



THE RUNSTONE



pedersen

The Runestone is a journal of the ancient, yet ever new, religion known as Odinism or Ásatrú. It is dedicated to that religion and to the values of courage, freedom, and vitality which are associated with it.

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February 17 is the DEADLINE for the Spring issue.

DECEMBER - FEBRUARY

December 20-21 - Mother Night. This is the night that gives birth to the coming year (hence the name "Mother Night") and marks the beginning of the Júl, or Yule, season. We suggest an appropriate ritual and/or a party to mark the beginning of this festive time. This is the night before the winter solstice and marks the beginning of the Sun's return.

December 31 - Twelfth Night. The celebration which began on Mother Night continues for the traditional Twelve Days of Yule, each day of which is a month of the preceding year in miniature. Twelfth Night marks the culmination of this period.

January 3 - Charming of the Plow. An agricultural ritual of great antiquity is traditionally performed on this date in Scandinavia. Although long since cloaked in Christian disguise, the original rite called upon Mother Earth and Father Sky to bless the fields, and grain cakes were turned under the first furrow. This is a good day to reflect on our dependence upon Nature and our roots in the soil. In the revived Vanir faith, this day is called *ardr*, or "plow."

January 9 - A Day of Remembrance for the martyr Raud the Strong. Raud was a landowner of great renown in Halogaland, in Norway. Olaf the Traitor, known to history as King Olaf Tryggvason, had Raud captured and tortured to death because he would not renounce Ásatrú. History says that Olaf forced a snake down Raud's throat. Needless to say, Raud's wealth was confiscated by the king.

February 2 - Barri. Known generally as Candlemas among Wiccans, this is the day we celebrate the wooing by the god Frey of the Maiden Gerd. It is a festival of fertility, of the planted seed and the plowed furrow, in the same spirit as Charming of the Plow.

February 9 - Another Day of Remembrance for another Halogalander, Eyvind Kinnrifi. Olaf tortured him to death by placing a bowl of red-hot embers on his stomach until his belly burst open. Eyvind's crime was steadfast loyalty to the old gods. A good day to reflect on Christian kindness....

February 14 - Feast of Vall. This day is in honor of the family and is a traditional time for the renewal of marriage vows, betrothals, and ties of kinship loyalty.

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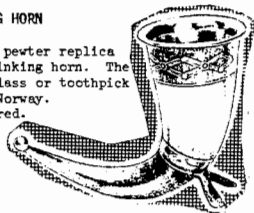
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Ogham and Beth Luis Nion

by Jeffrey R. Redmond

Editor's Comment — Our readers may wonder why a magazine dedicated to Germanic religion would run an article dealing with an ancient Celtic script. The key lies in the author's understated remark that the Celts "were much the same as the Germanic peoples east of the Rhine river...."

It is the conviction of your editor that the Celts and Germanics have common roots as Indo-European peoples and that they share essentially the same Northern European ethos. If we are to weather the coming storms, these two families of our European folk must recognize their basic unity and work together. In this spirit, this article is offered.

In the period after 800 B.C. in western Europe, a people called the Celts inhabited the areas of Gaul (the Netherlands and France), Britain, Eire (Ireland), and the Alps mountains. They developed a high degree of agricultural skill, and lived in harmony with the natural forces of the earth and sky. They were much the same as the Germanic peoples east of the Rhine river, in central and northern Europe. The Celts carefully followed the movements of the stars and planets, and their Druid priests spent many years learning about astronomy and astrology. Stonehenge, in England, was constructed as an observatory, even before the major Celtic period, to accurately predict the locations of the sun and moon at certain special times of each year.

The Irish Druids formulated an unique series of magic symbols, and used them as an alphabetical system for writing. The knowledge of writing was felt to have come from the god of the sun, Ogha (or Lugh), and the alphabet was called the *Ogham Y Wyddor* after him. Aside from their common Gaelic language, the Druids employed a secret language of their own called *Berla Na Filied*, and used the Ogham alphabet with it as well. An ancient Irish hero, Cu Chulainn, used both to great advantage, along with many practices of Druid rites and sorcery, as is told about in the *Táin Bó Cúalgne*.

The Celts were very adept at composing songs, poetry, rhymes, and riddles, and when subdued by the Roman armies in the first century B.C., greatly perplexed their more technical-minded conquerers. The Druids spoke mainly in riddles, only hinting at subjects, and left most of the conversation to be figured out for itself.

The Ogham alphabet was divided up into five groups of five letters each. Each letter had a separate magical power, and the Celts inscribed them on jewelry (especially amber) to give themselves extra assistance from the supernatural forces. Combined together, the letters could also spell out words, and give even more powerful magic, along with communication. It consisted of a series of lines, marked above and below a line or sharp edge, and was simple to read and understand.

T	TT	TTT	TTTT	TTTTT	┆	┆┆	┆┆┆	┆┆┆┆	┆┆┆┆┆	┆	┆┆	┆┆┆	┆┆┆┆	┆┆┆┆┆	✕	⊖	∞	∂	⊞
B	L	F	S	N	H	T	D	C	Q	M	G	NG	ST	R	A	O	U	E	I
				V					Z										

Ogham script

While the Ogham symbols were somewhat common knowledge, the Druids themselves had an even more magical secret alphabet. It was called *Beth Luis Nion* (Tree Writing), and was based upon the magic powers believed to exist in trees. It had a code which followed the changing seasons, and was used at the religious rites associated with each. A Druid had to have been in the priesthood for twenty years before he was taught it.

There were thirty-nine letters, divided into four groups, in the *Beth Luis Nion*, and each letter was named after a different type of tree. One of the most important of the tree symbols was the apple, and its fruit was the food of the gods. The kingdom of the dead was called Avalon, and means "sacred apple place". (This was believed to be an island across the ocean, where the sun set each evening. It is interesting that an area of the island of Newfoundland in Canada, west of Ireland, would be named Avalon).

The oak was another very important tree, as the acorns on it resembled the head of male sexual organs, and were associated with fertility. It was the sacred tree of the sun god, of manliness and virility. A third was the willow tree, which was the special tree of the moon goddess Ceridwen. It represented childbearing and femininity, and was especially sacred when the moon was full.

After coming in contact with Roman and German cultures and languages, the Celts incorporated their writing symbols, and others, into a third alphabet called *Coelbren Y Beirdd*. This was an improved style, with thirty letters, and didn't require the lines or edges of the Ogham type. It also enabled new words to be used, with an easier spelling of the older ones.

∧	∟	<	K	>	▷	∇	∨	∩	∪
A	B	C	CH	D	DD	E	F	FF	G
◇	∟		∟	∩	∩	∩	∩	◇	∟
NG	H	I	L	LL	M	N	NH	O	P
∩	∟	▷	∟	↑	∩	Y	∇	∟	Y
PH	R	RH	S	T	TH	U	W	WH	Y

Coelbren Y Beirdd

∟	∇	▷	◇	∇	Y
A	E	M	O	W	Y

(variations)

The Celts were conquered by the Romans in Gaul (by 50 B.C.) and Britain (by A.D. 65), but remained independent groups in Eire and Scotland. Gaul fell to the legions of Julius Caesar, only after the total defeat and capture of the Celtic king Vercingetorix. Britain was subdued by Plautius, only after the defeat and capture of the warrior queen Boudicca, and not before she had burned the Roman-built city of Londinium (London) to the ground. However, despite Roman occupation, Christianization, and rule, much of the Celtic life-style remained intact.

In the 300's the Germanic tribes (Franks, Burgundians, and West Goths) moved into Gaul, as conquerors or by treaties. The Romans withdrew their troops from Britain to defend Italy, and seafaring northern German tribes (Angles, Saxons, and Jutes) invaded Britain and took it over, in the early 400's. In England and Wales, King Arthur and his round table warriors were a Christianized Celtic group, battling these invading pagan seafarers. For a time they were successful, but eventually succumbed. In Gaul, Celtic, German, and Roman forces more or less combined to ward off the invasions of the Huns, in the mid-400's. With the death of their leader, Attila, the Huns retreated to the Russian steppes, never to return.

Despite these conquests and wars, and many more to follow, the Celts still managed to keep much of their culture and tradition alive. Even today, in places like western Ireland, northern Scotland, Wales, and Brittany, the Celtic traditions have been carried on continuously. Christianity has flourished only because it incorporated all of the Celtic customs and beliefs (simply giving them Latin names), and by helping to maintain these traditions. Perhaps the best known of these is the Celtic Eve of Samhain, a time when ghosts and deamons appeared, which we today celebrate every year as Halloween.

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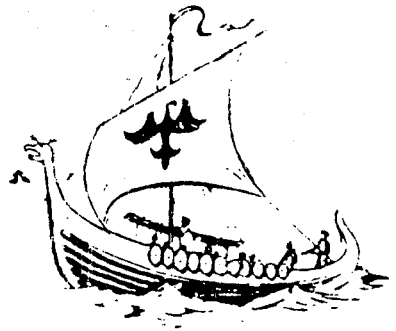
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THE NORWEGIAN RUNE POEM

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REFLECTIONS ON BRUCE DICKENS' TRANSLATION IN HIS "RUNIC AND HEROIC POEMS OF THE OLD TEUTONIC PEOPLES"
BY GARMAN LORD - THE AUTHOR IS AN ANGLO-SAXON HEATHEN PRIEST

There is something deeply unsatisfying about an oldrithc rune-poem as translated by a Bruce Dickens, scholarly though that translation may be. The "something" is that the result is no longer poetry. Literal meanings may have been rendered very well, of course. But poetry doesn't "mean" literally to begin with, which is of course what distinguishes it from prose. Poetry "means" holistically; it's strictly a right-brain process, like music. But of course there is nothing that Bruce Dickens can do about that. He is forced to say: "I'm not sure I can tell you what it means, but here is a modern English rendering of what it says; make of it what you will." And thus is the wheat thrown away to be rid of the chaff, leaving us in proud ownership of the straw.

Runes were invented by Woden as a means whereby gods may send direct, albeit cryptic, messages to men. Rune-poems are the media of such messages, and by memorizing a rune-poem, the ancient German could carry his own personal I-Ching around in his head. The Scandinavian examples in particular show traces of this and other uses. They are tools from the workbox of the kind of poet who was expected to stand up in courtly beerhall from time to time and extemporize in an entertaining fashion.

If one does not think and breathe in Old Norse, the meanings embedded in such stuff can be pretty opaque. I can no more bring the mountain to Mohammed than Bruce Dickens can. In fact, I can't even tell you if such poetry is, or was ever intended to be, any more than doggerel. I can, of course, tell you that I love it, and as something more than a mantlepiece-curiosity. And I can show you how I love to see it rendered.

Bruce Dickens' literalism is all very well, of course. Still, if we hie a bit closer than he does to the actual obsolete verbiage of the original, altering it only where that seems impossible, we do end up with something that reads a lot more like poetry. And while we're at it, let's excise some of the more carcinomious Christian accretions, and graft in something at least more in keeping, shall we?

MEP 14 NRES 207, NEFIN 48MM3 ***

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A Reading of the Norwegian Rune-Poem by Garman Lord:

FEE: Fé vældr þrænda róðr; þóðrsk ulfr í skóðr.
 Kinsmen oft fight over gold; Fodders the wolf in the wold.

WOLD = WILD

NORE: Úr þr af illu jarðr; opr løypr þáinn á hjarnr.
 From its slag doth the illness of iron appear;
 Over hard snow often lopes the reindeer.

(GIANT) Þurr vældr kvinna kvillu; kátr væðr þar af illu
 Thurse is womens' agony;
 Much joy in mischance few can see.

ESTU-ARY: Óðr þr flæstra þræða/þr; þr skalpr þr svæða.
 ASA: Óss is the slowingest journey-way;
 Sheath a place where sword can stay.

Það kveða þosom væstra; Reginn sló svæðr þætta
 Riding of horses is deplored;
 Reginn smithed the finest sword.

CAN-KER: Kaun þr barna þglvan; þei zgvér nán þglvan.
 Ulcer is the baby's bale; Death shall turn a corpse full pale.

BALE = AFFLICTION

† Hagall þr kaldast þr kornna; Óðinn skóp hafim þr þorna.
 Hail is of all grains most cold;
 Woden shaped the world of old.

† Nauðr zér þr næppa koftr; nektan kátr í þrofr
 Need names its own cost; who is naked is chilled by frost.

| Ír kellum þrú þræða; blindan þarf at læða.
 Ice we call the broad bridge-stead;
 who is blind must needs be led.

† YARE: Án þr gumna zóðr; zér þk at qnr var þróðr.
 Plenty is a boon to mankind;
 Proðr was generous, to my mind.

᚛ Sól er landa ljómé; lúti ek hæl-gum dómé.
Sun doth the land illumé; lout I to heaven's doom.

LOUT = BOW
DOWN

↑ Týr er einendr ása; opt væðr smidr blása.
Tyr is one-hand godly fellow;
oft hath smith to work his bellow.

DOOM = JUDGEMENT

ᚱ Bjarkan er lauf-grönst líma; Loki var stígrða tíma.
Birch is the leaf-greenest byer; Loki was a lucky liar.

BYER = BRANCH

Ⓞ Máðr er askar auki; mikil er græip á hauki.
Man was eked of ashen stalk;
Mickle indeed is the grip of the hawk.

EKED =
IMPROVED
UPON
MICKLE =
GREAT

↑ Lake Löggr er, fællr ór fjallr þor; er gull éro norþr.
Water falls from mountain-hold;
ornaments are made of gold.

↑ Ýr er vetr-grönst víða; vænt er, er þrúsur, at víða.
Yew is wintergreenest byer; wont to crackle in the fire.

It is hoped that the reader can overlook the insularisms of, after all, an Anglo-Saxon, who doesn't know any better. Other than that, what have we here? A marred piece of skald-craft, I fear. *Yá lá*; what have I done?

Compared to elder languages like the Old Norse, modern English is a rambling, inexact and flabby tongue, almost impossible to write good poetry in. Gone is the crisp, terse, alliterative cadence of the original. This started as an amusing poetic exercise, a wayward inspiration born out of reading the writings of a sound scholar. In the course of this archaic excursion, I noticed in a church vestry some treasure stolen from elder gods. So I stole it back, thinking to restore it to its proper owners. Alas, how rash an act. Now the original no longer alliterates according to formula. I have sadly marred these goods in transmission.

One can only hope that grateful gods will now send along some real skald, to restore these damaged treasures good as new. Meanwhile, no doubt some revenge-minded real skald, seeing the damage and mistaking the fond intentions, will come looking to grant me a battle death, thereby saving me from wherever bad poets go when they die. No matter. Marred or not, the poetry can and will survive me. It was here before I came. It will be here after I am burnt. *Þér Hál* ----- Garman Lord

Turnings of the Year

The Vikings recorded their years by using a system of association with events, such as rule periods of monarchs, battles, births and deaths of people, natural disasters, etc. A typical way of expressing when an event occurred was to say that it happened so many winters after a certain other event, or that something was so many summers before something else. Also, an event like a voyage could be expressed as taking place a certain number of years after another event. There was no year numbering system as used (inaccurately) by the Christian clergymen.

The ancient Germans used the phases of the moon (*máni*) in a lunar calendar to measure months, with the four seasons making up each year. The Vikings had a similar system, and used it to determine times for festivities, etc., but they also developed a solar (*soln*) calendar from the movement of the sun (*sol*). Besides the seasons, the Norse year was divided up into twelve months (*manathir*), with each month (*manathr*) corresponding roughly between the middles of the Christian ones.

	<u>Month Name</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Time Period</u>
1.	Gormánathr	Slaughter	Oct. - Nov.
2.	Frer	Frost	Nov. - Dec.
3.	Jol (Hrut)	Yule	Dec. - Jan.
4.	Thorri	Waning (Ebbing)	Jan. - Feb.
5.	Góí (Gománathr)	Snow	Feb. - Mar.
6.	Einmánathr	Single	Mar. - Apr.
7.	Gaukmánathr	Cuckoo	Apr. - May
8.	Skerpla (Stekktith)	Sharp (Fold)	May - June
9.	Solmánathr (Selmánathr)	Sun (Pasture)	June - July
10.	Mithsumar (Heyannir)	Midsummer (Haymaking)	July - Aug.
11.	Tvimánathr	Double	Aug. - Sept.
12.	Haustmánathr	Harvest	Sept. - Oct.

Each month was about thirty days long, and was divided up into six weeks of five days each, called a *fimt*. Five or six extra days were added on to the June-July (*Solmánathr*) month, as one additional *fimt*. They were termed *sumarauk* (summer eke) or *auknaetr* (eke nights). Contact with the Christian calendar produced a week of seven days, but with the keeping of pagan names for each day.

	<u>Day Name</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Day</u>
1.	Sunnudagr	South (Sun)	Sunday
2.	Mánadagr	Moon	Monday
3.	Týsdagr	Tyr (Tiwaz)	Tuesday
4.	Óthinsdagr	Óthinn (Woden)	Wednesday
5.	Thórsdagr	Thórr	Thursday
6.	Frjádagr	Free (Love)	Friday
7.	Thváttdagr	Wash (Bath)	Saturday

In Scandinavia, the sun always rises and sets in the southern parts of the eastern and western horizons. Fridays were associated with the fertility deities Freyr and Freya, and Saturdays were wash (*thváttr*) days. Many of these names remain in use in the Germanic languages today, and most of the modern English names are derived from the old Anglo-Saxon versions.

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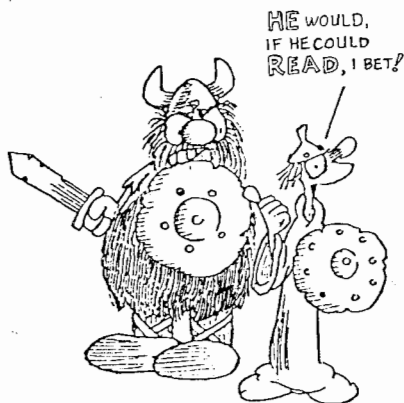
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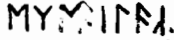
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RUNA

I, the Runemaster

In this installment of *Runa* we will look at a runic formula which tells us something of the psychological realm of the old Germanic runemaster — and try to learn what this can mean to our conceptions today.

The formulaic use of the first person singular pronoun *ek*: "I," followed by either a seemingly official title or initiatory or "magical" name is quite common in the elder runic corpus. It occurs a total of at least twenty-one times in extant inscriptions dating from between 200 and 600 C.E. This *ek* plus noun/nominal adjective formula is found only in the North and seems firmly entrenched in the cultic organization which supported the old runic tradition in Scandinavia.

One particular formula *ek erilaR* (e.g. , on the stone of Järsberg), which occurs eight times in the elder corpus, is at once informative, yet problematic. In the first place, from a linguistic point of view, we can not be absolutely sure what the significance of the term *erilaR* might have been. It has been suggested (e.g. by Jacobsen and Moltke *Danmarks Runeindskrifter* [1941]) that the term was originally the tribal name (*H*)*eruli*. However, it seems rather more likely that it was some term for a great and powerful man which in this case became specialized in the runic realm as "runemaster." Otherwise, the word developed in a more general sense as Old English *eorl*: "warrior" → "earl," and in Old Norse *jarl* → "noble man." If the derivation is from the tribal name of the *Heruli*, then this would seem to be because this tribe (which had its original homeland in the Danish islands) was well-known for its experts in runic practice. The *Heruli* were subsequently pushed out of their home by invading Danes from Skåne and scattered themselves throughout Europe in the Age of Germanic Migrations. In any event, the final result as far as *erilaR* is concerned is the same. It has the semantic force of "one skilled in rune-knowledge"— which was probably a general title for a master of the runic art.

Another informative type is that which incorporates a descriptive title (or adjective) into the formula, often alone, but sometimes alongside *erilaR* or another seemingly more official title. Since *erilaR* has been discussed exhaustively elsewhere, we will concentrate on some examples of this type which may well illustrate the point of this article. There are thirteen examples of this kind of formula which have thus far been found among the runic inscriptions. We do not have space to treat all of them, however; a few typical examples will demonstrate the principle at work.

The oldest of all these inscriptions (from ca. 200 C.E.) is the brooch of Gårdlösa which reads: *ekunwodīR*, and which literally translated would mean: "I, the un-raging one," i.e., the runemaster designated by the *ek* formula is, for purposes of this magical work, going by a name which emphasizes the quality of calmness and freedom from agitation with which he wants to load the brooch and hence the owner of the brooch for whom he is working. A similar formula is found on the fragmentary stone of Nordhuglo, which reads:

ekgudjaungandiRih///

"I, the priest (*gudja* → *godī*), (am) the un-enchanted one (i.e., the one not open to [evil] magical influences)." The last two staves begin a word, or are part of a formula which is broken off. Here, the runic *godī* is identifying himself with the quality *ungandiR*, and attaching this banishing power to the stone and ultimately to the grave-mound to which the stone was originally attached.

Some other characterizing names with which the runemaster identifies

himself for magical effect are: *wiwaR*, "the sanctifier;" *wiwila*, "the little sanctifier" (perhaps the apprentice of a *wiwaR*); *þirbijaR*, "the sleep-maker;" *wakraR*, "the wakeful one." There are further examples with the formulaic *ek*, as well as in isolation where the *ek* might be understood.

But what does all this tell us about the psychological world of the ancient Germanic runemaster, and what can these stones and pieces of metal teach us today? In the first place it tells us that the *ego* (the word is after all merely the Latin first person singular pronoun cognate to *ek*) plays an important role in the conceptual world of the runemaster. His way was not to negate the *ego*, but rather to develop and enoble it — ultimately through identification with divine or archetypal qualities. He boldly proclaimed himself at the beginning of these formulas — it was with his personal power (i.e. forces over which his own will had control) that he loaded the objects for magical purposes. This fact accounts for the sometimes seemingly strange formulas which instead of directly saying "keep evil magic away from this place," will use a personalized magical formula such as: *ek judha ungandiR*. From what we know about the Germanic spiritual world, this does not represent empty boasting or "crass egoism," but is rather a phenomenon of conscious fulfillment of duty and responsibility. The *erilaR* won his position through hard work within his community and under the training of some runic teacher and was bound to serve the community and to carry on the tradition.

Another important aspect of these inscriptions is the fact that rarely does the name in question appear to be a regular or common proper name, but tends to be a special title or characterizing magical name which was probably coined for the occasion of the inscription — or drawn from a storehouse of evocatory names available to the runemaster. With the help of these runic formulas the *erilaR* could evoke these magical roles or personas, identify himself with them through the *ek*=magical power formula, subsequently bring them under the control of his will, and direct them in the desired manner. Thus, the formula in question represents a transformational process for the runemaster.

This psychological dynamic is a powerful one with which we can identify today — and one which is fundamentally in accordance with the whole of the Germanic world view. The way of the *erilaR* does not teach that humanity is the tool of "higher" forces, nor that the unschooled brute-will of man can have its way — but rather that the self, working in tandem with the archetypal forces and trained in the runic traditions, can bring the will of man into harmony with world order — and thus make it a most effective and powerful essence in the cosmos.

Edred



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M O O T ↑ P O I N T ↑

Dear Stephen,

I received your Fall issue of *The Runestone*, and was very impressed with all but one section. On page 5 in the *Guild News* someone suggested a nudist guild. I don't think our ancestors would approve of this. From what I've read, a woman had grounds for divorce if her husband wore his shirt too open in front. The amount of clothing worn by both men and women, especially the men, founded the custom of the woman undressing her man at the end of the day.

This may sound old-fashioned, so let's look at it another way. I don't think that our movement can use such propaganda. It's bad enough when our young women are center-folded into internal cheapness. And it's more tragic yet when our children are forced into porno mags for perverted thrills. Let's face it, a large per cent of the porn mags are promoted to sell our race as cheap and having the morals of dogs. I hope the future will find the people of *The Ásatrú* rejecting this type of guild...

Sincerely,

S.O.

Dear S.O.,

Thank you for your letter!

Like you, I am angry at the materialistic exploiters who parade our women on centerfolds. *Playboy* is a supreme example. Check the names of Hugh Hefner's staff and you'll see that *Playboy* is not exactly a Majority enterprise. Not surprisingly, these non-Nordics are all too eager to sell us visions of blonde, statuesque Nordic flesh. Someday they'll reap the fury they are sowing.

The real issue, though, is this: They're selling us something we should already have, namely, our own natural sexuality. If it wasn't for Christian repression of our native instincts, no one would be titillated by pictures of naked women, and the pornographers would be out of business. I'll bet very few nudists buy *Playboy*—or if they do, they're the handful that REALLY DO read the articles!

Kiddie porn? Anyone who sexually exploits a child should die. Period. But again, such sickies are produced by the repression and denial of natural sexual impulses—not by the healthy body that is found in nudism. To quote a nudist slogan, "Nude is not lewd!"

Modern nudism, by the way, owes a great deal to Germans, who were enthusiastic about "Freikorperkulture" around the turn of the century. Nudism was an integral part of the Germanic spiritual revival early in this century; there was even a magazine called "Folkish Nudism"! Later, after the National Socialist rise to power, this aspect of the Germanic renaissance was crushed as a concession to the churches and the more bourgeois elements of the population.

Our race has traditions of strict modesty—and of total sexual celebration. Tacitus notes the former tendency, but the latter is well-attested by the huge erect cocks on ancient rock carvings and on the statues of the god Frey. Goddess figurines are typically bare-breasted, and let's not forget the Irish *Sheila-na-Gig*, which is mostly vagina!

We can cast off the Christian chains only when we regain our sexuality. Until we are sexually whole, the enemy will continue to control us, and our women and children and men will continue to be exploited.

Sincerely,

Stephen A. McNallen



Hey buddy! Hail Odin!

...By the by, I just read an article by Joseph Campbell (in *Myths to Live By*) which analyzed the major religious traditions of Eurasia. Seems they break down to (this is my thought):

Religions of Oneness: eastern religion...The Creator *is* the creation. Man seeks remembrance of his non-existence as a separate being.

Religions of Submission: Judeo-Christo-Islamic line...The Creator is apart from his creation. Man, the creature, must submit to the creator, ergo, he is separate, alienated from God.

And Religions of Man: European Paganism...The gods were brought into being as products of a sort of primal chaos...they then shape the already existing matter of the universe...ergo, gods & man share the risk of mortality, both being results of a process of creation which itself is spontaneous. Man therefore may stand as an individual, again sharing proudly an ultimately tragic destiny with his gods.

Obviously, only the latter religions truly allow for freedom. The first don't, because they do not really admit the existence of the individual. The second don't; by their own definitions, the only healthy position for the individual is submission. Only the third say definitely that a man is an individual, accountable to none, really. Thus, everything we have and are is of our own making, for better or worse, or the working of natural forces (including other individuals). The latter, combined with concepts of cause & effect are what truly make up our Fate.

Thus Fate is not really some sort of force directing our lives, because we partake in it. So we do not submit to Fate, we face it. Our own actions bring forth their consequences, the unexpected impinges, and we face a moment of crisis. A thousand times a lifetime. Death is only the last crisis. And how we face each crisis shows our courage, our heart, until we at last face death, our Fate, our doom, with the same easy, grim determination, and perhaps even laughter, with which we faced other crises.

Our religion offers no hope, only a platitude: "the world will go on;" even after Ragnarok the earth will rise anew. So why follow it? Because it offers a true paradigm of reality, which is after all a succession of dooms and re-births. Spontaneous in ultimate origin, fate uncertain, the universe offers no certitude. And neither does Asatru. But Asatru does help us truly know the world, and it demands we face what we see with courage.

Asatru is not a religion, then, of those who seek comfort, or comforting. It is a way for those who demand the right to face destiny in their own way. It is a path for those who like to carve their own.

In the end, what Asatru gives us is the strength and courage that come from knowledge, from knowing the real nature of the universe, and the qualities needed to live fully. To the majority of our species, this has not been enough. Perhaps someday it will be.

Yours Truly,

A. J. Dillon-Davis

Steve! Greetings!

While reading the recent issue of "The Runestone", I came across the suggestion, or "plea", for the construction of guilds. It's a stupendous idea! And I congratulate you for putting it before us. I only wish there was something which I could do to help now! Soon, hopefully, and with a

little help from the Gods, I'll be able to take an active part.

However, I do have something to say, concerning types of guilds, which may someday be useful.

First off, I would like to ask you, and the readers of the Runestone, to look around your households, offices, etc. You'll probably see a table cloth, for instance. It's of a most exquisite workmanship, is it not? It involves weaving, and, to go further back, bleaching, smoothing, designing, and who knows what else. Do any of you know, from personal experience, anything of the labor involved? Have any of you ever contributed to the manufacturing of table linen?

Let me draw your attention to some samples of pottery. Surely the men and women who produce such beautiful items are artists! What a joy it must be to hold such a completed item and say, "I made it!" Many forms of labor are involved here also -- the digging of the clay, carting, fashioning, painting, burning, baking, and finishing. How many of us have touched such labor?

There are samples, I'm sure, of the most exquisite, and costly, cut glass! That also involves much labor, and Art! Yet the process of this Art is practically unknown to us!

I could go on and on, such things as silver ware, carpets on your floor, curtains or draperies over your windows, your own clothing, shoes, tools, your home itself! Etc. and so on!

Perhaps we are to be congratulated that we are at an age when sense of humor covers a multitude of sins, but personally, I cannot enjoy, or laugh at, our situation.

Perhaps I should have put you more at ease, by explaining that I have never experienced the joy of fashioning useful articles with my own hands. Here we are then, a group of men and women who have learned almost everything the great universities have to teach us, yet we know nothing. We produce nothing we eat; we can not even lend a hand in making any of the things we see around us; and truth compels me to venture the suggestion that, for ninety-nine out of a hundred, the chief motive for a college education is to escape actual participation in just such work as gives, or ought to give, joy to the worker.

Sure, a timekeeper performs a useful function; so does a cash register; but the function of education is not to turn out timekeepers or cash registers. It has been truly said, that if ten Bachelors of the Arts were wrecked in mid-ocean, they could not build a pontoon to save their lives!

No... Education is to prepare and equip one for the duties and responsibilities of life -- not to turn out industrial and commercial bosses, gaffers, timekeepers, and cash registers. I would hardly be justified in taking up your time with these observations alone. So, in addition, I want to say this: Most of you are destined to become masters or leaders of men. You will organize and mobilize their labor; you will oversee it.

When you see men and women around you, actually creating beautiful and useful things with their hands, I would like you to remember that it is this man's opinion that the actual labor in these arts and crafts and industries is an infinitely nobler contribution to the happiness of mankind than clipping coupons and living on the sweat of other men's brows.

It will not come in our day, but the world will ultimately come to understand that the training of the mind and the training of the body are equally necessary. Why should it be considered an unthinkable thing that a blacksmith or a carpenter should need an education? Why should college men consider it degrading to handle tools, and make beautiful and useful things?

Why should universities perpetuate such a revolt against nature as a system in which the man who does no useful work at all is considered a gentleman, while the creator of wealth and beautiful things is considered low caste?

In the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, "We are students of words; we

are shut up in schools, colleges, and recitation rooms for 10 to 15 years, and come out at last with a bag of wind, a memory of words, and do not know a thing."

Let me also point out that the Christian's "Jesus of Nazareth" was not only a philosopher, but a carpenter also.

So, I sincerely hope that at least some of us can and will think about these things, and then think about what we'll need to know in order to get back to the Earth and the ways of our Ancestors. Not to mention the things we may need to survive after a nuclear war, or whatever?

Heill Odinn!

Lawrence J. Scott



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