

**THE PRE-HISTORY OF THE
NORTH: BASED ON
CONTEMPORARY
MEMORIALS**

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J. J. A. WORSAAE & H. F. MORLAND SIMPSON

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THE
PRE-HISTORY OF THE NORTH.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

IN presenting this work to the English public, in memory of the distinguished archæologist to whom the early history of our own people also owes a deep debt of gratitude, I desire to express my heartfelt thanks to those of his friends and countrymen from whom I have received encouragement and valuable assistance; and firstly to Fru Worsaae herself, the widow of the author, for her gracious assent to the undertaking; also to Dr. Sophus Müller, secretary of the Northern Text Society, the author's most intimate friend and assistant, for permission to use his memorial address delivered in November last before the Society.¹ To him I am gratefully indebted for several corrections and explanations of difficulties in the text, and still more for his personal kindness and introduction to many of the objects described in this volume.

My best thanks are also due to Fräulein Mestorf,

¹ Aarbøger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie, pt. ii, vol. i. 1886.

the learned writer on Northern Antiquities, curator of the admirable museum in Kiel, from whom I received the like genial courtesy, with leave to use her *Nekrolog über Worsaae*.² Her faithful German translation of the first edition of Norden's *Forhistorie* (Hamb. 1878) I have had before me throughout, along with her valuable work illustrating the pre-Christian antiquities of Schleswig-Holstein.

To the Lords of the Committee of Council on Education I tender my grateful thanks for their generous permission to borrow the illustrations used in this work from the author's "Industrial Arts of Denmark"—one of the Art Handbooks published by the South Kensington Museum. For further illustrations of the subject the reader is referred to that treatise.

The lines in my map marking the density of population in the Scandinavian North are based on a small map in the "Universal Geography" of Mons. Róclus, published by Messrs. Virtue & Co., whose courteous permission to use it I desire here to acknowledge. The attentive reader will observe that these lines,—as we might expect,—depend chiefly on the natural elevations physical features and climate of the country. It is hoped that this modern instance, when compared with the chart on the progress of the various cultures,

² Beilage zum Hamburgischen Correspondenten, 30th August 1885.

will throw some light on the facts and views set forth in this work.

It remains to record my thanks to the kind young friends whose willing hands have lightened the labour of copying for the press.

To the text I have ventured to add a few occasional notes,—chiefly of reference and illustration. But mindful of the author's intention that this should be a popular introduction to the subject, I have not dared to over-burden the text—and the reader's patience—with more elaborate explanations. Those who seek for such will find them most fittingly in the National Collections which Worsaae's genius for arrangement and classification has made the model of all museums and his country's pride. There—

“Si monumentum queris, circumspice.”

The abbreviated references are chiefly to the author's “Arts,” *i.e.* “The Industrial Arts of Denmark:” also to C. P. B.—Corpus Poeticum Boreale, 2 vols., ed. Vigfusson and York Powell (Oxf. 1883).

O. Montel. Kult. Schwed.—Die Kultur Schwedens in Vorchristlicher Zeit, von Oscar Montelius (German Tr. by Carl Appel, Berl. 1883).

Munch Hist.—Det Norske Folks Historie, in 6 parts, 8 vols. (Christiania, 1852–63).

J. M.—Fräulein Mestorf's *Vorgeschichtliche Alterthümer aus Schleswig-Holstein* (Hamb. 1885).

I have derived much benefit from the various Danish catalogues, which are clear systematic and cheap; and wish that the same could always be said of our own, —where they exist at all. Some of our curators seem to prefer writing expensive works to doing their plain duty by arranging the collections the public has intrusted to their care. Need they wonder, if the public show so little interest in their works, when the collections, to which they are referred, so often repel them by a babel of uncatalogued disorder?

FETTES COLLEGE, EDINBURGH,
October 1886.

MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

CHARLES II. being one day in merry mood propounded this deep problem to certain members of the Royal Society: "Why, when a bowl be filled with water to the brim, and fish placed therein, does not the water run over?" Whereupon there arose a mighty cudgelling of wits and babble of learning. When each, according to his favourite lights, had given his reason for the *phenomenon*, the merry monarch solved the riddle himself:—"It does run over." And Charles being a monarch, this was held to settle the matter.

Not so with a discussion which arose between our author and certain learned authorities in 1840. The body of a female had been recently discovered in a bog. This was commonly identified as that of a Norwegian Queen, Gunhild, murdered in Denmark some nine centuries ago and sunk in a marsh. Could the evidence of probabilities be more convincing? Do not our museums usually possess a daughter of the Pharaohs? And is not everything strange a miracle? The single

point at issue was trivial: the principles of criticism involved were all-important; and the plain question of a youthful critic—"Whether the archæological material and the narrative of history had any real connexion?"—remains to mark a new departure in the critical investigation of antiquities, the rise of a new method.

Jens Jacob Asmussen Worsaae, who had thus the temerity to call the common faith in question, was then a young man in his twentieth year. Born on the 14th March 1821 at Veile in Jutland, where his father, a man of good family, held the post of Public Receiver and Counsellor of Justice, he was educated at the Gymnasium of Horsen, and entered the University of Copenhagen at the age of seventeen. Shortly afterwards he was appointed assistant to Thomsen in the Museum of Northern Antiquities. At an age when most English youths of his position are still *in statu pupillari*, Worsaae won his first victories in science. The struggle with hoary error only served to strengthen in him those principles of investigation and critical comparison to which he owed his early success and title to be considered the founder of a new science. The criticism which stormed the "Heights" of Frode and Harald Hildetand and banished a host of august ghosts to the limbo of popular superstitions was not merely destructive. Sounder principles were then not only laid down but fully tested. Simple as they now may seem to a generation familiar with the brilliant