

THE EVIDENCE

Source 1 from Adam of Bremen, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, trans. Francis J. Tschan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), pp. 75-76, 190-191.

**1. From Adam of Bremen,
*History of the Archbishops of
Hamburg-Bremen*, 11th century**

BOOK TWO, XXXI.

At that time a fleet [994] of pirates whom our people call Ascomanni landed in Saxony and devastated all the coastland of Frisia and Hadeln.⁴ And as they went up the mouth of the Elbe River, they fell upon the province. Then the chief men of the Saxons met, and although their forces were small, engaged the Barbarians, who had left their ships at Stade, which is a convenient port and stronghold on the Elbe. Mighty and memorable, but exceedingly unhappy, was the battle in which, though it was manfully contested on both sides, our men finally proved too few. The victorious Swedes and Danes completely destroyed the whole Saxon troop. Captured there were the margrave Siegfried, Count Dietrich and other distinguished men whom the barbarians dragged to the ships with their hands tied behind their backs, and their feet shackled with chains. After that the barbarians ravaged the whole province with impunity. But since one of the captives, the margrave Siegfried, stealthily slipped away by night with the aid of a certain fisherman and escaped, the pirates forthwith fell into a rage and, mocking all the nobles whom they had in chains, severed their hands and feet and cut off their noses. Thus maimed and half dead, they cast them upon the land. . . .

BOOK FOUR, VI.

There is very much gold in Zealand,⁵ accumulated by the plundering of pirates. These pirates, called Vikings by the people of Zealand, by our people, Ascomanni, pay tribute to the Danish king for leave to plunder the barbarians who live about this sea in great numbers. Hence it also happens that the license granted them with respect to enemies is frequently misused against their own people. So it is true they have no faith in one another, and as soon as one of them

4. **Ascomanni**: literally "shipmen," but conveying the sense of pirates or sea raiders. Frisia and Hadeln roughly corresponded with the modern Netherlands and the North Sea coastal portion of Germany. Saxony, the northwestern part of modern Germany, was then a province in the Carolingian empire.

5. **Zealand**: a Danish island in the North Sea between the Jutland Peninsula and modern Sweden.

Chapter 6

Vikings and

Polynesians:

Exploring

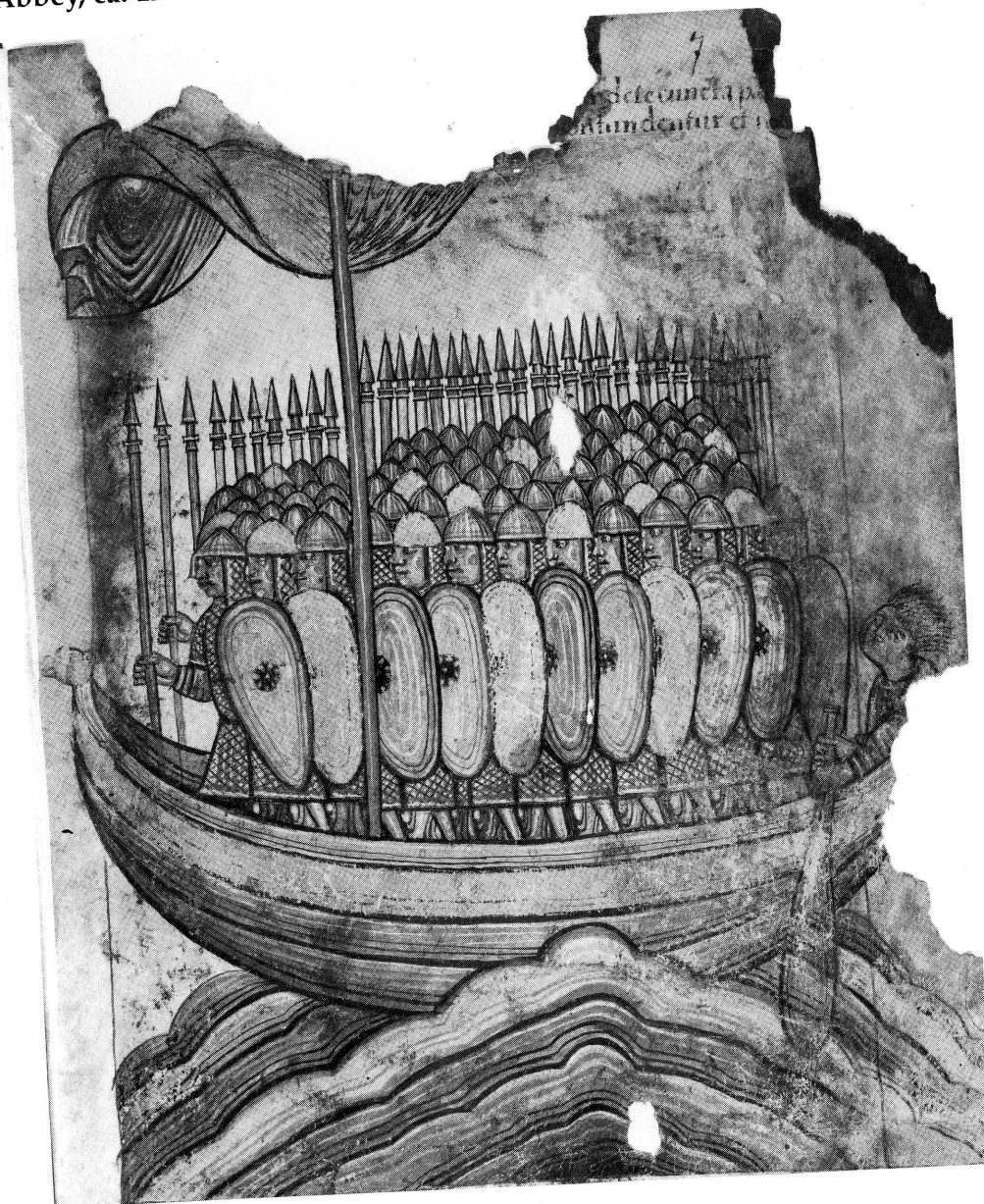
New Worlds

(300-1100)

catches another, he mercilessly sells him into slavery, either to one of his fellows or to a barbarian. In many other respects, indeed, both in their laws and their customs, do the Danes run contrary to what is fair and good. None of these points appears to me to be worth discussing, unless it be that they immediately sell women who have been violated and that men who have been caught betraying his royal majesty or in some other crime would rather be beheaded than flogged. No kind of punishment exists among them other than the ax and servitude, and then it is glorious for a man who is convicted to take his punishment joyfully. Tears and complaints and other forms of compunction, by us regarded as wholesome, are by the Danes so much abominated that one may weep neither over his sins nor over his beloved dead. . . .

Source 2: Bibliothèque nationale de France. Manuscript 01 NAL 1390 Fol 7.

2. Illuminated French Manuscript on Life of St. Aubin, St. Aubin Abbey, ca. 1100



Source 3: Antikvarisktopografiska arkivet/National Heritage Board, Stockholm.

3. Memorial Stone, Gotland, Sweden, 8th to 9th century



Source 4: University Museum of Cultural Heritage/University of Oslo.

4. Oseberg Viking Ship, Norway, 9th to 10th century

