

THE RUNESTONE

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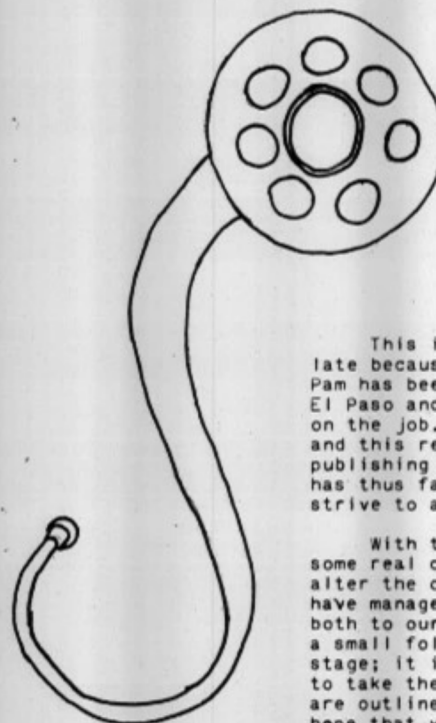
The Runestone is a journal of the old Norse religion and is dedicated to the revival of that religion as epitomized during the Viking Age, and to the revival of the values of courage, freedom, and personal independence which are associated with it. The Runestone is the official publication of the Viking Brotherhood and is published quarterly. Subscriptions are \$3.00 per year. Write The Runestone, "A" Co. 1 Bn. 39th Inf., APO New York 09034.

NORSE NOTES

We are just now getting our administrative hassels resolved, but the road looks clear for the future. Another issue will be coming out in a couple of weeks, to help us catch up with our schedule. We are determined that our subscribers will receive their money's worth!

We had hoped to be able to include photography in this issue, but the cost is still prohibitive. Maybe when our circulation grows it will become more practical. Nevertheless, I think you will find our format gradually improving.

The Runestone continues to grow in numbers, and in contacts which will prove useful in the near future. We already have permission from the Danish National Museum, among others, to reproduce their photographs. Contact seems imminent with a group of pagans in Iceland. Our library, which serves as a source for our articles, was recently increased by \$130 worth of books purchased while on an expedition to Denmark. In short, we have no intention of resting on our laurels.



SPECIAL

ANNOUNCEMENT

This issue of The Runestone is coming to you late because of various problems we have encountered. Pam has been in poor health due to the climate in El Paso and under increasing pressure at school and on the job. She has requested that she be retired, and this retirement has been accepted. The job of publishing The Runestone, answering the mail, etc., has thus fallen on me. It is a job which I will strive to accomplish to the best of my ability.

With this issue of The Runestone we are making some real changes, changes which will drastically alter the course of our organization. To date, we have managed only to clarify our basic position, both to our readers and to ourselves, and to acquire a small following. But now we have outgrown that stage; it is time for something larger. It is time to take the next step. Our plans for this next step are outlined in the article "The Skeppsiag", and we hope that you will read it thoroughly and give it your careful consideration. Briefly, what we are doing is to make every attempt to form action groups around the world and to put membership in the Viking Brotherhood on a more formal basis. It is time that we make it clear to everyone that we are not a debating group, social club, or bunch of history buffs--we have definite beliefs and goals, and we are willing to work to achieve them! The Viking Way was, and must always remain, a way of real, solid, pragmatic action, not day-dreaming of bygone eras or the paying of lipservice to a way of life that many don't have the guts to live. We are in dead earnest on the matter of our Norse faith, and we plan to accomplish some real changes in the world.

We will be needing your support. The Brotherhood has entered a new and active phase. We are out of Kindergarten now. Welcome to the new us. Join us in the epic adventure we are now launching!

BOOK



REVIEW

For the Children: Viking Adventure by Clyde Robert Bulla

In the two years that we have been publishing The Runestone, we have featured a book review in every issue. Without exception, these reviews have been aimed at adult readership, since our subscribers fall into that category. These reviews have served the valuable purpose of acquainting our readers with the relatively obscure literature on a relatively obscure topic.

But what about the kids? Vikings, we know, were members of a family-centered society, and the most ferocious warrior was once an impressionable bairn. How, then, can we in all conscience neglect the upbringing of our own future "Nordmanni"? How can we protect our young from the constant indoctrination of a society which will rob them of their freedom and blind their search for adventure and worth? We must never use means so authoritarian as to break that spirit which we seek to develop, yet we must do something.

It is up to us to teach our children to love courage and freedom and strength, to seek adventure and glory and to hate that which is base or demeaning. Perhaps books like the one in the title of this article are a part of the answer. Bulla never once mentions the name of Odin or refers to the conflict of faiths which characterized the era of which he writes, but the actions of his characters speak for themselves. The story concerns one young man, Sigurd, the son of a Viking named Olaf the Strong. Olaf, a veteran of raids and adventures in Ireland, Spain, Scotland, and other lands, trains his son relentlessly. Sigurd's instruction is dealt with at some length, and includes weapons training, running, rope climbing, and various other skills. Finally Sigurd gets his own chance for glory by sailing with an expedition to Vinland and returning as the sole survivor. The story as a whole should provide plenty of inspiration for young would-be Vikings, whetting their taste for adventure and keeping them entertained by the lively action throughout. If you have a child in one of the intermediate grades, you might consider this one. Boys would probably enjoy it more than girls, though these days who can say? Viking Adventure sells for 95¢ from Scholastic Book Services.



THE VIKING ARCHAEOLOGY OF JELLING

The Viking-Age finds at the town of Jelling (or Jellinge), located in the center of Denmark's Jutland, rank as some of the more significant discoveries in Scandinavian archaeology. Within a few meters of one another are located two famous runestones, two large burial mounds, and the remains of an early stave church, and, according to some, bits of a pagan temple.

Today, Jelling is a quiet village. The mounds are surrounded by the town and a museum stands near the structure of the church. A gift shop across the way will sell postcards and a booklet on the runestones, and a bakery down the street will sell you some delicious pastry, accompanied by pleasant conversation in English. At one time, however, Jelling was the royal residence of Viking Denmark, the home of Gorm the Old and his son, Harold Bluetooth. Gorm is generally considered Denmark's

first king, and ruled from about 900 to 950 Common Era. Before this time, Denmark had been a fragmented conglomeration of warring peoples and kingdoms. Gorm unified the country, established his rule over it, and Harold marked the event by erecting a runestone made from a large boulder. This runestone is the one now commonly called "the Jelling Stone". The carving on this remarkable stone covers the three faces of the monument. On one face we have the bulk of the inscription-- "Harold king bid done monuments these after Gorm father his and after Thyra mother his." This portion was extended, apparently after Harold's conversion to Christianity, to read, "That Harold who him won Denmark all and Norway and Danes made Christians." Another side of the stone pictures a most remarkable and rather unidentifiable animal, in the Norse art style known as the Mammen-style. This impressive beast was evidently carved at the same time as the Christ figure which adorns the remaining face since they are intertwined in the usual Norse method. The figure of the crucified Christ is perhaps the oldest in Scandinavia. He is here represented not as the defeated Christ in death, but as a vital, conquering Christ--a bit unrealistic, but the only concept of Christ which would have impressed the Vikings. The beast and the Christ were apparently added at a later date than the original inscription. The entire stone shows a curious combination of the pagan and the Christian, reflecting the turmoil which accompanied the period of the conversion. The term "kubi" is on the stone, which is a purely pagan term for "monument".

Equally famous is the smaller stone which stands beside the Jelling Stone. Roughly rectangular in shape, it reads, "King Gorm made this memorial to his wife Thyri amender (or glory or adornment) of Denmark." Thyri (or Thyra) is often credited (erroneously) with the constructing of the Danevirke, that protective earthwork separating Jutland from those lands to the south. The name "Denmark"-- here as "Tanmarker"--is first found on this runestone, giving it the nickname of "Denmark's Birth Certificate".

The mounds which flank the present-day church are of considerable interest in themselves. The larger one, to the south, is 273 feet in diameter and 36 feet high. It is built of peat and grass sod, with the growing side laid facing down. No grave was ever built into this mound, a fact which has aroused considerable controversy. One explanation is that Harold, who ruled from about 950 to 985 C.E., had the mound erected for himself, despite the fact that he had been converted to the new religion. Harold had also directed that he be buried in the cathedral at Roskilde, which may at first glance seem inconsistent. The flavor of the times, however, makes it seem less unlikely. Harold had been born and raised a pagan, adopting Christianity only in his later years. He was still a sound part of the pagan cultural matrix, with its values deeply imbedded in him. The mound at Jelling would give him a place on earth to inhabit in his afterlife. Mere conversion would not be enough to cause Harold to sever himself from his clan.

The other explanation for the empty southern mound is simply that it was a cenotaph, not a burial mound, and was never meant to

be a site of interment. This was a common practice throughout the pagan north. Other examples are the greatest of the howes, Raknehaugen near Oslo, which measures more than a hundred meters in diameter and eighteen meters in height, and the howe Farmanshaugen by Jarlsberg.

The northern mound, at least, contained a burial chamber, though no human bones were found, or for that matter, much else of value. The grave finds were limited to a few carved and painted pieces of wood, the head of a bird of copper, a small silver cup, an iron bridle and horse bones. The bodies had been removed. The sepulcher itself measured 22 feet by 8½ feet by 4¾ feet. A vertical plank was erected in the middle and the walls had been lined with tapestries. Gwyn Jones, in his A History of the Vikings, has an explanation for the lack of bodies in the chamber. Harold, once converted, would have felt compelled to move the remains of his mother--who was also a convert to Christianity--to the church he had established. Though Gorm, Harold's father, had been a pagan, it is likely and precedented that his body, also, would have been removed to consecrated ground.

NEXT ISSUE: Part II of "The Viking Archaeology of Jelling" which will discuss Jelling as the possible location of a pagan cult site.

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THE SKEPPSLAG

The Viking Brotherhood has outgrown its limited role as merely the publisher of The Runestone. It is time to organize cells or local units in the many countries in which we have subscribers, for the purpose of working to promote the Norse religion and the philosophical values in which we believe. Over the last few decades there have been numerous groups which espoused beliefs which were allegedly founded upon the same basis as is the Brotherhood. They have crumbled into the dust of history. These organizations attempted to operate as fraternal groups, as philosophical and scholarly societies, and the like--and they failed. In past times, no one expressing a Norse-oriented religious or philosophical system has been able to make a lasting impression on the world, because they either did not apply their efforts to practical action or did not have the imaginative scope or objectives required of those who plan on making a difference in real events.

The Viking Brotherhood has no plans of joining these groups in obscurity and extinction.

We have spent the last two years establishing ourselves, defining our position, and gathering a group of people who agree with our general goals and values. Now it is time to take the step which will remove us from the ranks of other pagan and neo-pagan groups. It is time to establish organization for the purpose of taking definite, positive action in the real world.

One reason that our Norse religion succumbed to the attacks of Christendom was that the heathen religious viewpoint had no coherent, organized system of advocates. We had no systematic, consistent, and uniform set of beliefs and we had no cooperation among pagans to resist the Christian assault. Perhaps worst of all, we could not comprehend the monstrous evil of Christianity. We simply did not realize what was at stake. The Christians, on the other hand, were hierarchical, adept at political infighting, closely knit, and thoroughly convinced of our own wickedness.

There is simply no way to make Norse beliefs fit a structured, hierarchical form such as that typical of Christianity, and we have no intention of trying to do so. Our freedom-loving and individualistic way of life will not tolerate the subservience and submission required by such a set-up, and to set up a Norse version of Christianity would be disastrous, or at best ludicrous. The answer must be a Norse answer. We cannot survive without some form of organization, yet our values cannot survive in an overly organized environment.

We of the Viking Brotherhood have recognized the need for cooperation and concerted action among those who profess our beliefs. We have endeavored to design a way of meeting these requirements without sacrificing our values.

It has been our decision to establish local action groups, led by local emergent leaders, for the purpose of practicing our religion, promoting the growth of the Brotherhood, and engaging in various projects. These units will operate within general guidelines established by the Brotherhood, but will be largely autonomous. Control will be decentralized. The name "skeppslag" has been chosen to designate these local congregations, an Icelandic term which translates literally as "ship's crew". The "skeppslag" is also a legal subdivision of the Norse government in Iceland.

The leader of the skeppslag will be chosen by the members in good standing, and can be male or female. If female, she must keep in mind that the role she portrays is fundamentally a warrior chieftain's role, and be prepared to handle her responsibilities in that light. The skeppslag leader will officiate in religious ceremonies, administer the projects carried out by the skeppslag, and in time of war lead the skeppslag in warfare. He or she will be elected on an annual basis.

Each skeppslag has certain projects which are required, plus projects that it may undertake on its own initiative. It must meet at least weekly and must celebrate the major Norse festivals. It must plant at least one tree per year, preferably an oak tree (assuming the climate is hospitable). All skeppslags must make every effort to acquire a small plot of land where they can meet for social or religious functions in a natural surrounding. This land should be forested, so that a true grove can be established. If a skeppslag cannot immediately afford such property, it should begin fund raising projects to enable them to do so. (Remember, as land set aside for non-profit, religious activities, it is tax exempt.) In addition to these essential activities, the skeppslag is expected to have some other project underway. Examples would be paper or metal recycling, donation of books on Norse topics or subscriptions to The Runestone to local libraries, distribution of printed material, and the like. A permanent physical fitness program of some sort is a must.

No member shall be coerced into supporting a project which violates his own beliefs.

A skeppslag is expected to send at least one representative, the leader if possible, to the annual Althing, and may send one additional delegate per each ten members in good standing.

Skeppslags are independent financially. They are responsible for their own recruitment, choice of leader, and internal organization. They have a voice in the proceedings at the Althing on a representative basis. There are, on the other hand, a few requirements set upon them. They must perform several essential functions, as outlined above. They must not distribute unauthorized printed material or engage in activity which would present the Brotherhood in an unjust or non-representative light. If the skeppslag ceases to be representative of the beliefs and objectives of the Brotherhood, our responsibility to it is negated and recognition will be withdrawn. Such a provision is regrettable but it is essential to prevent infiltration by Fascists, Communists, or anyone else who would attempt to use our organization to further their own ends.

The above system, we are convinced, will enable us to operate together as persons having a more or less common goal, without sacrificing our own unique values. It is a basis for all future projects, and a plan for the future--and for now.

The only missing ingredient is YOU.

Suppose you want to set up a skeppslag. You've decided that the Norse Way is your way, and you have a few friends who share this belief. How do you go about organizing, getting recognized by the Viking Brotherhood, and so on? It's simple. First, be sure that you have a total of at least three potential skeppslag members. Then write to us, and we will send you all the necessary paperwork (it's minimal; we're not bureaucrats) to make your group fully recognized,

Basically, this is just a brief statement of belief to certify that you have no ulterior motives for joining, and to insure that we're at least talking the same language when we're talking about the Norse religion.

ECO CORNER

This section of The Runestone is set aside for the subject of individual action to support the ecology for two reasons. First, our religion is a religion of nature, of the free and wild places on the Earth. Secondly, the worsening ecological crisis will result in more regulation and less freedom, unless we solve it ourselves.

The ecology movement is no longer a fad; other causes have captured the limelight. We must not assume that the crisis has passed. Nothing could be further from the truth--our air is getting dirtier, our water muckier, and our natural resources scarcer. The forests, the sacred home of our religion and our natural temples, are being destroyed. The animals sacred to our religion continue to die, and our personal freedom shrinks as governments try to cope--however ineffectively--with the mounting problem.

The answer lies with YOU!

A project for the World Wildlife Fund recently has come to our attention. As detailed in the attached clipping, the WWF is acting to protect the wolf, the animal sacred to our high god, Odin. This project should be of special interest to all of us Norsemen.

Besides this, the WWF is promoting scores of other studies and active programs to protect the wild animals and the wild places of the world. Upon learning of their high ethical standards and efficiency, I sent them a check for \$10. Perhaps our readership will feel similarly moved. Their address is:

World Wildlife Fund
910 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

"ODIN LIVES!"

Wolf Needs New Image

MORGES, SWITZERLAND — The World Wildlife Fund recently sponsored a meeting of experts from 14 countries in Stockholm, Sweden, to formulate plans to save the wolf from extinction.

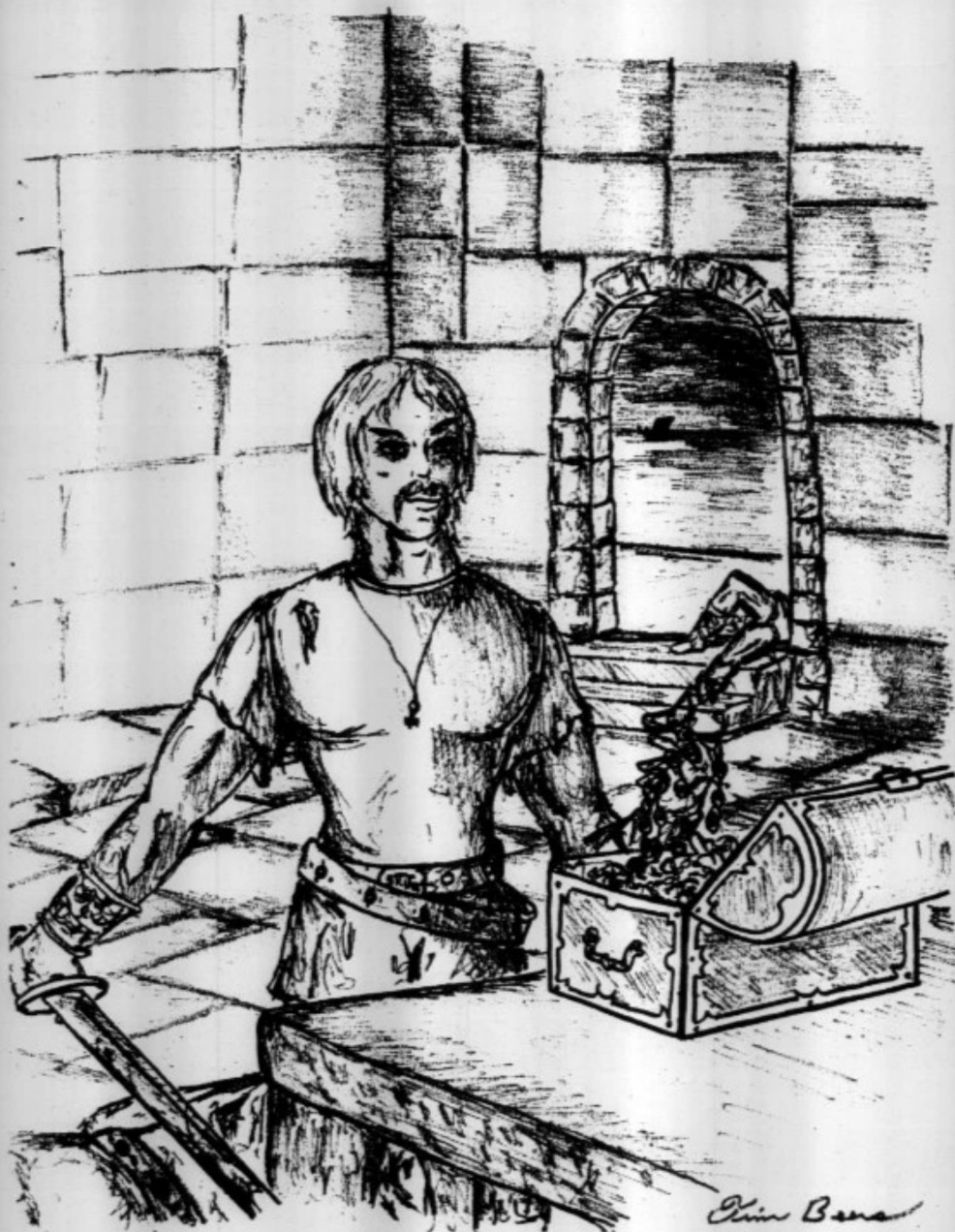
They explained their initial goal was "to change the public image of the wolf from that of a bloodthirsty killer to that of a highly developed social animal which is no threat to man."

The U.S. Appeal is presently supporting a wolf research project in the Mount McKinley area (No. 774) with a \$1,500 grant. The Fund previously supported the project with a \$4,500 grant in 1971.

The project, under direction of Dr. Ian McT. Cowan, considered one of the foremost experts on wolves, is in its seventh year. It is a behavioral study with emphasis on the way in which the social behavior of wolves has adapted animals of two adjacent packs to the sub-Arctic ecology.

Another area of wolf research supported by WWF/U.S. with a \$10,000 grant in 1972, was the work of Dr. L. David Mech in Minnesota, the only state outside of Alaska with a sizable wolf population.

The project (No. 661) was carried out under direction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, for which Dr. Mech works. Findings of the project are being used by the Interior Department in the development of a nationwide program to protect remaining wolf populations.



ADS - ADVERTISEMENTS - ADS

Green Egg is published 8 times per year and a subscription is \$5 per year. GE is a broad-spectrum publication of the pagan movement. Write:

The Church of All Worlds
P.O. Box 2953
St. Louis, Miss. 63130

Send for The Silver Ankh, a newsletter of the old religion. \$1 for their introductory issue.

The Silver Ankh
565 Howard Drive N.E.
Sierra Vista, Ariz.
85635

Here's another group of followers of the old Norse gods:

The Odinst Movement
Box 731
Adelaide St
Toronto 210
Ontario, Canada

A fine publication, known formerly as The Waxing Moon, which survives by donation rather than by set fee is:

The Crystal Well
Box 18351
Philadelphia, Penn.
19120

A new publication of the occult is The New Broom from Dallas. Write:

The New Broom
Box 1646
Dallas, Texas 75221

There is an occult shop in New York which is selling copies of The Runestone for us. For a catalog, write:

The Warlock Shop
300 Henry St.
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201

Here are some other Pagan groups you may be interested in:

The Pagan Way
Box 593
Huron, So. Dakota
57350

The Central Wiccan
Archives Library
P.O. Box 364
Lawton, Oklahoma
73501

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