
Renewal

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Eostre – our goddess behind the modern ceremony of “Easter”

-by Mark

As this issue goes to press, many of us will be tucking into chocolate eggs and hot cross buns. In this article, Mark, a distinguished scholar of our ancestral lore, investigates the goddess whom we honour with these and other rites.

It is one of our most sacred rites, the celebration of the vernal Equinox, and yet so much of it is wrapped in obscurity. The primary issue surrounds the identity of the goddess the feast is named after. How could a deity have such an important blót and a month (April) named after her, and not have a prominent place in our lore? The answer to this lies, most likely, in the Teutonic poetic inclination to use polyonymy, or several names for the same character. There is quite a bit of evidence to link Ostara to another goddess of the pantheon, which could also shed some light on her feast as well.

There have been some who have tried to connect Ostara to Frigga. It does seem tempting to do this, given her high status, but nevertheless there is no proof to support this claim. I believe that it is based upon a Christian theory linking Ostara to the semitic goddess Astarte, who shares some traits with Frigga. Scholars who promote connections of traditions to Biblical characters (Astarte is the Old Testament's Ashtoreth) only do so to give validity, in relation to Hebrew doctrine, to their practice of European pagan customs, or to explain the practice of such customs, by relating them to semitic lore. Santa Claus as a Persian saint (ever see a reindeer in Persia?) and the Christmas tree as a Babylonian hanging tree are other examples of this. It is better to do this, in their eye, than to admit their origin in Europe and their theft by the early Catholics, since Europe is not in the Bible, nor are Odinists or Celts for that matter.

Ostara is the Teutonic goddess of the dawn, her name relates this much to us, for it represents the rising of the sun in the east. If we are to relate her to foreign goddesses she would be Eos of the Greeks, Aurora of the Romans, and Ushas of the Hindus. All of these names: Ostara, Eostre, Easter, Eost Aurora and Ushas are etymologically related and all have the same meaning: goddess of the rising sun in the east.

To begin to recognise who this Ostara is

in the Teutonic lore we must first look at something the other three, Eos, Aurora and Ushas, have in common: they are all producers of the sacred honey-dew. Eos-Aurora cries tears for her dead son Memnon, which falls on the fields as morning dew. The Ushas, who are a group of female



Michelangelo's sculpture of "Dawn", c. 1525. The sculpture is known in Italy as "Aurora", and as Mark tells us, Aurora was the Roman goddess known to our own forebears as Eostre.

divinities, have a representative with the same name who brings the Madhu-dew, the honey-dew (Rigveda III, 61, 5; I, 92, 13; IV, 45, 7). There is only one goddess in the Nordic pantheon who performs this same duty for our world, this being Nát, the goddess of night, whose horse Hrimfaxi drips the dew from his bit onto the dales.

It can be said that basing an investigation upon comparative studies can be dangerous to say the least. But we are not just talking

about similarities in attributes here, these goddesses all share the same name, literally translated into several different languages. Also, it is firmly established by many scholars that there is a very close link between *Rigveda* Hinduism and Odinism. Between the Teutonic and Mediterranean goddesses there are, of course, differences in their characters — Nát is not known to weep for a fallen son, nor to marry a human (Aurora married Tithonus), however, what we see here is an Indo-European connection between the goddess of the dawn and the morning-dew. It makes sense considering that dawn is when the dew falls from the sky.

Vafthrudnismál 14 tells of Nát's bringing of the dew, after her horse eats the leaves of Yggdrasil, which is nourished by the holy mead fountains of the underworld:

"He is called Hrimfaxi, which the hallowed night brings to the blessed gods. As he fares, foam falls from his bit; thence comes the dew in the dales."

Beyond this we must look at Nát's position in the lore. She is the goddess who crosses the sky every night on Hrimfaxi. Thus, when the dawn comes it is she who would be the one to meet the morning rays. The Mediterraneans believed that Eos-Aurora opened the gates of heaven for the sun god every morning. There is probably a lost story that tells the same of Nát, since we know of such gates existing in the Teutonic Underworld (they are called Hølpörtar), and it would be her, more than any other, who would be in the position to do this, to greet the sun goddess and the day. When we take into consideration the fact that she is the wife of Delling, the Elf of the dawn, and mother of Dag ("Day"), it is quite easy to see her in this position. If we look at this from a symbolic point of view, Night being the mother of Day could be a perfect metaphor for the dawn.

As stated above, the Vedic lore has a group of goddesses of the dawn, known as the Ushas. This is actually the same with the Teutonic as well. Nát's father is Narvi, Neri,

(Continued on page 2)

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Nor, Nari (*Vafþrúdnismál* 25), who is proven to be identical to Mimir (see Viktor Rydberg's *Teutonic mythology* vol. I ch. 85) and he is identical to Gudmund of the Middle-Age sagas (ibid. ch. 51). Saxo tells us that King Gudmund has twelve daughters, a statement confirmed by the Icelandic sagas where these daughters are depicted as wearing red and riding on gold-adorned horses. The Vedic Ushas are also clothed in red (Rigv. IV, 51, 9) and ride gold-glistening steeds (Rigv. III, 61, 2). The church historian Bede only mentions *one* Eostra, but this does not contradict the Vedic sources, for one of these Ushas is given a particular prominence as a representative of the group, and receives her particular hymns (Rigv. I, 48, I, 49, I, 124, III, 61), while all of the sisters, the Ushas, are sung of in other hymns (I, 92, IV, 51).

Here is what Viktor Rydberg has to say on Ostara (*Undersökningar i Germanisk Mytologi*, pg. 51):

"The word Ushas is related to or, more correctly, is the same word as the Old High German *ôstar* and the English Easter. Its Teutonic form stands in full phonetic conformity with its Indian. The Passover in Germany still bears the term Oster and the month of April, "The Month of the Year's Dawn", is still called, as in Karl the Great's time, Ostermonat. The church historian Bede says that the Anglo-Saxons worshipped a goddess Eostre, after which the month of April is called Esturmonath. Grimm assumes that she was "the goddess of the radiant morning, the rising light", because her feast became the feast of the resurrected Christ and because since heathen times the fires of joy were kindled on the Passover and on the morning of Passover the collected waters would be particularly holy and a powerful curative. I think on the stated grounds Grimm is correct on this point. It stands firm that the word Ushas in Teutonic form has preserved itself among the Teutons as a mythological concept; it is borne witness to by the goddess Eostra mentioned by Bede and the circumstances cited by Grimm, just as this concept related to the beings who stood in relation with the notion of the reawakening of nature from a longer or shorter dormancy, winter's or night's. And the Nordic traditions show that these Teutonic Ushas, the red-clad disir on gold-ornamented horses, were Gudmund-Mimir's daughters and Nát's sisters. The holy and curative waters gathered on the Passover morning are connected with the myth of the morning dew. Lif and Leifþrasir live through the ages on the morning dew, which from Yggdrasil drops down onto the Underworld's dales, and from within the Underworld the disir's horses drop this same dew over Midgard when morning approaches."

It may seem odd to some that Nát is given such an exalted status in the cycle of the year, since in many sources she seems to be a minor goddess. In the ancient lore she

was highly respected, as much as in the Indian, where she is said "to have a fair face, to increase riches, and to be one of the mothers of order" (*UGM* I ch., 84). Indeed, Tacitus knows her as "The Mother of the Gods" because her bloodline stretches into all of the divine clans. She herself is a Giantess as a daughter of Mimir, with Delling she is the mother of Dag, the Elf of the days, with Hœnir-Fjörgynn she had Frigga, high mother of the Aesir, and Njordr, prince of the Vanir. In *Germania* ch. 3 Tacitus tells us that the Teutons "do not ... compute time by days but by nights, night seems to lead the day", revealing the reverence our earliest ancestors had for her.

We must also not take lightly the fact that a hymn fragment to Nát and her family has survived in *Sigrdrifumál* 3-4:

"Hail Dag, Hail Dag's sons, Hail Nát and Nipt! Look down upon us with benevolent eyes and give victory to the sitting! Hail the Aesir! Hail the Asynjur! Hail the bounteous earth! Words and wisdom give to us, and healing hands in life!"

Since the word Nipt signifies a female relative it can only specify here a kinswoman of Nát who was worshipped by the Teutons, possibly one of the Ushas (the only other dises of Night we know the names of are Sinnmara, Mimir's wife, and Boduhild. This being the case, the hymn points out Nát and her kin in a place of prominence among the Aesir and Asynjur.

So when we rejoice the rebirth of the world, our "bounteous earth" (Frigga), it is her mother, Nát, we honour as the goddess of the dawn, along with her sisters. The honey-dew they drop is the most sacred liquid in nature, said to come from Yggdrasil itself. The bees collect it to make honey and from this we get our mead. Other symbols of this holiday: rabbits, eggs, etc. simply represent the fertility of this time, which comes from the earth's renewal.

Sources:

Undersökningar i Germanisk Mytologi, vol. I (UGM) translated as *Teutonic Mythology* by Rasmus Anderson. Now available at: www.northvegr.org/lore/rydberg/

Undersökningar i Germanisk Mytologi, vol. II, selected essays translated by William Reaves. Available at: www.europaltdcom

Encyclopedia Britannica

The Poetic Edda Lee Hollander translation.

*** Note to readers: We scan in submitted articles, and wherever possible retain the author's original spelling of ancient names and non-English words.**



**"Yes, I am for dead white male culture. It's pretty damn good."
- John Rhys-Davies**

WALES, January 20 (IslamOnline.net) – A Welsh Hollywood movie star was castigated Monday, January 19, by his local community, Muslims and non-Muslims, for "racist and ill-informed" statements he made about Islam.

John Rhys-Davies, a lead actor in the blockbuster *Lord Of The Rings*, drew flack after he warned of a "demographic catastrophe" in Europe by 2020 - that around 50 percent of the children under 18 in Holland, for instance, will be of Muslim descent, according to the national website of Wales Sunday.

"I condemn these comments as being racist and ill-informed," said Adam Price, the MP for Rhys-Davies' former home town, Ammanford.

"It is obvious that this man who now lives in the lap of luxury in Hollywood is out of touch with realities of the nature of present day European society.

"His attack on Muslims and comments about the threat that they pose to Western society shows his ignorance of world events and the true teachings of Islam," he added.

He told the website that the people of Ammanford "will feel very let down by a man with such close connections to the town".

In an interview with American journalists from *World* magazine, Rhys-Davies made his racial warnings noting that "we dare not bring this up because we are so cagey about not offending people racially ... But there is a cultural thing as well".

His remarks were used by the far right British National Party (BNP) in a leaflet to campaign for support among cinema-goers, the website said. The party reproduced some of his comments on their website, where they ask people to print them off and distribute them at showings of *Lord Of The Rings*.

Mohammad Javed, the chairman of the Muslim Society for Wales, wanted an apology from the 59-year-old actor.

The actor, however, stood by his views.

"I believe in racial equality, not racial discrimination. All I was commenting on was that there are cultural changes taking place in Europe that I consider to be unacceptable," he told the website.

This is an edited report from IslamOnline.net, which is published from Qatar. The ensuing controversy can be followed on the Internet.

As previously reported in this publication, Mr Rhys-Davies' fellow Rings star, Viggo Mortensen, has been spotted wearing a Thor's hammer.

The “new” Anglo-Saxon royal burial is heathen!

According to the breathless report on *Ananova*, “The tomb of an East Saxon king containing a fabulous collection of artefacts has been unearthed.”

Details are still sketchy, but apparently this is the richest Anglo-Saxon archaeological find since that of the Sutton Hoo ship burial in Suffolk – and it dates to the same period.

The site is somewhere near Prittlewell, Southend, Essex. It includes all the things that a heathen warrior king might need in the afterlife, including his sword and shield. It also contains all sorts of imported treasures that must have been worth a proverbial “king’s ransom”.

The body of the king has dissolved in the acidic soil, but two gold foil crosses were found which have been claimed to suggest he was a newly-converted Christian.

The chief archaeologist involved in the excavation, Ian Blair, said: “To find an intact chamber grave and a moment genuinely frozen in time is a once-in-a-lifetime discovery. The fact that copper-alloy bowls were still hanging from hooks in the walls of the chamber, where they had been placed nearly 1,400 years ago, is a memory that I’m sure will remain with all of us forever.”

Unfortunately he added: “Two foil crosses, probably originally laid on the body or sewn to a shroud, suggest that the King had converted from paganism to Christianity.”

Oh really? Since when have Christians been buried with their swords and shields? The presence of grave-goods of this kind is usually taken by archaeologists as unequivocal evidence that the burial was heathen.

We suspect that if the crosses have any Christian significance at all, they were probably placed in the grave by Christians against what would have been the wishes of the evidently heathen nobleman. At least they presumably meant well according to their own beliefs. They certainly didn’t desecrate the grave, as their fellow-Christians desecrated the bodies of the Odinist priestesses buried in the Oseberg ship (see *Renewal*, Vol 9, No 1)

We can think of other possible explanations. One is that the king had taken these crosses as a memento of a battle against Christians. At the time of the burial, the Christianised kingdoms of Britain were waging crusades against the last heathen kingdoms. The great king Aethelfrith of Northumberland was constantly besieged by Christians in this way, and was finally killed by them in c. 616 at the battle of the River Idle.

This tendency to try to posthumously “Christianise” obviously heathen kings on the slenderest “evidence” really is becoming

tedious. The same has happened with the king whose death was commemorated in the Sutton Hoo ship burial. Here the supposed evidence is ten silver bowls with crosses on them, and two Byzantine silver spoons with the names of Christian disciples on them.

We can discount the bowls immediately. Here is what they look like:



There is nothing

particularly Christian about these crosses – which would look perfectly in place on a Hollywood heathen Viking shield. As to the spoons, the fact that a king had in his possession attractive objects made of precious metal, but presumably cast by or for Christians, tells us nothing about his own personal beliefs. The present author has a collection of silver “apostle” teaspoons mounted on the wall. They are a memento of a deceased relative and mean nothing in Christian terms.

The gold crosses in the “new” tomb might be susceptible to many interpretations, but one of them is *not* that the king had had second thoughts about his immediate future as a heathen warrior in the afterlife. You don’t take to the grave everything you think you might need in Valhalla if you’re a Christian!

The Prittlewell tomb was found last northern autumn, when the Museum of London Archaeology Service was evaluating an area due for road improvements. On a strip between a road

and a railway line they discovered the burial chamber, measuring about four metres square by one and a half metres high.

According to *Ananova*:

The contents of the tomb had been held in place because the sand from the mound sealing the grave gradually seeped into the chamber, silting up the air spaces and supporting the roof-timbers.

Most of the organic material on the site had been destroyed by the acidity of the soil, but fragments of wood from the burial chamber and from some of the vessels had survived.

A spokesman for the Museum of London Archaeology Service said: “The find is spectacular in its size and quality, but what makes it unique is that all the objects were in their original positions, just as they had been arranged on the day of the funeral.”

He added: “The burial is probably contemporary with the Sutton Hoo burial (c.AD 630) and it is quite possible that the two men knew each other.”

The most exotic finds are a decorated flagon and at least one bowl that were both imported from the eastern Mediterranean, possibly Asia Minor.

Other highlights among the sixty or more finds are a hanging bowl decorated with metallic strips and medallions, and two cauldrons, one small and one very large.



Anglo-Saxon coloured glass bowls found in the “new” royal grave



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Books

Marching through Georgia Under the Yoke The Stone Dogs Drakon

by S. M. Stirling

Baen Books, Riverdale, NY, USA
1988, 1989, 1990, 1996

The trouble with most Utopian fiction is that it is fundamentally unbelievable. Changing the way the world is ordered, economically, politically or in any other foreseeable manner, will not change human nature. Any mere reform of our institutions will therefore come to grief on the shoals of human greed, envy, selfishness, short-sightedness and general stupidity – as all our sorrowful history shows.

Can any Odinist really believe that prior to the forcible (and partial) conversions to Christianity of our revered ancestors, all was sweetness and light? True, we don't have extensive written records of life in the northern lands before that time; and true, Tacitus tells us that the ancient Germans were morally and physically superior to the Romans of his day. We do, however, have very extensive records of how other people closely related to us behaved while still adhering to very similar religious beliefs.

The ancient Greeks, for example, even in Homeric times, were often cruel, aggressive, manipulative, deceitful, and even childish. The experiment of radical democracy in Athens didn't improve them noticeably, despite the brilliant art that the Athenians have bequeathed to the world. Nor did the many Greek tyrants and petty kings. A partial exception could be made for the magnificent Spartans, but even they were proud of a contemptible trick their great king Söis perpetrated on the Clitorians of Arcadia.

To be believable, therefore, Utopian fiction has to posit a permanent change in human nature. In short, it must accept Nietzsche's argument that humanity "is a thing to be surpassed". Furthermore, it has to suggest a convincing means by which this might be achieved. That is precisely what S. M. Stirling has done in his Draka series.

Stirling has created an "alternative history" which begins with the American rebellion. In our own historical timeline, France and Spain took the opportunity of the rebellion to declare war on Britain. In Stirling's alternative timeline, Holland joined this European hyena pack. Britain lost in America even more comprehensively than in our history books, but triumphed over the Dutch. As a result, the insignificant Dutch settlement at Cape Town was ceded to Britain. It became a Crown Colony known as Drakia (named after Sir Francis Drake). Many thousands of American loyalists subsequently found refuge there (as, in our

own timeline, they did in Canada). They were later augmented by the Hessian mercenaries that Britain had deployed in America, and by Icelanders fleeing the consequences of an eruption of Mount Hekla, by French aristocrats escaping from the revolution in their homeland, by Canadians dislodged after the American invasion of 1812, by Confederates after their defeat in the American civil war, and by prominent 19th century European dissidents including Nietzsche, Thomas Carlyle and Oscar Wilde.

The first Drakians soon pushed inland, dispossessing and largely destroying the native African tribes, discovering the mineral wealth of what we know as the Witwatersrand, and sharing with Britain in creating the industrial revolution. By 1798, after they repelled Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, they became masters of all of Africa.

In the war that we know as WW1, the Drakians conquered most of the Middle East and Central Asia. In WW2 they stayed their hand until Germany and Russia had exhausted themselves by fighting one another in the Urals – then struck hard. Russia was mopped up quickly. The Germans fought tenaciously, but were ultimately no match for a people who by now *genuinely* believed in their superiority. All of Europe apart from Britain was then added to what was by now known as "The Domination of Draka".

One incident in *Marching Through Georgia* perhaps sums up the implacable ruthlessness that made Drakan military success inevitable. A young female Drakan soldier is captured by SS crack troops, one of whom offers her water and chocolate:

"Ach," the young SS trooper was saying, "She's just a young maiden –".

Not since I was fifteen, or thirteen if you count girls, she thought, wincing in half-pretended pain and taking inventory. Good, everything moving. She accepted another sip of the water

"– and of fine Nordic stock, just look at her, even if they've cut that beautiful blond hair so short. And look," he indicated the name tag sewn over her left breast, "*Johanna von Shrakenberg*, a German name. What a shame, to be fighting our own stock; and a crime, to expose a potential Aryan mother to danger like this." He clucked his tongue, ts-k-tsking.

Why, you son of a bitch, Johanna thought indignantly as the fingers of her right hand curled inconspicuously ...

Are these people total idiots? she wondered. The way they were acting ... Almighty Thor, they hadn't even searched her ...

... [Her knife] slid through the [German's] tunic without resistance, through the skin, slanting up under the breastbone ... up into the heart, razoring it in half, then quarters as she wrenched the weapon back and forth in the wound.

After conquering Europe and enslaving its surviving population, the Domination of

Draka is involved in a cold war with what remains of the "free world", led by America.

The culture of the American alliance is as sordid and money-grubbing as that with which we are familiar in our own timeline. Drakans, by contrast, live in a serf-owning aristocracy, whose Citizens cultivate the visual arts, music, architecture, philosophy, and radical conservation. Neither side can share the planet with the other, and both urgently pursue a scientific military advantage, thus stimulating enormous technological progress. America has the lead in computer systems; the Drakans, vitally concerned with improving their race, lead in biological research. Hot war breaks out in 1998, and the American alliance is comprehensively defeated, with only a small remnant being allowed to escape off-planet.

Left to their own devices, the Drakans then reduce the world's population to something like the earth's carrying capacity, and also work on genetically improving their race. First, diseases are eliminated. The Drakan IQ is increased to an average 200 points. Citizen lives are extended to hundreds of years, potentially infinity. Trans-species genes are spliced into the Drakan stock, giving them an enormous increase in physical strength, and improvements – for a warrior people – such as night vision.

Fast forward in the final volume of Stirling's series to what would be the year 2442 CE in our own timeline. *Homo sapiens* has been superseded by two new species, *Homo drakensis* and *Homo servus*. They are mutually infertile, and one species has been genetically programmed to serve, the other to dominate. As the chief protagonist of *Drakon*, Gwendolyn Ingolfsson, says: "We *drakensis* don't need ideology much, we've got genetics instead. Our social order is hard-coded into our genes." (We also learn that *Homo drakensis* share a little over 90% of their genes with *Homo sapiens*.)

As a result of a failed scientific experiment, Gwendolyn is catapulted into a slightly different version of our 1995 America. She tells some of the humans about the world that her own people have created – disease-free, with no fossil fuels in use, a stable population of 500 million, and with the environmental damage done by humans over so many centuries utterly reversed.

An American environmentalist blurts out: "I never dreamed ... I never thought human beings could be such stewards of the Earth". Gwendolyn replies, simply and devastatingly: "They can't. I'm not human."

At one level, Odinism is all about the ascent of humanity to something better than being merely "human, all too human". S. M. Stirling has given us a powerful vision of one way in which that could be achieved – as well as a reminder of the "human" traits we would have to jettison to reach that goal.

Christians, Jews, Muslims & Pagans

One of the last messages dispatched from the Bin Laden cave listed as a principal Osama grievance “the tragedy of Andalusia” – by which was meant the reconquest of Spain by the Spaniards, culminating in the expulsion of the last Muslim invaders in 1492.

What is not generally known is that the expelled Muslims and their heirs then went on a rampage of enslaving white Europeans for the next three hundred years. All in all, over a million Europeans were enslaved, according to a new book by Professor Robert Davis called, not altogether accurately, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800*.

These Muslim slavers operated from the Mediterranean coast of North Africa. They were pirates known as “corsairs” whose slaving raids netted them captives from coastal towns in Italy, Spain, Portugal,

France, Britain, even Iceland. They also raided non-Christian parts of Eastern Europe. Needing about 8,500 new slaves annually, the pirates would often land on unguarded beaches, usually at night, and abduct anyone who fell into their hands. For instance, almost all the villagers of Baltimore in Ireland were captured in 1631. Another method was to board ships and abduct the passengers and crews. One source indicates that about 7,000 English people were taken in this way between 1622 and 1644 alone.

Once captured, the slaves would then be taken to northern Africa. There they were put to work in quarries, building sites and galleys. The death rate was high as a result of malnutrition, disease and maltreatment. They were typically fed black bread and water.

The local rulers, “pashas”, deemed themselves entitled to an eighth of all the slaves taken, and many of the females ended up in the pashas’ private brothels. No doubt children of both sexes, and even men, were also sexually abused. That was, and is, by no means an uncommon practice in this part of the world.

Professor Davis’ research methodology has been supported by Ian Blanchard, professor of economic history at the University of Edinburgh. Blanchard, a specialist in trade with Africa, said: “I don’t find that absolute figure of 1 million at all surprising. It makes total sense.”

To put this figure of over a million European slaves in perspective, it has been estimated (from records of baptisms, burials and marriages) that the population of the British Isles in 1600 was about 4,811, 718. So the European slaves amounted to about a quarter of the population of the British Isles.

It seems that the Barbary ships had previously concentrated on taking slaves and gold from southern to northern Africa, but when gold began to arrive from the New World they turned their attention to slave raids in Europe.

“One of the things that both the public and many scholars have tended to take as given is that slavery was always racial in nature – that only blacks have been slaves. But that is not true,” said Davis, whose book is published in the US by Palgrave Macmillan.

He added that white slavery had been minimised or ignored because academics preferred to treat Europeans as evil colonialists rather than as victims.

So much for the Christians, pagans and Muslims mentioned in the title above. But where did the Jews fit in? Well, according to another, earlier study, the European slaves were

Stripped and subjected to humiliating public inspection ... Their inspection ... was a skilled business in which Jewish middlemen specialized.

(from Clissold, S, *The Barbary Slaves*, 1977, Purnell, Abingdon, England)

If Bin Laden and his Muslim mates ever decide to reverse “the tragedy of Andalusia” by enslaving Westerners again, we assume they will cut out the Jewish middle-men this time around. After all, Osama’s imprisoned Indonesian henchman, Abu Bakar Bashir, has warned Australia to cut its alliance with the regime of US President George W. Bush, because “That’s a government controlled by Jews”. (See *The Weekend Australian*, March 20-21, 2004, page 1.)

Ripples in Time



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Renewal

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● Humour downloaded ● Standing up for ourselves ●
 Religious rights betrayed by polities ● They're declining,
 we're growing

We can't vouch for this

From the internet (unchanged by us):

Subject: Catholic elementary school test:

Pay special attention to the wording and spelling. If you know the Bible, even a little, you'll find this hilarious! It comes from a Catholic elementary school test. Kids were asked questions about the Old and New Testaments. The following statements about the Bible were written by children. They have not been retouched or corrected (i.e., incorrect spelling has been left in).

1. In the first book of the bible, Guinnessis, God got tired of creating the world, so he took the Sabbath off.
2. Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark. Noah built an ark, which the animals come on to in pears.
3. Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day, but a ball of fire by night.
4. The Jews were a proud people and throughout history they had trouble with the unsympathetic Genitals.
5. Samson was a strongman who let himself be led astray by a Jezebel like Delilah.
6. Samson slayed the Philistines with the axe of the Apostles.
7. Moses led the Hebrews to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread which is bread without any ingredients.
8. The Egyptians were all drowned in the dessert. Afterwards, Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten amendments.
9. The first commandment was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple.
10. The seventh commandment is thou shalt not admit adultery.
11. Moses died before he ever reached Canada. Then Joshua led the Hebrews in the battle of Genital.
12. The greatest miracle in the Bible is when Joshua told his son to stand still and he obeyed him.
13. David was a hebrew king skilled at playing the liar. He fought the Finklesteins, a race of people who lived in Biblical times.
14. Solomon, one of David's sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines.
15. When Mary heard that she was the mother of Jesus, she sang the Magna Carta.
16. When the three wise guys from the east side arrived, they found Jesus in the manager.
17. Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption.
18. St. John the blacksmith dumped water on his head.
19. Jesus enunciated the Golden Rule, which says to do one to others before they do one to you. He also explained, a man doth not live by sweat alone.
20. It was a miracle when Jesus rose from the dead and managed to get the tombstone off the

entrance.

21. The people who followed the lord were called the 12 decibels.
22. The epistles were the wives of the apostles.
23. One of the opossums was St. Matthew who was also a taxi man.
24. St. Paul cavorted to Christianity. He preached holy acrimony, which is another name for marriage.
25. Christians have only one spouse. This is called monotony.

But we can vouch for this

As we reported previously, the Victorian government has been proposing to make swords "prohibited weapons" rather than "controlled weapons". The main difference is that you can have a "controlled weapon" if you have a legitimate reason, but to possess a "prohibited weapon" you need an expensive annual permit and police checks, together with even more expensive storage requirements.

This proposed change would have put many historical re-enactment groups out of business, as well as most Scottish Highland Dancing societies – according to their own testimony. It would also have been a nuisance for Freemasons and – particularly – for Odinists, since we have swords on our altars for purely symbolic reasons.

Therefore the Odinic Rite of Australia decided to use our democratic entitlement to object to this proposal. We explained exactly why we consider the idea to be an unwarranted intrusion on our religious rights and freedoms, which happen to be guaranteed in the Australian Constitution.

On 16 December 2003 one Helen M Mason, describing herself as a Legal Adviser to the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee, answered us as follows:

The Regulation Review Subcommittee notes that the Regulations have changed in form in that the parts which related to the change of status of swords and cross bows from controlled weapons to prohibited weapons and the prescription (sic) of inert or imitation explosives as controlled weapons have now been abandoned.

This change of mind was *not* caused solely by our submission. We know for a fact that many re-enactment groups, Highland Dancing groups, and even museums objected to the half-baked idea. However, as far as we know, *only* our submission raised constitutional considerations. It is therefore quite possible that it was our objection that caused this intrusive proposition to be "abandoned". After all, under Australian law, the States can make whatever rules they like, no matter how unpopular they may be –

except that they *can't* legally pass laws that conflict with the Australian Constitution.

We think this exercise shows that it is always worth while taking the trouble to stand up for our rights.

No-one can vouch for politicians!

Three days after the previous article was written the Victorian Police Minister changed his mind yet again. A vicious brawl in the centre of Melbourne between two Asian gangs had led to one gangster having his hand severed with a samurai sword. Citing this as his justification, the Police Minister announced on March 9 that the proposed, then "abandoned", ban on swords was now going to be made law.

According to a report in the (Melbourne) *Herald Sun*, "Collectors and people with legitimate cultural, **religious** or military reasons to own swords will be exempted from the ban, but must store them under lock and key and have a burglar alarm".

Since we were the only group to oppose the original change purely on religious grounds, it seems reasonable to assume that the Minister had Odinists in mind when he allowed the religious exemption. Big tick!

It seems harsh, though, that we will have to incur additional expenses just to keep a blunt piece of altar furniture – and this only because people not of our ethnic background and not of our faith choose to chop each other up in brawls. If any suitably qualified readers can advise us as to our legal options, we will consider taking this matter further.

Never forget!

The last Australian census revealed that the percentage of the population formally labelling themselves as Christians was now down to 67.27%. Of the remainder, 1.89% were Buddhists, 1.48% Muslims, 0.5% Hindus, 0.44% Jews, and 0.03% said they held traditional Aboriginal beliefs

9.47% of the population refused to answer the question. About 18.2% said they were atheists, heathens/pagans of various types, or else stated their beliefs in terms that the Census Bureau labelled "inadequately described".

Let's guess that heathens make up a fifth of this group. If so, there are more than a million of us. Nominal Christians still outnumber us 12 to 1, but their numbers are declining every year, and ours are growing.

Never forget that it is only half a century since Christians sent the then-handful of Odinists in Australia to concentration camps!



Ota's Talking Point

For as long as I can recall, the fact that some film is meant to be based on the Bible has been a turn-off. I don't say this because I'm not a Christian. I'm not a communist, either, but Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* is a great movie despite its propaganda. Not so any Christian films that I can recall. Nope, they've invariably been appalling – featuring sanitised, caricatured, and above all unconvincing characters, plots and dialogue. They were meant to evoke some sense of awe, and boy, did the effort show! In fact, the only sense of awe they ever gave me came from seeing Charlton Heston's body at its (sadly long-past) peak.

Doesn't it seem strange that a religion commanding so many believers can't make a half-decent film about its own founders? Even Cecil B de Mille's second stab at the task, in 1956, was plodding. Compare it to Leni Riefenstahl's stunning 1935 paean to her god! You might as well compare Elton John's insipid tribute to Princess Di with Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance*.

Why is it that the Christian story doesn't seem to work on film? It has inspired wonderful music, and some of the greatest literature in our language. So why not film?

Part of the problem, no doubt, is the Christian inversion of the heathen view of the human body as an emblem of divine perfection. In Christian thinking (to use the word loosely), the body is a study in shame and humiliation. Yet any film other than the most mechanical nature doco is intimately involved with the human body. A film either accepts the body, including its animal needs and nature, or rejects it – at least to the extent of keeping it freshly showered, deodorised, covered up, safe, unthreatening. Films that take this second course *when the plot demands otherwise* are invariably unconvincing.

Yes, as you no doubt guessed, this is a lead-in to my views on Mel Gibson's *The Passion*. Well, to be more precise, on the hysterical media response to *The Passion*.

In all the pre-release controversy, there seemed to be only one important question: Was this film going to be bad for the Jews? So, as you will remember, just about every Christian priest and Jewish rabbi who could string more than three words together was asked to comment on this vital question. And what did they tell us? Nothing but flaccid

platitudes. The correct answer ought to have been obvious to anyone who isn't a Jew or a Christian. The Christian Gospels portray the Jews as baying like wild animals for Jesus' blood. So if *The Passion* stuck to its sources that's exactly what it would have to show. Anything less and it would be ducking what the media, at least, said was The Big Issue.

Then for months we had the sad sight of Mel Gibson ducking and weaving, trying on the one hand to appease the Jews and on the other to arouse a latter-day crusade of fundie Christians to protect him. His pathetic cries for help reached their lowest point when the media finally Googled that Mel's dad is a "holocaust

core meaning, in other words a truly Christian movie, simply *has* to depict the central event in the Christian story. And as I said earlier, if it doesn't acknowledge both the beauty and the frailty of the human body it will not be believable. So congratulations to our Christian neighbours for finally getting a bit of genuine Christian cinema.

Yet there haven't been many genuine Christian voices among the reviewers. One of the few in the wilderness was Michael Novak, a world-renowned theologian. To help you savour the depths of modern Christian theology, here is an extract from his at times almost unintelligible review:

We've accounts in the daily papers of ladies fainting in cinemas and having to be given reviving glasses of water by staff. (No mention yet of smelling salts, or cutting off the poor dears' corsets, but I'm an eternal optimist.)

revisionist". (Where have these people been? Mel's dad has spent decades trying to tell people what he thinks really happened in places like Auschwitz, as any mature-age Mel fan in Australia would know.)

Well, that side of the controversy is over at last. Mel has released a reputedly bowdlerised cut of his film. Leading Hollywood producers have publicly vowed to destroy his career. Christian fundies have booked out whole cinemas to support their hero. Mel himself is now a much richer man than he was, although perhaps much less wealthy than he might have been if he had kept his lens capped.

This debate has since moved on. Now the critics are panning the bloodshed, gore, and brutality of *The Passion*. Given that the film is supposed to be about a bloke being whipped half to death, then nailed to a cross and having a spear poked through him, I can't really see what else it can do other than show ... well, say, a bloke being whipped half to death, then nailed to a cross and having a spear poked through him. Or have I missed something?

"Gruesome imagery and tasteless violence" thundered one local critic, in tones that would have been more appropriate to *Saving Private Ryan*. We've even had accounts in the daily papers of ladies fainting in the cinemas and having to be given reviving glasses of water by staff. (No mention yet of getting out the smelling salts, or of cutting loose the poor dears' corsets, but I'm an eternal optimist.)

Now this is supposed to be an opinion column, and by this stage you might well be thinking: "OK, Ota, but where do you stand on all this?" Aha! I thought so!

First, the core meaning of Christianity is that Jesus died in a gruesome and degrading manner to atone for "the sins of humanity". (True, we don't believe that, but *they* do – and there's nothing wrong with showing a bit of intellectual respect.) A film that is true to that

"I have never sat in the presence of a religious film with anything like the power of *The Passion*.. At the end I wanted to weep, to be silent and to commune with my God, on whom my sins had heaped such afflictions. From the opening scene, it is clear that God's will governs the last 12 hours of Christ's suffering and death, and that He is called, not by his own will, but his Father's, to die for my sins. I am not certain how the film-maker achieved this effect, but from the opening instant I felt personally drawn into recognition of my own responsibility for what was to come."

Forget all the theological mumbo-jumbo. Just bear in mind that this award-winning scholar doesn't even know how a film has managed to manipulate his emotions! How naïve are these people? Hint to Michael Novak: evocative music helped, and so did Caleb Deshanel's stylish camera work. Some pretty good actors didn't hurt, either.

Here's another extract:

"*The Passion* ... is a wondrously wrought work of art, a kind of prayer all its own. It achieves what I would have thought impossible. It makes one forget art, and think of the Lord and his suffering and one's own sins. It brings one to awe for one's fellow man, fellow sufferer, fellow weakling. And it brings one to one's knees."

I defy anyone to explain precisely what Novak's words here really mean. Obviously he wants to get down on his knees and grovel, but only as a result of seeing a film whose techniques he admits he can't even understand! His wish to grovel is therefore emotional, not spiritual or intellectual.

All I can suggest is that if Novak is ever in Sydney, he can look me up. As a special favour to such a distinguished theologian I will buy a nice whip, and use it to bring him to his knees. He can then celebrate the difference between my glorious heathen body, formed in the image of *our* gods, and his own shame-filled Christian body. At least he will know how I "created this effect".

Maybe he will even have fun – for once.

Dear Ed ...

□ Heilsa everyone,

My compliments on the latest issue of *Renewal* – you've really outdone yourselves this time! Especially Osred's own article, *Evolution – an Odinist belief*, a very thought provoking piece of work. It sounds to me like he took the hypothesis proposed by Kathy AOR in her article, *Rigsthula* (ORB #188) and simply expanded on it. But his development of Kathy's zeitgeist panned out very well, even taking ideas from sources that she didn't consider (or at least didn't mention) in her article.

How would you feel about me posting this article on my website? Of course I'd give proper credit to the author and so forth.

I also rather enjoyed *The Celtic Cross Revisited*. While I couldn't say that I'm convinced that Crichton Miller is right, I couldn't say that he is wrong either. If nothing else, he offers some things to consider.

Modern American Numerology is embarrassing for all us Americans. 'Nuff said. *Strange quote from a subsidised scholar*, though, may be almost as embarrassing for you Aussies, ;-)

In the *Dear Ed* section one Tania says: "Ota has been flippant for ten years now. It's time for her to get serious about the reawakening (sic). By the way, her photo probably needs an update." To which the editor's reply remarks: "Ota says it's her face that needs an update, so she won't be sending in a new photo."

Ota looks (at least in her old photo) to me to be rather the cute, petite, big-eyed type. My guess is that she probably improves with age, so if you're taking a vote here's one for the new photo!

Stephen writes: "I would like to see more info on the earlier trailblazers in resurrecting our faith. Not just Rud Mills in Oz in the 1930s, but also people like Guido "von" List, Friedrich Marby, Jorg von Liebenfels Hel, how about William Morris and the other English proto-Odinist literary figures like him?"

And with Stephen I have to agree! I'm forever searching for reliable works on Kummer, Fahrenkrog, et al. Granted, such information may be a bit difficult to find, but then, the staff at *Renewal* seems to have an amazing ability to find rather obscure pieces of information!

- Steve, by email from Vinland

□ Thanks, cobber.

- *Ota resists your entreaties, but thanks you for the compliment. (She adds: "IF that really IS a compliment!")*
- *We featured one of the proto-Odinist writers, the English poet Algernon Charles Swinburne, in an earlier issue (Vol 2 No 4), and have referred to others from time to time (e.g. David McKee Wright, Vol 8 No 4).*

- *Anyone who is not a Christian, Jew or Muslim can reproduce our articles, as long as the source is properly acknowledged and the articles are not edited. It is not necessary for heathens to seek permission. We trust them! Adherents of the Abrahamic faiths must NOT reproduce our articles, which are protected by copyright, unless they have obtained explicit permission.*

□ I am a professional biologist, and as such I really enjoyed Osred's article on evolution as a traditional Odinist belief.

As Osred pointed out – and I think this was the main thrust of his essay – it is truly astounding that our ancestors of a thousand years ago could have had the faintest idea of the theory of evolution. Yet they did, as their poetry proves. They had it all worked out, in poetical terms, long before Alfred Russel Wallace and Charles Darwin.

This is really awe-inspiring! As Osred wrote: "So how might our ancestors have known that humanity had undergone a very lengthy period of physical development before it could reach its then-present level of culture? There seem to be only two possibilities: either they made a series of incredibly lucky guesses, or they were informed by the gods." I urge all readers of *Renewal* to think long and hard about those two possibilities.

Osred made one very excusable error in his article. He said that the idea of a god (in this case, Rígr) intervening in the process of evolution in order to favour one species (in this case, Nordic humans) was "not fully consistent with Darwinism". By contrast, I would say that it is absolutely consistent with Darwinism. May I give you an example?

When the Aborigines came to Australia, the trees weren't mainly sclerophylls, they were mostly antarctic beeches, at least in the southern half of the continent. The soils were therefore more fertile than they are now, and there was even an inland sea that caused precipitation to the south and east.

The Aborigines back then periodically burnt down the native vegetation of southern Oz. They were "gods" in the sense that they had their will with an entire continent. As a result of their behaviour, the predominant vegetation was changed irrevocably, the topsoil was then stripped off and blown away, and the inland waters dried up – making Australia the second-driest continent after Antarctica. (Some "gods", you might say!)

Yet in exactly the same sense, if higher beings intervened for the better in the gene-pool of our ancestors, that would be just as much a part of the story of evolution as the Aborigines' destruction of Australia (from a human point of view, but not a gum tree's!)

- "Smithy", by email from NZ

Notice Board

For updates on the *Australian Viking Ships Museum*, see:

www.australianvikingshipsmuseum.surf.to

The AVSM aims to build a replica of the Gokstad ship, and also to collect other replica ships that have been built in Australia. In addition there will be a land-based interpretation centre, through which thousands of people will be exposed to our heritage.

The National Prison Kindred Alliance aims to help Odinists who are incarcerated in US prisons. Contact: NPKA, PO Box 6493. Napa, CA 94581, USA;

email: Himmingbjorg@aol.com

The Odinist is back! The world's longest-running Odinist journal has returned after a necessary break. For details write to: PO Box 1973, Parkesville, BC, V9P 1R8, Canada.

The Scorpion is an independent magazine dealing in depth with matters relating to the survival of European culture. Its address is: *The Scorpion*, BCM 5766, London, WC1, England or stormloader.com/thescorpion. A sample issue costs £5.00 sterling.

éléments: pour la civilisation européenne is a stylish and intelligent magazine sympathetic to the heathen world-view. Published in French, a year's subscription costs 180 F or 240 F by air. Address: 41 rue Barrault, Paris, France. This is an often brilliant publication!

Odinic Rite Briefing is a quarterly publication of the (British) Odinic Rite. Enquiries to: BCM Runic, London, WC1N 3XX

The Runestone is a quarterly journal of Asatru, "dedicated to our Gods and Goddesses, to the people of the North, and to the values of courage, freedom, and individuality within the context of kinship". Cheques for \$US15.00 airmail should be payable to S. A. McNallen, PO Box 445, Nevada City, Ca, 95959, USA.

The *Asatru Alliance* believes in "standards of behaviour which are consistent with the spiritual truths of the Norse gods and goddesses and harmonious with our deepest being". The Asatru Alliance, PO Box 961, Payson, Az 85547, USA.

Theod has suspended regular publication, but plans to put out occasional special issues from time to time. All back issues will be kept available, and a free brochure is available for the asking at any time, from PO Box 8062, Watertown, NY 13601, USA.

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