Olaus Magnus, A Description of the Northern Peoples, 1555, Volume I

P.G. Foote

THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY

ASHGATE EBOOK

Olaus Magnus, A Description of the Northern Peoples, 1555

Volume I

Edited by
P.G. FOOTE

ASHGATE

Published by
Ashgate Publishing Limited
Wey Court East
Union Road
Farnham
Surrey, GU9 7PT
England

Ashgate Publishing Company
Suite 420
101 Cherry Street
Burlington
VT 05401-4405
USA

www.ashgate.com

Founded in 1846, the Hakluyt Society seeks to advance knowledge and education by the publication of scholarly editions of primary records of voyages, travels and other geographical material. In partnership with Ashgate, and using print-on-demand and e-book technology, the Society has made re-available all 290 volumes comprised in Series I and Series II of its publications in both print and digital editions. For a complete listing of titles and more information about these series, visit www.ashgate.com/hakluyt, and for information about the Hakluyt Society visit www.hakluyt.com.

ISBN 978-0-904180-43-5 (hbk)
ISBN 978-1-4094-3368-2 (ebk)

Transfered to Digital Printing 2010

IV

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
MPG Books Group, UK

WORKS ISSUED BY
THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY

OLAUS MAGNUS
DESCRIPTION OF THE NORTHERN PEOPLES
VOLUME I

SECOND SERIES
NO. 182

HAKLUYT SOCIETY

COUNCIL AND OFFICERS, 1995–96

PRESIDENT
Professor P. E. H. HAIR

VICE-PRESIDENTS
†Dr T. E. ARMSTRONG FBA
Professor C. F. BECKINGHAM FBA
Professor C. R. BOXER FBA
Professor D. B. QUINN HON.FBA
Sir HAROLD SMEDLEY KCMG MBE
Professor GLYNDWR WILLIAMS
Mrs SARAH TYACKE

COUNCIL *(with date of election)*
Dr JOHN APPLEBY (1995)
PETER BARBER (1995)
Professor W. E. BUTLER (1992)
STEPHEN EASTON (Co-opted)
A. J. FARRINGTON (1992)
Dr F. F. R. FERNÁNDEZ-ARMESTO (1992)
Professor JOHN B. HATTENDORF (1994)
Dr PETER JACKSON (1993)
Professor WENDY JAMES (1995)
J. C. H. KING (1991)
Professor ROBIN LAW (1993)
A. N. RYAN (1991)
Royal Geographical Society (Dr J. H. HEMMING CMG)
Mrs ANN SHIRLEY (1994)
M. F. STRACHAN CBE FRSE (1994)

TRUSTEES
Sir GEOFFREY ELLERTON CMG MBE
H. H. L. SMITH
G. H. WEBB CMG OBE
Professor GLYNDWR WILLIAMS

HONORARY TREASURER
DAVID DARBYSHIRE FCA

HONORARY SECRETARY
ANTHONY PAYNE
c/o BERNARD QUARITCH LTD, 5–8 LOWER JOHN STREET, GOLDEN SQUARE, LONDON W1R 4AU

HONORARY SERIES EDITORS
Dr W. F. RYAN
(Librarian)
Warburg Institute, University of London, Woburn Square, London WC1H 0AB
Mrs SARAH TYACKE
(Keeper of Public Records)
Public Record Office, Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU

HONORARY SECRETARIES FOR OVERSEAS
Australia: Ms MAURA O'CONNOR, Curator of Maps, National Library of Australia, Canberra, A.C.T. 2601
Canada: Professor J. B. BIRD, Department of Geography, Burnside Hall, McGill University, Montréal, Québec H3A 2K6
New Zealand: J. E. TRAUE, Department of Librarianship, Victoria University of Wellington, PO Box 600, Wellington
South Africa: Dr F. R. BRADLOW, 401/402 French Bank Building, 4 Church Square, Cape Town 8001
U.S.A.: Dr NORMAN FIERING, Director and Librarian, The John Carter Brown Library, Box 1894, Providence, Rhode Island 02912
Professor NORMAN J. W. THROWER, Department of Geography, U.C.L.A., Los Angeles, 405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90024–1698
Western Europe: PAUL PUTZ, 54 rue Albert I, 1117 Luxembourg, Luxembourg.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Mrs FIONA EASTON
(to whom queries and application for membership may be made)
Telephone 01986 – 788359 Fax 01986 – 788181
POSTAL ADDRESS ONLY: Hakluyt Society, c/o The Map Library, The British Library, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG

OLAUS MAGNUS

Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus

Romæ 1555

Description of the Northern Peoples

Rome 1555

VOLUME I

Translated by
PETER FISHER and †HUMPHREY HIGGENS

Edited by
PETER FOOTE

with Annotation derived from the Commentary by
†JOHN GRANLUND
abridged and augmented

THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY
LONDON
1996

Published by the Hakluyt Society
c/o The Map Library
British Library, Great Russell Street
London WC1B 3DG

ISBN 0 904180 43 3
ISSN 0072 9396

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is
available from the British Library

Typeset by Waveney Typesetters, Norwich
Printed in Great Britain at
the University Press, Cambridge

CONTENTS

This page has been left blank intentionally

EDITOR'S PREFACE

This translation of Olaus Magnus's *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* has been long in the making. The idea of a translation was first mooted by W. E. D. Allen, a member of the Council of the Hakluyt Society, approved by Dr Terence Armstrong, the Society's Secretary, and after recommendations sought from myself and George D. Painter of the British Museum finally accepted, with the usual provisos, as a publication commitment by the Council of the Society in November 1972.

Allen had seen from the start that some sort of scholar in the Scandinavian field should be associated with the work and had discussed the notion with me before making his formal proposal. My interest in Olaus Magnus had been roused some years earlier by the enthusiasm of my historian friend, the late Dr Björn Þorsteinsson, of the University of Iceland, and I gladly agreed to act as an adviser and as an intermediary between the project and the Swedish scholars and institutions whose cooperation would be essential for its successful completion. In the event I have survived to oversee the whole work.

Allen recruited Humphrey Higgens as the translator, a classicist who also knew Russian and had seen the White Sea in winter.[1] He had done other translation and research for Allen, and since he was a man of wide and curious learning he soon found translating Olaus Magnus a congenial task. He was provided with texts and other aids by the Department of

[1] Humphrey R. A. Higgens, born in 1908, was educated at Eton and Peterhouse, Cambridge, where he read Classics for Part I and English for Part II of the Tripos. He taught at St Paul's 1935–9, joined the army at the outbreak of the Second World War, and on the strength of his knowledge of Russian was soon transferred to intelligence work in the RNVR. He saw service as an intelligence officer and interpreter in the Atlantic, on Arctic convoys and in Murmansk, ending the war as a Lieutenant-commander. Teaching no longer appealed to him after his six years in the Navy, and he had a spell at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, when he contributed to part of the Institute's survey of the years 1939–46, translated extensively from Russian, and published papers in the *Central Asian Review*. His revision of Constance Garnett's 1924 translation of Aleksandr I. Gertsen's memoirs appeared in 1968. He was then working with W. E. D. Allen, for whose *Russian Embassies to the Georgian Kings, 1589–1605* (Hakluyt Society Publications, Second Series, 138–9, 1970), he provided bibliography and notes. He also published reviews of numerous books, on an extraordinarily wide range of subjects, in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*. When he began to translate Olaus Magnus, he was again working with Allen, now on a book on Anglo-Russian contacts through the centuries, unfinished when Allen died in October 1973.

Scandinavian Studies, University College London, of which he became an Honorary Research Fellow in 1975, and was greatly assisted by the sympathetic scholarly interest of the late J. Scott, University College Librarian at the time.

Allen had volunteered to see to the translator's remuneration, but the Department of Scandinavian Studies also obtained a three-year grant in aid from the Anglo-Swedish Literary Foundation through the good offices of the late Nils-Gustav Hildeman, then cultural attaché at the Swedish embassy in London, subsequently director of the Swedish Institute in Stockholm. This enabled us to purchase the consent of the late Professor John Granlund of Stockholm to make free use of his indispensable 1951 commentary on the *Historia*. This accord was backed by the generous permission of his publishers, Michaelisgillet, who had sponsored the Swedish translation (1909–25), now completed by Granlund's massive volume of annotation. His death in 1982 deprived us of his willing support for the translation project and further profit from his immense erudition.[1]

It was soon necessary to seek further assistance, for Allen died in 1973 and had made no provision for continuation of the project. Thanks to the interest and support of two great Swedish scholars in the field of folklore and ethnology, the late Dag Strömbäck and the late Gösta Berg, we received substantial donations from Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för Folklivsforskning, Uppsala, and Kungl. Patriotiska Sällskapet, Stockholm; and we had smaller but nonetheless welcome grants from the Dorothea Coke Research Fund of University College London.

By 1977 Humphrey Higgens was on Book 12, by 1979 on Book 16. But by then he was plagued by illness and inevitably slowed. He had a leg amputated and spent half of 1980 in hospital, but nevertheless he had finished Book 17 and begun Book 18 by the end of that year. In the circumstances, however, it was obvious that assistance would be necessary. The difficulty was resolved by happy chance.

In 1979 Peter Fisher published a highly commended translation of the first nine books of Saxo's *Gesta Danorum*, and in the same year met Dr Kurt Johannesson of Uppsala. In 1980 he asked Dr Johannesson about the possibility of undertaking an English translation of Olaus Magnus, and Dr Johannesson broached the matter at a meeting of Michaelisgillet soon afterwards. Professor Gösta Berg was present and was able to

[1] John Granlund, born in 1901, spent years as assistant keeper and keeper in Nordiska Museet, Stockholm, and became professor of Nordic and Comparative Folklife Studies in the University of Stockholm in 1955, a chair he held until retirement in 1969. Notable memorial appreciations are to be found by Sten Carlsson in *Saga och Sed*, 1983, pp. 17–18, and by Nils-Arvid Bringéus in *Rig*, 66 (1983), pp. 65–70. The latter piece (pp. 70–71) has a completion, by Ingalill Granlund, of the bibliography published for his seventy-fifth birthday, *John Granlunds tryckta skrifter 1929–1976* (Stockholm, 1976).

report on the situation of the translation work in progress in London. Peter Fisher was encouraged to get in touch with me, and we met in October 1981. He then readily agreed to undertake revision and completion of the translation as required, subject of course to Humphrey Higgens's agreement. This was easily obtained, with regret but without delay. (Humphrey Higgens never lost interest in the work, and I was able to report its progress regularly to him until his death in 1984.) In 1982 Peter Fisher began to translate the outstanding Books 18–22 – not the easiest books of the lot, full as they are of zoology real and fantastic – and on their completion to check and recast the draft English text of Books 1–17. He finished the work in 1991 – both translating and editing have, of course, been done on top of other bread-and-butter commitments – and on his way added much useful comment, on points of interpretation, sources and realia, now built into the annotation. His erudition, sense of style, energy and good will have made him an ideal collaborator. Finding, as Humphrey Higgens had done, Olaus Magnus so congenial an author, he was keen to contribute a more general discussion of aspects of the *Historia*, and this will be found in the Introduction, part III. I on the other hand seemed better placed to say something needful about the Swedish background and the career of the inseparable Magnus brothers, now found in the Introduction, parts I and II. But we have profited throughout from each other's comment and material, and on occasion it would be hard to say whose copyright exists in any given sentence or paragraph.

About the time Peter Fisher took over as translator, funds to provide even the modest fees he and Humphrey Higgens accepted were virtually exhausted. The project was saved only by another grant from Kungl. Patriotiska Sällskapet in 1981 and further support from the Anglo-Swedish Literary Foundation, 1983–5. A scholarship from the Swedish Institute enabled Peter Fisher to spend a term in Uppsala in the autumn of 1985; and the expenses of a fortnight I spent in bibliographic pursuit in Uppsala early in 1993 were met once more by the Literary Foundation, with further help from Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien. In 1989 the Hakluyt Society received a handsome subvention towards publication costs from Konung Gustav VI Adolfs Fond.

It will be crystal-clear that without our Swedish benefactors this translation would have foundered within a year of its launch. Our gratitude is boundless.

There are many individuals, other than those already named, to whom we are deeply indebted for information, advice and practical aid. We should especially wish to record our warm thanks to Professor Michael Barnes, University College London; Mr David Baxter, Anglia Polytechnic University, Cambridge; Mrs Gunnel Berg, Stockholm; the late Dr John Bernström, Stockholm; Mr Peter Cattermole, Anglia Polytechnic

University, Cambridge; Mrs Barbro Edwards, Secretary of the Anglo-Swedish Literary Foundation, London; Professor Sven Eklund, Uppsala University; Professor Lennart Elmevik, Secretary of Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien, Uppsala; Mr Paul Foote, The Queen's College, Oxford; Professor Åke Fridh, Gothenburg University; Mr Michal Giedroyć, Oxford; Dr Monica Hedlund, University Library, Uppsala; Professor Kurt Johannesson, Uppsala University; Professor Sven Lundström, Uppsala University; Dr David and Dr Ian McDougall, Toronto; Dr Thomas Munch-Pedersen, University College London; Dr Caroline Oates, Folklore Society Library, University College London; Mrs Hilary Proudfoot (née Higgens), London; Dr Mai Reinhammar and her colleagues at Folkmåls- och Folkminnesarkivet, Uppsala; Professor Peter Sawyer, Gothenburg University; Dr Göran Tegnér, Historiska Museet, Stockholm; Mrs Angela Waite, Sheffield; and Cand. mag. Þorbjörg Helgadóttir, Den Arnamagnæanske Ordbog, Copenhagen University.

Finally it is a pleasure to acknowledge the patient encouragement we have had from the late Dr Terence Armstrong and Dr Will Ryan, his successor since 1991 as Joint Secretary of the Hakluyt Society. Will Ryan has seen these difficult volumes through the press. They could not have been in more capable hands.

July 1993; July 1996 PETER FOOTE

NOTE ON THE TEXT AND ANNOTATION

No manuscript drafts of any part of the *Historia* survive. The sole authority for the text is consequently the 1555 edition, whose printing was personally supervised by Olaus Magnus. When the plan for translation emerged, this had recently been made available in two decent facsimile editions, one published in England in 1971, the other in Denmark in 1972 (see the Bibliography).

Olaus Magnus included two pages of corrigenda at the end of the original edition, and these (where not themselves erroneous) have been followed in the translation. Other misprints were pointed out by Granlund in his commentary; and only a few fairly obvious ones remained for further correction (see e.g. 1:25, n. 6, 3:16, n. 2). Passages reproduced by Olaus Magnus from his many written sources, admittedly quite often known to him only in inferior texts, are not always accurate, and in consequence it has sometimes been necessary to follow a modern edition instead of his garbled version (these and other deviations from the 1555 print are duly recorded in the annotation). There is, however, a solitary instance where he himself drew attention to an alteration in the wording of a quotation, in an extract from St Ambrose's *Hexameron* in 21:40, but it may be that his care on this occasion was due more to his respect for the author than to any particular concern for textual minutiae.

The chapters of the *Historia* have no paragraph divisions; those in the translation have been introduced by the editor.

The first aim of the annotation is to show what is original to the author and what is derived from earlier writers. Granlund's commentary has been the chief guide, and it has only occasionally been possible to add to or correct his references. They have however been modified inasmuch as we have made use, as far as possible, of classical texts in modern standard series which have English or French translations accompanying them; and in the case of Vincent of Beauvais, for example, we refer to the 1624 Douai edition instead of the rather rare 1473 and 1475 Strasbourg and 1483 and 1486 Nürnberg editions cited by Granlund. It should be noted that in following up the references given in the notes on the translated text it will always be best to have first recourse to Granlund's commentary: he often quotes the source *in extenso* and thus saves the reader from scurrying about a library.

The second aim of the annotation is to provide ample internal reference,

for it seems likely that the *Historia* will often be consulted on particular topics rather than read continuously. We trust that such cross-referencing, in conjunction with the Indexes, will be of material assistance in such a case. Again Granlund has been the chief guide.

The third aim is to offer explanatory comment, doubtless too much for some readers and not enough for others. Much of it is abridged from Granlund, who should always be consulted in the first instance. Some additions and modifications have been made for the benefit of readers unfamiliar with the Scandinavian, and particularly the Swedish, background. The material in the *Historia* is so extensive and so diverse that an attempt to cover everything of possible relevance published since Granlund's commentary appeared in 1951 has been out of the question. References have however been included to some more recent papers and monographs and especially to the invaluable *Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for nordisk middelalder*, published in twenty-two volumes by Rosenkilde og Bagger, Copenhagen, between 1956 and 1978. Many articles there supplement Granlund's information, cover a wider Nordic field and, within the limits set by the publication dates, offer more recent bibliography. Contributions on natural history by the late Dr John Bernström have proved of the greatest value, and more of them have been consulted than find specific mention in the notes. His store of learning enabled him to consider almost every aspect of any creature from eagles to ants and sea urchins, covering with equal ease, and sometimes with a certain stubborn enthusiasm, etymology, nomenclature, classification, habitat, appearance, behaviour, fable, folklore and popular medicine. His compressed studies are especially cited where they suggest novel identifications of Olaus Magnus's fish and fauna or enlarge and correct Granlund's commentary. Other notes on natural history are owed to Peter Fisher and his ornithologist friend, Peter Cattermole. In the Introduction, too, some suggestions for first further reading have been made by references to a handy one-volume English-language encyclopedia, recently published, *Medieval Scandinavia* (ed. P. Pulsiano, New York and London, 1993).

INTRODUCTION

In his title, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus*, Olaus Magnus used the word 'historia' in its primary sense of 'enquiry, description'. Some of his major preoccupations will not, however, be clearly understood without acquaintance with the history, in its more usual sense nowadays, of Swedish affairs from the fourteenth century to the lifetime of the Magnus brothers, Johannes (1488–1544) and Olaus himself (1490–1557). Part I of the Introduction is a cursory sketch of major developments and issues in the political and church history of the period (see also the tables and map on pp. xc–xciii). Part II traces the careers of the Magnus brothers. Part III is concerned with some aspects of the *Historia* itself.

I

The Nordic Countries in the Later Middle Ages

In the course of the fourteenth century dynastic accident and a variety of political factors led to a situation in which the crowns of Norway, Denmark and Sweden could be joined in a single sovereignty. Norway at that time had the Atlantic communities of Orkney, Shetland, the Faroes, Iceland and Greenland under its rule, along with mainland Østfold (now Swedish Bohuslän) to the south-east and Jämtland to the north-east (this province, ceded to Sweden in 1645, had always been part of the Uppsala diocese). Denmark comprised Jutland and the islands along with what are now the southernmost Swedish provinces of Halland, Skåne and Blekinge. (These were long claimed by the Swedes, cf. 8:38, 20:28[1] and the *Carta marina*, but were not finally conquered by them until the seventeenth century.) Lund in Skåne was the seat of the Danish archbishop; he was theoretically primate of the Swedish church, though his precedence came to be totally disregarded in Sweden in the course of the fifteenth century. To the south Denmark had close, but often uneasy,

[1] References in this form (as in the notes on the translated text) are to book and chapter of the *Historia*. Details of the authors and works mentioned in the Introduction and short titles used in the notes are to be found in the Bibliography. It is taken for granted that a reader in search of information about prominent Scandinavian individuals referred to in the Introduction will consult the national biographies (*DBL*, *NBL*, *SBL*).

relations with German and largely Germanicized Wendish neighbours, in Holstein, Mecklenburg and Pomerania. To Swedish mainland territory, circumscribed in comparison with its present extent, must be added western and southern Finland, which had been gradually but effectively attached to the Swedish crown by missionary efforts, campaigns and settlement from the twelfth century onwards. The south-eastern borders of the Swedish realm thus marched with Russian territory, as they did in the northern landmass between the Atlantic and the White Sea. These far northern expanses, sparsely populated by nomadic Lapps, had ill-defined boundaries, or none, but were early exploited by hunters, fishermen and traders from the adjacent countries, and the number of settlers from Sweden and Finland steadily increased.[1]

The Norwegians were inevitably orientated towards the Atlantic and built their trade on fish. The Swedes were rich in agriculture, fisheries and fur-bearing animals, and, exceptionally among the northern kingdoms, had immense mineral resources, especially iron, copper, and to some extent silver.[2] As a western outlet, however, they had only Lödöse on the Göta river, cramped by Norway to the north, by Denmark to the south, and easily cut off. They were thus more or less confined to the Baltic, with its drawback of winter freezing. In south-east Finland, however, they held an important strategic position. They commanded the north side of the entrance to the Ladoga region, the key to the Russian waterways, and in the course of the middle ages they made various attempts to complete their domination of that channel by establishing themselves on the opposite shore, an aim ultimately, but not lastingly, achieved by Gustavus Adolphus and his predecessors in the years around 1600. Gotland was also a significant strategic and commercial node, technically a Swedish possession (and always part of the Linköping diocese), but variously controlled from time to time by other powers, Danes, freebooters, and the Hanse League (cf. 2:24). The Danish situation was in general far more favourable, with both North Sea and Baltic access and easy control of the passage between them, the Øresund, commercially vital at any time but all the more so as the Russian trade developed.

If any sort of hegemony existed in Scandinavia in this early period it can be said that it was primarily imposed not by any state but by the Hanse network. The nucleus of the League lay in the 'Wendish towns', situated precisely in the Holstein–Mecklenburg–Pomeranian duchies south and east of Denmark, with Lübeck emerging as their principal

[1] For a recent survey (1994) of Nordic history from the ninth to the sixteenth century see Sawyer and Sawyer in the Bibliography below. On early Finland see *Medieval Scandinavia*, pp. 188–94; on Norwegian and Swedish Lapland, *KL*, IV, cols 281–7, X, cols 320–23; *Medieval Scandinavia*, pp. 379–80.

[2] On early Sweden see *Medieval Scandinavia*, pp. 629–33.

power. With their counters in all the major ports of the Scandinavian countries and the carrying-traffic almost entirely in their vessels, they dominated Baltic trade, and with their financial and naval resources they played a major part in international politics. Sweden was prosperous but commercially vulnerable. Stockholm, for example, founded towards the end of the thirteenth century, came to have a large German element in its population, chiefly among the well-to-do burghers, with their presence so marked that half the city council and its officers were statutorily drawn from their number. Swedish exports, iron, copper, furs, hides, butter, fish, train-oil, tar, were collected and consigned through these merchants to Hanse markets, especially those in Lübeck and Gdansk. Hanse merchants brought in salt, essential for preservation of the substantial summer surpluses of farming and fishing, and the cloth, wine, beer, spices, in demand among the upper classes and the commoners who could afford to follow their example.[1] By the end of the fifteenth century the population of Sweden (excluding Finland) is estimated at about 600,000, mostly scattered in rural households, though with some greater concentration in the mining districts and in and around the towns. Few of these marketplaces, some associated with a castle or cathedral, are thought to have had more than a thousand inhabitants; Stockholm with some 6000 was by far the biggest. Precarious subsistence side by side with conspicuous consumption was perhaps not as markedly characteristic of Sweden as of some other countries in the middle ages, but it certainly existed here and there.

The Union of the Scandinavian Crowns

When King Håkon V of Norway died in 1319, the heir to his throne was his three-year-old grandson, Magnus, son of Duke Erik of Västergötland. Duke Erik had been recently done to death by his uncle, Birger, king of Sweden. Birger was soon ousted, and the Swedish magnates elected the boy Magnus as his successor too. This personal union of the Norwegian and Swedish crowns paved the way for a wider union which included Denmark by the end of the century. All three northern kingdoms had developed a Council of State institution, with one or more of their number usually named to the regency during a king's minority or other interregnum. The constitution and powers of the Swedish Council were laid down in the National Law (*Landslagen*) codified about 1350.[2]

Magnus Eriksson's reign saw much turbulence, conflict within the realm and with Denmark abroad, but two law codes, one the National

[1] On the Hanseatic League and trade see *Medieval Scandinavia*, pp. 265–6, 649–53; on Swedish-Hanse relations *KL*, VI, cols 195–9.

[2] On the institution see *Medieval Scandinavia*, pp. 110–13; on its Swedish form *KL*, XIV, cols 230–33.

Law just mentioned, the other a Municipal Law (*Stadslagen*), proved solid monuments of his rule (both remained largely in force until 1736). Mecklenburg was a third power embroiled in Dano-Swedish affairs, and there were various shifts of alliance among the three states. In 1355 King Magnus assigned his throne of Norway to his younger son, Håkon, and in 1363 a diplomatic marriage was arranged for Håkon with Margaret, the ten-year-old daughter of the vigorous King Valdemar IV (Atterdag) of Denmark. It was not an alliance capable of saving King Magnus, who was deposed the following year by his dissatisfied people and spent the last ten years of his life, 1364–74, in retirement. In his place the magnates of the Council of State elected the candidate put forward by the Duke of Mecklenburg, his son Albrecht, Magnus Eriksson's nephew.

The situation changed on the death of Valdemar Atterdag in 1375, when his grandson, Oluf, was elected to the Danish throne. This five-year-old was the offspring of that diplomatic marriage of 1363 between Håkon and Margaret, and Oluf inherited the throne of Norway when his father died in 1380. Mounting opposition in Sweden to the rule of Albrecht of Mecklenburg led to influential backing for young Oluf as a dynastically suitable candidate for the Swedish throne as well. Meanwhile, throughout his minority, his mother, Queen Margaret, proved an energetic and able regent. Oluf did not live to hold three sceptres. He died in 1387, and in his place Margaret was promptly accepted as ruler of Denmark and lifetime regent of Norway. The most powerful of the Swedish nobility then swore fealty to her in 1388, and in a campaign the following year her troops and theirs defeated King Albrecht's forces and captured the king himself.

Norway was the only Scandinavian kingdom in which the principle of hereditary monarchy was firmly established. Denmark and Sweden were elective kingdoms, with the power to elect in the hands of the Council of State in each country. When Oluf died in 1387, Queen Margaret took steps to ensure the Norwegian succession. The Norwegian rules of inheritance were complex and debatable. Technically the Mecklenburg house stood closest but current hostilities ruled out a choice in their favour, and the claim of Erik of Pomerania was preferred. He was the grandson of Queen Margaret's elder sister and had some royal Norwegian blood in his veins. When Erik came of age in 1397, an inter-Nordic assembly of magnates met at Kalmar and by a joint act of homage acknowledged his sovereignty in all three kingdoms. A full treaty of union was also discussed and drafted, but whether it was formally ratified is disputed. Nevertheless, the idea, or ideal, of the union of the three Scandinavian states took firm hold and remained a political factor throughout the following century.[1]

[1] On the Union see *KL*, XIX, cols 293–300; Roberts, *The Early Vasas*, pp. 1–24.

Margaret successfully consolidated her authority in Sweden, and when she died in 1412 Erik of Pomerania's position as Union king met no early opposition. He had Baltic ambitions, however, and was at war for most of the years between 1416 and 1432, with Holstein and the Hanse his principal enemies. He made as much as he could from his control of the Øresund, strengthening fortifications and imposing tolls on shipping. But war was expensive, and the Swedes suffered from increased taxation, studied depreciation of the currency, and not least from Hanse embargoes. A recurrent cause of Swedish complaint was the appointment of Germans and Danes as officers of the crown, especially as governors of castles and their attached fiefs, which had begun under Albrecht of Mecklenburg and continued under Margaret and Erik. There was revolt in 1434. An uprising of mine-masters and workers in Bergslagen, the metal-producing districts in Västmanland and Dalarna, led by Engelbrekt Engelbrektsson, first made headway against local officials (cf. 8:27), and then, in coalition with prominent members of the nobility elsewhere in the country, and supported, it seems, by the merchant middlemen of Stockholm, they created a native régime. In theory King Erik was now confined to his constitutional rights, and in practice more or less barred from interference in internal Swedish affairs. The five or six years of the new order were full of negotiation and hostilities, but it was a moment when wider, more popular, interests than those of the magnates came to the fore and Swedish 'freedom' became a rallying cry. Engelbrekt himself, who was murdered in 1436, was remembered as a national hero, almost a national saint. In retrospect these departures have been seen as symbolized in meetings of the Estates that were held in these years. Such meetings brought together a wider consultative and enabling body, though with no regular role in affairs, in which burghers from the towns and freeholders from the countryside were represented as well as leading churchmen and the nobility. Later on meetings of the Estates were to be effectively used by national leaders in opposition to factions in favour of maintaining the Union.[1]

From 1389 to 1434 the Swedes accepted foreign rulers and their foreign agents but it was an experience which appears to have made them more keenly aware of their national identity. After the Engelbrekt episode, from 1440 down to the accession of Gustav Vasa in 1523, occupants of the Danish throne reigned as Union monarchs in Sweden only intermittently and for no more than twenty years between them. And in just those few Engelbrekt years sentiments associated with 'freedom' and 'fatherland' received an intellectual boost which was to prove a rapid formative influence on Swedish thinking and a long-lasting element in

[1] On national assemblies see *Medieval Scandinavia*, pp. 544–5; and in Sweden *KL*, XIV, cols 438–42.

policy and propaganda. In 1434, at the Council of Basel, Nicolaus Ragvaldi, bishop of Vaxjö and later archbishop of Uppsala, eloquently claimed precedence over other delegates on the grounds that his nation was the race from which the ancient Goths had sprung, his Swedish homeland their homeland, his Swedish kings descendants of their kings. The identification, which was not entirely novel, did not go unchallenged abroad, but became supremely orthodox in Sweden and suitably irksome to contemptuous Danes, whom the Swedes came more and more to regard as perfidious encroachers and oppressors. The tribal name of the 'Götar', the people of the provinces of Västergötland and Östergötland, was regularly latinized as 'Gothi', and their identity with the famous Goths, who had finally broken Rome and succeeded to her empire, was self-evident.[1] Already in 1441, the proem to a partial revision of Magnus Eriksson's National Law could include the remark, 'The name of Goth does not permanently remain in any country except in the realm of the Swedes, because it was from them that the name of Goth spread out to other lands ... '. Much subsequent historical thinking and writing developed the theme, especially with the rediscovery and publication of the works of Jordanes, Procopius and Cassiodorus. Gothic history became a substantial part of the Swedish past and a paradigm for the Swedish future. This 'Gothicism', which had no bearing on constitutional thinking, for instance, but was all built on the glory of Gothic arms and Gothic magnanimity in victory, is a main plank in the historiography of the Magnus brothers and a constant source of national pride.[2]

There was at the same time and throughout the fifteenth century a steady flow of vernacular literature in Sweden and a concomitant increase in literacy. Much that has survived is either devotional, especially from the great Brigittine monastery of Vadstena, or courtly, but there is also a notable body of rhymed chronicles, all more or less partisan, satires and political songs.[3] The written word as nationalist, anti-Union, propaganda became significant in the middle of the century, and its employment was fostered by later leaders, Sten Sture and his successors in the regency. It was also found important to tell the world of Sweden's proud history, and that could only be done in Latin. About 1470 Ericus Olai, a learned canon of Uppsala, composed his *Chronica regni*

[1] For the sake of clarity the term 'Gothi' has been rendered in two ways in the translation of the *Historia*. As a name for the ancient tribes it appears as the usual 'Goths', but as a name for Olaus's own countrymen it appears in Swedish form, 'Götar'; 'Gothic' and 'Göta' are the corresponding adjectives. But Olaus and his brother, archbishops and authors from Östergötland, have been allowed to keep their own proud style: Johannes Magnus the Goth, Olaus Magnus the Goth.

[2] On Gothicism see especially Svennung, *Geschichte der Goticismus*, Nordström, *Johannes Magnus*, Johannesson, *Gotisk renässans* (tr. Larson, *Renaissance of the Goths*); and pp. lx–lxiv below.

[3] On vernacular literature of this kind see *Medieval Scandinavia*, pp. 81–4, 633–6.

Gothorum, written in the spirit of patriotic Gothicism, but with the aim of glorifying the archiepiscopal see as well as the national past. His success was limited, but his book circulated in manuscript (it was not printed until 1613) and was often turned to by Johannes Magnus when, some seventy years later, he wrote his expansive separate works on the history of the Gothic and Swedish kings and the history of the Uppsala bishops (see p. xxxvi). That men of learning were to be found in Sweden was acknowledged in 1477, when the pope gave permission for the establishment of a *studium generale* in Uppsala (1:32). There was no need to recruit foreign scholars to open the faculties; Ericus Olai became the new university's first professor of theology.[1]

A rapprochement between the leading men of Denmark and Sweden led to Erik of Pomerania's deposition in 1439. The Danes proceeded to elect Kristofer of Bavaria as king in 1440; the Swedes followed suit in 1441. Kristofer kept his throne till his death in 1448, one of the few fifteenth-century kings to do so. The following twenty years were confused by discord within the Union and within the Swedish Council of State. The Council made one of their own number, Karl Knutsson Bonde, their candidate for the Swedish throne; the Danes elected Christian of Oldenburg. Karl maintained his position with difficulty until forced to withdraw in 1456, and Christian was duly elected king of Sweden the following year, with the accession assured in 1458 in the person of his infant son, Hans. Swedish dissatisfaction prompted the restoration of Karl Knutsson, who, with one intermission, then remained king of Sweden till his death in 1470. In the last years of his reign he seems to have been little more than a figure-head. Throughout the period authority in the country shifted among active members of the prominent noble families. Chief among them were the Oxenstierna and Vasa group, with Jöns Bengtsson of the former family, archbishop of Uppsala (1448–67), and Kettil Karlsson of the latter family, bishop of Linköping (1459–65), warlike prelates both, as key players in the confused politics of the time. Members of a newer family, the sons of Axel Pederson Thott, of Danish origin, Åke, Erik and Ivar, also emerged as great men (their mother was a daughter of King Karl Knutsson). These had more decided Union interests, for while they held land and fiefs in Sweden, their own possessions were concentrated in Danish Halland and Skåne, and they were thus vassals of both crowns. They were the power behind the throne in Karl Knutsson's last years, but closest to him at the end seems to have been a nephew of his, Sten Sture of the Natt och Dag family, who was also the son-in-law of Åke Axelsson. On King Karl's death Sten Sture was quick to proclaim that Karl had assigned crown castles and property to his care. He probably, but not certainly, acted in collusion with his

[1] See Lindroth, *History of Uppsala University*, pp. 1–14.

wife's powerful family. At least, he met no unequivocal opposition from them when he proceeded to assume the title of regent.

It was, however, an obvious moment for Danish intervention. King Christian sailed with a Danish fleet to Stockholm in 1471 and negotiations were begun. They came to nothing and the issue was settled by the battle of Brunkeberg, fought in October that year on ground now in the middle of modern Stockholm (7:15, 9:37). The groupings on either side show the complex bedevilment created by Union and internal Swedish politics. King Christian had the support of the Oxenstierna–Vasa clan and was backed by the archbishop, now Jakob Ulvsson, and the people of Uppland. Sten Sture and his ally, Nils Bosson, of the Sture kindred through his mother, had mustered men from Bergslagen and Dalarna and some from the Götaland provinces, and they had the burghers of Stockholm on their side. All the same, the decisive victory of Sten Sture and Nils Bosson was primarily remembered, and inflated, as a defeat of the national enemy, the Danes, and a triumphant step toward Swedish freedom.

The Sture Regency and the End of the Union

Sten Sture survived as *de facto* ruler of Sweden until his death in 1503. He had to contend with members of the nobility who, while not in favour of the Union, were hostile to his autocratic behaviour, and with others who were in favour of the Union and wanted King Hans of Denmark on the throne (he had succeeded his father, Christian I, in 1481). The regent also faced new problems in foreign affairs, chiefly in consequence of the Muscovites' success in investing Novgorod in 1478 and their active interest in Baltic expansion. Their Ivangorod fortress, a counter to the Swedish Narva in Estonia, was begun in 1492. A Russian-Danish alliance in 1493 posed a serious threat, and a Russian drive into south-east Finland in 1495–6 brought it home more forcibly (11:1–4). Sten Sture had successfully cultivated popular support, and a meeting of the Estates which he then summoned halted the plans of the Council of State to bring in King Hans as the Union monarch. But not for long. In 1497 the Danes invaded by land and sea and with their Swedish allies defeated Sture forces at Rotebro, between Uppsala and Stockholm, and outside Stockholm itself. The regent was excommunicated and had to compromise, with the result that Hans was acknowledged as king. Sten was however soon able to benefit from further internal dissension and he and Svante Nilsson (his father was Nils Bosson of Brunkeberg fame), recently an enemy, now an ally, soon regained all the mainland strongholds except Kalmar. Svante Nilsson, a leader for whom Olaus Magnus appears to have had especially high regard (see 16:29 and 53), became regent after Sten Sture's death. He continued the struggle against the Danes and

faced the same internal opposition from the Unionists who favoured peace and acceptance of King Hans. Kalmar city changed hands more than once in the following period, but Kalmar castle, which could be supplied by Danish shipping, withstood a Swedish siege, largely directed by the energetic and experienced Hemming Gadh, bishop-elect of Linköping, for some ten years (cf. 9:10 and 22). Svante Nilsson died in 1512, not long after Kalmar castle finally capitulated.

Erik Trolle, a prominent opponent of the Sture régime, was elected to the regency but had to yield it to Svante Nilsson's son, Sten, usually known as Sten Sture the Younger to distinguish him from the earlier regent of that name. Sten held his father's castles and had wide popular support, but he met the same opposition as before in the Council of State, now led by the young Gustav Trolle (c. 1488–1535), son of the Erik Trolle recently ousted from the regency. Gustav was elected archbishop on the resignation of the aged Jakob Ulvsson in 1514, and he was consecrated and received the pallium in Rome in 1515. He and the pro-Union party were apparently thinking in terms of war. While in Rome he obtained a papal privilege confirming the castle and fief of Almarestäk as an archiepiscopal appanage and his right to a retinue of four hundred men, ten times the normal number allowed the archbishop by Swedish law.

King Hans had died in 1513 and was succeeded by his son, Christian II, born in 1481. He took his claim to the Swedish crown seriously, launching fleets with little success against Stockholm in 1517 and 1518, capturing Öland and making incursions into Västergötland in 1519. Archbishop Gustav Trolle was now a willing ally. His hostility to Sten Sture, marked from the start, seems to have become implacable when in December 1517 the regent, with popular and Council of State approval, took and razed his Almarestäk fortress at the end of a fourteen-month siege, and forced the archbishop, now his prisoner, to resign his office. Gustav Trolle petitioned Rome and a bull threatening Sten Sture with excommunication was issued. There was no compliance by the regent, and the archbishop of Lund imposed the ban on him along with an ineffective interdict on Sweden as a whole.

In January 1520 a Danish advance was met by Sten Sture on a frozen lake in Västergötland. He was wounded in the action and died on the way back to Stockholm (cf. 11:24). The Danish army marched on to Västerås and a settlement was concluded in Uppsala in March 1520. Christian was to be acknowledged as king and Gustav Trolle as archbishop; there was to be a general amnesty and the old native constitution safeguarded. Christian reinforced his grip by concessions to the Hanse which led to an embargo on trade with Sweden, and the Sture garrison besieged in Stockholm castle capitulated in September. Preparations for Christian's coronation were made and the ceremony took place

in Stockholm on 4 November. Along with the feasting some sort of judicial enquiry was held, with Archbishop Gustav Trolle as the most prominent member of the inquest. The details are obscure but the outcome was the notorious 'Stockholm bloodbath' of 8–9 November (cf. 8:39). The dead Sten Sture was condemned as a heretic and traitor, and about ninety individuals from among the nobility, gentry and burghers were pricked off, rightly or wrongly, as guilty of the same charges and summarily executed. Two bishops were the first victims.

The 'bloodbath' doubtless offered an opportunity to pay off old scores (not all those slaughtered are known to have been close adherents of the Sture party), but if its main intention was to crush the opposition, its success was short-lived. King Christian left Stockholm in January 1521, entrusting internal affairs to the Council of State, with Archbishop Gustav and Didrik Slagheck, a ruthless German henchman of the king's, as his principal agents. Gustav Eriksson Vasa (born in 1495 or 1496) had returned to Sweden in May 1520 after a period as a hostage in Copenhagen and a sojourn in Lübeck. He was a cadet member of the old-established Vasa family; he had fought for Sten Sture the Younger and, as it happened, was the nearest adult male relative of Sten's widow, Kristina Gyllenstierna; his father, a staunch supporter of the Stures, had died in the 'bloodbath'. He proved a born leader, a skilful demagogue, and an efficient administrator with a fierce eye for detail. In response to the Union victory he sought popular support in the Sture tradition. He raised an army among the population of Dalarna and Bergslagen, descendants of the people who began the Engelbrekt uprising in the late 1430s and provided the backbone of the older Sten Sture's host at Brunkeberg in 1471. On their way south they defeated troops brought against them by Didrik Slagheck and fought victorious actions against the archbishop's musters in Uppland. Gustav Vasa's success brought in members of the Council of State on his side, while both Slagheck and Archbishop Gustav Trolle left the country, and in August 1521, little more than six months after raising the standard, Gustav Vasa was elected regent. He spent the next two years reducing the fortresses still loyal to Christian as Union king. In June 1523, after Stockholm had finally capitulated to him, he was himself elected to the Swedish throne, though not crowned until 1528. Meanwhile he set about consolidating his authority and laying hands on all the resources he could to secure it for the future. Recalcitrant members of the old Sture party and foreign hostility ensured that he did not have an easy time in the first ten years of his reign, and he had plenty of trouble after that too.[1]

[1] On Gustav Vasa and his reign see especially Roberts, *The Early Vasas*, pp. 25–198.

Gustav Vasa and the Church

The crown's finances were limited at any time and particularly straitened by war.[1] Gustav Vasa's 'liberation' campaigns were paid for only by large loans from Lübeck. The farms that made the basic units throughout the country were owned freehold or leased from crown, church or lay landlords. The royal treasury had revenues from crown land and from the taxes payable by freeholders, but the property of the nobility and the Church (chiefly lands held by bishops, cathedral chapters and monasteries), whether under direct administration or rented out, was exempt from ordinary taxation, though not entirely from special levies. The lay lords comprised groups that merged with one another in various ways. They ranged from members of an ancient ancestral nobility to a large number of men who had more recently acquired the status of *riddare* ('knight') or *väpner* ('squire'), some specifically designated as armigerous, some not. (In most cases the titles were not at first hereditary but came to be widely maintained as such.) For their exemption from ordinary taxation they owed military service, a fully armed man and his warhorse as a minimum; and anyone with the means could apply to join the ranks of this knighthood.[2] Meanwhile the freeholders and tenants were also required to keep up their arms and training in order to muster as infantry forces, particularly strong in bowmen, when need arose. They provided the victorious 'peasant armies' of the Stures and Gustav Vasa, though it was generally recognized that they could not hold their own in conditions of fifteenth-century warfare unless stiffened by heavy cavalry and the trained bands of mercenaries, expensively recruited by Swedes and Danes alike from Lübeck employ or the German principalities. Experts in siege warfare and artillery were similarly needed and also mostly recruited from abroad.

As elsewhere in Europe, castle strongholds, built with private, episcopal or crown funds, had become more and more significant in Sweden in the course of the middle ages, as key points for the defence of the realm and as residences and administrative centres for the governors of the fiefs into which the country was divided. It was constitutionally expected that these officers should be drawn from native magnates, particularly from among those who formed the Council of State. As a body the Council had become fully conscious of its own power when, through the elective constitution, it made and un-made kings from the early fourteenth century onwards. The natural aim of these great men was to curb the autocratic pretensions to which kings and regents were found always prone, but they also had private interests to maintain and improve and they generally tended to identify the welfare of the nation as a whole with

[1] On royal finances see *Medieval Scandinavia*, pp. 541–4.

[2] Characteristics of Swedish 'feudalism' are assessed in *Medieval Scandinavia*, pp. 187–8.

the fortunes of their own families. Faction within the Council was more or less inevitable. Rulers on the other hand often preferred to choose their own lieutenants, whatever the social or national origin of these might be. Since governorships gave not only authority and prestige but also opportunities for enrichment, competition was keen and criticism and complaint constantly heard. The fief-holders had various revenues from their districts, but paid no dues to the crown, and they often found it easy to acquire wealth and estates in the region under their control.

There were six mainland bishoprics and one, Åbo, in Finland. They had the Uppsala metropolitan at their head. He had the shrine of St Erik, Sweden's patron, in his cathedral, and oversaw the vast Uppsala diocese, which took in all of North Sweden, vaguely defined, and the city of Stockholm as well. The other sees were in Västerås and Strängnäs, on the north and south shores of Mälaren respectively, Linköping in Östergötland (which was at least as wealthy as Uppsala itself), Skara in Västergötland, and Växjö in Småland. Fifteenth-century bishops had incomes and responsibilities, some as fief-holders, which gave them a position on a par with that of officers of state. The archbishop was *ex officio* a leader in the Council of State, and other bishops were also regular members. The crown took a natural, and increasing, interest in episcopal elections, and nomination by Danish and German rulers of foreigners to Swedish sees bred further resentment against the Union. Some of the native bishops were ambitious members of noble families, others of humbler origin who had pursued their education in the Church and become senior cathedral clergy or monks. Of the several monasteries and convents in the country, the Brigittine foundation at Vadstena (50 km from Linköping, Olaus Magnus's home town), with the shrines of St Birgitta and St Katerina, was the best known and wealthiest, a popular goal of pilgrimage. Some of the cathedral prebends went to members of the nobility who had chosen a clerical career; others were normally allotted to graduates on their return from study at foreign universities. Such men set and maintained the educational standards which made the foundation of Uppsala University possible (p. xix above); they were also needed as secretaries and diplomats in both ecclesiastical and secular service. Relations with Rome were close and became closer, partly by Swedish attendance at councils and episcopal visits to gain papal confirmation, partly by financial involvement in Peter's pence collection and indulgence trafficking, partly by papal provision to Swedish benefices, partly by employment of Swedish clerics as procurators in Rome to serve the diplomatic interests of both churchmen and statesmen. Swedish clerics had a base in Rome in the house, still standing on the Piazza Farnese, which was St Birgitta's home from about 1335 onwards and which remained a hospice in the ownership of Vadstena after her death. It was where Olaus Magnus spent his last years and printed his books.

In the first years of his reign Gustav Vasa was saddled with debt, had vast outlay in prospect, mainly on defence, and an inadequate income from taxation and the property he had privately or officially inherited. He then looked with calculating eyes at the position of the Church in his realm. Lutheran arguments reached Sweden with the same speed as they spread elsewhere. Two of them appealed to him in particular. One was that within his country the king was the supreme head of both nation and Church; the other that within national territory people and Church must be identified as one. Therefore Church property was national property and its disposal lay with the sovereign. He first took large silver subsidies from the churches towards his Lübeck debts, and then moved decisively against their landed property, taking care to ensure that the lay lords would see their own advantage in his proposals. By 1527, when those proposals were finally ratified, there was little opposition from churchmen: the archbishop-elect, Johannes Magnus, was abroad, and other episcopal appointments were waiting on confirmation. Bishop Hans Brask of Linköping did what he could to defend the old order, but he too left Sweden late in 1527 and lived the rest of his days in Polish exile. Lutheran reform was already under way, steered by two keen and capable converts, Laurentius Andreae, Gustav Vasa's secretary from 1523, and Olaus Petri, from 1524 priest in charge of the 'Great Church', St Nicholas, in Stockholm and clerk of the city council. Olaus Petri introduced a Swedish liturgy in his Stockholm church in 1525, the year in which he also became a married priest; and he and Laurentius together produced a Swedish New Testament, printed in 1526.

Resolutions confirmed at a meeting of the Estates in Västerås in 1527 put the crown in charge of diocesan property and gave lay lords the administration of monastic estates. Of more immediate importance, they permitted the resumption by donors or their descendants of any property given to churches from 1454 onwards, a matter in which Gustav Vasa had pressing personal interests. (For Olaus Magnus's views on this sacrilege see e.g. 16:22 and 16:40.) The reappropriation went on apace, not always with scrupulous regard to the terms of the enactment. It has been reliably calculated that in 1521 taxable households made about 50% and the tax-exempt lands of the gentry about 22% of the total holdings in Sweden. Forty years later those proportions had hardly changed. In contrast, crown lands, including the Sture inheritance and the property of Gustav Vasa's family, amounted to a mere 5.5% in 1521 but had swelled to 28% by 1560. In the same period church holdings fell from 21% to zero. King Gustav's spoliation had been thorough.

By the Västerås settlement, ratified and extended by later enactments, the power of bishops was effectively broken. Otherwise reform of internal church organization and liturgy went on at a gentler pace and led to none of the 'martyrdoms' elsewhere too common in sixteenth-century

religious strife. There was abolition of holy days and other Catholic 'superstitions'; a Swedish service book was issued in 1529; a vernacular order for the mass was introduced in 1531 (and ousted the Latin order within fifteen years or so); finally, the whole Bible appeared in Swedish in 1541.

In 1531 Laurentius Petri, younger brother of the Olaus Petri mentioned above, was consecrated archbishop. (Apostolic succession was assured by the chief officiant, Bishop Peder Månsson of Västerås, who had himself been consecrated in Rome in 1524; cf. p. xxix below.) No papal approval was sought on this occasion, or when further bishoprics were filled with reform-minded clerics. Archbishop Laurentius had a long career (he died in 1573) and seems to have been influential in setting the generally tolerant tone of the Lutheran church in Sweden, which, in the end, was never swayed far from its middle way by either Calvinism or Counter-reformation. The new generation of clergy were poorer and perhaps less well educated than their Catholic predecessors, but they were more closely identified with their parishioners and represented no sort of alien authority. Loyalty to the old dispensation doubtless remained natural and strong in some individuals and communities, but opposition to reform seems usually to have needed combination with other causes of complaint before it led to open revolt, as in the 'bell' rebellion in Dalarna 1530–32, so called because of the state's confiscation of church bells for the sake of the metal (cf. 12:16), and in the Dacke rebellion in Småland in 1542, prompted among other things by further expropriation of silver vessels from churches.

II

The Magnus Brothers in Sweden

At the time of the Västerås assembly in 1527 Johannes Magnus, thirty-nine years old and archbishop-elect of Uppsala, and his brother, Olaus, thirty-seven and dean of Strängnäs cathedral, were both out of the country. They could have had no inkling that they would never see Sweden again. Yet without the challenge of Gustav Vasa's church policies and the brothers' exile in a cosmopolitan humanist world, it may be doubted whether they would, or even could, have composed the works for which they are famous. Together they put Sweden, its history, geography and people, more firmly on the intellectual map of Europe than any other authors have ever done.

Little is known of their early years.[1] They were born in Linköping (cf.

[1] Apart from state papers and the limited information to be found in the *Historia* itself, the chief sources on the personal history of the Magnus brothers are: (1)

2:31), Johannes in 1488, Olaus in 1490. Their father was Måns (=Magnus) Pedersson, a burgher of the city but, as far as is known, of no particular prominence. (It was the brothers who adopted the nominative form 'Magnus' in their latinized names, instead of the patronymic genitive 'Magni'. It smacks of pretension or ambition, or both, whether they had some earlier genealogical warrant for it or not.) The family appears to have been well connected and necessarily of some substance, for a third brother also became a priest and the three daughters were educated, one of them taking the veil, at the Dominican convent in Skänninge, a school not open to everyone. Johannes and Magnus were obviously bright boys, and the means and patronage were available to set them on a clerical career, presumably first at the chapter school in Linköping. Olaus refers to himself as a lad in his home town (6:13) and speaks of a visit he made to Oslo when he was about fifteen (cf. 2:9 and 26, 13:32). Johannes finished his schooling in Skara, Olaus in Västerås (21:48).[1] They were then preferred to cathedral prebends of the kind often reserved for promising scholars; they both had canonries at Linköping, Johannes at Skara as well. Both then studied abroad. Johannes graduated from Rostock in 1513 and afterwards spent some time in Louvain and Cologne. Olaus attended German universities from 1510 to 1517 (on his return voyage cf. 2:29). He had an early spell in Rostock but the rest of his academic itinerary is obscure and it is not known where he obtained his title of 'magister'.

On his return to Sweden, Johannes evidently enjoyed the trust and favour of his Church superiors and of the regent, the younger Sten Sture, for in 1517, aged 29, he was sent to Rome to act as Swedish emissary at the Curia. That was the year when Christian II first sent his fleet against

---

Correspondence, published piecemeal by various editors. See the titles and register given in Buschbell, *Briefe*, pp. viii–x, xix–xxiv, supplemented by the references under Johannes and Olaus Magnus in the Bibliography below. (2) Olaus Magnus's autobiographical notes, published by Hjärne in *Literära fragmenter*. These exist only in a draft, put together in 1550–51. They are brief and lay itemized emphasis on Olaus's personal expenditure 'in causa religionis' (summed by him as 4624 ducats over 30 years). His intention was presumably to give Pope Julius III, newly elected and an old friend, an orderly record of his long, self-sacrificing service. (3) The biography of Johannes Magnus completed by Olaus as a supplement to the former's *Historia metropolitanae ecclesiae Upsaliensis*, which Olaus published in Rome in 1557. See *SRS*, III:2, pp. 74–97. For substantial recent studies, from which this Introduction has greatly profited, see Granlund, 'Efterskrift' (tr. Foote, 'Introduction'); Richter, *Olaus Magnus' Carta Marina*; Grape, *Olaus Magnus*; and Johannesson, *Gotisk renässans* (*Renaissance of the Goths*).

[1] That Olaus Magnus was at school in Västerås and not merely on a visit has been satisfactorily established by Almquist, 'De enbärsplockande djäknarna'. He presents evidence to show that in Västerås and elsewhere schoolboys paid masters partly in kind by collecting nuts and berries around St Bartholomew's day, 24 August. This fits neatly with Olaus's expression in 21:48, 'more scholarium in medio Augusti'.

Stockholm in the summer, and Sten Sture forced Archbishop Gustav Trolle to resign the following winter (p. xxi above). It was also the year in which Olaus returned from his years of study in Germany. Olaus was appointed a canon of Uppsala soon after he came back.

Early in 1518 the papal legate, Giovanni Angelo Arcimboldi, arrived in Sweden (9:22). He had been appointed legate four years earlier and especially commissioned to raise money for the papacy in northern Europe. He proved an unsuccessful mediator in the Dano-Swedish conflict, but in Sweden achieved some degree of official cooperation in his main mission. One outcome of this was that Olaus Magnus was deputed to act as his sub-collector in the vast north of the country. (This is the point where Olaus's autobiographical notes begin; see p. xxvi, n. 1 above.) It can probably be taken for granted that Olaus was expected to add missionary preaching and intelligence gathering to his task of fund-raising. The observations he made in his northern travels, which included a visit to Trøndelag in Norway, are widely apparent in his *Historia*, whether he writes on Lapp marriage customs or the best way to deal with midges. He doubtless had commonplace books already full of his reading; but he must now have begun to make notes and sketches of many of the novelties he encountered.

He was away for perhaps eighteen months, spending some of the winter of 1518 across the border in Trøndelag, and reaching Tornio and going some way upstream from there in the summer of 1519, probably as far as Pello. He came south by sea that autumn (cf. 2:6).[1] We do not know where he spent the next twelvemonth, but in 1520 he was in Stockholm in time to witness the coronation of Christian II and the subsequent 'bloodbath' in early November (cf. 6: Preface, 8:28 and 39). He more than hints that he was himself in some danger at the time (8:40, *ad fin.*). He and his brother, still in Rome, had owed their employment to Sten Sture the Younger, but it is not known how far they were publicly aligned with the Sture party or what other protectors they may have had. At least for the time, however, Olaus must have obediently followed his superiors, Archbishop Gustav Trolle and Bishop Hans Brask of Linköping, in accepting the legitimacy of the régime under Christian. Within a few weeks of the 'bloodbath' he was in office as priest in charge of the Stockholm 'Great Church', probably the most influential pulpit in Sweden.[2] Nomination

[1] For attempts to reconstruct the routes followed by Olaus see Richter, *Olaus Magnus' Carta Marina*, pp. 13–22, and in more detail Grape, 'Carta Marina som resejournal'.

[2] It has been thought that Olaus Magnus was appointed to the Stockholm church before the city capitulated to King Christian, not least because he himself refers to 1520 in connection with an experience under siege (13:29). He is however not infrequently vague about dates and Carlsson, 'Olaus Magnus och hans författarskap', pp. 60–64, justifiably concludes that this is a mistake, stressing that Olaus was certainly in Stockholm 1521–2, when the city was besieged by Gustav Vasa. A date in 1520 is

and presentation to that post lay with the archbishop and the king,[1] so he was clearly found suitable by the supreme Union authorities. He served there for about two years, preaching incessantly, he says, against Lutheran heresy newly brought in by German merchants. From June 1521 the city was again under siege, now beleaguered by Gustav Vasa's forces. After eighteen months, in December 1522, the supply situation was such that some 300 non-combatants were sent away from the city,[2] and Olaus was probably among them. The garrison and castle then held out until June 1523. (Other references to Olaus's stay in Stockholm are in 7:16 and 13:29.)

That month which saw the capitulation of Stockholm and Gustav Vasa's election to the throne also saw Johannes Magnus's return from Rome, now invested with the powers of papal legate. He was promptly given the deanship of Strängnäs cathedral, but resigned on his almost immediate election as archbishop by the Uppsala chapter, in place of Gustav Trolle, who had seen no option but to follow the fortunes of King Christian in exile from Sweden. The chapter's choice met Gustav Vasa's approval. Olaus meanwhile, whose credentials were evidently unimpaired, was appointed to the vacant Strängnäs deanery but had another, more urgent, task to accomplish. He was despatched to Rome to obtain papal confirmation of his brother's election, making a winter journey and arriving about the turn of the year. He never set foot in Sweden again.

The Magnus Brothers 1523–37: Diplomacy and Exile

In response to Olaus's mission the Curia proved wary, doubtless swayed by Danish diplomacy and the canonical legitimacy of Gustav Trolle's claims to the archbishopric. Johannes was confirmed as papal legate and as administrator of the archdiocese but not as metropolitan. In this his first visit to Rome Olaus stayed in St Birgitta's hospice, and spent energy and money in obtaining the consecration of the highly-regarded scholar, Peder Månsson, priest-monk of Vadstena and the house's curator since 1508, to the see of Västerås. In the following year, 1525, Olaus arrived in

---

again implied by Olaus, but perhaps not altogether plainly, in a letter written many years later, in December 1555, to Pope Paul IV (Buschbell, *Briefe*, pp. 105–6). He describes a recent dream in which he had told the pope of a vision of the Blessed Virgin which he had experienced after the 'bloodbath' of 1520, 'cum impiissimus rex Christiernus . . . me eciam requireret ad mortem', and of his sudden escape, among warships and running into the bows and swords of the enemy. Carlsson convincingly argues that Olaus's particular reference to Holy Innocents' Day in this context and the other circumstances mentioned by him cannot be appropriate to December 1520 (when there was no siege), but only to December 1522.

[1] Dahlbäck, *Medeltidens Stockholm*, p. 138.

[2] Corin, 'Kampen om Stockholm', p. 163.

Lübeck, where he met Johannes, now employed by Gustav Vasa on treaty negotiations with the Netherlanders. Johannes returned to Sweden and made a visitation in Jämtland early in 1526 (4:19), the first by any bishop for 28 years. He was obviously in a difficult situation because of Gustav Vasa's Lutheran leanings and the claims the king was already making on Church property. Later in 1526 he was sent abroad again, and in retrospect, if not at the time, he and his brother were convinced that this was a Lutheran plot to remove his authoritative and critical voice from the domestic arena. The diplomatic business this time was in pursuit of a possible match between Gustav Vasa and Princess Hedvig, daughter of King Sigismund of Poland. Olaus had first stayed on in Lübeck, from where he undertook various missions for King Gustav, but moved to join his brother in Gdansk in the latter part of 1526.

While Church reform went steadily on in Sweden (pp. xxv–xxvi above), the Magnus brothers lived in Gdansk, still occupied at first in royal service. For Olaus it entailed a visit by way of Lübeck to the Low Countries in 1527, where he could interest himself in Dutch water-pumping methods as well as diplomacy (2:33, 6:5), and a journey into Poland in 1528, where he both discussed royal marriage prospects and inspected salt-mines (13:43). These were the last official missions of the Magnus brothers, though they continued to serve Swedish interests in various ways at least until 1534. In the winter of 1528–9 Gustav Vasa urged Johannes to return to Sweden, but made it plain that he would lose his right of domicile and his Swedish revenues if he refused. Olaus reports that he too was invited home, with the offer of the post of chancellor as inducement, but evidently on the same terms in the event of refusal. The Västerås enactments of 1527 and other 'reforms' made it impossible for the brothers to comply. Early in 1530 their income was cut off, their property confiscated, and Johannes's election to the archbishopric annulled. In 1531 Gustav Vasa saw to the election and consecration of his own candidate, Laurentius Petri, younger brother of the leading reformer, Olaus Petri (p. xxvi above). Even so, the king subsequently appears to have been under some diplomatic pressure to effect a reconciliation with Johannes and made new overtures. The Magnus brothers were not unwilling to contemplate return, but Johannes would not go home without the authority which only papal confirmation of his election as archbishop could confer. Setting off in December 1532, they made the journey to Italy, through Poland and by way of Vienna. The Curia had now abandoned Gustav Trolle, and at last, ten years after his election, Johannes was consecrated archbishop of Uppsala in Rome on 27 July 1533. They were not back in Gdansk before June 1534, partly delayed by the archbishop's illness on the way.

The brothers presumably lived on their savings and on charity in their travels and in Rome; in Gdansk they became pensioners of the Polish

archbishop and of the city council. In their Polish years they sent constant petitions far and wide to win support for Johannes's claims to his high office and reinstatement in his see. But it was not their only activity. Olaus began work on his *Carta marina* in 1527, a year after he settled in Gdansk. (Significant influences on his cartography may have been his visit to the Low Countries earlier in the year and the arrival in Gdansk later in the year of Bishop Hans Brask, also a map-maker.) Johannes completed his *Historia metropolitanae ecclesiae Upsaliensis* there in 1536.[1] Their humanist and patriotic scholarship was indissolubly linked with promotion of the Catholic cause in the northern countries. Olaus later professed that the object of the publication of the *Carta marina* in 1539 was to show pope and emperor how vast a territory had been seduced from the true faith; the Uppsala history, though not published until 1557, was still a demonstration of the unswerving loyalty of the ancient and authentic Swedish Church to orthodox belief and Rome.

The Magnus Brothers in Venice and Rome 1537–57

Early in 1537 the Magnus brothers sold up in Gdansk and set off on an arduous journey to attend a council summoned by the pope. It was expected to meet in Mantua in May that year, but, like so many other councils, was then postponed. Johannes, whose constitution seems to have been much less robust than his brother's, fell ill on the way, and they did not arrive in Rome until October. They met with a friendly reception but little practical help. The planned council had appeared to offer them a welcome opportunity to air the problems of the Swedish province – the Västerås edicts and the New Testament translation were particular monstrosities – and they now urged their concern in Rome. A committee of cardinals was appointed to hear Johannes give a three-day account of the situation, but they recommended that full consideration should await the new council, now mooted for Vicenza in May 1538. That assembly was also postponed. From September 1538 until the end of 1540 the Magnus brothers were the guests of the munificent Gerolamo Querini, patriarch of Venice. Querini provided the funds for the publication of Olaus's magnificent and influential *Carta marina* in 1539, printed from wood blocks on nine large sheets, and of the booklets in German and Italian which gave further summary explanations of the map's contents.[2] Johannes spent nine months of 1540 in composing his *Historia*

[1] Cf. p. xxvi, n. 1 above.

[2] On *Carta marina*, which Olaus himself regularly refers to as 'my Gothic map', see e.g. Granlund, 'Efterskrift', pp. 581–6 ('Introduction', pp. 20–24); Lynam, *Carta Marina*; Richter, *Olaus Magnus' Carta Marina*; and Knauer, *Die Carta Marina*. The rare pamphlets, *Ain kurze Auslegung* and *Opera breve*, are conveniently reprinted in facsimile as an appendix in Richter's book. For translations see references under these titles in the Bibliography.

de omnibus Gothorum Sveonumque regibus, ultimately published by Olaus in 1554.[1]

Pope Paul III then recalled them in haste to Rome. The Curia may perhaps have been disturbed by a letter from Johannes, written in October 1540, in which among other things he proposed that he be furnished with means to return to Germany and Poland in order to continue his Church's struggle at closer quarters. The brothers were sympathetically received on their arrival in Rome in the New Year 1541, but they were left in the dark as to the reason for their sudden summons and little was done to relieve their debt-ridden penury. After nearly a year's delay they were allotted a small monthly pension but, according to Olaus, they continued to eke out a miserable existence. Johannes's begging letters grew increasingly bitter, and his health certainly deteriorated. He died on 23 March 1544. In August Pope Paul ordered the consecration of Olaus as his brother's successor; he received the pallium in October, having been excused the customary *subsidium*, which was obviously far beyond his means. The new archbishop was then delegated, with the customary stipend, to attend the council, now summoned to meet at Trent. Olaus continued to receive the papal pension which had been allotted to his brother from the end of 1541. He must have been a prudent manager for henceforth his finances appear to have been on a secure footing. He ought to have received some income from Polish and German benefices conferred on him, but there are no records to show that he did.

Gustav Vasa had appropriated church property, encroached on episcopal authority, interfered in the order of worship, and abolished sanctioned forms of popular piety. Nevertheless, it seems that in these years the Magnus brothers must have continued to count on widespread sympathy for the 'old' and 'true' religion among all ranks of Swedish society. They doubtless misread the situation, but various events could feed their hopes. Their situation in relation to the Curia was probably eased by the spread of Lutheranism in Denmark and its official adoption there in 1537. Although Johannes and Olaus were horrified by the reformers' treatment of the Danish bishops and appealed in many quarters on their behalf, they nevertheless no longer had to contend with their traditional enemies in Rome. In 1537 King Gustav made a second marriage, and his new wife was and remained, with some modification, a practising Catholic. In 1540 Gustav Vasa arraigned the principal architects of the Swedish Reformation, Laurentius Andreae and Olaus Petri, on various treasonable charges. Their lives were spared and Laurentius went into retirement, but Olaus Petri was soon re-employed in the Stockholm 'Great Church'

[1] On this work see especially Nordström, *Johannes Magnus*, and Johannesson, *Gotisk renässans* (*Renaissance of the Goths*).

and the king's cause. In 1544 there was the Dacke rebellion in Småland, a region always regarded by Olaus as an integral part of his own 'Gothic' province of Östergötland. It was ruthlessly put down, but it had shocked the state and might be optimistically seen as a symptom of wider unrest. Nor perhaps did Olaus ever abandon hope of better things from Gustav Vasa's sons, whom he addressed from time to time in the 1550s and, indirectly but sternly, in 16:40–41.

In his *Historia* Olaus Magnus constantly denigrates the people he sees as national enemies: the Danes are faithless, greedy and ruthless aggressors (cf. pp. lii, lix), the schismatic Russians are swindlers and barbarous (cf. pp. xlvii, lix). Otherwise, however, he reserves his fiercest condemnation for the tyrannous and sacrilegious ruler on the one hand and the heretical Lutherans on the other. Christian II is his prime example of the 'rex iniustus', but he more than once elsewhere speaks of the justifiable revolt of a people against a tyrant and the miserable fate that awaits him in this world and the next (cf. e.g. 9:26, 16:19 and 42, 18:14). There is little doubt but that he had Gustav Vasa in his sights, though he refrains from naming him in these contexts (see further pp. xlvii–xlix below). Of Lutherans he willingly believed any scurrility and any imputation of cruelty, and he castigates them in the crude language that was common enough in contemporary polemic (cf. pp. xlix–xl). Again in such passages he nowhere animadverts on Gustav Vasa's specific responsibility for the promotion of these beastly heretics in the Swedish Church. Earlier, however, the uncompromising attitude which he and his brother adopted had been made clear to the authorities in Rome.

Kurt Johannesson has drawn attention to a document, unsigned but apparently in Olaus Magnus's hand, representing a memorandum drawn up for Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggio, the Curia's great expert on English and German affairs.[1] The document is not dated, but it is most reasonable to refer it to the early part of 1538, as a preliminary to the Council summoned to meet in Vicenza that summer (p. xxxi above). The announcement of Cardinal Campeggio's nomination as president of the council was made in March 1538. He was seriously ill by August, when it was decided to postpone the meeting, and he died in July 1539. The memorandum must nominally have been submitted by Johannes, but since Olaus was both his brother and his official secretary, we can safely assume that they were at one on its wording and contents. They do not mince their words,

[1] The document is printed by Johannesson, *Gotisk renässans*, pp. 286–9 (not included in *Renaissance of the Goths*), and discussed by him, ibid., pp. 193–4 (*Renaissance of the Goths*, pp. 141–2). He finds circumstantial evidence in favour of dating it to the beginning of 1545 and thinks Olaus Magnus is writing in his new dignity as archbishop. He overlooks the fact that in early 1545 Cardinal Campeggio, to whom the memorandum is addressed, had been dead for nearly six years. On Campeggio's last years see Cardinal, *Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggio*, pp. 165–82.

urgently stating the need for papal action and propounding ways and means of restoring Sweden to the fold. They seek condemnation by pope and emperor of the decisions of the Västerås assembly (1527) and the Örebro council (1529), and of the Swedish translation of Scripture, 'quae plusquam in mille locis per Hereticos corrupta est'.[1] They further propose for consideration whether or not Gustav Vasa should be excommunicated (in fact, he never was) – 'quia notorius, et pertinax, ac intolerabilis Hereticus est' – and deposed, seeing that earlier popes had taken such action against other rulers 'pro culpis longo gradu inferioribus quam sunt demerita illius Gostavi', in comparison with whom Nero and Domitian and other persecutors could be counted gentlemen. After due examination of the case of 'that Tyrant', it might be considered whether the Swedish realm should not be adjudged a perpetual possession of the Holy See; or, if the pope could not proceed in this way, whether a Christian prince might not be empowered to reduce the kingdom and retain it as his own. This last proposal was in line with the Magnus brothers' lifelong political efforts to persuade the emperor, Charles V, to attempt armed intervention in the North or, failing that, to get papal support for a Mecklenburg invasion or for claims to the Swedish crown by Frederick of the Palatinate or Sigismund of Poland.[2]

Archbishop Olaus was present at the Tridentine Council from 1545 to 1549, at its sittings in both Trent and Bologna, with two visits to Venice in 1548 in connection with an *auto da fé* of heretical books in the city. In September 1549 he was back in Rome where he now installed himself as curator of Birgitta's house. (It was in a sorry state and he had to fight a vexatious claim to the property, one of long standing which was now pursued by an Italian fellow-prelate.) Then, with astonishing energy – he was now fifty-nine and had had a hard life – he fitted up a printing shop on the first floor and saw to the hire of a printer.[3] His first publication, some prayers of St Birgitta, was issued in 1550. In October 1551 he was back in Trent for the reconvened council, which lingered on to small effect into the next year. It was at this gathering that he met the recently elected Archbishop Adolf von Schaumburg of Cologne, to whom, four years later, he dedicated his *Historia*. Archbishop Adolf was a zealous

[1] In Olaus's biography of Johannes this same expression is twice used of the Swedish New Testament translation of 1526; see *SRS*, III:2, pp. 81, 84. Other matter in the memorandum is echoed in his account of his brother's representations to the committee of cardinals late in 1537 (p. xxxi above).

[2] Johannesson, *Gotisk renässans*, p. 194 (*Renaissance of the Goths*, p. 142).

[3] For the *Historia de omnibus Gothorum Sveonumque regibus* and his own *Historia* (printed 1553–4) Olaus employed Joannes Maria de Viottis from Parma; for the Uppsala history and the Revelations of St Birgitta (printed 1556–7) Franciscus Mediolanensis from Ferrara. According to the inventory made after Olaus's death, he had two printing presses in his quarters in Birgitta's house. On the various prints issued by Olaus see Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi*, II, 205–16, 221–7, 229–30, 234–7.

supporter of Charles V, and Olaus very probably hoped that he would engage the emperor's interest in Counter-reformation in the North.

The years at the Council of Trent were fruitless for Olaus Magnus's diplomatic efforts on behalf of the Catholic cause in Sweden, but not for his work as an author. He had the leisure to put his mass of material into order and to add to it. (In Rome he must always have had access to books, but there were choice libraries in Trent and Bologna as well.) Among his fellow-prelates he seems to have had justifiable status as an expert on North and Central European affairs, and he enjoyed the esteem and friendship of numerous senior churchmen in Rome and elsewhere. His acquaintance and correspondence with a wide circle of humanist scholars, already begun in his years in Gdansk, kept him abreast of new learning, though, apart from a reference to Budé (8:18) and quotation from More's *Utopia* (8:32–33 and 38), he shows little sign of familiarity with recent French and English writings. New learning seems to have been always welcome to him, as long as it did not affect orthodoxy in any way. He was polite, fulsomely so in the style of the time, to the College of Cardinals and to his Italian hosts in general, though cynical enough about grasping and dilatory churchmen in and about the Curia and not always able to hide his disapproval of the moral laxity he saw around him. (He could blame a new Swedish taste for shameless depiction of the naked human body on the loose living encouraged by Lutheranism, but it was harder to impute the same cause in Rome.) He was hostile to anything he saw as meretricious, but by the standards of his time in Italy he may well have appeared straightlaced and old-fashioned. He adhered rigidly to unalterable ideals: Church unity and Church liberty, both ensured by obedience to the successors of St Peter.

Olaus Magnus's Counter-reformation zeal could build on his pride in the glorious Gothic past of his nation and his confidence in the character of his 'Gothic' countrymen. His 'Gothicism' was not merely antiquarian: he could see it as the destiny of the modern Goths of Sweden to turn back the tide of Lutheran corruption that had flooded into the universal Church. He looked to Germany for allies, where men were born of kindred stock. He admired and often cited German historians and he supported the notable scholar and polemicist, Johannes Cochlaeus (1479–1552), with cash and encouragement. Between them they could extirpate heresy and restore stability to the world, even create a new Rome, as their Gothic ancestors had done centuries before.[1]

Of course, he did not see his ideal realized, but the last five years of his life were still a time of triumphant achievement, when he ensured dissemination through the printed word of the 'truth' which he and his

[1] Johannesson, *Gotisk renässans*, pp. 202–5 (*Renaissance of the Goths*, pp. 150–53).

brother had steadfastly stood for. In 1553 he published lives of St Birgitta and her daughter, St Katerina of Vadstena. In January 1554 Johannes's *Historia de omnibus Gothorum Sveonumque regibus* was printed and in October of the same year Olaus's own *Historia* was ready from the press, though not issued until January 1555. In 1557 Johannes's history of the Uppsala see appeared, the last third of it taken up by Olaus's account of his brother's career, with numerous letters from and to him included. And when Olaus died on 1 August that year his print of the *Revelations* of St Birgitta was almost complete. His attention to the life and works of that compelling 'Gothic' lady, the only Swedish saint of international renown, was appropriate, for reasons of both piety and policy. She had been born and bred and was now enshrined in his own home diocese of Linköping; and had she not in her time preached rigorous and militant sermons, backed by the authority of heavenly visions and voices, to king, emperor and pope alike? Johannes's work on the Gothic and Swedish kings was accepted as authoritative until the pendulum swung with the discovery of Icelandic 'sources' and the application of different standards of criticism a century or so later. But none of the books Olaus published served his aims of education and propaganda better, or has lasted longer in general esteem, than the lengthy and lively account of his homeland, and of much other lore besides, here translated complete into English for the first time.

III

The Inception of the *Historia*

Olaus Magnus's *Carta marina*, published in 1539, includes a brief Latin commentary which ends with the author's assurance that he will supplement it with 'books' offering more explanation and further describing northern marvels. Olaus repeats this undertaking in the two pamphlets elucidating the map (p. xxxi above), printed soon after it appeared, and in the Preface to his *Description of the Northern Peoples*, published sixteen years later, he reminds his readers that he has now kept his word. His programme was thus already clear in his mind: map and description went hand in hand, as he may be said to have visibly demonstrated by adopting intact no fewer than 124 of the map's illustrations for use in the *Historia*. He had fulfilled his part of a plan which we may surmise he and his brother Johannes had made early in their careers: a map and a full description of the contemporary North were to complement works by Johannes on the glorious past, a history of the Gothic kings and their successors in Sweden and of the metropolitan see of Uppsala.

Obviously both the brothers had read widely and deeply during their years of study abroad, and that Olaus made notes and sketches on his