Although Norway and Sweden have been mentioned only briefly in previous chapters, they had a lengthy history of interaction with each other as well as with Denmark. During the expansion of Danish royal power during the reigns of Haraldr Gormsson and Sveinn Tjúguskegg southern Norway appears to have come under Danish authority.\(^1\) The largest of all the excavated Trelleborg-forts is at Aggersborg, on the northernmost tip of Jylland. This had some function controlling the population within the vicinity of the fort, but its size argues that it also had a wider function, perhaps exerting royal influence over the trade routes around the head of the peninsula of Jylland and northwards up the Oslofjord.\(^2\) Furthermore, Schia has built a case that the earliest urban layers of Oslo were founded as an administrative centre by Haraldr Gormsson.\(^3\) This would accord with the statement of Haraldr’s runestone at Jelling, that he had “won all Denmark for himself and Norway”, albeit with some allowance made for exaggeration.\(^4\) The northern coastal regions of Norway were under the authority of the jarls of Hlaðir from 961 to c. 995. Relations between the jarls of Hlaðir and Haraldr Gormsson were close, and Jarl Hákon brought Norwegian military forces to the Danish king’s aid on at least one occasion in the late tenth century.\(^5\) Additionally, members of the jarl’s dynasty

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1. Note, however, that the record of the Royal Frankish Annals, s. a. 813 (\textit{Annales Regni Francorum et annals Q. D. Einhardi}, ed. G. H. Pertz (Hannover: Hahnsche, 1895), 138–9) implies that some area of southern Norway (most probably Vestfold) had been under Danish control in the ninth century also.


4. \textit{Danmarks Runicenskrifter}, no. 42 (text volume, 79); “ias saR . uan . tanmaurk / ala . auk . nuruiak”.

sought refuge in the Danish court during the periods of exile which were forced on the jarls by the Norwegian rulers Óláfr Tryggvason and Óláfr Haraldsson. Sveinn Tjúguskegg appears to have consolidated his father’s relations with the jarls by marrying his daughter to Eiríkr, Jarl Hákon’s son. Additionally, although the evidence is circumstantial, Sveinn appears to have held some form of overlordship over the Swedish king, Óláfr skötkonungr.⁶

The Beginnings of Cnut’s Interaction with Norway and Sweden: The Period up to and including Helgeå

Cnut appears to have tried to perpetuate his father’s relationships with rulers in Norway and Sweden, but with little success. Adam of Bremen notes that in preparation for the reinvasion of England, Cnut “entered into a pact with his brother Óláfr…who reigned in Sweden”.⁷ However, Óláfr skötkonungr appears not to have held to whatever was agreed in the pact and opened diplomatic negotiations with the enemies of the Danish king, petitioning Archbishop Unwan of Hamburg-Bremen for some ecclesiastical representation.⁸ This was granted by Hamburg-Bremen, and Bishop Thorgaut was established in a see based on the settlement of Skara. Óláfr skötkonungr also seems to have entered into some form of alliance with the Norwegian king, Óláfr Haraldsson, at this time, resulting in the marriage of Óláfr skötkonungr’s daughter Ástríðr to Óláfr Haraldsson c. 1019.⁹ This defiance of Danish overlordship gives some context to John of Worcester’s account of the movements of the two English æthelings (royal heirs), Edmund and Edward, after Cnut

⁷ Adam of Bremen, Gesta, 2: 52 (Schmeidler, 112–13); “pactum iniit cum fratre Olaph…qui regnavit in Sueidia”.
⁸ Adam of Bremen, Gesta, 2: 58 (Schmeidler, 118). Sawyer, “Cnut’s Scandinavian Empire”, 18, has noted that as Unwan was consecrated archbishop on 2 February 1013, and Sveinn died exactly one year and one day later, it is more probable that the appointment of Thorgaut occurred early in Cnut’s reign rather than very late in Sveinn’s.
⁹ This marriage-alliance is recorded by a fragment of a poem of Sigvatr Þórdarson’s (Finnur Jonsson, Skjaldedigtning, A. 1: 248; B. 1: 231), and in the historical narratives of Theodoricus, Historia, ch. 16 (Storm, 29), and Aegr, ch. 25, ed. M. J. Driscoll (London, 1995), 36–8.