



Putting on the Wolf Skin: The Berserker gang and Other Forms of Somafera

By Wayland Skallagrimsson

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The berserkers are legendary: mad, hairy Viking warriors who fought like wild animals, giving no thought to fear or pain. How did they perform seemingly supernatural feats – and what did they have in common with ancient Greek women dancing to exhaustion in pursuit of their god, or Vodoun practitioners eating glass while possessed by spirits, or Pentecostal preachers speaking in tongues, or even mad scientists walking the fine line between inspiration and insanity? Although arising out of widely varying cultures and worldviews, all of these people used heavily altered states of consciousness to enhance the functioning of their bodies and brains. Today the berserker gang is being revived, drawing not only on ancient accounts, but on similar traditions around the world and throughout history. Together these practices are called somafera, “the body wild.” This book explores the many variants of somafera – including its martial, religious and intellectual applications – with a concentration on the berserker gang. The author shares his personal experiences as well as the results of decades of research. Both theory and practice are addressed, and examined from a unique combination of spiritual and scientific perspectives.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Wayland Skallagrimsson has been involved in Northern Tradition religion for decades, and is the author of several books on the subject, including *Heathenry: A Study of Asatru in the Modern World*. His primary website is www.uppsalaonline.com, which includes a section on the berserker gang. He also maintains the somafera website at www.uppsalaonline.com/uppsala/somafera, and a related blog at somafera.wordpress.com.

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