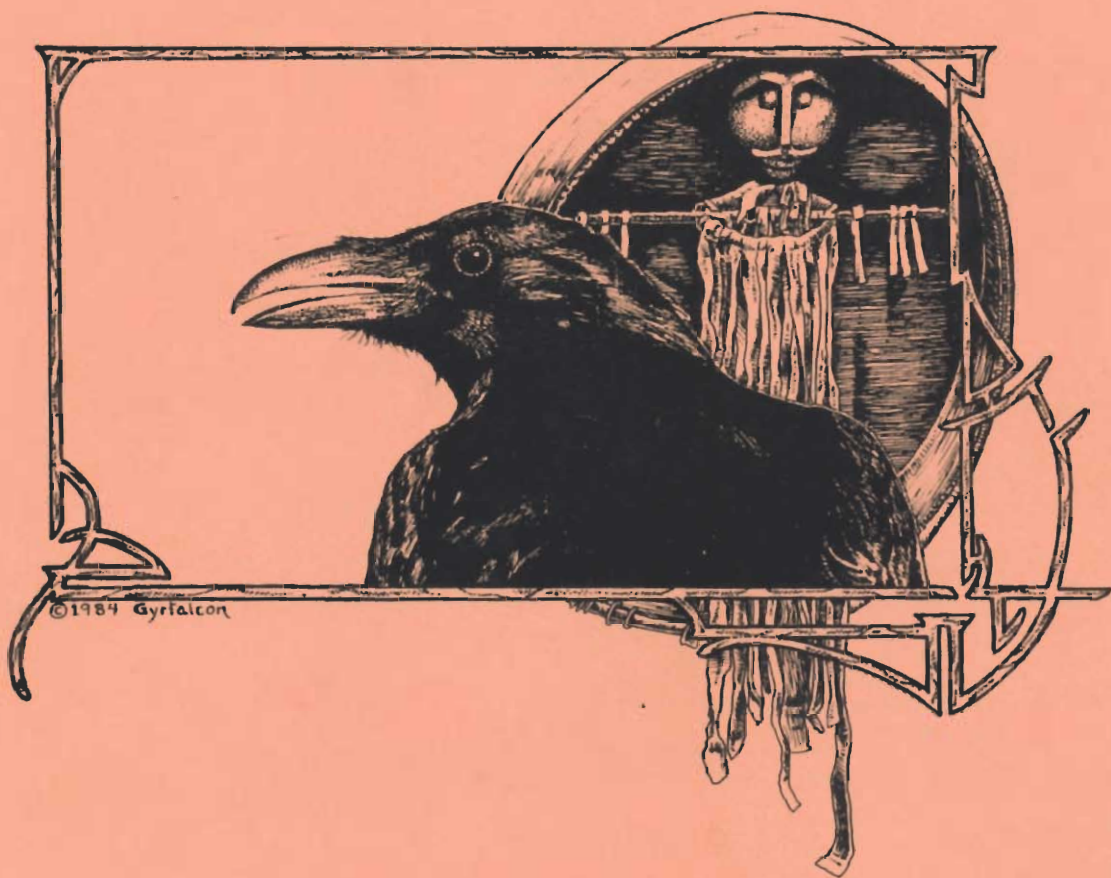




THE



RUNSTONE



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THE RUNESTONE is a journal of the ancient, yet ever new, religion known as Odinism or Asatru. It is dedicated to that religion and to the values of courage, freedom, and individuality which are associated with it.

THE RUNESTONE is the official journal of the Asatru Free Assembly and is published quarterly. Subscriptions are \$7.00 per year in the U.S. and Canada, and \$12.00 per year overseas (airmail). Write to: AFA, P.O. Box 1832, Grass Valley, CA 95945. Please make checks payable to the Asatru Free Assembly.

Staff for this issue: Stephen A. McNallen, Editor-in-Chief; Maddy Snow, production;

November 10 is the deadline for the Winter issue.

CALENDAR

October 8 - DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR ERIK THE RED. Everyone knows that Erik's son, Leif, discovered America, but the old sire himself is even more honored by us of Asatru, for he clung to his belief in Thor despite the defection of his son and the conversion of his own wife, who refused to live with her heathen husband. Nevertheless, he allowed her to build a small church in the Greenland colony - so long as it was situated so he could not see it from the house!

You can celebrate this day by pausing in memory of Erik, drinking a toast in his honor, and praising Thor for such stalwarts.

October 9 - LEIF ERIKSON DAY. This is a holiday in the United States, declared by President Johnson in the mid 1960's. Some (all too few) cities have Scandinavian-oriented celebrations on this date.

One could serve our cause this day by resolving to tell three other people that this is, in fact, Leif Erikson Day, thus making the public more aware of our Nordic heritage. Better yet, remind a lot of people by writing a letter to the local newspaper!

October 13 - WINTER NIGHTS. In the old Icelandic calendar, winter begins on the Saturday between October 11th and 17th. Winter Nights celebrates the bounty of the harvest and is held in honor of the goddess Freya and the disir. These latter beings are sometimes viewed as tutelary fertility spirits, and sometimes as the female ancestors.

This day can be observed by giving honor to Freya and pouring a libation of ale, milk, or mead onto the earth as an offering to the disir.

November 11 - FEAST OF THE EINHERJAR. The chosen heroes who sit in Odin's hall are the einherjar. Today we honor those dead kin who gave their lives for family and Folk.

If you have friends or relatives who died in battle, visit their graves today. If that is not possible, offer a libation in their memory.

How to Live

by Stephen A. McAllen

The Lessons of Balder

Of all the Northern deities, Balder may be the one most misunderstood by the average person. A casual reading of the myths, especially as they are found in children's literature, or an acquaintance with the Christian-influenced works of re-interpreters like Matthew Arnold, will render a picture of Balder as a peaceful, even pacifistic god whose sole traits are goodness and fairness of complexion. This son of Odin becomes a sort of Nordic Jesus, somehow out of step with the rest of Northern myth and religion.

In short, Balder the Good has been reduced to Balder the Goody-Goody. He has become a hostage, not of Hel as in the Eddic story, but of the alien beliefs which have come to permeate what was once a Northern European worldview. It's time we freed him and demolished the dank prison that has kept his light from shining on us, his kin.

The Balder-as-wimp school has little evidence to support it. Snorri's account says only that he is softly-spoken and pure; one translation adds mercifulness as a trait. Snorri also tells us at length how white his complexion is, comparing it with the whitest of flowers. Some modern tale spinners have construed this as indicating a pallid, "sensitive" delicacy, but this is a reflection of their own values, not of the Eddic intent. In fact, there is plenty to indicate that to our ancestors Balder was far from the Christ-like figure that is often drawn for us. The old skalds used "Balder" as a kenning, or poetic synonym, for "warrior" -- suitably, since the very name translates as "bold". Beyond that, the Prose Edda account of the god's death contains what some scholars see as a warrior initiation rite! Remember that

Balder was struck down by a shaft thrown by his blind brother Hoder, whose name means, approximately, battle or conflict. The warrior is killed by the blind forces of war -- by "blind chance", as we would say today. Surely this is a paradigm of the warrior's fate, not part of a morality play pandering to alien religious values!

Everyone has heard of Snorri's well-known version of the Balder myth. Less well known is a different account, told by the chronicler Saxo, who casts his vote solidly against the "Balder-was-a-pacifist" camp. He relates a story not of Balder the god, but of Balder, a warrior hero who is figuratively a son of the high god. While superficially very different, Saxo's and Snorri's accounts have strong structural similarities.

From all the preceding, what has Balder to teach us? Plainly NOT the lesson of modern interpreters who see him as a sort of Christian forerunner, but rather the lesson of our own, unaltered lore: that one can combine gentleness of speech and demeanor with bold-heartedness and physical bravery, and Balder is the example for those who would do this. According to Magnusson,

"The Norse ideal was a man of open, generous disposition, a man imbued with qualities of compassion and kindness, not ruthless but firm and fair, even-tempered but capable of passion, physically accomplished and strong in a fight, but not a bully".

Surely Balder is a reflection of this ethic. In thinking of him we remember that gentleness of speech is praised on memorial stones along with other virtues, and that this lack of bluster does not indicate any inherent non-violence. Balder teaches us the way of the noble warrior, a way characterized by self-control, magnanimity, and boldness.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE NORSE SOCIETY is an organization in Australia which specializes in re-creating the Viking Age through pageantry, feasting, crafts, and battles. They're not Asatru, but they're fun! Kim Peart, leader of the group, edits "Norse News" to give members and readers word of events as well as to inform them on various aspects of viking history and culture. He also makes rings and other Norse jewelry which he sells at very reasonable prices. You can subscribe to "Norse News" for \$15 per year (6 issues) by writing Mr. Peart at Studio 20, Salamanca Art Centre, 79 Salamanca Place, Hobart, Tasmania 7000, Australia.

PETER SEYMOUR offers a line of viking regalia, weapons, and ritual artifacts, as well as items from other historical eras. His prices are quite modest. Thora, his lady, specializes in rune-inscribed pottery and similar objects suitable for the rites of Asatru. We were honored by their presence at Althing Five, and everyone who was there can testify to their personal charm and the high quality of their work. Send \$3 for his catalog to Thorguard Productions Ltd., 32 Fairfield Road, London N18, England.

"STORM HAMMER" is a relatively new but very worthwhile Odinst publication which manages to give an overview of our very diverse movement, serving as a sort of unofficial interorganizational newsletter. The format is attractive and the contents well written. For information write to The Church of Odin, P.O. Box 251, Allen Park MI 48101.

A YULE CELEBRATION will be held in Bakersfield, CA on December 22. Arrangements are being finalized, and interested readers can write to Wotan, 3125 19th St., Suite 297, Bakersfield, CA 93301.

APOLOGIES!! To all of you who are waiting for replies to letters, ordered materials or even this issue of the Runestone, we are sorry for the delay. First the Althing held us up and then hectic work and child schedules interfered. We're getting back in stride now, so bear with us. . .

Steve and Maddy

FUTHARK: A Handbook of Rune Magic by Edred Thorsson (published by Weiser) is making its impact felt on Asatru in this country. The runic revival picked up steam a year or two ago with the publication of The Book of Runes and later Rune Games, but Futhark is in our opinion by far the best. Edred's scholarship is impressive and his dedication to the runic worldview unquestionable. If you haven't got your copy yet, we heartily recommend you hit up your local metaphysical book store.



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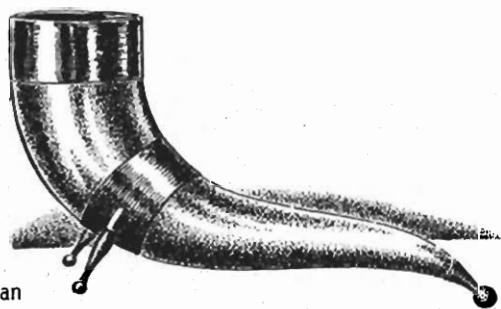
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THE LOVE TOAST



.....BY Brian Regan

Some issues back there appeared in "The Runestone" an excellent article on Freyr, lord of fertility and of earth powers. That essay prompted me to put together this one, on the related topic of the old Germanic "love toasts".

St. Gertrude of Nivelles (626-659), an abbess of noble stock, became the patroness of travellers, among other things. In her honor, those about to set out on a trip drank a farewell drink, the Gertrudenminne. Likewise, the Johannisminne was a wine blessed and distributed on the feast day of St. John the Evangelist, December 27th. In the folk tradition he helped guard against despair and it was to him that the farewell - and reconciliation - drink was drunk.

Both of these love toasts go back to the ancient Germanic "love drink" (Minnetrunk in German) or commemorative drink. At the end of the ritual feasts of the Northmen of old, a drinking vessel filled with mead was repeatedly emptied to the honor of the gods in the order of Odin, Thor, Freyja, heroes or a dead relative. Christianity originally tried to depreciate this custom as a "devil's love toast" or Teufelsminne, but finally, in the ninth century, they usurped it for use in honoring the memory of saints of the Church. The nobles continued to practice it as a courtly custom, whence modern toasts. But as a corporal-mystical union with saints who confer blessings, the "love toast" was used up to modern times in southern Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

The names of Freyr and Freyja themselves go back to the two different manifestations of the Wane named Ingwaz, the chief demi-god and divine ancestor of the Ingaones, forerunners of the English, Frisians and other northern continental Germanic peoples. The titles "Lord" (Freyr) and "Lady" (Freyja) were obviously used to distinguish the two forms of this divine power and to emphasize nobility. In a 1973 reprint of an 1855 German book, Das gotische Alphabet Vulfilas und das Runenalphabet: Eine sprachwissenschaftliche Untersuchung by Julius Zacher (pp. 88f) I found the following:

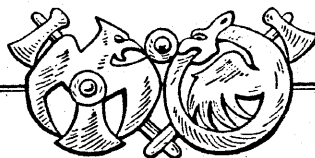
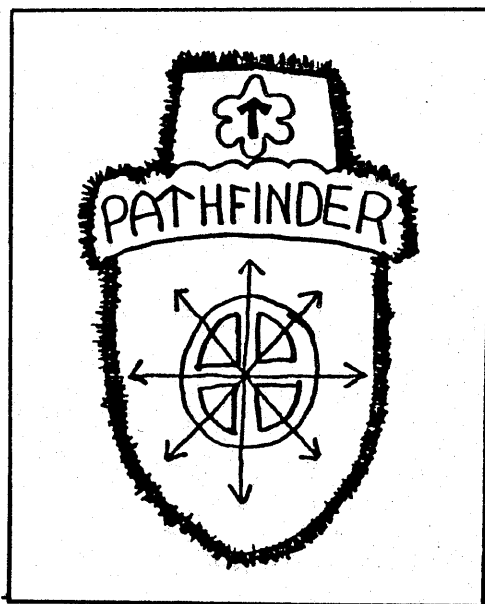
"Now Kilian teaches us in his Etymologicum (published 1777) that in the Dutch language 'epilepsy' is also called Sint Jans eucl (Saint John's evil); but we first understand who is meant by "St. John" when we recall "Saint John's love toast", (S. Johannes minne), in which John has taken the place of Freyr in the same way that St. Gertrude has taken the place of Freyja in "Saint Gertrude's love toast". The disappearance of the stag (in ancient times the animal sacred to, and symbolizing Freyr) in myth and legend may be chiefly a consequence of the strict prohibitions which, from the sixth century on, were continuously decreed against exhibitions of the stag around New Year's, the time of Freyr's main feast in former times."

Thus it can be seen that, although Christianity recognized the mystical union of the ancient Germanic peoples with their gods -- our gods -- and also unconsciously recognized that, whatever one wishes to call these supernatural powers, whether by the names "god", "angel", "saint", or (today often) "guide", they are nonetheless real, still, the Church knew from much experience in the last centuries of the Roman Empire that the names and naming conventions were devices of political power. And political power was, after all, the name of the main game.

PATHFINDER!!

Here's a chance to prove your mettle! The Pathfinder Course is a physical and mental test for nature-conscious Odinists. To pass it, and win the Pathfinder patch, you must complete a 10 mile backpacking trip, camp for two days under hard winter conditions, and take a course or prepare a report on one of several wilderness or survival skills. As Chip Johnson (who is in charge of this operation) puts it, the purpose of this course is to enhance the individual's development as a leader, mastery of wilderness living skills, environmental awareness, and achievement of peace of mind in any stress situation in primitive conditions.

The Pathfinder Course has the endorsement of the AFA Warrior Guild as a beneficial and very worthwhile endeavor. Readers who want to take part in this program should write to Chip Johnson, 2833 W. Seldon Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85021



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Yes, *The Runestone* is now accepting advertising. Our NEW advertising rates (adjusted for the sake of reality!) are as follows:

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1/2 page -	11.00 per issue	8½" x 5"
full page -	20.00 per issue	8½" x 11"

We reserve the right to reject any ad - but if you've got something of interest to our readers, you'll find that advertising with us is a sound investment! Above rates are for camera ready, black and white copy. Your ad should be drawn to the listed size as we reduce all copy (to 75%).

FREYA'S FOLK

A MORNING'S MEDITATION BY Ariel

"Freya's Folk" has hosted articles on "creative mythology" as it relates to the obscure goddesses Lofn and Jarnsaxa. With this piece we expand on that theme to touch upon yet another goddess whose presence we feel in a moment's vision...

Picture a warm sunny morning in late August. Deep in a forest clearing stands a tall, old oak tree. Gathered in a circle in the sun-dappled shade of this venerable oak are people about to take part in a group meditation. A young woman sits among the exposed roots of this tree, with a small drum in hand. For the next hour she will beat out a trance-inducing rhythm upon it. The people gathered in the circle sit or lie upon the ground among the leaves and twigs. Many of them close their eyes, breathing deeply in preparation for what is coming.

Another young woman stands inside the circle. She moves about randomly, explaining what we will be doing. She asks us to be comfortable, to shut out outside noises and allow our minds to create pictures of what we are hearing.

So, it begins, the hypnotic beating of the drum and her chanting. It is an invocation to Tyr. Tyr, the one-handed. God of justice. God of war. Fearless Tyr who sacrificed his hand to bind Fenris Wolf.

I sit back and allow my mind the freedom to roam.

Slowly the pictures begin. There is Fenris Wolf surrounded by the gods. Such an ugly beast! Never have I seen one as fearsome as he. Standing in a circle are Odin, Tyr, Frey, Thor and Loki, among others. There is a discussion going on. Finally Tyr steps forward. He will put his hand in the mouth of the wolf. And so the wolf is bound by the magic of the dwarves. In the process Tyr loses his hand to Fenris. Tyr the faithful. Tyr the bold.

I am standing in the doorway of a bed chamber. Upon a bed of skins lies Tyr. Many candles are burning about the room. Blocking my vision of Tyr is the body of a woman. She is on her knees beside the bed with her upper body lying across Tyr. She is weeping -- not because she is afraid he will die, but because she knows how much this deed has cost him.

Who is this woman? Her hair is dark brown highlighted with red, in the light of the candles. It cascades freely down her back to her waist. Slowly she turns to me. I am arrested by the color of her eyes. They are a deep midnight blue. She is dressed in the same shade which intensifies her eyes. My first thought as she smiles through her tears is how beautiful, how ageless she is.

Now I am...where?

As my eyes become accustomed to the gloom I realize that the air is very hot and difficult to breathe. There is a painful noise assaulting my ears. And there is a very strange smell. I can see a forge and the dwarves scurrying around. These are the same ones that made Freya's Brisingamen. They do not notice me. They are hard at work fashioning a metal gauntlet for Tyr. They prepare to show it, first to Odin (who ordered it made) then to Tyr. Of course with the dwarves' magic this cold metal gauntlet will become as warm as flesh. Tyr can move the fingers

as his own. Odin is pleased. Once again Tyr is whole. As the gods crown around him to give their congratulations I know the mysterious woman has disappeared.

Slowly the picture fades, not to be replaced. The silence is broken by the sound of people quietly moving. I open my eyes. It takes a moment to get reacquainted with my surroundings. Has an hour passed so quickly?

I ask several people about the lady in my vision. The replies are the same. No one knows who she is. Tyr has no known daughter or wife. I think no more about it until several months later. It occurs to me that Tyr is the original Sky Father. Suddenly I know who she is. She is night.

GUILDS



The Warrior Guild, stronger than ever after gaining still more support at the Althing, continues publishing the Guild newsletter "Wolf Age". Activity at the Althing included the formal initiation of brothers Steve, John, Edrik, and Paal, and the presentation of a striking Guild banner made by the talented hands of John Parmenter's wife, Billie. Our special thanks to her for a most impressive piece of work! The Guild also sponsored an informative presentation and the Volksmarsch. Persons interested in the Guild should address inquiries c/o the AFA.

The Brewing Guild solicits your articles, recipes, notes and letters for inclusion in "The Frothing Vat", the Guild's irregular newsletter. The editor is none other than Jace Crouch, whose erudite articles in "The Runestone" have shown a touch of the Mead of Inspiration, themselves. Drop Jace a line at 118 E. Downie, Alma, MI 48801.

The Amerysk Folkbond unfurled its banner recently at Althing Five, where Guildmaster Paal gave a presentation on the goals and aspirations of the group as it works toward building a Teutonic folkdom in North America (the Ameryk) and beginning anew a fresh Odinist/Asatru culture. Dedicated to producing American Europeans, the Folkbond publishes "Folkblaed", which covers everything from language and ideology to alternative energy sources. It is available from P.O. Box 2305, Ventnor, NJ 08406.

The Aerospace Technology Guild sponsored a skywatch at Althing Five designed to acquaint participants with the night sky. The Perseid meteor shower was kind enough to cooperate in making it a memorable event. Our special thanks to Dave Rogers for taking charge for the occasion. Issue #3 of the Guild's publication carries a philosophical article titled "The Path of Sleipnir", a look at the Experimental Aircraft Association, and a review of Rocket Fighter by Mano Ziegler, who flew the notorious ME 163 during the Second World War. Interested persons can contact the Guild c/o the AFA.

The Artist's Guild is now forming! If you are an artist, would-be artist, or just someone with an interest in the arts, you can write to Skjold Skull, c/o S. Bernard, 21 North Street, Burlington VT 05401. Here's your chance to get in on the launching of a new endeavor!

The Shamanism/Computer Guild is a gleam in the eye of one of our readers interested in both the abilities of computers to unlock our creative impulses, and in the need for right brain - left brain integration for the full realization of our potential as individuals and as a people. Write to this Guild c/o the AFA.

KINSHIP IS BETTER THAN ALIENATION

by Stephen A. McNallen

It is quite acceptable these days to point out that we live in an alienated society. It is also standard to offer the idea of kinship in one form or another as an antidote to the loneliness and separation so many of us experience in our lives. Since kinship is often praised among us who follow Asatru, let's remind ourselves of the reasons we consider it important, and, while we're at it, let us ask ourselves why alienation seems to have triumphed in the first place.

First, what's so great about identifying with our kin, and working harmoniously with them?

Kinship is efficient. Imagine the effects on the average taxpayer if people turned to family and tribe in hardship, rather than to the government! Welfare, make-work jobs designed solely to redistribute the wealth, food stamps - all could be slashed almost out of existence if there was a supporting network of kin ready to help their own. The clumsy bureaucracy which eats up our resources and hems us in with ever more regulation could be largely dismissed, and we would all benefit by better use of funds and by freedom from the petty bureaucrats who currently oppress us.

Kinship is natural. A need for it is programmed into our genes. Humans evolved under conditions that required an "in group" receiving the loyalty of the individuals comprising it. Nature wired us in such a way that we are happiest and most effective when we have such a kin bond with the people around us. Anything less, and we are not likely to find real satisfaction.

Finally, kinship is an integral part of Asatru. We believe that we are linked to our ancestors and our descendants in a special way that takes priority over lesser relationships, and our traditions tell us that mighty spiritual properties are transmitted down the family line from one generation to the next.

These intangible properties are a priceless treasure carrying with them weighty duties, and much of the ethics of Asatru revolve around these obligations.

If kinship is such a fine thing, why do we live in an alienated society? Why don't we have kinship, instead of writing articles about it?

We have been seduced by a universalist ethic that insists we call everyone kin, that we love anything that walks, crawls, or slithers. Nevertheless, we have less genuine experience of natural kinship than at any time in our history as a people. If all are special, none are special. "Universal brotherhood" paradoxically destroys the meaning of kinship by indiscriminately bestowing it on every passer-by. Again, we must ask why we ended up with such an unnatural ideology prevailing over our instinctive needs. The answer lies in one word - CONTROL.

Strong, special bonds create social units which are harder to control, harder to coerce into conformity with the produce-and-consume system. Alienation, on the other hand, makes us dependent on the present order even as it makes us powerless to change it, and encourages us to consume material goods. Any hint of tribal feeling, any stirring of a real social alternative, must be quietly sidetracked into avenues of expression that will not threaten the official ideology or its servants. Much of the counterculture (a very mixed bag indeed) functions as a sort of safety valve or even as a "deep freeze" where challenging ideas, good and bad alike, can be rendered harmless. Things have to be kept under control. People mustn't turn off their televisions or start talking to each other, for goodness sake. The whole artificial mess might come crashing down! While a restoration of kinship sounds fine to us who follow the gods, it's a pretty threatening thing to some who like the current state of alienation. We, however, must resolutely press forward to make a better world for our people, one in which we can be free to experience both the duties and the great benefits of kinship in Asatru.

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Side One: A discussion of the theory and practice of ritual in Asatru, complete with a step-by-step description of a ritual to Odin.

Side Two: Invocations to seven deities, with a commentary on each. Suitable for use with the ritual format on side one.

Tape #2 - "STORIES FROM SCANDINAVIAN MYTHOLOGY"

Six well-loved tales of the North recorded for children, newcomers to Asatru, and all of those who share a reverence for the legends that reveal so clearly the spirit of our people.

Side One: Odin Visits Mimir's Well
Sif's Golden Hair
Idun's Apples

Side Two: Thor Loses his Magic Hammer
Balder the Beautiful
Tyr and the Fenris Wolf

THE DEATH OF VIKING GREENLAND

Translated from the Latin and Old
Norwegian by Jeffrey R. Redmond.

THE IVARR BARTHARSON NARRATION (c. 1360)

A Description of Mediaeval Greenland
in the Fourteenth Century.

Introduction

In the mid 1300's, the Norse colonies in the fjords of southwestern Greenland were deteriorating from plagues and an increasingly colder climate. The most troublesome problem for the Greenland Norse was the attacks by Eskimos migrating southward along the western coasts. Wars and the Black Plague (1347-51) in Europe caused fewer trading voyages to be made to Greenland, and increasing amounts of ice in the North Atlantic made for a shorter and more dangerous sailing season each year.

The Mediaeval Christian Church (based in Rome) was still interested in the Greenland settlers and the situation of the Church in the colonies. There are records of sailing expeditions being organized specifically to investigate the situation in, and around, Greenland, with mixed results.

In 1341, a priest named Ivarr Bartharson was sent from Norway by the Bishop of Bergen, Hakon, to go to Greenland as a steward (or deputy or judiciary) of the bishop there. He resided at the bishop's house at Garthar in the Eastern Settlement. The bishop himself, a Norwegian named Arni, left in 1348 to return to Norway, and Ivarr acted as the sole Church authority in the colony, over the priests, monks and nuns for the next fifteen years.

In the 1340's, the Eskimos destroyed the Norse colony in the fjords of the Western Settlement, and Ivarr was sent there by Bishop Arni to be a witness to this event. Many of the Norse people were killed, and others escaped and sailed south to the Eastern Settlement. Probably many of them had friends and relatives there who took them in, but most of the Western Settlement livestock, tools and supplies probably had to be left behind.

The following is Ivarr Bartharson's account of the situation in Greenland around the year 1360. It is based on an old Norwegian and Latin text which was found in the Faroe Islands in 1596 and which was copied from an older one in a book of a century earlier. It is an accurate and detailed narration, and has been confirmed by other sources as an excellent historical report. Geographic localities and navigational directions are given, as well as a listing of much of the properties taken over and owned by the Church. What was once a proud and independent Norse colony is shown to have become just another part of the vast feudal world of church and state domination.

* * * * *

The easternmost settlement, which is in Greenland, lies right to the east of Herjulfssnaes, and is named Skagefjord. It is a large settlement. A long way to the east of Skegefjord lies a fjord, which is not inhabited, named Berefjord, and across the entrance to the fjord lies a long reef so that no large ship can come in there until it is high tide. And when the high tide flows, countless whales swim there. In this same Berefjord there is no want of any fish. Everyone may fish for whales there, but only with the bishop's permission as the fjord belongs to the cathedral. Inside the fjord lies a large whirlpool, the Whales' Whirlpool, and when the tide goes out, all of the whalefish swim there into this same whirlpool.

Also further east towards the glacier lies a large island which is named Korsoe. There is everyone's hunting area for white bears, but only with the bishop's permission, for the island belongs to the cathedral. From this point further east, there a man can see only ice and snow.

To the west of Herjulfснаes lies Ketilsfjord. There it is fully settled. And at the right-hand side, where men sail into the fjord, lies a large bay, where streams flow. Near one of these streams stands a church which is named the Aros Church, dedicated to the Holy Cross. It owns out to Herjulfснаes, the islands, islets, rocks and all that the sea casts up, and as far as Petersvig.

At Petersvig lies a large settlement which is named Vatsdal. Near the settlement is a large lake, two sea miles wide, filled with fish. The Petersvig church owns all of the Vatsdal settlement.

Also not far from this settlement lies a large monastery where the canons are, which is dedicated to Saint Olaf and Saint Augustine. The monastery owns all in the bay and out to the other side.

Next to Ketilsfjord lies Rafnsfjord, and far in this fjord lies a nuns' convent of the order of Saint Benedict. This convent owns all in the bay and out from the church, which is dedicated to Saint Olaf the King. The church owns all the land of the fjord. In the fjord there are many islets, and the convent shares it with the cathedral. At these islets there is much warm water so that men may bathe in it, and many find there healing of sickness.

Einarsfjord lies next, and between it and Rafnsfjord lies a large estate which belongs to the king, and is named Foss. And there stands a magnificent church, dedicated to Saint Nicholas, which the king has overseen. Nearby lies a large lake filled with fish, and it rises when the tidewater and rain come, and when the water flows back and diminishes, there remain many fish lying on the sand.

Where men sail in, on the left-side on Einarsfjord, lies an inlet named Thorvaldsvig, and then further in the fjord, on the same side, there is a cape which is named Klining, and then further in lies an inlet, which is named Gravesvig. From Gravesvig a way lies a large settlement which is named Dalr and is owned by the cathedral. At the entrance of the fjord by the cathedral lies a large wood owned by the cathedral. Out in the same wood the cathedral has all its cattle both large and small. The cathedral owns all of Einarsfjord and similarly the large island, which lies out before Einarsfjord, and is named Rensoe; so called, because in the autumn there are countless reindeer there. It is an open hunting ground, but only with the bishop's permission. And on the island there is the best carving stone in Greenland, so naturally good that they make pots and bowls and so strong a stone, that fire can not do harm, and they make there such large bowls that ten or twelve hogsheads fit inside.

Further west, before the mainland, lies an island which is named Långö, and on this island lies eight large orchards. The cathedral owns all of the island except the tithes which go to the Hvalsoe church.

Next to Einarsfjord lies Hvalsøerfjord. There lies Hvalsøerfjord Church, which owns all of the fjord, and also all of Kambstædfjord, which lies next to it. In this fjord there is a large royal estate, which the king oversees, and it is called Thjodhildestad. . .

From the eastern settlement and to the western settlement there are twelve sea miles all uninhabited. Out from the western settlement stands the Steinnaes church. It was for a time a cathedral and bishop's see. Now the Shriekers (skraelings) have all of the western settlement. There are many horses, oxen, beef cattle and sheep, all wild, but no people, Christian or heathen.

This all was told to us by Ivar Bardsen, a Greenlander who was the official of Garda, the bishop's seat of Greenland, and who had seen all this. He was one of those named by the Lawman to go to the western settlement where the Shriekers were, and drive them out. And when they came there, they found no man, either Christian or heathen, only some wild cattle and sheep, so many as ships could carry, and sailed home with them.

Epilogue

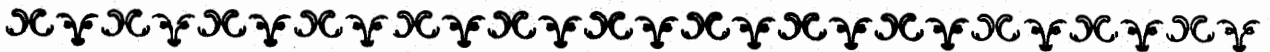
Ivarr Bartharson returned to Norway in 1363. Other events took place during this time. About the year 1360, an English monk named Nicholas of Lynne sailed with a Norwegian expedition to Greenland to explore the Arctic regions in the northwest. He probably returned to Norway with Ivarr to give his report in 1363.

The church continued its duties with the appointment of a bishop named Alfr. He was sent from Norway in 1368 to reside at Garthar until 1377. In the year 1385, a Norwegian named Bjorn Einarsson was blown off course to Greenland while sailing to Iceland. He finally returned to Norway with reports of the situation in the eastern settlement. The Eskimos were beginning to attack the Norsemen there during this time.

In the year 1410, the Norwegians stopped all other countries from making voyages to Iceland and Greenland, in order to gain a monopoly on trade. In 1448, the pope, Nicholas V, wrote a letter to the bishops in Iceland, stating that the Norsemen were known to still be Christians, thirty years previously, around the year 1418.

Other countries began to make voyages to Greenland as the Norwegian rulers lost interest in it. In 1474, the Danish king Christian I sent an expedition of Danes and Portuguese under Didrik Pining and Hans Pothorst, to explore Greenland. In 1476, a Danish group under Jon Skulason went to Greenland and reported seeing white people there. After the Cristoforo Colombo (Columbus) voyage to the Carribean in 1492, many other countries sent expeditions west to explore, but Greenland faded into obscurity and the viking colony there perished from starvation, disease and attacks by the Skraelings.

The Norse colonization of Iceland and Greenland was originally made by spiritually dynamic and free pagan individualists with the capabilities of voyaging to, and settling in, distant and unknown lands. Their great accomplishments were not to be equalled for many centuries.



Shadow of Sleipnir

Ilona Stamer

Odin's mighty war steed rears and plunges,
Thundering up and down crags of the Fels.
Bounding high, Sleipnir, the eight-legged,
Neighs a challenge; casting a great shadow
That starkly shifts, transformed
Into four man-shapes bearing a coffin.
Inside a cold corpse - inglorious, mundane...
Unless the life and death were brave and fierce,
Sagas of viking deeds remain forever
On the lips of friends and foes alike,
Promising endless fighting and feasting in Valhalla!

SO, HOW WAS T

When we first announced Althing Five several issues back, we said we wanted it to be the biggest and best Althing yet.

Well, it was!

In terms of numbers, we had more AFA members and supporters than ever before. People came from the farthest reaches of the U.S., from Canada, and from overseas. They included respected movement personalities like Thorsteinn Thorarinsson, Peter Seymour and Thora from England, Paal Filssunu, Alice Rhoades, and John Parmenter of our own Warrior Guild, among others -- the most potent assembly of Asatru-folk we have ever seen.

On the evening before the Althing started, we already had more people on site than attended last year. By the time activities officially began the next day, our most optimistic projections were being realized. David James from Connecticut picked up the action after our opening ritual to deliver a most learned class on ways of working with runes, and Paal unfurled the Amerysk Folkbond's flag to update us on doings within that Guild of the AFA. Later in the afternoon Ariel - in between tasks that would have daunted two ordinary people - led a guided meditation built around shamanic aspects of the goddess Freya, in a session that was highly acclaimed by all. While Althing-goers examined the fine jewelry, paintings, literature, drinking horns and other merchandise offered by our attendant artisans, Warrior Guild members were undergoing weighty initiation in an isolated forest clearing.

That evening we feasted to the music of Elfin and Craig, who performed until darkness made it impossible to continue. From music after the meal we were transported to the music of the spheres, as Dave Rogers of the Aerospace Technology Guild introduced us to the constellations during a skywatch punctuated by meteors of the Perseid shower.

Next morning we greeted the Sun, standing in elhaz-rune position (☿) as we invoked her power and energy upon our day. Peter Seymour and Thorsteinn gave a presentation on the role of go-dar ("priests") based upon saga sources, and Peter exhorted us to seek that which is truly in accordance with the way of our Folk and of Asatru, and to avoid building into our movement foreign elements based on Crowleyanity, Eastern mysticism, popular occultism, pseudo-paganism and the like. Thorsteinn spoke on the status of Asatru and Asatru-related organizations overseas, particularly in Iceland.

Afterwards, I introduced the Warrior Guild, explaining its role in the AFA. John Parmenter then gave a short class on home security, and we - or many of us - set out on the first annual Warrior Guild Volksmarsch.

So what is a Volksmarsch? It's a walk through the countryside on a predetermined course, usually 10 or 20 kilometers. We decided to make ours only 5 kilometers, or a bit over 3 miles. The idea is to provide pleasant physical exercise while encouraging a closeness to Nature. Those who completed the march were awarded a black and white ribbon stamped with the symbol of the Guild. It was a warm morning, and we were more than ready for the cold German beer (appropriate, since the Volksmarsch is a German custom started in the 1960's) which awaited us at the end.

THE ALTHING?

by Stephen A. McNallen

After the clink of bottles and the sound of beer-drinking songs had faded away, Alice Rhoades changed the tenor of events with her talk on, and invocation to, Frigga. We hadn't seen Alice's rituals before, but everyone who was there must have felt the power and presence of the Queen of Asgard, for Alice did her part exceedingly well.

Sandwiched in between all these workshops and activities was a goodly amount of "business". A membership meeting was held and, in secret ballot, the AFA-folk approved the organization's constitution and voted Steve McNallen, Maddy Snow, and Ariel Bentley as members of the Executive Council while confirming the removal of Buzz Wagner and Josef Turner, who had not been members of the AFA for some months. A special session was also held to allow Althing attendees to express their thoughts on the proposed Troth.

Throughout the Althing, close support was had from members of the Odinist Fellowship. Tom Padgett spoke briefly on what the Fellowship is accomplishing in Los Angeles, and the OF contingent from Arizona - Mike Murray, Chip Johnson, and Dieter Bueschgen - added a great deal to the success of the weekend. The hot-and-heavy exchange of ideas, opinions, and information along the California-Arizona-East Coast-England axis would in itself have made the gathering worthwhile.

The accomplishments of Althing Five were possible because of the hard work and dedication to the gods shown by a lot of people. We remember Ariel's driving some 900 miles (!) on vital errands, Maddy, doing the work of four people, the constant labor of folks like Carole, Lycia, Caroline, Larry, Karen, Pat, John and many others in preparing food, the stalwarts who volunteered as late night fire guards/"charge of quarters" - and of course all who came and contributed their enthusiasm and concern for our growing tribe.

To you all, thank you for the best Althing yet.

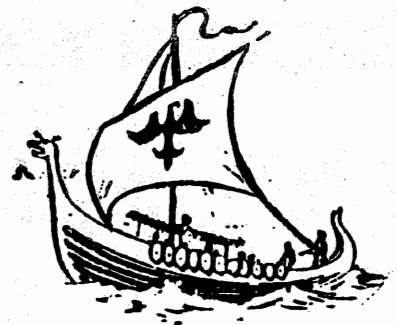
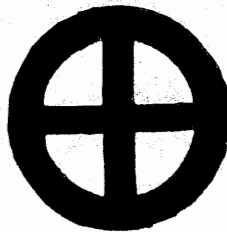
Was it worth all the work? The sumbel captured the spirit of the weekend in microcosm. As the power of the ancestors was once more manifest among us, as Alice's clear voice sang of the Lady of the Vanir, as we heard the tale of Bowie at the fortress of Bexar told in alliterative verse and hoary kenning, as companion after companion toasted the gods and called on our virtue, we KNEW.

See you at Althing Six!



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— Irv Slauson —

The story of the ancient faith of northern Europe and its rebirth in modern times. This book details the beliefs, customs and attitudes of the worshippers of Thor and Odin from ancient times to the present. Many of the topics were written by Odinists who are experts on the history and customs of their religion; including some who played important roles in its re-emergence. The old Teutonic values of life are discussed as well as the concepts of the Sky God and the life force in the context of the religion. Thoroughly researched and documented, it takes up where 'The Hammer of the North' by Magnusson, or 'Pagan Scandinavia' by Davidson, leaves off. 180 pages, 17 illustrations, 8 1/2 X 11", 2nd Printing, Incorporates the 'Foundations of Odinism'.

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INTRODUCING.... A Bold New Concept

MIND, MEMORY AND ANCESTRAL HERITAGE

by Brian Regan

EDITOR'S NOTE -- In other essays (See "Metagenetics" in the *Odinist Anthology*) we have talked about the religious implications of ancestry. The present article takes some of the frontier theories of science and relates them to our ancient beliefs concerning ways in which we are linked to our forebears and our descendants.

THE NATURE OF MIND AND MEMORY

The mystery of memory lies at the core of the question of mind. Modern research has finally begun to shed some light on the actual nature of memory. It now appears that the brain or body does not store memory directly, but only acts as a kind of "transmitting station" to "transform space", a realm of memory-encoding not exactly identical with flesh and blood.

We cannot here go into detail on the illuminating book of brain researcher Paul Pietsch, *Shufflebrain* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1981); we can only quote his own statements of what he and his colleagues have discovered. He explains (p. 144):

Transform space is where the hologram's message [i.e., memory] abides.
The Fourier transform is our link to transform space.

And later (pp. 159ff):

Memory is phase codes: whether it's "learned" or "instinctive" has no bearing on its mathematical, and therefore necessary, features.

* * *

Consider something else our stripes, dots, and rings reveal about the phase code. We can't assign memory to specific structural attributes of the system. In holographic theory, memory is without fixed size, absolute proportions, or particular architecture. Memory is stored as abstract periodicity in transform space. This abstract property is the theoretical basis for the predictions my shufflebrain experiments vindicated, and for why shuffling a salamander's brain doesn't scramble its stored mind. My instruments cannot reach into the ideal transform space where the mind is stored. Holographic mind will not reduce directly to constituents of the brain.

Further (p. 163) :

A mind, the theory asserts, is not specific molecules, particular cells, certain physiological mechanisms, or whatever may serve as its media. It is phase information -- relationships displayed in time and in what we have termed perceptual space, and stored as a function of time in transform space.

In biological molecules and structures the information is distributed hologramically, so that each part of the storage medium has a whole "picture" (as, for example, each body cell's nucleus contains the whole code for the entire body in its chromosomes); and it is difficult, often impossible, to assign a given intellectual ability or memory to any clearly delimited area of the brain, especially a more youthful brain. In general, a clearer "picture" results from a larger amount of storage medium, and greater intelligence from larger brains. And finally, the body organs, limbs, and entire bodily system would appear to be the expression of a memory complex stored in transform space by an organism's ancestors and recalled by the organism's genes and developing structure as it grows. This is the logical conclusion to Pietsch's research-based theory.

It may be theoretically impossible for us ever to discover the precise way in which memory storage is accomplished by biological structures, but it is clear that this storage is the true essence of life, and the reason why computers will never be "alive". And the remarkable property of unifying all the small, identical and unclear memory-pictures into one large, exclusive and clear memory-picture is much more akin to the properties of electromagnetic or gravitational fields than to those of particle-bound chemistry. Such a hologramic field is what we would call a "soul". And also like electromagnetic and gravitational fields, it too fuses at its borders into the dominant hologramic superfield of the environment -- in this case, the Worldsoul -- and is governed by it.

BIOLOGY AND CAUSATIVE FORMATION

In his groundbreaking book, A New Science of Life: The Hypothesis of Formative Causation (London: Blond and Briggs, 1981), British biochemist and plant physiologist Rupert Sheldrake points out that mathematics is almost useless for predicting the actual forms which an as yet uncrystallized compound or complex molecule will take (pp. 70f.):

This discussion leads to the general conclusion that the existing theories of physics may well be incapable of explaining the unique structures of complex molecules and crystals; they permit a range of possible minimum-energy structures to be suggested, but there is no evidence that they can account for the fact that one rather than another of these possible structures is realized. It is therefore conceivable that some factor other than energy "selects" between these possibilities and thus determines the specific structure taken up by the system.

This "other factor" Sheldrake calls a "morphogenetic field", stating (p. 72):

Morphogenetic fields can be regarded as analogous to the known fields of physics in that they are capable of ordering physical changes, even though they themselves cannot be observed directly. Gravitational and electromagnetic fields are spatial structures which are invisible, intangible, inaudible, tasteless and odourless; they are detectable only through their respective gravitational and electromagnetic effects. In order to account for the fact that physical systems influence each other at a distance without any apparent material connection between them, these hypothetical fields are endowed with the property of traversing empty space, or even actually constituting it. In one sense, they are non-material; but in another sense they are aspects of matter because they can only be known through their effects on material systems. In effect, the scientific definition of matter has simply been widened to take them into account. Similarly, morphogenetic fields are spatial structures detectable only through their morphogenetic effects on material systems; they too can be regarded as aspects of matter if the definition of matter is widened still further to include them.

And most importantly (pp.73f.):



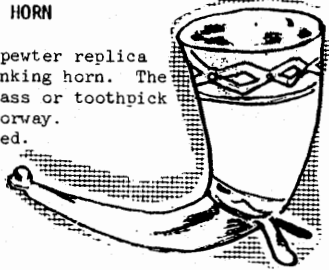
A higher-level morphic unit must somehow coordinate the arrangement of the parts of which it is composed. It will be assumed to do so through the influence of its morphogenetic field on the morphogenetic fields of lower level morphic units. Thus morphogenetic fields, like morphic units themselves, are essentially hierarchical in their organization.

The highest-level morphogenetic field of the whole global biosystem, of course, would be the Worldsoul.

In fact Sheldrake's morphogenetic fields actually represent a scientific updating of the very old recognition, articulated by the thirteenth-century Christian philosopher St. Thomas Aquinas, that the soul is the form of the body. In this, Aquinas used the Greek philosopher Aristotle as his basis, so the roots of Sheldrake's theory reach back to pre-Christian times in that most conscious of all endeavors, philosophy.

The implication of all these findings is this: the soul is in fact a memory-complex composed of both racial-familial, or ancestral, memories and personal memories added by the individual in whom the morphogenetic memories -- laid down by past generations -- become incarnate. The main difference between the ancestral memories and personal memories is that the latter are inherited and actually shape the organism's physical structure; in contrast, personal memories cannot be acquired until the appropriate physical structure has already been developed to gather them and to produce the biological media (DNA, neural connections, etc.) for learning. These media then transmit what is learned back to the inherited part of the soul. The personal memories thus play a significant role in the physical growth, not of the individual, but of subsequent generations genetically linked to the same memory-branch -- the heirs. This is why Sheldrake calls the ancestral memories (or transform fields) "morpho-(shape)-genetic (engendering)".

The personal memories acquired during an individual's lifetime influence (that is, reinforce, extend, or blur) his or her ancestral soul or morphogenetic field. Thus, any new individual emerging later with similar initial genetic structure -- usually an offspring, descendant or relative, but also perhaps merely some individual sharing the same general genetic heritage -- will start off with an augmented soul-base. This in turn leads to a comparatively augmented body structure in the new cycle of "incarnation". Augmentation includes reinforcement, which is the normal case in evolution, where most species change very slowly. But the constant addition of new memories to the morphogenetic field is the driving force behind the essential characteristic of our history: the (historically recent) evolution of consciousness. And the main mechanism of all this has always been, is now, and will always be the process of learning and memory by which each of us adds to the collective memories entrusted to us by our ancestors.

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WEDNESDAY SONG

H Strutz

The WORD is with WODEN
and WODEN is with WORD.

Seek that word on Wednesday
and every day.

Woden's word is forever made flesh.

Woden is in the woods
and in the cellulose
of every body cell.

Walk with Woden in the woods
and everywhere.

Make Wednesday and every day
a sacred God-Day.

Participate in the ongoing
pregnancy of the gods.

All the gods are forever divine.

Declare your divinity
and share in theirs.

Partake, participate, share.

Woden works in the world, always,
with all the gods, evolving
in brilliance and in secret quiet.

Wotan and all the gods would and will
be greater when you work more willingly
with them and with the god within you.

Woden is in the rose, in all things that grow,
Woden is in all things that roll, like ovaries,
like planets, ejaculations, globes and all
things holy.

FOOTNOTES ON THE FUTHORC

THE LAST FOUR ANGLO-SAXON RUNES....BY Garman Lord

As an amateur rune-scholar and occasional writer on the subject, I often like to slip the fetters of erudition, as with a loosening-rune, spread the wings of fancy and let myself be carried aloft in speculations about the more fanciful possibilities of Odin's old glory-twigs. In the area of the Old English runic tradition, especially, the harvest is perennially ripe for fancy's sickle.

I wrote about the Old English tradition in an article that appeared as "Your Future in the Runes" in the September 1983 issue of "Fate" magazine, and amongst the mail elicited from that piece was an especially provocative question posed by a sharp-eyed reader. This person wanted to know why it was that between my iteration of the futhorc in one part of my article, and of the fortunetelling runes at the end, the last four runes were different. It was in the course of answering that question that a notion occurred to me that seems too interesting not to share with all Asatruar who still ponder Odin's ancient wisdom.

Most of what we know about the Old English futhorc comes down to us by way of the Hickes Thesaurus document, with its puzzling rune poem, in each stanza of which one of the runes may or may not be explained. One of the non-explained runes is the rune for the p-sound, rendered as peorth, a word for which no meaning is given. Suggestions for what a peorth may have been, if it was ever anything but a mnemonic noise, have been many and various, but one recent one is of particular interest here. It was put forth in Rune Games (Osborn and Longland, 1982, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. at 9 Park Street, Boston MA 02108). The authors call our attention to the Keltish word "porth", meaning "tune", or piece of music, with the suggestion that "peorth" is the identical word, borrowed by the English from the Kelts.

I know not whether this suggestion has any merit, but let us imagine for the nonce that it does, just for the sake of what follows.

As to the "last four runes" of the futhorc, referred to above, these are calc (𐌺), gar (𐌾), stan (𐌸) and cweorth (𐌽). Each stands phonetically for its initial sound -- a back k, a back hard g, an st-sound and a qu-sound respectively. But it is in the names of these runes that matters get interesting, as clues to possible meanings.

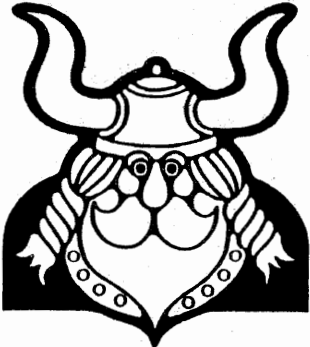
These meanings are not provided by the rune-poem, which ends with the stanza for "earth"; the four extra runes seem to have been added on by Hickes himself to complete the list, and no stanzas are provided. We will need to begin, then, with the simple facts that "calc" means "chalice", "gar" means "spear" or "spear point" or in fact anything that one might jab with, "stan" means "stone", and "cweorth" means -- well, we don't know what it means. Scholars suppose, usually, that cweorth is just a made-up word, on analogy with "peorth".

Let's look again at "peorth". If the meaning is taken to be "tune", then it certainly fits in with the play and laughter and beerhall joy that the stanza for "peorth" speaks of, very nicely. But then, a tune ought to have some lyrics, just as a soul ought to have a body. In an age when sung poetry was the pre-eminent beerhall pastime, would it be too far-fetched to imagine that someone somewhere might have crossed the word "peorth" (tune) with the word "cwitha" (saying or speech) to hybridize a word, perhaps even a slang word, "cweorth", meaning song lyric or poetic saying?

If such logic seemeth not too tortured, then, let us plunge on and consider those last four runes again. The rune poem doubtless pastes together many a tradition in coming down to us in the form we have received it; some of these traditions will be early and some late. Presumably the last four runes are very late; too late to have formed part even of the 8th century pastiche that underlies the poem. How late? Late enough, perhaps, for some knowledge of the "magical" tradition to have made its way as far west as the British Isles (I do not consider the native heathen Teutonic runic tradition to have been "magical", if one understands by the word "magic" an essentially Oriental worldview). Considering then those last four rune names again -- what do we have then but "chalice", "spear", "stone", and "words" -- and how far removed are these items from being the neces-

sary elements to cast a magic circle -- depending on your tradition, of course! Is there a hint of esoteric art of some kind staring up at us out of these sigils, perhaps as quarter-markings or something? And might they not tie in with the runes that precede them ("earth", for instance, mysteriously transposed in the poem from its usual position preceding "day", etc.)?

Actually, "earth" itself is an Old English "made-rune" tacked onto the futhorc in addition to "oethal", homeland or inheritance, and the web is far too tangled to try to untangle here. But taken this way, these last few runes can certainly seem suggestive. Not every magician knows much about runes, but on the other hand, if we give him the sacred ground, the right day, earth, the chalice, spear, stone and words of power, we may be sure he will know what to do with them. Enough said and to spare, no doubt!



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BAD NEWS for overseas subscribers! We have taken quite a considerable loss on our overseas mailings for some time now. It has been costing us more to send out-of-country Runestones, few as they are, than to mail to all of our U.S. subscribers. You guessed! We are raising our airmail rates to \$12.00 starting with issue #50. Rates will remain the same for those of you who don't mind a long wait (about 6 weeks) for sea mail.



We don't announce many babies in the columns of the Runestone, but we are delighted to say new subscribers Branwen and Byrthwulf had their first child on September 15. Guenther Erich Haeger weighed in at 9lbs 4ozs. Branwen says she and Byrthwulf and son are very happy!

SONG OF THE FREEBOOTER by George P. Saunders

1. Follow me my wolf brothers,
Toward yon Westering sun;
To go whence Fortune leads us,
Where heroic deeds are done.
2. The eagle's flight doth beckon,
Across a glittering sea;
His pinions lift him upwards,
In realm-of-stars he's free.
3. And storm-crows mark our progress,
For lives of risk we live;
No glory's gotten cheaply,
In price we often give.
4. Yet no one lives forever,
All know this to be true;
But cometh soon the morrow,
Again we sail the blue.
5. Our strength lies not in numbers,
By sword we count the foe;
And fret not warfare's outcome,
For this men may not know.
6. Courage is ever deathless,
Great deeds these merit praise;
So on with life and Destiny,
And Raven's banner raise!



MOOT POINT



EDITOR'S NOTE: Letters chosen for publication in Moot Point are simply taken from our current stack at printing time. We do assume that mail we receive is available for use in the Runestone. If you do not wish us to consider your writing for this section, please make a note of it in your letter to us. Thank you!

Dear AFA,

. . . I was raised as a Roman Catholic, but like many Catholics my "stint" in parochial school quickly turned me off to organized christian religions. This may sound strange, but I've been drawn to Odinism since I was young, but I didn't know what it was or what compelled me. Recently, I've looked deeper into the question of reincarnation and some of my earlier urges, feelings, call them what you will, make much more sense when looked at in that light.

As far as my ethnic background goes, it is your standard American bastardization of the British Isles. My mother's almost 100% Welsh, and my father's a mix of English, Irish and German. That pretty much touches a few of the Northern European tribes.

I'm a very opinionated person which doesn't always please everyone. I am extremely worried about the present condition of our society. Especially the slow, but effective way our individual rights are being taken away. What scares me the most is the obvious attempt of the national news media to control our society and act as our collective conscience. People have been deadened by television, which makes it easy for them to be influenced.

When I was in the military, I used to get sick of hearing that I didn't have any rights, only privileges. That's bull. It's my privilege to be alive, but what I decide to do with my life, and the way I think is my right.

I just wanted to tell you a little about myself because I definitely am interested in what you have to offer.

Sincerely yours

Mark

COVER ART : Our cover this issue was the work of Craig Thiessen of Grass Valley who some of you will remember from Althing Five. Craig is a man of many talents: at Althing he was one of the musicians entertain ing us during and after the feasting! Thanks for the effort, Craig.

Dear Steve and Maddy,

Congratulations on a GREAT Althing!!! It was just super -- I don't know how it could have been better! The tremendous amount of work which you both (and Ariel, also) put into the Althing was evident, and I believe, appreciated by just about everybody there.

As I was leaving, Peter Seymour presented me with a heavy rectangular medallion depicting an ancient Teutonic warrior. I propose that it be suspended from a large black and white ribbon to be worn, as an amulet, by the Alsherjargothi during Warrior Guild rituals. What do you think about that? I'll put the thing together and send it to you. (There's no big hurry, is there?)

Thank you both for the great hospitality!!! The work you guys do is truly amazing! I'm glad I could help in some way and hope to be able to continue to do so.

The Althing was very good, as I think about it. The programs and presentations were good as were the speakers. The food was excellent. The rituals were excellent and very moving. My only suggestion, as I mentioned before, would be to have the last man on the Volksmarch carry a couple of canteens and a first aid kit including an ace bandage, some bandaids, etc..

Althing Five is something I'll never forget. I learned, I grew, I met some wonderful people, and I had some fun!!! What more could I ask for? I've added six more names to the WG mailing list and have ordered some stuff from Dieter (also suggested that he place an ad with Wolf Age).

Take care of yourselves!!! Let me know what more I can be doing for our cause.

Ulf Hedin!

John. Parmenter

John, rave reviews like that make it truly worthwhile. More accurately, it's people like yourself who make it worthwhile; the reviews are just a bonus. You put out some incredible effort yourself, publishing "Wolf Age" for the Warrior Guild. Thank you!

Dear Steve,

. . . As Wooden is said to have been an actual human being at some time, why would not all of the gods have been? As they are all given credit for some outstanding attributes, they would have been remembered, either as outstanding humans or as gods-on-earth.

Paul Doerr

I do not believe that Wooden/Woden was ever a human in the simple sense proposed by the euhemeristic school of religious history. This, as you know, is the idea suggested by the Greek writer Euhemerus that the gods are nothing more than tribal leaders revered to the point of deification after their death. If the gods are only this, they are powerless except as a sort of mythological morale booster. More and more, though, we are coming to know what our ancestors knew - that the gods are living forces capable of acting in the world, not dead symbols of deceased heroes and kings.

Now, this does not mean that certain outstanding personages might not have been so infused with the spirit and traits of a particular deity that they became identified with that deity. That is, to my mind, another thing altogether, and more in keeping with the spirit of our religion.

Steve

Dear Sirs:

Permit me to comment on two trends which puzzle me, both of which are to be found in various letters to your magazine. Any response from you would be most appreciated.

The first is the trend toward looking back to the Viking Age as the time of glory for the Northern peoples, while neglecting much mention of the Bronze Age in Scandinavia, which was for its time more like a "Golden Age". The vikings were, after all, pirates, and were not always well regarded even in their own homeland. Their theology reflected their modus vivendi -- thus their gods were untrustworthy and bloodthirsty. Odin was a war leader before he was a god. In contradistinction, the Sun was the great deity of the Bronze Age -- it represented mind, justice, omnipotence. As such it became the deity in all the early civilizations from the Old World to the New. It was Scandinavians who spread this religion. I refer you to the book Atlantis of the North by Jurgen Spannuth for information on the Bronze Age in the North.

The second trend is to point to Odinism as a religion without hope -- this is done almost as a point of pride. This attitude reflects the source mentioned above. I would suggest, however, that it is inconsistent with Northern tradition. I advert to the Elder Edda itself. The translation I prefer is that used in Ignatius Donnelly's Ragnarok. The "wise woman" says

"The fields unsown yield their growth;
All ills cease. Balder comes.
Hoder and Balder, Those heavenly gods,
Dwell together in Odin's halls."

This is hardly a hopeless religion. There is a difference between self-reliance and selfishness. The religion of the North is not a license for barbarism, nor should it be considered mere weakness for one to expect that the bravery for good shown in this world will entitle us to "dwell together in Odin's halls".

Sincerely,

Frederick A. Lord

In reviving Asatru, we must strive to reach the spiritual bedrock which underlies both the Bronze Age and Viking Age expressions of our faith. The Folk operates in different modes in different eras, but we have to anchor into that which is solid and true in order to safely permit such a flexible response (Personally, I think you're a little hard on the vikings, but I agree that not all vikings were worthy representatives of Asatru. There were, of course, "atheist vikings" just to take an extreme). Recovering the essential spiritual and philosophical truths of our troth -- the elements which remain constant -- is a task for us and our children.

Ragnarok is best seen as a turning point in a cycle, not as a final end. While I admire stoicism and the courage to face non-existence, and consider these virtues important for us all, I don't see a need for the pessimism which is so often attached to them.

Steve

Readers who are interested in being able to obtain a copy of the Lee M. Hollander translation of the Poetic Edda should write requesting that it be reprinted to: John Kyle, Director, University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78712.

EXCHANGE ADS

Pagan Unity News Magazine is a publication devoted to Paganism as the Old Religion and recognition of the Duality in One. Its purpose is to unify Pagan individuals and groups of ALL traditions by establishing a "common ground" for all interested members and friends of the Pagan community to share information, ideas, techniques and traditional lore, as well as to indicate resources of Pagan contacts, goods and services available. Published quarterly. Subscription rates: U.S.A. bulk mail, \$7; outside U.S.A. and Canada surface mail, \$8; Airmail, \$10; sample copy or single issue, \$2.

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Opec News - Published by the Ozark Pagan Ecumenical Council. Cross-quarterly Networking Newsletter. \$8 per year. Sample copy: send 40¢ in stamps with your address. OPEC, P.O. Box 605, Springdale, AR 72764.

Panegyria - A pagan oriented journal and newsletter of the Aquarian Tabernacle Church, Inc. and the Center for Nontraditional religion. Charter subscriptions \$5/yr., will be \$8. P.O. Box 73, Index, Washington 98256.

Vor Tru is back! Vor Tru (which means "our belief" in Icelandic) can be had for \$8, cash only, from 2922 S. Marvin, Tucson, AZ 85730. This newsletter is especially interesting for its close contacts with the Asatru movement in Iceland.

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