
Renewal

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Ossian – a heathen hero

Ossian was a famous heathen warrior-bard whose works, collected and compiled from the oral tradition by James Macpherson, constitute the Scottish equivalent of The Iliad. Macpherson's version of Ossian was Napoleon's favourite reading, and the name of Ossian's son, Oscar, became very popular in Scandinavia. No doubt northern Europeans recognised that despite the linguistic differences, the heroes of the Ossianic poems had a true Odinist spirit.

According to later legend Ossian spent many years in the Land of Youth, returning to his old haunts to seek knowledge of his heroic father and his mighty warrior-son Oscar. There Ossian touched the ground and immediately his years caught up with him. Suddenly he was old and infirm. And he became a captive of St Patrick. Patrick tried to convert the old heathen bard, now bereft of his father, his son and his once-lordly strength, to Christianity. Ossian replied to Patrick's entreaties with contempt.

Here are some extracts from an Irish work that purports to record the discussions between Ossian (here spelled "Oisín") and Patrick:

And it was Patrick had power at that time, and it was to him Oisín was brought; and he kept him in his house, and used to be teaching him and questioning him. And Oisín was no way pleased with the way Ireland was then, but he used to be talking of the old times, and fretting after the Fianna.

And Patrick bade him to tell what happened him the time he left Finn and the Fianna and went away with Niamh. And it is the story Oisín told: "The time I went away with golden-haired Niamh, we turned our backs to the land, and our faces westward, and the sea was going away before us, and filling up in waves after us ...

"Follow on with your story, pleasant Oisín," said Patrick, "for you did not tell us yet what was the country you went to.

"The country of the Young, the Country of Victory, it was," said Oisín

"And we saw coming out to meet us three fifties of armed men, very lively and handsome. And I asked Niamh was this the Country of the Young, and she said it was. 'And indeed, Oisín,' she said. 'I told you no lie about it, and you will see all I promised you before you for ever.'

"And there came out after that a hundred beautiful young girls, having cloaks of silk worked with gold, and they gave me a welcome to their own country. And after that there came a great shining army, and with it a strong beautiful king, having a shirt of yellow silk and a golden cloak over it, and a very bright crown on his head. And there was following after him a young queen, and fifty young girls along with her.

"And when all were come to the one spot,



Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres: *The Songs of Ossian, 1811-1813?*

the king took me by the hand, and he said out before them all: 'A hundred thousand welcomes before you, Oisín, son of Finn. And as to this country you are come to,' he said, 'I will tell you news of it without a lie. It is long and lasting your life will be in it, and you yourself will be young for ever.

" 'And there is no delight the heart ever thought of,' he said, 'but it is here against your coming. And you can believe my words, Oisín,' he said, 'for I myself am the King of the Country of the Young, and this is its comely queen, and it was golden-headed Niamh our daughter that went over the sea looking for you to be her husband for ever ...

"And that is the way I married Niamh of the Golden Hair, and that is the way I went to the Country of the Young, although it is sorrowful to me to be telling it now, O Patrick from Rome," said Oisín.

"Follow on with your story, Oisín of the destroying arms," said Patrick, "and tell me what way did you leave the Country of the Young, for it is long to me till I hear that; and tell us now had you any children by Niamh, and was it long you were in that place."

"Two beautiful children I had by Niamh," said Oisín, "two young sons and a comely daughter. And Niamh gave the two sons the name of Finn and of Osgar, and the name I gave to the daughter was The Flower.

"And I did not feel the time passing, and it was a long time I stopped there," he said, "till the desire came on me to see Finn and my comrades again. And I asked leave of the king and of Niamh to go back to Ireland.

'You will get leave from me,' said Niamh: 'but for all that,' she said, 'it is bad news you

are giving me, for I am in dread you will never come back here again through the length of your days.'

"But I bade her have no fear, since the white horse would bring me safe back again from Ireland. 'Bear this in mind, Oisín,' she said then, 'if you once get off the horse while you are away, or if you once put your foot to ground, you will never come back here again. And O Oisín,' she said, 'I tell it to you now for the third time, if you once get down from the horse, you will be an old man, blind and withered, without liveliness, without mirth, without running, without leaping.

'And it is a grief to me, Oisín,' she said, 'you ever to go back to green Ireland; and it

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is not now as it used to be, and you will not see Finn and his people, for there is not now in the whole of Ireland but a Father of Orders and armies of saints; and here is my kiss for you, pleasant Oisín,' she said, 'for you will never come back any more to the Country of the Young.'

"And that is my story, Patrick, and I have told you no lie in it," said Oisín. "And O Patrick," he said, "if I was the same the day I came here as I was that day, I would have made an end of all your clerks, and there would not be a head left on a neck after me."

"Go on with your story," said Patrick, "and you will get the same good treatment from me you got from Finn, for the sound of your voice is pleasing to me."

So Oisín went on with his story, and it is what he said: "I have nothing to tell of my journey till I came back into green Ireland, and I looked about me then on all sides, but there were no tidings to be got of Finn. And it was not long till I saw a great troop of riders, men and women, coming towards me from the west. And when they came near they wished me good health; and there was wonder on them all when they looked at me, seeing me so unlike themselves, and so big and so tall.

"I asked them then did they hear if Finn was still living, or any other one of the Fianna, or what had happened them. 'We often heard of Finn that lived long ago,' said they, 'and that there never was his equal for strength or bravery or a great name; and there is many a book written down,' they said, 'by the sweet poets of the Gael, about his doings and the doings of the Fianna, and it would be hard for us to tell you all of them.

'And we heard Finn had a son,' they said, 'that was beautiful and shining, and that there came a young girl looking for him, and he went away with her to the Country of the Young.'

"And when I knew by their talk that Finn was not living or any of the Fianna, it is downhearted I was, and tired, and very sorrowful after them. And I made no delay, but I turned my face and went on to Almhúin of Leinster. And there was great wonder on me when I came there to see no sign at all of Finn's great dun, and his great hall, and nothing in the place where it was but weeds and nettles."

And there was grief on Oisín then, and he said: "Och, Patrick! Och, ochone, my grief! It is a bad journey that was to me; and to be without tidings of Finn or the Fianna has left me under pain through my lifetime."

"Leave off fretting, Oisín," said Patrick, "and shed your tears to the God of grace. Finn and the Fianna are slack enough now, and they will get no help for ever."

"It is a great pity that would be," said Oisín, "Finn to be in pain for ever; and who was it gained the victory over him, when his own hand had made an end of so many a hard fighter?"

"It is God gained the victory over Finn," said Patrick, "and not the strong hand of an enemy; and as to the Fianna, they are condemned to hell along with him, and tormented for ever."

"O Patrick," said Oisín, "show me the place where Finn and his people are, and there is not a hell or a heaven there but I will put it down. And if Osgar, my own son, is there," he said, "the hero that was bravest in heavy battles, there is not in hell or in the Heaven of God a troop so great that he could not destroy it."

"Let us leave off quarrelling on each side now," said Patrick; "and go on, Oisín, with your story. What happened to you after you knew the Fianna to be at an end?"

"I will tell you that, Patrick," said Oisín. "I was turning to go away, and I saw the stone trough that the Fianna used to be putting their hands in, and it full of water. And when I saw it I had such a wish and such a feeling for it that I forgot what I was told, and I got off the horse. And in the minute all the years came on me, and I was lying on the ground, and the horse took fright and went away and left me there, an old man, weak and spent, without sight, without shape, without comeliness, without strength or understanding, without respect" ...

And Patrick took in hand to convert Oisín, and to bring him to baptism; but it was no easy work he had to do, and everything he would say, Oisín would have an answer for it. And it is the way they used to be talking and arguing with one another, as it was put down afterwards by the poets of Ireland:

Patrick: "Oisín, it is long your sleep is. Rise up and listen to the Psalm. Your strength and your readiness are gone from you, though you used to be going into rough fights and battles."

Oisín: "My readiness and my strength are gone from me since Finn has no armies living; I have no liking for clerks, their music is not sweet to me after his."

Patrick: "You never heard music so good from the beginning of the world to this day; it is well you would serve an army on a hill, you that are old and silly and grey."

Oisín: "I used to serve an army on a hill, Patrick of the closed-up mind; it is a pity you to be faulting me; there was never shame put on me till now.

"My grief. I to be stopping after him, and without delight in games or in music; to be withering away after my comrades; my grief it is to be living. I and the clerks of the Mass books are two that can never agree.

"If Finn and the Fianna were living, I would leave the clerks and the bells; I would follow the deer through the valleys, I would like to be close on his track.

"Ask Heaven of God, Patrick, for Finn of the Fianna and his race; make prayers for the great man; you never heard of his like."

Patrick: "I will not ask Heaven for Finn, man of good wit that my anger is rising against, since his delight was to be living in valleys with the noise of hunts."

Oisín: "If you had been in company with the Fianna, Patrick of the joyless clerks and of the bells, you would not be attending on schools or giving heed to God."

Patrick: "I would not part from the Son of God for all that have lived east or west; O Oisín, O shaking poet, there will harm come on you in satisfaction for the priests ..."

Oisín: "There is a greater story of Finn than of us, or of any that have lived in our time; all that are gone and all that are living, Finn was better to give out gold than themselves."

Patrick: "All the gold you and Finn used to be giving out, it is little it does for you now; he is in Hell in bonds because he did treachery and oppression."

Oisín: "It is little I believe of your truth, man from Rome with the white books, Finn the open-handed head of the Fianna to be in the hands of devils or demons."

Patrick: "Finn is in bonds in Hell, the pleasant man that gave out gold; in satisfaction for his disrespect to God, he is under grief in the house of pain."

Oisín: "If the sons of Morna were within it, or the strong men of the sons of Baiscne, they would take Finn out of it, or they would have the house for themselves."

Patrick: "If the five provinces of Ireland were within it, or the strong seven battalions of the Fianna, they would not be able to bring Finn out of it, however great their strength might be."

Oisín: "If Faolan and Goll were living, and brown-haired Diarmuid and brave Osgar, Finn of the Fianna could not be held in any house that was made by God or devils."

Patrick: "If Faolan and Goll were living, and all the Fianna that ever were, they could not bring out Finn from the house where he is in pain. ... Leave off, old man, leave *your* foolishness; let what you have done be enough for you from this out. Think on the pains that are before you; the Fianna are gone, and you yourself will be going."

Oisín: "If I go, may yourself not be left after me, Patrick of the hindering heart; if Conan, the least of the Fianna, were living, your buzzing would not be left long to you ... This mouth that is talking with you, may it never confess to a priest, if I would not sooner have the leavings of Finn's house than a share of your own meals."

Patrick: "He got but what he gathered from the banks, or what-ever he could kill on the rough hills; he got hell at the last because of his unbelief ...

Oisín: "One strong champion that was with the Fianna of Ireland would be better than the Lord of Piety, and than you yourself, Patrick."

Translated and adapted by Lady Gregory - Gods and Fighting Men, 1904.

Nature and Odinism

by Edith

The June 1999 issue of *Renewal* carried a report on a survey by the University of Texas. The survey studied the attitudes toward genetic engineering of creationists, college students and pagans.

About 38% of creationists agreed strongly with the statement that "Genetic engineering should not be encouraged". About 7% of students agreed strongly, and about 8% of pagans.

At the other extreme, about 42% of pagans disagreed strongly with the same statement, as did 35% of students and 11% of creationists.

The overall picture that emerged from the survey was that creationists were far more opposed to genetic engineering than the student control group, while pagans were far more in favour.

In issue 28 of *Pagan Times* (see page 8 for subscription details) the esteemed Jon Bardell quoted these figures from *Renewal* and asked: 'What happened to "Earth-based" religion?' A good question, and it deserves an answer.

I wouldn't necessarily say that either paganism in general or Odinism in particular, is "Earth-based", but I'd happily accept that ours is a "nature-based religion". Maybe there isn't a great deal of difference. Nor can I speak for pagans in general, but I believe I can speak for many Odinists.

Our religion is fundamentally "natural" in a way that Judaism, Christianity and Islam can never be. Our gods and goddesses evolved within nature, just as we have. Unlike the desert god they didn't "create" the universe. The universe existed first, and then the gods, and eventually humans. Furthermore we, and the gods, and the material objects around us are all formed either of the nuclei that came into existence in the first few minutes after the Big Bang, or of the other atoms that you could loosely say have "evolved" from that original soup of hydrogen and helium. We are quite literally children of the stars.

It is hard to imagine a religion that could be more "nature-based" than Odinism.

Yet we all know that nature itself is not always the sweet, gentle, nurturing Nerthus goddess that San Francisco hippies might have envisaged. Natural forces can be very destructive of the things that humans hold dear, including life itself. Think of earthquakes, plagues, floods, droughts, volcanic eruptions.

In fact, what both we and our deities most value is whatever staves off the process of entropy. We require *order*, but the natural process puts the universe as a whole on an irreversible slide toward maximum disorder, as is formulated in the second law of thermodynamics.

That this applies even to our gods is fully recognised in our ancient traditions. Without a

constant supply of the apples of Iduna, even the mighty and beautiful gods will rapidly age – which is merely to say that they will experience their own bodies reverting from a highly ordered state to one of increasing disorder.

So the gods stave off that particular form of rising entropy, which is experienced ultimately as death, by eating Iduna's apples. The story is obviously symbolic or allegorical. (It would be childish to believe that there are magic apples somewhere that can ward off ageing. In fact, other regional versions of our Indo-European heathen spirituality specify other foods and drinks as serving the gods in the same way.)

But the gods are not only interested in trying to oppose the increase of chaos as it applies to themselves. They also care about maintaining the stability of our world, and therefore they care about us.

One of the strangest stories in the Odinist tradition concerns the binding of the wolf Fenris by the God Tyr (in English, Tiw, who gives his name to our Tuesday). When Fenris grows alarmingly large and increasingly ferocious, it becomes obvious that he is an embodiment of the forces of chaos. The gods therefore decide that Fenris must be bound. Once suitable chains have been forged, the god Tyr is the only one brave enough to approach the hideous beast. The wolf will only allow the god to chain him on the condition that the fetter will not really be binding. Tyr lies that this will be the case, but Fenris insists that the god place his hand in the wolf's jaw as a pledge of honesty. Tyr unhesitatingly does so, knowing of course that he has lied to Fenris, and knowing what the consequence must be. The god applies the fetter, the wolf is bound, and Fenris bites off Tyr's hand.

Stated baldly like this, as it often is in those populist simplifications of Norse mythology, the story tends to read like a

fairy tale. Yet as we should all know nowadays, traditional European fairy tales are often just a way of encoding our ancestral wisdom.

The Tyr/Fenris story is an allegory that works on many levels, and there is no space in this article to look at more than one of them.

Tyr is primarily regarded (at least, by the time this story was popular enough to be recorded) as the god whose main function is divine justice. Fenris embodies the principle of chaos, or entropy, or the unbridled destructive forces that are embodied in some of the "laws of nature".

It is obvious that Tyr's functions involving justice are not compromised by the lie he tells to the beast. After all, he unflinchingly sacrifices his hand to the monster. Therefore we must assume that for the gods there is a higher form of justice – and that can only be the suppression of chaos at any cost.

The modern laws of physics say that in a closed system the degree of entropy can never decrease. At best it can only remain constant. The stories of Iduna's apples and the binding of Fenris seem to confirm that our ancestors agreed with these laws. Despite the most valiant efforts of the mighty gods, they are unable to create greater order – but they *can* prevent, at least for a time, the furtherance of disorder.

"As above, so below", as some people say.

I started by returning to the subject of genetic engineering. When we are talking about crops and farm animals we usually employ the phrase "genetically modified". When we talk about humans in the same way, we usually speak of "genetic engineering". So I presume that the pagans in the survey were thinking about modifying human genes.

In the light of the old stories, that seems perfectly moral, and heathen, to me. If science can eventually change our genes so that we don't get cancer or Alzheimers, I will regard the breakthrough as being like Iduna's apples. If science can eliminate plagues, I will see that as being like the binding of Fenris.

Of course, Tyr paid a price. Maybe we humans will, too. But our implacably "nature-based" religion insists that we must emulate our gods in opposing nature's own forces of destruction, disintegration and entropy.

Bring on the apples, and let's bind the wolf!



FRÖJEL

Fröjel Gotlandica.
Viking Re-enactment Society.

Contact **SANDY SEMPEL**

Phone: 59411887, 0419411887

PO Box 127. Pakenham,
<http://www.frojel.com/>

E-mail: frojel@frojel.com

Æthelfrith - defender of the faith

The Odinst kings of the AngloSaxons have generally received a bad popular press, largely because one of the main sources of information is a book written by a Christian monk named Bede, with the title *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Needless to say, Bede's heroes are the later Christian kings.

Perhaps the most brilliant of the heathen kings was a man named Æthelfrith. We don't know a great deal about his background, or his family life, but it is plain from the known facts that he was a magnificent general and a staunch, unyielding defender of the Odinst faith of his people. Even Bede, that most Christian of writers, was forced to admire the magnificent Æthelfrith

The king's earliest male ancestor was said to be Woden. After that god, the king's line ran as follows (with the names rendered in modern English form): Baldag, Bernic, Wegbrand, Ingibrand, Alusa, Angegeot, Athelbert, Oesa, Eoppa and Ida. The last of these men founded the kingdom of Northumberland in 547, wresting his territory from the native Britons, and establishing his capital and fortress at Bamburgh. Ida's son and successor was Athelrich, of whom little is known. Ida's grandson was Æthelfrith.

At that time there were two Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in the north-east of England. The land north of the River Tees was known as Bernicia, while the area between the Tees and the Humber was called Deira.

Æthelfrith was married to a princess of Deira, and when the Deiran king died in 588, Æthelfrith's father annexed Deira. On the death of his own father in 593, Æthelfrith therefore inherited the recently united kingdom of Northumbria.

No-one can be certain of the date of the battle of Cattaeth, but Skene suggested 596. In any event, the Angles had a massive victory over the invading Britons. Northumbrian power was then consolidated as far north as Edinburgh, and the Britons who had escaped the general slaughter were largely enslaved or else managed to flee to Wales and other Celtic Christian redoubts.

If Skene's dating of these events is correct, then the Northumbrian king would have been Æthelfrith. This seems to be confirmed by Bede, who wrote:

"At this time Æthelfrith, a most mighty king and one very anxious for glory, ruled the kingdom of the Northumbrians and harried the British people more than all the other rulers of the English. In this he might seem comparable to Saul, once king of the Israelites, excepting only that he was ignorant of the religion of God. No-one among the commanders, no-one among the kings made more of the lands of the Britons either tributary to the English people or available for their occupation by

wiping out or subjugating the inhabitants."

It must be remembered that by this period the Celts were mostly Christianised, while the Northumbrians were proudly Odinst. The war therefore had a strongly religious dimension.

In c.600 another great British attack was spectacularly defeated at Catterick, making Æthelfrith without question the most powerful king in the north. In 603 he utterly crushed the Welsh and Scottish Christian crusaders at Degsastan (either Dalston near Carlisle or Dawstone Rigg in Liddesdale). Bede has this to say:

"Aidan, king of the Irish who live in Britain, was disturbed by his advance and came against him with a vast and mighty army, but fled away with a handful of men, defeated. For at the famous field of Degsastan ... almost all his army was slain. Theobald, brother of Æthelfrith, was also killed in that battle with all the forces he commanded. Æthelfrith brought this war to an end in the year of our Lord 603, the eleventh year of his own reign (which lasted for twenty four years) ..."

Still, the Christians wouldn't leave heathen Northumbria alone. By 616 they had regrouped, and led by a king of Powys named Selyf map Cynan they attacked again, only to be smashed once more at the battle of Chester. It was in this battle that the religious aspect of the wars came to a head. Here is how Bede describes what happened:

"When Æthelfrith was about to give battle, he observed the enemy's priests (who had gathered to pray to God for the soldiers as they fought) standing by themselves in a safer place. He asked who they were and what they had gathered there to do. Most of them were from the monastery of Bangor Many of these, having observed a fast of three days, had come, with others, to this battle to pray. They had as their protector one Brocmail, who was to defend them from the swords of the barbarians while they were intent upon their prayers. When King Æthelfrith was informed of the reason for their coming, he said, 'If they cry out to their God against us, then indeed they are fighting against us, even though they do not bear arms; for they pursue us with curses.' He therefore ordered them to be attacked first, and then defied the rest of the impious army, not without great loss to his own forces. 'It is said that about twelve hundred of those who came to pray were killed, and that only fifty escaped by flight.'"

Throughout all these invasions, Æthelfrith – and Northumbria – stood alone, bearing the full brunt of the Christian onslaught. Heathen

Mercia, adjoining Northumbria to the south, didn't raise a finger to help. Even more significantly, neither did heathen East Anglia. The king of that latter country was Rædwald, a heathen. Some historians believe he is the king who was celebrated in the Sutton Hoo ship burial. If so, he must have been wealthy and powerful. If Bede can be trusted, he was also perhaps one of the most disgraceful heathens ever to sit on a throne.

When Northumbria was united in 588, a deposed Deiran prince named Edwin fled to East Anglia. Æthelfrith paid Rædwald to have Edwin either extradited or executed. The East Anglian king, who had done nothing to assist his Odinst brethren in the north, seemed to go along with this deal. Then he suddenly had a change of heart. Bede attributes this to a prophetic dream, but the dates make it clear what happened.

In 616 at Chester, Æthelfrith had suffered "a great loss to his own forces". In 617 the treacherous Rædwald proclaimed Edwin the true king of Northumbria, marched north, and defeated the sorely undermanned Northumbrians at the Battle of the River Idle. The pious and noble Æthelfrith was slain, and the supposed puppet Edwin was installed on the northern throne.

A form of poetic justice ensued. Edwin went on to reduce the Mercians and East Anglians to vassalage. In 627 he converted to Christianity. In 633 he was defeated by an unholy alliance of Cadwallon, the Christian king of Gwynedd, and Penda, the heathen king of Mercia.

Æthelfrith's sons, who had fled from Edwin to find shelter among the Irish and the Picts, pretended to convert to Christianity. In 633 the eldest son, Eanfrith, was crowned king of Bernicia. At the same time Osric, the baptised son of Edwin's uncle, assumed the throne of Deira. Both immediately renounced the false religion that they had been forced to adopt to save their lives. Odinism was once again the official faith of Northumbria.

Unlike the slippery Rædwald and the inscrutable Penda, Æthelfrith was a staunch defender of his faith and his people. Not once could he be accused of sacrificing his religious principles for worldly gain. He was a true Odinst king: brave, indefatigable, a servant of his folk, and a warrior who died with his face to the foe.

Let us celebrate the life of Æthelfrith in the words of the beautiful modern prayer:

"Lo, there do I see my father. Lo, there do I see my mother and my sisters and my brothers. Lo, there do I see the line of my people, back to the beginning. Lo, they do call to me, they bid me take my place among them, in the Halls of Valhalla, where the brave may live forever!"

Politics – another opinion

Renewal has often expressed the view that politics is largely irrelevant to Odinists. If I understand it correctly, the party line (with all respects to Osred) is that what we really need is a spiritual revival, and then a total transformation of the still largely Christian values of the West. Until these religious reforms are achieved, all overt political action is futile. Then, once the religious change has occurred, the political renewal will look after itself.

Maybe that's an over-simplification, but no matter how subtly the argument may be drawn out, I simply can't agree with it. The great challenge of our time is the physical survival of those people whose forebears were once Odinists. Without us, there can be no Odinist renaissance, and to put it in the starkest terms possible, our people – the Nation of Odin – is rapidly going down the demographic gurgler. No, I don't advocate joining or supporting a political party. There is really no

difference between the mainstream parties in countries like Australia, Britain or the U.S. They may sometimes disagree on the means, but they always agree on the ends, and those agreed ends all tend toward our extinction as a people.

Furthermore, when an "outsider" challenges the oligarchy's goals, both "sides" of the political spectrum effortlessly close ranks to prevent the possibility of a different paradigm gaining any legitimacy among the voters. In Oz, for instance, they jailed Pauline Hanson on trumped-up charges, even though she was no more of an intellectual challenge than a seaslug.

In my view, though, we should be preparing right now for a future in which the will of our currently subjugated people is reborn and can be freely expressed.

Obviously the current political system has led us into our present mess, and therefore can never be part of the solution. So we need to come up with a better system, one that we can start to apply as soon as the opportunity arises.

Without going into any precise details, I think the following general principles should be used for guidance:

(1) The chief purposes of the state and the economy should be the protection and furtherance of our collective, group interests. At present, of course, the opposite is the case. We would therefore need to be much more like Sparta than Westminster.

(2) Lesser issues such as individual rights are very important in the Odinist tradition, but if we fail to survive as a people none of us will be allowed much in the way of rights by those newcomers who take over our traditional homelands. Survival comes first, then rights.

(3) Religion, by which I mean **our** religion, should be invoked at all times as the ultimate sanction for our cause. There can be no compromise with alien-inspired cults like British Israel or Christian Identity, or the "Germanic Christianity" of the Third Reich. We must also be austere, pious, and utterly devoted to the faith of our ancestors – again, somewhat like the Spartans.

(4) The arts must be seen as a way of exploring the roots and the core of our unique spirituality. This has, of course, happened in the past. Gothic cathedrals, the music of composers like Bach, the paintings of artists like Michelangelo, all explored our Western spirituality during the period of the Christian interregnum. These examples should be deconstructed in terms of the never-subdued Odinist character of our people, and new forms of art expressing our eternal Odinist values should be encouraged.

(5) For a transitional period, at least, we will need to have a form of theocracy. Don't be frightened by that term. We have a theocracy today, and it's called "political correctness". The priests of that cult are to be found among the media, academia, educationists, what is left

of the Christian churches, and the "leaders" in the world of commerce.

(6) During the transitional period we will need the equivalent of sacral kings to steer us through the difficulties.

(7) The long-term goals of these "Kings", or "Lord Protectors", or "Archons", should be to transfer all decision-making powers back to the revitalised rank and file of the Nation of Odin. Something like citizen-initiated referenda must eventually be introduced.

Ben

Ripples in Time



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Our original 21-part series has now been combined in a self-contained A4 size saddle-stitched booklet of 20 pages, with a 120 gsm clay cover (as illustrated).

This really is the complete guide to runes from an Anglo-Saxon perspective.

Fully up-to-date in terms of research, *Ripples in Time* reveals, for instance, that Germanic runes probably relate to pre-Classical Greek letter shapes. That is much earlier than most current New Age and even scholarly accounts suggest. The booklet also establishes that our Anglo-Saxon ancestors used runes for a variety of purposes, including divination, magic, and the control of occult powers.

Ripples in Time is available for \$Aus10.00 within Australia. (This price includes postage and handling). Overseas residents can obtain *Ripples in Time* for \$US15.00 (US cash), which covers airmail anywhere plus handling.

There is no way around it: you *need* this booklet if you are serious about our ancestral runic heritage.

Renewal

P.O. Box 4333, University of Melbourne, Victoria, 3052, Australia.

Renewal exists to share the views of modern Odinists, both within Australia and world-wide. In Australian and British law Odinism is described as "the continuation of ... the organic spiritual beliefs and religion of the indigenous peoples of northern Europe as embodied in the Edda and as they have found expression in the wisdom and in the historical experience of these peoples".

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● *Fears for the Franks* ● *Maybe we should convert (no, just kidding!)* ● *Shonky statistics?* ● *Viking capital York liberated from Anglicans - but not by Odinists*



More warnings from John Rhys-Davies

In the last issue we brought you the views of *Lord of the Rings* star, **John Rhys-Davies**, on the demographic crisis in Europe.

In a recent interview concerning Michael Moore's new propaganda film, *Fahrenheit 9/11*, Rhys Davies was asked:

"John Rhys-Davies, what do you think about Michael Moore being praised at Cannes, as it appears that they're probably going to name him the top film-maker for this year's ceremonies?"

JOHN RHYS-DAVIES: "Well, you see, the French have a lot of problems internally. And the one unifying factor that they can find in their society is to bash America.

"So don't be surprised by anything the French do. Their society is so troubled and it's about 24, 25 years away from major civil war. So you can discount most of what they do."

See <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/5013506/>

This outburst occurred on May 19, 2004. On the weekend of April 24-25, none other than media mogul Rupert Murdoch startled a business conference in Los Angeles.

"There is going to be real trouble coming in Europe, I think," Murdoch said, noting the large Muslim communities living in France.

"They [Europe] have major centres of problems that are just boiling up. Paris is surrounded by vast blocks of tens of thousands of apartments – all Muslim, all nogo areas for police and totally lawless. There is more danger of terrorist attacks coming than what we have here," he said.

Of course, Jean Raspail envisaged just such troubles (compressed into weeks rather than years) in his prophetic 1973 novel, *The Camp of the Saints*. In Raspail's story, however, there is no civil war in France. The native French, brainwashed and cowed, meekly surrender to their own humiliating extinction.

So was Raspail right, twenty years ago? Will the French simply surrender to the Third World? Or is Rhys-Davies right in suggesting that they will eventually stand up for their right to survive as a people, even if that involves "civil war"? One thing is probably

certain. When even the fabulously cosseted Rupert Murdoch can no longer turn a blind eye to the problem, it must be coming to a head one way or the other.

Interesting scam

According to *Impact* magazine, April/May 2004, p. 16:

"Germany pays every new Jewish immigrant to Germany a bonus to start out a new life. In other words, Germany is paying Jews from Russia and encourages them to come to Germany. A Russian Jew who chooses to go to Israel will receive a present of 28,000 euros. But every Jew who chooses Germany receives a gift of 140,000 euros per family member. The average Jewish family arrives with four family members, thus they receive a present of 560,000 euros from the German taxpayer.

"One hundred thousand Jews have already arrived in Germany and another 180,000 new applications are currently being processed. These people never lived in Germany or worked here, nor have they paid a penny into any German fund, but they are becoming rich overnight ...

"How does the German state pay for it all? Every country worldwide is broke right now and is cutting corners. But German politicians have come up with something that might solve their financial problem. It has been suggested that the retirement age be raised to 67 years. That would give the German government two more years of tax money and would save them two years on pension payments. It has also been suggested that once a person reaches 75 years, they should not receive any life-extending medication unless they are able to pay for it themselves."

(*Impact* sources this info to "PHI Deutschland Dienst", whatever that may be.)

Now, one euro is currently worth about 1.77 Aussie dollars, so 140,000 euros = \$247,800. Not bad bikkies!

One facetious reader has suggested that we could all convert to Judaism, hot-foot it to Germany, and claim our quarter million forthwith.

But why stop there? Before leaving, each of us could formally adopt nine impoverished children from Zimbabwe or South Africa. Every such family on arrival in Germany would then have an instant net worth of \$2,478,000. No doubt we could club together and buy a cute little chateau – maybe somewhere near the Teutoburger Forest.

No-one can vouch for government statistics

In the 2001 Australian census, the three most

common ancestries identified in the State of Victoria were:

Australian:	1,522,821	people (33.0%)
English:	1,396,768	people (30.3%)
Irish:	469,161	people (10.2%).

Nearly all those who called themselves "Australian" would have been of British Isles origin. Therefore according to the official figures, at least 73.5% of the population of Victoria is descended from ancestors who were once Odinists. The actual percentage should be a little higher, given that Germans, Dutch folk, Scandinavians, and people from places like northern Italy and France, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada and the USA are not included in this total.

The problem is that these figures may bear no relation to reality. Anyone who walks around the streets of Melbourne, where most Victorians live, will know that "Anglo"-looking people do not make up anything like 70-80% of the people they observe. Quite the reverse, in fact. In the main streets of the Melbourne central business district, far more than half of the pedestrians seem to be of Asian origin.

So are the government officials lying to us? Maybe not. Nobody knows how many illegal migrants have found a bolt-hole somewhere in the Australian suburbs, but obviously the illegals would tend to keep a very low profile at census time. It is therefore possible that the official census figures are more-or-less accurate for those of us who are living in Australia legally, while there might also be far more illegals than the government is prepared to acknowledge.

Can we trust the Australian Bureau of Statistics on this issue? It's probably best to err on the side of caution.

Peerages for heathens, anyone?

The last British census revealed that more Muslims attend mosques in the UK than Anglicans attend churches. The Archbishop of York's spokesman said: "The Archbishop acknowledges the overtaking of Church of England members by the Muslim community."

The Church of England currently has 26 seats in the House of Lords. Now Muslim leaders want a share of the spoils. Lord Ahmed, a Labour peer, said ten extra seats should be allocated to other religions.

We don't particularly like the idea of any seats being set aside for religious representatives – but if Lord Ahmed's suggestion bears any fruit, we hope there will be at least a peerage or two for heathens.



Ota's Talking Point

everyone seen the Wolfgang Petersen film, *Troy*? If you haven't, take Ota's word that you should. And on the big screen. The battle. The battle scenes are amazing, and Homeric in their remorseless confusion and brutality.

More importantly, though, it is fascinating to see just what a mess a director who is obviously either an atheist or a Christian can make of a brilliant ancient story of our people, despite a magnificent budget and a very capable cast.

Let's get the obvious weak points out of the way as soon as possible. *Troy* claims to be based on Homer's *Iliad*, but in fact it contradicts Homer on many of the crucial details. Here are a few examples:

- According to Homer, king Menelaus finally returns home to Sparta with the beautiful Helen, and they live happily ever after. In *Troy*, Menelaus is killed by Hector.
- In the Homeric tradition the Greek high-king Agamemnon returns to Mycenae, where he is treacherously murdered by his wife Clytaemnestra. In *Troy*, Agamemnon is killed by a Trojan girl.
- According to Homeric tradition, the Trojan prince Paris abducts Sparta's queen Helen against her will, also stealing and taking away with him a sum of money, mentioned several times by Homer as an additional crime. In *Troy*, the two are beautiful young lovers like Romeo and Juliet – and therefore the Greatest Story Ever Told, and the most famous war of the ancient world, was supposedly based on nothing more than a mutual teenage crush.
- In the Homeric tradition, Achilles was king of Thessaly, from whence he sailed with fifty ships. In *Troy*, Achilles is not a king, or even a prince, but more like a hired gunslinger in a Hollywood Western.

I could go on, but won't. There's nothing wrong with a film director taking a few liberties when trying to compress an epic tale spanning ten years into three hours of cinema.

Nor is there anything wrong with changing the details of the Homeric story for artistic effect. The Greeks themselves did just that. In one version of the story Helen was hanged after Menelaus' death. In another she was torn to pieces by the widows of the Greeks killed at Troy. In yet another she lived on, after death, with Achilles in the Happy Isles (cf. Tennyson's lines in *Ulysses*: "It may be we shall reach the Happy Isles,

and see the great Achilles whom we knew").

What is wrong, though, is that Petersen has totally distorted the Homeric world-view in order to make it conform with his own atheism (or perhaps his Christianity, which is much the same thing).

The hero of the film is Achilles, and as Petersen's version of the celebrated warrior is militantly anti-heathen. Petersen's Achilles has no hesitation in destroying a temple of Apollo and slaughtering the god's priests, and he taunts other characters in the film by gloating that the god Apollo is not helping his favoured Trojans.

Nothing could be further from the spirit of

Achilles throws his spear and misses, but the bright-eyed goddess invisibly hands it back to him, and on the second cast his spear goes "right through the tender neck" of Hector. Thanks, Athene!

the Homeric world.

I haven't counted up the lines, but about half the focus of the *Iliad* is on the actions of the gods and goddesses, and the interactions between the deities and the heroes. As you probably recall, some of the gods favoured the Greeks while others favoured the Trojans, and almost all the actions of the heroes prompted in one way or another by interventions of the deities.

One example will do. In *Troy*, Hector and Achilles face off for their final single combat. They are entirely on their own. Achilles wins simply because he is the better warrior. In the *Iliad* it is entirely different. Poor Hector, deserted by Apollo, is indeed on his own, but he is fighting two opponents: the mighty Achilles and the even mightier goddess Athene. As the goddess says to the warrior, "Now verily, glorious Achilles dear to Zeus, I have hope that **we twain** shall carry off great victory ... No longer is it possible for [Hector] to escape **us** ..." Achilles throws his spear and misses, but the bright-eyed goddess invisibly hands it back to him, and on the second cast his spear goes "right through the tender neck" of Hector. Thanks, Athene!

It is no exaggeration to say that almost every twist and turn in the *Iliad* is precipitated by the gods and goddesses. Yet no-one viewing *Troy* would suspect anything of the sort. In fact, except for Priam, the only characters in the film who seem to respect the gods at all are portrayed as fools or snake-oil merchants.

As a result of his refusal to accept the religious dimension of ancient Greece, Petersen has to invent rigidly secular explanations for the behaviour of his characters. This often makes them seem either contemptible or, even worse, utterly implausible in terms of their motivations.

In Homer, the terrible quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon begins **after** the

Greeks land at Troy. Agamemnon offends the god Apollo by abducting Chryseis, the daughter of one of the god's Trojan priests. In his wrath Apollo rains arrows of plague on the Greek camp. A Greek priest explains that Apollo will not stop the killing until Chryseis is returned. Agamemnon angrily rejects this advice, but Achilles backs the priest. The high-king then reluctantly agrees to hand back Chryseis, but demands in return Achilles' own spoil of war, "Briseis of the fair cheeks". The furious Achilles is about to kill Agamemnon there and then, but his patron goddess Athene stays his sword-hand.

In the film, though, Achilles clearly has nothing but contempt for Agamemnon even before they leave Greece. Since Petersen's Achilles is not a king, and therefore owes no fealty to Agamemnon, there is no compelling reason why he should even go to Troy in the first place. Petersen labours the point that Achilles was seeking immortal fame. But he could just as easily have won glory by serving Priam, the blameless king of Troy, whom he respects far more than Agamemnon. Then when the high-king steals Briseis from him, with no explanation of the religious background to the quarrel and no mention of Athene's soothing role, Achilles goes off to sulk in his tent. He doesn't kill the king. He doesn't defect to Priam. He doesn't even turn around and sail home.

He just sulks, like a petulant child. This is totally out of character for both the Athenecounselled Achilles of Homer and the destiny-driven Achilles of the film.

He just sulks, like a petulant child. This is totally out of character for both the Athenecounselled Achilles of Homer and the destiny-driven Achilles of the film.

This is just one of many cases where Petersen's militant secularism deprives his characters of their motivation and therefore their dignity.

Speaking of characters, when I first heard that Achilles was to be acted by Brad Pitt I winced a little. Some critics have savaged this portrayal – one local scribbler canned it as "a male stripper time-travelled to Ancient Greece". Having now seen the film, I think that the critic and your eminent columnist were both wrong. Unlike Wolfgang Petersen, Brad Pitt seems to have actually read, and understood, the *Iliad*. It must have been tempting for Brad to portray Achilles as a somewhat misunderstood but deep-down-all-American-good-guy. He does nothing of the sort. In Brad Pitt's hands the fearsomely wrathful Achilles of Homer comes alive: magnificent, implacable, and scarier than any schlock horror film. And if you have ever wondered why Homer keeps referring to Achilles as "fleet of foot", be prepared for Brad's first single combat! Just that minute or so would justify the rest of the film.

Dear Ed ...

q Regarding Smithy's letter in the last issue, and Osred's article on which Smithy was commenting:

In evolutionary terms mankind is a special case in two senses.

First, humans can change the environment in ways that make it more suited for the survival of some species and less suited for the survival of other species.

Of course, other species can do this too. By killing off millions of humans, the medieval plague bacillus made conditions more favourable for vegetation and wildlife.

The difference is that humanity can and does discriminate deliberately between species. Some of the sharpest scientific minds in Australia have spent decades trying to work out how to kill all the rabbits in order that other species such as bilbies might survive. We are species-ist.

Second, humans have a unique genome, jam-packed with duplications. It is these duplications that have allowed us to evolve so fast and so far, by allowing mutations to occur in one copy of a gene while still allowing other copies to fulfil their intended functions. Effectively, it's like having several tickets in a raffle: you're more likely to win the prize.

True, a few other species have genomes that are also crammed with duplications. Maize is one. Yet the evolution of maize hasn't gone very far in the wild. So maize has the same potential for evolution as us, but something is clearly missing.

Now both Osred and Smithy claim that the gods have intervened to improve the gene-pool of our species, and ours alone. I agree that our early sacred poetry backs up this claim. But why would the gods choose us?

Well, to start with, there aren't many other contenders. It's rather obvious that with all our flaws we have more potential than maize (or African clawed frogs).

Just as importantly, though, the gods are concerned with maintaining the fruitfulness of the earth. This is why, as *Renewal* often says, they fight the forces of entropy.

Yet primates have always had the potential to brutally destroy the earth's biodiversity. My feeling is that the gods intervened in our case in order to convert us from potential enemies of Gaia into allies. The fact that so many scientists are trying to kill off Australia's rabbit plague shows that, despite all our flaws as a species, the gods placed a sensible bet when they chose to back homo sapiens.

Steve, Queensland

□ I must express my admiration for the way in which the French have handled one of the followers of the desert god.

Today on the BBC web site it is reported that the French have kicked out an imam who said to his congregation that it was ok to beat women. The article is entitled 'French

ject pro-beating imam'.

I wish that our western governments would show as much intolerance towards these creeps and kick them out, instead of allowing them to poison our society.

I've always been a fairly tolerant Canadian (of English origin), but these creeps are pushing me into intolerant racism.

If it's their lifestyle to be disgusting wife beaters they should be returned to their desert and leave decent society.

Today it is also reported that the Saudis have a man who almost killed his wife when he beat up on her. I think of this whenever I fill my car up with gas. Though I would like to think that the gasoline that I use comes from Alberta.

The other day an Iraqi widow woman who is also a Canadian citizen returned with her injured son to Toronto (for free medical treatment) Her ex husband was an associate of Bin Laden, and he got killed. She appeared on TV saying that it's a good thing for her children to get killed because then they go to heaven (what kind of place must that be?) The Children's Aid Society is checking her out.

But I have a question. When she crossed the Canadian border she would go through immigration and they would look at her passport. Did she lift the facial cover that she wears all the time so that immigration could see her face and compare it with her passport photo?

Garry, Canada

□ I loved the review of S. M. Stirling's *Drakon* series of sf. novels so much that I went out and got and read copies of the lot.

Here is an extract from the works of the pre-eminent Drakan philosopher, Elvira Naldorssen:

"The Draka will conquer the world for two reasons: because we must, and because we can. Yet of the two forces, the second is the greater: we do this because we choose to do it. By the sovereign Will and force of arms the Draka will rule the earth, and in so doing remake themselves. We shall conquer: we shall beat the nations into dust and reforge them in our self-wrought image: the Final Society, a new humanity without weakness or mercy, hard and pure. Our descendants will walk the hillsides of that future, innocent beneath the stars, with no more between them and their naked will than a wolf has.

Then there will be Gods in the earth."

As you read through the series, you see that this is the essential philosophy of the Draka. Sometimes it is very jarring, and one of the merits of Stirling as an author is that he can envisage what a shock this complete transvaluation of all values would be.

Be warned, this series is very scary.

Ben, Melbourne

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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