on other materials. Of the *Three Fragments*, Fragment I ends at the year 734 or 735; Fragment II at the year 704; Fragment III begins at the year 851. John O'Donovan, the editor, comments at 115, n. I: "This extract,

which is evidently the continuation of a long story, seems to have been taken from some history of the Danish invasions, now lost."

²¹⁹ Todd, *War*, li, n. 6.

²²⁰ Rinntown = Rinndun, probably from Ir. *rind dún* = the *dún* or fort on the point, cape or promontory, see *CDIL*, "R", 1944, cols. 71-4 under meanings (a) and (c); but possibly *righdún* = royal fort.

The ruins of the Norman structure of Rinntown still stand in isolated magnificence on the western shore of Loch Rí. The main wall, now reinforced by massive trunks of ivy, covers the narrow neck of a peninsula jutting into the waters of the loch, shallow enough along the shore. They enclose an area of several acres covered with forest growth. The traces of a stone wharf and slips for boats run down to the water.

The original *dún* of Rinntown was pre-Norman and probably pre-Norse — dominating as it did the narrow neck of the loch, here about a mile across, and the passage to the upper Shannon. There is a valuable discussion on Norman and pre-Norman fortifications in Ireland by T. S. Westropp, 'On Irish Motes and early Norman Castles', *JRSAI* XXXIV, 1904, 313-45 with refs. to Turgeis, 330 and 334; also, criticising some of Westropp's views, see G. H. Orpen, 'Motes and Norman Castles in Ireland', *ibid.* XXXVII/2, 1907, 123-52. The anonymous author of a note on 'Lough Ree and its Islands' believed that 'Randown or St. John's Point' had been previously fortified when the Normans first built there in 1227, *ibid.* 323-8.

In *JRSAI* LXV/2, 177-90, Captain J. E. Fitzpatrick devotes a special paper to 'Rintown Castle, Co. Roscommon: with a comparison of the systems of fortification used in Ireland in the 12th and 13th centuries' (with photographs). He believes that a rectangular area enclosed by earth ramparts, above the scarp of the main Norman fosse, represent an outer ward or bailey which may be the remains of a fortification which existed long before the castle was founded.

The toponym 'John's' or 'St. John's' is recorded four times in the immediate neighbourhood. According to the author of 'Lough Ree and its Islands', the story that seven kings named John ruled at Rinntown is not traceable before 1838. The church was supposed to have been founded by an Irish saint, John of Carlan, of Teach Eoin in Hy Many, who appears in the calendars on 17th August. The local 'pattern' was, however, held some days later; a tradition told how John was angry with his servant for his cruelty to a horse, and how the man was drowned when

crossing the lake. (For the legends of drowning connected with St. John, see my note 231 below). The author cites Archdall for the statement that Rathdown (*recte* Randown) was a house of Hospitallers in the reign of King John; and the *Four Masters* record under 1372 that Shane More O'Dugan, a learned historian and *ollamh* of Hy Many, died at Randown among the monks of St. John the Baptist. In O'Donovan's *Tribes and Customs of Hy Many*, Dublin, 1843, 109, there is a reference to a chieftain of Hy Many buried in the Abbey of St. John the Baptist at Randown in the year 1493.

²²¹ Keating (Dineen ed.), III 183. For a modern view of the High Kingship of Ireland, see D. A. Binchy, 'The Fair of Taitiu and the Feast of Tara', *Ériu*, XVIII, 1958, 118-38. The author finds that "while the king of Tara, as the head of the far-flung confederation of Uí Néill dynasties was normally the most powerful monarch in Ireland, his 'sovereignty' over the other provincial kings is a fiction invented by the 'synthetic' historians . . . This 'sovereignty' had neither a legal nor a historical basis."

²²² Du Chaillu, *Viking Age*, I 394, n. I. "In Orvar Odd we see that the Volvas performed the foretelling ceremony with fifteen boys and fifteen girls. It seems that night was the chosen time." Cambrensis, like Keating, has fifteen youths; Campion and Hanmer, who followed Cambrensis, sixteen — presumably a slip.

²²³ cf. G. Turville-Petre, 'Professor Georges Dumézil', *Saga-Book*, XIV/1-2, 1953-5, 134; and Dumézil, *Hadingus*, 127 (see note 163 above).

²²⁴ cf. Tacitus, *Germania*, 40.

²²⁵ "The pigs (Ragnar's sons) would grunt now if they knew the hog's suffering", du Chaillu, II 453, from *Ragnars saga loðbrókar*; see also Allen Mawer, 'Ragnar Lothbrok and his sons', *Saga-Book*, VI/1, 1909, 73, where 'pigs' is rendered 'griskins' from ON *gríss*.

²²⁶ Keary, 47; cf. also Saxo Grammaticus (ed. A. Holder, 1886), 263. In the cult of the mother goddess among the Baltic Aestii, boars' masks were worn, see Tacitus, *Germania*, ch. 45.

²²⁷ Adam of Bremen, IV, 26; cf. also Saxo Grammaticus, 185.

²²⁸ Fraser, *The Golden Bough*, II (= *The Magic Art*, II), 144.

²²⁹ *ibid.* 364.

²³⁰ For Edmund Campion's characterization of Maelsechlainn, see *Holinshed's Chronicles*, 1808 ed., VI, 89. But according to Lynch, *Cambrensis Eversus*, Kelly's ed., 295, the ancient laws prescribed "that all persons guilty of grievous crimes, and especially tyrants, traitors and parricides, should be sewn up

alive in a sack and thrown into a river." cf. also Joyce, *Social History*, I 211.

In 851, Maelsechlainn, by another ruse, captured his vassal, Cinaeth (Cinnéide) king of the Ciannachta who "was dragged out and drowned in a dirty streamlet". Here, again, the charge against the victim was sacrilege (*Three Fragments*, 118-9 and n. s). In 864, Conchobhar, son of Donnchad, 'half-king' of Meath, was drowned by Olaf, the Norse king of Dublin. The Celtic princes generally disposed of their rivals by drowning, breaking their backs with rocks, starvation in prison, or blinding. While the bodies of enemies were decapitated after battle, there seems to have been a superstition against formal shedding of blood of social equals. Similar inhibitions existed among the Scyths and Turks — hence execution by the bowstring in the Ottoman empire until comparatively recent times. Among the Celts, the superstition probably dates back to the remote period of their origins in central Europe.

²⁸¹ cf. Fraser, *The Golden Bough*, II (= *The Magic Art*, II), 65, 92; V (= *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, I), 253; X (= *Balder the Beautiful*, I), 160-1, 171-2, 181-2.

Writing of Midsummer Eve (23rd June) and Midsummer Day (24th June), Fraser, *ibid.* X 160, expressed the view that "a faint tinge of Christianity has been given to them by naming Midsummer Day after St. John the Baptist, but we cannot doubt that the celebration dates from a long time before the beginning of our era." In pagan times human sacrifice sometimes formed part of the ritual of the day. "In this connection it is worth while to note that in pagan Europe water as well as fire seems to have claimed its human victim on Midsummer Day. Some German rivers, such as the Saale and the Spree, are believed still to require their victim on that day; hence people are careful not to bathe at this perilous season . . . Many a fisherman of the Elbe knows better than to launch his boat and trust himself to the treacherous river on Midsummer Day. And Samland fishermen will not go to sea at this season . . . In the neighbourhood of the Lake of Constance the Swabian peasants say that on St. John's Day the Angel or St. John must have a swimmer or a climber . . . According to others St. John will have three dead men on his day . . . In Cologne the saint is more exacting; on his day he requires no less than fourteen men; seven of them must be swimmers and seven climbers. Accordingly when we find that in one of the districts where a belief of this sort prevails, it used to be customary to throw a person into the water on Midsummer Day, we can hardly help concluding that this was

only a modification of an older custom of actually drowning a human being in the river at that time." (Fraser, *ibid.* XI (= *Balder the Beautiful*, II), 26-27.) Along the lower reaches of the Blackwater river in Co. Waterford, a superstition still exists that if one man is drowned, the river will take two more before the end of the summer. Here, as in the case of the Saale (originally a Celtic name) the water remains the hungry god, without St. John being introduced.

It is curious that legends of St. John are so closely associated with Turgeis' castle at Rinntown; even the story of St. John of Carlan's drowned servant seems to reflect in a homely way the tradition of drowning at the behest of St. John. (See my note 220 above.)

²³² Todd, *War*, 227, *Cogadh* fragment from Book of Leinster, ch. xv: "The foreigners came to Roscrea in this year, on the feast of Paul and Peter, and the fair had then begun, and they were given battle, and the foreigners were defeated through the grace of Paul and Peter, and immense numbers were slain; and Earl Onphile was struck with a stone there, so that he was killed thereby. Some of the men of Mumhain (Munster) were fasting to propitiate Paul and Peter the night before."

²³³ In *AU* the battle of Magh Itha is recorded *before* the capture of Turgeis by Maelsechlainn, *s.a.* 844 = 845. The fight at Roscrea is not mentioned. *Chronicon Scotorum*, *s.a.* 845 has the battle of Magh Itha and the capture and drowning of Turgeis. The fight at Roscrea is not mentioned. *Cogadh* ignores Magh Itha; in *Cogadh* events for the years immediately before and after 845 are given in very confused sequence.

²³⁴ See above, text, p. 25. 'The ruler of that city' was Ramiro I (838-850). He had repulsed a Viking attack in August 844 (see my text above, p. 8) and in 846 was in a state of irregular war with Abd al-Rahman II (see Ramon Menendez Pidal, *Historia de España*, VI, 1956, 62 and n. 70). Nevertheless, in the conditions of the time, a free passage through Asturian territory for al-Ghazal and the Viking envoys was possible.

According to *Folklore*, LXVIII, Dec. 1957, 489-91, "the first authenticated pilgrimage to Compostella was in 849". But the city was already the national sanctuary of the Asturians before the death of Alfonso the Chaste in 838 (cf. Menendez Pidal, VI 56).

The feast of St. James, the culmination of the pilgrimage, fell on 25th July. If my calculations are correct, al-Ghazal would have returned to Cordova in August 846. Just after Christmas of the same year, an embassy from Abd al-Rahman II attended the court of Charles the Bald at Rheims 'to seek peace and alliance'

(Lot and Halphen, 170, citing *Ann. Bertiniani*, 34, s.a. 847). In the view of Lot and Halphen, this embassy was undertaken to clarify the situation on the Pyrenean border, but it is possible that the catastrophe of Turgeis in the summer of 846 and the changed situation round the Atlantic coastlands, which relieved the pressures on the Frankish kingdom, may have been factors which moved Abd al-Rahman to seek a conciliation with Charles the Bald.

²³⁵ Lot and Halphen, 139, n. 1.

²³⁶ See above, p. 10 and note 49.

²³⁷ In chapters xvi, xvii and xviii of *Cogadh*, immediately following the reference to the capture and subsequent drowning of Turgeis and the account of the battle of Roscrea, the author lists in some detail the operations of Viking fleets in what seems to have been a planned counter-offensive against the territories of the Northern and Southern Uí Néill and particularly against Maelsechlainn's kingdom of Meath. The attacks on the eastern districts of Ulster and along the Boyne may have been directed from the north, but it is probable that 'the great fleet' which appeared to the south of Dublin and ravaged most of Leinster was composed of the forces withdrawn from the Seine in the summer of 846. The attack on the south coast, Cork and Munster, described last in *Cogadh* (ch. xix), can have coincided with the arrival of the Westfaldingi from the Loire.

Maelsechlainn must have been seriously shaken by the attacks in Meath. He was defeated by one of his vassals, Tigernach of Lagore (*AU* 845 = 846), and had to contend with a *bagaud* of the tributary tribes, Luighne and Gailenga, "sons of death who were plundering the districts after the manner of the Gentiles". However, he demolished their island stronghold on Loch Ramor (near Virginia, Co. Cavan) during 847 (*AU* 846 = 847). Towards the end of 847 and into 848 the situation changed. The Vikings, probably the Westfaldingi from the Loire who had attacked round the south coast, were defeated in several fights in SW Munster (*Cogadh*, ch. xviii) and Cearbhall, king of Ossory gained a victory over the Viking Agonn (? Hákon), *AU* 846 = 847 (proposed 848), who seems to have commanded the Norsemen of Dublin (*Four Masters* 845 = 848).

²³⁸ The winter of 847 = 848 was bitter in Ireland. "Great snow on the Kalends of February" (*AU* 847 bis = 848). These conditions must have made more difficult the flow of reinforcement to the Norsemen. *AU* lists the series of Irish victories: "battle (gained) by Maelsechnaill over Foreigners at Forach (now Farragh, Co. Meath) wherein seven hundred were slain. A battle (gained)

by Olchobar king of Munster, and by Lorcán son of Cellach, with the Leinstermen, over the Foreigners, at Sciath Nechtain, in which Tomrair erell, tanist of the king of Lochlann, and twelve hundred along with him were slain. A victory by Tigernach over the Gentiles in Daire Dísirt Dochonna (oakwood of Dochonna's desert, unidentified, but hardly 'Derry' as in Shetelig, *VA*, I 52), in which twelve hundred were slain. (*Four Masters s.a.* 846, *Chron. Scot. s.a.* 848, give the loss of the Gentiles at 'twelve score', which, in Todd's view, *War*, 355, n. 13, "seems more reasonable".) A victory by the Eoghanacht Caisil over the Gentiles at Dún Maeletuille ('probably near Cashel', *AU*, IV 136), in which five hundred were slain."

²³⁹ The discomfiture of the Norsemen was complete when a Danish fleet of seven score ships (not 104 as in Shetelig, *VA*, I 52) "came to exercise power over the foreigners who were before them, so that they disturbed all Ireland afterwards", *AU*, I 357. The first intervention of the Danes was in 848 = 849, *AU* and *Four Masters* in the Clarendon Codex version (see note "L" in O'Donovan's ed., I 477). *Cogadh* records only the further wave of Danes arriving in 851, adding that "it was in the reign of Feidhlimidh, son of Crimhthann, that all these ravages were perpetrated" (Todd, *War*, 21). (This reference seems to confirm doubts as to the death of Feidhlimidh as early as 848, see last paragraph of my note 215 above.)

The Danish intervention against the Norwegians in Ireland preceded the first serious Danish attack on England in the winter of 850-851, cf. Hodgkin, *Anglo-Saxons*, II 497.

²⁴⁰ Anderson, *Sources*, I 279, citing Prudentius of Troyes, *Annales*, in *Mon. German. Hist., Scriptores*, 443, *s.a.* 848. cf. also Kenny, *Sources*, I 554. There were numerous monkish fugitives from the pillaged Irish monasteries in France during the middle and latter part of the ninth century; it may be assumed that these men helped to maintain contacts between Charles the Bald and his bishops and Irish rulers like Maelsechlainn and Feidhlimidh. The celebrated Irish scholar, Sedulius Scottus or Sedulius Scottigena arrived at Liège about 848 and "it has been suggested that he was a member or companion of the embassy which arrived on the Continent in 848 from Maelsechlainn. This, however, is pure supposition. The mention of Ruadri, king of Wales 844-878, suggests that Sedulius may have spent some time in that country on his way to the Continent." Sedulius was the author of a poem which may have been written before he went to the continent. It was entitled *De strage Normannorum* and celebrated a victory over the Norsemen — "gained probably by the Irish" (Kenny, *ibid.* 561).