



In this time of turning Sun

One year gone, another begun...

A time to rest, a time to plan,

A time of kith and kin and clan...

Happy Yule!



THE RUNESTONE is a journal of the ancient Norse religion and is dedicated to the revival of that religion as epitomized during the Viking Age, and to the values of courage, freedom and individuality which are associated with it.

THE RUNESTONE is the official publication of the Ásatrú Free Assembly and is published quarterly. Subscriptions are \$5.00 per year in the U.S. and Canada, and \$6.00 per year overseas (airmail). Write to Ásatrú Free Assembly, 1766 East Avenue, Turlock, CA 95380. Please make checks payable to "Ásatrú Free Assembly."

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## Calendar

December through February, 1978/1979 C.E.

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Announcements

The Varangian Guard, our warrior fraternity, has just published the first copy of its newsletter, Wolf-Coats! and is making rapid progress. Response to the formation of the Varangian Guard has been enthusiastic. Serious warriors are invited to inquire to the Varangian Guard, c/o the Ásatrú Free Assembly.

Our Vanir-worship focus, People of the Lord and Lady, is drawing favorable response. We recently met with Vanir-oriented co-religionists from Southern California, and by the time you read this they may have become a skeppslag of the AFA. This aspect of Ásatrú, emphasizing fertility, seasonal celebrations, and worship of divinity manifesting as Frey and Freya, continues to advance.

Eiríkur and Inga of Vor Trú have suffered personal setbacks recently due to a death in the family and generally compounding problems. We offer them our support in this time of trouble, and remind them that, come what may, "the clan abides." Their address is 511 W. Panorama, #P86, Tucson, AZ 85704.

### SKEPPSLAGS of the ÁSATRÚ FREE ASSEMBLY

Local groups, and/or contact people wanting to start local groups, are:

San Francisco Bay Area Skeppslag - contact The Runestone for monthly meeting date.

San Diego Skeppslag - contact Shawn O'Riley, 1808 Third Avenue, Apt. 12, San Diego, CA 92101.

Washington - write Isaac Moll, c/o Virginia Calvert, P.O. Box 608, Soap Lake, WA, 98851.

Sarnia, Ontario area - Jeffrey Redmond, 1664 W. Tyrie Dr., Sarnia, Ontario, N7V 3P7, Canada.

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Darian Burns, Am Kauzenburg, 655 Bad Kreuznach, West Germany, wants to contact ardent conservationists wishing to defend and protect wildlife as a lifetime activity.

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## SCANDINAVIAN YULE

by

Peter Seymour, Thorvordrsgothi

The Autumn Festival that was held between October 9th and 14th, the Spring Festival celebrated between February 9th and 14th, and the Summer Festival kept between June 9th and 14th are without doubt, according to Snorri Sturlason, the three great offering tides that appeared up to the beginning of the ninth century. Generally speaking, Germanic festive tides may have varied a little from tribe to tribe in different parts of the Northlands due to the influence of the Sun upon the Earth--the fundamental condition of economic existence. But as the Germanic peoples took up the division of the year into six three-score day tides in pre-historic times, it is tantamount to a counting of three hundred and sixty days, or perhaps even of three hundred and sixty six days, and who can deny that a tribe that counts the days of the year according to an established standard is able to fix festive occasions very exactly?

These festive tides fulfill all requirements of the three old Germanic single season beginnings--each being distant from the others by four months or two sixty day tides.

J61 (Yule) in earlier times denoted a three score day tide extending approximately over our modern December and January of the Christian calendar. By the Middle Ages the Scandinavian Spring festival of Pagan times had been relegated into a market in Sweden and elsewhere quite absorbed into the Yule festival under the influence of the Roman calendar which rose in importance under Christian sway as to be considered genuine and old in its chronological traditions.

The eighth century is the last time we historically hear of the festival of G61bl6t, and it is in the mid-ninth century that the term Yule is spoken of by Sturlason as a celebration held by guesting. Could it be that within a century J61bl6t had taken over G61bl6t (which had its name from G61--the month in which it was held) and that G61 just as easily received the name J61bl6t according to the month in which it was now held?

By the tenth century (Viking times) the Yule feast extended over several days and celebrations began between January 9th and the 14th. During that period Hakon the Good changed or tried to change this arrangement by ordering that the holy tide should in future start from the Christian December 25th after the Christian fashion and be kept in a proper and festive way. But naturally he had a "run-in" with the Heathen folk who were given to sacrifice on that occasion. He claimed that every man should "brew a meal of malt or pay money else and keep holy tide while Yule lasted." Up to then Yule had been held on "H6ku" Night, e.g. Midwinters Night and Yule was held for three nights after. A powerful Earl called his bonders together at a place called Ladir where he arranged and paid for a feast with the King present. The Earl had arranged a blood sacrifice and Hakon's attempt to withhold from such rites met with great disapproval and he thought it best to partake in order to preserve crown and kingdom. His next clash with the blood offering festivities came in the Autumn-tide at Winter-Nights which at that time still outshone the January festivity. Hakon tried to avoid difficulty with the Heathen nobility by eating privately but ended up in the public view of the high seat where the blood feast would be greatest! One Earl Sigurd made the sign of Odin over the first poured cup and drank off this horn to the King. When the King took the horn he made the sign of the cross over it, which started problems until the act was explained away as the sign of Thor's

hammer by Sigurd. The next day, the bonders surrounded the King bidding him to eat horseflesh but Hakon refused so they asked him to drink the broth of it, which he also rejected. So they tried to get him to eat the dripping without success, whereupon they came near to attacking him--he was only saved from the situation by Earl Sigurd getting him to take in the reeking vapour by leaning over the boiling pot of flesh--although nobody was too pleased about this settlement. The next Yule feast brought Hakon to Mere where the Earls of Throndheim had already planned to rid Norway of the Christian faith and compel the King to take blood offerings...

Four Earls sailed South to Mere, slew three priests and burned three churches thus retrieving them for the Pagan faith. When Hakon arrived at Mere he ended up avoiding trouble by eating a few bits of horse liver and drinking uncrossed Pagan memory cups thus toasting the old Gods. With the Thrandheimers having had their way with him, Hakon left with Earl Sigurd and his retinue and swore revenge on the Pagans. He stayed with Sigurd until Spring, gathering a force about him by Summer that boded ill for the Throndheim Heathens but it so happened that the Danes made an invasion at that time so Hakon decided to lead his army against them, supported by Earl Sigurd and the Thrandheimers (around 955 c.e.). Hakon died in 963 having failed to establish Christianity in Norway. The Christianized sons of King Eric of Denmark broke down temples and abolished blood offering festivities at Yuletide but gained only hatred for it and when Earl Hakon hung up King Harald and subdued the land he restored the Heathen faith throughout all his dominions. Even when King Olaf Trygvason established Christianity by force and cruelty in Norway by 998, the country was still Pagan. Just as centuries earlier, the Autumn festival has been the opportunity frequently chosen for surprising a drunken enemy at the feasting table, the eleventh century began by using the Yuletide festival for the same purpose... Amongst friends it became customary to feast the first half of Yuletide at the home of one and the second half at the home of the other, the two parts being called the earlier and the latter Yule. In these terms are contained reminiscences of a halving of the older Yuletide of three scores of days which amongst the Anglo Saxons was divided into "aerra Geola" and "seftera Geola" and amongst the Goths as "fruma Iuleis" and "aftuma Iuleis."

The days of Yule are counted like the days of the month in the Roman calendar and seems to have grown bigger. Snorri Sturlason tells us that as long as Yule was held in January, it was for three days duration but when it took its new date for three quarters of a century it took up as least eight days, the eighth day (January 1st) being that for giving gifts of friendship according to the Roman Calends of January custom. King Svein made Yuletide a legal term for paying duties which had not been in order until then. This act was used as a new step toward a complete takeover by the Roman calendar which progressed alongside the rites, feasts and doctrine of Christianity until they had gained a complete hold on all the land. It became the habit to fast on Yule eve and start festivities not earlier than Yule day, as the 25th of December was called by the 12th century. It no longer became the custom to have concubines on the night preceding Yule day, fights at Yuletide were dropped and only three days freedom from necessary labour kept though there were some cases when a fight in Yule company would arise and some men were killed. By the 12th century a celebration of fourteen days was reached. Saga literature from the beginning of the 11th century mentions Yule celebrations more frequently than in earlier material, but as in typical 13th century writings, as a festive time. There is no mention in the early parts of "Heimskringla", of a "Thing", (Norse general public and legal proceedings assembly,) being held at Yuletide which goes toward proving that it was no old offering tide; for both in Germany and Scandinavia these two happenings occurred alongside, being merely two different facets of the three

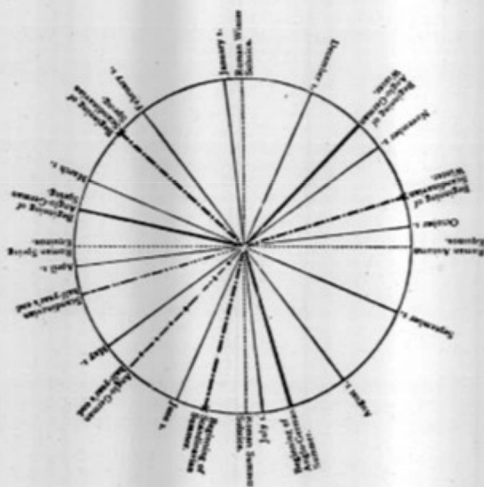
annual assemblies of the men of the individual tribes. But in the 13th century, Yuletide appears to have been used for royal edicts and public announcements for which it was well suited as men either stayed at home or met in large companies at principle places in the country.

The Norwegian customs carried to Iceland and Greenland and in Greenland as in Europe, Yule was held for a number of days--this duration enabled a Völva (Prophetess) to visit several farms within Holy tide some of which were more than a days journey apart.

Half a millenium after winning over the Western German tribes, Christianity finally pervaded all Scandinavia, forcing upon all its subjects the uniformity of system in belief, rite and custom.....

At the dawn of their history the German peoples had inherited an ancient unity of intellectual life that had once embraced all the tribes, but with the varying economic and mental environments into which these tribes entered in the early Middle Ages this inheritance from the East was lost. Christianity took over and made great use of that void in Germanic mental unity for its own advantage... Therefore, a considerable part of that nation's history is contained in the two words Yule and Christmas.....

*(Based on the researches and subsequent works of A. Tille.)*



## The Runes

by Jeffrey R. Redmond

The word "rune" comes from the Old Norse word "runar," meaning a magic sign, and from the Old German word "runa," meaning something secret. In Old Anglo-Saxon England, the word "roon" meant to whisper a secret. They developed an alphabet for writing from 36 pre-historical Germanic picture symbols. These symbols were combined together, and have been found carved on a rock, and are called the Hallristingner script. They originated in the Alpine mountains of Germany, Austria and Italy, which were called "Mundia-fjöll." They depict all the facets of life and religion, such as the sun, moon, earth, gods and goddesses.



The Hallristingner Carvings

Continuous contact with the advancing Roman Empire caused many changes and improvements in the lifestyles of the Germanic tribes, especially from trade. Along with better weapons and utensils, the Germans acquired the notions of a letter-symbol writing system, rather than the picture-word one. They learned much from the Romans, and after defeating the attacking legions of Varus, under chieftain Hermann, at Teutobergerwald in C.E. 9, it was the Germans who began showing the Romans what to do.

From the Hallristingner symbols, clever pagan priests formulated the runic Futhark alphabet, with the idea that the knowledge came from the chief god Wotan, (or Woden, or Othinn) himself. The runes had magic power, and were Wotan's gift of knowledge to mankind. Use of the new Futhark runes spread rapidly throughout northern Europe by C.E. 300, and became the dominant form of writing for the Germanic tribes. The Germans helped Rome stop the Asiatic Huns, and then took over the Roman lands themselves, in the 400's. They sailed across the North Sea and took England, pushing the Celts into Scotland and Wales. The magic power of the runes was great indeed!

In France and Italy, the Roman Latin alphabet was maintained only by hard-working monks, hidden away in mountain retreats. In Greece and Turkey (Byzantium), the Greek alphabet prevailed, and throughout North Africa and Spain, conquering Muslim armies brought the Arabic one, in the 600's. However, hardworking Christian missionary priests began converting more and more Germans (usually by giving them fine clothes and valuable items at the baptism ceremony), and under such rulers as the king of the Franks, Karl the Great (Charlemagne), (768-814), Latin was maintained. By arrangement, Karl was crowned Emperor of the Roman Empire by Pope Leo III, in return for conversion and support. In this way, Germany and England became Christian lands as well, and runes were immediately banned by the Church as being deemonic and evil.

In the Scandinavian lands of northern Europe, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, the pagan lifestyles remained intact, and the runes continued to be used. The Futhark developed into a shorter alphabet of 16 runes, and gave great psychological impetus to the Viking sea raiders of the 800's and 900's. They have been found carved everywhere the Vikings went, from Greece to Greenland.

Most of the Scandinavians were Christianized by the year 1000, (the Viking settlers in Iceland voted for it at their yearly assembly that year), and most of the surviving pagan cult groups died out by 1200. However, even though the runes had lost their pagan magical powers, the runes continued to be used in everyday life throughout Scandinavia. Witchcraft and sorcery groups continued to use runes in their illegal rites, throughout the Middle Ages. Ten more runes were added for new letters by 1300, to accommodate new word spellings. Only the Church clergy used the Latin alphabet.

The victorious Swedish army, under King Gustav Adolf, used runes for secret communications during the Protestant Reformation fighting of the Thirty Years War (1619-1648). Many gravestones had runic inscriptions in the 1700's in Scandinavia, and school children continued to learn at least a little about runes there in the 1800's.

In the 1900's, many paganistic cults and cultural study groups developed in Germany, such as the Thule Society under Walter Nauhaus, and the German Order under Dr. Bernhard K ner. Many of the officers of the German Army in World War I were members of such organizations. After the war, the cults continued and became immensely popular among Germans from all social and economic backgrounds. One of the most fanatical cultists was Adolf Hitler, who was a member of the Thule Society, as were most of the leaders of the National Socialist Party. Hitler used many pagan runic symbols in his political campaigns, with very effective results. Once he was elected to power he made the old Germanic sunwheel symbol, the Hakenkreuz (swastika), the national emblem.

The head of the police and security troops, Heinrich Himmler, used the double Sig (or S61) rune to represent the S.S. abbreviation of these Schutzstaffel units. Himmler also controlled the German intelligence organization during World War II, and set up an Occult bureau to study magic, astrology, astronomy, and psychic powers, to use them against Germany's foes. The Allies did the same. During the war, the German armies for a time conquered a vast empire, planting the runic Hakenkreuz war flag everywhere, from the Arctic Lappland, to the Caucasus mountains, to the North Saharan desert.

After the war, and Germany's total defeat by the overwhelming odds against it, paganism and runic studies were no longer popular. However, today interest is once again reviving in Europe and North America, and many witchcraft and other groups continue to use runes. Perhaps they will once again be held in high esteem, with the magic power of the ancients, one day soon.

## SCANDINAVIA NEEDS ODIN!

.....or as the poet expressed it, VALHALS GUDER, KOM TILBAGE!

Recently I watched a program on public television about young people in Sweden. During an interview with several teen-age girls, the following dialogue took place:

"Do you want to get a job?"

"No."

"What do you want to do?"

"Nothing."

"Do you want, later on, to have children?"

"No."

"Why don't you want children?"

"Because they wouldn't be happy in this world."

To this ultimate in apathy have the young people of the North been sunk by the twin deceivers, the Christian Church and the Socialist-welfare State!

It makes one sad, at first, and then furious, to see these young descendants of Vikings stagnating in drunkenness, drugs and despair. One young fellow, asked why they don't do something on their own to shake off this suicidal aimlessness, replied, "If we get together to do anything for ourselves, they don't give us any money."

The entire atmosphere among these young people was of negation and running away from life, and from what I have heard and read, that attitude is general throughout Scandinavia today.

A news item on October 26, 1979, said, "Sweden, which earlier this year passed a law forbidding parents to spank their children, now has a report before it from a blue-ribbon commission recommending that children be permitted to divorce their parents."

Whether or not people should physically discipline their children is not the question. The point is that individual freedom and decision-making, and the chance to cope with one's own life, are slowly being eroded and taken away. The next step will be to turn all decision-making over to the State, with the populace a mass of faceless robots. Suicidal tendencies in Scandinavia? Small wonder!

What is the answer, the only answer? The only answer is to tell the young people of all the Northern lands that to find a reason for living they must turn back to their glorious past; back to their fundamental traditions of courage and self-reliance; back to the Gods and Goddesses of the Viking Age; back to the wisdom of the Runes; back to Allfather Odin! They must see that true happiness comes only from striving and knowing the joy of struggle! They must realize that the Gods of their valiant forefathers are not dead but are awaiting communion with them--for they are truly children of Odin who have been led astray by false gods and must now return to those traditions that made their ancestors respected throughout the known world.

Someone has defined a Pagan as "one who says YES to life." Present-day Scandinavian youth seem to be saying NO to life. The only hope for them is to turn to their true faith--the Faith which is still in their very blood and bones if they would but awaken and acknowledge it.

Deceived by the Christian Church and betrayed into cultural suicide by the socialist-welfare State, the youth of the North must come back to Odin and reclaim their heritage! Nothing else can suffice if Scandinavians would endure as a great people with a future as glorious as their past! May we see, some day, a tremendous gathering of Scandinavian youth at the site of the Pagan temple at Gamla Uppsala where they will, with joy and confidence, remember who they really are!

-HARALD

## THE NEW NOOSE

In ancient days the knotted noose was the instrument of the sacrifice to the high god Odin, and many a scoundrel was it who had the life wrenched from him by this somber means of capital punishment. Today, though, the noose is not the cleansing symbol which purged society of wrong-doers. The noose about our necks in this age is a noose of thralldom, threatening to choke us if we strive for freedom, threatening to strangle our liberty in our very throats, and suffocating us with constraints.

Let us count a few of the coils of this slave-collar. They extend beyond our sight and their numbering from memory would be a feat worthy of the greatest of saga-tellers, yet let us pick out a few of the nearer ones.....

You may have trouble focusing on them, because we are supposed to believe we are still free, that we still have a choice in these matters. All too often, though the only freedom we have is to either go along, or go along to jail.

The remarkable thing about the surrender/go to jail "choice" (which has got to be the secular equivalent of the "You have free will to obey God or burn for eternity" argument) is that it applies to so many of the other coils in the slave's rope. Social Security is an example. The chance of the system being solvent when (if) I reach retirement age is on the order of the probability that Billy Graham will announce next week that he's a Thor's-man. But I still have to pay that chunk out of my check, or face prosecution (although of course there are ways...):

Want to tug on the rope a little? Try hiring or firing whomever you want. Maybe you can't stand people with brown eyes (Don't ask me why! Query a Freudian.), but don't let the Equal Opportunity people find out; they'll institute a brown-eyes quota. Which by definition discriminates against all those blue- and green-eyed people out there. And yes, I am in a position to denounce this part of the thralldom for what it is; I've been discriminated against because I wear a beard--and I acknowledge a person's right to so discriminate.

Suppose you decide to start your own mail service. Never mind that you can do it less expensively and more efficiently than Uncle Sam, it's still against the law. Have you ever noticed that monopolies are a violation of the statutes unless they're government monopolies?

Of all the ways in which freedom is being forfeited, the greatest may be in the matter of taxes. What the worker earns by his labor and ingenuity is forcibly taken away from him and used for many other purposes, some of which touch his life only peripherally, or not at all. When taxation exceeds that necessary to provide for certain basic government functions, for services which the citizen desires to receive in exchange for his money, it is literal robbery. The government of the United States has no moral right to confiscate my money and give it to Mozambique or to use it to aid special interest groups--but it happens every day. To call such confiscation taxation is to avoid the truth. When you're mugged at gunpoint your assailant doesn't introduce himself as a tax collector (although I understand one such Socially Deprived Individual is having business cards printed up to read "freelance socialist").

A few months ago the slavers tried to add a coil, and it was actually thrown off! That's the good news. The bad news is that our society is degenerate enough that the measure could be proposed in the first place. The plan was to issue all Americans a national identification card. A reasonable assumption would be that it would then be mandatory to carry it on your person at all times, just as you now carry a driver's license when operating a motor vehicle. You don't have to carry your driver's license with you, for instance, if you decide to jog around the park.

But a national identification card applies to the simple fact of your existence, not something you do. Imagine--having to have a document to operate your own body!

Should such a card be issued, I announce in advance my decision to publicly burn mine. I hope you will join me.

Freedom is what Ásatrú is all about. I was a freedom fanatic for years before I became an Odinst, and it was the Odinst emphasis on a vital, scintillating freedom that made that religion so appealing. This devotion to liberty is found woven throughout Ásatrú to an extent that I've never seen in another faith. Where else do you find people so independent that they'll not even submit to their gods? Our demand for freedom prompted the defiant reply from the Vikings of Hrolf Ganger to the emissary of the Franks--when asked if they would bend the knee to King Charles and accept his favor, they responded, "We shall never submit to anyone at all, nor ever cleave to any servitude, nor accept favors from anyone. That favor pleases us best which we win for ourselves with arms and toil of battles." Egil Skallagrímsson's dispute with his ruler was another expression of this refusal to be awed by authority. This is our heritage!

Though we have been able to laugh a little at the bonds of our slavery, in a sort of gallows-humor way, the seriousness of the situation is not to be shrugged off easily. Nor, unfortunately, are the fetters themselves. We have here named a few of the coils in the noose. They grow tighter by the day, and that freedom that has been ours for millenia is being choked. In the names of all our gods and in the names of our revered ancestors we must reassert ourselves. Political action is helpful, but do not neglect a way more lasting and more profound--help to spread Ásatrú! Until the people of the West return to that religion which is organically theirs, any other measures must attack symptoms rather than causes. As long as we are cut off from the spiritual roots of our being, any improvement in our crisis will be both minor and temporary. Our ancient faith calls us. Let us rally to it, and help to rally our kinsmen to it as well!

## Here and Now

It's easy to look back to the Viking age and lament its passing, while maintaining that life then was so much more conducive to the pursuit of adventure, glory and heroism. But such a backward-looking attitude fails to see this present age for what it is! We live in a time in which the potential for heroism has never been greater for those who have the courage to shoulder its burden. Never have the odds against us been more threatening--and thus each and every one of us has a chance to fight, to struggle, and to sacrifice to an extent that has been denied to many of our ancestors. At the moment our struggle is one of the spirit and the mind, rather than the clash of arms. But if heroism may be weighed by the magnitude of things done and by the stakes to be gained or lost, ours is the golden age of the heroic spirit! Ragnar would envy us, and Herman at Teutoberger Wald would understand our time and identify it with his own.

So do not pine for the past, no matter how brilliant, no matter how it has shaped our soul and our thought. Apply the spirit of the past to the problems of the present, and be joyous. Stop for a moment each day, and give thanks to all the gods and goddesses that you live in this era, and for the honor and the privilege of being here and now, in this fight.

## BOOK REVIEW

Carlyle Pushong. RUNE MAGIC. (Regency, \$6.00)

This little volume (100 pages) is quite valuable as an introduction to the modern runic tradition from an essentially eclectic point of view. It is a study by an outsider for outsiders. The basic philosophy behind the book is not compatible with the faith of Ásatrú, nor with the inner traditions of Runic Odinism. Some short quotes from the text may illustrate the non-Ásatrú approach to a subject which should, by our birthrights, belong to us. With respect to the relevancy of "myth," Mr. Pushong states on page 19, "In a practical sense, myths cannot be revived... myths can most certainly be looked upon with nostalgic sentiments of halcyon days perhaps paralleling the imaginative dreams of our childhood." This type of conception would seem to deny the eternal living essence of the myths and archetypes so vital to the ever-green nature of Ásatrú. On page 25, Mr. Pushong pens a most disturbing sentence: "Since there was no central religious authority or no recognised framework of doctrine, and since whatever doctrines were commonly accepted correlated closely at least in spirit with Christian beliefs and ceremonials, the transition to Christianity was easy and indeed painless."

Martyrs of Ásatrú, such as Raud the Strong, Eyvindr Kinnrifi, and Olvir would have a different version--let us hope Mr. Pushong never has to face their wrath! Much of the material in the book is lifted directly from German works by Karl Spiesberger. It is somewhat perturbing that this source is never acknowledged in footnotes or in the scanty bibliography. Rune Magic can be a valuable book, when read with the critical eye of an Ásatrúari.

- Eðrad Thorsen

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## MOOT POINT

Dear Steve:

Two years ago Magnus Litzén, a young, bright scholar, stated that he had heard from Åke Hyenstrand, director of an ancient memorial inventorying department, about plans to build houses on the fields around the gravemounds in Gamla Uppsala, plans which were subject to considerable worry in No. 29 of The Runestone. I have not been able to get this statement confirmed, neither from Åke Hyenstrand nor from anybody else. On the contrary, the whole thing seems to be some kind of misunderstanding. Not least when you listen to what the county antiquarian Stig Rydh has to say about it:

"There is no town or building-plan for the area around the Uppsala mounds. Instead the area has been protected by the government having fixed the boundary for the ancient memorial area according to §3 in the ancient memorial law. Beyond this, the surrounding fields are protected by the state owning large ground-areas such as the Academy of Literature. The possible threats against the ancient memorial area are two. The area is Sweden's most visited ancient memorial area. A counting in April-May, 1976 showed that 70,000 persons during this time visited the place; the figure of visitors per year lies somewhere around 200,000 persons. This brings about an extensive wear and tear of the ground, which we try to counteract by continuous care of the ground. A second threat is a proposed cemetery extension in connection with the table-land where the demesne of the Crown has been situated. This, however, presupposes that the Academy of Literature sells land, which is rather unlikely, and that the County administration gives permission according to ancient memorial law and burial announcement, which I will definitely oppose. Any new building up which can change the surroundings of the mounds, has as far as I can remember not been talked of since the Academy of Literature made its different real-estate purchases, and such a proposition would be refused."

Stig Rydh's denial sounds reassuring and I will have to apologize, if I have helped to circulate a false alarm.

Gudrik Stveg  
Lindvallsgat 15 4tr  
117 36 Stockholm, Sweden

Editor - I'm sure that all our readers are relieved by your report, Gudrik. Still, we must all keep our guard up against any future threats to this, or any of our other, holy sites.

Dear Steve:

...Yes, there are many similarities between the Celts and the Germans. For this reason, in a perspective of solidarity, I have given my aid to the new cultural group entitled "Front of Liberation of the Gauls" - (Don't be anxious about the name, it will not be an army; the projected liberation is cultural. That is certainly the most important, because the aim is to free our spirits from alien spiritual influence). In some months, we will perhaps start a small group of studies about the relations and similarities between Celts and Germans. It seems

to me that this could be of the greatest interest for all, and I hope that we can realize this. In some time, when it will be possible, I will send to you some information about this "Front of Liberation of the Gauls," and particularly their manifesto. I am a partisan of Celto-Germanic solidarity; particularly, the Celtic and Germanic pagans must work together. We must promote, in small concrete facts, a real pan-pagan solidarity....

GLOIRE A NOS DIEUX ET A NOS HEROS!

Jean-Francois Mayer

Case postale 83  
CH-1700 FRIBOURG 5  
Switzerland

## Frey

Frey, whose name means "Lord," is the principle masculine Vane (singular of Vanir). He was the chief god of the ancient Swedes and the early kings of Sweden considered him their divine ancestor.

Frey has several things associated with him as symbols of his power and influence. One of these is his golden boar *Gullinbursti*, or "Golden Bristles," who can outrace the swiftest of steeds and who lights up the land and sea as he flies over it. *Gullinbursti*, on one level, seems to be a symbol connected both with the Sun and with the stark masculinity of the rampant boar. This boar motif is found again and again in the literature and in the archaeology of Northern Europe. Boar-crested helmets are described in the epic *Beowulf*, and one such helmet was recovered from a grave mound at Bentley Grange in East Anglia. Pictures of similar helmets can be seen on the famous Gundestrup cauldron, now in the Danish National Museum, and on ancient Swedish helmet plates which have been unearthed. A sword from the pagan period has three small boars stamped on its blade. It would seem that the powers of fertility, too, could extend their aid and protection to a warrior just as could the warlike Odin and Thor.

The ship is another fertility symbol, dating back in another cultural context to ancient Egypt. Frey is described in the Norse myths as having a wondrous ship named *Skidbladnir*, said to be large enough to transport all the gods and their baggage, yet made in such a way that it could be folded into a package capable of being carried in one's pocket. It appears that miniature boats were carried about the fields at certain times of the year in solemn procession, so that the god of fertility could bestow his blessings in the crops. In fact, model ships were kept in Danish churches for a Christianized version of the same ritual down into modern times--another proof of the durability of the old Vanir cult.

Many of the ship burials of the Viking Age seem to be related to Frey specifically or to the Vanir in general. There is evidence that in Iceland priests of Frey were interred in boat graves, and the ship from the Oseburg burial in Norway, now on display in the Viking Ship Museum in Oslo, also seems to be connected with Frey or his sister Freya. The ship may appear in these and other graves for two reasons--it symbolizes the journey to the land of the dead, and also is a reminder of the motif of fertility and of rebirth.

Lastly, the ship in connection with the Vanir makes us mindful of the fact that the people of ancient Scandinavia were dependent upon two harvests, the usual one from the earth and a second one from the sea in the form of fishing.

Another symbol associated with Frey is the stallion--highly appropriate for a god of virility and strength! There are mentions in the sagas of horses sacrificed to Frey, and the horse fights depicted in old Icelandic sources may have been connected with his worship. We know that the eating of horse flesh was a part of some of the old ritual feasts, and that the Church forbade the consumption of horse meat for that reason, accounting for much of our psychological aversion to such a delicacy today. In at least two cases that have survived in literature, horses were specifically dedicated to Frey and no human was allowed to ride them--in both instances the horses were named *Freyfazi*, or "Frey's Mane."

Of course, besides these established symbols of Frey there was yet another one, the erect penis. The statue of the god which stood in the ancient temple at Uppsala is described as featuring a huge phallus, and a small but powerful bronze figurine from Sweden is similarly well-endowed. It seems that the old heathen religion was a little more honest and a little less inhibited than present-day cults--and healthier for it.

The one surviving myth dealing with Frey is found in both Snorri Sturlason's *Prose Edda* and in the *Elder Edda*. It tells how Frey fell in love with Gerd, and how he sent his emissary Skirnir to woo her for him. After both promises and threats, Skirnir persuades the maiden to meet Frey nine days later, and the story closes with the god exclaiming impatiently what an interminable time that would be. Mythologists interpret this story as being an account of the divine marriage of winter with spring to produce the fruitfulness of summer, though it also has elements which go far beyond this simple explanation.

Jól--better known to most of us as "Yule" or "Christmas"--is the festival especially dedicated to Frey and to the concepts associated with him, such as the return of the Sun and the continuity of the clan. Chieftains of old would have a boar, sacred to Frey, led through the mead hall at Jól while his retainers placed their hands on the animal and swore the great deeds they would accomplish in the year to come, thus anticipating the modern custom of New Year's resolutions.

## Freya

Freya is Frey's twin sister, and her attributes are comparable to those of her brother, from a feminine perspective. Where Frey is the priapic, penetrating principle of male potency, Freya is the personification of voluptuous female fecundity. If Frey is Pan, Freya is Venus or Aphrodite. The common theme is one of growth, love and pleasure.

Likewise, while Frey's animal is the boar, the sow is that of Freya, carrying the male/female complementarity one step further. Another creature associated with the goddess is the cat--indeed, she drives a chariot pulled by two of these pets. Can it be memories of her cult that helped create the early medieval stereotype of the witch as a woman accompanied by a cat? Certainly we today generally think of cats as being "feminine" animals, while others, such as dogs (or Odin's wolves?) tend to be thought of as "masculine."





Through it all I've managed to maintain a fair degree of fitness. Like most of us, though, there are gaps in my efforts caused by laziness and by that easiest of all excuses, lack of time.

My favorite excuse has evaporated, though, because of a new program I've embarked on which takes *ten minutes a day, three days a week*. The purpose of this article is to recommend this program to you. It is adaptable to virtually anyone, whether old or young, jock or sedentary. Thirty minutes a week is all it takes. Compared to an hour or more, six times a week, as required for some workouts, it's nothing. The results, though, are excellent.

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Look it over. I think you'll be as impressed as I was.

## LATE NOTICES!

Chuck Hayes became a free man on November 29 th! About time! -- our thanks to all who gave him support --

Add to the contacts list - Michael J. McArthur, #A-50185, P.O. Box 112, Joliet, IL 60434 and Hans Steingass, 10862-92 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Jim Bruner, 403 Hermosa Ave, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254 wants anyone interested in forming a L.A. skip-pslag to contact him --

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