

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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There is, however, a source, which has not been referred to by Mr. Wheaton, whence very valuable relics of ancient Northern poetry may be derived. Though what is there recorded is only in the shape of translation, there can be no doubt of its authenticity, and as little of its poetical recommendations. We refer to those Latin imitations of the ancient Northern songs which are to be found in the writings of Saxo-Grammaticus. These, collected by him in the twelfth century, and immediately referred to those who might have impugned their genuineness had there been any grounds for doubt, we cannot but deem of the highest value; and of literary debts, long owing and still unpaid, we think the debt to Saxo among the strongest. In his living pages will be found a moving picture of the past, which, though sometimes verging into too fanciful a world, does notwithstanding present a striking portraiture of things that were. Here may be traced the original of that master-piece of Shakspeare, his Hamlet; and here might also be followed to their sources, what Æhlenschlâger and many inferior minds have made the topics of their songs. *Ewald's "Balder" and "Rolf Krage" are among the first results of the study; Æhlenschlâger's "Steerkodder" followed; and Grundtvig's translation of the whole of Saxo, is a very important contribution to the subject. Mr. Wheaton supposes that Hamlet (Saxo's Amlet) assisted the Saxons against the Franks in the sixth century. Where Mr. Wheaton discovered any authority for this theory, we know not, unless in that wilderness of Suhm, which the author calls a "Critical History of Denmark," and of which it has been somewhat bitterly, but not altogether undeservedly said, that every thing is to be found there, but truth.