

The War on Yule

Posted on December 20, 2013

As we mark the solstice, and the beginning of return of the sun to the north, I wish to reflect briefly on how thoroughly we seem to have lost touch with the origins of this holiday.

Yes, the outward signs surround us: the evergreen wreaths on doors, the houses and streets festooned with lights against the darkness of December, the ubiquitous gaily-decorated trees—aluminum, plastic, occasionally real, all invoking the world-encompassing Yggdrasil—and festive gathering of friends and family [1] before the blazing Yule fire [2] to feast and drink mulled wine. Even that ever-present “Santa”: obviously an odd synthesis from many cultures, but coming out of the northern skies in a sled pulled by reindeer and accompanied by elves. The signs of Yule are everywhere.

But this has become shallow amid the crass materialism, the anodyne references to “the holiday season” and the confusion of social obligations. Where has our appreciation of the true Yule gone?: the blessings of the wisdom of Odin, the protection given us by Thor, the abundance bestowed by Freya? Recognition that with the passing of another year, the guardians of Asgard have again held off the Frost Giants [7], Ragnarok is again deferred, and in a few months the light and warmth of summer will return?

Oh, and I suppose a bit of interference from somewhat confused references [3] to events in the Middle East whose commemoration the Romans shifted to the wrong season.[4] Though that doesn't get much attention either these days.

Let's keep the Yule in the Yuletide.

And rather than buying another piece of useless plastic crap at Wal-Mart, donate to the charity of your choice.

Seasons greetings, you'all.

Footnotes

o. Sorry about the absence of entries of late: spending most of my free time writing code. Yes, I do still write code, not just screeds against Penn State. But I've got a number of items in the pipeline, starting with “Feral + 6” on my first six months as an independent contractor. Unless I

procrastinate and make it “Feral + 7” which, now that I think of it, is tempting.

But continuing the “Seven Series,” expect to see in the near future:

- Seven Bits of Unsolicited Healthcare Advice for the Young Invincibles
- Seven Reasons Big is Bad [5]
- Seven Questions for Post-Tea-Party Conservatives [6]

Stay tuned.

1. “Ben! Jonas! Put down those broadswords!” Sez Uncle Andy.

2. Or gas/video equivalent

3. Which is it, people: Egypt (Matt 2:13-16) or Nazareth (Luke 2:39)? Or maybe, just maybe, parts of the text are metaphorical, not literal?

4. For if the shepherds were indeed abiding their flocks by night in the vicinity of pre-“Separation Barrier” Beit Sahour, it was probably lambing season, and that’s in the spring, not the winter. Whatever.

5. Okay, Penn State puts in a couple appearances here, starting with their incoherent \$800,000 post-Paterno re-branding effort.

6. As I know at least some of you are following this blog.

7. Though with Typhoon Haiyan following last year’s Hurricane Sandy, this supposedly imaginary climate change thing seems to be getting a little out of hand, and perhaps we should ask that a few of these Frost Giants being given a longer leash?

Update 6 Jan 2014: Whoa, dude: be careful [what you wish for](#)! If Nordic paganism had a Pat Robertson—whoa, dude, be careful what you wish for!—he’d be on TV saying the “polar vortex” is Asgard’s revenge and berating the US for paying insufficient attention to witchcraft.

And for the two or three people reading this blog who haven’t already concluded that Donald Trump and his ilk are functionally brain dead, perhaps from spending way too much time at the high-roller open bars in Atlantic City, these sorts of extreme weather events are very much in line with what the climate change simulations have been predicting since the beginning.

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