

The Runestone

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*From the editor...*

Here it is - the first, ever, online version of The Runestone!

It took the coordinated efforts of many different people to make this happen. Fine writers poured their creative juices into this container, where I refined and distilled it. Sheila poured this brew into the format you see before you, and now it is finally ready for your consumption.

To all who helped bring this issue to life, we give our sincere thanks.

There are countless online magazines and many of them, no matter how good their content, don't look much like their print counterparts. We didn't want to follow in their footsteps. This online issue has been designed to look familiar and comfortable to those of you who knew the paper editions. So settle in and make yourself at home, because nothing much has changed except, we like to think, for the better

And while you're settling in, remember to make room for the thousands of men and women who will be joining you - good folk who would never have seen the paper **Runestone**, but are able to access this one!

Our readership has just expanded by an order of magnitude or so, and the cost of a subscription has disappeared into nothingness for anyone who has a computer hooked up to the Internet. We think that's pretty neat.

In the final analysis, though, these are just words like the ones you used to see on the printed page. We're the same. You're the same. We still live in the same world we did a few months ago. So, after you read - act! Life is not measured in the reading, or in the thinking (much as we honor and enjoy those things) but in the doing! Live Asatru with every bit of your life, honor the Gods and Goddesses, serve the Folk...Build the tribes!

*Stephen A. McNallen*

Drighten, AFA

Tribes, What's next?

By Stephen A. McNallen

*Where We've Been...*

A year and a half ago the AFA held the first Gathering of the Tribes. Over a period of several frenzied days, Asatruar from all across Vinland thought, talked, and planned the birth of new tribes worthy of the ones our ancestors knew.

We listened intently as James Russell, author of the seminal volume, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*, addressed us...we sat in an unforgettable torchlit concert...and we called the tribes of yore to be with us in a ritual that induced paranormal perceptions in several of those who took part.

It was one outstanding Asatru event!

Since that time, many words have been written and many deeds done. But what comes next? Do we actually have our tribes yet?

Well, not exactly...but that doesn't mean we've been holding still! Anyone with their ear to the ground, or their eye on the Internet, can see that the idea of tribes has been gaining ground among Asatruar. Ignored for years, the concept is now percolating through our ranks. Ideas are being tossed around, definitions argued and established, plans put forth. There has definitely been ferment.

The AFA is largely responsible for this activity. The afa-list, where our members talk to each other about almost anything that (remotely) deals with our ancestral religion, has seen threads on naming tribes, forming tribes, dating systems for tribes, and modern-day tribal languages. Without a doubt, we have had a significant role in spreading the tribal idea.

Back in the 1980's, our forerunner - the Asatru Free Assembly - talked in terms of intentional communities. While many of us seemed to like the idea, not a lot actually happened. In retrospect, it may be that the very phrase "intentional community" conjured up images of beaded hippies sitting in yurts and teepees, smoking grass and listening to the Grateful Dead. This was hardly the correct perception, and we made it clear all along that a return to the glorious Sixties was not our aim - but for whatever reason the concept of a community remained little more than words on paper.

The semantic move from "intentional communities" to "tribes" may have touched something in Asatruar. Germanic warriors and women seemed a lot more palatable to most of us than the aforementioned counterculturalists in dreadlocks and tie-dyed clothing - as well they should!

### ***Where We're At...***

Whatever the reason, the tribes are now catching on. Not only is there more talk, but small proto-tribes are starting to come together.

In theory, any kindred should be the precursor to a tribe. Its members should understand that it will, in time, become a clan or family within a larger group, along with other kindreds like their own. The only thing that keeps the average kindred from being a proto-tribe is awareness - a consciousness that the larger entity is a desirable goal - and a willingness to work in that direction. All too many of us have been unwilling to look beyond our local area and our immediate friends and associates; in the process, the bigger picture gets overlooked.

Individual Asatruar, out there on the steppes in lone wolf mode, are important. Kindreds, even if they never morph into components of a tribe, are important. But they are not enough by themselves; it is time

to take the next step. Asatru has been in the kindred-producing phase since the late 1970's! It's time to take the next step!

Our kinsmen in Virginia are taking that step. Vor Stead Kindred and Waters of the James Kindred are inching toward joining forces as a "shire" - the name the AFA has used to describe just this sort of close cooperation. Neither kindred will lose its identity, but rather they will reinforce each other. This sort of linking is the beginning, and the essence, of tribe-building.

At the same time, Hjuke Gutane (James Coulter, to the outside world) began tribe-building after learning that he is partly descended from the Goths of old. Hjuke is painstakingly rebuilding the ways of this tribe, even to studying their language (and you can read more about his thought on language elsewhere in this issue of *The Runestone!*).

In other parts of the country, groups not connected with the AFA are, according to their web sites, carrying out a program almost identical to ours. We need to be talking to them, and they need to be talking to us!

### ***Where We're Going!***

So what's next?

The best leadership is by example. Therefore, AFA kindreds in California will have the opportunity, over the next five months or so, to actually build the kind of tribe we described in the last *Runestone* - complete with the traditional social structure, as faithfully as we can reproduce it.

Our method isn't complicated. We have AFA members and supporters scattered all over the state. Some of them are already organized into kindreds; others are not...but could be, with a little encouragement on our part! We will build kindreds, and at the same time weave those kindreds into our (yet unnamed) tribe.

Next summer, instead of staging another mammoth gathering like the Gathering of the Tribes of yesteryear, we will formally bring this larger entity into existence. The tone will be more regional than the ground-breaking assembly of two years ago, as we do our best to put our ideas into practice. Hopefully we will have learned valuable lessons that will serve all of you, AFA members and kindreds across the nation of Vinland, as you conduct your own experiments in retribalization.

You're all invited!

## **A NEED FOR A NEED FOR TRIBAL LANGUAGE TRIBAL LANGUAGE** by **Hjuke Gutane**

A distinct feature of any tribal culture is the language it uses to describe the things around it, as well as the events which shape the tribe's objective and subjective worlds. Language is a tribal expression, an indispensable key to the group's outlook or perceptions of all things great and small - from those of

minuscule importance and influence to the macrocosmic foundations which give substance, life and spirit to the collective community of folk.

By knowing a tribe's language, and by studying the context in which certain words are used in written or oral settings, a patient researcher can sift through the sources, detecting even minute idiosyncrasies or patterns of usage in words or phrases. These patterns lend significant clues and insights into deeper meanings of important words for the folk who used them. This is especially true in researching the customs and ethics of our ancestors; though much can be gained from researching Germanic literature such as the Eddas and sagas, they remain rather inefficient in providing us with anything close to a complete picture. For this, we turn to the languages our forebears used and are provided with greater insights and profound understanding (This is the basis for Eric Wodening's revealing work, *We Are Our Deeds*, published by Theod).

### **The Power of Language in Magic**

From a purely Heathen perspective, we can think of the objective society, that physical collection of gathered folk within a contained community, as the physical manifestation of that community's tribal or collective soul. The language of that society or tribe is the community's collective medium of expression, through which those things which are subjective are expressed in the objective world. Examples of this would include (but are not limited to) such things as *sumbel*, and "active magical" workings such as formulaic verse charms and even *galdor*.

In "active" magical workings (such as verse charms), the use of words in specific patterns, or using certain numerical formulas, is generally regarded as vital to bring about the desired result. Encrypting the work within specific linguistic terms ensures that the work is carried out without being "decoded," and hence rendered magically impotent. A good illustration can be found in the (Finnish) *Kalevala* - when Lemminkainen vows to assail the Lapps (a folk well-renown for their magical capabilities) his mother protests his going, cautioning him that he doesn't know the "Lapp's language" - and would be incapable of warding himself from the effects of their songs.

Of course, a magical working's effectiveness is also determined by the amount of *maegen* one imparts within the working. The more energy we can utilize from our deepest consciousness and *maegen* (Old Norse *hamingja*), the greater the success and potency of that working. Of course, this goes beyond our own selves (especially in more profound workings) to include the energy (*maegen/ hamingja*) of the folk's collective soul as well. Our modern tongue is limited in its ability to explain these depths.

### **Linguistic Deep Structure**

Over the course of time, as English became over-amalgamated with foreign ways of speaking, sweeping alterations took place within the language's grammatical structure. These have grossly changed our modern tongue from its elder form, and from that of its Germanic relatives. Most notable is the complete absence from Modern English of certain grammatical agencies which had once been a prominent part of its elder form; one example is the lack of various "cases" (which denote a word's function within a sentence), such as "vocative," "instrumental," and "dative." Another substantial change was the obliteration of gender classification for nouns, which is lost in Modern English but survives in present-day European tongues.

Within the gender classification structure, nouns are assigned to one of three categories: feminine, neuter, and masculine. Generally, these classifications are thought to operate apart from real or actual sexual nature; however, some experts (such as Stephen Pollington) do expand gender classification to infer characteristics for words which fall under male/female groupings. In an expanded context (as presented in Pollington's *First Steps in Old English*) the feminine class includes words denoting abstract thoughts or ideas, as well as those which are associated with feminine forms, or with females.

Words found under the neuter classification indicate inanimate, or non- or asexual, things or groups of things. Finally, words that belong to the masculine class denote or are associated with masculine forms, or with males.

If we consider a simple example, this certainly seems applicable to our subject: In Modern English, neither "sun" nor "moon" indicate any specific gender roles or properties for the things the terms represent. In Old English, however (as in all other Germanic dialects, elder and modern), *mona* (moon) is designated as "masculine," and *sunne* (sun) as feminine. In Germanic mythology, the spiritual embodiments of the moon and sun (which, incidentally share the names of their astronomical counterparts), coincide perfectly with their grammatical gender classifications; that is, the moon is a "he" and the sun is a "she"!

While it would be a grotesque overstatement to say that grammatical gender indicates any form of sexual classifications as found in nature on a whole, such categories can lend deep insight into the perceptions and attitudes of our forebears.

Gender classification also plays a significant role in determining inflexion: specific endings or word-form alterations which indicate number, tense, case, or similar qualities. Gender (along with case, i.e.: nominative, accusative, dative, etc.) also determines which demonstrative pronoun (that, this, the) are used in a given setting.

True, a simple kind of inflexion remains, to a minute extent, in our current language - we still attach endings to words to indicate number and tense, and we alter words such as "she" to "her" to indicate what we call a "change in function." However, this diminished form is a mere ghost of the complex intricacies inherent in the elder language, intricacies which lend insight to form and provide a connection to elder attitudes and perceptions (hence, a connection to the folk-soul) which simply can't be attained in our modern dialect. This, in essence, leaves modern languages cut off from the folk-soul in profound ways.

When dealing with whole Germanic forms such as a Germanic collective soul, or *folk-maegen/ hamingja*, only a structurally whole Germanic language is capable of invoking the deepest levels of our individual and collective beings. Utilizing an elder tongue instead of "disconnected" Modern English gives us the greatest access to these strata, drawing such force and form from the furthest reaches of tribal wisdom through the soul's own medium of expression: the tribal dialect.

### **Evolution and the "Quasi-culture"**

It goes without saying that languages, along with the tribes who speak them, will evolve over a period of time. This is perhaps the one point most cited in defending the use of modern English over an elder tongue, and it is often included in the argument (usually made from non-Heathen circles) against reforming or refounding tribes along elder forms.

Even so, this is a rather shallow, misinformed argument; while a degree of evolution is certain, our folk's development in accordance with tribal thews and ways ceased when our ancestors adopted foreign creeds and the ways of an alien culture. Our folk integrated that culture within their own, absorbing the dogma and statutes of strangers and abandoning our original, unwritten customs or thews - forming in essence, a sort of "quasi-culture" which was to have enormous (and greatly detrimental) impact on the shape of the folk-development in later generations. Thus, our folk's evolution did not advance along Germanic lines, but rather, along that of a mixture of Germanic and non-Germanic forms and means.

In our modern era, increasing numbers of people are moving away from the artificial quasi-culture, and instead are seeking their roots: the "old ways," the folk ways and folk religion(s) of their forebears. This shift in perspective is mainly made manifest in the return to elder religions such as Asatru and Theodism among Germanic folk, as these are the living embodiments of our folk-soul and folk-expression - the very access to that deep ancestral wisdom contained within Mimir's well.

### **Rebuilding the Tribes**

Likewise, as Theodism and Asatru (re-)develop, strengthening the thew and maegens currently re-awakening within the collective folk, the concept of rebuilding the tribes moves from the backburners to the fore...and again, the argument presents itself: Isn't that counter-evolutionary? Aren't we undoing centuries of evolution? Aren't we beyond such things?

Absolutely not!

As more and more individuals return to ancestral, Heathen ways, we are increasingly more likely to bind into communities such as the modern Asatru kindred or Theodish leode. Surely, a furthering of one's folk and folkways cannot be carried out on an isolationist, "lone wolf," or strictly individualistic level; It takes an entire folk-group, a tribe, to fuel the momentum of evolution! Hence, the shift from emphasis on the individual to the kindred/leode and to the tribe/theod.

In refounding the tribes, we aren't returning to the past as a goal in and of itself, as in a historical reenactment society, but rather we are returning to a starting point, a Heathen foundation at which we can wipe the errors from the proverbial slate and begin anew - furthering ourselves and our folkways along natural, tribal law (as "coterminous with society," to quote Eric Wodening).

So, what's all this got to do with language? To that I might as well ask in return, what's the point of returning to the "old ways" if we're going to abandon the "old folk-expressions" of elder tongues? Why bother with such a half-hearted attempt at all? That is, why return to a starting point, only to keep the linguistic folk-expressions of the quasi-culture we seek to leave behind? One might as well ask, why bother with the drinking horns and sacral flame at a blot? Why not just drink beer straight from the can, and microwave that blot offering 'till it blackens, catches fire, or explodes?

Tribal language is the medium of expression for the tribe and its soul. True, we have had a linguistic return in recent decades to a certain extent: In Asatru, Old Norse is given much use in ritual setting, and in Theodism, Anglo-Saxon (Old English) is a much-used form.

Though this is undoubtedly an excellent start, it must not stop there! Our folk's evolution must not plateau with simply Old Norse or Old English as the only Heathen dialects of the tribes; after all, we're not all of Norse or English descent! Besides, we'd only be trading one universal, non-tribal, non-differentiated quasi-culture for another.

When we speak of rebuilding the tribes, we must include a re-introduction of tribal dialect. Again, the tribal language is the medium of expression for the tribe and the tribal soul.

In practicing Heathen ways, we as Germanic folk follow general Germanic forms. Any close examination (such as Wodening's) of our elder culture clearly illustrates pan-tribal similarities and shared beliefs or commonly held practices. Such examination also reveals tribal variations, however subtle, in religious custom, providing significant insights into the attributes and perceptions of not only the Germanic folk as a whole, but of the individual tribes as well.

In your own kindred's ritual and dynamics (by-laws, thews, etc.), there's always a specific group influence or perception, something held or maintained by the kindred that is unique in form or function...and so it is with tribal languages.

Tribal tongues contains the essence of the specific group dynamic, and provides a whole and rounded form of the community; it is a container of all that the tribe is and has been. Likewise, a language which is firmly rooted in elder forms (and especially the elder grammatical structure) retains a firm connection to the entirety of the Folk-soul in its being and evolutionary development.

### Conclusion

By no means should we abandon a pan-tribal language, which for us would suitably be Modern English. Without a doubt, we could not possibly conduct a productive Gathering of the Tribes, Althing or Moot without a common linguistic denominator. But in rebuilding the tribes, we must include a return to the tribal expression. We must let the return be a whole return, and so, a whole evolution - and that evolution has already begun with the revival of Old Norse and Old English, continuing with the revival of Old Frisian among the Frisians (Theod) and of Gothic among the Gutish Thiuda (Gothic Tribe).

A return to elder tongues is a return to a culturally authentic starting point. From this starting point, our languages will evolve along natural lines, developing structurally sound dialects that reflect the subtleties of the attitudes and perceptions of each tribe. This tendency has already become manifest in recent years with the introduction of neologisms (new words or expressions) within elder linguistic forms such as Anglo-Saxon and Gothic; developments that strengthen not only our grasp upon elder linguistic structures, but which also strengthen our grasp upon our culture, and renew the connection we share with our ancestors, our Gods, and the soul of our folk.

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PARANORMAL

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**Dr. Brian Regan**

We live in an age which, for various reasons, ignores and even ridicules the very idea of the paranormal: of that which cannot be explained by the norms of everyday experience. Telepathy, clairvoyance, psychokinesis and similar categories are regularly dismissed as ridiculous, impossible, delusional, and so forth. In cases where it is very difficult if not impossible to dismiss such things, the evidence is most often suppressed or deliberately misconstrued. Peer pressure is too great.

In spite of this hostile atmosphere, we of Asatru need to look seriously at the ocean of human experience which testifies to the reality of another dimension of nature.

### **Epistemology**

One difference between the universal religions and Asatru is that Asatru does not claim that knowledge or "revelation" about the paranormal has been finalized. That is, it does not say that some religious founder has revealed all there is about it or has said all that can possibly be known about this mysterious realm.

This stance is due to the fact that Asatru does not have a founder in the same way that Christianity, Islam, Buddhism or even Judaism (with Moses) has. Rather, it is a tribal religion and draws its knowledge from experience, hypothesis and reflection - in short, from life itself. For this reason, it has no "holy book," and no "sacred scripture" to fixate on, although we have the histories and the sagas of our Northern ancestors on which to reflect. It is the shamanic religious experience of our ancestors, as seen in their myths and actions, that forms our foundation. To their experience we add our own: science based modern psychology, parapsychology and philosophy.

My purpose in this discussion is not to "prove" the existence or reality of paranormal events. I take it for granted that they occur, and have been witnessed in one form or another by the vast majority of mankind during its entire existence. This does not mean that the false claims of frauds, fakers and charlatans - and they are many - are true. It just means that the laws of classroom science do not explain the whole of reality. There are other factors which operate on a mental level: a level of mind and memory. And in the long term these factors are far more powerful than the so called physical level which they undergird.

Our particular species, according to scientists, has been in existence anywhere from 60 to 200 thousand years. We have probably had language of some type for about 60 to 70 thousand years. (In fact, some scientists think that the development of speech was what made it possible to kill off our nearest competitor, the speechless Neanderthal species.) But in the period before speech, and also in the long period from the emergence of language until the appearance of the first cities, survival in the world and even emergency messages between individuals were often made possible through a very different means of consciousness. We know this both from the careful study of 40 thousand year old European cave paintings and from the investigation of tribal peoples who have retained a primitive way of life up until modern times. We also know it from studying the earliest literary texts and monuments of mankind, many of them religious or containing much religious thinking.

This ancient mode of thinking was characterized, above all, by slow brainwaves. In general, brainwave frequency is an important part of intelligence: the faster the frequency, the smarter the person, other things (such as brain size and structure) being equal. Over time, humanity has developed brains with higher frequency and so has become more conscious. People with below average frequencies are mentally "slow" whereas those whose brains produce higher frequencies are quicker to learn and understand.

But there is a trade off. For a long time now we have studied meditation, sleep and the Near Death Experience (NDE) as well as poltergeist phenomena in adolescents, among other things. From such study



we have learned that the low-frequency (alpha, theta or delta) brainwave frequencies are precisely those most attuned to paranormal processes. Faster, higher frequencies (as in waking, busy adults) drown out the delicate communications from the deeper levels of existence. Thus intellectuals almost never experience such things as telepathy and hence often opine that it is impossible. In contrast, earlier generations of mankind had slower brainwaves than we have today, and so were necessarily more aware of paranormal - that is, spiritual - events and phenomena. Ancient Germanic lore has many references to the gods, giants and other supernatural beings; the early parts of the Bible have gods and angels communicating frequently with men and women; likewise for the Vedas and Upanishads of ancient India, the Gathas of ancient Iran, and the various myths universally found among the other peoples of the earth.

As we learn from modern psychology, the human mind has many different parts. And our consciousness is but the tiniest tip of a vast wave variously referred to as the subconscious, the unconscious, the soul or the psyche. Furthermore, one important aspect of the unconscious is the pathological ego (the "mentally ill me"), a highly creative but unbalanced part of us. About this component we will have more to say later.

### **A Little Theory**

So as a species we have been becoming smarter. But the various subdivisions of our kind are developing at different rates, and express brainwave characteristics that vary accordingly. Other factors also influence brainwave frequency: social conditions such as fast paced, modern city life versus backwoods tribal or farm conditions; sobriety versus drunkenness; waking versus sleep; adulthood versus childhood; health versus sickness.

Small children in underdeveloped countries (who accordingly have quite slow frequencies) sometimes spontaneously "remember," and speak of having lived, previous lifetimes as former personalities, whereas this is rare in urban America and almost nonexistent among adults anywhere. More significantly, many of those who "remember" having died violently often have birthmarks and birth defects corresponding to the wounds or marks made on the previous personality's body before, during or even after death. (Cf. Ian Stevenson, MD, *Reincarnation and Biology: A Contribution to the Etiology of Birthmarks and Birth Defects: Volume 1: Birthmarks. Volume 2: Birth Defects and Other Anomalies.* Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger Publishers (88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881), 1997.)

Small children, of course, generally have a more "magical" understanding of the world than do adults, and often perceive things telepathically. Their brains are not yet developed enough to produce the faster brainwaves which block paranormal perception. In accordance with the 19th century German biologist Ernst Haeckel's discovery that each individual of a species retraces, in its own personal development, the evolution of the species as a whole in an accelerated manner, children give us some insight into the mental processes of early man. From such evidence as this we can see that paranormal perception is very ancient.

The critical stage in the development of the personality is puberty: the surge in hormone levels which pushes the individual toward manhood or womanhood. Puberty is a not just a physical but also a psychic process vulnerable to many attacks from within and without the individual. On rare occasions, it produces a split in the personality. A strong subconscious element, a part of the Self which is intelligent but mentally unbalanced or pathological, blocks the formation of a stable personality; instead, this "pathological ego" reaches into the mental depths below the individual to vent its hatred or frustration through psychokinesis, moving nearby material objects by mental means. This is known as the "poltergeist" (German for "banging ghost"). Physical objects near such individuals suddenly fly from their

positions on walls or tables, disappear from one spot and mysteriously reappear in another in the presence of sober witnesses, and the like.

The central agents of poltergeist phenomena are almost always girls and only rarely boys, for two reasons: girls tend to have slower brainwave frequency to begin with (the female brain is on average both smaller and less differentiated than the male brain); and girls tend to be assigned to more submissive, often frustrating roles than boys. Their frustration is consequently directed inward toward the self rather than outward toward family or friends. The resulting poltergeist then expresses unconsciously and physically what the consciousness cannot.

At this point it is necessary to say that all paranormal phenomena are natural, not supernatural. It is true that they do not conform to the materialist world model which says that if you can't see it, it doesn't exist. It is also true that they demonstrate the existence of a dimension additional to the one we see: a dimension I here call the "inframind" (from Latin *infra* "below, underneath" and English *mind*).

### **The Types of Paranormal Phenomena**

There are two main types of paranormal events: psi cognitive and psi kinetic. They can be organized as follows:

***PSI cognitive phenomena.*** (This refers to the events themselves, that is, what is happening or has just happened. Information transfer takes place spatially by means of unconscious channels and under specific conditions. In general the unconscious nature of these phenomena makes such communication useless for practical purposes.) Psi cognitive events include:

***Telepathy:*** subconscious communication between one mind and another. It can also be defined as the paranormal cognition, on the part of one person (or living being) of an event or mental state relative to another person (or living being). Pure telepathy requires that the two people involved not be in the same place.

***Clairvoyance:*** subconscious communication between a human mind and inanimate physical reality. Pure clairvoyance occurs when there is no possibility that the communicated information is already known by other human minds. (Otherwise it would be classed as a case of telepathy.)

***Precognition:*** knowing events which have not yet taken place but are germinating, forming, in their seed stage. This process involves parapsychologically surveying current developments and, of all possible outcomes dependent on human action, proposing to consciousness the most probable one. Precognition is, therefore, not a true knowing of what is to be; it is a shrewd conjecture about the effects of current human actions /effects which, based upon probability, are anticipated by the unconscious. The farther into the future the events about which such precognitive predictions are made, the more their details turn out to be wrong: a few hours can yield surprisingly exact details; days or months will produce blurred or inaccurate details. A reasonably accurate prediction covering a time span of a year or more is rare. The outer limit of human predictive capabilities seems to be about a decade, to judge from general experience.

**PSI kinetic phenomena.** (These are unconscious communications, by acting on and through matter, of a symbolic message whose meaning varies according to the type of the phenomenon.) Here we have:

**Telekinesis or psychokinesis:** movement at a distance, that is, the displacement of objects without the application of any known physical force.

**Levitation:** a rising into the air, especially by a person. It can also refer to the rising of objects. When objects are displaced from one spot to another, we speak of psychokinesis.

**Apportation:** the appearance of an object in a spot where it has not previously existed. Usually such an object has been transferred from some other spot where it is now absent. The history of parapsychology includes instances of the apportation of stones, water, flowers and various other objects.

**Materialization:** the formation, during sessions with a medium, of human forms. Such forms are sometimes called ectoplasms.

**Raps:** knocks of varying intensity, from loud cracks to deafening noises. Normally connected with mediumistic sessions.

**Direct painting:** the graphical or pictorial reproduction of images where there is no contact with paintbrushes (where a medium is present) or in the complete absence of any brushes (in the case of auto infestations).

**Bilocation:** the materialization, apart from spiritualist environments, of human forms. Some process of organization of atomic structures may be involved here. It is produced through unconscious channels; its origin is usually some unconscious stimulus, although occasionally it may be due to a conscious act of will. Often, the human form behaves like a true "double," has a physical consistency and even talks, admonishes or heals people. The phenomenon has shown up in the lives of mystics and saints and in the spiritist environment, although outside of mediumistic settings. The environment in which it appears is always different. Related to this is the "out of body experience" (OOBE), which includes seeing one's own body lying as though asleep, visiting unknown places and being able to describe them later. Such "astral travel" happens inside the mind and, hence, can be a product only of PSI cognitive activity of the telepathic clairvoyant type. The OOBE is therefore not strictly classified among psychokinetic phenomena.

**Olfactory phenomena (osmogenesis):** the release of perfumes or disagreeable odors (like sulfur). These have been witnessed both in contexts involving mystical phenomena, and in pseudo diabolic, spiritualist

and infestational contexts. And they are completely distinct from smells due to bodily emissions by any living thing.

***Thermal phenomena:*** lowering or raising of the surrounding temperature (up to ten degrees) in mediumistic sessions and in the moments preceding the more striking physical phenomena such as apportations, materializations and levitations. On the other hand, apported metallic objects are ordinarily very hot, to the point of burning whoever touches them, or leaving burn marks on the table they come to rest on. One extraordinary type of thermal phenomenon is that of spontaneous combustion, which occasionally occurs in poltergeist phenomena.

### **Consciousness**

The human connection with the paranormal is the unconscious. As already mentioned, it is also known as the subconscious, the psyche or the soul. This is the mental storehouse of all knowledge about the body, of all personal memories and psychological motives; furthermore, it is many sided and has characteristics still unknown. Interacting intimately with the human nervous systems and especially with that most complex of all organs, the brain, the unconscious communicates with the physical body in a manner analogous to the way in which electromagnetic TV waves are sent out by a TV station and sensed by a TV set. The station translates views captured by a special camera into electromagnetic waves and broadcasts them, and the set picks up this signal and translates it into viewable form. The analogy is imperfect, of course, but still helpful. The body is both "station" and "set": a "transceiver," in this analogy.

The notion of the paranormal presupposes the idea of the unconscious because, for the most part, paranormal dynamics develop and play themselves out in the unconscious. Moreover, the unconscious is the filter through which paranormal phenomena - "psi" for short - reach the conscious self. And, finally, consciousness itself is but a historically very recent product of the unconscious, which in turn emerged long ago from the much more diffuse and profound deepsoul of nature. We will return later to this deepsoul, which we may also call the cosmic inframind or, or in Germanic-Asatru terminology, Weird.

In laboratory tests with psychics, the group consisting of the sensitive (or psychic) and the experimenters (with their own mental attitudes) forms a *psychic unit* through the union of their unconsciouses - a group soul which can change the outcome of an experiment. As a result of this psychic integration, the experimenters themselves become part of the experiment. Those with negative attitudes or personal preoccupations can change the results in a negative direction, while those with positive, believing, fully attentive attitudes can move the results in a positive direction.

Such psychic integration, well attested in parapsychology, is also seen in mob action, in wars and, on the non human level in the tendency of groups (flocks, herds, schools, etc.) in many animal and insect species to act as wholes rather than as unrelated collections of mere individuals.

### **Formative Causation**

The philosopher who has best explained the operation of the soul - of group or individual - is the British scholar and scientist Rupert Sheldrake. He explains the soul as one kind of "form memory" or "morphic field." The term "morphic" comes from the Greek "morph," meaning "form." He uses this word because it is the morphic field which, like a magnetic field, determines the form of the bodies of individuals and of whole species; it also determines the form of events, or three dimensional forms acting through the fourth dimension of time.

Sheldrake calls his theory "formative causation." According to it, a living stock - a race - maintains its bodily shape and behavior by remembering similar forms and actions of the past. A species evolves by rethinking its own structure in a way that enables it to fit better into its life surroundings. An evolutionary change in bodily form, thus, happens "miraculously" and suddenly. In other words, evolution occurs through sudden leaps: a part of a species integrates into its group soul (or what Ian Stevenson calls the "eumorph") all of the recent, short term knowledge it has acquired and thereby changes its form. (The term "recent" as used here means simply "since the last evolutionary change," which may be millions of years.) To put it another way: evolution is the ongoing development of ever newer morphic ideas.

### **The Archaic Nature of the Paranormal**

All of this, of course, takes place on the level of the very deep unconscious, a level whose very existence is unsuspected by consciousness with its fast brainwaves. The human brain, however, availed itself of this deep level in pre conscious times (from 2 to 200 thousand years ago) to help us survive. For this reason, we discover valid cases of so called precognition occurring mainly when life itself is at stake: the man who has a vivid vision or dream of being in a horrible accident at a specific spot and then has a near miss at that very spot a few days later; the woman who senses that her husband or son is facing a mortal danger unless he undertakes a different plan of action, a sensation that proves true when he is killed shortly afterward, exactly as sensed.

We know from the cases of idiots savants ("wise fools") that the ordinary human mind is capable of enormous feats of calculation and prediction. What happens in precognitive sensations is that the brain senses vitally important information from the deep, paranormal level, and calculates the most probable outcome. Should this be life threatening, the soul presents it in understandable form to consciousness. This kind of capability enabled our ancestors to survive in extremely perilous circumstances and spread over the earth. Only since the acceleration of brainwave frequency and appearance of consciousness in the last two thousand years or so has this paranormal capability become forgotten and viewed as a bizarre rarity best ignored, a freak happening to be deliberately misinterpreted as a non event.

### **Odin**

In the long era of human prehistory, some individuals specially gifted in such psychic abilities were accorded great reverence and respect within their tribes. We call them "shamans." (Technically, the feminine form is "shamanka.") Typically, they were able to enter trances in which their brainwave activity was reduced to a minimum, so that their consciousness no longer blocked information flowing up from the deepsoul and the inframind. This condition often happens inadvertently today as the so called Near Death Experience or NDE, a kind of "juxtamortal" (near death) dream in which brainwaves are greatly slowed or even stopped. The traditional shaman or mystic, of course, is much better trained and

able to use this information and the extraordinary power it conveys than is the average modern city dweller.

Prehistorically, and even today in primitive societies, the shaman was and is of great value to the tribe because he - or more often she - could do for the whole community what psychic warning and seeming precognition frequently still do for the individual: communicate information critical to survival and well being.

In the early Europe of 5000 years ago, the word *wut-* was used to refer to a shaman in trance rapture. By 2000 years ago this had become *wod-* among our Germanic ancestors. Because shamanism was central to tribal survival, the chief supernatural entity was considered as the highest shaman. Among the Goths in what is now Ukraine, this entity was named by taking the ending *-in* or *-an*, meaning "chief or leader of," and attaching it to this word for the trance inspired shaman. Hence our words for the leader of those in shamanic raptures or, in effect, "Chief Shaman." Centuries later, the doublet became German "Wotan," Old English "Woden" and Old Norse "Odin," So it happens that this divine name bears witness to the great and vital importance of deep psychic experiences among our ancestors.

### **Psychic Legacy**

In his two tome work, *Reincarnation and Biology*, researcher Dr. Ian Stevenson provides massive evidence for what seems to be reincarnation. Among other things, this evidence includes not just remembrance of past lives by young children but, above all, descriptions of birthmarks and birth defects corresponding to death wounds or marks on the corpses of those whose lives seem to be remembered. The volumes contain a great many black and white photographs of such birthmarks and birth defects. (The work's author regrets that publication costs forbade printing the photographs in color, which would have made the pictures of many such marks much more vivid.)

Dr. Stevenson notes that a large majority of these cases involves some form of violent or drastic death of the remembered previous personality. For this and other reasons he opines (Vol. II, p. 2077; I am paraphrasing here) that: Reincarnation is a normal process in which all memory is fed into a personal morphic field (which Ian Stevenson calls a "tautomorph" - the "psychophore" or "soul bearer" of the individual). This in turn guides the growth of a subsequent individual and, at a yet deeper level, contributes to the form memories of the race or species as a whole.

However, intense emotions around death, combined with an individual's cultural ideas, can disturb this process of reintegration so that the life memories do not become wholly "digested" by the morphic field.

Instead, due to the dying person's intense obsession with wounds or marks, such emotions modify the new body and imprint their own physical and mental character upon it. This leads to the suspicion that having specific conscious memories of a previous lifetime may actually be a defect, somewhat in the way that terrible childhood experiences often burden an adult with serious psychological problems.

Psychic alteration of physical reality happens not just in human bodies but also in cases of "haunted houses" and "infested" places: an event - a battle in war, a horrible murder, a tragedy of some kind - in which intense human emotions are produced modifies the underlying morphic field of the environment and imprints its character upon it. For long afterwards, sensitives and those in a state of lowered brainwave frequency are often able to "see" or sense the event in some way. Included may be psychokinetic phenomena such as: the sound of steps; knockings; rustling sounds; voices; sighs; clanking; singing; loud laughter; gusts of cold air; the smell of flowers, of burning, of sulfur; spontaneous

combustion ( a possibility for the disappearance of Jesus' body from his tomb and the strange, "photographic" image left on the Turin Shroud); the appearance of three dimensional figures; the movement of objects always at a certain place inhabited or uninhabited, such as a building or an open space.

The difference between infestations and poltergeists is that the poltergeist is always associated with a person, while an infestation is connected to a locale, so that it always recurs in the same place.

This difference is not absolute. There are some cases, such as the sudden appearance of intelligible writing on a wall in which poltergeist and infestational activity are combined, and a message of some significance is communicated to someone present. In all such cases the simplest explanation is that it is the inborn power of the human soul which activates the phenomenon and endows it with intelligence.

There are borderline cases. In the literature of the paranormal there is the report of Mrs. Anne Simpson who would nightly see the ghost of a woman who mournfully gave her name as "Malory." The ghost stated that she had left a debt. Informed of this, the parish priest investigated the matter and found there had been a washerwoman of that name who had died several months previously. She had left a small debt in the place where she had been a storeroom manager. The priest paid the debt and the ghost ceased appearing.

In this case it is quite probable that Mrs. Simpson had unconsciously activated the "psychic legacy" of Malory, whose last thought before dying was, perhaps, the debt she owed. The psychic legacy forms part of the deep inframind or "archives of the past" in which, it would seem, exist all of the psychic experiences of all time. The ghost would appear at night when Mrs. Simpson, having relaxed from the chores of the day, had also relaxed the frequency of her own brainwaves and was thus more sensitive to such perception.

The reason the ghost disappeared after the debt was paid was most likely this: The ghost had never appeared in the first place but was instead a hallucination of Mrs. Simpson, who had paranormally perceived the final thought of the dying person and constructed a visual image of it in front of her own senses. The "ghost" appeared in Mrs. Simpson's own house and was not connected to any specific spot. After Mrs. Simpson learned the debt had been paid, she unconsciously deactivated the message, since she had been convinced that Mrs. Malory was at peace.

On the other hand, with haunted places, the communication is connected with a specific spot and often even seems tied to the material of the building. Since most of the buildings of the Greek, Roman and Etruscan civilizations have disappeared, most of their psychokinetic hauntings have also disappeared. And this, even though ancient Greek and Roman histories report cases of haunted houses.

Thus two elements appear to be requisite for the phenomena of (apparent) reincarnation and haunted places:

1. A powerful message or complex of information registered in the inframind (inframental memories).
2. The physical material of the building, place or living body containing such memories from which a sensitive soul can reconstruct the original drama - often psychokinetically, with associated noises, etc.

In the case of haunted houses, a living human psychically surveys the situation and senses the turbulent psychic legacy which is part of their history. Then, psycho physically interacting with matter, the soul reproduces echoes of the drama which so strongly imprinted itself on that history. Hence the raps, strange visions, gusts of air, etc.

In the case of reincarnation, the fertilized egg, reaching ever deeper into the abyss of Weird, evokes the memories of similar, bygone embryonic forms and, psycho physically "remembering" them, reenacts within itself the same activity which produced those earlier forms.

It is this "memorization and remembering," this back and forth between the psychic and the physical, the soul and the body, spirit and matter, which keeps us and all living beings alive. We are the heightened reflection of our ancestors, mirrored in the depths of Weird. Their souls - their psychic legacies - are part of us, as our souls will be part of our descendants.

### **Evolution**

Of course, memory alone is not the whole of the story. Weird not only accepts, but also integrates the memories fed into it, and appropriately reorganizes the morphic complexes which produce life forms to achieve a better fit between them and their environment. As already stated, the group soul of a subspecies suddenly "rethinks" its own being and re shapes itself, thereby giving rise to a new life form perhaps higher or lower than the ancestral one.

But there remains the question of the greater depths of the cosmic inframind, to which there seems to be no end. We know today that the cosmos has evolved, and that time itself as we know it had a beginning. Space and time were not always here, but were born together about 13 billion years ago. Man can only stand in awe at such vast, transpersonal power of Weird, the mind which undergirds the universe and brought it about.

Contrary to the partial views of the universal religions, Weird does not repeat itself meaninglessly or make the soap operas of ordinary human life its primary concern. The emergence of consciousness is an extremely rare and perhaps even unique event in this universe, despite what the writers of science fiction series would have us believe. And even on this planet, most do not rise above the general human tendency to relapse into an animal like state of tyranny, ignorance and laziness.

Scientists who study birds have noted that, whenever possible, birds will give up the hard lifestyle of flying and become flightless. This has led to species such as the ostrich, the penguin, the now extinct dodo and others.

Humans are similar to birds in this way. For it is hard to be human, with the constant struggle to learn and to think and to remain conscious and sober. We constantly seek to give up the hard lifestyle of work and thought and to become primitive again. Among other things, the universal human thirst for alcoholic beverages and other consciousness altering substances shows this. We seek to become flightless.

And so our status as intelligent life is endangered, and we may yet degenerate. If that happens, this planet will fail as far as intelligent life is concerned, and everything will revert to the jungle whence it came. Mind destroying drugs attack the basis of consciousness which is Weird's highest achievement. They throw the gift of life back in its face.

Allowing our world to be taken over by those who hate us and our high culture will have the same effect. We have just narrowly escaped being engulfed by Communism. But there are many other vicious dangers



lying in wait for us. Take one such threat: As Professor Richard Lynn, Director of the Ulster Institute for Social Research, Coleraine, Northern Ireland, has shown in his 1996 book, *Dysgenics: Genetic Deterioration in Modern Populations* (London & Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, p. 208), the average intelligence in Western nations has fallen by between five and eight IQ points in the last century or so. In other words, in spite of modern technology, we are on average becoming dumber and dumber. The less conscious are reproducing at a much faster rate than the more conscious. This is a fact, and all of the king's horses and all of the king's men will not overcome this fact, although they may prevent us from revealing it.

Prominent in this death march is the apparent death wish of peoples of European descent: Any sign of an ethnic survival instinct on our part, no matter how modest, is attacked (often by our own kin) as "racism," and the entire body of our knowledge and civilization is spurned as the work of "dead White males."

### **In Conclusion**

From an open minded review of the paranormal, we see that all of its manifestations, from simple telepathy through "diabolical" possession to psychokinesis, are messages or information transfer. This means that all matter, space and time, as well as all life and, above all, conscious human life, make up one grand system of intercommunication: a divine message. It is the most important task of consciousness - our task - to interpret this message of almighty Weird, the source of life.

Paranormal events show us the invisible foundations of life. But in doing this, they also show us that life itself is quite literally a message, a threefold message of love, of learning and of knowledge. Love, from its sexual and parenting foundations to charity towards other members of the folk, brings life into being and nourishes it. Learning is the process of committing information to memory and thereby expanding and strengthening the paranormal basis of life. Knowledge is the organized store of memories which are built into our bodies through the psychic legacy of our ancestors, and into our minds through our own personal experience.

Asatru seeks to spread this triple message to all of our folk, and thereby to rescue it from the desert of meaninglessness in which we live today. We want to correct the false messages - the countless lies - which rain upon us and lead us to destroy our own lives. And thus we call upon our gods to protect us with the life giving power of the mysterious depths beneath the soul: the inframental realm of the paranormal.

It takes no special insight to see that we are facing global catastrophe because we are stopping evolution and regressing biologically. The universal religions have encouraged this. Our apparent loss of the will to live makes the coming of this catastrophe a question not of whether but of when. Weird is more cunning than man, and will not permit evolution to stagnate. It is either up or down, forward or extinction. For the few who want to escape Ragnarok and remain true to the higher destiny which made our being possible, however, there remains the shining light of Asatru, the faith of our forefathers, with its great leader, Odin: lord of the depths and master of shamans.

# Gunnar Hamundarsson

## PART 2

by HNIKAR WOOD

Editor's note - In regaining our religious and cultural heritage, it is important to learn to get inside the minds of our ancestors, peeling away the accretions of Christian thinking and taking on the values and perceptions that are more in keeping with who we really are. Study of the sagas can be one tool to help us accomplish this.

With this in mind, we continue with Hnikar's insightful gleanings from one of the ancient tales, that of Gunnar Hamundarsson...

Having traveled abroad and won both fame and wealth with his courage and daring, Gunnar had returned to Iceland. His brother Kolskegg then sought to convince him to attend the Althing.

Kolskegg urged him on much to ride to the Thing, saying, "There thy honor will grow, for many will flock to see thee there." "That has been little to my mind," says Gunnar, "to make a show of myself; but I think it good and right to meet good and worthy men."

Two things stand out from this exchange. First, as noted in Part I of this article, the admiration of others enhances one's worth and merit. The deeds that Gunnar had performed stood on their own value, but the respect of others added to this. Second, it was considered right not to egotistically seek self-glorification. This, however, when weighed against the first point, is not always easy to measure. At what point does the desire to have the respect and admiration of people become a quest for self-glorification? Njal's advice is notable here, that some would be envious of the new standing his exploits had earned him, so it was a question quite open to individual interpretation. The Havamal addresses these social niceties, and they had great significance in an era when so much hinged on social standing and interaction.

Consider again Gunnar's reluctance to meet Earl Hakon until he had proven himself with his deeds. Clearly he felt that his deeds in a sense stood beside him when they finally did meet, and added to his standing. There was in this some expectation that he would be held in higher respect than would have been the case had they met before his deeds. Had this expectation been promoted through boastfulness or arrogance, however, his standing would have suffered.

So Gunnar rode, and they all rode. But when they came to the Thing they were so well arrayed that none could match them in bravery; and men came out of every booth to wonder at them. Gunnar rode to the booths of the men of Rangriver, and was therewith his kinsmen. Many men came to see Gunnar, and ask tidings of him; and he was easy and merry to all men, and told them all they wished to hear.

Magnusson and Pallson interpret the second sentence as "they were so well dressed that none could compare with them." There is no sense of the later, melodramatic, Medieval Christian humility. Falsely dressing in ragged clothes was not expected- it was thought that people should be true to themselves rather than putting on an act.

It was at this Thing that yet another piece of Gunnar's Wyrð was put into place.

It happened one day that Gunnar went away from the Hill of Laws, and passed by the booths of the men from Mossfell; then he saw a woman coming to meet him, and she was in goodly attire; but when they met she spoke to Gunnar at once. He took her greeting well, and asks what woman she might be. She told him her name was Hallgerd, and said she was Hoskuld's daughter, Dalakoll's son. She spoke up boldly to him, and bade him tell her of his voyages; but he said he would not gainsay her a talk. Then they sat them down and talked. She was so clad that she had on a red kirtle, and had thrown over her a scarlet cloak trimmed with needle work down to the waist. Her hair came down to her bosom, and was both fair and full. Gunnar was clad in the scarlet clothes which King Harold Gormsson had given him; he had also the gold ring on his arm which Earl Hakon had given him. So they talked long out loud, and at last it came about that he asked whether she were unmarried. She said, so it was, "and there are not many who would run the risk of that." "Thinkest thou none good enough for thee?" "Not that," she says, "but I am said to be hard to please in husbands." "How wouldst thou answer, were I to ask for thee?" "That cannot be in thy mind," she says. "It is though," says he. "If thou hast any mind that way, go and see my father." After that they broke off their talk.

These many centuries later, one can picture long-haired Hallgerd in red and scarlet, and sense her effect on Gunnar. The sagas often depict a great deal of rationality in male-female relationships, but here we find the irrational, the magnetic attraction. Hallgerd, having seen him about, desiring him, and knowing her affect on men, sought him out and spoke with him. Before long, he was speaking of marriage and nothing could alter his course away from what he desired.

Who, then, was Hallgerd? She was among the first introduced in the saga, so central is her role in events.

Hoskuld had a daughter named Hallgerd, who was playing on the floor with some other girls. She was fair of face and tall of growth, and her hair was as soft as silk; it was so long, too, that it came down to her waist. Hoskuld called out to her, "Come hither to me, daughter." So she went up to him, and he took her by the chin, and kissed her; and after that she went away. Then Hoskuld said to Hrut, "What dost thou think of this maiden? Is she not fair?" Hrut held his peace. Hoskuld said the same thing to him a second time, and then Hrut answered, "Fair enough is this maid, and many will smart for it, but this I know not, whence thief's eyes have come into our kin." Then Hoskuld was wroth, and for a time the brothers saw little of each other.

Just what is being said here? There is clearly an indication that her character was set quite young, and an understanding that character was generally part of a family's traits, hence the wondering about her "thief's eyes" and their origin. At any rate, we meet her again a few years later.

Now, it must be told how Hallgerd, Hoskuld's daughter, grows up, and is the fairest of women to look on; she was tall of stature, too, and therefore she was called Long-legs. She was fair-haired, and had so much of it that she could hide herself in it; but she was impetuous and willful. Her foster-father's name was Thjostolf: he was a South Islander by stock: he was a strong man, well skilled in arms, and had slain many men, and made no atonement in money for one of them. It was said, too, that his rearing had not bettered Hallgerd's temper.

There was a man named Thorvald; he was Oswif's son, and dwelt out on Middlefells strand, under the Fell. He was rich and well to do, and owned the islands called Bear-Isles, which lie out in Broadfirth, whence he got meal and stock fish. This Thorvald was a strong and courteous man, though somewhat hasty in temper. Now, it fell out one day that Thorvald and his father were talking together of Thorvald's marrying, and where he had best look for a wife, and it soon came out that he thought there wasn't a match fit for him far or near. "Well," said Oswif, "wilt thou ask for Hallgerd Long-legs, Hoskuld's daughter?" "Yes! I will ask for her," said Thorvald. "But that is not a match that will suit either of you," Oswif went on to say, "for she has a will of her own, and thou art stern-tempered and unyielding." "For all that I will try my luck there," said Thorvald, "so it's no good trying to hinder me." "Ay!" said Oswif, "and the risk is all thine own."

After that they set off on a wooing journey to Hoskuldstede, and had a hearty welcome. They were not long in telling Hoskuld their business, and began to woo; then Hoskuld answered, "As for you, I know how you both stand in the world, but for my own part I will use no guile towards you. My daughter has a hard temper, but as to her looks and breeding you can both see for yourselves." "Lay down the terms of the match," answered Thorvald, "for I will not let her temper stand in the way of our bargain." Then they talked over the terms of the bargain, and Hoskuld never asked his daughter what she thought of it, for his heart was set on giving her away and so they came to an understanding as to the terms of the match. After that Thorvald betrothed himself to Hallgerd, and rode away home when the matter was settled.

Hallgerd was displeased with the match, and yet during the wedding itself she became quite merry. Behind this the saga speaks of the shady dealings of her foster-father, Thjostolf, and her maternal uncle, Svan, said to be "extremely skilled in witchcraft." Thjostolf told her that "this will not be your only marriage, and you can be sure that you will be consulted about it next time."

The marriage was tempestuous and contentious, and it was not long before Thorvald struck her in the face, causing it to bleed. She was visibly injured, and when her foster-father inquired how this had come about, he chose to avenge it. And so Hallgerd was widowed, for the first time. (Thjostolf was said to have been protected from Oswif's revenge by Svan's workings, which brought on a shielding fog and darkness on three occasions.)

The saga is complex in its depiction of events, relying not on the sort of formulaic dogma which all too often passes for a sociology of relationships today. Thorvald was no "wife-beating ogre" caricature, and Hallgerd was no simple shrew. The dynamics between them and the other people around them is shown in its complex humanity, and one can place oneself in any role and see it from the perspective of that individual: Hallgerd, forced into an unwanted marriage, displeased with her husband and a forceful enough character to tell him so...Thorvald, driven into a marriage by his desire for this beauty, frustrated that he cannot please her and unable to take more of her insults...Thjostolf, seeing the battered face of his foster-daughter and taking revenge.

A second man was soon drawn to her, and again he would not concern himself with her character or worry about the fate of her first husband. Glum Olafsson, brother of the future Lawspeaker Thorarin, would settle for no other woman. He, too, sought her hand from her father, and her uncle advised him of the wisdom of letting her choose.

Then they sent for Hallgerd, and she came thither, and two women with her. She had on a cloak of rich blue woof, and under it a scarlet kirtle, and a silver girdle round her waist, but her hair came down on both sides of her bosom, and she had turned the locks up under her girdle. She

sat down between Hrut and her father, and she greeted them all with kind words, and spoke well and boldly, and asked what was the news. After that she ceased speaking.

It is easy to envision her entering the room just so, aware of her impact and taking in the situation. We imagine Glum looking toward her with appreciation and anticipation, catching the glimmer of her hair and the grace of her walk, seeking to calm his breathing - feeling a bit like the predator and a bit like the protector. She would have known his business from the look in his eyes, young men seldom being subtle in such things.

Then Glum said, "There has been some talk between thy father and my brother Thorarin and myself about a bargain. It was that I might get thee, Hallgerd, if it be thy will, as it is theirs; and now, if thou art a brave woman, thou wilt say right out whether the match is at all to thy mind; but if thou hast anything in thy heart against this bargain with us, then we will not say anything more about it." Hallgerd said, "I know well that you are men of worth and might, ye brothers. I know too that now I shall be much better wedded than I was before; but what I want to know is, what you have said already about the match, and how far you have given your words in the matter. But so far as I now see of thee, I think I might love thee well if we can but hit it off as to temper." So Glum himself told her all about the bargain, and left nothing out, and then he asked Hoskuld and Hrut whether he had repeated it right. Hoskuld said he had; and then Hallgerd said, "Ye have dealt so well with me in this matter, my father and Hrut, that I will do what ye advise, and this bargain shall be struck as ye have settled it."

And so the marriage was made, and she gave birth to a daughter, Thorgerd, who came very much to resemble her mother. There was great love between Glum and Hallgerd, but soon Thjostolf came to be under their roof.

Now once on a time when autumn came, it happened that men had hard work to get their flocks home, and many of Glum's wethers were missing. Then Glum said to Thjostolf, "Go thou up on the fell with my house-carles and see if ye cannot find out anything about the sheep." "'Tis no business of mine," says Thjostolf, "to hunt up sheep, and this one thing is quite enough to hinder it. I won't walk in thy thralls' footsteps. But go thyself, and then I'll go with thee ." About this they had many words.

The weather was good, and Hallgerd was sitting out of doors. Glum went up to her and said, "Now Thjostolf and I have had a quarrel, and we shall not live much longer together." And so he told her all that they had been talking about. Then Hallgerd spoke up for Thjostolf, and they had many words about him. At last Glum gave her a blow with his hand, and said, "I will strive no longer with thee," and with that he went away. Now she loved him much, and could not calm herself, but wept out loud. Thjostolf went up to her and said, "This is sorry sport for thee, and so it must not be often again." "Nay," she said, "but thou shalt not avenge this, nor meddle at all whatever passes between Glum and me ." He went off with a spiteful grin.

Nonetheless, Glum and Thjostolf were soon to quarrel:

Then each began to scold the other, and Thjostolf said at last that Glum had no strength save to tumble about in Hallgerd's arms . Then Glum said, "A man's foes are those of his own house. Shall I take upbraiding from thee, runaway thrall as thou art?" Thjostolf said, "Thou shalt soon have to own that I am no thrall, for I will not yield an inch to thee."

Glum was the first to strike, but Thjostolf the last. The complexity again of their clash is apparent in their exchange of words. It seems that there was some jealousy on Thjostolf's part, since in anger his mind went first to thoughts of Glum and Hallgerd together. But it seems that Glum's disrespect for Thjostolf was the major issue.

Hallgerd was sitting out of doors, and saw that his ax was bloody. He said, "I know not what thou wilt think of it, but I tell thee Glum is slain." "That must be thy deed," she says. "So it is," he says. She laughed and said, "Thou dost not stand for nothing in this sport." "What thinkest thou is best to be done now?" he asked. "Go to Hrut, my father's brother," she said, "and let him see about thee."

For me, this has always been one of the more disturbing passages. The dichotomy between her telling Thjostolf not to take vengeance on Glum from her apparent love, and her casual laughter when told that Glum had been slain, gives rise to questions in my mind. It means either that her loyalty and love is shallow and easily put aside, or that the tale as it came to be told does not accurately depict the private exchange between her and Thjostolf - that perhaps she had again goaded Thjostolf to slay a man who had struck her, as other men would one day kill at her instigation, but they chose to let Thjostolf carry the blame alone, for whatever reason. (Her father and uncle paid compensation for both slain husbands, however). I think the former possibility disturbs me more, since it places a person's loyalties on the level of an alley cat: Who's feeding me today?

And so, we now see how beautiful and formidable a character Hallgerd was - and in the next chapter of the saga, Gunnar is introduced.

Ultimately their paths were to cross at that fateful Thing, years after Gunnar had humiliated her uncle Hrut at another in the matter of Unn's dowry. Recall that in the original divorce, Hrut had undergone the embarrassment of being publicly depicted as impotent in the marriage bed, but had saved for himself the dowry of Unn by challenging her enfeebled father to a personal duel. Gunnar had then taken this vestige of his manliness by challenging Hrut, in turn - a challenge that Hrut dared not accept - and winning the dowry back for Unn.

Now it was necessary for Gunnar to approach Hrut and Hoskuld to ask their approval of his marriage to Hallgerd.

Gunnar went straightway to the Dalesmen's booths, and met a man outside the doorway, and asks whether Hoskuld were inside the booth. The man says that he was. Then Gunnar went in, and Hoskuld and Hrut made him welcome. He sat down between them, and no one could find out from their talk that there had ever been any misunderstanding between them. At last Gunnar's speech turned thither; how these brothers would answer if he asked for Hallgerd? "Well," says Hoskuld, "if that is indeed thy mind." Gunnar says that he is in earnest, "but we so parted last time, that many would think it unlikely that we should ever be bound together." "How thinkest thou, kinsman Hrut?" says Hoskuld. Hrut answered, "Methinks this is no even match." "How dost thou make that out?" says Gunnar. Hrut spoke, "In this wise will I answer thee about this matter, as is the very truth. Thou art a brisk brave man well to do, and unblemished; but she is much mixed up with ill report, and I will not cheat thee in anything." "Good go with thee for thy words," says Gunnar, "but still I shall hold that for true, that the old feud weighs with ye, if ye will not let me make this match." "Not so," says Hrut, "'tis more because I see that thou art unable to help thyself; but though we make no bargain, we would still be thy friends." "I have talked to her about it," says Gunnar, "and it is not far from her mind." Hrut says, "I know that you have both set your hearts on this match; and, besides, ye two are those who run the most risk as to how it

turns out." Hrut told Gunnar unasked all about Hallgerd's temper, and Gunnar at first thought that there was more than enough that was wanting; but at last it came about that they struck a bargain. Then Hallgerd was sent for, and they talked over the business when she was by, and now, as before, they made her betroth herself. The bridal feast was to be at Lithend, and at first they were to set about it secretly; but the end after all was that every one knew of it.

Much is said in this. Hrut and Hoskuld act as if there are no lingering resentments, yet when they seek to dissuade Gunnar, he states that he thinks such resentments are the cause. So fixed is he on the goal, marriage with a striking woman who he has just met that day, that either he chooses to believe the worst about their motives or he flings it at them in an effort to soften their position. Hrut nonetheless told Gunnar of her faults, and for a moment Gunnar seemed to have his doubts.

The day for the wedding came, and it was marked with an incident of its own. Among the guests were Thrain Sigfusson, a kinsman of Gunnar, and his wife Thorhild. Traveling with her mother, the bride, was Thorgerd, "who was now 14 years old and very beautiful." Like her mother, who she was said to resemble, her effect on men was marked.

Now Thrain Sigfusson kept staring at Thorgerd Glum's daughter; his wife Thorhild saw this, and she got wroth, and made a couplet upon him.

***Ogling is evil, Thrain,***

***There is lust in your eyes.***

He rose at once up from the board, and said he would put Thorhild away. "I will not bear her jibes and jeers any longer;" and he was so quarrelsome about this, that he would not be at the feast unless she were driven away. And so it was, that she went away; and now each man sat in his place, and they drank and were glad. Then Thrain began to speak, "I will not whisper about that which is in my mind. This I will ask thee, Hoskuld Dalakoll's son, wilt thou give me to wife Thorgerd, thy kinswoman?" "I do not know that," says Hoskuld; "methinks thou art barely parted from the one thou hadst before."

And yet the marriage became a double one, for mother and daughter.

Hallgerd took the housekeeping under her, and stood up for her rights in word and deed. Thorgerd took to housekeeping at Gritwater, and was a good housewife.

Few could fully foresee the consequences of Gunnar's and Hallgerd's wedding, but many thought it would bring ill-luck. And so it would...

*To be continued -*

**Part 1 was published in THE RUNESTONE, Issue 29**

*In Baltic Groves*

**Sept. 27:**

I slept well, and had many dreams, but, as is so often the case, couldn't remember them. I woke before the sun; there were birds, and especially Ravens, at and near my window, seemingly calling to me. As I'm lying in bed, confused, no focus, I got the following poem:

Let the Raven take flight,  
"To wings, it's the day"  
We don't want to fight,  
But there's no other way,  
For our ways must re-new  
Our folk come alive  
For our children are due  
A good life, so we strive  
The fight may be metal,  
The fight may be mind,  
From the cauldron or kettle,  
Our way we must find  
So good folk, do take heart  
Let the battles begin  
We all must take part,  
For our futures we win,  
For the skalds and the Norns,  
The Aesir and Vanir,  
We'll walk on life's thorns,  
We'll carry the banner, so prepare for the future,  
And honor the past,  
Prepare for the future,  
We must not be the last....

*by Henry Anderson*

*from the editor...*



When Christianity overwhelmed the European tribes, our native religions were forced into the deep woods and inaccessible places. No longer the object of public worship and honor, they became a treasure hoarded by secretive men and women in the woods. We can wonder what awaits us still, in places where the tourists don't go.

Imagine you are a Californian named Henry Anderson and have finally managed to take that long-awaited trip to the Baltic. Eager to see what the Gods hold for you in Estonia and the surrounding region, as well as to simply have an adventure, you board the plane. A few days later, you are on the island of Saaremaa in the middle of the Baltic Sea, and have arranged to meet a follower of the old, pre-Christian religion.

The adventure you had wanted was about to begin.

Let's take a look at your diary...

Sept. 29

I slept poorly last night, very nauseous. I wonder what the day has in store?

I was talking with Siili about "sacred groves" in the area, when through several serendipitous events, she contacts a man named "Vigala Sass." He says he'll wait for me, even though he doesn't know me and I have no appointment. How fortuitous. He is a shaman in the old ways of the region, which predate the Viking-type religion by a fair amount, as I understand it.

Anyway, I call a taxi immediately, and it takes me to see "Sass."

It's quite a drive up there, maybe forty-five minutes or so, and as we pull up to the gate in the middle of nowhere I offer to get out and open it for the

driver. He promptly states " No, you don't drive in there," in a very serious tone. So, okay, we walk.

He asks if I've been there before. I of course say no, and he just nods. Hmmm, I wonder what he knows I don't?

We pass through the gate, and immediately are greeted by brightly colored flags hanging from trees all around. As we walk further along, I notice totems carved into trees and sticks and everything surrounding. It seemed as though the whole forest was decorated. At this point the driver asks me if I'm afraid of dogs. I answer, "Well..." and he informs me that Sass has two very large ones, to which I reply, "Are they mean?". His answer was a shrug and "Sometimes..".

Great. I'll get eaten by dogs in the middle of an island in the Baltic Sea.

A little further along the road, I notice a change in the decoration of the forest. Now, along with the other items, there are runes, as well as goat heads nailed on trees in differing states of decay. Upon further

inspection, there were different parts of animals hanging here and there. This is getting surreal, I thought to myself.

Just then, I hear the agitated barking of what sounds like dogs. One sounds as big as a horse, WOOF, WOOF, the other, a sharper and faster bark, like that of an imminent attack. Uh-oh.

We round a corner and here comes a great Dane, which stands about five feet tall at the ear, loping along with a German shepherd type dog right behind, looking at me like a walking meal. Fear? Yup. Run? No. I just told myself to be calm, and trusted that the dogs will know my intent. The great Dane kind of sniffed as he ran past me, almost like he couldn't stop in time, but the other dog stopped with his muzzle right between my legs. And he was the seemingly aggressive one! My mind flashed on how I would explain this when I got back...all the things I wouldn't be doing any more...and of course, the pain that seemed imminent.

But, the Gods were kind, and he just started wagging his tail and barked and walked around me. Whew!

We rounded one more bend and had our first vision of the "camp." It was somewhat cluttered, but probably only seemed that way to me. There was a tripod of sticks over a fire pit filled with some kind of root crop, or herb, that a man was working with a knife. He wore an army field jacket and sweat pants, with a headband of some sort. My first impression was of my friend, Valgard. Although not an exact twins, the man was similar in look, and, mostly, "presence."

There was a woman walking towards me from behind him. She turned out to be the man's "wife" ( I don't know that they were married, really). She spoke some English, and the driver introduced us. Then he turns, to go back to the car.

The woman invited me to sit near the fire, so I accepted, and she began by saying there is usually a charge for this visit, to which I agree. She says she will interpret, since Sass doesn't speak English.

Sass asked why I was here. I answered that I didn't know. He said people usually come for a reason, to which I answered that until only an hour or so earlier I had never heard his name. I also said I had been given a word from a dream that was very similar to his name. His reply was that his name had four letters, and my word had only three. This was interesting, since I hadn't told him what my world was.

I also mentioned I followed the Teutonic path, mentioning a few of our Gods. He was, of course, familiar with this path. His only comments were that it was a good path, but very young in comparison to his. During this conversation, I notice Sass doesn't look straight at me, ever. This was to hold true for the entire length of my stay. I also noticed several tattoos on his face, and one struck me like a cold wind. It was a figure of a man that had been drawn for me a couple of years earlier by a friend who had a dream about me in a cave, and this was one of the drawings on the cave wall!

Coincidence? I don't know, but I think not.

He asked what else I might want to know. I replied that I have been carrying a certain rock in my pocket since I was about 16 years old, and wondered if he would look at the design on it and give me his impressions. His reply was that was a sacred stone to me and shouldn't be shown to others, as it would give them information that might be used against me. So, I kept it secret.

His woman finally suggested that I ask about medical problems I might be having, so Sass could give a diagnosis and treatment. I told him I had stomach problems, to which he replied first that the doctors shouldn't have removed my gall bladder. Well, how did he know? However, I had said I had surgery, so maybe he surmised it, but that sort of operation is rare among men at all, and especially my age. Then he

went on to write an herbal prescription for me to take as a tea, with instructions on how to prepare it. It's all in Latin, so I still must translate it.

He then mentioned a weakness or problem with my thyroid gland that should be checked, as well as prostate and colon weaknesses, that should be monitored. One more thing, something with my right leg, but he couldn't be specific.

I had no other problems that I could think of (although others occurred to me later), so I told him that was all I wanted to know. At this point, the woman offered to take me to see their sacred areas, if I was interested. I of course accepted the offer.

We left the campsite, where Sass continued his work, and followed a path. The dogs accompanied us, which was okay now since I didn't feel like I was their lunch. We approached a pair of trees with a wooden sign hanging between them, with an unfamiliar rune or bind rune inscribed on it. She announced this was the beginning of the sacred area and I was to knock 3 times, and duck under the sign and enter the space. She went first and I followed, trying to imitate what she did, but adding or changing small details as the feeling struck me.

The path wasn't real worn, but I could see it clearly. She seemed to walk with a reverence for everything in the area, animate or not. She wouldn't necessarily avoid stepping on a certain place or plant, but seemed to acknowledge the act and respect the things she was impacting with her presence. She pointed out the trees they had planted with the placenta of each of their children, and explained how this tree would become a place of magic and comfort for each individual.

We then came to the single-stone altar, at which we stopped. The woman pointed out the various articles adorning the general area, in trees, bushes and on the ground. She couldn't tell me exactly what all of them meant, supposedly because of interpretation problems. I think, though, that I was supposed to figure out their meaning for me. The different items were intriguing, though: pieces of cloth, worked wooden carvings, animal parts, especially heads and horns in various states of decay and mummification, totems - so many things it was hard to see it all. I didn't take notes, because it felt inappropriate, so all this is from memory. As we continued, she was adamant we circle the altar and fire pit in a counter clockwise direction. This was to hold for anything we circled or went around the rest of the "tour."

She pointed out Sass' personal sacred area, which we weren't allowed to enter. It had a teepee-type structure in the center, surrounded by many totems, and many things I can best describe as looking like Celtic crosses. I didn't ask, and she didn't offer an explanation.

We headed for her area, which was similar to Sass', but not yet complete. We went around her "teepee," and she told me to wait outside while she went in. I did. She returned a short while later and we continued on. She tried to explain their respect and reverence for nature, and some of what they believe, but the language barrier made it difficult to get much information.

At a point in our walk, which was more silent than conversant, I asked if I could taste the needles of a particular tree. Her response was very matter of fact: "Why ask me? Ask the tree!" I found that very interesting, and of course felt somewhat awkward about asking incorrectly. It didn't seem to bother her, though. I think she understood my intention and lack of knowledge with their ways.

After a few more minutes walk through the forest, she announced the "tour" was over. I looked around, obviously not knowing where I was, and she pointed in a direction and said to go that way.

I started to get money out, to which she responded "No money from you." I asked why not, since I had taken their time. She answered, "You didn't ask much." I left in the direction she pointed, wondering where I would end up - hopefully where the taxi was still waiting, or near to it, anyway.

Well...I got to the road, very near the gate where the taxi parked, but, no taxi! UH-OH! Now what? I didn't feel right about going back to Sass's place, so, I started walking down the road. "I wish I had paid more attention to how I got here," I said to myself. I again paid honor to the Gods for the experience and the challenge of getting back. I then walked across the road, into the forest and found a pile of rocks, and started walking, hopefully in the right direction.

A few minutes later I came upon a grove of trees in the middle of an open field, which it seemed I should go look at, so I did. It was not far from the road, so I got there soon. As I entered, I acknowledged the powers of the land and Gods, and began to explore. It seemed to have paths laid out through the rocks, with areas of clearing and altar stones, as well as stones placed in shapes I didn't really recognize but which seemed ordered. I took a few photos inside, then left the grove to walk counterclockwise around the perimeter. There appeared to be a small ditch surrounding the grove. I found a single black feather, so took it with thanks, and left.

I walked for a mile or two, I guess, and finally came to the village. I found a bus stop, and tried to figure out which bus to take back to Kurassaare. I asked several people, none of whom spoke English, and finally, a couple of schoolgirls came by who spoke enough English to help.

I boarded; it seemed all eyes on the crowded bus looked at me. I'm sure they don't get many tourists in that village, let alone on that bus, which is probably occupied mostly by regular riders.

This adventure, pregnant with mystery, was not to be Henry's final exposure to Baltic heathendom. Friends had arranged for him to meet with another shaman. Here is how Henry tells it...

Ohto, the shaman, arrived on time. He, too, spoke no English, so, Ahti interpreted once again.

We had met at the site of a thousand year old Pagan stronghold. The "hill" they built is still there, with a "gateway" as Ohto called it, still there, but the wooden walls were long since gone. Ohto said we should walk through the gateway, so we did. We talked about their beliefs some, and I asked about a leafless tree that was full of red berries. He said it was a sacred tree to them, but the name couldn't be translated. He invited me to taste the berries, and, after asking permission of the tree and acknowledging our Gods for the gift and protection, I ate a few. They were very bitter, but not altogether unpleasant. Ohto said they have magic properties and are also used medicinally for heart and blood pressure ailments. I again asked the tree, and picked a bunch to bring home.

It was then time to go to his groups sacred grove. We drove down a dirt road, taking a very circuitous route, almost seemingly designed to confuse a traveler. We arrived and parked.

There was a sign explaining something about the grove and its uses, but since it was in Estonian, I couldn't read it and Ahti said it was just a simple explanation of the area.

The same type of wooden plaque I had seen at Sass' grove hung between two trees where we entered, with the same runes inscribed. We each knocked in turn and entered. There was a fire pit, and some of the same carvings and runes as at Sass' place, but not as elaborate. We spent a few minutes there with idle conversation, then he decided to take us into the "most sacred" area, usually not seen by the public. We entered under another plaque, and began a walk with description of their reverence for nature and all it

had to offer. Ohto walked with the same slow, deliberate gait and reverence for everything he passed as did Sass' woman.

We passed a roundish stone, with a hole in the middle. Ohto explained that was their sacrificial stone, and said I could make sacrifice if I choose. I accepted his offer, whereby he and Ahti turned their backs to me. I was a somewhat of a loss as to what to do, so I performed a small stathagalder, using Elhaz, and pulled a few hairs out of one of my eyebrows and placed them in the middle of the stone, and then poured water from my drinking bottle around it, counterclockwise. I thanked the Gods for this opportunity, and ended.

I asked why they turned their backs when I was performing my rites, and Ohto's answer was "It is between you and your Gods, as it is with us and ours, and none of any one else's business." (I am paraphrasing, I can't recall his exact words, but this is what he meant).

He then offered to take me to their "spring of sight." I gladly accepted and we walked down a path, to a spring in the side of an embankment. It had clear, swiftly moving water, welling up from a point in the ground with a substantial flow. He said we should wash our eyes in the water, drink, make sacrifice, and then demonstrated. After he finished, I approached the spring, thanked the Gods, and squatted to wash my eyes. After this, I tossed a couple of coins into the spring, at Ohto's suggestion, and we turned and went up the hill. He explained the washing the eyes in this water was said to cure diseases of the eyes, but mostly it opens the "spiritual eyes" to what is around. We continued up the hill to their sacred grove, which was a stand of what seemed to be black oak trees, only about 10 years old. Ohto explained that these trees had been planted after the Russians left Estonia, since it was forbidden under their regime, and they had cut down the old grove, along with one very old and sacred oak, just to show them they could. What a waste!

Next, he told me he had decided to take me to a very special, even secret, spring, called the "spring of life and health." He said outsiders are rarely taken there, and we must not tell any one where it is. I agreed. We walked down a non-descript path, and he explained that they try not to go by the same route each time, in order to keep a trail from developing and leading others there. We got to the bottom of an embankment and walked through some brush, and came to this spring. He explained its

health-giving properties, as well as spiritual ones, and said to drink and make a sacrifice of silver. He did this first, so I turned my back to him in keeping with their custom. When he finished I followed suit and, since I didn't have anything silver, I scraped some gold off my money clip into the water while hoping my intention was enough to make up for the lack of silver.

I asked if I could photo this spring as I had the other, and his reply was: "It is your choice." With that answer, I decided not to, and we left. We walked up the hill, past the sacrificial rock, and out of this area, under the wooden plaque. On the way out, you knock as many times as you feel necessary to clear your mind. I did 9.

We went then to sit near the fire pit. It turned out none of us had matches, so we had no fire. Ahti offered to light one with a spark from his battery and fuel, but Ohto said it needed to be "live" fire. I didn't exactly understand what he meant.

We spoke of our beliefs, comparing and contrasting, runes, his symbols, the persecution of his forefathers by Christians, and my similar story. He showed me a calendar of his folk. As I looked at each month, and came to October, I noticed flowers drawn around my birthday. I asked why the flowers, and he said it was his daughter's birthday. We smiled at the

coincidence, and in that conversation he mentioned that his wedding had been performed by a man named Vigala Sass - the shaman I had met earlier. It turns out they know each other fairly well.

As we were winding down our conversation, a woodpecker landed in a tree about twenty feet from us, only about four feet up, and began working intensely even though we were talking. Ohto commented that was a good sign, and the birds must trust me. I told him birds and I are companions, and that I especially am drawn to a certain bird. He responded that I shouldn't have told him what kind of bird, because he could do me harm magically with that knowledge. I replied that I felt I have nothing to fear from him. He smiled and nodded and said I was very trusting.

We walked out under the first plaque, I knocked once, and we parted just as it began to rain, almost signaling the end of the meeting. Ohto also said there was no charge for his time.

Ahti drove me back to Tallinn, to a place called the "Valge Villa", meaning "white house." I was exhausted.

And so the adventure is over...or is it?

### Solstice Site in Ancient America



#### *WINTER SOLSTICE 2000*

We had a remarkable day here. We drove to Boston from Vermont last night, then arose at 5 a.m. this morning and headed out to a tiny town about an hour south of the city. After a number of false leads and wrong turns, we finally found the state park we were looking for (which many of the town residents whom we asked didn't even know existed). The park was officially closed, but we left the car outside of it and trekked about 20 minutes by foot into the woods there, finally locating the small stone chamber which was our destination.

This is one of the many 'megalithic' anomalies that dot the New England landscape. The Indians definitely did not build them, but no one knows for certain who did. Given their resemblance to similar structures in Europe and the British Isles, some believe that Kelts, who may have arrived here long before the Vikings,

must have erected them. Mainstream archeologists insist they are merely simple "root cellars" built by early Colonial settlers.

This chamber we visited is quite obscure, and situated in a larger circular area composed of odd-sized large stones and boulders. It is set into a mound, and clearly man-made, with an opening facing the East. It is a small chamber, and we could just fit inside with our three friends.

We were there with perfect timing, arriving about 10 minutes before sunrise at 7:37 a.m. At the moment the first rays of the sun come over the horizon, a very peculiar alignment is illuminated. The rays shine through a thin slit in the outside of the rocky mound, beaming a straight, arrow-like line of concentrated light into a small alcove in one side of the chamber. This can only occur when the sun is at its furthest point on the solstice. The arrow of light intensifies for a few minutes, before quickly disappearing. There can be no mistaking that the chamber was engineered for this to occur.

While the chamber has been documented in old journals of the New England Antiquities Research Association, no one we are aware of has ever noted that it also features a solstitial sun alignment. Hail the ancient engineers!



21 Horning 2251 RE

A Runestone did stand in the Hof

Deep the carvings upon its face

A worthy spot where all could see

Its message old its meaning plain

Know how to read Know how to write

Wise words hard gained from Elder Kin

They prod us to much knowledge learn

And use our minds in worthy ways

Know how to carve know how to stain

In stone and wood in steel and bone

The Holy Runes from Odin's grasp

Holding power in form and stroke

Know how to ask know how to Blót

To worship give and blessing get

A rightful plea and grateful thanks  
Confirm respect for Old Ones High

In all of these and more besides  
The Staves hold keys to Lore and thought  
A healing charm a warding mark  
A craftsman's glyph a grave mound's stone

The magic though contained within  
These simple lines upright and slash  
Lies in the Wyrd of Tribe's Orlay  
And Runestone's words reminders are

## BOOK REVIEWS

### **Thought Contagion: How Belief Spreads Through Society**

*by Aaron Lynch, Basic Books, 1996.*

#### **Reviewed by Stephen A. McNallen**

This book isn't about our Gods and Goddesses, and the author, although he is an educated man, almost certainly would not recognize the word "Asatru."

Which is precisely the point.

After all, if enough of us had read Thought Contagion and put its principles into practice, Lynch might not only have heard of Asatru, he might be an AFA member.

One of the first thing Lynch does is introduce us to the meme, a term coined by biologist Richard Dawkins, who wrote The Selfish Gene some years ago. A meme is simply a contagious idea. It behaves much like the genes in Dawkins' famous book; memes compete with each other, and in this struggle



certain memes, like some genes, will survive while others die out. A meme succeeds by having enough carriers or hosts to perpetuate it.

Alternatively, we can compare memes to viruses. Instead of a disease-causing organism that spreads from person to person in a population, we are confronted with ideas leaping from mind to mind.

These are more than superficial analogies, they are powerful models that tells us a lot about the propagation - or the failure - of belief systems.

Asatru is one such belief system, and its success or failure in the modern world will be determined by laws such as those described in Thought Contagion. That fact, alone, is enough reason to study this book. There are things we can stress in modern Asatru which will help it spread to more people, thus ensuring that it becomes a permanent feature of the cultural landscape - rather than a minor anomaly ready to be eroded by the forces of history.

Does this mean that we have to twist and distort the nature of our beliefs? Not at all. Most of the things we need to do to propagate Asatru are already consistent with our customs and beliefs, but we can fine-tune our memes - our "contagious ideas" - to give them stronger survival qualities in relation to other, competing ideas.

For example, religions which place a high value on having children will, statistically, grow faster than those which do not. A religion which features "family-friendly" gatherings will grow faster than one which encourages drunken parties.

Likewise, belief systems that possess certain "cognitive advantages" will tend to proliferate: Those which are reconcilable with modern science; which feature clear, acceptable explanations of their doctrines; and which offer evidence for their beliefs will thrive in comparison with those which do not have these traits.

Another example: Groups which practice a degree of separation from the outside world, or which limit the influence of the popular media, tend statistically to lose fewer young people to other belief systems.

Examples could go on and on, but the point I am trying to make here is that we have an opportunity, at this time and place in history, to build Asatru in ways (1) which are consistent with our lore and traditions and (2) which will give us not only a degree of permanence but a steady growth in our numbers and influence.

And come to think of it, this whole approach is very compatible with the theme we stress over and over, which is building tribes.

Thought Contagion is an important book which deserves the attention of everyone concerned about the future of our religion and our tribal existence. I hope you'll read it.

BITS  
& PIECES



### **AFA News**

**There is now an AFA office!** It's true - for a very reasonable rate, we were able to secure two very nice rooms at one of Nevada City's nicest business addresses. This may be an Asatru "first" here in Vinland! We expect our efficiency to skyrocket; our organization had been crowding us out of house and home, and we were giving whole new meanings to the word "cramped." Here's another milestone to our (your!) credit!

The AFA has posted its **Law Enforcement Packet online**, at <http://www.runestoneorg/lep1/html> . This collection of information is designed specifically for individuals in law enforcement, and refutes the allegations of the so-called "anti-hate" groups in regard to Asatru. This is a valuable resource, and we encourage its reproduction and use by anyone involved in police work, gang suppression, or prison administration!

**The Gathering of the Tribes, June 22 through 24**, will see the birth of something new in California - a real tribe, forged from kindreds across the portion of Vinland, and structured in accordance with the ways of our ancestors. We invite AFA members and friends from all across Vinland to witness this event, and to celebrate with us as we take another step in the evolution of our Nation! Contact the AFA for details.

### **Volunteers needed!**

The AFA needs people to fill the following positions:

**Warrior Guild** - Administrative help in the form of a WG member who can answer queries and handle routine correspondence.

**The Runestone** - Staff members needed include a music reviewer, book reviewer, manuscript editor, kindred news columnist, and managing editor. Write us for details on these!

**On the Web...**

**The Scandinavian Center for Shamanic Studies** has a web site at <http://www.users.dircon.co.uk/~snail/SCSS/SCSS.htm> . While most of their material relates to core shamanism or to cross-cultural work, they are clearly aware of seith and have included it in their advanced workshop listing.

**Expo Media**, at <http://www.expomedia.se/eindex.htm>, has a couple of outstanding CDs of interest to Asatruar. One is devoted entirely to the **Viking game of tafl**. On it you will find eight opponents, ranging from beginner to master, against which to test your skill. At a mere \$15, it's a real bargain. The second CD, *The Viking World*, is aimed at children and covers our lore, runes, and Viking history. Price: \$35.

**If you're interested in the Orkneys**, that chain of islands north of Scotland where Vikings ruled for centuries, pay a visit to <http://www.orkneyjar.com> . Customs, history, and heritage - it's all there, in quantity!

**Project Runeberg** is an attempt to get a very large number of old texts from Sweden and the other Nordic countries online, in imitation of the well-known Project Gutenberg. You can access it at <http://www.130.236.254.25/runeberg/admin/>

**For information on the so-called Dark Ages**, take a look at <http://www.bbtinternet.com/~mark.furnival/index.htm> - it's pretty broad, but there is quite a lot on the Germanic tribes.

**An interactive map showing the migrations of the Germanic tribes** can be found at <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~atlas/europe/interactive/map21.html>

Row of windows, bottom left are the AFA offices.(Picture taken 8 pm, 22 Horning 2251)

### Activism!

**Nissa Annakindt** is a fighter. Her **Nine Virtues News** is all about making changes in the public opinion of Asatru, and about battling for our rights. When legislators pass laws to post the Ten Commandments in public buildings, she is on them like an attack dog, demanding that the Nine Noble Virtues are also posted. On this and several other fronts, Nissa works hard for the defense of Asatru. Send her stamps. Subscribe to **Nine Virtues News**. It's \$30 for one year, when you consider that it comes out weekly. Above all, participate! She will tell you exactly how to make an impact. Contact her at **W4213 Co. Rd. 360, Daggett MI 49821-8817**.

**Weyland, of Varangian Kindred**, is also working overtime for Asatru. Specifically, he has taken on the Florida Department of Corrections by defending the rights of Asatruar in the prison system to practice our religion. This is a difficult task, one which requires patience and persistence. Hail, Weyland!

**The first blot in an Oregon State prison** was performed on February 12 by **George McNew, AFA Representative for Oregon**. It was attended by thirty-three prisoners, and a lore session followed. Thanks to George's efforts, the Eddas and Thor's hammers are now allowed in the system - until now, they were expressly forbidden because Asatru/Odinism was considered a "racist gang." Well done, George!

The AFA has posted its **Law Enforcement Packet** online, at <http://www.runestoneorg/lep1/html> . This collection of information is designed specifically for individuals in law enforcement, and refutes the allegations of the so-called "anti-hate" groups in regard to Asatru. This is a valuable resource, and we encourage its reproduction and use by anyone involved in police work, gang suppression, or prison administration!

### *Some Upcoming Events...*

**The Gathering of the Tribes, June 22 through 24**, will see the birth of something new in California - a real tribe, forged from kindreds across the portion of Vinland, and structured in accordance with the ways of our ancestors. We invite AFA members and friends from all across Vinland to witness this event, and to celebrate with us as we take another step in the evolution of our Nation! Contact the AFA for details.

**Althing 21** will run from Horning (September) 19 to 23, at a campground near Payson, Arizona. It is open to members and supporters of the Asatru Alliance and the other organizations within the International Asatru/Odinic Alliance. This is one of the key tribal events in Vinland, a direct continuation of the first Althing sponsored by the Asatru Free Assembly in 1980. We encourage your attendance! Information packets may be requested from **Valgard Murray, Secretary of the Asatru Alliance, PO Box 961, Payson, AZ 85547**.

**A Great Lakes Moot** is in the planning for next summer. Contact Derek Skoular, longtime AFA member and *Runestone* contributor, at [thunar9@softhome.net](mailto:thunar9@softhome.net) . Derek has done a great job of taking the initiative on this, but he can use some assistance in making it happen. Drop him a line if you live anywhere around the Great Lakes!

**The first annual East Coast Regional Thing of the Asatru Alliance** will happen from May 25 through May 28, at a campground in southern New Jersey. It is being organized by Jim (Giuki) and Mary Coulter of Hammerstede Kindred. Hammerstede is an AFA affiliated kindred, and Jim and Mary are AFA area representatives. Contact them at [hammerstede@hotmail.com](mailto:hammerstede@hotmail.com) for an information packet.

### **Archeology**

US Magistrate Judge John Jelderks has ordered the government to provide raw data from the CT scans of **Kennewick Man's** bones to scientists who have filed suit to study the ancient human remains. Indian tribes involved in the case have protested, but as attorney Alan Schneider commented, "The government is trying to censor information about the skeleton. The judge's ruling is that this type of censorship will not be tolerated."

Kennewick Man became controversial because he is evidence that the earliest inhabitants of North America were not the ancestors of the Indians, but another group - very possibly Europeans. (For more info, see links below)

[Tri-City Herald's Kennewick Man site](#)

[Friends of America's Past](#)

[AFA Kennewick Man page](#)

**An erotic Anglo-Saxon ring** found at a secret location two years ago has caused some excitement among archeologists. It appears to be the earliest known "seal matrix," or stamp used to make images in wax, predating the next oldest example by two hundred years.

One side of the ring features a cross, and the other shows a man and a woman engaging in sex. It dates from the seventh century. The name "Baldehildis" inscribed on it suggests it may have belonged to Bathilda, who married Clovis II, king of the Franks, in the year 649 CE.

AFA,

...I don't get it. Why do you get so uptight when people sign their letters with "Fourteen Words!" or "14/88," anyway? Do you really believe this is bad, or are you just trying to stay "respectable" in the eyes of the System? It looks to me like the AFA is wimping out.

14/88!

Shawn

Shawn:

There is nothing wrong with the famous fourteen words themselves. ["We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White children." - Editor] All peoples, all races, have the right to advance their interests, and one of those interests certainly is survival!

The problem is that the fourteen words are often used by people who have a much less generous attitude toward other groups than is implied by this simple sentence. Sometimes what they really mean is not so much "We must secure the existence of our people" as it is "We must secure the non-existence of some other people." In combination with the number 88 [Code for "Heil Hitler!" - Editor] the result is something even farther from the spirit of Asatru.

The AFA will not allow itself to be linked to this philosophy.

Our position is very clear, and is laid out in our Declaration of Purpose. On the one hand, we stand unequivocally for the preservation and the advancement of men and women of European descent. We turn our backs on the ethnomasochism, the racial self-hatred, that is so popular today. As I have written elsewhere, "The existence of my people is not negotiable." Certainly we will defend ourselves as the need arises.

On the other hand, we also support other racial, ethnic, and cultural groups in their striving to maintain their identity in a world that wants us to all be the same. In many ways, they are as much the victims of the homogenizing mentality as are we.

Hail our Gods and Folk!

*Stephen A. McNallen*

Drighten, AFA

Dear Mr. McNallen,

...The reason I have decided not to renew my membership in the AFA is that I don't see the benefit of the increased cost, from \$25 to \$180 per year. I support the AFA, but with \$180 per year my own kindred can prosper. For those not in California, it's a big increase as we can't use the land the money goes to buy.

Best wishes,

D.

Heilsa!

One thing to keep in mind is that the Land Fund is separate from the AFA's General Fund. Your dues go into the General Fund to keep the AFA going and growing. It's possible that there may be some transfers to the Land Fund, but generally your dues will go toward the many other needs of the AFA. (*Editor's note: The membership increase applies to renewing member's only. First year GestR dues remain at \$25.00.*)

It is good to support your local kindred, but there are important things that kindreds can't accomplish, and for which we need a national or international organization. That's where the AFA comes in. We have reached literally millions of people with information about Asatru, thanks to our widespread media outreach. We've fought back against the discrimination we all face. The AFA is building tribes. In short, we are literally trying to change the world!

We feel that Asatru, and our Folk, need the vision provided by our national and international presence. We can carry out our mission only if we have the support of good people like yourself.

California may be a long way off, but the AFA is not limited to California! We are everywhere!

Hail the Gods!

*Stephen A. McNallen*

Drighten, AFA

Dear AFA,

I am new to Asatru. Visiting all the web sites, I see a lot of conflicting material. The word "Folk" is one I do not truly understand. Some use it one way, others, another. How do you define this word?

Bless,

R.

Heilsa, R!

For me, there is the Folk Within, and the Folk Without.

The Folk Within is made up of those of us who have returned to Asatru, some other form of Germanic religion (Theodism comes to mind) or perhaps even Celtic, Slavic, or Baltic religions. These are men and women who have answered the call of the blood, who have heard the ancestors whispering in their ears.

The Folk Without is comprised of people of European heritage who have not come back to our various native ways. Lost in materialism or in the dead ends of alien spiritual paths, they have not been integrated into our people; they have not claimed their birthright. They are still our kin, so we have an obligation to them, but the nature of that obligation is different from, and often less, than that owed to the Folk Within.

The term "Folk" or "folk" can also be used in less formalized ways, of course - as, for example, referring to the people in attendance at a blot: "The folk went on their way inspired by Tyr's sacrifice."

Hail the Folk Within! Hail the Folk Without!

*Stephen A. McNallen*

Drighten, AFA

## A Tip of the Horn

<p>. . . to <b>Hnikar</b>, a valiant fighter for the Folk, as he lays down his Asatru burdens and sets sail on the seas of adventure! Alsherjargothi of the IAOA...publisher of Vor Tru...AFA representative for southern California...and</p>	
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constant battler on egroups everywhere, he led the way where men and women fight for the right.



We salute him as he sails into the sunset, and we await the day he comes sailing back!

and the OTHER tip of the horn !



... to the **Anti-Defamation League**, which has declared our holy runes to be racist symbols because they have been misused by a small number of misguided people. We note that they have not said that the Christian cross is a hate symbol because of its use by the Ku Klux Klan,

nor have they said anything about the Star of David as used by the radical and intolerant Jewish Defense League.

For the Nations

*(THIS PAGE IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION)*

"The promotion of diversity among the peoples and cultures of the Earth, in opposition to global monoculture ... The AFA supports the effort of all cultural and biological groups to maintain their identity, and opposes the plans of the world-managers to reduce all of humanity to the lowest common denominator."

**- From the Declaration of Purpose of the Asatru Folk Assembly**

## TIBET

China's ruthless occupation of Tibet has entered its second fifty years. By undermining that exercise in tyrannical arrogance, we strike a blow for freedom and against the globalist agenda.



To get the background on the Tibetan issue, and to find out how you can help, go to <http://www.tibet.org> (Tibet Online) or to the Tibetan Government in Exile page at <http://www.tibet.com> .

For the web site of the rather more militant Tibetan Youth Congress, visit <http://www.tibetanyouthcongress.org> .

Chushi Gangdruk was (is?) the armed Tibetan resistance. They haven't mellowed much over the years. You can find them at <http://www.chushigangdruk.org> .

One thing we can all do is boycott goods made in China. One good web site is <http://www.spacepub.com/users/china/index.html> , and another one is <http://www.buyhard.org> .

For a list of multinational corporations which are run as profit-making entities by the Chinese military, take a look at <http://www.churchward.com/cpla/index.html>

The fact is, you - yes, you! - can play a role, however modest, in this global socio-political-spiritual struggle. You can help subvert the country which is the hope of the New World Order, as well as arguably the most racist (against us!) nation on the planet. And you can help a subjugated people attain freedom and independence. Start today!



## **Warrior Guild**

Another issue of Wolf Age, the journal of the Warrior Guild, has emerged from Bodvar's computer and found its way to readers.

The lead article is one that defines the warrior's role as leadership in the defense of the tribe or nation. As Bodvar says, "The charge of warriorship begins, I feel, with the recognition that one's duties lie outside one's self. Our people should feel that they can look to our warriors as protectors and 'movers-along' of our Folk. They should be the vanguard. The Warrior Guild warrior is the tip of the spear."

In another essay, Piparskegg studies Ullr as provider and guardian, in what is undoubtedly the most informative overview of this God that I have seen anywhere, bar none. Anyone planning a blot to this deity of hunting, death, and winter would do well to refer to this article in preparing their rite.

Other major items in this issue include "Murphy's Laws of Combat Operations" (Tracers work both directions), an excellent discussion of the warrior virtue of preparedness, and a report on a successful boar hunt, using spears.

Wolf Age is available for \$8 per year from the AFA.

**Visit the [Warrior Guild website](#)**

## **The Aerospace Technology Guild**

In the latest Sleipnir, Ed LeBouthillier points out that putting satellites into orbit is now a reasonable goal even for private organizations. More importantly, he asks us to think about what we - meaning Asatruar - could do if we had access to space. Very profitable business are emerging on the space frontier. Ed tells us how we, as small as we are, could begin taking concrete steps in this direction.

Another noteworthy article gives us a glimpse into rocket technology by analyzing the engines that powered the V-2 missiles of yesteryear.

As a minimalist goal, the ATG is dedicated to maintaining an awareness among Asatruar of our destiny on the vertical frontier. Frontiers are where Eurofolk thrive - and there isn't a lot of unclaimed real estate left on crowded Earth. The ultimate scope of the Aerospace Technology Guild, however, can be much greater than merely creating an awareness; it can ensure that future generations of Asatruar not only know of these adventurous vistas, but that they can actually participate in them.

Sleipnir can be had from the AFA for \$8 per year.

**Visit the [Aerospace Technology Guild website](#)**