

Forfatter: Grundtvig, N. F. S.

Titel: Udrag fra History of the Northmen, or Danes and Normans, from the Earliest Times to the Conquest of England by William of Normandy

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who inhabited Nordalbingia, or the territory between the Elbe and the Eyder.—pp. 10, 11.

The authority referred to here, is that of professor Rask, who quotes as his authority the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Yet it may well be doubted if there be any the slightest ground for these refined and closely drawn distinctions. The proof has not yet been produced that, either in Denmark or in England, a people speaking Icelandic ever existed; and as little is it proved that the Anglo-Saxon language, as we find it in books, is a mixed language sprung up in England, produced by the amalgamation of the Vikings, whom history calls Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, and by local circumstances with which we are unacquainted. It would, indeed, be much too rash to decide from this book-language on the German origin of the Anglo-Saxons, even if it had much more of a German character than it really possesses. Without inquiring into grammatical niceties, the argument which, by means of the language, is brought against the *Northernity* of the Anglo-Saxons, may be combated by these three facts; that modern English, which has still most in common with ancient English, is far more nearly allied to Norse than it is to German; that Danes and Icelanders have found it much less difficult than Germans to make themselves acquainted with Anglo-Saxon; and lastly, that the ancient Icelanders reckoned the language as well of England as of Denmark, but never that of Germany, under what they called Danish. If, in the meanwhile, other positive proof of the preponderance of the northern spirit amongst the Anglo-Saxons is required, than that which springs forth visibly from their whole history and literature, the "Drapa" of Beowulf might well serve for such; since we there not only find Hengist as a fief-holder of the Danish king, but discover the clearest northern tradition, and are continually occupied with Denmark and Gothland, without hearing one particle about Germany. To meet this irresistible fact, by declaring, like Thorkelin, that Beowulf's "Drapa" is a translation from the Icelandic, is certainly easy enough, but if it be merely remembered that the Icelandic literature first commences at the termination of the eleventh century, just when the Anglo-Saxon, through the Norman invasion, ceases, there will be little disposition to select so desperate an outlet, instead of following the track of history, and coming to this reasonable conclusion; that in the North of England, which in particular continued to maintain a close alliance with the North, and which was the principal seat of Anglo-Saxon poetry, the Northern legends were preserved, from the middle of the sixth century, to the beginning of the eighth, when Beowulf's "Drapa" must have been written.