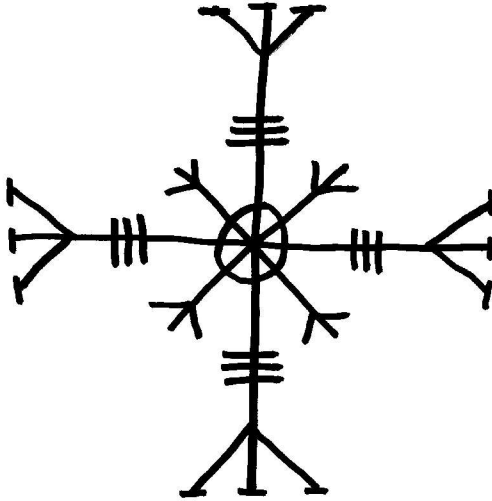


ÆGISHJALMUR

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by Michael Kelly

A Publication of the Order of Aep

ÆGISHJALMUR

For the Folk of Eormensyl Hall of the Rune-Gild

*Most Especially For
Ian & Ingrid,
and For Paul, Whose Sense of Mischief Rivals Loki's*

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***A Note on Names:** It has been my intention to make this book as accessible as possible for those with no prior knowledge of the Northern Mysteries. Given that modern English is itself a Germanic language, I have deliberately chosen (in most cases, with one or two idiosyncratic exceptions) to render names and other vocabulary relating to magical concepts in the form likely to be most familiar and pronounceable to the modern English reader. Thus readers will find named in this book 'Odin' rather than 'Odhinn'.*

Naturally, those who have a familiarity and love for languages such as Old Norse or Old English may substitute their more technical forms as they wish.

INTRODUCTION

Ægishjálmur is a practical manual of Draconian magic utilising the traditions of Northern Europe. This is an unsurprising development, since Northern European lore has a great deal to say concerning dragons and three such great wyrms in particular cast especially dominating shadows in the *Eddas*.

The book contains sufficient information and guidance to stand alone. Anyone who wants to begin practice will be able to do so immediately, without obtaining other works first. However, the serious practitioner will certainly wish to reach out to some or all of the following three sources of invaluable further learning, which will flesh out their experience and knowledge to a very great degree:

1. *Apophis*, by Michael Kelly. *Ægishjálmur* is a direct sequel to *Apophis*. The curriculum contained herein stands alone and can be practised without reference to the previous volume. However, *Apophis* contains an explanation of the foundations on which this curriculum is based, along with a much fuller description of some of the concepts, which may be skimmed over or even omitted in

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the current volume. Those Initiates who possess both books will find that the chapters and themes of *Ægishjálmur* are quite deliberately arranged in the same order as *Apophis*. It is quite deliberate that the two volumes share an identical underlying structure. In this way, an Initiate can use the techniques of chapter three of one book with chapter three of the other, interfacing the two perfectly. This will also be the case with further volumes in the series.

2. The basics of Northern European mythology and runic lore can be found within these pages, but only the bare essentials required to do the Work herein and those mythological models which directly impact upon the curriculum. Serious students will need to look elsewhere to apply flesh to these bones and to fill in the gaps and omissions. Mythological sources are listed in the 'Further Reading' section at the close of the book. For Initiated insights, the student must refer to the works of Edred Thorsson, beginning with *Runelore*. Again, refer to the 'Further Reading' section for other titles.
3. Serious students may wish to consider approaching the Rune-Gild with a view to membership in order to enrich their study of the Northern tradition (<http://runegild.org>).

These options for deeper study remain open at all stages within the initiatory process, of course, and whether you choose to avail yourself of them now, later, or not at all, I wish you well as you prepare to don the Helm of Awe.

Michael Kelly
- The Dragon Fafnir -

December 2010

CHAPTER ONE

THE DRAGON OF THE NORTH

Draconian Magic and the Northern Tradition

Draconian Magic is a magical current which is especially concerned with the energies and symbolism of dragonkind. It draws its inspiration from the myths and legends of dragons and serpents and it draws its powers from the fear, wonder and fascination these beings bring forth within the human psyche. It also draws its power from mankind's own biological heritage, reaching back to the very roots of the reptilian brain stem, the part of the mind where monsters reside, untamed and primal. It brings these powers and perspectives forcefully and consciously into full manifestation within the practitioner.

The Northern tradition is that school of magic, mythology, history, philosophy, cosmology and psychology that has its roots in the people and tribes of Northern Europe. This is the world of runes and the Norse Gods, the heroes of the sagas and the world-tree Yggdrasil. This tradition lives on in the bloodline descended from those people today, those

who still remember the ancestral Gods and the tales that have shaped their heritage.

Draconian Magic is a school of magic which teaches that the goal of the soul is increased individuation and empowerment. The sovereignty of the Self is its creed. The purpose of the Draconian magician is to increase his own essence to a near godlike level, acquiring new powers and new states of being as he does so. He wins the mastery of his own life and seeks to perpetuate that life through the immortalisation of his psyche.

The huge difference between such a spiritual path and that offered by the majority religions is a subject that has already been covered in *Apophis* and I will not retread that ground here.

The root ideals of the Northern peoples are hearty and life-affirming. As such, the conflict seen within Judeo-Christian religions simply does not occur. Man is not seen as a sinner and a wretch, but as a noble being who is quite literally descended from his Gods. He carries Divine worth in his own flesh, blood and mind. As such, it can be suggested that there is no need for a distinction between Right-Hand and Left-Hand Paths in the North, such as one finds in other spiritual approaches; or perhaps more accurately that the Northern ideology is Left-Hand Path in its very essence. This does not mean that all who follow a Northern spiritual path are Initiates of the Left-Hand Path. Some choose to lead a gentler, less Self-evolutionary role. But there is no such irreconcilable conflict of basic principles as will be found between Christianity vs Satanism, or Setianism vs the other Egyptian cults. There is a sense of fellowship and shared ancestry among all who follow the Northern way, even if some choose to develop and extend that ancestral power more than others.

The union of Draconian Magic and Northern lore is a profound and enriching one, a perfect magical marriage. Dragons are a major feature of the myths of Northern Europe and there are three particular wyrms featured in the *Eddas* and sagas which will feature heavily in our Work, each manifesting a separate aspect of the primordial serpent.

This brings us to a point where we need to define the patrons of the curriculum that lies before us. In *Apophis*, the three Deities pertinent to Draconian Magic were defined as: the Lord of Darkness, the Scarlet Woman and the Ancient Dragon. We must now take some time to examine these Deities as They manifest to us in the Northern tradition. If you, like me, have the blood of Northern ancestors flowing in your veins, you will find that this will become a marvelous revelation, a sense of coming home. It should not be mistaken as choosing a tradition, any tradition, and making its Gods fit. If these Gods are in your blood and you use the Work of this book to call upon Them, believe me, you will know about it!

The Northern Deities of Draconian Magic

Odin

In *Apophis*, the principal God of Draconian Magic is explained to be the Lord of Darkness, represented in that volume as Set, the Egyptian God who is against the Gods.

In the North, the figure occupying this foremost position, the principal God of the Draconian magician, is Odin, the All-Father. He is the Lord of Valhalla, the God of the hanged, Bolverkr, Lord of Light and Drighten of Darkness. He is a complex and multi-faceted God, which should suit us well since Initiates must be complex and multi-

faceted people.

Odin possesses many of the attributes belonging to the Lord of Darkness as listed in *Apophis*. He broke loose of the original cosmic order represented by the giant, Ymir, by slaying him and using him as the building blocks for a new creation, shaped to accommodate Himself and His fellow Gods: the nine worlds that hang from the world-tree Yggdrasil, most especially the world of Midgard and the enclosure of the Gods.

He is also described as Gifting mankind with consciousness. According to the mythology the original man and woman were named Askr and Embla: Ash and Elm. In other words, they were trees. The symbolism of this should be obvious, since the complex of nine worlds in Norse mythology is itself figured as a tree, Yggdrasil. This implies that the human species is a microcosm of that greater cosmic structure and is – like the Gods – capable of travelling within all of the worlds and partaking of their unique energies.

Odin gives mankind a mind / soul complex, the capacity for Divine ecstasy and spiritual inspiration, and – most importantly – a sense of Self. He makes human beings as unique, Self-aware individuals, each with a will of their own, even as He Himself is.

Nor is Odin a comfortable God. He travels throughout the worlds, often as a wanderer in disguise, an old man who challenges those He meets, sometimes as a grim joke, sometimes in deadly earnest. He tests those who take His Name to themselves and affords them opportunities for heroism, which often equates to great discomfort and tribulation.

It will be apparent that an Initiate honours Odin and seeks to emulate Him, developing the consciousness he has been given to its most elevated and inspired potential. He

does not offer up prayers to Odin or beseech favours, for such would displease this God who favours heroic souls. An Initiate will acknowledge Odin in word and deed and will seek to emulate Him. The profoundest worship that can be offered to Odin is to take up your own spear and stride out into the worlds to forge your own path as He has done.

Most of the Northern tribes traced the ancestry of their chieftains ultimately back to Odin. The All-Father was literally the blood ancestor of the Northern folk. He is not a God we choose to 'believe in' among other gods. He does not require belief; He is in every pulse of our blood around our body, a tangible part of our genetic heritage. The proof of His presence is our own consciousness, Gifted from Him. The existence of consciousness is the direct expression of the God of consciousness, who is no mere metaphor. This creates a very particular bond between Odin and the Initiate of the Northern Mysteries, a bond which goes beyond mere belief; it is the bond of kinship.

Unlike the Principle of Darkness in many mythologies, Odin is not a Devil figure. He is the All-Father, the chieftain of the Æsir. He rules in Valhalla, He is not a rebel against the order He has created.

And yet in many ways, He is far more secretive and subversive than any of the other Gods who follow Him. He frequently travels in disguise and deliberately misleads mortals and Gods alike. He is not afraid to lie or deceive in order to achieve His aims. Odin plays a long game and when other Gods are most concerned with the preservation of what They have, Odin understands that Ragnarok is inevitable. He will face it heroically, but He lays His secret plans for the reshaping of the world thereafter. As the God of consciousness, Odin understands the principle of Remanifestation and applies His energies to using it instead

of fighting it. Odin moves the pieces in His game far beyond the limits of the vision of others. Nor is He afraid to break the rules of the game when Necessity requires it.

The role of the Devil-like figure in Norse mythology is played by Loki, a complex figure whose purpose is to introduce a chaotic element into the world of the Gods, thus creating the potential for transformation. He is a master of transformation and disguise Himself, assuming many different forms. As a horse, He sired Sleipnir, Odin's eight-legged steed. He is also the father of Fenrir, the wolf of Ragnarok, and of Hel, the Goddess of the realm of the dead which bears Her name. Loki's influence causes strife and trouble for the Gods, but His cunning also often wins the day for the Æsir. It is only after He causes the death of Baldur that He is finally chained and the events leading to Ragnarok are set in motion. These latter tumultuous upheavals are discussed fully in chapter nine.

Matters are more complex than this brief description would suggest, however. Edred Thorsson makes a good case for Loki actually being a manifestation of Odin's own Shadow-Self rather than a totally independent entity. It took me a while to reconcile this idea, but the more I came to Understand and know Odin, the more certain I became that Edred was right. Loki is a manifestation of Odin's Understanding of the necessity for change and transformation. He is a catalyst, and often a cruel one, sweeping away the old to make way for the new. Odin is aware that Ragnarok is both necessary and inevitable and Loki is the tool He uses to ensure that it unfolds according to His design.

This does not mean that Loki is under Odin's direct control. That is entirely untrue. Odin and Loki are frequently at loggerheads, to say the least. But Loki is nonetheless a projection of Odin's Will, a realisation of what is Necessary.

It will be apparent to the astute reader that we each have a Loki within us – our own Shadow-Self – who needs to be unchained at times. When the path of our Wills is set and we know what we are to do, when we are acting with our Odian consciousness, that is when Loki will slip through also. He will act upon the same current of Will, but will introduce elements and shape occurrences which are tangential and unforeseen. This phenomenon is discussed more fully in the later chapters of the book.

It is noteworthy that both Odin and Loki are shape-shifters and change Their forms during the course of Their myths in order to achieve Their goals.

Those familiar with the teachings of the Temple of Set may appreciate the following allusion: Loki is to Odin as HarWer is to Set, a fitful and unpredictable Other Self.

What is indisputable is that Odin is the primary God of the Northern Draconian magician. He is the God of consciousness; the God of transformation; the God of life, death, and life beyond death; the God of magic; the winner of the runes; the shaper of worlds (inner and outer), who holds the *valknutr*, the means of binding and loosing those worlds.

There are many tales and attributes of Odin which are of great relevance to the Work outlined in this book and which the Initiate will actively seek to emulate. These will be introduced in their proper places. This brief introduction serves merely to outline the core Essence of that God who is the sovereign ancestral Deity, in whose Name we Work.

Freyja

The second Deity of the Draconian current identified in *Apophis* is the Scarlet Woman. She is the feminine

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complement of the Lord of Darkness, the focus of Desire within the Draconian pantheon.

The Northern Goddess who holds this position is without any shadow of a doubt Freyja. Her origins and the nature of Her mythology mark Her as quite distinct in many respects.

It is to Her origin that we must look first of all. It is highly significant that Freyja is **not** of the Æsir. She and Her twin brother Frey are from a different race of Gods, the Vanir, with whom the Æsir fought a war. It seems highly likely that the woman who was the cause of this war was Freyja Herself, as will be explained below.

Why is it so important that Freyja is not one of the Æsir? Because the Scarlet Woman in Initiation is representative of the Other: She is that which the Initiate is Not, but which he Desires. Freyja is a Goddess, and thus worthy of the interest of Odin and his kindred, but She is something different, something from Outside, something Other, adding a new and dynamic element.

The mythology tells how when the Æsir had established themselves, a stranger came to their halls, a woman named Gullveig. The meeting was not a cordial one and the Æsir killed the mysterious woman with their spears and burned her body. She returned once again and again they slew her with spears and burned the corpse. She returned a third time, more powerful than before. This ill-treatment of one of their own by the Æsir led the Vanir to initiate a war between the two races of Gods, finally ending in a truce and the customary exchange of hostages.

Gullveig Herself remained with the Æsir, changing Her name to Heithr. It seems likely from the mythological evidence that She was in fact Freyja, since Freyja is thereafter found among the Æsir, yet She was not one of the hostages

exchanged at the conclusion of hostilities. The catalytic action of Gullveig in initiating the conflict, and Her ability to Remanifest in ever more powerful form, are also characteristics of the Other, as the Initiate will discover when his own Other begins to manifest Her influence in his own life.

A word should be said about the differences between the two races of Gods: *Æsir* and *Vanir*. The former are Gods of the vertical axis, the spiritual dimension, linking Midgard with the worlds above and below. They are associated with consciousness, culture, life and death. The *Vanir*, however, are Gods of the natural order of things, the yearly agricultural cycle, animal husbandry and so forth, the means of survival and propagation in the natural world. Following their initial war, both groups of Deities feature in Northern mythology, representing life in all of its aspects, natural and supernatural.

Freyja's name is actually a title rather than a personal name; it means 'Lady', as that of Her twin brother Frey means 'Lord'. These two members of the *Vanir* are of enormous importance in old Northern religion and following the war they abode largely with the *Æsir*. Freyja in particular features heavily in the mythology and it will repay us to examine another of Her mythic tales now.

The Brisingamen was a necklace (or a belt or girdle) which was of exceptional beauty. It was being forged by four dwarfs and its virtue was such that it gave its possessor tremendous power over natural forces and wealth. Freyja desired this necklace and She obtained it through Her sexual favours, agreeing to sleep with each dwarf in turn as payment for the Brisingamen.

The powerful qualities of the Brisingamen were not lost upon Odin, who desired it for Himself. He persuaded Loki to steal the marvelous necklace, although it was returned

to Freyja when She pledged to support Odin in His Work. In time, She taught Odin the use of that magic of which She was Mistress: *seith*, a technique quite different from His own *galdor*.

This myth reveals a lot about Freyja. One of Her primary attributes is Desire, illustrated here by Her own Desire for the Brisिंगamen and the Desire of the dwarfs for Her. This leads to an exchange, in which each obtains that which they wish for through a sexual process.

Sexual adventures are often linked with Freyja. Her relationship with Her twin brother Frey is incestuous in nature. She is accused of this by Loki in *Lokasenna* (*Loki's Quarrel*, or *Accusation*, a kind of jousting with words and insults), where He also claims that She has been promiscuous with the entire company:

*'Be silent, Freyia, I know all about you;
you aren't lacking in blame:
of the Æsir and the elves, who are in here,
each one has been your lover.'*

...

*'Be silent, Freyia, you're a witch
and much imbued with malice,
you were astride your brother, all the laughing gods
surprised you,
and then, Freyia, you farted.'*

-- *Lokasenna* 30, 32

As the curriculum of Work in this book unfolds, the reader will discover that Desire is a very powerful magical Key. It is also noteworthy that in Loki's accusation, Freyja was 'astride' her brother. This is significant, as Kenneth Grant argues in his *Typhonian Trilogies* that the most correct position in

sexual magic is for the woman to be on top of the man, not vice versa.

Loki also denounces Freyja as a 'witch', a reference to the *seith* magic She practises. *Seith*, as opposed to *galdor*, is primarily associated with women, especially female seers. It is carried out in a state of trance and can involve sexual elements.

Half of the slain warriors who were assembled into the Gods' armies were gathered to Valhalla by Odin; the other half were brought to Freyja's hall at Folkvangr. When Freyja Herself manifests in Her warrior aspect, She takes the form of a great sow, a female wild boar, an animal of great ferocity. Her chariot is pulled by wildcats.

It is said in the mythology that Freyja was married to Odr. This may or may not be a name of Odin, but it is most definitely the name of the ecstatic, awakened consciousness which Odin represents. Freyja is said to seek the missing Odr across the Earth, leaving tears of gold in Her wake.

Thus we have in Freyja a Goddess of sex, war and magic. As such, She fulfils every function of the archetype of the Scarlet Woman as discussed in *Apophis*. I must add a cautionary note at this juncture, however. It is useful for us to use these comparisons for the insights they afford us into the Goddess and Her role in Draconian Magic. But when we are dealing with a specific tradition, it would be very wrong to say, 'Freyja is Babalon' or 'Freyja and the Scarlet Woman are the same thing'. This is quite untrue. There exists a resonance which allows us to sense an affinity between them, but Freyja is Her own Goddess and will quite rightly not respond to the names or titles of others. The Gods of our ancestors do not exist in a world of pick'n'mix, mix'n'match hotch-potchery. Approach Freyja as Freyja and as Freyja alone. Otherwise, if you're lucky you'll be ignored; if you're

unlucky you'll get your nose bloodied. You cannot – ever – equate one Deity with another. They may be a culturally distinct manifestation of a very similar Idea, but the personality and the spirit will be quite distinct.

A Triplicity of Dragons

In *Apophis*, the Ancient Serpent was represented under a single figure, namely Apep or Leviathan. All facets of the Draconian Essence were discussed under the ægis of this single entity.

This encapsulation of Draconian attributes in one all-encompassing Form is a good thing and a necessary thing, representing the Draconian Essence awakening within the psyche of the magician. However, when we look at Northern lore we find a particularly rich history of dragonkind and these individual serpents can be used to invoke and embody specific aspects of Draconian consciousness. This allows us perhaps a little more precision in our Work and a boost to our Understanding.

There are many dragons in the myths and legends of Germanic countries. The student can profitably research a great many of them. The dragon in the final third of *Beowulf* is a good example. But there are three dragons in particular which are of great antiquity and whose attributes particularly inform our present Work. These are Fafnir, Jormungandr and Nidhogg.

Fafnir is the dragon slain by the great hero Sigurd. This story is recounted in the *Fafnismal* and in the *Saga of the Volsungs*. Unlike most of the sagas, that of the Volsungs is evidently a very old tale and its tone is mythic rather than historical.

Fafnir is the guardian of a great treasure of gold and the bearer of the *Ægishjálmur*, the Helm of Awe, after which this book is titled. Sigurd kills Fafnir and wins the gold and the Helm. He also tastes the dragon's blood and acquires its wisdom, exemplified by his newfound ability to understand the speech of birds. The sequence of transformations in this tale forms the central Initiatory process of this book and is the focus of chapter six.

The transformative process described in the tale of Sigurd and Fafnir extends throughout the book, however, including some of the practical techniques taught, such as the use of the Helm of Awe as a tool for operative magic. Most of these allusions and developments will be pointed out, but the Initiate is well advised to read the source texts several times in order to draw their atmosphere and mythic pattern within.

The second great mythic serpent is Jormungandr, often referred to as the Midgard Serpent. This enormous beast is a sea serpent, dwelling in the ocean depths. Jormungandr was originally a monstrous child of Loki and was cast into the sea by Odin. Once there, it grew to such a size that it encircled the entirety of Midgard with its body.

The symbolism of Jormungandr echoes that of the *Ouroboros*, the serpent forming a ring and taking its own tail in its mouth. The function of this great sea dragon is to establish the boundary of the world and to mark its limits. If Fafnir represents the Dragon Within and the initiatory journey of the magician, then Jormungandr represents the Dragon Without and the arena in which that journey takes place. The two are distinct and yet there is a link between them. This polarisation between the two dragons will be discussed more fully later in its proper place.

The great enemy of the Midgard Serpent is the God

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Thor, who nearly breaks the foundations of the world when He hooks the dragon on a fishing expedition and almost succeeds in reeling it in with His great strength. At Ragnarok, it is Thor who will slay Jormungandr with His hammer Mjolnir, though He Himself will perish from the Serpent's venom. When Jormungandr is slain, the bounds of the world will be broken and reality as we now know it will be swept away.

The third of our triplicity of mythic Northern dragons is Nidhogg, a winged dragon who is said to have its lair in the deepest parts of Hel's domain, feeding upon the dead and rending the very roots of Yggdrasil with its claws, spewing venom upon them. Nidhogg is a devourer, whose sole function is to consume. It is thus the dragon of time, which devours all. And yet, it is the dragon which may devour time itself and therein lies its initiatory key. It is reminiscent of the mythology of Apep recounted in *Apophis*, the serpent who swallows the Sun. As such, Nidhogg will be a force to be actively resisted by those beginning on their initiatory quest, but a force to be actively harnessed by those who are well advanced upon it.

The Mysteries of Nidhogg will be discussed more fully in their proper place.

CHAPTER TWO

DRAGON RUNES

The Language of the Gods

All magic, including Draconian Magic, is first and foremost concerned with communication. Every magical act is an act of communication. Magic is a communication with the Gods, with our own hidden complexes, with the world outside ourselves. This is not simply a matter of firing out messages, requests, prayers or petitions and hoping something comes of it. Any effective communication must be a two way process. It is question and answer, proposal and response, comment and reply; it is **dialogue**.

In order to effectively communicate, we must have a sophisticated language with which to convey our ideas. In the magical realm, ordinary words are useful, but are not sufficient. There are magicians who scorn the use of words altogether, but words are a symbol set just as valid as any other. As Anton LaVey pointed out, a well chosen set of emotionally charged words and phrases can fan the Magical

Will and the empowering force of Desire to fever pitch.

Passion is not enough, however, precision is also required. It was Stephen Flowers, the Magus of **Rûna**, who pointed out that the correct application of passion and precision in due proportion will be the measure of a magician's success.

This precision is achieved by adopting a purely magical symbol set, preferably one based upon a solid tradition, which has been tried, tested and refined over the centuries. This will give us a concise and meaningful way of clearly specifying our aims in a language which is understood by the subconscious. Once we have settled upon such a symbolic language, we will be able to communicate our magical Will with clarity.

In Northern Europe, this precise magical encoding is achieved through the use of the runes. Each rune possesses four unique qualities: it has a shape; it has a sound; it has a number; it has an inherent meaning. The practice of rune magic is known as *galdor*, a word which has a meaning akin to 'croaking' and refers to the speaking of the runes. The runestaves may be used to define our Will in speech or in writing. Specific ways of using the runes for magical purposes are described in chapter four.

The runes were originally arranged in a sequence of twenty four staves, known as the Elder Futhark. This twenty four rune set is the most complete and traditional iteration of runelore and this is the rune sequence used throughout this book. It most fully embodies the original Vision of the early runemasters.

In the Viking Age, the runes were recodified into a simplified set of sixteen staves. In this reworking of the runes, some of the more complex staves were given simplified forms and some sound values were grouped together under a

single stave. This should not be seen as a degradation of the original tradition; it was a thorough, Initiated reinterpretation and Remanifestation of the runes to meet the needs of a new age of expansion and exploration. The Younger Futhark, as it is known, has proven itself to be extremely effective in Workings of operative sorcery. These are the runes which were used on my own home, the Isle of Man, and they are the runes I usually use for operative magical Workings. Nevertheless, it is in the Elder Futhark that we find the most comprehensive expression of runic philosophy, so that is the rune series used in this book. The Elder rune row is certainly the one which Initiates should familiarise themselves with first; those who wish to then use the Younger Futhark will find it easy to adopt the Younger row having first Understood the Elder.

The Old English runes were basically the Elder Futhark with new staves added to the end of the row to allow for new sounds as they were added to the language, so its underlying lore is basically that of the Elder rune row.

Those desiring a more in-depth history of the development of runes are directed to *Runelore* and the other books of Edred Thorsson.

The runes of the Elder Futhark are tabulated below, along with their number and sound values and their primary meanings.

Number	Rune	Name	Sound	Meaning
1	ᚠ	fehu	F	cattle, money
2	ᚢ	uruz	U	aurochs
3	ᚦ	thurisaz	Th	thurs, giant
4	ᚨ	ansuz	A	ancestral god

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5	ƿ	raidho	R	wagon, riding
6	<	kenaz	K	torch, sore
7	χ	gebo	G	gift
8	ƿ	wunjo	W	joy
9	h	hagalaz	H	hail
10	þ	nauthiz	N	need
11	l	isa	I	ice
12	ǰ	jera	Y	year
13	ʒ	eihwaz	Ei	yew
14	ƿ	perthro	P	lot-cup
15	ʁ	elhaz	-Z	elk
16	ʒ	sowilo	S	sun
17	↑	tiwaz	T	Tyr
18	β	berkano	B	birch
19	ƿ	ehwaz	E	horse
20	ƿ	mannaz	M	man
21	ʀ	laguz	L	water
22	◇	ingwaz	-NG	Ing
23	⋈	dagaz	D	day
24	⋈	othila	O	property

Knowing the names and shapes of the runes is one thing, but it is necessary to Work with them, carving and colouring them, singing them and shaping them, meditating upon them, in order to make them your own. These practices all form part of the curriculum of this book and will be presented in a logical and workable order.

The information given here will be sufficient for anyone to use the runes in Draconian Magic. However, those who desire to create a deep and authentic connection with the runes are referred to *The Nine Doors of Midgard* by Edred Thorsson, published by Runa-Raven Press. Edred's book details a three year course of study and practice which will ingrain the runes deeply in your soul. It is a demanding course, but the rewards are immeasurable. Needless to say, it will greatly enrich your experience with *Ægishjálmur*.

The process of making the runes your own will make you acutely aware that each rune has an existence both within and without. A rune expresses certain elements inside your own being, but it also embodies a quality that is found in the world outside of yourself. Once you have identified the essence of a rune within you and in the world you will become conscious that the two are linked; in a sense, they are one thing. A stream flows between them in both directions and thus the manipulation of the runes within your own mind can cause changes to occur in the outside world. In a similar way, the shifting of the runes in the outside world can cause new insights and understanding to manifest within your own being, through practices such as divination.

Ultimately, **all** runes, both within and without, are but aspects of a single Rune (the word 'rune' actually means 'mystery'). This is **Rûna** itself (or Herself, since Rûna is often referred to as a Lady), the Mystery that lies behind all mysteries, that which is always sought after but never quite

found, the promise that lies just over the horizon. A lot more will be written about Rûna in this book and the subject will be discussed at length in the appropriate place. Rûna is the entire motivation for magic.

Dragon Runes

The core, traditional meanings of the runes can be found in the writings of Edred Thorsson, listed in the Reading List at the back of this book. The Initiate is encouraged to study these carefully in order to establish a fully rounded and authentic Understanding of each rune.

The meanings suggested below are specifically tailored to the purposes of Draconian Magic. They do not contradict the traditional meanings, they merely draw out and emphasise the aspects most pertinent to our current Work. These meanings do not replace the traditional ones. It must be borne in mind that the meanings below may weight certain runes in certain ways, accentuating some runic aspects and abbreviating others. Although they are fully functional and tailored to the practice of Draconian Magic, Initiates who wish to explore the use of runes more fully will necessarily take time to study the traditional meanings also in order to understand how the current ones have been derived.

ƒ *Fehu*

The Draconian associations of this rune are apparent from the outset. It is strongly linked with the dragon Fafnir and his cursed hoard. The rune refers to both the dragon's fire and the

gold it guards. This is explicit in the words of the *Old Icelandic Rune Poem*:

(Gold) is the strife of kinsmen and fire of the flood-tide
and the path of the serpent.

The "fire of the flood-tide" is both the fiery breath of the dragon and the gleam of the Rheingold beneath the waters. The "path of the serpent" is the path of Fafnir, who seized the treasure and hoarded it, causing the "strife of kinsmen" in the *Saga of the Volsungs*.

These are powerful mythic images and highly representative of the rune and its danger. But the *Old English Rune Poem* points out that "every man ought to deal it out freely". The dragon's gold is not to be hoarded. The proper place for the Rheingold is in the Rhein, freely flowing in life's stream.

Gold is a powerful magical tool. Particularly in the modern age, money is imaginary: figures that bounce back and forth in the banking computer system, without substance or real essence. Money has value because people **believe** it to be so. To hoard it is to hoard an illusion. This imaginary tool should be **used** to win your goals, to travel to new places, to influence people. This is the truer sinuous path of the serpent, a path along which the fire does not flicker and die but constantly finds new fuel.

𐌆 *Uruz*

The Draconian aspect of *uruz* is perhaps best illustrated by the Dragon as invoked by Merlin in the movie *Excalibur*: an

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imminent force of nature that rises powerfully from the earth itself. The animal generally attributed to the rune, the wild aurochs, is a symbol of great strength and vitality, a beast that fights with its horns and is "a famous roamer of the moors".

This rune embodies primal strength and vigour, a wild ferocity and freedom that refuses to be bound. It is the Dragon in its most aggressive and dynamic manifestation.

The rune provides the Draconian Initiate with great strength of purpose and the stamina to carry his goals through to completion, but it demands the sacrifice of all inhibitions and societal restraints in the process. To effectively use this rune, one must emulate Captain Nemo and not be a civilised man.



Thurisaz

Thurisaz is described as a thorn or a thurs (i.e. a giant), also as a symbol for Thor's hammer. In all cases, the symbolism is aggressive and violent. In Draconian terms, it represents the tooth or claw of the Dragon.

This rune is brute force. Contrary to most modern bleating, brute force is sometimes regrettably necessary. However, it always inflicts wounds and bruises.

The rune is a symbol of conflict and conflict is inevitable, whether we like it or not. Better to be the Dragon than to be devoured by it, but the price is always high.

ᚱ *Ansuz*

Ecstasy and inspiration derived from the ancestral sovereign God: the magical power of speech and poetry. These are the usual meanings of the *ansuz* rune.

These meanings speak of consciousness; its awakening and its inspiration. In Draconian terms, *ansuz* is the hot wind of the Dragon's breath that stirs the cloak of Odin. Its heat and motion scorches the mind, blasting out the old, dead leaves that lie cluttered in its corridors, enlivening and energising the conscious faculties. It emerges again from the mind through the mouth in a rousing stream of oratory.

ᚲ *Raidho*

Traditionally, *raidho* represents a journey, a 'riding'. It carries the meaning of an ordered progression. This is echoed in its Draconian symbolism, in which the shape of the stave may perhaps be interpreted as the carved head of a Viking dragon ship as it journeys through the waves, the head of the dragon gazing out over the miles that lie ahead.

The concept of ordered progression may also be seen in the movement of a serpent, as will be recognised by anyone who has seen the patterns left in sand after a snake has passed over it.

This rune stands for far-seeing and planning, the process of a well-planned journey (whether literal or metaphorical) and the recognition and implementation of repeating patterns.

< *Kenaz*

Kenaz is a torch. In other words, it is a controlled fire, harnessed and utilised by human ingenuity. Its sound value suggests words such as 'kenning', 'cunning' and 'craft'. As such, it expresses the insight and occasional deviousness which leads us to think outside the box and develop new technologies, using the properties of physics to enhance our lives. *Kenaz* will always contain a certain subversive element, for even the most benign invention requires the ability to think in a way that sidesteps the usual obstacles. This accords with the legendary cunning of the Dragon and its love for riddles and misdirection. In spite of its undoubted positive applications, there is always a certain streak of cruelty in *kenaz*, evidenced by its alternate meaning as 'sore'. This too suits the character of the Dragon. The rune's shape may be considered representative of the Dragon's jaws yawning wide to breathe fire.

X *Gebo*

Gebo represents a gift. In actual fact, it embodies the entire process and all of its variables: it is the act of giving; the thing given; the giver and the one given to. It also implies the responsibilities and obligations which come with the exchange of gifts.

This is largely a positive rune. Gifts strengthen friendships, seal pacts and forge alliances; they can also placate and reconcile enemies. Whether the gift is gold or a word of friendly advice, the principle is the same.

But the cold and unyielding eye of the Serpent warns that a gift – whether given or received – may incur an obligation, whether explicit or implicit. So give wisely and warily, only to those who merit it and always in proportion. A gift should mean something.

ᚷ *Wunjo*

What does this rune of fellowship and camaraderie signify for the Draconian Initiate? Quite simply, it symbolises the link with all of the actual and legendary Orders of the Dragon that have persisted throughout history. The shape of the rune is a banner upraised on behalf of all those who understand the serpentine roots of consciousness. It is the fellowship of the Mysteries themselves and the fellow travellers we meet upon the Path.

But also significant is the rune's meaning of joy. Sorrow and misery are the default mindsets of the major world religions. The Draconian Path champions a fierce joy in all of life's experiences: existence itself is a pleasure and delight; life is sheer exuberance.

ᚱ *Hagalaz*

Hagalaz is an imprint of order; it establishes a pattern and stamps it upon reality. This is manifest in the fractal patterns of nature, the orbits of atoms and the principles underpinning the laws of physics. But for the Draconian magician, a champion of consciousness, this will be a self-created order.

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Hagalaz is the process invoked when the Eye of the Dragon wishes to recreate itself in the wake of initiatory progress, sweeping aside the old to make way for the new.

But this Remanifestation has its destructive side. The hailstorm of the dragon's breath will lay waste crops and cause structural damage to property. But the world afterwards will be new and fresh, ripe for rebuilding, imprinted with a new pattern.

Hagalaz is all about the perception and use of patterns. These may be long-lost patterns of behaviour, ancestral tendencies or core values, hidden in the deep places of the soul, waiting to be reawakened. Or they may be new patterns, freshly invoked, birthing in joyous fanfare. These moments of exhilarating crisis are what we ultimately use and direct to define ourselves.

† *Naudhiz*

Need is the driving force behind evolution, the transformation from one state of being to another. It is also the driving force of the Draconian magician.

Most people in the modern world are programmed with a set of goals: marriage; mortgage; children; good career with 'prospects' (whatever they're supposed to be); a nice car; a comfortable three piece suite, regularly renewed in the annual sales; a good credit rating; an obligatory conservatory; dinner parties with trendy low fat, reduced sugar, zero nutrition foodstuffs. And so on...

Need rubbishes this list. Need doesn't concern itself with comfort, excess money, social acceptance or anything else of that sort. Need cares only that life is vital, exciting

and transformative. Jobs, relationships and respectability may all be jettisoned in the service of Need.

Need is fueled by Desire. If we accept (and I do) Anton LaVey's division of the human soul into surface personality, hidden Dæmonic Self and innermost Core Self, the Need-fire within the magician is ignited by the friction between the various layers of his own being. It must be noted that this inner conflict is not a negative thing; it is a very positive and dynamic affair.

The outer personality Desires the Dæmonic Self, which in turn Desires manifestation. This Desire is projected as goals and quests in the outer world, which drives us to achieve great deeds. These in turn feed back to the Core Self, transforming and energising it. Thus the glorious game of Self-creation continues while the Dragon fire continues to burn. That other face of *naudhiz*, the devouring dragon Nidhogg, reminds us what happens when the flame of Desire sputters and dies: to stand still is death.

I *Isa*

In the Celtic symbolism of Vortigern's tower, there are two Dragons in perpetual conflict: a red one and a white one. This is echoed in the Draconian interpretation of the runes *fehu* and *isa*. The former, as already discussed, is the expansive force of fire. *Isa* is the contracting force of ice. If the former is the fury and passion of the Dragon's flame, the latter is the stillness and intensity of its gaze.

This conflict is a necessary one and intensely creative. It is the root of the Germanic creation myth, as the outflowings from Muspellheim and Niflheim meet in

Ginnungagap. If either force is missing, the Void cannot give birth. If either force is lacking in the Initiate, he cannot continue to Remanifest his own being.

In the Initiate, *isa* represents his ability to turn back in upon himself, to concentrate his essence and separate it from his surroundings, withdrawing to a vantage point bordering on the Void. *Isa* is the resultant ray of intense concentration, pure and unsullied, which is directed outward from his core. From this vantage point, he may view events with complete dispassion and concentrate his Will into an irresistible focus.

↔ *Jera*

Jera, the turning of the cycle of the year, the recognition of cause and effect and the apprehension of recurring patterns, resembles the well known symbol of the serpent swallowing its own tail; it is Jormungandr, encircling and defining the limits of the world. As such, it is a rune of Self-definition and subsequent Remanifestation.

With the Initiated Draconian awareness, such a pattern is not merely cyclical, however. With every turn, with every Remanifestation, we do not simply come back to the same place, doomed to repeat the same pattern for eternity. The imperative of consciousness is that we recognise the patterns that we ride, that we learn from them. As such, we ride a spiral rather than a strictly fixed course. Every time we come around we find ourselves in a better position to use and shape the forces that sustain us, becoming more than we previously were.

The Eye of the soul focuses at the still point at the centre of the turning wheel, seeing all clearly and

dispassionately: whereas the conscious, incarnate mind strives to cling to the very rim, experiencing the thrill of maximum speed and transformative potential. The truly awakened soul accomplishes both at once, as discussed under the *dagaz* rune.

√ *Eihwaz*

This is a rune of the span of consciousness, from its most primitive and bestial manifestations right through to Self-generating divinity. The Dragon is the most noble and the most ravenous of mythical beasts. The Draconian consciousness must understand and embrace all of these extremes, synthesising them into a Self, if it is to achieve the full span of *eihwaz*.

This is a rune of life and death and the limits within which they occur. It is also a rune of the consciousness to which such limits are irrelevant.

Eihwaz is in certain respects indicative of Yggdrasil itself, the height and depth of the World Tree from which the worlds depend. To the Draconian, a shift in perspective is required, so that the span of the Tree is the Initiate's own consciousness, the framework of the worlds within. The Self becomes the constant around which all else revolves.

⚔ *Perthro*

Perthro is the lot cup, the element of chance. It is also the weight of past history that carries us to the event where

chance is invoked. Every possibility or probability that may arise has come about because of the patterns we have woven through our own actions to date. Every decision depends upon the decisions that came before it.

The Dragon, with its Eye in eternity, understands this. It learns to read and interpret the patterns active in every circumstance (a practice we may develop through rune-casting for divinatory purposes). Moreover, it understands how such patterns are formed and learns to actively steer its own future through its present actions and the reinterpretation of the trends of its past. The Draconian Initiate forges his own destiny.

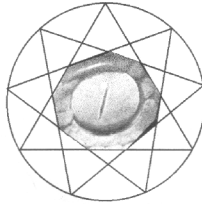
No matter how precise the patterns, the way in which any event finally falls out depends upon the factor of chance, the weighing of the probabilities, the rolling of the dice. The Initiate welcomes that chance, recognising it as symptomatic of the Void – Ginnungagap – from which all things ultimately issued. The fact that both our best-laid plans and our most desperate gambles each remain dependent upon a chance element is a cause for rejoicing, as we know that the future will always unveil something fresh and at least partly unexpected.

Ƶ *Elhaz*

Elhaz is the root rune of the Helm of Awe, the entrancing gaze of the Dragon Fafnir. It is also the sword in the hand of Sigurd, who slew Fafnir and assumed the Helm and the Dragon's treasure to himself, a transformation from Beast to Man to God through the power of this rune.

The sexual symbolism of the rune, depicting female

genitals in its normal form and male when inverted, is indicative of the opening of the Serpent's Eye and the streaming of the creative / transformative forces across Ginnungagap, a doctrine central to the Helm Project of the Order of Apep, and depicted in the Order Seal below:



⚡ *Sowilo*

The lightning strike symbol depicting the sun's rays is suggestive of the zig-zagging motion of a serpent across the sands. It is a smooth and efficient motion, carrying the snake unerringly on, as a ship is steered by the position of the sun in the heavens in the rune-poem. Yet it is a motion that seems strange to those whose thoughts are fixed only on their feet.

Sowilo's sunlight brings the clarity of the Dragon's gaze and the certainty of the snake's motion, steering us to that destiny which we have crafted for ourselves.

↑ *Tiwaz*

This is the rune of the axis of the worlds, around which all

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revolves. It is the serpent who coils around the pole in the night sky.

For the Draconian Initiate, this axis is his own innermost Self, the only true and abiding constant in his life. Upon the aesthetic and ethical standards of this Self, he must establish the laws of the world in which he chooses to reside.

It will be observed that the pole itself neither moves nor transforms: only the appearances that spin into manifestation around it.

The worlds derive their meaning and their ordering from the pole: the pole finds its sense of identity reflected back to it from the worlds.



Berkano

This rune is attributed to the Birch-Goddess and the Draconian interpretation has little to add to this. Some magicians tend to forget that they are just as subject to the general operations of nature as everyone else. We are born, we need to be nurtured through our childhood, we enter our own adulthood and ultimately we die.

There is no conflict between the Birch-Goddess and the Draconian current. Indeed, in certain mythologies and interpretations it is evident that the primordial Dragon is itself female and associated with birth and generation.

The Draconian Path is concerned with the flesh. Unlike those religious creeds most people pay lip service to, there is no enmity – and little differentiation – between flesh and spirit in the original European religions. The body is one part of the complex that makes up the Self. Incarnation is a joy, not a chore.

The generative forces attributed to *berkano* are among those most readily harnessed and applied by the Draconian Initiate.

M *Ehwaz*

Most religion is concerned with the cessation of Desire, but Draconian Magic is – and always has been – about the pursuit of Desire. The Draconian Initiate seeks out those people, places, things and organisations that resonate with his Desire and allies himself with them.

His Desire itself, the hunger in the Dragon's heart, is really the very steed that he rides. But he knows to value the relationships and partnerships he forms along the Path. He draws strength from the Other, who reflects and strengthens him, providing a conduit for those qualities he may personally lack. This is the Mystery of Exchange.

ᚱ *Mannaz*

This rune may be viewed as two *uruz* runes facing each other and overlapping. This creates a central *gebo* rune in an elevated position. The interpretation of this is a definition of Man as a creature in whom the Gift of consciousness has assumed dominance over the bestial nature.

This illuminated, Self-aware Man is the one who is fit to command the Beast, to tame / slay / steer the Dragon. This Man is a hero of Sigurd proportions, properly fitted to face and overthrow Fafnir, assuming the Dragon's powers and

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riches.

As illustrated in the shape of the rune, this Man is the strength and vitality of a Beast merged with the consciousness and Will of a God.

† *Laguz*

This rune signifies a lake. It is a reminder of the source of life and the weight of evolution and ancestral development. It is the forces which shape life itself and the processes which shape and define the course of life, the rites of passage we undergo.

The rune's other meaning, as *laukaz*, is a leek. Such a plant grows in an environment which encompasses water, earth and sky. In just such a way, our lives grow in an environment shaped by both natural instinct and biological imperatives and the wider plains of the imagination and the realisation of consciousness itself. We are impelled by the patterns that have been established in our past, but are also guided by our visions of the potential of the future.

We possess the divine spark of consciousness, but we are not Gods. We are meant to exist in this world, in Midgard, first and foremost. The wise Initiate does not fight against the environment in which he finds himself. Instead, he learns its ways and adapts himself to best possible use of it in order to achieve his goals.

The proper harnessing of the forces in the *laguz* rune depends upon a proper Understanding of the nature of Man, as shown in the preceding *mannaz* rune.

◇ *Ingwaz*

This is the rune of gestation, of introspection and incubation. Initiation is a cyclical process. Each initiatory cycle will include a phase where the Initiate seems to run into a brick wall and can progress no further. Life reaches a standstill and it takes much effort to simply tread water. Magical Work yields unsatisfactory, muted results. There seems nowhere further to go.

In such a situation, to simply continue on as one always has done is to achieve a state of stagnation at best, regression at worst. Instead, it is necessary to withdraw and to turn inward, seeking the walls that you have built inside yourself. This is a process of analysing your reasons and motivations for the Work, assessing which of your practices are helpful and which are merely habit. It is time for a Nietzschean “revaluation of all values”. Only by such an active reassessment and repointing can we identify our self-created blockages and demolish them, emerging into a far bigger world of magic and potential than we previously inhabited. Until the cycle turns again, of course, and we have expanded to fill our new space also.

Every time we achieve such a breakthrough after a time of incubation and reflection, every time we win our new Vision and create our new Destiny, we can only see so far ahead. We unconsciously create new barriers for ourselves at the limits of our Vision, and it is these that we inevitably bump against as we continue to grow and to fulfil our potential and promise.

Such blockages, which seem frustrating and disheartening at the time, are thus positive indicators. They mean that we have reached the limits of what we previously

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understood and that it is time to seek a new illumination. In Draconian terms, the whole process of *ingwaz* may be likened to the serpent shedding its skin when it has outgrown it, emerging as a new being: the same, yet greater.

⚡ *Dagaz*

The rune expresses the zigzagging cyclical course of the Draconian Initiate as he / she passes through a central still point – the point of focus of Self, where all perceptions are ultimately evaluated – and rides the course through all extremes and polarities of experience: symbolised in the rune by night and day, light and dark, known and unknown.

It is the duty of the Initiate – as superbly recounted in Colin Wilson's book *The Outsider* – to ever seek the extremes, but to always remain apart from extremism, soaking in the knowledge and insight to be gained at the edges of experience without identifying with them. The serpent's course always zigzags back again to the centre, then on in a new direction.

⚡ *Othila*

The rune row begins with the spendable wealth of *fehu*, wealth which we are urged to keep in circulation rather than hoarding. The final rune represents another kind of wealth entirely, the wealth of the homestead and assets of a more permanent variety. These we are expected to hold onto and to treasure, for ourselves and for our posterity.

The traditional interpretation of the rune's shape is of the fenced enclosure which surrounds and protects the homestead. In Draconian symbolism, it may equally be the sleeping dragon in its lair, enfolding its treasures, claws crossed before it.

Fixed wealth refers to more than just the stability and security of the home, however. It signifies all of those treasures that we have gathered to ourselves because they tell part of our story, because we have chosen them to mirror and represent some fact of our Selves. These may be things of little actual financial value, but which provide a link to our past. My grandfather's binoculars are one such treasure that I own. Others are things which express our values and sense of beauty. The range of statuettes that stand on the shelving behind me as I type this are bold and idiosyncratic statements of my sense of aesthetics. We all have such treasures, which when viewed with the initiatory eye are far more sacred and transformative objects than any occult trinket.

Galdor and Seith

As mentioned briefly in the previous chapter, there were two distinct types of magic used by the folk of Northern Europe. These were called galdor and seith and owed their origins and inspiration to Odin and Freyja respectively (though each was capable of using the magical techniques of the other).

Galdor was a form of magic which primarily used the runes – chanted or written / carved – and was very much directed by the conscious mind. The runer selects runes whose meanings resonate with his purpose and then focuses his Will upon those runes, awakening them within his own being and sending the stream of rune-shaped Will out into the

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world to effect his desired change.

Seith is the magic of the seeress, who seeks to still her conscious thought and allow images, visions or voices to arise from the depths of her subconscious or from the worlds beyond Midgard. This form of magic was most often employed by women and was considered shameful by most men of the period. This did not prevent Odin from seeking tuition from Freyja in order to learn its secrets, however. The seeker after magical power cares nothing for the sneers or values of the ignorant and if it's good enough for Odin, it's certainly good enough for us.

Most of the Work of the early chapters (equating to the first three heads in the *Apophis* curriculum) will focus upon the techniques of galdor. Throughout, we will be trying to build bridges between the conscious and subconscious aspects of the mind, but the latter can only be effectively Worked with when it has established a rapport with the former and a good two-way communication is manifest.

Despite this, the first Working of *Ægishjalmur* is more akin to seith, since it is a visionary meditation intended to link the new Initiate with the Northern Draconian current. This first Working, which should be carried out prior to starting the Work of the next chapter, will awaken the Essence of Fafnir – the first of our three dragons – in the Initiate's consciousness.

Fafnir's Hoard – A Working

This Working is intended to be carried out over a few successive nights, each one adding to what has been achieved before. Its symbolism will be investigated in the chapters which follow, but it is important that this symbolism should

be made 'live' within the psyche now, preparing the Initiate for the particularly Draconian aspects of the Work that lies ahead.

The Working is a visual meditation. At this stage, the Initiate should not worry about the peripheral details. Yes, assuming a formal posture can enhance such Workings. Yes, establishing a proper rhythm of breathing can deepen the richness of visionary Work as the blood is better oxygenated. Yes, prior experience with the vision-making powers of the imagination can render such a Working more stable and less likely to lose concentration and cohesion. But every single person capable of sitting down and reading this book possesses sufficient power and skill to carry out this simple Working in a way that will be effective and which will prepare them for the curriculum that lies ahead.

You only need three things in order to be able to carry out this Working effectively:

1. You need to be able to go to a quiet place where you can be alone and where you will not be disturbed for the duration of each day's Working. This may be a comfortable armchair in a quiet room. At a push, it might even be lying in bed when you retire for the night (so long as you remain awake to do the Work).
2. You need to be able to relax and get yourself comfortable. You may choose to sit down in an armchair, you may prefer to sit in a stable, straight-backed pose in an upright chair, or you may even lie down on your bed. At this stage it doesn't matter, so long as you are able to relax and turn your mind to things other than your body.
3. You need to have a good imagination. A lot of people will protest that they **don't** have a good imagination, but we can soon give the lie to this. Imagine your favourite

celebrity lust object lying naked on a bed, luring you over with an enticing smile and all the promise of the lifestyle of wealth and luxury that an affair with them would bring. You didn't find **that** piece of imagining too difficult, did you? I bet it leapt fully formed into your mind without you even having to think about it. If in doubt, go and read a novel that appeals to you for practice, you'll find that you're perfectly capable of exercising your visual imagination when you allow yourself to do so.

The basic procedure is a visualisation, a re-enactment in personalised form of certain aspects of Sigurd's encounter with Fafnir. The Working is intended to progress over nine nights, with each night's phase adding to what has gone before. Its purpose is to awaken the Draconian current of the North within you and prepare you for the curriculum of Work in this book.

The First Night

Begin by relaxing in your chosen place, free from interruptions or distractions. Phones should be unplugged, mobile phones switched off. Take as much time as you need to completely relax and settle, stilling your mind and preparing to give your full concentration and attention to the Working.

Then allow your mind's eye to build up a landscape in your imagination. It is a grey, barren mountainside, with only a few gnarled and stunted trees, all leafless. The wind blows strongly, grey clouds scudding overhead, threatening rain or even snow; it's certainly cold enough. The ground is uneven, with many dried up streams and ravines breaking its parched surface. Imagine strongly that you are standing in this

unwelcoming environment. Look around you and fill in its details. Take a few steps in it, but don't wander far from your starting position at this time. In the near distance, you can see a deep hollow, a cave entrance yawning in its depths. Do not approach it. Just use all of your Will and your power of imagination to render this inner environment real and tangible to you. When you have established and stabilised it as best you can, slowly withdraw from it, breathe deeply and open your eyes, returning to full physical awareness.

The Second Night

Return to the forsaken mountainside and take a few minutes to let the landscape stabilise around you. Turn around slowly, viewing all about you. Now you can see that behind you the land falls away suddenly into a deep ravine. You can hear water rushing far below, at the bottom of the cliff walls.

You turn your attention to the hollow that you saw yesterday and you carefully edge closer to it, looking down upon the cave entrance. A foul stench issues from it and a vapour seeps out, clinging and poisonous. It is this venomous miasma that has rendered the mountainside barren and waste.

You back away from the course of the poisonous vapour and allow yourself to return to ordinary, everyday awareness.

The Third Night

You return to the withered mountainside and spend a few minutes building and stabilising the landscape within your imagination.

This done, you make your way to a tangle of brittle, dead trees that stand like twisted skeletons in the wasteland.

You climb up into these and find a knot of creaking branches in which to conceal yourself. For long moments, there is no noise nor motion save the sighing of the cold wind and you find that as you sit motionless, you can become almost invisible in the grey pallor of this world.

You sit totally still and observe in silence as an enormous serpent slithers out of the cave in the hollow, a long and sinuous neck holds a fanged and crested head. The eyes are deadly, the beast's glance radiating a sense of terror and maddening horror, bewitching and beguiling all that it gazes upon. You shrink back, but it does not see you in your hiding place.

The dragon crawls further out of its hole, a poisonous fume surrounding it. It propels itself forward on powerful legs, scaled and clawed, until it reaches the edge of the cliff. Then it lowers its long neck and forebody over the edge, clinging on with its rear claws. It drinks greedily from the rushing waters below and a venomous mist sprays up.

The dragon then pulls itself back up from the ravine and crawls back into its cave.

You climb down from your hiding place and allow your eyes to open, relocating your consciousness in your physical body, thinking about what you have witnessed.

The Fourth Night

You return to the mountainside, but this time there is a weight in your hand. As the familiar landscape shapes around you, you realise that you are carrying a heavy sword, perfectly balanced and razor sharp. A feeling of trepidation sweeps over you. Tonight you are going to face the Beast. Kneel and consider the implications of this. Consider what the Beast means to you. What is embodied in the primal instincts and

ferocity of the Dragon? Spend as long as you need in meditation on these matters, preparing yourself for what you must do.

When the time feels right – and it will come upon you as a deep foreboding, compelling you to follow the mythic pattern laid out for your feet – rise up and walk to the cliff edge.

Look down and see the dizzying drop beneath your feet, the river raging and coiling below, like a serpent in its own right. Carefully lower yourself over the edge, finding your feet on a ledge just beneath the lip. Clasp the sword firmly in both hands, point uppermost, and wait.

Soon you feel the earth shaking as the body of the Dragon coils across it, clawed feet propelling it along. Terror almost chokes you as the light is blocked out by the great head as it reaches over the cliff and curves down before you, mere inches from you.

You watch the underside of the long neck passing by until the upper body appears over the cliff edge. Without hesitation, you allow instinct to guide your hands and strike upwards hard and deep into the soft underbelly, cutting deep into the Beast, burying the sword to its hilt.

A great tumult breaks out, the Dragon shrieking and hissing, spraying a poisonous spume in its agony. It recoils back over the top of the cliff and throws itself to the ground, thrashing and coiling. You cling desperately to the ledge as the earth bucks and shakes beneath its death throes.

Finally all is still and the hoarse, venomous breaths have silenced. You climb slowly back onto the upper ground and survey the huge, still body of the Dragon in its ruin. Overcome with the adrenaline and emotion of this experience, return to your physical environment and think over what has transpired.

The Fifth Night

You return again to the withered waste and slowly approach the still body of the slain Dragon. You marvel at its huge size and crushing strength and walk around it.

As you pass by the head, you are startled by a greenish glint between the eyelids. One of the eyes suddenly opens wide, transfixing you with a paralysing glance. You stand helplessly rooted to the spot as the Dragon speaks.

“I am Fafnir,” it hisses. “I am the Dragon that lurks in the deep hollows in the dark places of the mind. You have looked deep within and found me looking back at you, my power persisting even after death. Ponder that well. What will become of my power now? Dare you taste the very heart's blood of me?”

Fafnir will now give you a message that is meant for you and you alone. It may be a word, a phrase, an image, or a feeling. Remain staring into the Dragon's eye until you are certain that you have 'got it'. The eye will then close, releasing you from its spell.

Let your consciousness return and be grounded in your body, then record the Dragon's message and consider what it may mean.

The Sixth Night

You return to the dreary mountainside and the remains of Fafnir. The Dragon's body is still hot to the touch, its internal fire not yet faded.

You take your sword and cut deeply into the chest cavity, removing the enormous heart.

You then gather wood from the dead trees and build a fire. Squatting beside it, you skewer the heart and begin

roasting it. As the mighty organ cooks, you reflect that this is that which pumped life and power through the Dragon's being.

You reach out to see if the heart is cooked yet, but burn your thumb upon it. You snatch your hand back and suck your thumb to soothe the pain of the burn. But it spreads, searing your body and your mind in waves of blistering heat, the venomous blood of the Serpent, energised by the fire, coursing now through your own veins, transforming every cell in your body, every thought in your mind.

Finally, the pain passes and you fall in a swoon, allowing your mind to blank for several moments.

When you recover, you feel stronger and more whole and alive than you have ever done before. You have assimilated and embodied the qualities and Essence of the Beast you have overthrown. Part of you now is the Dragon.

Return to your normal mode of consciousness and your normal place to reflect upon this fact.

The Seventh Night

You return to the slain Dragon, now an empty husk, its Essence coiling somewhere deep within your own mind, waiting to be awakened to its full potential.

You decide that it is time to survey some of the treasure that you have won through your conquest. You make your way towards the cave in the hollow, descending into its dark mouth. The lingering fumes and foreboding presence no longer repel you: you feel a kinship with them.

Inside, you find a great, golden hoard, wealth beyond imagining. Spend some time visualising the extent of the Dragon's gold, drawing it into your consciousness.

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There are three treasures that you carry forth from the cave, representing the Dragon's hoard. The first of these is gold, which brings strife as well as wealth; the second is a sword, which offers invulnerability to the courageous; the third is a magic cloak, which brings invisibility, strength and the power of deception. Think upon these treasures and how you may harness and use them. They will be discussed more fully in the chapters that follow, but you should make them your own first.

A further thing that settles invisibly upon you is the burden of the Work. You have set foot upon the Draconian Path which brings riches of body and soul, but this is a Cursed treasure and it comes with a price. You must keep ever pushing forward, following your Vision. It was lying still and failing to progress that led to the Dragon's fate. The Dragon now in you must not fall by the same mistake.

The Eighth Night

You return to the area outside the cave, where you are hailed by two ravens sitting on the branch of one of the dead trees. You can understand the birds' language, one of the powers you have gained through tasting the Dragon's blood.

They tell you that you have also inherited the Helm of Awe, the pall of horror and mesmerising power that radiates from the Dragon's gaze. Operative keys for using the Helm will be given later, but for now consider its implications for yourself.

Listen now to what the ravens have to tell you. They will have a private message for you. Wait and meditate until you are sure you have grasped it.

The ravens also warn you of the treachery of your own nature. Your own mental conditioning will rob you of

all that you have realised in this place if you do not master it and overthrow it, establishing a new ordering in your soul of your own devising. This is symbolised in the mythology by Reginn.

Go on your way, but be wary and do not forget.

The Ninth Night

On this night, you should sit in quiet contemplation, considering how the Dragon is subdued by the Hero – the subconscious, bestial aspect is subdued by conscious Will – and the two then merge into a single, greater entity: a Hero with the powers and abilities of the Dragon.

You should now stretch forth with your mind, probing the Dark potential of the Work to come. You should receive an inkling that the Hero in turn must surrender himself to the Divine, becoming something greater and immeasurably more powerful in the process.

Conclude the Working by swearing aloud an Oath that you will learn to control and fully develop the Draconian powers within; that you will always fight for consciousness against non-consciousness; that you will aspire to the Divine spark that will elevate you yet higher.

Record this Oath in writing, then close the Working.

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CHAPTER THREE

ESTABLISHING SOVEREIGNTY IN MIDGARD

The first step in mastering Draconian magic is to achieve a sound understanding of place: where you are, who you are, what you can do, and how you came to be here. Thus it is essential to first learn how to master the physical world and how to use your own body and its abilities as a magical tool. This will give you the surest possible foothold in the quest for Self-transformation. The subject matter of this chapter resonates with the Work of the first head of the Dragon as described in *Apophis* and the two chapters may be used in conjunction.

This chapter will concern itself with channeling the runes through the body, using your own physical being as a magical tool, with posture and breath work. We will examine the basic structure of reality according to Northern cosmology. The physical senses will be exercised and expanded. We will look at genetic heritage, the forces that shaped our physical presence and its environment and brought us to where we now stand. We will investigate the controlled

stimulation of the body through such media as alcohol and sex to achieve different states of consciousness. We will prepare tools and learn to carve and colour runes. Finally, this stage of the programme will be concluded with another major Working.

Stadhagaldr

Stadhagaldr is the process of using the body to channel the runes. By posing the body in the shape of the runestaves, the energies of those staves may be generated and used by the Initiate, expressed through his own flesh, blood and bone. By assuming several postures in a specific sequence, a fully developed runic enchantment may be expressed and actualised.

Such enchantments will become accessible later in the programme, but first the Initiate must put in the work and make the adoption of each posture second nature, and must make a decisive link between the posture and the rune it represents. Until this identification has become second nature, the rune streams will not begin to flow. But once established, a stream of runic energy will begin to emanate the moment the Initiate assumes a given stance.

When I first began to study the practice of stadhagaldr, I did so simply because it was part of the runic curriculum of work I was following. I approached it with the attitude that I would tick the appropriate boxes and likely never use the practice again. I was very, very wrong in my preconceptions. Stadhagaldr is now one of my foremost means of runic Work. I have found it a tremendously powerful and vitalising discipline, which will repay the effort you put into mastering it tenfold. The awareness of the rune

streams when manifesting them in your own flesh, blood and bone is incomparable and exhilarating.

Each posture should be learned and practised in sequence, spending sufficient time on each to thoroughly ingrain it in your physical and associative memory. As you hold each posture, think over the meaning of the rune as given in the previous chapter.

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Both arms are raised at an angle in front of the body, the left arm higher than the right.

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Feet together, lean forward and extend the arms down towards the ground.

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Stand upright, the fingers of the left hand touching the left hip, the elbow jutting sideways.

7



Both arms are extended in front of the body, inclined slightly downwards, the left arm lower than the right.

R



The fingers of the left hand rest upon the left hip, the elbow sideways. The left leg is raised sideways from the body.

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The right arm is raised at a 45° angle, the left arm lowered at a similar angle.

X



The arms and legs are extended from the body to form the 'X' shape of the rune.

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The left hand touches the top of the head, the elbow jutting sideways from the body.

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H



In Futhark, Edred Thorsson presents a posture for hagalah which is based upon the alternate form of the runestave. It is an excellent arrangement and is a miniature ritual in its own right. However, I have always desired a posture for the rune which is a single stance to accord with the others when sequencing several runes together. This posture emulates the shape of the rune with the two arms representing the two vertical shafts and the left hand raised to right shoulder providing the diagonal crossbar.

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The body forms the shape of the rune as the right arm is raised sideways at 45° and the left arm is lowered in like manner.

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The body is held straight and erect, arms by sides.

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The right arm is angled forward and bent back at the elbow to touch the top of the head. The left arm is angled back and bent forward at the elbow to touch the hip.



The arms are stretched forward at 45° from the body and the right leg is bent back to form the lower hook of the rune.

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This is a seated position. The legs are together and the knees drawn up. The arms are bent forward, the elbows resting on the knees to form the shape of the rune.

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The arms are raised at a 45° angle on each side of the body, the head forming the third, central arm of the rune.

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The arms are held straight at the sides. The knees are bent and the body inclines forward at the waist, forming the rune's lightning flash shape.

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The arms are extended out from the sides, pointing downwards at a 45° angle.

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The right arm and leg are kept straight. The left arm is extended to the left, the hand resting on the hip. The left leg is likewise extended sideways, the knee bent, with the heel touching the right ankle.

M



The left arm is raised up and sideways at 45°, the right arm is lowered to the same degree. This is a mirror image of nauthiz and is an alternate form of the E-rune.

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Both arms are raised straight up, then bent at the elbows so that the forearms cross over the face, each touching its opposite armpit.



Both arms are extended forward and down at an angle of 45°.



The elbows are pointed sideways and the hands turned back across the body to touch before the abdomen.



The arms are crossed across the breast, the fingers of each hand touching the opposite shoulder.



The arms are raised above the head, elbows bent and fingertips touching. The legs are splayed.

Through regular practice of these postures, combined with concentration upon the meanings of the runes they represent, the Initiate will soon be conscious of embodying the runes in his very flesh, his body becoming a conduit for runic forces flowing through him. It should be noted that this is a type of work where practice will always lead to an improved experience. No matter how far you advance in the Work, it is always worthwhile to periodically come back to your stadhagaldr for a fresh round of practice. This will pay enormous dividends in your later magical Workings.

Breath Work

Once you have established a good practice routine with the stadhagaldr postures and have become familiar with them, you should focus on the proper control of your breath as well as your posture.

As explained in *Apophis*, there are three main benefits to breath work, applied in three distinct areas, as follows:

- Establishing a steady and regular rhythm of deep breathing will assist the body to relax, easing tensions. This assists greatly with posture work and generally leaves the mind freer and less distracted, to focus upon matters magical.
- Because the patterns of breath used in our work tend to be deeper and longer than the shallow breaths we normally take, they lead to a greater level of oxygenation of the blood. This causes various chemical changes in the body. The extremities tend to become warm and slightly numb and minor irritations and itches are generally lessened. The enriched blood supply to the brain also boosts concentration on the mental aspects of magical Work.
- Practice with breathing techniques and the proper balancing of inhalation and exhalation is of tremendous assistance in the rune-singing exercises and other vocal / incantatory magical Work, which will be introduced in the next chapter and will form a major part of your galdorcrafter thereafter.

The simplest, most basic rhythm to begin with is to breath in to the count of four, hold the breath in the lungs to the count of four, breathe out to the count of four, hold the lungs empty to the count of four, then repeat the sequence.

As Initiates become more practised, it may prove

helpful to extend the duration of each breath cycle, deepening and lengthening the respiration still further.

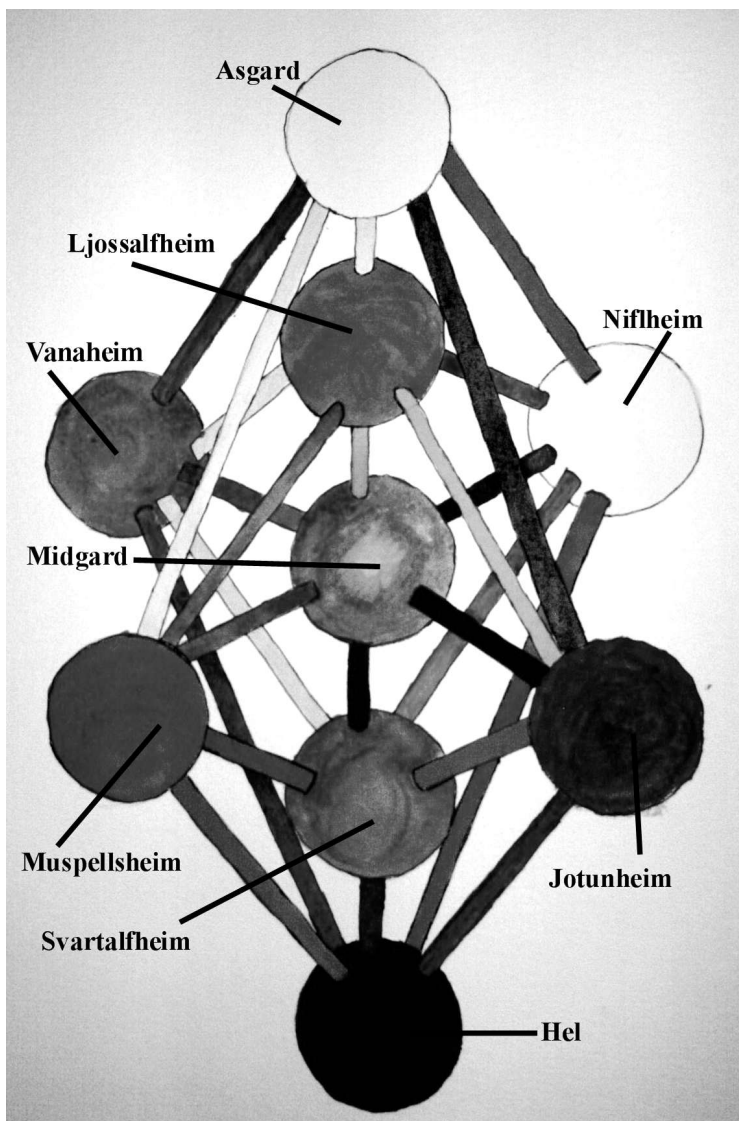
For rune-singing and other vocal magic, practise a rhythm such as the following and accustom your body to it: breathe in to the count of four; hold your breath for the count of two; exhale to the count of eight; then immediately inhale, repeating the sequence. This kind of rhythm will allow you to fill your lungs with air, 'charge' the air with vitality, then chant or intone on the lengthier outbreath, without fear of running out of puff. Practice here will pay great dividends later.

Nine Worlds

The Work of this first chapter is concerned with the body and the world in which it finds itself. The mortal world of physical manifestation is called Midgard in Northern lore, but it is only one – albeit the central one, into which the others pour their influence – in a system of nine worlds spanning multiple dimensions. These worlds are collectively arranged in a structure like a cosmic tree, named Yggdrasil. Although we are currently focused upon Midgard, it is important to understand its place in the larger framework. Accustomising yourself to the ideas of all nine worlds now will prove helpful in later chapters, when consciousness can be projected further afield to explore the world-tree.

An illustration of the worlds on the Yggdrasil framework is on the following page. This has been scanned from a full colour painting by the author. Sadly, the colours are not reproducible here, but every Initiate will benefit greatly in understanding the worlds if they study the attributions and paint their own Yggdrasil.

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A brief description of each world follows. These should be supplemented from other, more detailed sources, and most especially from the Eddas and the mythology.

Asgard

This is the enclosure of the Gods, where Odin has his great hall, Valhalla. In terms of the psyche, Asgard is the abode of the pure spark of consciousness, the bright flame of Self.

Ljossalfheim

This is the realm of the bright elves, masters of lore and wisdom. It is a place of ecstatic inspiration. Some ancestral secrets may be discovered from the dwellers here.

Midgard

This is the world of earthly manifestation, into which the influences from the other eight worlds pour. It is thus the realm of potential, a melting plot where Will and passion may lead to Becoming.

Svartalfheim

The realm of the dark elves, or dwarfs. A land which fosters cunning and intricate craftsmanship and invention. Frequently linked with subterranean places.

Hel

The realm of the dead, ruled over by the Goddess of the same name, daughter of Loki. A place of cold mists and gloom, shadows and memories.

Vanaheim

The land of the Vanir, the race of Gods responsible for the cycles of nature. As such, it is a green and fertile land, the

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plentiful ideal of any people who live in harmony with their environment and rely on its regular patterns and cycles for their survival.

Jotunheim

This is the land of the giants, the etins. In the Norse myths, these beings – descendents of Ymir – are often portrayed as enemies of the Æsir, and of Thor in particular. Yet Odin will occasionally seek knowledge and wisdom from one of their kind. These are monolithic forces of resistance, the opposite of consciousness and Initiation, yet because of their great age they may harbour some forgotten wisdom or insight that needs to be won from them by guile.

Niflheim

This world is one of the two great poles of Northern creation myth. This is a place of ice and contraction. The further one progresses into Niflheim, the more cold, compacted and massive it becomes. The heart of Niflheim is at Absolute Zero, possessing zero energy, a solid mass in which all vibration has ceased.

Muspellsheim

This is the polar opposite to Niflheim. It is a world of heat and fire, an expansive force of furiously vibrating energy and escalating heat. A cosmic furnace, ever rushing outwards.

These are basic descriptions of the general character of the nine worlds. Some will be returned to later in this book when it will be necessary to take a more detailed at certain specialised areas. But in the meantime, the student should consult the reading list and seek out fuller descriptions in the mythology and in books more suited to a general runic study.

Enhanced Sensory Perception

Part of the Work of the first head of *Apophis* is to seek to sharpen and enhance the information received by our consciousness from the five physical senses, the goal being to circumvent the filters and preconditioning that edits most of the data we receive from the world.

A full discussion on possible exercises for this purpose can be found in *Apophis*, so I will just briefly recap here.

The Initiate should determinedly exercise a given sense one day per week. For instance, you may decide that monday is for sight, tuesday for hearing, wednesday for touch, thursday for smell and friday for taste, with the weekend reserved as free days.

Then every monday you would concentrate hard on everything you see. Take in every detail and deliberately make a mental note of it. Our brains normally filter out 90% of what our eyes perceive, so you need to retrain your brain that you are interested in everything. Register every last detail, look at everything. Do the same for the other senses on their respective days.

This will benefit you in three ways: it will make you more alert; it will allow you to notice things of interest to you that you would otherwise have missed; most importantly, it will help in establishing better communications between your conscious and subconscious minds.

The Call to the Ancestors

Now that the student has familiarised himself with the runes, both on an intellectual level and by manifesting them in his

own body, and now that he has started to familiarise himself with the various worlds and is taking better notice of the messages of his own senses, he needs to make a solid connection with his roots. It is time for another ritual to formalise the current state of the Work.

The Working is intended to form a psychic link between the Initiate and the shades of his ancestors, so that their influence and guidance may assist him as he progresses in the Work, passing their accumulated wisdom on to him. If you are not of Northern genetic stock, this Working will be less direct and more difficult for you, but you should still carry it out, requesting assistance from the shades of the North in general rather than familial terms.

This Working can be carried out either outdoors or indoors. Which you choose will depend upon your circumstances. If you are live in an area where your ancestors are buried, you should ideally opt for the outdoor version. If you live in a large city or have moved far away from home, the indoor version will probably be more appropriate.

1. First, you need to prepare your place of Working. If you are doing the outdoor rite, travel to the oldest burial place of your ancestors that you can find. At a suitably quiet time of night, when there is little risk of disturbance, find a spot in the graveyard that 'feels right' to you. If you are Working indoors, sit down in a quiet room where you will not be disturbed. Make sure the phone is off the hook. On a table before you, you should arrange mementoes of your ancestors, such as old photographs, letters, a family tree, plus copies or pictures of any historical runic inscriptions or other sacred objects specifically linked with your place of origin.

2. Next, attune yourself to the rune work you have accomplished so far. Assume each rune posture in correct sequence whilst speaking the name of the rune and reflecting upon its qualities. Feel the runes permeating your own being, the place in which you stand, and the ancestors buried there or represented in the items you have gathered.
3. Assume the *eihwaz* posture and try to reach back in time with your mind. Feel the months, years and ages rolling by as you plunge your mind back to its very ancestral roots.
4. Once you feel you have established a resonance with your ancestors, switch smoothly to the *elhaz* posture, extending your arms upwards.
5. Recite the following invocation: *“I, < speak your first names >, of the line of < speak the surnames of both your parents >, do call upon my ancestors to bear witness to my Oath and to lend their assistance to my Work. I solemnly swear that I will strive to Remanifest the lore and the magical heritage of our people and that by exalting my consciousness I shall exalt also the memory and the future potential of my folk. Aid me and strengthen me in this endeavour, encouraging me when I falter, driving me back onto my feet when I fall. Let the valour and the wisdom of my forefathers be reborn in and through me. Open my eyes, that I may see outside the constricting bonds of time.”*
6. Now shift to the *hagalaz* posture, crystallising this ancestral bond within your psychic framework.

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7. Once again, adopt the posture of each rune in proper sequence, naming each as you go. This time, imagine each rune streaming back in time and extending forth into the future as you do so, with you at the pivotal point of Now.
8. Finally, pack away your things, clap your hands or stamp your feet to ground yourself, then depart from the Working area.

Of Elf and Dwarf

There are other beings in Northern mythology who abide close to Midgard and who may be called upon at this stage to assist the Initiate in his Work. These are specifically the elves of Ljossalfheim and the dwarfs of Svartalfheim.

Before proceeding with a Working to call upon these entities, I would recommend a close study of the mythological material concerning them. In general, the elves are wise advisors and the dwarfs are expert craftsmen. Both will prove invaluable in the Work that lies ahead. Invoking the elves will assist you to imprint your mind with the thought patterns of the rune streams. Invoking the dwarfs will assist you to exteriorise those streams with skill as you craft your own staves and artifacts.

Edred Thorsson's books offer well-crafted, traditional rituals suitable for this purpose, although it is permissible to build up to these and start with a simplified Working such as the ancestral one given above. But be aware that a sacrifice should be made to the wights. Traditionally, this is mead or ale. A cup or horn of inspirational ale should be offered at the peak of the rite. Half is drunk by the Initiate; the other half is spilled upon the ground for the wights. (If working

indoors, it may be spilled into a bowl and taken outside and poured on the ground after the conclusion of the Working).

Use this period to seek your inspiration in the myths of elves and dwarfs and try to advance your ritual skills till you are practising the fuller rites described in Edred Thorsson's books.

Combat Readiness

It is important that the Initiate should take stock of himself at this stage and assess his general state of physical fitness. It should never be forgotten that we are warriors in an Invisible War, the struggle of consciousness against non-consciousness and we must ensure that we are combat ready at all times.

Although this War is largely a mental and psychic one, it nevertheless makes its demands upon the body. As the Work of this chapter focuses upon the magician in Midgard, it is appropriate that we take steps to improve our physical well-being at this early stage of the Work.

I am certainly not going to suggest that everyone needs to be an athlete. We all love our little indulgences, but it is imperative to note Anton LaVey's advice that these should not become compulsions. If you get too overweight, cut down on your eating. Don't bother with faddy diets, simply eat less. Take regular exercise. You don't need to jog or lift weights or anything like that. Regular, brisk walks will do. Make sure that you get enough sleep. Simple things like these will ensure that you can rely on your body when you need to push it to its limits.

This is as much a matter of Will as any other magical operation and if you can't manage this control of your own self, how do you expect to influence the rest of the world?

Alcohol as a Sacrament

Whether you drink alcohol or not, there is no shred of doubt that our forefathers did and with good style. Alcohol was not merely a thirst-quencher or a social catalyst, however, (although it certainly served a very important role in social occasions, bonding warrior-bands together at feasts). It was also a religious sacrament.

Alcohol (traditionally ale or mead) serves two functions in Northern spirituality. It removes the brain's usual inhibitory blinkers sufficiently to allow divine inspiration to flow through the Initiate from the Gods. In return, half the measure is poured upon the bare earth as a sacrificial offering. So the drink serves as a two-way exchange between Man and his Gods. This principle is expressed in the 𐚩𐚩𐚩 ALU Formula, which is described fully in Edred Thorsson's *Futhark*.

It may seem unwise to recommend the use of alcohol in a time when most medical practitioners and government bodies are taking the moral high ground against it. Personally, I feel that's one of the biggest reasons for its use: if politicians don't want you to have something, seize it with both hands. Regardless of all of this, I have no patience for political correctness. I also have no patience for drunken louts, but I firmly believe in LaVey's principle of responsibility to the responsible. If you can't handle your drink, that's your own problem as are the consequences.

I really can't recommend the substitution of a non-alcoholic sacrifice in Northern rites. It misses the point of the inspirational effect and the link with past tradition. If you insist upon being teetotal in this sacred matter, make sure you examine your own motives carefully and determine why this may be. The indoctrination of centuries of Christianity

lingers with us all, even those of us who profess otherwise.
Drink to your Gods with pride!

There does remain a cautionary note to make, of course. Even given my above insistence, it's nobody's business but your own if you choose to be teetotal in mundane life. I acknowledge that not everyone is as fond of a good single malt as I am. Similarly, if you choose to drink to excess during mundane life, that's none of my business either. Although I must remark that I still hold to that principle of 'responsibility to the responsible'. As far as I'm concerned, violence or criminal damage committed under the influence of alcohol is evidence of the weakness and lack of self-control of the perpetrator. In such a case, alcohol is not a mitigating factor in my eyes, but an aggravating one.

Alcohol is a magical tool and it's in this respect that I'm pushing it. Its use or abuse in any other context is entirely your own concern and entirely your own fault.

When used in ritual, you will soon come to recognise that precise point of balance when you have drunk enough to feel your mind beginning to flame with inspiration as your inhibitions fall away. Any more at this point will simply tip you over into drunkenness, which is worse than useless.

If alcohol seems a risky and dangerous tool to recommend in our current nanny state, that's tough. Magic is a risky and dangerous business and it gets a lot dodgier than this. Take it or leave it, always at your own risk.

Of course, if you are a recovering alcoholic, I certainly can't recommend the above course to you and you should substitute a different liquid accordingly. In your case, your Will and determination are best exercised in overcoming your addiction. My words above are directed at the inhibited and the vacillating, who still echo Christian abstention and guilt.

Sex as a Sacrament

Whilst we're on the subject of bodycentric magical techniques, we can't ignore the huge topic of sex magic. Sex and magic have always been linked, and often equated. In Peter Grey's *The Red Goddess*, we read, 'Sex is magick, magick is sex.' I wouldn't go so far as to identify them with each other myself, but I would certainly amend the quotation slightly to read, 'Sex is magical, magic is sexual.' That much at the very least is true.

We need to consider whether sexual practices were traditionally a part of Northern magic and whether they can or should be so today. We also need to consider sex in the field of Draconian magic in particular.

It is quite apparent from the accounts we have in the sagas and mythology, both explicit and inferred, that the practice of rune magic – galdor – is a function of sound, shape and number, with no overt sexual element in its working. The runes are chanted, or carved, they are not cast in a framework involving any sex act.

It is equally apparent that the more trance-oriented seith magic, that style of magic which was taught by Freyja, could incorporate sexual elements. Sexual activity is certainly one effective way of entering a trance state. This kind of activity was often viewed as shameful for males to indulge in as it could include role reversal, cross dressing and submissive sexual relations. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that Odin learned this art from Freyja in order to complete His own magical arsenal.

However, I must point out one major misconception with sex magic at this point since anyone who investigates the subject is bound to stumble across this error, which is reported as factual in so many places.

You will read that a practitioner of sexual magic must dissociate himself from any sense of enjoyment in the experience and that the feelings of pleasure are but a distraction. This is complete and total bullshit, a puerile whitewashing devised by minds steeped in guilt, cowering from the reality of that which they profess. I read and heeded this nonsense for ages, but couldn't reconcile the idea in my head. Sex is supposed to be enjoyable! That's the whole point of it!

Let's get this absolutely straight: sex is an exercise in the fulfilment of Desire. Sex is all about pleasure and the exchange of delights. Whatever power, symbolic or actual, it may afford the magician, is derived from these very qualities. By the time you reach the stage in a Working where it is actually time to engage in love play and passion, your statement of intent should have already been made, your sigils drawn, your invocations chanted. Now is the time to let your conscious focus fade away in the heat of your passion and ecstasy. The greater the pleasure, the more powerful the rite. And that, despite all pious protestations to the contrary, is the be all and end all of sex magic. Snarl, stroke, kiss, bite, writhe and rut until you're exhausted, lost in ecstasy and delight. All of this will feed into the magical framework you have already established **beforehand**.

Bearing the above in mind, feel free to explore the theory and practice of sex magic at this stage, but do bear in mind that there is little room for it as a technique in the practice of rune galdor. You may be able to apply it in some of the practices described later in the curriculum, however, which are more akin to seith. In these more visionary Workings, where the intuition of impressions rather than the sending of a direct charge is the issue, sex can be used as a technique for inducing a suitable trance state, though it is

certainly not the only means. The act of sex is not essential to this current plan of Work, I personally prefer a more cold-blooded and spartan method of working, although Desire is certainly an absolute necessity.

The Tools of Runework

During the Work of this initial chapter, when we are focusing upon the basis of magical practice in the physical world, you will want to take time to find or make your tools for the more complex ritual Work which will follow in later chapters. You may possess some of these items already; others you will need to make or purchase.

You will need a table or a work surface. When you are first starting out, you can make do with a coffee table or a workbench in your garage or shed. It is better to proceed with makeshift tools initially than to put off the Work until everything is perfect. Doing the Work – in spite of whatever circumstances you may find yourself in – is the only real Key to success. But as soon as you are able, you should invest in a table or work surface that will be used for your runecraft alone. By dedicating it to the Work and using it solely for that purpose, its very substance will become imbued with your purpose. Over time this will add an extra boost of cumulative force to everything you do upon it. You might wish to find an intricately carved old table in an antique shop; you might set aside an ordinary coffee table for use; you might use your woodworking skills to make your own. Do whatever best suits your skill and circumstances, what feels right to you. In all cases you should dedicate the table to its purpose with a simple ritual of your own devising. You may wish to cover it with a cloth (black, white or red according to

your aesthetic) when not in use.

You will need a lamp or candle to signify the Flame of individual consciousness, the Gift of Odin. The lighting of this Flame in a ritual asserts your identity as a free and unique being acting by your own Will. In Draconian magic, this lamp / candle should be either black or red.

You will need a cup, chalice or drinking horn to hold the ale or mead used in ritual Workings. Anyone reading this book will necessarily have access to the internet and if you have access to the internet, you'll be able to source a perfectly suitable drinking vessel. Most occult suppliers sell horns or chalices in their online stores and there are many fine examples, featuring serpent or dragon motifs that are suitable for Draconian Work. You will also obviously need the liquid with which to fill it.

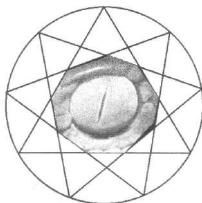
You will need a knife. The traditional dagger or athame of most occult traditions will **not** do in this case. I am not speaking of a ceremonial symbol, but of a practical tool, a blade with which runes can be carved into wood. The best solution is a simple, good quality craft knife, available from most tool stores. Function is more important than form in this instance.

You will then need your set of personally carved runes, used for divinatory purposes. We will discuss the creation of these in the next section. It is permissible to use a commercially produced rune set until your own are ready, but the sooner you can begin working with runes carved and charged by your own hand, enlivened by your own essence, the better.

If you plan to seriously Work within the Draconian field, you should have a representation of the Seal of the Order of Apep to hand (illustrated overleaf). This can be a representation of the Seal hanging upon the wall or positioned

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upon your work surface, or you may prefer to wear it as a pendant, pin or ring (preferably silver if used as jewellery).



Those are the basic tools that will be needed in all cases. Others may be added to suit personal aesthetic tastes. Some like to wear special robes or ritual clothing; some like to have all manner of useful or artistically appealing paraphernalia about their working area. But these things are up to you; the essentials are described above.

Carving Your Rune Set

During the course of this chapter's Work, whilst you are seeking to physically ground yourself in the runic current, you will want to carve your own set of twenty four runes for use in the divinatory and meditational Work which will come later.

You will need your knife and twenty four slivers of wood. You may wish to really go to town and cut or gather the wood to be used yourself, cutting it down to size and sanding until each piece is the same shape and size. There would be definite benefits in doing this, but I won't hold anyone to this procedure as it requires a lot of time and patience and a very skilled touch. It is perhaps something to aspire to in the long term rather than when making your first

set. I have found craft sticks to be admirably suited for the purpose.

You may prefer to carve a few runes at a time, perhaps in three groups of eight, or you might wish to carve them all at once. In either case, they should be carved in the correct order, as given in the 'Dragon Runes' chapter.

Take your time and hold the stave firmly down with your left hand (assuming you are right-handed; reverse if you are left-handed) and hold the knife steadily in your right hand. Use it as if it was a pen, firmly and cleanly scoring the lines of the rune. Angle the knife slightly differently on successive cuts and you will make a groove, twisting out the excess wood. With a little patience – and practice if necessary – you will soon have cut nice, deep runes into your staves. As you cut each rune, whisper its name repeatedly under your breath, or chant one of the traditional rune poems relating to it (these can be found in Stephen Flowers' *The Rune Poems, Vol. 1* and other sources in the Reading List). Concentrate on the rune's meaning.

The next stage is to colour your runes. Traditionally, the runes are coloured red, with the runer's own blood, but in practice a reddish pigment was often used as a substitute. The use of blood is very important, as your own vital fluid creates a tangible and very powerful link between you and your runes. But you don't need much. Buy a tub of bright red poster paint and mix just a few drops of your blood into it. This will be a perfectly sufficient quantity to establish the magical link. Then take a very fine paintbrush and fill the lines of the runes you have carved with the magically charged vital fluid. You should focus upon the fact that you are filling the runes with your own blood, giving them life and vitality.

There is no need to cut yourself specifically for the purpose; it is never a pleasant thing to do and everyone

suffers an accidental cut on occasion. Carry the pot of paint with you, and the next time you bleed due to a small accidental injury, add a couple of drops to it then. Some people would argue that the pain is a part of the magic and this is certainly a defensible position, but I personally hold that your blood is link enough in its own right, no matter how acquired.

Ladies, of course, will find that menstrual blood does the job very nicely indeed. Indeed, most sex magical traditions would say that menstrual blood is superior in many ways to ordinary blood.

Once your runes have been carved and coloured, put them in box or a bag with a drawstring for safe keeping. They are already powerful talismans as a consequence of the work you have put into them. Their charging will be completed during the Work of the next chapter.

A Vigil

We are going to close the Work of this chapter with another ritual Working.

The actual mechanics of this one are simple in the extreme. One evening, at the close of this chapter's Work, when all has been accomplished to your satisfaction, take yourself off to an outdoors place in natural surroundings that means something to you, that 'speaks' to you in some way. If you live in a city, you may have to make advance plans and scout a suitable area in advance. Bring warm clothing, a flask and a snack if you feel you may need it.

Find a place to sit and relax. Here, in this special place, feel anew your connection to the place which is Midgard. Spend time reflecting upon all that you have done

during the course of this first chapter's Work. Refresh your memory of the rune meanings, holding and studying each of your own hand-carved runes as you do so. Practice your stadhagaldr postures, feeling again the flow of the rune streams through your own body. Try to sense those same streams flowing through the landscape around you, radiating through both the inner and outer worlds.

Remain in this place throughout the night, sensing the changes in the land and the atmosphere – and yourself – as dusk turns to dark and ultimately approaches dawn. Renew your reflections and introspections on the runes each hour; refresh yourself as needed; walk about if you get cold or cramped.

As the sun rises over the horizon, become aware that the sun of ancestral lore is rising in your own soul. Promise yourself that you will apply your mind to this awakening and be illuminated by it. Swear that you will take the steps necessary to develop and enhance your mind's abilities to this end.

Finally, go home and catch up on your sleep, knowing that you are now ready to commence the Work of the fourth chapter.

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CHAPTER FOUR

MASTERY OF THE MIND

Huginn and Muninn

The Work of this fourth chapter will focus upon the development of the Initiate's mental faculties. We will be striving to create a harmonious synthesis of the various aspects that make up the mind-soul complex, enabling consciousness to operate at maximum efficiency and wakefulness. We will be sharpening both perception and Will, so that the magician can sense and direct the runic streams with skill and precision. This mental training should mesh perfectly with the physical facility gained through the previous chapter. For those readers who are already familiar with the Draconian curriculum of *Apophis*, this present chapter is cognate with the Work of the second head of the Dragon: the Thunderbolt.

In Norse mythology, Odin had two ravens, named Huginn and Muninn, who flew out over the worlds each day and then returned to Him, bringing word of all that they had

seen. The names of these ravens are derived from parts of the Norse model of the soul, which we will be examining more fully in the next section of this chapter. Huginn is related to the *hugh* and Muninn to the *myne*.

The *hugh* is the intellect, the reasoning faculty within the soul, and *myne* is the memory and the pattern-making, imaginative part of the mind. They basically represent left-brain and right-brain consciousness respectively. So in effect, Odin sends forth His own consciousness in the form of ravens, to gather news and insights and report back to Him.

The intention of this chapter is to train our own two ravens (hemispheres of the brain) to be equally useful and to work equally well together. This phase of the Work is all about the balancing and focusing of consciousness, so that it can be used as a ladder to higher states later on.

The Structure of the Soul

In *Apophis*, the Celtic model of the soul was discussed as an example of the sophisticated way in which our forebears understood the composition of their own beings. In this present volume, we will naturally be examining the Germanic model of the soul. This is actually very similar to the Celtic model in many respects, which is unsurprising given the similarities and occasional cross-pollination between the two cultures.

The parts of the Germanic soul model are as follows:

Lyke: (Old Norse *lik*)

The lyke is the physical body itself. This may seem a strange place to start when considering the soul, but the philosophy of our Northern ancestors quite sensibly postulates that mankind

is meant to be a complete being, with physical, mental and spiritual faculties all interdependent and equally important. The body is as much a part of the initiatory experience as the most exalted state of Divine inspiration. The Work of the previous chapter should have taught you that.

Hyde: (Old Norse *hamr*)

The lyke is permeated by the hyde, which is the medium which gives shape and form to the person. It governs not only how we look, but our mannerisms and the way in which we present ourselves. A good actor will use his hyde to transform himself completely, seemingly becoming a new person in his role. Is it a coincidence that Robert Louis Stevenson named Dr Jekyll's alter-ego Mr Hyde in his classic tale? Perhaps he knew the term, perhaps not, but this account of transformation is certainly a good indicator of the shaping power of the hyde upon the appearance and aspect.

Athem: (Old Norse *önd*)

The athem is literally the breath of life, the animating principle that courses through the lyke and hyde, keeping the organism living and breathing. It is not simply the automated systems that govern the vital processes, it is also something beyond the purely physical, a kind of life force which vibrates within the individual. But it also extends beyond the individual, resonating with the life principle on a macrocosmic level. As such, it is one of the avenues whereby psychic impulses may be transmitted or received. Anyone who has been present when someone has died will know by personal experience that there is a world of difference between a live body and a dead one and this difference is noticeable immediately. This difference is the athem.

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Hugh: (Old Norse *hugr*)

This is the part of the soul symbolised by one of Odin's ravens, Huginn. The hugh is the analytical, computational part of the mind, skilled at linguistics and mathematics. It basically comprises the left-brain functions of mental activity.

Myne: (Old Norse *minni*)

The myne is the reflective, imaginative part of consciousness, that part which communicates through images and intuitions rather than words. As such, it governs dreams and memories (including the archetypal memories that reside within the collective unconscious). It corresponds with Odin's other raven, Muninn.

Wode: (Old Norse *ódhr*)

Huginn and Muninn report to Odin and the hugh and myne report to that part of consciousness which is akin to Odin: the wode. Wode is a condition of accelerated, intensified consciousness, a Divine inspiration, a kind of ecstasy or even rage in which the contents of the mind are illuminated by magical perception and insight. This is the state of mind which is necessary for the effective working of magic or the interpretation of divinations. It will be evident that the wode-state of consciousness is most easily and effectively accessed when the hugh and myne are working in harmony, the two ravens advising the inspired self in a balanced fashion.

Fetch: (Old Norse *fylgja*)

The fetch surrounds and touches the other parts of the soul, but is not itself a part or a possession of the individual. It is an essence which is transpersonal, spanning generations. The fetch may appear to a person in three forms: (a) as an animal; (b) as an entity of the opposite sex; (c) as a geometric shape.

Some people have very little awareness of their fetch at all. It is possible that some people simply do not have a fetch, or else a very undeveloped one. The fetch is a tutelary entity, linked to an individual for that lifetime, which responds to and reflects his actions and the destiny which he shapes for himself, offering guidance as appropriate. It is similar to – though not identical with – the Holy Guardian Angel of some occult traditions. It can bestow both gifts and obligations along with its guidance.

Luck: (Old Norse *hamingja*)

To our ancestors, luck was not a random thing, it was a positive and active virtue within the soul. This is the recognition that when an individual acts with Will, Passion and Vision, his luck will effect an influence upon the world around him, bending it to tend towards the fulfilment of his goals. Events will seem to simply fall into place when this faculty is exercised and that which was previously difficult may be achieved through determination. Heroes would often deliberately test their luck through the casting of lots and gambling.

Soul: (Old Norse *sál*)

The soul itself is the name given to the shade of the deceased, which departs to one of worlds of the dead, there to await rebirth in Midgard in due course.

The Wode-Self:

The Wode-Self is a state of consciousness aspired to by the Initiate of the Northern Mysteries. It occurs when the wode, hugh and myne are aligned in perfect balance within an individual and the entire intelligence is illuminated by the influx of Divine consciousness. This state of being will be

discussed in some detail in a later chapter. The ability of the Initiate to attain and maintain this state of consciousness is essential to the process of opening the Eye in the Void and reaching the pinnacle of Draconian Initiation.

Thought Control

Before progressing with the more specialised Work of this chapter, it is essential to first gain some facility with basic techniques of thought control.

Full exercises toward achieving this goal are presented in *Apophis* under the Work of the second head. The Initiate should basically take some time practising the following before progressing further:

- Sit in a comfortable posture and monitor all of your thoughts as they arise. Do not try to analyse or shape them, simply observe and follow them. Take note of how thoughts react when subjected to conscious observation in this manner.
- Choose one particular thought and follow it to the exclusion of all others, till it finally comes to its conclusion.
- Observe your mind and stamp out each and every thought as it arises, crushing them and allowing them to progress no further. The object is to empty the mind of thought, yet remain expectant and watchful.

Concentration Exercises

Having established a degree of control over the basic thought

processes, the Initiate should spend some time practising the following exercise in order to sharpen his powers of concentration before proceeding further with the Work of this chapter.

First, select an item upon which to concentrate. It shouldn't be anything too complicated, but may be a mark on a wall, a shape drawn on a piece of paper, or a small object such as a nail or a spoon. It should **not** be something which possesses any particular symbolic significance.

The purpose of the exercise is simply to focus your attention rigidly upon the object you have selected and concentrate upon it. Every time your mind wanders or your thoughts waver, bring them back to the task in hand by an act of Will. Your experience of monitoring and controlling your thoughts in the previous exercise should prove of great value to you here.

Be aware that the object of this training is to improve your concentration through practice. You have not 'failed' if your mind continually wanders. Instead, you succeed every time you **notice** that it is wandering and call it back to heel. This will, over time, establish a mental habit of improved concentration which will pay enormous dividends in your galdor Work.

Basic Principles of Rune Galdor

The techniques learned in this chapter will enable the Initiate to begin the practice of operative Draconian magic using the techniques of galdor. The precise ways of getting the most out of your runic sorcery will be explained step by step in the sections that follow, but first it is advisable to gain a basic understanding of what galdor entails and how the runer

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employs it.

Through long practice (which began with the *stadhagaldr* exercises in the previous chapter), the Initiate establishes a familiarity with the runes and learns to recognise and direct their influence. This process of invoking and 'steering' the runes toward a Willed end involves the combination of four qualities. *Galdor* is a technical skill, which relies for efficacy upon the correct combination of these factors by the operator:

Shape:

The Initiate must carefully formulate and focus upon the shape of every rune used in his casting. This may be done by assuming the runic posture given in the last chapter; by drawing the rune boldly on paper; by carving the rune on wood in the form of a *taufr* (a talisman); by strongly visualising the rune; or by any combination of these.

Sound:

The word '*galdor*' means something akin to 'whispering' or 'croaking' and sound is key to the runic Mysteries. Every rune used must be clearly uttered, its key sound seemingly rolling from the Initiate's vocal chords out to the far corners of the cosmos. The rune songs discussed shortly provide the fullest method of summoning the runic stream through incantation.

Number:

Each rune has its number, from 1 (*fehu*) to 24 (*othila*). When runes are used in combination, their numbers are added together to give an overall number for the formula of the spell. The number of actual runestaves employed in a given formula is also significant. Runic number lore is too huge and complex a field to be adequately explained in this present

volume, but the Initiate should at least be aware that numbers are significant and should take the time to research the subject in the books suggested in the Reading List.

Will:

The final element in the practice of galdor is the Will of the magician, which binds these factors together, energising them and sending them on their way. What is Will? I am not talking about simply thinking hard about your goal in the vague hope that it will happen. Will is a combination of three elements: Vision (seeing the need and the opportunity for change); Passion (having a genuine Desire for the stated result that is ardent enough to fuel the magic); Precision (possessing the lore and knowledge of the runes necessary to communicate that Desire to the magical realms).

Bearing these factors in mind will assist the Initiate to place the remaining exercises of this chapter in perspective and understand how the various practices fit together to form a single magical key.

Runic Visualisation

The first exercise is related to the shape of the runestaves. Taking one rune each day, in proper sequence, the Initiate should spend several minutes visualising the form of the rune in fiery red lines within his imagination. The image should be held steady and strong for as long as possible, without wavering or altering its shape or proportions. The imagined rune should ultimately be vivid enough that the Initiate sees it clearly superimposed over his ordinary vision of the real world should his eyes be open.

When all twenty four staves have been visualised in this manner, go back to *fehu* and start over again. Keep this practice up until your visualisations are perfect.

The Initiate may then extend his practice to include the act of forcefully drawing the shapes of the runes in the air with his extended forefinger, feeling the rune stream flow through his body, along his arm and out into the world. The visualised rune should be clearly visible to the inner eye, traced upon the fabric of reality.

The Initiate should keep up this practice until his visualisations superimpose themselves upon ordinary vision and are self-sustaining (i.e. once he has traced a shape in the air, his subconscious has become accustomed to maintaining the visualisation whilst his conscious mind busies itself with other things).

Runic Meditation

The basic meanings of the runes in terms of Draconian magic were introduced in the chapter three, but the Initiate should supplement this knowledge by reading as much on the runes and their meanings from reputable sources as he can, both academic and magical. The runic trilogy of Edred Thorsson (*Futhark*, *Runelore* and *At the Well of Wyrd*) should be studied at the very least.

Armed with this knowledge, the Initiate needs to set aside some time each day meditating upon the runes. Start out with about ten minutes per day, building up to twenty. As with the visualisation exercises, take each rune per day in turn, in their proper sequence, then return to the beginning and start again when you have worked through the full twenty four.

You should begin these meditation sessions by sitting comfortably and bringing the rune's shape and sound to mind (you may wish to have a drawing or other representation of the rune before you to focus upon). Remind yourself of the things you know about the rune, its meanings and symbolism. Then let your thoughts circle around the concept of the rune, seeing where it may lead you, what connections it may make, what new realisations it may awaken. How does the rune speak to your own mind? By following these steps, you will discover the rune streams that run within your own being and you will bring the rune to life within you.

You should be aware that you will need to complete many cycles through the runes, revisiting each one in meditation many times, before you will begin to fully reap the rewards of this practice. Also, be sure to write down all of your thoughts and insights after each meditation session, because if you do not, you **will** forget them and lose what you have gained. Your diary will become increasingly important to you the more you use it, the best book of magic you will ever own.

Rune Singing

Once you have established a couple of cycles of runic meditation, you can expand your daily exercises by adding the practice of rune singing, learning the sonic secrets of the runes and the techniques of invocation by sound and breath.

As in the previous exercises, you should concentrate upon one rune per day, working through all twenty four in sequence, then returning to the beginning for a fresh cycle of practice. During each practice session you should sing the rune song for as long as you feel comfortable, but for a

minimum of nine repetitions for the initial two or three cycles of practice.

How you choose to sing each rune is to some extent flexible according to your preference, although you must make sure in all cases that it is enunciated clearly. You may whisper; you may chant; you may 'vibrate' the sounds as taught by such Orders as the Golden Dawn; you may shout it to the hills. You may choose different sonic keys for different runes. My personal preference is to project the song literally as if singing. But you should always mentally project the sound, as if flowing from you and echoing out to the far reaches of the Universe. You should also focus upon the key meanings of the rune at the time of projection.

The breath control techniques learned in the previous chapter are of vital importance in rune singing. You should draw the breath deeply in for a comfortable count (say 6, for example), feeling it entering your body and sinking deep down into you. Then pause and hold for just a second or two and exhale strongly to a double count, singing one line of the rune song as you do so (each line being a separate breath cycle). Hold again for just a couple of seconds, then proceed to the next line.

Your core practice should involve you focusing completely upon the sound of the rune, but occasionally set aside an additional practice period and combine the rune song exercise with the appropriate posture or with a strong visualisation of the rune. In this way, the several parts of galdor will begin to draw together into a powerful unit.

The songs for each rune are as follows. Note that 'g' is always pronounced hard, as in 'good', not as in 'general'; 'j' is pronounced as 'y' in 'you'; 'a' is pronounced as in 'park'; 'u' is pronounced as in 'peruse'; 'e' is pronounced as in 'whey'; 'i' as the double 'e' sound in 'street'; 'o' as in 'whole'.

fehu *fehu fehu fehu*
fffffffff
fu fa fi fe fo
of ef if af uf
fffffffff

uruz *uruz uruz uruz*
u u u u u u u
u u u u r r r r
u u u u u u u

thurisaz *thurisaz thurisaz thurisaz*
th th th th th th th th
thu tha thi the tho
oth eth ith ath uth
th th th th th th th th

ansuz *ansuz ansuz ansuz*
a a a a a a a
aaannssuuuzz
a a a a a a a

raidho *raidho raidho raidho*
r r r r r r r r
ru ra ri re ro
or er ir ar ur
r r r r r r r r

kenaz *kenaz kenaz kenaz*
keeeennaaazzz
ku ka ki ke ko
ok ek ik ak uk
keeeennaaazzz

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gebo *gebo gebo gebo*
geeeboooo
gu ga gi ge go
og eg ig ag ug
geeeboooo

wunjo *wunjo wunjo wunjo*
w w w w w w w
wu wa wi we wo
ow ew iw aw uw
w w w w w w w

hagalaz *hagalaz hagalah hagalah*
haaagaaall
hu ha hi he ho
oh eh ih ah uh
haagaalaazz

naudhiz *naudhiz naudhiz naudhiz*
n n n n n n n
nu na ni ne no
on en in an un
n n n n n n n

isa *isa isa isa*
iiiiiii
iiiiiiisssssss
iiiiiii

jera *jera jera jera*
 jeeeerrraaaa
 ju ja ji je jo
 oj ej ij aj uj
 jeeeerrraaaa

eihwaz *eihwaz eihwaz eihwaz*
 e e e i i i i
 eeiiihwaaazz
 e e e i i i i

perthro *perthro perthro perthro*
 peeerrthrrrooo
 pu pa pi pe po
 op ep ip ap up
 peeerrthrrrooo

elhaz *elhaz elhaz elhaz*
 z z z z z z z z
 uz az iz ez oz
 oz ez iz az uz
 z z z z z z z z

sowilo *sowilo sowilo sowilo*
 s s s s s s s s
 su sa si se so
 os es is as us
 s s s s s s s s

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tiwaz *tiwaz tiwaz tiwaz*
tiiiiwwaaazz
tu ta ti te to
ot et it at ut
tiiiiwwaaazz

berkano *berkano berkano berkano*
beeerrkaaannooo
bu ba bi be bo
ob eb ib ab ub
beeerrkaaannooo

ehwaz *ehwaz ehwaz ehwaz*
e e e e e e e
eeehhwaaazz
e e e e e e e

mannaz *mannaz mannaz mannaz*
m m m m m m m
mu ma mi me mo
om em im am um
m m m m m m m

laguz *laguz laguz laguz*
l l l l l l l l
lu la li le lo
ol el il al ul
l l l l l l l l

ingwaz *ingwaz ingwaz ingwaz*
iiiiinnnngggg
ung ang ing eng ong
ong eng ing ang ung
iiiiinnnngggg

dagaz *dagaz dagaz dagaz*
daaaagaaaazz
du da di de do
od ed id ad ud
daaaagaaaazz

othila *othila othila othila*
o o o o o o o o
ooooothiilaaaa
o o o o o o o o

If you are uncertain about the pronunciations, Runa-Raven Press supply an excellent CD as an accompaniment to Edred Thorsson's *Rune Song* book. The book / CD combination is worth its weight in gold to Initiates at this stage of the curriculum.

Charging Your Rune Set

It is now time to complete the charging and consecration of the set of runes you carved and coloured during the Work of chapter three. This process is accomplished through the combined use of all the skills you have developed in this current chapter so far.

Each rune should be charged individually, in correct sequence. To begin with, rub your hands vigorously together,

then pick up the runestave and hold it in your cupped hands. This will allow your body heat to flow into it, vitalising it. Then raise it until it is just a short distance in front of and slightly below your face, so that your breath is full upon it, breathing life into it. You should then use your visualisation skills to project a fiery mental image of the rune upon the carved representation, strongly willing the projection to bond into the wood. Take a deep breath and literally sing the song of the rune into the stave. Repeat the rune song several times, ideally nine times.

The rune is then charged and ready for use, bound to your own consciousness by the measures you have employed to enliven it. Place it safely away and move on to the next stave until all have been done.

This is the rune set which you will use for divinatory purposes, which we will be looking at in the next chapter. They can also be used for meditation, or manipulated upon your altar to produce magical effects.

Magical Uses of Runestaves

There are three specific ways in which you may use the skills you have learned so far in order to practice magic for objective results. Indeed, at this stage in the curriculum it is imperative that you should do so and should not be satisfied until you can be confident in your abilities to produce some actual, observable change in the world due to your magic.

The first stage in all three cases is to select which runes to employ in your spell. This should not be difficult since you have spent a good period meditating upon the runes and their meanings by this point in time. So, for example, if you were to cast a spell for money, *fehu* would certainly be

one of the runes to be employed. For friendship, you would want to use *wunjo* and *ehwaz* at the very least. To strike at an enemy, *thurisaz* would be essential.

Having chosen your runes, they would then be charged and sent by one of the following three methods or a combination thereof:

1. You could adopt the *stadhagaldr* postures of each rune in turn, feeling the rune streams being reshaped by your Will and the shape of your body, flowing through you and out into the world.
2. You could sing the rune songs whilst tracing the rune shapes in the air, strongly visualising them before you, the song of change vibrating out to the far reaches of the Universe.
3. You could carve and colour the runes on a sliver of wood or a strip of leather, singing them into the carved substance. This powerfully charged talisman would then continue to radiate your Will over the long term.

A sample runic ritual follows in order to illustrate these basic principles.

As a final footnote when considering the use of runes for an operative Working of sorcery, take time to specify what you really want. For example, simple money spells are rarely worth doing. It's not that they don't work, they certainly do, but money isn't what you actually want, is it? If you can't afford to put food on the table, you actually want the power and opportunity to provide for your family and their comfort. Money is certainly a step toward that, but it isn't your actual goal. Ensoresel for what you truly Desire, not the stepping stones toward it. This allows greater freedom of manifestation to the spell and enriches your soul by taking

heed of what you truly want. The practical result may ultimately be the same, but the difference in intent is highly important.

A Simple Runic Ritual

This sample ritual will illustrate the basic steps involved in any act of runic sorcery. It should be noted that this simple skeleton can and should be expanded upon as the Initiate gains greater familiarity with the mechanisms of magical practice in general from the titles in the Reading List.

Let's assume a magician is due to give a speech at some important function: a wedding or formal dinner. He is unaccustomed to public speaking and is understandably nervous about the prospect. So he decides to use his runecraft to bring his nerves under control and ensure that he doesn't become tongue-tied, but delivers an eloquent and well-received speech.

He first selects his runes. *Ansuz* is a must, since it governs speech and poetic utterance, but also produces inspiration, so that his words will not dry up. He selects *wunjo* to establish a camaraderie with his audience, hoping to keep them entertained. *Isa* will keep him focused and to the point. *Elhaz* assists *ansuz* in establishing an inspirational link, but also defends against manifestations of his nervousness. Finally, *sowilo* ensures the success of his speech, which will illuminate and energise the listeners.

He next devises a brief statement to be made when he invokes each rune, steering them in the direction of his Will:

“Ansuz, I invoke the speechcraft of the Old One, that my mouth may be filled and overflowing with His wisdom.

“Wunjo, be a source of mirth and good fellowship.

“Isa, my words are uttered with precision and focus, clear and true.

“Elhaz, my purpose is strong, no weakness or nervousness assails me.

“Sowilo, clear understanding and a bright response shall be my reward from my peers.”

If he chooses to employ stadhagaldr, our Initiate will now take time to still his mind and body and will then adopt each runic posture in turn, singing its rune song and reciting the statement he has composed for it. He may alternatively trace the runestaves in the air whilst singing and reciting, or he may chant his runes whilst carving them upon a sliver of wood or leather, colouring them with his blood.

Bind Runes

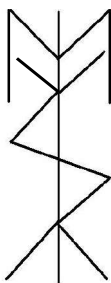
Whilst the ritual given above is perfectly adequate (especially when fleshed out with a full ritualistic structure as, for example, described in Edred Thorsson's *Futhark* or Anton LaVey's *Satanic Bible*), the Initiate may enhance it by developing bind runes instead of simply visualising or cutting each runestave separately.

A bind rune is a symbol which combines the shapes of all of the individual staves into a single figure, which can be adjusted until it pleases the Initiate's aesthetic sense. This has the double advantage of: (1) producing a unique figure which will be used solely for the present Working; (2) providing a single, composite figure for the eye to rest upon when concentrating and sending forth the rune streams. It is so named because the force of the runes employed is bound

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together in a common shape and purpose by the Will of the runer.

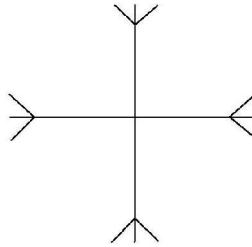
As an example, the following figure might be derived from the situation offered above, utilising the five runes *ansuz*, *wunjo*, *isa*, *elhaz* and *sowilo*. It will be noticed that the shape of every stave can be traced within the finished figure. When singing the runes to charge the bind rune, each must still be sung separately. Also, the lines of each must be traced in its turn when carved, ensuring that each element of the whole is properly bound in its place.



The Helm of Awe

The Helm of Awe – the Ægishjalmur after which this book is named – is the name given to the mesmerising power of the serpent. The Helm was possessed by the Dragon Fafnir and by it he could immobilise his foes, paralysing them with his gaze, freezing their hearts with terror. This power of hypnotic dread passed to Sigurd when he defeated Fafnir and obtained the wealth and power of the Dragon. It is sometimes referred to as if it was an actual helm, but is most often figured as a bind rune of a specific sort. The helm has four or eight branches radiating equidistantly from a common centre, each

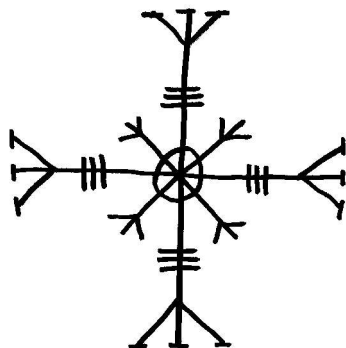
branch terminating in a rune. In its simplest form, as an expression of aggressive defence, a protective talisman, it is formed of four *elhaz* runes, as follows:



From this simple beginning, the Helm can be elaborated in many different ways. Markings are occasionally placed at the midpoint of the branches and sometimes when eight arms are used, one set of four will be shorter than the others. The rules concerning this are not briefly explained, but the markings and terminations at the midway point are generally presumed to have their effect primarily upon the subjective universe of the Initiate, whereas those that terminate at the outermost points are intended for objective effects. Far more extensive guidelines for the construction of Helms can be found in Edred Thorsson's book *Northern Magic*. Many examples also follow in the next section of this present chapter.

The version of the Helm of Awe which adorns the cover and title page of this book (and is reproduced overleaf) was designed by me at the commencement of my **Fafnir's Galdrabók** Working. This particular Helm is intended to be charged and then placed before the Initiate when he carries out further magical Workings. Its function is to catalyse and enhance the operative sorcerous skills of the runer, boosting the results of his enterprises.

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A Helm for Operative Sorcery

The Ægishjalmur is of particular interest to Draconian runers, since it is the chief expression of the power of the Dragon Fafnir. As Sigurd slays Fafnir, he becomes something more than human, his consciousness awakens the Beast within himself, the coiling Serpent in his own Self, and releases its potent wisdom and power within him. By utilising the structure of the Helm as a basis for his bind runes, the Draconian Initiate taps into this mythic resonance and claims the Dragon's essence as his own, intensifying his magic immeasurably.

Given that the Ægishjalmur was borne upon the forehead, radiating its pall of terror from the visage of the wearer, this is reflected in the specific manner in which a Helmic bind rune is charged and sent.

After designing the Helm, the Initiate should visualise it intensely or stare fixedly at a drawn or carved representation of it. Each rune in turn should be sung into its form. This may be supplemented by stadhagaldr if desired. The purpose of the Helm should be strongly concentrated upon throughout.

The Initiate then draws in a very deep breath, imagining that he is breathing the visualised Helm into himself. The visualisation should be felt to sink right down through his body to the soles of his feet, blazing brightly in the imagination. It should be held there for several seconds, gathering power all the while. The Initiate then breathes forcefully out and the Helm rises along with the breath, passing up through the body until it reaches the brow, where it bursts into incandescent manifestation in the third eye region, between the eyes. The Initiate visualises it burning strongly here, radiating out from his brow into the world around, compelling it to change in response to his command. Whilst holding the Helm upon his brow, a short declaration of his purpose is chanted, in order to shape and fix the charge. The Helm is then 'let go', sending it forth like an arrow from the bow.

Initiates familiar with Kundalini will note that the Helm follows the serpent path as it ascends the body to the brow.

Fafnir's Galdrabók

The *Galdrabók* (the *book of galdor*, or *book of magic*) is an old Icelandic grimoire of sorcery, which has been edited and published, along with others of its kind, by Dr Flowers in a book of that title (see Reading List at the end of this volume). It follows the basic pattern of many of the medieval sorcerous texts, presenting a list of spells, most of which have some sigil or other magical sign incorporated into their usage. The major distinction in these books of Icelandic sorcery is that alongside the names of various devils and demons which are familiar from other European grimoires of the time, there are

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also many spells which call upon the names of the Æsir, who had been demonised following the advent of Christianity. Also, many of the sigils feature runic influences and some have a similarity with the structure of the Ægishjálmur.

The magic contained within the pages of the *Galdrabók* and its kindred has been described by Order Initiate Paul Fosterjohn as 'survival magic'. There are no high-faluting airs and graces here, these were spells geared to the essentials, to assist the sorcerer in simply surviving in an often hostile environment. Survival was very much key, since to be found in possession of one of these books of spells was certain death at the hands of the authorities.

A few years ago, the Order of Apep instituted the Helm Project, a special research team to specifically study the sorceries of the North, and the *Galdrabók* and the Ægishjálmur in particular, since these were so closely tied to Northern Dragon lore. As the project proceeded, it occurred to me that it would be instructive to create a new, modern *Galdrabók* in order to explore and express the Mysteries of the Helm of Awe.

The structure that such a project should take was obvious to me. Rather than simply compiling a random selection of spells, I would create eighteen seals and incantations as expressions of the eighteen mighty spells whose knowledge is recited in the *Havamal* 146-163 (these can be read in the *Poetic Edda*). Thus, the following grimoire was devised.

*"I know those spells which a ruler's wife doesn't know,
nor any man's son"*
- *Havamal*, 146

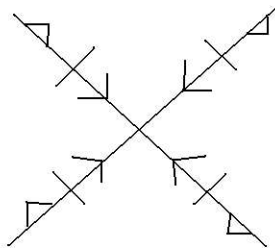
I offer a few explanatory notes on each spell. The

chants were written as they suggested themselves to me during the heat of the creative Workings. As such, they are bound to me and I am not interested in any perceived lack of poetic quality. The point was to devise words which would reawaken the necessary emotional charge within me whenever required.

This grimoire is offered as an example of reviving and personalising a traditional method of sorcery. While I don't have a problem if anyone wants to use it as it stands, that's not what it's for. Such spells are strongest when forged from your own heightened consciousness, inflamed by the inspiration of the moment and informed by your prior learning. Initiates may wish to play with these to develop a familiarity with the process of working with the Helm of Awe, but your success will increase as you start to develop your own expressions of the sorcery of Fafnir.

The First Spell: Help

*"Help one is called,
and that will help you
against accusations and sorrows
and every sort of anxiety."*

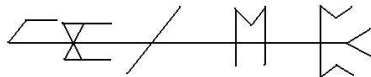


***"Thurisaz be a hammer against twisted words;
Elhaz be a sword against sorrow;
My soul is fortified and I am at peace."***

Comment: The arms of the helm are diagonal, since its emphasis is upon help for the user's anxieties rather than an objective result. *Thurisaz* is an active force within the objective world, demolishing and discrediting any badmouthing of the user as it occurs. The horizontal crossbar on each arm prevents the fallout from such clashes from affecting the user's subjective state. *Elhaz* establishes an active defence and guard within the psyche. The helm provides a sense of reassurance and security, but also has an active component which responds to threat.

The Second Spell: Healing

*"I know a second one which the sons of men need,
those who want to live as physicians."*



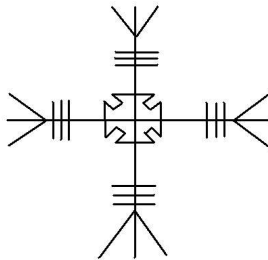
***"When need is strong, I send forth vitality,
to correct the crooked and shape the shifting."***

Comment: This spell's bind rune is not a helm, it simply didn't come to me like that. It contains *uruz* for vital energy; *naudhiz* in recognition of the patient's need; *mannaz* as the template for the whole, healthy human being whose restoration is invoked; *ehwaz* to cement the exchange between healer and patient; *kenaz* to assist in an informed and

knowledgeable diagnosis; and *perthro* for a good dose of luck.

The Third Spell: Fettering Foes

*"I know a third one which is very useful to me.
which fetters my enemy;
the edges of my foes I can blunt,
neither weapon nor club will bite for them."*

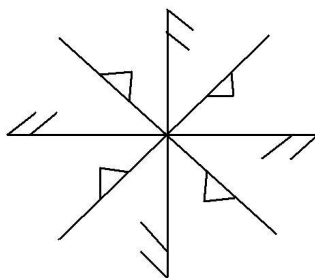


*"Spears shiver upon my shield,
Swords slide off my mail,
Darts fail to find their mark;
My luck is strong, my foes are nought."*

Comment: This helm utilises the active, aggressive protective force of *elhaz* and the triple bars on each arm shield the magician from foes. As an active rather than passive defence, this helm not only nullifies an aggressor's attacks (whether physical, verbal or otherwise), but turns them around and strikes the foe back with equal force. This involves a measure of chance, so a final shield of four interlocked *perthro* runes surrounds the helm's core.

The Fourth Spell: Breaking Bonds

*"I know a fourth one if men put
chains upon my limbs;
I can chant so that I can walk away,
fetters spring from my feet
and bonds from my hands."*

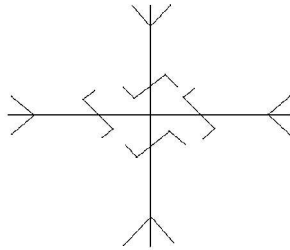


***"Thrice spoken:
chains are broken" (X3)***

Comment: A simple enough helm. *Thurisaz* represents the force (whether physical, moral or otherwise) necessary to break bonds or shatter accusations. *Ansuz* supplies the oratory skill to talk one's way out of trouble. The helm itself supplies the sense of awe to cow those who would detain you.

The Fifth Spell: Dodging Arrows

*"I know a fifth if I see, shot in malice,
a dart flying amid the army:
it cannot fly so fast that I cannot stop it
if I see it with my eyes."*

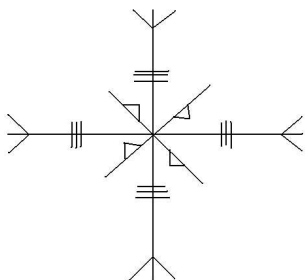


*"I see them as they run
glinting in the sun.
Darts of evil mark
fall into the dark."*

Comment: A simple helm for a simple protective spell. Note the specific and targeted nature of this spell: it is to be used against a **known** attack. It is specifically designed to precisely and accurately nullify specific enemy shots (whether literal or metaphorical). It is the best tool to use in such specific circumstances, but is useless as a general protection, for that is not its intent. The *elhaz* runes are actively defensive and the four *sowilos* afford clear sight and perception.

The Sixth Spell: Magical Conflict

*"I know a sixth one if a man wounds me
with the roots of the sap-filled wood:
and that man who conjured to harm me,
the evil consumes him, not me."*

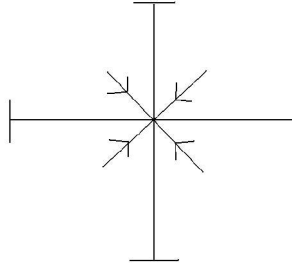


***"Runes of wrath are returned
upon the wrongful rister:
My heart is whole and hale,
no harm may harbour there."***

Comment: Another protective helm utilising *elhaz*, the purpose of this one is to return harm to an enemy magician. The implication is that the user has already suffered a wound from a magical attack. *Elhaz* and the three barriers prevent further harm, whilst *thurisaz* hurls the attack back with interest.

The Seventh Spell: Putting Out Fires

*"I know a seventh one if I see towering flames
in the hall about my companions:
it can't burn so widely that I can't counteract it,
I know the spells to chant."*

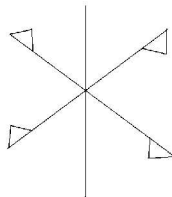


*"Cold is my clear call,
To calm the wild fire.
Chill is my freezing chant,
To chain and control the flames."*

Comment: The vertical and horizontal arms of this helm are barred to prevent the spread of fire, denying it fuel. The diagonal arms cross the vertical to form *hagalaz*, cooling with the power of ice and re-establishing order. Each diagonal arm bears a *kenaz* rune to assert control over fire. This rune is also invoked by alliteration in the chanted spell.

The Eighth Spell: Settling Disputes

*"I know an eighth one, which is most useful
for everyone to know;
where hatred flares up between the sons of warriors,
then I can quickly bring settlement."*

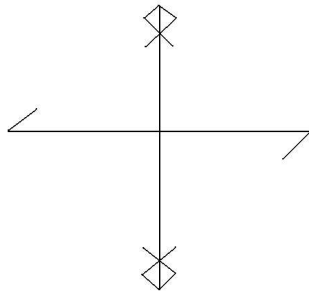


***"When the whirling wheels of wilfulness
rain hammer blows of hate,
I heal the hurts, restore good hearth,
wielding words of weal."***

Comment: A simple helm, utilising *wunjo* for social harmony and *hagalaz* for the restoration of order after disorder. *Wunjo* ensures that disputes are settled in a manner appropriate to the group, but *hagalaz* never denies the tensions that existed. Both runes are also invoked alliteratively in the chant. Problems and disputes can only be solved by addressing them and working through them, never by brushing them under the carpet.

The Ninth Spell: Calming Weather

*"I know a ninth one if I am in need,
if I must protect my ship at sea;
the wind I can lull upon the wave
and quieten all the sea to sleep."*



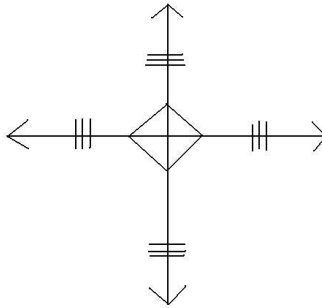
***"A ship is a sturdy steed
when steered upon still waters"***

*over the open sea,
easy is its passage."*

Comment: This helm incorporates *laguz* for the water, *othila* for a safe enclosure and shelter and *sowilo* for good steerage and clarity. The latter two runes are also strongly alliterated in the chant.

The Tenth Spell: Foiling Witches

*"I know a tenth one if I see witches
playing up in the air;
I can bring it about that they can't make their way
back
to their own shapes,
to their own spirits."*

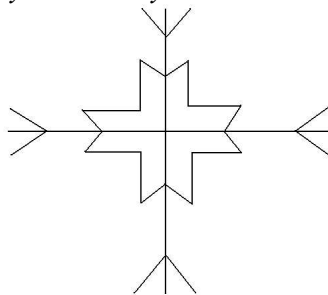


*"Fallen is the eye of malice,
bruised and broken on barren rocks,
lost in a lonely place,
bereft of sense and self."*

Comment: 'Witches' in pre-Christian European lore may be of two types: human seers and sorceresses, or wholly supernatural entities assuming a human form. In either case, the spell seeks to confuse and bewilder those who would spy upon you in a disembodied fashion. This might be construed to include such modern versions of remote viewing as CCTV, invoking technical faults at desired moments. The helm is a simple affair: *tiwaz* for an upright victory; *ingwaz* to isolate the runer from the witchery, and crossbars to shut out the intrusive outside observer. The active bewildering charge of the rune is channeled through the arrow head of *tiwaz*. The alliterated runes: *berkano*, *laguz* and *sowilo* are more inward turning, isolating and nurturing the runer and assuring his own clarity of insight while the helm works its tangled spell on his adversary.

The Eleventh Spell: Safety of Friends in Battle

*"I know an eleventh if I have to lead
loyal friends into battle;
under the shields I chant, and they journey inviolate,
safely to the battle,
safely from the battle,
safely they come everywhere."*

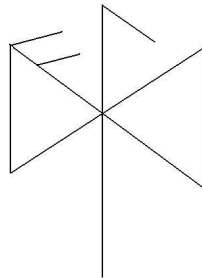


***"From far afield friends shall meet
to face their foes together.
Without exception each returns
in honour to his home."***

Comment: The *elhaz* rune signifies both protection and a sword; *ehwaz* stresses the fellowship between soldiers. The chant alliterates *fehu* and *hagalaz*, invoking energy, reward and the restoration of order in a potentially ruinous situation.

The Twelfth Spell: Necromancy

*"I know a twelfth one if I see, up in a tree,
a dangling corpse in a noose:
I can so carve and colour the runes
that the man walks
and talks with me."*

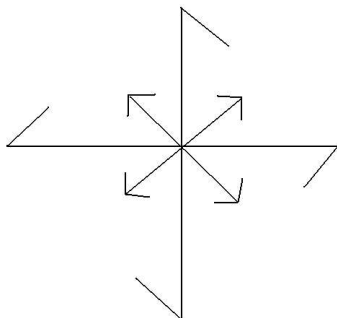


***"Out of the depths I call you,
out of dark dreams,
to awaken and answer
the questions I ask.
Dead lips are loosened,
the living shall listen."***

Comment: The runes incorporated are *laguz*, *dagaz* and *ansuz*, all of which are alliterated in the chant. *Laguz* represents the dark lake in which the deceased consciousness drifts, and its revivification. *Dagaz* heralds the return from the darkness to the daylight. *Ansuz* invokes consciousness directly, also Odin as the God of the slain. This echoes the fact that the corpse in the *Havamal* verse is a hanged one.

The Thirteenth Spell: Coming of Age

*"I know a thirteenth if I shall pour water
over a young warrior:
he will not fall though he goes into battle,
before swords he will not sink."*



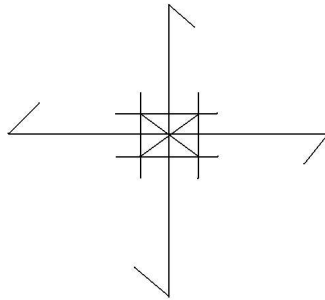
*"It is time to arise,
to shake off childhood's shackles,
to face the wide world as a (wo)man,
to stake your claim on life."*

Comment: I have extended the meaning of this spell from simply 'first battle' (though it still covers that) to any major event marking the entry of a young person into adulthood.

These days it will most likely serve as a charm for 'first job' rather than 'first battle', but the principle remains the same. This rite of passage is marked by *laguz*, reinforced by *tiwaz* and *sowilo* for success and strong guidance.

The Fourteenth Spell: Otherworldly Wisdom

*"I know a fourteenth if I have to reckon up
the gods before men:
Æsir and elves, I know the difference between them,
few who are not wise know that."*



***"I know who rules in the heavens;
I know how the world is woven;
the knots of knowledge are mine to unravel
and mine to bind anew."***

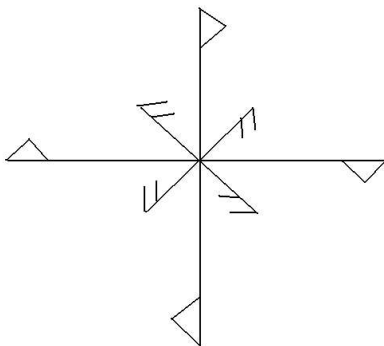
Comment: A spell to enhance the runer's Understanding of cosmological and psychological structure, meaning and purpose. The helm is built around two *eihwaz* runes, the great yew which spans all worlds. Multiple *hagalaz* runes (in both its forms) are structured around the centre, revealing the

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ordering of the cosmic patterns. Understanding is provided by Need, as alluded by the alliteration of *naudhiz* in the chant.

The Fifteenth Spell: Wise Advice

*"I know a fifteenth, which the dwarf Thiodrerir
chanted before Delling's doors:
powerfully he sang for the AEsir and before the elves,
wisdom to Sage."*

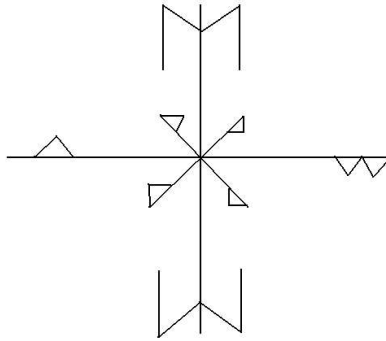


***"The wisdom of my words
shall win all hearts.
My speech is my strength
and is with gladness met."***

Comment: Where the previous helm sought wisdom and insight for the Initiate, this one serves to make his wisdom heard and heeded among his fellows. *Wunjo* and *ansuz* invoke wise eloquence and fellowship. *Wunjo* is echoed in the chant, along with *sowilo*, ensuring that the advice given is true.

The Sixteenth Spell: Seduction

*"I know a sixteenth if I want to have all
a clever woman's heart and love play:
I can turn the thoughts of the white-armed woman
and change her mind entirely."*



*"A woman's will accords with my wish;
a woman's heart pants for my hunger;
a woman's desire mounts at my demand;
a woman's legs part for my lusts."*

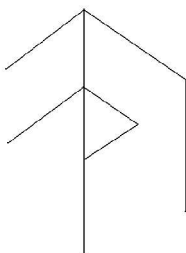
Comment: The use of such spells is attested in the *Eddas* by such instances as Odin's winning of the poetic mead through his skills in sorcery and seduction. The helm invokes *ehwaz* for the union of two people and *wunjo* for joy and pleasure. A more specifically sexual charge is added by the balancing of *thurisaz* and *berkano*, along with *elhaz* in both upright and reverse forms, referencing the female and male genitals respectively. Naturally, since this spell was devised by me, it seeks to influence women. Female readers can be advised

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that males are much easier to seduce. The above model can assist you in devising a suitable charm.

The Seventeenth Spell: Sex Appeal and Charisma

"I know a seventeenth, so that scarcely any young girl will want to shun me."



***"I am a virile force,
a man of might and majesty,
charm and cheer are mine to wield,
maidens swoon at my approach."***

Comment: Whereas the previous spell worked for an actual seduction and consummation of lust, this one is an invocation of the charismatic qualities which constitute sex appeal. It may thus be turned towards various forms of persuasion and used to sway situations where popularity and charisma are important. The vital and masculine characteristics are enshrined in the *uruz* and *thurisaz* runes, but these are anchored in the inspired eloquence and divine persona of *ansuz*.

The Eighteenth Spell: Secrecy

*"I know an eighteenth, which I shall never teach
to any girl or any man's wife --
it's always better when just one person knows,
that follows at the end of the spells --
except that one woman whom my arms embrace,
or who may be my sister."*



Comment: Not telling.

Dream Recall

At this stage in the Work, the Initiate should begin keeping a record of his dreams. Every night upon retiring, lie back and close your eyes. Address your innermost self, telling yourself that you wish to remember your dreams upon waking. As soon as you wake up the following morning, look within and try to recall what you dreamed about and write it down in a journal you have placed at your bedside for the purpose. Do this **immediately**. Do not wait until you've got up and had a coffee; do not roll over and have 'just another five minutes' first. The memory of most dreams will evaporate from your conscious recall in seconds. Conversely, if you use those few precious seconds after waking to seize upon a single element of a dream, you will often find that this suffices to pull the entire experience back into memory. Your brain is conditioned to remember only the things that happen around

you when awake and present only these to your conscious awareness. You will need to retrain it to deliver you your dreams also.

Your success will be patchy at first. If you can't remember anything on a particular morning, record that fact in writing too. This will gradually educate your subconscious that you wish to be kept informed of your dreams. You will be astonished at how well it will learn to deliver the goods until a time will come when you can regularly recall four or five dreams in a single night.

This dream record will be an important reference in the Work of the next chapter, so keep it up to date.

Harnessing Emotional Energy

As well as learning to discipline and control the functions of the mind during the Work of this chapter, we should not neglect the emotions.

The Initiate should take note of his emotions and when they occur and how they arise. You should seek out and identify your own 'hot buttons', those cues that will always provoke an emotional reaction in you. Thus, you may become master of your own choices and responses, not the slave to a programmed reflex.

In doing this, be careful to remember that you are seeking to learn about and understand your emotions, **not** repress them. They are powerful and essential magical drives whose full utility will be explored in chapter seven.

But at this stage you can already learn how to start harnessing the magical power in your emotions. During the course of a day we experience many emotions which are not ordinarily directly useful. So any time you are feeling

frustrated or angry or winsome or sad, or any other feeling that has no direct current use to you, channel it into a bind rune that you have prepared for charging. Put it to useful purpose. Say to yourself, “I sacrifice this emotion of <anger, or whatever> and devote its energies and obsessions to the greater purpose of <whatever the bind rune was constructed for>.” Then concentrate upon flooding your passions into the prepared figure until they begin to fade. In this way, the emotion is detached from its trigger event and reconsecrated to your magical purpose.

Remembering

The Initiate should also use this phase of his Work to begin training his memory. The names, order and values of the runestaves should all be committed to memory. Then learn the rune poems or sections of the *Eddas* by heart. This is another thing which improves dramatically with practice: once you train your subconscious to realise that you desire this level of recall, it will begin to make the process easier for you. But regular practice and striving is the only way to make this happen.

Other, related practices of great use are learning other languages. Any Germanic language, ancient or modern, is of value to the runic magician. This discipline will not only be of practical use, it will also develop the mental qualities necessary to this phase of the Work.

ÆGISHJALMUR

CHAPTER FIVE

UNLOCKING THE WORLDS

In the previous two chapters, the Work was focused upon enhancing our senses and our understanding of our place and position in the world, then training our mental faculties to carry out our Will in the world. In this present chapter, now that we are properly grounded and alert, we will begin pushing the boundaries of consciousness into those areas which lie beyond Midgard. We will explore the means of reaching out with the mind to explore the other worlds of the Northern cosmology and the means of divining information through direct apprehension, both by casting the runestaves and by visionary experiences. This chapter encompasses many of the processes normally classified under clairvoyance and psychic phenomena. Anyone who has diligently accomplished the preceding Work will have little difficulty in attaining some degree of success with these more esoteric disciplines.

Basic Principles of Seith

Odin was taught the techniques of *seith* by Freyja. This method of magic was traditionally used by seeresses and sorceresses and was deemed to be an untrustworthy practice of women, unworthy of men. Well, if it was good enough for Odin, it's bloody well good enough for me!

Those who wish to know more about the origins of *seith* and the way in which it was practised are referred to *A Source-Book of Seid*, Edited and Translated by James Chisholm and Stephen E. Flowers, published by Runa-Raven Press. In this book are collected all of the ancient references to the practice and its practitioners.

The precise techniques of *seith* remain somewhat vague, however. These days it is fashionable to describe it as a more 'shamanistic' kind of magic than the well-structured system of *galdor*, but this description is only of value if you have studied shamanism properly and even then it is only a comparison, not an identification. We may do best to simply define *seith* in our own terms here.

If *galdor* is a technique of ordering and manipulating symbols (such as the runes) in order to create effects or to read the patterns of manifestation (in divination), then *seith* is a technique of entering a trance state and allowing the subconscious to communicate images and impressions directly.

The trance state may be entered through a wide variety of techniques and we will be examining a few of these and trying them out for size in the following section. But it should be apparent to your thought processes, duly sharpened by the Work of the previous chapter, that such subconscious impressions carry a far greater risk of being influenced by subjective fancies and falsehoods. This is why we have put in

all the hard work of building up that inner mental structure and runic knowledge first, so that its ingrained pattern may act as a safeguard and keep your visions upon correct paths. To be a good and **reliable** seithman, you must be a practised galdorman.

The techniques and practices offered in this chapter will assist the Initiate in developing the clairvoyant and visionary skills necessary to effective use of *seith* magic.

Magical Trance

The major stumbling block that most beginners face when dealing with trance states is actually realising when they have entered such a state. People seem to get all sorts of fanciful notions into their heads. It is assumed that one must enter a somnambulistic state, or see the mists parting in a crystal ball, or sit around listening to twangy foreign music beforehand.

Entering trance is actually the easiest thing in the world. We all do it all the time. Every time your mind drifts and you daydream, you have entered a trance. Every time you find yourself wondering what's for supper when you should be concentrating on driving home, you have entered a trance. Every time you are caught up in a book or a movie, or close your eyes and listen to a piece of music, you have entered a trance. Entering a trance happens every time you allow the conscious mind to relax its grip and allow the subconscious to lead the way, taking you away in a new direction and turning your mind from what is happening around you.

There are two ways to enter a trance state and each produces a different kind of trance. The first way is to become fixated upon some object or event or thought and to focus upon it exclusively; the other way is for thought to

disperse seemingly randomly, following a myriad diverging patterns. Both are useful in their way, each in different circumstances.

Most solo magical or divinatory *seith* operations will make use of the first type of induced trance, where a specific symbol or question or motivation is focused upon when shifting your phase of consciousness. In this way, the altered mental processes will direct themselves towards a specific, desired result. The other kind of 'open' trance is not very conducive to solo working as it is undirected. It works best within a group Working, or with two Initiates, one the recipient and one the sender. In such a case, the recipient enters a trance state, becoming a blank canvas, and is then directed by the other(s).

There are many techniques for entering a trance state. Some of these are discussed in chapter five of *Apophis* and include the chanting of mantras, fixed concentration upon a symbol (as mentioned above) or exhaustion induced by sexual or other means (provided it leads to physical relaxation coupled with mental focus, not merely sleep). Alcohol in precisely measured quantities may also help (as explained in chapter three, alcohol was viewed as a source of inspiration in Germanic mysticism).

It will be noted that the practice of the posture and thought control exercises in the previous chapters will already have served to introduce the Initiate to a state of magical trance, so you are merely seeking to formalise and deepen what you already know. Do not be disheartened if your early trances are very light, they will become easier and deeper of their own accord with practice.

The Initiate should familiarise himself with the process of entering and leaving a light trance state before proceeding with the other exercises following in this chapter.

Becoming a Seer

The main thrust of this chapter's Work will be to train the Initiate to use the techniques of *seith* to become a seer. We are seeking to train the mind to perceive the patterns operating in the world – and not just this world, but flowing through all the worlds of Yggdrasil – so that they can be reliably read and interpreted and ultimately changed by an act of Will.

As the chapter advances, we will begin by practising *galdor*-based methods of rune divination, involving the rational mind in the process and accustomising the psyche to the interpretation of information that derives from a supra-sensual source. This accomplished, we will begin to extend the consciousness into an awareness – and direct experience – of the worlds beyond this one. We should then be ready to begin operating as a seer by pure trance techniques, without need for the casting of physical runestaves or other props. We will close the chapter by looking at the implications of this expansion of consciousness for the Work that lies still ahead.

The Rune Streams: Inner and Outer

As the Work of this chapter proceeds, you will become increasingly aware that the runes exist both within and without. There are runes that move within your own inner world and are projected forth in the staves you carve, sing and manipulate with your own hands and voice. There are also runes that move in the world outside of your own sphere of influence, shaping the events of the outside world. There is no difference in principle between the *raidho* that reflects

your still half-formed plans for this year's holiday, the *raidho* that drives you to work in the morning, and the *raidho* that takes a space shuttle into orbit. All are manifestations of the same rune. All are connected.

Once you truly awaken to this fact, you will become aware of just how interconnected the whole of reality is. The term 'web of wyrd' will never have seemed so appropriate. This continuity of the runic streams, this underlying pattern behind each manifestation of Mystery, is the reason magic works.

You will become aware that there exists one place and one place only where the runes within and the runes without can meet. There is only one gate through which they can possibly pass, a single locus which must – to you – be the axis upon which the whole cosmos turns. This gate is your own centre of consciousness.

Once this is realised, you will be able to open that gate and take the patterns of the runes without into your own consciousness, to tell their tale there and inform you of what is happening in the world and why. They may whisper directly in your ear (*seith*) or reflect themselves in your own staves as they fall from your fingers upon the casting cloth (*galdor*). But speak they will. Then you may send your own runes through that same gate, riding and guiding the patterns in the world outside, steering them to suit your desires.

That 'magical link' so often pondered by magicians – that which connects the inner and outer worlds and allows each to influence the other – can only be your own consciousness, for this is the only thing in your Universe which touches both realities and through which each can pass.

Rune-Casting

To begin with we will use the techniques of *galdor* rather than *seith* to investigate the process of divination. Since we have already learned the intricacies of *galdor*, it will make it easier for us to learn the prophetic ropes by using the means most familiar to us. Once you have become used to the ways in which the rune streams inform your consciousness, you will be better able to recognise those promptings in a less structured *seith* instance. The good magician will learn both skills to the best of his ability.

There are two main ways to carry out divination by runes, by placing a selected number of runes in predetermined patterns of meaning, or by literally casting the runes and seeing which fall where. But in either case, it will first be necessary to establish a pattern whereby the reading may be interpreted.

You will need to decide what factors you will need to consider in order to interpret the answer to your question. The simplest method is to randomly draw forth a single rune. This may well answer your question, but it will necessarily be very sketchy and lacking in detailed advice or background information. The next step up from this is to arrange the selected runes in three places, representing the past, the present situation and the likely future outcome based upon the prevailing conditions. This will still answer your question, but will also provide you with more food for thought. A much more thorough reading can be obtained with yet more complex methods of laying out the selected runes. For example, you might choose one rune for each of the worlds of Yggdrasil, interpreting the influence bearing upon the question from each world in turn; the ultimate manifestation of the answer would be placed in the position of Midgard, of

course, but its roots and possible means of changing the outcome could be traced elsewhere in the reading.

When you have established these steads of meaning for your reading, you should mark them on a casting cloth. For example, a simple past / present / future model would involve dividing the cloth into three sections, whilst a 'nine worlds' model would involve drawing the outline of Yggdrasil on the cloth. The cloth may be white, black or red according to preference and the fields may be drawn, painted or embroidered thereon.

When you are ready to commence your reading, take the runes in your hands and mix them thoroughly. You may wish to perform a small ritual to clear your mind and focus your attention upon the matter you are inquiring about. Ask the three Norns – the keepers and shapers of Wyrð (see further in chapter eight concerning this) – Urdhr, Verdhandi and Skuld – to reveal the patterns of manifestation to you with regard to your inquiry. Then the runes should be selected for placement in the steads of meaning.

This can be done by either mixing the runestaves in your hands, then carefully selecting one (or more) at random to place in each stead. Or it can be done by mixing the staves, then holding them high, closing your eyes and letting them all fall, scattering them upon the casting cloth randomly.

In either case, the runes are now interpreted according to the stead in which they are placed. If a rune falls in a stead which represents the past, it will be interpreted as a factor in the initial shaping and formation of the matter under inquiry, shedding light upon the reason matters now stand as they do, for instance. If using Yggdrasil as a model for a layout, a rune falling in Jotunheim would represent the immovable obstacles that must be circumvented when dealing with a situation; a rune falling in Svartalfheim would indicate the

practical skills necessary to achieve a satisfactory conclusion.

If you draw runes to be placed in specific steads, the above process will be relatively simple and will consist of considering the import of the field in which the rune lies, then using your rune knowledge acquired in previous chapters to interpret the meaning of that rune in relation to the position it occupies relative to the question. This mental cross-referencing and balancing act will become easy with practice. You may then need to adjust your interpretation to take into account a given rune's relation to others around it and how they impact upon the question. Use your intuition and the rune lore you have absorbed to accomplish this; divination is more of an art than a science.

The casting of runes upon the cloth is a more advanced technique, requiring experienced interpretive skills. It can provide a deeper, but much more complex meaning. For a start, some runes will fall outside of the established fields of meaning; they should be discarded from the reading. Also, some fields may be empty if no runes fall in those places. Those areas will thus have no impact upon the reading (although it may be interesting to consider if these missing influences could be introduced into a situation they are currently absent from: is a situation bad because it is lacking in *fehu*, for instance, or does the lack of any activity in *Ljossalfheim* signify why the questioner is indecisive?) In such readings, different fields will contain different numbers of runes and their concentrations need to be explained and their combined influences calculated. Bear in mind that some runes may cross from one field to the next, falling across the line. Some may fall and lie in parallel, reinforcing each other. Still others may fall across one another, blocking or diverting each others' influence. All of these patterns will need to be interpreted and read according to your runic knowledge and

your own inspired intuition. Let the runes speak to your deep mind, do not simply recite accepted meanings by rote.

The information provided is sufficient for a good student to use the runes for divinatory purposes. Much more detail on this subject, with examples and additional layout methods and ritual guidelines can be found in Edred Thorsson's book *At the Well of Wyrð*, which is the last word on the subject.

Reading the Runes in the World and in Others

The *seith* method of divination is to enter a trance state and seek to intuit the currents and patterns of the rune streams flowing through the world by direct psychic apprehension, instead of establishing a resonance with physical runestaves to read them in. The Initiate seeks to focus his mind on the question to the degree that it triggers a mental state that allows him to see the Wyrð spread out before him, enabling him to prophesy, speaking what he sees.

It is possible to practice this trance state by deliberately taking time to consider what runes are present in a given situation in everyday life. In this way, you will train your mind to look for the roots of things as a matter of course. Every half hour or so, remind yourself to have a look at everything that is occurring about you and analyse it runically. For instance, if a monetary transaction is taking place, *fehu* will be involved; if cars are driving by, think *raidho*. Initially, your insights will be of this simplistic nature, but as your runic knowledge grows and your analysis of people and circumstances starts to deepen, you will begin to jump to some startling insights as your subconscious senses and responds to your desire to look deeper into the causes of

things. You will find yourself perceiving exactly how a situation will unfold before it actually happens. This skill can then be transferred from your practice into a more formal divination session when you really wish to know something important to you.

There are both pros and cons to this more intuitive approach as compared with the techniques of laying out physical runestaves for a reading. On the plus side, the patterns and currents you perceive arising from your deep mind have already been weighted and interpreted before they bubble through into your consciousness. All you need do is speak what you 'see' and relate what 'comes through'. Also, you are more likely to pick up one specific details which may be uncannily accurate, things that may never occur to those who rely on a more rigid interpretive matrix. But on the minus side, you are more prone to error and have no real checks and balances against which to check your perceptions. If you are at all off colour or obsessed or troubled by some other issue at the time of the divination, it is far more likely to colour your results and introduce error.

Initiates should strive to master both methods of divination, of course.

Riding the Eight-Legged Steed: Rune Journeys

Now that you are training your mind to perceive the rune streams in the world around you, it is time to reach out with your consciousness to explore the worlds beyond this one. Midgard is the centre of all the worlds, the realm of manifestation, but it is important to grow to understand where these runic streams are ultimately flowing from. Note that the previous sentence should be interpreted **very** carefully; your

first interpretation of it may not be your final interpretation of it, but this may become clearer as we progress.

The process of stepping out of Midgard and perceiving the other worlds is one which requires a specific combination of Will and imagination. The imagination is the tool which gives shape and perception to realms beyond the physical. A firm Will is required to keep the vision on track and not fall into the trap of daydreaming.

These journeys, which are such an important part of the *seith* part of our Work, raise all manner of stumbling blocks for those not already familiar with them. Some people will find it difficult to distinguish whether they are actually on a clairvoyant journey at all and will not be able to grasp the reality of what they are doing. Others will protest, “But it's only imagination!” Let's take a little time to put these difficulties and misunderstandings to rest.

Probably the most common difficulty faced by inexperienced but eager Initiates is the failure to recognise when they are experiencing such a mental journey (or 'astral journey' as most occult sources label it). Go back and reread what is said about trance states, then remind yourself that the imagination is the tool used to undertake such journeys. It is possible to expect too much, but this technique – as with all others – can only reach its greatest strength through practice. People tend to expect to feel a sense of separation from their bodies. This will probably not happen, at least not at first. The body is still there, with all of its sensual apparatus active, and it is only the well-experienced mind that can sink itself so deeply into its visionary experience that all awareness of the body is temporarily lost. In fact, some of us make deliberate use of the fact by shifting awareness back and forth to make notes as we go (this is probably not advisable for beginners, as the continual shifting of consciousness may break the

connection to the experience).

It may help, therefore, to assume that what you are doing – at least initially, until experience teaches you otherwise – is simply a kind of daydreaming combined with meditation. Just use your imagination to shape your journey, visualising the sights and sounds of the world around you as you go. When you have gained some familiarity with the process, you will learn to distinguish between this willed process and mere daydreaming, especially when startling insights and communications start to come through. But for now, daydreaming describes the kind of perception you should reasonably expect.

As for the protest that this is only imagination: there is no 'only' about imagination! Everything that mankind has ever produced has been birthed in the imagination. The great cathedrals, the pyramids, every work of art, the internal combustion engine, all of these things were only made real because they were first conjured into existence in someone's imagination. What is more, the imagination is the mind's image-making faculty, it is the lens which interprets and presents the information gathered by the senses. So literally everything you ever perceive – even those you deem to be objectively real – are reshaped and prepared in your imagination before presentation to your conscious mind. So this silly objection can be discarded altogether.

It should be borne in mind that although the physical body is bound to the physical world of Midgard, the consciousness is not. The imagination and intellect may roam freely throughout the worlds once it finds the paths to do so. This process is akin to dreaming, wherein the mind fashions a mental body for itself to interact with the visions and landscapes it encounters. Odin's steed Sleipnir had eight legs and so does the human mind. The body remains in Midgard,

but the legs of the imagination may ride throughout the other eight worlds.

Mapping the Nine Worlds

How does one set about exploring the World Tree? First of all, remember that you are established in Midgard, the central world, into which the influences of all the others flow and become manifest. So don't make the mistake of assuming that you start at the bottom and work up, or at the top and work down. Your journeys will begin in Midgard, the centre, and wend outwards, up and down from that point.

If you refer back to the diagram of Yggdrasil in chapter three, you will note that pathways run between the various worlds, connecting them all. A journey will consist of establishing your consciousness in Midgard, then sending it forth along these paths, making note of all that you see and experience along the way, finally arriving in one of the other worlds described in the third chapter.

You will notice that there are twenty four of these paths and it makes sense to assume that this number is significant, with each path relating to one of the runes. I am not going to spell out for you which is which or suggest an authorised interpretation, I will simply suggest that if you begin in Midgard and chart your path out, up and down from there, you will find a pattern of meaning that appeals to you. Let each path speak to you and inform you of its own merits. Ultimately, if you have put the groundwork in and are confident of your rune lore, you cannot be wrong, since every path contains every rune to some degree, just as all runes are but aspects of the one Rune.

Each journey should have a specific destination. For

example, you may decide that you wish to visit Vanaheim to learn the wisdom of that world. You would begin by using the techniques already learned to quiet your thoughts and enter a light trance. Then create a vivid mental image of yourself and powerfully imagine yourself 'stepping out' of Midgard and travelling west, in the direction of Vanaheim. Carefully observe everything that you encounter on the path that leads you there, as you will want to make extensive notes of all your travels. If you fail to keep notes, there is no point even beginning this Work. Eventually, the path will lead you to Vanaheim and you will enter that realm. Don't rush things: simply getting there will probably be sufficient for your first visit. The next time, you will be able to tread the path more quickly, relying on the landmarks you have already established, and will be able to spend more time in the world of Vanaheim itself. Each retreading of a journey will become more solid and 'real' in your mind, adding structure to your psychic universe. You will become familiar with the paths, noting more and more detail as they open themselves up to you. These journeys should be made many, many times.

Do this for all of the paths and worlds, lay claim to them and come to understand them as a regular traveller of the rune-roads.

Once you have become accustomed to the layout of the nine worlds and the paths that run between them and have established a series of landmarks whereby you navigate the branches of Yggdrasil, it is time to start personalising them a little more.

Turn now to the dream journal you began keeping in the Work of the previous chapter. If you have been keeping this journal for any period of time, you will have already noticed how certain themes, images and locations frequently recur in your dreams. These are themes which are unique to

yourself and are reflective of the manner in which your subconscious chooses to communicate with you. You should therefore make the effort to try to place those dreams within the psychic map you have been constructing. Consider carefully to which world – or connecting path – a given dream image belongs. You might wish to draw an outline of the world tree, write upon it the traditional attributions and over a period of time add those dream images which are your own.

Interpretation of Dreams and Omens

Once you start mapping your own dream world to Yggdrasil, you will find a new coherence of vision within your innermost self. What is more, you will find that this coherence begins to inform you on many levels.

Forget books about dream interpretation. The guide to the meanings of your own visions will be discovered by the attributions you apply on your world tree. As these expand and grow, so the Mysteries of your subconscious are gradually revealed. The meaning of your dreams will be laid bare to you. (Of course, not all dreams have important meanings, but all arise for some reason; interpret the little along with the great. Practice always makes perfect.)

This will further lead to the apprehension and interpretation of those synchronicities that arise in the magical life with ever-increasing frequency. This ability is at the root of accounts of soothsayers who could divine the future by observing the flight of birds and so forth. All things speak to the mind that is awake and alert and tuned into its own language of Mystery. This observation and interpretation of symbols incorporated in synchronistic happenings is another aspect of *seith* and should be practised

by the Initiate. You will score many failures at first as you learn the 'language', but each failure will teach you more until you begin to see and speak True.

Blood and Venom

We will be dealing with the full initiatory symbolism of the Sigurd / Fafnir myth in the next chapter, taking it to its culmination. But first, it is appropriate to investigate the nature of the Dragon and its attributes a little more closely. We need to be fully aware of the forces we are dealing with.

We have already spent some time looking at the outward powers of the Dragon, in particular the Helm of Awe, but we also need to examine its inner power: its Blood and Venom.

The blood of Fafnir is key to the Sigurd myth. It is after tasting the Dragon's blood, that Sigurd is able to understand the languages of bird and beast and thus discover Regin's plot to kill him. It is thus the blood that passes on the power of the Dragon into the hero and which ensures the hero's own survival.

Blood is key to survival, of course. It is the vital fluid that carries life-giving oxygen around the body. It is red with the heat of vital energy. Blood is used to enliven runestaves. We use the term 'bloodline' to refer to our ancestry, to the heritage we carry within our genetic structure. Those of us who view the world through spectacles which are not purely mechanistic believe that blood may also carry forward a psychic heritage, a pattern of Becoming that is ultimately traced back to Odin.

The Dragon is symbolic of the Beast in Man. It is the primal root of Being, the reptilian brain stem which predates

the development of true consciousness. It is the raw Chaos-stuff of which our psyches are born and shaped. The bloodline of the Dragon carries forward all of these qualities, the genetic and psychic attributes of the Beast. So what does it mean when Sigurd slays Fafnir and then tastes the Dragon's blood?

The slaying of the Dragon is indicative of the victory of consciousness over non-consciousness in the individual. This is that moment when one becomes an Initiate and can honestly say, "I have Come Into Being." The Initiate has learned to steer the course of his life by conscious Will, jettisoning the pre-programmed survival responses and conditioning, and adopting free choice in their place.

The act of consuming the Dragon's blood establishes a very important fact, however, one that is deeply rooted in the Northern tradition with its emphasis upon ancestral sovereignty and the literal kinship between Man and his Gods. This tasting is an act of affirmation that the hero and the Dragon are linked by blood: they are kin.

In other words, the Initiate takes conscious control of his life and establishes his own Will in the place of sovereignty, but he accepts the Beast that he has conquered as a valid and necessary part of himself. Its functions and powers are vital ones in this world, so he brings them into conscious awareness, unifying the heroic essence with the Draconian essence by an act of Will.

This essential step of unifying the conscious and bestial natures is an important one in the practice of Draconian magic. Some initiatory schools neglect to stress the necessity of this step, assuming that the 'lower nature' can be sloughed off and disregarded. This ultimately leads to the resurgence of those powers as 'monsters from the id', as admirably illustrated in the old science fiction movie

Forbidden Planet. After the ascension of consciousness to the throne of Self and the overthrowing of the pre-conscious imperatives, they must be examined, understood and brought fully on board as essential parts of the mind-body-soul complex.

So as Sigurd kills Fafnir in the saga, in a very real sense he actually **Becomes** the Dragon. A further metamorphosis / integration lies ahead of him, which will be discussed over the next two chapters.

Blood is not the only fluid associated with the Dragon of the North, however. As blood is the fluid of life, so venom is the fluid of death. All of the great Serpents and Dragons of Northern mythology are described as venomous in the extreme: their breath, their bite and their very presence are poisonous. In the Sigurd myth, pits are dug for the venom to spew into; it is the venom of Jormungandr that causes Thor to fall at Ragnarok after the mighty God kills the Serpent with His hammer; Beowulf is brought low by the venom of the Dragon which has been laying waste to his kingdom. In so many tales, the hero kills the Dragon but is then himself overcome by its venom.

The thing that distinguishes Sigurd from other legendary Dragon-slayers is that he tasted the Beast's blood and assumed its qualities, integrating it into himself. The consciousness that cannot integrate the Dragon within is doomed to die by its venom.

What is the nature of this venom? The poison of an ordinary snake tends to break down and dissolve the tissue into which it has been injected. In other words, it is a dispersive agent, whose function is to break aggregates down into their constituent parts. Naturally, as the venom courses through the blood stream, the body of the stricken victim breaks down altogether and death ensues.

Given the strong presence of venom in the Draconian myths of the North, it will pay us to take a closer look at it and why it is so important. It is a startling fact that Venom is counted as one of the Elements – the basic building blocks of reality – in the Northern cosmological model. We shall devote the next section to a study of the implications of this in relation to our world view and this initiatory curriculum.

Ginnungagap I: The Creation Myth as a Model of Magic

Most students of the occult are familiar with the Hellenistic model of the four classical Elements, namely Fire, Water, Air and Earth (with Spirit as a fifth, from which the four other Elemental principles are ultimately derived). In most curricula of ritual magical practice, these Elements are appointed to the four cardinal points of the compass: Earth to the North; Air to the East; Fire to the South and Water to the West. The magician is thus provided with a workable model for invoking / balancing Elemental forces and affinities, a process upon which almost all practical magic is based.

The Northern European model is a little different to this. The tradition is recognisably derived from the same ultimate European cultural roots and is not incompatible with the Greek ideas. But it finds a different emphasis in its expression and spawns an interesting set of secondary Elements. In Northern Elemental lore, we begin with a Void. There then arise two primary Elements, whose interactions produce a further two Elements. This provides the fourfold basis upon which manifestation may occur. The four Elements then interact with each other to produce a further set of four secondary Elements, representing their operations in

the world. Finally, all are gathered in the Element of Earth as reality Is.

According to the Norse account of creation given in Snorri Sturluson's *Prose Edda*, before the manifest Universe existed there was a Void, called Ginnungagap, which translates as something akin to 'magically charged space'. Those who have read *Apophis* will recognise this as the Void described therein. It is a kind of anti-place, where nothing exists in manifest form yet where everything possible exists in potential. Note that I stress 'everything possible'. This potentiality includes not only everything that will **ever** exist, but also everything that will **never** exist. The Void is a Neverwhere / Neverwhen outside of time and space, which contains the seeds of Everywhere and Everywhen within itself.

How does something Come Into Being from Nothing? Because Ginnungagap is not nothing as we understand it. It must be Understood as a Nothing which is not itself manifest, but which contains the matrix for the possible manifestation of everything. If all manifestation occurs as equal and opposing forces, then the overall balance of Zero is maintained. This is Crowley's equation of $0 = 1 + (-1)$.

So the Void spawned two equal but opposite forces which formed at opposite ends of it. These forces are the two primary Elements of Northern lore, Fire and Ice, symbolically placed in the South and North respectively and embodied in the worlds of Muspellsheim and Niflheim. Fire is the expansive force of heat and brightness and Ice is the contracting force of cold and concentration.

The expanding heat from Muspellsheim radiated outwards until it finally met and mingled with the frozen stream issuing from Niflheim. The touching of the two opposing forces had explosive results, resulting in a burst of

energy and interaction that spawned the building blocks of the whole manifest Universe. This creation myth is recounted in detail by Snorri's *Prose Edda* and its symbolism is discussed in some detail in the books of Edred Thorsson.

The initial mingling of the energies of Fire and Ice produced a further two primary Elements, establishing the four quarters of manifestation. These two Elements were Air and Water, stationed to the East and West respectively.

This creates a model quite similar to that of the four classical Elements which is still used by most modern occult models. A comparison is below.

<i>Direction</i>	<i>Classical Element</i>	<i>Northern Element</i>
North	Earth	Ice
East	Air	Air
South	Fire	Fire
West	Water	Water

The only difference between the two models at this stage is that the Element representing solidity and density in the North is Ice instead of Earth in the Northern conception. This striking similarity indicates the shared origin of European thought prior to later diversification.

The Southern tradition chose to expand upon the basic fourfold model by subdividing each major Element into a set of Sub-Elements. So Water, for instance, would be subdivided into Fire of Water, Water of Water, Air of Water and Earth of Water and the others would be similarly divided. In this way, they sought to express the more complex

interplay between the Elements.

In the North, they approached the question of complexity and Elemental interplay in a different way, one which restated the ninefold theme so prevalent in Northern mythic patterns. They looked at the arrangement of the Elements at the four quarters of manifestation, then observed the angles where each Element met with its neighbours. At these borderlands where the primary Elements met and mingled, they brought into being four more secondary Elements, which combined the natures of each of their parents and expressed them in new ways.

In the North-East, between Ice and Air, is the Element of Salt; in the South-East, between Air and Fire, is the Element of Iron; in the South-West, between Fire and Water, is the Element of Venom; in the North-West, between Water and Ice, is the Element of Yeast.

Just as the primary Elements are established on a fourfold matrix formed by two pairs of opposite forces (Fire vs Ice; Air vs Water), so the secondary Elements establish themselves according to the same pattern, but from the angles between the compass points rather than the compass points themselves. Thus, Iron (principle of hard, inert matter) is opposed to Yeast (principle of organic change), and Salt (the basis and sustenance of life) is opposed to Venom (the dissolution of organic and inorganic compounds).

All eight of these Elements are finally summed up and synthesised in a single Element which is the manifestation of all their qualities in a dynamic, ever-evolving whole. This Element is Earth. Unlike the Earth Element of the classical model, this Northern Earth Element represents the entirety of manifest reality in Midgard.

Thus, we have a ninefold model of Elements to go with our ninefold world structure.

The four secondary Elements display a level of sophistication and differentiation lacking in most other such systems and the final synthesis of the Elements in Earth reinforces the Northern view that Midgard – the world of manifestation – is the purpose and destiny of creation, the culmination of all, not a confining prison to be escaped from.

Now that we have established the position of Venom as one of the root Elements, we may consider anew its importance to the Draconian Initiate. All of the Dragons of the North are venomous in the extreme and we have established that the Initiate who conquers the Dragon and partakes of its blood (i.e. synthesises it within his own Self) will gain the powers of the Dragon. However, the Initiate who seeks to overcome the Dragon by suppressing and denying it (i.e. by putting it down and not partaking of its bloodline) is overcome by its Venom, which still seethes within his subconscious, beyond his reach.

Venom, the Element of dissolution, is the tool whereby the Initiate loosens and unties the knots of reality – and of his own Self – so that they can be reshaped. Things that were bound fast dissolve and come to pieces through the application of Venom. This is true and instantly observable in the world around us; it is equally true in the world of magic. This process is figured in the *Valknutr*, the Knot of the Slain, which we will be considering closely in the next chapter.

Before leaving this model of the Norse creation myth, we should briefly consider its ramifications as a model for the practice of magic. After all, every magical act is a creative act and every act of creation follows this same pattern. (We are here considering only the Elements of creation, not the figures and characters in the mythology, though there are many essential lessons to be learned there too by those who

wish to study further.)

Every magical act begins with a Void, into which the magician invokes the Elements which constitute the situation. The primary Elements of any magical Working are the magician himself and those factors he wishes to change. These are all brought into balance within the Working environment. The secondary Elements are those tools (such as runestaves, rune-songs, bind-runes, etc.) which introduce the desired change into the situation that has been established. Some of these tools will enliven and strengthen positive aspects (a Yeast function); others will dissemble or rearrange negative aspects (a Venom function.) Finally, all will be synthesised into a new Earth at the conclusion of the Working.

This model may not be clear to you yet with regard to your own Workings, but keep it in mind and it will in time become so. It should remind you that every act of magical creation is an echo of that original Coming Into being. This process will be discussed at much greater length in the next chapter.

The Wode-Self Stirs

The Initiate who has got this far without skimping on the exercises and who has taken time to study the mythology and lore, will begin to notice a few peculiar changes in himself at about this time.

As well as his ordinary, everyday personality, he will begin to detect a new focus within his consciousness, almost an 'other self' which takes the reins at times of peak experience, and most particularly when engaged in acts of magic. A secondary consciousness, encapsulating those parts

of himself that he defines as 'the Initiate', will appear to have arisen, to have Come Into Being.

This phenomenon will be similar to that of 'the observer', with which we will all be familiar. Basically, the observer phenomenon refers to the process where you are doing something, but then suddenly realise that there is another 'you' or aspect of you who is watching you do it. The first stirrings of this magical 'other you' will happen when you notice that upon entering a magical trance state or performing any act of ritual magic, a kind of wiser, more charismatic self appears to come to the fore and take you over.

This entity – which we may call the Wode-Self – is discussed briefly in chapter four and its arising and subsequent development will be documented quite thoroughly in chapter six.

The Ultimate Rune and the Runic Shaping of the Void

As the Initiate contemplates the role and nature of Ginnungagap – the Void – in the process of magical creation, so he will begin to grasp the significance and immanence of **Runa** – the Ultimate Rune – as it brushes the fringes of his consciousness.

Runa is the Mystery that lies over the next horizon, it is that which is immanent, but which has not yet come into manifestation. **Runa** is Schrödinger's Cat before the box has been opened. It is reality about to resolve in one direction or another, the tension before it happens. It contains all of the runestaves within itself as expressions of itself.

The task of the magician with relation to **Runa** has two parts, each equally important. First, he must discern

which resolutions are likely and which are not. Then he must manipulate those specific runes which will coax **Runa** to resolve a situation in such a way that will manifest the most likely of those resolutions which is most resonant with his purpose. These two operations are divination and sorcery respectively.

Runa is much bigger and more important than this – also much more personal. We will return to stress just how big and how important later. But this offers a brief insight into the magician's interaction with **Runa** in his magical practice at this stage of Initiation.

Rune Poems – Inspiration and Sacred Utterance

If you have practised the section of this chapter dealing with divination, most particularly divination through direct apprehension in a trance state rather than just rune-casting, you will already be familiar with perceiving and expressing in words the currents and images that well up into your conscious mind from the subconscious depths when you direct your Will to this purpose. Before concluding this section of the Work, we should try to extend this practice into two new and exciting areas. These are skills which will become particularly useful later on, but in order for them to do so, you will need to begin the ground work now and get some solid practice in.

Take some time to read the rune poems (the Old English, Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian Rune Poems). These are contained in many runic texts, but the best two for the purpose are either *Rune-Song* or *The Rune Poems, Vol. 1*, both by Edred and published by Runa-Raven Press. These poems consist of a series of stanzas, each of which is a brief

encapsulation of the qualities of one of the runes. Study these poems avidly; commit them to memory if you can. Learn what it is they have to say about the runes. For some runes, this will be straightforward, but other stanzas will require a deal of thought and meditation until you pin down the core meaning and how it pertains to the rune.

Once you have fully familiarised yourself with the traditional Rune Poems and the way in which they are constructed and worded in order to reflect the innermost qualities of the runes in frequently riddling language, you can progress to the next step. This is to write a rune poem of your own.

Don't simply sit down and begin writing the first thing that comes into your head. Take time to invoke each rune properly, letting its essence infuse your consciousness. See what thoughts and images spontaneously arise and use these as the basis for your poem's stanzas. Choose your words carefully in order to convey the correct emotion. Remember that sounds have power in runic magic, so shape your sounds well. Work through the entire rune row in this manner until you have completed all twenty four stanzas of your own Rune Poem, which taken in its entirety will be your own unique and personal apprehension of **Runa**.

Next you should sit down and reread the *Poetic Edda*. Pay particular attention to the more prophetic and visionary sections. Then think of how these writings are enhanced and made majestic by the visionary elements and the words used to describe them. Words – in the hands of a poet or visionary – are amongst the most powerful and world-changing of all magical forces. True 'words of power' are those which you utter and which then ripple out across the world, travelling from mind to mind, creating change in every consciousness they touch. This is true magical power and the triumph of the

magical approach of *galdor*.

You should be accustomed to using inspired prophecy as part of your divinatory toolbox by this stage. The next time you use it, try to capture your impressions in words and weave them as skillfully and as powerfully as the words are used in the Eddas. Become a prophet in truth.

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CHAPTER SIX

HANGING ON THE TREE

In this chapter, the Work really steps up a notch. Paradoxically, the prescribed exercises will become much fewer in number. Instead, you will need to devise your own means of considering the ideas presented and Working with them to increase your Understanding.

In this chapter, we will take another, closer look at Sigurd as the heroic slayer of Fafnir and the treasures and powers he thereby became master of. But we will also take a first look at another of the great Dragons of the North, Jormungandr, the Midgard Serpent, who lies at the bottom of the ocean and encircles the world, bounding it with his coils.

We will be looking again at Ginnungagap, the Creative Void, and will consider what it means to awaken the Draconian consciousness and open the Eye of the Dragon within that Void, perceiving its limitless possibilities in their entirety.

We will encounter the concept of the Wode-Self again in this chapter too, as our consciousness awakens parts of our Selves which have previously been slumbering. This

will lead us some small way to determining why we are the people we are. Who are we and why are we here? We may now begin to Understand something of the concept of Destiny.

Mimir's Well and Hlithskjalf

Odin sees all, gathering information to Himself, analysing it, tracing the patterns of Becoming, and making His plans to suit the ever-changing situation.

We have already made reference to the two ravens, Huginn and Muninn – thought and memory – who fly out each day and return to tell Odin of all that they have witnessed transpiring in the worlds. But they are not the Old One's only means of vision or wisdom. As befits the often paradoxical balance factor found in Northern lore, Odin gazes out upon the worlds from both the highest and the lowest points on Yggdrasil.

Right at the very roots of the World Tree is located Mimir's Well. The waters of this well are renowned for the wisdom that they bestow. Odin sacrificed one of His eyes for a drink of this water, casting it into the well. However, His eye remains there in the well still, turned upwards, marking all that occurs in the deep places of the worlds.

At the other extreme of Yggdrasil, Odin has his seat upon Hlithskjalf, the highest peak in Asgard and the uppermost vantage point in the nine worlds. From here He can look down and behold everything that occurs in the worlds below.

The symbolism of these mythic images is of great importance in this chapter and you should keep the well and the high seat in mind as we progress. For the Work of this

chapter involves the process of opening the Eye in the Void, a process akin to Odin's sacrifice of His eye to Mimir's Well. At this stage in Initiation, you will also have a very definite experience of the Wode-Self awakening and steering your consciousness at critical moments, affording the Vision from the high seat.

In the previous chapter, you experienced the other worlds of the Northern cosmology by faring forth on imaginative journeys to explore them and the paths that link them. That realisation will now be taken a significant step further as you begin to realise that there are elements of your consciousness that permanently abide in these other worlds, especially those situated upon the central trunk of Yggdrasil.

Your body and conscious mind are located in Midgard, but as you learn to open the Eye in the Void, you will become increasingly aware of a consciousness which subsists at the very roots of the tree, where Mimir's Well is located. Similarly, you will become aware of the Wode-Self, a consciousness that abides in the highest places of Asgard. Yet both of these distinct consciousnesses will still be you, parts of your awareness that have been long cut off from your conscious perception and are now being integrated as a direct result of your magical Work.

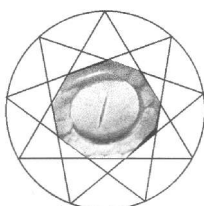
The Eye of the Dragon and the Helm of Awe

We have now reached a point in our Work where the Dragon has been integrated into the consciously accessible parts of our psyche and we have obtained some experience of exercising the powers it brings, as symbolised by the Helm of Awe.

It is time now to weave a matrix of Understanding

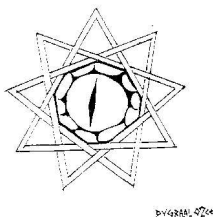
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around that Draconian awareness and to place that experience with the Helm in a coherent philosophical context. This context and matrix of Becoming is symbolised in the Seal of the Order of Apep:



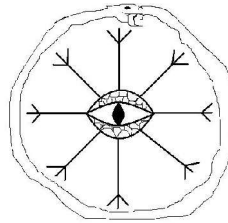
In brief, this Seal consists of three main elements which are interpreted as follows: [1] the central Serpentine Eye is the awakened Dragon, the focal point of the Initiate's consciousness, seeing all through its Draconian lens; [2] the three linked triangles represent the Will of the Initiate, extending from the Eye and reaching out – through all nine worlds (symbolised by the nine points) and across all spans of time and space to touch and influence [3] the surrounding boundary, the phenomenal world of manifestation, in which that Will may take shape and create change. Every Secret of Draconian Magic is contained within this Seal.

The Seal may be drawn with the triangles more obviously interlocking, as in the version by Order Initiate D.V. Graal shown below. This emphasises the link between the Seal and the *valknutr*:



D.V. GRAAL ©2004

Tellingly, the Seal may also be represented as a Helm of Awe, as illustrated below. In this case, the central Eye itself is taken as one of the nine points, the other eight radiating outwards as *elhaz* runes, with the circle being replaced by Jormungandr, the Midgard Serpent:



Much of this chapter will be spent elaborating upon the symbolism and meaning of the Order Seal, since its Understanding is essential to the Work of the Initiate at this stage.

The Dragon Within and the Dragon Without

Up until now, we have focused our attention almost exclusively upon Fafnir as the symbol for the Dragon whose blood and venom has been instrumental in awakening new powers within the Initiate, bringing the dark, submerged parts of the psyche into their proper place in an integrated consciousness, transforming them from a source of unpredictable danger to a source of immediate power. In this manner, like Sigurd, the Initiate is elevated from Beast to Hero.

We have so far dealt with the process of bringing the Draconian Essence into consciousness and integrating it within your Self. This is symbolised by the Dragon's Eye in the centre of the Order Seal. This Draconian Essence – this

bloodline of the Dragon – extends back to primeval times, an image and a psychic 'shape' that has been buried deep within humanity since before our species became properly self-aware. The Eye represents a window in the soul that looks out across infinity and eternity; it is timeless and ageless and the continuity of this Draconian bloodline is crucial to the immortality of our own soul, as we will ride into Remanifestation upon the Dragon's Breath. But more of this later.

The other Dragon that now concerns us is outside of the Self; indeed, it is at the furthest extreme from the inner Dragon, coiling around the very outside boundaries of manifest reality, holding the Universe in shape. This encircling, binding force is the Midgard Serpent, Jormungandr, the bane and doom of the mighty God Thor.

The importance of the function of Jormungandr cannot be overstated. This great Serpent bounds, and thus defines the limits of, reality itself. Without the encircling Serpent, the Universe would unravel and disperse. This is why the tale of Thor's fishing trip, when He hooks the Serpent and tries to reel it in, is so insistent upon the peril of this action. Witness also the consequences of Jormungandr's uncoiling and slaying at Ragnarok, when reality is unmade and falls into ruin.

In marking the limits of manifestation, the Midgard Serpent defines a space in which creation and subsequent transformation may occur. It allows the phenomenal world to Come Into Being. This provides resistance and a friction against which the Will of the Initiate may find purchase when seeking to introduce change.

The inner Dragon represented by the Eye and the outer Dragon represented by the Circle in the Order Seal do not touch each other: one is the focused, contracted point, the

white heat of Selfhood; the other is the expanded, ever-shifting Universe. They are connected by the network of lines which make up the three interlocked triangles and the nine points thereof.

The triangles represent the angles of Space-Time through which the Will of the Initiate extends in order to influence and shape the world. The points where the triangles touch the Circle are representative of the nine worlds.

In Northern lore, the symbol of three interlocked triangles is known as the *valknutr* and is a glyph particular to Odin. The name literally means 'knot of the slain' and this is a highly appropriate title. Odin – and the Odian Initiate – possesses the power to loosen and to bind the knots which hold reality together. To use the *valknutr* is to alter the underlying nature of reality, rebinding it into a new configuration.

But note that this is the knot of the **slain**. This title is not idly used. Every time you use magic, you kill reality as it stands and substitute a new one. It is no longer the same thing. You kill thousands of possible futures, preventing their manifestation, but open up thousands of new possibilities. Your actions as a magician destroy things which would otherwise have come to pass had you not interfered. They also create things which would otherwise never have happened. You cannot take this lightly. This is the responsibility that goes with being a magician; this is the burden that you must bear.

There is another factor, which is often forgotten, a simple statement that contains infinite warning: when you exercise your Will to change the world (the Dragon without), the Dragon within also changes in like measure. Your acts of magic change your very Self in every instance, whether you realise it at the time or not.

Ginnungagap II: Opening the Eye in the Void

The question now facing the Initiate is: how precisely does one use one's Will in such a way as to loosen and rebind the *valknutr*? How do we actually change reality? In what way is the magic effected?

The process whereby the Will is focused in order to carry out this task is known as '**the opening of the Eye in the Void**' and it is a task of the Dragon within, the state of Draconian consciousness symbolised by Fafnir.

Let's examine the precise mental processes that entail opening the Eye in the Void, laying bare the manner in which the Draconian Initiate works his magic. Following this, I will list some of the ways in which these processes may be enhanced to suit the individual practitioner.

1. Having entered a trance state, the Initiate turns his mind inward, focusing upon the creative, magically-charged Void that is Ginnungagap, the primal Chaos in which all possibilities are latent.
2. Once an awareness of the expanse of the Void has been achieved and the Initiate is able to sense the threads of possibility stretching beyond him, he must bring to mind the various elements of the situation he wishes to change, envisaging that situation as it currently is. In particular, he must clearly define / visualise three key aspects: [1] himself as he currently stands in relation to the situation; [2] his goal, or Desire (for more on Desire, see chapter seven); [3] the environment / obstacles / events which lie between himself and his goal. These three key factors must resonate within his clear perception of the situation as a whole. This may seem like quite a feat of

concentration and visualisation, but if the matter is truly important to you, you will be able to achieve it if you take your time and build up the mental image step by step.

3. When the above points of focus are clear and stable, the Initiate Wills his centre of mental focus to take shape in the form of a great reptilian Eye in the centre of the triangle formed by the three key points. He deliberately allows the Draconian consciousness to arise from his deep mind, remembering all that he has learned of it in his Work to this point.
4. The Initiate fixes the Eye of the Dragon upon the three key points of the situation and begins to establish a vibration throughout the Void, keyed to his breathing pattern. This resonance builds and buzzes, loosening the bonds that hold the situation in its current state. This is the 'untying' of the *valknutr* knot.
5. The Initiate next replaces point [3] with a new vision of the situation as he wishes it to become. He focuses his concentration, stabilising the new pattern by an act of Will.
6. Now comes the crucial moment, the act of 'binding' the altered matrix of happening. The Initiate does this by holding his attention rigidly upon all three key points at the same time, maintaining full awareness of each. It may take seconds, or many minutes, depending upon the situation and your own experience, but an ecstatic moment will arise – almost a mental orgasm in its intensity – when the Eye in the Void 'bridges' all three points and binds them together in a single transformative unity. Since one of the points is the magician's own Self and he is changed by his Work, the ecstasy arises as his own being is transformed by the magic. Hold this moment of binding for as long as possible, until it begins to fade, then let it

go, allowing your mind to return to its normal function.

7. Open your eyes and stamp about the place to ground yourself. Cease fretting about the situation and let it be, confident that you have rebound its parameters and changed its trajectory by your Will.

These are the basic steps involved in the process known in the Order of Apep as 'Opening the Eye in the Void', which is the fundamental means of Draconian Magic. There are several ways in which an Initiate can enhance this bare process, both for aesthetic purposes and also to better clarify and express his Will. Some of these means are suggested below:

- Whilst this process is simple enough to use purely on the mental plane, many Initiates will prefer to employ a more formal ritual construct around it. I would suggest using the tools already described in this book and working them into a ritual framework, with the Opening of the Eye occurring at the climax of the rite.
- A bind-rune, chant or other means can be used to focus and direct the Will at step [6] above, binding the changed pattern into the structure of reality.
- A suitable skrying device can help when first conceptualising the Void at point [1], staring deeply into it in order to enter the trance state. This could be a small pool of ink or something similar. I personally use an egg of obsidian.

Practice will make the processes of Will and imagination involved in Opening the Eye in the Void come naturally in time. This is the very heart of any Working of successful Draconian Magic and it is important to get it right and become utterly familiar with this state of consciousness.

The Tripartite Treasure

We have so far discussed the manner in which Sigurd kills Fafnir and assimilates the Draconian Essence into his own Self, becoming the hero of legend. We have also looked at two of the powers he obtained from the Dragon as a consequence of tasting its blood: the *Ægishjálmur* itself and the ability to understand the tongues of birds and beasts. But from the Dragon's hoard, Sigurd took three items of supreme worth, which signify some of the magical abilities – directly related to the integrated Draconian Essence – which the Initiate at this stage of the curriculum might expect to start manifesting.

A large amount of gold

The bulk of the hoard consisted of a very large quantity of golden treasures. The Draconian interpretation of gold was discussed earlier when we looked at the *fehu* rune, but to briefly recap, gold / money is a medium of exchange. It is a transformational power which should flow like a river through the hands, vitalising and enriching its owner and those he directs it towards. Gold is intended to flow, to be in constant motion, else it turns into the Dragon's breath and simply consumes and devours. The gold of the hoard signifies the hero's ability to reach out and create change in the world; he now has the means to accomplish his wishes. In its most positive aspect, gold is a catalyst which speeds and eases our path; in its most negative aspect it is dammed up and hoarded and leads to the 'strife of kinsmen' which proved to be the doom of Sigurd.

Sword and mail

The second significant set of items from the hoard are

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Sigurd's arms and armour: a sword and a suit of golden mail. In the Old Norse material, the sword is given the name Hrotti and in *The Nibelungenlied* it is said to be the sword of King Nibelung, named Balmunc. In either case, the symbolic significance remains the same. Sigurd takes on the tokens of the hero, the sword to win his victories and the golden armour to give him protection. In some ways, these echo the bite and the scales of the Dragon, transfigured into a new, heroic model that shines like the sun. Sigurd now bears the means to strike down his foes, achieving his Will in the world, and the strength of Being and integration of character which will render him impervious to the malice of others. The golden colour of the armour is significant in asserting the regal nature of its wearer; the sword was also a mark of great status, deemed superior to other types of weapon.

A magic cloak

The final treasure, according to *The Nibelungenlied*, was a magic cloak known as the *Tamkappe*. This cloak was used by Sigurd to win Brynhild as wife for Gunter by deception. It had the power to deceive, to render the wearer invisible and to boost his strength. It is clear that this 'cloak' is the same sorcerous tool known as the *Ægishjálmur* – the Helm of Awe – in the Old Norse sources. The magical powers and adaptations of the Helm have already been extensively discussed.

As the Initiate enters this stage of the curriculum, he should be actively trying to manifest the qualities of these three treasures within himself in order to prove his own heroism and assert the integration of the Draconian Essence fully into consciousness. He needs to learn to live his life in the way that he chooses to do, cutting off those things that tie him

down and embracing the path that his own Will and Desire choose for him. This can entail changing jobs, relationships, location: the whole contents of your life are up for examination and evaluation as you seek to learn how to flow through life, following your Wyrð, instead of being shackled by circumstances. To accomplish this task, you must turn your Will into a sharp sword, capable of severing bonds and cutting through obstacles, and you must learn to trust in your own emergent Destiny (see later in this chapter) to see you safely through the consequences of the changes you instigate. Finally, of course, you must use the magical powers of enchantment encoded in the Helm of Awe to bend the world to your Will, remoulding it to support your feet as you enter the realm of Mystery and go out on a limb. Claim the treasures of the Dragon's hoard and the *Ægishjálmur* will come to blaze upon your brow.

Volsungadrekkja – A Working

By this stage of our curriculum, the Initiate should have completed all the crucial groundwork. As well as gaining familiarity with the runes and learning to feel and steer their flow in both himself and the world, he should also have begun to grasp the great Mysteries that lie behind this manifest world of Midgard; Mysteries of both his own soul and the Universe.

This is the point at which the base of the initiatory pyramid has been firmly built (or at least it will have been if you have practised your exercises correctly). Now it is time to seek after the Mysteries which are guessed at by few and found by fewer. To prepare for these ordeals, it is necessary to concentrate what we have so far learned and experienced of

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the Draconian Essence, focusing it intensely and then partaking of it and Willing it to transform us, just as it transformed Sigurd and elevated him to the greatest of all Germanic heroes. The following Working should be performed with all solemnity and concentration, taking your time over each element, allowing the invoked runes to transform you. This is a ritual re-enactment of Sigurd's transformation through the blood and venom of Fafnir. In many ways it is a restatement of the 'Fafnir's Hoard' Working in chapter two, reaffirming that earlier Working with the Understanding you have since gained.

Volsungadrekka means 'drink of the Volsungs' and is a direct reference to the transforming power of Fafnir's blood upon Sigurd. It was also the title of a booklet published by Order Initiate D.V. Graal which explored some of the Mysteries of this transformation, and was later reprinted in *Runa* magazine.

1. Begin by sitting quietly for a few minutes, stilling and centering your body and mind.
2. Open the ritual. This may be as simple or as complex as suits your own magical aesthetic. The Hammer Rite described in Edred Thorsson's *Futhark* is a good opener for any Working of Northern magic.
3. Invoke Odin and ask Him to unveil to you the Secrets of His favourites, the Volsungs.
4. Invoke each of the following runes, either by *stadhagaldr* or rune-singing or a combination of both. You should meditate upon the statements made below; you may find it helpful to speak them aloud. Take time over this, fully experiencing the essence of each rune as you summon the Essence of Fafnir.

- ƒ – I have bathed in the Dragon's flame. Its blood and venom course through my veins, strengthening me, for we are become as one.
 - ƒ – The Divine consciousness pours down upon me, breathing the Gift of Odin into my mind, illuminating me. Thus I am made stronger and rejuvenated by my ordeals, made anew with each moment, for I am kin to Odin.
 - ƒ – The Dragon's gold is mine to claim, its treasures are mine to wield. I will open my hands and the gold will flow from me like water, enriching the Earth, for it will have no dominion over me. For I have become one with the Dragon.
 - † – The flame grows now within my own spirit, the fire and venom that leapt from the Dragon's jaws, devouring the obstacles that are set against me, for we are become as one.
 - | – The powers of the Dragon are concentrated within me, for me to command as I Will, balanced and regulated by the focus of my own consciousness, for I am kin to Odin.
 - Ƴ – I hear the call of the Valkyrie in the core of my soul, the inspiration of the one who is my Other, elevating my consciousness to realms undreamed of, for I am kin to Odin.
5. Take up the drinking horn or chalice and hold it directly below your mouth, so that you are breathing into it. Sing the names of the six runes into it, infusing it with the Draconian Essence: *Fehu – Ansuz – Fehu – Naudhiz – Isa – Elhaz*.
 6. The chalice may be filled with the traditional mead or ale used in Northern tradition. For the present Working, it is best if the liquid used is one which has a definite 'warming' effect as it is swallowed. Cherry brandy comes highly

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recommended for the suitability of its colour, consistency, scent and the heat which suffuses the body as it is drunk.

7. Drink the contents of the chalice, feeling the liquor's fiery course as it flows into your body. Strongly affirm this to be the blood and venom of the Dragon. The venom dissolves the bonds, conditioning and inhibitions that restrict you and the blood awakens the Dragon within, forging its Essence into a union with your sense of Self, hereafter accessible directly by your consciousness. Feel yourself recreated and renewed.
8. Devise a bind-rune to express your realisation of this Draconian awakening. Ensure that it prominently features the *elhaz* rune to prefigure your aspiration for the next stage of your transformation. Draw or carve this bind-rune onto paper, wood or leather. You should display it in your future magical Workings as a statement of your attainment.
9. Visualise yourself taking up each element of Fafnir's hoard, thinking hard upon what each symbolises: the golden treasure; the sword and armour; the magical cloak. Finally, see your bind-rune blazing upon your own brow, representing the *Ægishjálmur*.
10. Spend several minutes standing in the *elhaz* posture, fervently aspiring to the Divine, visualising a radiance descending upon you. Know that it is your Destiny to touch the source of this radiance.
11. Close the ritual with the words: "So It Is Done!"

This Working will not only serve to consolidate your Work to date, fixing the Draconian Essence within your consciousness, but will also prepare you for the Work of the next chapter, preparing your psyche for the transformations still to come.

Runa

Mention has already been made that the twenty four runes of the *futhark* row are themselves but aspects of the Ultimate Rune – **Runa** – which is Mystery itself. I would be disappointed if everybody following this curriculum had not had at least an intuitive glimpse of this truth by this point. But it is now time that we started to look at **Runa** a bit more closely and to examine the implications of the concept.

Runa is the Word of the Magus Stephen Edred Flowers and it is upon this Word that Edred founded the Rune-Gild. The Formula associated with the Word – and the sole task of all Gild Initiates when it all boils down – is *Reyn til Runa!*, which means 'Seek After the Mysteries!'

To place the preceding paragraph in context, a Magus is one who Utters a sacred Word, the meaning and implication of which revolutionises the current of magical thinking and the world itself. The Formula is an expression of the Word in action.

Runa – Mystery – is the Key to all of our Work. It is the thing that makes us get out of bed in the morning. It is the whole aspiration of and motivation for magic, indeed for life itself. It is **Runa** that stirs you to find out what lies over the next hill. It is **Runa** that teaches you the distinction between your Self and the world outside of your Self. It is **Runa** that engenders Desire, not only for the things you see and want, but for the things you can only imagine. It is **Runa** that makes the extraordinary happen in the midst of the mundane.

Some of the things in the above list prefigure the Work of the next chapter, but it is as well that they start to gestate within your mind now. This too is a function of **Runa**. Also, bear in mind that **Runa** is often deemed to be a Lady by those who follow Her call.

It will be immediately apparent that **Runa** can only manifest via consciousness. The insensate neither knows of nor cares for Mystery. The Quest to Seek After the Mysteries arises from our awakened consciousness and that Quest will expand the horizons of our consciousness in ways we could never have imagined as we pursue it. It is important to meditate upon this Key now and come to Understand it.

Spend some time now to contemplate how the concept of **Runa** applies to all you have learned so far. What is the Draconian Mystery that lies at the heart of this book's curriculum and in what ways can you seek after it? In your meditation, you would be well advised to consider again the Seal of the Order of Apep, with its central Eye, three Triangles and outer Circle. Consider the tension that exists between the Dragon within and the Dragon without. Consider the angles and lines of Wyrð – possibility and potential – that extend between them, carrying the Unmanifest into manifestation. Learn to Understand, recognise and embrace this Mystery.

The Sacrifice of self to Self

We are now going to talk of a very great Mystery. It is the Mystery of how **Runa** was first sought and perceived; the Mystery of how Odin discovered the runes; the Mystery of what He sacrificed in order to do so, and Who He sacrificed it to. For if you are to progress any further, you will need to prepare yourself now and make the same sacrifice yourself.

The first step in this process of sacrifice is the intuitive perception of the presence of Mystery. It is the realisation that the Universe is more than you realise. It is the knowledge that your own Self is larger than you know. It is

the Understanding that you have not yet begun to Understand. You must begin to yearn to see what lies beyond the horizon of your current limits of consciousness. You must begin to Desire the secrets which transform potential into manifestation.

This yearning for Mystery will impress upon you how miserably small you really are when compared to the entirety of the Universe, and how miserably small the Cosmos itself is when compared to the infinite paradoxes and possibilities which are latent within Ginnungagap. But it will also awaken you to the realisation that your own consciousness is also immeasurably greater in potential than your meagre everyday thought processes. The very fact that your consciousness is able to raise these questions and dare to ask them should alert you to the fact that it has the capacity to find answers for them and to Understand this immensity. So the question before you becomes: how can I set aside my piddling little concerns and replace them with this Understanding, this greater consciousness which lies concealed within me?

Odin felt this very yearning when He sought the Mysteries, establishing the pattern for we mortal Initiates to follow. So let's pause to examine the passage in *Havamal* where He describes His ordeal (translation by W.H. Auden and P.B. Taylor:

*Wounded I hung on a wind-swept gallows
For nine long nights,
Pierced by a spear, pledged to Odhinn,
Offered, myself to myself
The wisest know not from whence spring
The roots of that ancient rood*

They gave me no bread,

*They gave me no mead,
I looked down;
with a loud cry
I took up runes;
from that tree I fell*

The only thing that we can offer up in sacrifice to wisdom is our own selves. European traditions strongly emphasise the sovereignty of the individual, but we have now realised that the everyday personality is not the sovereign Self; it is a poor usurper, a mere shadow of the fully integrated soul. So we must dethrone that lesser ego, offering it up as a sacrifice so that the greater Selfhood may assume its place, consuming it. As we shall discover in the next chapter, this is not the death of the ego / personality, but it is the end of its rulership as it becomes but a single part of something much greater.

How are we to accomplish this sacrifice? By revisiting the Work that has been done so far. Firstly, still your body and mind, quieting the everyday ego and holding the Void open for the greater consciousness which will rush in to fill it. Meditate in silent anticipation of this event. Secondly, reflect continually upon how you have integrated the Draconian Essence into your consciousness, drawing it out of the primeval mists to unite with your awareness. Then reach forward with your mind to grope for that Essence which may be reaching back to you from the other direction, the super-evolved consciousness arising in the unshaped future. Thirdly, when you have practised hard with both of these two methods and have achieved some glimmer of realisation, you must re-enact Odin's sacrifice.

It would be preferable if you could arrange for some time off work, a working week (including both weekends, for a total of nine days) would be ideal. It would also be helpful

if you could arrange to spend this time altogether alone. Leave the television and radio switched off, ensure you have enough food in to avoid going shopping, basically prepare for a few days' existence as a hermit.

This, of course, is an ideal situation and very few of us live in circumstances where we can arrange our lives to that degree. Sometimes work, family and mundane demands do intrude and there is absolutely nothing we can do about it. So we just have to do the best we can; this is not an excuse to postpone the work. Just be sure that you have made what arrangements you are able to the very best of your ability and are not guilty of shirking, for the Self to whom you now offer sacrifice can see through all of your deceptions, since it is you yourself at a much higher resonance.

At the very minimum, ensure you can be completely undisturbed for an hour or two each evening and put your all into that time. During the rest of the day, avoid conversation where possible except as absolutely necessary. No chit-chat or passing the time of day. Watch no television and be generally withdrawn and introspective in all ways.

There are three elements present in Odin's sacrifice which you must now enact for yourself:

1. He was 'pierced by a spear, pledged to Odhinn'. Now we certainly don't want anyone literally impaling themselves, but remembering that blood is used to stain and enliven the runes, you might wish to smear a little fresh blood on your set of hand-made staves to rededicate them to this purpose. But the main focus is that of offering up the limitations of the everyday personality in sacrifice, so that a higher Understanding may descend and infuse you.
2. 'I hung on a wind-swept gallows for nine long nights'. And so must you. This gallows is Yggdrasil itself, the World-

Tree. You may simply sit in long meditation upon this fact, extending yourself upon the worlds of the tree. But for maximum effect, you may wish to literally suspend yourself, perhaps looping a rope over a beam or a tree branch so that you can hang there by your wrists. This bondage will alter both your body chemistry and the intensity of your aspiration.

3. 'They gave me no bread, they gave me no mead.' You should fast for the duration of the Working, taking only water to drink when you need it and eating but a small amount of light food at the conclusion of each night's Working before you retire.

You should now spend nine nights in deep meditation, with your handmade runestaves strewn on the floor randomly before you. Consider the patterns they make and the meanings they infer. As the nights pass, increase the fervency of your aspiration, your Desire to behold Runa directly and to experience the flaming touch of true divinity brushing against your own mind.

On the ninth night, you cannot fail to awaken if you have prepared correctly. Allow the sense of divine ecstasy to take you and ride with it, wailing aloud even as Odin did when He experienced this transcendence, this enlightenment. Then, when the experience subsides, take up your runes as if you knew them for the first time.

This Working should change you dramatically, altering your priorities and your outlook. Even so, don't make the mistake of thinking that this is a one-time only experience. You will pass back and forth from wakefulness to sleep many times, until gradually the former state may begin to predominate. Nor is this the only kind of sacrifice that may be required of you. Remember how Odin also sacrificed His

eye to Mimir's well. This is not the end of your road of Initiation, it is the crossing of a frontier from one country to the next, but the journey continues.

The Wode-Self Awakes

Two parts of the soul complex really begin to come into their ascendancy at this stage of the Work and you should sense each of them as they begin to stir within your mind and rearrange its contents to gravitate around their own mighty presence. The first of these aspects of Self, which should be stirred into wakefulness by the preceding rite, is the Wode-Self. This is that higher, more essential Self to which the lower self or ego is sacrificed.

Let's briefly recap what was written about the Wode when discussing the parts of the soul earlier: "Wode is a condition of accelerated, intensified consciousness, a Divine inspiration, a kind of ecstasy or even rage in which the contents of the mind are illuminated by magical perception and insight."

In other words, you can expect to experience a heightened state of consciousness, one inspired by the touch of Divinity itself, inspired and ecstatic. This consciousness is not something outside of yourself, it **is** your Self. It is that part of you most capable of peering between the worlds and seeking the Mysteries. It is a part of you which is qualitatively different from your normal, everyday awareness and which can be rapidly sealed away behind mental barriers again by the drudge of your daily routine. It is not something new, it is something which has always been there, but beyond the threshold of your ordinary ways of thinking, occasionally seeping through in the shape of intuitions and startling

realisations which you cannot explain the origin of.

You will not be able to sustain this awareness for long, your habitual modes of thinking will reassert themselves and the old barriers will once again close off your mind. But once experienced, the phenomenon of Wode is never forgotten and it will begin to resurface with ever-increasing frequency, especially if you take the trouble to actively reach out for it. The entire structure of your Self will be irrevocably changed by this Working, as new links are forged between aspects of you and a greater degree of wholeness and integration is achieved.

Wode, is of course, derived from the name of Odin, and this higher consciousness is a manifestation of the spirit bestowed upon mankind by Odin, the gift of Self-awareness. Through this rite of sacrifice, the giving of self to Self, we awaken the same ecstasy and inspiration that Odin Himself experienced; we awaken that consciousness within us which is directly linked to the Divine source of all consciousness, the All-Father.

The Fetch

The fetch, or *fylgja*, is another aspect of the soul that you will probably begin to first become consciously aware of at about this time. This is a tutelary spirit which will set you specific initiatory challenges. We will examine the nature of those challenges and the nature of the fetch itself in the next chapter, but it is likely that you will intuit the first inklings of this entity prior to that and you should begin to keep an eye open for them now and record meticulously any strange things that may happen.

Remember that according to the lore, the fetch may

manifest in any one of three different guises: as a human figure, generally of the opposite sex to yourself; as an animal; or as a geometric shape.

Now that you have integrated the Dragon and have begun to stir the Divine spark of pure consciousness into wakefulness, the fetch will be actively seeking to connect with you, so be alert for it. Its approach will be highly personal in nature, so I can offer no further guidance than that at this point, it is up to you to be watchful.

Orlög – The Sense of Destiny

It is also at about this time in your Initiation that you will begin to develop a sense of destiny, the feeling that you are living toward a purpose that may yet be unseen, that there is a distinct trend in the direction you are heading. It is important that we should understand what this sense is and where it comes from.

Destiny, or fate, plays an apparently large part in Northern tales. Seeresses are able to foretell the future; the three Norns – Urdh, Verdhandi and Skuld – abide at the roots of Yggdrasil, weaving the pattern of past, present and future; you have probably heard of the web of Wyrð, the tapestry of all events throughout time, connecting all effects with all causes. But actually, it is not quite so straightforward as these first impressions would suggest. We need to investigate the matter a lot more closely than this.

Firstly, it is necessary to understand that for the people of Northern Europe, the future is unshaped. There exist those events that have already happened, which have inevitably led to the present moment. But there is no future, because the future has not yet happened. Edred Thorsson has

pointed out in his writings that unlike most other languages, the Germanic group of languages (of which English is one) do not have a proper future tense. It is possible to reference the past, by saying “I drank the beer”. It is possible to reference the present, by saying “I drink the beer”. But we cannot directly reference the future. Instead, we have to add another verb to fudge the issue, saying “I will drink the beer”. But this statement does not inform us that some future event is going to happen. It is but a statement of intent. We can rephrase it as “It is my intention to drink the beer”. We cannot use the English language to reference the future directly, as we can the past or the present. This is strongly indicative of how our ancestors thought of such things, and the language we use affects our own thinking and concepts now.

If this is the case, if our forefathers saw the future as an unwritten page, what is Wyrð? How could the prophetesses and practitioners of *seith* foretell the future? What was the point of casting the runestaves for purposes of divination?

Wyrð is not an account of what will be; it is a complete picture and understanding of all the intricate cross connections in the past that have led us to the present moment, all of the causes and all of the effects, together with all of the synchronicities and resonances that have rippled sideways in mysterious ways. By analysing these patterns of events, it is possible to determine the manner in which the pattern is likely to continue to unfold, and thus to determine the likely direction of future events. But these events have not happened yet; they are merely most likely to happen given the prevailing patterns of manifestation. The magician understands that behavioural patterns in human activity tend to follow set courses through to completion. Of course, it is

always possible for individuals with Will, imagination and perceptiveness to abort a pattern of behaviour and bring about something completely different. Such is, in fact, the essence of magic.

These behavioural patterns when applied to individuals are named *orlog*, an Old Norse word that means something akin to 'primal layers'. This term is suggestive of habitual actions or modes of responding. *Orlog* is the sum of the patterns and the automatic responses we have built up within ourselves over the course of our lives. As such, it is indicative of the manner in which we are **likely** to respond to any future stimulus; it is the established precedent.

As we consider this question of Destiny now, therefore, it would be a worthwhile exercise for the reader to spend a month or so observing his own responses to whatever situations he encounters on a daily basis. Learn to recognise your first instinctual response in every case and try to trace its origin. Root out and list your habits, become aware of them. Make a chart of just how predictable you are. You will find this an astonishing exercise if you carry it out thoroughly. Finally, meditate upon all that you have learned about yourself and pledge yourself to observance, so that you can act instead of reacting in future.

It should be noted at this point that the Germanic perspective upon the future actually provides for two possible interpretations. You should meditate upon both of these, weighing their merits. Such meditations upon the nature of time will stand you in good stead when you reach the Work of chapter eight. The first concept is that the future is completely unshaped and happens only as we reach it. This might be termed the orthodox interpretation. But the often outlandish ideas of quantum physics propose the intriguing idea that all possible futures exist and that we steer our course

through these possibilities, selecting which time stream to actualise on this plane of reality. This latter model is delightfully paradoxical, allowing for both complete predestination and total free will both at the same time, within a single model. There is something about this which is magnificently Odian. Again, we shall be returning to such considerations in chapter eight.

So what does all of this mean when we consider Destiny? It means that the notion that our fates and the fate of the world are set in stone is erroneous, but it allows that our paths into the Is-To-Be may be predictable to a greater or lesser degree. It also means that the patterns established by past events and modes of behaviour acquire a kind of gravity, wearing grooves of least resistance into probability, steering cause and effect along certain lines (*orlog*). That which has happened once is most likely to happen again. That which has happened several times will most definitely happen again. If time is a stream, it rarely flows up mountains, it tends to follow a well-worn course.

But it will have occurred to you over the course of your Work so far that much of magic is concerned with the threefold process of: (a) identifying the aspects of our Self; (b) pruning those patterns of behaviour which are not conducive to our Will; (c) creating and establishing new patterns of behaviour which will lead to the fulfilment of Desire.

This raises the intriguing notion that an Initiate creates his own behavioural patterns and takes absolute responsibility for his own deeds. We therefore produce our own *orlog*, which resonates with our magical Will and Vision. Thus, as we progress along our Path, our every action – indeed, our every intent – builds up a magical momentum, a tangible force which drives us on in our direction, following a

very real Destiny which we have in fact created for ourselves.

You should take time to meditate upon this fact and consider its full ramifications, for it will inform everything that you do from this point onward. Here is that lesson which I am always keen to point out: do not work magic unless you yourself are willing to be changed thereby.

A Creature of Midgard

All of these weighty questions and realisations which occur at this stage of the initiatory journey give rise to one final question which we need to consider before leaving the Work of this chapter: this is the question concerning the enormity of the Universe, and what is my place in it?

It is at this point that I am going to make one of my most dramatic departures from many schools of Initiatory thought and spiritual ideas. It is normal in such schools (or at least those which know their onions) to assert that their Initiates are gods, or are becoming gods and are just one step away from omnipotence. This is an absurd assertion.

How many people have you met who lay claim to exalted titles, who pronounce themselves portentously to be gods in the making, but still have to push their trolley round the supermarket the next morning, nosing for bargains? This ego-inflation is one of the greatest dangers of magical practice and the stage which you are now at if you have been following the Work so far, is the stage at which it reaches its maximum threat.

I am not for one moment denying that there is a spark of the Divine in humankind. This is the Gift that Odin placed within our species, awakening us. This is the kinship that we share with the All-father, the ancestral, sovereign God. But

that Divine spark moves within us and brings us into manifestation in the sphere that is ours. We are not Gods, we are men and women. We should seek to be the best, most Divinely inspired and enlightened men and women we can possibly be, but men and women we are and remain.

Much of the confusion regarding this question arises from the introduction of alien notions of Godhood into European thought. In original European thinking, the Gods are in the blood, They are not omnipotent, They are not omniscient and They are not omnipresent. In a philosophy that postulates a cosmos shaped from the Chaos of the Void by Will, a cosmos which is susceptible to continual change and renewal, such concepts simply do not fit. The cosmos tends toward manifestation and the Gods are among the forces that shape it and direct it toward those ends. Humanity arises within that enclosure of manifestation, Midgard, but we possess the Odian Gift of consciousness and thus are able to conceptualise the worlds beyond this one and use our Wills to shape this world to our needs.

Humanity is not in a 'fallen state'. We stand in that place to which the whole Universe is tending and we ride the wave into the Is-To-Be. Is this not the most glorious place for us to be? Is this not the very cutting edge of creation? Not a withdrawal into some 'heaven', but a progression into manifestation? Consider well who you are, where you are, and how you got here. These are the most important questions you can now ask yourself.

We will return in part to this question in the next chapter when considering the question of immortality, but be sure to understand the imperative here first.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE MYSTERIES OF DESIRE

Runa as the Lady

In this chapter, as the title suggests, we shall be looking more deeply into the feminine Mysteries concerning Freyja and Runa. We will also be examining the importance of Desire to the Initiate and the way in which it manifests as an Initiatory tool, and as a power source for operative sorcery. The ideas touched upon here have significant implications for the lore of the soul, so we will be returning to that subject with a more experienced eye and considering the implications of our Initiatory Path as regards the possible immortality of the soul.

It is important to begin this chapter with a reiteration of one of the key facts mentioned in the previous chapter: Runa is often figured as a Lady. She is Faust's Eternal Feminine, who draws us ever on. Think about it and you will see how apt this description truly is. I am not going to labour the point, although I will certainly be returning to it and touching upon it again throughout this chapter. But I want to state quite clearly that everything that is said here about

Desire and the Other applies first and foremost to the pursuit of Mystery Herself, which is the first and only law of the runer. *Reyn til Runa* – Seek after the Mysteries. Bear this in mind through all that you read. It would be well to set aside some time to meditate regularly upon this idea throughout the practice of this chapter's arts.

Freyja – Goddess of Eroticism, Sovereignty and War

We have already touched upon much of the symbolic attributes of Freyja in chapter one and have begun the process of exploring Her magical techniques in chapter five. I would recommend returning to those chapters to study anew the relevant sections now, illuminated by the light of the Work you have already accomplished and the Understanding you have won. It would also not be a bad idea to return to the *Eddas* to look afresh at the source mythologies concerning this Goddess, for She is crucial to the Work of this chapter.

There are three major functions which pervade the essence of Freyja and which are of utmost importance to the Initiate at this stage in Initiation. The first of these is eroticism; the second is sovereignty; the third is war. All three of these themes and principles will weave in and out of this chapter. In some cases, their influence will be obvious, in other cases it will be subtle. But it will always be present. It is up to the reader to raise up the standards of these three Divine principles at the forefront of his mind and to ask as he progresses through the Work of this chapter, “In what way does this reflect upon the Work of the erotic principle? How does this establish my sovereignty? What am I championing here? Against what am I fighting?” If you remember to keep those questions in mind, and if you can furnish answers

through your own insights, then you will do well.

In most modern religions, it is unheard of to hear eroticism associated with the Divine. This is because most modern religions are alien and antagonistic toward the values and principles of our ancestors. They have lost the sense of being descended from the Divine in very flesh and blood. They have concerned themselves with a retreat into a heavenly daydream and have lost sight of the fact that the universal imperative is toward manifestation. They have separated flesh and spirit, when there can be no distinctions between the two; both are but aspects of the Whole Man. They have forgotten pleasure and delight, the sheer joy of life and the appreciation of what it means to be alive. And any God who forgets that, or allows his followers to forget that, is not worthy of the title.

Freyja is under no such delusions. She is a Goddess in whom Desires runs deep. So don't hold back and be stiff-necked and aloof when you address Her, as if afraid to offend a maiden aunt. Laugh and be joyful. Your Desires are Her worship, your pleasures and joys are Her manifestation. Make no mistake.

Sovereignty is a central focus and goal of the Work of this book. The aim is for the individual to ascend to the throne of his own being and to become the sovereign of his own world. You are the ruler of your own life, you and no other, and this is a principle championed by Freyja.

As for war, we all wish to live peaceful lives, but there will come those times when we need to fight for what we believe in, what we cherish. When others try to topple your sovereignty, you must repel them; when your Desires are difficult to explain, you will need to fight to achieve them. But the greatest conflict of all is the Invisible War, the struggle between consciousness and conformity.

The Eternal Feminine

*“Everything that can be perceived
is only a symbol;
the imperfect, which cannot be realized,
here makes itself reality;
that which cannot be described,
here finally completes itself.
It is the eternal feminine,
always attracting us to the higher.”*

Goethe – *Faust*

If there is one thing which most characterises the struggle of the soul as it reaches this point of its initiatory journey, it is the Desire of the Self for the Other.

This Desire for the Other is described perfectly in the quote from Goethe, above, and he so accurately labels it 'the Eternal Feminine'. This is why **Runa** is so often envisioned and addressed as a Lady.

For isn't this the ultimate manifestation of **Runa**? The search for the Other, for that which is not yourself – i.e. that which is Mysterious and Unknown to you – and yet which is the perfect mirror and complement for yourself?

This Desire may be traced and analysed in order to better understand and direct your Quest. In the previous chapter, we mentioned *orlog*, the 'primal layers' which steer behaviour down certain avenues, shaped and weighted by the decisions and actions we have made in the past. We may examine this *orlog* in order to determine the shape and the essence of our Desire.

Take some time to think back over all of your previous lovers and crushes. Who have you ever fancied,

when and why? Make an exhaustive list of all the people who have ever caught your eye.

You now have a lengthy catalogue of the individuals you find attractive. Now work your way back through the list with three highlighters to hand. Highlight those who you find so beautiful that it's actually painful in one colour; those who are very attractive but not quite so eye-searingly gorgeous in another colour; those who attracted you because of a single specific feature or two in the third colour. (Note that at this stage we are concerned only with physical attractiveness, not the personality of the people.)

Next you should concentrate upon that smaller group corresponding to the first category, your ideals of absolute beauty incarnate. Try to synthesise an ideal Form out of these various expressions until you are left with a clear perception of your perfect ideal of Beauty. You should use all of the creative tools at your disposal when carrying out this task. Draw, paint, sculpt, model, write effusive descriptions. If you have the technical know-how, use computer 3D modeling programs; even the character creation routines for many recent video games will prove useful. But do not rest until this ideal image is real in your mind.

Now turn to the complete list of all three categories. Start making a list of the recurring features which repeat time and again in those you find attractive. What features stand out? Perhaps it's a specific eye colour? A snub nose? A particular hairstyle? Write them all down. Write, analyse and condense until you have a list of the most repeated descriptors. Then spend some time considering **why** these particular things are so attractive to you. Don't look to books for answers, you must find your own. When did each feature *first* grab your attention? Trace back your erotic triggers to their very origins in a series of meditations and don't rest until

you have successfully done so.

These exercises in evaluating and categorising your own erotic / aesthetic triggers will greatly enhance your awareness of such triggers in your future erotically charged encounters. On the one hand, this will enable you to retain a measure of control since you will understand what is happening. Thus you will be able to act instead of reacting, you will not be a puppet to be played on strings. On the other hand, it will allow you to take those triggers to new peaks, creating an epicurean aesthetic and erotic consciousness from your own past experience. More importantly than either of these two immediately life-enhancing factors, however, is that your new Understanding of your erotic imprinting will provide a clear and well-defined channel through which the Other may manifest.

This exercise should also have made it apparent to you that your personal erotic and aesthetic triggers that govern attraction are something within yourself, a set of features and proportions that have acquired a particular imprint for you personally. In other words, in the initial stages of attraction, it is **ourselves** we are invoking and interacting with, not the other person. Our standards of beauty are projected upon them and we experience an erotic response when a certain level of resonance is achieved.

Past that point, you have no claim over the other person. As Aleister Crowley declared it, "Every man and every woman is a star." There can be no possessiveness or 'ownership' in any true relationship; there can be only a mutual agreement, which either party may withdraw from at any time. Freyja is not only a Goddess of eroticism, but also of sovereignty and She will not tolerate a lack of respect for the sovereignty of others. This enlightened attitude is, alas, all too uncommon in human relationships, most of which are

based upon need or dependency. The Initiate can not afford to make such a mistake and must honour the sovereign individual.

Fenrir – The Hunger, Chained and Loosed

The closing comments of the preceding section lead us to consider the important fact that Desire may manifest in both positive and negative ways. There is the Desire that inspires and there is the Desire that consumes. We may call this latter, negative manifestation of Desire 'Hunger'. If Desire as a positive force is exemplified in the Goddess Freyja, Hunger is represented by the wolf Fenrir.

Fenrir was the son of Loki, a spirit in monstrous wolf-form, whose appetite was so great and growth so rapid and terrifying that the Æsir feared that he would consume all of Asgard and ultimately the world.

The Gods created a chain strong enough to bind Fenrir and had to resort to trickery to persuade him to let them put it on him. They made a wager with the wolf that he could not break free of the chain. Fenrir was dubious about their promises to free him afterwards, but agreed to participate when Tyr placed His hand in the wolf's mouth as a pledge of good faith. Fenrir strained with all his might but could not break loose. The Gods then refused to release him and the ravening Hunger was bound. But Tyr lost His right hand in the furious wolf's jaws for betraying the oath.

When does Desire transform into Hunger? When does a positive, motivational power metamorphose into an inward spiral of greed and consumption? When the thing Desired becomes more important than the evolutionary motive underpinning the Desire. When we cling onto things

instead of principles. Yet because the Desire is founded upon a principle rather than a thing, the thing can never satisfy and thus more and more is demanded to sate the craving, in ever huger and more monstrous forms, a downward trend that can never be satisfied, but can only become greedier, hungrier and more desperate.

Possessiveness is the Key which transforms Desire into Hunger: the urge to possess instead of to experience, to allow matters to flow and take their own course. This is a Mystery of the *fehu* rune. Funds (or Desire) must flow, not be hoarded, in order to avoid the curse of the Dragon's gold.

Fenrir is the ultimate Form of the addictive personality. This is something that many magicians are tainted with, it is the very thing that draws some to magic in the first place. It is something that needs to be overcome, to be chained as Fenrir was by the Æsir. The alternative is a form of lycanthropy, where the werewolf-self will lie low for a while, yet continually reassert itself in new displays of obsessive and addictive behaviour that make a mockery of our claims of higher consciousness and Self-awareness.

It must be remembered, however, that it was necessary to bind Fenrir with trickery and that there was a price to pay. The noble deed, the sacrifice of the hand of Tyr, is a part of this realisation. Our greeds, our jealousies, our possessive streaks, will always remain with us. They can only be chained by placing our hands willingly in their mouths and those chains will only hold so long as we remember this: we possess absolute freedom, but as we seek to evolve beyond the bestial toward the divine, we must establish our own order, binding some of our freedoms so that others may flourish. Our appetites cannot all have an absolute free reign without undoing the progress we have made.

Rediscovering Sorcery

At this stage of Initiation, you will be applying your energies to understanding the great Mysteries of your own Self and the Universe in which you find yourself. You will be busy integrating the various aspects of your soul and unifying your consciousness so that it may touch truly Divine levels of inspiration. You will have succeeded in ordering your daily life so that everything ticks along just so, allowing you to pursue your magical studies in the most effective way. Although life will always have its little ups and downs, everything will tend to go just as smoothly and as comfortably for you as it possibly can. This is useful, but can also be an extremely dangerous state of affairs if you are not careful.

It is very important for you to continue to test your limits. At this stage of Initiation this can be a very difficult thing to do, because your psyche will (hopefully) be firing on all cylinders, and the Universe will tend to fall into line with your Will almost automatically, giving you a smooth ride. This is great news for your personal development, you will be able to progress by leaps and bounds, but the risk is that you will start to lose your edge. You need some resistance in your life to strike sparks off. So how to find it without making things unnecessarily difficult for yourself? You certainly don't want to take a step backwards, after all.

You find it be deliberately seeking out opportunities to practise sorcery. You find these opportunities by seeking to help people. There are, however, a couple of very important points to be borne in mind here. Firstly, make sure that the people **want** your help. Secondly, be careful what kind of help you choose to give. Never forget that you are always a factor in your own magic and you will be changed by everything you do. Assisting someone to pass their exams,

recover from an illness, or increase their store of *hamingja* (luck), can only reflect well on you. Cursing someone's neighbour for taking their parking space could have dire consequences, tainting you with someone else's petty squabble that you should have no part in.

But those important considerations being made, most magicians will begin focusing a lot of their energy on helping others at this stage in their initiatory path. They don't really need to work sorcery for themselves any more, things just tend to click into place around them. But they can keep their skills honed and their edges sharp by Working on behalf of others. Note that contrary to what some may say, there is no reason why you should not charge for such services if you do so ethically and reasonably, because you will certainly be paying a price yourself. You will be exposing yourself to change and challenge. But this, of course, is precisely the purpose.

There is another factor at work here as well, of course, which is crucial to the Work of this chapter. Sorcery is an expression of your Desire. It is a statement of your belief that the world should be different in order to approach the idealised model in your head. True Sorcery is an expression and manifestation of your sense of Beauty, Purpose and Justice. It embodies those three principles of Eroticism, Sovereignty and War. So when addressing any situation, always ask yourself what is your highest Desire.

Crafting Bizarre Artefacts

You can also continue to keep your magical muscles in trim by marrying them with your general creative urges and creating bizarre and beautiful magical artefacts and tools as

expressions of your Initiation. Many magicians who approach this initiatory level find that their creative impulses begin to express themselves in very potent ways. Some will write, some will paint, some will sculpt, some will create music, but I have never yet met an effective magician who was not also tremendously creative. When the mind unites, the floodgates are opened. This too is an expression of Desire, an urge to manifest the Beauty of the Other.

This creativity need not be limited to recreational or entertainment purposes, nor need it be focused upon teaching. It is possible to display your Initiation as an example to all by crafting symbolic items which will enhance your magical world. Let's consider a few ways in which this can be done, along with a few historic examples.

You will be completely familiar with all of the techniques of magical practice by this stage. You will already have established a working set of tools to suit your needs, so you no longer face the pressing need to find or fashion such things quickly. This therefore means that you now have time to begin fashioning your ritual space and tools at your leisure, to become something really and powerfully representative of your aesthetic. It doesn't matter if it takes you eighteen months to complete an item, because you can use the one you've always used previously in the meantime. So you may decide to continue working on an old coffee table, whilst in your garage you are crafting an ornately carved and painted altar which will ultimately take its place. You may be painting or embroidering beautiful wall hangings depicting dragons and mythic scenes which will inspire you and fuel your magic when they are finally finished and hang on the walls of your ritual space. Now is the time to carry out all of those long term, intricate tasks that were always so impossible and distant in the early, 'rush hour' period of your Initiation.

This is also the time when you can think outside of the box and really express your magical creativity. You can craft artefacts which are truly unique and bizarre for specific purposes. These may be wands, amulets, cups, tables, or items of clothing. Anything that expresses your purpose. Some of the wild and wonderful magical items found in fantasy role-playing games come to mind as examples. But probably the most bizarre example comes from real life. I am talking, of course, of the infamous Necropants. These trousers were made from the skin of a dead human being. The skin was taken in a single piece from the waist downwards, dried and treated, and made into a pair of leathery trousers of a particularly grotesque appearance. These were supposed to ensure a steady stream of coined money to the person who wore them. If you search online, you will readily find a photograph of the particularly gruesome Necropants on display in the Icelandic Museum of Witchcraft and Sorcery. I hasten to add that I am certainly not suggesting that anyone today fashions a pair of Necropants, but don't be afraid to be bizarre and creative in less gruesome ways.

Loki and Tangential Tantra

We referenced Loki earlier as the trickster and mischief-maker among the Æsir, the God who would invariably get the other Gods into trouble, but whose skills and sharp wits would inevitably be required to get them out of it again. We also posited that Loki may actually be a projection from Odin Himself, a kind of 'shadow-self' who introduces the element of the random and unexpected into one's path.

At this stage of an Initiate's development, the

interjections of Loki into initiatory Work will start to become really noticeable. You will find that your magic quickly brings the results you ask for, but that bizarre and unlooked-for side-effects and synchronistic events that bear little connection to your original purpose also begin to increasingly manifest.

Some might argue – and this would certainly have been the case with those Edwardian magical pioneers such as Aleister Crowley and the good gentlemen and ladies of the Golden Dawn, to whom reason and conscious control was paramount – that this is an unwanted and undisciplined phenomenon and something which should be avoided and stamped out at all costs. Today, following the contributions of the Chaos Magic schools to magical thought, we are free to think quite otherwise.

In actual fact, the further we advance, the **more** prevalent these unforeseen happenings (termed 'tangential tantra' by Kenneth Grant) will become, not less. For as we unify and harmonise the various parts of our souls, so we can expect an increasing amount of new material to be offered up to us from the deep, dark places in response to our magic, alongside our actual anticipated results. This is not a failing, nor a weakness, but a signification of our personal development.

What kind of manifestations can we expect as tangential tantra? These will be entirely unique to the individual, a chain of synchronicities that will lead – if followed – to a new Understanding, something that would not otherwise have been attained. Expect them to be strange and bizarre. They will also very often be keyed to Desire. On one occasion, without going into details, the sight of a homeless woman asking for change in a London alley led me on a pilgrimage spanning over a year and taught me the Mysteries

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of the Banshee and the essence and worship of the Celtic Goddess Badb.

These tangential tantra, like the mischievous machinations of Loki, will throw you off your intended course, compelling you to follow their lure. But this is why they have been given to you: if you follow them, you will uncover new Mysteries that are now beckoning to you and which you would not otherwise have discovered. If you disregard them, the deep places of your psyche will assume you are not interested in their input and will cease to communicate with you, turning away and undoing all of the work you have put into your Self-development. If you're not going to listen to the deeper parts of yourself, it's best not to awaken them in the first place, for – like Loki – they can become nasty.

Reading Life's Runes

The Initiate will have become very familiar with reading runes in divination in order to trace the developing patterns of Wyrd in the World. But now it is essential to reach one step further, a step which is quite logical and which should be obvious to those who have performed the rite emulating Odin's sacrifice and rune-winning in the last chapter. You must now learn to read the patterns unfolding in the world **directly** and then extrapolate backwards in order to discover the runes at their root. This will transform the whole field of time and space into a picture book which your magically sensitised vision may read.

Some runes are easy to read. For instance, any matter of motion will involve *raidho*, money matters will invoke *fehu*. So you should be able to begin this practice very easily

and readily. Other layers and patterns underlying the processes of life may be more subtle, requiring a more intuitive touch. And don't forget that every situation is multi-faceted. Every happening will have motives and past influences which lie behind it. Try to discern these, and soon you will be carrying out your own rune-castings, entirely within your own mind

This level of runic awareness and perceptual ability will stand you in excellent stead for the remaining Work.

The Fetch in the Flesh

The fetch has already been described when discussing the soul lore of the Germanic peoples. There it was said that:

The fetch surrounds and touches the other parts of the soul, but is not itself a part or a possession of the individual. It is an essence which is transpersonal, spanning generations. The fetch may appear to a person in three forms: (a) as an animal; (b) as an entity of the opposite sex; (c) as a geometric shape.

The fetch is of enormous importance to the Work of this chapter and those beyond it. It is vitally important that you learn to communicate with the fetch and heed its advice. So far, so mystical. Yet you may be surprised to learn that the fetch will generally manifest in a solid, living form and will turn your life on its head in doing so.

If the fetch chooses to appear as an animal, then you will recognise the otherworldly character of that animal and will be able to deduce its message for you. If it appears as a

person of the opposite sex, you will feel a strong affinity for that person and their arrival will be heralded by a series of meaningful synchronicities; you will need to develop matters from there. Your interactions with the fetch in this form will be more complex, since it will be capable of speech. In its final form as a geometric shape, the fetch will attract your attention with a recurring image or design in which a particular shape is dominant. You will then be drawn to follow that shape; it may lead you off your expected course, indicating another way to go, or it may simply dominate your thoughts, turning them in a particular direction. In all cases, it is up to you to make the effort toward effective communication.

What, then, does this mean? Are we to interpret the speech of every tom, dick and harry as a message from a supernatural entity linked to our soul and to our ancestry? Not at all. It is essential to have developed a sense of due proportion and a subtle awareness of what constitutes an otherworldly communication and what does not by the time you reach this stage in your Initiation. If you cannot do so, go back and work thoroughly through all the preceding chapters again until you can.

Also, it would be a fallacy to assume that the fetch permanently incarnates itself within a given person, animal or thing. I am not saying that this can never happen, but I am certainly saying that it is unlikely in the extreme. The fetch will adopt any number of guises in order to get its messages across to you, speaking perhaps a single sentence through a given host at a time, then leaving that host to his / her / its own devices, probably utterly unaware of having been utilised as a supernatural mouthpiece. It is up to you to distinguish and understand such messages when they come.

The question may be asked whether the fetch may

embody an erotic component, given its frequent manifestation in the form of a person of the opposite sex. It may do so, of course, and that erotic element may in itself prove to be initiatory in nature. But this should not be assumed as a given, it will not always be the case. For an example where the erotic emphasis is definitely present, we need look no further than Sigurd, the heroic exemplar utilised throughout this book. This will be discussed much more thoroughly in the section of this chapter entitled 'Desire as the Engine for Immortality', which follows shortly. But before you think you have a cosy handle on this concept, let me throw you a particularly barbed question for your consideration: does Sigurd's fetch manifest in and speak through Brynhild, or Guðrún, or both?

The Effects of Death on the Soul Complex

Before proceeding to address the vexing question posed above, it is first necessary to consider the constitution of the soul in Northern lore once again, most especially the effects of the process of dying upon the various parts of the mind / body / soul complex.

The lyke, the physical body, dies of course, since it is bound to Midgard and is discarded when the soul withdraws to other worlds. The elements which make up that body are then broken down, decomposing in order to be reused in the ever-changing material realm. The soul will build a new lyke around itself when it is reborn.

The hyde, that shaping influence which gives form to the soul's manifestation, withdraws from the body it has shaped. It is this withdrawal of the hyde which triggers the process of decomposition as the underlying structure is

removed from the body. The hyde departs with the immortal parts of the soul and will begin shaping a new home when the soul is reborn in the world, establishing itself in a new physical envelope and moulding that body to reflect the individual's qualities.

The athen, the life-force which animates the body, is also removed from this plane, sustaining the soul as it fares across the bridge to the higher worlds. Upon its departure, the body of the deceased becomes mere matter, with no life of its own. The many tiny life forms and bacteria which co-exist with a body in life, now begin to break down the structure.

So far, all of the parts we have mentioned have been connected either directly with the physical body, or with its shaping and animation. Now we begin to examine the invisible parts of the human complex, such as the hugh and the myne, thought and memory. These certainly don't remain within the physical shell, they can be presumed to depart to the higher or lower realms on Yggdrasil, along with the other invisible parts of the self. I suspect in most cases that these functions then remain in the immaterial realms, along with the part of the soul which is truly transcendent and immortal (see later). Certainly, when the soul is reborn into a new life, it brings very little of the previous life's thoughts and memories back with it, though occasionally something may be carried across. I have the hunch that the more coherent and integrated the personality is within life, the more cohesion and direct memory there will be between incarnations. This continuity of conscious identity and memory is one of the highest aims of Initiation. In any case, the hugh and myne will always remain available to the greater Self in Asgard, or will at least be accessible in the freezing halls of Hel, where the redundant and dormant aspects of accrued experience slumber until needed.

The wode is that part of the soul which is capable of inspired consciousness, the illuminated part which is touched by the Divine. This aspect is named after Odin and its abode is in Asgard. The wode ascends and takes up its station at the loftiest point of the World-Tree. Indeed, I would argue that Asgard is the **natural** abode of the wode and that it is located there even when the soul is manifest in earthly life. The wode may descend and communicate with the other parts of Self when inspiration floods the being, but its natural roost is in the Highest. In this way, the wode accrues ever greater experience, wisdom and knowledge as the individual is reborn each successive time. This part of the soul loses none of its essence or substance, but increases in power and intensity over the course of lifetimes, so that the advanced soul gains increasingly from its inspiration and wise influence.

The fetch we have already spoken of in this chapter. It is attached to the soul of the individual in life, but is greater than him, a tutelary spirit which is transpersonal, spanning generations. Upon the end of a particular life, therefore, the fetch will go on its way, attaching itself to some other newborn member of the family line. It may be that in years to come, when the individual is reborn, it may attach itself to him again, but this is not a given.

An individual's luck is an expression of many factors: his outlook on life; his courage; his deeds; his generosity; his understanding of the ways of *wyrd*. It is thus a faculty which is generated for the most part by the deep places of the soul, and it can be presumed to pass on from this world with the less tangible parts of being. Wherever the soul sojourns next, whether passing a span of time in other worlds, or entering quickly back into rebirth in this world, its luck will still accompany it, manifesting anew alongside it. Luck is generated by the Self in motion and will thus be wherever

consciousness resides at any given time.

The core of the soul itself, that sense of selfhood around which the other faculties revolve, will generally pass into one of the other worlds for a time whilst its attendant parts are analysed and distributed as above. If it has accomplished nothing worthy or notable, it may simply sink down to the halls of Hel, there to sleep until sent forth into the world again. If it has unfinished work that it wishes to accomplish between lives, it may perhaps do this in Svartalfheim. It may reside with its ancestors in the wonder of Ljossalfheim. A particularly shining example of an Initiated Self may reside in Asgard, fused with the Wode-Self.

The Wode-Self is that part of the consciousness which is directly touched with the Gift of Odin, the Flame of Self-awareness and all-potential. As such, it remains in Asgard and never descends fully into manifestation when the soul is reborn in Midgard. Of course, there is always a link between the manifest self and the eternal Wode-Self of which it is a projection, namely the faculty of wode itself, as mentioned above. The ecstatic, Divine consciousness of the Wode-Self may become immanent and apparent to the incarnate self when the wode, hugh and myne – the tricameral mind – are harmonised and resonating together as a result of successful Initiation.

If you consider the implications of this, it makes a profound statement about what befalls the soul during the death process. When people talk of dying, they normally think of the soul departing this world and going somewhere else. But according to the above model, the Wode-Self, the most highly evolved part of us, is **already** in that other place. So we don't actually go anywhere at all, since we are already there. All that happens is that the lens of Self makes a transition from being body-centred to being wode-centred.

Through the practices outlined in this book, the Initiate may become accustomed to this transition whilst still in earthly life.

Desire as the Engine for Immortality

Having established that according to the Northern soul model, there is a part of us which is truly immortal and incorporeal, and that it projects its sense of Self into this world to be reborn periodically, we should now find ourselves asking the question, “So what is the engine that drives this process? What is it that leads us into rebirth?”

The Immortality Engine is a key function of this level of Initiatory Work, as it begins to inform all of the Work that you do. The name of this engine is Desire, which has already come under scrutiny in this chapter as a function of the Goddess Freyja.

This needs a little explanation. After all, a Buddhist would explain to you that Desire is a very bad thing, the root of all sorrow in the world since it serves only to remind us of those things we do not have. Get rid of Desire, they say, and enlightenment might be obtained. But let us not forget the final goal of most orthodox Buddhist philosophy: a state of Nothingness. But this is not the goal of the philosophy of our forebears; their philosophy – and ours – is to enjoy a vital existence and to always seek to discover what lies over the next horizon. For such a philosophy as ours, Desire is a positive necessity. Bearing in mind that we have already drawn the essential distinction between Freyja and Fenrir: the Desire to explore and to experience, and the Hunger to possess and consume.

So we may establish Desire as a positive force that

drives us to accomplish our goals in life, to chase after our dreams and visions. We should therefore be able to see that it is a life-enhancing and life-sustaining quality. Desire is what makes it worth our while to get up in the morning, to face the new day with hope and courage in our hearts. Without it, life becomes a tedious routine, depressing and mundane, and who in such a condition would possibly want immortality?

The next question we have to ask is: what do we Desire? I am not speaking of specific instances here such as we explored earlier in this chapter, though our findings then should help us in resolving this current question. Instead I am trying to discover the essential Principle that fuels Desire. So what is it that we Desire?

The answer to this question was, I believe, provided best by Plato, who discussed it in *The Symposium*. Plato argued that people Desire that which is beautiful. So the Principle which arouses Desire is Beauty. But Plato didn't leave it there. He went on to argue that if something is truly beautiful, then it must be beautiful eternally, for true Beauty (he was talking here of the Principle itself rather than individual manifestations of that Principle) is imperishable; otherwise, how could it be beautiful? So in his argument Plato now moves the goalposts one stage further, implying that our Desire for Beauty is actually a Desire for immortality.

This is not such a hard thing to imagine and when I first grasped this concept it grew within me until it is now a central tenet of my philosophy. That which causes us up to bother getting up in the morning is the quest for Beauty; this is the Desire that drives us. Moreover, it is this same quest for Beauty which causes us to seek rebirth in the world, to en flesh our Desire once more and to follow Beauty's siren call into new manifestation. This is the Immortality Engine, the

Eternal Feminine which draws us ever on. This concept is also implied in reverse by the later Germanic magical legend of Faust. In one of the versions of Faust's Pact, he obtains magical powers from the Devil and may lead a life filled with as much wealth and pleasure as he will for as long as he will, but the Devil may claim his soul in payment if Faust should ever become bored of his existence. This proclaims the same truth from a contrary position of outraged piety: that so long as Desire continues to drive us on, we are on the path of immortality.

This concept is expressed in many of the Dragon myths told in Indo-European culture. Before we turn our attention to that specific myth which is most central to the Work of *Ægishjalmur*, let's examine the themes which recur in almost every European folk tale concerning the slaying of Dragons:

- There is always a town terrorised by a Dragon.
- In lieu of destroying the town and devouring all its people, the Dragon demands the sacrifice of a maiden at periodic intervals.
- Sometimes this maiden is specifically fated for her role, at other times she is chosen by lot. But in any event, she always turns out to be either a princess or (in more bourgeois versions) the daughter of the local mayor or town official.
- The town proceeds to chain the maiden at the appointed place, but has secretly sent out calls for heroes to rescue her from her fate, promising her hand and / or the town's wealth in payment.
- A hero arrives, either from foreign parts, or a local who has been long away and is now returning home after accomplishing great deeds.

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- The hero slays the dragon.
- The hero marries the maiden and becomes heir to the kingdom.
- “And they all lived happily ever after.”

So the hero (the conscious Will) slays the Dragon (the bestial nature) because of Desire for the maiden (the fetch), through which relationship he becomes ruler of the land (the integrated psyche, with all its powers awakened).

We have already mentioned the Faust legend in relation to Desire as the Immortality Engine, and this pattern is played out there, as Faust defies the Devil for the sake of Margaret and wins redemption (this thematic emphasis is superbly realised in F.W. Murnau's movie *Faust*).

But we can most profitably trace these Dragon-slaying mythological themes in the tale of Sigurd, who is the heroic exemplar of the *Ægishjálmur* curriculum. Sigurd himself is the hero, of course, and he is of noble blood, the surviving heir of the Volsung line. He overthrows Fafnir and gains the powers of the Dragon. This victory grants him the power and the courage to penetrate the wall of fire which surrounds the Valkyrie Brynhild and awaken her from her sorcerous sleep. Brynhild represents the Divine messenger, Sigurd's link with the Gods. Upon that hill they pledge themselves to each other.

This is the theme of the Work of *Ægishjálmur*: that the conscious Self overcomes the Beast within and integrates with it. This balanced, whole Self may then reach out and touch Divinity. This is the Work that every Initiate must do who has persevered through to the present chapter and it is a Work which will be primarily approached through the fetch. With the assistance of this transpersonal essence which impinges upon your own soul, you must reach out to discover

the principles and the aspirations which truly drive you on when all else has been left behind. You must discover, identify and follow after the Beauty that you Desire, which will make you truly immortal.

In the saga, of course, things ultimately ended tragically for Sigurd and Brynhild. They are brought low by greed and treachery, the cursed, aversive aspect of *fehu*. But this need not and should not be the case for you. Remember that the Dragon's treasures must be allowed to flow freely. They are not to be seized or jealously hoarded. The further you progress in your Initiation, the more expansive you should become. Remember this and you should do well.

Connecting With Ancestral Spirits and the Gods

As you progress towards communion with Divine levels of consciousness at this stage of your Initiation, you should introduce some ritual element into your practice for connecting with the Æsir and the Vanir, the Ljósalfar and the Svartalfar, and the honoured spirits of your ancestors.

There are various ways of doing this. One is to take a spirit journey through the nine worlds until you approach the realm of the God or spirit you seek, then call out to Him / Her / It. Speak with them on this level and write down what you have learned when you return.

Another way is to devise a suitable ritual for the purpose (good examples are given in the books of Edred Thorsson). This can be directed towards any God or spirit you may wish (there are long lists of elf and dwarf names in the *Poetic Edda*) and can be done to seek wisdom on a particular issue, or simply to sense their essence and to make some exchange or oath with them.

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It should be noted that it is deemed appropriate to pour out half the contents of the chalice or horn upon the earth as an offering to the being you call upon (or if indoors, into a bowl which will later be poured upon the earth), so if you do devise your own ritual, this step should be incorporated into it.

There are many reasons for calling upon the Gods, elves and spirits, ranging from increase of wisdom and knowledge, through to veneration and worship of them and the principles they represent, through to seeking their assistance in practical magical results. But in all cases it must be borne in mind that the Gods of the North do not respond well to the grovelling that is common in most religions. Approach them as if they were honoured kin, or as a warrior to his lord. The human soul is a noble thing, vitalised by the threefold Gift of Odin. To demean that Gift by abasing yourself is to demean the Giver. Also, do not expect these Gods to do things for you or sort out your problems. Their way is to encourage you and empower you to sort out your problems for yourself. By now you should be entirely capable of doing so.

CHAPTER EIGHT

TIME AND THE GODS

With this chapter, the Work becomes more speculative and experiential. We begin reaching into areas of cosmic significance. It is essential that the Initiate entering these uncharted waters must be sailing in a sturdy vessel. He will need the full span of the runic skills he has developed so far, plus a thorough understanding of the cosmological and psychological structures underpinning his reality. Without these solid anchors, it is easy to fall prone to self-delusion and wishful thinking.

Even more than this, the Initiate must have experienced the transformation of Draconian consciousness within his own being. The Dragon, the Hero and the Valkyrie must all be aflame within his brain. This will allow his Wode-Self to speak clearly and unambiguously, guiding him aright.

Those who have grasped the fundamentals of Desire as the Immortality Engine and who have engaged in the teasing dance of tuition led by the Fetch, will find themselves most fully equipped to explore the themes of this chapter.

Indeed, although a more austere and ascetic approach is certainly possible, I cannot personally even begin to imagine it, let alone practise it.

Whether you have encountered manifestations of your Desire in the form of a sexual partner (or partners, as is sometimes the case), or whether you are inspired most by an otherworldly projection of Beauty, you should by now have realised and unlocked a further secret of Draconian Magic. This is a kind of Tantric flow of energy between the Hero and his Lady, typified by the Draconian Essence. (Although couched here in the generally masculine tone of the myths, in practice it translates perfectly well for female Initiates as the Heroine and her Lad, and can also accommodate same sex relationships with only a little imagination.)

This ecstatic energy flow, which cycles between the one who Desires, the one who is Desired, the process of Desiring and the implicit Form of Desire itself as an eternal Principle, is crucial to Draconian Work at this stage. It should take only a little consideration of the previous chapter to explain why. You should also consider that in the case of mutual Desire, the energy flows in both directions simultaneously.

This Desire may be seen – and utilised by those who have the skill – as a Form of Kundalini. The Hero is the erect spine (or phallus) and the Dragon uncoils from its lair at the base of the spine and sends its energy up the shaft, seeking a union with the Valkyrie, who extends Her swan wings above the brow. There are numerous magical Mysteries in this imagery and you should seek them out, meditate upon them, and – above all – practise them.

These Mysteries of Desire will be the Key to unlocking many of the powers alluded to in this present chapter.

The Norns

The Work of this chapter takes what we have already considered about Destiny and aligns it to the patterns of time. It also places us in a position (achieved through Draconian consciousness of those Mysteries of Desire) where we are able to view that pattern from **outside** and manipulate it and our own situation and place within it.

This will necessitate an Understanding of the three Sisters of the Wyrd: Urdhr, Verdhandi and Skuld. These three dwell at the very roots of the World Tree and are conscious of all that occurs within its branches, as well as all that has occurred, all that may have occurred but didn't, and every possible event that may yet occur. The Initiate must learn to see through the eyes of all three of the Norns. Having achieved this, he must learn to see through all three of their perspectives **simultaneously**. And if that wasn't demanding enough, he must ultimately transcend even this in an ecstatic single Vision which combines All, Nothing and Might-Be-Might-Not-Be. This should not be difficult for anyone who has learned to Open the Eye in the Void.

Urdhr represents the past. Her name is closely related – if not directly identical – to Wyrd, and those patterns of past processes which lead into the unfolding and manifestation of the present are indeed Hers. Knowledge of Urdhr is knowledge of the roots of things, the understanding of what is likely to happen based upon what has previously happened.

Verdhandi represents the present, that which now is. She is the ever-changing moment, the gap between now and now, in which reality is turned over and made anew. In the time it takes you to blink your eyes, the entire world has been destroyed and recreated, similar but not the same, for billions

of possibilities and events have been made manifest that were previously only building potential, patterns in the greater pattern. Paradoxically, the Eternal Now of the present ceases to exist in the time it takes our minds to recognise and respond to it. The present we are thinking about is no longer the present we are now in; it has gone into the past. It has been said that all that truly exists is the present. The past does not exist, for it has been and gone; the future does not exist, for it is mere possibility. There is only the present, which is annihilated the moment it exists, ever Remanifesting in changed form before its loss can be noticed. So the present is All, yet the present is Nothing. Think about this, for it is critical to the Work of both this chapter and the next.

Skuld is often glibly said to represent the future, but this is simply not true. Skuld is everything that may yet be, every possibility that lies implicit within the Wyrð, including those which will never come into manifestation. She is perhaps better said to represent probability or continuation.

When the Initiate views the patterns of potential as Skuld views them, he gains the ability to manipulate those threads in the present which lead towards certain strands of the future, tying and knotting some to strengthen them and snipping or tangling others. It is possible, with awareness and determination, to steer your course by following the possibilities you prefer to come into manifestation.

Each Initiate should at this point devise a ritual of their own making (or three rituals, if you prefer), designed to access the consciousness and Understanding of Urdhr, Verdhandi and Skuld. Follow the guidelines given previously, incorporate suitable runes into your Working, and record the result. When you complete the Work of this chapter, go back and repeat your ritual, comparing the results to the first attempt in order to discover just how far your

Understanding has advanced then, compared to how it is now.

Writing the Saga of Your Deeds

If you have been immersing yourself in Northern lore and legend to complement the practices offered in this book, you will probably have read more than one of the sagas. As opposed to the *Eddas*, which basically tell the various tales of the Gods, the sagas are very much more human, concerning themselves with the acts and noteworthy deeds of human heroes. *The Saga of the Volsungs* is really required reading for the *Ægishjálmur* curriculum, for reasons which surely shouldn't need to be explained. But there are other valuable tales too, such as *Egils Saga*, which tells the story of master rune magician Egil Skallagrímsson.

Now that you have achieved this level of Initiation and have tapped into the current of your own Destiny, awakened the Wode-Self and learned to follow the promptings of your Fetch, it is time to start writing your own saga, the tale of your life and deeds. I mean this quite literally. Take up a pen and paper (or more likely a computer keyboard in this day and age) and start writing your own story, beginning with your earliest memories. Don't be afraid to go back where appropriate and mention pertinent deeds of your ancestors that may have shaped you. Recount every memory that comes to you; each will have its own story to tell, its own way of shedding light on some facet of your being. Pay particular attention to magical events, of course, but do not ignore the mundane.

Not only will you find yourself telling a fascinating story – probably far more interesting and inspiring than your everyday recollections would ever suggest – but your saga

will also grasp hold of the patterns of Wyrd in your life, tracing their unfoldment and their direction. The intention is that you will be able to ride these patterns into the past and future. This Work is the underlying focus of this present chapter.

Understanding the Need For Change - Foretelling Ragnarok

All who have so much as glanced at the mythology of Northern Europe will know something of Ragnarok. This is the great battle between the Gods and the Giants, respectively the forces of consciousness and non-consciousness, laying waste to the world as it is. But life and consciousness survive to spring forth again in a new world, with a new race of Gods and men.

This is not some 'end of the world' myth like the Christian *Revelation*, however. It is not intended to keep the sheep fearful and in line. It is simply an expression of the essential and inevitable process of change – on all levels of reality, not just the physical – and the Remanifestation that must follow such upheavals.

The process of Ragnarok will be discussed fully in the next chapter. The purpose of mentioning it here is to ensure that the Initiate is aware that periods of stability will inevitably be followed by a time of drastic change and upheaval. This cannot be avoided and so must be prepared for beforehand. At this stage, the Initiate must begin casting his Work into the future, planting the seeds for the Remanifestation of his ideas as well as his own personal Remanifestation.

The Helm of Awe as a Tool For Time Travel

We have already established the use of the *Ægishjálmur* in operations of sorcery. Now we must use it for one of the most outlandish purposes yet. The Initiate will now seek to expand his consciousness beyond the barriers of the fourth dimension and travel in time itself.

I am not speaking here of physical time travel, but travel of the mind, a kind of out-of-body experience wherein the Initiate's consciousness travels backwards or forwards in time whilst his body sits at rest. He is then able to watch what happens in his chosen time zone and return to the present with the knowledge he has gained.

The first step in this process is to design an appropriate bind-rune in Helm form. It will be good to make the central core of the design the typical equilateral cross with each arm terminating in an *elhaz* rune. This will ensure the Initiate's safety whilst travelling. Other runes that should be incorporated into the Helm design are:

raidho, for travelling
gebo, for an exchange between that time and this
hagalaz, for returning to the primal patterns
isa, the stream of concentration
jera, the cycles of time
eihwaz, the span of life and death
dagaz, the polarity of then and now

A very serviceable bind-rune may be constructed in Helm-form from these component runes. I am going to leave the final design of this Helm to the genius of the individual Initiate. For one thing, anyone who has come this far should consider it an insult for me to continue designing your bind-

runes for you. If you can't achieve it yet, you need to go back to the beginning and work through the previous chapters until you can as you are not yet ready for this Work. Secondly, this current material is still in the experimental stage for me, so I do not wish to mislead anybody by presenting what I feel to be a partly speculative and not fully proven design of my own making.

Having designed your bind-rune and correctly fashioned and charged it by carving, colouring, singing, etc., it is time to decide which time period you wish to visit. You may decide to look at a period in general, or you may wish to home in on a particular historical event. I say 'historical', because it is best if you explore the past to begin with and leave the future well alone. We have already established that the future is a nebulous and indeterminate concept in Northern belief. You will certainly want to extend your perception in that direction when you have some practice under your belt, but you will need considerable skill to navigate its multi-layered mirage of maybes. So begin with the past until you have amassed some considerable skill and a proven, reliable track record.

It is helpful if you can gather some items, pictures or music relating to the time or event you wish to see and use these to set the mood. Open a ritual and explain your wish clearly. Spend some moments in intense concentration upon your goal. Then relax your mind, stare at the bind-rune and think only of travelling. Let the rune's lines draw you in and send you on your way. After you have mentally seen and heard what you need to know from the past (remembering that to invite more than is freely given leads only to error and self-deceit), refocus your consciousness in the here and now and write up your results.

Test the veracity of anything you see or experience as

best you are able, using the most reputable sources to do so. You can probably only expect to bring back three or four precise pieces of information with you to start with, increasing as you become more adept with the practice. Again, do not push for more than readily appears, because your subconscious will gladly paper over the cracks for you if you push it. You are looking for truth, not necessarily coherence. It will take time for things to gel.

Once you have a proven record of successfully travelling to the past, you can then start to look to the future, bearing in mind the caveats already given.

Of Elves, Dwarfs and Etins

As the Initiate begins to breach the dimensional barriers with his consciousness, time is not the only foe to fall. Space must also be conquered, enabling us to interact with the denizens of others worlds in ways that have not been possible in previous parts of the curriculum.

I am not talking here of Gods, the Æsir and Vanir, but of those entities and wights of a less than Divine status that dwell in the Nine Worlds upon Yggdrasil. Most specifically, I refer to the Elves, Dwarfs and Etins, who dwell in Llossalfheim, Svartalfheim and Jotunheim respectively.

Before we start looking at the practical aspects of this Work, let's refresh our memories of what these beings are.

The Elves are a people closely connected with the Vanir and the processes of cyclical time and generation. They are not bound to Midgard as we are, but have their dwelling in a brighter and more fruitful realm, under the Lordship of the God Frey, brother of Freyja, whose name means simply 'Lord'.

An Elf in Northern lore is a tall and shining being, quite unlike the depictions that have been inflicted upon us since the Victorians started producing pictures of them in storybooks. The way they have been represented in the recent *Lord of the Rings* movie trilogy has actually been a very fair one and may hopefully go some way toward redressing the balance. Tolkien, of course, knew his Germanic myth inside out, as evidenced by his own alliterative verse retelling of the Volsung saga and numerous other essays.

The Elves are custodians of deep wisdom and have a great knowledge of all the things beloved of the Vanir: the living, growing, organic substance of the world and its cycles. They are tellers of tales and teachers of secrets to those who approach them correctly.

The Dwarfs dwell in Svartalfheim, a name which calls them kindred to the Elves, but they are 'Black Elves'. This blackness refers to their subterranean realm, for the Dwarfs love the deep places of the world, and their abiding in low tunnels accounts for their short stature. They are as wise in their way as their Light cousins, but they are cunning in the lore of crafting and making things with their hands. They teach the use of tools and skill in shaping the raw materials of the earth (or the Self) into intricate and beautiful objects of great usefulness. They tend to be craftier in spirit than the Light Elves and drive a harder bargain, but their friendship is very worth the price.

There are accounts in the *Eddas* of many wonderful and magical treasures crafted by the Dwarfs for the Æsir, not least of which are the Brisingamen of Freyja and the Hammer of Thor.

The Etins, or Giants, live in Jotunheim (or at least those we are interested in here do. There are other Giants in other places, such as the Fire Giants of Surt who come from

Muspellsheim, and the Giants of Utgard, who dwell outside the enclosures of the Nine Worlds in the Outside – these are expressions of the forces of the Void). But we are here interested in the Giants of Jotunheim, who are active within the structure of the worlds upon Yggdrasil.

The Etins possess great age, great strength, and often great size. They are creatures who are stuck in their ways and reactionary, and who are generally opposed to the changeful ways of the young Gods in Valhalla, and hold the Æsir as enemies. They are forces of stasis as opposed to the forces of consciousness and evolution embodied in the Gods.

It would be wrong to categorise all of the Etins as foes, however, matters are rarely as simple as that. They are certainly forces contrary to individuation and consciousness. But so may a mountain be: it is not a conscious thing, nor does it care anything of consciousness, and it may stand in the way of a man who wishes to get from one side to the other. But to say that a mountain is a bad thing or an enemy would be a gross over-simplification and a serious mistake. Mountains are actually very useful and rather beautiful, even if they are generally static and immovable.

In a similar way, the Etins can be very useful and even helpful in the right circumstances and with the right approach. We even read of some of the Gods consorting with Etin-wives in the mythology.

An Etin is very old and has thus acquired great wisdom after its fashion. This wisdom must be carefully interpreted, as it is bound to the Etin's own narrow spectrum of experience, nevertheless it runs very deep. Care must also be taken because although Etins are not particularly smart, they are crafty and cunning after their fashion, misleading or trapping the careless.

So the wise Initiate may discover deep and timeless

wisdom from an Etin, but must be careful to interpret it correctly.

There are two main ways to seek communication with Elves, Dwarfs and Etins. One way is to travel to them; the other way is to call them to you. In the first case, the Initiate will take a spirit journey as described in chapter five, faring out into the worlds along the rune-roads until he arrives at the appropriate realm: Ljossalfheim for the Elves; Svartalfheim for the Dwarfs; Jotunheim for the Etins. Once there, he may seek out and speak with a being of that type. The other way is to formulate a ritual to call the entity for illumination. In such a case, you will need to spell out the name of the invoked wight with runes, with a bind-rune of that name placed before you. Also, a sacrifice will be necessary: drink half of the ale or mead yourself, pouring the other half upon the ground as an offering to the spirit, refreshing it and welcoming it. You should then sense its presence and may communicate mentally with it, receiving its wisdom as flashes of inspiration either during the ritual or shortly thereafter.

Through working with these entities, many of the deep Mysteries of time and space may be revealed to you.

The Apples of Idunn

The Goddess Idunn is associated with youth and with apples. The apples She cultivates are the source of the rejuvenating powers enjoyed by the Gods, which grant them immortality. Her name is thought to mean 'ever young' or 'the rejuvenating one'. She is thus a Goddess of Remanifestation and of key interest to Draconian Initiates.

One of the myths concerning Idunn is very indicative of Her power. Loki is forced by an Etin named Thjazi to

deceive Idunn and lead Her out of Asgard on a pretext, whereupon the Etin seizes Her, desiring Her apples of rejuvenation for himself. In consequence, the Gods begin to grow grey and to age, lacking the restorative power of Idunn's apples. It becomes apparent that Loki is responsible and He is forced to go out once more to rescue Idunn from Thjazi. He does this using His powers of transformation and Idunn is restored to the Æsir, who kill the pursuing Etin.

The following rite is intended to accomplish two things:

1. It should rejuvenate and reinvigorate the Initiate, reminding him of his immortal essence. It binds the parts of his soul more firmly, manifesting continuity of consciousness.
2. It reminds the Initiate of the parts of himself that lie beyond even Yggdrasil, pulsing with potential in Ginnungagap. Thus, it makes the temporal manipulations of this chapter's Work that little bit easier.

The Apples of Remanifestation

The Initiate should set up his tools in preparation for a ritual. The Grail should contain a potent cider (specifically an alcoholic cider – I am aware that non-alcoholic apple juice is sold under the name of cider in some places. Also, for rather obvious symbolic reasons, this must be a traditional apple cider, not pear cider or some other such variant.) An apple should also be present (if more than one person is celebrating this Working, there should be enough apples for everyone to have one.)

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1. Open the ritual in your accustomed fashion.
2. Hold the apple in one hand and hold the palm of the other hand over the top of the Grail. Slowly sing the names of all the runes of the Futhark in proper order, feeling the qualities of the whole rune row entering the fruit and the drink, empowering them.
3. Say: **“I am one who has awakened the sleeping Dragon, who has pursued the Heroic path, who has reached out his hand to the Valkyrie and has felt the Divine Mind. I am one who has opened the Eye in the Void and who has seen beyond the limits of time and space. As such, I claim the right to taste of the apples of Idunn, and to partake of their rejuvenating essence. The ecstasy of their sweetness shall bring forth my Remanifestation. I invite all Gods and favourable wights to bear witness and to partake with me.”**
4. Hold aloft the Grail and sense it filling with Divine force. Pour one half of the cider upon the bare earth (or into a bowl to be taken outside and poured upon the earth later if you are working indoors) as a sacrifice to the Gods, then drink the other half, feeling it refresh and renew you, filling your mortal frame with spiritual force.
5. Cut the apple in two and place one half upon the bare earth (or in the bowl for later) as an offering to the Gods. Eat the other half, feeling it nourish and renew you, flooding your body, mind and spirit with new energy.
6. Remove the pips from the half you ate. These should be buried later, to renew the Earth.
7. Close the ritual in your accustomed way. If you worked indoors, take the offerings outside and complete them accordingly.

The Tally of Selves

One of the most useful and important applications of the transdimensional techniques of this chapter is to look back along our own timeline in order to better understand ourselves in our completeness.

We have established the belief in rebirth and have investigated at some length the effects of the death process upon the various parts of the soul-body complex. We have also discovered Desire as the engine which drives the process of Remanifestation and which can facilitate the continuity of consciousness from one state of being to the next, allowing us to be reborn in our next life without losing all memories of this present one. But having made such provision for the future, we should now turn our minds to the past and seek out the Mysteries which are hidden there, buried deep within the layers of the unconscious. We need to find our previous selves, those shells which are now dead and gone, and we need to revivify them in our contemporary consciousness, restoring them to fullness of life.

There are two methods that we might use to accomplish this goal, but before we can make any progress with either of them, we need to refresh our memories of three key facts concerning the process of dying and the division of the parts of the soul. The first thing to remember is that the core sense of identity, the actual continuity of consciousness, abides within us. The second thing is that all of the key insights and evolutionary advances in consciousness achieved by the soul are lifted up to Asgard upon death. Since our initiatory Work has long since enabled us to touch the Divine spark within ourselves, these powers and this knowledge, acquired over many lifetimes, is available to us to call upon already. What we have yet to do in our Work, but what is

most vital if we are to be balanced and truly coherent Selves, is to go down instead of up, to discover the third thing, the memory of those aspects of personality and those forgotten skills which lie entombed with the dead in the halls of Hel.

So it is to Hel that we must look if we are to resurrect and Remanifest the shades of our previous Selves, who lie in slumber awaiting the call to reawakening. In so doing, long dead memories will be restored to us, along with the skills that supplement them. We will have taken a hugely significant step in making ourselves complete. This is a Work which goes far beyond the usual 'past life recall' of reincarnationists.

There are two ways to accomplish this Work. The first way is to go to the dead: the second way is to bring the dead to you. Both methods will be discussed here.

In the first method, you will prepare to take a spirit journey, as was described in chapter five. You should project your consciousness out of your physical body and descend down the shaft of Yggdrasil to Svartalfheim. Spend a little time to get your bearings there, then descend still further until you arrive in the freezing, gloomy, mist-shrouded world of Hel.

You will need to take time to allow the region to unfold within your mind. Its symbolism will express itself in terms pertinent to you, but I always see Hel as a fogbound land of vaults and tombs, with shadowy wraiths creeping through the mists.

Follow the direction in which your instinct guides you and you will come at last to the memorials to your previous selves. There will be a large vault, like a hall, nearby. Enter this and your past (and some say future, once facility with the method is won) selves will be seen standing in the alcoves. They will begin to awaken as you approach them, stirring in

their slumbers. From them you will learn long forgotten skills and you will achieve a great sense of completeness as they reintegrate themselves with your current manifestation. You will now realise the truth that nothing is ever truly lost or forgotten.

For those who have access to the archives of the Order of Leviathan in the Temple of Set, the 'Apep Workings' of Ipsissimus James Lewis have strong echoes of this theme and can be read as a practical example.

The second approach is to bring the dead to you, awakening your past selves by ritual invocation and revivifying them with the sacrificial mead and bread offered at your altar. This ritual should be constructed by your own genius, guided by your deepest instincts (those parts of you which have most affinity with your previous manifestations). The basic formula should be akin to that used to call upon other wights described in this chapter, using the tools and basic steps of ritual previously discussed in this manual.

This is obviously highly skilled magic, requiring a powerful focus of mind and an open channel to the subconscious in order to receive and correctly interpret the communications of these earlier selves. But if you have practised diligently up to this point in the curriculum, you should be perfectly capable of such skilled magical application.

Repeat the invocations frequently, building up a strong rapport with these earlier shells of yourself, until you have reawakened their identities fully and begun to incorporate them within your own current being. This will be a far more transformative experience than you can possibly imagine whilst simply reading these words. It is something that must be experienced.

In time, you will become aware that these selves are

accessible by your consciousness at all times. You may simply reach within your mind and 'remember' what it was to be these people and to utilise their skills. You will have accomplished a great deed of Self-integration.

Nidhogg – The Eater of the Dead

It is during this process of Self-integration that you will encounter the last of the three great Dragons of the *Eddas*: Nidhogg, who lurks at the very deepest root of the World-Tree, gnawing upon it, spewing venom as he consumes the shells of the dead.

Nidhogg is a devourer, a breaker down of aggregates, and in reawakening the essences of your past selves, you are effectively undoing Nidhogg's work, causing the Dragon to regurgitate that which it has devoured. This leaves you with an angry and hungry Dragon to contend with.

What form will this Dragon take? You will have to fight Nidhogg in the guise of those past selves you have now taken as a part of you. Each of these personalities had its own flaws, guilts and debts, each one of them a tooth of the Dragon. You will benefit from the sense of completeness as you integrate these aspects of your manifestations, you will gain by the rediscovery of their skills, but you will also be burdened by their failings and weaknesses. These are the fangs and claws of the final Dragon, and because they are of you they can consume you utterly if you are not careful. Having learned to control and channel positively your own obsessions, you may now fall prey to those which were buried a long time before your present birth. Nidhogg is the most insidious and deadly Dragon of all.

Although this process is an enormous initiatory step,

it will initially seem like a retrograde one. Having (hopefully) brought all your own insecurities, blind spots and bad habits to heel, you will now find yourself burdened with a host of new ones, threatening to bring you down. You will find yourself behaving in irrational and unexpected ways and not knowing quite why. In other words, when you begin this Work of necromantic Self-integration, you had better be ready for some bizarre twists and turns and be prepared to fight your corner.

At this stage, I should really need to give you little more guidance in how to deal with these matters. You should already know. Indeed, there is little I could advise you, since the phantoms from your own buried past and the manner of their manifestation will be utterly unique to you. Fight them and assert your Will as you have done all along, always holding onto that Divine consciousness you touched in the previous chapter, when you came to understand the symbolism of Sigurd awaking Brynhild and the two plighting their troth. Do not allow yourself to become bewitched and forget your promise, as befell Sigurd in the saga.

So Nidhogg, the final of the three great Dragons of the North, is the accretion of the debts, the grievances and the unfulfilled desires of your past selves. This is a mighty and worthy foe to conquer. But if you can conquer and subdue the Dragon, gaining the use of those past skills and knowledge, broadening your outlook and your very sense of Self in the process, then this Dragon has one final Gift to offer when brought to heel. Nidhogg is the most dangerous of Dragons, but also the most transformative, for according to the *Voluspa*, the Seeress' Prophecy in *The Poetic Edda*, this Dragon is immortal indeed, surviving Ragnarok. The last thing the Seith woman sees is this ancient Dragon of Chaos rising on mighty wings after the fall and renewal of all:

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*66. From below the dragon | dark comes forth,
Nithhogg flying | from Nithafjoll;
The bodies of men on | his wings he bears,
The serpent bright: | but now must I sink.*

- translated by Henry Adams Bellows

So the Initiate transforms “the dragon dark” into “the serpent bright” as the “bodies of men” [his past selves] are borne upon his wings, arising in victory even after the upheavals of Ragnarok.

Speaking of Ragnarok, it is time to deal with these issues in the final chapter...

CHAPTER NINE

TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

And so at last we come to the Twilight of the Gods, the *Götterdämmerung*, the day of Ragnarok. Loki, bound and cursed after the death of Baldur, returns leading the legions of frost and fire giants, to destroy the cosmos with the fire and ice from which it was created. Yggdrasil burns, the World-Tree shivered to its roots. The chosen warriors of Odin fare forth to battle. The All-Father Himself is swallowed and slain by Fenrir. Jormungand, the Midgard Serpent, loosens its coils and the world rocks in consequence, unbound and crumbling. Thor kills the great Serpent, but is Himself slain by the fumes of its venom. The whole world falls to fire and the sword. The order of the Gods is overthrown and Chaos rages unfettered.

But the last remnants of Gods and men are sheltered within Yggdrasil, emerging upon a new plain when all is done, a place unformed where a new pattern of worlds may be shaped. Odin is represented here by his surviving sons, through whom He may be reborn according to the Northern soul lore we examined earlier. And yet He may still be here

in one of His aspects as more than just the potential for Remanifestation, for Hoenir is said to survive Ragnarok, and Hoenir is listed as one of Odin's many names and an aspect of the All-Father. But in either case, the Earth Remanifests, and Odin will Remanifest too in the new creation.

Remanifestation

All things that are shaped and ordered out of Ginnungagap must one day resolve themselves back into that primal Chaos. They were born from the potential to be, they expressed themselves through manifestation, once their expression is complete they must unravel and assume new forms. This is the lesson of Ragnarok. Even the abode of the Gods cannot stand for ever.

One day, the world itself will cease to be. One day, the sun will go out and the solar system will perish. All of these processes are patterned and foreshadowed in Ragnarok. One day our personal lives in the fleshly bodies we now inhabit will end. But in all cases, something will Remanifest. No atom of matter, no focus of spirit, will ever cease, all will be reshaped in new forms and will come into being once more.

For the Initiate, who experiences new horizons and personal metamorphosis on a scale unimagined by his less enlightened fellows, Ragnarok is a recurring pattern in life, as the edifices of the old must be brought down to clear a way for the new. The Initiate at this level is a Destroyer as well as a Creator. All that exists is the moment, the perception of the now and the Will to reshape that now. The moment is destroyed as soon as it is perceived, to be replaced by a new moment, nearly the same, but not quite, reshaped by Will.

We now walk through life in the knowledge that every moment may be utterly different from that which preceded it and that which will follow it. We understand that “I Am Now” is the sole law of existence.

This is a state of being and a state of mind that is attainable only through the exercises and practices suggested in the previous chapter. The Initiate must have conquered the concepts of time and space, his psyche effectively outgrowing the bounds of the Universe and existing Outside. This is a more permanent realisation of the Draconian practice of 'Opening the Eye in the Void' which was introduced and discussed earlier in the book. This is that which Edred has termed the 'omnijective perspective', when both the inner and outer universes are lesser in scope than the simple fact of consciousness and perception itself. The Initiate now sees and interfaces with patterns and currents of manifestation directly, not with their outer appearances.

In this way, we rise upon the Dragon's wings, soaring above Ragnarok. We create and destroy worlds, but are neither chained to them nor brought low with them. We become “*the dragon dark ... the serpent bright*” and are whole beings.

This chapter is of necessity short, for there are no exercises I can describe, or rituals to perform. This stage of Initiation is a series of Remanifestations and realisations which occur spontaneously when all of the prior stages have been performed properly and effectively. Telling you how to go about your Work now would be like telling Groucho Marx how to light his cigar.

Initiates at this stage should have reached the

understanding that all things must undergo a Ragnarok, not just once, but periodically. Will and Desire bring forces into manifestation, our own earthly lives included, but the manifest universe must continually break down its parts and regenerate itself or it will become clogged up, preventing the manifestation of newly emerging Will and Desire. This is amply illustrated by the tale of past selves which you investigated in the previous chapter.

But we also understand that the 'I' which is the Dragon ascendant, rising out of the Darkness on wings of Light, is a thing larger than the bounds of these worlds; it persists outside of time and space and projects itself within those realms as it chooses. This is the Eye Opening in the Void once more, now understood as an ecstatic, timeless moment that permeates everywhere and everywhen, nowhere and nowhen.

The power and the understanding are ours, our very own. Now, as we rise on the wings of Nidhogg over the New Heaven and the New Earth, we must decide: In what way will I shape these things? What will I bring to pass?

FURTHER READING

The reading list provided in *Apophis* contained core texts which dealt with the Draconian curriculum of Initiation taught by the Circle of Initiates who call themselves the Order of Apep. That list remains useful for obtaining an overview of magical practice and philosophy as a whole; the list which follows adds a purely Northern element to enhance that collection of titles.

For those who wish to restrict their interests solely to the runic Mysteries found in *Ægishjálmur*, pursuing the Dragon of the North exclusively, the reading list which follows will be found to be complete and sufficient to their purpose.

There exist many other texts, some of them very fine, but the list is purposely restricted to those which I have read personally and have derived value from.

I have limited the list to texts which are available to the public at large. Some publications, such as the *Gildisbók*, are restricted to members of the Rune-Gild, hence are not listed here. Initiates who are interested will find it worth their while to approach the Rune-Gild directly with a view to affiliation.

Those withing to contact the Draconian Circle of the Order of Apep for further information or dialogue having studied *Ægishjálmur* may email manxbull@hotmail.com.

Rune Magic

The titles listed in this section all pertain to the actual practical application of runes in the magical field.

FUTHARK: A Handbook of Rune Magic, by Edred Thorsson, published by Weiser

FUTHARK is the first of Edred's runic trilogy, the book which spearheaded the contemporary revival of true esoteric runology. It focuses upon defining the meanings and symbolism of each rune, drawing upon the rune poems and giving plentiful advice on *stadhagaldr*. The book's emphasis is heavily upon the practical magical application of runes and methods of applying their effects in life.

Runelore, by Edred Thorsson, published by Weiser

Runelore is the second of Edred's runic trilogy and is the core volume of the series. It delves into the origins of runes and the various permutations of the runic 'alphabet' in different times and places. It explores the theory and underlying structure and philosophy of runelore in far greater depth than its predecessor volume and is probably the single most indispensable title in this list.

At the Well of Wyrd, by Edred Thorsson, published by Weiser

The third book in the runic trilogy, this title focuses exclusively upon the use of runes in the practice of divination in an authentically Northern manner. It revises the basic

runic meanings to suit the purposes of divinatory enquiries and offers several methods for reading the runes.

Rune-Song, by Edred, published by Runa-Raven Press

This is a book with accompanying CD or audio tape and is the best guide available for the essential knowledge of how to 'sing' the runes. Each rune-song is recorded in full, plus the texts of the various rune poems in both their original languages and English translation.

The Nine Doors of Midgard, by Edred Thorsson, published by Runa-Raven Press (originally published by Llewellyn)

The *Nine Doors* is Edred's curriculum of runework, intended to give the practitioner a thorough philosophical and practical knowledge of the runes on a deeply internalised level. This course of work complements the *Ægishjálmur* curriculum admirably, filling out some of the broader runic areas which are not focused upon in this Draconian Work, and providing a good framework to develop the essential knowledge to make possible the Draconian operations.

Northern Magic, by Edred Thorsson, published by Llewellyn

In this title, Edred focuses upon the sixteen rune system of the Younger Futhark, which was used most widely in the Viking Age. It is just as valid a runic expression as the Elder Futhark, but has a different dynamic in use. The book also includes a very useful section describing the process of designing and activating Helm of Awe-style bindrunes, which are key to Northern Draconian sorcery.

Rune Might, by Edred Thorsson, published by Llewellyn

Edred explores the teachings, theories and magical practices of the German rune magicians of the early

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Twentieth Century, along with the 18 rune Futhork that they devised for their use. Because of the circumstances and occult environment in which this system was developed, this particular style of runology is the one best suited for mingling with other occult systems, as it is itself a bit of an eclectic mish-mash, reflecting the popular occultism of the time as much as genuine tradition. Nevertheless, it remains a coherent and powerful phase of runic development and the runic yoga exercises developed by the pioneers of that time are of particular interest and value.

The Galdrabók, by Edred Thorsson, published by Runa-Raven Press

This Icelandic book of magic is a fascinating blend of runic sorcery mingled with the grimoire traditions of the Middle Ages, where the names of Germanic Gods mix with those of Demons. It is especially valuable for the examples of the use of Helm designs in practical sorcery as used by Icelandic magicians.

UTHARK: Nightside of the Runes, by Thomas Karlsson, published by Dragon Rouge

Karlsson's book is based upon an interpretation of the Elder Futhark in which the rune order is slightly changed (most significantly, *fehu* is now the final rune and *uruz* is the first in the sequence), based upon a variant reading in one source. It is a mastery work, and he tells the tale of the runes with great power and magical insight. He is also the head of the Draconian Order named Dragon Rouge, so the book is very pertinent to the interests of this present curriculum.

Helrunar, by Jan Fries, published by Mandrake of Oxford

This large book is an absolute delight, a down'n'dirty

manual of practical, hands-on runework, with a strong emphasis on the darker side of magical lore and process, represented by the Goddess Hel. Very highly recommended for honing your skills and getting you out of your armchair.

Magic of the Norse Goddesses, by Alice Karlsdottir, published by Runa-Raven Press

This book is a study of some of the lesser known female Deities of the Æsir, expanding upon what little is known of Them from surviving tales through an analysis of the meaning of Their names coupled with the author's own Initiatory insights.

Practical Magic in the Northern Tradition, by Nigel Pennick, published by The Aquarian Press

As with all of Nigel Pennick's books, this title takes a very broad view, adding custom, craft and folklore into the mix of directly magical and mythological material in order to trace out the major themes of Northern belief. It is a worthwhile process, adding much flesh to the bones.

Witchdom of the True, by Edred, published by Runa-Raven Press

This is Edred's account of the Vana-Troth, the religion and magic of the Vanir, specifically of the twins Frey and Freyja. It reveals the authentic cultural roots of that which is now known as witchcraft, and is a good introduction to *seith*.

Wiccan Sex Magic, by Inga Steddinger, published by Runa-Raven Press

This booklet expands upon the themes of *Witchdom of the True*, most particularly in the field of sexuality and its

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magical functions, a subject which is dear to the heart of many Draconian practitioners.

Northern European Mythology, Philosophy and Lore

Introduction to the Germanic Tradition, by Edred, published by Runa-Raven Press

This little booklet gives a concise overview of Northern cosmology, soul lore, God lore, culture, ritual practices and runes and is thus a very handy reference tool for those new to this field of study. All of the basics you will need are covered here.

Valknutr: 9 Lays of Power, by Valgard, published by Eormensyl Hall

This remarkable little book, which focuses upon the Seal known as the Valknutr, the Knot of the Slain, which binds and unbinds the worlds, is the work of one of the founding members of the Order of Apep and is a masterpiece of extrapolating magical patterns.

Rûnarmâl I, by Dr Stephen E. Flowers, published by Runa-Raven Press

This book, written by the Magus of the Word **Runa**, is a record of series of open public lectures he held in Texas after Uttering the Word, explaining its origins, purposes and usage.

Green Rûna, by Edred, published by Runa-Raven Press

This is the first of a series of collected works which gather together Edred's published writings and articles which have appeared in various periodicals over the years. As such,

it is a goldmine for those wishing to obtain greater insights into the minutiae of the Northern tradition.

Blue Rûna, by Edred, published by Runa-Raven Press

The second volume in the series of collected writings, this one contains more material of very great value for the student.

Black Rûna, by Dr Stephen E. Flowers, published by Runa-Raven Press

The third volume in the series reprints exclusively documents which were produced by Dr Flowers during his time as Grand Master of the Temple of Set's Order of the Trapezoid, an esoteric group which focused upon the magic of runes, Germanic romanticism and the concept of angles and other-dimensional realities. Plenty here to interest the Draconian Initiate.

Red Rûna, by Edred, published by Runa-Raven Press

The most recent collection of articles and one which contains the controversial 'Contra Templum', which emphasises the importance of a true, organic, initiatory tradition with firm roots as opposed to a more subjective, eclectic approach to magic.

Studia Germanica, Vol. I, by Stephen E. Flowers, published by Runa-Raven Press

A collection of articles exploring some of the issues arising from Northern lore, such as the concept of rebirth, especially with regard to Sigurd, which is highly pertinent.

The Rune-Poems, Vol. I, by Stephen E. Flowers, published by Runa-Raven Press

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As the title suggests, this is a detailed study of the various rune-poems, their origins and their purposes.

The Northern Dawn, Vol. I, by Stephen E. Flowers, published by Runa-Raven Press

The first of a projected series in which Edred explores the very roots of Germanic culture and its unfolding, tracing how ideas and concepts and identity developed and changed over time. Very useful for those who like to be able to trace the origins of all that they do.

Skaldic Number-Lore, by Robert Zoller, published by Runa-Raven Press

This does precisely what it says on the cover: sets about analysing the numeric lore of Northern mysticism, as applied in the mythology and the runes. These numeric keys leave some people cold, but unlock many fascinating doors for others. But an understanding of the number symbolism is vital to all at the very least.

A Source-Book of Seidh, Ed. & Tr. by James A. Chisholm and Stephen E. Flowers, published by The Rune-Gild

This book gathers together translations of every single passage referring to *seith* magic and its use from every existent source from the period, presenting as clear an understanding as possible from genuine sources of this type of magical practice.

Grove and Gallows, by James Chisholm, published by Runa-Raven Press

The ancient Germanic peoples weren't ones for writing much down, but some of their neighbours were. This book collects together a huge number of texts on the subject

of Germanic magic and religion penned by Greek and Latin scholars who had either borne witness or heard accounts. The sheer volume and scope of material allows a fairly persistent and authentic image to be formed, even allowing for occasional exaggeration, misunderstanding or ancient propaganda.

A Concise Edition of Old English Runic Inscriptions, by Stephen E. Flowers, published by Runa-Raven Press

A collection of the Old English runic texts and inscriptions, translated and annotated as appropriate. Valuable for those who wish to study how the Runemasters of old shaped and framed their letters.

The Poetic Edda, tr. by Carolyne Larrington, published by Oxford University Press

The Poetic Edda is of vital importance to appreciating the mythology which is so essential to this Work. It is available in several translations additional to the one listed here, some printed and some freely available online.

The Prose Edda, by Snorri Sturluson, tr. by Jean I. Young, published by University of California Press

The Prose Edda is the prose mythic account of the Northern Gods, from Their beginnings through to Ragnarok. A valuable account in its own right, it also provides a framework for the poems of *The Poetic Edda*.

The Saga of the Volsungs, by Jesse L. Byock, published by Penguin Classics

The saga upon which the initiatory model of this book is based. It will be very helpful if readers know this story inside out.

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The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún, by J.R.R. Tolkien, published by HarperCollins

Tolkien was not just a writer of brilliant imaginative works, he was also a skilled linguist and Professor of Old Norse. Being enamoured of both poetry and the *Saga of the Volsungs*, he composed his own version of the tale as an epic poem in the style of the old skalds. The result is a treasure indeed.

Egils Saga, by P. Edwards, H. Palsson and Snorri Sturluson, published by Penguin Classics

This saga is particularly interesting in its depiction of Runemaster Egil Skallagrimsson. It is a helpful account of the ways in which the runeworkers of old applied their craft in the course of life.

The Penguin Book of Norse Myths, by Kevin Crossley-Holland, published by Penguin

This book is a handy collection, discussion and retelling of the Norse myths, gathered together in one volume from their various sources. An excellent general reference work.

Gods and Myths of Northern Europe, by H. Davidson, published by Penguin

An excellent and scholarly account of the Northern Gods and the myths associated with Them. A masterly analysis of the mythic themes.

An Introduction to Viking Mythology, by John Grant, published by Chartwell House

A handsome coffee table book, profusely illustrated, which recounts the major Norse myths. An excellent

introduction for the beginner to the field of Northern magic.

Lady With a Mead Cup, by Michael J. Enright, published by Four Courts Press

A fascinating book which analyses the function of various people within the structure of the European warband, focusing most closely upon the woman who presented the mead to the warriors and the order in which she did so. A thorough examination of the ritual and principle involved, using the hall scenes from *Beowulf* as a central example. This may not sound like immediately initiatory relevant, but the book's themes are important ones. You'll have to keep your mind open and read between the lines.

How to Kill a Dragon, by Calvert Watkins, published by Oxford University Press

The title is a touch misleading, as this book is actually a study of Indo-European poetics and linguistic roots. Nevertheless, it does contain a good deal of insights into mythic poetry, including the Germanic, and does focus upon recurring themes of Dragon-slaying. A valuable read for those who like to look really deep into matters, but not for all by any means. The writing style is atrociously dry and impenetrable, you will pay with tears for every insight you prise from these pages. Yet I cannot deny its importance.

Other Essential Reading

Apophis, by Michael Kelly, editions published by Lulu, Blurb, and CreateSpace

The core volume of the Order of Apep's teaching, which sets forth the Initiatory curriculum of the Seven Heads

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of the Dragon, the same system and curriculum which is applied throughout this present book. *Apophis* is the parent volume of, and blueprint for, *Ægishjalmur*. The two are specifically designed to be read side by side and used in tandem, each enhancing the other.

Uncle Setnakt's Essential Guide to the Left-Hand Path, by Don Webb, published by Runa-Raven Press

This book is every bit as essential as the title claims it to be. An introduction to magical philosophy and practice which covers all the bases. Those who follow its instructions properly will have a good grounding in Initiation.

Lords of the Left-Hand Path, by Stephen E. Flowers, published by Runa-Raven Press

A masterly overview of Left-Hand Path initiatory thought and practice through the ages, with particular emphasis upon modern groups and insights.

Liber Null & Psychonaut, by Peter J. Carroll, published by Weiser

Blows the cobwebs off the subject of magic, paring it down to the operant essentials and laying bare the mechanism of belief. Armed with this insight and a strong tradition (such as the Northern), you find yourself upon very firm ground.

Fire & Ice, by Stephen E. Flowers, published by Llewellyn

This book is an account of the magical rites and philosophy of the Fraternitas Saturni, a German magical order who allied themselves with Crowley's New Æon and resonated strongly with their Germanic heritage. A fascinating examination of a genuine Northern magical group of considerable prestige and power.

Paradox Games, by Waldo Thompson, Rune-Gild edition

This book explores the paradox and its relation to Mystery. It is a valuable work and those who pay attention to its thought experiments will gain enormous insights into the ways in which the conscious and subconscious minds work and cross-reference each other. Essential for proper self-integration.

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