
**The Anglo-Saxon Poems of Beowulf, the Travellers Song
and the Battle of Finnesburh**

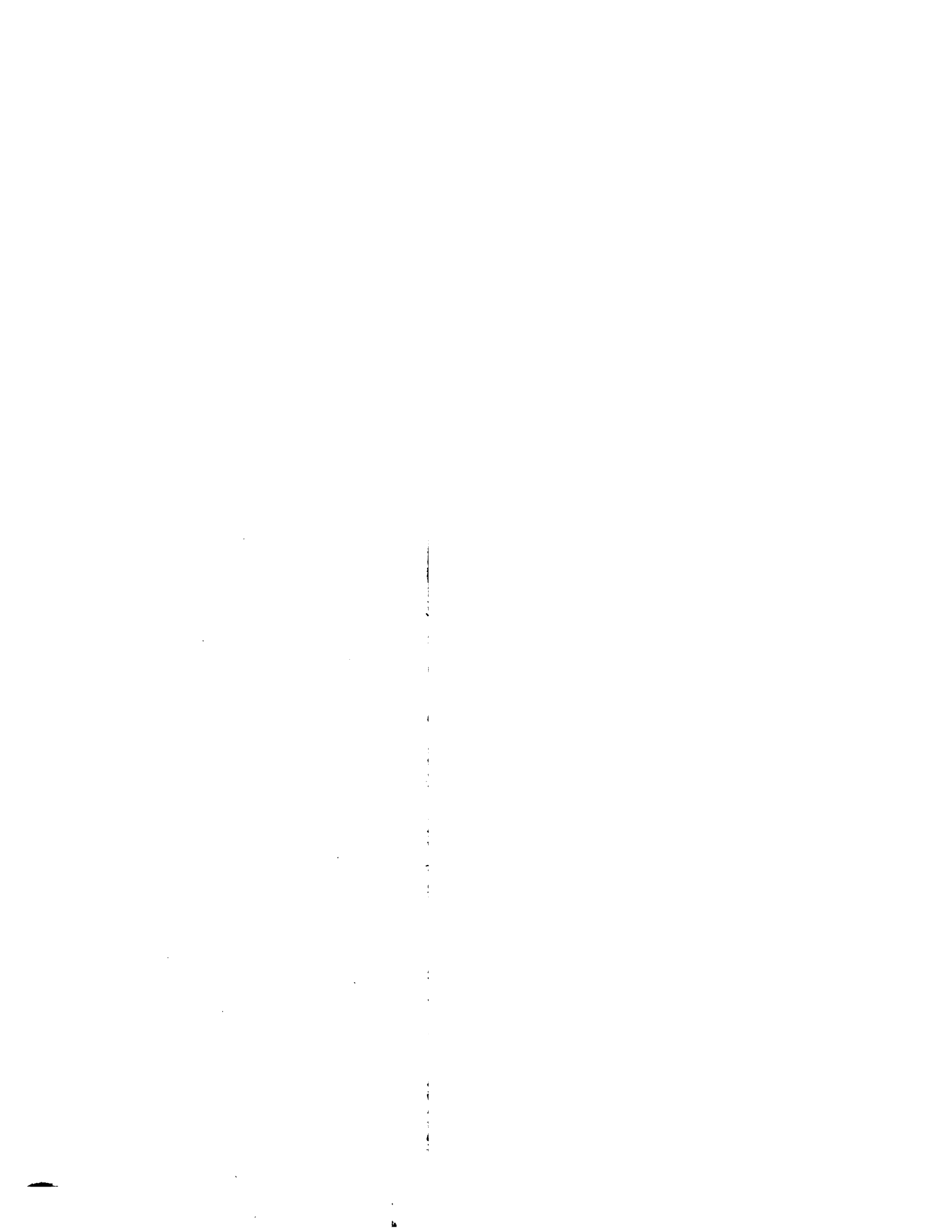
Kemble John Mitchell

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Beowulf.

THE ANGLO-SAXON POEMS OF

BEOWULF

THE TRAVELLERS SONG AND THE
BATTLE OF FINNESBURH

EDITED

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OF TRINITY COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE FELLOW OF THE KONUNGLIGA
NORRÆNA FORNFRÆDA FELAG

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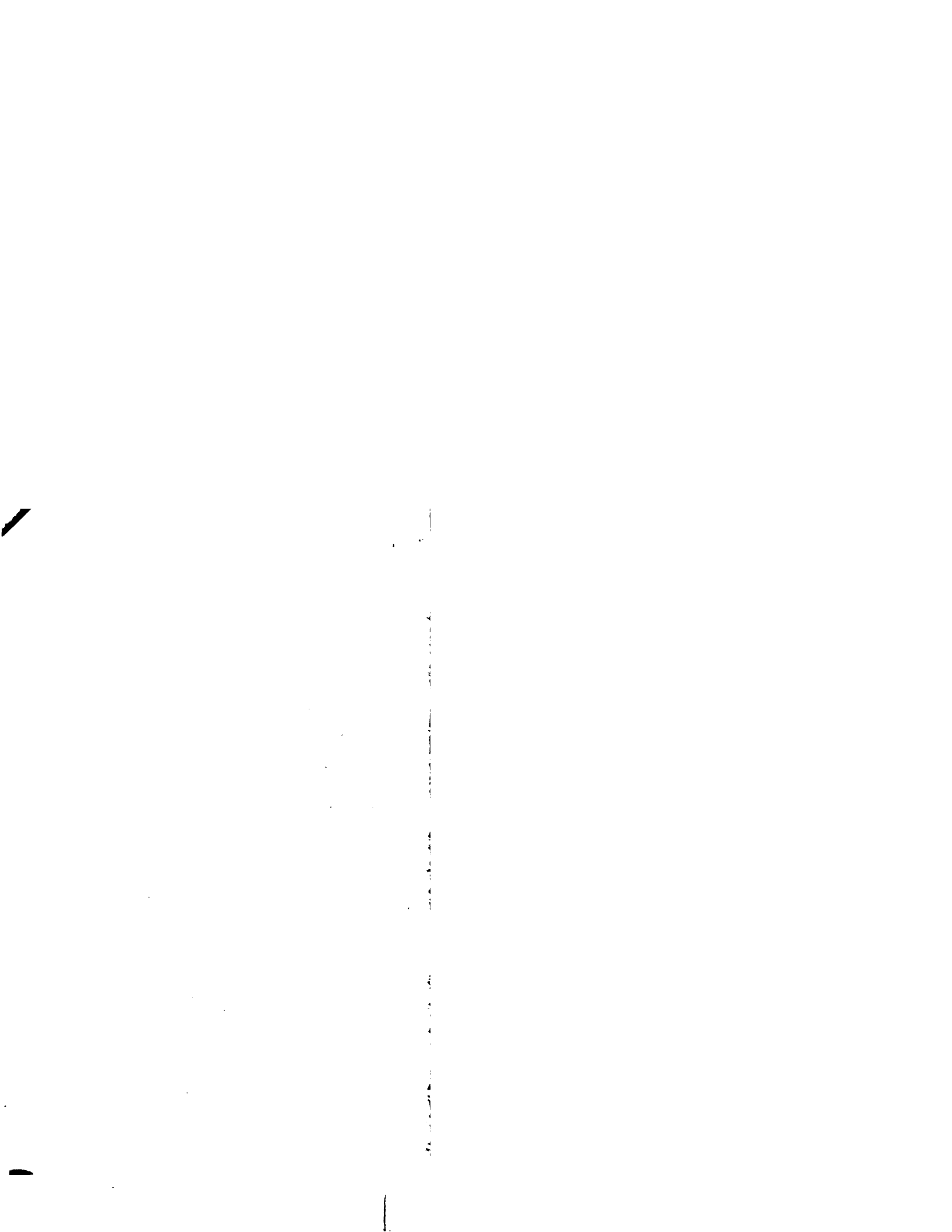
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PREFACE.

VERY few words will, it is hoped, be necessary to justify the present publication. At this time, when a little more attention seems to be paid to the old feeling of England than heretofore; when, under the patronage of the government, one of our most distinguished scholars is occupied in reproducing the laws and annals of our ancestors; when too the Antiquarian Society have broken ground so nobly with their Cædmon; it is thought that this correct, lively, and most interesting record of the superstitions, the hero-life, and the domestic habits of society in a remote age will not be without its value.

It is remarkable that no notice whatever is taken of this fine poem by any Anglo-Saxon author: and although this is partly to be attributed to theological causes, it also furnishes a presumption that the

invention of the work did not fall within the period embraced by their writings. In the absence therefore of all direct testimony, we must content ourselves with such an approximation as internal evidence will allow us to make, to the place and period which may claim the honour of its production. The date of the events described in *Beowulf* is the middle of the fifth century: *Hróðgár*¹ and *Halga*, two of the Danish kings actually reigning at the time, being, as recorded in our poem, the sons and successors of *Healfdene* the second. As I shall have occasion to refer more than once to the story of these princes, I will give as much of their pedigree as is necessary in order to put the reader clearly in possession of the requisite knowledge. *Fróda IV.* reigned over Denmark, including most of the islands and the southernmost portion of the Scanian peninsula, A. D. 370. His sons were, 1. *Ingeld*. 2. *Healfdene* the

¹ These are the Anglo-Saxon names of the princes, which, as they are used in the poem, I preferred giving. In the Danish historians we have *Hroar*, *Helgi*, *Ingjald*, *Frodi*, &c.

second. 3. Fróda V.³ According to our poem, l. 117, Healfdene had four children, Heorogár, Hróðgár, Halga, and Elan, a princess. Of these, Hróðgár and Halga reigned together in Scania :³ and according to Suhm,⁴ Ingeld was king in Sieland. Johannes Magnus,⁵ and Saxo Grammaticus⁶ agree in making Ingeld contemporary

³ Saxo Grammaticus, who puts all these kings at a period far too early, and moreover attributes to Healfdene the crime of Fróda, calls Healfdene's brothers Roe and Scato, and his sons, Roe and Helgo. Book ii. p. 27, fol. Hafn. 1644. In doing this he commits the error of confounding Fróda IV., Healfdene's father, with Fróda I. who reigned in the first century. Gheysmer, in his *Comp. Hist. Dan.* written in 1431, copied the blunder; he gives the pedigree thus; Frotho IV, Halfdanus, Ro, Scathus: and again from Healfdene, Ro, and Helgius, *vid.* Langebeke. *Script. Rer. Dan. medii ævi.* vol. ii. p. 295. fol. Hafn. 1772. In general the different histories agree very well with the account given in the text. It is however observable that Heorogár and Elan are found in no one of the Norse genealogies.

⁴ Holberg. *Dannemark's Riges. Hist.* vol. i. p. 49. 4to. Hafn. 1762.

⁵ *Historie af Danmark*, p. 28. 8vo. Hafn. 1776.

⁶ *Hist. Gothorum.* p. 174, fol. Paris, 1554.

⁶ *Hist. Dan.* Book vi. p. 107.

with Healfdene: but then they not only give us a double set of Healfdenes, the successors of Fróda I. and Froda IV. but also make Halga king of Norway, and Healfdene of Sweden; which according to the *Heimskringla*,⁷ and to our poem, l. 4956, was in the power of Eadgils.⁸ The history of Hrolf Kraki, Halga's son,⁹

⁷ Snorro Sturleson. *Heimskringla*, Hist. Reg. Norweg. Ed. Schöning. fol. Hafn. 1777. vid. vol. i. *Ynglinga Saga*. xxx. xxxii.

⁸ This prince, the Adils of Snorro, and Athialus of others, had only a divided rule. According to our text, Ongentheow and his son Ohtere, (probably the famous Hother of Danish tradition, the Havdr of the *Vavlv-spa*.) were his rivals; Saxo, B. iii. p. 39, in contradiction to the Saxon legend which represents the family of Ongentheow as at feud with Eadgils, makes Hother and Adils brothers. The "Song of the Traveller," l. 62, also gives to Ongentheow the kingdom of Suionia. Torfæus. *Series Dyn. et Reg. Daniæ*. 4to. Hafn. 1702, p. 235, differs but little from me. He gives as contemporary with Ingeld and Healfdene, i. e. A. D. 387. Eigils, a Swedish king; but Adils contemporary, as he no doubt was, with Halga, A. D. 450. Between these, A. D. 410, stands Ottar, probably our Ohtere.

⁹ Ed. Torfæi. 8vo. Hafn. 1715. The Norse account of Hrolf is that he was Halga's son; it is