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SPRING 1972 - THE RUNESTONE - VALUE NUMBER 1



The Runestone is a journal of the old Norse religion and is dedicated to the revival of that religion as epitomized during the Viking Age, and to the revival of the values of courage, freedom, and personal independence which are associated with it. The Runestone is the official publication of the Viking Brotherhood and is published quarterly. Subscriptions are \$2.00 per year in the U.S. and Canada, \$3.00 per year overseas. Write The Runestone, Box 2552, Wichita Falls, Texas 76301.

NORSE NOTES

This is volume one, number one, so I might as well apologize now for technical and typographic errors. We're new at this business of cutting stencils, so this will definitely improve as we gain experience. Bear with us... We would appreciate it if you would mention The Runestone to your friends; publicity is important to a fledgling enterprise like this one... We are also interested in establishing contact with various pagan groups and publications, with the idea of exchanging publication, advertisement, etc.... Edison Marshall's novel Vest with the Vikings has recently been reprinted, you might want to read it... Heiman-Marcus in Dallas had a four-foot long Viking ship, hand carved and accurate to the smallest detail for sale a while back - they only wanted about \$2000 for it... You wouldn't believe the trouble we had getting this issue out. First, our spirit duplicator refused to work, then the people whom we hired to mimeo it for us changed their minds because our material didn't agree with their religious beliefs, and now we're recutting the stencils because the machine our current printers are using doesn't take our original stencils... Ragnar Lodbrok never had problems like this!!... This column is going to serve as a means to present short "newsy" items, comments, and the like but I've about run out for now, so until next time, happy holmganging!

OUR THANKS

.....to some other pagans (though not of the Norse variety) for their cooperation with us. We recommend them to our readers. They are the Pagan Movement, which can be reached by writing to Ed Davies, 105 Rainy Road, Cardiff, CP2 4HN, Wales, United Kingdom, and Pagan Way, Box 972, Minot, North Dakota 58701. These people will be glad to send you information on their organizations and beliefs upon request. We expect to hear from a couple of similar groups soon, and will mention them in the next Runestone.

ODIN LIVES

The revival of a pagan religion is greatly hampered by the blanket of Christian propaganda which has, with great success, attempted to convince the world that there is no other god than theirs; that all other gods are not real. In this article I shall attempt to refute this lie.

The idea that other men's gods do not exist is a new one. Men might have believed that a foreigner's gods were the "wrong" gods or inferior to their own, but seldom did they hold that his gods were any less real than their own. It took Christianity, with its political astuteness and self-righteousness to declare all other gods as non-existent or, at best, the devil in disguise.

It is worth noting that there are accounts of the Christian kings of Norway, among others, actually having encounters with Odin and with Thor. Admittedly, such stories are not high in evidential value and may well be folk-legends devised for entertainment. Nevertheless such anecdotes are at least as valid as the pious stories Christians use to demonstrate the greatness of their religion. I am not here actually stating that such events in either category did or did not happen; I do mean to demonstrate that at least some persons in post-heathen Scandinavia believed in the existence of the old gods.

In Scandinavian Mythology by H.R. Ellis Davidson is recounted stories of this sort, which, the author says, seem to be old stories remolded to include the Christian rulers. Olaf Trygvason received an old man with one eye into his hall and they sat long into the discussing the history of heathen times and the ancient kings. The next morning the old man had disappeared. The cooks, however, said that the man had been in the kitchen and had given them two sides of beef. Realizing that the visitor was Odin, or the devil in Odin's form, the king had all the meat destroyed. Olaf the Holy was visited by a man who wanted to join his bodyguard - a man in a cloak and with a broad-brimmed hat. King Olaf and the man talked at length of heroes and great deeds, and Gest, the visitor, asked him which of the old kings he desired to imitate. Olaf replied that, if he could keep his Christianity he would want to be like King Erolf kraki. Gest asked if, instead, he would not like to be the king who was accomplished in everything, especially poetry, and who could give victory in battle. Upon this remark Olaf recognized Gest as Odin in disguise, and the visitor promptly vanished. Olaf Trygvason is alleged to have also met Thor as the king was sailing in his famous ship Long Serpent. A man on shore hailed the king's ship and was taken on board. He was a huge man with a red beard. He showed a remarkable knowledge of the stories of the past and told Olaf that the surrounding area had once been the home of giants, all but two of which had been killed. The stranger said that he had killed the last two with his hammer because they had been terrorizing his friends. He always helped his friends in need, he claimed, and King Olaf was now killing them. At this he grinned at the king and dived overboard.

"Reality is a slippery term. Scientific discoveries in this century have altered our old conceptions of space, time, matter and cosmology; Heisenberg's "principal of uncertainty" confused philosophical issues even more. The gods, to Aleister Crowley, were personifications of the forces of nature, and quite real. According to some philosophers each man creates his own reality - reality is whatever he believes it to be.

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Pagan Martyrs

Countless books have been written about Christian martyrs, to the point that the very word conjures up images of early Christians being fed to lions or a saintly ascetic being led away by Roman soldiers. Forgotten are the martyrs of other faiths - men who were tortured and killed, often by those who claim to represent a God of love and mercy, simply because they refused to accept "the true faith". These martyrs have been of many races and nationalities - the American Indians, for example, suffered greatly. In particular we wish to call to mind the martyrs to the old Norse religion.

Olaf Tryggvason was not the least squeamish about using fire and sword to win converts in Norway. In Halogaland, especially, many men refused to abandon the old faith and be baptized as the King demanded. Eyvind Kinnrifi refused to knuckle under and was tortured with red-hot embers until he died. Another landowner, Raud the Powerful, was also tortured to death. After murdering Raud, Tryggvason stole his ship for himself and named it "Long Serpent." Thorleif the Wise also refused Christianity, and no one could be found to murder him because of his great wisdom and personality. King Olaf sent one Hallfred the Icelander to kill or blind him. Hallfred succeeded in blinding him in one eye but could not go through with robbing him of the other. Thus was Thorleif, like Odin himself, left with only one eye.

Perhaps someday someone will prepare a book on pagan martyr - if all the relevant documents have not been destroyed or altered - and the record will be set straight.

If this issue looks a bit strange, maybe it's because we had three different people, on three different typewriters, trying to put it out.

Basically, this is the teaching of the philosopher Berkely, and the writer Pirandello, wrote a play to emphasize a similar outlook on reality.

The gods of the Norsemen are real; as real as the Christian god, or you, or I. They are weakened because of the deaths - violent and otherwise - of their faithful and by the rising tide of slavery and meekness which is engulfing humanity, but they are not dead. Ragnarok is not yet fought. Whether you think of him as an archtypal symbol in the "collective unconscious" in the style of psychologist C.G. Jung or in a less rationalized way, ODIN LIVES! So long as there are men who are bold and free, men who follow the Norse way, so it will be.

Ecology and the Norse Religion

It seems as though everyone these days is jumping onto the ecology bandwagon, and it may seem that we, too, are preparing to do so. However, the interest of the Norseman in the ecological system is much more than a superficial one or a mere fad. There are sound reasons why everyone should be concerned with the environment, namely, we could destroy ourselves if we do not remedy at least some of our ecological problems. A follower of the old Norse religion, however, has more reasons than the average man-on-the street to want to do something toward stopping the pollution of our air and water, conserving our natural resources, and preserving our wilderness areas and the wildlife therein.

The existence of widespread crises or societal problems usually results in a clamor for State action, which leads to more centralized power in the hands of government, higher taxes, more laws and regulations, and, as a result of all this, a diminution of human freedom and the individualism which is the keystone of our religious beliefs. State power moves in most easily whenever the private sector has failed to do the job as effectively as it might (not that government necessarily does a better job, but that is the excuse made). Thus, by taking action on an individual level or at the level of private organizations we can forestall action by government and avoid the anti-individualist results of government interference.

Another reason for Norse interest in the ecology is more spiritual and less political - although, like almost everything else, it has its political ramifications. If our wilderness areas are destroyed, if man must forever live in his glass and steel cages, can the very essence of the Viking spirit survive? A man who has watched a sunset from a mountaintop, who has lived apart from the masses

and mobs - such a man has a dimension of soul which makes him hard to enslave. In the wilds, away from the luxuries of civilization, we find out what it is to be free. The thought of an entire world crowded with people, stinking of refuse, and covered with asphalt and belching factories is unthinkable to the Viking. Let us work to insure that such a dismal future does not come to pass!

We must never forget that those hardy people whose values we have adopted and whose religion and way of life we keep alive were a people wedded to nature. Man proved himself on the unpolluted sea or in the vast virgin forest, lived in the heart of nature's beauty, and danced before Odin in the oak groves. To preserve their spirit of freedom, and independence, we must have a similar devotion to nature. So do something about it - don't fall for the fallacy that one person can't do anything. Use a no-pollution detergent, collect paper to be recycled (thus saving trees), join a conservation group. Walk somewhere rather than drive your car (the exercise will do you good, anyway). Or on Lindisfarne Day get together with your Viking brothers and plant an oak tree, dedicating it to Odin. There is a lot that you can do to help - and so much is at stake.

Lindisfarne !

The monastery on the Holy Isle of Lindisfarne was the parent of all the monasteries in Northumbria, the northernmost kingdom of Saxon England. There by the sea the monks led their holy lives of contemplation and prayer, dedicated to God and the emulation of the saints. And it was here that on the eighth of June in the year 793 A.D. that the force of the furor normannorum made itself felt and gave birth to an era.

It is this date which most scholars concede marks the beginning of the Viking Age. A band of Norwegian Vikings, probably en route to some foreign shore, landed on Lindisfarne and proceeded to kill the monks, steal their livestock, plunder everything of value, and topple the holy cross of Ethelwold. The scholar Alcuin sent a report on the situation to Ethelred, the king of Northumbria, part of which reads as follows:

"Lo, it is nearly 350 years that we and our fathers have inhabited this most lovely land, and never before has such a terror appeared in Britain as we have now suffered

from a pagan race, nor was it thought that such an inroad from the sea could be made. Behold, the church of St. Cuthbert spattered with the blood of the priests of God, despoiled of all its ornaments, a place more venerable than all in Britain, is given as a prey to pagan peoples."

A twelfth century account also exists:

"In the same year the pagans from the northern regions came with a naval force to Britain like stinging hornets and spread on all sides like fearful wolves, robbed, tore, and slaughtered not only beasts of burden, sheep and oxen, but even priests and deacons and companies of monks and nuns. And they came to the church of Lindisfarne, laid everything waste with grievous plundering, trampled the holy places with polluted steps, dug up the altars and seized all the treasures of the holy church. They killed some of the brothers, took some away with them in fetters, many they drove out, naked and loaded with insults, some they drowned in the sea."

The action at Lindisfarne was a typical Viking strand-hugg, or plundering operation to replenish food and water exhausted by journey at sea. This is revealed by the fact that the Norsemen killed various animals for meat and took the carcasses aboard their ships. The richer treasures were an unexpected bonus, but a welcome one - and it insured that there would be more ambitious raiding expeditions to follow in years to come. Lindisfarne was the beginning, and the fury of the Northmen would have every knee in Europe bent in prayer before it abated.

For this reason June 8 is an officially celebrated day on the calendar of the revived Norse religion, and it should be appropriately celebrated by all who adhere to the Norse Way.

NOTICE

In this issue we have mentioned the Irish (in the poem) and the British (in the Lindisfarne article) in a context which may displease our readers of these nationalities. Naturally, this is not our intention. We are merely extolling the feats of our spiritual ancestors; we mean no ill-feeling to either of these noble peoples. On the contrary, some of the staunchest supporters of paganism (even though not our particular brand) are to be found in that part of the world. Being a Viking is not a matter

of race or nationality, it is a matter of the mind and the heart.

General Patton a Crypto - Viking?

We doubt it. Nevertheless, we thought our readership might find the following item interesting. During the summer of 1937 the famous General George Patton was kicked by a horse, and was in critical condition because of a blood clot which had formed and was working toward his heart. In relating the accident to Fred Ayer, Jr., his nephew, Patton said "I know I passed out, and then I was aware that I was lying on some battlefield on a big Norse shield. After a while two armored Vikings came and started to lift me up on that shield to carry me to Valhalla. Then one of them shook his head, and they gently put me down again, and I came to, here in bed. I guess they're not ready to take me yet. I still have a job to do." This incident is easily explained by Patton's self-immersion in military history and his sense of personal destiny. In fairness to General Patton, it must be admitted that he was a Christian - despite the fact that he conspicuously displayed a number of Viking virtues.

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of The Runestone will feature a biographical sketch of Ragnar Lodbrok, an article on Thor's hammer, an article on how to brew mead, with comments on its history, The Barbarian Statements, other articles, and perhaps another poem. See you then?

ATTENTION, VIKINGS!

We at The Runestone are interested in hearing from anyone interested in actually participating in the old Norse religion. Reading The Runestone is important, but there's more to it than that. Write us if you're interested.

If any of our readers know where we could subscribe to a good clipping service, we would like to know about it.



Shown above is a representation of the stone erected by the monks at Lindisfarne to commemorate the raid of 793 A.D. This side of the stone memorial, obviously, represented the Viking raiders. The reverse side, not pictured, features a cross and kneeling monks.

The Role of the Norse Religion in Today's World

Because our religion is one which has not formally existed for almost a thousand years, many people will accuse it of being hopelessly out of date and irrelevant to the complex and sophisticated world in which we find ourselves living today. It is an anachronism, a dream of romantics and die-hards, they claim.

I disagree, of course. It is my earnest belief that the religion and the values of the pagan Norseman are needed more today than they have ever been and that the Norse religion is completely relevant to the issues which are facing us today.

There is an age-old struggle being fought today, and the tempo of the battle seems to be accelerating and speeding towards some crucial point. The struggle is not between something as illdefined as "good" and "evil," "darkness" and "light." These terms are ambiguous and mean different things to different men. Rather, the battle is locked between the individual and the collective. Unfortunately, the latter has been gaining ground during recent history and has reached a point where the defeat - total and final of the forces of individualism is not inconceivable.

This battle is occurring on the entire front of human endeavor, on of which is the political. To merely illustrate our thesis: A man named Bertrand de Jouvenel wrote a book titled On Power in which he presented his views that Power, the power of the state, is continually destroying and absorbing all power that is not of itself; that authority and Power throughout history has grown more and more centralized. Indeed, he claims that men in past centuries were actually freer than we are today (a notion abhorrent to Liberal philosophy). Elsewhere, politically, we see growing collectivism and regulation. For example, you seldom hear socialism denounced, and relations with Communist nations are friendlier than ever. Government control of the economy - whether you are of the persuasion which would call it socialism or that which would call it fascist - is a matter of fact.

Emphasis has shifted from individualism to "cooperation" and "social adjustment." Sheop continues to prattle of "the brotherhood of man" and "God's will" - the latter of which calls to mind another vital front of the battle between the individual and the collective - the religious front. For centuries and Christianity, have called upon men to surrender their freedom of will, their very selves, in the promise of obtaining Paradise - and in the threat of eternal torment should they obstinately refuse to surrender their egoistic and self-ish ways. A survey of their life attitude will reveal a philosophy even more inimicable to individualism and personal sovereignty than those collectivist philosophies on the political front. Yet the two fronts are complementary. Even though at times they appear to be working at odds to each other, a net gain for the collective forces is almost always the result.

Thought control emanating from a tyrannical government may put a proud people up in arms. Thought control from supernatural entities - and yes, we believe that these entities exist - is welcomed and actually sought for by those same people. Thus can people be managed.

Aside from politics and orthodox religion, the movement to the hive - life reveals itself in the resurgence of occultism which has been evident for several years. Occult philosophy is anti-individual in that it is mystical philosophy - the ego is evil, individual existence an illusion, and so on.

In this colossal struggle for human freedom the position of the Viking is clear. He will refuse to "merge with the Cosmic Overmind" or sell his freedom to a god in return for security. Even to be come the Ir slave. His idea of the "just state" is one which leaves men alone to be free. He is careful to avoid labels such as "left" and "right". He is aware that these terms are ambiguous and that a spectrum of individual versus the collective is more accurate. He hates fascism and communism equally, because he can see that they are different forms of the same thing.

Such men are despised by the masses, because the masses envy their greatness, and by the power-wielders, because they cannot be turned into servants. Followers of the old Norse religion, standing alongside brave and free men who are not Norse men, must form a mighty shield-ring to guard the precious individuality which is so threatened to day. On our efforts hinge the freedom of all men, and the resurrection of the Viking Way against the ravages sheep-like conformity.

We are fortunate to have the following poem to present, thanks to a friend and sympathizer, one John W. Dalrymple. It is untitled.

Crim, dark clouds of the morning,
Hide the sun from my eye.
You hid the stars from the watch last night,
But birds are in the sky.
Birds to follow to Trondheimfjord.
I need not see the sun.
Why, I could follow the smell of land
With the voyage so nearly done.
It's a long, hard haul from Ireland
To the rocks of Trondheim strand,
But Clontarf's bloody field is lost.
I must die in my native land.
I'm old, I'm old, as Vikings go,
Full three score years and two;
I want to look at Norway's pines
Once more before I'm through.
I'll die before the sun has set,
But Norway lies in sight.
My son will burn what's left of me
On Trondheim strand tonight.
No cold, damp, lonely grave for me,
But red, consuming fire;
And my son will set the torch to me,
For such is my desire.
I will not have him burn my ship
As ancient customs say;
For that has better uses yet,
With Irish yet to slay.
Aye, he will take my ship and sword
And follow where I trod,
And win him wealth, and burn the houses
Raised to the Christian god.
He knows my will. Now lift me up;
The final dark draws nigh,
And I must look on Norway's shores
Once more before I die.