

Scandinavian Chronicle: From Geology to History or From Stones to Mankind

Joao Vicente Ganzarolli de Oliveira^{1*}

¹Senior Professor and Researcher of the Tercio Pacitti Institute of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

**Corresponding Author: Joao Vicente Ganzarolli de Oliveira, Cidade Universitária, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Email: jganzarolli@usa.com*

ABSTRACT

This article address Scandinavia both as a geological and a historical entity. Being part of Europe, Scandinavia plays an important role in what we may call the creation of the Western Culture. Endangered by alien and destructive forces, Scandinavian society – the same applying for Western culture as a whole – needs to defend itself against its visible and invisible enemies; it is a matter of survival. The Author thanks Mr Eduardo Mendes Cavalcante for his important collaboration.

Keywords: Scandinavia, Europe, Vikings, Geology, History.

The past has infinite value if one learns from it.

Ken Hensley

We are not permitted to choose the frame of our destiny.

But what we put into it is ours.

Dag Hammarskjöld

AN INTRODUCTION LONGER THAN I EXPECTED IT TO BE

As it happens with “Middle East”, the expression “Scandinavia” is a vague one.¹ Geographically and culturally speaking, it is common to associate – and even confuse – Scandinavia either with the Scandinavian Peninsula or the Nordic countries, also called “the Nordics”.²

Located in the northern part of the so called Old World, the Scandinavian Peninsula is the largest peninsula of Europe – being she, in turn, the largest peninsula of Asia. In fact, “In the beginning, there was no Europe. All there was, for five million years, was a long, sinuous peninsula with no name, set like the figurehead of a ship on prow to the world’s largest land mass. To the west lay the ocean which no one had crossed.

To the south lay two enclosed and interlinked seas, sprinkled with islands, inlets, and peninsulas of their own. To the north lay the great polar ice-cap, expanding and contracting across the ages

like some monstrous, freezing jellyfish. To the east lay the land-bridge to the rest of the world, whence peoples and all civilizations were to come.”³



Figure1. Fantoft Stave Church (Bergen, Norway)

Photo taken by the Author

Located in Northern Europe, as we were saying, the Scandinavian Peninsula roughly comprises the

Swedish and Norwegian mainland, as well as the northwestern part of Finland. Nevertheless, she excludes Denmark, the southernmost of the Scandinavian countries, which also happens to be located in a peninsula, namely that of Jutland; on the other hand, the Scandinavian Peninsula includes Finland, which is not a Scandinavian country, *stricto sensu*, which is the connotation adopted in this article.

As for the Nordic countries (commonly known as *Norden* by their inhabitants), the list is long: besides Denmark, Norway and Sweden (the Scandinavian countries properly said), the concept includes Finland, Iceland, as well as Greenland and the Faroe Islands (both part of the Kingdom of Denmark), let alone the Åland Islands and Svalbard and Jan Mayen archipelagos (possessions of Finland and Norway respectively) – not forgetting: a) oftentimes the Norwegian Antarctic territories are not considered members of the Nordic countries, given their geographical location, literally at the other end of the world; b) Greenland and more than half of Iceland are situated on the North American Tectonic Plate, what makes of Reykjavík an American city, in geological terms, notwithstanding the fact of being the capital of an European country, both in cultural and political terms.

Those being the facts and the circumstances, it is about time to give a full stop to this Introduction and start talking specifically about the three only countries that form Scandinavia, in the local usage you and I decided to adopt, namely Denmark, Norway and Sweden.



Figure2. Western Fjord (Bergen, Norway)

Photo taken by the Author

WHO ARE THE SCANDINAVIANS?

Judging from the fact that the Late Latin word *Scandinavia* stems from Proto-Germanic **skadinawjo* = Skadia (term of uncertain origin) + **aujo* (“thing on the water”), we are led to believe that the region was an island by the time it received a name; undeniable it that “the coastlines of the Baltic Sea has changed dramatically since the end of the Ice Ages”.⁴ In our current geological epoch – no matter whether we call it Holocene” or Anthropocene⁵ –, Scandinavia is the northernmost part of the European continent, bounded by the North Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, the Baltic Sea, as well as by Russia, Finland and Germany. Her area of c. 1.155,000 sq km, almost a third of them above the Arctic Circle (66° 33’), makes Scandinavia twice as big as France. Denmark – whose Northeast part appears to touch the south of Sweden, but it does not – is a natural bridge that connects Scandinavia to Central and West Europe.

Written geo-cultural descriptions of Scandinavia can be traced back to Roman (Tacitus, Pliny the Elder) and Alexandrian times (Ptolemy). Often inaccurate and hard to decipher, their works leave us with little but conjecture about the Scandinavian people, as well as the Norwegian fjords, the Scandinavian mountains, the flat, low areas in Denmark and the archipelagos of Norway and Sweden, famous for her many lakes and moraines, relics of the Ice Age, ended c. ten millennia ago – not to mention the endless vastness of the Arctic, alien frozen world shared by three continents (Europe, North America and Asia), partially covered by a “tapestry of taiga and tundra”, as Glenn Gould said about Northern Canada.⁶ Germanic and Sámi sources throw considerable light on Scandinavia’s geography, history and culture as well.⁷ Nonetheless, what we know about her is next to nothing if compared to what we do not know. Still not clear enough, and therefore opened to debate, is to what extent Scandinavian peoples can be considered autochthonous, so to say; it cannot be ruled out that the Scandinavians descend from the Basque people – whose origin is, by the way, also shrouded in mystery.⁸

What we do know is that the North Germanic peoples had their origin in Southern Scandinavia, during the Nordic Bronze Age (c. 1700–500 B.C.), and those were the main ancestors of

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nowadays Swedish, Norwegian and Danish peoples. In the 8th century A.D., many of those Northern Germanic tribes started to expand in all directions, inaugurating the so-called Viking Age.⁹ In the second half of the 11th century, Christianization brought an end to the Vikings' brutal belligerency, just as she did, some decades before, with the Magyars, who finally settled down in what is now Hungary; at more or less the same time, thanks to the Crusades and the Spanish *Reconquista*, Muslims were detained in the East and in the West, respectively.

That was the *light in the darkness* – achievements such as Universities, Renaissance, Scientific Revolution, Freedom of Speech, Democracy and so on would never have been achieved (let alone thrived) without the Crusaders, heroes (and many times martyrs) that saved Europe from being totally enslaved by Islam¹⁰ – that made it possible for Europe to recover from the fall of the Roman Empire and overcome her consequent historical backwardness – and in some cases, pure and simple chaos – caused by more than 500 years of relentless aggressions from invaders (all of them ultimately assimilated and pacified, being Muslims the one and only exception).



Figure3. Copenhagen (Denmark)

Photo taken by the Author

CONCLUSION: A MATTER OF SURVIVAL

In the specific case of Scandinavia, Christianization was the unifying element that allowed Denmark, Sweden and Norway to come into existence between the 10th and the 13th centuries. Borders between them were modified several times throughout history; Sweden, for instance, had even an empire during the 17th and

early 18th centuries, which allowed her to exercise territorial control over much of Finland and the Baltic region, in addition to parts of Norway, Russia and Germany.

Not spared either by the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) nor by the First and Second World Wars, Scandinavia, nonetheless, has become a very wealthy land, not only in economic, but also in artistic and cultural terms.

It would be difficult to find a branch of art or culture in which Scandinavians have not stood out; the list of great names seems just endless (Dag Hammarskjöld, Karen Blixen, Edvard Munch...). Last December, two Scandinavian girls (Louisa Vesterager Jespersen and Maren Ueland) were in the headlines, due to their assassination in Morocco: the fact of being “enemies of Allah” was one of the “justifications” for their kidnapping and decapitation.¹¹ Menaced by nihilism, atheism, materialism, Satanism, political correctness and “silent Islamization”¹², Scandinavian culture (together with Western culture as a whole) runs the risk of being annihilated before the end of this already tragic 21st century. It is high time for us all to abdicate from leaving things alone and struggle for our freedom and – why not to say? – for our very survival. To quote an old truth, “*Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty*”.



Figure4. Lund (Sweden)

Photo taken by the Author

REFERENCES

- [1] See, for instance, João Vicente Ganzarolli de Oliveira. “Middle East: a Few Remarks on Geography, History and Art”, in *Open Access Journal of Science*, v. 2, issue 3, June 2018.

- [2] “The term *Scandinavia* in local usage covers the three kingdoms of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. The majority national languages of these three belong to the Scandinavian dialect continuum, and are mutually intelligible North Germanic languages (David Landes et alii. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scandinavia>).
- [3] Norman Davies. *Europe, a History: a Panorama of Europe, East and West, from the Ice Age to the Cold War, from the Urals to Gibraltar*, Nova York, Harper Perennial, 1998, p. XVII.
- [4] <https://www.etymonline.com/word/scandinavia>.
- [5] “The Holocene began approximately 11,650 years before present, after the last glacial period, which concluded with the Holocene glacial retreat” (John Inge Svendsen et alii <https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Holocene>). “The Anthropocene is a proposed epoch dating from the commencement of significant human impact on the Earth’s geology and ecosystems, including, but not limited to, anthropogenic climate change. (...) Various different start dates for the Anthropocene have been proposed, ranging from the beginning of the Agricultural Revolution 12,000/15,000 years ago, to as recent as the Trinity test in 1945. (...) the ratification process continues and thus a date remains to be decided definitively, but the latter date has been more favoured than others. The most recent period of the Anthropocene has been referred to by several authors as the Great Acceleration during which the socioeconomic and earth system trends are increasing dramatically, especially after the Second World War” (Noel Castree et alii. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthropocene>).
- [6] Glenn Gould’s *The Solitude Trilogy*, Part 01: The Idea of North (1967), in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwlbUdbVqQE>.
- [7] “The Sámi people (also spelled Saami) are a Finno-Ugric people inhabiting Sápmi, which today encompasses large parts of Norway and Sweden, northern parts of Finland, and the Murmansk Oblast of Russia. The Sámi have historically been known in English as Lapps or Laplanders. Sámi ancestral lands are not well-defined. Their traditional languages are the Sámi languages and are classified as a branch of the Uralic language family” (Przemyslaw Urbanczyk et alii. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sámi_people).
- [8] See David Landes et alii. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scandinavia>; and Mark Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*, London, Vintage Books, 2000, pp. 3, 71-72 et passim.
- [9] “The Viking Age (793–1066 AD) is a period in European history, especially Northern European and Scandinavian history, following the Germanic Iron Age. It is the period of history when Scandinavian Norsemen explored Europe by its seas and rivers for trade, raids, colonization, and conquest. In this period, the Norsemen settled in Norse Greenland, Canada, Faroe Islands, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Normandy, Scotland, England, Wales, Ireland, Isle of Man, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Canada; as well as Sicily and Byzantium” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viking_Age; see also Jonathan Bardon. *A History of Ireland in 250 Episodes*, Dublin, Gill & Macmillan, 2009, p. 39 et passim).
- [10] See Thomas Woods, Jr. *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization* (with new Foreword by Cardinal Antonio Cañizares), Washington, Regnery, 2012, p. 9sq; and Robert Spencer. *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)*, New York, Regnery, 2005, p. 3sq
- [11] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murders_of_Louisa_Vesterager_Jespersen_and_Maren_Ueland
- [12] See Udo Ulfkotte em *Mekka Deutschland. Die stille Islamisierung*, Rottenburg, Kopp, 2015, p. 10 et passim.

Citation: Joao Vicente Ganzarolli de Oliveira, "Scandinavian Chronicle: From Geology to History or From Stones to Mankind ", *Annals of Geographical Studies*, 2(2), 2019, pp. 1-4.

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