

COMMENTARY ON FREYR'S AUDIENCE WITH PERYITE  
[excerpt from the research journal of a Winterhold College student]

My assignment is to write a brief analysis of a Nordic folktale, particularly one featuring religious aspects. I found an old volume in the library; it's a collection of stories local to the region now dubbed Eastmarch Hold. Therein is a story centered on a chieftain who apparently leads a clan devoted to veneration of Kyne. It'll do.

**Overseer Sothan witnessed this and wrote. (11)**

The text opens with a reference attributing the subsequent verse to "Overseer Sothan," the witness and author. Interesting. "Overseer" is not a title associated with any traditional Nordic cultural roles, and "Sothan" sounds Elvish. Curious, indeed.

**Hear now Freyr's tale, and lesson painful learned. (11)**

**For a time, all was well for chief and clan; 'neath (11)**

**Tree-copse to Kyne consecrated they, glad, dwelt (11)**

**Peaceful: game plenty, rains steady, storms fleeting. (11)**

The tale will, evidently, prove to be a tragedy, and, like most tragedies, begins happily. The Nord chieftain Freyr and his clan live near a wooded area devoted to Kyne (close to modern Kynesgrove, perhaps?), the Storm Goddess, Shor's Widow, and Mother of Men. "For a time," the clan seems to experience a life marked by the typical blessings associated with their Goddess: plentiful game, reliable rains, and passing storms.

**Quickly, everything changed: blight havocked grasses, (11)**

**Game turned scarce, and sickly when snagged; all fell ill. (11)**

Kyne's blessings seem to have been revoked, or otherwise undone. The local flora is taken by blight, and, consequently, game becomes harder to catch, and proves sickly when snared. Ominously, the line ends with an indication that the clan succumbs to whatever plagued the region.

**Dead were buried by Kyne's hallowed copse, alone (11)**

**Yet untouched and pristine; survivors few fled (11)**

**Thereafter, all save Freyr, who would not leave. (11)**

The few clansmen who survive the sudden onset of plague honorably bury the fallen near the woods of Kyne, which seems to be the only spot of green spared. Freyr alone refuses to flee the area—typical Nordic stubbornness.

Came I then to Freyr, isolate, mourning, (11)  
Who offered me what meagre welcome he could. (11)  
“Long have I watched thee, yet only by scrying. (11)  
“Speedily I journeyed, sent here to arrive now, (11)  
“Yea, now, that thou mayest meet the Source of blight.” (11)

*The author, presumably Overseer Sothan, inserts himself into the story, saying he came to Freyr, who gave welcome despite his sorrow. Sothan then speaks directly, and claims to have watched the unfolding of the plague through use of scrying (familiarity with such magic is further evidence for reckoning him an Elf); furthermore, he claims to have been sent to meet with Freyr at the appointed time, that he may orchestrate a meeting between the chieftain and the source of his woe. Odd, but fascinating.*

Readily, with vigorous ferocity (11)  
Didst forlorn chief offer accept, straightaway. (11)  
Concocted I then prescribed vap'rous incense, (11)  
And, as astral witness, recorded audience. (11)

*Freyr enthusiastically embraces the chance to meet the plague's source. Overseer Sothan brewed an ichor, the fumes of which are presumably inhaled by the chieftain, and goes on to serve as the special witness of the “audience” between the Nord and the plague's source. The succeeding verses are seemingly written from Freyr's point of view.*

Entered I then a realm, stony and barren, (11)  
Land broken by geysers spewing noxious fumes (11)  
Into smoky sky, polluted thereby, and (11)  
Surface pockmarked with craters, filled with, as pools, (11)  
Fetid discharge. Little wonder lifeless place. (11)  
Roaming, found vast plateau, seeing plane riven (11)  
With canyons, caverns, and filthy holes besides. (11)

*It seems Freyr is transported to a desolate realm of Oblivion. Bearing in mind that Overseer Sothan is “sent” in diabolical timeliness, and is watching as the chieftain undergoes this ordeal, one can be fairly certain it is in one of the planes of the Sixteen where Freyr finds himself. The description, poetic as it is, leaves much to the imagination, and my preliminary hypothesis is best held tentatively: perhaps the blight is sourced in the Deadlands of Mehrunes Dagon, who is frequently associated with natural disasters, especially in Morrowind.*

Sudden earthquake stole ground 'neath mine feet, hurled (11)  
Me to floor of sheer gorge. Oddly, no scrape or (11)  
Bruise had I. As choking dust didst settle and (11)  
Footing I regained, blanching sight beheld mine (11)  
Eyes: from wide crevice slithered, oozed, sinuous (11)  
Serpent, emaciated thin, titanic (11)  
Length. No drake this, but naked Wyrms, by no scale (11)  
Adorned. Bare flesh seen: patchy jaundice, pale green. (11)  
As He writhed, cuts from canyon shards outpoured pus; (11)  
As He coiled, boils burst, bloody ruptures. (11)  
Prince reeked paral'sis stench; here reared Peryite. (11)

*Freyr has entered the Pits, and the source of the sickness is revealed to be Peryite, Daedric Prince of Blight and Plague! The given description of the realm is befitting of Peryite's sphere of influence, and the portrayed aspect matches the extant lore: the Prince assumes a form like Akatosh, yet so unlike him ("No drake this, but naked Wyrms . . ."), a draconic figure riddled with foul disease.*

"Thou mayest approach, for this audience of Mine (11)  
"Own design, yet thou hast still off'ring to make." (11)

*These verses record the speech of Peryite, who grants Freyr an audience, and even claims to have been its orchestrator, yet seems to desire an offering from the Nord before proceeding. The subsequent verses continue from Freyr's perspective before returning to record the Prince's words.*

I fell to my knees, yet not out of reverence; (11)  
Overcome by sickness and disgust, I gagged. (11)  
Amused and pleased, the foul Lord laughed, and didst say, (11)  
"Accept I doth thine feeble sacrifice, for (11)  
"Mine touch thou hast known. Hear Mine words, o great Chief: (11)

*Freyr collapses before the odious aspect of the Lord of Pestilence, "yet not out of reverence," and vomits. Peryite accepts this bile as a token of the chieftain having known the Prince's influence. The upheaval of proper courtly etiquette is appropriate for this One of the Sixteen. Peryite proceeds to address Freyr in a haughty and mocking tone.*

“Monument art I to thy limits, and thy (11)  
“Hawkish Mistress knowest this: without Me all, (11)  
“Not only few, die in agony and vain. (11)  
“Thy precious Goddess loveth to fill and fill, (11)  
“Whole World with men and beasts, yet never She minds (11)  
“Capacity’s brim. Mortal World canst not all (11)  
“Life innumerable sustain. Thus, I am (11)  
“Present to cull the herd by plague, blight, and drought. (11)  
“Before thou doth depart, remember this: (11)  
“Snow-Throat’s avalanche begun by Falling Rock, (11)  
“That stone, Mine germ in thy World. Thou art dismissed.” (11)

*Peryite claims to be a manifestation of the limits of mortality, and reckons that Kyne well knows the knowledge he is about to impart to the Nord. The Taskmaster asserts that he is the reason not all mortal life dies, and criticizes Kyne’s governance of vitality, saying she irresponsibly “loveth to fill and fill” with no regard for the ramifications of dwindling resources and overpopulation. Peryite proudly claims to be the self-appointed culler of the herd by way of “plague, blight, and drought.” The reference to “Snow-Throat” can only be to the Throat of the World, and Peryite compares his far-reaching influence over mortals to an avalanche begun by a single stone; the comparison is simple but ominous: plagues and pestilences can arise from but a single germ, and it’s impossible to wholly prevent such outbreaks forever. The succeeding verses return the reader to the voice of Overseer Sothan, who’s been bearing witness to the encounter.*

Heaved the Wyrn then high aloft His head, and squirmed. (11)  
Vomited out the Prince a scourge of skeevers, (11)  
And Freyr chief swooned, returned, and knew no more. (11)

*The meeting between Freyr and Peryite, witnessed by Overseer Sothan, is ended when the Prince expels a torrent of vermin—possibly upon the supplicant before him. Regardless, Freyr loses consciousness at the sight, and is apparently “returned” to Nirn. That the poem ends as it does could be indicative of the bold chieftain’s death upon the conclusion of the encounter, having finally succumbed to the sickness with which he is infected.*