

# TENTH CENTURY COLLAPSE: SOURCES AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Heinsohn 15-01-2020

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SCANDINAVIA</b></p> <p><i>VOELUSPÁ</i>, the first poem of the <i>EDDA</i>, was probably created by an Icelandic seer of the later <b>10<sup>th</sup> century AD</b>. Its earliest audience may have personally survived the cataclysm. [<a href="http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/poe/poe03.htm">http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/poe/poe03.htm</a>.]</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONTINENTAL EUROPE</b></p> <p>Rodulfus <b>GLABER (985–1047 AD)</b> <i>Historiarum Libri Quinque</i> (<i>The Five Books of the Histories</i>) [<a href="https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/glaber-1000.asp">https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/glaber-1000.asp</a>]</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MESOPOTAMIA</b></p> <p><b>SHAYKH MUFID (948-1022 AD)</b> <i>Kitab al-Irshad</i> (Book of Guidance) [<a href="https://www.shia-maktab.info/index.php/en/library/books/english?format=raw&amp;task=download&amp;fid=93">https://www.shia-maktab.info/index.php/en/library/books/english?format=raw&amp;task=download&amp;fid=93</a>]</p>
<p><b>36:</b> From the east there pours   through poisoned vales /With swords and daggers   the river Slith.</p> <p><b>38:</b> Venom drops   through the smoke-vent down, / For around the walls   do serpents wind.</p> <p><b>39:</b> I saw there wading   through rivers wild / treacherous men   and murderers too, and workers of ill   with the wives of men; /there Nithhogg sucked   the blood of the slain, and the wolf tore men;   would you know yet more?</p> <p><b>40:</b> The giantess old   in Ironwood sat, in the east, and bore   the brood of Fenrir; among these one   in monster's guise / was soon to steal   the sun from the sky.</p> <p><b>41:</b> There feeds he full   on the flesh of the dead, / and the home of the gods   he reddens with gore; dark grows the sun,   and in summer soon / come mighty storms:   would you know yet more?</p> <p><b>45:</b> Brothers shall fight   and fell each other, / and sisters' sons   shall kinship stain.</p> <p><b>47:</b> Yggdrasil shakes,   and shiver on high./ The ancient limbs,   and the giant is loose.</p> <p><b>52:</b> The sun of the battle-gods   shone from his sword. The crags are Sundered,   the giant-women sink. The dead throng Hel-way,   and heaven is cloven.</p> <p><b>57:</b> The sun turns black,   earth sinks in the sea, / the hot stars down   from heaven are whirled; fierce grows the steam   till fire leaps high   about heaven itself.</p> <p><b>59:</b> Now do I see   the <b>earth anew</b> / Rise all green   from the waves again; the cataracts fall,   and the eagle flies / and fish he catches   beneath the cliffs.</p> <p><b>62:</b> <b>Then fields unsowed bear ripened fruit. All ills grow better.</b></p>	<p>"Therefore these things aforesaid befell more frequently than usual in all parts of the world about the <b>thousandth year after the birth of our Lord</b> and Saviour. For, in the seventh year before that date, Mount Vesuvius (which is also called Vulcan's Caldron) gaped far more often than his wont and belched forth a multitude of vast stones mingled with sulphurous flames which fell even to a distance of three miles around; and thus by the stench of his breath he began to make all the surrounding province uninhabitable. [ . . . ] It befell meanwhile that almost all the cities of Italy and Gaul were ravaged by flames of fire, and that the greater part even of the city of Rome was devoured by a conflagration. [...] At this same time a horrible plague raged among men, namely a hidden fire which, upon whatsoever limb it toned, consumed it and severed it from the body. Many were consumed even in the space of a single night by these devouring flames. [...] Moreover, about the same time, a most mighty famine raged for five years throughout the Roman world, so that no region could be heard of which was not hunger stricken for lack of bread, and many of the people were starved to death. In those days also, in many regions, the terrible famine compelled men to make their food not only of unclean beasts and creeping things, but even of men's, women's, and children's flesh, without regard even of kindred; for so fierce waxed this hunger that grown-up sons devoured their mothers, and mothers, forgetting their maternal love ate their babes."</p>	<p>"Traditions have been reported mentioning the signs for the time of the appearance of the Imam. [...]</p> <p>There will be an eclipse of the sun in the middle of the month of Ramaḍān; there will be an eclipse of the moon at the end of that month in contrast to ordinary happenings; the land will be swallowed up at al-Bayḍā; it will be swallowed in the east - it will be swallowed up in the west; the sun will stay still from the time of its decline to the middle of the time for the afternoon prayer; it will rise from the west [...] The star will appear in the east giving light just like the moon gives light; then (the new moon) will bend until its two tips almost meet; a colour will appear in the sky and spread to its horizons; a fire will appear for a long time in the east remaining in the air for three or seven days. [...] The Euphrates will flood so that the water comes into the alleys of Kūfā. [...] A black wind will raise it at the beginning of the day and then an earthquake will occur so that much of it will be swallowed up; fear will cover the people of Iraq and Baghdād; swift death (will occur) there and there will be a loss of property, lives and harvests; locusts will appear at their usual times and at times not usual so that they attack agricultural land and crops and there will be little harvest for what the people planted. [...] Slaves will rebel against obedience to their masters and kill their masters (mawālī). [...] A face and a chest will appear in the sky before the people in the centre of the sun. [...]</p> <p>That will come to an end with twenty-four continuous rainstorms and <b>the land will be revived by them after being dead and it will recognize its blessings.</b> [...] We have only mentioned . [...] what is recounted in basic sources of tradition."</p>
<p>"There is another type of discontinuity in the late <b>Viking</b> Age: the old rural places of power, commonly called central places, <b>all met their end</b> [...] <b>around the turn of the millennium</b>. A general conversion to Christianity took place at this time" (Skre, D. [2012], „The Development of Urbanism in Scandinavia“, in Brink, S., Price, N., eds., <i>The Viking World</i>, London &amp; New York: Routledge, 83-93/86.).</p>	<p>In <b>Poland's early 10th century</b> <b>"there was a rapid, sometimes catastrophic, collapse</b> of many of the pre-existing tribal centers. These events were accompanied by the <b>permanent or temporary depopulation</b> of former areas of settlement" (Buko, A. [2011], <i>Archeologia Polski. Wczesnosredniowiecznej: Odkrycia – hipotezy – interpretacje</i>, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo TRIO, 464.)</p>	<p>The Great Mosque of <b>Samarra</b>, capital of the Abassid caliphate with an area of 57 km<sup>2</sup> one of the <b>largest cities of ancient times</b>, was at one time the <b>largest mosque in the world</b>. After the collapse of the Abbasid empire in about <b>"940, Samarra was largely abandoned"</b> (Contributors of Wikipedia, "Samarra", <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samarra">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samarra</a>), 2 January 2020; retrieved 15 January 2020).</p>