

## BATTLE OF FULFORD NOTES

Fought at Gate Fulford 2 miles south of York on 20th Sept 1066 between men of Mercia & Northumbria under their earls EDWIN & MORCAR against the Norwegians under Harald Hadrada & his ally Tostig. The Norwegians won

(STEINBURGS DICTIONARY)

Harald Hadrada sailed with his fleet to the Humber & so up along the River Ouse. There came against him the Earls of Northumbria, Morcar & Valpof of Huntingdon, the son of Godwin, and they had a huge army which had collected during the whole Summer & Autumn.

King Harald offered battle, landed & arranged his army on the river bank, one wing by the river, the other by a dyke, a deep swamp full of water.

The Earls had their army with everyone down by the river.

The Kings banner was near the river, the force was densest there, thinnest by the dyke and there was the least reliable force.

And when the attack began, that wing gave way and the English advanced down along the river & so to the dyke, & they thought the Northmen were in flight.

King Harald with his force turned to the attack & fought such a fierce battle that all was split before them & they put the English army to flight to where they could see no weapons before them, & that was out into the marsh.

Morcar had gone with the standard that was near the dyke, but Valpof fought against the King nearer to the river, & fled along the river, & the only survivors were those who fled with him.

CONT'D...

Earl Morcar fell, & others so thickly around him that the dyke was full of dead men where the greatest flight had been & they had fallen in the march, but some were stabbed with spears as they ran along the dyke, & it was filled with bodies.

As Steinn Herdisarson says.

Men sank & drowned,  
 Many in the river died,  
 Young Morcar all around,  
 The King who would not be denied  
 There in flight victims found  
 Who vain escape had tried.

He made the poem in praise of Olaf Haraldsson that this verse comes in. That was the evening of St. Matthews day and it was on a Wednesday (THURSDAY!) that year. After this battle the whole force of the county submitted ~~to~~ to King Harald, but some fled away as it says in the poem here:-

All the dwellers round the Ouse  
 The young prince obeyed.  
 A new leader did they choose,  
 The brave King unafraid.  
 A new King to England came,  
 Others fled in shame.

And also he said:-

Blood rivers gushed a mighty flood  
 Vikings waded in mens blood  
 Wolves there seized their food.

CONTD...

Arnorn also mentions how great & decisive this battle was :-

Heavy on England fell the sword.

No doubt never but by Ouse,

Was greater victory ever scored,

On had more men life to lose.

And he also says :-

Battle blood ran royal warm,

Black stone flew, banners forward storm.

Thousands were compelled to die,

As spears through skulls quivering fly.

Generous lord of men of Sogn,

Fearless brightshield, victory won.

The battle went as he desired,

The Earls to the town retired.

But their force no quarter got,

A morn that ne'er can be forgot.

These judgements are all of this battle

(TAKE FROM MORKINSKINNA IN "EAST YORKSHIRE  
IN THE SAÇAS")

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BATTLE OF FULFORD NOTES

Then King Harald went to the Humber, up along the river & landed. The Earls were in York, Morcar & Valbjof his brother, with a huge army.

King Harald was lying in the Ouse when the army of the Earls came down. King Harald went ashore & arrayed his army. One wing lay forward of the river, the other extended up inland to a dyke. It was a deep, wide marsh full of water.

The Earls allowed their army to concentrate down on the river with the whole body. The King's banner was near the river. He had a dense array there, but thinnest by the dyke & least reliable.

The Earls attacked down the dyke. The Norweigen wing that extended to the dyke gave way, but the English thought that the Norwegians were seeking flight, and followed them up.

The banner of Morcar advanced there.

But when King Harald saw that the English formation had come down the dyke opposite them, he had the attack signal blown & encouraged the army heartily, had the banner landwaster borne forward, developed such a fierce attack that all gave way before it. There was great slaughter in the Earls' army. The troops soon took to flight, some ran up along the dyke & down, but most ran out over the dyke.

The slain lay so thick that the Norwegians could go dry shod over the marsh. Morcar died there.

(5)

contd...

So says Steinn Herdisarson ....

Men sank & drowned,  
Many in the river died,  
Young Morcar all around.  
The King who would not be denied,  
There in flight victims found,  
Who in vain had tried.

Steinn Herdisarson made this poem in praise of Olaf, King Harald's son, and says that Olaf took part in the battle with King Harald his father. This is also mentioned in Harald's lay:

Fallen lay  
In the fen  
Valbjof's men  
Stabbed were they.

Victors trod  
All dry shod,  
Over Mortal clay.

Earl Valbjof & those who escaped fled to York. Casualties were very heavy. The battle was on Wednesday, the day before St Matthew's day.

( FROM HEIMSKRINGLA by Snorri Sturluson )  
1220.

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