

98. The development of Latin script IV: in Denmark

1. The Carolingian minuscule
2. The older Gothic script.
3. Literature (a selection)

1. The Carolingian minuscule

1.1. In general

The oldest medieval manuscript from the kingdom of Denmark presumably is the evangeliary called *Dalbybogen*, now in the Royal Library of Copenhagen, GKS 1325 4°. It is written in the characters of the Carolingian minuscule. As the manuscript does not contain any date, the usual estimate of its dating from about 1050–1100 is based upon the script only. The characters of the minuscule are enclosed by the fourline system: the low characters, e.g. *a*, are written in the middle, the ascenders are bounded by the upper line, the descenders by the lower one. The Carolingian minuscule was developed about 800 at the court of Charlemagne. The main principle is that the characters should be written separately from each other and with a clear space between the words. The low characters should be of equal height, the ascenders and descenders being of the same shape. The use of ligatures should be reduced. The script used in *Dalbybogen* corresponds to this description. The low characters are of equal height, the back stroke of *a* is almost perpendicular or curves a little to the left, *e* has a raised loop with a small tip on the right, *i* has no dot above it, *d* in most cases ascends perpendicularly, but now and then curves backwards to the left. The long-stemmed *s* is in frequent use. Like *f* and *r* it breaks through the bottom line. At the end of words *s* and *r* now and then are replaced by the reduced capitals *S* and *R*. The use of capitals, majuscules, is the usual one, with both square and uncial characters. In *Dalbybogen* e.g. rustic *A* is without a crossbar; two of them written together form the *M*. The uncials *D*, *E*, *H*, *T* and *U* are fairly well represented. The right stroke of the *U* runs beneath the line. *E* may also be formed as an enlarged minuscule, the loop with its tip hanging on the top of the extended curve. The use of ligatures is moderate. *Dalbybogen* uses & for the conjunction *et*, but also for the letters *et* within and at the end of words, e.g. *dicer&*. Ligatures connecting *c* and *t*, and *s* and *t* occur. The endings *ns* and *nt* can be formed as a ligature connecting a capital *N* and *s* or *t*

by prolonging the last stroke of *N* above the line and continuing on to the curve of *s* or the crossbar of *t*. Now and then the diphthong *ae* is expressed by the ligature *æ*, but more frequently by the ligature *e* caudata, the tagged *e*, where the tail beneath is a remnant of *a*; *e* at the beginning of *ecclesia* and *evangelium* is often written in this way, perhaps influenced by *cælorum*. The tables of canons and the list of pericopes are modestly decorated columns and Romanesque arches. The four gospels are each introduced by a seated evangelist painting the initial letter in the style of the 11th century. The connection with Dalby in Scania is evident from some 14th century additions.

1.2. The manuscripts from Lund

From the archdiocese of Lund in Scania, established in 1104, and its institutions, several manuscripts have survived, all on parchments. The oldest one is an evangeliary, now in the Royal Library, Thott 22 4°, written in a Carolingian minuscule reminiscent of *Dalbybogen* with broad and low characters, and *f*, *s*, and *r* having the long stroke beneath the line, but with an increased use of the diminished capital *S*, i.e. “the round *s*”. The hairline stroke on the descender of *q* is perhaps a new feature. However, the most important manuscript is the *Necrologium Lundense*, a collection in three parts: (1) a tax list, the donation in 1085 by Holy King Knud, canonized before 1100, and the list of prebends, (2) the rules of Aachen, perhaps of foreign origin, surrounded by texts of the Fathers, written by the same hand as the following constitutions of the canons, and (3) the “Memoriale fratrum”, the book of the deceased. The different hands still use the Carolingian minuscule. The ligature *N + t* is still in use, and *æ* is written as *e* caudata. The place-names and personal names are written in Danish, showing interesting ligatures: e.g. *Øpi*, written with a majuscule *O* in ligature with a small *e* above it, and *Ætu* “sororis nostre”, written with an enlarged minuscule *a* in ligature with a small *e*, the following *nostre* ending with *e* caudata. In the list of prebends many place-names have a minuscule *a* with a small curl above on the right side representing *æ*. This list also has several examples of *o* with a crossbar, representing the Danish letter *ø*. In “Memoriale

fratrum” under January the 3rd, there is another example of *o* in ligature with an *e*, perhaps representing a second way of writing the Danish *ø*-vowel. It should be noted that the scribes use all majuscules in a very clever way. Two of them are enlarged ornamental initials with bands, animals and plants, one of which introduces the rules of Aachen, the other one the text of Father Basilios. Later two scribes used the last leaves in the *Necrologium* for entering two acts concerning the borders of Ballingslöv. The numerous names provide many examples of *o* with a crossbar, as well as one example of *y* in *-by*. There is one example of *v* with a crossbar = *y*. Furthermore, two epistolaries, now in Lund, Medeltidshandskr. no. 2 and 5, and two evangelaries, one in Thott 21 4° and one in Uppsala University Library C83, come from Lund. Presumably they are a little younger. The characters are slimmer, the curves more oval, and the letters *r*, *s* and *f* have a hairline stroke beneath. From about 1137, onward, the annals now known as the annals of Colbaz were written in the neighbourhood of Lund. After a drawing of the crucifixion of Christ came a calendar written by the main scribe. The initials were formed by the scribe who made the initials of *Necrologium Lundense*. When Lund Cathedral was consecrated, a new manuscript of 143 leaves in folio, the so-called *Liber daticus vetustior*, was made in the form of a martyrology with extracts of legends for every day of the year. The first day of every month, the *Kalende*, abbreviated as *KL*, is richly decorated; January the 1st is especially enlarged and profusely decorated. Two different hands have transferred some notes from *Necrologium Lundense* changing over on the 22nd of July.

1.3. Manuscripts from Zealand

From the rest of the Danish dioceses, nothing has been left. Only some small fragments of secular literature have been discovered, used as binding material in Rigsarkivet in Copenhagen, including an ornamental initial *P* from a manuscript of Justinus, whose script in some respects reminds one of the hand which wrote *Dalbybogen*: the ligature *NT* occurs and *&* is used inside words. Another undamaged manuscript of Justinus was given to Sorø Abbey about 1200, but the hand is older, though not as old as the hand which wrote the fragments. In it, the use of the round *s* has increased, the *e* caudata occurs, and *&* is used only for the word *et*. On the last leaf three

different hands have written the annals of Sorø; the oldest hand entered the notes until 1231. A manuscript of Plinius in two volumes, now in the Bibliotheca Laurenziana in Florence, probably dates from this time, and is introduced by a dedicatory picture with the superscription “*Petrus de Slaglosia me fecit*”, i. e. Slagelse in Zealand. The characters are of the same type as in the Justinus manuscript, but there are more initials of different sizes, richly decorated with acanthus, animals and figures. It was bought in Lübeck about 1430 for Cosimo de Medici. All these manuscripts are in Latin. No manuscript in Danish has survived, even though e. g. the *Scanian Law* was written before 1200.

2. The older Gothic script

2.1. In general

During the first decades of the 13th century the Carolingian minuscule was being gradually modified. The broad round characters grew smaller and slimmer. The round letters like *o* became oval, and letters were connected by means of hairline strokes at the foot of the stems of *i*, *l*, *m* and *n*. The crossbar of *f* and *t* also formed a connection with the following letter. Then a new convention arose whereby the curve on the right side of the backward-bent *d*, and gradually *b*, *e*, *o*, could be united at the scribe’s discretion with a contrary curve on an immediately following letter such as *e* and *o*. The curves of *o* and the perpendicular strokes of *i*, *m*, *n*, *u* and *t* were slightly angulated, later on still more so, at first above, later also below. The backward-bent *d* was used more frequently than the perpendicular one. An oblique stroke closed the lower curve of *g*; in addition to the orthodox *r*, the round *r* after *o* and later on also in other positions, and diminished majuscule *r* occur. The long-stemmed *s* was increasingly replaced by the round *s*, especially at the end of words. The crossbar of *t* was now put a little under the top of the perpendicular stem and later on only on the right side of the stem. The oldest Danish manuscript in this book-hand is the so-called Angers Fragment of *Saxonis Gesta Danorum* which was found in 1863 as lining in a book in Angers, France, now in the Royal Library as NKS 869 g in 4°. It has a total of four reduced leaves of parchment with extra large space between the lines, that is with room for additions and corrections to the main text, especially in the first folio. The script has a

mixture of old and new features. The long-stemmed *s* runs under the bottom line, and only a few examples of the round *s* are found at the end of words; *t* varies: the stem is sometimes perpendicular, sometimes curved, now and then going through the crossbar. The curves are slightly angulated. The majuscules are a mixture of slightly angulated uncials and enlarged minuscules. Many ascenders are forked, sometimes almost a “thorn”. Only slightly younger is *Liber monasterii Carae Insulae*, now in the Royal Library as E donatione variorum 135 4°. It consists of two parts, only the first of which was written in the 13th century. According to the prologue the most ancient part was written between 1207 and 1216. The scribe used reddish-brown ink, but the initials and the headings are red. He also wrote most of a charter from 1221 with the Abbot of Cara Insula (Øm) as mediator. The initials of the chronicle are decorated with palmettos, while those of the charter are not. The identification of the two hands is based upon the letters *e*, *g* and *x* and the abbreviations for the syllables *-bus* and *-que*. Both of them have the long-stemmed *s* at the end of words, now and then curved to the left beneath the line, but the round *s* on the line also occurs. The backward-bent *d* dominates the chronicle; the charter, however, has a few perpendicular *d*'s. Neither *æ* nor *e* caudata occur, and *o* is an *o* with a crossbar.

2.2. The manuscript of the *Scanian Law*

The oldest manuscripts in the Danish language were produced in the following decades. They are the manuscripts of the Danish laws, the *Scanian Law* and the oldest edition of *Valdemar's Zealand Law*, the originals of which, now lost, must have been written before 1216. The *Jutland Law*, the original of which is also lost, was passed in 1241. The oldest law manuscript is in Stockholm, Royal Library B 74, which contains the *Scanian Law* and the customs of the Scanian church. Every page has 22 lines indicated by dots in the very broad margin to the right. Some of the leaves have the edges cut so that the dots have disappeared. To the left the text column is bounded by two perpendicular lines. Between them the scribe inserted the initials in red, green and yellow, decorated with very modest palmettos. The headings of the sections were written in red by the same scribe as the text. The letters are rather broad and low and only slightly angulated, the foot-serif hardly represented.

The upper curve of *a* is open, *d* is mostly perpendicular, and *h* has its right line curved down under the bottom line. Besides the orthodox *r*, round *r* after *o* and the diminished majuscule *R* at the end of words occur. Both long-stemmed *s* and round *s* are used at the end of words. The perpendicular stroke of *t* does not break through the crossbar. The perpendicular strokes of *u* are seriffed. Besides the orthodox *e* with a tip there are about 30 examples of *e* caudata. The upper curve of *æ* is open like for the *a*'s, and the loop above on the right side is closed. The scribe used *e* caudata about 200 times. It is not possible to find any phonetic difference between *e* and *e* caudata or *æ* and *æ* caudata; the phenomenon must be only graphical. Another interesting feature only occurs in the first part of the manuscript up to f. 58v, where the consonants *l*, *ll*, *n* and *nn* are often, but not always, given a crossbar. This is commonly assumed to indicate a palatalized sound. Among the very few original charters from this period, it should be noticed that only the scribe of the Latin charter, issued by King Erik Plovpenning on the 6th of July 1241, twice wrote the ending *-sun* with a crossbar through *n*, one a minuscule, one a majuscule. After that time the cross almost disappears. Referring to the previous text described above, it seems possible to suggest an approximate date of about 1230–1250 for this manuscript, which contains no indication of year and scribe.

2.3. The years 1250 to 1300

Several manuscripts have survived from these years, both in Latin and Danish. A calendar originating from Skovkloster in Næstved, dated to about 1265, is now in the Royal Library as E donatione variorum 52, 2°. A section of its leaves containing, among other things, the whole of June has disappeared. On two leaves in front of the calendar a scribe entered the older *Annals of Næstved* covering the years 1130 to 1228. The scribe of the calendar itself uses gold, red, blue and green for the calendar scheme. The Sunday letters, *A* in red, *B-G* in blue, are a mixture of square letters and uncials. The names of the months and the saints are written with the letters of the older Gothic script; the curves and the stems are moderately angulated, and the upper curve of *a* is almost closed. The scribe uses *7* for *et*, the round *s* at the end of words, and backward-bent *d*. The ascenders are slightly forked. At about the same time, perhaps in

1268, the calendar called *Liber daticus recentior* was made in Lund, now in the Royal Library as GKS 845 2°. The main hand also entered the oldest death notices, mostly transferred from the old *Liber daticus*. Also about this time a copy of the poem *Hexaëmeron* by Andreas Sunesøn was written down, now in the Royal Library as E donatione variorum 155 4°, consisting of a total of 134 folios with lines in pencil. The column of Latin verses is bounded in both sides by two perpendicular lines. Between the lines on the left the scribe put the first letter of the verse, the perpendicular stems are moderately angulated, and the upper curve of *a* is alternately open and closed. Both perpendicular and backward-bent *d* occur. The uniting of curves and the use of 7 for *et* appear. About this time the original part of manuscript AM 37 4° containing the Latin paraphrase by Andreas Sunesøn of the *Scanian Law* together with the Danish customs of the Scanian church was probably written down in Lund, with the text set in two columns by two scribes. The script of the paraphrase itself is very angulated; the feet of the rather low letters end in a pressure or a serif to the right. There are many united curves, especially involving *d* which is sometimes perpendicular, sometimes backward-bent. The second hand has written the customs with more pointed and narrow letters. The vowel *æ* is almost like the *æ* in B 74. The vowel *o* is an *o* with a crossbar. At the bottom of the last leaf but one, running underneath both columns, a third hand wrote a two-line stanza (“Skåningeverset”) in a script which is barely angulated and which uses a rather old-fashioned *a* and *æ*. A manuscript of 65 folios of parchment, now in the Universitätsbibliothek in Kiel, S.H. 8, A 8, contains the *Office of Saint Kanute*, duke of Sleswig, killed 1131, canonized 1169, and, after a small space, a copy of the *Chronicle of Roskilde*, written after 1250 by a single scribe probably in Ringsted or Roskilde. The headings of the sections of the office are red, the initials red or blue, some of them being extra large and elaborately decorated with palmettos, such as the majuscule *A* at the head of the chronicle. Some of the lessons are followed by songs annotated with black notes in a red four-line system. The scribe used the old Gothic book-hand. Another scribe using this kind of script designed the *Obituarium Hafniense*, now in the Royal Library, Thott 805 2°, as the usual calendar with names of saints. He also entered the oldest death notices from 1208 to 1277 all at

one time. The death notice for 1277 has an extra large initial *P*. The notices continue till about 1450. – Only one complete leaf of a manuscript in folio of *Saxonis Gesta Danorum*, called the “Lassen Fragment”, written in the old Gothic script, has survived, now in the Royal Library as NKS 570 2°. The upper curve of *a* is still open, perpendicular and backward-bent *d* occur, and the perpendicular stem of *t* does not break through the crossbar, but the round *s* dominates at the end of words. The majuscules inside the text are accentuated by contour strokes. The letters *m*, *n*, *i* and *u* are slightly angulated, while *o* and *g* keep their round shape. The lowest curve of *g* is closed. Presumably the fragment consisting of 8 leaves of parchment containing *Valdemar's Zealand Law*, now AM 24 4°, was written during this period, but it is not known where. The text is in black, the headings in red ink. Each section has an initial square capital, rustic or uncial, painted in red or blue and variably decorated with palmettos. The very first one is adorned as a fleuroné-initial. Both perpendicular and backward-bent *d* occur, the upper curve of *a* is open, and the crossbar of *t* is mostly put on the right side of the stem. The long-stemmed *s* dominates, except at the end of lines, round *r* occurs only after *o* and *o*, the crossbar of *o* is inside the curves, *e* and *æ* have no tip to the right, and *z* has no crossbar; *y* is often expressed by *u* with a crossbar, but the orthodox *y* also occurs. Many of the ascenders are slightly forked, and the feet end with a serif. There is very little uniting of the curves.

2.4. The manuscripts from Sorø

Only a space of a few years separates the above manuscripts from another group of three manuscripts which presumably must have been produced in Sorø Abbey. The connection to this scriptorium is based on manuscript AM 455 12° containing *Valdemar's Zealand Law* combined with the preface of the *Jutland Law* and signed by Johannes Jutæ, but without a date. He, however, can be identified as one Jens Jyde, acting as a witness in 1298. His hand also occurs in the famous manuscript *Kong Valdemars Jordebog (Liber census Daniæ)* from 1231, now known only from this copy, which was formerly kept in the Stockholm Royal Library as A 41, but since 1929 in Rigsarkivet in Copenhagen. This manuscript is a collection of very different subjects, e. g. theological treatises, monastic rules for the Benedictines,

the so-called *Annales Waldemariani* from 1074 to 1219, a list of Danish kings, a list of popes, two itineraries and, last but not least, a cadastral survey of the kingdom of Denmark and two lists concerning Estonia. All of the cadastral survey, except the second list for Estonia, was written by Jens Jyde. All the other sections were written by an unidentified scribe. The third manuscript in this group was written by a scribe called Kanutus Yuul. He can be identified as the Knud Jul who acted on behalf of the abbey in 1310. The manuscript in question is in the Royal Library, NKS 66 8°, and contains three medical treatises by Henrik Harpestreng. The construction of this manuscript is very much like that of the others. The common features of the three manuscripts are a stronger angulation of the stems and also of the curves in *o*. The stem of *t* breaks through the crossbar, the round *s* is closed, and *z* has a crossbar. Jens Jyde closes the upper curves of *a*, but lets the upper curve of *æ* remain open. His *d* is mostly the backward-bent one, he uses *u* with a crossbar for *y*, e.g. in “by” and “syssel” but not without exceptions, and round *r* after *b*, *d* and *p* as well as after *o* and *ø*. Knud Jul on the other hand uses round *r* only after *o* and *ø* like the unidentified scribe. He uses very simple palmettos, while Jens Jyde only uses chapter marks in the cadastral survey, whereas the initials of AM 455 12° and NKS 66 8° are decorated with palmettos.

2.5. The manuscripts from Flensburg

In the town of Flensburg just to the South of the 1920 Danish-German border, a manuscript of the *Jutland Law* from about the same time is kept. It was written in the old Gothic script on parchment by one scribe and has red and blue initials decorated with palmettos. As well as the features mentioned in 2.4., the round *s* at the beginning, middle and end of words, the stem through the bar of *t*, *z* with a crossbar, the round *r* after *a* and *ø*, and the backward-bent *d* occur frequently. The use of *v* for *u* and *v* with a crossbar instead of *y* must be especially noted, though *y* also occurs. On the other hand, the upper curves of *a* and *æ* are open. A related hand can be seen in the manuscript of the Danish text of the *Town Law of Flensburg* dating from about 1300. The letters are rather angulated, the perpendiculars are forked, there are two kinds of *a* – one with the upper curve open, the other with a closed upper curve – and *æ* occurs with the upper

curve both open and closed and once with a closed curve to the left. *y* is in its orthodox form.

2.6. Manuscript C 37 of the Jutland Law

At one side of the end page of the index of sections of the *Jutland Law* in Stockholm Royal Library manuscript C 37, the scribe who wrote the original charter on the 24th of July 1279 entered the judgement of Odense 1245 and the 1276 ordinance of Nyborg just before the start of the text of the law, whose letters to some extent remind one of those in the Flensburg manuscript, e.g. the upper curves of *a* and *æ* are open, *æ* sometimes has a tip, but the round *s* is open. For these reasons C 37 must probably be considered one of the oldest manuscripts of the *Jutland Law*. The manuscripts Stockholm C 39 and AM 4 4° of this law are also from nearly the same time and are decorated with blue and red initials ornamented with palmettos. C 39 has very elaborated fleuroné-initials. In this manuscript both *u* with a crossbar and *y* with a crossbar occur for *y*; *x* also has a crossbar. The almost contemporary manuscript AM 286 2° was written in two columns with very elaborate initials in red, and blue. The letters are rather erect, the curves of *a* and *æ* are still open, and the *ø* is an *o* with a long crossbar. The Stockholm manuscript B 69 of the *Scanian Law* has initials of various colours, one of them a fleuroné-initial. The upper curves of *a* and *æ* are closed, both *z* and *x* have crossbars, and *ø* is an *o* with a crossbar. The Stockholm manuscript B 76 of this law is probably younger, perhaps from about 1325. The scribe uses *þ*, the forms of *æ* are unstable, the perpendicular stem of *t* is very high, *ø* has a carved stroke, *z* has a crossbar, and *h* and *þ* are followed by round *r*. The palmettos are very simple.

2.7. The manuscripts from Århus and Ribe

Very little has survived from the ecclesiastical institutions of this period. Only fragments exist as binding material in the archives from the 16th and the 17th centuries in Rigsarkivet in Copenhagen. Only the *Liber capituli Arusiensis* (Århusbogen) has survived, a manuscript of parchment containing 103 folios written in a large Gothic book-hand and furnished with red and green initials, the first part of which is dated to about 1315. As an introduction the scribe wrote out the statutes of the

Chapter of Århus Cathedral from the year 1312, adorned with many ornamental pen-rolls, followed by copies of papal bulls, royal privileges and title-deeds in systematic order, and finally by a cadastral survey of the estates of the Chapter in Zealand. Another scribe added after that a similar survey of its estates in Jutland. The vertical strokes and the curves are completely but modestly angulated. The upper curve of *a* and *æ* are as a rule closed, *e* is without a tip, the round *s* is closed, the perpendicular stroke of *t* breaks through the crossbar, *x* has got a vertical bar, and *d* is backward-bent. Both *A* and *E* are enlarged minuscules. About 1317 the town of Horsens sent to the town of Ebeltoft a sealed copy of the Latin customs of Slesvig in the form of a booklet containing 10 leaves of parchment, now in the Royal Library, NKS 3168 4°, accompanied by a testification all in one hand. The letters are only slightly angulated. The upper curve of *a* is still open, but varies very much. Both *e* and *æ* have a tip, *y* in “gyald” should be compared with *y* in “sysæl”, and the two *o*’s in “skoot” have a stress accent like several of the Latin words.

The manuscript called Avia Ripensis, containing 29 folios of parchment belongs to the archives of the Ribe Chapter, now in Rigsarkivet in Copenhagen. The text is set in two columns separated by frame strokes and is divided into main sections, each with a heading in red, the first three of which contain privileges, title-deeds and statutes, lists of the wealth of the church, its treasures etc. In the second list of the “fabrica” the scribe reveals his identity as Åstred (Latin Astratus), canon and church-warden. He wrote the many Latin entries during the years 1290 to 1322. His hand is identified on the basis of his way of writing the letters *g* and *x*, the Tironian notation for *et*, and the abbreviations for *-bus*, *-rum*, *-que*, *con-* and *-ur*. Besides this, he wrote 12 deeds concerning Ribe during the years 1289 to 1315. After his death in 1323 nothing was entered into the manuscript till after 1340. The above-mentioned headings and initials were made by the scribe who, at about the same time, designed the Necrologium of the Chapter of Ribe, now Royal Library, GKS 849 2°. He wrote the whole calendar in a Gothic book-hand with many red initials and the 12 oldest death notices till 1284. Unlike this scribe, the script of Canon Åstred is characterized by his intimate knowledge of writing a charter or a title-deed. He avoids the angulation of the curves. He very often ties together

characters with hairline strokes and extends the use of the uniting of curves, like in the cursive hands used for diplomas which exist from about 1230 onward. However, he neither followed the habit of bending to the right the long ascenders of *b*, *h*, *k*, *l* and the backward-bent *d*, nor of curving the long descenders of *f*, *s*, *p*, *q* and the final stems of *m* and *n* to the left under the bottom line. During the following decades till about 1340, the scribes of diplomas use minor variations, but they maintain the above-mentioned main principles.

3. Literature (a selection)

3.1. Editions including Facsimiles

Apoteker Sibbernensens Saxobog (1927), København. *Corpus codicum Danicorum medii aevi* I–X, redigendum cur. Ioannes Brøndum-Nielsen (1960–73). Hafniae. This edition contains in Vol. I (1960) Necrologium Lundense; in Vol. II (1960) Liber capituli Arusiensis, Liber monasterii Carae Insulae; in Vol. III (1961) Lex Scaniae e cod. Holm. B 74; in Vol. VII (1965) Lex Scaniae e cod. Holm. B 69 & B 72; in Vol. VIII (1967) Necrologium Ripense, Avia Ripensis; in Vol. IX (1972) Cod. AM 286 2°, AM 4 4°, AM 455 12°; in Vol. X (1973) Cod. Holm. C 37 & C 44.

Corpus diplomatum Regni Danici I–VIII, ed. Franz Blatt/C.A. Christensen (1938). Hauniae. This edition contains as No. 10 the charter of Cara Insula 1221, cf. *Diplomatarium Danicum* 1st Ser. Vol. V (1957) No. 197; as No. 27 the charter of King Erik 1241, cf. *Dipl. Dan.* 1st Ser. Vol. VII (1990) No. 77; as No. 186 the charter of 1279, cf. *Dipl. Dan.* 2nd Ser. Vol. II (1941) No. 377. – As for Jens Jyde 1298 see *Dipl. Dan.* 2nd Ser. Vol. IV (1942) No. 284; and Knud Jul 1310 *Dipl. Dan.* 2nd Ser. Vol. VI (1948) No. 306.

Danmarks gamle Landskabslove III, ed. Peter Skautrup (1932–51). København. This edition contains a facsimile of the Flensborg manuscript of the Jutland Law.

Kong Valdemars Jordebog, ed. Svend Aakjær (1926–43). København.

Kroman, Erik (1951), *Middelalderlig skrift. Skriftprøver og transskriptioner*. København.

3.2. Literature

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sen, *Indledning* p. 1–35; Erik Kroman, *Dansk Palæografi* p. 36–81.

Riis, Thomas (1977), *Les institutions politiques centrales du Danemark 1100–1332*. Odense 60–85. Cp. a review by Niels Skyum-Nielsen in [Dansk] *Historisk Tidsskrift* 80, 524–538, esp. 531.

Skyum-Nielsen, Niels (1948–49), Haandskriftet “Ribe Oldemoder”. En kritisk Studie. In: *Scandia* 19, 127–156.

Weibull, Lauritz (1923), *Necrologium Lundense. Lunds domkyrkas nekrologium*. Lund.

Herluf Nielsen, Copenhagen (Denmark)

99. History of Old Nordic metrics

1. Introduction: Old Nordic poetry and the Germanic poetic tradition
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7. Literature (a selection)

1. Introduction: Old Nordic poetry and the Germanic poetic tradition

1.1. Germanic alliterative poetry: The earliest evidence

Classical authors testify to the presence of poetry in Germanic territory. As early as 98 A.D., Tacitus in his *Germania* (70) describes how the Germanic tribes celebrated the god of the earth, Tuisto, in ancient poems that were used as annals and historical sources, and in his *Annales* (Lib. II, ch. 88, p. 115) Tacitus mentions that they sang of the life and rule of the hero Arminius. Jordanes states that the Goths commemorated their heroic ancestors in poetry (ch. 5, p. 9), and Priscus describes how two barbarians appeared at Attila’s court and recited a poem they had composed to celebrate his victories and valiant deeds in war (60; 164). The practise of composing panegyric poetry in honor of ancient heroes and kings was also current among other Germanic tribes, such as the Bavarians and the Saxons (Paulus Diaconus, col. 476; Altfred, Lib. II, i, p. 412). Thus it is clear that heroic poetry, extolling the lives, battles, generosity, and fame of dead and living rulers, as well as mythological and annalistic poetry, was part of Continental Germanic culture. However, as far as the metrical form of this early poetry is concerned, we are left in the dark, and concerning

the presence of early poetry in Scandinavian territory, the Classical sources are silent.

1.2. Old Nordic Eddaic and scaldic poetry

Old Nordic poetry is traditionally divided into the two categories Eddaic and scaldic on the basis of functional and formal criteria (Frank 1985, 159–60; Gade 1995a, 1–7). With the exception of isolated encomiastics, Eddaic poetry was devoted to events from a heroic and mythological past, such as the beginning and the end of the world, Þórr’s fishing expedition, the fall of the Burgundians, and the death of Ermanaric. In that respect, the subject matter of Eddaic poetry conforms to the categories of Germanic poetry described in 1.1. above. Scaldic poetry, with few exceptions, addressed contemporary persons and events. A scald could eulogize a living or deceased dignitary by praising his victories, valiance, and generosity (cf. Priscus’s description of the barbarians at Attila’s court, 1.1. above), but the stanzas could also be devoted to the poet’s individual experience; i. e., he could use his poetry as a tool to deride his enemies and to extol his own prowess as warrior, poet, or lover. Thus from a functional point of view, the extant corpus of Old Nordic poetry encompasses all the genres attested in early Germanic society.

2. Germanic alliterative poetry

2.1. Dating and chronology

Aside from possible metrical inscriptions in the Older Fuþark (see 2.3. below), the earliest transmitted Germanic poetry comes from Anglo-Saxon England. Such poems as *Bede’s Death Song* and *Cædmon’s Hymn* can be dated

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