



THE



RUNESTONE



WINTER 1982

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

THE RUNESTONE is the official journal of the Asatru Free Assembly and is published quarterly. Subscriptions are \$7 per year in the U.S. and Canada, and \$9 per year overseas (airmail). Write to Asatru Free Assembly, 3400 Village Avenue, Denair, CA 95316. Please make checks payable to the Asatru Free Assembly.

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February 17th is the DEADLINE for the Spring issue.

FOR THOSE WHO ARE READY:

Inquiries concerning membership in the

ASATRÚ FREE ASSEMBLY

are welcomed

3400 Village Avenue
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AFA Festivals ~ 1983

Below are the AFA festivals which will be officially celebrated in California during 1983. Members and supporters from elsewhere are of course invited to attend.

Festivals marked "Ostviken" will be hosted by the AFA kindred in the San Francisco Bay Area. For information, call (415) 845-0586.

Those labeled "Wotan's Wald" will be conducted near Camptonville, above Auburn in northern California. For further information on them call (916) 288-3215.

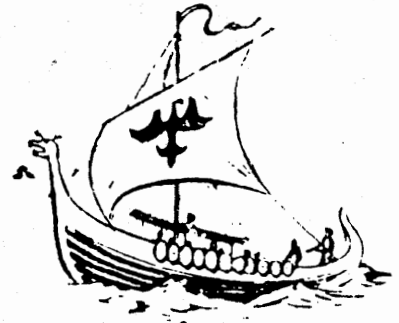
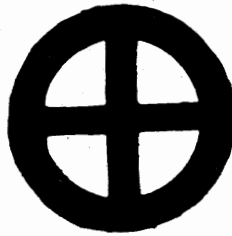
Events denoted "Home Kindred" will occur in the vicinity of Modesto, and the contact number is (209) 634-6500.

For details on Winter Nights and Einherjar, call (209) 634-6500.



January 22 - Thórrablót	Home Kindred
February 12 - Vali	Ostviken
March 20 - Ostara	Home Kindred
April 30 - Walburg	Ostviken
May - Regional Things	Local kindreds prepare for Althing. Newfull moon traditional
June 4,5 - Spiritual Growth Workshop	Wotan's Wald
July 2,3,4 - Althing	Home Kindred at Wotan's Wald. A.F.A. members only
August 27 - Freyfaxi	Wotan's Wald
September 17 - Herman	Ostviken
October 15 - Winter Nights	Freyja's Folk
November 12 - Einherjar	Varangian Guard
December 17 - Yule	Home Kindred in Bay Area

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— Irv Slauson —

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INTRODUCING.... A Bold New Concept

Althinging in the Rain

By Stephen A. McNallen

It's hard to convey the spirit of Althing Three to anyone who wasn't there, but let's try: Imagine a group of people who had paid to come to an event and had then traveled some considerable distance to attend - thousands of miles in one case. Suppose now that the deities in charge of cloudbursts decide to have a little fun by causing it to rain almost non-stop for the duration of the gathering. Not too promising, eh? But this is a hardy band! The rain doesn't dismay them, it draws them together by shared adversity. Not once is a serious grumble heard and not one soul packs baggage to leave. Moreover, this party of stalwarts manages to accomplish a series of important tasks and to lay a foundation for further action.

That was Althing Three.

The start was less than auspicious. It was wet - actively wet; stuff falling from a grey sky. Things hadn't congealed yet and the whole mood could have gone either way. We could sit around and be miserable or we could get going, so we chose the latter. Ariel had the first presentation, a study of daily religious observances available to the Asatru-arar, including the Greeting to Sol and the Hammersign. Her class began under a leaky makeshift shelter and moved to the tent of Nelle and Bryan as things became more uncomfortable. That tent, by the way, provided a great deal of the magic of Althing Three. It's hard not to be sociable when you're packed into a small tent, shoulder to shoulder with other suffering wights!

Ariel's presentation ended with shared memories of the Sun, almost everyone participating by describing some time when the Sun had been important to them, and telling first how they had felt. We were brightened and warmed by those images, and things began looking up from that point.

After a short break, we came back to our relatively dry enclave and Madeline and I proceeded with our unfolding of the Ingathering of the Folk. The Ingathering is nothing less than the "retribalization" of people of Northern European descent around our native faith, Asatru. A lot of profitable

discussion was generated, and a report on the Ingathering appears elsewhere in this issue.

The Freya's Folk meeting was especially productive, as it resulted in a list of people present who promised to do specific tasks. For example, Lars is going to research seitar, Isaac is to investigate love charms, Maddy is compiling an information source for use by members and others, Chuck will provide security, Susa will type, and I am helping to "flesh-out" some rather ignored goddesses who may be essentially aspects of Freya herself.

Edwin presented a short address describing the work of the Institute of Runic Studies, Asatru, and brought us up to date on Edred's work along those lines.

In the evening we held a sumbel. This is a sort of ritualized drinking event - in which the idea is not to get drunk, but rather to recall the courage, abilities, and high accomplishment of the clan, tribe or other group, to concentrate this metaphysical power in the ritualized moment, and to use it in the future to aid the endeavors of the group. No mean feat, that! It is accomplished by making toasts, telling (short!) stories, boasting of something that made you feel proud, singing a song or reciting a poem. Our sumbel was the high point of the Althing for most of us. The roaring fire, the mead passed from person to person, the earnest participation or so many like-minded folk - the purpose of the sumbel was well accomplished.

It was then that the Asatru Free Assembly was presented with a most significant item. On his travels, Edred had obtained a small piece of the Law Rock at Thingvellir, where the Althing met in Iceland. This rock was given to the A.F.A., through Edwin at the sumbel. We plan to suitably mount it in respect for that which it represents.

The next day, Lars gave a class in basic rune theory and practice. The weather was cooperating for the moment and we were dry for his presentation. He did his duty well, and the result was a lot of information, well presented.

Later, we selected the symbol for the A.F.A. As described elsewhere, we discussed

the two main contenders and then cast ballots which gave us our new raido logo.

In summary, Althing Three was very much a success. We chose our group symbol, set up a vigorous agenda for Freya's Folk, unveiled the Ingathering of the Folk, and provided an opportunity for a high degree of spiritual fellowship. People came from as far away as New Jersey (Otto and Jean Krumbach, who brought news of Folk stirrings in their part of the world) to share our campfire and contribute their own energies. Something important happened there - something to do with the people and adversity and directions. You'll be seeing the results in the coming year.

Announcements

Our new Membership Secretary is Maddy Snow. She has undertaken the task of organizing the files, collecting hof tolls, and answering membership inquiries. Matters pertaining to membership can be addressed to her c/o THE RUNESTONE.

Speaking of membership, we now have a membership information packet available for those who want to know more about joining the AFA. It includes several flyers which describe the purpose, values, and general beliefs of our group, in addition to the forms needed to join and to become a part of our membership network. Another packet with reading list, upcoming events, and the "Rites of Linkage" is then sent upon receipt of one's application.

Guilds

THE SKALDIC GUILD continues under the able leadership of Jim Wittenberg. Those interested in poetry won't want to miss "Woden's Word-Sword," the guild newsletter. Cost is \$3 per year for guild members and \$4 for non-members. Jim's new address is c/o Moose Sheppard, 2043 Wyda Way #13A, Sacramento, CA 95825.

THE MARTIAL ARTS GUILD has recently published the first issue of their newsletter, titled "Mjollnir." Subjects ranged from use of the front kick to the Teutonic equivalent of "ki" to the development of fighting spirit. We congratulate guild master Greg Steiner on a job well done, and we urge interested people to subscribe. You can do this by sending \$5 to Greg (payable to him). His new address is 1115 Doreen #3, Waterloo, Iowa 50702.

THE BREWING GUILD has likewise leaped into action with the publication of their first newsletter, as well. It is called "The Frothing Vat," and number one contains an article on meadmaking (a reprint of the one we ran a year or more back) as well as a recipe for Finnish "sima" and a proposed organizational structure for the guild. Guild master Jace Crouch can be reached at 118 E. Downie, Alma, MI 48801, and a subscription to "The Frothing Vat" can be had for "a couple of bucks." We hope you'll subscribe.

ADVERTISE IN The Runestone

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

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Odin Lives!



Odin Lives!

In the eye of the cyclone.

In the wheel of the sky.

Where the spear of thought penetrates matter.

Wherever a rune is carved and cast.

Between the secret whispered — and the secret heard.

Beneath a broad-brimmed hat in the sacred oak groves shade.

Beside the oaken gallows — awaiting the hanged souls release.

Beside the lonesome traveler — patron of the free.

In the mead that frees the instincts from the bondage of the mind.

Where the swords sing their blood-song.

Among his sons and daughters — in the region of their genes.

In the skalds song before it yet is sung.

Hail to the Sun

(A Yuletide Carol)

The sun is gone, but when she returns
She'll bring us life, and long may she burn!
The Sun returns, the Earth turns green,
Hail to the Sun!

Oh, Star of wonder, star of light
Star of royal beauty bright
She sees our fire and comes higher
Brings us life and brings us light!

The Earth will wake, the plants will grow
The ice retreats, fast melts the snow
Hurry, Oh Sun, please don't delay
Hail to the Sun!

(repeat chorus)

Oh, call the Gods and call the Dwarves
Elves and Spirits, Sprites and Norns
Oh, call them all, let's feast, have cheer,
Hail to the Sun!

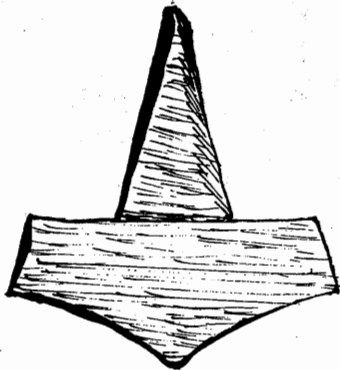
(repeat chorus)

(tune: We Three Kings of Orient Are)

(with thanks to Julie Maahs)



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The Wild Huntsman

By Jace Crouch

"Laughing aloud, Imric rode homeward. But of a sudden he heard his laughter echoed through the noise by a different sound; and he reined in with his breast gone cold. A last break in the clouds cast a moonbeam on the figure which galloped across Imric's path. A bare glimpse he had, seated on his plunging steed, of the huge eight-legged horse that outran the wind, its rider with the long grey beard and shadowing hat. The moonbeam gleamed on the head of a spear and on a single eye.

Hoo, halloo, there he went with his troop of dead warriors and howling hounds. His horn called them; the hoofbeats were like a rush of hail on the roof; and then the pack was gone and rain roving over the world."

Though the above is from a modern fantasy novel, the huntsman is clearly Wotan, and it is such a Wotan that is found in the oldest of the tales. Throughout the north the Wild Hunt is referred to as Odin's Hunt, Wode's Hunt, Wotan's Ride, etc. Grimm goes to great philological lengths to link the term "Haeckelberand" with "The Cloaked One" (i.e. Wotan).

In Sweden, where there is an old tradition of the Wild Hunt, when certain sounds are heard in the night sky, the people say: "Odin rides there." The Upsalla Giant himself is a figure of Wotan.

The worship of Wotan begins to recede in late Viking times, and is nearly dormant in most pagan areas by the year 1000, with the worship of Thor taking its place. H. R. Ellis Davidson states that this is due to a reaction against the treachery and savagery of Wotan. While this is true at least in part, it is more likely that Thor comes into prominence as the Teutons stop warring and begin to settle in the lands they once pillaged. As the warlike nature of the Teutons mellows, so their warrior god makes way for the harvest god: Thor.

As Christianity makes headway in the north, Wotan, already in recession, becomes



the devil. The Wild Hunt becomes the Hell Hunt. The wildness and treachery always associated with Wotan become the dominant characteristics of the Hell Hunter (itself a term for Wotan) as he rides the old paths of Wotan.

In Bavaria and the Tyrol the devil hunts the wood-wife. In Skania the devil hunter rides down those in his way. The Wild Rider in the tale Kühn relates in clearly Satan astride a demon steed. Herne the Hunter hunts wild boar with the devil in Worcestershire, England. In the late tales, the demon hunter actually drives a black coach with which to take the souls of sinners to Hell.

But the tradition of the Wild Hunt is too colorful and popular to be left to the devil, and the old gods are born again as heroes. Dietrich of Bern becomes the Wild Hunter when he mounts a raging black stallion that approaches him. This hunter is variously called Dietrich Barnhard, Berndietrick and Dieter Bernhard.

Charlemagne appears leading the Furious Host in the Märchen of the Odenburg (no relation to Odín). After a great victory, Charlemagne is swallowed up in a hill, only to emerge on certain nights to ride furiously, along with his host, about the countryside. Grimm relates a tale in which Charlemagne appears at the head of a spectral host with Roland at his side. Similar tales are told of Hugh Capet, and Ogier the Dane.

Legends of King Arthur have long put him at the head of a spectral hunt, leading his host to seek the wild boar, or to harry the enemies of England. Like Charlemagne, Arthur emerges from a hill, most often Cadbury near Somerset, and leads his host over the sur-

rounding hills. Arthur, unlike Wotan, usually gets a white horse.

Friedrich Barbarossa did not drown in the Dardanelles, we are often told, but was taken to the Kifhäuser and imprisoned in a hill. From this hill he often emerges to lead his long dead warriors at hunting boar and stag. (Friedrich also gets a white horse). While Arthur will return to the world in England's darkest hour, Friedrich will return when a dead tree that is near the Kifhäuser becomes green again.

This last story, which is widespread, reminds one of another famous hero who lives in a hill: Tannhäuser. Tannhäuser loses his salvation for the sake of Dame Venus, who is likely Frau Holda in disguise. Frau Holda is often seen holding court in hollow hills, from which she leads her phantom host to hunt in the night.

Is Friedrich a figure of Tannhäuser, or Tannhäuser a figure of Friedrich? At any rate, Friedrich is often seen at the head of the Wild Hunt, whereas Tannhäuser is not.

More fully developed than the hero tales are the tales of solitary huntsmen and spectres. These evolved and spread so far likely as a result of the church, for these tales usually have a moral attached to them. Foremost among these tales are those of the Haeckelberand.

The Haeckelberand usually hunts alone, with his dogs, and must do so until the Judgement Day. His ceaseless hunting is usually the result of an improper attitude towards the Sabbath, or an incautious remark on his deathbed. The Haeckelberand is usually represented as a man who hunts on Sundays, and, when reprimanded, says that he would rather hunt than win heaven. After his death, which quickly follows this blasphemy, he becomes the Haeckelberand, doomed to hunt until the Judgement Day.

When encountered during the day, the Haeckelberand will tell a man the nature of his doom. He might also ask the unwary man to do him some small favor, such as opening a gate whereupon the man is carried aloft, usually to his death.

The Haeckelberand also rewards those who aid him in his hunt, or echo his cries in good faith. He leaves them joints of stag, small bags of gold, or even joints of moss maidens. Grimm relates a Prussian tale of the Haeckelberand's throwing a man's severed thigh into a forester's carriage, saying, "Something for you out of our hunt!"

The Wild Hunt as a spectre is also encountered in the above mentioned Knark-vogn. The participants of the Knark-vogn are the suicides, the hanged, and various other unsavory spirits. As is common in such processions, the dead appear as they do in death, their wounds gaping, and their hanged necks twisted.

A variation of the spectral huntsman that is found even in America is the Headless Horseman. Every schoolboy in America knows the story of Ichabod Crane and the Headless Horseman, but few know that there is a tradition of Europe that is much older, and has its roots in the pagan past.

On the Isle of Moen, in Sweden, where the Hunter is well known, there is a spectre called the Grönjette. This Grönjette (bearded giant) is clearly a figure of Wotan. He rides with his hounds, a spear in his hands, and wears a long cloak. The farmers leave him out to feed his horse, lest he trample their crops. All of these things are associated with Wotan, but this Grönjette also carries his head under his arm.

Kühn has a Nachtjäger (night hunter) carrying his head under his arm, as well as a headless hunter chasing woods maids. Hans Jägenteufler (hunting devil) rides the night with his hounds, his great grey horse, and no head.

In some stories the horses themselves are without heads. Christina Hole relates a story wherein Sir Francis Drake, followed by baying hounds, is driving a black coach that is pulled by headless horses.

The Wild Huntress

As mentioned above, the Hunter can be a Huntress. With a Huntress in the lead, the Wild Hunt takes on different attributes, though it can retain most, or all, of the attributes of the Hunt as led by a Hunter.

Frau Holle, or Holda (goddess), leads the Wild Hunt in many tales of the Huntress. She is one of those "white ladies" found through-

out mythology, here identified with Freya. Frau Holda rides a cart, or a chariot, as does Wotan on occasion, but she is also seen riding a goat at times, as Freya does usually. Furthermore, in the Grimmismal, Freya is said to receive half the battle dead:

"Folkvang the ninth, where Freya doth stay
whose seats shall hold in her hall:
Half of the slain are hers each day
and half are Odin's own."

Holda leads the dead in the Wild Hunt throughout the twölven. As earlier mentioned, the dead appear as they do in death. This host often follows Holda in a procession into a hill, or Venusberg. Eckart, once companion of Dietrich, is often seen riding at her side. Here we see the Fairy Queen of old, or the Queen of the Underworld.

As she rides the fields or woods, she often comes to crossroads, where she is forced to stop. She cannot pass the crossroads without some kind of trouble (the symbolism of the crossroads is discussed above). She is seen at the crossroads begging people for help. Her wagon is broken, or her horse is lame, and would they kindly help her. Those who help her are rewarded with wood chips, or droppings from her hounds, which turn to gold if they take them.

It was the Huntress who suffered the worst decay in the oral tradition. In late stories, Holda is seen leading a wild ride of witches across the sky. In Scandania, the Wild Huntress grows a tail and becomes a fiend. In Norway, there is an entire menagerie of Hulda women with tails on their behinds and evil thoughts on their minds. It is a Huldre that leads the Aaskareida, and she has a tail.

Holda finally becomes a snaggle-toothed hag who steals children. Her host becomes one of dead children, weeping for their mothers.

Frau Berchta, later Mother Bertha, is virtually identical with Frau Holda, but undergoes even more savage changes. Berchta, or Perchta in some tales, rides the winds on the twölven and disembowels children. Finally, she becomes a Christmas visitor who brings sugarplums to good children and only disembowels bad ones.

Dame Gaude, though often seen leading a host of children, undergoes no such changes. She is seen foremost as the head of the Wild Hunt. Her host is usually the dead, but she is often seen leading her twenty-four daughters as well. Grimm again goes to great philological lengths to show that "Gaude" is a corruption of Wotan, convincingly so.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, one can easily see the completeness and complexity of the Teutonic myth of the Wild Hunt. It begins as the huntings of Wotan and his Einheriar. It is turned into the maraudings of the Christian devil, is resurrected as the hunting of a long dead national hero, becomes the Haeckelberand parable, and is finally devolved to Mother Bertha, bringing sugarplums at Christmastime.

Oral tradition, more so than written, is constantly changing and adapting itself to the needs of the culture in which it resides. As Christianity supplants paganism, it becomes improper, in the eyes of the church, for the laity to be telling stories of the old gods, so the church makes the old gods into the Christian devil. The Northern people, not satisfied with this demeaning of their gods, give them new life in tales of Dietrich, Barbarossa, and Arthur. The church counter-moves by making the Hunt a parable of blasphemy and recidivism.

The Huntress is dealt with in a similar manner, though more devastatingly so. The church can tolerate no rival of Mary, and thus thrusts Holda into the underworld. She barely sticks her head out again, and even then, the supplanted goddess is little but a tool for making children behave, so complete is the devastation.

The Wild Hunt is a fine example of the lengthy war being waged between folklore and Christianity. The Northern people might be pressed into accepting a foreign mysticism, as Christianity was, and often is, but they refuse to wholly abandon their own gods. However much the Christian church tries to suppress or demean the old gods, the Teutonic peoples re-make them as folk heroes, or even as agents of the Christian god. The war goes on, yet Wotan and his heroes remain among us:

Deyr fé;	(Cattle die)
Deyja fraendr;	(Kindred die)
Deyr siálfir it sama;	(And one must die oneself)
En orðstírr;	(One thing only)
Deyr aldri;	(Shall not meet death)
Hveim er sér góðan getr	(The songs of a hero's life)

- from the Havamal

Nine Times Nine

By Edward Arvid Anderson II

We have come here to welcome back the longer days
Waiting through the winter for the Sun's warm rays
Gathered on this hill and round about
While the Sun's return is yet in doubt
To sacrifice and celebrate we are assembled here
For tonight is the longest of the year
We worship in the ways our ancestors did
We seek the ancient knowledge they hid
We were persecuted but never really fell
But few now know it's our legends they tell

This wooden block that is cut from the ground
In some lands is decked with ribbons and flowers around
The Yule log will burn in place of the Sun
and oaths will be said, then drinking's begun
Burned for the joy and peace of the town
Warming and lighting as the mead's passed around
Think of this oak and of whence it grew
Take some of the oak to kindle the new



For Thor's protection keep safe
And for protection from robbery
On the longest night the Yule
It's fire and light the symbol

By Loki and Hoder did shining
In Hel's realm he remained,
Slain by Mistletoe, the slim
Pierced through the side by
In remembrance, the father,
As "rebirth" was whispered by
Hanna, daughter of Nep, the
Was laid on the pyre at Balde
Though not gladly, the broken
Yet hopeful and knowing they
Some see in Heimdall the Sun
The bridge God who listens,
He watches for evil as the
He'll call us one day when S

With Sturt and fire, the Sou
Comes Loki and Midgaard, the
Fenris shall break the Gleip
And thus will begin final Ra
Nothing in Heaven or Earth s
Still good will prevail in th
Frey's great army on Skidbla
And the Mjólnir wielder will
Heimdall shall avenge the sh
As a new Earth rises, mantle

Long after Fenris the Earth
Fairer than Sunlight shall b
After the battle's destructi
Shall grow unsown harvests
Then Balder will sit and con
And thus will begin a new ag
From out of Hoddmimir's wood
And repeople the Earth, thus

For the Vanir this day is al
Though once at war, now the
For Frey also is this short
For feasting and oaths in th
Frey's giant boar is led in
Sprinkling its blood in the
Cooking Frey's bristling reg
We begin the ancient Yuletid

Invocation for Yule

Be at home
Those who nightly roam
Whom log will burn
Of Balder's return

Balder die
For Thökk would not cry
Green wonder
Sign or blunder
Give golden Draupnir, the Ring
The God King
Joining One's bride
To his side
Hearted did burn
That would return
Mightily glare
Laughs and stares
Laughs prepare
That will stir

Worm spoiler
Serpent coiler
For lock
For brook
I'll be free of fear
In final year
I will row in
Vengeance great Odín
Joining god Baldor
With elm, ash and alder

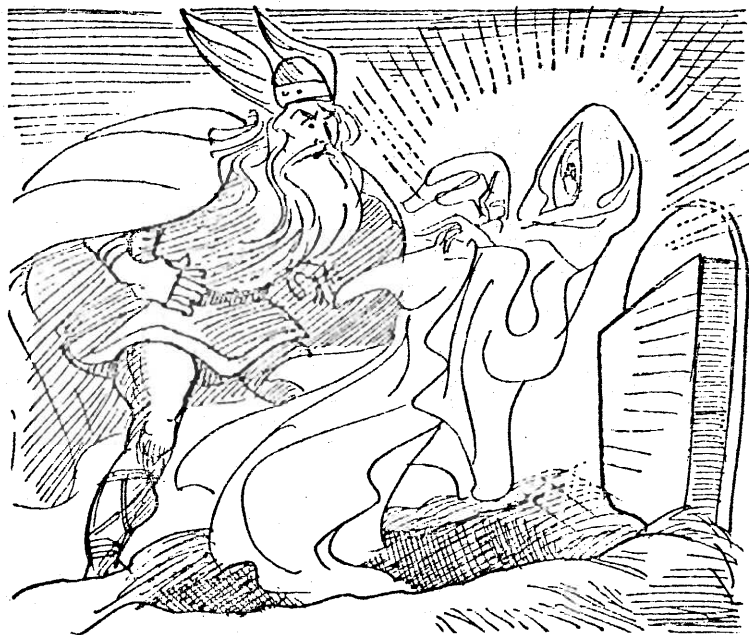
And maul
I built a new hall
In the haze
I'll have happier days
I'll converse with blind Hoder
In peace and order
I'll welcome the survivors come
When the battle is won

I'll do in honor
I'll welcome friends of Donner
I'll have a lived day
I'll follow the ancient way
I'll have the halls
I'll have the temple's walls
I'll have my own beast
I'll have a feast

Toasts to Bragi are now made
Whose poetry tells of the latest raid
Three days of Merriment we now begin
Oaths of glories and women still to win
This time is also for young girls and boys
It is a time for prizes, candies, and joys

On Yule the Goths who dwell with the Vanes
Remember the Vanir and all the year's gains
And hope that Frey will again bless the lands
As they weep for Njörd whose realm extends to the sands
Finally in remembrance of the dead who have warred
Glory to Odín and the wisdom he stored
May the Norns weave and cut us a good cord
And the ship God grant us a great precious hoard
As we worship the Vanir land and lord

Joyous we will be when the battle is won
Merry we'll be when the cold winds run
And merrier still when the Summer has come
Hopeful we are as we await the Sun



Verses for Egill

I, Thunarr, bid myself
compose with Bragi's verse -
my art's been on a shelf,
may Óthinn keep it terse.
These runes, Einarr, I cut
deep into this hard stone -
they pull me from my rut
to show how art has grown.

He who sends forth ravens
to trim the fallen tree
fills the skald with heaven's
mead, Kvasir's blood set free -
this frenzied brew can lead
a skald to show his praise
with sacred words which read
from lips the cup did raise.

Control sudden anger,
it may strike thru the heart -
to take care is better
than being pulled apart.
Egill Skallagrimsson,
wordsmith of elder days,
great among skalds this one
who stood by viking ways.

Bold warrior, Egill,
scion of Iceland's strong -
fierce man with skaldic skill,
he fought chaotic wrong.
His kin suffered by war,
his own deep wounds were raw,
he knew the runic lore,
he lived by Óthín's law.

Passionate, yet manly
Egill was indeed great -
his hoard, true poetry,
above others did rate.
His anger was known wide -
where he went his foes left
because they then must hide
from his wrath, "Óthín's theft."

A noble gift, skald-craft,
with it he saved his life -
in the sphere of statecraft
embroiled by severe strife,
he was asked to recite
words of praise to a king.
After working all night
twenty stanzas did sing

forth from his mighty tongue.
One night away from bed
his eyes wearily hung,
yet he still kept his head.
Control sudden anger,
it may strike thru the heart -
to take care is better
than being pulled apart.

I, Thunarr, bid myself
compose with Bragi's verse -
my art's been on a shelf,
may Óthinn keep it terse.
He who sends forth ravens
to trim the fallen tree
fills the skald with heaven's
mead, Kvasir's blood set free.

-Thunarr Wittenberg



A Symbol for the A.F.A.

By Stephen A. McNallen

One of the most important accomplishments of the Althing Three was the selection of the Raïdo rune, \mathfrak{R} , as the official symbol of the Asatru Free Assembly. When used by us in this role, it will be portrayed as a blood-red rune on a black background.

After Althing Two, a committee had been set up to select such a logo for the A.F.A. Many designs were submitted - a wide array spanning sunwheels, swastikas, runes, Thor's Hammers, and many others. All were considered carefully, but the final choice was between the raïdo and another design (an excellent glyph which henceforth will be used to represent I.R.S.A., the Institute of Runic Studies, Asatru). The ultimate design was made by a vote of those attending Althing Three.

\mathfrak{R} is a rune of weighty significance. In ancient times, it stood for the religion of Asatru itself. Today, it is, as Edred puts it, "a symbol of the way back to right, through the conscious efforts of asatruarar to recover the essence of the primal order." A better description of the role of the A.F.A. would be hard to find.

This rune possesses a great deal of what David James terms "density" - that is, a great many other runes are contained within its form. One of the obvious ones is \mathfrak{P} , a wunjo, which carries meanings of fellowship, binding, the clan or tribe, and the relationships of beings descended from a common source. Another is \mathfrak{F} , *ansuz*. Associated with this rune is the idea of the receiver - container/transformer - expression of spiritual power and knowledge. It also is the magical ancestral might handed down genetically from one generation to the next. Finally, it is the rune of the god Óðin himself.

If we superimpose \mathfrak{P} and \mathfrak{F} laying them neatly one over the other, we get \mathfrak{R} with all its intense meaning. While there are other runes contained in \mathfrak{R} , this fact alone would weigh heavily in its favor as a choice for our symbol.

Still another way of looking at it is to consider that if \mathfrak{P} is the idea of the clan and togetherness - a rune representing our Folk or people - then \mathfrak{R} is a "walking" or

dynamic form of that rune. In other words, the Folk is on the march!

A raïdo banner was made and formally presented at the Althing. Others are being presented to all kindreds of the A.F.A., and we will be making this logo available in various forms to our members and supporters.



1983

RUNIC CALENDAR

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The Yule Gift

by Swanhild Torbergsdatter

It was the longest night of the year.
Visitors filled our great hall.
They all clamored for meat, sweets or beer;
hard work for my father's thralls.

Strange dreams had stolen my rest of late.
Now sleep tried to close my eyes.
The noise of guests could not keep me awake,
nor merriment stop my sighs.

I had to get out to freshen my face,
so I took a full hot bowl
of porridge, our gift to the nisser race,
and set it outside the hall.

I walked until grain stacks were in sight,
for folk who live under the hill.
They come out only on Yule's long night,
and from our gift eat their fill.

There I saw a man with wavy hair
coming from the farthest wood.
At first I thought he might be a bear,
Til he threw back his furry hood.

His eyes were like sunlight on blue fjords,
his face neither young nor old,
and from his memory, without words,
I saw a beautiful scene unfold.

He had the rare and wondrous talent
to become a wolf at will,
which he had to use when his heart's lament
demanded true freedom's thrill.

I first saw him running as a wolf
down a valley's shadowed track,
then I became the wolf myself
and felt hot stars burn my back.

The powdered snow stung in my paws.
The night smells flooded my head.
In pine bitter water I plunged my jaws
and drank, and thought of humans with dread.

Humans will always try to destroy
what they cannot understand.
This knowledge chilled my loving joy,
and I worried for the wolf/man.

Inside the hall the people feasted,
all cozy and safe from harm,
until a voice of fear protested,
"a wolf is on the farm!"

We knew he had to run away.
"Tomorrow," he called out behind.
Never had I so longed for a day,
because his gift would be mine.

Now men swarmed out, around and around.
I remember only my screams.
Next day no trace of him could be found.
I was told he was just a dream.

I know he escaped to the woods so fair
that lie beyond human ken,
and I know his gift with me he'll share,
this most desirable of men.

A thousand Yule logs have blazed and died
since first I viewed these scenes,
and every winter again I've tried
to find his secret in my dreams.



A Reading for Vali

By Edward Arvid Anderson II, Gothar of the Northern Way (Chicago, Illinois)

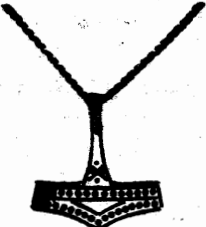

This is the day of Vali, the Feast of the Family and Kindred. In ancient times the stores of food that were left from the last harvest were counted to insure that the kindred would not go hungry by the end of Winter. It is a day to rejoice that we have survived one-half the hard season; it is a time for reaffirming the unity of Log, Birth, and Blood.

On this day we should also look back on the strengths and achievements of our people. We are the environs of the great ice ages and of a million winters. As is revealed in the Eddas, we came from bubbles of acid forced from the ice, which flowed to the southern realms of fire to mix and become life. Odin, and his brothers, Hoenir and Lodur found our species on a cold beach and carved from the raw material our race.

Some of the first men, the Eddas say, made tongs, hammers, scissors, and crucibles, and with such tools they mastered metal with Dvargar-like skill, as well as stone and wood. Our scientists, though perhaps ignorant of the ancient legends, have now discovered that from bubbles of amino acids formed by molecular force on the ancient ice, and carried to warmer lands, was life formed, and that our people, 250 generations ago, were the first to master metal.

On a thousand epic journeys we traveled through seas of forests and mountains and across the great oceans. The legends of many lands of the stranger peoples speak of our coming to them, and of the knowledge of building and irrigation they learned from us. On this day of the Kindred, let us look back on where we have come.

Our generation still masters knowledge and through the ocean of space we continue the epic journeys, and we are still carved by the forces of movement and time. Let us hope that we survive this winter, and more, and that our descendants will also remember and number our generation among the Einjahar, and that they will continue our people's true path and will. Let us remember that now we are the current living, and therefore, most significant link in our kindred. On this day we reaffirm a oneness of the family and tribe, and rejoice for the winter is one-half over!

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Freya's Folk

One of the latest endeavors of Freya's Folk is the development of an Information Resource and Referral service. We are currently actively seeking books, articles, pamphlets, etc. that deal with issues of particular concern to the special interests of Freya's Folk. Our plan is to accumulate material and make it available to members and the general readership of the Runestone. We would ultimately like to have a body of information which will address such family orientated topics as education, alternative lifestyles and rape prevention (a fuller list follows) and offer facts, ideas and opinions. The A.F.A., through the Ingathering of the Folk, aims to provide social and cultural alternatives consistent with our essential beliefs. While we cannot today hand anyone such a complete package (see us next year!) we can help people find options which they can apply, now, to their lives.

How can you help/benefit? Information in any form on the following or related subjects can be sent to or requested from Maddy Snow at 201 Patricia Lane, Modesto, CA 95354. We will organize, file, duplicate and distribute material. Freya's Folk members will receive this service free of charge while others may be

asked to pay a small copying fee.

Information subject areas:

Family

Marriage, lifestyle alternatives
Natural childbirth
Infant and child nutrition
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Options in childcare
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Dealing with guilt in our society

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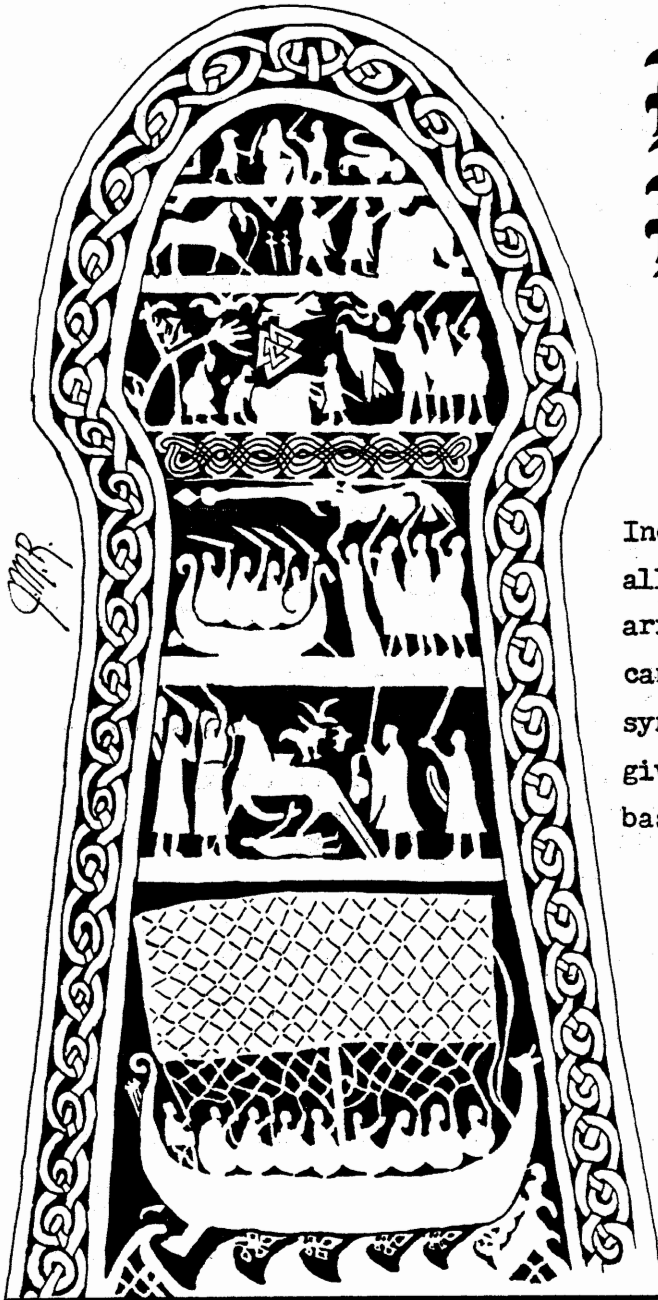
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MOOT POINT



Letter from Jeffrey Redmond to Prudence Priest (via Stephen McAllen), October 1982.

About Noite's letter in the last issue of the Runestone:

Nerthus was the Danish fertility goddess up to the year AD 100. Thorgerth was the Norwegian fertility goddess up to the year AD 100. Freyja came from Sweden and by the year AD 200 was the exclusive female fertility diety.

By the time of the Viking Age, Nerthus was long forgotten. She was an ancient Germanic (à la Tacitus) diety.

Skathi was the wife of the sea god (Njörthr). She was the daughter of a giant and represented Water.

Frigg was the wife of the Sky god (Óðinn) and queen of the AEsir. She was Skathi's and Freyja's boss, and was separate and not at all interchangeable with them.

Freyja was the daughter of Skathi and Njörthr. As fertility diety she represented the Earth.

Sif was Thór's wife. Her long golden hair was so bright it radiated beams like Fire.

Thus we have the four cardinal elements represented in the Norse female pantheon. However, since fire is the least of the four; Sif is probably excluded from any trilogy of these goddesses. Noite should not try to usurp Auden! Freyja is Nerthus and Thorgerth combined. The trio remains: Frigg, Skathi, Freyja. (Sif gets to be added on to the "quartet").

"Ancient" Scandinavia was not the same as "Mediaeval" (í viking) Scandinavia. Tacitus was not recording the same things as Adam of Bremen, or even Snorri Sturluson, both did centuries later. By the year AD 500, the ancient world was ended and the mediaeval one began. It was to last for a thousand years until the 1500's Renaissance and discovery of the Western Hemisphere. The "Viking Age" was from about the years 700- 1100, and covered a period of about four hundred years. The Crusades were roughly 1100- 1300, etc. Tacitus was a Roman historian who never visited the northern German lands, but wrote extensively about them from reports brought back by the army, in the first century AD. Adam of Bremen was a Church Bishop who only visited Denmark, but wrote about all of Scandinavia from vikings who had come in from every northern land, in the mid 1000's. Snorri Sturluson was an Icelandic lawyer who visited many places, and compiled enormous amounts of saga accounts from many sources, in the early 1200's. Noite has done a fine job of raising important points that need clarification, and perhaps this will help explain what is indeed a sometimes confusing issue.

Heilsa Steve!

. . . And finally, yet another ramble . . . thus . . . writing rituals is fun! You know when it's really happening, when you're "dancing with the gods". . . and why not? . . . rituals are artistic, they are art . . . and as such you partake in the creative aspects of the gods when you yourself create. . . what you have to avoid is a kind of lock- step adherence to other men's notions of the gods. The gods will dance into your life in a unique way. Óthinn will reveal different mysteries to me than to you. And I can only suggest the magnificence and power of Thórr and Freyr, and the almost frightening amorousness of Freyja, the Lolita-ish charm of Ithunn, the wintry visions of Ullr and Skathi . . . only suggest these things I feel, and if you say, "Yes, I know, I feel this too", you are my brother, and if these things only touch you, vaguely stir you, then you are my comrade. Paganism/heathenism is a religious way of the artist. That is why dogma is alien to it, and why it's ideas seem sometimes so vague and contradictory. It is a creative "visioning" of the world. When we join as a "religion" it is because our separate visions make a harmony, but we must never make the error of binding the gods to but one way of seeing, for in doing this we not only make the gods turn away in disgust, but we mutilate our souls. So if you would be with the gods . . . dance, sing, write, make love, fight (for this too may be a dance), and laugh all the while, and the gods will join your feast. All you really have to do then is welcome them and prepare to be astonished! For the gods are contained in no man's vision. If you are sincere they will play with you, turning different faces to you each time you ask them. You will never see them completely, but they will never leave you. And you may just see that one of their faces is yours.

Hail Óthinn!

Tony Dillon-Davis

Dear Brothers,

This letter is written in prison and comes because of a tract a brother circulated describing the basic tenets of the "Norse" Religion. I, along with a number of men, find the reading very interesting and encouraging. Most of the people here aren't of European descent; this in itself means little in most respects, however, the religions here are orientated towards non- white, or, the thick religions of the deep south calling for slavish submission and acceptance of meekness in life for the "promise" of a golden after- life. My brothers, and I, do not subscribe to any of these, and until we fortunately came across the tract, we wore pretty much the mantle of athiests. Hence, this letter.

We would very much appreciate more literature on the subject of the "Norse" Religion. We are in harmony with these few words and would like to start our own clan here. Actually, we already have, but we would like to base ourselves upon a righteous religion that cradles the soul without crushing the man. Our people are a warrior people, though we lean towards peace so long as that peace is uncompromised and principled.

As prisoners we full well know that our admission into the Religion may well be accepted with reserve, if at all. However, none of our brothers are perverted or diseased. We pride ourselves on being clear of the taint many crimes carry, and we allow no association of our own with vermin who've preyed on women, children, or the elderly. Outcasts we may be, but barbarous people, no. We would follow with straight backs the "Norse" codes of ethics and morals. If you find us less than proud men and reject our request and hand of alliance, we would still carry on in the manner of the Old People, and always strive to make our impact upon this earth. One our heritage would not be ashamed of. We are seeking to strengthen spiritually our own kind. Physically we're prepared to deal with life from a man's stance.

We submit this letter in the sincere hope that we will be afforded the opportunity to learn more of our forebearers and the Religion that fortified them through the trials of the ages. In this hope we remain.

In solidarity and strength,

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