Notes and Documents

NOTES ON OLD-ENGLISH HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY.

I. *The Battle of Ringmere.*

FLORENCE OF WORCESTER, *sub ann.* 1010, records that the Danes *post Pascha East-Angliam advecti, et prope Gipeswic navibus egressi ad locum, qui Ringmere dicitur, ubi ducem Ulfketelum cognovere cum exercitu consedissee, perrexerunt, et durum cum eo proelium, tertio nonas Maii, commiserunt.* He then relates that the East-Anglians fled, but that the men of Cambridgeshire long resisted, and that the Danes after their victory ravaged East Anglia for three months, and burned Thetford and Cambridge. With the exception of the mention of Ringmere, the passage is practically a translation of the entry in the Chronicle under this year. The Norse sagas record a battle against Ulfketil at a place called *Hringmaraheiðr*, which, no doubt, represents an O.E. **Hringmere-hæð*, 'Ringmere-heath.'¹ They, however, place the battle at a somewhat later date. I have suggested that Florence derived his *Ringmere* from Danish sources, whence he seems to have obtained other information.² It is not impossible that Florence, knowing the Norse account of the defeat at *Hringmaraheiðr* of Ulfketil, who is always associated with East Anglia in the sagas, may have erroneously transferred the name of Ringmere to the battle that he found recorded in the Chronicle in 1010. This is a possibility that has escaped Freeman,³ who is here, as elsewhere, too sweeping in his condemnation of the sagas.

My present object, however, is not to discuss the battle, but its site, concerning which Freeman makes no suggestion. The Roman road from Colchester to near Brancaster, part of which still exists under the name of 'the Peddars' Road' ('peddlers' road'), lies a few miles to the west of Ipswich. A little more than a mile to the

¹ The O.N. *hringr* is, of course, historically the same word as the O.E. *hring*, and *heiðr* similarly corresponds (except in gender) to O.E. *hæð*. O.N. *marr*, gen. *marar*, 'sea,' and O.E. *mere*, 'lake,' also agree historically.

² *Crawford Charters*, ed. Napier and Stevenson, p. 144, note 3.

³ *Norman Conquest*, i. 346-7. In the *Crawford Charters*, p. 123, note 1, I have suggested that the Wulfric, son of Leofwine, who fell in this battle of 1010, was an Essex man, the grandson of one of the heroes of Maldon, and not, as Freeman states, Wulfric (Spott), the great Mercian noble who founded the abbey of Burton-on-Trent.

west of this road, as it crosses Roudham Heath, near Thetford, is a 'Ringmere Pit,' in the parish of East Wretham. It lies between Croxton Heath, Roudham Heath, and Bridgeham Heath. We have here, I think, the heath of the Norse *Hringmaraheiðr*. On the old Ordnance map Ringmere Pit is depicted as a circular lake or mere at the bottom of a circular pit of considerable size. This round pit and mere explain its name. Adjoining it is a similar pit and mere known as Langmere, and there are other meres in the vicinity.

The agreement in name and situation with Florence's *Ringmere* and the *Hringmaraheiðr* of the sagas is so remarkable, and a 'ringmere' is so unusual a geographical feature, that I think we may safely conclude that Ulfsketil's defeat occurred near Ringmere Pit. The existence of this name in a heathy country justifies the Norse name *Hringmaraheiðr*, and is a remarkable proof that the sagas, despite their frequent chronological displacements and contradictions, contain valuable independent information concerning our early history that requires more careful study than has been generally accorded to them.

II. The Site of Brunemue.

The Old English Chronicle, *sub ann.* 1066, records that Earl Tostig, after Harold's accession, came from beyond sea into the Isle of Wight with his fleet, and that he ravaged the coast between there and Sandwich, and that, upon hearing of Harold's approach, he went north into the Humber and ravaged Lindsey. Geoffrey Gaimar, who in several instances seems to have used sources no longer available to us, states that Tostig, with a force principally Flemings, arrived at Wardstane, or Waldestane (in the Isle of Wight?), that he went thence to the Isle of Thanet, where Copsige joined him, and that they went to Brunemue or Brunesmue, ravaging the country about there, and that they thence came to the Humber and ravaged Lindsey.

- Done vint Tost od mult grant gent,
 5160 Tut li plusur furent Flemeng;
 A Wardstane [*v.l.* Waldestane] sunt arive:
 Tut cel pais unt fort praie,
 E mult homes i ont oscis.
 En Taneth vont; en cel pais
 5165 Encontre lui Copsi la vint,
 Un son baron, ki de li tint;
 Il vint del isle de Orkeneie,
 Dis e seit niefs out en baillie.
 Puis corurent en Brunemue [*v.l.* Brunesmue],

5170 Cele contre out confondue.
 Grant damages e grant dolurs
 Firent iloc e unc aillurs.
 Puis vont en Humbre od lur navire,
 Grant prais ont pris en Lindeseie.

The *Brunemue* of this interesting passage has not been identified by the editors of the 'Monumenta Historica Britannica' or by Mr. C. T. Martin, the editor of the Rolls Series edition. Freeman does not refer to Gaimar's account, and therefore does not mention Brunemue. The name is a good English name, slightly disguised by the Romanic dropping of the intervocalic *ð*, whereby *mue* stands for *mūðe*, as in many English names in *mūða*.⁴ As the first *e* cannot well be mute, we may restore the name to the O.E. *Brūnnan-mūða*, 'the river mouth of Brūnna' (a man's name). The name cannot, I think, be derived from O.E. *burna*, 'a bourn.'

The name occurs as *Brunnemuth* in 1301, when it was charged jointly with 'Skottermuth' with the provision of one ship for the Scotch war.⁵ In the index to the calendar of the Patent rolls it is suggested that these places are in Lincolnshire.⁶

The clue to the situation of *Brunnemuth* is supplied by the Ramsay Chartulary. In a thirteenth-century inquisition relating to Holm (that is, Holme-next-the-Sea, near Hunstanton, co. Norfolk) it is recorded that certain tenants *facient tria averagia* [carryings] *per annum de Brauncestre, vel de Ringstede, ubicunque dominus voluerit, inter Brunnemuth et Buggemuth ad remotius*.⁷ Similarly, in an inquisition concerning Ringstead, which adjoins Hunstanton, we read that a tenant *faciet tria averagia per annum, quamdiu bladum de Ringstede duraverit, ubicunque dominus voluerit, inter Brunnemuth et Buggemuth*.⁸ Here Brunnemuth and Buggemuth⁹ are clearly the limits of the distance in opposite directions. From the geographical position of Holme and Ringstead these limits must be respectively on the north coast of Norfolk and its west coast, opposed to the Wash. In other words, one is to the east of Holme and Ringstead, and the other is to the south of these villages. One of the tenants in Brancaster was bound to carry corn to the mill of Holme or to Burnam, *ad portum Brunagge ad remotius*. As Holme

⁴ Cf. Anglo-French *Portesmus*, *Tinemue*, &c.; Johannes Westphal, *Englische Ortsnamen im Altfranzösischen* (Straasburg, 1891), § 27, 2.

⁵ *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 29 Edw. I, p. 583.

⁶ In justice to Mr. Black, the editor, I think I ought to state that I am responsible for this erroneous suggestion, which is based upon the juxtaposition of Brunemue and Lindsey in Gaimar, and upon the fact that there is a Scotter in Lindsey, which is, however, some distance from the Trent or Humber.

⁷ *Cartul. Mon. de Ramseia*, i. 402.

⁸ *Ibid.* i. 406.

⁹ Buggemuth I am unable to identify, though it should, I think, be one of the mouths of the Babingley River, near Castle Rising. As the *Bugge* of this name represents so clearly O.E. *Bucgan*, the gen. of the female name *Bucge*, it supports the view that *Brunemue* is also from a personal name.

is to the west of Brancaster, it follows that *Burna* must be to the east. Turning in that direction, we find the villages of *Burnham Deepdale*, *Burnham Norton*, *Burnham Sutton*, *Burnham Ulph*, *Burnham Westgate*, *Burnham Overy*, and *Burnham Thorpe*, and a creek or creeks known as *Burnham Harbour*. These villages and hamlets adjoin one another, and are, no doubt, to be regarded as divisions of one original estate or manor, according to Professor Maitland's interesting suggestion.¹⁰ His explanation of the origin of these adjoining homonymic villages with surnames is strongly supported by the fact that these Burnhams, with the addition only of North and South Creak and Waterden, constitute the hundred of Brothecross. Some of them appear in Domesday as *Brunaham* and *Bruneham*.¹¹ These forms represent an O.E. **Brünnan-lām*, and they are therefore derived from the same man's name as *Brünnan-mūða*.¹² Most of these Burnhams are by the side of the river Burn, which runs from North and South Creak into Burnham Harbour, and it therefore seems evident that Brunemue or Brunnemuth was somewhere on Burnham Harbour, perhaps at Overy Staith.¹³ The *Skottermuth*, which had to provide a ship jointly with *Brunnemuth* in 1301, was probably on the adjoining harbour of Brancaster. Its name is perhaps preserved in 'Scott Head,' the name of a sea-girt ridge of land off Brancaster and Burnham Deepdale.

The proximity of Brunemue and Washingborough, co. Lincoln, suggests the question, 'Did Gaimar derive the information in the passage under consideration from his lost English "book of Washingborough"?'

De Wassingbure un livre Engleis
U il trovad escrit des reis.¹⁴ (6470-1)

Ramsey Abbey had possessions in the Burnhams, but if the abbey had any record of Tostig's ravages there we should, I think, have found some mention of them in Henry of Huntingdon, who, from his witnessing Ramsey charters, must have been well acquainted with the abbey.

W. H. STEVENSON.

¹⁰ 'The Surnames of English Villages,' *Archæological Review*, iv. 233.

¹¹ D. B. ii. 169, 170 b, 179, 183 b, 215 b, 237, 262.

¹² In 1226 the king ordered the sheriff of Norfolk to make inquisition concerning the liberties enjoyed by William le Valtre, on the day when he set out for Jerusalem, 'in the land of Burnham and in the sea and port of Brunnemuth and in the market of Burnham;' *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, ii. 150. Here *Burnham* is differentiated by metathesis from *Brunnemuth*, in such a way as to favour a derivation from O.E. *burna*, 'a bourne.' The river Burn, however, seems to be too large to have been called a *burna*, and we should hardly expect that word to be used as a proper name without some qualification being added.

¹³ *Staith* is the O.N. *staða*, 'a landing-place' (O.E. *stað*, German *staden*, 'bank').

¹⁴ It has been suggested that this 'Book of Washingborough' was the O.E. translation of Bæda's 'Ecclesiastical History' ascribed to King Alfred. The mention in it of 'all the emperors of Rome' rather favours the view that it was Alfred's translation of Orosius, but I advance this suggestion with great hesitation.