

Undersökningar i Germanisk Mytologi, första delen.
Investigations into Germanic Mythology, Volume 1
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**B. REMINISCENCES IN THE POPULAR TRADITIONS OF THE
MIDDLE AGES OF THE HEATHEN MIGRATION SAGA.**

15.

THE LONGOBARDIAN MIGRATION SAGA.

What there still remains of migration sagas from the Middle Ages, taken from the saga-treasure of the Teutons themselves, is, unfortunately not much. Among the Franks the stream of national traditions early dried up, at least among the class possessing Latin culture. Among the Longobardians, it fared better and, among them, Christianity was introduced later. Within the scope of Roman history, they appear in the first century after Christ, when Tiberius invaded their boundaries.

Tacitus speaks of them with admiration as a small people whose paucity, he says, was balanced by their unity and warlike virtues, which rendered them secure in the midst of the numerous and mighty tribes around them. The Longobardians dwelt at that time in the most northern part of Germany, on the lower Elbe, probably in Luneburg. Five hundred years later, we find them as rulers in Pannonia, whence they invade Italy. They had then been converted to Christianity. A hundred years after they had become settled in North Italy, one of their Latin scholars wrote a little treatise, *De Origine Longobardorum*, which begins in the following manner:

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, here begins the oldest history of our Longobardian people. There is an island called *Skadan*, far in the north. There dwelt many peoples. Among them was a little people called the Vinnilians, and among the Vinnilians was a woman by name Gambara. Gambara had two sons: one by name Ibor, the other named Ajo. She and these sons were the rulers among the Vinnilians. Then it came to pass that the Vandals, with their dukes Ambri and Assi, turned against the Vinnilians, and said to them: 'Pay ye tribute unto us. If ye will not, then arm yourselves for war!' Then made answer Ibor and Ajo and their mother Gambara: 'It is better for us to arm ourselves for war than to pay tribute to the Vandals'. When Ambri and Assi, the dukes of the Vandals, heard this, they addressed themselves to Odin (Godan) with a prayer that he should grant them victory. Odin answered and said: 'Those whom I first discover at the rising of the sun, to them I shall give victory'. But at the same time Ibor and Ajo, the chiefs of the Vinnilians, and their mother Gambara, addressed themselves to Frigg (Frea), Odin's wife, beseeching her to assist them. Then Frigg gave the advice that the Vinnilians should set out at the rising of the sun, and that the women should accompany their husbands and arrange their hair so that it should hang like a beard under their chins. When the sky cleared and the sun was about to rise, Frigg, Odin's wife, went to the couch where her husband was sleeping and directed his face to the east (where the Vinnilians stood), and then she waked him. And as he looked up he saw the Vinnilians,

and observed the hair hanging down from the faces of their women. And then he said: 'What long-beards are they?' Then said Frigg to Odin: 'My lord, as you now have named them, you must also give them victory!' And he gave them victory, so that they, in accordance with his resolve, defended themselves well, and got the upper hand. From that day, the Vinnilians were called Longobardians - that is to say, long-beards. Then the Longobardians left their country and came to Golaida, and then they occupied Aldonus, Anthaib, Bainaib, and Burgundaib."

In the days of Charlemagne the Longobardians got a historian by name Paulus Diaconus (Paul the Deacon), a monk in the convent Monte Cassino, and he was himself a Longobardian by birth. Of the earliest history of his people, he relates the following: The Vinnilians or Longobardians, who ruled successfully in Italy, are of Germanic descent, and came originally from the island Scandinavia. Then he says that he has talked with persons who had been in Scandinavia, and from their reports he gives some facts, from which it is evident that his informants had reference to Scania with its extensive coast of lowlands and shallow water. Then he continues: "When the population on this island had increased beyond the ability of the island to support them, they were divided into three parts, and it was determined by lot which part should emigrate from the native land and seek new homes. The part whose destiny it became to leave their native land chose as their leaders the brothers Ibor and Ajo, who were in the bloom of manhood and were distinguished above the rest. Then they bade farewell to their friends and to their country, and went to seek a land in which they might settle. The mother of these two leaders was called Gambará, who was distinguished among her people for her keen understanding and shrewd advice, and great reliance was placed on her prudence in difficult circumstances." Paulus makes a digression to discuss many remarkable things to be seen in Scandinavia: the light summer nights and the long winter nights, a maelstrom which in its vortex swallows vessels and sometimes throws them up again, an animal resembling a deer hunted by the neighbors of the Scandinavians, the Scritobinians (the Ski-Finns), and a cave in a rock where seven men in Roman clothes have slept for centuries (see Nos. 79-81, and No. 94). Then he relates that the Vinnilians left Scandinavia and came to a country called Scoringia, and there was fought the aforementioned battle, in which, thanks to Frigg's help, the Vinnilians conquered the Vandals, who demanded tribute from them. The story is then told how this occurred, and how the Vinnilians got the name Longobardians in a manner corresponding with the source already quoted, with the one addition, that it was Odin's custom when he awoke to look out of the window, which was open, to the east toward the rising sun. Paulus Diaconus finds this Longobardian folk-saga ludicrous, not in itself, but because Odin was, in the first place, he says, a man, not a god. In the second place, Odin did not live among the Teutons, but among the Greeks, for he is the same as the one called by the Romans Mercury. In the third place, Odin-Mercury did not live at the time when the Longobardians emigrated from Scandinavia, but much earlier. According to Paulus, there were only five generations between the emigration of the Longobardians and the time of Odoacer. Thus we find in Paulus Diaconus the ideas in regard to Odin-Mercury which I have already called attention to. Paulus then relates the adventures which happened to the Longobardians after the battle with the Vandals. I shall refer to these adventures later on. They belong to the Germanic mythology, and reappear in mythic sources (see No. 112), but in a more original form, and as events which took place in the beginning of time in a conflict between the Aesir

and Vanir on the one hand, and lower beings on the other hand; lower, indeed, but unavoidable in connection with the well-being of nature and man. This conflict resulted in a terrible winter and consequent famine throughout the North. In this mythological description, we shall find Ajo and Ibor, under whose leadership the Longobardians emigrated, and Hengist, under whom the Saxons landed in Britain.

It is proper to show what form the story about the Longobardian emigration had assumed toward the close of the twelfth century in the writings of the Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus. The emigration took place, he says, at a time when a Danish king, by name Snö (Snow), ruled, and when there occurred a terrible famine. First, those starving had resolved to kill all the aged and all children, but this awful resolve was not carried out, thanks to a good and wise woman, by name Gambaruc, who advised that a part of the people should emigrate. This was done under the leadership of her sons Aggo and Ebbo. The emigrants came first to Blekingia (Blekinge), then they sailed past Moringia (Möre) and came to Gutland, where they had a contest with the Vandals, and by the aid of the goddess Frigg they won the victory, and got the name Longobardians. From Gutland, they sailed to Rugen, and thence to the German continent, and thus after many adventures they at length became masters of a large part of Italy (Saxo, Book 8).

In regard to this account it must be remarked that although it contains many details not found in Paulus Diaconus, still it is the same narrative that has come to Saxo's knowledge. This Saxo also admits, and appeals to the testimony of Paulus Diaconus. Paulus' Gambara is Saxo's Gambaruc; Ajo and Ibor are Aggo and Ebbo. But the Longobardian monk is not Saxo's only source, and the brothers Aggo and Ebbo, as we shall show, were known to him from purely northern sources, though not as leaders of the Longobardians, but as mythic characters, who are actors in the great winter which Saxo speaks of.

The Longobardian emigration saga - as we find it recorded in the seventh century, and then again in the time of Charlemagne - contains unmistakable internal evidence of having been taken from the people's own traditions. Proof of this is already the circumstance, that although the Longobardians had been Christians for nearly 200 years when the little book *De Origine Longobardorum* appeared, still the long-banished divinities, Odin and Frigg, reappear and take part in the events, not as men, but as divine beings, and in a manner thoroughly corresponding with the stories recorded in the North concerning the relations between Odin and his wife. For although this relation was a good and tender one, judging from expressions in the heathen poems of the North (*Völuspá* 53; *Vafþrúðnismál* 1-4), and although the queen of heaven, Frigg, seems to have been a good mother in the belief of the Teutons, this does not hinder her from being represented as a wily person, with a will of her own which she knows how to carry out. Even a Norse story tells how Frigg resolves to protect a person whom Odin is not able to help; how she and he have different favorites among men, and vie with each other in bringing greater luck to their favorites. The story is found in the prose introduction to the poem *Grímnismál*, an introduction which in more than one respect reminds us of the Longobardian emigration saga. In both, it is mentioned how Odin looks out upon the world from his dwelling and observes what is going on. Odin has a favorite by name Geirrod. Frigg, on the other hand, protects Geirrod's brother Agnar. The man and wife find fault with each other's protégés. Frigg remarks about Geirrod, that he is a prince, "stingy with food, so that he lets his guests starve if they are many." And the story goes

on to say that Geirrod, at the secret command of Odin, had pushed the boat in which Agnar was sitting away from shore, and that the boat had gone to sea with Agnar and had not returned. The story looks like a parable founded on the Longobardian saga, or like one grown in a Christian time out of the same root as the Longobardian story. Geirrod is in reality the name of a giant, and the giant is a being who brings hail and frost in the myth. He dwells in the uttermost North, beyond the mythical Gandvik (*Þórsdrápa*, 2), and, as a mythical symbol of winter, he corresponds to king Snö in Saxo. His "stinginess of food when too many guests come" seems to point to a lack of food caused by the unfavorable weather, which necessitated emigrations, when the country became overpopulated. Agnar, abandoned to the waves of the sea, is protected, like the Longobardians crossing the sea, by Frigg, and his very name, Agnar, reminds us of the names Aggo, Acho, and Agio, by which Ajo, one of the leaders of the Longobardians, is known. The prose introduction has no original connection with *Grímnismál* itself, and in the form in which we now have it, it belongs to a Christian age, and is apparently from an author belonging to the same school as those who regarded the giants as the original inhabitants of Scandinavia, and turned winter giants like Jökull, Snær, etc., into historical kings of Norway.

The absolutely positive result of the Longobardian narratives written by Longobardian historians is that the Germanic race to which they belonged considered themselves sprung, not from Troy or Asia, but from an island, situated in the ocean, which washes the northern shores of the Germanic continent, Germany's northern coast.

16.

THE SAXON AND SWABIAN MIGRATION SAGA.

From the Longobardians, I now pass to the great Germanic group of peoples comprised in the term Saxons. Their historian, Widukind, who wrote his chronicle in the tenth century, begins by telling what he has learned about the origin of the Saxons. Here, he says, different opinions are opposed to each other. According to one opinion held by those who knew the Greeks and Romans, the Saxons are descended from the remnants of Alexander the Great's Macedonian army; according to the other, which is based on native traditions, the Saxons are descended from Danes and Northmen. Widukind so far takes his position between these opinions that he considers it certain that the Saxons had come in ships to the country they inhabited on the lower Elbe and the North Sea, and that they landed in Hadolaun, that is to say, in the district Hadeln, near the mouth of the Elbe, which, we may say in passing, still is distinguished for its remarkably vigorous population, consisting of peasants whose ancestors preserved the communal liberty throughout the Middle Ages in successful conflict with the feudal nobility. Widukind's statement that the Saxons crossed the sea to Hadeln is found in an older Saxon chronicle, written about 860, with the addition that the leader of the Saxons in their emigration was a chief by name Hadugoto.

A Swabian chronicle, which claims that the Swabians also came from the North and experienced about the same adventures as the Saxons when they came to their new home, gives additional details from popular traditions in regard to the migration and the voyage. According to this account, the emigration was caused by a famine which visited the Northland situated on the other side of the sea, because the inhabitants were heathens who annually sacrificed twelve Christians to their gods. At the time when the famine came, a king named Rudolph ruled over that region in the Northland from where the people emigrated. He called a convention of all the most noble men in the land, and there it was decided that, in order to put an end to the famine, the fathers of families who had several sons should slay them all except the one they loved most. Thanks to a young man, by name Ditwin, who was himself included in this dreadful resolution, a new convention was called, and the above resolution was rescinded, and instead, it was decided to procure ships, and that they who, according to the former resolution, were doomed to die, should seek new homes beyond the sea. Accompanied by their female friends, they embarked, and they had not sailed far before they were attacked by a violent storm, which carried them to a Danish harbor near a place, says the author, which is called Slesvik. Here they went ashore, and to put an end to all discussion in regard to a return to the old dear fatherland, they hewed their ships into pieces. Then they wandered through the country which lay before them, and, together with much other booty, they gathered 20,000 horses, so that a large number of the men were able to ride on horseback. The rest followed the riders on foot. Armed with weapons, they proceeded in this manner through the country ruled by the Danes, and they came to the river Alba (Elbe), which they crossed; after which they scattered themselves along the coast. This Swabian narrative, which seems to be copied from the Saxon, tells, like the latter, that the Thuringians were rulers in the land to which the immigrants came, and that bloody battles had to be fought before they got possession of it. Widukind's account attempts to give the Saxons a legal right, at least to the landing-place and the immediate vicinity. This legal right, he says, was acquired in the following manner: While the Saxons were still in their ships in the harbor, out of which the Thuringians were unable to drive them, it was resolved on both sides to open negotiations, and thus an understanding was reached, that the Saxons, on the condition that they abstained from plundering and murder, might remain and buy what they needed and sell whatever they could. Then it occurred that a Saxon man, richly adorned with gold and wearing a gold necklace, went ashore. There a Thuringian met him and asked him: "Why do you wear so much gold around your lean neck?" The youth answered that he was perishing from hunger, and was seeking a purchaser of his gold ornaments. "How much do you ask?" inquired the Thuringian. "What do you bid?" answered the Saxon. Near by was a large sand-hill, and the Thuringian said in derision: "I will give you as much sand as you can carry in your clothes." The Saxon said he would accept this offer. The Thuringian filled the skirts of his frock with sand; the Saxon gave him his gold ornaments and returned to the ships. The Thuringians laughed at this bargain with contempt, and the Saxons found it foolish; but the youth said: "Go with me, brave Saxons, and I will show you that my foolishness will be your advantage." Then he took the sand he had bought and scattered it as widely as possible over the ground, covering in this manner so large an area that it gave the Saxons a fortified camp. The Thuringians sent messengers and complained of this, but the Saxons answered that they had faithfully

observed the treaty previously, and that they had not taken more territory than they had purchased with their gold. Thus the Saxons got a firm foothold in the land.

Consequently, we find that the sagas of the Saxons and the Swabians agree with those of the Longobardians in this, that their ancestors were supposed to have come from a northern country beyond the Baltic. The Swabian version identifies this country distinctly enough with the Scandinavian peninsula. Of an immigration from the East, the traditions of these tribes have not a word to say.

17.

THE FRANKISH MIGRATION SAGA.

We have already stated that the Frankish chronicles, unlike those of the other Germanic tribes, wholly ignore the traditions of the Franks, and instead present the scholastic doctrine concerning the descent of the Franks from Troy and the Moeotian marshes. But I did not mean to say that we are wholly without evidence that another theory existed among the Franks, for they, too, had traditions in harmony with those of the other Germanic tribes. In the time of Charlemagne and after him, there lived a Frankish man whose name is written on the pages of history as a person of noble character and as a great educator in his day, the abbot in Fulda, later archbishop in Mayence, Hrabanus Maurus, a scholar of the distinguished Alcuin, the founder of the first library and of the first large convent school in Germany. The fact that he was particularly a theologian and Latinist did not prevent his honoring and loving the tongue of his fathers and of his race. He encouraged its study and use, and he succeeded in bringing about that sermons were preached in the churches in the Germanic dialect of the church-goers. That a Latin scholar with so wide a horizon as his also was able to comprehend what the majority of his colleagues failed to understand - viz., that some value should be attached to the customs of the fathers and to the old memories from heathen times - should not surprise us. One of the proofs of his interest in this matter, he has given us in his treatise *De invocatione linguarum*, in which he has recorded a Runic alphabet, and added the information that it is the alphabet used by the Northmen and by other heathen tribes, and that songs and formulas for healing, incantation, and prophecy are written with these characters. When Hrabanus speaks of the Northmen, he adds that those who speak the German tongue trace their descent from the Northmen. This statement cannot be harmonized with the hypothesis concerning the Asiatic descent of the Franks and other Teutons, except by assuming that the Teutons on their immigration from Asia to Europe took a route so far to the north that they reached the Scandinavian peninsula and Denmark without touching Germany and Central Europe, and then came from the North to Germany. But of such a view there is not a trace to be found in the Middle Age chronicles. The Frankish chronicles make the Franks proceed from Pannonia straight to the Rhine. The Icelandic imitations of the hypothesis make Odin and his people proceed from Tanais to Saxland, and found kingdoms there before he comes to Denmark and Sweden. Hrabanus has certainly not heard of any such theory. His statement that all the Teutons came from the North rests on the same foundation as the native traditions which produced the sagas in regard to the descent of the Longobardians, Saxons, and Swabians

from the North. There still remains one trace of the Frankish migration saga, and that is the statement of Paulus Diaconus, made above, concerning the supposed identity of the name Ansgisel with the name Anchises. The identification is not made by Paulus himself, but was found in the Frankish source which furnished him with what he tells about the ancestors of Charlemagne, and the Frankish source, under the influence of the hypothesis regarding the Trojan descent of the Franks, has made an emigration leader mentioned in the popular traditions identical with the Trojan Anchises. This is corroborated by the Ravenna geographer, who also informs us that a certain Anschis, Ansgisel, was a Germanic emigration leader, and that he was the one under whose leadership the Saxon tribes left their old homes. Thus it appears that, according to the Frankish saga, the Franks originally emigrated under the same chief as the Saxons. The character and position of Ansgisel in the heathen myth will be explained in No. 123.

18.

JORDANES ON THE EMIGRATION OF THE GOTHs, GEPIDÆ, AND
HERULIANS.
THE MIGRATION SAGA OF THE BURGUNDIANS. TRACES OF
AN ALAMANNIC MIGRATION SAGA.

For a long time, the most populous and mighty of all the Germanic tribes was the Gothic, which carried victorious weapons over all eastern and southern Europe and Asia Minor, and founded kingdoms between the Don in the East and the Atlantic ocean and the Pillars of Hercules in the West and South. The traditions of the Goths also referred the cradle of the race to Scandinavia. Jordanes, a Romanized Goth, wrote the history of his people in the sixth century. In the North, he says, there is a great ocean, and in this ocean there is a large island called Scandza, out of whose loins our race burst forth like a swarm of bees and spread over Europe. In its capacity as cradle of the Gothic race, and of other Germanic tribes, this island Scandza is clearly of great interest to Jordanes, the more so since he, through his father Vamod or Alano-Vamut, regarded himself as descended from the same royal family as that from which the Amalians, the famous royal family of the East Goths, traced their ancestry. On this account, Jordanes gives as complete a description of this island as possible. He first tells what the Greek and Roman authors Claudius Ptolemy and Pomponius Mela have written about it, but he also reports a great many things which never before were known in literature, unless they were found in the lost *Historia Gothorum* by Cassiodorus - things which either Jordanes himself or Cassiodorus had learned from Northmen who were members of the large Germanic armies then in Italy. Jordanes also points out, with an air of superiority, that while the geographer Ptolemy did not know more than seven nations living on the island Scandza, he is able to enumerate many more. Unfortunately several of the Scandinavian tribe-names given by him are so corrupted by the transcriber that it is useless to try to restore them. It is also evident that Jordanes himself has had a confused notion of the proper geographical or political application of the names. Some of them, however, are easily recognizable as the names of tribes in various parts of Sweden and Norway, as, for instance, Vagoth, Ostrogothae, Finnaiithae (inhabitants of Finved), Bergio, Hallin,

Raumaricii, Ragnaricii, Rani. He gives us special accounts of a Scandinavian people, which he calls sometimes Svehans and sometimes Svethidi, and with these words there is every reason to believe that he means the Swedes in the wider or more limited application of this term. This is what he tells about the Svehans or Svethidi: The Svehans are, in connection with the Thuringians living on the continent, that Germanic people which is particularly celebrated for their excellent horses. The Svehans are excellent hunters, who kill the animals whose skins through countless hands are sent to the Romans, and are treasured by them as the finest of furs. This trade cannot have made the Svehans rich. Jordanes gives us to understand that their economical circumstances were not brilliant, but all the more brilliant were their clothes. He says they dressed *ditissime* (*richly*). Finally, he has been informed that the Svethidi are superior to other races in stature and corporal strength, and that the Danes are a branch of the Svethidi. What Jordanes relates about the excellent horses of the Swedes is corroborated by the traditions which the Icelanders have preserved. The fact that so many tribes inhabited the island Scandza strengthens his conviction that this island is the cradle of many of the peoples who made war on and invaded the Roman Empire. The island Scandza, he says, has been *officina gentium, vagina nationum* - the source of races, the mother of nations. And from there - he continues, relying on the traditions and songs of his own people - the Goths, too, have emigrated. This emigration occurred under the leadership of a chief named Berig, and he thinks he knows where they landed when they left their ships, and that they, like the Longobardians, on their progress came in conflict with the Vandals before they reached the regions north of the Black Sea, where they afterwards founded the great Gothic kingdom which flourished when the Huns invaded Europe.

The saga current among the Goths, that they had emigrated from Scandinavia, ascribed the same origin to the Gepidæ. The Gepidæ were a brave but rather sluggish Germanic tribe, who shared the fate of the Goths when the Huns invaded Europe, and, like the Goths, they cast off the Hunnish yoke after the death of Attila. The saga, as Jordanes found it, stated that when the ancestors of the Goths left Scandza, the whole number of the emigrants did not fill more than three ships. Two of them came to their destination at the same time; but the third required more time, and therefore the first-comers called those who arrived last Gepanta (possibly Gepaita), which, according to Jordanes, means those tarrying, or the slow ones, and this name changed in course of time into Gepidæ. That the interpretation is taken from Gothic traditions is self-evident.

Jordanes has heard a report that even the warlike Germanic Herulians had come to Germany from Scandinavia. According to the report, the Herulians had not emigrated voluntarily from the large island, but had been driven away by the Svethidi, or by their descendants, the Danes. That the Herulians themselves had a tradition concerning their Scandinavian origin is corroborated by history. In the beginning of the sixth century, it happened that this people, after an unsuccessful war with the Longobardians, were divided into two branches, of which the one received land from the emperor Anastasius south of the Danube, while the other made a resolve, which has appeared strange to all historians, viz., to seek a home on the Scandinavian peninsula. The circumstances attending this resolution make it still more strange. When they had passed the Slavs, they came to uninhabited regions - uninhabited, probably, because they had been abandoned by the Teutons, and had not yet been occupied by the Slavs. In either case, they were open to the occupation of the Herulians; but they did not settle there. We misunderstand

their character if we suppose that they failed to do so from fear of being disturbed in their possession of them. Among all the Germanic tribes none were more distinguished than the Herulians for their indomitable desire for war, and for their rash plans. Their conduct furnishes evidence of that thoughtlessness with which the historian has characterized them. After penetrating the wilderness, they came to the landmarks of the Varinians, and then to those of the Danes. These granted the Herulians a free passage, whereupon the adventurers, in ships which the Danes must have placed at their disposal, sailed over the sea to the island "Thule," and remained there. Procopius, the East Roman historian who records this (*De Bello Goth.*, II. 15), says that on the immense island Thule, in whose northern part the midnight sun can be seen, thirteen large tribes occupy its inhabitable parts, each tribe having its own king. Excepting the Ski-Finns, who clothe themselves in skins and live from the chase, these Thulitic tribes, he says, are scarcely to be distinguished from the people dwelling farther south in Europe. One of the largest tribes is the Gauts (the Götar). The Herulians went to the Gauts and were received by them.

Some decades later it came to pass that the Herulians remaining in South Europe, and dwelling in Illyria, were in want of a king. They resolved to send messengers to their kinsmen who had settled in Scandinavia, hoping that some descendant of their old royal family might be found there who was willing to assume the dignity of king among them. The messengers returned with two brothers who belonged to the ancient family of rulers, and these were escorted by 200 young Scandinavian Herulians.

As Jordanes tells us that the Herulians actually were descended from the great northern island, then this seems to me to explain this remarkable resolution. They were seeking new homes in that land which in their old songs was described as having belonged to their fathers. In their opinion, it was a return to the country which contained the ashes of their ancestors. According to an old source from the Middle Ages, *Vita Sigismundi*, the Burgundians also had old traditions about a Scandinavian origin. As will be shown further on, the Burgundian saga was connected with the same emigration chief as that of the Saxons and Franks (see No. 123).

Reminiscences of an Alamannic migration saga can be traced in the traditions found around the Vierwaldstädter Lake. The inhabitants of the Swiss Canton Schwitz have believed that they originally came from Sweden. It is fair to assume that this tradition in the form given to it in literature has suffered a change, and that the chroniclers, on account of the similarity between Sweden and Schwitz, have transferred the home of the Alamannic Switzians to Sweden, while the original popular tradition has, like the other Germanic migration sagas, been satisfied with the more vague idea that the Schwitzians came from the country in the sea north of Germany when they settled in their Alpine valleys. In the same regions of Switzerland, popular traditions have preserved the memory of an exploit which belongs to the Germanic mythology, and is there performed by the great archer Ibor (see No. 108), and as he reappears in the Longobardian tradition as a migration chief, the possibility lies near at hand, that he originally was no stranger to the Alamannic migration saga.

The migration sagas which I have now examined are the only ones preserved to our time on Germanic ground. They have come down to us from the traditions of various tribes. They embrace the East Goths, West Goths, Longobardians, Gepidæ, Burgundians, Herulians, Franks, Saxons, Swabians, and Alamannians. And if we add to these the evidence of Hrabanus Maurus, then all the German tribes are embraced in the traditions. All the evidences are unanimous in pointing to the North as the Germanic cradle. To these testimonies we must, finally, add the oldest of all - the testimony of the sources of Tacitus from the time of the birth of Christ and the first century of our era.

The statements made by Tacitus in his masterly work concerning the various tribes of Germania and their religion, traditions, laws, customs, and character, are gathered from men who, in Germania itself, had seen and heard what they reported. Of this, every page of the work bears evidence, and it also proves its author to have been a man of keen observation, veracity, and wide knowledge. The knowledge of his reporters extends to the myths and heroic songs of the Teutons. The latter is the characteristic means with which a gifted people, still leading their primitive life, makes compensation for their lack of written history in regard to the events and exploits of the past. We find that the man he interviewed had informed himself in regard to the contents of the songs which described the first beginning and the most ancient adventures of the race, and he had done this with sufficient accuracy to discover a certain disagreement in the genealogies found in these songs of the patriarchs and tribe heroes of the Teutons - a disagreement which we shall consider later on. But the man who had done this had heard nothing which could bring him, and after him Tacitus, to believe that the Teutons had immigrated from some remote part of the world to that country which they occupied immediately before the birth of Christ - to that Germania which Tacitus describes, and in which he embraces that large island in the North Sea where the seafaring and warlike Sviones dwelt. Quite the contrary. In his sources of information, Tacitus found nothing to hinder him from assuming as probable the view he expresses - that the Teutons were aborigines, *autochthones*, fostered on the soil which was their fatherland. He expresses his surprise at the typical similarity prevailing among all the tribes of this populous people, and at the dissimilarity existing between them on the one hand, and the non-Germanic peoples on the other; and he draws the conclusion that they are entirely unmixed with other races, which, again, presupposes that the Teutons from the most ancient times have possessed their country for themselves, and that no foreign element has been able to get a foothold there. He remarks that there could scarcely have been any immigrations from that part of Asia which was known to him, or from Africa or Italy, since the nature of Germany was not suited to invite people from richer and more beautiful regions. But while Tacitus thus doubts that non-Germanic races ever settled in Germany, still he has heard that people who desired to exchange their old homes for new ones have come there to live. But these settlements did not, in his opinion, result in a mixing of the race. Those early immigrants did not come by land, but in fleets over the sea; and as this sea was the boundless ocean which lies beyond the Germanic continent and was seldom visited by people living in the countries embraced in the Roman empire, those immigrants must themselves have been Teutons. The words of Tacitus are (Germ., 2):

Germanos indigenas crediderim minimeque aliarum gentium adventibus et hospitibus mixtos, quia nec terra olim sed classibus advehebantur qui mutare sedes

quærebant, et immensus ultra atque ut sic dixerim, adversus Oceanus raris ab orbe nostro navibus aditur.

"I should think that the Teutons themselves are aborigines, and not at all mixed through immigrations or connection with non-Germanic tribes. For those desiring to change homes did not in early times come by land, but in ships across the boundless and, so to speak, hostile ocean - a sea seldom visited by ships from the Roman world."

This passage is to be compared with, and is interpreted by, what Tacitus tells when he, for the second time, speaks of this same ocean in chapter 44, where he relates that in the very midst of this ocean lies a land inhabited by Germanic tribes, rich not only in men and arms, but also in fleets (*præter viros armaque classibus valent*), and having a stronger and better organization than the other Teutons. These people formed several communities (*civitates*). He calls them the Sviones, and describes their ships. The conclusion to be drawn from his words is, in short, that those immigrants were Northmen belonging to the same race as the continental Teutons. Thus traditions concerning immigrations from the North to Germany have been current among the continental Teutons already in the first century after Christ.

But Tacitus' contribution to the Germanic migration saga is not limited to this. In regard to the origin of a city then already ancient and situated on the Rhine, Asciburgium (*Germ.*, 3), his reporter had heard that it was founded by an ancient hero who had come with his ships from the German Ocean, and had sailed up the Rhine a great distance beyond the Delta, and had then disembarked and laid the foundations of Asciburgium. His reporter had also heard such stories about this ancient Germanic hero that persons acquainted with the Greek-Roman traditions (the Romans or the Gallic neighbors of Asciburgium) had formed the opinion that the hero in question could be none else than the Greek Ulysses (Odysseus), who, in his extensive wanderings, had drifted into the German Ocean and thence sailed up the Rhine. In weighing this account of Tacitus, we must put aside the Roman-Gallic conjecture concerning Ulysses' visit to the Rhine, and confine our attention to the fact on which this conjecture is based. The fact is that around Asciburgium a tradition was current concerning an ancient hero who was said to have come across the northern ocean with a host of immigrants and founded the above-named city on the Rhine, and that the songs or traditions in regard to this ancient hero were of such a character that they who knew the adventures of Ulysses thought they had good reason for regarding him as identical with the latter. Now, the fact is that the Germanic mythology has a hero who, to quote the words of an ancient Germanic document, "was the greatest of all travelers," and who on his journeys met with adventures which in some respects remind us of Ulysses'. Both descended to Hades; both traveled far and wide to find their beloved. Of this mythic hero and his adventures, see Nos. 96-107, and No. 107 about Asciburgium in particular.

It lies beyond the scope of the present work to investigate whether these traditions contain any historical facts. There is need of caution in this respect, since facts of history are, as a rule, short-lived among a people that do not keep written records. The historical songs and traditions of the past which the Scandinavians recorded in the twelfth century do not go back further than the middle of the ninth century, and then the oldest were already mixed with imaginative stories. The Hellenic historical records from a pre-literary time were no older; nor were those of the Romans. The question how far historically important emigrations from the Scandinavian peninsula and Denmark to

Germany have taken place should in my opinion be considered entirely independent of the old migration traditions, if it is to be based on a solid foundation. If it can be answered in the affirmative, then those immigrations must have been partial returns of an Indo-European race which, prior to all records, have spread from the South to the Scandinavian countries. But the migration traditions themselves clearly have their firmest root in myths, and not in historical memories; and at all events are so closely united with the myths, and have been so transformed by song and fancy, that they have become useless for historical purposes. The fact that the sagas preserved to our time make nearly all the most important and most numerous Germanic tribes which played a part in the destiny of Southern Europe during the Empire emigrants from Scandinavia is calculated to awaken suspicion.

The wide diffusion this belief has had among the Teutons is sufficiently explained by their common mythology - particularly by the myth concerning the earliest age of man or of the Germanic race. As this work of mine advances, I shall find opportunity of presenting the results of my investigations in regard to this myth. The fragments of it must, so to speak, be exhumed from various mounds, and the proofs that these fragments belong together, and once formed a unit, can only be presented as the investigation progresses. In the division "The Myth concerning the Germanic Prehistory and the Emigrations from the North," I give the preparatory explanation and the general résumé (Nos. 20-43). For the points which cannot there be demonstrated without too long digressions the proofs will be presented in the division "The Ivaldi Race" (Nos. 96-123).