

Song of the Lady Odivere

The Lady Odivere: Ann Mayo Muir (Narration, vocals, flute)

Sir Odivere: Euclid Hanbury (Narration, vocals)

San Imravoe: Gordon Bok (Narration, vocals, 'cellamba)

Bruce Boege: flute, percussion, vocals

Will Brown: laud, percussion, vocals

Anne Dodson: whistle, percussion, vocals

Carol Rohl: harp, vocals

Paul Schaffner: regular and double-bass hammered dulcimers, whistle, vocals

Translation, adaptation, and all music by Gordon Bok, BMI

Recorded, edited, and mixed by Bruce Boege of LIMIN MUSIC, Northport, ME

CD mastering by Grey Larsen at Grey Larsen Mastering, Bloomington, IN

Produced by Gordon Bok and Anne Dodson

Cover Art: "Ye Selkie Folk, to Norway" woodcarving by Gordon Bok

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as Play of the Lady Odivere

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THD CD19



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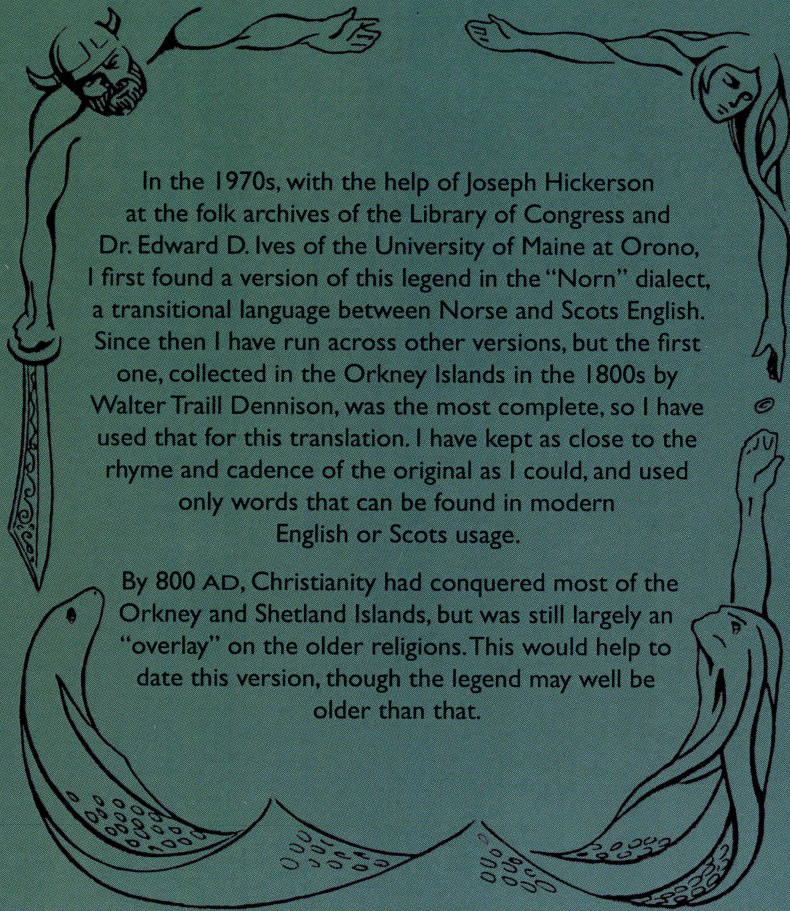
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In the 1970s, with the help of Joseph Hickerson at the folk archives of the Library of Congress and Dr. Edward D. Ives of the University of Maine at Orono, I first found a version of this legend in the "Norn" dialect, a transitional language between Norse and Scots English. Since then I have run across other versions, but the first one, collected in the Orkney Islands in the 1800s by Walter Traill Dennison, was the most complete, so I have used that for this translation. I have kept as close to the rhyme and cadence of the original as I could, and used only words that can be found in modern English or Scots usage.

By 800 AD, Christianity had conquered most of the Orkney and Shetland Islands, but was still largely an "overlay" on the older religions. This would help to date this version, though the legend may well be older than that.

Before the story:

A young LADY of a wealthy family falls in love with a stranger on the shore (SAN IMRAVOE) and seals her promise to him with a golden ring. She does not know his "very" (true) name, nor that he is a seal/man. SAN IMRAVOE appears in human form only every six months.

First Fit (First Act)

The knight Odivere marries the LADY by invoking the ancient and powerful "Oath of Odin," which overcomes her vow to the seal/man made in time gone by. ODIVERE goes off to fight the Christian wars, leaving the LADY in his "holding" (estate).

Second Fit

SAN IMRAVOE poses as one of ODIVERE's knights to gain entrance to the LADY's castle; he returns the golden ring she had given him years earlier, thereby revealing his true identity to her alone. He seduces the LADY.

Third Fit

The LADY bears a son. SAN IMRAVOE vows to return on the next spring tide to claim his son and pay her a nurse's fee. When he comes to fulfill his promises, the LADY places a gold chain around the child's neck so she might identify him when he is a seal. The chain had been a wedding gift to the LADY from ODIVERE.

Fourth Fit

ODIVERE returns in triumph, goes hunting, and kills a seal — the child of SAN IMRAVOE and the LADY. ODIVERE recognizes the chain and realizes the truth. The LADY is cast into a cell for her infidelity.

Fifth Fit

The LADY is sentenced to be burned; she appeals to the spirits of her parents for relief. SAN IMRAVOE hears and decides how he might help her. The full weight of Odin's oath descends upon ODIVERE.



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