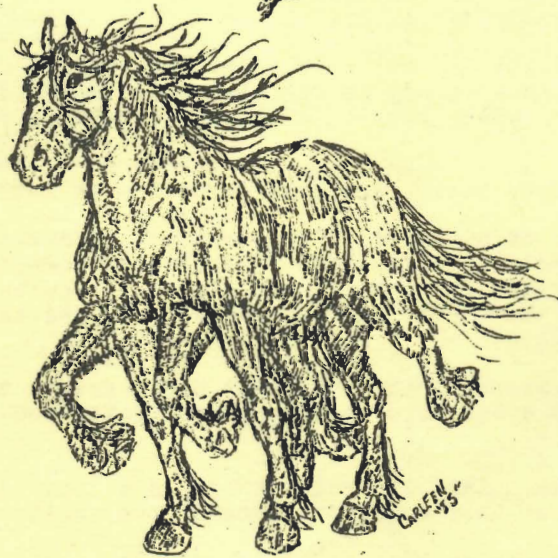




THE  RUNSTONE



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CALENDAR

March 20 - SUMMER FINDING. Today is the Spring Equinox, marking the end of Winter and the start of its milder successor.

Pour a libation to Frigga while facing the newly-risen Sun, for the rebirth of Nature, the rekindling of Asatru, and the resurgence of our Folk.

March 28 - RAGNAR LODBROK DAY. We honor the semi-legendary Viking chieftain who sacked Paris on this day in the year 845. Coincidentally or not, it was Easter Sunday, and those who would steal our holy days for their own were punished.

Do a brave deed today, and drink a toast, in honor of Ragnar.

April 10 - SUMARSDAG/SIGRBLÓT. "Summer's Day" celebrates the first day of Summer in the old Icelandic calendar, and falls on the Thursday between April 9 and April 15. In Iceland it probably had strong agricultural overtones, but elsewhere throughout the Nordic world mid-April was the sacrifice to Odin for victory, the sigrblót.

Select the aspect of this day that most appeals to you and honor the appropriate deity with a moment of reverent meditation and with some act done in service to him or her.

April 30 - WALBURG. This is better known as Walpurgisnacht or May Eve. Walburg is a Goddess of our Folk combining some of the traits of her better-known peers.

Reflect this day on Freya's sinister side, on Hel, and on Frigga as repository of the glorious dead, and you will have an idea of Walburg's nature. Pour a horn upon the earth to heroes.

EDITORIAL

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The story of how any individual comes to Asatru is one that interests most of us. Such anecdotes illuminate our own experiences and give insight into the process of spiritual awakening. The understanding we then gain can in turn help us tell others about the Gods that are their birthright.

Dean Andersson's "Odinssey" is such a personal history. We liked it well enough to give it center-spread billing, and we hope you'll like it too. The unfolding of awareness prompted by cultural pride is something with which many of us will be able to identify. In fact, we're considering printing Dean's piece up separately, as a flyer to be used along with our standard "Why Asatru?". Maybe you'll find it appropriate for showing to your own friends.

Not that "Odinssey" is the only sparkling article in this issue! Who could ignore Linda Dice's invitation to hold an impromptu Feast of Penda, or Jace's enthusiastic discourse on Wagner? As usual, it's a pretty packed issue and we hope it will give you pleasure, and help you better serve the Gods, as we wend our way towards Spring.

Remember to read the "Announcements" and "Guilds" sections, too. There are some vital things mentioned there that you really shouldn't miss!

Stephen A. McNallen

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PENDA - hero of the old ways

Crida, first King of Mercia, died in the year 595 A.D., and was succeeded by his son of whom we know nothing. This son of Crida was followed by Penda, one of the greatest figures of early English history.

By this time, what had once been many kingdoms were being reduced to three: Northumbria, Mercia and Wessex. Northumbria had its King Edwin. He came to the throne in 617 C.E., and brought to his land peace and the blessings of settlement law and order; but also, eventually, a super-zealous religion - Christianity. Anyway, good old Edwin married Ethelburga, who was the daughter of Ethelbert, King of Kent. This same "Black Ethelbert" allowed himself to become converted to Christianity by Saint Augustine. Before this fateful conversion, Edwin had been cheerfully regarded as "Overlord" by all other kings. But his desertion of Woden for the new Christ made many rebel against him.

As this crisis of leadership grew, a "man of the hour" took shape. Penda, (bless his name) decided to stand in the gap. He was ruler of the Mercians in the Trent Valley, and also of the Angles and Saxons who had settled around the Wrekin. Gradually, solely because of his unshakeable belief in the Old Ways, he extended his influence until he added to his dominions the districts along the lower Severn and even to the upper Thames. He staunchly refused to hand over the beliefs of his beloved Old Religion to the privileged clergy of the new.

Finally, after Edwin was baptized, the people decided they had had enough. They rose against him as one, and slew him. (Good for them, say I!) Now Penda stood forth as the sole leader of the rebellion against Edwin's rulership. Penda, alone, was the champion of the faith of Woden against that of Christ. . .

It is probable that most of the British tribal chiefs had acted as priests of their people and as such now saw in Penda a man of faith - THEIR faith! Apparently, the Christians of that time believed their own religion was indomitable and could easily overcome any odds. (Bear in mind that this was a time well into the Piscean Age.) Yet such was Penda's devotion that he would not be swayed, and his rebellion became formidable. He journeyed even to the lands of Northern Wales, and formed an alliance with their king - Cadwallon. The two of them swore allegiance under the faith of their forefathers and united under the leadership of Penda. Penda now led his valiant forces into Yorkshire and defeated his enemy soundly at Hatfield (Heathfield) near Doncaster.

Unfortunately Edwin's successors had the "same stomach" as their father. Once the serfs were placated, they sent for Christian missionaries from the Church of Ireland to replace the Italian monks who had prospered well under Edwin and had then fled after the people's uprising, declaring Penda to have "laid waste the Northern Kingdom".

During this period the Christians (at this time referred to as "the Romans") led by Augustine - later "Saint" Augustine, of course. . . by hook and by crook, took a stronghold and center of operations at Canterbury, in the 7th century. The Irish mission, led by "Saint" Aidan made its headquarters at Lindisfarne, in 686 A.D.

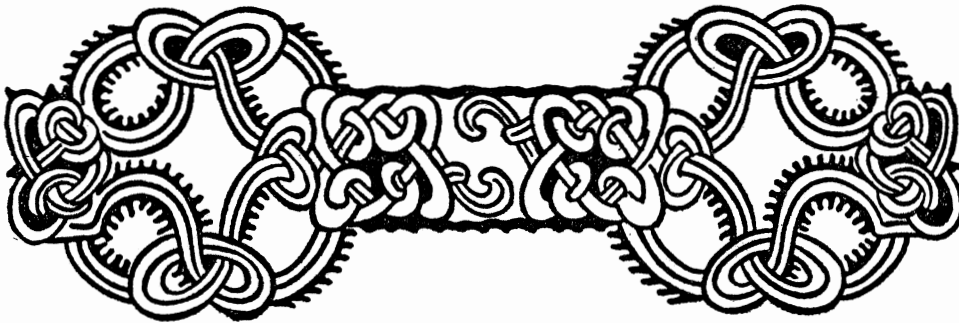
Meanwhile, Penda became ruler of a considerably enlarged Mercia. His new kingdom stretched from Hereford and Chester in the West, to the Humber and Wash in the East. But again, the Christians made war with Penda and his pastoral peoples of the Old Religion. Oswald, the new king of Northumbria, rallied all the Christian folk in Mercia and many of his own, to his standard. But, as Penda had never failed the Old Gods, so the Old Gods did not now fail Penda. Piscean Age or no Piscean Age, Penda stood true. He believed in his faith.

Again, the stout-hearted people of Northern Wales rallied to Penda's call-to-arms. Again they united under Penda's standard. And, again, (the Goddess of Light forever bless them) they prevailed - and Oswald was slain, amid cheers, near Oswestry, in north-east Shropshire. (However, to one aware of British/Welsh pre-Medieval terrain, this tells how close Penda and Cadwallon came to being overrun.)

Penda's genius welded what before was merely petty tribes into a great kingdom, and for many, many years, Mercia was still a center for the Old Religion in Britain.

Now, how does this apply to us today? Well, my friend, as true descendants of Penda, we should have at least one Feast of Penda during the year. Make it a good honest celebration of the Old Ways. When you feel most depressed, down-hearted or just plain "blue" - fight back! Throw a Feast of Penda! Invite all your friends and neighbors. Affirm a love of life and the dignity of freedom. You'll be amazed at how something as simple as this can lift your spirits.

Linda Dice



LAND FUND LAND FUND LAND FUND LAND FUND LAND FUND LAND FUND LAND FUND

We want to thank the following for their recent contributions.

Michael Gipson
Paul Therrien
C. Dean/Nina Andersson
J. Templar
Edrik Borg Hannsson
Michael Townsend

Wilhelm von Rappold
Thomas P. White
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Richard Mobraaten
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W.F. Cunningham

Richard Paratore
Baldur Electric
Clint Copeland
Russell Heater
Wesley A. Noel

We are grateful also to all those who donated to the fund but who wished to remain anonymous.

LAND FUND LAND FUND LAND FUND LAND FUND LAND FUND LAND FUND LAND FUND

LAND UPDATE

It's only been a couple of months since we announced our determination to purchase land for the Asatru Free Assembly; the response of our readers has been very encouraging indeed. Right now we're just over 20% of the way to our first goal of \$5,000. It's becoming quite clear that we're going to succeed - the only question is when!

Of course, the \$5,000 goal represents only the first hurdle. It should provide a minimal downpayment on a hunk of unimproved land. After that we'll have to struggle with monthly payments and with funds for roads, a hall, temple, shelters, power, and the other things we will have to add over the years. But we're on the way, thanks to you.

In related developments, we've located among our number an architectural draftsman who's going to be bringing some of our concepts to life. (You'll be seeing some of his material in future Runestones). Craftspeople of all sorts have generously donated pieces of their work for the auction at Althing Seven to benefit the Land Fund. Good things are happening!

Visions of just what we can do with the land, once acquired, continue to come in from people like yourselves. Some things, like shelters, temple sites, and meeting places, are obvious. Others are less so. Some have suggested a store located off the premises that would sell goods produced by Asafolk. Others have proposed arrangements where selected outsiders could come to be introduced to our Gods. A place for training gothar, gythjur, and healers might be built. So could a youth camp - and of course a school. A library could be assembled to benefit all Asafolk, and a resource center might aid the production of books, pamphlets and audio and video tapes. Certainly, the opportunities for serving our Gods and our Folk will be many!

But all this lies in the future. It can begin happening in a year or two, if we all get behind it - or it can drag out for five years or more if the idea loses steam. We are off to a good start, but we need your help to make it. If you haven't sent in a contribution, please consider doing so. This is a chance to take an active part in the ongoing history of the movement - a chance to give the Gods a place where they can be specially honored - a chance to serve our people. Let's prove that Asafolk are doers, not just dreamers! If you send \$15 or more, we will send you a carved reminder of our appreciation, bearing the special symbol of this project.

GERMANIC UTOPIAN COMMUNITIES

For those wishing to start Asatru-based communities, few things could be more rewarding than a survey of similar settlements that have been attempted in the past. From the experiences of others we can learn about possible problems and danger areas without having to actually run afoul of them ourselves.

The communities to be examined in this article came about as a result of the Volkish movement in Germany between the last years of the 1800's and the first few decades of the 1900's. During that period urbanization and modernization were threatening the cultural ecology of the German people, and many turned "back to the land" to escape the degenerating influence of the city. A general purpose of the resulting communities was to rescue the Folk by strengthening its roots in the German soil - a concept not merely economic or political, but ultimately, mystical and religious. The land, too, was to be freed from exploitation by developers and money-worshippers, a situation we can well appreciate today.

Briedhablik, near Danzig, was based on the ideas of rune mystic and esotericist Guido von List, to which were added vegetarianism, abstinence from alcohol, and nudism. Although described in the literature as "tiny", it functioned from 1919 to 1924. Perhaps the ideas it promulgated were just too strange a mix to attract many followers or much outside support.

A more successful endeavor was Donnershag, founded in 1919 by Ernst Hunkel and surviving for several years

with about 50 people. Hunkel managed to give Donnershag influence beyond its numbers by operating a publishing house as part of the overall scheme. Economically, the group aimed for an ideal that expressed Germanic values; religiously, they were influenced by the "Germanic faith" of Paul de Lagarde, which was actually a sort of Christianity with some heathen overtones.

Still other communities thrived for a much longer period of time and with more people. One of these was Eden, which never seemed to decide just what it was in terms of religion. Christmas was celebrated (with a strong Teutonic flavor), but so was the solstice and other pagan festivals. As in so many of these efforts, land was communally owned and the inhabitants contributed part of their labor for the common good. Unlike some of the others, there was not the equal sharing of wealth found in primitive communism; a modified form of profit sharing gave Eden a system that better matched human nature. Private endeavor was further stimulated by allocating patches of land to individuals or families who could then sell their produce on the open market. Barter was encouraged.

Eden was started in 1893 - not by Volkish theorists, but by vegetarians. The colony rapidly assumed the tenets of this mystical Germanic ideology, however. It flourished into the 1930's, operating farms and factories which turned out meat and dairy substitutes - "Eden butter" can still be purchased in Germany today. The greatest legacy of the community, however, was a number of seasoned individuals who fissioned off after World War One

to lead other experimental communities (Hankel of Donnershag being an example).

Another successful agrarian settlement program was that of the Artamanen. This group was named after the deity Artam -real or imagined- who according to Volkish writer Willibald Hentschel was the proper God of our branch of humanity. Despite this somewhat bizarre notion, the Artamanen managed to motivate up to 1500 hard working followers at the organization's peak, compared to the 200-300 devotees mustered by similar groups. Starting in 1924, they hired themselves out as agricultural workers with the aim of eventually raising the money for a settlement of their own. This goal was never attained because the extreme financial crisis of 1929 brought about their dissolution, yet the Artamanen existed long enough to demonstrate the superiority of their concepts over some of the very self-contained and overly abstract theories put into practice by other utopian groups.

What can be learned from these attempts to found Germanic communities? From tiny Briedhablik we are warned not to mix too strange a stew - not to try to combine nudism, vegetarianism and other "cultist" principles with the main message, be it Volkish philosophy or Asatru. Eden is a reminder that private initiative works better for our Folk than does a more collectivized economic system. Donnershag shows how to extend our influence with publishing. And the Artamanen, whose dreams died with the Depression, urge us not to wait until it is too late! Perhaps most importantly, they all teach us that our goal is one that can be attained.

The path we are travelling has been trod before, and the more we learn from those who scouted the way, the more successful will our journey be.

@Stephen McNallen



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Reaching for the Unconscious

The Norse poets called mead Odroerir, that is, od- "mantic poetry" and -roerir "stirring, churning up." This is because mead contains alcohol, which is a depressant and anesthetizes brain cells. The cells which are affected first and foremost are those of the most recently evolved, consciousness-supporting neocortex (the outermost layer of the brain). When this happens, the primordial deepbrain takes over, and is able to express itself and its sensations from the psychic depths more freely. An earlier, less modern and less human form of thinking becomes thereby exposed to view.

This was how the drinking of mead was able to facilitate mantic poetry, that inspired verse which pours unbidden from the poet when he is in Odin's grip. Such poetry normally relayed information received "parapsychologically" from the deeper, non-personal memory levels. This information could be admitted to semi-consciousness in resonance with the slower brainwave frequencies of the deepbrain. Mantic poetry (which includes the variations of chant and song) is therefore above all rhythmic, pulsed out by the deepbrain. As Julian Jaynes (The Origin of Consciousness, . . ., p. 73) notes, "The function of meter in poetry is to drive the electrical activity of the brain, and most certainly to relax the normal emotional inhibitions of both chanter and listener. A similar thing occurs when the voices of schizophrenia speak in scanning rhythms or rhyme." But the information and the beauty of this poetry could more easily surface and be vocally expressed by anesthetizing the "censorship" and inhibition of the neocortical consciousness through the drinking of mead. Hence mead is called the "Stirrer of Mantic Poetry."

But there are other things to consider when these deeper levels of the brain make themselves known. For example, the very form of the spoken language - related again, to electrical activity in the brain - matters.

In the last century or so before the Christian era, the word-accent in Proto-Germanic shifted from the old Indo-European position, which could be anywhere in the word, to the first syllable of the stem only. This meant the deepbrain could use only the onset of any given word-stem (not including prefixes) for the pulse carrying its message, not the end or middle syllables as before. Hence onset-rhyme, alliteration, was invented by the Germanic unconscious and used to tie together two, three or four (rarely more) stressed words into a larger overall unit of meaning (as in the Shakespearean title Love's Labors Lost) and so conveying the content of the message.

So far we have been talking about the deepbrain communication with our consciousness. How do we send messages back?

Prayers, spells, magic chants and religious songs are the same process in reverse: the neocortical consciousness "packages" its messages to the psychic depths in the same way it receives information from them. The important thing for Asatruar to remember is that this process still works. And because English is a Germanic language with the stress accent on the first syllable of a word's stem (again, not including prefixes or the exceptions to the rule), most of our prayers and invocations should be expressed in alliterative verse as in old English or the various other, older, Germanic languages. They should also preferably be uttered with emotional intensity or chanted. In any case they should be voiced aloud.

TO HEIMDALL

By the horn, the horn of fate
white god come
By the bridge, the tumbling bridge
white god come
By the ears, by the eyes
white god come.

Come Rig, founder of families
Come Lodur, maker of man
Come Lodur, maker of woman
giver of life!

God of the hearth, the gentle fire
You who helped to carve our forms
You who shaped the ways of men
Lord of the home, watchman god!

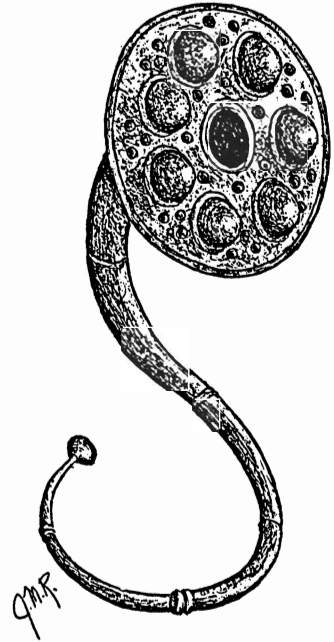
We salute you White God, Heimdall
To you will rise the smoke of sacrifice
To you the joyful songs are sung
To you the mead is drunk, o, Watchman!

We will praise you, foe of Loki
Ash and Elm give thanks to you
hearth god
golden-toothed
Watchman

By the horn, the horn of fate!
By the horn you wait to wind!
By the lonely watch you keep!
Sor of the nine, the giant maids
born by the sea, the roaring sea
ere the earth was shaped.

Rig, Lodur, Heimdall hail!
With Odin and Hoenir whittling away
You shaped mankind from ash and elm
Guest god
Guest god

Father of orders of mankind
Dweller with men to shape their lives
Shaper, Maker
Giver, Guest



Hail Rig, guest of man
Hail Lodur, shaper of man
Hail Heimdall, watchman of worlds

White god, watchman
White god, guest
White god, giver of life

By the horn, by the sword
By the lonely watch you keep!

Hail Heimdall, watchman
Hail Heimdall, guest
Hail Heimdall, white god
Hail Heimdall!

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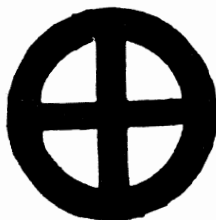
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The Eddic Guild is planning to distribute the Poetic Edda as soon as the Hollander version is reprinted by the University of Texas in May. Price will be \$12.95. Write to the Guild now, c/o the AFA to sign up for your copy of this important religious and cultural work.



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Books In Brief

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ODINSSEY

THE '50s

A small boy huddled in the top row of the balcony. The huge reaches of the old theater stretched away to vast distances below him. Monstrous chandeliers hung in widely-spaced rows from the lofty ceiling.

Waiting for the movie to begin, he munched popcorn and looked up at the hanging clusters of lights, imagining how it would feel to leap or fly from one to the other far above the distant floor, certain it would feel wonderful and free. The sanctuary of the church to which his family usually went on Sunday mornings also had hanging lights, though of course on a much smaller scale. It had, in fact, been while enduring a sermon there one sweaty and sticky Sunday that he had first had the fantasy of flying from one light to the next, free of the church. Free. . .

The lights in the theater dimmed. His pulse beat a little faster as the movie began, a new world and ideas and images about to be experienced, new sensations about to be explored.

The movie stirred him deeply. Afterwards, on the way from the theater, one of his friends laughed and made a remark about the people in the movie being his people. He hadn't thought of it that way before, but yes, his friend was right.

A sense of deep pride of himself and his heritage which he'd never felt before welled up within him. Yes, he thought over and over again, it was really true! Those characters portrayed in the movie were his people. He must learn more about them. They had seemed so free, so alive, so courageous, so filled with the sheer joy of just being alive.

And he kept remembering over and over the name of the God upon whom those people, sword in hand and fire in their eyes, had called. Had his people once worshipped that way rather than in stuffy little buildings on Sunday mornings? Had they ever really called upon a God who made them feel alive and free rather than one who made them think of death and feel afraid?

The images from the movie continued to swirl in the boy's mind. He repeated the name of his people's God over and over to himself. Something moved deep within him each time he said it, spawning feelings he normally felt only when looking up at stars burning in a black night sky, feelings of awe and wonder and freedom. Freedom. . .

The boy's father had come to America from Sweden. The name of the movie was THE VIKINGS. And Odin was their God.

THE '60s

What was he going to use as the theme of his project? His college professor had given the class an assignment to create a series of advertising posters upon a single theme, something which told a story, something which conveyed useful information in both words and pictures, something about which people did not generally know.

The young man thought and thought. Everything he imagined using seemed trite and unworthy. He could think of nothing which fired him with the enthusiasm he sought. But he had to pick some subject and get on with it. Time was running out, and if he missed the deadline his grade for the class would seriously suffer.

After thinking another hour without success, he turned on the TV in disgust, hoping that maybe if he just let his thoughts wander for awhile by watching some old movie, a good idea for the project might slip through the creative backdoor of his mind. It had worked before. Maybe it would again.

He thumbed through the television schedule until he found the proper night and time. His eyes fell upon a familiar title. He smiled, remembering --THE VIKINGS, starring Kirk Douglas, Tony Curtis, Ernest Borgnine, Janet Leigh.

As the film flickered through its reels, he began remembering his boyhood enthusiasm for Viking lore spawned by that film, an enthusiasm which had recently been overshadowed by the normal concerns of growing up and surviving adolescence. And before the movie was over he knew what the theme of his project would be. He would go to the library, do research on Viking ships, and create a series of posters about them.

His professor, it turned out, was also interested in the Viking Age and loved the posters. The young man's grade did not suffer at all.

THE '70s

The U.S. Air Force sergeant on temporary duty in Bangkok, Thailand, was about to leave the small Thai bookstore. He had found a couple of books which looked interesting, but nothing he really wanted to buy. Then on a shelf near the door his eyes fell on a large format hardback with a yellow spine. Its title jumped out at him in bold red letters --SCANDINAVIAN MYTHOLOGY by H.R. Ellis Davidson.

He pulled the book out, leafed through it, bought it, went to his hotel and began to read, memories of childhood rearing and the same old feelings stirring when he read of the Gods and Goddesses of his ancestors --Odin, Thor, Freya, Frey, on and on. And for the first time he had wonderful pictures of actual Scandinavian artifacts, beautiful objects and weapons his people had once made, worn, used. Again and again, he returned to the pictures of the Viking amulets called Hammers of Thor. How wonderful it would be, he thought, to wear a Hammer himself, just as his ancestors had a thousand years ago. Very well, he decided. He would!

Later, back on Clark A.F.B. in the Philippines, he drew a design based on Hammers in the book, took it to a Philippino jeweler, had a small hammer made, and thereafter happily wore it on a chain about his neck.

Unknown to him at the time, the souls of others were also feeling the stirrings of a Northern wind. People in various parts of the world, America, Iceland, England, Germany, Scandinavia, were also beginning to wear Hammers and even starting organizations devoted to rediscovering and further developing the religion of the Vikings and other Northern European peoples, an ancient faith which had been suppressed by the religion of the White Christ -- suppressed but not destroyed, for try as they might the Christians had not been able to destroy the soul-memories of the Northern peoples, and now those memories were emerging all over the world from the rich depths of the Northern genes in which they had survived.

Several years passed before the man with the Philippino-made Hammer of Thor heard of one such group. He had purchased a copy of Margot Adler's book about modern Paganism, DRAWING DOWN THE MOON. In the back were listed various Pagan publications. THE RUNESTONE caught his eye, a newsletter of Norse Paganism edited by Stephen A. McNallen of the Asatru Free Assembly. Free. . .

Intrigued and curious, he wrote to them, not knowing quite what to expect, and discovered a publication filled with serious, scholarly, inspiring articles exploring his ancestor's culture and religion, past and present. Approving of what he'd found in THE RUNESTONE and hungry for more, he subscribed, bought some back issues, and began corresponding with the editor.

More years passed. There was no pressure to join the Asatru Free Assembly itself. None whatsoever. But the invitation was open, should he decide it was right for him, and eventually he did.

Nearly twenty years after watching Kirk Douglas lift a movie-prop sword to Odin, he had found his Folk. His spiritual home.

THE '80s

Now the man who as a boy once huddled in the top balcony row watching THE VIKINGS has written this story. Now you have read it. The next move is yours.

Heritage, Freedom, and Truth -- the motto of the Asatru Free Assembly. Stop and listen to the heroic songs your Northern European ancestors yet sing in your soul. Hear the whispers of the Gods and Goddesses which are your heritage.

You need no longer endure the religion against which your ancestors once fought, a supposed religion of love and forgiveness which sought to destroy their native beliefs with fire and sword. And you no longer need to live without a religion because you've rejected a God who demanded the subjugation of your heart and soul.

A Northern wind is blowing, a crisp, clean breath of freedom. You need no longer bend the knee or bow the head to a God of guilt and death and fear. You can, if you desire, stand straight and tall and proud and lift a fist to the

heavens, crying the name of Odin, of Thor, of Freya, of Frey, Gods and Goddesses of the free, Goddesses and Gods of your soul.

Your heritage, your freedom, your truth -- the step is yours. If you are intrigued; if you would like to know more, simply write to the address below. Answer the call of your soul. Your Gods and Goddesses are waiting to welcome you home.

Asatru Free Assembly
P.O. Box 1754
Breckenridge, TX 76024

© C. Dean Andersson

• GUILDS •

THE AMERYSK FOLKBOND, which has been an AFA guild, has elected to "go it on its own" as a separate entity. Director Paal Filssunu has made it clear that this is not a sign of dissatisfaction with the Asatru Free Assembly, but rather a natural evolution that carries with it no enmity at all. Cooperation between the Folkbond and the Assembly will continue unabated.

CRAFTS GUILD? HEALERS GUILD? Both of these have been proposed by a reader who is willing to work with others to get such a group, or groups, going. The former would focus around builders, draftsmen, mechanics, machinists and those with similar skills, and the latter would emphasize herbs and other alternative medical treatment. If you want to help something like this to happen, write Michael J. Brown, O41147 BB-113-B, Tomoka Correctional Institution, 3950 Tiger Bay Road, Daytona Beach, FL 32014.

While we haven't known Mike long, he definitely strikes us as a sincere fellow willing to pull his own weight and then some.

THE NORSE CULTURE AND SAGA GUILD
Thorsteinn Thorarinsson, 2922 S.
Marvin Ave., Tucson, AZ 85730

THE SEWING GUILD
Caroline Webber, 3501 Bernard St.,
#2A, Bakersfield, CA 93306

THE BREWING GUILD
Jace Crouch, c/o the AFA, P.O. Box
1754, Breckenridge, TX 76024

THE ARTISTS GUILD
Skjold Skull, c/o S. Bernard, 21
North St., Burlington, VT 05401

THE WARRIOR GUILD
John Parmenter, Tyr rune Services
Int., Contract Station, #28, P.O. Box
335566, 611 Garland Dr., Denver, CO
80233

THE COMPUTER/SHAMANISM GUILD
Richard Simmons, c/o the AFA,
P.O. Box 1754, Breckenridge, TX
76024

THE AEROSPACE TECHNOLOGY GUILD
Stephen McNallen, P.O. Box 1754,
Breckenridge, TX 76024

THE WRITERS GUILD
Matt Phipps, 78 Flagg St., West
Hartford, CT 06107

THE CONTINUING CLAN
(A parent and child guild)
Cheryl Follette, P.O. Box 1182, New
Haven, CT 06515.



ALTHING SEVEN

March 28-30

A CRAGGY HALL by the shore of a lapping lake.
Cedered hills standing guard. Blazoned banners hanging
from rafters, above mead benches filled with Asafolk
from across the land. . .

What magic can we make here? What new ways to
praise the Gods in this unique place? What words from
visiting kin, and what new ties when the visiting is
done?

Come to Althing Seven - for all the usual reasons,
and for new possibilities awaiting realization.

Texas in March is a wonderful place, carpeted
with wildflowers and graced with mild weather. Welcome
in the spring with followers of our Gods and Goddesses
from all around the country in a setting sure to inspire
your Northern soul.

Write now for information on how you can join us!

SPECIAL NOTICE!! Interested in our traveler's network
to help you get here more easily and cheaply? Let us
know right away!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

POETIC EDDA will be available in May, according to the University of Texas Press. Their catalog listing of it, reproduced elsewhere in this issue, specifically credits your letter-writing campaign with the reprinting of this cultural treasure.

THE ARIZONA KINDRED'S SPRINGFEST has been rescheduled for April 11-12. Contact them at P.O. Box 961 Payson, AZ 85547 for details on attending.

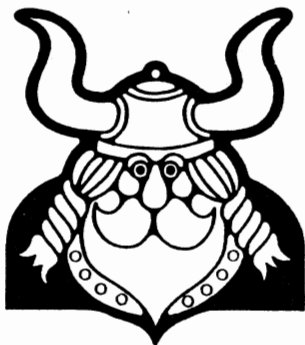
THE CONTACT PROGRAM has had to take a back seat to some of our pressing obligations such as the Althing. If you're waiting eagerly on this project, don't despair! We'll be giving it attention before long, as we continue to sort things out.

ALTHING SEVEN MARCH 28-30! The line-up of events is going to be action-packed, inspiring, and fun. Among other things we'll have workshops on reaching others, festive and informative guild booths, a Freya's Folk meditation, games, activities for the kids, a Land Fund update and a lot more. There's still time to get in on the action. Write at once or call us at (817) 559-2117 and we will send you information. You won't want to miss this Althing!

OATH (PAC)

POLITICAL ACTION, ANYONE? Paal Filssunu is testing the waters for a proposed organization tentatively called OATH(PAC), for "Organization of Asatru-Tradition Heathens Political Action Committee." As you can guess, the idea was prompted by recent Witch-hunting on Capitol Hill. OATH(PAC) would be completely separate from the AFA or other religious groups, of course, since its purpose is avowedly political. Paal lives close to D.C. and is in a good position to bang on Congressional doors.

Interested? Write Paal at P.O. Box 2305, Ventnor, NJ 08406.



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poll results:

The Women Speak

In the past half year the AFA has been looking closely at the relationship between women and Asatru. Althing Six included a panel discussion of the subject, last Runestone contained Alice Rhoades' comments on a similar theme and we have recently polled female readers for their opinions. We think the results of our readership survey are interesting and important enough to report on fully.

[Note] Not all those surveyed responded to every question, hence the fact that percentages do not necessarily tally to 100%. In other cases, when readers gave more than one answer to a question, totals will exceed 100%.

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE AFA/THE RUNESTONE?

| | |
|---|-----|
| Advertisements (2/3 of these from pagan pubs) | 39% |
| Personal contact with a subscriber/member | 30% |
| Articles/reviews in books/newspapers | 26% |

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE RUNESTONE?

| | |
|--|-----|
| Specific Norse/Germanic focus | 35% |
| Sample issue | 21% |
| Desire to learn more about subject | 17% |
| Other: Wanted more info on mythology | |
| Wanted to connect with others | |
| Glad to see a religious but not Christian magazine | |

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THE RUNESTONE?

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Values and code of living exemplified | 26% |
| The articles in general | 17% |
| Articles on ritual and meditation | 13% |
| Other: Freya's Folk | |
| Diversity of content | |
| Professionalism of magazine | |
| Pure ethnic focus | |
| Poetry selections | |

WHAT DO YOU DISLIKE?

| | |
|---|-----|
| Nothing | 35% |
| Too great emphasis on heritage and racial identity | 17% |
| Narrowness of focus or argument | 13% |
| Male/female stereotyping | 9% |
| Too great celebration of war and violence | 9% |
| Lack of information on cultural history and modern day applications | 9% |
| Uninteresting articles | 9% |
| Other: Too individualized to list | |

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THE RUNESTONE TO OTHER WOMEN?

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Yes (no hesitation) | 39% |
| Yes (some reservation) | 39% |
| No | 9% |

WHAT MAGAZINES DO YOU READ MORE OR LESS FREQUENTLY?

[Very varied responses: everything from Cat Fancy to Dell Horoscope to The Journal of Literary History!]

| | |
|---------|-----|
| Circle | 17% |
| Harvest | 13% |

DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR THE AFA IN TRYING TO REACH MORE WOMEN?

| | |
|--|-----|
| Broaden presentation of feminine images to include many Goddesses and other strong females | 21% |
| Reduce "males only" impact of "Viking religion" | 9% |
| Other: Use Freya's Folk more actively | |
| Work through other pagan/new age groups | |
| Keep women and their interests in mind | |

WOULD YOU ATTEND AN AFA GATHERING?

| | |
|-------|-----|
| Yes | 65% |
| Maybe | 13% |
| No | 4% |

It's plain to see that women Runestone readers are a varied, hard-to-categorize bunch. Their interests, attitudes and reading material are diverse. Yet trends can be discerned, and those of us who want to attract and keep women would be well advised to mull over the above figures!

by Maddy Hutter



Die Wichtigkeit Wagners

The music of Richard Wagner often holds central importance in the aesthetic life of an Asatruar. So much is obvious; one only has to look around: we Wagnerians are everywhere. As Robert Kvinnesland implied in the late (and still lamented) Vikingstaff, Wagnerians are undoubtedly religious in their devotion to the master from Bayreuth, seeking the major Wagner festivals "for the purpose of enlightenment, much as the Christian seeks the rituals of the church for the purpose of communion".

What is it in Wagner that makes for such quasi-religiosity amongst his devotees? It is not merely the magnificent and iconoclastic music, nor the poetry, nor the portrayal of man as an heroic creation of heroic Gods, nor even the great Germanic Gods themselves, nor indeed any single element: it is all of them taken as one. Wagner's operas are Gesamtkunstwerken, total works of art. One may lose some of the sense of this when listening to recordings, but one retains the music, the poetry, the singing, the heroic portrayal of Gods and man, and all of the major aural splendors of Wagner. Indeed, it is through recording that most of us have come to love Wagner.

Well, so it's Gesamtkunstwerk. One can say the same thing about a Grateful Dead concert (as I often do). What is the link between Asatru and Wagner? First and foremost, it is the passion for life and/or honor that permeates all of Wagner's mature operas. Almost all of Wagner's major characters, from Lohengrin through Parsifal, have an incredible passion for life and honor. When circumstances offer them only a choice between life without honor or death with honor, they invariably choose to risk death, as do Siegfried in Die Walküre and Isolde in Tristan. On occasion, they hold their passion for a full life even above their desire for life itself, as does Siegfried in Götterdämmerung, act 3, scene 1. Wagner's heroes passionately grasp at their destiny, cherish their wyrd, and spit out in disgust any hint at a lukewarm life. Death before dishonor! Wagner's heroes often get stomped in the process, but when they go down, it is with the ecstatic smile of a life lived to the fullest. These heroes do not always die, however, and often triumph through responding to overwhelming odds with iconoclasm, wit, and audacity: like Walther in Die Meistersinger or the eponymous hero of Siegfried (although the latter does get waxed in Götterdämmerung).

Secondly, it is the subject matter: the Heroic Age. The Ring, of course, takes place in Teutonic pre-history, wherein one meets Wotan, Donner, Froh, Siegfried, Brunnhilde, Freia, etc.. Tristan occurs during the age of Arthur and Parsifal in the midst of the ninth century. Lohengrin takes place in tenth century Belgium, and characters include Henry the Fowler, Godfrey of Boullion, and Garin of Lorraine (Lohengrin). The hard-core romantic in most of us eats up these costume dramas and tales.

Finally, there is the music itself. As Bernard Shaw wrote, there is "not a single bar of classical music" in all of Wagner. The master himself boldly proclaimed that he wrote "the music of the future". His immense popularity as a composer today attests to that, and there is every indication that Wagner is the music of our future, as well as it was of his own. There are many immensely talented singers active today, young singers, who are just beginning to sing the major roles: Eva Marton, Ute Vinzing, Hildegard Behrens, Joanna Meyers, Jeanine Altmeyer, Julia Varady, Rene Kollo, Siegfried Jerusalem, Simon Estes, Donald MacIntyre, Kurt Moll, Matti Saalminen, Richard Rollof, Peter Hoffman, and Timothy Jenkins, just to name the most prominent ones. Some of these singers are already skilled Wagnerians, i.e. Kurt Moll and Rene Kollo. Others are either just maturing, such as Peter Hoffman and Eva Marton, or showing great promise, such as Timothy Jenkins and Ute Vinzing. Every indication is that we are about to enter a new "golden age" of Wagnerian singing.

The immediate problem, however, is that we Wagnerians prefer to hear Wagner today, as well as in the future. Hence, we must turn to recordings. The remainder of this article will constitute a personal (and biased) guide to the perplexed, trying to guide the Odinitist, or even the neophyte Wagnerian, through the truly immense number of Wagnerian recordings. For example, as I write in June of 1985, there are available on records at least 19 separate (& complete) recordings of Der Ring des Niebelungens, four of them available on CDs.

One can, of course, turn to Alan Blyth's excellent anthology Opera on Record: In fact, I suggest that all serious Wagnerites do so, not only for a "second opinion", but also because of the careful accounting of the older 78rpm recordings (i.e., from the 1900s through 1950) of Wagner. This writing, however, is not mere re-hashing of Blyth, but a guide intended primarily for the Odinitist. The Blyth anthology, for all its excellence, has several things going against it for the Odinitist: 1) it is twelve years out of date [11 new Rings have appeared since it was published]; 2) its reviews reflect rather conservative English tastes; 3) different reviewers deal with different operas, so there is little continuity; and 4) although the critics are all Wagnerians, and generally romanticists, they certainly are not Odinitists.

The Orchestral Works

As one can tell from the above remarks, I am somewhat of a singers nut. If a recording has great orchestral work, but lousy singing, I usually won't enjoy it. In fact, I am such a singers fan that I often listen to older monaural recordings of Wagnerian singers from the most recent "golden age", 1951-65. Many folks, on the other hand, do not like singers, or even opera itself, although they do like Wagner. I can understand this, although I emphatically do not agree with the position. Nevertheless, I do own a good many orchestral transcriptions of Wagner, as well as the usual collections of overtures, preludes, etc. The orchestral works make for fine listening, and I often play them as "background music".

The only problem with the recordings of Wagner's orchestral works is that there are so many of them, and the quality is decidedly uneven. Where does one start? The most pleasing set to my ears is a three album set on Columbia featuring George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra, called simply WAGNER ORCHESTRAL WORKS (D3M 32317). It is a steal at \$20.00, and you can probably find it for less. This set features almost all the preludes and overtures, as well as one whole disc devoted to orchestral transcriptions from the Ring. The only things missing from this set are the prelude to Lohengrin Act 3, and the orchestral music from Parsifal. These last are best had on KARAJAN CONDUCTS WAGNER, ALBUM

2, on Angel Records(R 134017), featuring Herbert von Karajan conducting the Berliner Philharmoniker Orchestra. If you have these two sets, totalling four discs, you'll have a collection of Wagner's orchestral works that is second to none. If you want some added pizzazz, check out ORGAN ORGY, on Columbia (M 33 268), by Anthony Newman: it is a powerful collection of Wagner preludes, overtures, and transcriptions, played on a massive pipe organ -- it includes, for you fans of the piece, a wild version of Ride of the Valkyries that can shake your house down, if you so wish it.

Is there anything to avoid on orchestral collections? Plenty! Stay away from any "Greatest Hits" Wagner album: they are usually indifferently recorded by inferior orchestras. Stay away from the recordings conducted by Leopold Stokowski, whose recordings are highly ideosyncratic, and feature orchestration heavily re-worked by Stokowski himself. Watch out, too, for any recordings of Wagner by the New York Philharmonic, all they know how to do is clatter and bang. You are safest, as regards Wagner's orchestral music, in purchasing recordings by George Solti, Herbert von Karajan, George Szell, and Eugene Ormandy.

But enough theory for now - get out there and listen!

© Jace Crouch

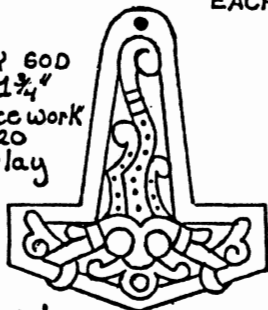
Editor's Note: Jace has two more sections of this guide for Odinitis. The first takes the reader through recordings of Wagner's operas: Flying Dutchman through Tristan and Isolde, and the second reviews recordings of the Ring and Parsifal. The article ends with a list of what Jace calls an "Ideal small collection of Wagner"! Readers may get the above sections from the AFA for the cost of copies (\$1).

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MOOT POINT



Dear Steve and Maddy:

I enjoyed the article by Alice Rhoades. I have more knowledge at this moment on the Celtic culture and feel that I might shed some light on this subject. In the Celtic lands the relationship between men and women was, I feel, very excellent in that each had his or her own strengths and weaknesses and acted accordingly. True, in some ways women dominated, but it was because the men chose so in reverence to the Goddess of the Earth. However, in battle, men and women fought together, each giving "the shout" before attacking. The modern concept of the warrior is that of a big unfeeling, thick-necked jerk. The true warrior always walks the balanced path in all things. It is hard to believe that if you spend a life in the presence of death, alive and growing things don't become something to cherish and protect.

In Celtic lands the Gods of the battlefield are female. I draw strength and nourishment from both the Gods and Goddesses of my land and that, my friend, is all. That is why I feel strongly about what you are doing.

As for the letter by Stephen W., I have a few friends who are in the Celtic Christian church and they are fine loving people and great metaphysicians, but they know the history, the sacred sites destroyed, lives ruined; the conversion of the Celts followed the same pattern of death and destruction. I can't believe that anyone thinks it was peaceful. I do believe that the old paganism died on the end of a Christian sword.

Jerry Falwell has a right to be wrong, but we have a right to defend ourselves.

Warrior for Peace,

M. and L. and M. C.

Thanks for the short course in comparative Indo-European cultures! I agree with your views, provided that by a "balanced path" one means exactly that. If the death-obsessed warrior is unbalanced, certainly the pacifist is, as well. I've known some people so "balanced" they were downright inert!

Dear Steve and Maddy,

I want to respond to Alice Rhoades' excellent article in RS #54, and her ideas on getting men and women together in Asatru.

The Old Norse Gods have strong masculine characteristics, and we should all work to point out their gentler attributes as well. I believe that most males in Asatru were, are, or eventually will be familiar with the strengths of the Norse Goddesses. All should be aware of the mighty power and authority of Frigga, the Queen of the deities. I believe too that most men would really find Freyja quite an attractive prospect at any time, quite apart from her more obvious traits.

Alice should keep up her good work in this matter. She's a knowledgeable and finely-styled writer, and a real asset to Asatru and the Folk.

Hejsan!

J.F.

We're glad to say that the Goddesses of our religion are getting more and more recognition as time goes on. People are realizing that we need all the Gods and Goddesses, not just those of one gender or those that are better known.

Yes, Frigga and Freya have a lot to offer us, but let's not forget Fulla and Idun and Gná and Vár and Lofn and the valkyries and . . .

Greetings Steve,

We would like to speak to our fellow Odinists through The Runestone's Moot Point about "magic". We see an increasing trend for magic to become dominant in Odinist literature and activities. Besides conflicting with our own personal beliefs it has been an obstacle in recruiting several other good people into the AFA.

Magic as we use the term here is the unsupported claim to be able to manipulate rather mechanistic unseen forces by means of runes, chants, spells, etc. We do not include truly religious acts like the Thorrblot by Thorstein Thorarinnsson at the last Althing. We do include stuff like Futhark: A Handbook of Rune Magic by Edred Thorsson. To us such magic seems quite flaky because when put to a valid test it doesn't work. Our group has a rule about magic which is "show me or shut up". If someone is doing research and development in a psychic or whatever area, they should perfect and demonstrate it before publicly proclaiming some ability to their kinsmen.

We vigorously oppose magic because we believe it is intrinsically Middle Eastern witchcraft rather than Nordic values. It is feminist rather than folkish. Most important, however, is that it attracts flakes, charlatans, the self-deluded, dope addicts, and homosexuals.

What we would like in the future is to see more emphasis on Nordic values, especially the AFA values which we wholeheartedly support. You have done great work on the values in the past and we know you have a good heart. Please emphasize values not magic.

Hail Woden!

T.J. and others.

Okay, I promised to run your letter - so here it is!

If I understand you, you are saying that magic per se is imported from the Middle East and that it conflicts with Nordic values and folkways. I would be interested in learning how you arrived at such a conclusion. What about the Eddic material, almost all of which is alive with charms, spells, and bewitchments? How about the scores (hundreds?) of examples of magic in the sagas? And the large number of amulets and magical inscriptions that have come down to us from pre-Christian times - how are they to be explained? The historical, archeological, and linguistic evidence overwhelmingly supports the idea that our ancestors not only used magic but in fact practiced it enthusiastically, and that they did so from prehistory. The material in Edred Thorsson's book in particular views the indigenous Nordic magic as a part of an overall Germanic cultural and religious worldview.

No one is obliged to believe in magic in order to belong to the AFA. Practitioners of magic have a right to be Odinists; so do emphatic sceptics like yourself, as well as the many people who don't know or don't care. The AFA does not have a dogma on the subject.

As for me personally, I seldom involve myself with magic. It's not my style. But I do believe that I have witnessed paranormal events and I have had the power of the runes dramatically demonstrated to me.

Perhaps our readers would care to comment?

Dear Stephen,

The Winter 1985 issue of The Runestone was another fine informative issue. My only reservation/concern was raised about the suggestion on page 14, regarding the "Guilds", that AFA children would be taught about circumcision in a new AFA newsletter. I hope this doesn't mean that the AFA approves of the practice of circumcision, because the Vikings certainly didn't.

Any practice of self mutilation contradicts our most fundamentally Anglo-Saxon traditions and subverts our moral and social fabric. Those who wish to practice circumcision should move to Israel. I hope that the AFA will not countenance circumcision, and by so doing compromise all its constructive efforts toward the preservation of our Norse and Germanic heritage.

Sincerely,

J.D.C.

We were surprised to receive several letters expressing your concern that the AFA was endorsing circumcision! Nothing could be further from our intent. I am quite confident that any statements in Bifrost will be directed at discouraging this unfortunate and alien practice that has been inflicted on so many of our infant boys.

EXCHANGE ADS

Vor Tru - the magazine dedicated to the restoration of Asatru, with a focus on Icelandic and Scandinavian approaches to the faith of our forebears. Up-to-date news and ancestral lore combine to make a pleasing and informative package. Subscription: \$8, cash only, to 2922 S. Marwin, Tucson, AZ 85730

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SheTotem - A women's magic newsletter. Published quarterly. Subscriptions are \$5 per year and taken no more than a year in advance. P.O. Box 27465, San Antonio, TX 78227-0465

The Bard, a hereditary Welsh journal of Celtic Paganism, is published quarterly, coinciding with Celtic Festivals, by the Anwn Temple of Gwynfyd. Subscription rate is \$9/year (first class postage) for U.S. and Canada; \$12/year foreign (airmail). Single issues/samples are \$3.50. Foreign payments must be made in U.S. funds or by international money order. Make any check/money order payable to: R.A. DeVowe. Mail to: Anwn Temple of Gwynfyd, 5102 N. 16th Dr., Lot #3, Phoenix, AZ 85015 USA

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



Available from the Rune-Gild

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The Runic Magic of the Armanen [Complete magical system used by 20th century German occultists and originated by Guido von List.....\$35.00]

The Galdrabók [Complete book of magical spells from medieval Iceland.....\$5.00]

Sigurðr, Rebirth, and Initiation [Exploration of the ancient Germanic psychology and the doctrines of "reincarnation" in the Völsunga Saga,.....\$25.00]

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