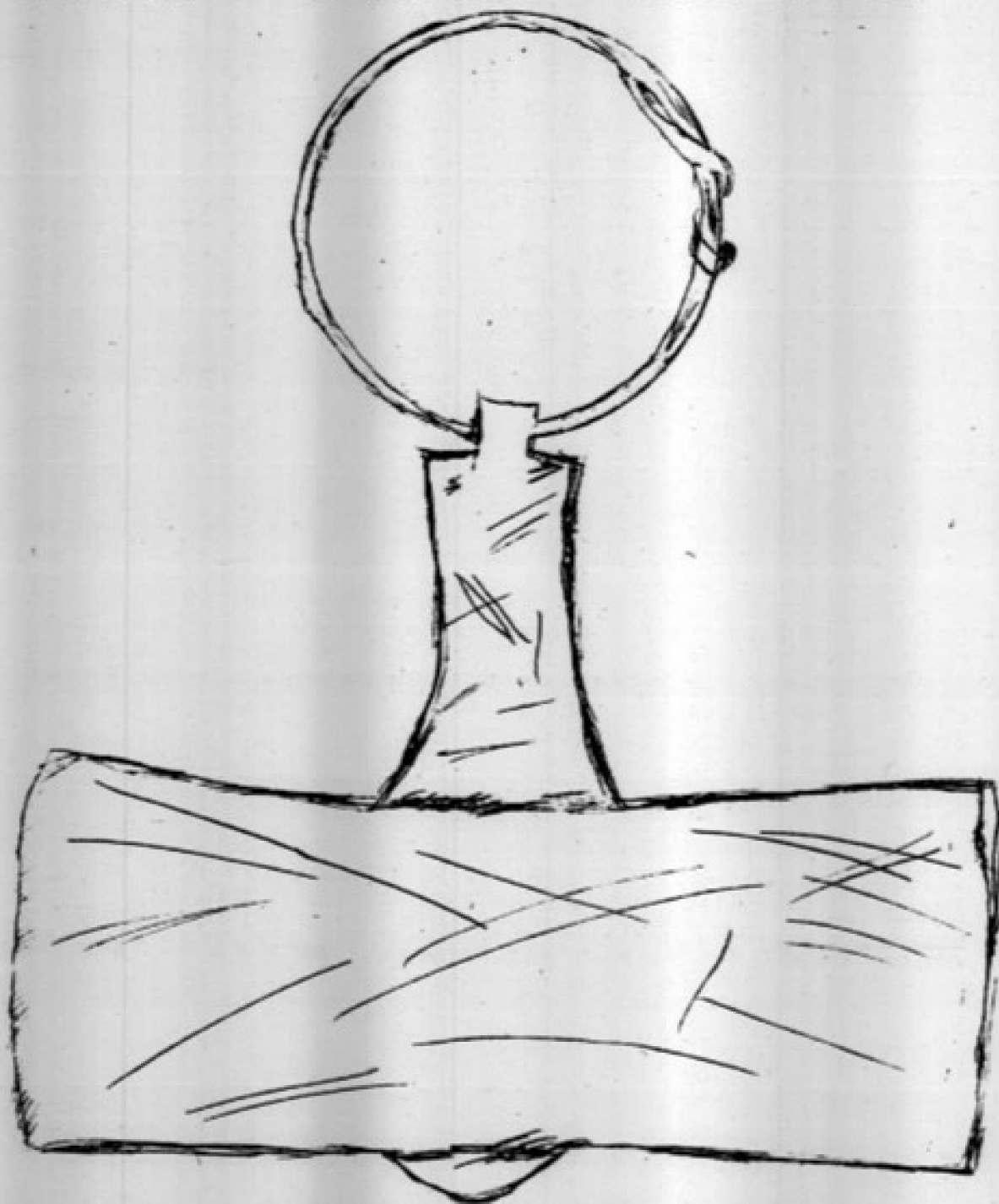


# WIR RANSTSTIX

SUMMER 1972 - - - THE RUNESTONE - - - VOLUME 1 NUMBER 2



The Runestone is a journal of the old Norse religion and 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

The runic writing on our cover, by the way, is a phonetic rendering of the German "der runenstein" meaning, of course, "the runestone". Though we have no runologists on our staff this would seem to be reasonably accurate.

Got anything you want to have published in The Runestone (ads, articles, etc.)? Submit it for publication. We won't guarantee to run it - we will check for suitability - but we will look at it. If you want it back, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

#### WILD RUMOR DEPARTMENT

About two years ago a friend insisted that she had read in a U.S. newspaper that archaeologists believe they have found the remains of a Viking ship IN THE BERING STRAITS! A search did not reveal the article, however - anybody out there know anything about this matter? If true, what a saga could be written about that trip!

#### OUR THANKS

.....TO SOME MORE PAGANS. Recently heard from are The Pagan Way Box 5145, San Bernardino, Calif. 92408. Also The Crystal Well Box 18351, Philadelphia Penn. 19120. More are coming in all the time we try to print addresses as they come.

#### The Hammer of Thor

The Thor's hammer, depicted on our cover this issue, has become one of the symbols of the reurgent Viking religion. Various design of the thunder god's weapon came to be worn all over Scandinavia during the tenth century, perhaps in response to the crosses worn by Christians. This would be consistent with role of Thor as the adversary of Christ and would symbolize resistance to Christianity and adherence to the pagan gods. Toward the end of the Viking Age Thor had begun to replace Odin as the principle deity, and some blame the decline of Viking supremacy upon this. Though Thor was very much a warrior, during the main part of the Viking era he was considered to be the god of yeomen and laborers rather than a true god of warriors like Odin.



The amulet made in the likeness of the hammer could be quite simple in design or it could incorporate various other characteristics ascribed to Thor. For example, it might have a pair of staring eyes, the gaze of which typified lightning, or a beard, or the beaked head of an eagle. Sometimes there was represented dragons or serpent heads calling to mind Thor's chief antagonists, the Midgard Serpent. The ring on which the hammer is usually attached is not a mere accessory; it, too was a symbol of the thunder god. A large ring was kept in his shrine and oaths were sworn on it. At times the pagan priest would wear it on his arm. Mjollnir (the name given the hammer of Thor) was evidently pictured as a throwing weapon, with a cord attached to the ring; thus it is pictured on the old memorial stones.

The handle of the hammer is somewhat short in proportion to the head. Two explanations for this are given in the old legends. According to Saxo, the handle was broken in a titanic battle in which the gods engaged. On the other hand, the chronicler Snorri gives another account. According to him, Loki had cut off the hair of Sif, Thor's wife, and Thor would have killed him but Loki arranged to have two dwarfs make hair for Sif out of real gold. But at the same time Loki found two other dwarf smithies and set them in competition with the other two. This second team of dwarfs forged a golden boar for Freyr and the magic golden ring Draupnir Odin, despite Loki's attempts to hinder them by changing into a fly and stinging them as they worked. The third item made by the dwarfs was Thor's hammer. Loki stung one of the dwarfs on the eyelid as he was operating the bellows, and the handle was a little short as a result.



Evidently the hammer amulet came to be rather popular, as more than forty of them have been recovered by archaeologists. Most date from the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. It seems that they were popular among the poor and the rich as well, as those discovered have been of metals as diverse as iron, bronze, and silver.

The power of the hammer was considered very real and very great. Full-sized ones were used to bless a bride, a new-born child, or a funeral pyre. Though they are often found on the sites of homes or buried with hoards of treasure, perhaps as a magical defense against thieves.

We of the renescent Viking movement have chosen the hammer of Thor as one of the symbols of our faith; of our belief in the old gods and in the Viking way. Odin is our chief god and always will be, but Thor, both as warrior and as antagonist of the White Kris, holds a place of high honor and esteem in our hearts.



"Laughing, I die" - The Life and Death of Ragnar Lodbrok

Of all the Viking chieftains whose traditions have come down through history, none can match the saga of Ragnar Lodbrok for adventure, courage, and general realization of the Viking ideal. Ragnarssaga has come down to us in two versions the Norwegian, or historical account, and the Icelandic or poetic form. Though complete, it contains a number of historical and chronological inconsistencies so that the actual events are often difficult to discern, yet even according to the most modest interpretations it is clear beyond a doubt that Ragnar Lodbrok was archetypal Viking leader.

The legends which grew up around Ragnar's life are fantastic by modern standards, but show the esteem which was accorded him and gives some idea of his greatness. Perhaps the best known tale about Ragnar is where he takes Thora as his wife after rescuing her from a house which was guarded by the traditional dragon atop the treasure trove. The similarity to the story of Sigurd the Volsung is obvious. There is a new twist, though - Ragnar puts on his "hairy breeks" (from which his name "Lodbrok" comes) to accomplish this feat, as these trousers were impenetrable to the teeth of the dragon.

In another story Ragnar's marriage to Kraka (whose real name was Aslaug), the daughter of Sigurd, directly connects him with the Volsung epis

According to one tradition, Ragnar was sent a-viking because he was an inconvenient claimant to the throne and some way was needed to get him out of the way. This may be one reason for the regard given to him by the Norsemen, as he "may have been one of the first of the royal stock who devoted himself wholly to the Viking life" as one writer puts it. Apparently he was a lusty individual who preferred action to merely sitting at home financing other people's expeditions.

Though Ragnar won fame in Sweden, Finland, Russia, and England (according to the sagas) probably his most famous campaign was in France, in March of 845 A.D. With a fleet of 120 ships he sailed up the Seine River to plunder Rouen and the neighboring vicinity, and continued on upriver. Charles the Bald, whose reign was hampered by internal dissention and self-interest, made one futile attempt to stop Ragnar's advance but ran for refuge in the abbey of St. Denis after it failed. Finally on March 28, 845, an Easter Sunday, the island - city of Paris, the city dedicated to the Virgin, fell before victorious Viking armies. They had barely occupied the city and commenced to plunder its holy places when a thick and impenetrable fog surrounded the area. In confusion, the Vikings made their way back to their ships, losing many warriors as they lost their way and became prey to hands of Parisians. To make matters worse, they

contracted a plague which they carried back to Denmark with them. This unfortunate series of circumstances was given a supernatural explanation by both the Vikings and The Christians, and was such a powerful psychological lever that Horik, the Danish king who had financed the expedition, gave back the prisoners and religious booty which had been captured. No mention is made of Ragnar's opinion of this compromise; one wonders if he approved the return of his hard-earned booty.

Count Cobbo, Lewis' ambassador to the Danes, relates that this foray was the death of Ragnar. He states that Ragnar was stricken with the illness even as he was in audience with Horik, and died after three days of agony. But as one historian remarks, "If the Ragnar of the Paris siege was the Ragnar Lodbrok of tradition he certainly did not die then and in that wise." One imagines rather that he pocketed his share of the loot and went on his way to other adventures which are related in Ragnarssaga.

The death of Ragnar Lodbrok occurred about two decades later, in 866, according to most authorities. His sons - Ivar, Ubbe, and Halfdan - had achieved great fame in their exploits, particularly in the slaying of the king of Sweden. Jealous of their fame, Ragnar outfitted two ships and set sail for England. The ships were destroyed in a storm off of Northumbria and all hands, except Ragnar, perished. The sea king was captured and brought before Aella, the king of Northumbria, who sentenced him to die in a pit full of serpents. He seized his harp and sang his death-song even as the serpents bit into his flesh.

I hope that Withri's (Odin)wand will Aella pierce,  
My sons shall swell with wrath at their father's  
betrayal.

Ready I am to be gone. The Disir call me home..  
When Odin the leader sends from his hall,  
Gladly shall I quaff ale with the Aesir on my seat;  
My life's hours are done; joyfully I depart.

Another source, of the twelfth century, has Ragnar conclude with the words "Laughing, I die" - which we used in the title of this article.

Ragnar was avenged. Before his death he said prophetically "The piglings would be g runting if they knew the plight of the boar" The Danes, led by the sons of Ragnar, soon invaded England and caused havoc.

The life of the great Viking was ended, but his memory is with us still. His example is ours to follow as we walk in his footsteps and preserve the mighty values of a mighty man. In remembrance of Ragnar Lodbrok and his feats, March 28 is an official day of feasting and celebration for the Viking Brotherhood.

\*\*\*\*\*  
We at The Runestone have really become interested in Ragnar Lodbrok after doing the article in this issue on him, and now we're trying to find a copy of Ragnarssaga - we've got a friend looking for one, but if you know where we can pick up a copy (preferably an English translation) how about letting us know?

Back issues of The Runestone are available at 50¢ each in the U.S. and 75¢ overseas - while they last.

## Mead - Its Brewing and History

Mead has come to be strongly identified with the Viking Age, and hosts of drunken Vikings sitting around massive tables in a mead hall has become a familiar scene in literature. Probably never before has a beverage become so closely identified with a historical period. The drinking of mead was the major past-time of the off - season Viking, and should he make it to Valhalla by his bravery he would spend his days in fighting, and his nights in drinking carousing and drinking huge quantities of the liquid. It would seem that a warrior chieftain's prowess was measured in part by his ability to quaff huge amounts of mead.

Drinking was generally done from conical glass containers, shaped somewhat like funnels, or from the characteristic horns. These drinking accessories had a common characteristic - being pointed, they could not be set aside so long as there was anything left in them. As the containers were generally kept full, this led to a lot of heavy drinking. Even the Vikings seem to have had their cop-outs, however - small stands have been found in some instances to provide a means of setting one's horn down. In the late 1700's two beautiful golden horns were discovered at Gallehus, Denmark, covered with figures of men and animals. One horn had runic carvings around the rim, indicating its Scandinavian origin. Most drinking horns were not this elaborate, and it is thought that these horns, which date from about 500 A.D. were used in some sort of temple rites.

In a book titled An Essay on Brewing, Vintage and Distillation Together with Selected Remedies for Hangover Melancholia or How to Make Booze (one of the few books to come to this writer's attention which discusses mead in any real detail) the author John P. Adams proposes that mead "perhaps significantly influenced their (the Viking's) bellicosity, and thus the history of western Europe! Notbad for booze!

Mead, Adams states, is easy to make - in fact, it practically makes itself. The basic ingredients are nothing more than honey and water, and of course a little yeast. As mead is essentially a honey and wine, it can be expected that the quality of honey used is a vital factor and such is the case. There are honeys of many different kinds, and there will be variations from one geographical area to another due to differences in the local flora. Undoubtedly the serious student of mead - making will want to experiment.



The chosen honey is mixed with warm (not hot or boiling) water at a ratio of about four pounds of honey per gallon of water. The Anglo-Saxons used about five pounds per gallon of water, but most people find this much too sweet .

Yeast is added. The mixture of honey will need to ferment for at least two months, and possibly three. The larger the amount of honey used, the longer the fermentation time that is required. It can be seen that more time is needed for mead than is required for the fermentation of most other beverages; this is due to the fact that mead has been considered an antiseptic down through the centuries. It has been used to bind up wounds and even to embalm mummies!

At least once during the fermentation process (after about two months), "racking" will be necessary - that is, the mead must be siphoned off into a new container, leaving the "lees" or sediment in the old container. The original bottle is carefully rinsed and the mead returned to it. Sufficient water is added to replace the volume which the lees had occupied.



Sometimes the mead will "stick", or refuse to resume proper fermentation, after racking. Should this occur a bit more yeast may be added to get the process underway again.

To make a carbonated, or sparkling, mead, a bubbler must be attached after the fermentation begins to slacken (sometimes after the first racking). When the bubbler emits only an occasional bubble, the mead is ready to be bottled or consumed immediately.

Such fineries were not for the Vikings, however. They drank their mead simple, and without the spices which were added in a later century. In fact, some blame the decline of mead upon the various spices which came to be added, claiming that it destroyed rather than enhanced the taste of the brew.

Besides providing the material for some excellent Viking social gatherings, mead - making is an enjoyable pastime and one which may be pursued with the traditional Viking gusto.

## What is the Viking Brotherhood?

The Viking Brotherhood is a body of men and women who are dedicated to the revival of the old Norse religion as epitomized in the Viking Age, and to insuring that the values of courage and individualism which were its hallmark shall not disappear from the Earth. We look around us and we see a tidal wave of conformity, cowardice, and collectivism which threatens to bury all free men in its morass - and modern technology has given the possibility of permanence to such an Orwellian end. We see that the predominating religious systems are aiding, or even serving as the principal cause of, this creeping tyranny. What is needed is something better - a religion and a way of life which is bold, which is free, which teaches that men must stand proud, not bend their knees. This religion, this belief which can help men be free, this way of life which we must implement now, before the last bold heart is consumed by the mediocrity of the masses, is the paganism of the barbarian Normannorum the Vikings!

Unfortunately, almost no one today knows even the basic precepts and principle of this noble religion. What little knowledge they do have is distorted and placed under the biased heading of "mythology" (a definition of mythology: all religions except your own). The fact that many details of the old Norse religion were forever lost when the Christians systematically and zealously set about the annihilation of all pagan ways and all pagans. This is what we have done taken these fragments of the Viking ethic and built them into what is in spirit the religion of the Vikings.

The old Norse religion, like all religions, including Christianity, changed from one century to including Christianity, changed from one century to the next in the emphasis placed on its various parts. We have chosen the religion and the values of the Norsemen at the peak of their power - during the period known as the Viking Age. The chief god of this era was Odin, the fierce god of war. A warrior who fought courageously and who died the hero's death, sword in hand, was entitled to sit in Valhalla, where the slain warriors feasted and fought until Ragnarok, the battle of battles. Because conflict was seen as the principal fact of life, the prime virtue naturally was courage - total, unyielding courage, even in the face of certain doom. The hero in one old Norse story is the man who has the courage to laugh at his enemies even as they cut his heart from his body. This is a hard code to live by. Certainly it seems lacking in the world of today, when we are surrounded by the bleating advocates of non-violence, when danger is carefully avoided, when the sacrifices of heroes are mocked.

The totality of the beliefs of the Viking religion cannot be explained in a short article such as this. Let those who are interested study the available literature on the subject. One excellent book which adequately expresses the atmosphere of the Norse religion is the historical novel The Viking by Edison Marshall.

Our religion will not suit everyone. It is not a religion of the masses. To follow it requires a courage and a vision which many in this day and age do not have. The rewards are great - a hero's seat in Valhalla, of course, but most of all the ecstasy of the

berserker and the satisfaction of being a free man in a time when such a thing is rare indeed. ODIN LIVES!!

\*\*\*\*\*

### ECOLOGY ADDENDUM

"The word for grove is in many Teutonic languages a convertible word with temple; this fact proves, better than a thousand examples, how entirely the religion of the Germans was bound up with their forest life." p. 36, C.P. Keary's The Vikings in Western Christendom

\*\*\*\*\*

### Viking Ghost??

While looking through The Bog People by P.V. Glob we came upon an anecdote of interest. The author was discussing graves and the fear of ghosts in Denmark, and stated that on a hill at Dyrred, on the island of Als, there seemed to be almost constant ghostly activity. About fifty years ago, there lived on the nearby Jutland mainland a clergyman resolved to cope with this situation. He took a hammer and a heavy oak stake, crossed over to the island and began walking around on the haunted hillside. At one location, though there was nothing to distinguish it, he drove the stake into the ground. This seems to have quieted the ghosts - peace reigned upon the hill afterwards. About forty years later, a museum official from Sønderborg Castle, one J. Faben, came upon a Viking - age grave upon the hill. The Vikings breast was still pierced by the stake which the clergyman had driven. At the time that the clergyman had done his ghost laying it had long been forgotten that there was such a grave on the hill, yet, so the story goes, it was the soul of this heathen which was so disturbing the local inhabitants.

All of which perhaps goes to show that it's hard to keep a good man down.

If things go as planned, you will notice this issue a lot thinner than our first one. This is because we are using both sides of the paper in this issue. So you're still getting the same amount of reading, but you're getting it on a higher grade of paper.

\*\*\*\*\* NEXT ISSUE \*\*\*\*\*

The next issue of The Runestone will feature an article on the Viking sword, a report on alleged Norse runestones in the State of Oklahoma (!), and article on Valkyries, and several other items.

GIVE ME THAT OLD TIME RELIGION!

## What is the Viking Brotherhood?

The Viking Brotherhood is a body of men and women who are dedicated to the revival of the old Norse religion as epitomized in the Viking Age, and to insuring that the values of courage and individualism which were its hallmark shall not disappear from the Earth. We look around us and we see a tidal wave of conformity, cowardice, and collectivism which threatens to bury all free men in its morass - and modern technology has given the possibility of permanence to such an Orwellian end. We see that the predominating religious systems are aiding, or even serving as the principal cause of, this creeping tyranny. What is needed is something better - a religion and a way of life which is bold, which is free, which teaches that men must stand proud, not bend their knees. This religion, this belief which can help men be free, this way of life which we must implement now, before the last bold heart is consumed by the mediocrity of the masses, is the paganism of the barbarian Normannorum the Vikings!

Unfortunately, almost no one today knows even the basic precepts and principle of this noble religion. What little knowledge they do have is distorted and placed under the biased heading of "mythology" (a definition of mythology: all religions except your own). The fact that many details of the old Norse religion were forever lost when the Christians systematically and zealously set about the annihilation of all pagan ways and all pagans. This is what we have done taken these fragments of the Viking ethic and built them into what is in spirit the religion of the Vikings.

The old Norse religion, like all religions, including Christianity, changed from one century to including Christianity, changed from one century to the next in the emphasis placed on its various parts. We have chosen the religion and the values of the Norsemen at the peak of their power - during the period known as the Viking Age. The chief god of this era was Odin, the fierce god of war. A warrior who fought courageously and who died the hero's death, sword in hand, was entitled to sit in Valhalla, where the slain warriors feasted and fought until Ragnarok, the battle of battles. Because conflict was seen as the principal fact of life, the prime virtue naturally was courage - total, unyielding courage, even in the face of certain doom. The hero in one old Norse story is the man who has the courage to laugh at his enemies even as they cut his heart from his body. This is a hard code to live by. Certainly it seems lacking in the world of today, when we are surrounded by the bleating advocates of non-violence, when danger is carefully avoided, when the sacrifices of heroes are mocked.

The totality of the beliefs of the Viking religion cannot be explained in a short article such as this. Let those who are interested study the available literature on the subject. One excellent book which adequately expresses the atmosphere of the Norse religion is the historical novel The Viking by Edison Marshall.

Our religion will not suit everyone. It is not a religion of the masses. To follow it requires a courage and a vision which many in this day and age do not have. The rewards are great - a hero's seat in Valhalla, of course, but most of all the ecstasy of the

berserker and the satisfaction of being a free man in a time when such a thing is rare indeed. ODIN LIVES!!

\*\*\*\*\*

### ECOLOGY ADDENDUM

"The word for grove is in many Teutonic languages a convertible word with temple; this fact proves, better than a thousand examples, how entirely the religion of the Germans was bound up with their forest life." p. 36, C.P. Keary's The Vikings in Western Christendom

\*\*\*\*\*

### Viking Ghost??

While looking through The Bog People by P.V. Glob we came upon an anecdote of interest. The author was discussing graves and the fear of ghosts in Denmark, and stated that on a hill at Dyrred, on the island of Als, there seemed to be almost constant ghostly activity. About fifty years ago, there lived on the nearby Jutland mainland a clergyman resolved to cope with this situation. He took a hammer and a heavy oak stake, crossed over to the island and began walking around on the haunted hillside. At one location, though there was nothing to distinguish it, he drove the stake into the ground. This seems to have quieted the ghosts - peace reigned upon the hill afterwards. About forty years later, a museum official from Sønderborg Castle, one J. Faben, came upon a Viking - age grave upon the hill. The Vikings breast was still pierced by the stake which the clergyman had driven. At the time that the clergyman had done his ghost laying it had long been forgotten that there was such a grave on the hill, yet, so the story goes, it was the soul of this heathen which was so disturbing the local inhabitants.

All of which perhaps goes to show that it's hard to keep a good man down.

If things go as planned, you will notice this issue a lot thinner than our first one. This is because we are using both sides of the paper in this issue. So you're still getting the same amount of reading, but you're getting it on a higher grade of paper.

\*\*\*\*\* NEXT ISSUE \*\*\*\*\*

The next issue of The Runestone will feature an article on the Viking sword, a report on alleged Norse runestones in the State of Oklahoma (!), and article on Valkyries, and several other items.

GIVE ME THAT OLD TIME RELIGION!

## Viking Military Tactics

As their war-like spirit is one of the characteristics which have insured the Vikings a firm place in history, it behooves us who also follow the God of Battles to learn what we can about the military science of our spiritual forbearers.

A survey of the literature on this subject shows that the Norsemen were, in most respects, equal to or even superior to their enemies. They introduced some concepts - such as the value of quick to movement in warfare - and others they were quick to adopt from their enemies.

Perhaps one of their most daring maneuvers was to break ranks and pretend to flee, and then reverse on signal to take advantage of the disorder in the enemy formations produced by pursuit of the Viking "retreat." C.P. Keary, his book Vikings in Western Christendom, remarks "I think any general would admit that there have been but few disciplined armies in the world's history which could be trusted to execute such a maneuver as this; that with the vast majority of troops the signal in the face of an enemy would be fatal to the hopes of the day, even though the reasons for the retreat were well understood." In other words, once retreat was sounded, most troops could not be persuaded to stop. Retreat all too often degenerates into route.

Yet this tactic of the sham flight was used in York in 867 A.D. in Lincolnshire, near Kesteven in 870, and Wikton in 872. It was used two hundred years later at the battle of Hastings.

Keary also analyzes the weird howling set up by Germanic and Scandinavian warriors - the Barritus. This custom is known to have been used by the Roman legionnaires, and some authorities give them credit for inventing it. Keary, however, argues that it is a Germanic word, hence a Germanic institution, and that the Romans got it from them. He suggests that the Romans learned it from German mercenaries in their ranks. In any case, this battle cry was produced by placing the rim of the shield beneath the mouth, and swelled to be a great noise. Some classical writers compared its swelling noise to the roar of the sea, and omens of victory or of defeat were interpreted depending on whether the sound rose and fell in harmony or in discord. It is thought that the barritus may be the reason for Odin's saying of his champions in one of the Eddic poems, "I sing under their shields."

Though the origin of the barritus may be lost in the past, it is more or less certain that the "swine-array" or wedge-shaped battle formation, was learned from the Romans, though legend attributes it to Odin. The Romans, calling this the caput porcinum, had used it against the Germanic tribes centuries before the Vikings, and its use had been preserved throughout the Migration. Appropriately enough, the point of this wedge was called the snout.

Other early Germanic techniques do not seem to have survived until the Viking Age. The early Germans had used abatis, or obstacles of felled trees in the line of march called brotic.

These were used in series and prepared days in advance. Trenches as obstacles were used, often conjunction with ambushes.

One of the few other fighting formations used by the Vikings was the shieldwall or skhaldborg, a defensive formation in which the warriors stood in line - or circle when, for example, they had been cut off from their ships - and overlapped their shields to form a continuous and almost impenetrable wall.

Shields were also used in conducting siege operations, as a "shield roof" to protect men with battering rams or who were digging. Though Viking prowess at siege warfare is seldom extolled, they had apparently worked it down to an art. During Ragnar's siege of Paris in 845 A.D., the sea-king employed catapults, combustibles, battering rams, and several machines which were unknown to the Franks.

Despite the swine-array, battles as fought by the Norsemen were essentially a series of individual fights. These fights were fought on foot. Horses were used for rapid deployment, but once at the battlefield the troops dismounted. This technique of movement - to-contact is illustrated on the Gotland stones, and the fact that no horse armor has ever been found supports it.

In the earliest Viking days, the sword and the spear were the primary weapons. Volleys of spears would be exchanged and the warriors would then close in for close combat. Later the axe began to replace the spear, and eventually became the typical Viking weapon.

Despite the violence and carnage which characterized such warfare, the Vikings possessed a strong sense of honor; of what was fair and just in the execution of military operations. Some writers contend that this tendency was so strong that it cost them victory on some occasions. This sense of honor, however, obviously did not preclude surprise and trickery, or so one indicate. In order to obtain entrance to a city, one band of Vikings announced to the city fathers that their chieftain, a newly-converted Christian, burial. To give a Viking chieftain a Christian funeral was no everyday event, so the local clergy and other authorities readily assented. While the funeral rites were being pronounced, the "dead" chieftain rose up and ran his sword through the officiating bishop. In the ensuing confusion the band of Norsemen proceeded to conquer and pillage the city. One feels that the raiders deemed such a colossal joke a sufficient reason to bend the rules a little.

On a strategic level the Vikings showed considerable ability especially regarding naval operations. In fact, one historian says of Ragnar Lodbrok, "He was the man who first realized the potentialities and principles of naval war. He demonstrated the possibility of moving great fleets over immense stretches of sea. He conceived the first idea of those chains of naval bases which have since become the foundation of British naval power. He embodied that new world of the open sea which was the gift of his country and generation to mankind.

On a tactical and strategic level, the invention of the

lightning attack from the sea so much used by the Vikings is probably the first important use of amphibious assault. With it comes recognition of the Vikings as the first warriors in Europe to realize the value of quick movement in warfare.

The stubborn individualism of the Viking must have made mounting large expeditions difficult. Leaders must have exhibited remarkable abilities to motivate and direct so many rugged individualists in the teamwork required by warfare. If one of the Norsemen sponsoring an expedition didn't like the way things were being run, there was nothing, except his sense of honor or of courage, or his loyalty to a particular leader, to prevent him from sailing his ships back home. Possibly this is one reason that Viking expeditions met with less success when they encountered armies which, though man-for-man not as fierce, were obedient and organized.

Essentially, the Viking was a warrior, not a soldier.

Perhaps these values will regain their military importance in this era of guerilla warfare. Somehow one hopes so.

At any rate, the Norse warparty, "a force of drilled warriors tried in a hundred forays, knit together by discipline and mutual trust, grouped around a leader of their own choosing, and armed from head to foot" (Viggo Starcke, Denmark in World History) was most formidable opponent, which created a reputation for prowess at arms which still echoes down to us today.

\*\*\*\*\*  
ODIN LIVES!!  
\*\*\*\*\*

Soon one of the founders of the Viking Brotherhood and The Runestone will be going to Europe, so we'll be getting a lot of feature articles from that part of the world.

" INSIGHT MAGAZINE "

Contents include, Ancient British Mysteries, Aspects of Paganism, Witchcraft, Ceremonial Magic, Archeology, Comparative Religions, Egyptology etc.  
Price \$1 (\$4 Yearly Subscription) to "Insight",  
118, Windham Road, Bournemouth, Hants, ENGLAND.

Become AWARE NOW!

Give me that old time Religion!

ODIN LIVES!!

Here another rendering from John W. Dalrymple also without a name.

Ax wind! Sword wind!  
Keening through the fjords;  
Last chill breath of winter;  
I commit my soul to thee.  
My keel, fresh caulked with pitchy yarns,  
I give into the keeping of the waves, thy children.  
The high foam peaks and shark grey hollows, I embrace.  
My blood, salt as the waters of the sea,  
Burns hot in dreaming of the gore red times to come.  
I sail to fight; I sail to kill.  
I sail, mayhap, to die.  
Ax sword! Sword wind!  
Receive thy Son!!

\*\*HELP\*\*

Our readers can be of positive help to us. In the last issue we asked for addresses of clipping bureaus, so as to be able to bring you more Viking-oriented material. An initial survey reveals lots of clipping services, but usually operating over a limited area, such as a state of several states. Thus, while we can subscribe to some such services, we can't possibly afford them all. If our readers will take the trouble to clip Viking-related material out of their area newspapers for us, it would save us a lot of money and make for a better publication. We could then be selective and subscribe to those clipping services where we have few or no readers. How about it?

We at the Runestone are appreciative of the response we've received so far and we thank you for this. We also hope that the readers we have will spread the word. We are a pagan newsletter on the Norse religion and we have knowledge of a group of people who follow the Norse religion. These people belong to the Viking Brotherhood. There is an article on the Brotherhood in this issue but if you like more information please feel free to write The Runestone and we will be glad to tell you more about the Viking Brotherhood. Until the next issue - - - ODIN LIVES!!