

# Heimdall's Horn



**Summer Solstice issue #13**

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**Dr.Carolynne Larrington  
and Katia Puryear**

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and Laurel Owen  
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Heimdall's Horn is an open collaboration project between several Heathen kindreds to provide quality information about the Awakening and how it affects our lives. Our purpose is to bring together the best information available on Folkish Heathenry in all its flavors, a Kvasir's mix of upwelling from the Folksoul of our people. Subscriptions are currently \$9 for two issues each year, with all of that going towards printing and mailing costs, and services we offer free to Heathens in need. Payment can be made in stamps or money orders made out to Wodens Folk Press. We welcome your input, and are always seeking interesting articles and opinions. Want to be in print? Contact our publisher at [OurHorn@Gmail.com](mailto:OurHorn@Gmail.com) or write us at:

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# The Opening Blast

## “More Than War”

Over the decades that I have been Heathen, I have often heard our way referred to as a "warrior religion". As a general rule, my response is to say "We are a folk religion, and some of our Folk are warriors." What I mean by this is simply that while our faith includes a warrior culture, it is also much broader than that. No one has ever offered a serious argument to that idea, so I have never felt compelled to develop the concept further.

I have seen a few things recently that convinced me that the time was ripe to address the idea of a "warrior religion" directly. First, in the last month I happened to read the publications of three different Heathen groups, and all three referred to our faith as a warrior religion. Considering that these groups do not

get along, the fact that they all agree on this concept got my attention. I also was very fortunate last month to get my hands on a copy of Groenbech's Culture and Religion of the Teutons, a book I have sought for several years. Groenbech's entire analysis of the culture of our ancestors is viewed through the lens of violence, and though his conclusions are well-thought out and generally dead-on accurate, I could not help but think that his focus on the warrior ideal was too much.

One can hardly blame someone for believing that our ancestors were hyper-focused on war. Most of what is written about our people comes from their opponents in war, and because these opponents usually lost, the Germanic Heathen as invincible warrior is a common theme. Even the literature of

Iceland is preoccupied with war and violence, and the slightest insult could lead to a multi-generational feud that claimed dozens of lives.

If, however, we look beyond the surface, we see that war was a smaller factor in our ancestor's world than is immediately apparent. The majority of our ancestors were simple farmers and fishermen who fought only when pushed. The saga literature depicts killings that were exceptional breaches of the peace, for if feud was the norm, Iceland would have been depopulated before 1100. Our ancestors were not people to be trifled with, and some of them were professional warriors who plied their trade across the known world, but to try to understand all of them as warriors would lead us astray.

Why the focus on war, you might ask, if the people were not all warriors? The answer is complex, but briefly put, war is the subject of so many stories because war is an excellent metaphor. We use it even today, in an age when no one would call us a warrior people. A struggle between any two forces is a "battle". We "attack" and "defend" ideas or initiatives. War describes a conflict of extreme passion for the ultimate stakes. Using war as a backdrop, we can examine ourselves and our culture, or we can convey a powerful message to a listener. In this sense, Njal's Saga is not a story about the exploits of Gunnar and Karl; instead, we should see it as a story about how good men can become enmeshed by pettiness, conceit, and greed. The wars that dominate our cultural inheritance can in this way be seen in the same light as the stories of heroes fighting dragons or Thor battling the giants.

War teaches us about struggle. Thor fighting giants or Germans fighting Huns can tell us about how to face any conflict, whether it is an ancient farmer holding back the forest from his land or a modern Heathen struggling to make his business a success. The qualities our heroes show—courage,

determination, honor—are good ones to have, even if you are just struggling to lose a few pounds. These traits, and the struggles that forge them, help each of us grow into the best person we can be.

The problem is that when we obsessively focus on the act of war and the warriors who wage it, we tend to miss a few things. We miss the cultural context of war, we miss the value that these warriors placed on peace and prosperity, and we miss the fact that war was pursued for a purpose, not for its own sake. When we miss these things, we miss the core of what our ancestors can teach us.

As we re-build the way of our ancestors, focusing on war has many perils. If we try to be an exclusive warrior society, we will miss the majority of the culture of our ancestors. More importantly, by claiming to be a warrior religion, we alienate huge segments of the very people we should be trying to attract. Average people, especially women, just don't see much for themselves in a "warrior religion."

It is time for us to broaden our focus beyond the warriors of our people's past. To truly reclaim our heritage, we have to be a mother religion, a farmer religion, a teacher religion, a mechanic religion, and a warrior religion. In short, our faith must mirror our Folk, and when that happens, we will be ready for all of our people to come home.

**By: Thorstein,  
Woden's Folk Kindred**



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# Nicomachean Ethics and the Nine Noble Virtues

Aristotle is known throughout the world as one of the greatest philosophers of all time. He concerned himself, as most Greek philosophers, with Happiness and The Good Life. Today, his greatest work is divided into two volumes known as Politics and Nicomachean Ethics. Aristotle's works are not much discussed in heathen circles, but they are extremely relevant to our way of life. The Greek philosophers spent their lives debating the values of virtue and how to instill their people with the highest virtues possible. There is much that we can learn from them.

When we think of philosophy, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle come first to mind. We do not tend to think of our Germanic forefathers as philosophers per se. This has a great deal to do with the differences of development between the Hellenic and Germanic societies in their pagan, heathen ages. The Hellenic Greeks, like their Germanic cousins to the north, were an Indo-European people and the two cultures have a great deal in common. The Greeks inhabited a far more fertile climate with a native population that could be exploited for menial labor. As a result of these conditions, the Greek societies were able to develop more advanced civilizations. As their culture progressed and developed, it allowed for a leisure class that could further advance the culture through development of music, mathematics, art, and philosophy. In the cold northlands, this flowering of culture was much slower to develop.

To be sure, it was on its way when Christianity violently halted all progress. Literacy had reached

the north and the various *vitkis* and *skalds* were committing our lore to paper. The wealth that had accrued to the greater kingdoms had allowed the rise of a warrior class along with that of the wise counselor. This change is also reflected in the rise of Odin over Tyr after the Folkwandering, but our nascent heathen philosophy was put on hold for a thousand years by the conquest of Christianity.

The Re-awakening of our heathen faith in the last part of the past century was a result of the spiritual needs of our people. Along with these spiritual needs came the day to day moral and ethical needs of our people as well. It was to this end that modern heathen thinkers formulated the various versions of what we know as the Nine Noble Virtues. These virtues were selected by our modern

elders after countless readings of the Eddas and Sagas, and are a distilled reflection of the values and ethics held by our Germanic ancestors in heathen times. These virtues and the many works about them serve us well, but they can be more fully understood by

comparison with the ancient pagan philosophers and their views on virtue and ethics. Enter Aristotle.

In his Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle asserted that Happiness is the chief goal of life. Happiness, he said, was not simply the presence of pleasure or the absence of pain. Happiness was the application of Moral Virtue in one's life. The higher the individual act, the higher the happiness that resulted from it. An example today would be a good student who always makes straight A's. If the A grade is the mark of excellence, then an A on a final exam should be more fulfilling than an A on homework even though both are excellent and good. The greater happiness is derived from the excellent performance on the final exam. Aristotle felt that the measure of virtue lay in the mean between excess and deficit of virtue. This



The key to virtue, according to the Nicomachean Ethics, lies somewhere in the middle. .



was known as his Doctrine of the Mean. Simply put, it meant that the true virtue of any action could be found in the middle. Further than this, Aristotle said that what was the most virtuous act was known as Right Action. Right Action was considered to be the adaption of conduct to the circumstances at hand. With this in mind, we can examine the Nine Noble Virtues under Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean.

**Truth** is the first of the Noble Nine that we will examine. According to the Doctrine of the mean, the virtue of Truth will lie somewhere between its opposite vices of excessive honesty and outright lying. While some may at first question the concept of excessive honesty, it is easily seen that pure truthfulness can be just as bad as outright lying. They are both pathological behaviors. Consider the case of a man confronted by his enemy. Obviously, if he is asked for information that would help his enemy, he has the choice of treason or untruth. No man in this situation could be faulted for lying to his enemy to preserve his countrymen. Even within your own community, there are times when the raw truth must be tempered. Do these jeans make me look fat? I think we all know the answer to that one. The key to virtue, according to the Nicomachean Ethics, lies somewhere in the middle. That perfect middle was what Aristotle called Right Action. To be sure, when it comes to the virtue of Truth, there are very few exceptions to the rule. Our ancestors placed a high value on the truth, and it would call for special circumstances to make a great lie into Right Action.

**Courage** was and always will be a highly esteemed virtue amongst our people. Aristotle and his master Plato both talked extensively about the virtue of Courage, and it is amply displayed throughout the Eddas and Sagas. Courage, and the lack thereof, is quite conspicuous, and Aristotle used Courage as an example both of the Doctrine of the Mean and of Right Action. The virtue of

Courage lies very clearly between cowardice on the one hand and foolhardiness on the other. This is a perfect example of the Doctrine of the Mean. Right Action, on the other hand, is often very difficult to judge- certainly so in the heat of the moment. In a given situation is it foolhardiness to attack, or cowardice to retreat? Perhaps cowardice or fear of being accused of such might even prevent a retreat where all good doctrine indicates such. This would be considered a lack of courage and therefore Wrong Action. Right Action would be what Reason dictated was the best decision. Right Action is the best application of virtue in the situation at hand.

**Honor** as a virtue is much like Truth. It seems counterintuitive that one could display too much Honor, but examination bears this out. Consider for a minute the man who strives after nothing but Honor. He does so to the detriment of other aspects of his life, and therefore his actions are not Right Actions in seeking Honor because he seeks it overmuch and for its own sake. The opposite vice, is far more common and despised, but they are both vices and lie outside the virtuous mean.

**Fidelity** is our fourth virtue. It is also known as Loyalty. This virtue in its highest value is contrasted by the polar vices of disloyalty and blind obedience. The disloyal man is shunned by all and watched like a wolf. Disloyalty's opposite vice, blind obedience, does not bear the same moral stigma as disloyalty but it is all the same devoid of virtue. The mean, Fidelity, lies in loyalty to those who are rightly deserving of our loyalty.

**Industriousness** is a highly prized value amongst our Folk. The lazy and shiftless are rightly ridiculed, but like the other virtues, the over-industrious person engages in a mild form of vice. We label this sort of person today as a workaholic. A workaholic is industrious to the detriment of other factors in his life, chiefly interaction with family and friends. Curiously, most of these people will cite family or friends for the reason



they work so hard. According to the Doctrine of the Mean, there is a point of parity where social and economic interests will balance out. With regards to Industriousness, this is the path of Right Action. The sixth virtue is Discipline. Discipline is a core virtue that helps to learn and sustain all other virtue. The undisciplined man or woman will never achieve much. Lack of discipline is a vice that plagues our people today. Its opposite vice, single-mindedness, is a detriment to virtue as well. This sort of outlook blinds one to factors outside of one's focus and is the cause of many missed opportunities. This sort of single-mindedness prevents an individual from being well-rounded, and the well-rounded man is most capable of exercising his reason to choose the path of Right Action.

**Hospitality** is next on the list, and it is a virtue held in high esteem by our Folk. The man who shows his Hospitality shows his greatness, but the man who extends it prodigally to those unworthy of it only shows his foolishness. On the other hand, the niggardly man is despised by all and rightly so. He is mean, selfish, and incapable of sharing, so that no one seeks his company. The virtuous man who shows correct Hospitality to all is held as a great man and is sought out as a friend. As with all of the other virtues, the Right Action lies in the situation at hand. The man who gives food to charity is a good and worthy man in most cases, but if that was the last food in his family's pantry, then he would be held as a fool. Once again, Reason dictates Right Action.

The eighth of the Noble Virtues is **Perseverance**. This virtue is highlighted between the quitter who has no heart to make it through the bad times and the zealot who cannot see or admit that the cause is lost and move on. Both of these vices are to be avoided, but of the two the quitter is the worse. Even so, the gods grant success, and this is given to the man who perseveres. The zealot goes against the gods and his Wyrd and therefore goes

against what is right. That Right Action is the correct amount of tenaciousness that we know as Perseverance.

The ninth Noble Virtue is **Self-Reliance**. In the framework of the Doctrine of the Mean, it can be seen how the heathen virtue of Self-Reliance is framed by the vices of codependency and being self-reliant to the point of being anti-social. The man who cannot do anything on his own is not really much of a man at all. If he needs someone to hold his hand, what good can he be? At the opposite extreme is the man who refuses the assistance or company of others. Aristotle wrote that the man who is not fit for the company of other men is either a god or a monster. Chances are that the guy who lives out in the boondocks by himself is one of the assholes and not one of the Aesir. But the mean virtue of Self-Reliance resides in the middle with all virtue. The Self-Reliant man can operate independently if he needs to, but he doesn't shun the help or company of others. He is a part of the community, and one that can hold his own.

Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics are a valuable tool that can be used to help understand and employ the Nine Noble Virtues in our daily lives. As was mentioned above, the Greek philosophers not only sought out the greatest virtues but how to go about instilling these virtues in their people.

What Aristotle taught was that virtue is formed by one's moral character through a process he called "habituation." By suppressing base urges and encouraging one's natural virtuous bent, it was possible to accustom one's self to a pattern of conduct that would produce Right Action. Habituation encouraged one to use wisdom and reason to determine exactly what the best course of action was in any given situation.

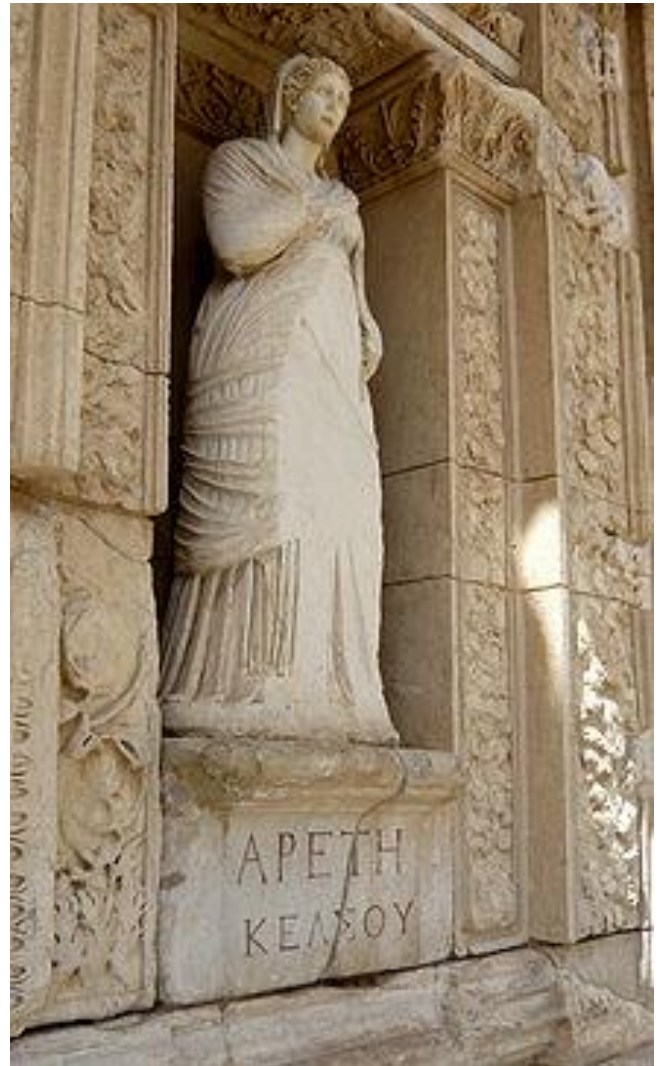
The training of one's self in virtuous habits while at the same time denying base urges to meaningless pleasure would lead to a state in which the man

derived happiness from virtuous action because he himself had chosen this path. The exercise of his will, wisdom, and reason on the situation that resulted in the Right Action was what produced the happiness for him.

Aristotle believed that the greatest Happiness came from the greatest good, and that therefore only the greatest men could achieve and experience the greatest good and happiness. This seems to be true, but every man can expand his potential to achieve the greatest good and happiness that is possible for himself. This is one of the goals of the Nine Noble virtues. All heathens today should be able to look around and see the validity of Aristotle's thought. What is more, we should be able to see that his process of habituation is what we need to use when we attempt to incorporate the Nine Noble virtues into our everyday lives. If we consciously make the effort to study and implement the virtues in our lives, we will reach the point where virtue becomes second nature to us, and when we become habituated to virtue, we become nearer to the gods.

Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics was written as the expression of the pre-Christian Greek ideals of virtue. It is the result of decades of debate by the brightest minds in classical philosophy. It is true that there are many differences between the pagan Greek and heathen Germanic cultures, but to overlook this valuable resource when examining the concept of virtue in a heathen context is a great mistake. Any heathen who seeks to know and truly understand the role of virtue in our lives should seek out and read the Nicomachean Ethics. It is a pagan work of great depth and wisdom, and should be known to all who would be deemed wise.

**Berk Harbin**  
**Wodens Folk Kindred**



Statue of Arete in Celsus' Library in Ephesus.



# The Power of Symbols



You are likely all aware of the power of symbols in the form of the runes. Perhaps you might also see the power of other symbols, such as Thor's Hammer or the Sunwheel. A far less obvious form of the runes, however, is one that is staring you in the face as we speak, the written word.

The form of staves in the Futhark is not where they derive their power. If they had been handed down to us in a completely different visual form, they would have no less power. The Runes are references to something far less tangible than scratchings on stone and wood.

Human languages are much the same as the Runes. Letters combine into references for somewhat ethereal concepts that are hard to contain otherwise. There is a real magic to communication that has

perplexed humanity, and left it in awe. Consider when you communicate with another person, whether it is through the spoken word, art, or just the movement of your body, that you are creating images in another person's mind, transferring your inner universe and intent into the universe of another.


If you know much about the Futhark, and its uses both esoterically and as a form of introspection, you would be careful in your arrangement of the runes. You would want to ensure that your intent was brought through in them, or that their communications to you were understood. Before using them you would want to understand what each of them mean, and what their combinations can bring across. Without a clear meaning to the

symbols you are using, there would really be no craft or usefulness to the Runes, as it is in their

meaning and their reference to something far greater than their individual form that brings their power.

It is the same with us when we utilize language. Each human language is a convention of forms, whether in patterns of sound, movements of our body (Sign), or visual patterns that convey information. These systems only work to convey information because they have a known system to them, and that system can be conveyed to others. Much like Odin, the creators of language have brought forth a system that allows us to encapsulate and define something ethereal and untamed.

Unfortunately, that system only works as long as we are willing to stay within some bounds of expression. If I say "WFGJRT", you might come up with a meaning for it, but there is little chance that you will come up with the same meaning that I intend. This is unlike when I use words like "Cake", "Ice cream", or even very difficult concepts like "Love". That is because many people have gotten together and communicated on the subject, and defined some kind of domain for the words to live within.

We are unfortunately running into the problem of "WFGJRT" with the words "Heathen", "Odinist", and "Asatru". They are more than patterns on paper, they convey a meaning, much like  conveys a world of spiritual and philosophical ideas. What I have seen lately though, are many people who would like to define those symbols as



The words "Heathen", "Asatru" and "Odinist" are more than patterns on paper. They convey a meaning that must be clarified if those symbols are to have any use for us.



having no meaning. They say that the word “Heathen” is in the eye of the beholder, which is the same as saying that the symbol points to a nullity of information. When a symbol means everything, then it means precisely nothing. Symbols only convey meaning when they can differentiate between states, objects or ideas, and a symbol that is undefined can carry little to no information into the inner world of another, other than a lack of information.

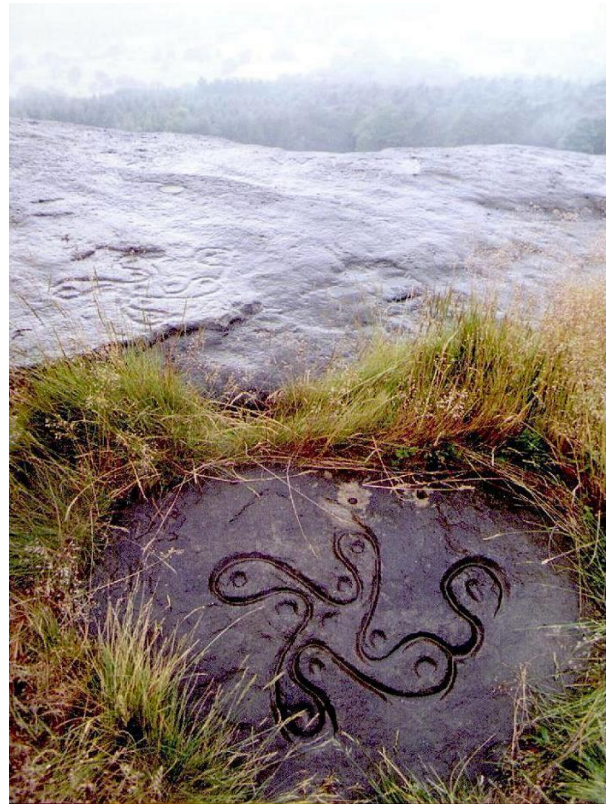
I understand that many people out there are very concerned that we not create some sort of hierarchical – “we will tell you what to think” - religious system. I agree with those concerns, and I would very much like to avoid anything approaching that. However, we together, through communication, debate and perhaps even a bit of love and companionship, can over time work on the inner nature of the runes we use to define our ontological experience of the divine in our lives. We can define our own runes so that we can communicate clearly with one another about our inner universe, and how we experience our relationship with our Gods. We might even be able to do it civilly, though I think we all doubt that a bit. Rather than having someone else define these terms for us, perhaps the path we can take is to define them together.

To do that though requires that we come to a fundamental agreement – that words have power and meaning, which is their whole purpose in the first place. For a religion that has such a close relationship with the Runes, I believe that this agreement can come without much bloodshed, but I may be incorrect. For those of you who would leave these words undefined I ask you - what use are words with no meaning? Why call yourself Heathen, Asatru or Odinist if those words are to remain undefined? Why not call yourself a “WFGJRT”? Perhaps this is where the discussion should start.

I open this up to the broader community of our Faith to discuss. What is the experience that we

share, and where do we differ? What symbols will we use to express our inner experiences? What Runes, what Utterance, will come forth out of this to help us in our introspection and our ongoing exploration of what it means to have a relationship with our Gods? I look forward to hearing from you about it.

### **Mark Walls** **Wodens Folk Kindred**



# Runic Thinking

## INTERNALIZING THE RUNES

### STATHAGALDR

Reading the Eddas will not inform us as to where the runes originated. The Voluspa describes the origin of the cosmos, and the Havamal informs us of Wodan's winning of the runes from Mimir. Then there is silence as to how so many of the other Gods and Goddesses of the Germanic pantheon gained the runic wisdom that is ascribed to them. Only in the Rigsthula are we told that Heimdall teaches the understanding of runes to mankind.

Perhaps the runes were formed through the commingling of fire and ice at the formation of the worlds. We should seek relationships with the runes in the same sense that most of us seek relationships with the Gods. But the reality taught by the runes is different from that taught by our Gods, not necessarily because they are contradictory, but because there are no clear parallels between them. Humans cannot begin to understand the reasons the runes exist, but runes ought to be used to aid us in understanding ourselves.

The runes are not allies we can count on. Runes follow their own course and in the process affect our doom, but for us to affect the runes would be like humans trying to affect the destiny of the stars. In contrast to the runes, our Gods can be convinced: we can ask favors of them. The Gods are our friends and can both laugh and cry with us. The runes merely exist.

Runes owe their odd and distinctive shapes to the fact that they were designed to be carved on wood, stone, or metal, as opposed to writing them on paper with a pen. Thus only straight lines are used to form

the rune staves. The language of the runes is generally some form of elder Germanic, be it Old English, Old High German, Old Norse, or any other of the myriad of dialects our ancestors spoke. Like these languages, the runes belong to a former, more sane time with that class of things Teutonic and pre-Christian. Unlike the chatter of words scribbled on paper, runes represented the earnest deliberation of using iron implements applied to solid rock for the creation of serious messages designed to survive centuries.

Where runes are found is used as evidence of the extent of Nordic discovery and migration. The discovery of the Kensington Stone carved with runes on a Minnesota farm in 1898, along with other runes discoveries, continues to fuel belief in Nordic travels across America during the past millennia.

### Runic Mysteries

More importantly, the runes have mystical and practical applications. Within the mystery of each rune, like printed electronic circuitry, are certain potent energies that can connect the rune scholar directly to the Gods. Secret formulas of runic combinations for achieving telepathy, foretelling the future, and peering into the past are possible.

Rune Magick is much more of an art than simple formula. It would be like asking an artist how to go about making a particular piece of artwork. It would require you to tell the artist what sort of a piece and in what kind of medium, but if you were to flesh out your question enough, someone would be able to answer more completely.

There is actually no difference between a "spell" and Galdar. Usually "spells" are made up of many components layered to achieve a result, but you could take just one component such as Galdar and have that as the whole spell. Much as in art, you



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could make a whole picture with just one color. I see magic as the manipulation of energy to affect reality. By "tapping" into the energy that is all around us, we can use it to bring about change in our own environment. The runes are like notes on sheet music, and the energy is the sound. You see the note and you know which key to press on a piano or which string to pluck on a guitar to get that sound. The effect of the sound on us is the magic.

Guiding the currents of energy, which is another way of defining magic, requires a level of wisdom which treading the path of runelore can give us. I see great similarity in Runelore to Kabalah, Ogham, and even ancient Egyptian practices. All are based on the power which we can access through the portals of "writing". Remember that "glamour" and "grammar" have the same root.

There are also powers evoked by intoning specific sounds, words of power, or mantras, along with the resonances we can provoke by certain postures and gestures. By turning our minds to the subtle melodies of this marvelous planet we can invest ourselves with magic and enrich our understanding of our own purposes and horizons. Through the intense power of the subconscious we create what the conscious mind impresses upon itself. We must therefore search deeply within ourselves to examine the set patterns which are brought about by the vast images in the subconscious and the intense emotions that are created and ingrained into us.

### Origins of Rune Yoga

The German Friedrich Bernhard Marby (1882-1966) was one of the greatest runemasters of all time. Marby published Runenschrift in 1931 after beginning his rune studies in 1907 and generating a separate stream of study that was contemporary with

the efforts of Guido von List. Marby was profoundly influenced both by the "levels of reality" theories of Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky which taught that it is possible to know God by

means of meditation and also the hollow earth hypothesis first proposed by Edmund Halley in 1692.

Marby called his evolving technology of internalizing the runes "runengymnastik", what we call today "stathagaldr". Marby taught that he was restoring an ancient craft practiced across northern Europe. Utilizing the scientific idiom of the early twentieth century, Marby thought man was a sensitive receiver and

transmitter of cosmic waves and rays which animated the universe and whose nature and effect were dependent on earth magnetism and the physical form of the landscape. The rays or waves were believed to be analogous to Fengshui, leg-lines, and the Earth's energy patterns.

Marby devised a system of postures conforming to the 29-rune Anglo-Frisian Futhork, believing this to be the original rune row. His work was interrupted in 1936 and was not resumed until 1945. By then, interest had waned, and he left it incomplete at the time of his death.

Runeologists that followed used Marby's work as a springboard for their own efforts. Siegfried Adolf Rummer and Rudolf John Gorsleben, both working predominantly in the 1930s, applied techniques similar to Marby's to List's Armanen runes. During the 1950s, Karl Spiesberger (Frater Eratus) of the Fraternity of Saturn became known for his work with rune yoga. Spiesberger utilized runes for ceremonial magic, experimenting with group rune positions, and sex magic. Ivar Hafskjold developed the Stav tradition of rune yoga by expanding the role of the runes into a holistic and useful system, but he failed to give Marby and Kummer credit for their contributions.



## Function of Rune Yoga

Following Marby, Kummer and Spiesberger developed runic yoga as a means of harnessing the streams of power present in the earth and atmosphere. Marby taught that there are five cosmic zones, not unlike the layers of an onion, to be reckoned with: (1) inner earth space, (2) material earth space, (3) wave space, (4) cosmic space, and (5) super cosmic space.

Marby taught that the Erulian (runemaster) is able to send and receive energy patterns to and from all five of the cosmic zones, not unlike transmissions sent and received through a short-wave radio antenna. By controlling the body through runic postures/dances and breathing patterns, controlling the thoughts and emotions by visualization, and by intoning the runes, one is able to secure or grasp the rune. Attuning to a particular rune might be compared to tuning in a certain frequency on a radio; the antenna still receives all the various signals, but only the selected frequency is being manifested and manipulated by the system.

The analogy of a radio antenna seems quaint to most people today, but consider that Guglielmo Marconi did not even begin to experiment with radio waves, called Hertzian Waves back then, until 1894; the radio was not patented until 1898; radio signals were first heard across the Atlantic in 1901; and the BBC was established in 1922. When Marby published Runenschrift, he was using cutting edge technology as his analogy.

There is a division between our reality here in Midgard and the otherworld described in the Eddic verses. The forces and wights that exist in the outer spheres represent the forces that manifested Creation. The forces and wights in the inner planes are those who walk on and in our world. Spirits of the outer layers generate dynamics and form within the ALL. The spirits of the ancestors and other wights generate dynamics and form within Nature, the home, and society.

When practicing runic yoga the decent of orgone, or

main, from the otherworlds to Midgard becomes seated in the human body, and in effect, the Erulian becomes a reflection of all those forces. If directions are symbolic only, and do not intend to suggest any sort of hierarchy or moral quality, the Erulian will experience good health, gain wisdom, live in Friede (fridu), and build luck. By manifesting these things, the Erulian has more worth because he is better equipped to contribute to society. It is when these forces come into conflict that one's life manifests illness, confusion, violence, and scarcity.

This type of cosmology is often misinterpreted to mean that the spirits/gods have punished those who neglect them. It would be more accurate to suggest that violation of the laws of nature has inevitable consequences. The same could be said for the laws of society. Rune yoga is one of the best tools available to us for aiding individuals in attuning both to nature and society. This is not, of course, to imply that there are no other ways. But rune yoga provides a clearly outlined system that many other methods lack.

## The Seele and Luck

An extremely important concept in Irminist psychology is that of the "Seele". The Seele of the individual forms a polarity with the "Folga". It is the Folga that forms the link between past and future lives. The ancient sources describe the Folga as a double of the individual, usually in female form. She acts as one's advocate in the Thingstead of the Gods, speaking for the good name of the deceased.

The link between the soul and the Folga lies within the inner consciousness, or the ego. Ego refers to the German sense of the Self as opposed to the profane use to which that word often refers today. This inner consciousness is the nucleus of the psycho-spiritual complex that creates self-awareness. That is to say, the mind and the emotions, as well as the will and the reputation, must be in agreement if the spiritual insight and other benefits of rune yoga are to occur. This is the same state of affairs that Carl Jung called "individuation", or the means of achieving mental health. In contrast, a conflict between the mind and the

emotions causes mental illness. Living in harmony with nature includes living in harmony with one's ego.

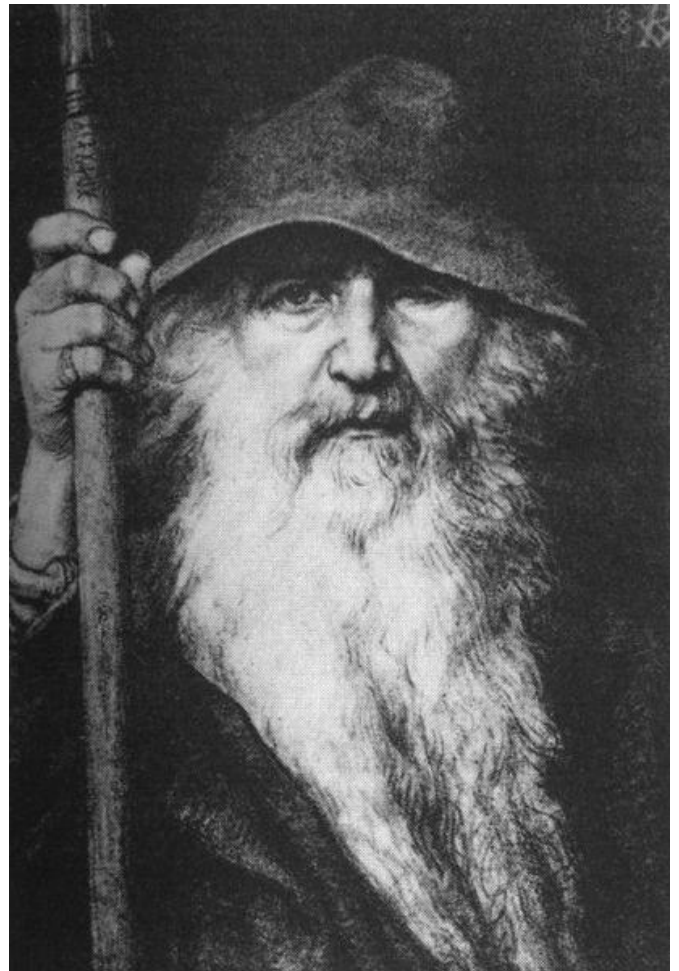
In addition to the polarity between the Seele and Folga, the Self is the center-point of the polarity between the body and a mysterious force we call "Megin" or the "Atum", bringing us full circle. It is interesting to note here that while many people think of rune yoga practitioners as imitating the runes through body postures, a more appropriate view would be to see the practitioner as manifesting the rune on all levels.

Many people tend to attribute their life's failures and successes to Chance, but Chance often has little to do with it. Success and failure have to do with luck, another term for megin; the difference being that luck is an energy that can be created and built upon while chance is just that.

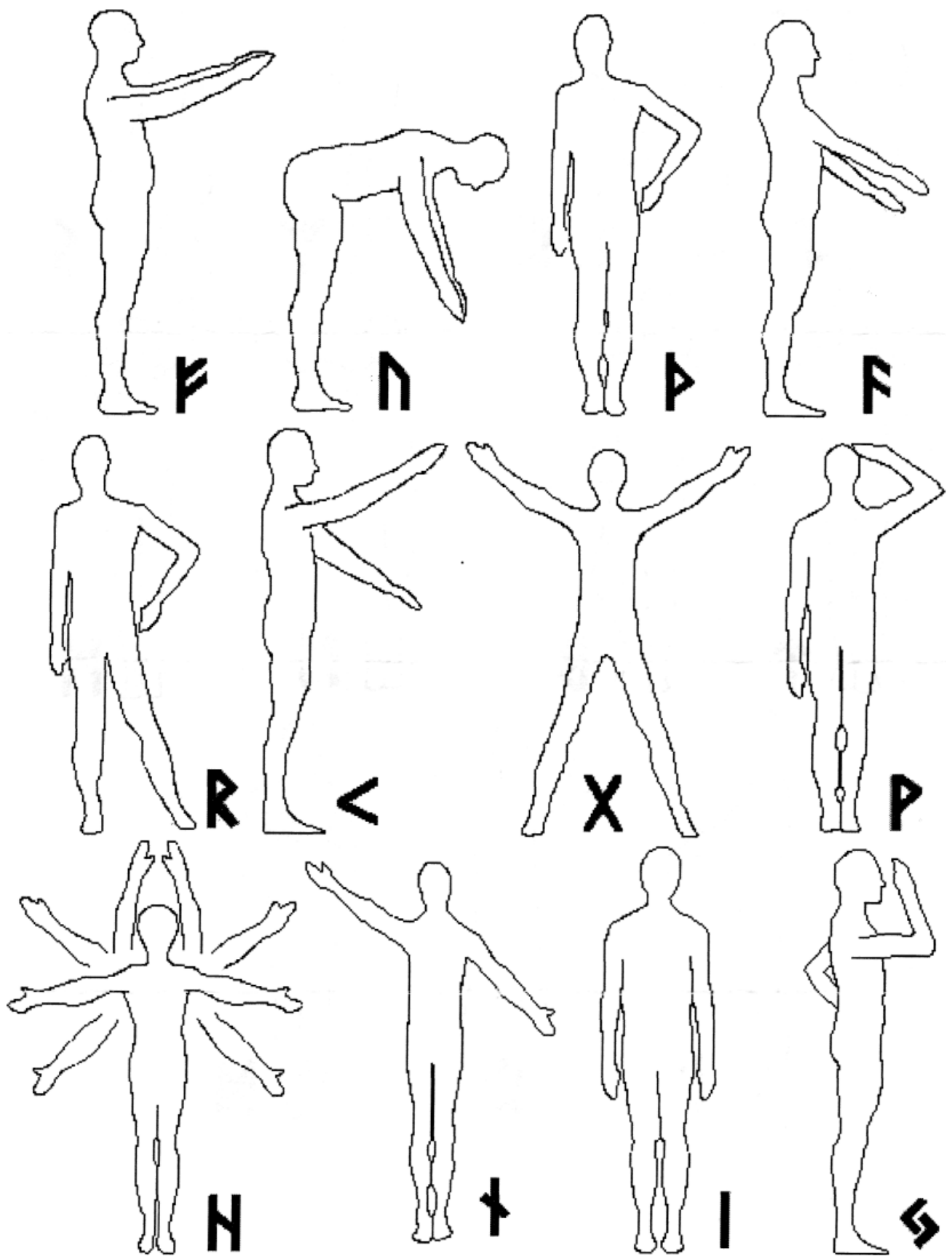
### **Conclusion**

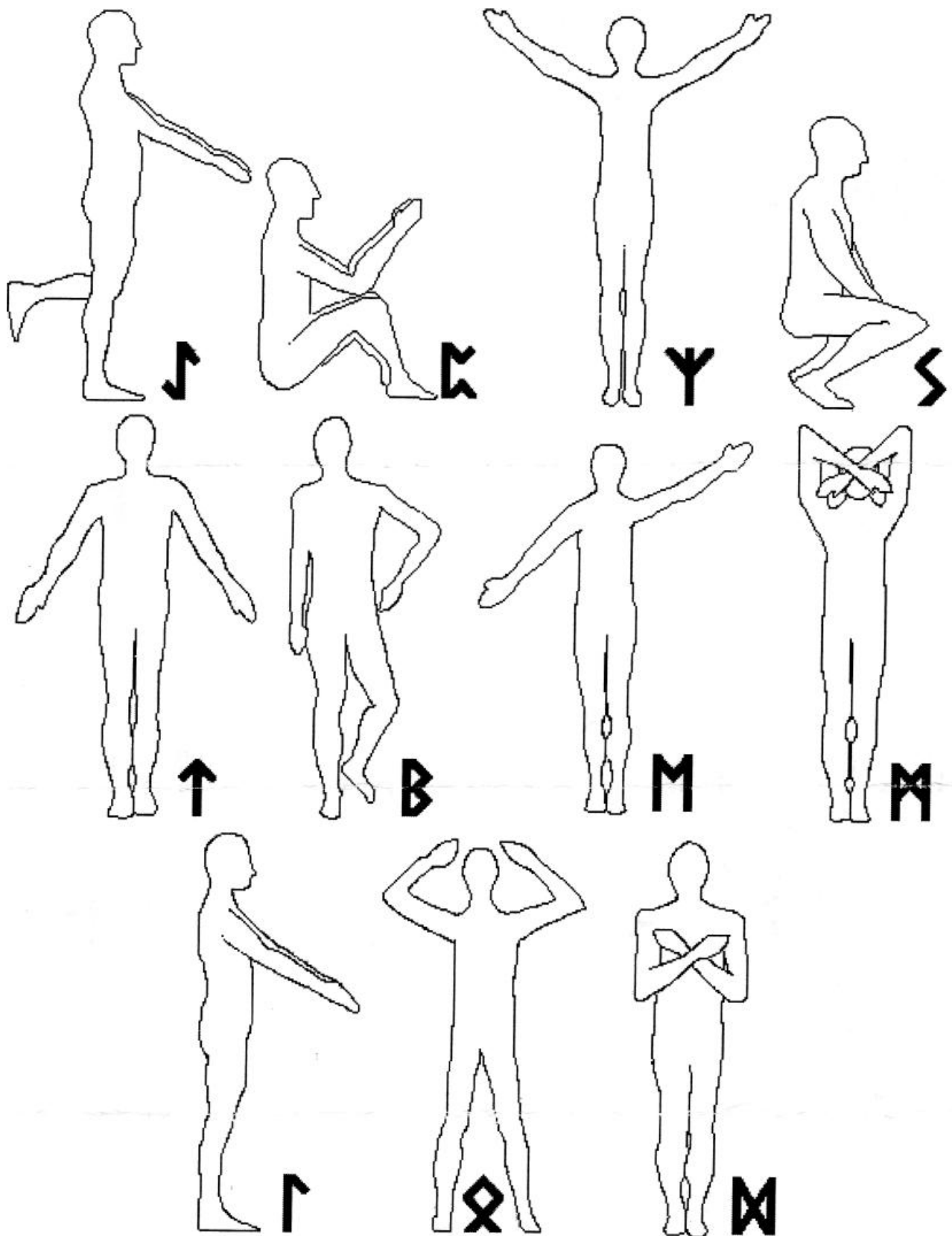
Just as other cultures offer their means of cultivating this force within their own cultural paradigms, such as Chinese aigong and Hindu hatha yoga, so we have our own method which is usually manifested through living good and worthy lives supplemented by some sort of metaphysical such as runic yoga. We live at the center of a network of active, invisible forces. These forces exist within us and outside of us. They push us, stop us, throw us about or allow us to advance, and sadly many people go on completely unaware of them. One of the unique aspects of Irminenschaft is that it permits and teaches us to store up the positive within ourselves and neutralize the things that oppose us. To this end, rune yoga is one of the most interesting and useful techniques available to us.

**by Wolfgang Wester "Old Man on the Mountain"**  
**Submitted with permission by Alfgar Thorsson,**  
**Woden's Folk Kindred**









# *Shaking the Twigs*

## A Beginner's Guide to Rune-Casting



With the release of the upcoming *Thor* movie, the Norse deities will have widespread exposure. This is both a blessing and a curse for modern Heathenry; the names of Odin, Sif, Loki, etc. will again be known to wide audiences, but in the context of comic book stereotypes and Viking anachronisms. Such is also the case with Ralph Blum's *The Book of Runes*. This was one of the first and most popular texts about the runes available to the public at large. It has exposed thousands of readers to the staves of the Elder Futhark; unfortunately, it is also the source of many errors and unfounded ideas still seen in rune books today. Many of Blum's individual "meanings" for the runes and concepts like his "blank rune", which Dr. Stephen Flowers calls "inauthentic and extremely counter-productive" (1), are products of the author's imagination. Additionally, Blum's "spontaneously divined" rearrangement of the futhark has no basis whatsoever in our ancestral lore (2), and he readily admits he had little to no experience with the runes prior to writing the book. (3)



The one commonality found in almost all systems of divination is the element of chance. To our Indo-European forebears, chance was anything but a random event.



A large portion of Blum's text deals with casting runes. This subject is somewhat controversial, mostly because we don't exactly how, or even if, our northern European ancestors used rune staves for divination, (4) A lack of historical evidence never seems to bother New Age pop authors though, and Blum is no exception. Rather than relying on our lore (the Eddas, sagas, etc.), he bases his methods of interpretation largely on Tarot cards and the Chinese *I Ching*. (5) These methods continue to be repeated by one author after another with few ever questioning their origins or foreign influence on our folkish traditions.

The one commonality found in almost all systems of divination is the element of chance. To our Indo-European forebears, chance was anything but a random event. A roll of the dice, selection of lots, neighing of a horse, or flight of birds— all these were messages from the gods, clues to the fate the Norns had woven. In *Gautrek's Saga*, lots are cast to determine who will be sacrificed to Odin, which is a means of allowing the All-father to choose who he wants. (6) In *Egil's Saga*, they cast lots to pair up men and women for the evening's drinking and other fun, and here we can only imagine Freyja is doing the choosing. (7) When lots were cast to select which prisoners of war were to be killed, it was the Norns who determined which would meet their fate. Tacitus speaks of Germanic men wagering their freedom on a dice throw, which was not a way of surrendering themselves to random chance but rather an extension of their belief that the Norns had woven their destiny. (8)

Several Roman historians have written about the importance of divination and the casting



of lots to our Germanic ancestors, including Caesar, Livy, and Plutarch; however, none has given us a more detailed picture of these traditional practices than Tacitus. In *Germania* Ch. 10 he provides the following illustration: They cut off a branch of a nut-bearing tree and slice it into strips; these they mark with different signs and throw them completely at random onto a white cloth. Then the priest of the state, if the consultation is a public one, or the father of the family if it is private, offers a prayer to the gods, and looking up at the sky picks up three strips, one at a time, and reads their meaning from the signs previously scored on them. (9)

Unfortunately we have no way of knowing what signs or symbols were carved on the pieces of branch. It seems reasonable to assume they were runes, but they were not likely to be the runes as we think of them today. Tacitus wrote his account of the Germanic tribes in the 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E. The earliest example of the entire Elder Futhark appears over 300 years later on a stone in Kylver, Sweden. (10) While "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence", it is a stretch to believe all 24 staves were in use three centuries before we see them as a coherent group; however, we do know several of the individual rune symbols were in use in northern Europe as far back as 1300 B.C. These include Tiwaz, Hagalaz, Isa, Gebo, and Algiz, along with pictograms that would later come to represent staves such as sun (Sowilo), man (Mannaz), and horse (Ehwaz). It's difficult to imagine these "proto-runes", along with other symbols like the swastika and hammer, weren't being used by Tacitus' Germans for divinatory rites. (11)

The *Poetic Edda* also refers to casting lots. In Larrington's translation of *Voluspa* st. 20,

the Norns "carved on wooden slips", and Hollander's version has "they scores did cut" followed by "for the children of men they marked their fates". This stanza is especially interesting as it comes immediately after the account of Odin and his brothers breathing life into trees to create man and woman, who were "yet unfated". (st. 17-18) The next stanza describes Yggdrasil, the world-tree, under which the Norns gather to carve the fates of men into the branches. Just as the world-tree here represents the Folk-soul of our people, what the Norns carve into its "wooden slips" are the destinies of everyone of northern European descent. As vessels of fate, the runes flow in the blood of every man, woman, and child of the Folk, etched into our DNA.



From the evidence presented we can construct a fairly solid foundation of how traditional rune-casting worked; however, before attempting a casting or any form of rune-magic, the very first step you need to take is to learn the runes.



Later in *Voluspa* st. 62 the god Hoenir "will choose wooden slips for prophecy" by Larrington, or, in Hollander's words, "handle the blood-wands", by which he notes that Hoenir will "divine future events as the priest of the gods". Again in *Hymiskvida* st. 1, the gods "shook the twigs and looked at the augury" (Larrington) or "the wands they shook, the blood they scanned" (Hollander). This could be taken two ways- either the twigs were dipped in a bowl of sacrificial blood, shaken over a cloth, and the pattern of blood-splatter was interpreted; or the twigs had runes carved on them that were reddened with the user's blood (*ala* Egil Skallagrimsson), and it was the twigs themselves that were shaken and thrown down on the cloth. After certain ones were selected, the blood-stained runes on them were interpreted. This second method closely reflects Tacitus' account, and what he described may have been a ritual enactment of an ancient myth.

From the evidence presented we can construct a fairly solid foundation of how traditional rune-casting worked; however, before attempting a casting or any form of rune-magic, the very first step you need to take is to learn the runes. The effectiveness of any form of divination hinges on your knowledge of the system you're using. This is especially true for people of European descent and the runes, as we are essentially reawakening a connection to our ancestors and the gods of our Folk. The words of Odin encourage us to "know how to carve" and "how to interpret" the runes (*Havamal* st. 144).

Ideally, you should be able to write out all the staves of the Elder Futhark along with their names and meanings from memory (see chart). This may seem difficult for anyone unfamiliar with the runes, but through simple repetition-writing the information down over and over- you should be able to carve the runes into your mind by dedicating a couple hours to it on consecutive days. Once you can identify each rune on sight and what it meant to our ancestors, it's time to discover what it means to you. Start with Fehu. In the rune-poems, Fehu means cattle or wealth. Through meditating or brain-storming on this, see where your mind takes you. On the next day, move on to Uruz, then Thurisaz, and so forth until you have a familiarity with each rune.

The next step is to make your own runes. While there are endless varieties of sets available commercially, our ancestors would have scoffed at the idea of purchasing runes from their version of the local Walmart. A serious runester will take the time to make his/her own set. Tacitus specifies using a "branch of a nut-bearing tree", but that

isn't always practical. Depending on your circumstances, you may have to be creative and use the best available material. Our ancestors usually colored their rune-staves red. Hilda Ellis Davidson writes that "according to the literature the runes had to be reddened with sacrificial blood to be effective.... It seems that it was the blood of a slain creature that made a sacrifice effective and knowledge of the future possible." (12) While there are instances in the lore of both animals and humans being sacrificed for divinatory purposes, for individual rune-casting a self-sacrifice of the maker's own blood would be far more potent. If



most of your castings will be of a personal nature, it only makes sense to "charge" the staves with your own life-force. This is evidenced in *Egil's Saga* when he carves runes on a poisoned drinking horn, reddens them with his blood, and says a charm that shatters the horn and saves his life. (13) As with the "nut-bearing tree" though, the use of blood may not be practical for everyone. For permanent markings such as memorial stones, our ancestors often used red paint to color the staves, but red ink or colored pencil will also work for a

personal rune set. It also helps to have a small bag to keep them in.

It's best to cast runes in a ritual setting, so do whatever is necessary to prepare your mind for the task at hand. Spread out whatever you're using for your "white cloth" in front of you. With a bed sheet it's fine to cast standing up, but for a smaller cloth like a handkerchief you need to kneel down to keep your runes from scattering too far. Cup the runes in your hands and concentrate on the question you wish to ask. This is of the utmost importance. As Carl Jung wrote in *Synchronicity*, "one must hold in mind the form of the question put, for this sets a definite limit to the

interpretation of the answer." Once the question is precisely framed in your mind, "shake the twigs" and let them fall on the cloth. Either look upwards or close your eyes while you do this and continue to do so while choosing three runes. This may take a few minutes as you feel around for the "right" ones, by which I mean certain runes will seem to jump into your hand or give off a slight electric current. Since divination is a right-brain function, I use my left hand to select the runes and place them in the order they're chosen on my right palm. Remember to stay focused on your question throughout this process.

The lore offers few clues as to how our ancestors interpreted their castings. At this point, the best I can do is offer advice from my own experience as to the most practical and effective method. After you've picked up three runes, take a look at them. Some or all of them may be facedown (assuming you've placed them in your palm the same way you lifted them off the cloth). The facedown ones can be related to each rune's "negative" aspects, whereas face-up they convey "positive" aspects. For example, in the rune-poems Kennaz means both a torch (guiding light), which is "positive", and an ulcer (sickness or time of suffering), which would be "negative". Of course, the rune-poems do not provide clear "positive" and/or "negative" interpretations for each stave. This is where personal intuition comes into play. The subjective meanings you've discovered by meditating on each rune are ideal for interpreting a casting. Again, almost any book on runes will have a list of meanings for each stave, but beyond the traditional interpretations derived from its etymology and rune-poems, all

the rest are whatever the author has pulled out of his or her ass. That doesn't make them "wrong" necessarily. It just means that they are subjective and may only have significance to that author. Since you're learning to do your own casting, it's only right that any subjective meanings you ascribe to the staves are pulled out of your own ass. Seriously- the runes are part of our heritage, an inheritance (Othala) that has been passed down to us in our blood. It's up to each of us to look within ourselves and claim them, not to borrow them from someone else's book.



Finally, the order you choose the three runes in is usually attributed to the Norns: the first being *Urdr*- past events or origin of your question; the second *Verdandi*- what's becoming in the present; and third *Skuld*- what's owed or likely to happen as a result. Thus if the first rune you pulled was Kennaz facedown, it could refer to a past sickness or ordeal that started the chain of events in question. Kennaz face-up as your second rune could mean someone or something is guiding you in the right direction.

Kennaz facedown as your last rune may indicate difficult times ahead. Don't freak out about drawing facedown runes, even if all three of them are that way. "Negatives" can be more helpful, as they show you where things may have gone wrong, are going wrong now, or are about to go wrong if corrective actions aren't taken.

Interpreting a rune-casting is a very subjective undertaking. As you continue to meditate on and gain an understanding of each rune, your ability to accurately read the runes will grow. Spending time with each rune individually will enable you to intuit how it speaks to you. The runes have been carved in the Folk-soul of all the



descendants of Ask and Embla. It's up to each of us to determine what these ancient symbols mean in our lives today.

**- Jayson Hawkins,  
Woden's Folk Kindred**

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Endnotes

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|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Flowers, 10.    | 9. Tacitus, 109.       |
| 2. Mountfort, 261. | 10. Elliott, 13.       |
| 3. Blum, 27.       | 11. Elliott, 7, 84 ff. |
| 4. Elliott, 86.    | 12. Davidson, 99.      |
| 5. Blum, 19,30.    | 13. Thorsson, 68.      |
| 6. Garmonsway, 10. |                        |
| 7. Thorsson, 75.   |                        |
| 8. Tacitus, 121.   |                        |



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# A Final Note on Christianity



To my way of thinking, the Christian god is a Middle-Eastern God. My Northern European ancestors honored Northern European Gods for thousands of years, until Rome pushed Christianity northward by every means at their disposal. The conversions from the Gods of our People (Folk), were sometimes peaceful, but there are many many instances of forced conversions, using economic pressures and outright violence to suppress the native religion and replace it with a foreign one.

Now, its 2010, and a growing number of people are returning to the religion of their Folk. The Gods of their ancestors. Our efforts at returning to our native Folkway, should focus on honoring our Gods and Ancestors. We should not be anti-Christian. We should be *beyond* Christianity. We need to shed Christian baggage and beliefs, and move forward into the future. Not dwell on the past. Towards this end, I wanted to write a Final Note on Christianity, as I don't intend to talk much about Christianity in the future. They get enough attention as it is.

These past two weeks, I've been dealing with the issue of a teacher at my kids' public school teaching them Christian songs. Songs-of-Worship that talk about people not getting into heaven and "Obeying the...Lord." We've been in this school district for 5 years, and this has never been done with our children before. So, I wrote emails to the teacher and Principal, and eventually met with the Principal, and he agreed with me. He felt there should be a policy against this, and he is working to ensure Christian songs-of-worship are not taught to my children again. Everything turned out well.

But during this past two weeks, I have had Christians writing me and telling me that Christianity is not trying to indoctrinate my children. Telling me that I sound paranoid. One said I sounded like a "lunatic." Telling me that my wishes to not have my children taught Christianity in school, is somehow ruining their education and education of their Christian classmates. Telling me that I sound like some sort of fanatic. Telling me that Christians are very respectful of other religions, and that Christians trying to convert others is "very, very rare." Let me tell you my story over the past three years.



Fear.

AT WORK - I was being looked at for a new position at work. A Christian co-worker called my future boss, and told her that they shouldn't bring me down to that position, because I was into "Devil Worship." My future boss knew me well enough, and liked my work ethic enough, that she disregarded this attempt to destroy my job opportunity and possibly my career, based on my religion.

"GOING TO HELL" - My wife and children have been told they are going to Hell, more than once by Christians. Every single person in Jotun's Bane Kindred has been told at some point that they are going to Hell by Christians. The children of the other families in Jotun's Bane Kindred have all been told they are going to Hell by Christian classmates.

NEIGHBORHOOD - The Christian members of my neighborhood association actually held a meeting, to decide "what to do about my family," as they saw our religion as a threat to their neighborhood. A neighbor that knows and likes me, stood up and told them they were idiots for even discussing it...and helped stop whatever efforts they were thinking of initiating.



**Fear.**

And the list goes on...

Let's be clear. Christianity is made up of individuals, and I have no problem with those

individuals. I have family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers that are Christian that I respect, like, and love. In saying these things, I'm not trying to insult or destroy these good people, who are Christian.

But, the religion itself teaches that the Christian god is the "one true god." It teaches that all other gods are false or outright tricks of the Christian "devil." It teaches that those that don't accept Christ are going to the Christian hell. It teaches and encourages its followers to actively recruit and convert people, using fear and whatever else might work.



The Christian members of my neighborhood association actually held a meeting, to decide "what to do about my family," as they saw our religion as a threat to their neighborhood.



These Christian teachings encourage people to disown their own family members that aren't Christian. It encourages job discrimination. It encourages harassment. It encourages abuse and bullying at school.

It encourages fear-mongering. It encourages a lot of behaviors on the part of its followers that are absolutely harmful to non-Christians. Would your Jesus have wanted things that way? I doubt it. But that's the way things are with a fairly large

intolerant segment of Christianity.

Fear (with a dash of hope)

So people can call me paranoid or a fanatic. But for me, this is the reality of living in our culture. Are all Christians like that? Nope. But there are plenty that are. Am I being a fanatic when I insist Christians don't try to convert my 4, 7, and 9 year old children using fear-mongering? Am I a fanatic when I insist my public school does not attempt to indoctrinate my children? Am I a fanatic if I take steps to ensure I don't end up losing my job or career based on my religion? Am I a fanatic when I defend myself as peacefully and calmly as possible from Christians treading on my family? Well, if those things make me a fanatic...then I'll wear the title proudly.



So, to my Christian friends, family, and co-workers...there's really not a thing in the world you can say, that will somehow magically erase the things that have happened, are happening, and will likely continue to happen because my family not Christian. Its just someone I have to live with. There will be other attempts to hurt my career. My wife and kids will have to hear "You are going to Hell" falling from the lips of Christians many more times. These things are just reality.

Am I a victim in all this? Nope. I'm proud of who I am, and what my family believes. I'm more than willing to defend my family and our beliefs. We live a good life, live in a good house, and we are happy. To me, living among a Christian majority is simply another challenge to overcome. Life is full of challenges, so what's one more challenge?

I just want Christians to know, the pretty picture you paint of how tolerant and non-judgmental Christianity is as a religion, is not the reality we have experienced. You can insist it is, but that doesn't make it so. Non-Christians know better.

Its why I'm thankful for the Constitution and the Freedom of Religion. I wonder how bad it would be without these protections in place...

Mark Stinson  
Jotun's Bane Kindred  
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# HOSPITALITY AS SOLIDARITY

Hospitality is a virtue, one of our Noble Nine Virtues, that is rarely discussed or written about by Odinists due to its self-explanatory, popular meaning. I think we should explore this virtue deeper however, and discover its folkish rather than popular implications as concerns Odinism as a healthy religious movement and evolving theology.

With the growth of Odinism in 2259/2260 RE (2009/2010 CE), growing pains exist that must be nurtured if our Troth and Faith are going to remain resilient, and solidarity is going to be the rule rather than the exception.

## Hospitality in Lore

One can find numerous examples of basic hospitality in the Eddas, Sagas and all lore, literature and history of our race and peoples. I will only touch on a few of the most notable in the poetic Edda (1). The Havamal, stanzas 2, 3 and 4:

*Stanza 2: "All hail to the givers! A guest hath come, say where shall he sit? In haste is he to the hall who cometh, to find a place by the fire. "*

*Stanza 3: "The warmth seekth who hath wondered long and is numb about his knees; meat and dry clothes the man needth, over the fells who hath fared."*

*Stanza 4: "A drink needth to full dishes who cometh, a towel, and the prayer to partake; and be bidden to banquet again."*

And,

*Stanza 48: "He who giveth gladly a goodly life leadeth and seldom hath he sorrow; but the churlish (2) wight is a chary (3) of all, and grudgingly parts with his gifts. "*

Much could be written on these stanzas alone, to the meanings of 'guest' (innegard or utgard), 'haste' (folkish struggle), 'a place by the fire' (compatibility), 'hath wondered long' (differences

among Odinists) or 'to be well-liked' (honour, integrity and dignity). There are deeper levels of abstractions in myth that must always be considered and explored.

In Grimnismal, Odin, disguised as Grimnir ('the masked one') rewards Agnar, son of an evil king, Geirroeth (representing false nobility) for his hospitality with metaphysical wisdom. This myth is replete with symbolism. In it, Odin is constrained between two fires (friction from an imbalance of non-conscious matter) by King Geirroth for eight nights (final gestation period) before the king's son, Agnar (corrected nobility) gives Odin 'a full horn to drink' (sustenance) out of hospitality and compassion, which elevates Agnar metaphysically. Here we see hospitality as an adjunct to spiritual elevation, higher nobility in a metaphysical sense in the heathen spirit of the 'eternal return'.

The colloquial everyday definition of hospitality is already known to the reader. My aim in this short essay is an explanation of the deeper mechanics and dynamics of our need for hospitality amongst Nordic and Celtic folk. Our modern English word 'hospitality' comes from the French, *hospitalite*, which originates from the old French word *hospice*, meaning 'guest house'. Similarly, in Modern German it is *Gastfreundschaft*, directly translated as 'guestfriendship', or friendship of the guest. Our Modern English translation is 'hospitable treatment, reception or disposition: given to generous and cordial reception of guest'. (Websters, 1999). Here, I think 'reception or disposition' are key words, but first let us define guests as those within *Innengard*, fellow Folkish Odinists who are generally compatible yet retain particular differences due to being in different kindreds, hearths, organizations or differences of ideological opinion. In short, hospitality is how different Odinists receive each other for the betterment of our religious and folkish community.

This 'reception' must always be in a general spirit of solidarity to our general cause and movement. Our individual proclivities and specific beliefs, or allegiances to various Odinist groups, is the disposition mentioned above. Each of us has a

'stead' or 'gard' in life and in the Odinist movement. One person cannot fill two places at once.

We should always value Odinists in their respected 'stead' as a measurement of worth in Odinism. Hospitality then is defined as consideration in its context used in business, as 'something of value exchanged for a promise or for performance' (4). Consideration is one of the most important elements of a business contract, without which the contract is illegal. Likewise, friendship and solidarity amongst Odinists is a contract if proper consideration is given to each according to his or her own stead. More consideration creates more healthy orlog and frith at the group level. We might even call consideration the stitches within *orlog* within the greater web of Wyrð.

### Wilkommen

It is important that we do not take each other for granted or give in to hard feelings should we disagree. We share the same general direction. "Know the direction you are reaching towards, striving for progression toward what is wholesome and beneficial to the quality and welfare of self and folk" (5). Recognize our differences as growing pains, as muscle fiber of the folk-spirit. We grace one another, a 'welcoming' - the coming of weal, and well-wishing. It is ancient Germanic custom.

### Beyond time and space

This hospitality, as consideration-in-friendship when reinforced in our folkish spiritual struggle, becomes a comradeship, which is the highest form of friendship. Time and space can diminish a friendship, but a comradeship is eternal because it is based on the shared timeless idealism of individuals.

### Runes of hospitality

The primary rune of hospitality is of course Gebo, the rune of gifting, reciprocity, consideration and generosity; it is the handshake and the hug; the exchange of willpower and will-to-power (*Wille zur Macht*) and harmonious balance. As a virtue of the

will, hospitality is delegated by the rune Wunjo, which is the rune of joy and hope-fulfilled, both outworkings of the will. "The W rune is the root force of attraction that sympathetic beings (wights) have for one another - that is, wights descended from a common source" (6). Another hospitality rune is Ehwaz, the rune of trust and loyalty. As a virtue of destiny, hospitality works in the rune Perthro, the rune of orlog and wyrð, of positive becoming and a healthy evolution. Finally, hospitality is ruled by Othala, the rune of compatibility, folk, home and land. Although hospitality has the construct of guest-housing, our context of guest is as a fellow Odinist in the *innengard*, that is guest as opposed to stranger; the first is welcome, the second is not.

In conclusion, I invite all Odinists to explore hospitality and its deeper implications and cultural traditions that act as bonds for a folk-community. On a personal level it is

even important to be hospitable to oneself, in harmony and balance.

### Hail the Gods!

### Hail the Folk!

### M. Boyd, AOR

#### Notes

1. Hollander Lee M., *The Poetic Edda*, 1996, Univ. of Texas, Austin.
2. Churlish = ill bred, uncouth
3. Chary = sorrowful
4. Friedman, J., *Dictionary of Business Terms*, 2000, Barrens, New York.
5. *Code of Advancement*
6. Thorsson, Edred, *Futhark*, 1984, Red Wheel/Weisser, San Francisco



It is important that we do not take each other for granted or give in to hard feelings should we disagree. We share the same general direction.





# An Interview with Dr. Carolyn Larrington



## Background

For many of us, Ms. Larrington needs no introduction. Her translation of the Eddas was a staple for me during my early readings of the Eddas because of how smooth and easy her translation was. I know I have led many others to read it since then. Ms. Larrington has published several other works, however, and is currently studying and writing on Arthurian legend. She has acted as the Supernumerary Fellow in English at St. John's College, and is an expert on Old English and Old Norse language and Lore. Her most recent book *King Arthur's Enchantresses: Morgan and Her Sisters in Arthurian Tradition* was published by IB Tauris in June 2006 to much acclaim from across the spectrum.

## 1) With your latest book out of the way, what's next for Carolyn Larrington?

At the moment I'm on leave from my teaching job, and having finished up some outstanding (in the sense of not written, not of excellent) articles I am working on my next book which is about brothers and sisters in medieval European literature.

## 2) Your version of the Poetic Edda is probably the most reader-friendly one available. What was your motivation in translating it?

I'd been teaching the Edda in translation to people who were interested in Norse myth, but didn't have time to learn Old Norse, and I found that the alternative translations – like Lee Hollander's for example – made too much use of archaic words to be really comprehensible. Other translations only gave part of the Edda, so I thought it was time to have something usable.

## 3) What draws you to ancient European history, languages and culture?

My interest in the medieval was kindled when, at the age of 18 or so, I went to work in Norway in the summer before I went to university. I could speak German, so I picked up some knowledge of Norwegian quite quickly – and I also met my first Icelanders there. When I got to Oxford, I found that Old English – which was compulsory – was quite easy for someone with German, and then I went to a lecture given by the now Reader in Old Icelandic in Oxford, my colleague Heather O'Donoghue, who talked about links between Old Norse and Old English. Thus I realized that I could study Old Norse as part of the English degree. Also, I've always been interested in mythology and legendary material; I think because I am interested in narrative. What makes stories work? How do they vary between cultures? What meaning might they have had for the different generations who have heard them – and those who wrote them down.

**4) Several episodes from European myth have been interpreted to describe a conflict between an older, more feminine earth oriented religion and the newer Indo-European patriarchal sky religion. Does this concept apply itself to the Arthurian cycle?**

Marion Zimmer Bradley would argue that that was the case, and she produces a very successful reading of the Arthurian story in that context. I don't think you see a clash between the pagan and feminine and the Christian and masculine in the medieval versions of Arthur by and large, but the important thing about myths is that they are capable of change and reinterpretation by successive generations. Bradley's recasting was important for second wave feminism and new age spirituality, but other versions of the story – like Camelot 3000 for example – have a different kind of politics and different cultural inflections.

**5) Feminine magic is often dark and frightening in Northern European myth. Is this a reflection of later Christian misogyny, or could it be part of the older Heathen worldview?**

Magic often deals with areas of life – and death – which are huge, important and frightening in their own right. Death, in battle or at sea, giving birth, weather magic in the north, and love magic all engage with fundamental areas of human existence, and that's why they are frightening in themselves. But male magic is equally frightening; Óðinn's powers which he boasts of in Hávamál are just as terrifying as anything ascribed to women. I don't think we know enough about pre-Christian belief in the north to talk about a heathen worldview; if anything, there were many and varied sets of beliefs, depending on class, gender, occupation and locality. Belief in the middle of agricultural and relatively warm Denmark seems likely to have been very different from belief in northern Iceland.

**6) Several recent books have attempted to identify a "historical Arthur". Does giving Arthur an historical identity interfere with understanding the myth?**

I think the search for the 'historical Arthur' produces interesting side effects – a better understanding of historical conditions in different regions in the late 4th / early 5th century. But ultimately there isn't enough evidence. Does it interfere with understanding the myth – not necessarily. The best work on Arthur and his context – like Tom Green's:

<http://www.arthuriana.co.uk/> – understands that history and myth are always interacting in the texts produced in different cultures.

**7) Aside from informing us about Old Norse culture, what can the Poetic Edda teach in the modern world?**

The wisdom poetry, on which I wrote my doctoral thesis, subsequently published as *A Store of Common Sense*, teaches exactly that – common sense for living which is neither pagan nor Christian. Don't get too drunk, be talkative and sociable, but not a foolish chatterer, find a good woman and trust her, make sure you have enough firewood and roof shingles, as well as more existential wisdom: don't praise the day until it is over, danger can come from any quarter, human company is what makes people happy. In the heroic poetry, the futility of revenge, and the terrible consequences of failing to grant women agency in their marriage partners are also evident.

**8) Translations of the Eddic poems are often quite different from one another. What insight can you give to students of Old Norse as they approach a complex poem like the Voluspá?**

With *Völuspá*, I think it is useful to read the poetry with an open mind, without immediately turning to notes, or Snorri, or guides to myth, to see what sense you can make of what's described and the situation. Then you can turn to other people's comments and interpretations to see how they make sense of it. But we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that it's poetry; there's a rhythm and a

series of brilliant images – the gold pieces that reappear after Ragnarök, the eagle diving for fish, the sooty-red cock that crows – which are worth lingering over, without necessarily interrogating them for symbolic or hidden meaning.

**9) There are so many ways that the Eddas can be translated from the Old Norse. What guide did you use when deciding which way to translate the originals?**

When I was translating, I used other people's translations – in English, modern Icelandic and German, primarily – to get a good sense of meaning, but then put them away so that I could find new words. I wanted to be as literal as I could, so that the translation would give a reliable sense of what's in the Old Norse. But there is a good number of words which can mean a number of things, or whose meaning is in dispute, and there's the problem of likely error in the manuscript, so some poems can be interpreted through translation in a number of ways. And I also thought about how to try to get across a sense of rhythm and of alliteration. I wrote about this in my article on translating the Edda in Old Norse Made New, ed. David Clark and Carl Phelpstead, which came out with the Viking Society in London a couple of years ago. Here is a link to it on Amazon:

[http://www.amazon.co.uk/s/ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=old+norse+made+new&x=-152&y=8](http://www.amazon.co.uk/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=old+norse+made+new&x=-152&y=8)

**10) In most translations there are changes in the order for several of the lays, such as the Havamal and the Voluspá. What guides decisions like that, and how do you think it affects the process of understanding and translating the myth?**

Older translations often decided that there were more logical or sensible orders for poems, particularly ones with loose narrative structures, than the order found in the manuscript. Scholars thought, particularly of Hávamál, that it could be re-arranged more meaningfully – and for a couple

of the poems – including Völuspá – we have two manuscript versions with different word orders. The editor or translator has to decide which order is better, sometimes on the basis of reckoning that the older manuscript – the Codex Regius – is likely to be more reliable than Hauksbók, which was written round a century later. Or the editor decides to use the Codex Regius version, because it IS older, but to include the verses which are only found in Hauksbók – giving you a slightly hybrid version.

Does this affect the translation process? Obviously the translator must make choices similar to those made by the editor – do I rearrange? do I include material from other manuscripts? Critical fashion now thinks that editors should make as few changes to what's in the manuscript as possible; you don't now get editors inserting verses that they've made up in order to give better sense. Necessarily there will be minor effects on understanding the mythological material across the different editions and translations, but I think that it's the accompanying notes and commentary in editions and texts which produce different interpretations.

Hope this is useful – and I wish your readers fruitful and thoughtful reading in Norse texts!

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**Arthurian Resources: Early Arthurian Tradition & The Origins of the Legend**  
[www.arthuriana.co.uk](http://www.arthuriana.co.uk)

Recent Publications provides details of some of my own recent academic publications, in which more detailed analyses of various aspects of the Arthurian legend and post-Roman British history can be found.

**Interview by: Bryan Page**



# An Interview with Katia Puryear



Katia Puryear is the administrative head of the Norroena society, an organization dedicated to reprinting the original sixteen volumes of the Norroena library collected by Rasmus Anderson, and creating high quality literature for the Awakening. She and her husband Mark Puryear recently published *The Asatru Edda* to a very receptive audience, as well as a study guide to help readers get the most out of it, available for free download at [www.norroena.org](http://www.norroena.org).

## **1) So how long have you been a Heathen (Asatru) and what attracted you to it?**

The process was definitely a gradual one. Like most of us, I was raised as a Christian. I knew it was not the creed for me, but honestly, it took a long time to recover from its negative effects. Guilt, fear, inadequacy, are all powerful emotions, and overcoming their indoctrination from a young age just can't be easy. For a long time I felt like a feather blowing in the wind, without anywhere to belong, just drifting through life. When I was finally ready to believe in something again in my

late teens, I dabbled into Wicca, but soon realized that it was more or less a fad and didn't have the effects of long-term stability. My now husband introduced me to the Northern path termed Asatru/Odinism. It took some getting used to at first, but the elements that attracted me to it were the strong cultural elements, the focus on positive human elements rather than focusing on human shortfalls, and the lack of dogma with the faith. It didn't take long before it all just felt familiar. It was like coming home.

## **2) You contributed an excellent essay to the book 'The Nature of Asatru', written articles and translated texts from French. What are you working on now?**

Well thank you for the kind words. Right now I'm in my last semester of University pursuing a teaching degree. I'm busy with my last two classes and gearing up for my internship which begins in August, on top of caring for two small children, so it's a pretty stressful time. I haven't been able to devote as much time as I would like to our website nor to our various other projects. However obtaining my teaching degree is essential in order to accomplish a short-term goal that we have in our sights – our very own Odinist/Asatru K-12 parochial school. Stay tuned!

## **3) In some ways your work is even more important than Mark's because we have a void in the area of women's perspectives, can you give a brief summary on the subject?**

Some people attribute the lack of women in our faith to the whole 'it's a warrior religion' stereotype. But I have to respectfully disagree. Personally, I believe that women crave a sense of community, and that this is more than just an emotional need, but an actual ancestral calling. While war was certainly an important aspect of our ancestors' lives in order to keep the tribe's enemies at bay, it was certainly not an obsession that took over every aspect of their lives. Research actually shows that the ancient Germanic tribes paid special attention to women, their rights, and their importance within the

community. They had to form strong communities in order to look out for each other when the men were away for long periods of time. I believe that this is a need that has been passed down to us from our ancestors. We want to feel part of something bigger than ourselves-- we crave a place where we women and our families (immediate or future) can feel appreciated, safe, loved, supported, nurtured and capable of nurturing others; a haven where the values we want instilled in our children (or future children) will be validated through proven means. We want this in order to make the world a more beautiful and sound place. Unfortunately that just isn't obviously present within our community to a newcomer in this early stage of the reawakening. We still have work to do laying the foundation, and we will need to work hard in order to accomplish this goal. However, when that does happen, and as more and more women are breaking the chains that Christianity has placed on them over the past thousand years, more women will feel the safety of a community that they need in order to open their hearts to their ancestral calling, and to come home. I feel certain of this.

#### **4) How would you describe The Norroena Society to someone who has never heard of it?**

Let me explain it this way – Have you heard of any other religion, any other real, established religion, whose sacred texts were authored by individuals of a completely different faith? Of course not. I mean, even plainly stated like that, it sounds a bit ridiculous, doesn't it? Yet this is what many of our faith have accepted to be normal, due to a lack of any other options. The chroniclers of our Sagas, the main sources we have that connect us to our deities, were Christian historians. While we should be thankful to them that any evidence of our ancestral religion exists at all, their bias can easily be discerned in the texts. The Norroena Society consists of loyal men and women devoted to taking the necessary steps to reclaim our sacred texts, by doing everything in our power to rid the Christian taint from it, and create a new epic for

us, by us. That's what The Norroena Society is all about. Now, we don't claim to be Asatru/Odinist "authorities" on the subject by any means.

However, we are utilizing the proven investigative methodologies of the pioneers of theological research into Teutonic lore: Jacob Grimm, Rasmus Anderson, Dr. Viktor Rydberg, and others in order to help rebuild the foundations of our faith.

#### **6) What role do you and your husband play in it?**

My husband is the Director. He focuses on the research, investigations, and creative ideas. He also extensively consults with contributors and consultants. I play more of a supportive role with administrative affairs, but we also discuss ideas for future projects and opinions on the best ways to get there. We work well as a team. Together we are creating the blueprints for the future. We want to build libraries, community centers, schools, the list goes on. The preparatory stages can be frustrating at times because our vision is so clear, and we are just so anxious to get there. But at the same time, it truly is amazing to look back and see what we've already managed to accomplish in such a short period of time. The future is bright.

#### **7) The Asatru Edda is an amazing accomplishment. How has it been received by the public so far?**

We have been overwhelmed with the positive feedback it has received. This book took more time, sweat and headaches than I think most people could fathom. It was over a decade in the making and none of it was easy, all the way to the very end when we were enduring seemingly endless back and forth with the publisher over the purchase price (we eventually had to take the Index out in order to make it affordable as perfect bound format – the Index is available for free download on our website at this time). Therefore getting positive feedback on a project you have devoted so much of your life towards just makes it that much more rewarding. Of course there will always be critics, and some have shown concern

over the use of the Oera Linda Book, as well as some other decisions that needed to be made, and that is perfectly fine. But overall, we have been astounded by the support. On a professional level, we have recently received a request from the University of Cambridge to utilize some of the book in their curriculum. What a compliment to be accepted into mainstream academia like that. But the real reward is hearing straight from the Folk itself on the impact it has had on their lives. Very touching.

**8) Are you a part of a kindred or of any Heathen organization?**

At this point we are not a part of a kindred and this is because we are living in an area that we do not plan on being located in long-term. We haven't been able to move due to my being in school, but that will be over soon, thankfully. I have personally been an apprentice member of The Odinic Rite for nearly eight years now and I have met some incredible people within that organization, many whom I consider to be family even though they live far away.

**9) What advice would you give to the new Heathen trying to find their way?**

Be patient with yourself and don't let yourself get overwhelmed. If you come from a Christian background, it will take time, and you will doubt yourself sometimes. That's perfectly fine.

Read the lore. Realize that in the early stages of our faith, our ancestors saw divinity in everything, from the rocks and trees to the sun and moon. The faith was nameless to them; it was simply an extension of the overall cultural system. Your culture is your own and nobody can take that away from you.

Live by example. People will not always understand you or the choices you make, but try to understand that in the end it isn't their fault and this is your opportunity to do what you can to change their minds. By living by example you will inspire others to have a good impression of our faith. One person touches the lives of hundreds of others. You never know what effect

your positive behavior will make one day down the road, even if you aren't there to witness it.

**10) Some of our readers and contributors are incarcerated. Do you think Odinism can be used as a rehabilitative tool for the folk? Any advice for them?**

As I stated before, we are all works in progress. People make mistakes. You can't change what has happened in the past but you can change where your path is headed. Research proves that religious people lead longer, happier lives. They are proven to be better spouses, better comrades, and better citizens. Religion is an intrinsic part of each culture its adherents belong to. When individualism replaces cultural collectivism, society begins to break down, as many of us are witnessing every day. To have a culture-- an organic, natural culture that represents the bond that individuals have as a part of a synergetic whole, is an extremely valuable aspect of the human experience. And that is an experience that I wish for everyone.

**Interview by: Bryan Page**

# An Interview with Laurel Owen



Laurel Owen is the Prison Affairs Officer for the Odinic Rite, and well loved by many for her tireless efforts to help inmates live the faith behind bars. Her efforts have opened many to the powerful experience of Blot in the community, and her positive influence has affected the lives of many Odinists both inside and outside the walls.

**1) You have a lot of experience dealing with prison officials, media, and others who view Odinism as a negative and racist religion. What's the best way to handle people like this and answer their allegations?**

I don't have a lot of experience with the media, because I view them as a mine field, and generally avoid them. As for anyone else, I just project myself genuinely. I know who I am, and try not to internalize what others believe about me. In the case of prison officials, the three P's work: Polite, Persistent, and Professional. You just keep showing up and exhibiting the three P's, It's a matter of stubbornness. You have to believe in who you are stronger than others believe you are something else. Then you project and articulate that belief.

**2) I know you've faced at least two lengthy depositions regarding the practice of Odinism behind bars. Do you encounter the same kind of hostile attitudes towards Odinism in the free world?**

One lengthy deposition, a federal grand jury, and lots of informal grillings, trip-ups, and obstacles over the years, to be exact, regarding Odinism behind bars. Do you mean hostility by non-Odinists towards the practice of Odinism in the free world? No, not really. People don't really know about it generally, Lots of people have heard of Wicca, but you have to explain Odinism, I pick and choose who I explain it to, which is probably why I haven't encountered a lot of hostility. The hostility I have encountered most is by Asatru free world people toward prison ministry.

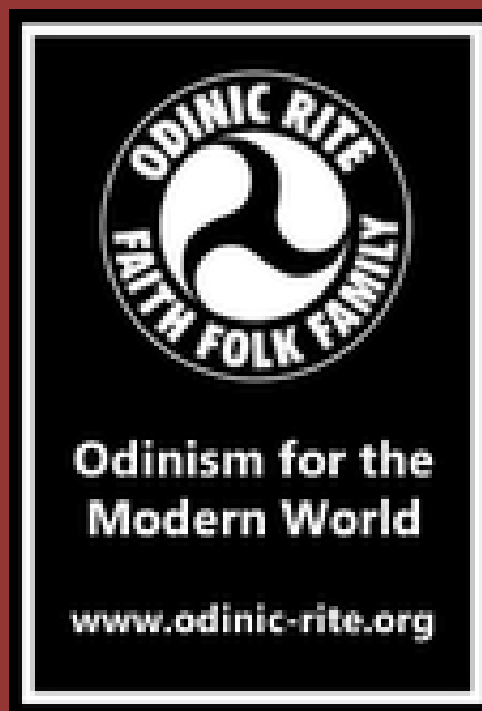


**3) Other folks involved in outreach ministry have commented on the difference between the culture of Odinism in prison and in the free world. In your opinion, how do they differ? Having been a part of dozens of blotar in both settings, do you have a preference for one or the other?**

There is nothing like a ritual in the woods with people you trust. That's the ultimate experience of ritual. I like the focus of people inside, though. Often they have fought to get where they are, and they appreciate the experience in ways that free world people may take for granted. The heart-felt focused quality of prison blots has always impressed me. As for the culture? I don't know. I am aware that when I walk in a prison I'm entering another culture, but I don't know enough about it to comment.

**4) In recent years articles have appeared in Odinic Rite Briefings advocating that a clear line be drawn between Asatru and Odinism. Is this distinction really important, or is it more essential that we all focus on moving forward as a Folkish movement?**

I think the question is this: can a non-hierarchical movement have enough cohesion to endure? We as a general group don't have a holy book or a prophet. We don't have a set of Thou Shalt Nots. We are spread around in small groups, and stubbornly maintain our separate identities. Kindred A believes only women should do Seidr work, Kindred B believes that gay men can do Seidr. Kindred C is mostly ex-convicts and doesn't have homosexuals in their kindred, nor many women, and don't know what Seidr looks like. Kindred D likes to dress in period clothes, kindred E believes that's a "Wanna Be Viking" thing to do, Kindred F doesn't care how you dress as long as you don't have ex-cons in the group, and have Heathens Against Hate plastered on the website.



**OR Vinland Affairs  
P.O. Box 351  
Brush Prairie, WA 98606**

**USA & Canadian membership is  
\$33.00 US (\$22 for prisoners)  
payable upon registration and  
thereafter every twelve months.**

Kindred G members vote Republican, Kindred H has libertarian members, Kindred I are national socialist, and Kindred J has non-European members and takes lessons from the SPLC and ADL about the meaning of racism. Are you getting my drift here? Words are symbols, and reflect organic differences that really exist, except in this case people are using words to simplify a complex situation. And sometimes the simplification doesn't work.

I do understand the impetus to break down heathenism to 3 distinct groups: Asatru,

Odinism, and Wotanism. I understand that people are genuinely different. Odinists want to break from what they see as weak armchair warriors who get together on weekends and make oaths (who they call Asatru), and Wotanists want to express themselves as separate because of their political/religious world-view, which neither Odinists or Asatruar share. And Asatru want to make sure they don't look racist. Then there are exceptions to the generalities and people who just like one word over another and choose arbitrarily.

What we need to do is realize that it's OK to be non-hierarchical. It's OK to have to have irreconcilable differences between groups. It's even OK to not like each other. If you ask me, what's important is to project and articulate the best in yourself or your group if you have one. Forget about what anyone else is doing. Do your own thing, and do it well, and believe in it. Let outsiders see you as a person who contributes positively and cares about your people and your world.

I am in love with an Odinist/Wotanist, I think the Raven Wolf Tribal Alliance (calling themselves Asatru) is an interesting and dynamic group with their period clothes and their lovely rituals, and the local Asatru Kindred here in NW Arkansas are mostly real nice people who welcome me whenever I show up. I ignore idiots of all stripes, from any group. But mostly, I have close friends in the Odinic Rite, and I appreciate the above average level of commitment and energy of Rite members and the more international flavor of it. I revel in the changing of the seasons and the rituals of my ancestors, and I feel proud of my contributions to my people and my world.

**5) I think you may have broken a few hearts with the news that you're getting married. Is your husband-to-be an Odinist? Any advice for Folk whose significant others are of a different faith or world-view?**

My husband-to-be is an Odinist/Wotanist, actually. Politics was not the binding force between us. Other things drew us together, like longtime friendship and chemistry, life-experience, and capacity to love. If you have all those things, politics pales as far as I'm concerned. As far as having mates with different religious or political views, I think it's best to first realize whether you are the kind of person that can handle that. Some people need their mates to be the same as them. You know the old adage: you can't change anyone. It's true. Don't marry a Christian unless it's really OK with you to have a Christian mate, because they probably won't change.

**6) Over the years I've noticed you have a gift for languages. Were you formally educated or self-taught? What languages do you know?**

Thank you! I minored in German in college, and took enough French to get around politely in Paris. It's all rusty now. The Chaucer poem was taught to me by someone who had learned the Middle English from a linguist. The other Middle English poem you heard me read I learned from listening to the Medieval Baebes!  
©

**7) I know you also have a passion for dance. Do you ever perform with a group or is it something you do purely for pleasure?**

There is a dance company I perform with from time to time, and I do it for pleasure, yes,

**8) Any other creative outlets or interests you'd like to share with us?**

I play fiddle and violin, and have a violin student. From time to time I take a part in a theater production. I have experience on stage from my New York days. I may have the opportunity to perform in Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors this spring. That will be great fun, and challenging. I also love to write, and read.

**9) Few folks possess the courage or commitment to get involved in outreach ministry, and those who do often get burned out. How have you managed to stick with it so long? Do you ever reach a point where the prison work interfered with your personal life?**

I've stuck with it this long because the rewards have exceeded the hard experiences. No, it does not interfere in my personal life. It's just something I do from time to time because it feels right.

**10) One more question. In Mark Puryear's excellent book The Nature of Asatru, he makes a statement to the effect that our faith, like all religions, is centered on our deities. I tend to think that Asatr/Odinism, like any religion that has evolved out of a particular people and place, is centered on the people themselves. Care to share your thoughts on this?**

We honor our ancestors and the Gods and Goddesses of our ancestors. I don't really care whether the Gods and Goddesses or the ancestors come first. Thank you for interviewing me, Jayson.

**Interview by: Jayson Hawkins  
Wodens Folk Kindred**

Blaue Nacht mit lauen Wellen!  
Am Geländ' die Juchzer gellen,  
Wo noch Hollas Büsche blühn.  
Feuer leuchten durch die Tale,  
Wie Balders Grabesmale,  
Und des Rades Funken glühn.  
Laßt die Sonnenrune funkeln,  
Hakenkreuz erstrahl' im Dunkeln,  
Sei begrüßt, erhabner Phol!  
Tausend Bauta-Steine reden,  
Druiden-Weisheit, Edda, Veden,  
Von dir, ewigem 'Symbol'!

-----

Blue night with mild waves!  
In the open country, the cry of the  
delighted rings,  
Where still Holle's bushes bloom.  
Fire shines through the valleys,  
Like Balder's monuments,  
And from the wheel sparks glow.  
Let the sun-rune spark,  
Swastika radiant in the dark,  
Be welcome, exalted Phol!  
A thousand Bauta-stones counsel,  
Druidic wisdom, Edda, Vedas,  
From you, eternal 'symbol'!

Anonymous völkisch poem of 1899

# Words from the Folk

My excursion into Asatru is parallel to the experiences of many others'. For the last several years I had developed my own personal philosophies born from experience. I refused to label my beliefs in order to "fit" into an inflexible category—simply to identify with a religious sect. I was momentarily content in my solitude, until I expressed interest in learning more about my man's faith. This was not the first time that Joe had shared his beliefs with me, but it was the first time that all of the tumblers fell into place, thus unlocking the door to Asatru...it felt like I was finally coming home. I have been a professed follower for approximately a year, but I am already passionately in love with our faith.

Each day I strive to grow in Asatru. Unfortunately, this feat has proven to be quite a challenge! While my husband is an incredible mentor, our current circumstances impede him from advising me on the tricks of the trade to blot and sumble within the confines of TDC. I am adept at "winging it", but I still long for fellowship with kindred during these events. I have discovered that on a unit of approximately 1300 women, I am the only KNOWN Odinist. In the last 13 years of my incarceration, I have encountered only one other female Odinist. I am utterly confounded by this observation!

While such a deduction is based solely on my personal exposure, it is safe to presume that this statistic conveys, albeit on a larger scale, that females constitute an alarming minority in the Asatru community. How can this be in a faith that places so much emphasis on Folk and Family? I know that it has been quite some time since some of us

have enjoyed the comforts of "practicing to expand the Folk", but I do not think that it has been so long that we have forgotten that it cannot be accomplished without women!!! (Smile)

In my quest to find answers to this mystery, I asked a couple of seasoned Odinists for their opinions. I was provided with a couple of theories...none of which I agree. It has been theorized that women lack the self-confidence to wade through a throng of testosterone fueled males in order to reach the female divine and that Asatru is not a "beginner faith".

Granted, Asatru is not, at this present time, a "beginner faith", as many of us were raised with pre-conditioned religious beliefs and were not introduced to Asatru the moment that we were born into this world. It was not this statement of fact that I disagreed with, but the implications that accompany the correlation between the two theories. It is plausible that women who lack self-confidence and self-worth may need to first explore other religions, establishing their footing by drawing out their inner strength and discovering their innate courage prior to delving into a male dominated religion such as Asatru. In my opinion, this view is a severe and inaccurate overgeneralization of women. Most of the women that I am acquainted with are not the least bit intimidated at the thought of wading through a throng of chest pounding males. Actually, we find it rather exciting!!!

My theory maintains that it is not self-confidence that women lack, it is KNOWLEDGE. 95% of the women that I have conversed with had never before heard of Asatru/Odinism. There are not many organizations that specifically reach out to the female population. Although I refrain from attempts at



persuasion on behalf of Odinism I find it impossible to conceal the passion in my words. This results in piquing the interest of my female companions.

There are quite a few women interested in learning more about the indigenous religion of Asatru. To be perfectly candid, I am a bit overwhelmed by their curiosity. I am still wet-behind-the-ears myself and together we are simply creating a vast puddle of water around us! I am seeking to enlist the assistance of the men. "Why the men?" While my explanations and insights into Asatru interest the women, the visceral characteristics of an Odinist man captivate them.

You guys have to understand that there are women out here in Midgard who STILL believe in the fairy tales of a good man. Chivalry, honor, passion, courage, strength, loyalty, and raw masculinity are character traits that have become endangered in today's society. We not only appreciate these attributes, we need them in our men.

I am certain that you are wondering what it is that you can do to help? After-all, our faith is one of action! Would you be terribly surprised to learn that I have a proposed solution? (Smile) I ask that in honor of the season you too do something that you normally do not do...I ask that you appeal to a female audience. I am aware that when there is a gathering of men, your proclivities towards matters of the heart are ignored unless it pertains to battle. All of the Gods and Goddesses of the Aesir and the Vanir are warriors that possess more than one facet to their personalities. However, women want to know what Odinist men think of love, marriage, children, family, folk, and Wyrð. For even in matters of love these are the treasures we must fight for. Accept my challenge and share your thoughts with us. May the Gods see you.

**-Astrid Diamond Cochran-Botts-**



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# Bookshelf

**Adam of Bremen. History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen, trans, by Francis J. Tschan. Columbia University Press. New York: 2002.**

Adam of Bremen's history of the bishops of Hamburg is a primary source of knowledge about the Scandinavian and Baltic regions from the late eighth to the late eleventh centuries. What begins as a church chronicle soon becomes a commentary on the history, geography, and culture of the entire region. No work on the history and culture of the Northlands from this period is complete without reference to Adam's work.

Adam came to Bremen in 1066 and entered the service of Archbishop Adalbert. To extol the virtues of this prelate and his see, Adam began his history. Much of the text draws from earlier texts we still possess, such as Einhard's biography of Charlemagne. Some, parts draw from works we no longer have or whose identity we can only guess at. Adam also draws heavily from contemporary witnesses such as missionaries, merchants, and soldiers.

Heathens will find much to interest them in Adam's work, though at times his Christian polemics will drive a Heathen to skim paragraphs. There are detailed accounts of the long and bitter wars fought to impose the desert faith on the Scandinavian and Slavic peoples. There are also descriptions of Heathen holy sites and rituals, though admittedly second and third hand. So many books about our faith and people draw from Adam's work that it is important for any serious student of the lore to go straight to the source. Tschan's translation is readable and well-annotated, and because a new edition was published in 2002, new and used copies can be readily found at good prices.

**-Thorstein,  
Woden's Folk Kindred**

**Pomeroy/ Sarah B. et al. A Brief History of Ancient Greece/ Oxford University Press. New York. 2004**

Greek culture and history is a must know for those of us that are Heathens in the true sense of the word. That small peninsula in southeast Europe influenced the world of its time, and Greek ideas of government and philosophy still influence us today.

A Brief History of Ancient Greece is a great place to start for those who know little or nothing about Ancient Greek civilization. From the invasion of the Indo-Europeans to the conquests of Alexander the Great and everything in between, this book covers it all. You will learn how the polis was developed and about the creation and implementation of a democratic government.

This book is not meant to be the end-all/ know-all of ancient Greece, as that would take volumes upon volumes. This book is true to its name and gets right to the point. At the end of each chapter there is a "Suggested Reading" column listing several books devoted entirely to the content of that particular chapter.

Understanding the development of Ancient Greek culture is imperative both to understanding what it means to be a Heathen today and, how to incorporate our faith into our everyday lives whether living in the country or in the polis.

A Brief History of Ancient Greece can be found on Amazon.com or Barnes & Noble. This book is a great read and a good starting point to learning about one of the most influential of European cultures.

**By: Valin**

# Heimdall's Horn

## Submission Guidelines

We see the Horn as a Kvasir's blend of the modern Folksih Heathen Awakening. With it we are attempting to bring together a wide variety of voices from the Folkish Heathen Awakening, both here in Vinland and around the world. We are non-political and we do not care what group you belong to if you have something good to say. We would like to see the Horn as a bridge between all the various ego driven camps to share what is best about our faith and our People without devolving into rants about petty issues. If you are interested in placing an ad with us, please see our separate note to advertisers.

*So what are we looking for?*

\* - **Full length articles** on modern Heathenry under whichever name you chose to describe it - Odinist/Adatru/Theod... These can be articles on rune knowledge, on the Gods and how we relate, modern issues of Heathens... (note: We can't take any articles on how to brew ale etc because some of our issues go into prisons.)

\* - **Short articles that are topical.** These can be news items of import to Heathens, info about upcoming Heathen events, etc... Never feel like you have to stretch out an article for us to accept it. We are always looking for small short articles if they are useful.

\* - **Articles about life after prison** We know there are several people that have seen our magazine behind the wire and are now out. If you want to write small or large articles about life outside the wire, living the virtues out here, the struggles and how you overcame them, we are very interested in them. We are considering making that a regular section of the magazine, and if we get enough regular submissions we will. Again you don't have to make it long for us to accept it. A few paragraphs about how you are living as a Heathen with strong values out here is fine.

\* - **Pictures** We would love to get high quality pictures to decorate the magazine with. We have a large portfolio of 'flash art' already, but if you have a cool picture that is Heathen in focus, feel free to send it to us.

When you submit your articles to us we ask that you be very clear if you are quoting someone else's work, and please be sure you have the full intellectual property rights on anything you send to us, or at least let us know so we can obtain them. We really like our full length articles to be footnoted, so people can track back and see what you have seen and do their own research. If you are pulling something out of nowhere, or it is strictly your opinion, feel free to say so. You don't have to have a PhD to have an opinion, but please don't try to slide through a personal opinion as ancient fact.

We do not ask for any kind of exclusive on any of the articles sent to us. We actually promote you sending your articles to multiple publications, so that good quality material can get around in the Awakening. We do though retain the right to re-publish any of the material you send to us in later publications and on our website unless you tell us specifically that you have an issue with that. We also retain the right to modify your article for size and content, mostly in case there are spelling or grammar issues you may have missed. We know you want to look your best and we want to as well.

We look forward to your submissions. We prefer digital submissions at [OurHorn@gmail.com](mailto:OurHorn@gmail.com), but if you need to send in a print version we ask that it at least be typed on only one side of the page and sent to our physical address: Submissions, P.O. Box 923, Oregon City, OR 97045. Health and Luck to you. May our Gods see you.\_

### Advertising

We have openings for ads in the new Horn. This money is used to defray the costs of production

and mailing. We are definitely not making a profit with this. We currently publish on both Solstices, but will likely move to both Solstices and Equinoxes next year. We place these ads on a donation basis, unless you are a business selling a product, in which case we ask that you support us directly, after all we are helping you make money. If you are a non-profit, we really hope you will be willing to either do an ad swap with us, if you have your own publication, or be willing to help support getting this magazine out.

#### **Ad submission guidelines:**

We ask that the ads be viewable by all age groups, and able to pass by prison monitors. That means no advertisements including nudity or anything else that you wouldn't want your 6 year old daughter to see. Use your best judgment, and if there are problems we will contact you.

We allow ads from all the various forms of Alliances on a donation basis. Send us what you feel it is worth to you. We are always trying to promote interconnection between our people.

We retain the right to refuse your ad if we do not feel it fits with our magazine. This would be extremely rare, but it may happen. Please do not be offended if it happens to you.

We have several ad sizes available:

**Sidebar ad:** These are ads that go along the side of a page. They measure 2" wide and are standardized here at 2.5" long. You can take up multiple sidebar slots, just be sure you do it in 2.5" sections so they all fit together. (Example - two sidebars together would make a 2" wide by 5" tall ad.) Our suggested donation for each sidebar section is \$5, but feel free to send what you can.

**Quarter page ads** These are ads that measure 3.5" wide by 5" tall. You can attach two quarter ads side by side for a half page ad. Our suggested donation for each quarter page ad is \$15, but feel free to send what you can.

**Full page ads** These are ads that fill an entire 8 1/2 X 11" page. If you would like to get together several people to share an ad page with, that is fine with us. It is your real-estate, do with it what you will. Our suggested donation for each full page ad is \$50, but feel free to send what you can.

We would prefer that you send the ad to us ready to go in a high DPI image in one of the standard image formats - JPEG or PNG. If you need to send it to us in a different format, just let me know. If you do not have the facilities to create an image from your ad, just let me know and I'll work with you.

Send your ad submissions or questions to [OurHorn@gmail.com](mailto:OurHorn@gmail.com) or our physical address: P.O. Box 923, Oregon City, OR 97045. Looking forward to hearing from you.



# Heathen Happenings



## Dan Halloran

The first openly Odinist legislator won a seat in the hotly fought after 19<sup>th</sup> district of New York. As a Republican, he came across many barriers to winning his seat among his own party, but in the end his solid record and conservative values won over his constituency. As he stated on line: **“I honor my Ancestors and cling to my Hiberno-Norse Culture’s Worldview. I revere my God (Tiw)- and henotheistically I may add... I have never hidden my religion—it’s on my Facebook.... I’ve been the corporate counsel for a variety of pagan groups—and have lectured and discussed theology all over the U.S.”** Health to him, and may he serve our people and our Gods well.



## Thor gets tired of Jesus Statue

MONROE, OHIO — On Monday lightning struck the large and gaudy image of Jesus with his arms outstretched that had long disgraced the highway in front of Solid Rock Church. It was quickly engulfed in flames, and destroyed down to the bare metal. Many Heathens across the internet quickly attributed the strike to Thor, who was probably tired of looking at it. The officials of Solid Rock Church vowed to rebuild the over \$300,000 statue. Thor was heard laughing.



## Texas Inmate wins court ruling allowing runes

Darren Mayfield of Woden’s Folk Kindred won his recent court case regarding the use of runes by inmates in the Texas penitentiary system(2008 U.S. App. LEXIS 11600,\*;529 F.3d 599). This multi-year court battle was waged against an opponent who lied and manipulated the system for years to deny our basic religious liberties. Darren’s persistence and general hard headedness won the day for the inmates of Texas. Any Heathens interested in repeating this performance in other states, please contact us here at Heimdall’s Horn. Heath to you Darren for all your hard work.



## FOLK WISDOM

**This other I counsel, that oath thou swear not  
but thou tell the truth:  
for baleful doom follows breach of trust;  
ill fares the breaker of oaths. -Sigdrifumal, 25**

When Sigurd awakens the valkyrie from her long sleep, she gives him battle-lore, rune wisdom, and wise counsel. Of all the advice she gives, no item carried more dire consequences than her warning to never break an oath. Sigurd does indeed forsake his sworn promise, although unintentionally, and the tragic events that follow this oath-breaking form the heart of the Volsung epic. To our ancestors, this was an inevitable consequence, for oath-breaking always left destruction in its wake.

In the modern world, the strength of our word is often a matter of pride, but to our ancestors, oaths formed the foundation of society. The heroic oaths sworn in the lore were reflected by much more prosaic oaths in every day society. Men wagered their entire fortunes on the sworn promise of a friend or neighbor. Legal disputes were settled by sworn statements instead of forensics, and the oaths exchanged between a gothi and his thingmen created a functioning system that spread justice throughout the various

layers of society and kept the disruptive violence of feud to a minimum. As long as everyone fulfilled their oaths and did their duty, society could function.

Oath-breaking was one of the three great crimes of our ancestors' society. Oath-breakers, according to Voluspa, are tortured in the weapon-filled waters of the river Slith in the afterlife. Men who broke their oaths were not fit for the company of other people because they could not be trusted. No farmer or merchant would enter into partnership with a man who was known to break his word, and no lord would take a man into his service who did not have the mettle to uphold his oath. Oath-breakers were "nithings", men whose shameful acts made even kinsmen turn away.

The life-or-death aspect of oaths has faded in our modern world, but the importance of keeping promises has not. Oaths are actually a common part of modern life. Soldiers take oaths when they enter the service. Witnesses take oaths

in court, and public servants take oaths of office. Marriage ceremonies are an elaborate and ritualized exchange of oaths. Our society has nothing but scorn for someone who does not uphold these oaths, and this scorn is well-placed.

The importance of oaths in our everyday lives as Heathens is harder to recognize at first. We can all agree that sacred promises made at blot and sumbel carry tremendous weight, but smaller promises are important, too. When we pledge to help a friend or neighbor, or when we promise to not do something, these oaths should bind us as tightly as our marriage vows.

This is the key to building the Heathen community, because the critical difference between us and our ancestors is not how much we know of the gods but rather how much we trust each other. For our ancestors, trust within kindred and community was a given. This type of trust has to be built over time, and it will not be easy. It is much easier to build barriers than trust, but without trust, without the sanctity of oaths, there is no community.

We can build trust among ourselves the same way we do in any relationship- one fulfilled promise at a time. When you say you are going to do something, hold yourself to it. The same goes for others. Let it be known that you will not accept those who do not hold up their end of a bargain.

One of the fundamental obstacles to advancing Heathenry today is a lack of unity. This is the result of a lack of trust. The only way we can overcome this is to start small and gradually build a sacred trust among the wider Heathen community. We can reach out to each other with

promises to help on worthwhile projects, and when we deliver on these promises, trust grows and we move closer to true community.

The flip side of this goes back to the verse from Sigdrifumal quoted above. Nothing hurts Heathenry worse than those who make promises but do not follow through. Too many people talk big but never deliver. This is more than just a character flaw; it undermines the future of our faith. Broken promises breed disappointment and distrust, and those who are betrayed pull back from the community. As the valkyrie said: don't make a promise unless you will keep it.

The wisdom of our ancestors shines through in Sigdrifa's words. Our people knew that promises had to be kept or disaster follows. As we grow our own communities, we must fill our promises with this same sacred weight and build an unshakable foundation of trust.



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**-Thorstein,  
Woden's Folk Kindred**



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