

CONTENTS

MAP OF THE VIKING WORLD	• vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	• xii
INTRODUCTION	• xiii
CHAPTER ONE: THE SCANDINAVIAN HOMELANDS	• 1
1. The Voyages of Ohthere and Wulfstan	• 2
2. A Description of the Islands of the North	• 5
CHAPTER TWO: SCANDINAVIAN SOCIETY	• 17
3. <i>The Lay of Rig</i>	• 18
4. Politics in Harald Finehair's Norway	• 28
5. Hoskuld Buys a Slave	• 38
6. How the Hersir Erling Treated His Slaves	• 40
CHAPTER THREE: A GLIMPSE OF NINTH-CENTURY SCANDINAVIA	• 41
7. The Life of Anskar	• 42
CHAPTER FOUR: EARLY RELIGION AND BELIEF	• 75
8. The Norse Creation-Myth	• 76
9. Ragnarok: The Doom of the Gods	• 85
10. A Prophetess in Greenland	• 90
11. Odin's Wisdom and Arts	• 92
12. Odin Welcomes Eirik Bloodax to Valhalla	• 93
13. Odin Hangs on Yggdrasil	• 96
14. Odin and Human Sacrifice	• 98
(a) The Death of King Vikar	• 98
(b) The Deaths of Domaldi and Olaf Tretelgja	• 100
15. Sigurd, the Earl of Lade, Sacrifices to the Gods	• 101
16. The Temple at Uppsala	• 102
17. A Temple in Iceland	• 103
18. King Harald Gormsson and the Land-Spirits	• 104
19. Norse Funeral Practices	• 106
(a) An Arab Description of a Viking Funeral	• 106
(b) Snorri's History of Burial Practices	• 110
(c) Odin Orders Cremation and Becomes a God	• 110

- (d) The Death of Baldur the Good • 111
- (e) Gunnar's Burial Mound • 113
- 20. The Living Dead • 114
 - (a) Gunnar's Posthumous Poem • 114
 - (b) Grettir's Fight with Glam • 115

CHAPTER FIVE: WOMEN IN THE VIKING AGE • 125

- 21. Unn the Deep-Minded Takes Control of her Life • 126
- 22. Queen Gunnhild Has her Way with Hrut • 130
- 23. The Prowess of Freydis, Daughter of Eirik the Red • 135
- 24. A Warrior-Woman • 136
- 25. Gudrun Drives her Sons to Take Revenge • 137
- 26. Gudrun Osvifrsdaughter's Incitement of her Sons • 142
- 27. The Goading of Hildigunn • 144
- 28. Betrothals from the Sagas • 146
 - (a) The Betrothal of Olaf Hoskuldsson • 146
 - (b) How Unn Mordsdaughter Found Herself Betrothed • 148
- 29. Divorces from the Sagas • 149
 - (a) How Gudrun Divorced Thorvald • 149
 - (b) Vigdis Divorces Thord Goddi • 151
 - (c) How Aud Dealt with her Humiliating Divorce • 155

CHAPTER SIX: VIKING WARRIORS AND THEIR WEAPONS • 159

- 30. The Accomplishments of a Viking Warrior • 160
 - (a) Earl Rognvald Kali on Being a Gentleman • 160
 - (b) Gunnar Hamundarson, the Ideal Warrior • 160
 - (c) Olaf Tryggvason, King of Norway • 161
- 31. Berserkers and the Berserk Rage • 162
 - (a) Odin's Berserks • 162
 - (b) The Rage of Skallagrim and Egil • 163
 - (c) Egil Fights a Berserk • 165
 - (d) Grettir Fights a Berserk • 168
- 32. Weapons • 170
 - (a) King Magnus Barelegs Dresses to Kill • 170
 - (b) The Sword Skofnung • 171
 - (c) Sigmund, Sigurd, and the Sword Gram • 179
 - (d) Saint Olaf's Sword, Hneitir • 190
 - (e) Viking Age Swords • 192

CHAPTER SEVEN: FJORD-SERPENTS: VIKING SHIPS • 193

- 33. King Olaf Tryggvason Builds the *Long Serpent* • 194
- 34. Harald Sigurdarson's Splendid Ship • 195
- 35. King Sverrir's *Mariasud* • 197
- 36. The Great Ships of King Hakon IV • 198
- 37. Animal Heads on the Prows of Ships • 201
- 38. Sea-Battles in the Sagas • 202
 - (a) A Hard-Fought Sea-Battle at Bute • 202
 - (b) Olaf Tryggvason at the Battle of Svold • 204
 - (c) Rognvald and Thorfinn the Mighty Fight It Out in the Orkneys • 214
 - (d) Earl Rognvald Kali in the Mediterranean • 217
 - (e) The Battle of Fimreite (Norafjord), 1184 • 221

CHAPTER EIGHT: "SUDDEN AND UNFORESEEN ATTACKS OF NORTHMEN" • 227

- 39. On the Causes of the Viking Expansion • 228
- 40. Viking Raids on England, 789-850/1 • 230
- 41. Alcuin's Letter to King Athelred, 793 • 232
- 42. An English Gospel Book Ransomed from the Vikings • 235
- 43. Viking Raids on Ireland, 795-842 • 235
- 44. The Martyrdom of Blathmac, 825 • 240
- 45. Irish Resistance to the Norsemen • 242
- 46. Franks and Vikings, 800-829 • 245
- 47. The Northmen in France, 843-865 • 252
- 48. The Annals of St-Vast, 882-886 • 262
- 49. An Account of the Siege of Paris, 885-886 • 267
- 50. Vikings in the Iberian Peninsula • 269
 - (a) Ibn al-Kutia • 270
 - (b) Ibn Adhari • 271

CHAPTER NINE: "THE HEATHENS STAYED": FROM RAIDING TO SETTLEMENT • 273

- 51. Viking Activities in England, 851-900 • 274
- 52. The Vikings in Ireland, 845-917 • 282
- 53. Ketil Flatnose and his Descendants in the Hebrides • 290
- 54. Earl Sigurd and the Establishment of the Earldom of Orkney • 291
- 55. Runic Inscriptions from Maes Howe, Mainland, Orkney • 293
- 56. Runic Inscriptions from the Isle of Man • 294
- 57. Rollo Obtains Normandy from the King of the Franks • 295

CHAPTER TEN: AUSTRVEG: THE VIKING ROAD TO THE

EAST • 301

- 58. The Piraeus Lion • 302
- 59. The Rūs • 303
- 60. The Rūs Attack Constantinople • 304
- 61. On the Arrival of the Varangians • 309
- 62. A Muslim Diplomat Meets Viking Merchants • 316
- 63. River Routes to Constantinople • 318
- 64. A Norwegian Soldier of Fortune in the East • 321
- 65. Rūs Expeditions to the Middle East • 325

CHAPTER ELEVEN: INTO THE WESTERN OCEAN,
THE FAEROES, ICELAND, GREENLAND, AND

VINLAND • 329

- 66. The Islands in the Northern Ocean, ca 825 • 330
- 67. Sailing Directions and Distances in the North Atlantic • 331
- 68. The Western Ocean • 332
- 69. Adam of Bremen on Iceland • 334
- 70. Icelandic Accounts of the Discovery and Settlement of
Iceland • 336
 - (a) *The Book of the Icelanders* • 336
 - (b) *The Book of Settlements* • 337
 - (c) *The Saga of the People of Eyri* • 341
- 71. Skallagrim's Landtake in Iceland • 343
- 72. The Settlement of Greenland • 346
 - (a) *The Book of the Icelanders* • 346
 - (b) *The Book of Settlements* • 346
- 73. *The King's Mirror* on Greenland • 348
- 74. Adam of Bremen on Vinland • 349
- 75. The Norse Discovery of Vinland • 350
- 76. Thorfinn Karlsefni in Vinland • 355

CHAPTER TWELVE: VIKING LIFE AND DEATH • 359

- 77. Advice for Sailors and Merchants • 360
- 78. Egil in Youth and Old Age • 362
- 79. Svein Asleifarson's Viking Life • 370
- 80. The Jomsvikings Meet Their End • 372
- 81. The Death of Gunnar • 379
- 82. The Burning of Njal • 383
- 83. The Death of Thormod Kolbrunarskald • 393

CONTENTS

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: FROM ODIN TO CHRIST • 397

- 84. The Conversion of the Danes under Harald Bluetooth • 398
- 85. Olaf Tryggvason and the Conversion of Norway • 400
- 86. A Poet Abandons the Old Gods • 408
- 87. The Christianization of Norway under Saint Olaf • 409
- 88. The Conversion of the Icelanders • 417
- 89. The Conversion of Greenland • 419
- 90. The Conversion of Orkney • 420
- 91. Christianity in Sweden • 421
- 92. Christianity and the Church in Norway • 422
- 93. The Travels of King Sigurd, Jerusalem-Farer • 423

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: STATE-BUILDING AT HOME AND ABROAD • 433

- 94. Harald Finehair and the Unification of Norway • 434
- 95. State-Making in Denmark: The Jelling Stone • 439
- 96. State-Making in Denmark: Unification and Expansion • 441
- 97. Knut the Great and the North Sea Empire • 444
- 98. The Earldom of Orkney at Its Zenith • 457

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: THE END OF THE VIKING AGE • 463

- 99. The Battle of Clontarf, 1014 • 464
- 100. The Battle of Stamford Bridge, 1066 • 471
- 101. The Decline of the Earls of Orkney • 479
- 102. The Battle of Largs, 1263 • 484

EPILOGUE

- 103. Advice from Odin • 491

SOURCES • 495

INDEX OF TOPICS • 499

INDEX OF AUTHORS AND SOURCES • 502