

Ars Magica

Land of
Fire
& Ice

Mythic Iceland
by Mark Shirley & David Woods

Land of Fire and Ice

C R E D I T S

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A number of stories are told about Mark Shirley. His doctorate was about counting flies and he has spent three years weighing slugs. He now writes computer programs about the Black Death, and teaches undergraduates how to get beetles to mate. He shares his life with two ferrets named after his grandmothers. He spends his spare time breeding armadillos for racing, and making life-sized papier maché models of giraffes as presents for his relatives. His grandfather was a druid. He seems oblivious to the violently clashing colors of his clothing, and he was once mistaken for a gnome. It is known that only one of the above facts is false.

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David Woods lives near Edinburgh with his wife Amanda, son Matthew and cat Jasmin. David would like to tell you what he does for a day job, but claims this would be a breach of national security. Some have speculated that his job involves reverse engineering captured alien technology and being flown about in black helicopters. Others speculate that he merely sits at a desk all day and plays around with various optical software packages, designing optics for defense avionics (whatever that means). David could not possibly comment. He will say that he is not an optician.

David would like to thank the collapse of the telecommunications industry for giving him the free time to complete this book and Amanda for making him a father, not necessarily in that order.

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Land of Fire and Ice

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Far beyond the knowledge of most in Mythic Europe lies a land of fire and ice. Untouched by man until the 8th century, it is a land of contrasts, with huge glaciers, fiery volcanoes, barren lava fields, lush meadows, and rivers teeming with fish. Its remarkable people match its astonishing natural beauty. Although they were few, Icelanders created one of the most interesting societies in medieval Europe.

From 870 to 1262 AD the Norse settlers developed and maintained an independent state. Without warlords and kings they made their own laws and settled their own disputes. Fighting both harsh winters and volcanic disasters this unique society gave us the Icelandic sagas, an extraordinary collection of literary and historical importance, which have inspired authors for over eight hundred years. Without these sagas of warriors, giants, wizards, trolls, dragons and faeries, modern fantasy literature would have lost much of its inspiration.

This book seeks to help you create your own Icelandic saga for an **Ars Magica** game within Mythic Europe. This book not only gives

On the west of Norway comes the island called Iceland, with the mighty ocean washing round it: a land very squalid to dwell in, but noteworthy for marvels, both strange occurrences and objects that pass belief.

— The Danish History
of Saxo Grammaticus

you a place in which to set up a covenant, but also provides a set of adventures around which to build your saga. From its conception to possible destruction, these adventures will help develop and maintain the momentum of your game.

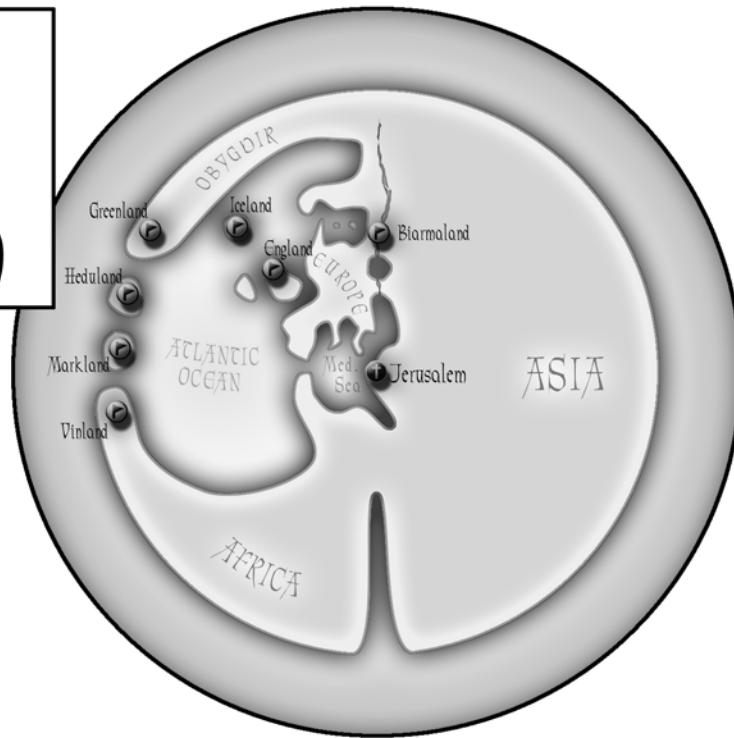
As well as the story-arc adventures, story seeds will give the players welcome or unwelcome opportunities to interact with the local population and get to know Icelandic society. Mythic Iceland is presented as virgin territory for Hermetic magi. However, Iceland has its own magicians and magi will not find themselves unrivaled in power. Icelandic magicians will be as unwilling to submit to the Order as their countrymen are to the Norwegian crown.

Alternatively the material here may be used with an existing saga, set in any other tribunal location. **Ars Magica** encourages Troupe play, in which the usual storyguide may step aside for a while and someone else can run the occasional adventure. This book has been written so a temporary storyguide can run a series of adventures far away from the main saga environment. This gives a degree of independence and freedom to the temporary storyguide otherwise difficult to achieve.

Orthography

Old Norse is a difficult language to pronounce, and we have adopted a scheme that emphasizes readability rather than accuracy or consistency. We have excluded all diacritic characters, and rendered the letter 'thorn' as 'th'. The letter 'eth' has been rendered as 'd'. The singular nominative endings (·r and ·n) have been removed or anglicized ('galdor' rather than 'galdr', for example). Finally, some words have been further anglicized.

The Icelandic Ring of the Earth



This book is aimed at storyguides seeking to create a new Saga or anyone looking to run adventures within an existing one. The sections on history and culture may be read by anyone. However, Chapters 7–18 should not be read by anyone not wishing to act as the storyguide for the setting.

Further Reading

This book is written for the **Ars Magica** setting of Mythic Europe. Although the authors have based the mundane history on genuine historical sources, this is not a history book. Where historians may make tentative claims and present alternative possibilities, we have taken a position. In regard to mythic history we have taken many of the more mystical sagas as authoritative. The bibliography (page 143) lists all the books used in the preparation of this sourcebook. However, if you wish to pursue subjects in more depth we recommend the following books.

Byock, Jesse, *Viking Age Iceland*: A richly detailed account of all aspects of life during the Free State period.

Jones, Gwyn, *A History of the Vikings*: A highly readable general history of the Vikings.

Miller, William Ian, *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking*: Interpretations of the Icelandic sagas and legal code.

Gunnar Karlsson, *The History of Iceland*: General history from the settlement to the modern age.

Simpson, Jacqueline, *Legends of Icelandic Magicians*: Although many of these magicians are out of period, they give excellent ideas for the galdramen. Also details the life and magic of Saemundur the Wise.

Sturluson, Snorri, *Edda*: A collection of Norse mythological stories as well as instruction on Skaldic poetry. Written by one of the major political figures in medieval Iceland. Otherwise known as the Prose Edda.

Swaney, Deanna, *Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands*: This modern travel guide provides a wealth of local information on geography, geology, climate, flora and fauna. It also gives an historical overview as well as local history on particular regions.

Williams, Paul, *Ultima Thule: Mythic Scandinavia*: This **Ars Magica** sourcebook focuses on mainland Scandinavia. It contains a detailed description of Norse theology and magic, which can supplement the material given here.



Chapter 2

Land and History

Icelandic Pre-History

Untouched by man since creation, Iceland was once the most occult place on the surface of the world. The fabric of the island pulsed with the primal forces of creation. The volcanoes and pits of boiling mud competed with chill winds and mighty glaciers. Elementals and spirits of all kinds danced and made war on one another in reflection of their material counterparts. These spirits of the land (called *landvaettir* by the Norse) existed free of human influence, remaining true to their primordial magical nature.

Known only to dragons, giants and magical beasts, the whole island was covered with a magical aura. In many places the aura grew

Many men say that writing about the settlement is unnecessary. But it seems to me that we would be better able to answer foreigners who censure us for our descent from scoundrels or slaves if we knew our true origins for certain. Similar, for those men who want to know old lore or to reckon genealogies, it is better to begin at the beginning rather than jump right into the middle. And of course all wise people want to know about beginnings of their settlement and their own families.

— The Book of Settlements

strong enough to penetrate the magic realm itself (the magical analogue of Arcadia).

The Guardians of Iceland

According to the *Heimskringla*, by Snorri Sturluson, King Harald of Denmark sent a warlock to Iceland to find out about the place. The warlock visited the island in the shape of a whale. He saw the land filled with guardian spirits (*landvaettir*), and every time he tried to reach land, he was repulsed. In the East a great dragon rushed at him, accompanied by a train of serpents and toads. To the North a huge eagle was waiting for him, accompanied by many other birds. To the West a large gray bull belled at him and waded into the water, along with attendant land spirits. Finally, the warlock attempted landfall in the South, but a hill giant carrying an iron staff led a crowd of other giants against him. The warlock swam back to his

Icelandic Names

Icelanders do not have family names. Instead they are described as being the son or daughter of their father (or very occasionally their mother). For instance, if Eirik had a daughter called Una, she would be known as Una Eiriksdottir (Una daughter of Eirik). His son Thord would be called Thord Eiriksson (Thord son of Eirik). Nicknames are often adopted to distinguish between people, thus Thord Eiriksson might also be known as *Viga-Thord* (“Battle-Thord”) if he was a veteran, or *Thord inn audgi* (“Thord the rich”) if he had accumulated wealth as a merchant.

The Guardians

Any magically powerful being approaching Iceland activates the magical defenses set up by its ancient residents. Guardian spirits (landvaettir, see page 32) constantly watch the coasts. If a threat is spotted the landvaettir gather into a host and approach the First Guardian. The First Guardian then leads them against the invader. If the First Guardian fails to repel the threat, the host passes to the Second Guardian, and so on.

The First Guardian is the dragon Pan Caudarax (see below for details). When he appears as Guardian, he is accompanied by a host of spirits, visible only to those with Second Sight, but perceptible to all as a tumult of the air. The host takes the form of serpents, toads and fishes, and produce a roiling cloud of poisonous vapor.

The Second Guardian is called Vindsvall, and takes the form of a mighty eagle. To those without Second Sight it appears as a storm cloud darkening the sky, accompanied by wind, rain and lightning. The spirit's wings produce the wind and lightning cracks every time he cries out. The landvaettir host takes the form of birds of all kinds and all descriptions, again visible only to those with Second Sight.

The Third Guardian is a gray bull, a huge aurochs the size of a house. It rushes to meet

any threat, snorting steam from its nostrils and pawing at the ground, eager for battle. No iron can pierce its hide, and few warriors can face it and not quail in fear. However, in 1105 AD this mighty spirit wandered into the fields surrounding the cathedral of Skalholt, attracted by the bishop's cows. It dallied too long in the Dominion and lost much of its power and size, before being captured by herdsmen. Being strong and virile, the Gray Bull has produced many strong calves. The bull now ages and dies, but produces a gray male calf to host its spirit; in this way it endures. The Gray Bull's power lies dormant, tamed by the Dominion. Thus, the Third Guardian cannot answer the call of the landvaettir host and so the host moves to the Fourth Guardian. Should the Gray Bull be freed the host will take the form of land animals, of all kinds and all descriptions.

The Fourth Guardian is a giant, chief of Iceland's jotunn. The responsibility is passed down as a new chief is chosen. Bard Dumbson (see below) is the second to hold this position. Regardless of their rivalries, the clans of Icelandic giants will join him in the defense of their home. The landvaettir host accompanies this army of giants, lending them power.



king, and the Danish fleet turned about and sailed back to Denmark.

The origins of these guardians are unknown, but they have protected Iceland from a very early period. Their function seems to be to repel magical threats to the island.

The Christian Priests (790-870)

Around 790 Irish priests put their faith in God and set out in coracles heading west. Their faith led them to the Icelandic coast and for the

Avoiding the Guardians

The landvaettir only alert the Guardians if they perceive a magical threat to Iceland. The approaching person must have substantial magical power and harbor thoughts of destruction or hatred to the land or its inhabitants. This should be treated as the spell *Sight of the Transparent Motive* with a penetration of +45 (resistance is considered hostile).

Whatever forces bound the landvaettir, their concern was an invasion of the land by their enemies. The weakness in the defense is therefore threats from within Iceland. Magicians native to Iceland are ignored by the landvaettir. If you use the Toframanna Saga, the magic portal to the Scartaris Sanctum is also exempt from alerting the Guardians' attention because it opens within Iceland.



next eighty years it was their summer retreat. Their prayers drove back the magical beasts, the magical aura contracted and the landvaettir retreated to their geyser fields, mountains, volcanoes and glaciers. Unmolested the priests spent many summers in prayer and contemplation.

Their peace was shattered by the arrival of the Norse settlers. Having been the victims of so much Viking violence at home, the Irish priests knew better than to stay. They sailed away to escape death by pagan hands.

Settlement (870-930)

In 850 Naddoddur the Swede found the island and the word spread amongst the seafaring Norse. Around the same time, in Norway, Harald Fairhair rose from a petty king in the southeast to overlord of the entire country. Many looked to move elsewhere and Iceland provided them with an opportunity.

Within sixty years all the agricultural land had been claimed and between ten and twenty thousand people had settled on the island. The majority came directly from Norway, but many also came from Norse colonies in Ireland, Scotland and the Hebrides. These people brought Gaelic wives, followers, and slaves. However, the Norse culture and language were completely dominant and the Gaelic people left no mark on Icelandic society beyond a few place-names and the mingling of their blood with the Norse.

A New Society

The Chieftains and Householders

The richer settlers built temples to their favorite god and provided oxen and horses for sacrifice. This was expensive and marked a man out as one of means and authority. Such men gained a strong position in the district and soon acquired the title *godi* (plural *godar*), meaning

The Landscape

The most striking feature of Iceland is the land itself. Few places in the world can boast such rugged beauty and diversity. In the lowlands, fast flowing rivers cut their way through lush meadows forming many spectacular waterfalls. These rivers seem unsure about where to run, their courses changing dramatically over the years. Deep gorges are cut through otherwise open plains, leaving travelers frustrated or worse.

Pits of boiling mud, hot spring pools and geysers are commonplace, with over 250 geothermal areas and 780 hot springs. All kinds of volcanic features both old and new litter the landscape. Reminders that lava once flowed or pumice and ash once fell are never far away.

The highlands are even wilder, with huge active volcanic ranges and vast glaciers. Only the mad and the desperate journey into these regions, as this is where trolls, giants and other fell beasts live.

The currently active volcanoes include Helgafell in Vestmannaeyjar, Hekla in the southwest, Katla beneath the glacier Myrdalsjokull, Grimsvotn and Oraefi beneath Vatnajokull and Krafla at Lake Myvatn.

Although Iceland is larger than Ireland, the vast majority of it is uninhabitable. Over half of Iceland is over 400m above sea level, a significant height so far north.

The land can be roughly categorized:

	Circa 800	Circa 1220
Cultivated	0%	1%
Grassland	40%	30%
Lakes and Rivers	6%	6%
Bush and Forest	25%	1%
Lava Fields	11%	11%
Glaciers	11%	11%
Sand	4%	4%
Other Wasteland	3%	36%

Deforestation and grazing animals caused extensive erosion in the Icelandic highlands. Even in 1220 this progress is continuing, and another 8% of grassland will be laid waste in future years.

By comparison, the land of Ireland is 13% cultivated, 68% grassland, and 5% forest and woodland.

Magical Landscape

The arrival of the Irish priests caused Iceland's magical aura to retreat from the lowland regions, leaving them mundane. In the relatively brief period of pagan temples weak faerie auras sprung up, but most vanished after conversion.

As Iceland is sparsely populated the general Dominion aura in lowlands is low and patchy. Farms next to churches might have a Divine aura of +1, but this rarely extends to neighboring farms. Only around the cathedrals does the Dominion cover a significant region.

Lowland volcanic regions often retain a Magical aura of +1 or +2. In highland areas a patchy +1 Magical aura exists in areas infrequently traveled. Mountainous and glacial regions normally have +2 Magical auras with particular sites peaking higher.

The magicians of Iceland maintain wards on the interior paths. These wards prevent the approach of trolls and landvaettir with Magic Might of 20 or less. Some sections are protected by more powerful spells, guarding against creatures with Might as high as 30.

godly one. These chieftains were Iceland's elite, but initially the position gave little authority.

The power of a godi was dependent on the number of householders (*baendur*, sing. *bondi*) he could attract. Householders could freely choose to ally with any godi. If two godar were in dispute the number of allies (*thingmen*) each had often had a great impact on the result.

Freemen, Freedmen and Slaves

The settlers had many slaves, but immediately there was pressure to free them. Slave owners found that extra hands did not offset the cost of feeding them, and the first landowners often had a lot of excess land, which was a liability, as it had to be defended.

The solution was to give grants of freedom to slaves who became laborers and tenant farmers. Freedmen often became landowners, which

accelerated the colonization, and the children of freedmen were automatically free.

Most slaves were freed by the tenth century. Household slaves, with women serving as nurses, foster-mothers and concubines, were more enduring, but even this was very rare by the middle of the twelfth century. Although slavery was lawful throughout the Free State period, by 1220 only debt slaves are commonly seen.

Norse Magicians

Norse magicians immigrated to Iceland with their countrymen. They included witches and seeresses called *volur* (singular *volva*), and wisemen called *visindamen*. Both often practiced *seithr*, a form of magic involving shamanic rituals. Attracted by its powerful spirits and abundant magical resources, many *galdramen* (sing. *galdraman*) settled in Iceland. Galdramen used spells, spoken in poetic verse or sung, to summon and bind spirits. Two other types of magicians were the Norse priests called *vitkir* (sing. *vitki*), whose magic came from devotion to the Aesir gods, and the *trollsynir* whose magic came from their blood.

Iceland's magicians were busy in the early days of the settlement. With the Irish priests gone, violent landvaettir, trolls and other magical beasts plagued the settlers. Without the benefit of Christian burial the magical atmosphere occasionally reanimated corpses. These *draug*, as the Norse called them, plagued farms until they were slain by magic or metal. Only enchanted burials could prevent the corpse wandering about. Wards against trolls and spirits were also in high demand.

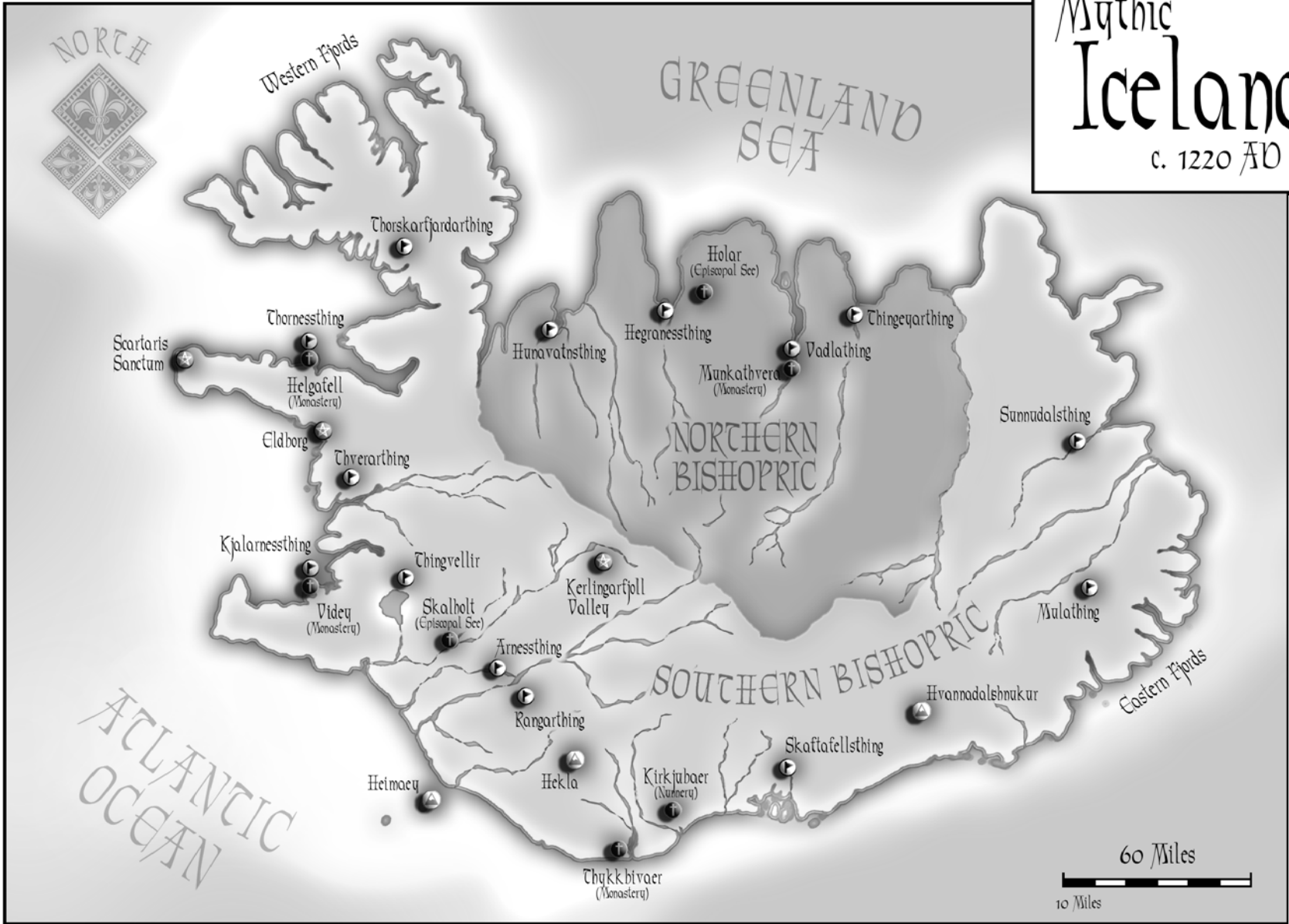


Iceland and The Order

Hermetic magi are currently unknown to Icelandic magicians and the Order's knowledge of Iceland is scant. In general the Order regards Nordic lands with suspicion. There are stories of a powerful Order of Odin, which many magi believe responsible for the destruction of all Hermetic covenants that try to settle in the region. As most Hermetic magi avoid even the Scandinavian mainland, few have even heard of Iceland. As of 1220, there is no known Hermetic presence.

Mythic Iceland

c. 1220 AD



Climate

Iceland has fairly mild winter temperatures, but it does rain a lot. Typically a day does not pass without some rain, snow, sleet, or at least drizzle. Happily, Icelandic weather is very changeable and a brief shower is often followed by sun for the remainder of the day. However, periodic gales and fog make for truly miserable weather at times. The northern and eastern coastal regions fare better: the northern region is the sunniest while the eastern is the warmest.

The central regions have clearer skies, but other problems afflict the interior deserts. Summer or winter the interior suffers from intense blizzards. Icy sandstorms can appear at a moment's notice and travelers may find themselves in serious trouble.

The Battle of Hekla (924)

In 108 the dragon Pan Caudarax returned to his lair near the Hekla volcano, after almost a thousand years in Flanders. He prepared a nest site for his mate's brood and in 232 the eggs were laid. Pan Caudarax then took over the mantle of Guardian from his mate.

Seven hundred years later men swarmed over the lowlands. When Caudarax awoke in 924 AD he could barely believe his eyes. He retreated to his lair and ordered the volcanic landvaettir to cause massive eruptions. Earthquakes rocked the land while seeresses and soothsayers predicted imminent destruction. A group of galdramen and trollsyrnir set out to track down the danger and came on Caudarax. In the ensuing battle many fell before the trollsottir Aud found the dragon's weak-spot and wounded him; both sides then withdrew and agreed a truce. Pan Caudarax agreed to call back the landvaettir, in return the Norse were to provide a yearly tribute of forty horses. Although the landvaettir occasionally still

cause eruptions, they are not at Pan Caudarax's instruction.

From that time on Pan Caudarax took little interest in the humans. They seldom strayed near his territory. The eggs are destined to hatch on the day of the solar eclipse of May 22, 1248.

Establishment of the Law (930)

With law must our land be built, or with lawlessness laid waste.

— Njal's Saga

The Norse held courts, discussed laws and settled disputes at assemblies called *things*. The early Icelanders organized district assemblies, which three of the local godar organized and presided over. The most important of these assemblies was held in the spring (May). These district assemblies were called the *spring things* (*varthing*).

As Iceland grew more populated the number of disputes grew. The settlers had come from all over Scandinavia and beyond; the lack of common law began to become a serious problem. Turning to the king of Norway to settle disputes was not a favored choice for people wishing to maintain their independence.

The chieftains asked Ulfjot of Lon to journey to Norway to study the Gulathing Law (the law of western Norway). With the help of his uncle, Thorleif the Wise, he learnt and adapted this code to the needs of Iceland. He returned to Iceland and in 930 a national assembly called the *Althing* was established.

Galdramen Hreppur (950)

During the pre-Christian era magicians were generally respected in Icelandic society, but magical interference in matters of honor





was detestable and usually ended badly. So most magicians lived quietly, displaying careful neutrality in feuds. When godar were themselves magicians the situation was tricky, as honorable conduct demanded no magical assistance (except from arms, armor or berserker rages). Godi magicians therefore had difficulty avoiding rumors of dishonorable behavior, a charge that enabled their opposition to gather support. Most made the choice of political power over magical power and did not pursue the vitkir arts. However, this did not stop godar attempting secretly to secure magical assistance.

In the early tenth century the most prominent Icelandic magicians created a *hreppur*, or cooperative, to discourage the godar from putting pressure on its members. The *hreppur* organized the placement of wards against trolls on the trails across Iceland and regulated the costs of various services magicians provided. Non-malign charms and spells were provided at fixed costs to all who were not blacklisted. Members who were under pressure received support from the *hreppur* and the godar soon thought better of it.

As well as helping farmers and defending against ghosts and spirits, Icelandic magicians negotiated with the giants and dragons to maintain the peace. The *hreppur* also regulated the harvesting of *Ond* (vis) from magical sites, which the *galdramen* used as offerings to the spirits.

The Colonization of Greenland (982-1000 AD)

In 982 Eirik the Red was outlawed from Iceland on manslaughter charges. Having already been outlawed from Norway for similar offenses he decided to go exploring and resolved to investigate a sighting made some fifty years previously by a Norwegian called Gunnbjorn.

Eirik set out from *Snaefelljokul* and discovered Greenland. There was plenty of grassland for the taking, and the lands were rich in bears,

Icelandic Flora and Fauna

When the settlers first arrived, the land was heavily wooded with dwarf willows, which were cleared for firewood and grazing. This massive deforestation led to soil erosion that gradually reduced the quality of the land for its farmers. Other areas of the coast were bog and marshland.

Only two land mammals are native to Iceland, the polar bear and the arctic fox. The settlers did not appreciate the polar bears and the population was slain or captured and sold abroad. Occasionally a bear floats across from Greenland on ice floes, but it is quickly hunted down. Foxes were also disliked, but they managed to run and hide more effectively.

Common and grey seals fish from the abundant coastal shelves. These seals are hunted by orca, and other species of whales are commonly seen. Walrus bask on the ice-floes in between diving for clams on the sea bed.

As well as the sea birds such as gulls, cormorants and the great auk, there are ducks, whooping swans, owls, divers and gyrfalcons. Arguably the most majestic bird is the snow-white arctic eagle.

Eels, salmon, trout and Arctic char swim the rivers, while the sea teems with many other types of seafood.

As well as the intended chickens, cattle, cats, dogs, sheep, goats, pigs and horses, the settlers brought mice and rats to the island. Soon after the settlement the rodents took their usual places in the island's ecology. However, goats and pigs were particularly destructive of the delicate Icelandic grasslands and by the year 1000 these animals were rarely kept.

foxes, caribou, sea mammals, birds and fisheries. The country appeared ideally suited to colonization. For the next three years he and his crew explored a large section of Greenland's coast and marked out sites of farms and homes

to be. This became known as the Eastern Settlement.

At its height the Eastern Settlement reached 190 farms, twelve parish churches, a cathedral, a monastery and a nunnery, with a government on the Icelandic model. The Greenlanders exported furs and hides, ropes and cables, oil, woolens, and sea-ivory as well as white bears and falcons, while they imported corn, iron, timber, garments and luxuries.

The Attempted Colonization of Vinland (1000-1020 AD)

Karlsefni and his men built themselves dwellings up above the lake; some of their houses stood near the mainland, and some near the lake. No snow fell, and their entire stock found its food grazing in the open.

— Eirik's Saga

During his journey to Greenland a storm blew one colonist far of course, where he spotted a rich and fertile land. Fifteen years after this sighting, Leif Eiriksson retraced the course and put ashore in several places. Helluland or Flatstone Land was mountainous, glaciated, grassless and barren. Markland was flat and forested, with extensive white sands and gently shelving beaches. However, Leif spent the winter in a place he called Vinland (Wineland).

Leif returned to Greenland singing Vinland's praises. His brother Thorvald took up the opportunity and organized a new exploration. On this journey the Norsemen encountered a group of natives and the situation soon became hostile. An arrow killed Thorvald and his crew returned home with the bad news.

Thorfinn Karlsefni then decided to take the next step. He organized three ships, 160 men (some with wives) and livestock to colo-

nize the country. The winters were indeed mild and the land fertile, but the following summer they encountered the people they named the Skraelingar ('screechers' or 'uglies').

Initially the contact was peaceful and the two groups traded. The Skraelings were very interested in the Norseman's metal, but Karlsefni forbade the sale of weapons. Despite initially peaceful trading, the Skraelings began to covet the red cloth offered by the settlers, and when it ran out, the raids began. The regular skirmishes made life very difficult and stressful even if actual loss of life was low. Without a common language no peace negotiation was attempted. Internal conflicts over women added to the situation and after three winters Karlsefni decided to leave.

There was one more colonization attempt, instigated by Freydis Eiriksdottir in 1019. This venture almost immediately provoked hostilities, which escalated into a major conflict against a far more numerous opponent. The would-be colonists were quickly forced to flee and this was the last such attempt.

However, in 1220 Greenlanders still make trips to Markland for furs and timber.

Christian Era (1000-)

Men are to put their trust in one God and His saints and are not to worship heathen beings. A man worships heathen beings when he assigns his property to anyone but God and His saints. If a man worships heathen beings, the penalty is lesser outlawry.

— Gragas, Christian Law Section

When Iceland became Christian in 1000 the position of Icelandic magicians changed. From the moment of baptism the threat of hell fire became real to most of them and in 1020 the compromise laws allowing private pagan worship were abolished. Missionary bishops preached against pagan practices and the use of magic.





Within a generation Iceland's vitkir went from respected priests to potential outlaws. Other magicians and witches continued openly to practice their arts, as their craft did not involve worship. However, in 1031 the heroic outlaw Grettir was slain with the aid of a Curse. The outrage that followed led to spells, witchcraft and magic of any sort being made illegal.

The Interdiction (1031-1041)

If someone uses spells or witchcraft or magic — he uses magic if he utters or teaches someone else or gets someone else to utter words of magic over himself or his property — the penalty is lesser outlawry, and he is to be summoned locally and prosecuted with a panel of twelve. If a man practices black sorcery, the penalty for that is full outlawry. It is black sorcery if through his words or his magic a man brings about the sickness or death of live-

stock or people. That is to be prosecuted with a panel of twelve.

— Gragas, Christian Law Section

After a number of successful prosecutions the most prominent magicians in the country met to discuss the situation and for the first time volur and visindamen were invited to join the Galdramen Hreppur. They decided to give the Christian lobby exactly what they said they wanted. For the next ten years Icelanders learned to live without the benefit of magical aid. Famines came, livestock diseases spread unchecked, fisheries failed and cruel weather came without warning. The trail wards failed and trolls slaughtered travelers and cattle.

Eventually a typical Icelandic compromise was reached. The prominent baendur and godar quietly visited the old magicians. They guaranteed them that any suit for using non-malign magic would be crushed and any accusations of black sorcery would receive a fair hearing. Iceland had its magicians and witches back as open secrets and the Galdramen Hreppur continued meeting to ensure its members did not endanger their position again.

The Lava Fields of Misdeeds

Odadahraun, “the lava fields of misdeeds,” lies north of the Vatnajökull glacier. This area forms the boundary of three of the four quarters (East, North and South), but strictly belongs to none of them. The Lava Field of Misdeeds is one of the wildest parts of Iceland, and is perhaps one of the most magical. There is more vis to be found here than in any other part of Iceland, among the twisted spires of rock and crumbling pumice, where sulfurous springs belch evil-smelling humors into the air, and the mighty glaciers and volcanoes provide a menacing backdrop.

This is a God-forsaken place, a region where the Dominion has never reached. Only the most desperate outlaws will brave the freezing winds and scalding steam, but desperate men are dangerous men. Spirits of all sorts haunt the blasted landscape, and most are not friendly towards humanity. Some of Pan Caudarax's earlier brood have taken up residence here, and these dragons can cause significant problems. Finally, giants are relatively com-

mon here, especially those of the clans of Geirroð and Bergelmir.

A season spent searching for vis will yield one pawn per ten points of a magus's Per + Intéllego + Vim + 10. This vis might take several forms, but Perdo, Ignem, Teram, Aquam and Auram are the most obvious choices. However, spending a season in these badlands is not conducive to good health, demanding (at the very least) a penalty to the character's aging roll. The character cannot expect to collect vis without attracting the attention of some of the region's inhabitants, either.

Any number of encounters could occur in the lava fields, and each is resolved differently. Perhaps the characters get ensnared in the illusions of a fire-giant. They might encounter a band of outlaws who have made a deal with malicious spirits in return for their victim's blood. Two of the (older) dragon-brood of Pan Caudarax might extract a toll of vis from any magus traversing the area.

The Age of the Sturlungar (1200-?)

During the 12th century the more successful *godir* began assuming a more aristocratic role, and by the end of the century the Icelandic ruling class realized that possession of multiple chieftaincies (*godord*) offered real benefits. Around 1200 the sons of Sturla began collecting chieftaincies within the Western Quarter and the race for overlordship of the country began.

By 1220 almost all the country is divided into eight unstable domains called *riki* (meaning power). The rulers within these *riki* are all closely related to one another and belong to one of the five major families. These became the *storgodar* (big chieftains).

Storgodar and Storbændur

As the *storgodar* developed, most *baendur* lost any choice of *thing* attachment. The *storgodar* were uninterested in local disputes, and most often the disputants would have the same *godir*, so some rich householders because *storbændur* (big householders). These men established themselves as local advocates and legal advocates, and filled the gap left by the *storgodar*.

In 1220 AD, the allegiance of this group remains of critical importance to contests among *storgodar*. They stoutly resist all attempts by the *storgodar* to impose taxes, which effectively prevents any *storgodi* from achieving his ultimate goal.

The *riki* in 1220 AD

The *Svinfellingar* Family

The first family to expand beyond one or two *godord*, by 1220 they have acquired the whole Eastern Quarter and formed two *riki*.

Skaftafellsthing is ruled over by Orm Jonsson from 1212.

Mulathing is under the command of Thorarin Jonsson, the brother of Orm, from 1220.

The *Asbirningar* Family

Named after Asbjorn Arnorsson who lived around 1100, it was Kolbeinn Tumason who first ruled the Skagafjord (Hegranesthing) district of the Northern Quarter. He later acquired Hunavatnsthing and by his death in 1208 he had extended his territory to the western boundaries of the quarter. The current *storgodar* is his brother Arnor, however his health is failing and it looks likely that his son Kolbeinn the Young will soon inherit.

The *Oddaverjar* Family

Jon Loftsson at Oddi was held in extremely high esteem as an arbitrator in disputes among chieftains for all four quarters. Jon and two of his sons, Orm and Pall (later Bishop Pall) came to rule over all the chieftaincies in the district of Rangarthing. The family rules over the district as a group and with Bishop Pall's death in 1211 and Orm's death in 1218, the chieftaincies are now divided among Jon Loftsson's third son Saemundur and his children.

The *Haukdaelir* Family

Prominent in the Christianization process, this family controls all three chieftaincies of the Arnesthing district.

The *Sturlungar* Family

This family descended from Sturla Thorardson at Hvamm in the Western Quarter. Although he never controlled more than one chieftaincy, his three sons are among the most powerful and ambitious chieftains of the 13th century.

The sons of Hvamm-Sturla form three *riki*.

Thord Sturluson has dominion in Snaefellnes and Dalir. He is content with one chieftaincy most of the time and is sharing the district with his ambitious nephew, Sturla Sighvatsson. Nonetheless Thord is regarded as the *storgodar*.

Snorri Sturluson holds dominion in Borgarfjord after moving there in 1202 to take possession of his wife's inheritance. He is moving





quickly to secure other chieftaincies of the Thverarthing.

Sighvat Sturluson holds dominion in the eastern half of the Northern Quarter. Sturla's third son, he started in Dalir and moved north to Eyjafjordur to take over chieftaincies that had been presented to his son. Sighvat has control of the whole eastern part of the Northern Quarter, the districts of Vadlathing and Thingeyjarthing.

Some areas have managed to maintain the old style of godar/baendur relationship. The Vestfirðir peninsula is the largest of these districts. Even within the *riki* the storgodar rarely own all the chieftaincies. Often minor chieftains lend their godord to storgodar or become followers, maintaining control under their protection. Lacking the strength to protect your *thingmen* is a great dishonor and in the new power structure full independence is often not viable. Still, godar only give up their title if no other honorable solution is possible.



The Beginning of the End (1220)

In the early 13th century King Hakon Hakonarson (called "the Elder") began to seek control of the lands in the North Atlantic that were inhabited by Norse people.

An opportunity presented itself when Snorri Sturluson appeared at court. Earl Skuli Bardson, the father-in-law of the teenage king, approached Snorri and threatened to send a navy to Iceland. Snorri managed to dissuade him, but offered to return to Iceland and lobby the chieftains to accept the authority of the Crown. Snorri however had no intention of championing so hopeless cause.

Timeline

B.C.

ca. 4000 . . . Destruction of Old Ones' civilization.

ca. 2000 . . . Egyptian cult of Thoth at its height.

ca. 500 Greek cult of Hermes at its height.

A.D.
412 Cult of Mercury officially disbanded.

767 Order of Hermes founded at Durenmar.

790 Irish priests (called *papar* by the Norse) reach Iceland and use it as a retreat in the summer.

800-1100 . . The Viking period.

825 Thule mentioned by the Irish monk Dicuil in *Liber de Mensura Orbis Terrae*.

850 Naddoddur the Swede is blown off course on route to the Faeroes. He names the island Snaeland ('snowland').

855 Gardar Svavarsson circumnavigates Iceland and settles at Husavik on the northern coast for the winter.

860 Floki Vilgerdason takes his family to Snaeland. He quickly becomes disenchanted and renames the place Island ('ice land').

- 870-930 The era of the landnam (land-taking). Main colonization sees 10-20 thousand Norsemen claim the available agricultural land. The Irish priests decide not to return to the island.
- 874 Ingolfur Arnarson sets up house in a place he names Reykjavik ('smoky bay').
- 890-930 Reign of Harald Fairhair of Norway.
- 910-990 Life of Egil Skallagrimson, warrior, poet and magician.
- 930 Althing ('general assembly') is established, with the first Icelandic constitution and the inauguration of what is later called the Icelandic Freestate.
- 925 The dragon Pan Caudarax commands the landvaettir (natural spirits) to rid Iceland of the human colonists. Volcanic activity builds across the country. An alliance of trollsyrir, galdramen and vitkir attack Pan Caudarax and eventually negotiate a truce.
- 930 Iceland declared *albyggd*, "fully inhabited," with 40-50 thousand inhabitants – 400 named settlers with kin, womenfolk and slaves.
- 950 Iceland's magicians create a hreppur to protect their interests. The Eldborg caldera, created by Pan Caudarax's wrath 25 years before, is used as their meeting place in memory of that initial alliance.
- 965 Refinement of the first constitution. Iceland divided into 4 quarters (fjordingar), each with its own court at the Althing.
- 970 Free pardon is given to an outlaw who kills three other outlaws.
- 979 Harald Bluetooth Gormsson of Denmark sends a trollson to investigate Iceland. The Guardians confront him and Harald abandons his invasion plans.
- 982 Eirik the Red outlawed from Iceland. He finds Greenland.
- 984 First church built in Iceland by the native Thorvald and a German bishop Fridrekr. While their mission is successful, the Althing they attend pours derision upon them.
- 986 Colonization of Greenland.
- 987 Bjarni Herjolfsson sights Vinland.
- 997 A law decrees that in some circumstances, conversion to Christianity may be regarded as a defilement of the family
- 1000 Christianisation of Iceland by Althing decision. The acceptance of Christianity by the logretta is mainly due to the zeal of three Christian godar. The case was made that Christians and heathens could not obey the same laws, and that two states would have to be formed, one for the Christians and one for the heathens. Partially due to trading pressure from Denmark and Norway, Christianity was seen as the religion that was best for the Freestate. Certain heathen practices, such as disposing of newborns and eating of horseflesh, were not banned, and sacrifices could still be made to the heathen gods, if done in private.
- 1001 Leif Eiriksson sails west to find Vinland.
- 1002-20 Attempted colonization of Vinland. Colonies abandoned due to native attacks no later than 1020. Some collection of furs and timber may have continued into the mid 14th century.
- 1005 Fifth court established.
- 1007 Holmganga (single combat) is abolished as a legal means of decision-making. The last recorded duel on the islet in the Oxara involved Gunnlaugur Serpent-Tongue, the warrior-poet, who challenged the husband of the woman he loved.
- 1014-1030 Reign of Olaf Haraldson (St Olaf) of Norway. In 1020 AD, a treaty is made between him and Iceland regarding the rights of Norwegians in Iceland and vice versa. Within that treaty the remaining pagan practices are made illegal.





- 1031-1041 . Grettir the Strong slain with the aid of magic. Laws against all magical practices are passed. For ten years Icelandic magicians refuse to provide any magical assistance. Eventually the godar agree to secretly provide legal protection to magicians accused of using non-malign magic.
- 1030-1118. . The Fridharold — age of peace.
- 1056 First Icelandic bishopric established at Skalholt in the Southern Quarter. The bishop is given a seat in the logretta.
- 1056-80 . . . Isleif Gizarson becomes Iceland's first native Bishop.
- 1056-1133 . Life of Saemundur Sigfusson the wise, godi of Oddi, galdraman and bishop. His sister Halla was sei-thkona.
- 1096 The law of tithes is introduced.
- 1106 Second bishopric established at Holar in the Northern Quarter. Its first bishop, Jon the Saint Ogmudarson (1106-1121), a powerful enemy of heathen ways, was later sanctified. The Bishop of Holar is also given a seat in the logretta. Bergthor Hrafnsson, Hafliði Mas-son and others compile and write down the Icelandic Laws. This work becomes known as Gragas (Grey Goose).
- 1122-1133 . The *Islendingabok* written by Ari in frodi; a history from the founding up to the death of Bishop Gizurr in 1118.
- 1123 The Christian law of Iceland is codified.
- 1218-1220 . Earl Skuli, acting for King Hakon of Norway, makes an expedition to Iceland to secure trade. Snorri Sturluson averts violence at the cost of agreeing to help integrate Iceland with Norway.
- 1222 Prose Edda composed.

King Hakon of Norway takes advantage of the political turmoil within Iceland to add it to the Norwegian Crown. The timeline below details the Icelandic *Sturlunga Saga*, which details events from 1220. Storyguides who wish to involve their players in stories involving mundane politics during these times are advised to seek further details from the sources found in the Bibliography on page 143.

- 1222-1231: Snorri Sturluson serves his second term as Lawspeaker.
- 1228: The Sturlungs fight over the Snorrunga godord. The brothers Snorri and Thord Sturluson had failed to claim what was theirs by right, and their brother Sighvat had become godi, in turn passing the title to his son Sturla. Snorri makes a formal demand for the godord at the Althing, but the matter is not decided. Snorri seizes the godord by force, supported by his violent brother-in-law Thorvald of Vatsfjord. Thorvald is burnt to death in the summer of this year in a revenge killing.
- 1229: The sons of Thorvald, believing that Sighvat and his son Sturla were responsible for the death of their father, attack Sturla's property and destroy it, although (fortunately for him), Sturla is away.
- 1230: After proving he was not involved in the attack against Sturla's property, Snorri is reconciled with his nephews. Snorri even makes peace with his brother Sighvat, and Iceland has a brief respite from the troubles.
- 1232: Sturla Sighvatsson seeks reconciliation with the sons of Thorvald, but their insults drive him into a rage, and he kills them. For this offence Sturla makes a pilgrimage to Rome. Snorri's illegitimate son Oraekia takes over the Vatsfjord godord. He is a wicked and violent man who sends out armed bands to plunder and ill-treat the people of his godord.
- 1234: Sturla Sighvatsson spends time in Norway on his way back from Rome, and falls under the influence of King Hakon and Duke Skuli Bardarson. Sturla promises to subjugate Iceland for the king, in return for which he will receive the title of earl.
- 1235: Sturla returns to Iceland and gathers an army to attack Snorri Sturluson. Snorri and his son gather a force to repel them, but Snorri is unwilling to fight his relatives.

Beyond 1220 AD

The main story arc covers the last four decades of the Icelandic Freestate. In 1262 AD

Instead, he flees into the Eastern quarter. Thord Sturlusson attempts to reconcile his brother and his nephew with no effect. Sturla seizes Rekjaholt, and Oraekia gathers a fleet of ships to harry Bogarfjord and the surrounding region. Oraekia is captured due to the treachery of Sturla, who pretends to sue for peace, but manages to escape being blinded and maimed. This behavior rouses Snorri to action, and he raises an army to attack Sturla, but is beaten by a superior force.

1237: In an attempt to end the conflict, King Hakon summons the godi of Iceland to Norway, and Snorri and his allies leave.

1238: Sturla Sighvatsson now rules most of Iceland. Only two storgodar offer him resistance – Kolbein The Young and Gizur Thorvaldsson, both married to daughters of Snorri Sturluson. Sturla tricks Gizur and takes him prisoner. Kolbein, guessing he is next, rapidly organizes a league against Sturla. Gizur, who has managed to escape Sturla's clutches, joins them. The opposing sides clash at Orlygsstad, and Sighvat and Sturla are finally defeated. It soon becomes clear that this victory has merely resulted in substituting new tyrants for old.

1239: With the defeat of Sturla, King Hakon's plan for the domination of Iceland has failed. Duke Skuli Bardarson grants Snorri Sturluson the title of earl, on the understanding that if the treacherous Duke succeeds in his bid for the Norwegian crown, Snorri will rule Iceland as a Norwegian dependency. Snorri returns to Iceland.

1240: Duke Skuli's attempt to wrest power from King Hakon results in the Duke's death.

1241: King Hakon, guessing that Snorri supported Duke Skuli in his treachery, makes Gizur Thorvaldsson his representative. He has orders to either bring Snorri to Norway or kill him as a traitor. Gizur's associate Kolbein arrives at the Althing to capture Snorri, but, forewarned, their quarry escapes to the sanctuary of a church. Later in the summer, Gizur and Kolbein descend upon Rekjaholt, gain secret entrance to Snorri's home, and slay him. Oraekia is later banished when he attempts to avenge his father.

1242: With most of the major Sturlungs dead or banished, the influence of the family fades. Gizur Thorvaldsson becomes the sole leader in Southern Iceland, and Kolbein the Young holds sway in the Western and Northern quarters. Thord Kakali, the avenger of the Sturlungs, returns to Iceland at this point. He is the sole remaining son of Sighvat, and many see in him the leader of the Sturlungs.

1246: At the battle of Haugnes, the greatest battle in Iceland's history to date, Thord Kakali ends the power of Kolbein and his kinsman Brand, leaving him supreme in northern and western Iceland. Gizur meets Thord with a force of armed men, and the two agree to arbitration by King Hakon. They sail to Norway together. In the spring of the following year, Hakon decides in favor of Thord, who returns to Iceland and rules unopposed for four years. Gizur remains in Norway to prevent further quarrels.

1251: Thord Kakali makes a trip to Norway, but is not allowed to return home. King Hakon is jealous of his power, and keeps him as an honorable captive there. Gizur returns as the new representative of the king, charged with obtaining full recognition of the king of Norway's rule over Iceland.

1258: King Hakon of Norway makes Gizur Thorvaldsson an earl, thus distinguishing him from the other storgodi. He is placed in charge of the Northern and Southern quarters, and all of Bogarfjord in the west.

1262: At a series of local assemblies, representatives of King Hakon offer the Icelanders peace from the quarrels of the storgodar if they swear allegiance to Norway. The Old Covenant is drawn up between King Hakon and the men of the Northern and Southern Quarters, giving Hakon suzerainty but granting the Icelanders peace and the preservation of Icelandic law. Hakon abolishes all godord, stripping power from the storgodar who would not swear to him.

1263: King Hakon dies, and his son, King Magnus Law-Mender takes over. He proves a wise ruler who avoids offending the Icelanders.





Chapter 3

People and Culture

Settlements

The first notable feature of medieval Iceland is the total lack of towns or villages. Icelandic settlements are almost all farmsteads. Raising sheep and cattle are the main occupations — cattle are the main food resource and sheep the main trade resource. The only other animal raised in number is the small thick-coated Scandinavian horse.

The largest crop in Iceland is hay. Hay is critical to the survival of stock over winter and a bad harvest can create serious hardship. Particularly fertile farms in the south and west grow cereals (mainly barley). However, Iceland's summers are only just long enough and these crops often fail. Most of the cereal in Iceland is imported, so alcohol is a rare commodity.

Few trees are left and the volcanic rocks are very hard to shape, making large fenced areas impractical. Relatively small enclosures have to be built for specialized grazing pastures and manured hayfields. Constructed of turf, these are usually built in front of or around the farmstead.

Turf is the main building material for houses. The traditional longhouse is a narrow, oblong structure that is marginally wider in the middle. The entranceway is beneath a small gable in the front wall, near one end. Over the years grass will grow over the lower walls and the house seems to melt in the countryside.

Wide benches are set into the inside wall, and a long fire along the center of the hall is used for warmth and cooking. Small holes in the base of the roof allow sunlight to enter and

“Here lives Bolli, the slayer of your bother. How unlike your noble ancestors you are that you will not avenge such a worthy brother; never would your grandfather Egil, have behaved in such a manner; and a piteous thing it is to have dolts for sons; indeed, I think it would have suited you better to have been born a woman and married. For here, Halldor, I see the old saying: ‘No stock without a duffer’, has been the ill luck of Olaf; how he blundered in begetting sons! This I would bring home to you, Halldor, because you see yourself as the leader of your brothers. Now we will turn back, for my errand here was to remind you of this, lest you had forgotten.”

Then Halldor answered, “We shall not put it down as your fault, mother, if this should slip our minds.”

Halldor had few other words to say, but his heart swelled with wrath towards Bolli.

— Laxdaela Saga

smoke to leave. Most people sleep in the main hall, but the master often has a locked bed closet on one bench. On average ten adults and children occupy each farmstead. Poorer tenant farmers only have room for their own family and a couple of laborers. Godar and rich baendur have large multi-room buildings (still single-level) capable of sleeping twenty or thirty individuals. Only the most prosperous farms have more than one farmhouse; usually the original is simply expanded as necessary.

Animals are housed separately.

Population size

In 1220 the numbers of farmsteads are as follows: Eastern Quarter, 1260; Southern Quarter, 1750; Western Quarter, 1580; Northern Quarter, 2140: a total of 4560.

This translates to a total population of between 60 and 70 thousand men, women and children.

Rank and Status

Godar (Chieftains)

The *godar* (sing. *godi*) are Iceland's social elite. Each *godi* owns at least one *godord* (chief-taincy). A *godord* is a legal entity, which belongs within one of thirteen local districts (see the Law and Governance Chapter for details). By 1220, most of the forty-eight *godord* are in the hands of only five families. *Godord* can be bought and sold, and are subject to the normal laws of inheritance. Two or more men can hold a *godord*; with the duties this entails being split among all parties. While a woman can inherit a *godord*, she is not entitled to administer it, and must nominate a man to do so.

Godar have legal duties and connect thingmen to the legal system, but theirs is not a feudal role, and although it is often in the mutual interest of thingmen to provide armed support, they are not obliged to. The *godord* is not a geographical unit, but most thingmen enter contracts with *godar* who live nearby for practical reasons. The other duties of *godar* are to sit at the law council (*logretta*) and to appoint judges at assemblies.

Baendur (Householders)

A household usually consists of a single farmstead with its associated fields and cattle. The simplest case is a husband and wife, their employees and legal dependents. Legal dependents include children and elderly or infirm relatives. Large farms might have more than one household on them, often sharing the same

farmstead. People might share the title of householder if they own shares in the property.

The requirements for a man to form his own household are modest. Even a moderately wealthy tenant or hut-man can form his own household.

A household exists when a man has milk animals, but if he is a landowner he must also declare himself in Thing even if he does not have milk animals. If he is not a landowner and has no milk animals, he belongs to the Thing of the householder into whose care he puts himself.

— Gragas

The household is the fundamental unit of society. Often, a household will occupy a single valley, headland or mountainside, frequently named after its founder. Householders have to declare themselves *in thing* with a *godi*. However, this is not a feudal relationship, but one that defines a legal residence for procedural purposes. As everyone is in theory a member of a household, which is *in thing* with a *godi*, everyone is a member of a particular quarter and district.

The householders are known as *baendur* (sing. *bondi*). Owning land automatically confers *bondi* status, as does ownership of milk animals. All householders have the right to choose their *thing* attachment. Richer householders are liable to pay *thing tax*. A *godi* can require one in nine of his *thing tax* paying *baendur* accompany him to the Althing. The rest pay the tax to support this retinue. A householder who qualifies for *thing tax* also enjoys full rights to sit on legal panels (see Law and Governance, page 34) and full membership of his local *hreppur* (cooperative).

Tenants

The tenants rent land from landowners for a year at a time. Changes in tenancy or renewal always take place at the *moving days* (six weeks after the start of summer). Rent is limited to no more than a tenth of the value of the land. Tenants are required to maintain the value of the property, particularly with respect to getting a full yield of hay. If the tenant cannot support his family, it is the landowner's responsibility to support him until the next moving days. A ten-





ant is considered to be a bondi, but might not qualify for *thing tax*.

Hut Men

Hut men also rent land from a landowner. The most common profession for a hut man is fisherman, but he might be involved in another non-farming profession. These men often have to move into farmsteads during the winter. Even normally self-sufficient enterprises often fail during famines. In return for the safety net of his farmstead the landowner can demand labor from a hut man. To ensure a landowner does not create more hut men than he can support, he must obtain permission from his local hreppur for each. Failure to do so can result in lesser outlawry of both the hut-man and the landowner.

Slaves

Slaves were initially common in Iceland. They were either captured slaves (mainly of Irish, Scottish or Saxon stock), or the children of slave parents. In 1220 a slave is a rare sight, most likely taken to Iceland from the mainland where slavery is still active. There are also debt-slaves, but this condition is usually temporary in nature.

Freedmen

When freed, the slave enters the class of freedmen. A new contract of dependence is made between the freedman and his former owner. Freedmen become dependents of the for-

mer owner, and he has an obligation to support them if they cannot support themselves. Should a freedman die with no heirs, the former owner inherits his property and receives the blood money if the freedman was killed. The children of freedmen are freeborn, and have no such obligations.

Icelandic Culture

Honor

At the heart of Icelandic society lies honor. It remains the central cultural concept, long after the Christianisation of the island. Godar, priests, rich and poor alike hold honor as the first measure of a man or women. To this the Christian concept of piety plays second fiddle and the passive humility of 'turning the other cheek' is entirely alien (to most at least).

An Icelander's honor lies in livestock, land and lawsuits as well as his sword and spear. Managing his farm well, securing good marriages for his kin and displaying his skill at law all give honor. Honor means dealing honorably with other honorable men; whether gifts or insults and injury are exchanged, an honorable man gives back what he is given.

This idea of honor is not that of chivalric knights and there is enough room within it for tactics, strategy and even some dishonesty. Sneaking up at night and burning a family to death in their own home is not incompatible with honor. However, not admitting your actions is contemptible.

Honor is bound up with Iceland's ambiguous class system. Whether or not an insult is given or received depends greatly on the respective rank of the people involved. A simple farmer understands that a chieftain is his social better, their relationship is clear and each knows how to treat each other. In cases where social dominance or equality is disputed, offense is difficult to avoid.

Matter of Honor

Story Seed: One of the magi has taken an Icelandic apprentice and completed his Hermetic training. The new filius receives an offer of a place in a spring covenant far away. However, the new covenant angers a local rival who collectively declares Wizard's War on the young magi. The player character receives a letter from his filius explaining the situation. He refuses to be driven from his new home and asks for his parents's help in negotiating a settlement.

The Redcap delivering the letter also brings the news of the covenant's annihilation. Will the filius go unavenged?

Families and Friendship

Kin are very important to Icelanders and are the first people called on for support. The island's isolation and small population has led to kinship being common, especially among people of rank, so an Icelander often finds himself in conflict with close relations. Therefore, Icelanders have developed a number of forms of spiritual kinship to complement their blood-kin. An Icelander usually finds support laterally within his family, rather than vertically. Thus, assistance comes from brothers, cousins, or second cousins rather than from uncles or nephews.

Things are confused further by the common practice of fostering. A child is often brought up in another's household as part of deal done by the father and foster father. Men can also ritually blend their blood to become foster-brothers, sworn brothers or oath brothers. Such spiritual kin are often more reliable than blood kin where vengeance is concerned. Men can also enter into formal friendships called *vinfengi*. This arrangement means guaranteed political and legal support, either immediately or in the future.

Women

Icelandic women have a measure of control over their lives. They have many legal responsibilities, including the right to own property. They can act as heads of households and are subject to outlawry for injury and killings. They cannot however, act as advocates or serve on legal panels.

Occasionally a woman will inherit a godord. Although they have to use a male representative at the *things*, they can be successful. Icelandic women often work behind the scenes, helping to prevent or resolve feuds as well as to escalate or prolong them. Women often shame men into action, recalling past debts unsettled. At times women act to calm hotheads and resolve petty squabbles before the situation spirals into blood vengeance.

Proposals of marriage are offered between fathers or legal guardians, but the woman is normally consulted. Widows have the right to refuse marriages. The groom pays the *bride price* and the bride's family provides her with a dowry.

Both count as her possessions. If she divorces she has the right to her *bride price* and her dowry, plus any increase that might have occurred.

Marriage is not the only option for women. Some women became concubines (*frillur*, singular *frilla*) of men of rank. As an Icelandic folk saying goes, 'Better a good man's frilla than married badly.' A number of these relationships are due to marriage being prohibited by kinship.

Despite being against normal Christian principles, these traditions on divorce and frillur endure in 1220.

The biggest impediment to marriage for many Icelanders is money. The law requires a betrothed couple to own at least 120 *law ounces* (see below for detail of the law ounce), between them. A landless worker will have to save for perhaps twenty years to gather this sum. This law attempts to prevent children being born into destitution, but it is difficult to enforce.

Poetry and Storytelling

As the Icelandic weather and long winter nights force people into their homes for long periods, Icelanders have found ways of passing the time. As well as the occasional board game, they like to tell stories and compose poetry. The ability to recite the sagas is highly thought of.



Hof and Ohof

Thorstein lived at Borg in Borgarfjord; he was wealthy, a great leader, a wise man, gentle, and a man of moderation [hofsman] in all respects.

— Saga of Gunnlaug Serpent-Tongue

Icelanders value people who observe a standard of moderation, called *hof*. Such men are those of justice and temperance, who most often prosper in the Sagas. The opposite is *ohof*, a lack of judgment or excess, which alarms foes, allies and even the aggressor's own family. Ohof is unevenness, unfairness and injustice in dealings with others. Rarely do such people succeed in their overbearing ways for long. Other leaders eventually band together to oppose such people.

Icelandic leaders must tread a careful path while pursuing their ambitions. Likewise, magi should tread carefully within Iceland. If playing the Toframanna Saga the magi benefit greatly if they display *hof* and avoid *ohof*.



Any traveler who knows many sagas and can tell them well will find himself welcome.

A man's reputation is also enhanced if he is a good poet. Such poems are based on references to Norse mythology and display both the poet's skill and knowledge. The greatest saga heroes were warrior poets and would compose witty, flattering, insulting or cryptic verses on any occasion. A poem can get a hero a job as a royal retainer or save him from execution, or get him involved in a feud.

If possible, an Icelander facing certain death should be able to come up with verse or five. Even if unexpectedly struck through the heart with a spear, a man's dying breath might be used for a witty quip.

Literacy

With Christianity came literacy. The newly Christian nation cried out for knowledge of the new faith and too few could provide it. Many

godar and baendur sought ordination and learned Latin and letters. Others sent their sons abroad for education and they returned with books of Holy Scripture. These pioneering god-priests set up schools in Iceland, which still exist in 1220.

The most famous schools are at the homes of the Haukadalja from Haukadalur and the Oddaverjar from Oddi. In 1220, knowledge of Latin and letters, often to a high standard, is common among the sons of wealthy men. Recently an intellectual movement has begun with authors like Snorri Sturluson writing poetry and prose based on Norse and Icelandic traditions.

Clothing

Both men and women follow the styles of the mainland. Men wear a long shirt and trousers. Women wear a long shift, often pleated. Overlaying this dress is a long front and back apron held in place by brooches attached to the front of the dress just below the shoulders. Usually the cloth is undyed natural brown, black, gray or white. However, dyed cloth is a clear sign of wealth and is worn at the Althing if possessed. Rich Icelanders also wear imported linen undergarments.

Economy

Money

There is very little silver in Iceland and most trade is done with standard lengths of *homespun* (woolen cloth). This cloth is used for clothes and sailcloth at home and abroad.

The quality and width of a bolt of homespun is standardized. A bolt of homespun is two *ells* wide (an *ell* is about 49 cm). Therefore, if an Icelander asks for twelve ells of homespun, he wants a sheet two ells wide and twelve ells long.

There are three types of currency in Iceland. The *law ounce* is the national rate and is used to pay fines. A law ounce is equal to six ells of homespun from a standard bolt. The *standard*



Currency Chart

Worth	Currency Unit:			
	Silver Ounce	Law Ounce	Standard Ounce	Ell of Homespun
Silver Ounce:	1	$\frac{1}{6}$	$\frac{1}{9}$	$\frac{1}{36}$
Law Ounce:	6	1	$\frac{2}{3}$	$\frac{1}{6}$
Standard Ounce:	9	$1\frac{1}{2}$	1	$\frac{1}{4}$
Ell of Homespun:	36	6	4	1

ounce is the local (district) rate and is used to trade, pay rents and tithes. A standard ounce is equal to 4 ells of homespun from a standard bolt. The *silver ounce* is the international rate, and refers to the actual weight of the silver. Eight ounces equaled one mark, whether law, standard or silver.

Each year the law council (see Chapter 4) defines the silver value of the law ounce. In 1220 the current law ounce is valued at one-sixth an ounce of silver.

The price of all goods is set at the district assemblies (*spring things*) in standard ounces.

Imports are mainly bought with bulk wool, homespun, skins and dairy products. White falcons, bears, sulfur and walrus ivory are also exported, but these form a small part of export trade. The cottage industries of wool and dairy products are the principle means of paying landlords and settling debts.

Sheep and Dairy Farming

During the summer all the region's farmers use common lands and highland pastures. Most lambs and gelded rams are driven up to the highest mountain pastures, while ewes and cows are kept in the lower lands around dairies. As un milked ewes produce more and better quality wool (the cash crop), the dairies primarily use cow's milk.

Dairies produce butter and cheese but their main production is *skyr*, a type of curdled milk that keeps over winter. It has the consistency of thick yogurt and is stored in large wooden vats partly buried in the ground.

Even though the majority of grazing land is communal, the ability to sustain livestock over winter is the crucial difference between farms. The farm's ability to produce hay and the

farmer's judgment in what stock level to keep are critical to success.

Hunting, Gathering and Food Preservation

Opportunities are available on common ground for landless men to better themselves. Seal hunting is common, but when a whale washes up serious disputes can break out over the huge quantities of meat and blubber.

Whale meat and blubber is put into specially constructed storage pits, where it ferments. Seal and whale blubber is used for frying food, in place of butter, and on leather to make it water repellent. Seal blubber also provides effective caulking for boats. Lamps are fueled with seal and shark oil.

Trout and char can be caught all year round and salmon are plentiful when in season; these fish can be smoked. Cod can be wind dried on outdoor racks using the dry arctic winds, a cheap process that one fisherman can do by



Money for Nothing

Compared to anywhere in mainland Europe, Iceland's economy is tiny. Using Hermetic magic, it is easy to generate huge quantities of precious metals. If magi do this in Iceland, it will be noticed almost immediately. Silver will quickly be devalued for local exchange.

The only remaining use for silver will be in trade with Norwegian merchants. In turn the merchants will quickly note that Icelanders have acquired a lot of silver. Being able to attract more merchant ships will benefit Iceland, but rumors of silver mines will only intensify King Hakon's desire to gain overlordship.

Storyguides should think carefully about the consequences of player characters conjuring wealth and may wish to discourage it.



himself. Dried and smoked fish are produced in large quantities for the Icelandic market and are particularly sought after during religious fasts.

The majority of meat is boiled and placed in vats of sour whey. *Surr*, as it is called, can be eaten straight from the barrel. Sausages are made from meat, suet, liver and blood-pudding preparations. Icelanders have little salt and the butter ferments, turning it sour but long lasting.

Edible lichens are often used instead of ground meal. Birds are hunted and their eggs collected. Dried dung is the standard heating fuel.

Roads and Travelers

Although their ancestors were famous for their seamanship, Icelanders have few ships due to the lack of wood. Internally Iceland is connected via an extensive system of horse paths, leading to almost every part of the country. Goods move around via packhorses and the tough Icelandic breed copes well with the often steep and rocky road network.

Householders usually provide shelter and board along the way. Householders are only legally obliged to give shelter to travelers on religious or legal duties such as taking a child to baptism or traveling to *thing* to take part in a case. However, showing hospitality is a mark of an honorable man and is usually provided. Good behavior, small exchanges of gifts, tales and gossip are all that is normally expected. To prevent idle or destitute people taking advantage of householders' generosity, traveling about on pointless journeys is illegal. An able-bodied man who does this is called a tramp and the penalty is lesser outlawry. This does not apply to the physically or mentally disabled, but a special arrangement is usually made in order to share their care within a district.

Trade

No permanent marketplaces exist in Iceland, but markets spring up at a number of times and places. The *things* provided regular annual meeting places where craftsmen like shoemakers and swordsmiths can ply their trades. Each Episcopal see holds a fair on particular feast days. Markets also spring up around trading ships. As well as buying the trade goods of the ship, the locals trade with each other. A fishing station is the closest thing to a permanent market, but these sell only fish.

As prices are set differently between districts, peddlers can make a living buying and selling between them. Occasionally a peddler can earn enough to buy his own farm, but his initial low status remains an obstacle. Making a living via petty trading is a poorly regarded occupation.

Association with long distance trade is seen as honorable. A man can buy a large quantity of goods from a ship and re-sell them (at a higher price) without appearing dishonorable. This requires significant capital as well as social contacts.

Among people of roughly equal status, the exchange of goods is part of the subtle game of honor continually being played. The most honorable form of exchange is the gift. This allows the receiver to dictate the nature and timing of the return. A refusal or immediate return may indicate the receiver's distrust or hostility. Too long a wait may indicate resentment. No return

Story Seeds

- A neighbor of the covenant always gets a good harvest, even in the worst of weathers. This has made him particularly rich, and he demands silver (virtually impossible to get hold of in Iceland) in return for grain and meat. What is the secret of his success? Perhaps a witch has charmed his fields for him, burying magical stones at the boundaries. Perhaps he is friendly with the *landvaettir* (page 32), blessing him with prosperity. His greed, however, has upset his benefactor (whoever that is). What will happen when his crops suddenly fail?
- Some years, even the best farmers cannot provide enough food for their household. When this happens to *magi*, what can they do? Allow people to starve? If not, how will they meet the shortfall? It is likely that most of the island has a similar dearth of food, after all.
- The covenant's livestock goes missing. The sheep all seem to vanish in one particular canyon, deep in the mountains. When the covenant's shepherds discover that a giant is responsible, and he stands ten times higher than a man, how are they going to stop such an invincible foe? Perhaps negotiation is the only option, but first they must find someone who speaks the language of giants.

at all can indicate either complete contempt or acknowledgement of permanent superiority, depending on the circumstances.

Icelanders might resort to raiding. A raid often results from a failed attempt to bargain. It involves the open taking of goods. As raiders operate under *forfeit immunity* (see page 38) the defender can kill or injure them without fear of legal consequence. However, if the defender is outmatched or simply decides against resistance, he can honorably step aside and seek compensation legally. In this way the raider eventually pays for what he takes, but third parties decide the price.

Making a wasted trip is deeply humiliating and the gift of an insult is seldom left unpaid. Most proposed deals between men of rank are well received. Trips to arrange marriages are seldom seen as hostile. Important deals like those involving land, marriage and dowries are legally formalized with a witnessed handshake, called a *handsal*.

Theft involves the secret taking of goods and is a highly dishonorable act. Naturally, if discovered, the resulting lawsuit is a serious affair.

Hreppar (Cooperatives)

All farmers belong to communal organizations called *hreppar* (sing. *hreppur*). These organizations are formed in a geographically defined region, and are independent of the godar. Hreppar are led by a five-member committee and provide their members with insurance and arrange the maintenance of the poor who have no legally bound carer. Meetings are held at least three times a year, at which the tithes and other contributions designated for the poor are collected and distributed.

The elderly, infirm and mentally disabled are assigned to households for a set duration. After this time another household is required to give them lodgings. In this way the costs of maintaining them are spread amongst all members according to their wealth.

A member who has lost more than one fourth of his herds to disease is entitled to recover half his loss from his hreppur. Half the value is also given in the event of fire damage to his home. No one is allowed to claim more than three times in his or her lifetime. This is funded by the rest of the members, to a maximum of 1 in 120 of each member's total wealth. If there is not enough money to cover the claims, the money recovered is reduced in proportion.

The Galdramen Hreppur

Iceland's magicians have formed their own hreppur to safeguard their interests. The Galdramen Hreppur meets yearly at a magical site called Eldborg in the Western quarter five days after the end of the Althing. Like the hreppur formed by farmers, its members seek to organize their trade, allocation of common land and sharing of duties. Additionally the hreppur acts



Story Seeds

- Trading with the monasteries and cathedral schools on Iceland might be a way of developing a good library, especially seeing as both Holar and Skalholt harbor schools for Natural Magicians. Books on Philosophiae may well contain information that a Hermetic magus could learn from, and vice versa. When a merchant heading for Skalholt gets blown off course and ends up on Snaefellsnes with the magi, what will they do when they find out his cargo include several books on Hermetic magic destined for the bishop's school?
- The walrus (or morse) is common around the western and northern coasts of Iceland, particularly during the winter when they haul up on the ice floes. Hunting walrus can be a dangerous business, not least because the walrus is a powerful opponent (see *The Medieval Bestiary*, page 90), but the rewards are great. Walrus ivory can fetch a high price, apart from the value of the exceedingly tough leather, the rich blubber, and the high quality meat. However, not all walruses are what they seem: shapechanged trollsyrir or giants are only one possibility.



as a court of dispute between members on matters that cannot be taken to the *things*.

The general rules of the hreppur are given below.

Magical Services (1220 AD)

A trollson, galdraman or vitkir must charge one standard ounce each day (or part) spent in performing a service, to a maximum of two standard marks (16 ounces) for each season.

Seithkona and witches may only charge half a standard ounce per day, to a maximum of one standard mark (8 ounces) per season.

Ond (vis) use is charged at one standard mark per pawn.

Discretion

Members should do their best to ensure their magic is discreet. Any householder employing a magician should give his assurance that none of his household will take offense before magic is performed. If this assurance is broken then the magician is not held to account. Every effort should be made to limit the number of witnesses.

Supernatural affairs are not to be discussed with non-members unless it is unavoidable. No affair of the galdramen hreppur should be made common knowledge. It is under the hreppur council's discretion to inform men of rank of matters of which they need to be aware.

If a charge of witchcraft is brought against a member as a result of unjustified and indiscreet use of magic, then the member must pay the godi or storbaendur defending him six law marks. If the charge is a result of circumstances beyond the magician's control, the godi should defend him without charge.

Harvesting Ond

Any member may lay claim to any ond source that lies on his own lands. If the site is on common land then the first member to harvest the ond can claim the source. Anyone found harvesting on another's claim must return the ond and pay 1 mark for each pawn taken.

If a magician dies with no heir, then his claims become vacant and the first person to harvest the site can establish a new claim. Others can claim sites that are abandoned. If this

Ond

Ond is the 'vital force' that is Odin's gift to man in the heathen story of the creation of the human race from two tree trunks washed up on the shore.

abandonment is later disputed the hreppur decides the case on its merits.

Duties

Trolls and violent spirits plague many of the paths crossing the interior. Part of the hreppur's deal with the godar is that these paths are kept safe. Both galdramen and vitkir are capable of casting wards on these paths, and the work and expense of maintaining these wards is divided amongst the available membership as evenly as possible. Those who cannot contribute to the effort must provide at least three pawns per year instead. Those too poor to contribute do not have to pay, but cannot sit as judges or on the council.

No member of the hreppur should provide magical services to anyone blacklisted by it. Providing such service will result in a three law mark fine, plus the fee charged for the service. The blacklist is reviewed each year.

Black Magic

Any member who casts malign magic on a human forfeits the protection of the hreppur. Magical attacks are only permitted in the pursuit of outlawed magicians.

If the magician chooses to involve himself in a mundane conflict he may only use mundane means. Using magic forfeits the protection of the hreppur.

If a magician is attacked while at home or on an innocent journey (not while on a raid), then he may use magic to drive the attackers off or aid his retreat. Even in these circumstances the magician is not permitted to deliberately cause injury and his life must be under threat.

The Order of Odin

Whether this organization of Norse wizards exists or not is for individual storyguides to decide. However, senior members of the Order of Hermes believe that it exists and poses a real threat to the Order. The lack of any clear information on this organization only creates more anxiety. The *galdramen hreppur* would, on the surface, appear to be this Order of Odin. However, the *galdramen hreppur* is a purely Icelandic organization, created in Iceland on an Icelandic model to serve Icelandic needs.

With the aid of the Guardians, the *galdramen hreppur* is capable of defending itself against even Hermetic magi. Killing prominent *galdramen* will incense many *landvaettir* lords and killing *trollsynir* will enrage their giant kin. Magi may find themselves at war with Iceland's entire supernatural community. Of course, a group of hedge wizards capable of resisting Hermetics is likely to cause alarm, confirming the Order's fears.

A protracted Hermetic campaign against Icelandic magicians would provide excellent story opportunities, whichever side the characters find themselves aiding.

The Giant and Troll Clans

A number of giant and troll Clans retreated to Iceland in the face of human encroachment in Scandinavia. Their presence continued after the settlement of Iceland, as they had nowhere else to retreat to. In 1220 there are no more than four hundred giants in Iceland. They make their homes in remote areas with high magic auras, many of which are regions or otherwise difficult to access. Mostly they live in small family groups consisting of a parent (single parenthood is common) and his or her children.

The Giant Races

The giants are the progeny of Ymir, the primeval frost-giant, who was slain by Odin and his brothers and used to make the world. Ymir had two broods of children. The first set were the progeny of his arms, and were a noble race, friendly to the gods and men. They are the primal powers of the world; Mimir, Odin's friend, teacher and advisor; Bestla, Odin's mother; Natt, giantess of the Night; and the three Norns.

His second brood were the children of his feet, and were foul and misshapen, and the sworn enemies of both gods and men. This second brood was mostly wiped out when Jotenheim was flooded with the blood of Ymir when he was slain by Odin.

Among the Christian Norse, the words troll and giant have become interchangeable. However, in *Ars Magica* terms a distinction is made between giants and trolls. Both are the children of Ymir, but the term giant is normally used to refer to the *jotnar* (singular *jotunn*). Jot-





Trolls

Characteristics: Int -3, Per -1, Pre -2, Com -2, Str +6, Sta +4, Dex -1, Qik -2

Magic Might: 20

Size: +2

Personality Traits: Aggressive +2, Territorial +2

Wpn/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawl (fist)	+4	+4	+1	+8	+9
Club	+6	+6	+4	+13	+9
Rock	+7	+4	n/a	+10	+9

Soak: 15

Fatigue levels: OK, 0, 0, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, 0, 0, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Powers:

Shapeshift: All trolls can change shapes as if they had the Shapeshift Talent at level 5 (with an Intelligence of -3 and a Speak Jotunn of 5, this gives them a +7 to shapeshift rolls). Each shapechange costs 1 Magic Might, but reverting to troll-form costs them no Might.

Curse, CrVi, 2 points: Most trolls can utter curses against their opponents, but few have the wit to use curses strategically. Treat them as if having the Curse Talent with a score of 7 (with an Intelligence of -3 and a Speak Jotunn of 5, this gives them a +9 to Curse rolls).

Hex, CrVi, 0 points: Anyone fighting a troll is subjected to exceedingly bad luck. Any stress dice roll has twice the chance of botching (roll for a botch if either a 0 or a 2 is rolled), and always roll two extra botch dice.

Gift of the Magic Arts: Around one in 100 trolls have formidable magical powers. While they don't study the Hermetic Arts, trolls gifted in this way can approximate the effects of any Hermetic spell at the cost of 1 Might per 5 spell levels. They cannot cast spells over level 25 unless they work in groups, when they can share the might cost of the spell between all members of the group. Such group spells take time to cast, about 1 minute per 5 spell levels. Magic using trolls are usually female, and have an Intelligence of +1

Roleplaying Notes: Trolls range from 6 to 10 feet tall. They are broad shouldered and hairless, with huge hands and deeply sculpted faces. Their skin is generally brown or gray in color, and has the texture of weathered rock. Trolls dwell underground, in deep caves or tunnels that they excavate themselves. Not all trolls are hideous monsters; some can pass as humans, albeit tall ones. Trolls have a reputation for stupidity and hostility. A troll can be easily tricked, if the trickster can remain alive long enough to actually speak to the troll. Trolls are fiercely territorial, and view the entire mountain range in which they live as their home. They can actually be helpful to farmers who live near their homes, protecting them as if the farm were a part of the troll's territory. Travelers are frequently set upon with barrages of stones thrown from high places.

Vis: 5 pawns of Corpus vis in body, more if particularly powerful

nar are powerful magical giants, often descended from Ymir's first brood. They remain the true embodiment of their race. Trolls are a degenerate form of giant: they are smaller, have little magic and dwell in caves, and tend to be stupid man-eaters. Originally true giants, their moral degeneracy is now reflected in their bodies. Trolls are normally descended from Ymir's second brood.

Giant Clans

The giant races are divided into clans and families. Trolls often no longer recognize, nor are recognized by, the clans of their ancestors.

The largest giant clan is the Clan of Hrym, the leader of the Frost giants. To the pagan Norsemen, the powers of Frost were the most frightening and the most immediate threat to life. The Clan of Hrym is implacable, relentless in pursuit of their goals, but often the wisest of the giants. However, they are also man's great-

Giants

Characteristics: Int +0, Per +6, Pre -4, Com 0, Str +15, Sta +20, Dex -1, Qik -1

Magic Might: 30 (or calculate magic resistance as Trollsyrir if higher; see page 53)

Size: +6

Personality Traits: As for clan

Weapon/

Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawl (fist)	+6	+4	-2	+21	+25
Club	+10	+8	+4	+31	+25
Boulder	-1	+10	n/a	+45	+25

Soak: 26 + Armor

Fatigue levels: OK, 0, 0, 0, 0, -1, -1, -1, -3, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, 0, 0, 0, 0, -1, -1, -1, -3, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Powers:

Boulders: The rocks that a giant throws are large boulders and any hit will kill most human-sized targets. Depending in the surface the boulder lands on, the boulder may roll, skip, sink or shatter. The storyguide should determine what happens to the boulder after it lands. Attacks missing by 3 or less should be considered grazing blows, which do “only” +15 damage.

Magical Abilities: Many giants possess powerful magical abilities. Such giants can be treated as trollsyrir (see Chapter Six). Even giants who have not developed their magical abilities often have the Jotunn Affinity appropriate to their clan, and most can Shapeshift. Other suitable magical powers include Curse, Svonhverfing and Transform. Note that all giants speak the magical language of Jotunn as natives, and those that specialize in magic will have high Potency scores as well.

Vis: 12 pawns of Corpus vis in body.

The Icelandic Giant Clans

While trolls are always hostile to humans, some giants offer shelter and protection to travelers (usually outlaws given the remoteness of giant homes). A number of Icelandic trollsyrir (see page 51) have resulted from unions between the bored and lonely daughters of hospitable giants and the occasional outlaw. Still, most Icelandic giants do not care for humans at all, but most have no contact since no sane human treks into their vast glaciers or volcanic homes.

est foes. They tend to have personality traits such as Wise, Vengeful, and Hateful.

The Clan of Thrym are called the Noise giants because they embody the howling wind and the crashing thunder. They are the Storm giants who destroy crops and lay the ground to waste. This clan contains the most violent of giants, delighting in the destruction that they cause at every opportunity. They are not known for their quick wits, and are easily tricked. They have personality traits like Violent, Gullible and Greedy.

The Clan of Geirrod contains the Fire giants, and embodies the rampaging forest fire and the flashing lightning. The Fire Giants are naturally the most hotheaded, yet are often the more intelligent of the giants. They tend to have traits such as Sly, Quick-Tempered and Meticulous.

The Clan of Gymir contains the giants of the sea, the whirling maelstrom, and the raging waves. Aegir and his fearful wife Ran are the most notable members of this clan, once worshipped as gods. The Sea giants of Gymir’s Clan are the most mercurial of the giants. They are famed for their hospitality, but not for their bravery. They tend to have personality traits such as Fickle, Hospitable and Cowardly.

The Clan of Bergelmir contains the Rock-giants. This is one of the oldest lineages of giants, but the most degenerate. Many of these giants have lost their magic and become more trollish over the centuries. They are the giants





Fylgjur

The fylgjur (singular: fylgja) are spirits that attach themselves to certain humans. They are closely linked to the pagan Norse concept of the soul, and can be inherited from an ancestor just as any other trait might be passed on.

Fylgjur are, for the most part, invisible and immaterial. Those who can see them say that they usually take the form of an animal (although giants are not unknown). The fylgjur of seithkonur are most often falcons, cats, and hares, the animals associated with the goddess Freyja.

Fylgjur usually have Magic Might of about 10, and rarely have any significant powers and little ability to interact with the physical world. However, many legendary characters had extremely powerful fylgjur, able to manifest and fight. Magicians in particular are known for their powerful fylgjur. Icelandic characters with the Premonitions Talent (such as all galdramen) receive their premonitions from their fylgja, which manifests in one of three ways. First it might

appear in a dream involving a particular animal, giving a clue to the danger. Fylgjur might also appear during the day in a form that no one else can see, in a situation resembling in a symbolic way the dangerous event. The final way that a fylgja might warn its owner is to get under its ward's feet, tripping them. Should a person stumble for no apparent reason, their fylgja may be trying to tell them something. This is usually the only way that a fylgja can affect the physical world.

The Premonitions virtue is common amongst Icelanders, and fylgja are particularly offended by malign magic being cast on their wards or their family. Consequently it is virtually unknown for such activity to go unnoticed and unrecognized.

Some fylgja are so diligent that they will take on human shapes, often giants or warrior-women. These spirits are called *hamingja*, and are best represented by either the Guardian Angel Virtue or the Ghostly Warder Virtue.

that cause avalanches and earthquakes. The Giants of the Clan of Bergelmir are often slow witted but brave. They are proud — sometimes to the point of stupidity. They have personality traits such as Proud, Slow Witted and Boastful.

The Children of Surt are a race of fire beings that are separate from the Geirrod clan. They dwell in the hottest parts of the world and are enemies of the gods and men. They symbolize volcanoes and lava flows. Their leader Surt will bring the fire that destroys the entire earth after Ragnarok.

Some giantesses enjoy a friendly relationship with gods and men. Several Norse kings and heroes had giantesses for blood-mothers or foster-mothers. These giantesses are called *etin brides*. They come from any of the five clans and have brothers and sisters who are hostile to man. It is likely that these gentle giantesses are the mothers or grandmothers of any player character trollsyrir.

Landvaettir

The term *landvaettir* (singular *landvaett*) is a catchall category for the host of spirits that live in Iceland. Before the first humans came, Iceland teemed with landvaettir. The first Norse settlers treated them with respect, ensuring that the dragon-prows of their longships were taken down before approaching land, so as not to scare the spirits. As temples to the pagan gods were established, some landvaettir became closely associated with these gods, and in turn, with the humans who worshipped at their temples. The *Islendinga Saga* tells of landvaettir causing widespread destruction as Christians destroyed their temples.

There are four broad categories of landvaettir.

The first are the 'true' landvaettir, creatures of pure magic who live in the wildest places in Iceland. It is these spirits who are primarily responsible for the magic of the galdramen (see

Chapter 6). To those with Second Sight, these spirits most often appear in the shape of animals, although the more powerful ones may take the shape of fantastic creatures such as dragons. They are the most aloof and least fathomable of all of Iceland's spirits, capable of both weal and woe, and most prefer to remain distant from mankind. This group of beings also includes the fylgjur (see insert).

The second variety of landvaettir is the *alfar* (singular *alf*). These are the spirits who have associated most with humans in the past, particularly within pagan temples. Consequently, many *alfar* still serve the deities with whom they dealt before Iceland became a Christian nation. The *alfar* will be familiar to most members of House Merinita, for they closely resemble the *sidhe*. The four most popular gods of pre-Christian Iceland were Thor, Frey, Baldur and Odin. Thor's *alfar* are very protective of humans, particularly against the ravages of trolls and giants. These *alfar* will become visible to warn communities of potential raids by these creatures, and if treated well by the humans may even assist them in driving off the danger. Frey's *alfar* are concerned with the fertility of the land and livestock, and the health of all living things. The *alfar* who followed Baldur, god of peace, are naturally the most gentle and helpful of all their race, and have been known to provide healing to those in great need. Finally, the *alfar* of Odin are the most war-like, and many humans have difficulty dealing with these bloodthirsty but basically benevolent spirits.

Closely allied with the *alfar* are the *husvaettir* or 'house-spirits', which bear a remarkable resemblance to brownies and other 'low faeries' of mainland Europe. These beings will often live in rocks near a human settlement, and in return for gifts of food will assist in household chores, drive away vermin, and generally be a great boon to any family that has one. If slighted they have been known to drive families from their homes with their malicious tricks and noisy antics.

The final type of landvaettir are known as *yarthkin*. These spirits could have once been members of any of the former groups, but their growing dislike for humankind has driven them

Story Seed

Members of house Merinita may be fascinated by the landvaettir. They are different from faeries of the mainland, being equally at home in magical and faerie auras. The metaphysical implications could require a lifetime to investigate.

further and further toward malice. They are found in all parts of Iceland, but most commonly in association with giants and trolls. Included within this group are the *tramar*, spirits of evil magic, and the *kveldrida*, spirits of sickness who often take the form of old women riding three-legged horses. It is these spirits that are summoned when *galdramen* sing curse-songs and disease-songs.

In *Ars Magica* terms, the landvaettir partake of both the magic and the faerie realms. Those individuals that have associated most closely with mankind are most closely akin to the fay, and should be treated as such. Those spirits who have avoided mankind and remained pure spirits of nature are more closely aligned with the Magic Realm. With respect to the Realm Interaction chart (*ArM4* page 239), treat all landvaettir as using faerie power, except in magical auras, where they are treated as magical creatures. Therefore, both types of landvaettir will be found in the magical auras that dot the Icelandic landscape. There are a few faerie auras in Iceland, primarily sites of heathen temples that have not been consumed by the Dominion. These will also attract landvaettir, mainly those who attended the temple when it was active. All Icelandic spirits have natural forms which are both invisible and insubstantial; some have the ability to become both visible and material, but not necessarily both at the same time.

Because the 'true' landvaettir (including fylgjur) and the *yarthkin* are more akin to spirits of Magic rather than Faerie, Treat their might as if it were ten points higher if they are targeted by a faerie-affecting spell.





Chapter 4

Law and Governance

As well as seeking land, the original settlers had fled the growing feudal system of the mainland. So when the early settlers framed their law, the rights of freemen were the first consideration. Iceland's geography prevented the early settlers from establishing lordship over large territories and resulted in an amazingly even distribution of wealth. Slaves were freed and freedman became landowners.

This social leveling is slowly and painfully reversing in the thirteenth century. The following account shows how the system was set up and how it was meant to function. However, the system proves unable to limit the actions of the storgodar and the later bishops. Conflicts among such men are considered later.

Legal Structure

Iceland is divided into four quarters: north, south, east and west. Within the eastern, southern and western quarters there are three districts, while the northern quarter has four districts. Each district holds a local assembly called a *spring thing*.

Everyone in Iceland is attached to the legal system by his or her *thing* attachment. Householders have to choose a *god* to be *in thing* with at the local springtime assembly. Others have to

follow the choice of the householder they are attached to. Therefore everyone is defined to be *in thing* with a particular *god*, within a particular district, within a particular Quarter.

The Spring Assemblies

The *spring things* are held by the end of the fourth week of summer. They primarily try cases between members of the same district. Each district has three chieftaincies (*godord*).

Originally each quarter had nine chieftaincies, thus there were a total of twelve districts. However, the northern quarter demanded the establishment of a fourth district, bringing the total to thirteen. This gave the northern quarter three more chieftaincies and so three more were given to the other quarters to maintain the balance. Currently each quarter has twelve chieftaincies, but only the original nine are designated *full and ancient*. Only the *god* of *full and ancient* chieftaincies preside over the spring assemblies of the eastern, southern and western quarters.

Western assembly sites: Thverar, Thorsnes, Thorskafjardar.

Southern assembly sites: Rangar, Arnes, Kjarlarnes.

Eastern assembly sites: Sunnudals, Mula, Skaftafells.

Northern assembly sites: Hunavatns, Hegrans, Vadla, Thingeyjar.

All the householders (*baendur*) of the district are required to attend, either in person or by proxy. There are two courts, the court of prosecution and the court of payments. The assembly begins with the court of prosecution.

Among them there is no king, but only law.

— History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen

A court containing 36 judges, twelve appointed by each godi from among his *thingmen*, decides all cases. At least thirty-one judges need to agree on a verdict. If this is not possible, the case is passed on to the corresponding quarter court at the Althing. Godar cannot be judges and are free to fight cases and broker out of court deals.

Four days later the court of payments opens and people settle debts and have goods valued for trade within the district. The court of payments also sets local provisions like the silver value of the standard ounce, and the current local prices of commodities such as cloth, fish and livestock.

The Althing (General Assembly)

He is a good liar, who does so with witnesses.

— Njal's Saga

The *Althing* is held at Thingvoll after ten weeks of summer have passed, and it lasts at least two weeks. The *Althing* is a great social event. Hundreds of people converge on this site of great natural beauty, with its large lake, and the river Axe running through the ravines and lava plains.

All godar are required to be present on the opening day of the *Althing*, as is the lawspeaker (see below). Each godi should be accompanied by at least one in nine of his thingmen and is fined if he fails to turn up with the required number.

Richer Icelanders maintain turf booths at the site. Booths are roofed with homespun for the duration of the meeting. Others pitch tents and for two weeks the area becomes the closest thing Iceland has to a town. Traders, peddlers, brewers, men looking for wives and women looking for husbands, all come to Thingvoll. People make or break friendships and political alliances. They tell stories, swap news and do business.

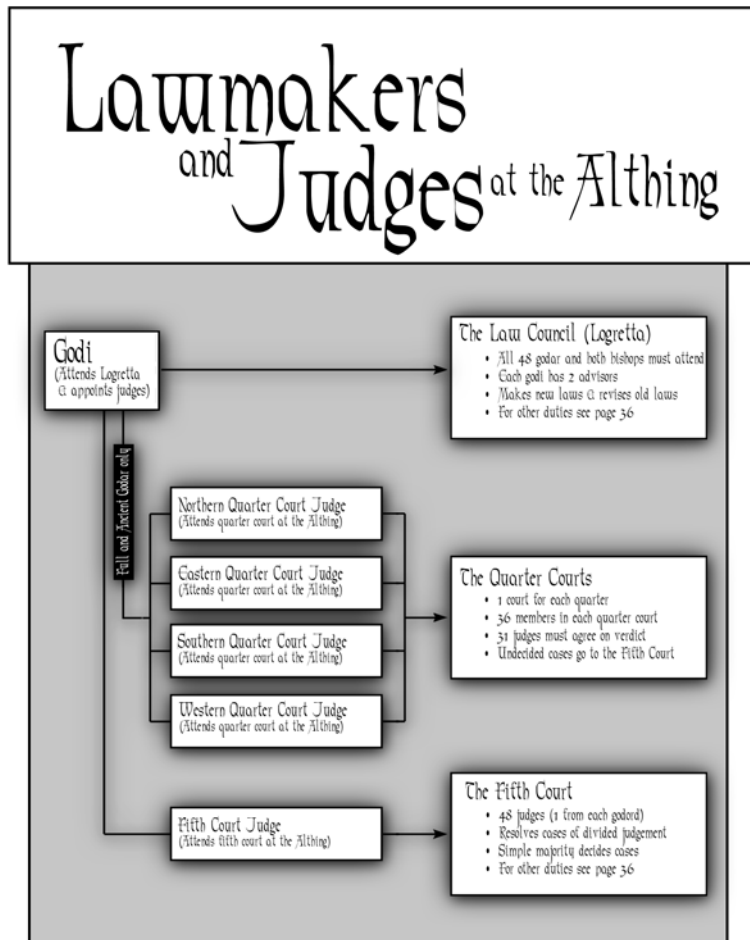
The Althing is officially opened by the allsherjargodi, the supreme chieftain. This title is given to the godi who owns the hereditary chieftaincy of Thorstein Ingolfsson, the son of Iceland's first settler. Although the title is

grand, its holder has no extra privileges beyond his duties at the Althing. The Althing is convened on Thursday evening with the allsherjargodi hallowing the site and setting the boundaries for the different sections of the assembly. On the following day all the judges are appointed, and on the Saturday nominees can be challenged or dismissed by either the accuser or the accused in any given case.

On Sunday the bishops lead a number of masses at the local church.

The Courts (see below) convene on Monday and continue for nine days, ending on a Wednesday.

The last official event of the Althing is the session of the logretta (see below). The Lawspeaker used to be required to recite a third of Iceland's laws in each of the three years of his term, but now the laws have been written down, he is only required to recite those laws that have been made or repealed that year.





The Althing ends with the *weapon-taking*. Those that attend the Althing are forbidden from carrying weapons once the Althing is convened and must leave them at their booth or campsite. The *weapon-taking* is when the attendees unpack their weapons in preparation for the journey home.

The Quarter Courts

The Quarter Courts constitute the judicial arm of the *Althing*. Each holder of a *full and ancient* godord appoints one thingman to be a judge to each of the Quarter courts, so that each court contains 36 judges. As at the *varthing*, the judges in the Quarter Courts need to reach an almost unanimous decision for it to be legally binding.

The Fifth Court

The Fifth Court was established in 1004. Cases of *divided judgment* in the Quarter Courts are heard at the Fifth Court, as well as cases where the legal procedure itself has been abused (like perjury and bribery). All the godi appoint one judge to this court, resulting in 48 members. However, for each dispute, the accused and the plaintiff dismisses six members, bringing the total to thirty-six. Unlike the *varthing* and the Quarter Courts, only a simple majority is necessary to reach a judgment at the Fifth Court. A tie decides the case in favor of the prosecution, unless the case resulted from a *divided judgment* in a Quarter court, in which case lots are drawn.

The Gragas

The Gragas (Grey Goose) is the title given to the laws contained in two manuscripts dated to the thirteenth or the early fourteenth century. The term Gragas was not used by thirteenth century Icelanders and the reader should not assume that Icelandic law was codified by it. Even the two lavishly prepared volumes that found their way to Old Royal Collection in Copenhagen do not completely agree. In 1220 the law is still suffering from the vagaries of its oral origins. Plenty of books of law exist but they may differ on the very detail on which a case rests.

The Law Council (Logretta)

The legislative arm of the *Althing* is the *law council* (*logretta*). Every free man of Iceland can attend, although only the godi and bishops are allowed to speak. All 48 godi and the two bishops are required to attend. Each godi has two advisors and they are seated on benches arranged in three concentric circles, with the godar sitting on the middle benches and the advisors on the inner and outer benches. Here chieftains review old laws and make new ones. They approve out of court settlements, decide disagreements over law and grant exemption from certain laws. The *logretta* also elects the lawspeaker.

The Lawspeaker

Every three years the law council elects a *lawspeaker*. The lawspeaker is the only paid position in the Icelandic administration. He receives an annual stipend of 40 law ounces, as well as half of the fines levied at the *Althing* and his own spring assembly. He acts as chairman to the law council and has the casting vote. He is required to formally recite new laws at the *logberg* (law rock). Each godi or two of his advisers need to attend this ceremony. Anyone can attend on the surrounding grassy slope, offering corrections and discussing legal issues.

The law council can also ask the lawspeaker to recite any part of the law they need in considering legislation. If he has a lapse of memory or faces a difficult point he cannot immediately answer, the lawspeaker consults with at least five legal experts.

The lawspeaker also announces all licenses for mitigation of penalty approved by the *logretta*. The last function of the Lawspeaker is to decide on the legal calendar for the coming year. In 1220, Teit Thorvaldsson the Priest is lawspeaker. In 1220 Snorri Sturluson returns from Norway and makes it known that he will be seeking re-election in 1222.

The Fall Assemblies

The *fall things* are the least formal of the three main legal assemblies. They are held when eight weeks of summer are left. No court

is appointed and the thing lasts no longer than two days. Its purpose is to inform the people what happened at the *Althing*. The new laws are announced, official pronouncements (like outlawry) are made and the next year's calendar is set forth.

Punishments

Icelandic laws have only three penalties: a three-mark fine, lesser outlawry and full outlawry. The penalties for particular crimes are defined; the court has no power to vary them. There is no governmental body charged with enforcing penalties. If a fine is not paid, a case for non-payment must be brought (the penalty is lesser outlawry). If an outlawry conviction is obtained, the family has to post a bounty or hunt the man themselves.

A *court of confiscation* is held two weeks after the *thing* at which a sentence of outlawry is pronounced. The court takes place at the home of the convicted man, and consists of twelve judges appointed by a local godi.

Fines

Three-mark fines (24 law ounces) are given for petty offences, such as unintentional damage by cattle, small legal errors and breaking minor religious strictures. Half is given to the prosecutor and half to the lawspeaker (if present).

Outlawry

Lesser outlawry is banishment from Iceland for three years. Lesser outlawry is generally given in cases of negligent damage in excess of five law ounces as well as in many religious matters (a priest who forgot to bring holy water to a baptism, for example). The outlaw's property is divided at a confiscation court conducted by a local chieftain. If the confiscation court is not held strictly according to the law, the case can be quashed and those responsible face lesser outlawry themselves. The lesser outlaw has three summers in which to find passage off Iceland. Once passage is found, his banishment

period of three years begins. After three years he can return to Iceland with full legal rights.

Full outlawry is given for any physical assault that landed a blow, whether it did an injury or not. It is also the penalty for judgment breaking in lesser outlawry cases. The outlaw forfeits all property, legal, family and ecclesiastical rights. His life is forfeit, no assistance (even advice) can be legally given him, and he can be killed with impunity. The Church always excommunicates him.

Such men and women have to flee into the wild. Only by surviving twenty years or by killing three other outlaws might an outlaw win a reprieve without the original prosecutor's agreement.

Wergild

A man's life is given a price according to his social status. If he is killed, the family of the deceased has to be paid compensation. If the victim is not killed but harmed (and not just physically), then a fraction of the blood money is paid instead.

Unless the victim fell with *forfeit immunity* the money is paid regardless of legal action. If the payment is not made the victim's relatives can forbid the attacker's relatives from approaching them. The aggressor family would then have to bear the humiliation of actively avoiding the victims.

Category	Wergild to be Paid
Free man	120 law ounces
Freedman	60 law ounces
Slave	12 law ounces

The Legal Process

It sounds like it's legal. But it is hard to accept.

— Njal's Saga

A casual reader of the Gragas would come to the conclusion that medieval Iceland was completely over sanctioned. In a land where the penalty for eating meat on a Friday was lesser outlawry and tripping someone was full out-





lawry, did people walk around in complete paranoia? The simple answer is no. Most crimes are not prosecuted. Either the prosecution *principal* decides not to pursue the issue (via law) or a private settlement is reached immediately. Pursuing a case is costly, time consuming, technical and often dangerous.

Every prosecution and defense requires a *principal*. A principal can transfer responsibility for preparing and presenting a case at any point. Defense principals charged with violent acts are excluded from things and so need to transfer. A common defense is *forfeit immunity*. The right of vengeance is gained for certain kinds of transgression; assault, injury, raids on property, insult by word or gesture, and sexual offences committed or attempted against kinswomen. The aggressor loses his immunity and can be killed or injured without legal penalty. Vengeance must be taken before the next Althing.

Transfer of Cases to Advocates

Running a major court case is difficult. Any small error (or possible error) can be prosecuted, spawning a new case. Disputes about *panels* can bog a case down for hours. Godar and rich householders have enough allies, influence and legal knowledge to undermine cases without similar support. Passing a case to a godi is often extremely expensive, but when the opponent is a godi himself the only alternative is to let the matter drop. Godar and storbaendur gain a lot of respect and wealth by their success at fighting other people's cases. Knowledge and skill at law can help rebalance the sides if supporters are uneven.

Pre-Court Procedures

Before a case is brought to court, there are several steps: Publishing, Summons, Calling of Witnesses and Assembling Panels.

The prosecution's first step is to make the charges public knowledge. He does this before a *panel of neighbors* (see below).

A man who kills someone is also required to *publish* it as his work within a set time and

distance; failure to do so makes the killing murder, a shameful and cowardly thing, punishable by full outlawry. This does not need to be done before a formal panel, but the killer needs to make it known who was responsible.

The prosecution has to summon the defense principal to the court, and formally tell any witnesses that they are required to be present. Both of these are done before a *panel of neighbors*, who can confirm that correct procedure has been followed.

If there are no witnesses or if someone's intent or state of mind is at issue, then a *panel* is formed to decide the issue. This could be either:

Panel of neighbors: A group of five or nine freeman, often those who live closest to the person or event they are asked to give a *panel verdict* on.

Panel of twelve: The local godi and eleven other freemen chosen from his assembly third. A *panel of twelve* is formed to give verdicts on matters of great public interest, like sorcery, theft, murder, and perjury. In practice a godi can dictate the verdict of such panels, although he may lose public respect by doing so. In this way the godi can protect magicians from unjustified prosecution by ensuring the *panel verdict* goes in the magician's favor.

Court Procedures

A *principal* cannot take more than ten men to the actual court. Spectators have to stay outside the court's boundary lines. Litigates draw lots to determine the order of cases. Each man draws one lot regardless of the number of cases he has. If a litigant is not ready, the next in line may be asked to proceed.

A case begins with the prosecution. He names his witnesses and swears that it is his case he is presenting. He states whom he summoned, for what he summoned him, what he made his penalty, to which assembly he summoned him, and that he summoned with a legal summons. He then presents his *formal means of proof* before the court.

Formal means of proof includes *testimony* of witnesses and *panel verdicts*. Conflicting statements to facts are forbidden within the same case. Perjury cases are held in the Fifth Court and may deliver a judgment before the end of the original trial (which may have been halted

for this purpose). Only in this way can the facts of the case be amended.

If there is more than one witness, they must agree a single *testimony*. If there is disagreement the majority prevails. Those who dissent are immune from perjury charges.

After the prosecution *testimony* the defense *principal* can challenge prosecution *panels* before they deliver their *panel verdicts*. The defense principal can challenge panel members on grounds that others (not called) are closer to the relevant place, kinship with the prosecution principal, economic status or even health. If the challenge is correct, the prosecutor must replace them with the most qualified people present.

A defense *principal* can also declare if the wrong type of *panel* has been called. Different cases require a *panel of neighbors* to have five or nine members or a *panel of twelve*. A mistake as to the type of *panel* called is grounds to veto the *panel verdict*. The defense can also veto a *panel verdict* if he has *testimony* to the issue the panel has been asked to consider. Witness *testimony* is superior to *panel verdicts* and conflicting statements must be avoided.

After the challenges the prosecutor asks the *panels* to give their *panel verdicts*.

The defense then presents his case. He first brings forward *testimony* and then *panel verdicts* (if any). The prosecutor can challenge *panels* as above.

Once there is no more to be heard, one judge sums up the prosecution's case and one the defense. *Varthing* and Quarter Courts need 31 out of 36 judges to agree on a judgment. Divided judgment is sent to the next highest court, usually the Fifth Court.

The Fifth Court procedure followed a similar pattern to the lower courts. The main difference is that 48 judges are called initially, and then the prosecution and the defense dismisses six each (leaving 36).

Arbitration and Settlement

Many disputes are settled privately before any legal process is begun.

The most honorable form of settlement is *self-judgment*. This allows the victim to fix the terms of the settlement. The offering party either presumes that the victim will act with moderation, or the victim is so powerful that he can demand terms. The concept of honor is



Stories involving the Law

Law is central to Icelandic society. Even if the magi keep themselves isolated from mundanes, it will be difficult to impose the same restrictions on companions and grogs. At the very least it will be necessary to obtain supplies from somewhere, and one's neighbors are the logical choice.

Due to the turbulent nature of Icelandic politics, characters are likely to have brushes with the law. Once their existence becomes known (even if the exact location of the covenant remains unknown), they may be courted by powerful bondi or godi, who may see them as potential allies. Others may feel threatened by the power they represent, and decide to plot against the characters. Either way, the law is likely to become involved.

Story Seed: An invaluable member of the covenant turns out to be the son of an outlaw, a *vargdropi* ('wolf-droppings'). Technically this leaves him in the same position as his father, but this is not a good situation for a man to be in. His father killed a man, and his family did not pay the blood money, so the man also has the sons of the murdered man out for his blood. As he is too valuable for

the covenant to lose, the safest course of action is to have the court decide on his legal status, and, with any luck, declare him free. This requires careful politicking, for the outlaw's son has well-placed enemies...

Story Seed: The best way to deal with a powerful enemy is to have him outlawed, since then he can be slain with impunity. But how exactly does one go about getting a powerful man outlawed? Even if the facts against him, powerful men have powerful friends, and in Iceland, powerful equates with heavy involvement in politics.

Story Seed: A covenant is just like a household. However, in Iceland, people cannot just turn up out of nowhere and claim land. All the usable farmland belongs to someone, and they will be reluctant to sell it, as their family's livelihood depends on the ownership of the land. So, how does a covenant set up? Becoming a tenant is a demeaning option, and makes oneself open to demands from one's landlord. Being a bondi is just as difficult, not only is there the difficulty in becoming a landowner in the first place (one's best bet is to inherit), but also once in position, it comes with too many obligations.



central to this form of settlement; abusing an offer of *self-judgment* can seriously damage reputations. The social consensus of what is reasonable and what is not is finely developed and those that exceed it pay a price.

Formal dueling was outlawed in the eleventh century, but single combat quietly continues. Alternatively the feuding cycle of revenge killing can continue for a while, before either side moves to legal action.

Unless overwhelming support on either side railroads a case, legal action rarely runs its course. The legal process offers several opportunities to settle privately or with the help of third-party arbitrators. The first is the summoning, where the two disputing sides first meet. The offender can offer settlement terms immediately and rejecting a generous offer can undermine the prosecutor's position.

Losing a court case is humiliating. If powerful families are in dispute a judgment will only intensify their conflict. While the conflict remains unsettled, the feud continues and sup-

porters are in danger of being dragged into violent encounters. Supporters are often the first who suggest or encourage arbitration.

In big disputes an independent arbitrator can be asked to step in by men of rank. Respected arbitrators can even offer themselves without prompting. Once such arbitrators intervene, only overwhelming support can enable a litigant to continue a case. Usually, even the most belligerent parties accept the move to a negotiated settlement.

Once in arbitration, the aim is to achieve a lasting reconciliation and therefore the needs of honor have to be met on both sides. Usually the corpses are counted on each side (offset by rank and other injuries) and the difference is made up with compensation (in addition to *wergild*). If the offender does not have the money to fund this compensation then a form of banishment is imposed. Unlike the judicial penalty of lesser outlawry the terms are entirely discretionary.



Chapter 5

The Church

Before the Conversion

A minority of the first settlers were already Christian. However, the faith never established itself and the sons of the Christian settlers followed pagan practices. Until the end of the first millennium most Icelanders were pagan. The Norse gods and goddesses were collectively called the Aesir, and to the Icelanders the most important was Thor, the god of farmers and seafarers. Frey, the god of fertility, was also popular.

The Conversion of Iceland (980-1000 AD)

Pressure from the mainland to convert started in 980, but it was King Olaf Trygvasson (995-1000) who brought things to a head. He sent the Icelander Stefnir Thorgilsson home to convert his countrymen. Stefnir's zealous destruction of sanctuaries generated so much violence that he was outlawed and forced to leave.

King Olaf then sent a priest called Thangbrand. In three years he converted several prominent Icelanders and killed three poets who had composed mocking verses about him. Thangbrand was forced to leave in 999, with most Icelanders still pagan.

In response Olaf closed his ports to Icelandic traders and took hostage the sons and relatives of important Icelandic pagans then in

It is the first precept of our laws that all people in this country must be Christian and put their trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

— Gragas, Christian Laws Section

Norway. The King threatened to maim or kill them unless Iceland accepted Christianity. This economic and personal threat had the desired affect. With their dependence on trade Icelanders could not afford to be cut off. Christians in Iceland quickly intensified their efforts to convert the entire country.

At the next Althing the two groups skirmished. With civil war imminent, mediators (in typical Icelandic style) stepped in and the dispute was submitted to arbitration. Godi Thorgeir Thorkelsson was selected to settle the dispute. Each side thought that they had him in their pocket, as he was pagan, but had strong family ties with the Christian side.

Thorgeir sequestered himself, lying under a cloak for part of a day and through the night. Before announcing his decision, he received assurances that both sides would abide by his ruling since,

'It will prove to be true that if we divide the law we also divide the peace'.

'Then it was made law that all people should become Christian and that those who here in the land were yet unbaptized should be baptized; but as concerns the exposure of infants, the old laws should





stand, as should those pertaining to the eating of horseflesh. If they wished, people might sacrifice to the old gods in private, but it would be lesser outlawry if this practice were verified by witnesses. But a few years later this heathen custom was abolished, as were the others.'

— Islandingabok

Therefore in the summer of the year 1000 the entire country converted to Christianity. Given the strife (roughly from 990 to 1040) that marked Norway's conversion, Iceland's virtually bloodless conversion was remarkable.

Icelanders still proudly recite the myths of the Aesir. Most Icelanders remain relaxed about matters of personal belief and a certain level of ambivalence to the Old Religion is common. Critically, the pagan ideals of honor and vengeance still dominate Icelandic society at all levels.

The Early Days of the Church

Everyone who has the capacity, man or women, is required to know the Pater nos-

ter and Credo in Deum. If he will not get them by heart but has sense enough to do so, the penalty is lesser outlawry and it is for the bishop to take charge of that suit and decide who shall prosecute.

— Gragas, Christian Laws Section

After its conversion Iceland fell within the archiepiscopal see of Hamburg-Bremen, but the island received little attention. An assortment of foreign priests and itinerant missionary bishops traveled to the newly converted country to instruct the Icelanders in their new faith, but not enough. Iceland was so short of priests and churches that several farmers built churches at their own expense. Many godar exchanged their pagan role for that of Christian priest and came to serve in their own churches.

Without much Roman authority the Icelandic Church found itself integrated into the secular law. Laymen administered its the wealth and authority. Families would grant land in the name of a saint, but retained control by acting as *wardens*.

Control of Church property had a great economic significance for those godar and baendur who had it. Donations to the churches passed through the hands of the *wardens* and directly or indirectly their wealth grew in response. The level of income increased in 1096 when the tithe law was introduced. The tithe was a 1% property tax and was divided into four

The Christian Magical Schools

In his youth Saemundur Sigfusson (1056-1133) was sent abroad to further his priestly education. He made his way to France, where he learned the principles of Natural Magic. On his return to Iceland he became influential, and was consulted on many matters. He founded a school at Oddi, and his son Eyjolf became headmaster there.

Through Natural magic he learned to command the airy spirits and thus perform magic. Although based on the classic knowledge *Philosophiae*, Saemundur integrated the style of the traditional *galdor*, or song magic in Iceland. Natural Magicians normally craft their spells to work their will directly; Saemundur's spellcraft however would conjure a spirit to perform the act. Many magicians in Iceland practiced this theurgist style, but it was based on heathen lore.

Before long, the two cathedral schools, Holar (in the north) and Skalholt (in the south-west), each had a center for the study of magic.

This study of magic continues in 1220. These magicians are often indiscreet, but their position as priests puts them beyond reproach. Powers of prophecy (through astronomy) are also ascribed to these dignitaries. There are less than two dozen schooled *galdramen* at any one time.

Currently, the two schools have polarized somewhat, with Holar becoming darker, using magic to enslave true demons, or so it is whispered. Skalholt on the other hand has retained an untarnished reputation, its members using their command over magic only for the good of their flock. Both are seeking a breakthrough that would allow them to equal the feats of their pagan countrymen (see Chapter 6).

equal parts, one for the bishop, one for the parish church, one for the priest, and one for the paupers. The *wardens* thus receive two parts, for the church and the priest, and if the enterprise was run at a profit he naturally got to keep it. In addition, the *wardens* were personally exempt from the tithe.

Establishment of the Bishoprics

Iceland's first native bishop was Isleif Gizursson (born c.1006). Bishop Isleif enjoyed little respect and authority. He was in competition with missionary bishops of the Armenian and Eastern Churches. Isleif's eldest son, Gizur Isleifsson, succeeded his father as bishop of Skalholt and immediately sought to establish his authority. Before accepting office, he received pledges from all the chieftains that they would accept his ordinances.

After he was consecrated in 1082, he returned to Iceland and set the Church on a more secure footing. He introduced the tithe law in 1096 and provided the Icelandic Church with a fixed Episcopal seat by willing his farm at Skalholt to the Church. A second Episcopal seat was established in Holar and in 1106 the archbishop of Lund consecrated Jon Ogmundarson to that see.

The Church in the 13th Century

Even in 1220 Icelandic priests of all ranks behave as laymen in most matters. They marry, keep concubines, inherit property, prosecute cases, carry weapons and take full part in feuds and blood vengeance. In recent times these un-Christian practices have been criticized.

The first Icelandic bishop to attempt to enforce ecclesiastical strictures was Thorlak Thorhallsson of Skalholt (1178-93). In 1190 the archbishop supported him in a letter forbidding Icelandic bishops from ordaining godar. Later, armed with a letter from the archbishop,

he tried to wrest control from the *wardens*. He was stopped by Jon Loftsson who refused to accept the archbishop's message and rallied the other *wardens* behind him.

The chieftains in Skalholt took care to choose a successor more sympathetic to their interests. After Bishop Thorlak's death in 1193 they elected Pall Jonsson. After Pall's death in 1211, the similarly minded Magnus Gizurarson was elected by the godi.

However, when the bishopric of Holar became vacant in 1201, the northerners misjudged. Chieftain Kolbeinn Tumason arranged for an illegitimate relative of his wife to become bishop. Although well known for his miracles Gudmund Arason was not thought able to administer a large institution, so Kolbeinn thought to rule the bishopric himself with Gudmund as his puppet. He was to be disappointed.

Gudmund wanted to be more generous to the paupers than Kolbeinn and there were disputes about juridical power in cases against clergymen. Each ignored the other's rulings, outlaws were given refuge, and excommunications were ignored. Gudmund gathered several unruly men and violence followed. The disputes accelerated until 1208, when a stone thrown at Kolbeinn's head killed him.

The chieftains then formed alliances and after 1209 Gudmund's attempted reforms were continually blocked, often with violence. In 1214 Gudmund was summoned to Norway by the archbishop to help resolve the situation, but he received little support. Returning in 1218 he abandoned the earlier goal of increased judicial authority and instead focused his efforts as a champion of the poor.

In 1220, priests are forbidden to carry weapons or engage in court cases except those for otherwise defenseless people; but these orders are ignored. While godar are no longer ordained in holy orders and few are now priests, most Church property is still under the firm control of the lay *wardens*.

The northern diocese has 108 parish churches and employs 136 priests. Bishop Gudmund lives in poverty, surrounded by clergy, weapon-bearing men, vagrants, beggars and thieves. When he is able, he gives most of the diocese's income to charitable causes. Gudmund maintains 120 followers moving about the Reykjadal region demanding hospitality from





the local farmers. The patience of those farmers has grown very thin.

Bishop Magnus Gizurason lives relatively quietly in Skalholt. He has 220 churches in his diocese and 290 priests serve in them. Skalholt has eighty residents and its wooden cathedral is almost 50 paces long.

Monasteries

Monasteries in Iceland are extremely small, typically no more than ten monks in any one house. They follow the rules of the Benedictine or Augustinian orders, and a monastery is often set up with support from a particular godi or bondi who then retires there. Monasteries serve as centers for learning and instruction, with scribes acting as both copyists and authors. The Icelandic monasteries are all extremely poor and most have difficulty making ends meet.

The Benedictine monasteries are at Thingeyrar (1112 AD), Munkathvera (1155 AD) and Kirkjubaer (1186 AD). The Augustin-

Story Seed

The nuns of Kirkjubaer need to secure sufficient resources or Skalholt will disband them. Word of the wealthy foreign scholars reaches them and the Abbess journeys to petition for their aid. The resources of the covenant can easily absorb the cost of supporting the seven nuns, who are almost self-sufficient anyway. Donating to the nunnery would generate a lot of good will and help reduce anxiety towards the foreign magicians. However, if the covenant is too generous, the monasteries may come asking as well.

ian monastery is at Thykkvibaer (1168 AD) with another being planned at Videy. There is a nunnery at Kirkjubaer (1186 AD), but this is in financial trouble and is under the control of Skalholt.



Chapter 6

Icelandic Magic

This chapter seeks to provide the storyguide with information to add an Icelandic flavor to magicians described in *Hedge Magic*, as well provide other more uniquely Norse traditions.

The following traditions will be covered in this chapter:

Traditional Galdramen: Norse theurgists who use the power of poetry and song to conjure spirits.

Schooled Galdramen: Christian priests trained at the Icelandic cathedral schools of Skalholt or Holar. These magicians use their Christian learning to emulate their more powerful countrymen. The Icelandic equivalent of Natural Magicians, as described in *Hedge Magic*.

Trollsynir: Potent magicians whose power comes from their giant blood. Very similar to the Gruagachan detailed in *The Lion of the North*.

Female practitioners of magic in Iceland often go by the name of *volva* (plural *volur*). There are few female traditional galdramen (called galdrakona), and no female schooled galdramen (as these are all members of the clergy). Other female magicians include the *seithkonur* detailed in *Ultima Thule*.

Icelandic magicians cannot have Virtues or Flaws relating specifically to any Hermetic Arts or the Order of Hermes or any other magical tradition (Deft Art, Twilight Points, Magical Affinities, Hedge Wizard, Guild Alchemist, etc.). Trollsynir cannot they have any Virtue relating to other shapeshifting powers (Skinchanger, Lycanthrope, Heartbeast, Will Over Form, etc.), or incompatible realms (Faerie Magic, Faerie Blood, True Faith).

*Runes none should grave ever
Who knows not to read them;
Of dark spell full many
The meaning may miss.
Ten spell-words writ wrongly
On whalebone were graven:
Whence to leek-tending maiden,
Long sorrow and pain.*

— Egil Skallagrimson, *Egil's Saga*



Galdramen

Now the king sought out galdramen, who could pry into anything they wished. They told him that the boys were not being brought up on land, yet were not far off from the king, who responded "We have searched widely for them, and it seems to me least likely that they are nearby. Nev-

What about the Vitkir?

Ultima Thule presents a Norse magical tradition of rune-magicians called the vitkir. These magicians use the runes to channel the power of the pagan Norse gods. In Iceland, vitkir are rare due to the tough legal proscriptions against heathen ways. Almost essential for a vitki in Iceland is a regio, either magical or faerie, in which they can hide a temple to their patron deity away from prying eyes. Other Icelandic magicians, while they might secretly be pagans, do not need the trappings of pagan faith to enact their magic, and have thus escaped the wrath of the Church.



ertheless, there is an island that we have not scoured thoroughly. Almost no one lives on it except for one poor freeman.”

“Search there first,” said the galdramen, “because mist and secrecy shroud that island. Only with difficulty can we see the area around this man’s house. He seems to be a person of profound learning, and there is more to him than meets the eye.”

Early one morning, Vifil awoke with a sense of foreboding. He said, “The air and paths are alive with magic, and powerful fylgjur have visited the island. Get up Hroar and Helgi, sons of Halfdan. Keep yourselves hidden today in the underbrush of my woods.”

— The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki

The term *galdor* refers to Nordic song-magic. Its practitioners weave ancient lore with songs or poems to call spirits to do their bidding. These conjured spirits can create a wide range of effects, but are bound by the same limitations as Hermetic magic.

There are now two types of galdramen in Iceland, the traditional and the schooled. Both groups work their magic by chanting a long series of sacred phases (called *synthemata* by Latin theurgists).

Traditional Galdramen

Traditional galdramen still use the old heathen lore in their songs and poems, filling them with references to Aesir mythology. Using this lore the traditional galdramen can be initiated into the higher mysteries of their tradition. If run as player characters, traditional galdramen should occupy a magus slot. They also pay for Virtues and Flaws as a magus.

All traditional galdramen have Free Expression, Second Sight, Premonitions, Galdor Conjuring and Galdor Enchantment as free Virtues. They also suffer from the Major Deteriorous Circumstances Flaw when touching the ground. Having the Gift they suffer from its social penalties and can purchase the Gentle Gift Virtue or the Blatant Gift Flaw.

They start with the following Abilities:

Galdor Wisdom 4

Premonitions 1

Singing 4

Speak West Norse 5

Second Sight 2

Legend Lore 2

[Choice of Song Talent] 4

[Choice of Song Talent] 2

Bargain 2

Starting Experience: Age + 10

Galdor Abilities

Through his apprenticeship and subsequent career, each galdraman develops knowledge of the local *landvaettir* and how spell-songs might be composed to summon or bind them. The Arcane Knowledge, Galdor Wisdom (see below) represents this knowledge. As the magic of a galdraman stems ultimately from the *landvaettir*, they are affected by auras in the same way as the *landvaettir* (page 32).

The Hermetic guidelines can be used to calculate effect levels, but the storyguide should not feel bound by them. Ultimately it is the storyguide that sets Galdor effect levels, not the rulebook.

Song Talents

Traditional Galdramen develop relationships with particular types of *landvaettir* by composing a set of praise songs and poems to them. These become the spells he uses to conjure and bind them. A score in a Song Talent represents a galdraman’s relationship with particular types of spirit and the quality of his associated spell-songs. Galdramen learn new Song Talents through Galdor Initiation (see below).

Each Song Talent can only be increased with practice or experience; it cannot be taught or trained. The maximum score a galdraman can have in any Song Talent is limited to the magician’s score in Galdor Wisdom. However, each season spent engaged in Galdor magic gives the magician 1 experience point in either Sing, Galdor Wisdom or the used Song Talent.

Galdramen start with two free Song Talents of their choice.

Galdor Conjuring

Galdramen are unable to use their magic if they cannot sing, and it fails them when they

Available Songs

- Yfel-galdor**, curse songs: Summon spirits who delight in causing woe to the galdraman's foes. This can manifest as ill-luck or direct physical harm such as open wounds or diseases.
- Mal-galdor**, speech songs: Summon spirits who can make the singer's words very persuasive, commanding, or awe-inspiring.
- Hug-galdor**, mind songs: Summon spirits to affect the emotions, or to read minds.
- Sig-galdor**, victory songs: Summon spirits to aid in all aspects of battle, from sharpening weapons to increasing strength and bravery.
- Lim-galdor**, healing songs: Summon spirits to help heal wounds and mend broken bones.
- Biarg-galdor**, birth songs: Summon spirits to cures disease or guard people, animals and crops from ill health. Galdramen can also ask these spirits to protect them from the rigors of age.
- Orlog-galdor**, fate-songs: Summon spirits that can peer through the misty veil of the future, remember the past, or show the galdraman visions of far-off places. Such spirits can also act to cloud such visions, protecting the galdraman's secrets.
- Svart-galdor**, black songs: Summon the spirits of the dead, to either question them or raise their corpses.
- Ol-galdor**, warding songs: Summon spirits to drive off hostile spirits or creatures from a house, field, path or even a person. Such spirits can also give protection against Curses and other malign magic.
- Brun-galdor**, weather songs: Summon spirits to control or predict the weather.

Other songs may be available to galdramen, but these are the only ones commonly known.

stop singing. Galdramen have difficulty conjuring in contact with the ground, so they usually prepare a ritual platform, although a simple wooden chair or table will do. Using galdor magic in contact with the ground halves the magician's casting totals.

To conjure a spirit the magician must first determine the level of the desired effect. Use the same spell guidelines as Hermetic magi, but the duration must be either Momentary or Concentration. Range and Target are calculated normally, with Range calculated from the Galdraman to the Target. In addition, galdraman cannot request a service of higher magnitude than the level of the Song Talent he uses.

Once the effect level has been calculated the magician must try to conjure a spirit powerful enough to generate the required effect. If the Hermetic equivalent would be a non-ritual the magician must spend 1 minute in uninterrupted singing for every magnitude of the intended effect. If the effect would be a Hermetic ritual, then the magician must spend 15 minutes per magnitude and provide vis to the spirit on arrival (1 pawn per magnitude).

A galdraman cannot use vis to boost the conjuring roll or extend Ranges, Durations and Targets like Hermetic magi.

The conjuring formula is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Stress die} + \text{Com} + \text{Sing} + \text{Galdor} \\ \text{Wisdom} + [\text{Song Talent}] + \text{Aura}$$

If the roll is greater than the level of the spell, then the spirit is summoned and attempts to create the desired effect. Concentration duration effects are maintained while the galdraman continues to sing. In ideal conditions, with no distractions, a trained galdraman can keep a song going for many hours.

Make a Sta + Singing roll every hour, with an Ease Factor of 6 + the number of hours. If the roll fails by three points or less, the galdraman loses a fatigue level. The song fails if the magician misses the Ease Factor by more than 3 points.

If the galdraman suffers any distractions while he is singing, use the 'Distractions' table on page 73 of *ArM4*, but replace Int + Concentration with Int + Singing. If a galdraman is in contact with the ground, add 3 to the ease factor.





If the conjuring roll is greater than or equal to double the effect level, roll a quality die after the galdraman stops singing. The spirit continues to work for a number of hours equal to this roll. This can only apply to Concentration duration effects.

The Might, and hence penetration, of the spirit is equal to the result of the conjuring roll.

Bargaining

Galdramen can only achieve durations beyond Concentration by impressing and negotiating with the most powerful landvaettir. This process should ideally be roleplayed. The galdraman must journey out into the wilds and seek out an appropriate landvaettir lord. Once found he recites praise songs or poems he has composed in its honor, as well as making offers of vis and service. Landvaettir lords are sentient creatures and may refuse any request which they feel is unwise or against their interest. However, if the spirit is agreeable the galdraman can obtain an extended service from one of the spirit's minions. This process usually lasts at least a day per magnitude for a Conjuring service, but may last a whole season if associated with an Enchantment (see below).

Calculate the effect level assuming Sun duration. Using D: Sun ensures the spirit has the Might to sustain the effect indefinitely without exhausting itself. However, the storyguide should feel free to adjust effect levels they find unreasonable.

If the service is to last more than a year landvaettir lords normally ask for yearly tithes of vis. The sum initially asked for is at the discretion of the storyguide, but as a guide double the magnitude of the requested service. A skilled galdraman can reduce this considerably. High magnitude effects normally require a service from the galdraman besides vis.

Once the deal is done, the galdraman travels to the desired location and makes the normal conjuring roll. The conjured spirit must be given the agreed sum of vis (which it consumes) and in return the spirit maintains the effect for the agreed period. Regular tithes must be delivered at the times specified in the deal. Failure to supply the vis or service breaks the deal and can lead to reprisals. Ending ongoing deals may only be done amicably by mutual agreement.

Conjuring Example

Einar is asked to ensure a section of path is warded against trolls and malign spirits. He travels into the wilds to find a regio where an Ol lord resides. The Ol lord greets him warmly and Einar enjoys his host's hospitality. The lord is impressed with the poem Einar composed for this visit and afterward the negotiation begins.

Einar wishes to ward the path against creatures with a Might of 30 or less. The storyguide considers the Aegis of the Hearth ritual a good model for this effect. The player suggests that as Aegis of the Hearth is D: Year, this effect should be reduced to D: Sun, subtracting 3 magnitudes. His storyguide disagrees and rates the effect as a level 30 Galdor ritual.

Einar's Ol-galdor of 6 means this service is not above his station to request. The Ol lord asks for 12 pawns of vis and a further 12 pawns each year thereafter. Einar politely bargains this down to 9 pawns, but knows that the lord considers this a favor, which will be called in one day.

Einar then journeys to the path he wishes to ward. He sends his sons to watch out for travelers and when all is clear he sets up a wooden platform. The song takes him an hour and a half to perform, as it is a ritual effect. His roll of 3 adds to his Com of 2, Sing of 8, Galdor Wisdom of 8, Ol-galdor of 6 and Magic Aura of 2, for a total of 29. Einar fails to summon the spirit.

After a rest Einar tries again and rolls a 6. The landvaettir appears and Einar gives it the vis as promised. Each year Einar must return to give the landvaettir 9 pawns of vis.

Bargaining is also required to practice Galdor Enchantment (see below).

Health and Healing

Instant duration effects are not possible, but healing (lim-galdor) and birth (biarg-galdor) magic are still effective. These spirits act to enhance the body's natural recovery, rather than generate the Instant effects of Hermetic magic.

Usually the spirits simply provide bonuses to recovery rolls. A galdraman may sing over a wounded or sick man and the spirit will help him recover. Add the magnitude of the effect to the recovery roll. However, the galdraman needs to keep the spirit in attendance for at least 12 in every 24 hours to help in recovery tests.

Alternatively, if the spirit is conjured in an extended ritual manner (see above) and given vis, truly astounding recoveries can be achieved. The spirit still needs to be sustained for hours for full affect, but cures and recoveries can be achieved which rival Hermetic magic.

Galdor Enchantment

Galdramen can use their spell-songs to bind minor spirits to items. First a bargain (see above) must be struck with a landvaettir lord. Next the spirit is bound into an item as the galdraman makes it. There are two ways a galdraman can enchant objects. The first way involves binding a spirit for the lifetime of the galdraman. The second restricts the binding to a year and a single service.

Binding a spirit for the magician's lifetime does not require yearly tithes, but only comparatively low Might spirits will submit to it. Use the rules for lesser enchanted items (*ArM4*, page 88), except where noted below. Durations are limited to Momentary or Concentration, but by adding +5 to a D: Conc Effect, it can be made Constant Use.

If the effect requires the user to maintain concentration, this usually means singing. In addition, spirits often set elaborate conditions on the item's care and maintenance. Activation can also be a convoluted process.

The second method produces single-use enchantments similar to Potions (see *ArM4* page 88), but with a lifespan limited to a year and a day.

A galdraman does not require a lab, only the tools and materials necessary to craft the item that he intends to enchant. A galdraman must have an appropriate Song Talent equal or greater than the magnitude of the effect.

Create a lab total by the following formula:

**Stress Die + Com + Sing + Galdor
Wisdom + [Song Talent] + Form
and Effect Bonuses + Aura**

For lifetime enchantments, this total must be double the effect level plus any frequency of use modifiers. For single service enchantments, this total must merely equal the effect level.

The Craft skill used limits the level of Galdor Wisdom and Song Talent when calculating this lab total. If possessed, Scribe Runes can be used as the Craft skill. Using Scribe Runes, pre-made items can be enchanted by adding an inscription. However, neither Scribe Runes nor Potency adds to the enchantment total.

After the bargaining stage the enchantment only takes the time required to make the item. However, negotiations for lifetime enchantments normally last two or three months. Vis cost should be roughly in line with the Hermetic equivalent, and the spirit must be paid before being bound into the object.

Galdraman Longevity

A Galdraman who knows the Birth-Songs (biarg-galdor) can strike a deal with a landvaettir lord to save him from the rigors of age. However, the landvaettir lord will always ask a service besides a vis tithe. The exact arrangement is up to the storyguide, but it should be commensurate with the age of the galdraman. The spirit does not specify that the galdraman himself complete the set task. Typical favors include: dismantling of a Christian shrine on a magical area, release of a captured spirit, driving out a diabolist who tortures spirits, creation of a charm to purify a stream.

Once the deed has been done, the galdraman prepares a drink of specially brewed mead containing at least one pawn of vis per decade of his life. He then conjures a biarg spirit in a ritual manner. Once summoned the spirit enters the galdraman's body as he drinks the mead.



Story Seed

A galdraman acquaintance of the characters asks that they solve some problem for him involving the landvaettir, not telling them that it is part of his longevity deal. The characters should respect this man sufficiently to attempt to help him; however, a rival magician is doing his best to thwart the characters' actions. They may not realize that their success or failure may well determine whether their old friend manages to survive the winter...



Treat as a Hermetic longevity potion with a lab total equal to the Galdor Conjuring total.

To maintain the effect, each year the galdraman must drink another quantity of vis laced mead; this provides the tithe to the spirit. Although this is very expensive in vis, the potion never fails even on an aging result. In Hermetic terms it is re-brewed each year.

Galdor Initiation

Galdramen can also learn further magical powers by spending time in meditation, exposed to the elements and speaking with the wild spirits of Iceland. Galdramen can initiate the following Virtues: Ars Notoria (see *The Mysteries*, page 132), Curse, Enchanting Music, Galdor Songs, Gift, Healer, Hamfarir, Potency, Svonhverfing.

As a type of theurgist, galdramen can gain Ars Notoria at +3, with Galdor Wisdom replacing Hermetic Theurgy in the formula.

Galdor Songs are rated as +2 Virtues for initiation, but are not actually virtues.

A galdraman may learn these virtues through tuition by one of the lords of the landvaettir. To be eligible for learning the Exceptional Talent the character must have 3 points of Galdor Wisdom for each point of the Virtue cost of the Talent (6 for Hamfarir or Song Talents, 9 for Ars Notoria and 12 for Svonhverfing).

If this requirement is met, the landvaettir will judge him worthy, but will require service in return for the teaching. The galdraman will be set one or more quests, which he must perform in payment. During these quests the galdraman must earn a number of story experience points equal to the pyramid cost of the Virtue sought; thus a Song Talent requires 3 experience points and Svonhverfing requires 10 experience points. These experience points must not be used to increase abilities in the normal way; instead they go towards learning the talent. Once sufficient experience points have been earned, the galdraman will gain the sought-after talent at a score of 1.

If a candidate does not have enough Galdor Wisdom, another galdraman (who knows the Talent) can support him. The supporting galdraman's Galdor Wisdom then counts for qualification. Such assistance is seldom free, for the teacher must spend at least some time helping his pupil on the quest.

Example initiation quests: Make peace between the men of Vapnafjord and the trolls of the Eastern Quarter. Retrieve the magical spear of the rune-magician Viga-Glum from the middle of the Odadahraun. Find the soul-stone of the giantess Mjoll so that she might die in peace. Get the men of Kirkadale to abandon their farms and return to the lowlands.

Twilight

Traditional galdramen gain Twilight points like Hermetic magi. They gain points from longevity bargains and can enter Twilight on magic botches. Temporary twilight manifests as the magician's fylgja taking his spirit into the twilight void. On Final Twilight the fylgja simply does not return (with the magician's spirit at least). As Galdor magic always uses a stress die, they tend go on the *Long Hamfaring* earlier than most Hermetic magicians.



Hermetic Potential

The Norse traditions of Galdraman magic are far removed from either the Latin or Druidic roots of Hermetic magic. A Galdraman joining the Order will be able to learn the Parma Magica, but not Forms and Techniques.

Option: If you are using the Mysteries, a galdraman and a Hermetic theurgist may be able to find enough common ground to learn from each other. Even if possible, a Hermetic galdraman is likely to wield a very crippled form of Hermetic magic, focused entirely on the theurgy mystae. However, his apprentices may be able to use more general Hermetic magic, but will probably lose most of their Norse heritage in the process.

Sun Duration

Duration Sun spells last until the sun next sets or rises. On midsummer day in Iceland, the sun is above the horizon for about 23 hours. Thus D: Sun spells cast at sunrise last about 23 hours and the same spell cast at sunset lasts 1 hour. On midwinter day the reverse happens. These times define the solstices. The shift in day length happens steadily throughout the year and in the middle of spring and autumn, day and night are of equal length.

A little further north, midsummer day and midwinter night last 48 hours. Further north these periods are extended and the extreme north experiences a six month day (in summer) and six month night (in winter).

Option: Duration Sun spells can never exceed a full rotation of the celestial sphere (just less than 24 hours). This astrological event supercedes D: Sun and breaks D: Sun spells.

Schooled Galdramen

These magicians are trained at the cathedral school of Holar or Skalholt. They follow the same rules as Natural Magicians (See *Hedge Magic*, page 40), but use their skills to conjure magical spirits, which then generate the desired effect. In game terms there is no substantive difference, except that they use the normal magical interaction table and possess the Gift.

When Saemundur Sigfusson returned to Iceland after his education in France, he used his new learning to substitute Judeo-Christian and neo-classical synthemata (sacred phrases) for the heathen idolatry of tradition galdor magic. Synthemata include animals, plants, stones, images, aromatics, talismans, and written letters. The schooled galdramen weave these ingredients with divine names into highly complex rituals.

Many of their mainland colleagues would consider their methods dangerous and their theories heretical. However, Iceland remains isolated and a law unto itself in such matters. No ranking Churchman who has become aware of these theurgist practices has yet made an issue of it.

Both Holar and Skalholt schools seek to rival traditional galdramen. Their hope is not vain as they are all Gifted, and they are actually capable of learning Hermetic magic, although they currently have no access to it. Should either get hold of books on Hermetic theory this might change, to the horror of the Order should they discover it.

The Trollsyrnir

...it is worth telling you that at one time there were three amazing species of wizard, each practicing their own miraculous illusions... The first of these were creatures of monstrous size, whom the ancients called giants, far surpassing human beings in bodily stature.

— Book I of the History of the Danes,
Saxo Grammaticus





These wizards are called *trollsynir*, literally “the sons of trolls” (the singular masculine is *trollson*, feminine is *trolldottir*).

In Scotland, wizards known as *gruagachan* use the power of their giant ancestry to work magic. The *trollsynir* are their Norse equivalents but are not identical, as Icelandic *trollsynir* are rarely more than three generations removed from their giant forebears. Most giants are hostile to mankind, and their children and grandchildren often share this attitude, but there are a rare few who use their powers to the benefit of man.

If run as player characters, *trollsynir* should occupy the magus slot. They also pay for Virtues and Flaws as a magus.

Deciding on a giant clan to belong to is an important part of character creation. Each clan has its own stereotypes, which helps build a character concept. These clans are described in Chapter 2.

All *trollsynir* have the Potency and Shapeshift Talents, as well as the Giant Blood Virtue for free. *Trollsynir* are not formally trained and acquire their magic from being raised by giants or adult *trollsynir*, experiencing the casual use of magic. This unfamiliarity with human culture leaves all *trollsynir* with the Sheltered Upbringing Flaw. They tend to avoid human company, but circumstances may force them into interaction with man. *Trollsynir* normally have the Blatant Gift, although this can be mitigated by the *Etin Bride* virtue (see below). These flaws are automatic and do not count towards the character’s flaw total.

Apart from these powers, the rest of their magical talents can vary greatly. They will learn whatever magic their giant kin use. At character creation, a player can choose to have one of the following powers in addition to Shapeshift:

- Curse (see below)
- Gift (see below)
- Transform (see below)
- Jotunn Affinity (see below)
- Svnhverfing (see below)

All *Trollsynir* start with the following ability scores:

- Speak Jotunn 5
- Shapeshift 4
- [Choice of Magical Talent] 3
- Trollson Lore 2
- Trollskap Wisdom 4
- Speak West Norse 3

Survival 3

Potency 2

Trollsynir receive Age + 10 experience points.

Trollsynir get to choose up to 10 points each of balancing Virtues and Flaws, besides those gained automatically.

Trollskap Magic

Trollskap is one word used in Icelandic for magic, but in game terms it refers to the magic used by *trollsynir*. *Trollskap* magic involves the acquisition and use of Exceptional Talents.

All *trollskap* is rolled on stress dice, as *trollsynir* do not have the precise control of their magic.

Trollsynir cannot affect the dead or spirits with their magic. A *trollson* may possess the *Necromancer* or *Summoner* talents, but these are not *trollskap* magic and cannot be gained through *Trollskap* Initiation. Non-*trollskap* magic can only be gained at character generation or via special story events (both at storyguide discretion). Once initiated in *Trollskap* magic the student is forever bound to the magic of his blood. This prevents him from learning *Galdor* Conjuring or Enchantment, or learning Hermetic magic.

Trollskap Afflictions

Trollskap is dangerous magic and brings the magician closer to his wild blood, making him more troll-like. The more the magician uses magic the faster he loses his humanity. When a *trollson* botches one of his primary magical talents (those that add to his magic resistance), the *trollson* gains a *Trollskap* Affliction at level 0, or adds +1 to an existing *Trollskap* Affliction. *Trollsynir* may only gain five separate afflictions. Affliction points are also gained from healing botches if an External Soul is possessed.

Typical *Trollskap* Afflictions might be Horns, Fangs, Claws, Blue Skin, Obsession, Rage, and Icy Aura. Essentially the character slowly transforms into a troll. When the *trollson* has five *Trollskap* Afflictions at level 6 (the maximum level), he begins to lose his sanity. Further points are added to a Troll personality trait. If the magician’s Troll personality trait

reaches +6, he becomes a non-player character and flees into the wild. It is believed that many of the trolls in Iceland were once trollsyrir. Others choose to destroy their soulstones before becoming trolls.

Full-blooded giants do not suffer Trollskap Afflictions. Assume non-player character trollsyrir gain one affliction point every five years. However, many grow cautious in latter years, so this rate may be reduced.

Magic Resistance

The Magic Resistance of a trollson is equal to the sum of the scores in the trollskap magical talents that they have at character creation (their primary magical talents). If the initial character has more than three of these abilities, then they must designate which contribute to Magic Resistance, but Shapeshift is always part of this total. When trollsyrir acquire an External Soul (see below), add 20 to their magic resistance.

For example: Bard Dumbson's primary magical talents are, Jotunn Affinity with Frost 17, Shapeshift 18 and, Transform 16. He also possesses an External Soul. His magic resistance is thus $17 + 18 + 16 + 20 = 71$.

Trollskap Initiation

A trollson may learn a new Exceptional Talent by spending a season or more communing with the Jotunn spirits. The trollson generates a learning total based on:

$$\text{Stress die} + \text{Intelligence} \\ + \text{Trollskap Wisdom}$$

Auras have no affect on this total.

The character must have 3 points of Trollskap Wisdom for each point of the Virtue cost of the Talent. For example, to learn Enchanting Music (+2 Virtue) requires a Trollskap Wisdom of 6.

The ease factor to learn successfully the Exceptional Talent is 10 times its Virtue cost. Thus Enchanting Music would have an ease factor of 20.

The process requires at least one season. For each additional season spent in continuous study,

the trollson adds a stress die roll to their learning total. Once the ease factor is reached, the trollson gains a score in that Talent of 1. Experience can then be applied in the usual fashion.

All Initiation rolls for trollsyrir are stress. If a zero is rolled, his meditations have tapped too deeply into his troll ancestry; he immediately gains one level in a Troll Affliction. In addition, check for a botch. A botch reduces the study total to zero and the whole process must begin again. If no botch results, the trollson has learnt nothing that season, but may continue to study the Talent in subsequent seasons.

Trollsyrir can initiate the following virtues: Curse, Divination, Dousing, Empathy, Enchanting Music, Entrancement, External Soul, Gift, Hamfarir, Healer, Hex, Jotunn Affinity*, Magic Sensitivity, Premonitions, Second Sight, Shapeshift, Svonhverfing, Transform, Visions.

*Only that of their clan.

External Soul

The magician's soul is extracted and placed in a physical object. Unless the soul-object is destroyed, the magician is safe from mortal injury. The magician can be incapacitated, but never killed. The magician's body cannot be dismembered or burned, even by the strongest magic or natural forces, but will heal slowly.

If incapacitated, recovery totals of less than 9 result in the loss of the next roll (half a day lost), while a botch loses the next two rolls (one full day lost to recovery). However, the character's condition never worsens. Every time a botch is rolled the magician gains a Trollskap Affliction, or adds one to a Trollskap Affliction (see above).

The magician's soul may reside in any type of object, but any damage to the object, even a scratch, will kill. Age has no effect on the magician. The soul can be removed only once, and may never return to the body. When this is done the trollsyrir's Magic Resistance increases by +20.

The nature of the ritual masks any arcane connection between the soul-object and the subject. A Hermetic magus would have to research a specific ritual to locate a soul-object, and the level of the ritual would have to exceed the subject's Magic Resistance. Such magic





requires the trollsnyir's actual presence to act as the arcane connection. A mere arcane connection to the trollsnyir is insufficient.

An external soul is gained through Trollskap Initiation (see above) and counts as a +4 virtue. It cannot be purchased at character creation.

Arcane Abilities

Galdor Wisdom

This Arcane Knowledge can only be gained if the Galdor Conjuring or Enchanting Virtue is possessed. This Knowledge represents the understanding of landvaettir that the galdraman has built up during his career. Should the galdraman move to a different country, the score in this knowledge temporarily drops to zero. As Galdor Wisdom caps Song Talents, initially the galdraman is powerless. For each season that the galdraman spends re-establishing his contacts with the landvaettir, 1 level of this knowledge is regained, up to a maximum of his former level. *Specialties:* Enchantment, Conjuring.

Scribe Runes

This ability can only be gained if the Potency Virtue is possessed. It is not merely knowledge of the Runic alphabet (most literate Icelanders have this), but an understanding of how the mystical properties of the runes are invoked. A magician carves the runes, rubs his blood into them, and then verbally invokes the effect. Scribe Runes acts as a "magical language" and adds to magical talents that are affected by Potency (except Jotunn Affinity). Using Scribe Runes to enhance an Exceptional Talent often takes longer than Speak Jotunn (see below), but inscriptions have other advantages (see individual Talents for details). Norse is typically used, but any language will do. *Specialties:* A specific Exceptional Talent.

Speak Jotunn

Jotunn is the language of Norse giants. The language has many magical overtones and can

be used by magicians with certain magical talents. It is closely related to Pictish, the language spoken by their Scottish cousins. A gruagach and a trollson can converse in their respective magical languages with a fluency penalty of only -1 to their scores. As a magical language, Speak Jotunn can be added, with Potency to many magical talents. Others can only learn this language if the Potency Virtue is possessed. *Specialties:* Insults, Praise.

Trollskap Wisdom

Trollskap is the Norse word for magic performed by trollsnyir. It allows them to research new Exceptional Talents. Trollskap Wisdom is used in Trollskap initiation. *Specialties:* Curses, Divinations, and Illusions.

Trollson Lore

Trollsnyir have no formal organization, but this Ability allows trollsnyir to recognize famous magicians of their breed, and it acts as a Giant Lore skill. A trollson can determine the clan of another trollson or a giant with this skill. *Specialties:* jotunn, specific Clan, female magicians.

Supernatural Virtues

The following exceptional virtues are available to Iceland's hedge wizards, either as part of their base powers or as standard Virtues. The storyguide should consider carefully before allowing characters to have any particular virtue. Virtues that are peculiar to Norse magic should only be available to Norse characters.

Mighty Fylgja, Variable Virtue

If the character possesses Premonitions then they automatically possess a fylgja (see page 32) with Magic Might of 10. However, by

investing more virtue points the power of the fylgja can be increased. If the character does not possess Hamfarir this virtue is initially of little use, but Icelandic magicians looking for apprentices value a powerful fylgja highly.

For each point spent the Magic Might of the fylgjur increases by 10 and it gains an extra power, in the order given below:

Phantom: While using Hamfarir, your fylgja may appear as a ghostly apparition for one hour per Magic Might point spent. Others can hear its cries, but they are unearthly and disquieting. Its voice is not capable of human speech.

Spirit Voice: While using Hamfarir, your fylgja can speak intelligibly while in phantom form. As well as the magician's own language, it can use any language it desires at level 3. This voice can deliver Curses, but the magician's Curse score is limited to his score in Hamfarir.

Corporeality: While using Hamfarir, your fylgja can take on a fully physical form by spending 5 Magic Might points per hour. The physical characteristics of the fylgjur are as a Beast of Virtue of its type.

Standard fylgjur can be no larger than Size -3, but virtue points can be invested to increase this. Investing +1 virtue point allows you to choose forms up to Size +0. Further size increases are brought on a one-for-one basis.

Example: A bear fylgja (Size +2) with Magic Might of 40 and the ability to become corporeal would cost +6.

Etin bride, +2 Virtue

The Trollsyrir equivalent of the Gentle Gift. Only available to female Trollsyrir.

Hamfarir, +2 Virtue

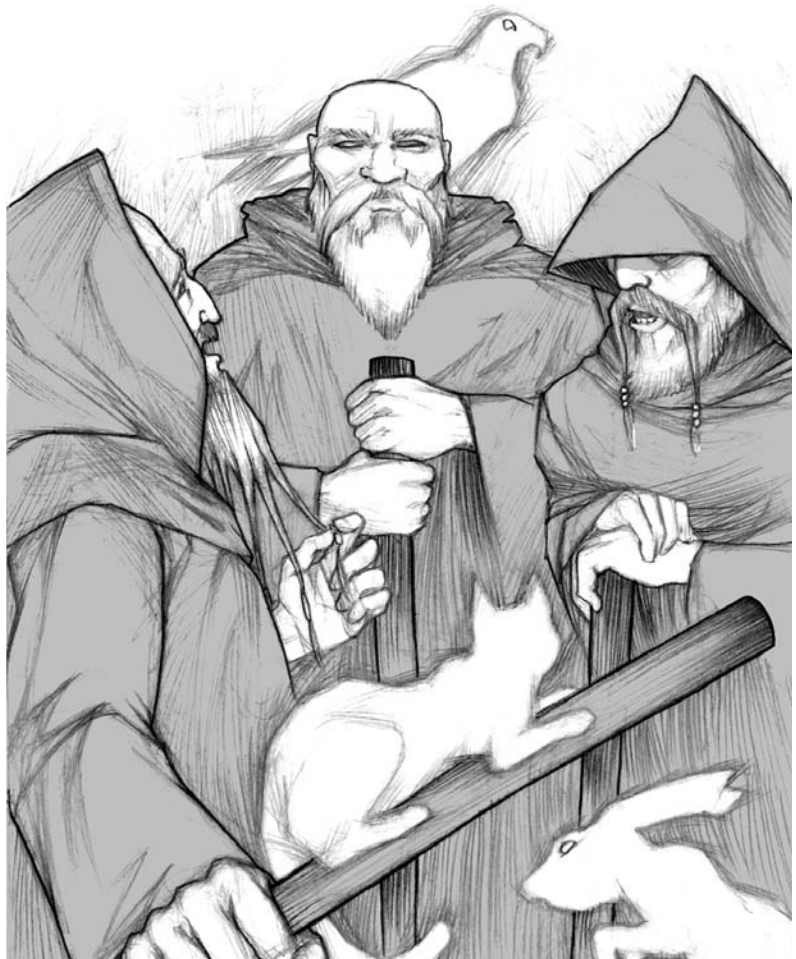
This virtue requires that the character have the Premonitions virtue. Hamfarir literally means 'shape-faring', or 'going abroad in the shape of another.' All seithkonur, and a few others, can borrow their fylgja's body and travel around in it. This virtue grants the character an Exceptional Talent, Hamfarir, at a score of 1, which can be increased in the usual way.

The process of transferring the mind into the fylgja requires an Intelligence + Hamfarir roll of 9+. If this roll is successful, the magician's

body lapses into a trance, while the mind wanders in fylgja form. In this shape the magician is immaterial and invisible, and can move at incredible speeds, managing up to a day's travel in a single hour (as a guide a fylgja can move nine times faster than its animal type). However, if the magician wishes to be able to see anything of the physical world, the pace must be more moderate. Those with Magic Sensitivity or Second Sight may sense or see the fylgja. Intéllego magic can also reveal its presence. While Hamfaring both Vim and Mentem can affect the fylgja.

While in this spiritual state, the magician can spy on the physical world, able to hear and see everything that goes on. The magician can also borrow the fylgja's spirit ability to understand any spoken language as if he had a score of three in that language.

The magician cannot read unknown writing in this form, as the fylgja's power does not extend to this.





A magician in fylgja form can attempt to enter the dreams of a sleeping person. This requires an Int + Hamfarir roll, resisted by the Stamina + 3 of the target. If the magician successfully enters, that person has a vivid dream in which the fylgja speaks to him in the magician's voice.

Hamfaring can be maintained for a number of hours equal to the magician's Hamfarir score. If unable to return in this time, the magician's body starts to lose fatigue levels at the rate of one every 20 minutes. Falling unconscious in this way causes the magician's spirit to return immediately and a point of Stamina is lost indefinitely (only magical healing can restore it). In this situation, the fylgja remains wherever the magician left it; if it is trapped, then the magician loses the ability to use both Hamfarir and Premonitions until it is freed.

The trance state of Hamfarir is seen as effeminate in Norse culture. Galdramen and other male practitioners usually take great care to only Hamfarir in private.

Potency, +2 Virtue

This virtue gives you an Exceptional Talent called Potency at an initial score of 1, which can be increased through story experience. Trollsyrnir, trolls and giants automatically gain this Talent. The ability means that many magical talents are particularly easy for you because you know how to invoke the power of a magical language. It cannot be used at a higher level than your score in that language. The only two magical languages known in Iceland are Speak Jotunn and Scribe Runes. The following Exceptional Talents are all assisted by Potency: Curse, Gift, Jotunn Affinity, Shapeshift, Svonhverfing, Transform. *Specialties:* Any applicable Exceptional Talent.

Jotunn Affinity, +4 Virtue

The blood of a major giant clan runs strong in your veins and you can call upon a particular force of nature. This virtue grants an Exceptional Talent at a starting value of 1. The ancestry may be distant, but you should have the Large Virtue at least, and should consider purchasing the Giant Blood virtue. A character can have no more than one Jotunn Affinity.

You must first decide what effect you wish to create and utter an invocation to your ancestors and the primal forces of nature. You can only create effects that are appropriate to the Jotunn. The effect is limited in the same way as a Hermetic spontaneous spell. You then make the following roll:

Stress Die + Communication + Jotunn Affinity + Speak Jotunn + Potency + Aura

If the roll is equal to or greater than the level of the equivalent Hermetic spell, then the effect occurs. You must ask the jotunn spirits to aid you, but no gestures are required. This magic only requires a single round to invoke.

Alternatively the magician may spend many hours summoning a mighty effect. A site strong in the particular elemental power used is necessary, such as cliff-tops for Sea, or a mountaintop for Storms. Such rituals can achieve the same effects as Hermetic rituals. The base time required is 15 minutes for every magnitude and the roll carries one botch die for every magnitude. You must make a Fatigue roll at the end of every hour the ritual takes, with at least one roll being made.

Using a Jotunn Affinity never uses vis and so vis boosted ranges and durations are not possible. Effects need to be calculated using base ranges and spells with durations beyond Moon are ritual effects.

Jotunn Affinity with the Sea: You may create any Aquam-based effect, and also affect the weather at sea. You cannot create a wind in a forest, but you can if you are aboard a ship. Fog can be created almost anywhere as sea mists can extend some way inland.

Jotunn Affinity with Storms: You may create any weather magic (Auram and Aquam based effects) that is violent in nature: thunderclaps, lashing rain, biting cold, powerful winds.

Jotunn Affinity with Frost: You may create any Auram, Aquam or Ignem effect that causes cold, frost, snow, or any other icy effect.

Jotunn Affinity with Fire: Fire is feared as much as frost in the north, especially in Iceland where there are many volcanoes. You may create any Ignem or Auram effect that promotes fire, smoke or heat.

Jotunn Affinity with Earth: You can affect elemental earth. You can hurl boulders, disintegrate stone, start avalanches and tear apart the

earth, if you are powerful enough. Any Terram effect that affects earth, sand, clay or stone (but not metal, glass, gemstones or general inanimate objects) can be created with this Affinity.

Gift, +4 Virtae

This virtue grants an exceptional Talent called Gift, beginning at level 1. Gifts grant abilities, traits or Virtues to the Gifter or others. Each Gift has a specific condition under which the Gift will be lost, and a Gift attempt must overcome the magical resistance of the recipient, even if the recipient wishes to receive the effect. If Speak Jotunn is used the target of a Gift must be present. If the Gift is inscribed with Scribe Runes, the inscription only needs to be delivered to the target.

Formula:

**Stress die + Int + Gift + Magical
Language* + Potency**

*Speak Jotunn or Scribe Runes

The base ease factor for a Gift is 3, modified according to the table below. If the roll is greater than the ease factor, the target acquires the effect. A roll of '0' requires a botch check as usual. However, even if there is no botch, the magician's entire casting total is treated as zero.

If the roll fails by less than seven, then neither character is affected. If the roll fails by seven or more, the storyguide has the option of laying a Curse against the caster. The unfortunate magician cannot remove this Curse directly as it acts as if another had cast it. Treat such Curses as equal to the ease factor of the attempted Gift (see Lifting a Curse below).

Example of a Gift: Yrsa, a trollsdottr, is grateful for the help from a man called Ketil, and decides to reward him with some protection against magic. She therefore decides to Gift him the Withstand Magic Virtue, with the condition that he never refuses a reasonable request from a lady.

The ease factor is: 3 (base) + 14 (+2 Virtue) + 0 (General prohibition) = 17.

Yrsa's roll is 7 (stress die) + 1 (Int) + 4 (Gift) + 4 (Speak Jotunn) + 3 (Potency), for a total of 19. The Gift succeeds.

Curse, +4 Virtae

This virtue grants an exceptional Talent called Curse, beginning at level 1. Curses reduce abilities, characteristics and Virtues, or grant Flaws. Curses must have a condition which breaks them. Most conditions describe something that the victim must do or have done to him or her, such as obtain a kiss or perform a specific act. The curse will end as soon as the releasing condition is met (even accidentally).

If the Curse is spoken, the target of a curse must be within earshot (neither hearing nor understanding is required). For a written Curse, the inscribed object needs to be given to, or placed very near, the victim (like in their bed). Alternatively, a *nidstong* or curse-pole can be erected near the victim's abode. A *nidstong* is a tall pole, inscribed with the words of the Curse in runes, and topped with the skull of a horse.

Formula:

**Stress die + Int + Curse + Magical Lan-
guage* + Potency**



Gift Abuse

At some point a player may hit on a cunning plan to increase his magical abilities via his Gift talent. In principle a magician could Gift himself Mythic Intelligence, and +3 Knacks in all his Exceptional Talents, Speak Jotunn and Potency.

The storyguide might refer the player to **ArM4** page 33, where it is written, "Virtues which provide bonuses on the same activity or statistic are not cumulative." Knacks are not permitted in Arcane Abilities, unless specifically allowed as a result of membership in a particular house (e.g. Bonisagus for Magic Theory, Tremere for Certámen). The storyguide would be well within his rights to impose a +14 poetic justice penalty. And lastly, even a non-botched roll of zero can have nasty results.

Another popular idea is for the magician to Gift the entire turb with the Tough Virtue (or similar). Again the maximum poetic justice penalty may be applied and each use of the Gift talent carries a 1 in 10 chance of the magician being cursed.

Optional Rule: The storyguide has the option to veto any Gift he finds poetically untenable. Attempts to grant such Gifts are automatically treated as if a 0 had been rolled (test for botch as normal). Similarly the storyguide may be lenient if a Curse or Gift is particular appropriate but a 0 is rolled or the target has a huge magical resistance. In such circumstances the storyguide might not apply a curse to the caster.



***Speak Jotunn or Scribe Runes**

The base ease factor for a Curse is 7, modified according to the table below. If the roll is greater than the ease factor, the Curse takes effect. A roll of '0' requires a botch check as usual. However, even if there is no botch, the magician's casting total is treated as zero.

If the roll fails by less than seven, then neither character is affected. If the roll fails by seven or more, the storyguide has the option of laying a backlash Curse against the caster. The unfortunate magician cannot remove this Curse directly as it acts as if another had cast it. Treat such Curses as equal to the ease factor of the attempted Curse (see Lifting a Curse below).

Nidstong

He took in his hand a hazel-pole, and went to a rocky eminence that looked inward to the mainland. Then he took a horse's head and fixed it on the pole. After that, in solemn form of curse, he thus spake: 'Here set I up a nidstong, and this curse I turn on king Eric and queen Gunnhilda. (Here he turned the horse's head landwards.) This curse I turn also

Poetic Justice

The appropriateness of Gifts and Curses is an important part of this magic. Storyguides should feel free to add 1 to 14 points to the ease factor of a Curse or Gift that has no relation to what has gone on in the saga, and may likewise subtract 1 to 14 points from the ease factor that is particularly appropriate.

on the landvaettir who dwell in this land, that they may all wander astray, nor reach or find their home till they have driven out of the land king Eric and Gunnhilda.' This spoken, he planted the pole down in a rift of the rock, and let it stand there. The horse's head he turned inwards to the mainland; but on the pole he cut runes, expressing the whole form of curse.

— Egil's Saga

Nidstong work slightly differently. Normally curses only affect a specific individual, but nidstong can be made to affect groups as well. In

Gift and Curse Ease Factors

Gift Ease Factor modifiers (Base 3)

Increase a Characteristic	+ (7 x increase)
Increase an Ability	+ (3 x increase)
Add a Virtue effect	+ (7 x Virtue Score)
Remove a Flaw effect*	+ (7 x Flaw Score)
Subject has Magic Resistance	+ Magic Resistance (use Vim Parma)

* Curses cannot be countered with Gifts

Curse Ease Factor modifiers (Base 7)

Cap an Ability at its current level	+3
Rolls in a single Ability are always zero	+14
Rolls in a single Ability always botch	+21
Sicken and die slowly	+28
Sicken and die quickly	+35
Decrease a Characteristic	+ (7 x increase)
Add a Flaw effect	+ (7 x Flaw Score)
Remove a Virtue effect*	+ (7 x Virtue Score)
Subject has Magic Resistance	+ Magic Resistance (use Vim Parma)

* Gifts cannot be countered with Curses.

Prohibitions for Gifts

Specific prohibition, easily avoided	+3
<i>never eat the meat of a cow; never strike a member of your family, never say the name of the one who Gifted you, never use your ancestor's sword</i>	
General prohibition, difficult to avoid	+0
<i>never eat cooked meat, never sleep under a roof, never use a metal tool, never use swords</i>	
Sweeping prohibition	-3
<i>never strike a blow, never eat meat or fish, never use a particular Hermetic Art, never speak, never use weapons</i>	

Conditions for Curses

Specific condition, difficult to lift	+14
<i>enter the priesthood, kill your father</i>	
General condition, hard to lift	+7
<i>get married, sleep with a corpse</i>	
Sweeping condition, easy to lift	+0
<i>apologize in public</i>	

general nidstong only need to be set overlooking land claimed or inhibited by the victim, but the storyguide should feel free to set limits on this. As usual the poetic nature of curses should be considered.

Each day the nidstong stands the caster makes a curse casting roll against each potential victim. This roll is compared against the curse Ease Factor, modified by individual Magic Resistance (if applicable). Once the casting roll exceeds the individual's Ease Factor, they are effected by the curse. Therefore the longer the nidstong stands the greater its chances of success. While the pole stands, the magician does not suffer from any backlash or botches from failed rolls. When the pole is taken down the last rolls stand for determining any curse backlash or botch.

The ill luck of nidstong often touches more than just the intended victims and only the most callous magicians use them. Any Icelander or Norseman who sees a nidstong will knock it down immediately.

Lifting a Curse

The one who made the Curse can lift it if they can exceed their original roll. Otherwise, the condition needs to be determined and fulfilled. Anyone with the Curse Talent can attempt to determine the condition, by exceeding the caster's Curse total with their own roll. A 7th magnitude Intéllego Vim spell (or its non-Hermetic equivalent) can also reveal the condition.

Magic can also be used to remove a Curse without fulfilling the condition. An Intéllego Vim spell of 20th level or more can determine the ease factor of the Curse. A Perdo Vim ritual, designed to dispel Curses, must be cast at a level that exceeds the Curse's casting total. As the Intéllego Vim spell only reveals the ease factor of the Curse, there will always be an element of uncertainty. If the ritual to remove a Curse botches, the magician could well find himself affected by the same Curse!

Example of a Curse: Skrukka, a troll-sorceress, tries to Curse a human man, Jorik, into marrying her granddaughter. She declares that he will suffer heart-rending sorrow (Lost Love Flaw) and total distraction (Short Attention Span Flaw) until she is satisfied.

The ease factor is:

7 (base) + 14 (-2 points of Flaws) + 14 (specific condition) - 7 (suitable Curse) = 28

The troll-woman's roll is 12 (stress die) + 1 (Int) + 8 (Curse) + 7 (Speak Jotunn) + 6 (Potency) for a total of 33. It is many months before the man can admit that marrying a troll is far better than the witch's Curse.

Svonhverfing, +4 Virtue

...As they left the room, she [Katla] slipped into the vestibule beside the door and started combing and trimming Odd's hair. Arnkel and his men came rushing inside, and all they could see was Katla grooming a goat. She seemed to be trimming its forelock and beard and combing its wool.

— Eyrbyggja Saga

Svonhverfing means "twisting the sight" and it is the art of illusion. This virtue grants the Exceptional Talent Svonhverfing at a score of 1. Affecting primarily sight, these illusions are short-lived and rarely complex. The base range is Personal, the duration can only be Concentration, and the target can only be Individual.

The Svonhverfing casting roll is:

Stress die + Intelligence + Svonhverfing + Magical Language* + Potency + Aura.

*Speak Jotunn or Scribe Runes

The ease factor for creating illusions with this talent can be determined from the table.

Using Speak Jotunn, it takes only one round to create a simple deception, with more complex illusions requiring two or three. Using Scribe Runes requires a minute or more to complete an inscription, but the magician gets +6 to all Concentration rolls to maintain the effect.

Svonhverfing is primarily a visual effect; it is difficult to create sounds and impossible to affect any other sense. This power is particularly associated with fire giants, as heat creates mirages and plays tricks on the eyes. Characters with a Jotunn Affinity for Fire gain a +3 to Svonhverfing Rolls.

Galdor Conjuring, +5 Virtue

This Virtue allows you to summon spirits to work magic. This virtue is available to Galdra-men as part of their starting package. Other Ice-





Svohverfing Ease Factor modifiers

Base	12	Ill-defined sound — growling	+3
		Clear sound — speaking, music	+6
Size		Invisibility*	
Size -3 or smaller	+0	Blurring of image (-3 to notice)	+3
For each point of Size above -3	+1	Invisible while remaining still	+6
		Invisible while moving slowly	+9
Complexity		Invisible while moving quickly	+12
Simple	+0	Moving under direction	+6
Complex — specific face, writing	+3		
		Range	
Motion		Personal	+0
Static	+0	Touch	+3
Moving 'naturally'	+3	Reach	+6
		Near	+9
Sound			
Silent	+0		

*'True' invisibility is not possible, as the character will become visible momentarily every time they pick up or strike a visible object, or move with any speed. Thus this is of small advantage in combat.



Icelandic magicians can purchase this ability if they have the approval of the storyguide. This virtue represents partial training in Galdor magic. You can initiate Song Talents but no other ability.

Galdor Enchantment, +5 Virtue

This Virtue allows you bind spirits in items. This virtue is available to Galdramen as part of their starting package. Other Icelandic magicians can purchase this ability if they have the approval of the storyguide. You can initiate Song Talents but no other ability.

Shapeshift and Transform, +5 Virtues (+4 for Trollsyrir)

Shapeshift and Transform are two separate but related exceptional talents. They must be gained and developed separately, but they use similar game mechanics. *Ultima Thule* has a

more limited +3 Shapeshift Virtue, and so care should be taken not to confuse the two.

Shapeshift allow a magician to alter his own form. Transform allows the magician to alter the form of others. It is not possible to shift into uniquely angelic, demonic, or faerie forms. Magicians may not shapeshift into a specific creature or person, and any physical defects translate to the new form. No words or gestures are needed, and the change is virtually instantaneous. While in animal form, the character has all the senses and abilities that the animal enjoys. Characters in inanimate forms only have the senses of touch and hearing and they cannot move themselves.

Casting Total:

Stress die + Int + Talent + Magical Language* + Potency + Aura

*Speak Jotunn or Scribe Runes

Shapeshift and Transform change the target's clothing, including shoes, boots, and belts. Small amounts of metal (daggers, rings, a medallion) also change with the target, but no magical effect granted by an object operates until it is back in its original form. Larger amounts of metal (armor, weapons, a sack of coins) normally fall to the ground around the target. If the target gained two or more levels of Size, armor bursts as the body grows inside it. The target takes +5 damage if wearing scale or other leather backed armor, +10 if wearing chain.

Alternatively, adding +6 to the ease factor allows all carried equipment to change.

Magicians with the shapeshift talent often possess a number of forms they can assume without effort or risk (no die roll). A magician can effortlessly shapeshift into a number of forms equal to his shapeshifting score. However, the Ease Factor for these forms must be less than the total of his attribute and ability scores.

Shapeshift

The base ease factor is 6. A magician failing the roll may not attempt to assume that general form again until the next dawn. *Sight of the True Form* or *Second Sight* can identify Shapeshifted magicians. Magicians with the Shapeshifter ability may always return to their own form by rolling 3+ using the regular

shapeshifting rules. Thus, such magicians have an easy defense to most shapeshifting magic (for example, Muto Corpus spells, Transform).

Transform

The base ease factor is 10. The victim is stuck in the new form until freed by magic. *Sight of the True Form* or *Second Sight* can identify a transformed person, and the original magician always recognizes his victims. Magi can use spells to restore the transformed person. A level 20 effect (R: Touch, D: Mom T: Ind) will normally restore a person from animal form; level 30, from plant; level 35, from inanimate.



Shapeshift and Transform Difficulty Modifiers

General

Transform Subject + Magic
has Magic Resistance
Resistance: (use Corpus Parma)

Size

1 point different: +1
2 points different: +3
3 points different: +6
4 points different: +10
5 points different: +15
6 points different: +21

General Forms

Mammal: +0
Reptile: +1
Fish: +3
Bird: +3
Insect/worm: +6
Wood/vegetable: +6
Stone: +10
Metal: +15

Nature

Man-made form: +6
Complex man-made form: +15
Supernatural: + Might score



Chapter 7

Toframanna Saga

Theme

Toframan (feminine *tofrakona*) is the word used by Icelandic magicians to describe those magic-workers whose power is not based on song, giant blood, runes or herbs; that is, foreign magicians. It is therefore the name given to magi of the Order of Hermes. The name of this chapter is therefore “The Saga of the Magi.”

The aim of this chapter is to offer guidance to you, as the storyguide, for running stories involving Iceland. In the following chapter, two intertwined story-arcs are introduced that are set largely in Iceland.

Saga Advice

What makes Iceland different? How can you convey these differences to your players?

A good start would be the landscape. Volcanic features are everywhere. Even the inhabited lowlands are often very rugged with deep ravines and cliffs making navigation off the paths difficult and dangerous. The interior is even more forbidding with the additional threat of trolls, giants and violent spirits. These bleak wastelands will contrast sharply with the lush lowland meadows, dotted with colorful wildflowers in summer. Vast lava fields, glaciers and mountain ranges must be navigated around or across. Characters should learn to stick to the paths and to appreciate the value of the sure-footed Icelandic ponies.

The weather is also a distinctive feature. There will rarely be a day without some rain, sleet, hail or snow, particularly in the western quarter. But a brief morning shower is often followed by sun; changeable is the key word. For magi used to more moderate climates the initial adjustment might be hard.

Unlike the politics of mainland Europe there is no feeling of a faceless multitude dictating events. Although the land is divided into quarters, there is no sense of distance. All members of the social elite know one another. Everyone has family, friends and acquaintances all over the island, and stay in regular contact (often by letter). In whatever quarter they occur, the actions of all men of rank are common currency. The lowliest laborer may hold informed opinions and children make play by aping the latest intrigues.

Iceland is a nation of farming neighbors, compared by some to a village. This feeling of intimate village-like politics should be conveyed to the players on a personal level. Foreigners and particularly foreign magicians will be subject to intense gossip and speculation, with all their public doings endlessly analyzed. All Icelanders will quickly know any reputation a character gains there. Player characters may be forced to defend their reputations against slander, spilling blood if need be. Due to the prevalence of magical talent, attempting to use magical means to ensure privacy or suppress rumors is likely to stir up even more trouble. For magi, used to quiet anonymity, this notoriety may be very disturbing. But secrets are extremely difficult to keep in Iceland and so the magi will have to learn to live with it, or else never step from their labs.

This difficulty in keeping secrets applies especially to crimes. Icelanders despise those who do not stand by their actions. Icelanders often argue about whether an act was legal or not, but seldom about whom did that act. Secret crimes have ways of revealing themselves in Iceland and the guilty rarely keep their anonymity forever (unless the victim was friendless). Player characters should be quickly made aware of this, before they do things they may regret.

Characters from the mainland will also note the relative poverty of the Icelanders. Compared with the aristocracy of Europe even storgodi are simple farmers and things like ale and bread are luxury items. In many ways their standard of living compares poorly with the mainland. This does not accord with their sense of self-worth however. Even with the scramble amongst the storgodi for feudal title, Iceland is still a nation of proud freemen. In Iceland, even a tenant farmer expects his voice to be heard and he is prepared to resist any change he objects to. If mythic Iceland follows its historical counterpart, all the machinations of the storgodi will come to nothing. The farmers simply will not accept a storgodi's feudal authority, even if one is given the title Jarl (Earl). Eventually the Norwegian king must come to them for an agreement, cutting out the godi and rendering the title redundant.

The fact that mere farmers, many not even landowners, are empowered in this way will be striking to characters who grew up in feudal Europe. On the mainland, player characters may expect or demand deference from farmers, due to their title, wealth or martial power. In Iceland any abuse of a freeman's rights may result in vengeance or a lawsuit. Even minor matters will lead to some form of response, even if it is simply a bad reputation. As all Icelandic reputations are gained at a national level, a man's bad behavior will cause him difficulties throughout the land. For instance, a character known to be an abusive guest will find it very difficult obtaining shelter. In Iceland there is no one (other than outlaws) that the characters can push around with impunity. The need to respect even lowly laborers may require a few painful experiences to communicate to certain players. Characters that show respect and courtesy will generally have it returned.

Bringing the Characters to Iceland

One method of beginning a campaign set in Iceland is given in Chapter 9. It is assumed that the magi are newly gauntleted residents of the covenant of Wormhout in the Normandy Tribunal. If you do not wish to use the **Spider in the Ice** storyline (detailed in the next chapter), here are a few ideas.

The Dragon's Bane

Sir Ivain of De Panne (in Flanders), a landed knight loyal to the French Crown, has discovered a prophecy made by a dragon by the name of Pan Caudarax. The dragon has promised to raze the town in return for a past slight (see page 140 for the dragon's prophecy). Sir Ivain, anxious to save his town from the dragon, prepares to set sail for Iceland, where he knows the dragon has a lair. He plans to meet the dragon in combat and defeat it with his holy sword. The magi are encouraged to go with him. Perhaps their *sodales* are interested in the dragon, and the prospect of plentiful vis from the corpse. Perhaps they have a desire to protect Sir Ivain for some reason. Whatever the reason, their mere presence on the ship may be enough to trigger the Guardians (see page 7). If they get to Iceland, finding the dragon's lair may be difficult, but if they enlist the help of local magicians, then information on Pan Caudarax's weak spot may be forthcoming.

If confronted Pan Caudarax will ask why the knight wishes to defend thieves? Once Sir Ivain understands that Pan Caudarax will only destroy De Panne when his hoard there is robbed, Sir Ivain will withdraw his challenge to combat and depart.

An Eye on the North

The covenant of Heorot on Zealand in Denmark (see *Ultima Thule*) was established partially to investigate the threat of the Order of Odin. The Galdramen Hreppar may be the closest thing to the Order of Odin that exists outside the fireside tales of the Order of Hermes. If the Order learns of these associations of wizards, they may be intrigued or feel threatened (or both). Perhaps the best solution would





be to send a group of young magi on a trip of investigation. This may constitute a spying mission with the approval of the quaesitores or a diplomatic mission, depending on the skills of the characters involved.

Character Creation

Magus characters are assumed to originate from the heartlands of the Order of Hermes, and not be natives of Iceland. Therefore, the standard rules from *Ars Magica* Fourth Edition should be used to generate the players' starting characters.

However, as the saga progresses, it will be natural for players to desire characters that are native to their new home. One suggestion would be for each player to begin the saga with a magus character and one other, either grog or a companion (or neither, if so desired). As the first few stories play themselves out, players can develop new characters taken from within Iceland. Players might even begin with just a companion

character, and fill his 'magus slot' with a magician native to Iceland. However, it is suggested that only one player in the troupe uses this option, for the theme of this saga is one of magi foreign to Iceland striving to survive in an unfamiliar landscape and society.

The following lists give some ideas for Iceland-born characters. Note that some of these (viking, skald) are anachronistic in a saga set in the thirteenth century. However, these may fit in well with the many individual Sagas. Suitable Virtues and Flaws are given in parentheses after each archetype.



For the Story Arc called **Spider in the Ice** (see Chapter 8), it is important that at least one character has the Premonitions virtue. As this is a common virtue for Icelandic characters it should not be too hard to persuade someone to take it.

Magus-equivalents

Trollson (see page 51)

Traditional Galdraman (see page 45)

Mythic Companions

Seithkona: In most respects, the seithkonur of Iceland are identical to the cunning-folk of *Hedge Magic*. Their craft revolves around herbalism and the creation of charms and banes. However, instead of the Visions Exceptional Ability, a seithkona makes use of a fylgja (see page 32) and the Hamfarir Exceptional Talent (see page 55). Unlike her counterparts on the mainland, Icelandic seithkonur more rarely encounter faeries and so their skills should reflect this (Second Sight and Legend Lore, instead of Faerie Sight and Faerie Lore).

Schooled Galdraman: Use Natural Magician from *Hedge Magic*.

Spirit Masters (from *Hedge Magic*): Summoners of spirits who practice a shamanic form of the galdramen's magic. The Icelandic sagas often refer to 'primitive' magicians as being from Finland.

Companions

Witch (heid): Many Icelandic witches possess a Jotunn Affinity as well as the usual ability to curse. Some also possess the ability to Scribe Runes, Shapeshift or Transform. (Bane Maker +2, Magical Animal Companion +2, Herbalism +1, Bad Reputation (pagan) -1, Tainted with Evil -2)

Seeress (volva) and Wiseman (visindaman): These people predict the future in a wide variety of ways. (Divination +4, Second Sight +1, Visions +2, Premonitions +1)

Viking: More than just a warrior, a viking should be skilled aboard ship and well traveled. Those that lean more towards a well-armed trader or boat captain are more in keeping with the setting. However, the word viking really belongs in the 11th century. (Mercenary Leader

+3 or Wealthy Merchant +3, Well Traveled +1, Social Contacts +1, Ways of the Sea +4, Berserk +1, Fury -3, Judged Unfairly -1)

Skald (poet): Poets are an important part of Icelandic culture; many of the heroes of the sagas have poetic pretensions. (Free Expression +1, Inspirational +1, Audio Eidetic Memory +3)

Shapeshifter: Well attested in the sagas, Icelandic shapeshifters can take the form of animals such as wolves that are not normally found here. Like Berserks, Shapeshifters are viewed with suspicion, as they are unreliable and prone to acts of violence (Shapeshifter +5, Skinchanger +2 or Lycanthrope -3, Outcast -1)

Bondi: see page 21 and below (Bondi +1, Landowner +2, Storbondi +3, Social Contacts +1, Obligations -1)

Godi: see page 21 and 66 (Godi +4, Prestigious Family +1, Feud -1-4)

Grogs

Berserker: In pagan days these warriors were devotees of Odin; in 13th century Iceland they are virtually unknown. A man unable to keep his temper has no place in a civilized society (Outcast -1, Berserk +1, Fury -3)

Laborer: (Freeman +0 or Freedman -1)

Tenant Farmer: (Bondi +1)

Thrall: see page 66 (Slave -2)

Social Class Virtues and Flaws

Freeman +0

You are a freeborn man who does not own land or milk animals. You must seek employment in a household or as a hut-man.

Bondi +1

You are rich enough to form your own household and are classed as a bondi. You rent land from a landowner for a year at a time. If you fail support your livestock or your family, the landowner has a responsibility to support you. As a householder you have, in principle, free choice in your assembly attachment. How-





ever, it is usual to choose the same godi as your landlord. As many landlords are in fact godar, you may have no real alternative.

Landowner +2

As well as being a bondi, you own land and pay thing-tax. You have full rights to take part in the thing, but may be asked to accompany your godi to the Althing or pay him money to support those that do.

Storbondi (big farmer) +3

You are a particularly rich and influential farmer with a substantial income. You will probably own several tenant farms as well as one or more churches. You have the Temporal Influence Virtue without needing to buy it separately.

You may be asked to act as an advocate in court cases by your tenants and friends.

Godi (chieftain) +4

You have a substantial income from a large farm and several tenant farms. You possess a godord, which gives you a great deal of legal and political power (Temporal Influence Virtue for free). You appoint judges and form *panels of twelve* at both the *spring things* and *Althing*. You have a seat on the *law council*.

Your central position in the legal structure and the support of your thingmen give you great influence over court cases. A court case involving one of your thingmen will often be transferred to you. If successful, you often receive most of the settlement, or property confiscated. You are, however responsible for enforcing any judgments you obtain.

Storgodi (big godi) +5

A storgodi usually owns more than one godord. You control a region called a *riki* and you must belong to one of the five families competing for domination of the country.

You own many farms within your riki and in Icelandic terms are fantastically wealthy. However, as you have little right to any tax income from people with your dominion, you

Icelandic Characters

All Icelandic character begin the game with the following free abilities:

Icelandic Law 2

Legend Lore 2

Characters who are from wealthy backgrounds (landowner or above) normally possess the Educated (+1) virtue, but this virtue must be paid for.

cannot easily raise or support full-time men-at-arms.

Freedman -1

You are a former slave and are considered a dependant of your previous owner. He has an obligation to support you in hard times. Although free the stigma of slavery still effects you. You have a Bad Reputation of Freedman at 3.

Slave -2

You are a slave, the property of your owner. You stand outside the law; your owner is held legally responsible for anything you do. You are not legally allowed to defend yourself, even if attacked, and your owner can punish or kill you with impunity.

Outlaw -3 to -5

People are after your blood. It is illegal for anyone to give you any practical help or even advice. Only by killing three other outlaws can you obtain a legal reprieve. The level of the flaw represents the power of those who obtained the sentence. A man outlawed by a simple bondi (-3) might not have a large price on his head, but obtaining food and lodgings would still be extremely difficult. A man with a large price on his head will attract the occasional bounty hunter or opportunist (-4). A man outlawed by a godi will find himself actively hunted until the bitter end (-5).

Chapter 8

Fire and Ice

Introduction

A saga seeks to provide a structure and theme to an **Ars Magica** campaign. The individual adventures presented here seek to provide a frame around which you can build your own stories. This section of the book is aimed at novice storyguides or those without the time required to do everything. With the central theme and structure provided, storyguides can devote their available time and energy to the more detailed aspects.

The story-arcs of the saga are designed to run over forty years of game time, so there is plenty of room for storyguides to integrate other material. Although Iceland is remote, the saga has been written to allow adventures to be run in mainland Europe without difficulty.

It should be stressed that the following is not official Mythic history. This saga takes a particular *high fantasy* approach, with many assumptions, concepts and inventions that are not generally applicable to all **Ars Magica** sagas. The following should be seen as an example of an individual saga, not an official source of facts on the Mythic Europe setting. The fate of Damhan-allaidh, the existence of the Kerlingarfjoll valley temple, and Vindolanda are at the storyguide's discretion, even if he wishes to adhere rigidly to the official setting.

These two story-arcs work best as material for the main (or alpha) storyguide, as they set the tone (in terms of the level of fantasy) of the entire saga. Other people who wish to run stories can draw on other aspects of Iceland, or include stories regarding events in mainland Europe.

Theme

The theme of this particular Icelandic saga (like many Icelandic sagas) is feud. The saga chronicles the final chapter in the feud between the Order of Hermes and Damhan-allaidh. The characters have to establish their covenant under the constant threat of violent attack. Along the way they will have the opportunity to gain allies and undermine support for their enemy. At the same time the characters will become embroiled in another feud, between a galdraman called Einar Gamlisson and the dragon Pan Caudarax. All the while, a wholly mundane feud among the storgodi of Iceland is going on in the background (see page 18-19 for a synopsis of this feud).

The following chapters all concern the Icelandic saga that you, as storyguide, are going to create. Two major story-arcs are detailed in this book.

The first story-arc is titled **Fire and Song**. Chapters 11-14 detail the feud of Einar Gamlisson with the dragon that killed his family. This story-arc involves the characters with Iceland's people, both magical and mundane. Occurring before the climax with Damhan-allaidh, the purpose of this story-arc is to get the characters involved with the daily life of Iceland, introducing them to an entirely new setting unlike anything found in mainland Europe. Here, magicians live side by side with the farmers and godi who make up Icelandic society. While the Church frowns on the galdramen, they are not actively discouraged. Iceland therefore shows a microcosm of what the Order of Hermes could





achieve if it could integrate itself with European society in the same fashion.

The second story-arc, entitled **Spider in the Ice** consists of Chapter 9: Blood of Innocence, which brings the characters to Iceland in the first place, and continues later in Chapters 15-17, detailing the plot involving Damhanallaidh, his hatred for the Order of Hermes, and his plot to bring about its downfall.

Each of these story-arcs consist of several adventures often separated by many years of game time. These adventures are not written to be the sole action of the saga. As the events are spread over forty years, the storyguide will need to introduce plenty of other adventures.

This book has been designed to give all the background information necessary for storyguides who desire a moderate amount of historical accuracy. Storyguides are urged to consult some of the sources listed in the Bibliography if they wish to include more details, especially of historical events postdating 1220.

It is by no means necessary to be bound to historical accuracy during any **Ars Magica** saga, and an Icelandic saga is no different. The events presented in the adventure chapters are not related to history, but instead relate to the supernatural side of Iceland.

Although the structure of the story-arc has been designed to allow different possibilities, it is unashamedly linear in parts. Some roleplayers react with disgust and loathing at the very concept of directed adventures. Others stare blankly unless there are big neon arrows pointing them in the right direction. Steering a middle road we hope you and your players will not mind the occasional nudge in the right direction. As players often do unexpected things the storyguide must decide how much nudging to use. The storyguide may have to adapt later adventures to accommodate events outside range considered by the authors. You may however want to let the reins go immediately. The material is yours to do with as you please and we hope you find it useful.

Saga Premises

Ars Magica does not have a rigidly defined game world. Every storyguide must make deci-

sions about Mythic Europe and the Order for which there is no definitive answer. The story-arcs are written according to a certain vision of Mythic Europe and the Order. It is important that both the storyguide and the players are aware of how Mythic Europe and the Order function within this particular setting, as it may be very different from sagas previously played. If a storyguide wishes to run this saga as written, he may have to convince some players to accept a culture shock.

The first feature of these story-arcs is the high fantasy approach. Powerful supernatural events, places and creatures abound, in a style derived from the heroic fantasy literature of the Icelandic Sagas. The characters are, to an extent, expected to act as the heroes of the story.

Hermetic society is assumed to be mature and stable. The days of aggressive expansion are long over. On its borders individual magi and covenants battle various pagan and Islamic rivals, but others make peace and trade with them. The 'join or die' challenge is used within the Order's heartlands to maintain Hermetic domination, but on the borders it is seen as a mere excuse for Flambeau and Tylalus magi to exercise their martial skills. Expansion continues by the efforts of individuals and local interests occupy the attention of most magi, rather than there being a Pan-Hermetic Hegemony.

The Oath is interpreted pragmatically not dogmatically. In particular the 'Interference with mundanes' clause was enacted to prevent individuals drawing the whole Order into mundane politics. Most magi wish to pursue their arts in peace, not govern a kingdom or fight its endless battles. If the Church or Nobility regularly discovered magi attempting to interfere with their affairs or flagrantly flouting their laws, all magi might be endangered. Regardless of the Order's capacity to defend itself, the majority wishes to avoid this situation. So in regards to magi interacting with mundanes, the quaesitores only take notice if these interests are threatened.

The Order itself is not general knowledge amongst commoners, but rumors abound within educated circles. Individual magi (mostly Jerbiton) maintain some unofficial diplomatic contact with the Church and some courts. These secret ambassadors smooth over anxieties. Nobles are assured that magi will remain neutral in their conflicts and churchmen are

assured that no paganism or heresy will be spread. The Church regards Hermetic magic as sinful, but then so are adultery and greed. While the Church's interests are not threatened the Pope is not likely to call a crusade (witch burning hysteria is from a later period).

While traveling, magi can choose to be open about being magicians. Open use of magic is not itself a breach of the Code. But as with any openly sinful practice local churchmen may be angered at public displays of magic. Being discovered breaking mundane laws or otherwise causing a breach of the peace will anger mundane authorities, and this may result in Hermetic as well as mundane charges. Normally magi are very careful in civilized lands, but need be less so in the wilds. In general magi need to respect local laws and any legal process they might become involved in, or at least maintain the appearance of doing so.

Magi cannot swear feudal oaths, as this would require them to support nobles in mundane conflicts. Therefore unless a covenant is completely hidden or highly isolated it must reach a special agreement with the local lord that complies with Hermetic law. Most nobles are sufficiently cautious of magi to accept such a deal and most are content with taxes. Occasionally a noble might attempt to enforce suzerainty, in which case magi can act to defend themselves. Again, Hermetic law is largely pragmatic and circumstance can be used as mitigation. However, in Iceland, being *in thing* with a godi entails no feudal responsibility. The characters may find themselves in the position of having to argue this at tribunal with magi who are so set into the feudal hierarchy of mainland Europe that they cannot conceive of another way of doing things.

Within this saga young magi expect to find onerous clauses attached to covenant membership, as this is standard practice within the Order. There is no land of milk and honey where covenants welcome new magi without any conditions. The magi begin the game without a covenant and should be keen to accept any offer of membership, even if the conditions seem onerous compared with previous player experience. To the characters the offer will seem reasonable or even generous.

Fire and Song

The setting for this saga is Iceland itself, and has already been described in the preceding chapters. This story-arc is simple in execution: a galdraman by the name of Einar Gamlisson is consumed by vengeance, and the characters get caught in the middle.

Background

In 1210, Einar Gamlisson traveled to Norway to spend time with a distant relative called Bjarke Odd-Karnor, who asked for his magical assistance in a feud his family was embroiled in.

Einar spent seven years with Bjarke, during which time he fell in love with Yrsa, a young girl of the Odd-Karnor clan. They were married and had two children together. Eventually Einar yearned to return to Iceland and re-inhabit his farmstead. Einar traveled out a year earlier than his family to renovate the property and to re-





establish his ties with the Icelandic spirits. In 1218, Yrsa and her sons boarded a ship at Bergen, bound for Iceland.

Unfortunately powerful magi from house Flambeau were also on the ship. They had heard stories about the magicians in Iceland and caught a ship northwards so that they could destroy the Order of Odin. The presence of the hostile magi on the ship alerted the landvaettir and the First Guardian of Iceland, the dragon Pan Caudarax, flew out. Never one to waste time, the dragon immediately unleashed his fiery breath on the ship. Those that did not die from the flames drowned in the icy sea. With the threat dealt with, Pan Caudarax returned to Hekla.

When Einar heard of the tragedy, he was consumed with hatred for the dragon. Not understanding that the dragon had acted to protect Iceland (albeit in a callous fashion), Einar swore to destroy the dragon's family just as the dragon had destroyed his family.

Cast of Characters

Einar Gamlisson is the main antagonist of this story-arc. He is consumed by sorrow for his lost family, and driven by the need to avenge their deaths. Storyguides may wish to give the player characters cause to feel sorry for the galdraman's plight, but he is a cunning and ruthless opponent. It is said in Iceland that a man's worth is measured by the quality of enemies. If this is true, then Einar is worthy indeed.

Pan Caudarax is the object of Einar's revenge. He is an immense dragon who lives in the crater of Hekla volcano. Pan Caudarax is not a dragon native to Norse lands, but has made Iceland his home for over a thousand years. For more details on Pan Caudarax, see Chapter 12.

Bard Snaefellsass is a powerful trollson who has an interest in making peace between the dragon and the galdraman. He also considers himself the guardian of the land where the characters have their covenant, and so could prove to be a powerful ally. Bard is detailed in Chapter 13.

Spider in the Ice

This story-arc centers on a Thothian temple located in the Kerlingarfjoll valley and on one of the Order's oldest enemies called Damhan-allaidh (The Spider). The war against Damhan-allaidh (also called Dav'nalleous) is described in *Houses of Hermes* (page 42) and recounted in detail in the tribunal book *The Lion of the North*.

This story-arc has two main locations. The first is in Iceland and the second might be located anywhere within Western Europe. If this saga uses a troupe style of play with multiple storyguides, a secondary (or beta) storyguide could run stories involving the mainland location. A suggested location for this is the port town of De Panne in Flanders, and for this book that location has been assumed. However, the names and places may be easily changed to suit any other location within Mythic Europe.

Background

The Kerlingarfjoll Valley

Around 2000 BC the Cult of Thoth in Egypt was at the height of its power. A group of Thothian priests led by the legendary Setna sought out the most remote and secret place on the Earth in which to build a hidden temple to the god of magic. Spirits led them on into the heart of Iceland's barren elemental battlefield. There they found a valley shrouded in impenetrable mist. For years they sought a way to enter the valley, using all their magical knowledge and power, until one day a spell was cast that tore through the mist and revealed the valley to them. At its center stood a huge obsidian block out of which an arch was carved.

They built a temple about the obsidian arch and began rituals they thought would open a gateway to Thoth himself. Eventually the priests perfected their rituals and the Gateway opened. Few who stepped through returned, but those that did found their powers multiplied. The power of Thoth's priests grew and they constructed minor gateways of their own. But the wheel of time turned and Egypt fell to chaos. Thoth's priests were slain or scattered and the

sacred gateways to the valley were either destroyed or their location lost.

Damhan-allaidh

The temple valley remained undisturbed for over two and a half millennia, until a particularly ambitious Pictish magician was inspired by Christian tales of demonic power. His interest quickly turned to the goetic arts.

Damhan-allaidh (pronounced 'davan-alli', and meaning 'the spider' in Gaelic) grew confident and in 680 an ancient reed scroll inscribed with the name and description of powerful demon found its way into his hands. With this knowledge he summoned Hetep and negotiated the terms of his cardinal pact. Hetep offered him access to the most powerful ancient knowledge and the safest place in the world to hide his soul. Hetep led him across the sea to the megaliths at Carnac, in France. There lay a gateway to the Kerlingarfjoll valley. Hetep led him to the valley and taught him the ritual to open the obsidian gate. Damhan-allaidh stepped through while Hetep's demonic spirit hid within his body.

Beyond the gate lay the inner chamber of a vast temple. Seven stelae lay within the chamber, on which lay the magical inscriptions of the god Thoth. The spirit of Setna, the guardian of Thoth's temple, greeted Damhan-allaidh, unaware of the demon lurking within.

Although Hetep had attempted this many times before, Setna had always spotted him. For the first time Setna's sight failed him and Hetep was undiscovered. Setna found Damhan-allaidh worthy and permitted him to study from the stelae. For the next four seasons he studied the pillars as Hetep hid within him, slowly corrupting their magic to the infernal. However, as the corruption was on the verge of completion, Setna became aware of infernal power at work. Enraged, Setna fought Damhan-allaidh, forcing him to flee through the seven doorways that lead out of the temple and trapping him in the Glasvellir regio (see page 116).

He emerged from the Snaefell crater in 730 and returned to Carnac. Hetep promised him ultimate power if he re-entered the obsidian gate, but it would no longer respond to him. Hetep assured him that he only needed to wait for Setna's power to weaken and the gate would no longer be barred to him.

Pralix

In 767 AD the Order of Hermes was founded and wizards throughout Europe received the 'Join or Die' offer. Damhan-allaidh would accept neither. Damhan-allaidh's use of sacrificial blood magic and his recruiting of demonic cultists forced the Order to act. A group of Flambeau and Tremere gathered to oppose the Scottish wizard, and battle was joined in 808. The Hermetic magi were soundly defeated, but Damhan-allaidh wisely decided to take the Carnac gateway to Scotland where the Order had no presence.

In May of 814, the maga Pralix of House Tylalus landed in Northumbria. In a fiercely fought two-year campaign she defeated Damhan-allaidh with the aid of local wizards. However, Damhan-allaidh escaped after the final battle. Pralix found herself the leader of a large army of witches, druids, beast mages and spirit masters. Being a Tylalus maga she did not throw away this opportunity and with their permission formed the Ordo Miscellanea, in direct opposition to the Order of Hermes. Only intervention by Trianoma averted disaster. But Pralix had played her hand well and the Ordo Miscellanea joined the Order as House Ex Miscellanea, with herself as prima.

Cast of characters

Brighde Scot: Daughter of Donncadh Scot. She lives in the town of De Panne, where her grandfather Iain owns a large trading company.

Damhan-allaidh, a.k.a. The Spider: Ancient Scottish magician and diabolist, bane of the early Order. After his last defeat in 890, he was trapped in the collapsed sanctum of the maga Ealasaid.

Donncadh Scot: The son of Iain the Unbowed. He works for his father's trading company in the town of De Panne in Flanders. His father has taught him the principles of natural magic, in which he has grown proficient.

Ealasaid, Lady of the Waters: One of the original members of the covenant of Vindoland. Ealasaid's magical line descended from the Romeo-Celtic priests which served the temple of Sulis Minerva, in the English town of Bath. She died at the hand of Damhan-allaidh in 889.

Hetep: Originally a servant spirit of the Egyptian god of magic, Thoth, he betrayed his





god and now serves the infernal. He was captured by the Hermetic magus Victor in 875 and is engaged in a 332-year battle of wills with him.

Iain the Unbowed: One of the original members of Vindolanda, Iain was a powerful *gruagach*. However, the demon Hetep maimed his Gift and he can no longer use any of his former powers, although his External Soul (page 53) has kept him alive. In 1220 AD Iain is a merchant working out of the town of De Panne in Flanders. He was given the gatestone to Victor's sanctum in 888 and has hidden it from the agents of the demon Hetep for 332 years.

Liam the Shapeless: One of the original members of Vindolanda, Liam is a *gruagach* experienced in the art of shapeshifting. His efforts ensured the last defeat of Damhan-allaidh, but he was trapped with his enemy in the collapse of Ealasaïd's sanctum.

Macomb: An original member of the covenant of Vindolanda, he was the filius of Ealasaïd. He died at the hand of Damhan-allaidh in 889 AD.

Pralix: A Tytalus maga who first defeated Damhan-allaidh in 816 AD. She founded House Ex Miscellanea from the army of hedge wizards she had gathered during the war against Damhan-allaidh.

Victor: Filius of Pralix, who founded the covenant of Vindolanda. He captured the demon Hetep and engaged it in a battle of wills in a futile attempt to extract the location of Damhan-allaidh's soulstone. He is trapped within his sanctum, and the battle continues. He is utterly consumed with the need to destroy Damhan-allaidh.

Victor and Vindolanda

Victor was Pralix's apprentice throughout the war, and his gauntlet was simply to survive the campaign. Pralix granted him his sigil and named him Victor in honor of the battle. Victor went on to found the covenant of Vindolanda, built on the ruins of one of the supply forts serving Hadrian's Wall. The other magi consisted of two theurgists and two *gruagach*an. They dedicated themselves to the goal of protecting Scotland from Damhan-allaidh's return, joining the Praeses Septentrionalis (Northern Guard).

In 845 Victor found the gateway that Damhan-allaidh had taken from Carnac. After an initial investigation he took the gatestone

back to Vindolanda where the powerful theurgist Ealasaïd set to work on it.

Seven years later the gate's means of operation and the writing on the lintel stone were deciphered. The gate was activated and the Kerlingarfjoll Valley was discovered. In the next three years the maga Ealasaïd researched a Hermetic version of the gatestones. Using this new magic the magi of Vindolanda created underground sancta for themselves and used the gateways to link them to the main covenant site.

Victor created a sanctum within the Scartaris peak of the Snaefell volcano in Iceland. The theurgists Ealasaïd and Macomb found sites beneath the waves off the coast of Devon and within the peaks of Snowdonia.

In 875 the magi of Vindolanda captured Hetep. Further research identified it as a fallen Thothian spirit. Victor proposed a bold (or crazy) plan to persuade the spirit to renounce the infernal and return to its former master. He would enter a battle of wills with the creature via a specifically designed spell. Once begun the spell would only end with the defeat of one party. His sodales attempted to dissuade him, but he would not reconsider.

Understandably nervous about this plan, the other magi suggested precautions. The theurgists Ealasaïd and Macomb began work on a wards designed to confine both the demon and Victor. They called on many ancient and powerful named spirits, which would seal Victor and Hetep in a potentially eternal struggle. In 888 Victor entered a battle of wills with the demon, and a group was sent away with the gatestone that connected Scartaris to Vindolanda. Thus all contact between the covenant and Victor's sanctum was lost.

The following year the forces of Damhan-allaidh attacked the covenants of the Praeses Septentrionalis. Damhan-allaidh himself led the attack on Vindolanda. Almost everyone was slain, but the *gruagach* Liam escaped the destruction and bided his time for vengeance.

Tremere and Flambeau magi routed Damhan-allaidh's forces the following year. During the attack, Liam and Damhan-allaidh were both trapped in the collapse of Ealasaïd's sanctum. Despite their external souls, neither Liam nor Damhan-allaidh could recover while still under tons of rubble and 50 meters of ocean.

Damhan-allaidh's remaining followers fled north to the Shetlands and some went on to

Iceland. However, Hetep's demonic minions continued to search for Victor's sanctum.

The Gateways

These artifacts feature prominently within the Saga. The ritual of their construction was passed down through the centuries, from the priests of Thoth to the Cult of Mercury and then to the Order, as the Hermes Portal ritual. However, the original version was significantly more powerful.

The original gateways consisted of a pair of cross-lintels ritually cut from a single piece of stone. The lintels would then be enchanted to act as bridges between the mundane and spiritual realms. Once complete a daemonic serpent spirit would be summoned. This type of spirit appears as a huge snake with a head at either end, similar to Amphisbaena (see *Hedge Magic*, page 76) but far larger and more powerful. The priest would offer the creature sacred gifts (vis) for its service and once the price was met it would agree to connect the gateways capped by the enchanted lintels.

The lintels could then be transported to any location and set up. The priests could signal the serpent by standing before the lintel and imploring the creature to respond. The serpent would arrive quickly and stretch one of its maws over each gateway. Travelers entering the gate would travel quickly through the spirit and emerge at the other end.

The spirit is intelligent and can be asked to restrict access to the gateways in any number of ways. The spirit can identify individuals and those who have joined oath-sworn groups. However, it cannot perceive a person's motivations, such as if they are coerced or magically compelled.

Ealasaid of House Ex Miscellanea reconstructed the required rituals as Hermetic thaumaturgy. If the player characters manage to recover her notes and grimoires they may be able to make their own gateways.

The first step is to find a block of unquarried stone. It needs to be cut free in a ritual manner and transported to a Hermetic lab without being seen or touched by ritually unclean people. The block then needs then to be cut in two and each piece opened for enchantment as an invested device. Each stone must then be invested with a level 40 Rego Vim effect. This

effect both calls the serpent and helps open a bridge to the spirit world for the serpent. This enables the serpent to ferry people while remaining incorporeal. Given that the serpent is huge this is an important practicality.

The next step is to summon an earth serpent of the appropriate type. Although there are sixty of these spirits, each has an individual name and each needs its own summoning ritual. Ealasaid identified the names of 16 of these daemons and created spells to conjure three of them. These are in her and Macomb's grimoire, each at level 55.

If you are using *The Mysteries*, to cast the spell from text the reader requires a score in Hermetic Theurgy equal to the spell's magnitude. Alternatively any Hermetic magus can learn the spell, but they need to master it before use. An individual serpent can serve any number of gateways (although not at the same moment), but the more it is asked to serve the higher its price will be.

Daemonic Adjuration of [Name], Serpent of Thoth (ReVi Gen)

R: Spec D: Spec T: Ind, ritual

Once the spell is cast you must entice the daemon to appear. Roll a stress die + Com + level of this spell + Penetration + Aura versus a stress die + 40 (the serpent's Might). For every point by which your roll exceeds the daemon's roll, you accumulate 1 point towards summoning the serpent. If you accumulate points greater than the daemon's might, it appears. If the number of points is not sufficient you may perform the ritual again and add the points generated by the previous roll. All rituals must be completed before the next sunrise or sunset otherwise the points are lost.

After the serpent is summoned it must be bargained with. Its initial price will be 20 pawns and a further 20 pawns for each gateway pair it has already agreed to serve. A Com + Bargain + Theurgy + stress die roll can reduce this price by half the roll's total.

As a side effect of this ritual, the two gatestones can no longer be used as arcane connections to each other. The power of the spirit occults the connection.





Serpent of Thoth

These serpents burrowed through the earth creating secret tunnels and finding hidden caves for their master. They would also bury secret things in these most hidden places. There is no place within the Magical, Faerie and Mundane Realms that is unknown to them. The priests of Thoth used them to help build temples in the most remote and secret places.

Saga Advice

Virtues and Flaws

Many Virtues and Flaws normally available to *Ars Magica* characters are not appropriate to this saga. It should be noted that the values of

all Virtues and Flaws are always dependent on individual sagas and the storyguide should consider Virtues and Flaws carefully before the saga begins.

As conceived, the magi in this saga are joining a very isolated and secretive covenant. Assuming the storyguide maintains this, Virtues and Flaws related to social interaction with non-covenant magi are inappropriate as such interaction will be rare. It is recommended that the following Virtue and Flaws are not permitted.

- Quaesitor
- Hedge Wizard
- Infamous Master
- Tormenting Master
- Discredited Lineage

Vis supply is another crucial feature of sagas and in the Toframanna saga supplies are limited and communally held. Therefore the following Virtues and Flaws should not be taken:

- Secret Vis Source
- Vis Obligation



Serpent of Thoth

Magic Might: 40

Characteristics: Int 0, Per +2, Per 0, Com 0, Str +8, Sta +8, Dex +1, Qik +5

Size: +6

Personality Traits: Determined +3, Touchy +3, Knowledgeable +3

Fatigue levels: Tireless

Body levels: OK, 0, 0, 0, -1, -1, -1, -3, -3, -5, -5, Banished

Powers:

Movement, 1 point: The Serpent can transport itself to any point within the Mundane, Magic or Faerie Realms.

Gateway, 0 points or 5 points: The Serpent can bridge the gap between the mundane and magical realms, allowing it to swallow or regurgitate people and objects while remaining incorporeal. The presence of a magical archway, trilithon or similar structure allows the spirit to do this without spending might. Without a magical archway or similar structure this power costs 5 might points.

Knowledge of the Subterranean, InTe 40, 3 points: See or hear anything occurring under the earth, or know the location of anything buried in the earth.

Strong willed: No magic can compel a spirit of this type to act against its will.

bidden to reveal that location to other magi. Wormhout covenant will honor its debt to Vindolanda and remain an ally.

Library Study

Wormhout will be happy to allow the magi to study their books, for their standard fee of 2 pawns of vis per season. The storyguide should generate a library suitable to support the magi's interests; at least until mid-saga, where they should begin to look to their own efforts.

Vis Exchange

Vindolanda should quickly gain vis sources for Rego and Vim. Apart from vis gained through stories (including the Odadahraun, see Chapter 12), the only other source of vis will be from aura extraction, which also produces Vim. The magi will therefore need to exchange their Rego or Vim for other types. There are two ways the magi can do this.

The first is via their local Redcap who visits De Panne. As he travels around the tribunal he will attempt to exchange the vis. However, this takes a year for each exchange. He will not be happy carrying around rooks of vis and will refuse to exchange more than 9 pawns at a time. Additionally he will charge a pawn for every three exchanged.

Alternatively the magi may like to haggle for exchanges at the annual Galdramen Hrepur meeting. Icelandic magicians do not recognize vis in Hermetic terms, but understand rough correspondences. For example, Fire vis, Illusion vis, Warding vis, Weather vis.



Vindolanda and Wormhout

Two non-player characters, Victor and Iain, lead the covenant of Vindolanda. Both are extremely wary of the wider Order knowing their affairs. After the first adventure the covenant of Wormhout will be aware of Vindolanda's survival. The Quaesitor Iphimedeia of Wormhout will initially investigate, but Iain and Victor will be able to reassure her that all is well. Iphimedeia will agree to register Vindolanda as a covenant of the Normandy Tribunal. Redcaps will deliver and collect from Iain's house in De Panne, but they will be for-

Saga Timeline

The following timeline gives suggestions for the timings of the story chapters. Some of these dates are dependent on player action or inaction. The storyguide should never need to enforce any particular date. If the players manage to pre-empt a particular event the storyguide will have to improvise.



1220: Blood of Innocence (Spider in the Ice)

Hook: The characters are dispatched to help Iain Scot, an old ally of their covenant.

Summary: Iain's family has been guarding the gatestone to Victor's sanctum. A diabolist has discovered this and attacked them, kidnapping Brighde, Iain's daughter. He forces her to open the gate. The characters pursue him through the gate into Iceland. Here they find Victor and Hetep locked in spiritual battle.

Resolution: The characters kill the diabolist. Brighde is possessed by Hetep, and then by Victor to imprison the demon. The characters are invited to join the Covenant of Vindolanda and make Iceland their base.

1221: Thord's Feast (Fire and Song)

Hook: The characters are accused of sorcery by a local storbaendur, and are taken to the district's *spring thing*.

Summary: The storbaendur is suffering from the side effects of a curse laid on the eggs of Pan Caudarax. One of the young dragons is already dead.

Resolution: By removing the curse, the characters find their place in Icelandic society. They also learn that someone has a serious grudge against a dragon.

1222: Meeting the Dragon (Fire and Song)

Hook: The characters are invited to the meeting of Icelandic magicians at Eldborg.

Summary: The dragon whose eggs were under threat demands to talk to the "priests of Hermes," threatening to lay Iceland to waste.

Resolution: The player characters must appease Pan Caudarax. By doing this they also earn the right to gather vis at certain sites.

1223: Feast of Thanks (Fire and Song)

Hook: Bard Snaefellsass invites the characters to a feast to thank them for dealing with Pan Caudarax.

Summary: While at the feast, they learn a little about the supernatural powers that inhabit Iceland, but also become embroiled in their struggles. In particular they meet a clan of giants who could end up being their enemies.

Resolution: Some allies may have been made, and some enemies defused.

1230-1: The Glittering Plains (Fire and Song)

Hook: The dragon eggs are near hatching, and Einar Gamliison makes another attempt to destroy them.

Summary: The characters discover that Einar has escaped to the Glittering Plains, a mysterious underground realm. They follow him there and meet the denizens of this underworld.

Resolution: The characters have the opportunity to resolve the feud between Einar and Pan Caudarax either through diplomacy or violence. They may also discover the Obsidian Temple.

1240: Brighde's Gauntlet (Spider in the Ice)

Hook: Brighde's Gauntlet involves tricking the demon Hetep into revealing the location of Damhan-allaidh's body.

Summary: Hetep makes for Old Vindolanda, where he activates a hidden gatestone leading to the secret sanctum of Ealasaid.

Resolution: If all goes to plan, Hetep tricks Brighde and escapes in Damhan-allaidh's body. Meanwhile Victor is forced to sacrifice himself to save Brighde.

1256: The Spider Through the Mist (Spider in the Ice)

Hook: Hetep/Damhan-allaidh break through the Kerlingarfjoll Valley and into the Obsidian Temple.

Summary: If not stopped, Hetep manages to corrupt the stelae in the Obsidian Temple and begin the process of corrupting all magical writings in the world.

Resolution: Either Hetep succeeds and Damhan-allaidh guards the Obsidian Temple, or Hetep is thwarted and the magi are victorious.

1260: Into the Gateway (Spider in the Ice)

Hook: The magi complete Ealasaid's work on the Obsidian Gateway ritual

Summary: The magi must either help defend the sacred stelae, or break into the Obsidian temple to destroy them, depending on the situation.

Resolution: A climatic battle with Damhan-allaidh and/or Hetep ends this story arc.

Chapter 9

Blood of Innocence

Background

During Pralix's campaign (814-816) a grua-gach called Iain lost his powers after being attacked by the demon Hetep. Still possessing an External Soul, he continued to fight in Pralix's army. After Damhan-allaidh's defeat, he joined the covenant of Vindolanda with full magus status, but all attempts to lift his curse failed.

When Victor was sealed into the battle of wills with Hetep, a group led by Iain went into hiding with the Scartaris gatestone. All contact with Vindolanda was lost. Soon afterwards Damhan-allaidh destroyed all the covenants of the Praeses Septentrionalis.

For centuries Iain traveled the known world looking for a way to win back his powers. He never succeeded but has intensely studied the world around him and is well versed in magical things. From these centuries of study, he has gained some mastery of Natural Magic (see *Hedge Magic*). Using his experience and magic Iain became a wealthy merchant. In the year 1182 he settled in Flemish town of De Panne, married, and started a family.

In 1219 he became convinced that Victor was never going to conclude his battle, so he decided to approach the covenant of Cad Gadu for aid. Without an invitation he was refused entry, but his journey was not unnoticed. A diabolist, eager to earn the favor of Hetep, tracked Iain back to De Panne.

The opening adventure of the saga is triggered by Lord Peter's raid on Iain's home. During the attack Iain is severely injured, the gatestone is taken and his granddaughter Brighde is

kidnapped. His son Donncadh rushes him, his mother and his wife to the covenant of Wormhout seeking aid.

Setting the Scene

This adventure begins at the covenant of Wormhout in the Normandy tribunal. All the players' magi passed their Apprentice's Gauntlets within the last few years. However they have neither a covenant of their own nor the resources to start one. The covenant of Wormhout has offered the magi board, lodgings and some study time, in return for scribing work. Between their duties they compose polite letters to distant covenants and await the next redcap visit.

They dread that they may be struck here for years before a covenant deigns to invite them out of this purgatory, but they have little option. However, it does allow them time to get to know one another.

Wormhout Covenant

The covenant of Wormhout lies in a forest just outside the town of the same name. It is located about 42 miles east of Calais and 16 miles southwest from De Panne. It was founded in 886, sponsored by Vindolanda. Since Wormhout's founding the region has seen a huge increase in trade and population. The covenant is within a regio with the mundane level protected by a powerful Mentem spell.





The Covenant Magi

As the player characters are unlikely to conflict with these magi, only a brief description and minimum statistics are given. All have been magi for about 60 to 70 years and if the storyguide wishes to flesh out their statistics he might give them about 1200 exp in arts and 120 exp in Abilities.

Markus, Follower of Verditius

Age: 97
Apparent Age: 35
Size: 0
Confidence: 3
Personality Traits: Cautious +5, Meticulous +4, Brave -1
Reputations: Contemptibly Cautious +3, with Flambeau and Tytalus magi; Promising Theoretician +2, with Verditius and Bonisagus magi
Twilight Points: 9
Roleplaying Notes: Thickset man of average height, with dark brown hair and green eyes, Markus is the leader of the covenant and is an expert in sacred architecture. His parents designed the regio gates and seals which form the covenant's primary defense. The foremost Verditius Alchemist in the Order was commissioned to brew his longevity potion and now he only needs to fear twilight or violent death. Although a specialist in the Art of Vim, he has managed to avoid any temporary twilight through a combination of cautious magic and good fortune. Still, even he has felt the pull of the void on occasion and the last time it nearly took him. He knows remarkably few spells, preferring to invest a device with any effect he wants. He dreads casting the Aegis ritual, although fortunately his enduring magic means one casting can last up to ten years. He is busy researching a way to better master rituals, to cast them without risk.

Vera, Follower of Bonisagus

Age: 92
Apparent Age: 50

Size: -1
Confidence: 3
Personality Traits: Clear Thinking +3, Considered +2, Uncompromising +1
Reputations: Formidable +3, with Normandy Tribunal
Twilight Points: 15
Roleplaying Notes: A thin, diminutive woman, with graying blond hair and blue eyes, Vera is an important powerbroker in the Normandy Tribunal. Her high ideals have earned her several enemies down the years, even amongst some quaesitores. Her skill at Hermetic law, certámen and (unusually for a Bonisagus) Wizard's War has impressed even members of house Flambeau and Tytalus. Her specialty is deception and illusion, a tool her master used to teach that truth is always hard won. She now uses her knowledge and skill to expose the lies and self-deceptions that plague her and others. She often accompanies Iphimedeia on investigations.

Iphimedeia, Follower of Guernicus

Age: 89
Apparent Age: 40
Size: +0
Confidence: 3
Personality Traits: Dedicated +3, Judgmental +3, Brave +2,
Reputations: Impartial +3, with Normandy Tribunal; Dangerous +3, with guilty magi
Twilight Points: 17
Roleplaying Notes: A tall woman, with a strong build, light brown hair and brown eyes, Iphimedeia is often called on to investigate alleged Hermetic crimes. She is generally well respected in the Tribunal, although her passion for impartial justice has left her with a number of powerful enemies. Her specialty is in Intéllego magics and her constant competition with Vera has helped them both become masters of their fields. Few magi in Normandy seriously believe that Iphimedeia

could not detect their sigils on illegal magics, even those long expired. Several Marched magi have found their best illusions, transfigurations and masking spells useless in her presence.

Cornelius, Follower of Verditius

Age: 81

Apparent Age: 32

Size: +0

Confidence: 3

Personality Traits: Obsessive +3, Patient -2, Practical -1

Reputations: Apolitical +2, with Normandy Tribunal; Maker of Automata +3, with Normandy Tribunal

Twilight Points: 10

Roleplaying Notes: A lean man of below average height with black hair and green eyes, Cornelius is the youngest magus of the covenant. Cornelius creates marvelous enchantments that are part magic

and part machine. His goal is to create automata with true intellect, the capacity to learn and develop naturally; something Hermetic magi have never achieved. His best results so far have been able to play games like chess and even work out puzzles, but they have never developed beyond that. His creations are used to watch over the covenant's vis sources. Vera and Iphimedeia collaborated in their creation, investing them with powerful magics to remain undetected while piercing any similar magic used by intruders. These magics are restricted to operate only within the boundaries of the covenant's property and only work against concealments. Concerns have been raised that these enchantments might give grounds for charges of scrying. However, Iphimedeia is prepared to argue that entering covenant lands under a magic concealment is itself magical spying and the detection of such is reasonable. A test case has yet to be brought though.



The covenant of Wormhout exists on the highest level of a two-tier magical regio. A clear path leads from the town of Wormhout out to the nearby forest. A mile into the forest the traveler passes between two well-worn stone pillars.

The +3 level contains a central manor house surrounded by the living quarters for the grogs, stables, a smithy and a meeting hall. The manor house is where Hermetic visitors are entertained and given accommodation. A short flight of steps at the far end of the main hall leads to a raised section. At the top of the steps, two elaborately carved pillars stand within a complex mosaic floor pattern. The two pillars mark the entrance to the highest level of the regio, where only the covenant's magi and consortes can enter.

The entrance to the +5 level leads directly into a huge tower, containing the member's sanctums, Hermetic library and council chamber. There are currently four members of the covenant. Most are in their middle age; none are showing any signs of final Twilight. Their covenant was built on the hard work and cooperation of the founders and their filii. Their vis

sources are secure and regular, and their mundane and magical security is excellent.

Fate Lends a Hand

After the storyguide feels the players have had enough, he can start the saga by the arrival of two men and two women on a horse-drawn cart. The leader of the group is Iain the Scot. The previous night an English diabolist raided Iain's townhouse, stole the gatestone, and kidnapped his granddaughter Brighde. Iain was badly wounded and the diabolist and his men escaped to their ship. Donncaadh immediately set off for the covenant of Wormhout to obtain aid in the pursuit.

Donncaadh reaches Wormhout by the morning of the following day. One of the covenfolk escorts them into the first level of the regio.



Iain lies wounded in the cart. The visitors are taken into the mundane guest quarters and the covenant's most experienced chirurgian tends to Iain's wounds. If the player characters ask they will be told that the strangers are from the port town of De Panne. The wounded man is Iain the Scot, an important merchant who supplies exotic goods to the covenant. His companions are his wife (Eleanor), son (Donncadh) and daughter-in-law (Mari). Their statistics can be found in Chapter 18.

The Council

The magi are summoned to a council meeting in the main hall. Vera and Iphimedeia are away pursuing an investigation, so the only magi present are Markus and Cornelius. Donncadh is seated in one of the guest chairs reserved for ranking mundanes. As soon as the magi are seated Markus will explain the situation.

"I hereby call into session an emergency meeting of the Wormhout council. Let it be noted that all the membership currently present at the covenant are in attendance. Also present are [names of player character magi] and Donncadh, consors of the covenant of Vindolanda. Consors Donncadh has invoked the treaty this covenant undertook with Vindolanda at its founding in 886. Property belonging to Vindolanda has been stolen and under the terms of the treaty we are obliged to give assistance. Our first and only order of business is the arrangement of this assistance."

Wormhout is intrigued that Vindolanda still exists, as it was reported destroyed 331 years ago. But the treaty had no time limit and Donncadh presented the agreed tokens to invoke it. Markus and Cornelius wish to send the player characters, as neither is adventurous. They are prepared to offer study rights in the library and they initially offer two seasons. They may be persuaded to give four seasons if pressed. Magi that refuse to go on the mission will be asked to vacate the covenant.

Assuming the magi agree to help, Donncadh will give a description of the attack in De Panne. He will describe the stolen property as a single black stone engraved with magical script, but will refuse to volunteer anything else. The magi must then prepare to leave with their own shield grogs.

Donncadh has an Arcane Connection to his daughter and an Intéllego Corpus spell of level 10 (Arc, Mom, Ind) can give the caster a general direction to her or tell if she is alive or dead. Donncadh himself is capable of this, but as a Natural Magician, it would take him half an hour to cast.

De Panne

De Panne is a large town about half of a mile from the beach and docks. The town reeks of soot and fish. Near the waterfront, the land gives way to earthen banks. Fishing huts are scattered along the shoreline around the docks that stretch out into the water. Roughly 5,000 souls live within the walls of De Panne.

Iain's house faces the town square with its rear to the docks. As the magi approach the town they can see the smoke still rising from that area. The return of Donncadh will arouse interest and the locals will ask questions about the fire. Donncadh will give a cover story about receiving threats from overseas debtors. The storyguide may wish to expand this section with the local Burghers making more of a fuss.

Information on the attackers can be found at either the docks or the local inn called the Red Lion.

The Docks

Long weathered docks stretch for hundreds of yards into the shallow waters off De Panne. Dockworkers can tell them that an English ship left port at night, soon after the fire started; the sailors never said where they were headed.

A ship owned by Iain's company is still in port, its captain waiting for word about the owner and his family. Donncadh will organize the use of the ship and quickly make arrangements for his father's interests to be secured while he is away. Meanwhile the player characters can ask in town for more information on the Englishmen.

The Red Lion

This cheerful inn consists of three connecting buildings. Redcaps often use it and the pro-

prietor is especially friendly with the Order. A gray-bearded man named Pol and his wife Richilda manage the inn. If asked politely they will say that they overheard the Englishmen talk about returning to Exeter. Rooms at the inn are available and affordable.

Exeter

The journey from De Panne to Exeter only takes two days. Iain's ship sails up the river Exe to the quay of this busy trading port.

Sailors from Iain's ship can identify a ship already docked as the one that fled De Panne. The ship's captain lives in mortal fear of Lord Peter and will not be very forthcoming if questioned. However, he or a member of his crew might give information if approached quietly and offered money. Public confrontations will only lead to angry exchanges. If approached the right way the informant will say that a local nobleman called Lord Peter and his men, hired

the ship for a journey to De Panne. All the men were paid handsomely to do their job and not ask questions. They expected some sort of raid, but were shocked that it occurred right in the middle of De Panne and that a fire was set.

The player characters should be able to get directions to Lord Peter's manor. Commoners and merchants in Exeter hold him in low regard. Various ugly rumors link him with several disappearances of moorland farmers.

Lord Peter's Manor

Lord Peter lives in a manor house on the edge of Dartmoor. Close to the village of Coombe, the hilly terrain effectively isolates the manor and the villagers avoid going there. In fact the relatives of the manor's servants have had no contact with them for months. The manor is lightly guarded and the magi must either go through or sneak past them to gain entry to the manor.





As the magi arrive the magician has already reconstructed the gateway to Scartaris in Iceland and forced Donncadh's daughter to open it, taking himself, most of his men, and Brighde through. The sanctum's defenses slaughtered most of the men-at-arms, but Lord Peter's forces eventually managed to overcome them.

Six guards remain in and around the manor. The household servants are all locked in their sleeping chambers. They will be extremely grateful to be let out and find Lord Peter and his men gone. If released they will want to flee back to their respective villages.

Within Lord Peter's private chambers lies what passes for a diabolist's laboratory. In the center stands a stone archway, capped with the gatestone. Donncadh will wish to go through immediately and rescue his daughter. He may have to explain to the magi where they are going though. To open the gate Donncadh simply touches the keystone and utters an unintelligible phrase. The space under the archway is then enveloped in an impenetrable darkness. While he concentrates the gate remains open. See page 73 for more information on the gateways.

Scartaris Sanctum

The Scartaris Sanctum Floor plan appears on page 92.

The players enter the first chamber of Victor's sanctum to find two-dozen corpses scat-

tered across the large chamber. Amongst the bodies lay the remains of the chamber's gargoyle defenders, now smashed. The smell of blood is overpowering.

Donncadh will lead to way directly to Victor's laboratory. Half the chamber is given over to a Hermetic laboratory, while the other half is inscribed with two interlocking circles each covered by a shimmering hemisphere of ice. Within one stands a tall man wearing Roman robes (this is Victor filius Pralix). In the other squats a hideously dog-like creature (the demon Hetep). Silver ribbons of light snake out from both their eyes, connecting them. Both figures appear completely frozen with the only motion that of the ribbons. Brighde is tied to a chair on the far side of the laboratory.

As the magi enter Lord Peter is conducting some ritual over the ward containing the demon. As his concentration is disrupted, dark cracks begin appearing in the icy prison. Lord Peter will howl in indignation and attack the nearest target, with his crow familiar attempting to peck or scratch out their eyes.

The player characters must defeat Lord Peter and his familiar. If they are required, the storyguide can have some more men-at-arms defending Lord Peter. Once done, Donncadh runs to his daughter and begins to untie her as the warding around the demon cracks.

As the demon's old host body shatters along with the surrounding ice, the silver streams connecting the magus to the demon are severed. The silver streams from the demon whip across the chamber and strike Brighde and the spiritual form of the demon possesses her. Quickly overcoming the child, the demon shapeshifts its new body into its bestial form and attempts to rip out Donncadh's throat.

The ice surrounding Victor remains intact. However, the silver streams from Victor strike one of the magi as Victor attempts to possess them. Victor's penetration is 50 + a stress die, so resistance is unlikely. If Victor fails he will merely attempt the same on a different magus. The first magus to fail his resistance roll will fall into a fit.

After one attack on Donncadh, the demon quickly runs towards the far wall where a hidden door swings open. The demon flees down the tunnel at a rate impossible for a human to match. Shortly after this the tunnel collapses.

Lord Peter's Men

Characteristics: Int +0, Per +1, Pre +0, Com -1, Str +2, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qik +1

Size: +0

Personality Traits: Mercenary +3

Weapon / Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawl (fist)	+7	+6	+6	+2	+6
Longsword & Round Shield	+8	+8	+13	+6	+6

Soak: +3 (Heavy Leather Hauberk)

Fatigue levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Awareness 2 (on watch), Brawl 4 (fist), Stealth 2 (raids), Weapon and Shield 4 (longsword and round shield)

Lord Peter

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +0, Pre -1, Com +1, Str +1, Sta +2, Dex +1, Qik +0

Age: 39

Size: +0

Confidence: 4

Virtues and Flaws: Landed Knight +5, Demonic Familiar +4, Blackmail (Falkes de Bréauté acting Earl of Devonshire) +2, Strong Willed +1, Educated +1, Reckless +1, Susceptible to Divine Power -4, Tainted with Evil -2, Bad Reputation (kidnapper) -1, Dark Secret (diabolist) -1, Obligation (to Hell) -1, Offensive to Animals -1,

Personality Traits: Ruthless +3, Sadistic +3, Sly +1

Reputations: Kidnapper +1, in Newton Abbey; Refined +2, with Devon Nobility

Weapon/Attack

Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat	
Brawl (fist)	+4	+4	+3	+1	+5
Dagger	+6	+5	+6	+3	+6
Longsword	+9	+8	+10	+4	+8

Soak: +15 (with magical cloak)

Fatigue levels: OK, 0, -1 -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, 0, -1 -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Awareness 3 (ambush), Bargain 4 (demons), Charm 2 (nobles), English Law 3 (Common), Guile 2 (activates), Folk Ken 1 (nobles), Intrigue 2 (English court), Leadership 3 (men-at-arms), Occult Lore 6 (demons), Speak English 5, Speak French (Norman) 4, Speak Latin 5, Scribe Latin 2, Single Weapon 5 (longsword), Weapon and Shield 5 (longsword and kite shield)

Roleplaying Notes: A tall, thin man with typical Norman features and a short black beard, Lord Peter normally wears a long red cloak. His family came over to England in 1066 AD with William's army. One of his ancestors lived near Carnac and served Damhan-allaidh there, and the infernal has taken special interest in the family since then. Lord Peter received a fine education as a child and when his grandfather died he discovered a set of books on the occult. He has been promised greater magical power in return for releasing Hetep. His demonic familiar is a crow that once served as a messenger for Damhan-allaidh.

Whisper, Lord Peter's Demonic Familiar

Infernal Might: 25

Size: -3

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +5, Pre -1, Com -3, Str -4, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qik +2

Personality Traits: Sly +5, Cowardly +2

Weapon/Attack

Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat	
Beak or Claw	+3	+2	+6	-5	0

Soak: -2

Fatigue levels: OK, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, -3, -5, Incapacitated, Banished

Abilities: Awareness 5 (being watched), Stealth 5 (secret observation)

Vis: Four pawns of Intéllego in eyes.

Powers:

Swift Flight, ReAu 20, 0 points: Whisper can fly at ten times the speed of a normal bird and never tire.

Mythic Perception, InVi 40, 5 points: Whisper can see through any disguise or illusion, and he can hear conversations up to a mile away perfectly.

Eye Peck, PeCo 30, 5 points: A successful attack roll will scratch one of the victim's eyes (Might is spent after a successful attack). The subsequent infection will cause blindness in that eye. The infection sets in the following day and lasts for seven days. A Medicine or Herbalism roll of 15+ can save the eye. Alternatively *Restoration of the Defiled Body* can arrest the infection and restore sight.

Roleplaying Notes: This demon appears in the form of a crow, known as Whisper as it communicates to its master by whispering into his ear. Its rasping voice is inaudible to others, but is also difficult for its master to understand (Per roll of +6). He never repeats himself. Several of its masters have come unstuck over the years from mishearing some essential message. It is a cowardly creature and will revert to spiritual form as soon it is attacked.





The statistics for Lord Peter and his familiar can be found on page 83. The statistics for Brighde as the characters first meet her are also given below. Hetep and Victor are detailed in Chapter 18. Although Victor is still alive, his spirit has entered another magus as if it were a ghost. This is the only way that Victor can leave the wards, which prevent his body leaving.

Victor Offers a Deal

The player characters should find themselves in the Scartaris sanctum, with Donncadh dead or badly injured, the demon long gone and one of their sodalis fitting on the floor. After Hetep has collapsed the escape tunnel, Victor will realize immediate pursuit is impossible. He therefore decides to enlist the support of the player characters. Having determined the player's need for a covenant he invites them all into a negotiation.

Victor will use his powers to send all the magi to sleep (the equivalent of a Rego

The Thothian Watchers

These spirits were set the task of capturing and imprisoning Hetep by Thoth himself. However, they cannot capture Hetep while he possesses someone. Hetep can lose his watchers by returning to hell and in the past he did this as soon as they tracked him down. However, returning to hell now would undo his partial corruption of the sacred stela.

No stats are given for the watchers. They will not normally communicate with the magi and are completely fixated on their one task. Ealasaid's grimoire (see page 124) contains a spell to contact these creatures, which she used to inform them of Hetep's location. However, there is little point doing this now and they wait patiently for Hetep to make a mistake.

Brighde, Donncadh's daughter

Characteristics: Int +5, Per +2, Pre +2, Com +1, Str -4 (-1)*, Sta +0, Dex -3 (-1)*, Qik -3 (0)*

Age: 5

Size: -2 (0)*

Confidence: 4

*Figure in brackets shows her fully grown potential.

Virtues and Flaws: Incredible Intelligence +4, Latent Magical Ability +2, Charm +1, Strong Willed +1

Personality Traits: Mischievous +3, Curious +3

Reputations: Spoilt +1, with the wives of De Panne's merchants
Soak: -2

Fatigue levels: OK -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Awareness 1 (food), Folk Ken 1 (parents), Charm 2 (parents), Speak Norman French (cute voice) 3, Speak Latin 1 (nouns), Scribe Latin 1 (her name), Disputatio 1 (getting own way)

Roleplaying Notes: Brighde is a noticeably bright child. In her short life she has managed to pick up basic Latin and is already learning her letters. Her grandfather has shown her the Scartaris sanctum and she now dreams of becoming a powerful wizard like him. Her magical potential should be obvious to any magus who spends more than five minutes in her company.

Mentem spell of 25th level, with a penetration of +50). He will then use his *Morphean Landscape* power to communicate with the characters (see Chapter 18 for more details). The magi should find themselves sitting around a large round marble table. The chamber has no exits and fully armed and armored men (circa 870) stand against the walls.

Victor sits on one side of the table, with the magi in a semi-circle opposite. He begins by introducing himself.

"Greeting sodales. My name is Victor filius Pralix founder of House Ex Miscellanea, Disceptator of the covenant of Vindolanda, and I bid you welcome to my sanctum. Be assured that I respect the honorable intention in your presence here and I beg your forgiveness for this magical intrusion. Unfortunately my current condition does not permit me to greet you in the waking world, yet it is essential to the safety of the Order that I speak with you."

"I understand that you are all looking for a covenant and it appears that mine is in need of new members. I therefore formally invite you all to join as full members effective immediately. The scroll in front of you contains the covenant's oath. I am willing to answer your

The Covenant Oath

I, _____, filius of _____, follower of _____ swear that I am a magus of the Order of Hermes. I swear that I speak these words of my own free will and with complete understanding of their significance.

I hereby renounce any and all ties to other Covenants, and do solemnly swear my everlasting loyalty to the covenant of Vindolanda. I thereby undertake to guard the Order against Damhan-allaidh and his servants for as long as they may exist. I swear that this Covenant's goals, fortunes, hardships, allies, and enemies shall be my own. I swear to abide by the Covenant Charter. I swear to abide by the decisions of its council. I swear to regard my fellow member's lives as my own.

Thus may I be a valued member of this Covenant and work to ensure it grows hale and strong. I will not rest until the soul of Damhan-allaidh burns in the fires of hell and all his works are dust. May my magic desert me if my word this day proves false.

Covenant Charter

a) This Charter shall govern the affairs of the Covenant Vindolanda and violation of its tenets shall be a violation of the Oath of the said Covenant. The Covenant is defined as the totality of the living magi who have sworn the Oath of Vindolanda and abide in accordance with its principles.

b) On joining Vindolanda members agree to use all property currently owned or later gained, solely for the good of the covenant.

Article I: Disceptatorship

a) The Disceptator is the Leader of the Covenant and is elected from and by the membership. The Disceptator serves from the time of his election until his death or final twilight.

b) The Disceptator breaks any ties in votes called by the Council of magi.

c) The Disceptator can delegate any of his powers and responsibilities to another willing member and can withdraw them at any time.

Article II: The Council

a) The Council of Vindolanda is defined as the full membership of the Covenant. Seasonal Council meetings shall be held around the solstices and equinoxes.

b) The Disceptator may also call emergency council meetings between these times.

Article III: Duties of Membership

a) All members are required to perform at least seven seasons of covenant work in every tribunal period, for which they receive no allotment of vis. Further work is rewarded upon completion by the allotment of the three pawns of vis per season of activity.

b) Covenant work is determined by successful Petition to the Council and is rewarded, if required, upon completion.

Article IV: General Provisions

a) Any magus expelled from the Covenant loses all rights and privileges immediately and must vacate the Covenant within one day.



questions, so far as I am able. However, the demon that just escaped my laboratory must be recaptured as soon as possible, so please make them brief."

Victor is prepared to give brief explanations about the demon in his laboratory. The briefest explanation being that he was attempting to extract information about the whereabouts of Damhan-allaidh or his soulstone. He will vigorously deny any suggestion that he has broken the code, he has never made a deal with a demon. He will add that his approach was

unsuccessful. Note that it should become plain in their conversations with Victor that he is obsessed with destroying Damhan-allaidh, no matter how long it takes.

Despite his obsession, Victor wishes to save the child Brighde. The simplest way of doing this would be for the magus Victor currently possesses to make eye contact with the child. Victor can then pass into her body and imprison the demon. Victor would then serve as jailer until a more permanent solution can



be found; meanwhile Brighde would be freed from control.

As soon as the characters agree to join Vindolanda and swear the oath of the covenant, they wake up on the floor of Victor's sanctum. Victor can communicate with his host and can direct them to the Library where a grimoire contains tunneling spells. Using these spells they should be able to clear the escape tunnel in about 12 hours. They will emerge from a cave halfway up the Snaefell volcano.

Snaefellsnes

The magi emerge from the tunnel halfway up the southern slope of the Snaefell volcano. The exit is naturally concealed and difficult to reach. Making their way down they see smoke and fire from several farmsteads between themselves and the coast. Following the trail of destruction leads them to a farmstead. If it is approached, horribly mutilated men, women and children will emerge and make a frenzied charge on the player characters.

The Storgodi

As the characters battle (or flee) the walking dead, a group of thirty men on horseback approach. The Storgodi Thord Sturluson leads them (his statistics can be found in Chapter 18). His initial attitude will depend greatly on the characters' behavior during the fight with

Walking Corpses

Infernal Might: 10

Size: Varies (+1 to -2)

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)	+1	+0	-1	-1	n/a
Club	+1	+1	-1	+3	n/a

Soak: +9 (only cutting muscles and breaking bones affects the creature)

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Immobilized

Notes: Although the creatures can be immobilized, only burning, a Christian burial, laying their head at their feet, or a specific Perdo Vim spell will stop them moving. They do not suffer fatigue.

Vis: 1 Corpse in body (infernally tainted).

Thingmen

Characteristics: Int +0, Per 0, Pre +0, Com +0, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex 0, Qik 0

Age: 14-45

Size: +0

Confidence: 3

Personality Traits: Brave +1, Loyal +1

Weapon/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam Fat

Brawl (fist) +4 +3 +3 +1 +4

Longsword & Round

Shield +5 +5 +10 +5 +4

Long Spear +8 +9 +4 +7 +4

Dagger +6 +5 +6 +4 +5

Soak: +3 (Heavy Leather Hauberk)

Fatigue levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Boating (fishing) 2, Brawl (Dagger) 3, Icelandic Law 2 (procedures), Longshaft Weapon 2 (spear), Speak West Norse (farming terms) 4, Weapon and Shield (longsword and round shield) 2

the undead, and if the characters fight bravely he will be well disposed. Hetep's attack ran right through many households attached to the storgodi. The whole region is in panic over the attacks; Thord and his men have spent the morning fighting the 'ghosts' after driving the demon off. The appearance of foreigners will be highly suspicious, but offering aid in hunting the creature down will immediately win Thord's acceptance.

Ocean Chase

After the player characters ally with Thord he will inform them that the demon killed the crew of a Norwegian trading vessel and headed out with its undead sailors into open water. Thord has access to another vessel. The arcane connection to Brighde is still working (she is not a demon after all), if the characters think to use Intéllego Animál to account for her current form. Victor may need to suggest this. Hetep is likely to notice the scrying and cast spells to block repeat attempts. Arcane connections to

the ship are available in the form of wooden planking that was recently replaced.

Thord will lead his men and the player characters to the ship and bully the captain into taking them. Hetep has a head start of about 4 hours, but his ghostly crew has lost a lot of seamanship skills. As long as the magi can give the captain an initial direction, they should be able to locate Hetep's ship at sea. If you have *The Mythic Seas*, you may wish to make more of this sea chase.

Assuming the player characters eventually find and board the ghost-ship, the magus currently possessed by Victor will have to get into hand-to-hand combat range with Hetep. The demon may get a single attack on him before Victor's spiritual form projects into it. Once this is done Brighde's possessed body reverts to normal, albeit in a coma for about 24 hours. Thord and company will be very impressed by this powerful magical display.

What Now?

The survivors man both ships and sail them home to the Snaefellsnes peninsula. The slaughter of over twenty Icelanders and thirty Norwegians will lead to questions and Thord will wish to give a publicly acceptable story. Marauding monsters are not unheard of in Iceland, nor are magicians aiding in hunting them down. A service of thanksgiving will be held at the church on Thord's estate at Stad, followed by a feast.

If her father is dead, Brighde can open the gateway back to Lord Peter's manor. The gatestone can then be taken back to De Panne where her family awaits their return. The

Devonian locals will not be sorry to see Lord Peter gone. Given that Lord Peter staged a raid on De Panne and the disturbing reports from his household, it will be seen as justice done. The Burghers of De Panne will give their support if necessary. How deeply you wish to play the party's return through England is up to you.

Victor remains the Disceptator, but he will give Iain the day-to-day responsibility. Iain will provide funds and advice, but it is up to the player characters how they organize the covenant. Victor will occasionally summon the magi to dreamscape council meetings, but only when he must, as keeping Hetep imprisoned requires most his attention.

Brighde and Donncadh

At this point you may like to offer players the opportunity to run Brighde and/or Donncadh. Both possess the gift and so are magus-level characters. They would suit players who had lost their own magus in this adventure, or soon after. Alternatively, if Donncadh never receives Hermetic training he could remain as a Mythic Companion.

Playing Brighde as a player character may cause complications farther into the saga. But if you believe a player would be happy in this role then this could be a great opportunity. In fact you may like to ask a player not to create a magus for this first adventure at all, in order for them to later run Brighde. It should be noted that Victor detests controlling Brighde and will only do so in extremis. As Victor's apprentice Brighde will not be an adventuring character until after her gauntlet.





Chapter 10

Vindolanda

Vindolanda is an unusual covenant in that its main site in Northumberland does not contain any sancta for the magi. Originally, each sanctum was connected to the main site through a Gatestone, but none of these are currently active, except for the gate to Scartaris sanctum, which in the previous chapter was stolen from De Panne by Lord Peter.

Initially the characters will only have access to the Scartaris sanctum of the covenant of Vindolanda. The original covenant site currently has an infernal aura and is rubble. Macomb's sanctum has also collapsed. Ealasaïd's sanctum is partially flooded and sea life has taken over much of the structure.

The gateways to both Macomb's and Ealasaïd's sancta are buried within the wreckage of the Scottish site. The gatestone to the Temple valley lies within Ealasaïd's sanctum. As the saga is conceived the players will not find these sites until after the *Brighde's Gauntlet* adventure

(see page 120). But if the players pursue this course the storyguide can find the necessary information on pages 122-124.

The Scartaris sanctum has only two lab areas and enough living quarters for a handful of covenantfolk. Elder magi (Victor and Iain) currently occupy both labs and so the players will have to create more space. The covenant also has no vis supply or servants beyond those the magi brought with them. The Scartaris library has only the basics on the Arts.

Scartaris

The sanctum at Scartaris was the first to be created in the early days of Vindolanda's history. When the Carnac gateway was first opened, the magi of Vindolanda discovered the Temple valley and later Iceland. Further exploration revealed how vis-rich the island was. Damhan-allaidh obviously had some connection to the temple, so this location was not considered safe. Scartaris sanctum was created for two reasons: It provided easy access to the island's vis, and it was unknown to Damhan-allaidh.

Location

On the western side of Iceland the Snaefellsnes peninsula juts out about forty miles into the Atlantic. Just over 1440 paces at its tip, the volcano of Snaefell dominates its surroundings and can be seen a hundred miles away. Two main peaks lie around its central crater, one to

Covenant Profile

Symbol: A red griffon with its claws raised, on a white field

Founded: 816

Season: Winter

Members:

Victor filius Pralix, founder of House Ex Miscellanea (currently possessing the body of Brighde)

Ealasaïd filius Morwena, follower of Ex Miscellanea (died 889AD)

Macomb filius Ealasaïd, follower of Ex Miscellanea (died 889AD)

Liam the Shapeless, filius of Brude, follower of Ex Miscellanea (disappeared 889AD)

Iain the Unbowed, filius Liam, follower of Ex Miscellanea

the north and one to the south. The Scartaris sanctum is located deep within the southern peak, which has a +5 magical aura.

Victor created an exploration tunnel at around 500 paces. The resulting stairway snakes up nearly a thousand paces over its two-mile length. The entrance to the tunnel is well concealed by geography and is unremarkable. The nearest farmstead lies about three miles from this entrance.

Scartaris Map Key

Gate Room: 30 paces square chamber. 12 pillar arches support the high vaulted ceiling. The magical gate that the players first enter through stands in an alcove in the south wall. Two corridors lead west, one leads north. Elaborate mosaics decorate the floor and walls. On each pillar is built a perch for a gargoye.

Laundry Room: 12 paces by 10 paces. Large stone basins line one wall. When operating warm water continuously flows into these basins. On the other wall is a magical hanging rack. Any wet inanimate item placed on this rack dries within a minute.

Meeting Hall: 12 paces by 17 paces. Currently empty, but particularly fine ceiling decoration makes this an impressive space.

Kitchen: 12 paces by 6 paces. A well equipped kitchen. A large magical oven stands next to the west wall. The kitchen also contains Scartaris's drinking water supply. When activated a fountain will draw and purify water from a deep shaft running into a glacial fissure. A wooden partition wall separates the larder from the main kitchen space; it is enchanted with a charm against putrefaction.

Latrine: 8 paces by 6 paces. Two stone benches line the north and south walls. Holes cut into the benches run into the drainage system where inanimate matter is destroyed.

Servants Quarters: 12 paces by 8 paces. This chamber is partitioned into four separate sleeping closets.

Library: 12 paces by 10 paces. Contains four lecterns and four writing desks. About fifty books sit on individual lecterns in front of the walls. There is space for ten times as many. This room has been enchanted to pre-

serve the books. Amongst the books lie Iain's accounts and ledgers; see below for details.

Victor's Private Chambers: Contains a lectern, writing desk, bed, chests and cabinets. Victor's sanctum marker is displayed on the door.

Victor's Lab: After the introductory adventure, Victor body is still within the ward in the western corner. The laboratory is equipped but not stocked with any consumables. Making the lab functional would require a season's work. Victor's sanctum marker is displayed on the door.

Iain's Private Chambers: Contains a lectern, writing desk, bed, chests and cabinets. This room appears to have had occasional use. A strongbox containing 500 pounds of silver sits next to his bed. Iain's sanctum marker is displayed on the door. A pair of spare gatestones lay in a box under the bed.

Iain's Lab: Contains the equipment required in the laboratory of a Natural Magician. Iain's sanctum marker is displayed on the door.

Apodyterium (changing room): This chamber is used to undress.

Tepidarium (warm room): When operating this chamber reaches a warm but bearable temperature.

Caldarium (hot room): When operating this chamber is hot and steamy. Alcoves around the walls provide continuous plunges of hot water, arranged in order of increasing temperature.

Laconicum (dry heat room): This circular chamber offers the bather dry heat. It is isolated from the rest of the baths to preserve its dry atmosphere. Rising tiers of seats provide increasing levels of heat.

Frigidarium (cold room): This circular chamber is filled with cold water and those emerging from the laconicum are supposed to plunge straight into it.



The Wildlife of Snaefellsnes

The whole of the Snaefellsnes peninsula is infested with trolls. When detailing the Scartaris covenant, the storyguide should keep in mind that the trolls should be considered enemies of the covenant. They will manifest themselves in the saga slowly, stealing sheep and the like, but if no reprisals follow, they will become bolder in their attacks.

See page 30 for the game statistics of Icelandic trolls.



Great Bath: A huge rectangular bath (22m by 8.8m, 1.5m deep) through which pleasantly hot water flows. Steps around the edges offer easy access.

Lucas Bath: The tepid temperature of this bath is used to cool the body before returning to the Apodyterium.

Bath: Three smaller baths serve various functions. The one next to the weapons yard allows combatants to clean up before returning to duty. The one next to the southern caldarium offers a bath at a similarly fierce temperature to the caldarium. The bath off the southern tepidarium is at a tolerably cold temperature.

Weapons Yard: 40 paces by 10 paces. This chamber was used for weapons training by the grogs of Vindolanda. It contains some training equipment, although it is too brittle with age to use.

Secret Tunnel: This passageway leads to two miles of stairs, eventually leading out on to

the southern slope of Snaefell about 500 paces above sea level.

Note that at present, Scartaris does not have any spare laboratories. Player magi will need to carve out the space from the mountain using the spells in the library.

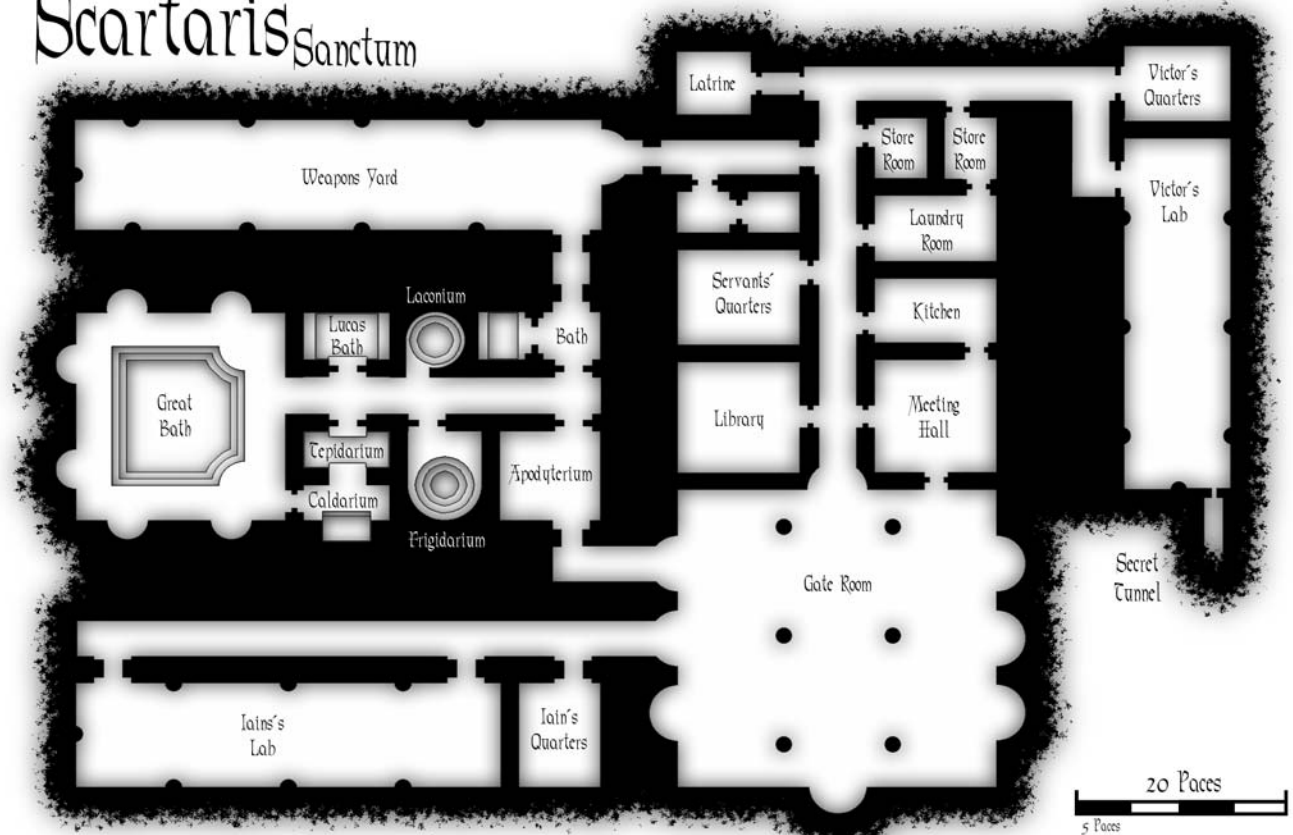
Magical Items

The Scartaris sanctum is highly dependent on magical items. The details of the function and activation of each are written in a single tome in the library. Most were commissioned from magi of House Verditius, using the copious quantities of vis discovered when Iceland was first explored. The relevant information is provided below.

Gatestones

As well as the gatestones that connected Scartaris with De Panne, Iain currently has an unused pair in a box under his bed.

The Scartaris Sanctum



Lighting

Within the gate room a brazier sits in the southeast corner. This provides lighting equivalent to sunlight through clouds. The effect is dependent on window-like architectural features in the ceiling; all rooms without their own lighting device possess these window features. It lights all areas, except for the magi's sancta, sleeping chambers and the library. If left alone its effect will be continuous. Alternatively, it can be turned on or off by a user twenty-four times per day. The effect includes an *Imáginem* requisite, which gives the illusion of open sky through the window features.

Individual items provide lighting in the sanctums, library, private chambers and servant quarters. Each creates a weird shadowless light that suffuses the room and can be activated/deactivated twenty-four times per day.

Heating

The same brazier that gives the light maintains the temperature for the main areas of the covenant. Its effect includes both *Creo* and *Perdo* and so it acts to maintain an even temperature, except in rooms with their own heating or cooling item, such as those in the bathing complex. The effect is constant, but touching the item and concentrating can control the exact temperature.

Individual items serve to regulate the various rooms of the bathing complex. Someone touching the item can set each at the desired temperature via concentration. Initially all these items are inactive.

The cooking range in the kitchen is also enchanted. The temperature of this item can also be adjusted by a user concentrating.

Water and Drainage

A fountain in the kitchen draws and purifies water from a deep shaft leading to a glacial fissure. It can be activated an unlimited number of times per day, and maintains its flow while the user concentrates.

Two large silver vessels, partially hidden in the western wall of the great bath chamber, supply the water for the baths. One supplies steaming hot water, the other produces water at a tepid temperature. A complex series of lead-lined channels carries the water to various

rooms, where it is mixed to produce the desired temperature. Additional magic items achieve further refinements to the temperature of both the rooms and the water. All these devices are initially inactive.

Lead lined drains carry away the continual overflow (when active) to a large bronze vat. The vat is invested with a powerful *Perdo* effect that destroys any inanimate material apart from metal and gemstones.

Miscellaneous

The rack in the laundry room uses a *Perdo Aquam* effect to dry clothes. The air is kept fresh with a T: Structure version of *Chamber of Spring Breezes*.

Library

Spells

***Grimoire of the Hidden*, by Timon, follower of Tremere**

Eyes of the Gnome (InTe 30)

R: Per, D: Sun, T: Spec

Allows the caster to see through up to a thousand paces of rock and study its formation at any point. The caster is able to sense intuitively the stability of any section he studies within 100 paces. Details can be seen within 15 paces.

Carve the Mystic Tunnels (PeTe req Re 25)

R: Touch, D: Spec, T: Spec

This spell allows the caster to tunnel into earth and rock. As the caster walks forward the earth or rock before him is destroyed. The spell also shores up the tunnel, preventing its collapse while the spell is active. The caster has full control of his direction, and the spell continues until he emerges, or until Sun duration has expired. Unless the tunnel is mundanely supported, it may collapse as soon after the spell ends. Using 'Eyes of the Gnome' it may be possible to navigate through stable sections of rock.

Soothing the Earth's Wound (MuTe req Re 20)

T: Touch, D: Sun/Inst, T: Spec

This spell transforms the walls, ceiling and floor of a tunnel or chamber into clay while





maintaining its shape. The pressure of the Rego effect fuses any cracks together. When the spell expires the walls, ceiling and floor should be an unbroken solid up to a pace thick. This spell is most effective on rock, but it will also create extremely tightly packed earth, which may serve in a dry environment. The addition of vis will transform the material into granite, ensuring the tunnel's stability even through earth.

Carve the Mystic Caverns (PeTe req Mu 40)

R: Touch, D: Inst, T: Str; Ritual

This effect carves out a huge underground structure to the caster's design. The spell will change the surrounding earth or stone into solid granite, providing a great deal of support. However, unlike *Conjure the Mystic Tower*, the spell depends greatly on the caster's architectural skill. Elaborate designs may require an Intelligence + Architecture roll to ensure their long-term stability. The internal facing may be in whatever stone is desired, including the highest quality marbles and even complex mosaics. The caster must have a complete design before him as he casts the spell.

Grimoire of the Hearth, by Notatus, filius of Bonisagus

The grimoire contains one *Aegis of the Hearth* spell, written at level 20. The work includes notes on its design and how it can be incorporated into Hermetic Theory. The book has been rebound with additional notes on how to design a similar ritual specifically for underground structures: a T: Str version, operating 5 levels higher than its spell level.

Hermetic Books

The Encyclopedia of the Hermetic Arts, by Cato filius of Bonisagus. Effectively a set of Libri quaestionum on all arts, Target 0, Quality 13 and Target 3, Quality 13. Bound in five volumes.

Principia Hermetica: Compendium de Principiis Hermeticae Magia, vel de Formis et Potentiis Vis Occultae, ac de Invocatione, Abjuratione, Transmutatione, Conjuracione et Divinatione. An authority on Hermetic Theory by Bonisagus, bound in a single tome.

Enchantments. A concise set of descriptions and instructions for the enchantments present at Scartaris, Glyder-Fawr (Macomb's sanc-

tum) and The Sea Temple (Ealasaid's sanctum). They contain no Hermetic information on their creation and cannot be used as lab texts.

Mundane Books

Artes Liberales ***'The Heavens'***, Summa 5, Quality 9; Craft (Architecture) ***'On Architecture'***, Summa 5, Quality 10; Legend Lore ***'On the Gods'*** Tractatus, Quality 9; Philosophiae ***'Asclepius'***, Summa 5, Quality 7; Philosophiae ***'On the Gods'***, Tractatus, Quality 6; Occult Lore ***'Pupil of the World'*** Tractatus, Quality 6.

The Baths

The baths are currently dry, with all the associated magical items inactive. To restore the baths to working condition the various activation actions for the items must be learnt. After this the operator must carefully set each device to its proper balance of temperature and flow. The various heating and cooling devices are potentially dangerous and setting them all up is not trivial.

If approached in a logical and cautious fashion all the rooms and baths may be set to modest temperatures and then adjusted incrementally to desired levels. Conversely, if the devices are merely turned on to their full potential the caldaria will cause +5 damage per round, the laconicum +10, and the frigidarium will freeze up causing a flood.

It will take about a month of work to bring the baths to full working order and about an hour every week making minor adjustments. They will require at least two full time attendants to keep clean, more if frequently used. In addition they will require a season of repairs by a mason every five years.

Old Vindolanda

It is in the magi's interest to investigate the site before *Brighde's Gauntlet* so they will know what to expect and may be better prepared. Ideally the magi should be forced to retreat on their first encounter with Ammon and his minions.

The players can then research spells or invest items to help them on their return visit. The Storyguide may want to adjust the timing of *Brighde's Gauntlet* to fit with the magi's actions and capabilities.

Location and History

Vindolanda was the name of one of the major Roman supply forts that served Hadrian's Wall. Located half way along the wall the site is about a mile northwest of the village of Bardon Mill in Northumberland.

The covenant restored the original Roman fortress to the height of splendor and protected it for mundane notice by using illusions and a type of *The Shrouded Glen* ritual. Although physically south of the wall, the covenant allied itself with Loch Leglean as part of the *Praeses Septentrionalis*. After its capture by Damhan-allaidh in 889, a Hermetic army led by Tremere and Flambeau magi reduced it to rubble.

A large number of innocent locals and covenfolk were killed in the attack. Damhan-allaidh had imprisoned them to fuel his sacrificial magic and the leaders of the Tremere and Flambeau decided to leave no witnesses to the magical conflict. The combined acts of diabolic sacrifice by Damhan-allaidh and callous murder by the Hermetic magi both served hell's purpose. The powerful *Shrouded Glen* effect prevented any of the victims receiving a decent Christian burial and now the shades of the slain beg for mercy as they re-enact their final moments every night. The stain of this evil overtook the original magic aura and now an infernal regio has replaced it.

Ruins

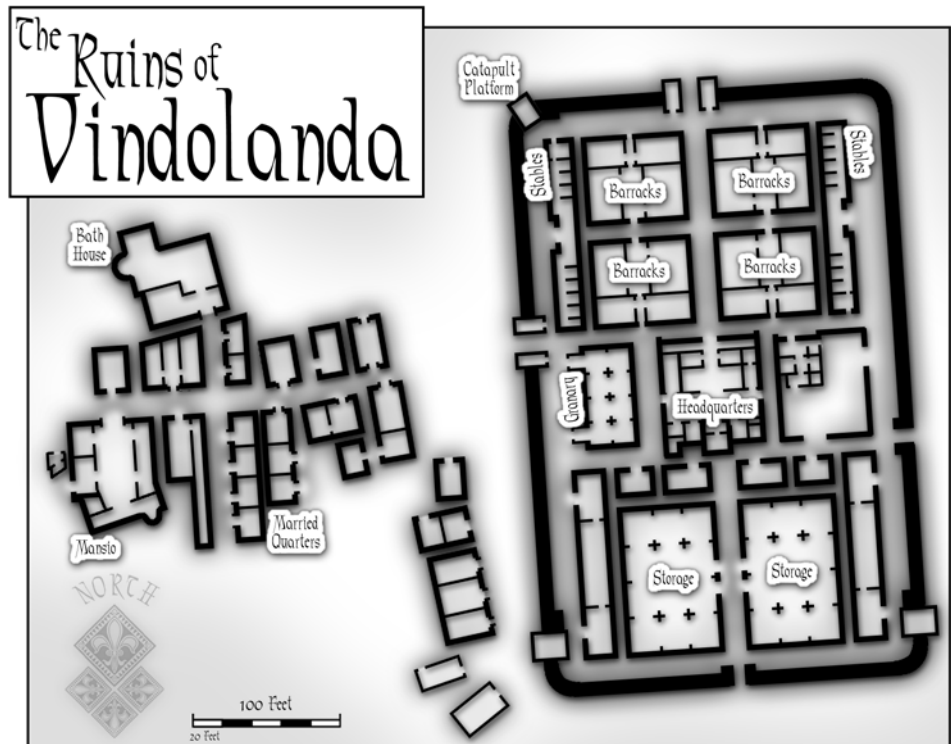
There are two obstacles to finding this site. The combination of the illusion and *Shrouded Glen* effect is infernally corrupted. A Perception stress roll of 12+ must be made to find the area, but anyone trying is likely to fall victim to an unfortunate

accident. Also, the site is now in a three-tier infernal regio (+1, +3, +6). One of Hetep's former minions rules this regio, commanding a score of infernal beasts on various levels.

Several Hermetic magi have investigated this site for vis. Infernally tainted Mentem can be harvested from the mid level (+3). The demonic ruler of the regio sends down tiny white salt crystals (formed from the tears of the ghosts), to attract more Hermetic visitors. However, since the original covenant that claimed the site was of the ill-fated *Castrum Antiquum* (See *Heirs to Merlin*, page 15), magi have viewed this source with suspicion. Currently Burnham covenant owns the harvesting rights as part of a legal settlement. After visiting the site once they investigated its history and thought better of returning. They now intend to offer the site to the next naive young covenant they can maneuver into an exchange.

The Gatestones

While Ammon is still present, access to the gatestones is very difficult. The demon lord will not allow magi into the top level, so spells with enough penetration to defeat the demon's Might must be used. Even if the characters





reach the top level, the gatestones are buried under tons of rubble.

After the infernal creatures are banished or killed, providing a Christian burial for the victims of both Damhan-allaidh and the Order can destroy the regio. The area will be restored to a two tier magical regio (+2, +4) within a decade. Trying to excavate the site while it is still within the infernal regio would invite further attacks by infernal creatures, and many fatal accidents would befall the workers.

If the magi have followed Hetep to the site, then the Sea Temple gatestone will have already been excavated and set up.

Other Sancta

There are at least two other sancta of Vindolanda. The first is the **Sea Temple Sanctum**, which belonged to Ealasaïd. She kept its real-world location a secret from the members of her

covenant. Only she knew that it was situated near the Isle of Lundy, under the sea between Devon and Wales.

The **Glyder Fawr Sanctum** belonged to Macomb, Ealasaïd's former apprentice. Before Pralix's arrival in Britain, Ealasaïd filia Morwena had fled her home in Wales after threats from Díedne magi. When the members of Vindolanda established their own sancta far from the main covenant site, Ealasaïd decided to reclaim her ancestral lands, which were close to Cad Gadu (Domus Magna of House Ex Miscelanea). Her first sanctum was built under Glyder Fawr, which she left to her filius Macomb when she moved to the Sea Temple.

The peak of Glyder Fawr lies north of the Welsh mountain Yy Wydda (Snowdon), about 10 miles east of the port of Caernarfon, off the pass of Llanberis. Glyder Fawr is just under a thousand paces above sea level and the sanctum lies about 100 paces beneath the peak, within its powerful +7 magical aura. Access to the passageway is via a cave system farther down the southern side of the mountain. The entrance to

Ammon, Master of the Hidden Revels, Torturer of the Dead

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +1, Pre -6, Com +0, Str +8, Sta +12, Dex +3, Qik +0

Infernal Might: 40

Size: +2

Personality Traits: Cruel +6, Secretive +3, Cautious +2

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Claws	+8	+11	+8	+10	n/a

Soak: +14

Fatigue levels: Tireless

Body levels: OK, 0, 0, -1, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated, Banished

Powers:

Weight of a Thousand Hells, CrMe 25, 1 point: As the hermetic spell (see **ArM4**, page 145)

Control Regio, ReVi40, 0 points: Ammon can control who enters or leaves the infernal regio around Vindolanda. Spells designed to allow travel between regio levels must defeat his Infernal Might of 40 to operate.

The Unblinking Eye, InIm30, 0 points. Ammon can shift his perception to any point within the bounds of the infernal regio. This scrying is undetectable by Parma or any Hermetic effect.

Sow Discord, CrMe, MuMe10, 1 point: The demon can subtly change and create emotions within people inside his regio. Using this power he attempts to manipulate visitors. An Int roll of 9+ will allow the victim to recognize the unnatural urge. This roll may be modified by relevant personality traits.

Ill Fortune, CrVi 30, 2 points: The victim automatically botches on any stress roll of '0'.

Roleplaying Notes: Ammon appears as a dried corpse dressed in the remains of once fine robes. By creating the infernal regio Ammon has tied himself into physical form within it, which makes him vulnerable to physical attack and prevents his retreat. If his regio is assaulted Ammon will defend it until he is banished. However, he has not gathered any new souls in a hundred years and Ammon hopes to be defeated. He will therefore allow a retreat, with mocking insults to encourage a return.

Vis: 8 Corpus in body, 4 Perdo in heart, 4 Mentem in brain

Infernal Rat Swarm (10)

Individual Characteristics: Cun +2, Per +2, Pre -6, Com +0, Str -7, Sta -3, Dex +0, Qik +1

Infernal Might: 5

Individual Size: -4

Personality Traits: Curious +2, Greedy +1, Vicious +3

Powers:

Swarm, 0 points: Each rat swarm contains about a hundred individuals. When attacked by a swarm of rats the victim will be bitten on any exposed flesh. Anyone wearing full armor, including helm and gauntlets will be relatively safe. Those wearing loose clothing will be most at risk. The SG must rule on the degree of protection afforded each player and consult the table below.

Degree of Protection

Damage roll per round (armor does not add to soak)

None (loose clothes)

9 + Stress Die

Minimum (sturdy clothing)

6 + Stress Die

Moderate (winter garb or hauberk)

3 + Stress Die

Good (half armor)

0 + Stress Die

Excellent (full armor)

-3 + Stress Die

Total (full armor with helm and gauntlets) -6 + Stress Die

Anyone being attacked by the swarm will be able to kill a number of rats equal to his Brawl + Dex each round. As soon as over half the rats have been killed, the swarm will retreat. Spells that affect areas like *Arc of Fiery Ribbons* may be able to kill the entire swarm if placed correctly. However, using such spells while the swarm is attacking would certainly include the victim in the effect (you better hope your sodalis's Parma is up to the job).

the sanctum via Macomb's lab is blocked for about 10 paces and Macomb's lab is impassable.

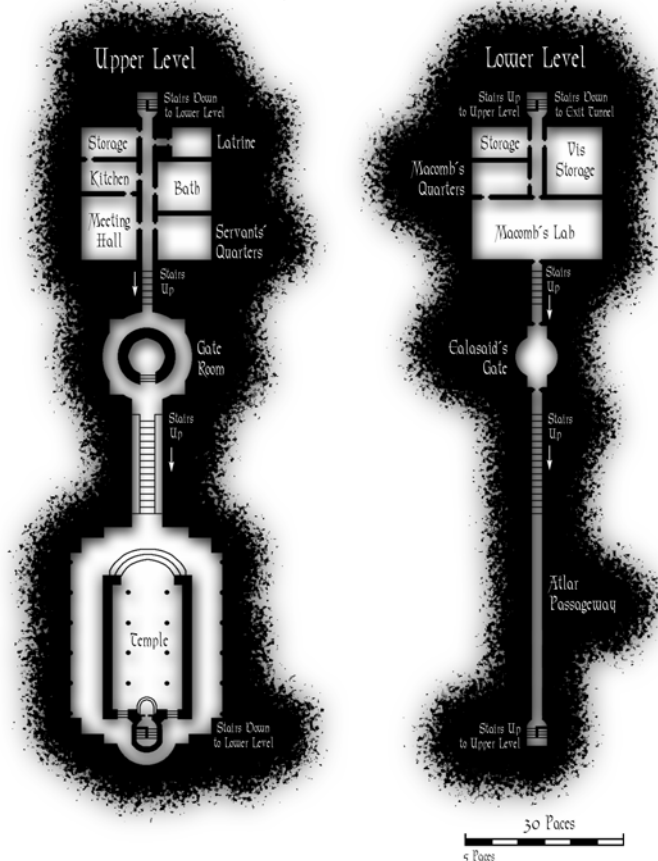
The Glyder Fawr site possessed an extremely strong magical aura, ideal for Macomb and Ealasaid's ritual magic. They advised Victor on the design of a temple to further enhance the site's potential. The resulting structure surpassed their expectations. However, the aura proved too strong for servants to stay safely and so the covenfolk did not use the quarters here. Macomb's apprentice was using one closet at the time of Damhan-allaidh's attack.

When Damhan-allaidh attacked this site Macomb was quickly slain. Macomb's apprentice managed to call a number of elemental spirits and commanded them to attack. The ensuing fight brought most of the sanctum down and forced Damhan-allaidh to retreat. However, Macomb's apprentice was dead at that point.

The most likely way in which the characters will reach Glyder Fawr is through the gatestone in Old Vindolanda. Two of the earth elementals summoned by Macomb's apprentice



The Glyder Fawr Sanctum





remain at the site. Cadell is eager to engage intruders in combat, but will not make any unprovoked attack. Enan is more considered and will attempt to persuade the party to leave without violence. Both are good-natured and unless the player characters appear seriously to threaten them, they will refrain from lethal force. If the magi can convince the spirits that they are members of Vindolanda the spirits will welcome them and report on their battle with Damhan-allaidh. If the magi wish to reoccupy the site, Enan will bring up the matter of the rent. One pawn each per year was the original deal made with Vindolanda, but the spirits are not beyond reasoning with. They will start at over six hundred pawns (one per year each) and can be bargained down to around sixty pawns payable over the next decade. For a suitable consideration they may be persuaded to restore the site to its former glory as well.

Liam's sanctum does not occur in this saga, nor does Iain's original sanctum. The storyguide should feel free to add these (and any other) sancta to Vindolanda. However, being grua-gachan neither required a laboratory.

Kerlingarfjoll Valley

Location

The valley is located within an encircling range of mountains 30 km southwest of the peak of the Hofsjokull glacier. It is warm, green and fertile, surrounded by high glacier-topped mountains on all sides, and the ground is peppered with steam vents, which keep the area warm and shrouded in mist. The valley is about four miles long and a mile wide with a small river running through.

The valley contains a two-tier regio. The mundane level consists of only fertile grassland. The first magical level (+4) is one mile long and half of a mile wide. It contains a ruined temple in the Egyptian style, and the climate at this level is warmer and the sun appears higher in

the sky. The third level (+9) only extends over the temple complex and walkway. On this level the temple is complete and the climate is Mediterranean. Astronomical observations on this level will be consistent with those taken at Memphis in Egypt.

The valley is under a powerful magical effect. Anyone attempting to climb to the valley is beaten back by increasingly powerful wind and weather. This ancient enchantment has a penetration of +120. This effect also acts as a level 120 *Aegis* about the valley, although it does not impede the magic of creatures within. A *Wind of Mundane Silence* powerful enough to affect a level 120 spell will overcome the effect for D: Sun.

Around the 30th of June each year the warding fails for about two and half minutes (one diameter) at midnight. Within these times the mundane level may be found. Only Hetep is aware of this short break in the warding (he was present when Setna created it). The upper levels however are impossible to reach without the aid of magic. A Perception + Second Sight roll of 15+ will allow a character to move between levels. Spells to travel between levels must penetrate a magic resistance of 30 to operate.

The Temple

On the highest level of the regio, a paved road runs for about hundred paces to the temple entrance. Five trilithons stand across this road, each has an enchanted lintel. Four can no longer be used due to the destruction of their partner gate. However, the gateway trilithon furthest from the temple connects to Ealasaid's Lundy Sanctum (originally located in cave near Carnac). Within the temple itself stands a solid block of obsidian, formed into an archway, eight paces across, sixteen paces high, and one meter thick; this was the gateway originally found by the Thothian priests and it connects to its twin within the Obsidian Temple.

Hieroglyphics on the temple walls tell of Setna's journey to the valley and the building of the temple. It also tells of his journey through the Obsidian Gateway into the presence of Thoth.

The sacred architecture of the temple complex is focused on the opening of the gateway. Any other type of magic that normally benefits

from a magical aura performed within this level of the regio receives no benefit from the magic aura. Infernal powers suffer the usual -9 to their penetration.

Visions

Any Gifted person who views the Obsidian Gate will feel an intense desire to go through it. The first time a magus touches the gate they will fall into a fit and experience visions.

The magus sees a large man (Damhanallaidh as he was in 681) standing before the gateway, performing a ritual. His shadow is twisted and his eyes seem to be shrouded in darkness, even in the brightly lit chamber. The gateway opens and he steps through. From that moment a dark wave appears to sweep out from the gate. As the wave passes over the walls the hieroglyphics change and images on the walls twist into demonic aspects. After this the magus sees images of the entire Order falling into diabolism, of cunning folk being burnt at stakes, crusaders burning books and putting scholars to the sword. The vision ends with a wordless appeal for help, emitting from the gate.

At this point the magus must decide if he will help. Offering to help allows them to roll once on the *Good Effects* table (see *ArM4* page 182). Refusing to help will cause them to roll on the *Bad Effects* table. Either way the magus will only gain one Twilight point from the experience.

The Obsidian Gateway

The ritual to open the obsidian gate can only be performed on or around the last day of June. The exact date can be calculated from Ealasaid's notes with an *Int + Artes Liberales* roll of 9+. The ritual takes two hours to perform (four hours from text) and must conclude at mid-day. A shaft of light in the gate chamber helps time the ritual's start and finish. The ritual involves four stages. First the leader of the ritual must anoint the gateway and declare his intention to summon the gateway's spirit. He then extols the spirit's nature and virtues. He then chants a long series of sacred words, which are written out in Ealasaid's grimoire. As the shaft of light strikes the radial point of the gateway, the caster commands the spirit to open the gate.

The anointment oil requires eight pawns of Vim or Rego vis to prepare and acts as the vis offering in the ritual. Preparing the oil requires a lab, but only takes a day.

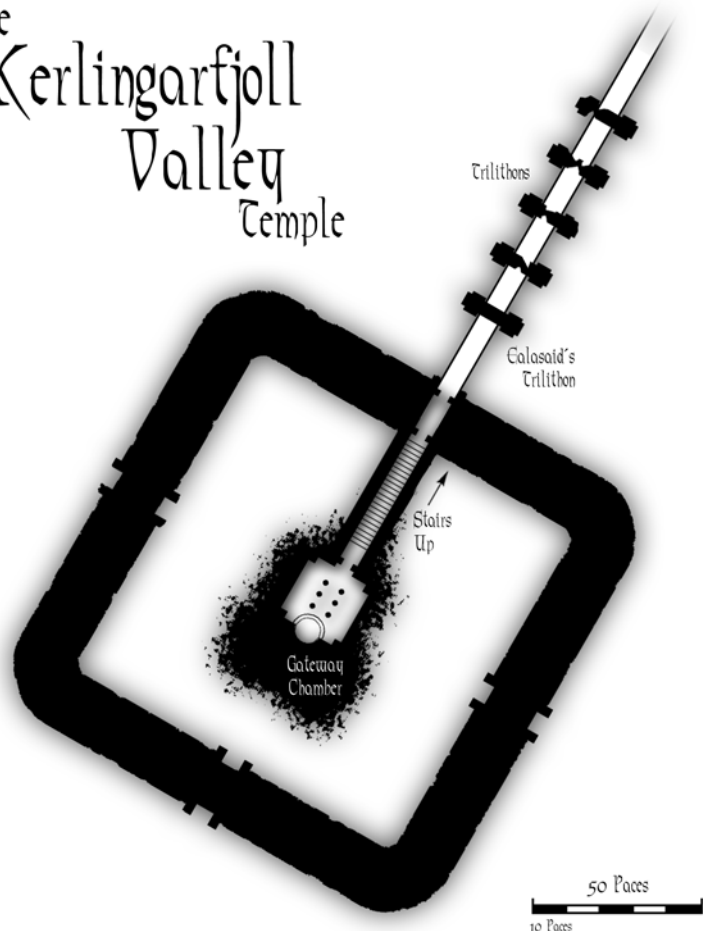
Call of the Obsidian Serpent ReVi 40

R: Spec D: Spec T: Ind, ritual

This spell does not truly summon the daemon serving the gate; it simply attracts its attention and requests its presence. It can only be successfully performed in the Kerlingarfjoll valley temple on a particular day (around the 30th June). If you are using *The Mysteries*, you may wish to insist that the caster of this spell has a Theurgy score of 8 to cast this ritual from a text. Those without Theurgy must learn and master the spell before it can be cast. Once the spirit has opened the gateway the passage will remain open while the caster concentrates.



The Kerlingarfjoll Valley Temple





Chapter 11

Thord's Feast

Synopsis

A curse is afflicting the household of Blund Thorgilsson, a local storbondi. Mistakenly he took vengeance on a local witch and now the regional leader of the galdraman hreppur (see page 27) has blacklisted him. Having heard of the arrival of the foreign magi, Blund hopes to force them to lift the curse. Thord Sturluson hopes to bring the foreign magi within his influence and Blund's legal action serves him well. The curse is not actually directed at Blund, but instead at a nest of dragon eggs, which were laid in the 3rd Century and are now in unfortunate proximity to Blund's farmstead. The curse was

laid by Einar Gamliðsson, who has a good reason to hate the father of the eggs (see page 70).

The Feast at Stad

Iain visits Thord at his Stad estate and attempts to negotiate the sale or tenancy of the farmstead closest to the Scartaris entrance tunnel. However, Thord wishes to get to know the magi better before making any deals and invites them to a feast. Iain will encourage the magi to accept, as a foothold on the surface allows the covenant to secure the entrance tunnel while giving them a mundane point of contact. For the sake of future story events, this covenant farmstead is critical.

At least two magi should attend. About mid-afternoon, during the feast, thirty horsemen arrive with the storbondi Blund Thorgilsson, who formally summons the magi on charges of witchcraft. Thord will explain the legal process and offers his legal support in return for being his thingmen. Thord will also offer to sell the farm nearest the entrance to the Scartaris sanctum.

The ownership of a farmstead gives the magi and their companions legal residency in Iceland. As residents they are legally required to be attached to a godord. Being *in thing* is not a feudal contract as neither party is obliged to provide support. It may therefore be argued that it is permitted under Hermetic Law; however,

How Does he Know?

It's possible that the magi did not demonstrate their magic during the initial adventure. How then would Blund know the magi are magicians?

First, they appeared on the Snaefellsnes without any known vessel, at the same time as a demon beast rampaged across the land. The transformation of Brighde/Hetep would have had many witnesses and this would have demonstrated magical ability in at least one magus (even though it was actually Victor). The magi then disappeared just as mysteriously.

Even without these events, Icelanders would quickly come to know. Given the prevalence of magical talents like Second Sight and Magical Sensitivity, a magus's Parma and Gift would be quickly noted. Given the way rumors spread among farms, Blund would have come to hear of them. Without the protection of the Galdramen Hreppur the magi are easy targets.

Blund Thorgilsson

Characteristics: Int +0, Per -1, Pre -1, Com +1, Str +1, Sta +2, Dex +1, Qik +0

Age: 32

Size: +0

Confidence: 3

Personality Traits: Protective of Family +3, Quick Tempered +2, Honorable +1

Reputation: Cursed +3, with Snaefellsnes residents; Independent +2, with baendur

Roleplaying Notes: A tall man with dark brown hair and brown eyes. Blund is caught between a loathing of magicians and the need to seek their help. His local priest has proved powerless and he is becoming desperate. He is a rich and influential farmer who owns several tenancies as well as the local church.

no similar ruling of the Peripheral Code exists as of 1220.

If the magi refuse, Iain will accept. As the magi live with Iain, they count as members of his household.

The Thorsnes Vার্থing

The magi should attend the district *thing* at Thorsnes, where the witchcraft case will be transferred to the Althing. During the initial proceedings a representative of Blund Thorgilsson will offer to set up a meeting to settle the case. If the magi agree to attempt to remove the curse on his household Blund will drop the case. Thord will urge them to accept.

Assuming the magi agree to investigate Blund's curse, Thord provides them with a guide and interpreter called Vifil (see Chapter 18). Vifil is actually a galdraman who has been asked to observe and report on the foreign magicians,

although he will not reveal this unless asked. As he does not have the Gentle Gift, the characters are likely to realize that a magician is being sent with them.

Blund's Farmstead

Blund's farmstead is on the northern coast of the Snaefellsnes peninsular, about 13 miles east of Thorsnes.

The curse appears to be causing all the fertile women and animals of his household to miscarry, including his wife Una. If the magi investigate the farmstead they find that Una's cat Hlokk is also sick. The cat sleeps fitfully almost all of the time, rarely eating and drinking. The cat is actually a beast of virtue that is hunting down fly-like disease spirits, which regularly approach the farm.

A character who makes a Per + Second Sight roll of 9+ will be able to witness a large cat spirit make a frenzied attack of a swarm of flies that appear over a rise and approach the farmstead. Intéllego Vim spells can also be used to detect the presence of the spirits.



Una

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +1, Pre +0, Com +1, Str -1, Sta +1, Dex +3, Qik +1

Age: 22

Size: +0

Confidence: 1

Personality Traits: Despondent +4, Frightened +4, Protective of Family +3

Reputation: Cursed +3, with people of Snaefellsnes

Roleplaying Notes: A young woman of average height, with light blown hair and green eyes, Una has two daughters (4 and 2) but has suffered two miscarriages in the last year. She is pregnant again but is not aware of this yet.



Hlokk (Beast of Virtue)

Characteristics: Cun +3, Per +2, Pre +0, Str -4 (+3)*, Sta +0 (+1)*, Dex +4, Qik +2

Magic Might: 20

Age: 2

Size: -3 (-1)*

Personality Traits: Devoted +3, Curious +3, Aloof +1

Abilities: Athletics 4, Awareness 3, Hamfaring 5, Hunt 3, Stealth (hunting) 4, Second Sight 5

Ferocity: 3 (protect mistress)

Weapon / Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Bite or Claw	+5	+5	+7	-5	+0
Spiritual Form*	+8	+7	+6	+8	+1

Soak: -2 (+5*)

Fatigue levels: OK, -3, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, -3, Incapacitated

Powers:

Eyes of the Cat: Can see in near-darkness.

Perfect Balance: As per the Virtue on page 42 of ArM4.

Grant Fertility, CrCo30, 1 point. Hlokk will cast this effect on any woman of childbearing age who allows her to sleep on their lap for more than 15 minutes. Those affected will find themselves pregnant as long as it would not be immaculate...

Hamfaring, ReVi30, 1 point per hour. While seemingly asleep, Hlokk can use her spiritual form to hunt down spirits that threaten her mistress.

Roleplaying Notes: A seemingly normal tabby, Hlokk is exhausted from trying to protect her mistress from the disease spirits. If she becomes aware that the magi are trying to help, she will attempt to lead them to the mud pits.

Vis: 4 pawns of Creo

The Dragon's Nest

The magi should be able to trace the source of the disease spirits to a field of boiling mud pits about 2 miles south of Blund's farm. The magi will find six mud pits arranged in a precise circular pattern. Magi may notice the +4 magic aura and any character making a Per + Awareness roll of 6+ will spot that something lays very near the bubbling surface of each pit. If they investigate these pits they find a large (Size +0) white egg in each. Blund is oblivious to the presence of these eggs; like most people he prefers to keep away from the often dangerous mud-fields.

Additionally, in the center of the circle of pits stands a pole, mounted with a horse's head

(a *nidstong*, see page 58). Runes curved on the pole translates as "Slayer of children, you shall know loss." Swarms of disease spirits are gathering about the pits, attempting to penetrate the eggs. These disease spirits are a manifestation of the curse and will disappear if it is broken. One egg is obviously discolored and the mud pit it lies in reeks of decay, beyond its natural sulfurous emission. The occupant of this egg has been killed and occasionally groups of disease spirits rise from the mud and fly off down the valley.

The living eggs have a Magic Resistance of +40, a Soak of +40 and 10 Body levels. The infant within has a Magic Might of 20 and a Soak of +10. However, if the egg is broken the infant will immediately defend itself or try to escape. The discolored egg has no Magic Resistance and a Soak of only +5. Intéllego Animál magic on the dead egg will reveal the corpse of an infant dragon within. The shell contains 4

Disease Spirits

Magic Might: 10

Size: -6

Soak: -5

Body Levels: OK, Banished

Powers:

Slay the Unborn, PeCo10, 10 permanent might. The victim must make a Sta stress roll of 6+ or suffer a miscarriage. Against the dragon eggs the spirits must be incredibly lucky to succeed. However, given enough time one will get through.

pawns of Terram and the dragon's body contains 3 pawns of Animál, 3 pawns of Vim, and 3 pawns of Ignem.

It is possible that the magi may decide that destroying dragon eggs is a good idea. Vifil will reveal his identity in this event and explain exactly how bad an idea it would be.

As explained on page 59, every day there is a chance that Einar's curse will affect the eggs, and destroying the nidstong will dissipate the effect. The nidstong can be used as an Arcane Connection to the magician who made it (Einar Gamliðsson, see page 139), but if it is broken the connection will fade within twelve weeks. Einar's current location is Glasvellir (see page 116) and no Intéllego magic will be able to locate him while he remains there.

Having eliminated the source of Blund's problem, Vifil will explain that this matter is now the business of the galdramen hreppur. Blund should simply be told that the curse is lifted and given no details. Icelanders are accustomed to magicians being highly guarded about their business and Blund will not press the matter. Vifil can provide the magi with information on Pan Caudarax. He will be very concerned about the dragon's reaction and advises the magi to attend the next hreppur meeting, which occurs just after the Althing.

The Covenant Farmstead

As soon as the situation with Blund is resolved Iain will complete the purchase of the Dagverdara farmstead. With Iain's money and logistical support from De Panne this farmstead will be able to employ up to thirty adults and their families. In Icelandic terms this will be a huge household and the current building will have to be greatly extended. An additional house may even need to be built.

Iain will set up the spare gatestones to connect the farmhouse to the Scartaris gateroom. From this point on the players can bring Icelandic characters into the saga merely by having them arrive at the farm seeking employment.





Chapter 12

Meet the Dragon

Synopsis

The attack on the nest site of Pan Caudarax has resulted in one unborn dragon being slain. The local magician invites the magi to a meeting to discuss the situation. Pan Caudarax is sure to want revenge; the challenge will be to limit the vengeance to only the guilty parties.

The Althing

Assuming the player characters were successful in lifting the curse affecting Blund's farm, Vifil Halldorson invites the magi to accompany him to the galdramen hreppur. Attending the Althing beforehand is used as a cover for travel. This is a good opportunity to introduce an Althing meeting to the player without actual involvement in a legal case. The players can explore the market and watch or participate in the games. For more details on the procedure of the Althing, see page 35.

If the player characters refused to help Blund or were unsuccessful, they should be at the Althing to help conduct their case. Meanwhile Vifil will have secretly investigated Blund's curse and discovered the source. Witchcraft cases are highly embarrassing to the galdramen hreppur and it is in their interest to end them as soon as possible. Vifil will offer to help Thord settle the lawsuit, offering to lift the curse for dropping the case. It should be noted that the curse is already lifted, but Blund is not

aware of this. Given the delay and the expense of bringing the case, Blund will demand up to sixty ells of homespun in compensation.

After the settlement Vifil will invite the magi to the hreppur meeting.

Eldborg

Vifil will lead them back almost all the way to the Snaefellsnes peninsula. While the path still heads northwards, Vifil cuts west across country. Half an hour later the party arrives at a large volcanic crater in the middle of a flat lava field. It measures 200 paces across and 50 paces deep. The party will have to secure their horses and climb up the sides of the crater and down into its wide base.

Over the next three hours most of Iceland's trollsyrir, vitkir and galdramen, as well as many of the more powerful Seithkona will arrive. In all 11 trollsyrir, 6 vitkir, 62 galdramen (11 schooled) and 8 Seithkona turn up. A brief description of the prominent members of each group, including the five council members, is given below. The storyguide will have to generate further details if required.

The Hreppur Meeting

Vifil will translate and explain the proceedings to the magi. The general rules regarding magic services, possession of vis ("ond" to the Norseman) sources and discretion are explained (see page 28). If the magi mention the Order of

Trollsons

Bard Snaefellsass

See page 141 for more details on this powerful trollson. He attends the hreppur to represent the interests of the giants, greater spirits and to some extent the trolls of the island. Although he is not the leader of all these groups, he has acted as mediator since the first settlement. Bard has a message from Pan Caudarax requesting that the 'Priests of Hermes' visit his lair, but apart from this, will probably not interact with the characters. He is aware that they have taken up residence in 'his' land (it was Bard who named Snaefellsnes and established the first settlement there), but is content just watching the characters.

Signy Grettisdottir, Hreppur Council Member

Magic Resistance: 63

Age: 196

Apparent Age: 37

Size: +2

Confidence: 3

Personality Traits: Quick Temper +3, Distrustful +2, Boorish +1, Cautious +1

Roleplaying Notes: Signy was raised by her giant mother and never met her outlawed father. Originally she was always provoking fights, but age has taught her a certain degree of caution. Trollsyr magic has taken a heavy toll on her body and she now looks more troll than human. She is attending the hreppur to support one of her descendents (Arnor Arngeirsson) in a dispute. The attack on Pan Caudarax's eggs is also of great concern. She is a member of the hreppur council.

Vitkir

Arnor Arngeirsson, Hreppur Council Member

Age: 72

Apparent Age: 67

Size: +1

Confidence: 4

Personality Traits: Judgmental +3, Honorable +2, Narrow minded +2, Cautious -1

Roleplaying Notes: Arnor is the leader of the few remaining vitkir left on Iceland. Pagan practice is extremely difficult and has to be conducted in complete secrecy. Arnor's temple exists within a regio near his farmstead. Regiones like this, close to a farmstead, are extremely rare and valuable to vitkir, but several have passed out of vitkir hands. Arnor hopes reclaim them for vitkir who have recently fled the Norwegian mainland. However, he has been blighting fields and cattle to get the land up for sale and using his powers to hide this from the perceptions of the victims' fylgjur. A galdraman has discovered his activities and reported them to the hreppur. Arnor will argue that his actions were subtle and remain unsuspected by the victims. He also paid a fair price for each of the farms.

Leif Beogart

Age: 51

Size: +0

Confidence: 4

Personality Traits: Secretive +2, Loyal to the Beogarts +2, Warlike -1

Roleplaying Notes: A member of the Beogart family, who are a powerful family in Iceland. They are involved in a centuries-old feud with another family called the Odd-Karnors. Leif has no particular business at the hreppur, other than to make clear that he had no involvement in the attack on Pan Caudarax's eggs.

Galdramen

Biorn Egilsson, Leader of The Galdramen Hreppur

Age: 106

Apparent Age: 85

Size: +1

Confidence: 3

Personality Traits: Detached +3, Fair +2, Respectful +3



**Twilight Points:** 19

Roleplaying Notes: Biorn is the oldest galdraman in Iceland. Due to the dangers of Galdor spellcasting most have made the long hamfaring (Final Twilight) by his age. Biorn enjoys his position and is a skilled politician. Still, he knows he cannot resist the call of his fylgja forever. His goal is to maintain the peace for future generations. Ironically the conflicts between the two Christian factions are proving the most difficult to resolve.

*Father Halldor Ormsson,
Representative of the Holar
School, Hreppur Council
Member*

Age: 56**Size:** +0**Confidence:** 3

Personality Traits: Cynical +1, Calculating +2, Curious +1, Pragmatic +2

Roleplaying Notes: Father Halldor attends on behalf of the schooled galdramen priests trained at Holar. He appears to seek to maintain the status quo among the magical factions. However, maintaining and expanding his school's right to harvest various magical sites is his priority. The chaos caused by Bishop Gudmund has left the school to its own devices. When some of Skalholt's vis sites were left unharvested, Holar quickly claimed 'abandonment' and harvested the sites. Some members of Holar are questioning the authority of the galdramen Hreppur, claiming that they should not be bound by its rulings. Halldor realizes that the time is not right for Holar to make such a move, but he is not opposed in principle. The school is searching for a breakthrough that would allow them to achieve the same level of power as the trollsyrir and traditional galdramen. Should they succeed they will press for independence.

*Father Vebrand Thoroddson,
Representative of Skalholt
School, Hreppur Council
Member*

Age: 73**Size:** +0**Confidence:** 2

Personality Traits: Forthright +3, Pious +2, Kind +1, Tolerant +1

Roleplaying Traits: Father Vebrand attends on behalf of the schooled galdramen trained at Skalholt. Local priests normally harvest the school's vis sites. However in recent years several of these priests have passed away, and in consequence sites owned by the Skalholt School have briefly been left unharvested while new priests were found. Galdramen of Holar are now claiming the sites were abandoned long enough to enable new claims. Father Vebrand hopes the hreppur will rule against Holar and this appears likely. Normally 'abandonment' is only claimed after many years of disuse.

Seithkona

Aldis Kolbeinsdottir

Age: 81**Apparent Age:** 75**Size:** -1**Confidence:** 3

Personality Traits: Fatalistic +4, Otherworldly +3, Patient +3

Roleplaying Notes: Nominal leader of the Seithkona, her constantly fatalistic prophecies have been accurate enough at times for her ramblings to be listened to. Some have even claimed to avoid catastrophe by deciphering her riddled words. However, as an advocate on practical issues, she is not very effective.

Helga Grimsdottir

Age: 56**Apparent Age:** 51**Size:** +0

Confidence: 4

Personality Traits: Confidence +3, Polite +3, Forthright +2

Roleplaying Notes: Helga does her best to ensure that the interests of the Seithkona are represented at the hreppur. As members of her tradition are women, most find it impossible to attend and so the Seithkona are always underrepresented. For several years

she has proposed that absent members might give their vote to the representatives that do go. Such proposals have no chance of success, given the effect it would have on the existing power structure. Still if Helga managed to assemble all Iceland's Seithkona at the hreppur, even for one meeting, she could get the proposal through.

Hermes, Biorn Egilsson will see no objection to the magi also being members of the hreppur. The hreppur's authority is very loose; there is no oath or membership ceremony. The hreppur's agreement with the godar protects members from unwarranted prosecution. If the magi wish to benefit from this deal they must follow the hreppur's laws. Attendance at Eldborg and the payment of the pathway tax are voluntary.

Mention of the Order of Odin will generate confusion, as the Icelanders will not have heard of it.

The situation with the dragon eggs is cause for great concern. Had they known the truth of the curse affecting Blund, they would have acted immediately. But as Blund killed one of their number in an act of misplaced revenge, they decided to let him suffer.

Now Pan Caudarax has heard of the attack and Bard Snaefellsass delivers the dragon's message to the meeting. The message is brief; the priests of Hermes should present themselves at his lair at the autumnal equinox. If the players refused to help Blund, they will be summoned anyway as Pan Caudarax has a long history with Latin magi and is curious to meet them. In this situation, Vifil discovered the nidstong by himself, and his presence will also be requested. He will explain to the dragon that the magi were asked to help but refused.

Biorn Egilsson will offer the magi (and Vifil if applicable) the harvesting rights to a couple of vis sources if they appease the dragon.

If the magi refuse to go it should be made clear to the magi that they cannot remain in Iceland if they defy Pan Caudarax. The dragon has control of volcanoes throughout the land and the Scartaris sanctum sits on one of them. The magi must negotiate peace with Pan Caudarax or their covenant will face destruction.

Hekla Lair

When the magi are prepared, Vifil can act as their guide. At the base of the Hekla volcano, a system of particularly wide tunnels leads into the huge cavern of Pan Caudarax's Icelandic lair. The air is hot, dry and sulfurous. A river of molten lava emerges from the far end of the chamber and flows down both sides. The lava streams then run into tunnels either side of the tunnel the player characters enter by.

Pan Caudarax lies sleeping in the form of a lindorm (Norse great serpent) on a bed of pure white sand in the middle of the chamber. The glow of the lava that almost encircles him gives an eerie red hue to everything. Dozens of fire spirits flit about the cavern and dive into the lava. All the magi notice an intense magical aura in this place (+9).

As the magi approach the dragon will wake and after a few moments he will greet the magi in an archaic form of Latin. Welcoming the priests of Hermes the Thrice Blessed to his home, he will ask for their account of how the curse on his eggs was found. After this he will explain that he was initially minded to drive the human population into the sea. He asks the magi why he should not.

The dragon will settle in return for the protection and then fostering of his remaining children, including Hermetic training. He will also offer a long hundred (120 pawns) of vis in return for the body of the magician responsible for the attack.

The dragons will hatch in twenty years at which point Pan Caudarax will use his Transform power to change them into human form (initially newborns). The magi must then raise and eventually educate them as Hermetic magi.





Once their training is complete the magi's task will be complete. Meanwhile the magi are responsible for protecting the nest site. Tracking down Einar will be impossible for now, given his location in a realm called Glasvellir (see Chapter 14). None of the galdramen in Iceland knows anything of the attack or who might be responsible.

The closest the magi might get to discovering the identity of Einar Gamliison, is by learning of the ship destroyed by Pan Caudarax five years ago. Many Icelanders lost relatives aboard this ship, but none are known to be magicians.

Conclusion

If the magi reach a settlement, the hreppur will grant them harvesting rights to a couple of local vis sources. The first site is a hot spring on the north face of Snaefell: on the night of the winter Solstice it flows with a silvery liquid that can be used as Vim vis. The second is an icy cave located farther up the mountain. During the summer peculiar ice crystals are washed out, but do not melt until the summer solstice. If gathered these crystals can be used as Rego vis. The storyguide should set the number of pawns harvested based on the number of magi. It is recommended that the two sites combined generate 3 pawns per magus per year. If Vifil was the one to discover the nidstong he must be given an equal share.

In addition Vifil will inform the magi about Odadakraun (see insert on page 14), where vis may be collect by anyone brave enough.

The magi are responsible for protecting the nest-site, but how they achieve this is up to them. They cannot post guards there without some mundane cover. The magi would have to

Story Seed

What about Pan Caudarax's mate? She is a true Scandinavian lindorm, a serpent-like dragon with small limbs and a venomous bite. She may well decide to swim to Iceland to see how her brood is getting on under their father's guidance. Of course, the characters fostering the youngsters may not realize who she is.

Dragon Magi?

According to the Oath, the magi can only provide Hermetic training to apprentices if they are to join the Order. Although there is no Hermetic law forbidding non-human members, many magi will be vexed at the idea. The magi face a choice and three possibilities are given below.

- Agree. The eggs are due to hatch in about 20 years, at which point Caudarax will Transform them into human babies. They will be brought up, to all intents and purposes, as humans and will need another five years before Hermetic training can begin. Having been raised as human beings and after 15 years apprenticeship there is no reason to assume they would not swear the Oath. Pan Caudarax will then introduce them to their dragon heritage. Should the Order discover these dragon magi, the matter would be debated. It is not clear which way this debate would go, but as the magi have not broken the Oath they are unlikely to have a Wizard's March declared against them.
- Agree, but attempt to renegotiate or simply refuse later. In 25 years' time the magi may well have a chance against Pan Caudarax.
- Refuse and be eaten.

enlist local men as covenfolk and set them up as hut-men. The magi would need to persuade both Blund (the land owner) and the farmer's hreppur that the hut-men could make a viable living. Given the location this will be very difficult, although sulfur collecting might be plausible.

Magical effects would have to be subtle enough not to attract mundane attention. If a mundane traveler could walk into an invisible barrier, it would be unacceptable to the galdramen hreppur. Intéllego magic may offer the easiest solution. Meanwhile simply visiting the site regularly should be enough.

Chapter 13

Feast of Thanks



Synopsis

Bard Snaefellsass invites the characters to a feast to thank them for appeasing Pan Caudarax. While there, they learn a little about the supernatural powers that inhabit Iceland, but also become embroiled in their struggles.

This adventure works well if the covenant has encountered problems with trolls. These creatures are particularly common on Snaefellsnes, and often steal much-needed livestock.

The Invitation

After dawn, a grog spots a dog a few hundred yards away from the covenant. It is huge (Size +0), with a thick pelt of mottled gray fur, but its folded over ears and short nose show that it is not a wolf. The dog wags his tail enthusiastically if the characters approach, and encourages the characters to follow him. He leads them into a ravine, where they lose sight of him momentarily as he moves behind an immense boulder.

A huge man emerges around the other side. He is over eight feet tall, and well muscled. This is Bard (see Chapter 18 for a fuller description), and he introduces himself.

“My apologies for bringing you all this way from your home,” he says, “But I had my reasons. I would like to extend to you an invitation to my midwinter feast. You see, I am most grate-

ful for what you have done to keep the great dragon’s wrath from the people of Snaefell.”

Any native Icelander may make an Int + Area Lore roll. If they get 8+, they will make the connection between the name Bard and a spirit or god (the words are the same in Icelandic: *áss*) who protects the people in Snaefell’s shadow. Most believe him to be a myth, but it is a local custom to “thank Bard” if some disaster is averted.

Bard is a modest man and does not lay any claim to being a supernatural entity — he is merely a man who wishes to thank the characters on behalf of the people of Snaefellsnes; “after all,” he explains, “all too often good deeds go unrewarded, and it would be churlish of me to pass you over.” If the characters accept, he says that he will send a guide to fetch them nearer the time. If they reject his offer he seems hurt, but sends Solrun anyway, hoping her charms will change their mind.

Bard turns and whistles through his teeth. The dog which led the characters here bounds to his side and they head off into the mountains.

Journey

A month or so before midwinter, the covenant has a visitor seeking shelter in the midst of a harsh storm. Underneath thick furs and layers of wool is a stunningly beautiful woman, with long, shimmering, golden hair. She has a pale complexion and startlingly blue eyes. The storm rages for several days and she



soon wins friends amongst the covenfolk. If quizzed on how she reached the isolated valley, she says that she was on her way to a neighboring farm, but took the wrong route.

Solrun is a natural at making friends. She is charming and apparently without guile, and has a wealth of stories with which she regales the covenfolk. Zealously Christian characters may disapprove of her subject matter, which is Iceland's spirits and the Old Gods. While she seems not to flirt with the grogs, many develop an interest in her, but she treats them all equally.

The storm passes, but the valley is filled with loose deep snow, making travel all but impossible. Solrun asks to stay longer.

She has a job to do, and on the morning before the winter solstice she requests to see the magi by name. Unless confronted beforehand, this is the first time she directly approaches them, although she does not actively avoid them during her stay. She announces that she is here to take them to Bard. She does not reveal that Bard is her father, saying that she is just one of his humble servants.

The weather clears to perfect conditions, clear and dry with little wind. At this time of

year the sun only briefly rises over the horizon at midday and so the party needs to bring plenty of torches or lanterns, as they will travel mostly in darkness. Once all the characters have assembled, Solrun leads them deeper into the valley. The deep snow is now compacted, making the first part of the walk easy.

As the midday sun makes its brief appearance they reach the foot of the mountains and Solrun suggests a rest for some provisions before proceeding. She leads them expertly through the mountains, but at the end of the day all the characters lose a fatigue level. Eventually Solrun leads them into a cave, where she advises they spend the night.

The cave stretches far back into the mountain. Solrun explains that tomorrow they will go farther in. Solrun warns everyone against journeying into the cave system prematurely. "The truce does not come into force until the Longest Night" she explains. The truce is between the trolls who inhabit the caves and the giants who inhabit the mountains. Her father is considered the godi of all the giants in this region, and the trolls have reason to fear him.

Meeting the Troll-King

During the night, one male character awakens. A grog is perhaps the best choice, and if one has already expressed an interest in Solrun, so much the better. He turns over just in time to see Solrun's cloak disappear into the tunnel. With luck, the character decides to follow. Kollbjorn, chief of the local trolls, is responsible for enticing the unfortunate into the caves, and lies in wait with his sorcerous mother, Skrukka. If the grog does not go alone, his companions become lost as Skrukka employs her illusion magic to split the group. Skrukka also creates the illusion of Solrun's leaving.

Eventually, the character enters the cave in which Kollbjorn lurks. The character's torch gutters and burns low, providing scant light. The troll chief then lurches out of the shadows, a terrifying experience that calls for Bravery rolls. The hideous troll has arranged this meeting as he wishes to entrap the character in a deal (see later for details of Kollbjorn and his mother).

"Tell me, little man, what you are doing in my caves, so far from your friends?"

The Troll-Bride

Story seed: Kollbjorn demands that the character marries his hideously ugly daughter Drit, because he cannot find a husband for her amongst the trolls. Skrukka imposes a Curse of Lost Love and Short Attention Span on the unfortunate groom, ensuring that he will want to turn up at the wedding to rid himself of the affects. The wedding should be a frightening affair. Horse and human meat are served, and violent games are played, including a rock catching game which the humans will be expected to participate in. Skrukka performs the ceremony, and the trolls drink themselves into a stupor. The trolls plan to eat their human guests (bar the groom), but Solrun turns up during the night to help them escape. They are be chased by Kollbjorn and his clan, who only call off the chase if several trolls are killed.

Drit is plain by human standards, ugly by troll standards. She has the statistics of a normal troll (page 30), but with a Presence of -1. Her name means 'excrement' in Norse, and she could become a player character if the storyguide agrees. Having a troll-chief as a father-in-law might not be all that bad; troll-laws forbid stealing from, or killing, a relative. Perhaps, over time, peace can be made between the covenant and the trolls of the Western Quarter, although Skrukka is likely to oppose this.

Kollbjorn tells the character that his life is forfeit; he is in troll-territory before the truce. If Kollbjorn is attacked, make it clear to the grog how ineffectual a human is against a troll. Kollbjorn is certainly tough enough to grab a sword and wrest it from his opponent.

The Troll-king wants to offer a deal. Use whatever deal that fits your saga best. An example deal (and its consequences) is given below. Skrukka will seal any agreement with a Curse (see page 57), imposing appropriate flaws on the unfortunate character, telling him that the curse will be lifted as soon as he performs his part of the deal.

The Singing Caves

On the following day, Solrun leads the characters into the caves. These twist, turn and divide many times. Some passageways are extremely narrow and others seem to have been widened. Towards midday, a section is entered that burrows through a glacier, and natural light is available, although weak and tinged with blue. On reaching this section, Solrun announces that it is not much farther, but at this point she must leave them. She instructs the characters to continue along the passage. She then turns around and heads back the way they came. Within half an hour, the characters stand in a massive cavern. The ceiling of this cavern is not complete, and it becomes clear that this cave is actually a deep, isolated valley formed by the meeting of five mountains, nearly closed off entirely by outcrops of rock. The weak winter sunshine filters down to the floor of the cave, which is nearly three hundred paces in diameter. There are many people in the cave, grouped into several clusters. Some lurk in the shadows of the cave walls; others stand in the center, enjoying the warmth of the sun.

“Welcome to the Singing Cave,” announces a voice, which echoes perfectly many times. Bard warmly greets the characters and a group of golden-haired women approaches, each bearing a horn of mead. These are Bard’s daughters, and one approaches each character, up to a maximum of seven (neither Solrun nor Helga is present). The characters may engage either Bard or his daughters in con-

versation. Bard also introduces the players to some of his guests, such as Thorkel his brother. Thorkel stands in the shadows of the cave, but emerges when Bard calls him over.

As Thorkel strides across the Singing Cave, his voice will boom out “Why so small, brother?” He then deigns to notice the characters, and adds, “Oh, I see,” in a condescending tone. With a certain amount of distaste, each stride towards the characters will bring Thorkel smaller in size, until he stands merely nine feet tall. He allows Bard to introduce him to the guests of honor, but is uninterested in conversing with humans. Thorkel sneers at them and once or twice rudely changes the subject while a character is speaking, addressing his brother directly.

The Feast

After about an hour of small talk, servants bring out trestle tables and benches. Guests share a trencher with another guest, and all the male characters are paired up with one of Bard’s daughters. All the characters are placed at one end of the table, near Bard. There are about a two dozen other guests: all are above average size, and four of them are trolls. All the giants shrink to fit at the table (Size +3 or less). Thorkel’s sons try to take places between each of the characters and their female companion, but Bard gives Thorkel a reproachful look, and he calls his sons off.

Bard claps his hands, and the food is brought out. Whole roasted horses are hoisted onto the table by the burly servants, along with flagons of beer and mounds of bread and cheese. Characters should be reminded that it is illegal to eat horseflesh in Iceland, as it is a heathen custom. Two whole sharks join the horses. These have been buried in sand and allowed to ferment in their own urine, and the smell is overpowering.

Before the meal, Bard raises a toast. He honors the gods Freyr, Njordur and the Almighty God (a traditional heathen toast, implying Thor as the Almighty God), pouring some of his mead on the floor in a libation and drinking the rest. Thordis, one of Bard’s daughters, who has been paired with the leader of the characters, then stands and toasts their honored guests for their bravery and integrity. The toast then goes around the table. Thorkel toasts the





ancestors, listing a long line of giant names ending in Kari, son of Ymir. One troll toasts Kollbjorn, boasting about his prowess at capturing food for the troll's table. The characters are also expected to raise a toast, and at least one of them should, or the air becomes distinctly unfriendly (although Bard will show no reaction). Anyone making an Intelligence + Etiquette roll of 6+ (Icelanders 3+) will realize that it is bad form to toast the host of such a feast.

During the meal, Bard converses willingly with the characters, holding nothing back.

Guests from Afar

As the trenchers are cleared away, the Singing Cave rings with the muffled shouts of several voices. Eventually, the owners of the voices come into view, five giants of wild appearance. They are black-haired and ugly, bearing more resemblance to the trollish guests rather than the giants. Unlike the giant guests,



who are dressed in human style clothing, these giants wear crude tunics of leather and fur cloaks made with clumsy stitches. They argue loudly with one another in Pictish about whom has the right to eat the sheep they have captured (they are carrying these in a sack).

Bard leans over to the characters and apologizes in a low voice. "My friends, I am sorry for this. I had hoped that they would not turn up today, but I cannot turn them away, much as I would like to." He then greets the newcomers in a loud voice, attracting their attention. They are dismayed that they missed the feast, and a second look reveals them to be thin, as if they have not eaten well over winter. One giant spots the characters and whisper to the others, who grin wickedly. He comments to Bard that although they've missed the main course, he is pleased to see that the dessert is still here. This raises a chuckle from Thorkel and his sons. Bard reproves them for dishonoring his guests, but their leader will proclaim loudly that he will not sit at feast with animals, and he feels insulted as a guest.

Bard talks quickly with the characters. He explains that these are visitors to Iceland from over the sea, and that he has no authority over their actions. He cannot order them to leave the characters alone, and should he interfere unduly he risks the wrath of the rest of the clan. He suggests the characters display strength, for these giants are bullies and will only pick on them if they perceive weakness.

Bard attempts to put everyone on an equal footing, and if the characters permit it he uses his Transform ability to increase their size. To increase the Size of each character to +6, Bard needs to beat an Ease Factor of 31 + Magic Resistance on his Transform roll (Stress die + 37). He attempts to Transform each willing character once.

If the characters fail to make a good impression on these giants, they are treated poorly. Making a good impression does not only mean being of the same size. A Strength + Intimidation roll of 9+ will do, as will flashy displays of magic whatever the size of the caster. Bragging about exploits will do (on a Com + Guile or Storytelling roll of 9+), but these giants are from Scotland, and they understand Pictish, Jotunn and Gaelic.

The characters may resort to violence. If one (or more) of the giants is beaten fairly they

The Scottish Giants

The five giants are members of a clan of a dozen or so who originated in Scotland. They are stranded in Iceland, and the Icelandic giants barely tolerate their presence. By comparison, the Scottish giants are brutish, crude, and lacking in magic. This makes them little more than barbarians in the eyes of the natives. Their names are Suil Aon (sool-oon — One-Eye), Creagcas (kreg kos — Rock-Foot), Beinn (beyn — Mountain), Sruth Dubh (sroo-doo — Black Tide) and the leader Geamhradh Grian (gev-ra grean — Winter Sun). The Scottish giants are members of a clan on which Damhan-allaidh has laid a magical compulsion called a *geas*. They are forced to remain in Iceland until they have visited the Temple of Thoth in the Kerlingarfjoll valley. This happened after Victor took possession of the Carnac gateway, as Damhan-allaidh sought another way to the temple.

They have discovered the valley, but have not worked out how to enter it. Bard would dearly like to see them gone, but knowing nothing about the Temple Valley, has no way of resolving their *geas*.

Once the characters access the Kerlingarfjoll valley (see page 96), they have a dilemma; do they tell the Scottish giants? If they do, Iceland will be rid of them, because the giants can return home. However, this might reveal vital secrets to Damhan-allaidh. One possible solution (as the terms of the *geas* were that the giants “could not leave Iceland until they have visited the Temple of Thoth in the Kerlingarfjoll valley”) would be for the characters to set up the gatestone to Kerlingarfjoll outside their covenant and allow the giants to visit the temple briefly. They will then have fulfilled the *geas*, but remain clueless about how to get into the valley without it.

Use the statistics for giants given on page 31. None of these giants have magical abilities.

will be impressed. They do not mind even if a giant dies. Once the characters prove themselves, the Scottish giants sit with them at the feast. The giants deport themselves well and may even manage a conversation with the characters.

Matters of Trust

Bard encourages the giants to talk about their *geas*, hoping the characters will know how to break it (see insert).

Later, the giants mention that on their way here from the Northern Quarter, they saw a strange sight: an immense eagle laying on the shore of a fjord with an arrow the size of a lance piercing its breast. Bard suddenly becomes very serious, and quizzes the giants over all the details. He then explains to the characters the reason for his concern. He believes this eagle to be the second of the supernatural guardians that protect Iceland (see page 7). The first is Pan Caudarax, and he was attacked recently. Now the second guardian has been attacked. The third guardian has been rendered impotent by the power of the Dominion, and the fourth guardian is Bard himself. He begs the characters to investigate this.

From the giants' description, the fjord is easy to find. Close to Husavik, where the River Laxa flows into the sea, is a broad cove. Geamhradh Grian says that the eagle was lying on the rocky beach, one of its immense wings resting limply in the water, the other brushing the top of the cliff as it struggled. When the characters reach the site they realize that this implies a wingspan of over 50 feet. However, there is no sign of it now. At Husavik there is a fishing station and a farm, clustered around a small church. They know that an eagle was recently found, wounded by an arrow on the beach. They talk of it as a large bird, but scoff at the suggestion of immense size; the priest carried it back in his two hands. If approached, the priest says that he handed the bird over to the hermit that lives on Skjalfandi, a nearby island.

The hermit, well known for his holiness often cares for injured animals. The characters have to borrow a boat and row out to the island. The hermit is caring for an eagle with a white flash of feathers on its head, just like the giants' description. It does not seem to be getting better, and the hermit attributes this to the witch-





ery drawn on the arrowhead. He burnt the arrow, as soon as he extracted it from the bird. The arrowhead, made of silver, can still be found amongst the ashes of his fire. The arrowhead is scratched with a runic curse designed to drain power from a spirit creature.

Vindsvall (for the eagle is the second guardian) has been forced into solid shape by the wound inflicted by the arrow. Because he is being cared for by a man of True Faith in a Divine aura, Vindsvall is not regenerating Might. An Int + Magic Theory roll of 12+ will allow a magus to realize that the influence of the Divine is killing the spirit. The hermit may be persuaded that the eagle can only recover if he stops caring for it. This is not an easy task and the hermit has an uncanny ability to detect lies. Alternatively Vindsvall's Might may recover if he is fed vis (Animál, Auram, Creo or Vim).

Once Vindsvall is out of the Dominion he calls his attendant landvetteir. Flocks of birds gather around, feeding him Might points. Vin-

dsvall recovers quickly, and stretches his wings. His body expands as he assumes his true form, and the second guardian flies off, accompanied by throngs of attending birds. Should the hermit witness this, he swears that he saw an angel.

Guests at the Feast

Bard's statistics can be found in Chapter 18.

Bard's daughters

Bard has nine daughters, three by his first wife (Helga, Thordis and Solrun) and six by his second wife (Ragnhild, Flaumgerd, Thora, Thorkild, Geirrid and Mjoll). Under most situations these giantesses will seem like perfectly normal human women. Some, including Helga, have substantial magical powers, others are weaker, but all possess the Jotunn Affinity with Frost and the Healer talent. Helga, the eldest of the nine, does not get on well with her father and argues with him constantly (probably because they are very similar to each other), and she does not live with him. Should any of Bard's daughters marry a human, their offspring are likely to be trollsyrir.

Thorkel Red-Cloak's son

Magic Might: 65

Characteristics: Int 0, Per +6, Pre -4, Com 0, Str +20, Sta +25, Dex -1, Qik -1

Age: irrelevant

Size: +6

Personality Traits: Quarrelsome +4, Hot-Headed +6

Reputations: Chief of the Clan of Hrym 6; with Iceland's giants

Important Abilities: External Soul, Jotunn Affinity with Frost (blizzards) 20, Curse (bad luck) 10, Transform

Story Seed: Iceland's Enemy

It has been left deliberately vague whether there actually is a systematic threat to Iceland's guardians. Is Einar Gamliðsson working alone or being manipulated by someone unknown? Who is this?

Story Seed: The Gray Bull

The third guardian of Iceland is the Gray Bull, who is owned by the Bishop of Skalholt (see page 7). As Bard is concerned about a supernatural attack (perhaps even by Damhan-allaidh himself), he may persuade the characters to 'rescue' the Gray Bull from the stifling power of the Dominion. However, Bishop Magnus Gizurason is unwilling to part with his precious bull, which has given him great prosperity from the sheer number of fine calves he sires. The characters may need to conduct a raid to obtain the bull. Once it is let loose in pastures free from the Dominion, the Gray Bull will shake off the reins of domesticity, and over a matter of weeks (faster if in a magical aura) will grow dramatically in size. It will let no human approach it, and will resume its role as a defender of Iceland.

(into rocks) 15, Speak Jotunn (Clan of Hrym) 8, Potency 8.

Appearance and Roleplaying Notes:

Thorkel is Bard's half-brother; their mother Mjoll married the giant Red-Cloak after her first husband was killed by another giant-king, Hardverk. Thorkel is a giant of the clan of Hrym, and their current leader. He is 40' tall, and could not be more dissimilar to his brother. He has a twisted parody of a face, topped by a mop of straight black hair. He has also walked with a pronounced limp ever since Bard broke his leg in a duel. Thorkel has a bad reputation as a troublemaker: he is violent, unprincipled and cunning. Like most giants he cares little about humans, but is not overtly hostile to them; they are an annoyance rather than an enemy.

Thorkel's sons

Thorkel has six sons, who all bear a strong resemblance to their father. Their names are Red-Cloak, Solvi, Svadi, Ox-Thorir, Asvald and Skeggi. All these giants have temperaments like their father, although Ox-Thorir finds humans intriguing, and wants to learn more about them. Red-Cloak is the eldest, and has a strong attraction to Helga Bard's daughter, although he is unable to admit this and it has expressed itself as a strong rivalry between the two. He has been known to play mean tricks on her, like stranding her on an ice floe and pushing her out to sea in a storm.

Kollbjorn, Troll-Chief

Magic Might: 35

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre -3, Com -2, Str +8, Sta +5, Dex -1, Qik -2

Age: irrelevant

Size: +3

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Scheming +1, Aggressive +2

Reputations: Troll-Chief of Western Quarter +4, with trolls and giants

Important Abilities: Kollbjorn has no more magic than the average troll, but is a far superior fighter. If encountered in combat, raise the Init, Atk and Dfn of a stan-

dard troll (page 30) by 5 points for all weapons; and Damage by 3 for his greater strength and size. His Soak is 18.

Appearance and Roleplaying Notes:

Kollbjorn is huge in size, although his back is bowed and his knees are bent, so that his knuckles can drag on the ground. His face is exceedingly ugly: his nose is broken in three places marked with huge knots, and because of this it seems triply twisted, like the horns of old rams. He always carries a staff of rusted iron.

Kollbjorn is secure in his lordship over the local trolls. He is by far the meanest of a mean bunch, and he has the support of his mother (see below) and two henchmen Gapi and Gljufra-Geir.

Skrukka, Troll-Sorceress

Characteristics: Int +2, Per -1, Pre -4, Com -2, Str +4, Sta +3, Dex -2, Qik -3

Magic Might: 62

Age: irrelevant

Size: +1

Personality Traits: Malicious +2; Hostile to Humans +4; Brave -1

Reputations: Powerful +3, with trolls

Important Abilities: Curse 12, External Soul, Potency 9, Shapeshift 12, Speak Jotunn 9, Svnhverfing 18

Power:

Gift of the Magic Arts: see page 30.

Appearance and Roleplaying Notes:

Skrukka is so bowed with age that it is difficult to make out her form, clothed as she is with a filthy gray wrap that just leaves her face and hands clear. Her nose and chin are so elongated that they nearly touch, and although her eyes are filmed with white her eyesight is not affected. She carries with her a fearful stench. She walks with the aid of a short walking stick made from the thighbone of a human priest.

Most trolls that have heard of Skrukka are frightened of her. Many say that she is the true chief of the trolls in the region, but none say this within earshot of Kollbjorn. She is about as evil as trolls get.





Chapter 14

The Glittering Plains

Synopsis

The dragon eggs are due to hatch in two years' time, but while the magi prepare, the galdraman Einar Gamliðsson tries to incite local farmers to destroy them. Luckily the covenfolk get wind of the plan. The magi must protect the eggs and persuade the farmers to leave them alone. By the time the magi arrive, Einar has already fled.

However, the magi can now discover the bolthole of the galdraman responsible for the attacks on Pan Caudarax's eggs, and have the opportunity to follow him there and finally confront him.

A Plot is Hatching

Around the middle of July a peddler called Kar Liefsson arrives at the covenant's farmstead trading household items. During the evening he relates the latest gossip. First there is a rumor that a horde of dragons is about to descend on Snaefellsnes. Apparently several householders in the region are taking the threat seriously. The storbaendur Blund Thorgilsson is building some strange tall wooden device at his farmstead. It has ropes and pulleys and Kar has never seen anything like it. Kar nearly got a beating for asking what it was, but a farmhand let slip it

was to kill the dragons. The huge iron tipped stake it housed pointed downward.

The device is actually a pile driver, built to penetrate the dragon eggs and skewer the infants within. Kar's information should be quickly passed to the magi who should be able to put two and two together. This adventure could be foreshadowed by the magi's preparation to foster Caudarax's children. It is possible that the magi have already taken steps to secure the nest-site from further attack, so rather than the peddler tipping the covenant off, one of the covenfolk charged with visiting the nest site could inform the magi of the danger. The magi should make haste to the nest site as soon as they are informed.

Blund's Farm

By the time the magi arrive, Blund has already left with several laborers and householders from nearby farms. Blund's wife, Una, says Blund has gone to the mud fields to kill the beasts before they hatch out and kill everyone. If asked how this plan came about, Una says a man called Einar Gamliðsson warned them of the threat. Einar only stayed one night, but told Blund to investigate the mud pits himself if he doubted.

Unless the magi are exceptionally swift (for example, using Seven League Stride), by the time the magi arrive at the nest-site the pile driver is set up over the first pit. The stake has just broken though the shell of the first egg, another strike will skewer the already wounded

infant. The magi have to persuade Blund and his followers not to go through with their plan. Quick talking or force may be required. Ideally the magi should do this without revealing too much.

After Blund is stopped and the wounded dragonet calmed and tended, Einar's whereabouts should be the magi's priority.

If the covenant has posted guards then they may be able to delay Blund long enough to prevent the wounding of the dragonet. However, do not underestimate the power of mob rule. Blund's days are likely to be short if he is responsible for injuring one of the Pan Caudarax's brood.

Einar's Journey

Einar rode out west towards Snaefell, and as someone traveling alone is odd, several people noted his passing. Einar's journey can be tracked to a farm owned by Thorodd Gamliðsson (his brother), on the northern side of Snaefell. Thorodd is unwilling to discuss his brother's business. Physical or magical threats have to be issued before Thorodd says anything. If adequately intimidated, he says that Einar returned to the Glittering Plains and is beyond their reach. Further pressure reveals that the entrance to this underworld is located within the central crater of Snaefell. Thorodd knows nothing beyond the reasons for Einar's vendetta.

If they investigate, the magi find no entrance within the Snaefell crater. If asked Bard or Pan Caudarax will explain that the opening appears for three days every year. The magi have to wait a year before they can pursue Einar.

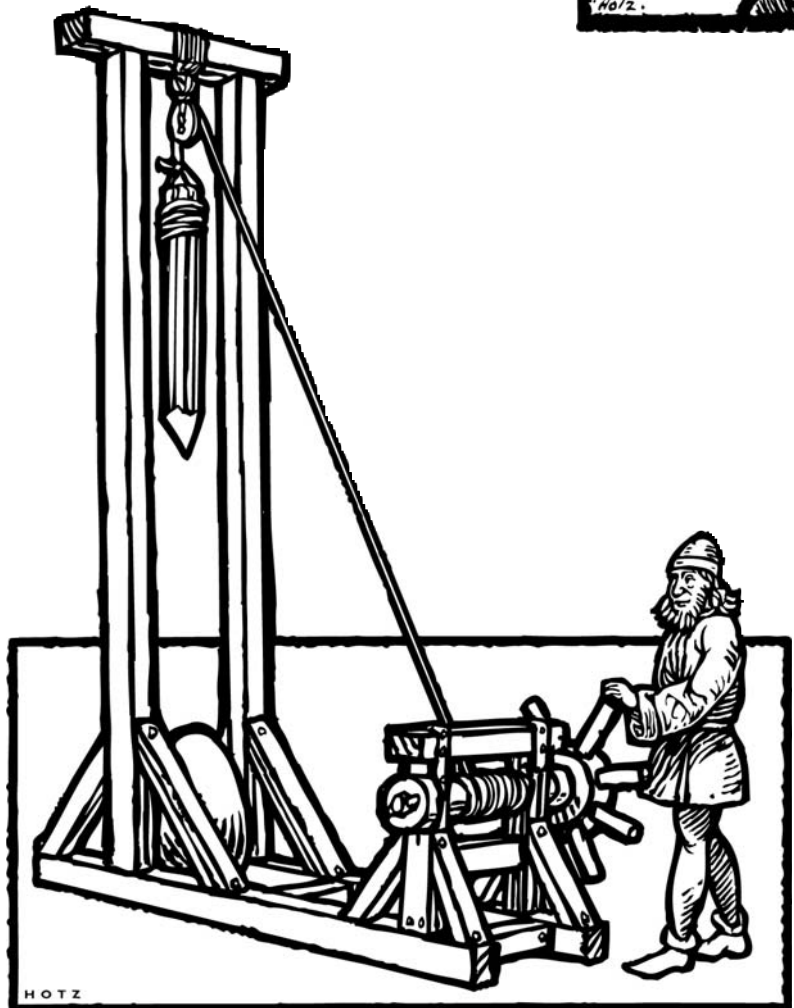
A Long Way Down

Einar fled into a realm inhabited by powerful spirits from Iceland's past. The realm is called Glasvellir, the Glittering Plains, and it is

a magical *regio* of level 8, with no lower levels. Its ruler is Gudmund, a powerful spirit who claims to be kin to the gods, being the son of Mimir and thus Odin's cousin.

The entrance to Glasvellir is found under the glacier on the central crater of Snaefell. On or around the last day of June at midday, the Scartaris peak casts its shadow on the glacier within the volcano's caldera. At that moment the ice breaks and reveals a 2,800-foot vertical shaft. The shaft remains open until the third sunset following. At all other times the shaft cannot be found.

Although the shaft appears like a *Regio* entrance no rolls are required to enter. The glacier itself has a normal magic aura of +3. The shaft has an aura of +4. At the bottom of the shaft lies a steeply declining tunnel heading East by Southeast. This passage continues for a day and a half's march until it meets a fork.





The eastern passage continues for two days. At this point the characters are committed, as the Snaefell entrance would be sealed on their return. The tunnel levels out and then goes into a slight incline, until it reaches a dead end a day's march later.

The western tunnel continues for a day and comes close to a fast moving underground river. A few feet of granite separate this river from the tunnel and a small hole in the tunnel wall emits a jet of steaming hot water. However, this water is drinkable (when cooled) and the resulting stream gives the travelers a vital clue to which tunnel leads down. The aura rises to +5.

From this point, an almost horizontal tunnel heads southwest for two days. Numerous side tunnels appear along the way, but the stream shows which way to go. Exploring the side tunnels only leads to dead ends, often after days of travel. Following the stream leads to a narrow crack in the granite making a nearly vertical staircase of sorts. This staircase takes two and half days to traverse. The stream has grown larger, and in places it is a veritable waterfall cascading down the stairs. By the time the bottom of the stairs are reached, the stream has become a fast-flowing river, which stretches outwards into a cavern so huge that the ceiling can barely be seen. The aura of this cavern is +8; the characters have reached the Glittering Plains.

This regio is entirely cut off from the mundane realm. Spells like *Leap of Homecoming* are ineffective as are any spells or items that allow communication. There are many other tunnels leading out, but there is no way of knowing where they lead (if anywhere). Using tunneling spells will be equally haphazard. The only sure ways the characters can return home are the way they arrived or through the Obsidian Gate (see below).

Glasvellir

The Glittering Plains are the home of Gudmund, who shares the *regio* with his brother Geirrod, who rules the portion beyond Gudmund's. Gudmund's realm consists of plains of golden barley and lush vegetation, which seem

to give off their own subtle light, illuminating the whole region.

The stream that the characters followed down here is now a raging river. The bank which the characters are on is only about 200 yards wide, ending in the rock wall of the cavern, which reaches up as far as the eye can see. The river is nearly 300 yards across, and horribly fast. Anyone attempting to cross without making preparations is swept away in a matter of minutes. It is far too fast to swim, but it has cooled down since its origins near the surface. Anyone who is swept away but who manages to keep his head above the water (with Str + Swim rolls) eventually finds himself on the banks of the river in Geirrod's realm (see below).

If the characters travel for a day downstream they discover an immense bridge, seemingly made of solid gold, which spans the river. Otherwise, judicious use of magic, ropes and/or very strong people enable the group to cross the river.

On the other side, the characters are struck by the sense of scale, as if they have been shrunk while crossing the river. The barley stands eight feet tall, and the occasional animal is similarly oversized, with goats the size of cows, and cows the size of elephants.

The Giants

Eventually, the characters come across signs of people and then the people themselves. Unsurprisingly, the occupants of Glasvellir are huge, averaging twelve feet tall. Small families of these giants sparsely populate the riverine zone, herding the oversized beasts and caring for the barley. Although most of these giants can shapeshift, the majority are not otherwise magically gifted. These families supply food to the giant city, far to the southeast.

Within this city about three hundred giant families live in luxury, ruled by their benevolent leader Gudmund. The characters are a novelty to the giants, who seldom see adult beings who are so small. It is not long before they are taken to see Gudmund.

King Gudmund is much larger than his subjects, approaching 20 feet in height. His twelve sons usually accompany him; they, like their father, habitually wear red clothing. Gudmund

entertains the characters for as long as they wish to stay.

Eventually, the characters will bring up the reason for their visit to the Glittering Plains, their search for Einar Gamliðsson. As soon as the matter is broached, Gudmund's face clouds over, and he looks troubled. He tells them to ask him tomorrow. The remainder of the day is filled with activity as Gudmund takes them on a tour of his kingdom, riding out with them on immense horses to show them many wonders, such as a many-colored waterfall and a cave-system that provides perfect echoes.

The next day they ask him about Einar again, and once again he tells them to ask him tomorrow. On this day he shows them a hall he is having built out of solid gold, studded with gemstones. He also shows them the source of all this gold: nuggets washed up on the banks of the river, easy to gather. For the next four days the same happens, Gudmund tells them to ask him tomorrow and shows them another wonder of his realm.

On the third day Gudmund takes the characters hunting the immense boar that dwell in the thick forests. This is a challenge and a half, even for the most capable of warriors. On the fourth day he shows them a spring that bubbles from a rocky hillock. The spring water tastes like the finest honey-mead, and grants those who drink it the Free Expression virtue for a day. A draft from the spring contains three pawns of *Creo vis*.

On the fifth day they visit a village of humans, whose ancestors found their way to Glasvellir centuries ago and now live in harmony with its people. They speak West Norse, like Icelanders, and still worship the heathen gods of the Norse. There are signs of recent destruction in the village, but Gudmund refuses to discuss the matter and the villagers refer any such questions to Gudmund. On the sixth day he stages a feast, which lasts the whole day. The more magically inclined members of Gudmund's court, experts in the creation of illusions, provide entertainment.

On the seventh day, Gudmund tells them what he knows. He explains that he hoped they would be persuaded to stay in Glasvellir, and give up this quest for the magician, but obviously they cannot be dissuaded. He tells them that several years ago a human entered the Glittering Plains. He was entertained like the char-

acters have been. Gudmund learnt of his sorrow, but encouraged him to begin a new life in Glasvellir. Einar settled in the human village where he started a new family.

Gudmund is disappointed to hear that Einar has made another attempt to avenge his first family. This is doubly tragic given recent events. Geirroð's people recently raided the village and several children have been taken for slaves or meat (including Einar's). The last time Gudmund's people saw Einar he was heading into Geirroð's realm.

Gudmund will not have mentioned Geirroð before, for his people and Gudmund's are in a state of hostilities, with occasional fighting breaking out. This latest raid is seen as a prelude to a future battle. Gudmund intends to avenge the raid on the human village, but in his own time. He believes Einar and anyone who follows him is throwing his life away without purpose.

If the characters still want to find Einar, they have to cross the Hemra River on the northern border of the Glittering Plains and into Geirroðgard.

Geirroðgard

On the other side of Gudmund's realm, beyond the icy Hemra River, is the land ruled by Gudmund's brother Geirroð. Called simply Geirroðgard, it is a stark contrast to Gudmund's land of plenty. The 'sky' seems to be a dark red in color, and a thin mist covers the black soil and blasted vegetation. Packs of immense dogs roam the landscape, making the land all but uninhabitable. All Geirroð's people dwell within the obsidian walls of the city that squats in the center of the land, about five miles from the only ford across the Hemra.

The Obsidian Citadel

Inside the town was crowded with murky and misshapen phantoms, and it was hard to say whether their shrieking figures were more ghastly to the eye or to the ear; everything was foul, and the reeking mire afflicted the nostrils of the visitors with its unbearable stench. Then they found the





rocky dwelling, which Geirrod was rumored to inhabit for his palace.

— Saxo Grammaticus,
The History of the Danes

Geirrod's city is huge, over five miles in diameter and three hundred feet high. Over two thousand trolls live within these walls, served by about five hundred human slaves. Everything is in ruin and decay with a thick cloud of smoke reducing visibility to less than fifteen paces.

Only one structure remains intact within the citadel. Hidden from general view in the center of the city stands a ziggurat over five hundred feet high, seemingly carved from a single obsidian block. Three golden winged sphinxes guard the triple stairways to its summit. At the summit lies its only chamber, sealed by an iron door. None of the residents ever approach this structure. (See Chapter 17 for more details.)

Geirrod's people are shorter than those found on the other side of the Hemra, and they have twisted frames and ugly faces. Doubtless they are close kin to the trolls that the characters will be familiar with by now. They have the temperament of trolls as well, mean and petty. The characters have to trick the trolls into letting them inside Geirrodargard, if that is what

they want; there is only a marginal difference between being caught in a poisonous wasteland haunted by massive dogs and being stuck in a city of trolls.

Geirrod is not as powerful as his brother, but is nevertheless a formidable opponent. He has a Might of 65, and he takes the form of a six-headed troll. He has a particular power over fire, being able to handle molten metal with his bare hands, and fling it in combat. Geirrod's lieutenant is a troll by the name of Jarl Agdi who rules his people with an iron fist.

Einar's Preparations

If the magi attempt to pursue Einar into Geirrodargard, they encounter him on their way to the Hemra ford. Einar is in the middle of negotiation with a landvaettir lady and is surrounded by countless shadowy shapes. Attacking Einar enrages the landvaettir lady and her court and the storyguide should make the players pay for such hasty action.

Alternatively, they can attempt to negotiate.

Reconciliation

Pan Caudarax killed Einar's first wife and their two children, and Einar has killed at least one child of the dragon. Einar's honor is partly satisfied and it is possible that the characters could negotiate a settlement. The feud could be settled in typical Icelandic fashion at the Galdramen hreppur, with each party paying compensation to the other. It may even happen that each is charged with fostering a child of the other; stranger things have happened in the sagas!

Rescue

However, the matter of immediate concern to Einar is the fate of his living children. The landvaettir he is negotiating with are Norns, spirits of fate summoned by Einar's orlog-galdor. He seeks knowledge of his children and the spirit's help in clouding the trolls' sight for the rescue. Einar has a high standing amongst the Norn landvaettir and their lady is willing to help.

A feast is being prepared in Geirrod's palace to rally his people to war against Gudmund. The centerpiece of the feast will be the

Gudmund of Glasvellir

King Gudmund is an extremely ancient giant. He announces his lineage as son of Mimir, which makes him a cousin to Odin, father of the Norse gods (Mimir's sister Bestla was Odin's mother). Whether this claim is true or not is impossible to determine, but it is undeniable that Gudmund is extremely powerful. He customarily appears to be 20' in height, dressed in white with a rich scarlet cloak around his shoulders. He is extraordinarily handsome, with golden hair and blue eyes.

Gudmund is a gracious host, the epitome of a Norse lord. He is generous to a fault, quick to forgive slights, and happy to fulfill the needs of his guests. While he has access to a whole range of powers, he is not the 'owner' of this *regio*, and does not control its boundaries. His Might is 75, but no other characteristics should be needed for him. It is difficult to be certain if Gudmund is a magical or faerie being. His claimed lineage and behavior suggest he is fay, but like landvaettir he seems entirely at home in this magical realm. This ambiguity is deliberate and it is for individual storyguides to resolve if they wish.

roasting of the human children captured in Glasvellir. Einar and the characters have about three days to effect a rescue.

The storyguide needs to fill in the details of this rescue, given the character's plans and capabilities. The Norns can enable the characters to pass as human slaves within the city, hiding them from Second Sight. Alternatively, with spells like *Veil of Invisibility* and a Target: Group version of *Seven League Stride*, the rescue could be trivially easy.

The rescue of Gudmund's human subjects humiliates Geirrod and gain the characters great favor with his brother. In addition, Einar will be more than willing to come to terms with Pan Caudarax.

Without the characters' aid, Einar is killed attempting the rescue.

Inhabitants of Glasvellir

Gudmund's people are fair of face, and more likely to have courtly skills than combat skills. They are bigger than trolls, but far smaller than giants (Size +3). Usually, they have no magical abilities other than Shapechange, and they can usually only manage a handful of forms. However, about one in twenty is magically powerful with the full range of Trollsnyir abilities. Jotunn Affinities are also common in this group. These people are usually members of Gudmund's men-at-arms.

Geirrod's people are physically identical to trolls, but many of them have a Jotunn Affinity with Fire. Many of the female trolls have the *Gift of the Magic Arts* power.





Chapter 15

Brighde's Gauntlet

Synopsis

This adventure should be run about twenty years after the saga inception date. Brighde's Hermetic training is complete and Victor has prepared her to take over his battle with the demon. Her gauntlet will begin by her abandonment in a remote region of Flanders and Victor's spirit returning to his own body. Although the stated aim is for Brighde to exorcise the demon, Victor and Brighde plan to trick the demon into revealing Damhan-allaidh's location: Brighde will feign defeat and the magi must track her down.

Victor's Plan

For one season a year Victor has been training Brighde in the Hermetic arts. For the other three he has been training her to battle the demonic spirit that Victor imprisoned within her twenty years before.

Demonic deception is impossible to penetrate with magic. However, demons are not beyond being deceived. Victor's plan is to trick Hetep into believing that he is engineering his own escape. Although this is a risky ploy, only Hetep knows the location of Damhan-allaidh, and Victor's driving goal is to see him destroyed.

As Brighde's Gauntlet begins, Victor will abandon her body and return to his own, still trapped and preserved within his Scartaris labo-

ratory. This ward can only be dispelled on the death of Victor.

When Victor leaves Brighde's body, Hetep and Brighde will be left to fight for control. Brighde seemingly leaves herself open and Hetep takes the opportunity to seize control. However, the player magi are secretly kept informed of Hetep's activities. It is then up to the player characters discreetly to track her, hopefully to Damhan-allaidh's lair. Once they are within the lair, Brighde leaps back to Scartaris so that Victor can destroy Hetep, while the characters can ensure that Damhan-allaidh's body is never released.

Victor has given Brighde a *Leap of Homecoming* waiting spell that she can activate even while Hetep is in control. This will transport her into Victor's lab and into the ward that originally contained Hetep (now restored). From there Victor and Brighde will be able to imprison Hetep within Victor's body. Victor will then trigger the destruction of his own ward. As his body crumbles to dust, he will be able to delay Hetep's spirit long enough for the Thothian Watchers (see page 84) to capture him. Victor's death will also release the power of the ward containing Brighde, allowing her to go free.

Hetep's Plan

Unfortunately for Victor and Brighde, Victor's control of the demon has not been as complete as he believed. During his imprisonment within Brighde, Hetep has managed to find a

way of breaking free from her control, and he can prevent her from triggering the *Leap of Homecoming*. Until Brighde's Gauntlet he bides his time. During the Gauntlet, with Victor finally out of the way, Hetep intends to find another host, kill Brighde and escape Victor completely.

Council Meeting

Victor invites the magi to a dreamscape council meeting. At this meeting he announces that Brighde's Gauntlet will be held in the following spring.

Victor will explain his plan. Brighde has been raised as a Tytalus maga and is confident in her abilities. She has been battling the demon without aid, although under Victor's supervision, for the last three years. She is certain that even without Victor's presence, she can exorcise the demon or at least activate the *Leap of Homecoming* spell.

In addition, Brighde has enchanted a mirror that allows her to communicate while Hetep is in control. This mirror, made by Brighde under Victor's guidance, always shows whatever images Brighde sees. The mirror is given to the player characters for their part in Victor's plan. After she allows Hetep to take her over, the mirror continues to show its images, although Hetep is unaware of this. The characters are to work out where Hetep is heading and meet him there. Victor suspects that Hetep will contact his Infernal allies, and as this is not part of Brighde's Gauntlet, the characters are allowed to help her if other demons come into play.

This has been Victor's long-term solution since the beginning and he has shared it with Brighde as her training neared completion. He is aware that this plan has only one ultimate outcome for him, his death. If Brighde is a player character and the player does not agree to the plan, you should have Hetep escape from Brighde into one of the covenfolk, who can then be pursued.

The Gauntlet

After Victor leaves Brighde, the demon regains control and quickly heads west. The first noteworthy event is a meeting between Hetep and the demonic crow Whisper (see page 83). Whisper reports Damhan-allaidh's last known location, but unfortunately Brighde does not understand the language used.

Now aware of Damhan-allaidh's location, Hetep decides that his old pawn will make an excellent new host.

Thanks to the mirror, the player characters should be able to locate Brighde/Hetep, and work out that they are heading for Old Vindolanda. Once at the original site of Vindolanda, Hetep excavates the Lundy Island gatestone and sets about locating Damhan-allaidh's body. Once the magi know where the demon has gone, they should follow as quickly as possible.

If Brighde attempts to activate her *Leap of Homecoming* spell she finds that Hetep blocks her. See below for details of the resolution of such a conflict. For the purposes of the saga narrative this battle will not conclude before Damhan-allaidh is found.

Old Vindolanda

See page 93 for details of the Northumbrian site of the original Vindolanda.

By the time the players arrive Hetep (possessing Brighde) should have already excavated the Lundy Island gatestone and be in the process of freeing Damhan-allaidh. The player characters must defeat Hetep's minion Ammon, who is guarding the gateway.

They can then confront Hetep/Brighde in Ealasaid's sanctum.





Damhan-allaidh's Tomb

See below for details of Ealasaid's Sea Temple sanctum.

Soon after Hetep arrives he locates Damhan-allaidh under the rubble of the Sea Dome Temple. First, he casts a *Creo Auram* spell on the chamber. In Hermetic terms the same effect could be created as the spell *Sanctuary Beneath the Waves*, described in the box below.

Once the sanctum is protected by this spell, Hetep can begin freeing Damhan-allaidh from the debris and centuries of sand, silt and sea-life. Many generations of creatures have fed on the constantly regenerating bodies of the two ancient wizards buried here and so this is not easy.

As soon as Hetep frees Damhan-allaidh's body he abandons Brighde and possesses his ancient ally. He then pours his *Infernal Might* into restoring his host. Once Damhan-allaidh has been revived (this takes a few rounds) he attempts to kill Brighde before she can use her *Leap of Homecoming* waiting spell.

If Brighde is a player character you may wish to play out the mental struggle between Brighde and Hetep as a dreamscape adventure, where Brighde desperately searches for the hidden trigger to the *Leap of Homecoming* before Damhan-allaidh revives. If Brighde is a non-player character you may wish to have her killed at this point. A player character should be allowed to escape (with maximum dramatic tension) via the *Leap of Homecoming* unless she is particularly slow.

Alternatively, if the players are quick and resourceful they may be in time to save Brighde, even if she fails to save herself.

Sanctuary Beneath the Waves

CrAu (req Re) 30

R: Touch D: Moon T: Room

Creates a region of air on the bottom of a large body of water. The effect needs a pre-existing enclosure with definite boundaries as described by the *Room* definition given on page 104 of *ArM4*.

Victor's Farewell

As conceived this story should end with the escape of Damhan-allaidh and Hetep. Brighde should have *leaped* into the containment ward in Victor's lab and will now be trapped, unable to escape, and lacking the demonic tenant that they were both expecting. The only way to free Brighde is for Victor to trigger his own destruction, which he is prepared to do. Before he dies, he will offer whatever last advice he can and wishes his filia good fortune in her future struggles.

It should be noted that if Victor were fully aware of Hetep's threat to the Magic Realm (see later chapters), he would have done this immediately. However, neither the players nor Victor will have any idea of Hetep's plan at this stage.

If Brighde is killed, Victor will remain within his own body indefinitely. The first possession was justified (in his own mind) because he was attempting to save Brighde. However, Victor has grown increasingly uncomfortable with possession over the intervening years, fearing its immorality and corrupting influence. Even if a willing host is found, Victor will refuse to use his *Possession* power again.

Although trapped within his icy ward, Victor can communicate using *Creo Mentem* spells. He can also use his *Morphean Landscape* power to conduct meetings and even teach. He will use his time to advise and teach the magi in preparation for the final conflict with Damhan-allaidh.

Sea Temple Sanctum

Location and History

Ealasaid's sanctum lies about eight miles due west of the island of Lundy, which is off the north Devon coast. This was the last site created by the magi of Vindolanda and was the most ambitious. Guided by Thothian spirits, Ealasaid

found a magical site conducive to her research on the Obsidian Gateway. Ealasaïd created a tunnel that led for nearly eight miles beneath the sea and cast *Carve the Mythic Chambers* about 10 paces below the seabed.

Only Ealasaïd knew the location of this site, a condition imposed by the spirits. The central feature was the crystal-domed chamber that rose out of the seabed, built over a magical spring. Shortly before her death at the hand of Damhan-allaidh she had discovered the name of the spirit serving the Obsidian gateway in the Kerlingarfjoll Valley and had begun re-constructing the summoning ritual to call it to the gate.

Damhan-allaidh surprised her in the sea dome chamber and theurgist magic was too slow to save her. Damhan-allaidh then raised her ghost and tortured her for information on the whereabouts of Victor and Hetep. A few months later a combined force of Tremere and Flambeau magi defeated Damhan-allaidh's forces and he fled injured and exhausted into the sanctum. There he found Liam, freeing Ealasaïd's ghost from her confinement. Both grugach transformed into beasts and charged each other.

However, even in Damhan-allaidh's weakened state, Liam could not defeat him. Ealasaïd's spirit waited until Liam was incapacitated before she commanded an earth elemental to shatter the crystal dome separating them all from the sea. The force of the collapse crushed the bodies of both Liam and Damhan-allaidh instantly and flooded most of the structure. Neither grugach could recover while buried under tons of submerged rubble. Her dying intention fulfilled, Ealasaïd's ghost rested. Liam and Damhan-allaidh have remained incapacitated for over three hundred years. The statistics given in Chapter 18 represent their state should they be freed and allowed to recover.

The distortions to their bodies are beyond the scope of Hermetic magic to restore at *instant* duration, although spells may be devised to grant relief temporarily. In this state both slowly begin losing their reason (not that Damhan-allaidh had much to lose).

Getting There

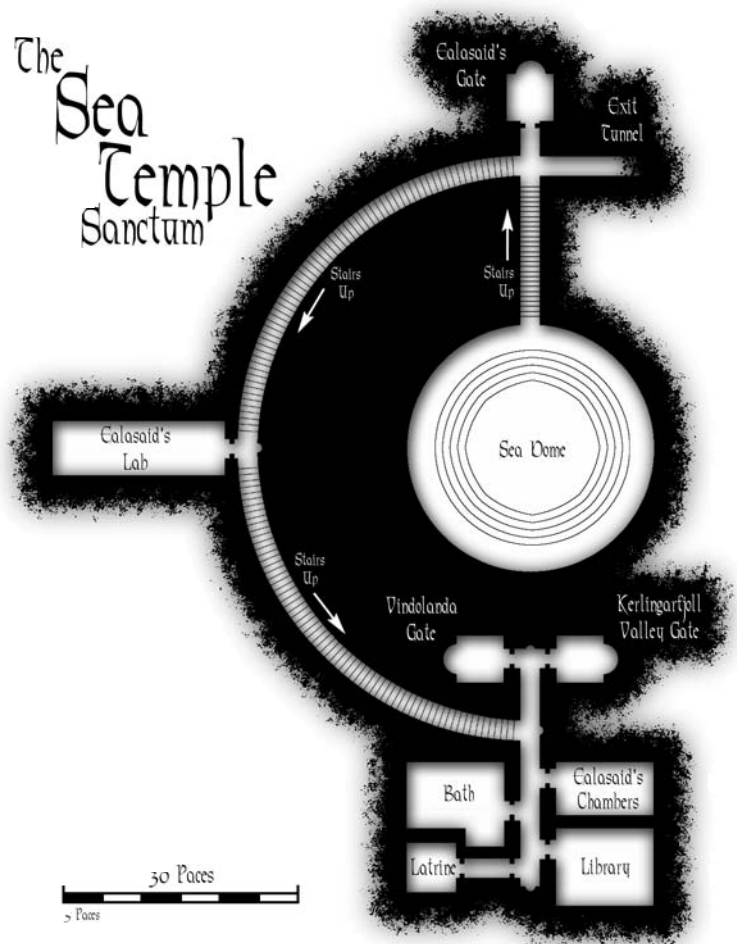
The only way to the Ealasaïd's sanctum is via the gatestone to be found at Old Vindolanda in Northumbria. Victor and Iain cannot give the players any information about the site's physical location.

The gatestone connecting Glyder Fawr to Lundy Island is out of position and cannot be opened.

Sea Temple Sanctum Map Key

Vindolanda Gate: 5 paces square chamber with one passage leading east. The gateway to the Northumbrian site is inset in an alcove in the western wall. *

Kerlingarfjoll Valley Gate: 5 paces square chamber with one passage leading west. The





gateway to the hidden Icelandic valley is inset in an alcove in the eastern wall. Unlike the archway gatestones created by the magi of Vin-dolanda, this gatestone is the capstone of a trilithon. *

Library: 12 paces by 10 paces. Contains four lecterns and four writing desks, and about forty books sit in untidy piles on tables. This room has been enchanted to preserve the books. Assume the library contains 900 levels of spells and 360 levels of books. Additionally the library contains Ealasaïd's translation notes on cuneiform and hieroglyphic texts, as well as her lab notes. *

Latrine: 8 paces by 6 paces. Two stone benches line the north and south walls. Holes cut into the benches run into the drainage system where inanimate matter is destroyed. *

Bath: The magical items that supplied this chamber are still operating. Although three hundred years of water erosion has opened the drainage channel somewhat the bath is still warm and clean. Originally the water flooded this section to about three feet, but the drainage system serving the bath and the latrine reduced the water level to the lowest drainage point in this room. *

Ealasaïd's Private Chambers: Ealasaïd's sanctum marker is displayed on the remains of the door. As well as a rotten bed and clothes chest, the room contains a writing desk and lectern. On the lectern sits Ealasaïd's last lab text, which shows she was close to completing the calling ritual for the obsidian gate. *

* The water level is about 6 inches in the above sections. The floor is covered in silt and debris from the initial flood.

Ealasaïd's Lab: Totally submerged. The equipment in this room is unsalvageable. It does however contain several clay and basalt tablets inscribed with cuneiform or hieroglyphics. Using these artifacts Ealasaïd was able to identify the names and nature of the spirits serving the gateways.

Sea Dome Temple: This 30-pace diameter circular chamber is open to the sea. A set of steps leads up to an altar. Originally a thick granite dome, enchanted into transparency, covered this chamber. Now this dome lies on the floor of the chamber, covered with four feet of sand, silt and sea life. If restored the temple would provide a +5 bonus to magical summon-

ing rituals. The location is greatly favored by spirits of the sea and secretive spirits like Lucifugus (see *Hedge Magic*, page 77). The altar incorporates a fountain fed by an underground fresh water spring; which generates twelve pawns of Intéllego vis on the winter Solstice each year.

Exit Tunnel: This is the original tunnel used to reach the area. It is eight miles long and leads to a cliffside cave.

Ealasaïd's Gate: Totally flooded and filled with silt. A gatestone connects this archway to Macomb's sanctum, but it is out of position and unusable.

Ealasaïd's Research

Ealasaïd was an expert on the summoning and control of spirits. In the terms introduced in *The Mysteries*, she was a Theurgist. As well as material relating to the gatestones produced by herself and Macomb, the Lundy Island sanctum library contains enough material for the player characters to re-create Ealasaïd's work on the Obsidian Gateway.

First the magi must translate her notes (see ArM4 page 82 for details). There are 20 sets of lab notes relevant to the Obsidian Gate. When translated and written up, each set of notes counts as a Quality 2 Tractatus in Occult Lore (or Theurgy, if using *The Mysteries*); all must be studied before beginning work on the Obsidian Gateway ritual.

In addition, the library contains her translation notes on cuneiform and hieroglyphic texts. As they were for her personal reference, they are extremely difficult to follow and so they are low quality when studied. Each may be studied as if it were a Summa on Speak Ancient Egyptian (Level 4, Quality 0), Scribe Hieroglyphics (Level 3, Quality 0), Speak Assyrian (Level 3, Quality 0), or Scribe Cuneiform (Level 3, Quality 0).

To begin work on the Obsidian Gate ritual the magus must reference the cuneiform and hieroglyphics tablets found in her lab. This requires a score of at least 3 in Speak Ancient Egyptian and Speak Assyrian as well as a score of at least 2 in Scribe Hieroglyphics and Scribe Cuneiform.

The ritual itself must be designed at level 40. Details of this ritual are given on page 73.

Chapter 16

Spider Through Mist



Synopsis

Damhan-allaidh/Hetep penetrates the Kerlingarfjoll valley and attempts to travel through the Obsidian Gateway. Should he succeed the sacred stelae will be corrupted.

It is recommended that this assault take place about four years before the player characters are likely to complete the Obsidian Gate ritual.

Foreshadowing

Around the end of June, any player character with the Premonitions virtue should make a Per + Premonitions roll. Characters obtaining a result of 6+ should become aware of imminent danger. Unless players make the connection themselves, have them all make an Intelligence roll. Characters who get a result of 6+ should be reminded that this is near the date when the Obsidian Gate may be opened and the tunnels leading to Glasvellir may be reached.

In anticipation of trouble, guards might be stationed at both the Kerlingarfjoll valley and the Snaefell caldera.

The Assault

At midnight, on the day the ritual can be performed, Damhan-allaidh and his allies

quickly cross into the mundane level of the Kerlingarfjoll valley. This will be a surprise, as only Hetep knows of this break in the ward. What allies Damhan-allaidh has depends partly on the magi's success in the *Bard's Feast* adventure. If the Scottish Giants were freed from their obligation, they have returned home and refuse to serve Damhan-allaidh further. Otherwise Damhan-allaidh will force them into this final service. Damhan-allaidh's other allies depend on the storyguide. Side stories could involve the characters trying to foil his attempts to gain allies in the supernatural landscape of Iceland.

Even with Hetep's magic, Damhan-allaidh will struggle to enter the upper levels of the regio. Hetep knows a ritual similar to *Tearing the*

Story Seeds

- In need of allies, Damhan-allaidh has attempted to unite the trolls of the Western Quarter under his leadership. Living on Snaefelsnes, where there is the largest concentration of trolls in Iceland, the characters cannot fail to notice. Furthermore, this task will not be easy for The Spider, as trolls are by nature territorial and quarrelsome.
- Damhan-allaidh has enlisted the help of Leiken, one of the most powerful of the yarthkin (see page 33) and leader of the *mara*, a type of evil landvaettir that causes nightmares. These witch-spirits appear as old women and literally ride their victims through terrifying dreams, sapping their energy. After a few *mara* attack members of the covenant, Victor may be persuaded to use his *Morphean Landscape* Power to allow the characters to combat the *mara* on their own terms. If Victor has already been killed, the characters will find it more difficult to combat the dream-spirits.



Mystical Veil (see *The Wizard's Grimoire Revised Edition*), which creates a tear wide enough for giants to pass, but which takes an hour to perform. The tear creates a huge disturbance on both the entrance and exit levels, and takes ten minutes to open wide enough for a giant to walk through. This should give any guards plenty of time to raise the alarm back at Scartaris. but if the magi delay longer than ten minutes, the first giant through the tear will attempt to smash the trilithon connected to the covenant.

If the magi manage to gather a force at the temple to meet Damhan-allaidh, then the storyguide should run the combat as he chooses. If the Scottish Giants from *Bard's Feast* are present the combat should be very difficult, with the covenant's forces perhaps forced to retreat. If the giants appear to have the upper hand, but the battle is close, they may offer to let the characters retreat.

If the magi appear to be winning or if they incapacitate Damhan-allaidh, Hetep will cast a *Leap of Homecoming* spell. Once Damhan-

allaidh has fled, the Scottish giants will offer an honorable truce. If the Scottish giants are not present, any other allies of Damhan-allaidh are likely to panic and attempt to run. However, they cannot escape the regio level and the player characters should be able to dispatch or capture them at their leisure.

Damhan-allaidh Succeeds

If Damhan-allaidh opens the Obsidian Gateway, he steps through and immediately smash the gateway. He then drives off Setna (its guardian spirit) and Hetep completes his corruption of the sacred stelae; see Hetep's *Corrupt Knowledge* power on page 137 for details. Once the stelae are corrupted the corruption begins to spread to all magical writings in the world. However, this process is far slower than if Hetep were doing it directly. Use the following rules to give a rough idea of when a particular book may be corrupted, but there will be a lot of variation.

The average summa will be corrupted after a number of years equal to the total number of experience points the work represents. For example, corrupting a level 10 Summa would require 55 years. *Libri Quaestionum* and *Tractatus* are corrupted in a number of years equal to their Quality. It takes over 365 years to corrupt the average Authority. Books written during this period are automatically corrupt.

After this Damhan-allaidh (still possessed by Hetep) remains to guard the stelae.

Damhan-allaidh Fails

He immediately flees towards Snaefell and attempts to enter the tunnels to Glasvellir. If he makes it to Geirrodargard, he claims the protection of Geirrod. He then tries to penetrate the Obsidian Temple from outside. If the player characters pursue him beyond the city gates, they will face the combined might of the Geirrod and his army of trolls.

Only after Damhan-allaidh betrays Geirrod will the player character have a chance to act against the city.



Chapter 17

Into the Gateway

Synopsis

The magi complete Ealasaïd's work on the Obsidian Gateway ritual. The magi must either help defend the sacred stelae or break into the Obsidian Temple to destroy them.

This chapter is divided into two major sections. Which one is followed by the storyguide will depend upon the outcome of the previous chapter. If Damhan-allaidh managed to get to the Obsidian Temple, use the first section (**The Stelae are Corrupted**). Otherwise, use the second section (**The Stelae are Uncorrupted**).

The Stelae are Corrupted

In this scenario, Damhan-allaidh broke the gate within the stelae sanctum, but the characters will not know this. Presumably they are eager to follow him through. However, upon completing Ealasaïd's research to open the Temple gateway, instead of taking the magi to the Obsidian Temple, the spirit serving the Gate delivers them to the edge of a corrupted wasteland on the magic realm. There the spirit of Setna greets them warmly and asks for their aid in destroying the corrupted stelae. He explains the consequences should the stelae remain to spread their corruption throughout the magic

realm and shows them how Hetep's poison is already taking affect.

If the magi agree to help, Setna teaches them how to enchant a weapon to slay those with external souls (see page 132). He can also tell them that the other entrance to the Obsidian Temple lies at the summit of a ziggurat. He will give them directions to the Glittering Plains, but he knows nothing of their current residents or the city of trolls. As soon as the magi wish they can return to the Kerlingarfjoll valley and prepare their assault on Damhan-allaidh.

Assault on Geirrodargard City

The magi will find their actions on the Glittering Plains much easier if they befriended Einar Gamlißon and gained the favor of Gudmund. Critically, Einar will have been spreading the Aesir religion amongst the human slaves and will be planning a rebellion.

With Einar's help the magi should easily be able to sneak into the city. Gudmund stages an invasion and besieges the city. All the player characters need to do is open the city gates and keep them open long enough for Gudmund's force to enter. The magi can time their attack to co-ordinate with Einar's plan to have the slaves poison the trolls en masse. Still, the battle for the city gate should be difficult.

If the city is captured Geirrod orders his people to stop fighting and sues for terms. It should be noted that Geirrod has an External Soul and, unless the magi have made a *Setna*





Hetep's Undead Form

Characteristics: Int +0, Per +2, Pre N/A, Com +3, Str +10, Sta +15, Dex +5, Qik +8

Infernal Might: 60

Size: +1

Personality Traits: Greedy +5, Secretive +6, Capricious +6

Weapon / Attack

	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Bite	+16	+13	+16	+19	na
Claw	+16	+13	+16	+16	na

Soak: +26

Fatigue levels: Tireless

Body levels: OK, 0, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Powers:

Sunder the Magician's Spirit, PeVi 50, 10 points: On a successful attack roll Hetep can reach into a magician's spirit and maim his Gift. Magic resistance applies, with Vim adding to magi's Parma total. No known Hermetic technique is capable of restoring this injury while Hetep exists in the mortal realm. Otherwise only Hetep himself can restore it, usually in return for a cardinal pact.

Shapechange, MuCo/An 40, 0 points: Hetep can transform possessed individuals into his natural physical form.

Raise Corpse, ReCo 25, 1 point: Hetep can raise the corpse of anyone he slays as one of the walking dead.

Infernal Spell, varies: Hetep can generate the equivalent of spontaneous spells up to 30th level. Such spells cost him 1 might per magnitude.

Roleplaying Notes: Hetep is now bound with the shell of his former servant, and Damhan-allaidh's body is even more hideous than when alive. It now appears as a huge skinless baboon, its flesh running with putrefaction.

Blade for him, he survives the battle. Geirrodd knows exactly where Damhan-allaidh's soulstone is, and is willing to hand it over, let the slaves go, and grant free access to the ziggurat. In addition, Gudmund and his forces take tribute in gold.

Should the players destroy Damhan-allaidh's soulstone, Hetep is forced to use his *Raise Corpse* power immediately. This binds him to the undead body and prevents him possessing any other person. Destroying Damhan-allaidh's undead body gives the Thothian spirits enough time to capture him.

Without Einar's support and information this approach will be substantially more difficult.

Into the Obsidian Temple

The Obsidian Temple has three immense guardians in the form of Golden Sphinxes, and

seven magical gates, which need to be opened. Getting through the temple's doorways (see page 97 for the process) takes time, but should be within the reach of player magi at this stage of the saga. It will be easier if Geirrodd has been defeated, but the players may find a way to reach the temple doorways anyway.

Once into the inner sanctum the player characters have to cope with Damhan-allaidh and Hetep. Should Damhan-allaidh still be alive, Hetep can attempt to possess magi and powerful companions. However, if he is successfully resisted the Thothian spirits will have enough time to capture him.

After this final obstacle, the magi have to smash the emerald stelae to stop the spread of infernal corruption.

The statistics for the undead Damhan-allaidh are given above. Destroying this body will automatically allow Hetep to be captured by his Thothian watchers.

The Stelae are Uncorrupted

If Damhan-allaidh failed to enter the Obsidian gate during *Spider through the Mist*, then the spirit serving the Obsidian Gateway will transport the magi to the stelae sanctum in the Obsidian temple. There the spirit of Setna will warmly greet the magi and ask for their aid in defending the temple. He knows that Damhan-allaidh is making his way through the gates, but knows nothing else.

The only immediate help Setna can give is a papyrus scroll containing instructions on how to enchant a weapon to slay those with external souls (see page 132).

Investigation in Glasvellir may reveal Damhan-allaidh's recent activities there. The sphinxes guarding the ziggurat barred Damhan-allaidh from the summit. Geirrod refused to help him defeat the guardians, so he betrayed Geirrod, binding him in magical iron. Damhan-allaidh also sought the troll-king's soulstone, but Geirrod refuses to say where it was kept. As a torture Damhan-allaidh has left snakes dripping venom on his faces, and has assumed kingship over the trolls.

By the time the player characters have completed the obsidian gate ritual, Damhan-allaidh has already dispatched the three guardian automatons, at great loss to the trolls. He is currently working on opening the ivory gate (the others are left open).

At this point the player characters have several options.

A Web for the Spider?

They might decide to prepare a trap for Damhan-allaidh in the sanctum. Setna can conjure food and drink while they study from the stelae and perhaps find a way to trap and/or kill Damhan-allaidh/Hetep as they open the golden door.

Cutting the Spider's Thread?

They might return through the Obsidian gate (which they can do whenever they wish) and travel to Glasvellir. If they have befriended Einar Gamlisson and Gudmund they are able to inform them of the developments in the city. Einar has been spreading the Aesir religion amongst the human slaves and planning a rebellion to coincide with Gudmund's siege. All the player characters need do is open the gates at the right moment.

With Einar's help the magi should easily be able to sneak into the city. With the more powerful trolls slain or maimed fighting the automatons, the city will be lightly guarded. The magi can co-ordinate their attack with Einar's plan to have the slaves poison the giants en masse. The battle for the city should be made tough, as success means the end of both Damhan-allaidh and Hetep. Gudmund will release his brother and lead the freed slaves to his realm (as well as taking a substantial tribute).

Without Einar and Gudmund's support and information this approach will be substantially more difficult.

The Third Way

It is possible that the players may decide to pursue both of the options listed above, with some staying to defend the sanctum and some working to defeat Damhan-allaidh from the other side. It is also possible that the magi pursued Damhan-allaidh into Glasvellir after the assault on Kerlingarfjoll valley. Whatever happens the storyguide should try to ensure a dramatic end to the saga.

The End

Assuming the magi succeed, Hetep is imprisoned and the Magic Realm saved. Setna can restore the gift of any magus affected by Hetep's *Sunder the Magician's Spirit* power, including Iain. If he is still alive, Victor will say his goodbyes and dispel his ward.





The Golden Sphinxes

Characteristics: Int +3, Per +5, Pre +3, Com +3, Str +15, Sta +20, Dex 15, Qik +10

Magic Might: 100

Size: +5

Weapon / Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Claws*	+20	+25	+10	+25	n/a

*Each sphinx can attack five separate individual simultaneously, if they are within reach of its claws.

Soak: +45

Body levels: OK 0, 0, 0, -1, -1, -3, -3, -5, -5, Destroyed

Powers:

Regeneration, CrTe 30, varies: The automata can instantly heal up to three wound levels each round. Each wound level costs one magic point. Using this power does not require an action.

Sense Intents InVi 100, 0 points: The automata can sense the presence of benign or malevolent forces.

Binding Word, ReCo30, 5 points: The automata can force any person or group to keep its word by controlling their bodies.

Thoughts Within the Babble, InMe20, 0 points: The automata can speak and understand any language.

Roleplaying Notes: The automata are aware of Setna's fate and the corruption of the stelae. If the magi think to explain themselves, the automata will let them pass and even defend them as they make their way through the doorways.

Vis: If destroyed they can be harvested for 50 pawns of Vim vis each. Alternatively, they may be studied to learn the secrets of liquid fire and true intelligence in automata (see *The Mysteries*).

If the Stelae are uncorrupted then the magi could gain untold power and fame. The storyguide might want to consider which Hermetic Limits are merely Hermetic and which are limits of Magic, but from this point he must shape the saga himself.

The Obsidian Temple

Within the city of Geirrodargard lies an ancient ziggurat, its purpose and origin forgotten by the troll residents. The summit chamber is the entrance to a Temple, within which the god Thoth hid the first magical writings. This temple does not exist in the mundane realm, nor in a regio, but instead in a section of the Magic Realm itself, the magical cognate of Arcadia or Heaven. The realm has a +10 magic aura, and those with magical abilities may find minor manifestations of their powers spontaneously erupting from them. The exact level of weirdness in the Magic Realm is left up to the storyguide. Although the Obsidian Temple resides in a part of the Realm of Magic, it is

completely cut off from it, and there is no way in which a character can pass from the Temple into another part of the Realm. If a character attempts this they should be warned by Setna. If they persist, the Twilight Void is all that exists beyond the Temple walls, spelling (at least) an automatic temporary Twilight episode for the over-curious magus.

Three golden statues in the form of winged sphinxes guard this entrance, and they animate to combat any threats. Beyond the automata there are seven gates. The first is made of iron, the second of bronze, the third of wood, the fourth of ivory, the fifth of ebony, the sixth of silver and the seventh of gold. Beyond the gold gate lies the sanctum of the stelae, on which the very roots of magic are inscribed.

The Doorways

The doors to the temple can only be opened by complex rituals, each more difficult than the last. Cryptic instructions adorn each door, and can be deciphered with effort. The

knowledges useful in unlocking the gates are Magic Theory (or equivalent), Occult Lore, Enigmatic Wisdom, Philosophiae and Arts Liberales. The characteristic used is Intelligence

The Sanctum of the Stelae

This chamber is hemispherical with a diameter of 343 cubits (about 150 paces). The twin of the Obsidian Gateway stands in the center of this completely black chamber. Before the gateway is placed an immense statue of the Egyptian magician Setna. The statue is carved from a single block of gneiss and shows Setna seated on an ornate chair with an ibis (representing Thoth) claspng the back of his head. Normally, the spirit of Setna (see below) resides within the statue, although it is able to emerge from it if desired. For first impressions, the spirit will usually animate its statue to talk with visitors.

Equally spaced around the chamber are seven pillar stelae, seven cubits (about 3 paces) high, made of emerald and inscribed with hieroglyphics of unknown form. If accepted by Setna, anyone studying these hieroglyphics sees them shift into their own language. The subject and direction of their study will be up to them. Studying these stelae allows the magician to conduct Arcane Experimentation as detailed in WGRE pages 83-87. No vis or lab is required to conduct this research, no control rolls need to be made, and the magus's Research Lab Total is at +10 because of the aura.

Alternatively the stelae can simply be studied for Arts and Magic Theory. Treat them as a Quality 10 Authority on any magical Art or Knowledge.

Setna will only permit one student to study the stelae at any one time. Setna's patience is not infinite and each magician can only spend up to four seasons in study before returning through the gateway (or out through the doorways and into the Glittering Plains if they wish).

but only two of the knowledges given above may be applied.

If more than one character is working on a door they can use the highest Intelligence and the highest combination of two knowledge scores they possess between them. All the people involved should realistically be able to contribute positively. A positive Intelligence and magical knowledge are essential. The storyguide should adjudicate on exactly who can and cannot help. Additionally, each person gets to roll a quality die. The highest roll is added to the total. Mythic Feats cannot be used on the gates, but Mythic Intelligence gives the user another +5 to his rolls.

If the total does not equal or exceed the difficulty then the full base time is spent and new rolls should be made to continue. If the total equals or exceeds the difficulty then the door is unlocked. For every three full points by which the total exceeds the difficulty the time needed to unlock the door is halved. For example, if the total exceeded the difficulty by 3, 4 or 5 the





Setna, Son of Rameses II

Characteristics: Int +5, Per +3, Pre +3, Com +3

Magic Might: 120 (30*)

* Setna's long battle against Hetep's corruption has left him increasingly weakened.

Personality Traits: Wise +6, Patient +3, Suffers Fools Gladly -3

Powers:

Words of Power varies: Setna can cast any spell effect the storyguide feels appropriate, at up to half his current might. If these effect would require vis then Setna must spend 1 might point per magnitude of the effect. Setna does not need to spend might generating effects that do not require vis.

Roleplaying Notes: Loudly do the people sing of Setna, son of the Great Rameses, most learned man in Egypt. A great scholar, he was able to read all the old writings and decipher the most ancient texts. He was also a mighty magician, perhaps the mightiest in Egypt, for he had learned the magical arts from the secret texts that not even the priests of Amen-Ra could read. He grew prideful and

sought out the sacred book of Thoth. In the face of dire warnings he took the book from Nefrekeptah's tomb and Lord Thoth sent a terrible vision to persuade Setna to repent and return the book. Contrite, Setna returned the book to Nefrekeptah and did penance. Setna went on to rise high in Thoth's favor and in time he was offered the guardianship of Thoth's stela in the Obsidian Temple. Setna's spirit has guarded the stela for nearly two and a half millennia. Many times the traitorous Hetep, hidden within magicians, attempted to deliver his poison. Until Damhan-allaidh, Setna had always spotted Hetep's dark shadow within. For the last four centuries Setna has been battling against Hetep's poison and he is now greatly weakened. Setna can no longer bar Damhan-allaidh's use of the Obsidian Gateway, and he will not be able to stand against him should he do so.

As the first magician to attempt to codify magical thought, Setna's spirit has become the very embodiment of man's understanding of magic. As such he is exceedingly powerful.

base time is halved, and if the total exceeds the difficulty by 6, 7 or 8 the base time is quartered.

Iron: Base time, one week. Base difficulty 18

Bronze: Base time, one week. Base difficulty 21

Wood: Base time, one month. Base difficulty 24

Ivory: Base time, one month. Base difficulty 27

Ebony: Base time, one season. Base difficulty 30

Silver: Base time, one season. Base difficulty 33

Gold: Base time, one year. Base difficulty 36

The doors are impossible to damage physically and are beyond the ability of Hermetic magic to affect.

Once the characters have made it through all seven gateways they can enter the Sanctum of the Stela and view the very source of man's understanding of magic. However, what they do once there is highly dependent upon whether Hetep's plan to corrupt the stela has been effective or not.

Setna's Blade

Setna will be able to provide the magi with a papyrus scroll detailing how to enchant a blade to kill a magician with an External Soul. The effect details are given below.

Setna's Blade PeVi 40

R: Spec D: Spec (Constant Use) T: Ind

This effect cannot be made into a spell, only invested into a weapon. Each weapon can only be used against a particular named individual. If the blade is driven through the heart of the intended victim, their soulstone will be destroyed and the victim will be slain. As long as the heart is pierced the victim is slain regardless of any magical resistance.

Chapter 18

Characters

This chapter contains all the recurring characters in this book. Only the important statistics will be found here, as you probably will not need to know how well Damhan-allaidh can play shinty. More abilities should be added as the storyguide sees fit.

Iain the Scot, Natural Magician

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +1, Pre 0, Com+2, Str +1, Sta +2, Dex 0, Qik +2

Age: 442 (Born 778 AD), apparent age 29

Size: +1

Confidence: 5

Virtues and Flaws: External Soul +4, Wealthy Merchant +3, Large +1, Strong-Willed +1, Well-Traveled +1, Magic Sensitivity +1, Cursed (lost his gift) -6, Enemies (servants of Hetep) -4

Personality Traits: Patient +3, Loyal (to Victor) +3, Devoted to Family +2 Fair-minded +1,

Reputations: Fair Dealer +2, with London, Flanders, Venice and Constantinople merchants

Important Abilities: Alchemy 5 (transformations), Artes Liberales 6 (logic), Bargain 6 (bulk), Boating 4 (navigation), European Area Lore 4 (towns), Etiquette 4 (merchant), Intrigue 6 (merchants), Legend Lore 6 (myths), Magic Sensitivity 3 (vis), Medicine 5 (self), Mediterranean Area Lore 4 (eastern ports), Philosophiae 4 (metaphysics), Scribe Greek 5 (contracts),

Speak Gaelic 5 (archaic), Scribe Latin 6 (contracts), Speak French 5 (all dialects), Speak German 4 (all dialects), Speak Greek 5 (southern), Speak Latin 6 (ancient), Speak Norse 4 (western), Speak Saxon 4 (all dialects)

Magical Equipment:

Dirk: Enchanted to give a +4 damage bonus and not to break.

Armor: Half Chain, enchanted to be light (load -0.5) and increase protection by +2

Ring of Magic Resistance: Commissioned from a Verditiis magus in 869 AD, it gives him a magic resistance of +50. The ring is enchanted only to work for members of Vindolanda.

Ring of Ages: Iain possesses several rings that give him the appearance of different ages. Currently he is using one that makes him appear about 50.

Potions: Iain normally has healing potions to hand; one was used to stabilize his wounds, but the rest were destroyed in the fire.

Roleplaying Notes: Iain is a large man with light red hair and blue eyes. Although he has not led the safest existence, Iain has managed to avoid any truly mortal injury and the disfigurements they would cause. He is devoted to both his family and Victor. His age and supernatural background are not immediately apparent and he does nothing to advertise them. After over a century of study Iain has mastered the basics of Natural Magic.

Eleanor, Iain's wife

Characteristics: Int +1, Per -1, Pre +3, Com +1, Str -1, Sta +1, Dex +2, Qik -1





Age: 47 (although she appears to be 40 thanks to a longevity potion from her husband)

Virtues and Flaws: Faerie Blood (Sidhe) +2, Empathy +1, Bad Reputation -1, Oversensitive (snide comments) -1, Soft-Hearted -1

Personality Traits: Devoted to Family +3, Insecure +2

Important Abilities: Craft Toys (safe ones) 5

Roleplaying Notes: Still a strikingly beautiful woman, even while approaching fifty, Eleanor dresses in the latest fashion for the lady of a wealthy merchant and carries herself accordingly. She was left as a foundling outside St. Michael's church in De Panne, and Father Galcher arranged for her fostering in the household of a carpenter. Lacking toys, she would make her own and her talent for this attracted the attention of her foster-father. Soon Eleanor was making toys for sale at the market, where they commanded high prices.

When she was of marriageable age fate had Iain meet her in the market square. That De Panne's most eligible bachelor proposed marriage to a person of such low birth sent minor shockwaves through De Panne's elite. Even now some women in the town hold her in contempt.

Donncadh Scot, Natural Magician

Characteristics: Int +3, Per +0, Pre +1, Com +1, Str +0, Sta +0, Dex +1, Qik +0

Age: 28

Size: +1

Confidence: 3

Virtues and Flaws: Wealthy Merchant +3, Strong-Willed +1, Well-Traveled +1, Charm +1, Second Sight +1, Faerie Blood (Sidhe) +2, Large +1, Enemies (servants of Hetep) -4, Overconfident -2, Dutybound (family) -1, Deep Sleeper -1, Weakness (women) -1, Magical Air -1

Personality Traits: Devoted to Family +3, Brave +2

Reputations: Fair Trader +1 with merchants of Flanders

Important Abilities: Alchemy 3 (transformations), Artes Liberales 3 (logic), Awareness

2 (markets), Bargain 3 (wool), Brawl 1 (Punch), Concentration 3 (reading), Etiquette 2 (merchant), Legend Lore 1 (myths), Magic Sensitivity 2 (vis), Medicine 1 (salves), Philosophiae 5 (spellcasting), Scribe Greek 1 (copying), Speak Gaelic 2 (trading), Scribe Latin 2 (original), Speak French 4 (trading), Speak German 2 (trading), Speak Greek 2 (trading), Speak Latin 4 (church), Speak Norse 2 (western), Speak Saxon (trading) 3, Single Weapon 3 (longsword)

Magical Equipment:

Armor: Half Chain, enchanted to be light (load -0.5) and increase protection by +2

Ring of Magic Resistance: Made by Iain, this ring gives the wearer a magic resistance of +20.

Roleplaying Notes: Donncadh is a man of great height with light brown hair and blue eyes. He is understandably desperate to rescue his daughter. He knows his father's secret and has spent a great deal of time being taught by Iain in the Scartaris library. He will not reveal any details of the gateway or Scartaris unless necessary and then only the minimum required. He is slightly nervous around Hermetic magi, but fascinated with their magic. At one time he would have made a fine Hermetic apprentice. It might still be possible for him to learn the Arts, but he would not accept the role of apprentice.

Mari, Donncadh's wife

Characteristics: Int +0, Per +2, Pre +1, Com +0, Str +0, Sta +1, Dex -2, Qik -1

Age: 22

Virtues and Flaws: Gossip +2, Sharp Ears +1, Premonitions +1, Meddler -1, Noncombatant -3

Personality Traits: World of Her Own +3, Brave -2, Judgmental +2

Reputations: Gossip +2, with De Panne ladies

Roleplaying Notes: Mari is of above average height and of medium build; her blond hair and blue eyes attest to her Scandinavian ancestry. Mari is the daughter of Baldwin, the co-owner of the town's only mill. She is very happy to have married so well and is pregnant with Donncadh's second child. Mari is very interested in the goings on of others and is well known for it among the wives of De Panne's merchant class. Although not of a particularly serious

nature, Mari is a good mother to Brighde, of whom she is very proud.

Despite her interest in De Panne society, she has no interest in her husband's or father-in-law's business. She knows nothing of Iain's true past, or her husband's dabbling in magic. Recent events are a complete shock to her and arriving at a Hermetic covenant has not helped. She has a fylgja (see page 32) in the form of a hawk. However, Mari has never spotted any link between her little accidents and impending danger, so its desperate attempts to attract her attention over the last week failed miserably.

Victor filius Prælix of House Ex Miscellanea

Characteristics: Int +5, Per +2, Pre -1, Com +1, Str +1, Sta +2, Dex +0, Qik +1

Magic Might: 50 (Although still technically alive, Victor's spirit and body are separate)

Age: 438 (born 782 AD)

Apparent Age: 41

Size: +0

Confidence: 6

Personality Traits: Focused +3, Otherworldly +4, Patient +2, Obsessed with destroying Damhan-allaidh +6

Reputations: Long Dead +3, with The Order

Spiritual Powers:

Possession, ReMe 50, varies: Victor can attempt to possess any human within eye contact, or within sight of his own body. The initial invasion requires Might points equal to the sum of the victim's Confidence + Stamina (+3 for Strong-Willed) + twice the victim's True Faith score (if possessed). This may be magically resisted with *Parma Magica*, using the highest of Corpus, Mentem or Vim. Victor's penetration total is 50 + a stress die. Natural Resistance rolls (Stamina + stress die) of 50 will also prevent possession. If in possession of a Gifted individual Victor can use his full magical powers without using Might. Victor has no interest in perma-

nently stealing another's body and will not take control of his host or search through their mind unless absolutely necessary.

Morphean Landscape, ReMe, 10 points: Victor can cause the dreams of up to twelve people to be melded into one, under his control. In this way he may hold meetings in which all can participate.

Mastery of the Mind (Me, varies), varies: Victor can use any Mentem spell up to 50th level. This includes all the spells in *Ars Magica 4th Edition*, plus a fair few of Victor's own creation. Victor must pay twice the magnitude of the spell in Magic Might points to create the effect, and need not use Hermetic words or gestures: a moment's thought is all that is required. If you have access to *The Mysteries*, all the Oneiromantic spells should be available to Victor.

Mastery of the Image (Im, varies), varies: Like *Mastery of the Mind* but with Imáginem spells instead, and restricted to 30th level or below.

Mastery of the Forms (varies), varies: Victor can also cast spells of Hermetic forms other than Mentem or Imáginem. These spells cannot exceed 15th level.

Roleplaying Notes: Victor was granted his sigil on Prælix's defeat of Damhan-allaidh 816 AD. Throughout his life he had used his natural and magical gifts to convince others of his position (whatever it might be), and his understanding of human needs and motivations was unsurpassed in his lifetime. However, convincing a demon to renounce Satan was something beyond even his abilities.

Initially Victor was overwhelmed and found himself imprisoned with a hell-like dream of Hetep's devising. For the next sixty years he suffered the torments of the damned. He eventually engineered his escape, outwitting Hetep and wresting control of the dreamscape away. At this point the contest of wills started in earnest, with each side trying to convince the other using the language of dreams. The central argument became that of divine grace or its rejection. Currently Victor has complete mastery of the dreamscape and Hetep is forced to endure constant exhortation to renounce the infernal.

Victor's knowledge of demonic nature has granted him the ability to possess others. As his body would crumble to dust within weeks if his ward were ever broken, Victor's only method of





continuing the fight against Hetep and Damhan-allaidh is by possession. However, his priority will be the rescue and protection of his friend's granddaughter Brighde.

Everything that Victor does will be colored by his desire to destroy The Spider. Although he is effectively a ghost throughout the saga, he will not stop planning the demise of the ancient gruagach. The players may find themselves helping out in sometimes dangerous schemes just to find out one more snippet of information about Damhan-allaidh or Hetep that might lead to their demise.

Liam the Shapeless

Characteristics: Int +3, Per +1, Pre n/a, Com +1, Str -5*, Sta -1*, Dex -5*, Qik -5*

* *Three centuries of being buried have not been kind to Liam and his body is a distorted ruin.*

Magic Resistance: 51

Born: 749 AD

Apparent Age: N/A

Size: +2

Confidence: 4

Virtues & Flaws: Giant Blood +5, External Soul +4, Student of Brude +1, Strong Willed +1, Monstrous Appearance* -5, Magical Memory +2

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Irritable +2, Suicidal +3

Reputation: Dead +1, with Hermetic magi

Abilities: Brawl (claws) 5, Empathy (magicians) 2, Enchanting Music (dance) 4, Faerie Lore (Sidhe) 4, Fantastic Beast Lore (giants) 4, Folk Ken (giants) 4, Geasa (physical) 3, Curse (characteristics) 3, Gruagach Lore (outdated) 3, Gruagach Wisdom (new Talents) 15, Herbalism (cures) 5, Hermes History (Prax) 3, Magic Sensitivity (faerie) 5, Potency (shapeshift) 6, Premonitions (immediate future) 5, Second Sight (faeries) 6, Speak Latin (hermetic) 3, Speak Gaelic (conversational) 5, Speak Pictish (shapeshift) 6, Speak Saxon (northern) 4

Gruagach Abilities: External Soul, Gift (physical) 8, Shapeshift (land animals) 16, Transform (birds) 7

Effects of Gruagach Powers: Magical Aura, Blatant Gift; totally monstrous appearance; boneless (Str -5, Sta -1, Dex -5, Qik -5), constant pain, Invulnerable (+40 soak).

Soak: +41

Shapeless Form

Characteristics: Int +3, Per +1, Pre N/A, Com N/A, Str +5, Sta +5, Dex -4, Qik -3

Size: +5

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Strike	+10	+12	+4	+9	n/a
Grapple	+10	+12	na	n/a	n/a
Smother	na	na	na	+10	n/a

Soak: +50

Fatigue Levels: Tireless

Body levels: OK, 0, 0, 0, -1, -1 -3, -3 -5, -5, Incapacitated

Appearance: A fleshy creature with no shape, no bones or internal organs, Liam can squeeze into small places or strike out with fleshy tentacles, which he constantly extrudes and retracts.

Pseudopods: Liam may extend up to five pseudopods a turn, using them to strike one opponent. If two or more pseudopods strike the opponent in one round, Liam may attempt to grapple the opponent and draw them in. If successful the victim automatically begins to be smothered in the next round. This damage first affects fatigue levels, and then body levels. Armor does not protect against this smother attack.

Roleplaying Notes: After his recovery, Liam's body will become a cruel mockery of his title 'the shapeless'. Barely recognizable as human he struggles for each breath and lives in constant pain. Only by using his shapeshift ability is he able to move about. The only form he can maintain for any period is the one described above (which he can assume at will). His pain may be temporarily relieved by spells such as *Endurance of the Berserkers*, or any other Corpus or Mentem effect designed to quell pain. If provided with pain relief, Liam will be able to help the magi hunt Damhan-allaidh down. Otherwise he can do little other than beg for death. Even if pain relief is provided he will ask his son Iain to destroy his soulstone once Damhan-allaidh is destroyed.

Hetep the Corrupter

Characteristics: Int +0, Per +2, Pre -5, Com +3, Str +5, Sta +5, Dex +5, Qik +6

Infernal Might: 60

Size: -1

Personality Traits: Secretive +6, Capricious +6, Ambitious +5,

Weapon/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam Fat
Bite or Claw +13 +14 +13 +11 +11

Soak: +15

Fatigue levels: OK 0, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK 0, -3, -5, Incapacitated, Banned

Powers:

Sunder the Magician's Spirit, PeVi 50, 10 points:

On a successful attack roll Hetep can reach into a magician's spirit and maim his gift. Magic resistance applies, with Vim adding to magi's Parma total. No known Hermetic technique is capable of restoring this injury while Hetep exists on the mortal realm. Otherwise only Hetep himself can restore it, usually in return for a cardinal pact.

Shapechange, MuCo (An) 40, 0 points: Hetep can transform possessed individuals into his natural physical form.

Raise Corpse, ReCo 25, 1 point: Hetep can raise the corpse of anyone he slays as one of the walking dead.

Infernal Spell, varies: Hetep can generate the equivalent of spontaneous spells up to 30th level. Such spells cost him 1 might per magnitude.

Possession, ReMe, varies: Hetep can attempt to possess any human within line of sight. The initial invasion requires Might points equal to the sum of the victim's Confidence + Stamina (+3 for Strong-Willed) + twice the victim's True Faith score (if any). This may be magically resistance with Parma, using the highest of Corpus, Mentem or Vim. Hetep's penetration total is 65 + stress die. Natural Resistance rolls of (Stamina + stress die) which equal 60 will also prevent possession. Possession is Hetep's specialty and he can retain possession indefinitely. Attempts to detect (not possible via Hermetic magic) or exorcise Hetep are resisted by twice his current might.

Corrupt Knowledge, PeVi 50, 1 point per day: Hetep can slowly corrupt any written work on magic that he touches. For summae, he

needs to spend a number of days equal to the total number of experience points the work represents. For example corrupting a level 10 summa would require 55 days. Libri Quaestionum and Tractatus require a number of days equal to their quality. Hetep needs a year and a day to corrupt an Authority. Subsequent study of corrupted works grants the unwitting reader diabolic knowledge. In game terms the reader gains an experience point in Occult Lore for every season of study. This point is subtracted from the normal experience generated by the study total. As well as knowledge, the text instills the desire to pursue the dark arts. This can be represented by a personality trait equal to the score generated by the Occult experience points gained. The change to the text is can only be detected by the Sense Holiness/Unholiness talent or other divine gift. Otherwise the text appears perfectly innocent.

Roleplaying Notes: Hetep appears as a skinless baboon. The storyguide should describe the creature as a distorted skinless dog-like animal with long fingered claws, similar to hands. Hetep originally served Thoth but he betrayed his master and turned to the Infernal. His goal is to turn all magic arts to the service of hell, and he has devoted his efforts to corrupting magicians.

Ever since his betrayal of Thoth, his former kin have been vigilant. Many times he attempted to penetrate the sanctum of Thoth's stela, but until Damhan-allaidh, Setna had always managed detect Hetep lurking within the petitioner. Once within the sanctum of the stela he began using his *Corrupt Knowledge* power (see above). By corrupting the words of Thoth himself, Hetep hopes to lay the entire magic realm at the feet of the infernal. He was not finished when Setna finally noticed the corruption and forced Damhan-allaidh to flee.

Hetep knew that the corruption would slowly weaken Setna. As Damhan-allaidh's powers grew and the Setna's weakened, it was only a matter of time before the undertaking could be completed. However, Pralix interrupted Damhan-allaidh's preparations and eventually defeated him. In 875 Victor of Vindolanda captured Hetep.

For the past 331 years Hetep has been locked into a contest of wills, and the mental





battle has reached a level of sophistication beyond mortal comprehension. In the last hundred years Victor's will has proved resistant to anything Hetep has managed to conjure. Although Victor's goal is impossible, Hetep is not particularly clever, and in their long battle Victor has tricked Hetep into revealing that he was near completing some plot against the Order.

Vis: 18 Vim in heart (Infernally tainted).

Damhan-allaidh, a.k.a. The Spider

Characteristics: Int -1*, Per -3*, Pre n/a, Com -5, Str +10, Sta +15, Dex +5, Qik +8

* Three centuries of being buried have not been kind to Damhan-allaidh and much of his mind has been eroded.

Magic Resistance: 77

Born: 570 AD

Apparent Age: n/a

Size: +1

Confidence: 5

Virtues & Flaws: Need Not Sleep +5, External Soul +4, Monstrous Appearance* -5, Hatred (Order of Hermes) -3, Deleterious Circumstances (under clear skies) -3, Fury (when thwarted) -3, Vulnerability (obsidian) -3, Vulnerable (Celtic holy relics) -3, Weakness (strong drink) -1

Personality Traits: Hate Order of Hermes +5, Insane (megalomaniac) +5, Suicidal +5

Reputation: Dead (Order of Hermes) +5, Evil +3

Important Abilities: Brawl 7 (claws), Concentration (screams) 5, Contortions 7 (escape bonds), Direction Sense 4 (hills), Divination 4 (entrails), Dowsing 6 (magic), Empathy 2 (victims), Enchanting Music 6 (fear), Entrancement 5 (willing sacrifice), Faerie Lore 3 (history), Fantastic Beast Lore 8 (giants), Geasa 7 (physical), Gift 6 (characteristics), Gruagach Lore 2 (outdated), Gruagach Wisdom 30 (new Talents), Herbalism 6 (poison), Hermes History 3 (Pralix), Hex 3 (fear), Magic Sensitivity 5 (Hermetic), Mimicry 5 (victim's voice), Occult Lore 5 (Scottish Highlands), Poten-

cy (curse) 6, Premonitions 5 (Order of Hermes), Second Sight 4 (faeries), Sense Holiness & Unholiness 7 (relics), Speak Frankish 3 (courtly), Speak Latin 3 (archaic), Speak Pictish 6 (Geasa), Speak Saxon 4 (threats), Stealth 5 (walk silently), Visions 3 (hunters), Weather Sense 4 (storms)

Gruagach Abilities: External Soul, Curse (physical) 17, Shapeshift (monsters) 20, Transform (fish) 20

Special Gruagach Abilities: Decay (bone-breaking) 15, Enthral (for sacrifice) 10, Incinerate (projection) 13, Sacrifice (human) 8, Shatter (explosion) 9

Effects of Gruagach Powers: Magical Aura, Blatant Gift, Offensive to Animals; totally monstrous appearance; clothes rot on contact with his skin; fangs (+8 damage in Bite); hunchback, iron-hard claws (+5 damage in Brawl); no bodily hair; skin is crusted with old pus; swollen abdomen; open sores on body; constant pain

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Bite	+15	+12	+15	+19	+22
Claw	+17	+13	+16	+16	+23

Soak: +16

Fatigue levels: OK 0, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK 0, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Special Abilities: Damhan-allaidh has developed even beyond the normal Talents of the gruagach and has learned the equivalent of Hermetic form + technique abilities. Each ability is a separate skill and allows casting spontaneous Hermetic-style spells. The level of the result is equal to:

Ability + (Characteristic) + Stress Die if he spends a point of the appropriate characteristic or,

(Ability + (Characteristic) + Stress Die)/2 if he does not.

If he spent a point of a characteristic and botches the spell, he loses the point permanently. Otherwise, he regenerates characteristics like fatigue levels. These spells may be resisted with Parma Magica or warding magics as any other spell-like effect. Penetration is equal to the result total (after division if applicable).

Incinerate: Like Creo and Rego Ignem, but only for true fire, not light or heat effects. Characteristic is Presence. (Can no longer be used without dividing by 2).

Decay: Like Perdo Animal and Corpus. Characteristic is Stamina.

Enthrall: Like Rego and Perdo Mentem. Characteristic is Intelligence.

Sacrifice: Like Creo Vim. For each body level that Damhan-allaidh drains from a sacrifice, he gains the equivalent of one pawn of vis per 10 levels of spell result. He may only perform sacrifices four times a year on the quarter days: Imbolc (Feb. 1), Beltane (May 1), Lughnasa (Aug. 1), and Samhain (Nov. 1).

Shatter: Like Perdo Herbam and Terram. Characteristic is Strength.

Roleplaying Notes: Damhan-allaidh now appears completely inhuman. His hairless skin is encrusted with pus and open sores; his head is bestial with a huge jaw and fangs. His back is contorted and he can no longer walk upright. His hands and feet are formed into long iron-hard claws. His mind is almost completely broken and what little remains of his humanity seeks release from his tormented existence. Still, his bestial instincts are normally dominant and he will obey Hetep if commanded. If he is somehow helped to reflect on his condition (Gift of Reason spell or excellent roleplaying), he may be persuaded to turn against Hetep and seek God's grace. In the unlikely event of his genuine and profound repentance for his sins, the enchantment of his external soul will be broken by divine intervention and he will find peace.

Einar Gamlisson, Traditional Galdraman

Nota bene: Einar's statistics are given for 1231, when the characters are most likely to face him.

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +0, Pre +1, Com +5, Str +0, Sta +2, Dex -1, Qik -1

Age: 76 (born in 1155)

Apparent Age: late 50s

Size: +0

Confidence: 4

Virtues and Flaws: Incredible Communication +4, Secret Hiding Place +1, Curse +4,

Potency +2, Driving Goal (Revenge) -1, Lost Love -1, Sense of Doom -3

Personality Traits: Obsessed with Revenge +3, Brave +3, Level Headed -1

Reputations: Rogue, amongst the Eldborg Hreppur, 3

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawl (fist)	+4	+3	+3	+0	+6
Axe & Round Shield	+6	+6	+10	+6	+7

Soak: 12 (with magical cloak)

Fatigue Levels: OK 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body Levels: OK 0, -1, -3, -5, incapacitated

Important Abilities: Galdor Wisdom (yfel-galdor) 12, Second Sight (fate-spirits) 6, Premonitions (violence) 6, Brawl 3 (fist), *Enchanting Music (rousing) 5, *Summoning (trolls) 4, *Hamfarir (distant travel) 5, Sing (long periods) 11, Norse Theology (Odin) 5, Legend Lore (fate-spirits) 6, Bargain (landvaettir lords) 4, Etiquette (landvaettir) 4, Weapon and Shield (Axe and round shield) 4, Curse (infertility) 4, Scribe Runes (curses) 3, Potency (curses) 3, Speak West Norse (magicians) 7, Speak Latin (churchmen) 5, Speak Jotunn (trolls) 5, Craft: Weaving (wool) 5, Craft: Leather (belts) 4

**gained through initiation*

Galdraman Songs: Yfel-galdor (curse songs) 7, Mal-galdor (speech songs) 5, Hug-galdor (mind songs) 2, Sig-galdor (victory songs) 2, Lim-galdor (healing songs) 3, Biarg-galdor (birth songs) 10, Orlog-galdor (fate-songs) 11, Ol-galdor (warding songs) 5, Brun-galdor (weather songs) 3

Magical Equipment:

Blue Cloak: Enchanted with Warding Songs, the robe provides a +20 magic resistance and a +10 Soak.

Scarf of Red Wool: this allows him to use an effect similar to *Trust of Childlike Faith* at Target Group 12 times a day.

Scarf of Yellow Wool: This grants an *Aura of Rightful Authority* at Constant Duration.

Leather Hat: When he stands still, Einar becomes invisible.

Einar should have any number of minor magical items available to him; most importantly, potions (in the form of woven bandages) which will heal wounds.

Roleplaying Notes: Einar is a driven man; his history can be found on page 69. He is a dis-





tinguished looking man, apparently in his late fifties, with straight black hair, very unusual amongst the Norse. Einar maintains a neat beard and moustache, and habitually wears a blue robe embroidered with a knot pattern. Einar's voice is like honey, and he has a way of persuading others to do what he asks. Einar is a great friend of the landvaettir of fate, called Norns, and of the alfar. The Norn who became his fylgja gave him a vision of his own doom, and he is determined to avenge his family before this comes about. His fylgja takes the form of a beautiful woman, who has come to look remarkably like Einar's dead wife.

Pan Caudarax, Dragon of Hekla

Characteristics: Int: +5, Per: +4, Str +20, Sta +10, Dex +0, Qik +0

Magic Might: 70

Size: +6

Personality Traits: Honorable +3, Brave +6, Cunning +3

Reputations: Guardian 3 (Icelandic magicians), Harbinger of Doom (De Panne) 1

Important Abilities: Curse (thieves) 31, Geas (deals) 34, Gift (one time bonus) 28, Shapechange (fantastic beasts) 23, Transform (tasty) 29

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Breath	+12	+8	n/a	+40	+10
Bite*	+15	+15	+10	+36	+20
1 st Claw*	+17	+18	+12	+32	+20
2 nd Claw*	+17	+18	+12	+32	+20

* *Furious Attacks that can be used to attack multiple opponents in a single round without penalty.*

Soak: +30 (+5)**

Fatigue levels: OK, 0, 0, -1, -1, -3, -3, -5, -5
Unconscious

Body levels: OK, 0, 0, -1, -1, -3, -3, -5, -5
Incapacitated

** If weakness behind left ear known.

Powers:

Fiery Breath, CrIg 50, 5 Magic Points: This gout of fire can blanket an area 10 paces wide by 30 paces long. Although intensely hot the

breath has little force, and cover of any sort can block it.

Spellcasting Ability:

Caudarax has the ability to cast a range of spells as if he had the following Arts: Cr 20, Re 10, An 20, Im 10.

Magical Items:

Dragon Amulet, CrVi 40: Caudarax wears a white marble amulet around his chest, held in place by a harness of finely wrought golden chains. This amulet will, once per day, provide the vis required to make one healing spell have Instant duration. The spell needs to be designed to work with the amulet and so the amulet needs to be successfully investigated before the spell can be designed.

Roleplaying Notes: Pan Caudarax has a weak spot in the scales beneath his left ear, where the scales never quite grew. Anyone who knows this spot can aim for it in combat by subtracting 3 from his Attack score. The dragon has a Soak of only +5 if struck there.

Appearance and History: Many thousands of years old, Pan Caudarax is an enormous beast. A skilled shapeshifter, he normally assumes the form of local dragons. In western Europe he has golden red scales and vast wings, normally obscuring his serpentine body and thin, sinewy arms. In Iceland he normally appears as a lindorm (Scandinavian serpent dragon). Throughout his long life he has built a number of lairs around the world. Prior to his return to Hekla in 108 AD, he spent almost a thousand years in the French district of Flanders. During his time in there he would capture priests of Mercury and Apollo to teach him their magic. His wizardly knowledge grew, as did his hoard. He left Flanders claiming the region had become too populous. He left with the message "Let there be no mystery, I leave because I do not choose to live among men, nor do I accept the task of exterminating their race. But let there be no doubt. I remember the treasures I left in this fair land. If any should think to plunder them, I shall return, and my vengeance shall be feared for centuries to come." Pan Caudarax has yet to fulfill this oath.

Bard Snaefellsass Dumbson

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre +3, Com 0,
Str +6, Sta +5, Dex -1, Qik -1

Magic Might: 71

Age: 260 (born 960)

Size: +2

Personality Traits: Friend of Man +4,
Unworldly +3, Boastful -2

Reputations: Guardian Spirit +4, with men of
Snaefellsnes; Dangerous to cross +4, with
trolls; Leader +8, with giants of Iceland

Important Abilities: Jotunn Affinity with Frost
17 (stopping snowfall), Shapeshift 18
(gaining size), Transform 16 (dog), Gift 5
(virtues), External Soul, Divination 3
(danger), Survival 8 (mountains), Climb 6
(mountains), Great Weapon 8 (quarter-
staff), Speak Jotunn 10 (Clan of Hrym),
Potency 10 (Transform)

Appearance and Roleplaying Notes: Bard
is exceptionally handsome, with blond hair now
turning silver-gray, and blue eyes. His broad
shoulders tell of his great strength. He is natu-
rally exceedingly tall (size +3), but has adopted
an 8' tall persona for so long now that it has
become second nature, and he will often adopt
an even smaller form when dealing with
humans. He has a guileless smile, and his genu-
ine manner means that he is rarely feared,
despite his obvious physical power. He usually
wears simple clothing of tunic and leggings tied
off with a belt of walrus hide, topped off with a
cowled cloak of gray fur for outside wear. He
often carries an iron-shod walking staff, and is
usually accompanied by a huge gray dog called
Snati.

Bard was the son of King Dumb of Hellu-
land, who was half giant and half troll. His
mother was Mjoll, the daughter of Snaer the
Old, a powerful frost giant. Bard is best
described as a trollson in **Ars Magica** terms as
he has spent so much of his long life interacting
with mankind that he has become more human
than giant. Bard was born in Helluland, a realm
ruled by giants beyond Greenland, but was fos-
tered by giants in Iceland and settled in Nor-
way. He left Norway like so many others when
Harald Finehair became king, and returned to

Iceland with his nine daughters. He settled on
Snaefellsnes (and was responsible for giving it
its name), making his home at Songhellir, the
Singing Cave. His brother Thorkel settled there
with him, and the two families feuded for some
time before becoming reconciled. Bard has
spent much time protecting the inhabitants of
Snaefellsnes from the depredations of the trolls
that are particularly common here, and he is
regarded as a guardian spirit in the region.

Bard is the leader of all the Icelandic giants
and one of the land's Guardians.

Thord Starluson, Storgodi

Characteristics: Int +2, Per 0, Pre +0, Com+2,
Str +2, Sta +3, Dex 0, Qik -1

Age: 55 (born 1165)

Aging Afflictions: Poor Hearing -1, Painful
Joints -1

Size: +0

Confidence: 4

Virtues and Flaws: Storgodi +4, Tough +1, Pre-
monitions +1, Enemies (various) -4

Personality Traits: Calculating +2, Ambitious
+3, Conciliatory +2

Reputations: Fair +2, with thingmen, Ambi-
tious, with Icelanders +3

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawl (fist)	+3	+3	+2	+2	+6
Longsword & Round Shield	+6	+7	+12	+5	+8
Long Spear	+9	+11	+5	+7	+8
Dagger	+5	+5	+5	+4	+7

Soak: +14 (Half Chain Mail)

Fatigue levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Athletics 2 (running), Awareness 2
(on watch), Brawl 3 (Dagger), Compose
Poetry 2 (praise poems), Diplomacy 4 (fam-
ily), Farming 4 (animals), Leadership 4
(thingmen), Longshaft Weapon 4 (long
spear), Icelandic Law 5 (compensation),
Intrigue 4 (assemblies), North Sea Lore 2
(towns), Premonitions 3 (doom), Speak
West Norse 5 (commands), Swim 3
(rivers), Stealth 3 (raids), Speak Latin 3





(Church), Survival 2 (mountains), Weapon and Shield 4 (longsword and round shield)

Roleplaying Notes: Thord is the eldest legitimate son of Hvamm-Sturla and Gudny Bodvarsdottir of the Myramen family. Through marriage to Helga Arisdottir he secured the estate of Stad at Snaefellsnes, together with half of the Thorsnes godord. The other half he received as a gift from the priest Thorgils Snorrason.

By 1220, Thord is the most powerful man in Southern Iceland. His brother Sighvat had similar prominence in the north, and his youngest brother, the famous Snorri Sturluson, soon acquired estates, a godord, and the position of Law-Speaker. For more details see the future history of Iceland on page 18.

Vifil Halldorson, Traditional Galdraman

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +0, Pre +1, Com +3, Str +0, Sta +2, Dex +1, Qik -2

Age: 45

Size: +0

Confidence: 3

Virtues and Flaws: Bondi +1, Close Family Ties +1, Social Contacts (Galdramen) +1, Lamé -2, Cursed (magic used for personal gain have double botch risk) -2, Favors -1, Poor Hearing -1,

Personality Traits: Generous +3, Brave +2, Honorable +1

Reputations: Generous +2, with people of Snaefellsnes

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawl (fist)	+0	+2	-1	+0	+3
Long Spear	+6	+10	+2	+6	+5
Longsword & Round Shield	+3	+6	+8	+4	+5

Soak: +8 (with armor)

Fatigue Levels: OK 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body Levels: OK 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Awareness 2 (sheep), Brawl 1 (Dagger), Craft — Jewelry 4 (silver), Craft — Blacksmith 5 (tools), Craft — Weapons 2 (spearheads), Farming 3 (animals), Galdor Wisdom 5 (conjuring), Hamfaring 3, Legend Lore 3, Longshaft Weapon 2 (long spear), Occult Lore 2, Icelandic Law 2 (procedures), Premonitions 2 (weather), Ride 2 (rough ground), Survival 2 (mountains), Sing (conjuring) 5, Second Sight 3, Speak Latin 4 (Church Latin), Speak West Norse 5 (casual), Weapon and Shield 2 (longsword and round shield)

Galdraman Songs: Biarg-galdor 4, Lim-galdor 3, Ol-galdor 5, Brun-galdor 4,

Magical Equipment:

Bracelet of Magic Resistance: Bracelet gives the wearer a magic resistance of +15.

Roleplaying Notes: Vifil is a tall thin man, with light brown hair and brown eyes. He is a moderately powerful galdraman and discreetly markets his services about the region. He is generally affable and generous to his neighbors in times of need. As well as running a farm he maintains a smithy, where he produces tools and occasionally weapons. He has a clubfoot that makes a lot of the farm work difficult, but he earns a good income from his blacksmithing and magical skills. His son now runs the farm and manages their three laborers. With the farm no longer needing so much attention, Vifil intends to concentrate on developing his magical skills.

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