

Assessment of RFV ILO 2

Brief Rationale:

Students completed this assignment on their own after an in-class discussion of the poem included in the assignment. I created this assignment specifically for the evaluation of RFV ILO 2. I hope it demonstrates how well students in my class are able to connect the relatively tumultuous religious environment of medieval Scandinavia around the year 1000 to its politics and artistic (poetic and visual) culture.

ASSIGNMENT:

Active Learning--Religion, Faith, and Values in Medieval Scandinavia.

The goal of this assignment is to help you articulate what the Jelling Stones and Hallfreðr Óttarsson's poem tell us about religious life in Scandinavia from ca. 900-1000.

Please answer the following questions. Write a paragraph of 3-4 sentences in response to each question. In your answers, make specific references to the texts and images. The text of the poem and images of the Jelling Stones are included below the questions. You can use your book to help you respond, but you may not use any other materials/websites.

- 1. How do the poem and the stones demonstrate tensions between the old Norse religion and the new Christian religion?**
- 2. What can the stones and poem also tell us about the co-existence of these two religious traditions?**
- 3. And finally, what do the poem and the stones indicate about the connections between political power and religious belief?**

Hallfreðr Óttarsson (the *Troublesome Poet*) (Iceland, c. 965 – c. 1007)

1. I worshipped the quick-witted lord of Hlidskjalf [Odin], before everything altered in the fortunes and fates of men.

2. All my lineage shaped lines praising Odin's reign; I remember precious poems, the work of my ancestors' age; reluctantly - for Odin's rule always pleased the poet - [Now] I show hostility to the husband of Frigg, for I follow Christ.

3. Lord of heroes, I leave off calling the raven-king [Odin] from heathendom a god; he heaped disgrace on man's good name.

*Frigg: Odin's wife and mother of the gods

4. Let Freyr and Freyja rage at me - last year I left Njord's mysteries - let mighty Thor's fury face me, let the gods find grace in Grimnir [Odin]; with all my love I will call on Christ, the only God and great father; awful for me us the anger of the Son, whose power prevails over the world.

5. For followers of the faith of Sogn's prince [King Olaf], sacrifices are banned; we must shun most of all the age-old ordinances of the norms; all men throw Odin's tribe to the tempest; I am forced to forsake Njord's kin to pray to Christ.

*Njord: God of the wind and sea; father of Freyr and Freyja

*Freyr: Earth and fertility god; son of Njord and husband and brother to Freyja

*Freyja: Earth and fertility goddess; daughter of Njord and wife and sister to Freyr

*Norns: Three goddesses who spun fates



Figure 5.6 The Jelling Stones. Granite. Jelling, Denmark. Left stone: ca. 936–958. Right stone: ca. 965. Height: 250 cm.

Inscription: "King Harald ordered these memorials to be made after Gorm, his father, and Thyre, his mother--that Harald who had won for himself all Denmark and Norway and made the Danes Christian."