**Myths of the Runestone: Viking Martyrs and the Birthplace of America** by David M. Krueger. University of Minneapolis Press, 214 pp., $130.99 ($36.99 paper). In the wake of the election of Donald Trump and events like Charlottesville, Krueger’s keen, critical, yet sympathetic study of the place of the Kensington Rune Stone in American cultural history serves to remind us that white nationalism, racism, religious extremism, and anti-intellectualism are nothing new. They are part of what Adam Hochschild in the *New York Review of Books* called a parallel, “dark river” of American history running alongside the stream of progress and tolerance (*NYRB*, 64:19). Krueger shows how an 1898 hoax—an apparent “Viking” rune stone “discovered” on the farm of a Swedish immigrant in Minnesota, and supposed to prove that Norwegian Christian missionaries traveled to the Midwest in A.D. 1362 to be murdered by savage “skraelings” or Native Americans—was bound up with the cultural insecurities of Scandinavian immigrants to the Midwest in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, and the need to obviate their guilt over the violent displacement of Native American peoples. From the beginning, the Rune Stone hoax participated in White Christian racial discourse about America, the Know-Nothing movement, and animosity toward “liberal” academics, and tendency to adopt “persecution narratives” at the hands of “others,” be they “Skraelings,” Blacks, Jews, or Muslims. As Kreuger concludes, “In light of the history of the Kensington Rune Stone . . . it is appropriate to inquire whether the specter of the savage skraeling will be revived to confront anxieties aroused by the presence of a new ‘other.’” Impeccably researched, skillfully written, and thoughtful, Krueger’s history of the Kensington Rune Stone is an invaluable addition to our understanding of this “dark river” of American culture.

• G. Matthew Adkins

(Contributors, continued from p. 380)
