

CLASSICAL RECORDS AND GERMAN ORIGINS

Part Six, By: William Finck © 2008

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Short Quotations May Be Taken From This Article, But Not To Edit

While it has been the purpose of this series of essays to demonstrate that the Germanic peoples indeed descended from the Scythians of Asia, who were also called Kimmerians and Sakans, and that they in turn had descended from the peoples of the Bible, notably those Israelites who had been deported by the Assyrians, here in this installment a short digression shall be made. Quite unfortunately, in the prelude to events in more recent history, certain propagandists among the English people succeeded in labeling the Germans as Huns, and in convincing the masses that the English themselves are a people of distinct origin. Of course such is not true, and here we shall digress in order to discuss the origins of the English, and Anglo-German kinship.

The pre-Roman inhabitants of Britain, while not the topic of this discussion, shall be mentioned here only briefly. In *The Encyclopedia of World History*, 6th edition, Houghton Mifflin Co., on page 180 we find: "The prehistoric inhabitants of Britain (called Celts on the basis of their language) were apparently a fusion of Mediterranean, Alpine and Nordic strains that included a dark Iberian and a light-haired stock. Archaeological evidence points to contacts with the Iberian Peninsula (2500 B.C.E.) and Egypt (1300 B.C.E.) ... The true Celts are represented by two stocks: Goidels (Gaels), surviving in northern Ireland and high Scotland, and Cymri and Brythons (Britons), still represented in Wales. The Brythons were close kin to the Gauls, particularly the Belgi." First, note that from the Belgi we have the modern name Belgium, and that the Cymri – distinguished from the Britons – have a name identical to the Cimmerii (Kimmerians), which cannot be overlooked. Yet much of the information provided here appears to have come from the Roman annalist, Tacitus.

In his *Agricola*, written about his father-in-law who was a governor of Roman Britain, in §11 Tacitus wrote: "Who the first inhabitants of Britain were, whether natives or immigrants, is open to question: one must remember that we are dealing with barbarians. But their physical characteristics vary, and the variation is suggestive. The reddish hair and large limbs of the Caledonians proclaim a German origin; the swarthy faces of the Silures, the tendency of their hair to curl, and the fact that Spain lies opposite, all lead one to believe that Spaniards crossed in ancient times and occupied

that part of the country. The peoples nearest to the Gauls likewise resemble them ...” [Penguin Classics ed.] Of course Tacitus was not properly a historian, for he was not educated in the classical histories and was apparently ignorant of, or perhaps simply ignored, the accounts of both the Phoenicians and Trojans in Britain, although it is not probable that all of the early Britons are derived from these alone. Rather Tacitus was a chronicler of his own times, and both the *Agricola* and his account of the tribes of Germany, the *Germania*, have been esteemed as works of great value for many centuries.

The Greek geographer Strabo, who lived a few generations before Tacitus, gave his own description of the German tribes as they were known to him, although he did not have nearly as much information as the Roman had almost a century later. Yet Strabo apparently described many German tribes accurately, since Tacitus’ later account is very much in agreement with the geographer, although much more detailed. While Strabo’s account of the Germans won’t be discussed here at length, one statement is important to our discussion: “Now as for the tribe of the Suevi [or Suebi], it is the largest, for it extends from the Rhenus [Rhine] to the Albis [Elbe]; and a part of them even dwell on the far side of the Albis” (*Geography*, 7.1.3, Loeb Classical Library ed., brackets mine). In the same paragraph, Strabo lists among the tribes of the Suebi the Cöldui (or Coadui, the Quadi of Tacitus) and Marcomanni, both who inhabited Bohemia, and the Langobardi (the Lombards) who some centuries later came to inhabit northern Italy, and also several other tribes mentioned by Tacitus. The name of the Suebi existed until recent times in the name Swabia, a large duchy in southwest Germany which included parts of modern day France and Switzerland, and the modern German state of Baden-Württemberg.

Tacitus, throughout the *Germania*, refers to the Baltic ocean as the “Suebian Sea”. He begins his description of the Suebi, found at §’s 38-46, thusly: “We must now speak of the Suebi, who do not, like the Chatti or the Tencteri, constitute a single nation. They occupy more than half of Germany, and are divided into a number of separate tribes under different names, though all are called by the generic title of ‘Suebi’.” In his ensuing description of these tribes, he makes special mention of the Semnones and the Langobardi, whom he notes for their bravery, and then he says: “After them come the Reudigni, Aviones, Anglii [the Angles], Varini, Eudoses, Suarines, and Nuitones, all of them safe behind ramparts of rivers and woods. There is nothing noteworthy about these tribes individually ...”. Tacitus then goes on to list the rest of the tribes of Suebia: the Hermunduri, Naristi, Marcomanii, Quadi, the Marsigni and Buri who are both “exactly like the Suebi in language and mode of life”, the Lugii who are “divided into a number of smaller units”, the Gothones (Goths), whose “rule is somewhat more autocratic than in the other German states”, the Rugii and Lemovii, both “bordering on the [Suebian] sea”, the Suiones “right out in the sea” (from where the name Sweden may well have come), the Aestii, and finally the Sitones. Of the Aestii (where we see the name of the Estonians), Tacitus says that they “have the same customs and fashions as the Suebi, but a language more like the British”, and that they “are the only people who collect amber – *glæsium* is their own word for it”, where we see that these are the Scythians of the amber district along the Baltic, mentioned by

Diodorus Siculus and earlier writers. Beyond these, Tacitus attests to the presence of the Peucini (also called Bastarnae), Venedi (the Slavic Wends) and the Fenni (Finns), all of whom he was not sure whether to class as Germans or Sarmatians (or Slavs). As we have seen in the first five parts of this essay, all of these Germans are the very same peoples whom the early Greek writers called Kimmerians, and later Scythians or Sakans, and then Galatae, while Romans called them all Gauls, and later divided them into Gauls and Germans. While it is absent from Tacitus, later we shall see that the term Sakans persisted, as Bede and other late writers call these same people by the general name of Saxons: certainly the same people whom Tacitus and Strabo labeled as Suebi. Here it must also be noticed that in the account of the Suebi given by Tacitus, the Anglii (or Angles), are but a minor tribe among the rest of the Germanic tribes, and certainly considered to be Germans, and being labeled as Suebi they are indeed closely related to the other tribes of the German interior.

The strength of Rome checked Germanic expansion into the lands of the empire for as long as such strength endured, and Tacitus records the various Germanic tribes who lived along the Rhine and Danube, which of those were friendly to Rome, and which had already crossed west of the Rhine by his time, as he distinguishes Germans from Gauls and doubts the Germanic origin of some of the tribes of Gaul (the lands of modern France, Belgium, the Netherlands and the portion of Germany west of the Rhine) even when they claimed such origin (i.e. *Germania* §28). Yet from the time that Julius Caesar conquered Gaul, for over 300 years until the 3rd century A.D., the Germanic tribes were for the most part held at the frontiers of the empire. Not that there was ever any peace, for Rome conducted campaigns in Germany many times, and many times the German tribes raided parts of the empire. From the 3rd century, however, the Germanic tribes were too strong for the empire to contain, while they themselves were also being pressured from the east. Rome had already begun an internal decline from the peak of her strength, and so the empire began to lose the more distant provinces first, and by the 5th century, was overrun by Goths, Vandals, Alans, Alamanni, Burgundians, Franks, Saxons, Suebi and Huns. The Goths are Tacitus' Gothones (*Ger.* 43), whom he counted among the Suebi. The Vandals Tacitus' Vandilii (*Ger.* 2), also mentioned by Strabo as Vindelici (4.3.3; 4.6.8, 9). The Alans are called by the 6th century Greek historian Procopius a Gothic nation (*History of the Wars*, 3.3.1, 5.1.3) and allies of those Vandals with whom they invaded Spain (3.3.1). The Alamanni and Burgundians are mentioned by Procopius along with the Suebi and other German tribes (5.12.11). The terms Frank and Saxon do not describe any single German tribe, but rather they generally describe particular groups of tribes, as Tacitus had also used the term Suebi. Procopius mentions "the Germans, who are now called Franks" (3.3.1) quite often. It is evident from Bede that many tribes which Tacitus called Suebi were Saxons, a term which Tacitus did not use, since Bede counts the Angles as Saxons, frequently using the term "Angles **or** Saxons" (i.e. *E.H.* 1.15). Many of the Goths, Alans, Vandals, and others who invaded the empire were already Christians, although of the Arian sect, as Propocius often relates, and being so they must have received their Christianity from the east, and not from the Greeks or Romans – who were adverse to Arianism. It shall be shown in a later part of this essay that the Huns

did indeed descend from the same Scythian stock from which the other German tribes had come, except that they had ventured further east than most of the others, and had come into Europe relatively late.

While much more may be said concerning the movements of Germanic tribes during the final centuries of the Roman empire, here we shall focus on Britain, turning to the British church historian Bede, who wrote his *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* in the 8th century A.D. Bede wrote of the “Franks and Saxons” looting and pillaging the British sea-coast as early as the reign of the emperor Diocletian, towards the end of the 3rd century (*E.H.* 1.6). After Rome lost control of Britain, first by a revolt of her own soldiers, for a short time the nation was ruled by various military tyrants. Later, the British came under the constant siege of the Scots (and Bede called all of the Irish by that name) and the Picts (*E.H.* 1.6-15; Bede also says that the Picts had come “from Scythia”, *E.H.* 1.1). Rome no longer being in any position to aid the Britons, who had made numerous appeals for help, finally a British King, in the reign of the emperor Marcian (which Bede dates as beginning in “the 449th year of the incarnation of our Lord”), invited the “English or Saxons” (“Anglorum sive Saxonum gens” in Bede’s Latin) into Britain. Bede says of the Saxons that: “... being sent for of the said king into Britain, landed there in three long ships, and by the same king’s commandment is appointed to abide in the east part of the island, as to defend the country like friends, but indeed, as it proved afterward, as minded to conquer it as enemies” (*E.H.* 1.15, LCL ed.) Bede goes on to describe how these first Saxons in Britain, after defeating certain enemies of the Britons in a battle, and noticing the cowardice of the Britons themselves, sent word back to Germany and were soon joined by many more of their kinsmen. Bede then explains: “Now the strangers had come from three of the more mighty nations in Germany, that is, the Saxons, the Angles and the Jutes. Of the Jutes came the people of Kent and the settlers in Wight, that is the folk that hold the Isle of Wight, and they which in the province of the West Saxons are called unto this day the nation of the Jutes, right over against the Isle of Wight. Of the Saxons, that is of that region which is now called of the Old Saxons [modern Saxony], descended the East Saxons, the South Saxons and the West Saxons [of those parts of England now known as Essex, Sussex and Wessex]. Further, of the Angles, that is of that country which is called Angeln [modern Schleswig-Holstein] and from that time to this is said to stand deserted between the provinces of the Jutes [Jutland, the part of Denmark on the mainland] and the Saxons [Saxony], descendeth the East Angles, the Uplandish Angles, the Mercians and all the progeny of the Northumbrians, that is, of that people that inhabiteth the north side of the flood of Humber, and the other nations of the Angles.” Bede goes on to relate the story of the Saxon kings Hengist and Horsa, and mentions their descent from “Woden [Oden], of whose issue the royal house of many provinces had their original” (*E.H.* 1:15, all brackets mine).

Later in his history Bede discusses a certain English preacher, Egbert, who made missionary journeys to the continent, and Bede says that he “... by preaching of the Gospel to bring the word of God to some of those nations which had not yet heard it: and many such countries he knew to be in Germany, of whom the English [Angli] or Saxons, which now inhabit Britain, are well known to have had beginning and offspring;

whereby it is that to this day they are corruptly called Garmans by the Britons that are their neighbours. Such now are the Frisons [the Frisians; Frisii in Tacitus, *Ger.* 34, 35], Rugins [Rugii, *Ger.* 43], Danes, Huns, Old Saxons, and Boructuars [Bructeri, *Ger.* 33] ..." (*E.H.* 5.9), where it is evident that not only does Bede count the Angles themselves as Saxons, stating "English **or** Saxons", but he refers to the Saxons of Germany as "Old Saxons". Also, the Britons knew these new inhabitants of Britain as Germans, but called them "Garmans" instead. Bede's Saxons must be those same tribes who, along with the Angli, Tacitus had described as Suebi, and while a district in Germany which was once inhabited by Angli evidently remained vacant for some time after their move to Britain, as Bede has told us, indeed not all of the Angli on the continent moved to Britain, as we shall see shortly from Procopius. That Saxon is a general name for a group of German tribes is also evident with Bede, since while he calls them by this name generally, aside from the Angli he also refers to other individual tribes among those who settled in Britain, namely the Gewissas or West Saxons (*E.H.* 2.5; 3.7; 4.15), the Grywas (*E.H.* 3.20; 4.6, 19), the Hwiccas (*E.H.* 2.2; 4.13, 23), and the Meanwaras (*E.H.* 4.13).

Procopius had mentioned little of Britain, but understandably since it was not within the scope of his intended subject. Yet being the personal secretary of Belisarius, the great Byzantine general who won many battles against the Germanic tribes during the reign of Justinian, he had the opportunity to witness and record many things, which indeed he did, in his *History of the Wars* (of the Byzantine Romans against the Persians, Goths of Italy and Vandals in Africa) and *Anecdota* (or *Secret History*, a scathing criticism of the emperor Justinian and his wife). On those occasions where he does mention Britain, he supports the account given by Bede. He describes how the Roman soldiers of Britain first revolted from the empire (about 407 A.D.), and how Britain was never recovered by Rome, "but it remained from that time on under tyrants" (*Hist.* 3.2.31, 38). At one point Belisarius, negotiating with the Goths who invaded Italy, offered to "permit the Goths to have the whole of Britain" in return for giving up Sicily (*Hist.* 6.6.28), even though the empire did not even possess Britain at the time. Procopius does not mention the Saxon invasions of Britain, but referring to his own time says only that it is inhabited by barbarians (*Anec.* 19.13).

Procopius described an "island", Thule, "exceedingly large ... more than ten times greater than Britain. And it lies far distant from it toward the north. On this island the land is for the most part barren, but in the inhabited country thirteen very numerous nations are settled; and there are kings over each nation" (*Hist.* 6.15.4-5). Naming some of the tribes of Thule, Procopius relates fantastic stories about some of them, as the Greek writers always heard and recorded such tales about the peoples who lived on the fringes of their own world. Yet Procopius also spoke of the Eruli, a tribe which had apparently adopted the Arian form of Christianity (*Hist.* 4.14.12), from which many had fought for the Romans and whom Procopius must have been quite familiar with, and describes how a great number of this tribe (after losing a fight with the Lombards) had left Germany to settle in Thule (*Hist.* 6.15.1. ff.). While there is much speculation concerning Thule, from the time of Pytheas who seems to have been the first to record the name as that of a place in the northern ocean, here Procopius certainly seems to be

describing Norway. Later, in the 8th through the 11th centuries, parts of Britain were invaded and settled by Norsemen and Danes.

Procopius describes another island which he calls Brittia – but which is certainly not Britain – and which is “towards the rear of Gaul, that side namely which faces the ocean, being, that is, to the north of both Spain and Britain” (*Hist.* 8.20.5), and he seems to be describing Denmark, which from the sea may certainly be perceived as an island. He then says: “The island of Brittia is inhabited by three very numerous nations, each one having a king over it. And the names of these nations are Angili, Frissones, and Brittones, the last being named from the island itself. And so great appears to be the population of these nations that every year they emigrate thence in large companies with their women and children and go to the land of the Franks [which at the time included large portions of both modern France and Germany]. And the Franks allow them to settle in the part of their land which appears to be more deserted, and by this means they say they are winning over the island. Thus it actually happened that not long ago the king of the Franks, in sending some of his intimates on an embassy to the Emperor Justinian in Byzantium, sent with them some of the Angili, thus seeking to establish his claim that this island was ruled by him. Such then are the facts relating to the island that is called Brittia” (*Hist.* 8.20.6-10, brackets mine). Now while this may seem to be a quite obfuscated account of some of the movements of the Germanic tribes which took place in the north at the time, the Frissones must be the Frisons of Bede, the Frisii of Tacitus’ *Germania*, (34, 35), and the Angili must be Tacitus’ and Bede’s Anglii, the Angles. While the Frisii have the country which is named for them Friesland, now a district in the north of the Netherlands, there is certainly much evidence of Angles who did not move to Britain – as we see here from Procopius – but rather remained in Germany. Indeed, the German surnames Engler, Englert and Engles, among others, are all surnames of the Angles in Germany, who also gave their name to places such as Engelberg in Switzerland, Engelsberg of which there are two such towns in Bavaria, Engelskirchen northeast of Cologne in Westphalia, Engelhartzell in Austria, Engeløy in Norway, and Ingelheim in the Rhineland, along with many other like placenames.

Bede used “Saxony” as a name for Saxon Britain (in his *Lives of the Abbots*, 19). Yet the “Old” Saxony which he often referred to is today found in the modern German states of Lower Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt. Yet it may be determined from this and previous portions of this essay, that the German tribes of Saxony are indeed akin to and of like origin with their neighbors, those of the German regions of Bavaria, Swabia, the Rhineland, Franconia, Hesse and Thuringia, along with the other portions of central and southern Germany, Austria and Switzerland in the south, the German regions in Italy (primarily Lombardy and the Tyrol), and also with those Germans of Pomerania, Brandenburg and the former states of Prussia to the east. Likewise, the Scandinavian peoples, the Picts of Scotland and other tribes of the original Britons, and the Germanic people of France, Belgium, and the Netherlands are all kin to both Anglo-Saxons and Germans. While the Slavic peoples pressed upon the German tribes from the east, and there are Slavs found among the Germans of today, through the practice of slavery, the mercantile trade, and by other means, people of Slavic lineage also exist

among the English. And while the English in the early 1900's slandered the Germans with the name of "Huns", it is not at all true that the Germans are Huns, although both groups certainly descended from the Scythians. Rather, the English themselves are Germans indeed, and no amount of propaganda – which in actuality emanates from the devious minds of the internationalist financial community in order to control nations for their own purposes – can ever separate the Englishman from the German blood which shall ever flow through his veins. Those Englishmen who deny their own heritage and origin are indeed guilty of hating their own brethren! For among the Saxon Chronicles of the ancient English kings are found many of the same ancient Germanic poems, such as the Voluspa, which are known to have been sung among Norsemen, Englishmen and Germans alike in the most ancient times.