



THE



RUNESTONE



THE RUNESTONE is a journal of the ancient, yet ever new, religion known as 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 \$9 per year (U.S. and Canada) and \$12 per year for overseas airmail. Write to: AFA, P.O.Box 1754, Breckenridge, TX 76024. Please make checks payable to the Asatru Free Assembly.

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CALENDAR

June 8 - LINDISFARNE DAY. On this date in the year 793, three Viking ships raided the island of Lindisfarne and sacked the monastery there, officially opening the Viking Age and underscoring our people's resistance to religious imperialism. Pause today in memory of these sea warriors who fought for our Folk.

June 21 - MIDSUMMER. This is the longest day (and shortest night) of the year. Now the Sun begins its long decline, sliding into the darkness which will culminate six months from now at Yule. Identifying the Sun with the brightness of Balder, we celebrate in honor of both. Do something fun and festive to honor the event!

July 29 - STIKKLESTAD DAY. Olaf the Lawbreaker ("Saint Olaf") was killed at the battle of Stikklestad on this date in the year 1030. Olaf acquired a reputation for killing, maiming, and exiling his fellow Norwegians who would not convert to Christianity, and for carrying an army with him in violation of the law to help him accomplish this repression. Commemorate the folks who overthrew him by doing some positive act for our Gods today.

August 1 - FREYFAXI. A festival honoring Frey was celebrated in ancient times in the month of August. The focus was on the harvest, and on horses as well as on the virility of the God. Be glad for the rewards you have reaped, and toast Frey with joy.

August 9 - DAY OF REMEMBRANCE, FOR RADBOD. On this arbitrarily chosen date, we honor Radbod, a King of Frisia who was an early target for Christian missionaries. Just before his baptism ceremony, he asked the clergy what fate had befallen his ancestors who died loyal to Asatru. The missionaries replied that Radbod's forefathers were burning in Hell - to which the king replied "Then I will rather live there with my ancestors than go to heaven with a parcel of beggars." The baptism was cancelled, the aliens expelled, and Frisia remained free. Drink a horn this day, in memory of stalwart Radbod!

editorial

It's easy to espouse a code of honor, when we're talking about HONOR - the exceptional deeds of high virtue that come along rarely in our lives. But what about lower case honor, that kind we can practice every day? Sure, it isn't as dramatic as the life-and-death stuff, but maybe it's even more important. After all, if we can't train ourselves toward perfection in the small things, how can we possibly handle the larger ones?

Practicing honor in daily life isn't difficult. It just takes attention to what one does, and a determination to do it properly. The precise applications will be different for each of us, because our lives are so varied. Reduced to its essentials, a lot of it simply consists of meeting our obligations, of keeping our pledged word.

Easy? Yes and no. Most people do it, in a general sort of way. But that isn't enough for us. We're not just any old bunch of people, we're Asafolk! We have to be impeccable, or at least strive to be. That means meeting our financial obligations - carrying through with our promises - doing all the things we've said we would do (Better to keep quiet than to pledge more than can be delivered!).

Remember, other people will judge us, and our Gods, by what they see reflected in our lives. Shoddy performance makes us all look bad.

If we all strive to make our word our bond, and to otherwise practice honor in the littlest as well as in the largest matters, we will build our characters in the

right direction, enabling us to better serve our Folk and our Gods. Not only that, but we'll get a lot of personal satisfaction.

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let's get lucky with leif

The 500th anniversary of Columbus' voyage to America is still six years off, but already the politicians are building up steam for the event. Major media offensives will be orchestrated to reap a propaganda harvest - for Cuba, the nations of Central and South America, and the Mediterranean lands.

By contrast, a recent move by Iceland to honor Bjarni Herjulfson (who spotted North America 500 years before Columbus set sail) was of course defeated soundly by the Third World-dominated United Nations.

Somewhere, the ghosts of Erik the Red and Leif Erikson and a host of other Viking explorers call out for vengeance, demanding redress for the murder of our Northern culture, of our very identity as people of Germanic heritage. The Asatru Free Assembly will answer that call.

We hold nothing against Chris Columbus. He was a lot more like us than like the people of Cuba, for example. But we will not allow our accomplishments as a Folk to be buried. The Gods themselves must be shouting their anger at this injustice!

In our next issue, we will present a plan to help remedy this disgrace by telling our side of the story - to literally millions of people - in a dramatic burst of concerted action. We will need you help. Stand by to help redeem our history!

@ Stephen McNallen

 I want to help make land for Asatru become a reality! Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation, payable to "AFA Land Fund".

\$10___ \$15___ \$25___ \$50___ \$100___ \$500___ Other amount \$_____

NAME:
 ADDRESS:

___ My contribution is \$25 or more. Please send me an AFA T-Shirt size ___
 (Men's S.M.L.XL.; Women's S.M.L.)

___ My contribution is \$100 or more If my donation is the highest this issue, in addition to my T-Shirt, please send me a horn carved with a _____ theme. (Choose one of the following: Aesir, Vanir, Runic.)

Please do __ do not ___ publish my name as a contributor.

ROOTS IN THE SOIL



Yes, it's really going to happen! In the reasonably near future, there is going to be a piece of land, dedicated to our Gods, where Asafolk can begin to experience community and to live in keeping with our innermost social and spiritual needs!

Piece at a time, things are falling into place. The fund made a thousand dollars at the Althing auction and then a small contribution from the AFA kicked the balance over the \$2,500 mark, enabling us to put the money into an interest-bearing account. Volunteers are coming forward - architects to help us design buildings, engineers to plan roads and utilities. Raven has built a small model showing what our settlement could look like. Sketches and schemes emerge, are rejected, or modified and put on file. Gradually, the whole endeavor comes into sharper, more exact focus. Our criteria for the land in question are being hammered out, and the long process of selecting the desired geographical location has begun with a careful map reconnaissance of areas with the right characteristics.

However, we need your help for all this to work. With the first eager rush of donations past, we still must have contributions - or better yet, pledges of regular monthly donations - to get us to our goal. We have a long way to go, and the best plans in the world take resources to implement them.

As time goes, on the AFA plans a number of Land Fund benefit activities - another Althing Auction, special rewards for generous donations, perhaps regional fundraisers of one sort or another. Up to now we have offered all donors of \$15.00 or more a wooden medallion, hand-carved by Redbeard and bearing the Land Fund symbol of the odal rune. With this issue we are giving an AFA T-Shirt to everyone donating \$25.00 or more and we are offering a horn, beautifully carved by Raven, to the highest donation over \$100 received before August 1, 1986. Just fill out the coupon in this issue. Let's make land for Asafolk happen, soon.



Existential Meaning of Ragnarok

In his article in the last issue of The Runestone, Richard Simmons quite rightly warned against the dangers of dwelling on Ragnarok in a kind of melancholic stupor. It's a valid point, especially as it concerns our people's morale. But there is also the danger of minimizing Ragnarok, of overlooking the unique knowledge it embodies precisely because it is unique and therefore doesn't fit into prescribed notions of shamanism, many of which are derived from other cultures. I'll go so far as to say this: Ragnarok is the central event in Teutonic mythology (even if historical evidence of it is slight from early Germanic times, which isn't surprising considering the scarcity of material). In a sense, this sacred narrative separates Asatru from other world views, in that it reconciles transcendent reality with the impulse to lead a purposeful, free, heroic life in this non-transcendental world where every individual faces loss and defeat and death. Ragnarok teaches what we require most just now -- wisdom.

As Simmons points out, Ragnarok is at heart shamanic. In fact, it is even more shamanic than most people will allow. Taken as a whole, the story depicts a cycle of destruction and reemergence: a new world rises from the deep, order is reestablished, Balder and the Aesir return to a purer realm. Naturally, there are cries of Christian interpolation here, though it is hard to see why a cleric would want to make a pagan myth more palatable, and why he would tolerate Viking Gods in his millenium. If the story has a Christian ring at this point, my response is that I'm not surprised Christian exegetes would steal good ideas and powerful imagery from our ancestors. Who can blame the poor, dull fellows?

But, of course, what fascinates us about Ragnarok, and what needs to be explained, is the Gods' confrontation with defeat and death. This is what evokes the perception that Asatru is a religion of pessimism and angst. Robert Wood has written an excellent article called "The Viking Universe" (Studies for Einar Haugen), where he argues that, on the contrary, it is just this confrontation that spared Norse cosmology from the spiritual flagellation going on in medieval Europe (or modern America, I might add). The human condition really mattered to our ancestors in a way it cannot to those who see this world as an illusion, a mere projection of a transcendent divinity who hoards all value. Asatru loves life, and a religion of life, of reality, reveres Gods who participate in life, not abstract entities paring their fingernails in mansions of glory. The Norse Gods are involved in the same struggle for existence over non-being as men are, are subject to the same causality, caught up in the same looming fate -- in short, are non-transcendent.

Or it might be best to say that in the story of Ragnarok, the Gods manifest themselves as non-transcendent, not to instill a morose attitude

toward life, but to remind us of our nature and the nature of the struggle we face. It's a lesson, it seems, we need to learn time and time again, but we didn't make this world, nor do we control its laws. Cattle die; men die; things fall apart -- let the doctrines of lesser men run from these facts. Nevertheless, it is just this limitation which permits us to assert our individual and communal identity. Fate can, and will, snatch away everything a man has -- family, wealth, life, and in the case of Ragnarok, the universal order itself. But it cannot deprive him of his courage if he doesn't let it. Odin and Thor demonstrate this at Ragnarok. Therefore, though we don't control fate, we can determine our identity in relation to it: creator or destroyer, hero or coward, freeman or slave. Courage is the only thing that transcends Weird.

And it means nothing to talk about it in the abstract. Anybody can do that. But to demonstrate courage while the Frost Giants march, that makes an authentic claim on existence, which applies not to some far-off battle in Asgard, but to everyday life -- the giants of chaos are on the march today, this very moment. Ragnarok gives us a paradigm to show our courage daily, to live as free men and women, to defend family, kin and culture with the full awareness of our individual limitations and ultimate demise.

I believe this knowledge is necessary for the resurgence of our people, and that is why the story of Ragnarok has come down to us. By sacrificing individuality and kinship, Eastern religions like Christianity cringe before oblique divinities for a begrudged immortality. Materialist philosophies fear freedom more than the devil himself because it forces a man to take a responsibility for who he is. These are the ideologies of Niflheim. But in the clamor of Heimdall's horn at Ragnarok, a defiant, never-ending challenge to the chaos that would nullify us echoes through time -- and in our hearts, today, to the many enemies our people face. We can see in Fenrir's ravening eyes the glory of heroes who will let nothing deny their identity; and we can see in the glower of Surt's flames the radiance of Balder reborn.

Ragnarok is not an occasion for dejection. It is, like the heroic lives it will consume, a triumph of being.

@ C. Manes

ON PIGEONHOLING ASATRU AS A MINDLESS, INSENSITIVE WARRIOR CULT

". . .the temptation is strong to offer generalizations about the viking himself, produce a 'typical' figure, and prop him against the museum wall with his catalogue number and descriptive label. It is a temptation to be resisted because of its limiting and misleading consequences. Harald Hardradi, who waged war from Asia Minor to Stamford Bridge for thirty-five years was a viking; so was his father Sigurd Sow, who stayed home and counted haystacks. Hastein, who led the Great Army of the Danes into England in the early 890s, was a viking; so was Ottar, who came peaceably to his lord king Alfred's court with walrus tusks and lessons in northern geography. The men who destroyed churches in England, Ireland and France were vikings; so were the woodcarvers of Oseberg and the metalworkers of Mammen. The men who said 'With law shall the land be built up and with lawlessness wasted away' were vikings; so were the practitioners and curtailers of blood-feud, the profit-makers and those who robbed them of profit, the explorers and colonizers, the shapers of verse-forms and makers of legend."

From A History of the Vikings, Gwyn Jones (1968) Oxford University Press;pg348-9

@ Submitted by Ed Neville

folk Music for Vikings

As the 1960's and early 70's produced the "counterculture" music wave of Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix and countless others, the 1980's are starting to present a surge of music (be it ever so small right now) that at least is "in tune" with what rebel Odinist/Asatruar/bikers and other Heathern idealists believe.

Part of this trend can be credited to the medium of the novel "compact disc" which has been dominated not by rock, soul or even jazz, but by classics. Baroque and Bach have never been so popular! The intrinsic beauty of musical delivery by the digital system has given classics a rebirth unparalleled in this era!

Of "hard rockers" and newcomers, a Swede named Yngwie J. Malmsteen and his "Rising Force" band have produced their latest album entitled "Marching Out". It's available on Polydor Records and Tapes.

Yngwie's sure-to-be Odinist classic number is "I AM A VIKING", a very defiant song with gusto and lyrics to turn on the "Berserker" in most anyone of Northern heritage. As rock videos use the new sounds of electronics in their soulful messages of hedonism and political/social relevance, it is refreshing to hear true "Barbarian Musik" emanating from so Swedish a band.

While we Northfolk have dulcimers, fiddles, mandolins, and flutes, they can hardly compete in the modern market with heavy metal and loud rock set-ups so popular on the streets today. Thus Yngwie is to some of us a "folk hero" for his hard-hitting message and Viking spunk that makes this "our song" for the '80's. Here's the chorus!

I AM A VIKING

As the shores of my home disappear
I sail over the sea without fear!
Dragon ships are charging through
the waves
Just want to sail away into the sea
yeah, yeah

© Paal-Erik Filssunu





THE 1986 WESTCOAST FOLKMOOT III

THE LOS ANGELES AND ARIZONA KINDREDS OF THE ODINIST FELLOWSHIP ARE SPONSORING THE THIRD ANNUAL WESTCOAST FOLKMOOT DURING THE WEEKEND OF JUNE 20TH. THRU 22ND 1986. THIS WILL BE THE ONLY MAJOR GATHERING OF ODINISTS ON THE WESTCOAST THIS YEAR. ALL MEMBERS OF THE ODINIST FELLOWSHIP AND ASATRU FREE ASSEMBLY ARE INVITED AND URGED TO ATTEND.

PLACE: A RESERVED CAMPGROUND IN AN ALPINE SETTING NEAR ARROWHEAD LAKE CALIF. THIS IS IN COMMUTING DISTANCE OF ONTARIO AIRPORT. LOCATED IN THE HIGH SIERRIAS, IT IS EASILY REACHED BY CAR. FULLY DEVELOPED CAMPING AREAS FOR TENTERS, PLENTY OF ROOM FOR CAMPERS AND MOTORHOMES. YOU ARE REQUESTED TO BRING YOUR OWN WATER FOR DRINKING AND WASHING PURPOSES. THIS IS A BEAUTIFUL CAMPGROUND IN AN ALPINE SETTING, WITH TALL PINES AND A LAKE CLOSE BY.

ACTIVITIES: 2ND. ANNUAL VIKING GAMES. EVENTS FOR ALL AGES. AXE THROWING, ARCHERY, THE NOW FAMOUS PILLAGE AND CUT COURSE AND MORE. PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED. THERE WILL BE INFORMATIVE SEMINARS AND DEMONSTRATIONS PERTAINING TO OUR TROTH. RITUALS AND CEREMONIES OF THE FOLK, FEASTING AND KINSHIP. MEAD TASTING, SINGING AND REVELRY. VIKING AXE RAFFLE, FREE MARKET, AND MORE.

PRICE OF ADMISSION: 20 DOLLARS PER FAMILY IN ADVANCE. 25 DOLLARS AT THE GATE. PRICE INCLUDES CAMPING FEE, TWO SUMPTIOUS FEASTS, ADMISSION TO THE VIKING GAMES AND MORE.

This will be an historical gathering, with many of the leadership personages of the Odinist Fellowship and Asatru Free Assembly in attendance. There are excellent motels, and summer resorts nearby. Airport transportation from Ontario Airport, with advance notification. Carpooling can be arranged in some cases. Advance reservations very helpful for logistical purposes.

For further information, or to make advance reservations, contact The Arizona Kindred, Post Office Box 961, Payson Arizona 85547. Please make all checks or money orders payable to: The Odinist Fellowship of Arizona.

What Happened at Althing Seven?

If last year was "the boot camp of Althings" because of the hot weather and the spartan facilities, this year's event was definitely "the luxury special". Not that we were so pampered - but there was running water, electricity, and indoor shelter, all of which greatly eased logistics and made the Althing a smoother, more enjoyable time for everyone concerned.

The focal point for our doin's was a large stone hall complete with a massive fireplace, which we decked with banners in best Viking style. Tyr was invoked in the opening ritual early Friday afternoon, followed by time for browsing among the various guild exhibits (The Brewing Guild in particular got a lot of attention!). The rest of the afternoon was punctuated with demonstrations by the guilds. Bob and Chip of the Warrior Guild showed us what rappelling looks like, and gave Jim, Alice and myself a go at it. Later, Brynhild, Thor, Loki, Njord and other personalities from our myths came alive in a series of characterizations offered by the Eddic Guild. The Aerospace Technology Guild launched a rocket and the Norse Culture and Saga Guild under Thorsteinn staged a holmgang, or Viking duel, in which Chip and Mike proceeded to bash each other over a young woman's hand (Well, actually, it was more than her hand!). That evening, we wrapped up the day with our traditional mead 'n cookies in front of the fireplace.

Saturday opened to an early-morning Greeting to Sol, after which aspiring martial artists were led by Greg through the groaning exertions of klima postures for the benefit of body and mind. Having given the physical its due, it was time for a change - in the form of a presentation by Maddy and me. We described how changes can be effected in the awareness of others through cultural projects such as distributing the Eddas and publicizing Leif Erikson Day.

The last session of the morning was a talk by Alice on "creative mythology" - and specifically on her personal encounter with one of Goddesses, Eir. After lunch, Ariel continued the theme with a guided meditation on another of our female deities, Ostara.

Shifting gears from the contemplative to the active, we kicked off the games with a tug-of-war, and moved quickly on to the Ostara egg throw and caber toss with Carleen and Ornulff officiating. Our culminating sporting event was the boat race, with four person teams paddling rowboats against the clock. Each crew had to paddle down to a distant stone jetty, carry the boat over it, and paddle back around the end, while using appropriate tactics against a boatload of competitors. All who survived seem to have had a fine time. . .

That evening we feasted on venison (courtesy of Bob and Kelly) before a crackling fire, communed with our ancestors with a sumbel, and settled in for some serious mead tasting. You just haven't lived until you've sipped some "Leather Nun" - not to mention "Uff Da Dill"!

Sunday started with more excitement for the kids, namely an Ostara-egg hunt (Earlier, they had had a coloring contest, a raft-building session, and a competitive trash pick-up). A tip of the horned hat to Cheryl for her patience and energy!

A short update on the state of the AFA preceded the Land Fund auction. Etched mirrors, statues of Odin and Thor and Tyr, game sets, jewelry, and a host of other items were sold to eager bidders who saw this as a chance to acquire some very hard-to-get goods. When the shouting and gavel-banging was over, we had netted almost a thousand dollars for the Land Fund, much more than we had hoped. Right now is as good a time as any to thank those open-handed folks who donated things to be auctioned off - and to the people who bid so generously for them.

Lunch, a closing ritual, leave-takings . . . soon it was over. . . But not really over, just adjourned. It was for us a wonderful chance to meet new Asafolk and to renew ties with old timers, affirming our Gods and the bonds between us. Our heartfelt thanks to all who helped it happen. See you next Ostara weekend at the same site!

⊗ Stephen McNallen

**Thor's Hammer
T-Shirt \$7.95**

**License Plates
"Odin" "Thor"
"Pagan Power"**

\$9.95^{ea}

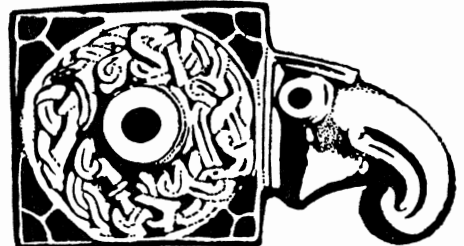
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ALTERNATIVE HOUSING FOR ASAFOLK

Let me start this article by stating that I wish to take nothing away from kinsman Brian Regan's thoughts, which appeared in the Winter 1985 edition of The Runeestone, (#54). As a matter of fact, it was he who inspired me to attempt a piece of my own on the subject of housing for our people.

Not long ago, I had the opportunity to read and study a book titled The Viking World by James Graham-Campbell. This informative work showed excavations and reconstructions of Viking houses which were long in shape, some with three wings in a "T" shape, with a central doorway. They were built of sod and timber with the walls tapering from about 8 feet at the base to about 4 feet at the top. This type of house afforded the owner with many advantages over contemporary homes and a similar type of structure can be built today which will offer those same benefits to modern day Asafolk. I am speaking of the bermed, earth-sheltered, or underground house design.

In the bermed design, earth is piled up on the top and walls of the outer shell of the house, and some kind of ground covering such as grass is then placed over it once everything has either settled or been compacted.

In the earth-sheltered design, one wall of the house is usually exposed with the three remaining walls covered with both earth and some kind of ground covering. This includes the roof of the house.

The underground design is usually just that, with only the entrance way showing above the ground with perhaps some sky lights or with an open-air section above a central courtyard.

To begin with, this type of design is very close to the traditional house of the Vikings, or at least those in permanent settlements and forts. Differences are that the sod in the modern houses is usually laid as a covering instead of making up the walls, and timber is replaced with steel and concrete. (Although some designs today still incorporate wood.) This design blends naturally with its surroundings instead of standing out from them like many contemporary houses.

The advantages of this house style are many. It has very little temperature variation and can be heated or cooled with minimal expense. A 2500 square foot home could probably be thermally controlled with a unit the size of the average one-room "window-shaker" air conditioner, on a low setting. These types of buildings retain air temperature for a rather long time with very little fluctuation because the walls and grass act as an extremely efficient insulation.



They are also quiet. Very quiet. You might come outside after a couple of hours and wonder where all of the noise came from! The earth and grass, as well as the other building materials, act as a super noise insulator. So, if you want the sounds of the outdoors in your house, put them on tape and play them at your leisure.

Such homes are easy to maintain and will cost you a lot less in this department as well. When built properly, they do not leak. And to re-shingle your house or roof, if you should somehow happen to damage a section, you have only to look in your yard for a place that you would like to start a new garden, or plant a tree, or put out flowers and move the grass to the damaged section. Water and cut as needed.

These shelters also lend themselves well to custom designs. Who cares if the rooms run a jagged line on the outside? All anyone is going to see is your lawn, your windows, and your doors, anyway! So how you shape your house is pretty much up to you. You can be as individualistic as you please.

For those who hold survivalist inclinations, the house can easily be turned into a safe, reliable fallout shelter with little effort, and quickly. Or into a fortress that is deadly to the enemy.

Earth structures blend themselves well with the alternative utilities such as wind, solar, and hydro-electric power plants or water systems, and between the three styles, there is a house suitable to any geographical region.

Now, as far as the initial cost goes, dome homes might be a cheaper buy. That would depend a lot on where you are and whether you build it yourself, and what style of home you choose. But in overall cost, those nice monthly utilities payments will run you more than the average bermed, earth-sheltered, or underground home. There are plenty of books on the subject that will tell you all that you need to know to design and build a good, solid, reliable home in any of the three styles.

For those of you who are steadfast dome home enthusiasts and would like to stick to this kind of structure, I suggest the following:

Gene Hopster has a book out which will explain how to build and design a dome which is just as strong as the geodesic, but cheaper and easier to construct. Two people can assemble and put up the shell in a day (You could be living in your home a week from the starting date). The volume is How to Design and Build Your Dome Home (1981, pap., \$5.95, I.S.B.N. 0-89586-100-3) It is available from H.P. Books, P.O. Box 5367, Tucson, AZ 85703, Telephone 602-888-2150. This book is nicely illustrated and covers the topic well.

A word of caution. Be sure to check the zoning and other laws, rules, regulations, and ordinances to see if they prevent the building of whichever home you choose!



A BLOT FOR ULLER

Arrow-god! Hear us, we call on you
Drift-Walker! Hear us, we call on you
Snowshoe-god! Hear us, we call on you
Shield-god! Hear us, we call on you

Uller
Winter lord, hear us

Uller
We have gathered in your name
Archer, hear us

Uller
Shield-god, hear us

Hear us, Uller, stepson of Thor
Come to us, winter king

Uller, snow lord!
By the arrow which strikes the deer
Send us game

Hail Uller, winter lord
By the pelts of the bow-slain
Send us wealth

Hail Uller, winter lord
By the trees you robe in snow
Keep our homes

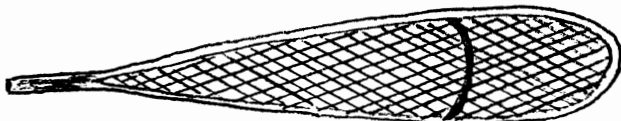
Hail Uller, winter lord

Hail Uller, bowman
Hail Uller, strider in snow
Hail Uller, shield god

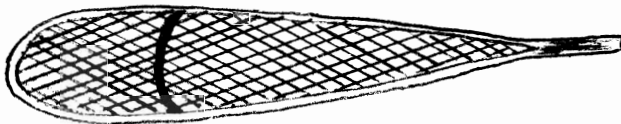
Uller!
As snowshoes guard your feet
The snow shields the earth
Hail Uller!
Gift-giver to sleeping soil

Uller, stepson of Thor
give us strength
Uller, winter lord
let us endure
Uller, shield god
stand by us

Uller, shield god
lord of the duel
Uller, shield god
lord of single combat



of Thor
length
ord
lure
god
is
god
ie duel
god
ngle combat



When the stakes are set
make firm our hearts
When the shields are raised
make our blades bite
When the sword is bared
make strong our arms

Uller, shield god!

Make us strong
as you are strong
Make us fearless
against foe or beast
Make us shrug
at stern hardship

Uller, hear us
In your name we eat
In your name we drink
In your name mull wine
and sing through winter nights

Hail Uller, frost lord

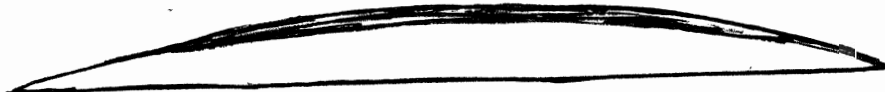
When the winds blow
walk with us
When the snow falls
walk with us
When the cold bites
walk with us

Snowshoe-god
Archer
Shield-god

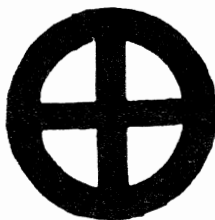
Uller, stepson of Thor
Uller, winter god
Uller, friend of frost folk

Uller,
Join our feast!
Hail Uller!

© Anthony Dillon-Davis



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Only \$10



THE RELIGION OF ODIN

— by Slauson —

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

WULFING KINDRED of Northern Illinois is now accepting requests for membership from any AFA member in good standing in our vicinity. Interested in hearing from anyone who is sincerely interested in becoming a part of a functioning AFA kindred. Write: Asatru Free Assembly, P.O.Box 56374, Harwood Heights, IL 60656

THE MONTANA ODINIST KINDRED is an independent Odinist group now forming. Comprised of several energetic individuals, the budding organization has laid groundwork for a newsletter, "Norwolf", and has devised a "Statement of Purpose and Principles". Interested readers may contact them by writing to Mr. J. Warman, P.O.Box 709, Lincoln, MT 59639

CONGRATULATIONS, CARLEEN AND ORNULF on your recent wedding! Yes, folks, April in Texas was the time and place of the latest AFA marriage, at which your Alsherjar-gothi was honored to officiate. A backyard full of neighbors and family, plus supporting Asafolk, were on hand. Odin and Frigga, give good fortune!

"MIDGARD" PAGAN COMPUTER BULLETIN BOARD is open to serve you! To find out more, contact Vidar and Lycia Andrewson, P.O. Box 256, North Highlands, CA 95660. Although the bulletin board is open to all pagans, Vidar and Lycia are AFA members, and head up Lagugiba Kindred of the AFA.

Announcing. . . the publication of an all-Asatru ANTHOLOGY OF POETRY from the vanguard of the Asatru/Odinist world revival! If you are a poet, artist, or cultural essayist who creates in the spirit and tradition of Asatru, we encourage you to write us for full details and/or submit your work to: "Wordsmiths" Skaldic Guild, AFA, P.O.Box 56374, Harwood Heights, IL 60656

THE SOCIETY FOR THE ERADICATION OF TELEVISION is a group for people who don't like TV. As they put it, "The ads sell products you don't need, and the programs sell a view of reality that discourages individual thinking." If you agree, write for information from S.E.T., P.O.Box 1124, Albuquerque, NM 87103.

"ARWALD" is the newsheet of the English Odinist Hof. Saxon and Norse Asatru faith promoted to a modern audience. Subscribe by becoming a Hof Associate or sending 3 pounds to: EOH, BCM:TERCEL, London, WC.IN 3XX, England.

TEXAS GATHERING - JULY 4, 5, 1986 Home kindred of the AFA is sponsoring a weekend get-together at a beautiful lakeside setting. All Texas subscribers will be notified of details; others who would like to attend are welcome and should write for information to AFA, P.O.Box 1754, Breckenridge, TX 76024.

ODIN AND THE NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE

Almost everyone today has heard or read of the Near Death Experience or "NDE". The dying soul

1. suddenly finds itself outside of its body
2. in many cases perceives its own life in its totality, or selected portions of it, in some kind of "replay"
3. often moves through a dark whirlwind or tunnel
4. often encounters a radiant light, usually described as golden or white, and as being magnetic or loving
5. tends to feel at one with the universe, and as having suddenly been enlightened with infinite knowledge
6. frequently meets others, often those known to be deceased
7. not seldom comes to some kind of a boundary representing the "point of no return" between life and death
8. on rare occasions enters a landscape or city
9. returns to the body, voluntarily or involuntarily.

The "light" mentioned above is often linked with some supernatural entity such as Christ, the Buddha, a saint or angel, a God or other personality who represents or is the (divine) light in its personal aspect. The psychic impact of the whole event is in any case so moving, overwhelming and powerful that it is unmatched by anything else in human experience. There is a strong tendency for anyone who has gone through it to become far more spiritually oriented, although not necessarily involved with any organized religion.

What is going on here?

Many people, unable to make sense of the conflicting reports, maintain that some kind of brain malfunction is occurring due to lack of oxygen or something of the kind. Others take everything literally, believing that the after-death realm must be exactly as perceived. Few people have taken the trouble to look at the reports from the view of depth psychology, let alone from the viewpoint of a pagan theologian.

Let us get to the heart of the matter: human beings do not see reality as it is in itself. We translate it. And since the translating organs and the conditioning of any two people are different, their sensory impressions of "the same thing" also differ.

What are we talking about?

In the external world, to take but one instance, there is absolutely no color. Repeat: no color. There are only light waves (that is, electromagnetic waves) of different lengths. Some of these waves are TV and radio waves, others infrared or microwaves (as in ovens), and so forth. The wavelengths are infinite in number. We humans take a very small portion of these different wavelengths and translate them into a "feeling" of color. A

similar process occurs in smell, hearing, pain, et cetera. Even our sensations of space and time themselves are due to some kind of "translation", if modern physics is correct (and we have every reason to believe it is).

The same thing is true for us when our souls leave (or seem to leave) our bodies. What we experience is not the Other Realm as it is in itself, but only as our souls are structured -- and have structured themselves -- to perceive it. And since individuals differ, they perceive differently what is in itself essentially one and the same thing.

From the viewpoint of the history of religions, the NDE is the basic shamanic experience. From comparative religiology we know that the shaman is often initiated, after much study and spiritual and intellectual preparation, by deliberately exhausting and generally overtaxing the physical body to the point of collapse. Initiation is sometimes, but by no means always, triggered by the intake of hallucinogenic substances.

Ancient Germanic religion centered around shamanism. For nine nights Odin hung spear-wounded and without nourishment, lashed to the shamanic tree, the gallows (Visigothic galga). This gallows-tree provided the image which assisted him in visualizing the inner patterns of his body, his central nervous system. And in this way the tree (that is, the mental image of the tree, not the tree itself) became his body and his central nervous system. This "inner" tree is Yggdrasil, the world-tree to which the soul of Odin found itself strung.

Finally, physically overcome, he left his worldtree-body and went down to discover the runes, the mysterious "secrets" which underlie the visible world. These he took in with a shamanic trance-cry and returned to his body, thereupon descending from the gallows-tree.

From that time on, Odin, like many moderns who have had an NDE, had the ability to tell the future, and other psychic capabilities, including the casting of spells, to a degree unknown to normal mortals.

In addition, from earliest times Odin has been worshipped as the God who travels down to the realm of the dead and back. He has always been the shaman of shamans. This is why Tacitus (in chapter nine of his Germania, written about 98 C.E.) "translates" his name as "Mercury" for a Roman audience: "Of all the Gods it is Mercury whom [the Germanics] worship most highly." For Mercury, in the Roman world, was the God who accompanied newly dead souls to the underworld. Incidentally, Christianity reports that even Jesus spent forty days and nights out in the desert without nourishment before he spoke with the devil and began his career. And according to the "Apostles' Creed" of the Roman Catholic Church, he is said to have "descended into hell" after his crucifixion -- that is, not into the Christian fire and brimstone but into the realm of the dead, as the Latin descendit ad inferos makes clear. So Jesus, too, may have undergone a shamanic NDE and may in fact have been a shaman.

At this point, let us make one thing quite clear. The experiences of shamans are not due to oxygen deprivation in the brain. The bodies of shamans in trance continue to breathe normally. Presumably their brainwave patterns are quite slow, perhaps even delta-wave (1/2 to 3 cycles per second). But there is no basis for believing that their brains have been deprived of blood or oxygen. Indeed some shamans stand on platforms, move around and talk

during their out-of-body-experiences and trance states. As far as the states of possession among the devotees of Odin, the berserkers of the North, are concerned, it is out of the question that men who were fighting savagely would at the same time have had no oxygen supplied to their brains.

Ancient Germanic religion, the earliest Asatru, explained the unseen roots of life through symbols, since psychologists were not around to give them a modern vocabulary. These symbols are as valid today as they ever were. In addition, they show us how modern Asatruar can interpret the mystical dramas which happen to them when they have an NDE, or when we finally go to our Gods as we all must. The religious symbols of the Northmen still work. Before we explain some of these symbols, however, something must be said to forestall certain false notions about what we are discussing.

We live in an age of materialism. Materialism is the belief that the only things which exist are the things we can experience through our outward senses or with machinery (such as TVs, radios, Geiger counters, etc.) of some sort.

Materialism is the decay product of Judaism and Christianity, which declare that the world is "dead matter" and that their God, Yahweh, represented among the Christians by Jesus, is outside the universe, in "heaven." Asatru rejects not only their oriental God, but also the idea that the world is dead. Our ancestors believed that everything is besouled and alive -- merely in differing degrees. This was expressed by the belief in elves, trolls, dwarves, etins, thirses (giants) and wights of all sorts who lived everywhere in and about the whole earth.

Today more people than ever are being saved from death and are returning to tell of their NDE's. It is the strong suspicion of this writer that this is happening for a purpose. That purpose is to make man in general, but especially people of Northern ancestry, aware that materialism is false and that we do indeed have a meaning which reaches beyond ourselves and our personal urges and desires. That meaning lies in the fact that we Northerners are ourselves the key to the continued growth and intellectual development of the World Soul.

Astounding? Possibly so - but there is more to be said about Near Death Experiences, and we'll continue this investigation in the next Runestone.

© Brian Regan



KINSHIP - A POSITIVE SOLUTION

In the early 1970's, a team of British naturalists developed a landmark answer to the greatest single remaining anomaly in Darwin's evolutionary theory: why do animals cooperate when "survival of the fittest" implies unrelenting and endless competition for food, mates, and territory? This team demonstrated through classic Mendelian theory and calculation that cooperation is, in fact, a very effective survival strategy if the aim is to assure the survival of the shared gene pool, and that such cooperation is directly proportional to the degrees of shared genes. . . or, in everyday terms, to kinship. The most extreme examples of this cooperation occur in ant, termite and bee cultures where all members have a common parent (the Queen) and are, in effect, all sisters and brothers. These colonies carry cooperation to the extreme that the colony acts as a single individual with many parts. Later field studies found the same phenomenon operating in birds, herding animals and even fish. The lesson, equally applicable to all animals including man, is that cooperation and harmony within a group are directly proportional to, and a product of, a common genetic heritage. Where such societies exist in the world, in countries like Japan and in some Northern European countries and elsewhere, the societies are relatively free of internal turmoil and divisiveness. Where artificial political boundaries have been created which ignore such bonding, however, upheaval, revolution and terrorism are frequent. This is evident in Africa and Southeast Asia where former colonial borders were used to create "modern" nations without regard to kinship or tribal bonds and perhaps most tragically in Ireland and French-speaking Canada.

We live in a world rampant with separatist movements and civil wars, many of which get little attention in the West. Basques in Spain, Shiites and Sunnis and Druse and Moslems in the artificial political structures of the Middle East, Sikhs in India, Khmer in Southeast Asia, Tamil on Srilanka (Ceylon), Moros in the Philippines, Amharic tribes in Ethiopia, Ibos in Nigeria, and on and on. Some universalists and "one-worlders" like to characterize these as national liberation and anti-imperialist uprisings or as machinations of the superpowers, but they are usually not. They are kinship groups rebelling against cooperation with what are perceived as unrelated and non-kindred adversaries. It is a typical tactic of manipulative external forces to encourage these divisions as a means to incite and later take over "civil" wars for their own political purposes. We've seen this so often in the 20th century that we've become inured to it and lose sight of why the groups within these wars originally confronted each other. Ideologies of the people who would banish kinship and genetic bonding as a legitimate and natural force in our world require these wars to be interpreted as East vs. West superpower imperialism when, in truth, they are nothing more than manifestations of the same cooperative phenomenon isolated by the British naturalists.

Does it serve humanity to try to make genetic bonds somehow "racist" or evil in intent? Do we truly act in a liberal-minded way when we tell our children that they should feel the same compassion and concern for all humans regardless of our kinship (or lack of it) with them? It may be emotionally appealing, but it is, when examined closely, like going to a rock concert because one feels badly about the killing of whales. It does the whales no good at all, but it puts a lot of money in the pockets of promoters and performers and gives us an emotional quick fix which reduces guilt. . . a meaningless and, in the end, counterproductive act. Would it not be much more likely to reduce tension and upheaval in our world to recognize and accept the facts revealed by the British naturalists, see them as legitimate and natural phenomena and adjust our solutions to world problems by taking them into account? Racism, per se, the premise that one racial group is inherently superior to another, is destructive and open to argument on

many grounds. Kinship bonding is a very different matter. A shared genetic heritage is the source for cooperation between people, perhaps the only meaningful source and maybe more important than all other linkages combined.

Asatru does recognize kinship bonding but is not racist. It sees in the common genetic heritage of those people who include in their collective unconscious the religion of the northern Gods, a natural and powerful agent for cooperation and survival of the gene pool. Is this somehow an "evil" goal? Some moralists would say it is; that it is somehow wrong to respond to what is apparently a drive which functions in every living animal species on this planet. Their appraisal is utopian at best. Ignoring the cooperative kinship link is tantamount to ignoring gravity. It might be fun to do so but it will inevitably have dire consequences. Terrorism, separatist violence and endless civil war are the consequences of their deliberate ignorance. Until this fantasizing ends and the naturalness and legitimacy of kin and genetic bonding is accepted, we will continue to live in a world of strife.

@ Edgar Neville

For those who are ready. . .

As we discussed in the "State of the AFA" presentation at Althing Seven, we have spent the last couple of years preparing a sound organizational framework for the AFA. Now it is time to flesh out that skeleton, so to speak, by adding people - individually as members, and in groups as kindreds.

AFA membership is not for everyone. But if you agree with the values we profess - if you wish to serve the ends listed in our Statement of Purpose - if you want to honor those Northern European ancestors of whom you are an extension - then it may be for you. We will gladly send the relevant information to interested readers.

Many of you who are already members may want more out of your AFA affiliation, and forming a kindred may be a way of satisfying that need. Remember, we now have considerable material to help you accomplish this task.

It is time for the Asatru Free Assembly to grow numerically. If you are ready to take part in that process, we invite your inquiry!

CONTACT PROJECT DISCONTINUED

We are continually examining our procedures, trying to make them as effective as possible for the attainment of our many tasks. Sometimes that means adding projects, sometimes it means discontinuing those that don't work well.

The contact program has fallen into the latter category, and we won't be doing it any more.

Why? Because it was a nightmarish administrative hassle which yielded - with a few exceptions - meager results. Furthermore, it was largely duplicative of (and confused with) the more comprehensive networking directory which is available to members.

There is only so much time and energy at our command for the accomplishment of our goals - and we can better utilize those valuable resources by dumping the contact project and emphasizing member networking instead. We urge all AFA members to take full advantage of this latter endeavor!

• GUILDS •

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, 884 S. Lewis St.,
Lakewood, CO 80226

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

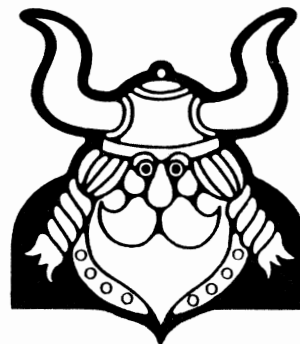
THE WRITERS GUILD
Matt Phipps, 78 Flagg St., West
Hartford, CT 06107

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

"WORDSMITHS" - THE SKALDIC GUILD of
the AFA is alive and well and
renewing memberships as well as
seeking new members. In the plan-
ning stages are several important
projects. (See poetry anthology
announcement elsewhere.) For mem-
bership or information, write:
"Wordsmiths", AFA Skaldic Guild,
P.O. Box 56374, Harwood Heights, IL
60656

A "ROMANCE GUILD" to get Asamen and
Asawomen together? Some interest
has already been expressed, and it
could happen if there's enough
support. Write to the AFA if you'd
care to be involved!

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for details. Be sure to see an ar-
ticle on this subject in the next
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MOOT POINT



Steve and Maddy,

I loved the latest Runestone. Come to think of it, I loved all the Runestones I have received. I disagree on very little in it, but I am a little disturbed about the high-tech guilds. I am not saying they shouldn't exist, but spacecraft and computers have a sterile, unnatural look and feel about them. A longship was born of nature, wood, and the hands of men who understood nature and lived beside it - not against it.

Pay no mind to my ramblings; I am just too old-fashioned. I ride a horse instead of driving a car, read instead of watching television. I love to hunt with lance and bow. My way of thinking is old and obsolete, but isn't that what some say about our religion? There is life in things of wood, leather and hand-forged iron. To me, plastic, aluminum, and fiberglass are the poison from which our people are dying. There are chemicals in all our food, water and clothes and contaminated medicines can send you to Valhalla early. Fanatics put ground glass in baby foods. People pump poison into Mother Earth's streams and into her skies - all in the name of technology. I had rather die a living museum piece than know I had a hand in killing the Earth and our Northern folk.

Heritage, Freedom and Truth,

C. P.

Your remarks make some excellent points; points of which it's good to be reminded. I agree very much with the spirit of what you're saying, I just don't see how that conflicts with the appropriate use of technology. Take myself, for example: I'm very interested in high-tech subjects - but like you, I don't own a television, and I wish I didn't need a car. The way I see it, our machines can serve us and our values, or they can master us and create our values (TV is a prime example of the latter). But to chunk all advanced technology out the window is to leave ourselves defenseless against folks unfriendly to us who retain these capabilities.

Let's not let people with values radically different from ours monopolize all the power!



Dear Steve and Maddy:

As you may have guessed, Althing 7 was an exceptionally positive experience for me. Although I have been involved with the AFA for some time, I have always had a few reservations; largely because I had never met the people involved. I no longer have any reservations. Althing was better than I could have imagined it. The people were the friendliest I have ever met, and made me feel very welcome indeed! I salute them. You and Maddy are to be congratulated on the fine job of picking the site, getting all of the madness organized, and working overtime to make Althing 7 such a great success. As Paal Filssunu suggested, for a few days we all walked and sang in Valhalla. I brought a lot of it home with me. Maybe we should hold Althing 8 next month instead of next year! At any rate, you can put me down for the long haul. You wrote earlier that one of the things that made Althing 6 so great was the sense of participation. Participation is the word for me from now on: it's time for me to quit admiring the longship and to pick up an oar.

All hail our Gods and heroes!

J. C.

Thanks for the rave reviews! We enjoyed it too, and we thank the many people who made it a success - not least of all yourself and the Brewing Guild, Jace.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

. . . we discussed the need for our movement to bring couples together; an Odinst dating service as it were. I strongly agree on the need for this, as it is very difficult for those of us who are "of the Folk" to find a suitable bride among the yuppies and xtians. . .

HAIL ODIN!

K. A.

Dear Maddy,

. . . I also wanted to ask you how does an Odinst fellow in prison go about finding an Odinst lady to write to? I mean a single Odinst lady who's interested in finding a single Odinst fellow? I'd really like to know. Is there a correspondence list or could I run an ad in back of The Runestone, and how to I go about it?

Hail the Gods!

C. W.

We've received several letters of late mentioning the difficulty Asafolk have in finding "dates and mates" who share their religious views. If you find yourself in that category, now's your chance! K.A. has volunteered to head up a guild for the specific purpose of putting eligible folks of the Folk in touch with each other. If you want to be listed, or just want to know more, drop us a line and we'll see what we can get going here.

Hi Steve and Maddy,

As the land becomes a reality, remember that I'm a registered professional engineer in the State of Texas, so I can design roads, buildings, utility systems (water, sewer, etc.) that will be acceptable to the State, county and all the local agencies of government. Of course, anything that I did of this nature would be part of my personal donation to the fund...

HAIL ODIN!

D.S.

Glad to take you up on that! It's still quite amazing to realize that our land acquisition is actually going to happen. Every day brings us a little bit closer to that goal, and your offer is one that gives us still more encouragement.

THANKS to all who donated to the AFA LAND FUND this past season.

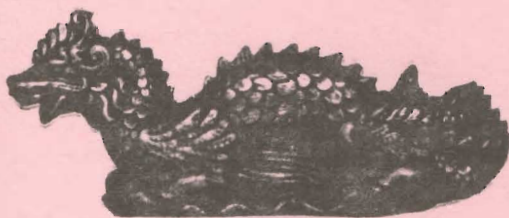
G. Saunders	E. Hinz	R.R. Brooks
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R. Paratore	Hardy Felgate	E. Hannsson
W. Martin	B. Stine	

Thanks also to those who wished to remain anonymous and to all who contributed in goods or cash to the Althing Seven Land Fund Auction.

THE BIRTHINGS

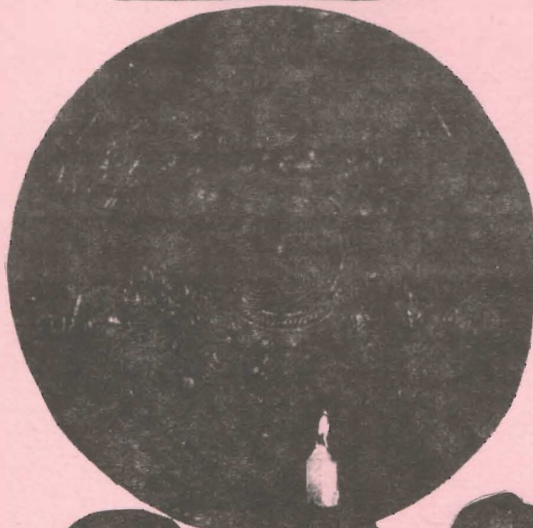
Thor's passion was not gentle:
the rains pounded the earth until his phallic power
flooded her, the womb that she was enclosed
in water inches deep. Thundercloud days
followed nights deeper than the flood
three times before an earth maiden breathed
a candle flame's heat and light into dawn, drawing in,
TH TH TH TH TH TH TH TH TH
and letting it out again,
echoing forth the sun's warmth and rays,
a brutal love followed by a softer healing,
womb emerging from womb, a regeneration, a continuance.

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#1 Dragon- by Continental 15"x6" h; cast in plaster; hand-painted by L.G.Cooper ; Copper finish; felt bottom.\$18.50 +3.50 Shipping & Handling (S/H).

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