

RUKES

The Mystery Keys



Äsruþr Cyneapsson

Runes The Mystery Keys

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ISBN: 1539588742

ISBN-13: 978-1539588740

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RA ING TI SA

Äsruþr Cyneapsson

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For my wife and daughter, without whom I would never have pursued my path.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A personal fascination with the runes has taken me along many avenues of investigation. The occasional reference to the runes in neo-pagan books drew me instantly to them, like the recollection of something once known. I found myself propelled into an obsessive need to grasp the runes. It has been a journey heavily informed by Stephen Flower/Edred Thorsson – without whom my grasp of the runes would have been wholly esoteric and subjective. Others have coloured my learning with the runes, yet not all tutors have given me lessons in the runes. A greater appreciation for comparative mythology and religion, philosophy, psychology, alchemy, quantum physics, the revivalist Heathen tradition, an array of magical systems and the veering towards the left-hand path have all informed my grasp of the runes. These sources have never altered the runes, rather the runes have led me to these sources and have allowed me to synthesise all into the framework of my pandeistic existentialist Neo-Platonism (that is more complicated to explain than I have space for!).

Naturally, I should thank myself for my own dedication to my continued pursuit of runa. It is a pursuit from which I shall never cease, even beyond mortal death. No part is anything without its counter-part and I am eternally thankful to my ever supportive and loving wife. Although she has not ventured along this journey with me, she has remained ever by my side. Her

continued questioning has helped me to fine tune myself.

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Introduction

What follows is an introduction to the runes and their uses. The main aim of this work is to provide guidance as to how the individual may connect with and grasp these ancient mysteries, keys that are so powerful that Odin, the high god of the Norse pantheon, had to sacrifice himself in order to gain them. Other works exist which provide a depth of historic study of the runes or focus upon the magical application of such. The works of Edred Thorsson, Stephen E. Flowers, Ralph Elliot and Guido Von List are excellent sources for the runer who seeks to know more. For those yet to wholly grasp the runes, then they may find the subsequent work to be both a good guide through the process of knowing and using the runes, whilst also being a primer for the further use and study of the runes. There exists no singular work which can be read and immediately bestow a complete comprehension of the runes. Each work forms only an aspect of the individuals work with these mysteries. The individual who begins a journey with the runes and grasps them will forever work with them, for the runic keys unlock the mystery within the self.

The preliminary focus of this work is then the study of the runes through the forms as known to us. The focus then shifts towards the use of the runes for divination with provision of full guidance towards the aim of enabling the individual to rapidly attune themselves with the runes and make use of these keys for divination in guiding their own lives. Runic divination is perhaps the most common use of the runes today, followed by that of bind runes. There is a huge benefit to the individual who uses the runes for divination. Whilst the runes operate on many levels, including as initiatory keys and for the transmission of magical energies, the use of them as divination tools generate an organic and intuitive understanding of the runes within the individuals mind. Other than a strict schedule of meditation upon each rune, there is no better method for achievement of a subjective grasp of the runes and the realisation of how they function as keys to unlock the subconscious mind and open the access to the power of the unconscious mind.

The key word in that last sentence is 'subjective'. Each rune will ultimately

come to represent a core concept, an archetype or form, which will be subject to the personal, spatio-temporal and socio-relativistic lens through which the individual views the world. We find this subjective lens in effect through the historic rune poems in the analysis that follows. Objective scientism has come to dominate our society and has consequently devalued subjective views. In order to realise the immense power of the runes, then it is vital that the individual discards the need for objective and finite answers as to the meaning of mysteries such as those of the Elder Futhark runes. There is a core concept represented within each of the runes, yet the true significance for the individual is only knowable to the individual. Advice on discernment of your own subjective interpretation for each rune follows.

The runes, as mentioned above, also hold value as a system of initiatory development, perhaps similar to that of the Tarot's major arcana or the application of the qabalah. Whilst I have covered this application of the runes within *the Lefthand of Odin* (Cyneapsson, 2016), I have included an update to this section within this work. As mentioned above, the runes are entirely subjective and continually evolve in terms of their interactions. It is as a direct result of my own personal development that I have further refined and updated this study of the runes as initiatory keys or guides with a provocative interpretation of the runes when viewed in triads. For those interested in an in-depth study of Odin, then I have performed such within *the Left-hand of Odin*, where I also look at the application of runic hours, the channelling of energies through the Yggdrasil Array and a base ritual for its use in magical rites.

Whether you are new to the runes, or you are well versed in the lore, open your mind as you now proceed. Removal of any constraints and preconceived notions as to the meaning of runes allows the lightning flash of inspiration to fire within your mind as the runic energies charge and embed within it. Reach out and grasp your keys to the mysteries.

What are the Runes?

Although there are now numerous versions of the runes such as the neo-Pagan 'Witch runes', there is only historical documentation of three true sets of runes. The three historic runic types are those of the Elder Futhark, the Younger Futhark and the Anglo-Frisian Futhark. There exists also the Armanen Futhorc of Guido von List's esoteric development, although this lacks a clear historic origin, yet this unclear development in no manner detracts from the power and applicability of List's system. The three traditional sets of rune staves link directly with the mysteries that they represent, through three rune poems.

In order to proceed with a degree of clarity, it is essential to understand that a rune is not a symbol or letter. The word 'rune' means mystery. As attested throughout the body of Norse mythology and contemporary Heathen systems, Odin is the master of the mysteries as he obtained mastery of the runes through his act of self-sacrifice. The symbols used for spell work, divination, and the written word are the rune staves. The runes work in a similar manner to the art of *stoichea* as applied to the Greek alphabet. The rune staves have a fourfold nature: each stave possesses a shape, sound, numerical value based upon its position in the *aetts*¹, and the essence of that inferred by its reference. Whilst all aspects of the rune are useful in magical application, it is the essence of the mystery inferred through the rune poems that is most useful for divination. The essence, numerical value, stave shape and the sound of the Rune, its *galdr*, are all useful in various applications of a magical nature. *Galdr*, the sounds of the rune stave, plays a central role in much of the applicability of the runes to operative, ritual and meditational work. The latter examples of rituals will demonstrate the use of *Galdr* to open channels of energy between the magus and the eight realms outside of Midgard.

Numerous books exist upon the use and study of the runes. The quality of these texts, as with many occult fields, is entirely variable dependent upon the diligence and knowledge of the author. Many texts exist upon the runes, yet with a varied degree of objective research and subjective interpretation.

Regardless of the level of academic study conducted by the author, the fact is that there is no definitive interpretation of the runes. As subjective mysteries, they have a direct impact upon the individual, as with the Tarot or Qabalah. The three major rune poems reflect a localised subjective interpretation. We find references to local animals, weather and the historic development of tools and war within each. It cannot be understated that the runes are of an intrinsic value to each individual. Accordingly, the subjective value and relationship between a rune and one person varies to that of another person given a degree of relativism as applicable to the runes. As with any process or tool of the great mysteries, it is vital that the individual defines their own interpretation of the mysteries within. The runes are mere keys to what lays within and beyond. Your key must be yours and yours alone.

¹ A term denoting the ordering of the runes into three rows, each row comprised of eight runes.

The typical representation of the major rune sets is as a *Futhark*². The Elder Futhark consists of twenty-four rune staves. When aligned in rows of eight, called *aetts*, then the result leaves us with three rows of eight staves. Three, in many magical systems, is an inherently powerful number. The common depiction of the Norse world tree of *Yggdrasil* is in a form with three realms, planes or levels. The Elder Futhark is largely a magical code embodying the mysteries and is therefore best suited for purely magical works, divination included therein. There is limited linguistic usage of the Elder Futhark; the most common written usage is that of magical statements in rune carvings. The later Futhark's, such as the Younger and Anglo-Frisian (often termed the Angle-Saxon), were largely linguistic functional alterations in order to provide a flexible system of written symbols adaptable to the influence of Latin and Greek. The Elder Futhark represents the Odinic mysteries and has magical usage accordingly. It is the runes of the Elder Futhark upon which we will focus here. Such a focus is appropriate given that they were the runes recovered by Odin as keys to his own initiatory experience. If the runes of the Elder Futhark are essential enough for Odin, then they demand our focus as we seek to know them also.

² A term referencing the runic alphabets of Germanic tribes across Northern Europe. The term is derived from the first six letters of the Runic alphabet.

Origins of the Runes

As Odin, the All-father, had to sacrifice himself in order to gain the runes, then the origin of the runes lays elsewhere other than with Odin and the Aesir gods. The runes acquired by Odin are external to the ordered cosmology of Yggdrasil, external to Odin and required an initiatory experience, one of actual or symbolic death, in order that Odin may acquire this powerful knowledge of the runes. The simple act of reading a text such as this one will activate aspects of the runes within your mind. The term 'activate' is intentional, as we are merely engaged in the revelation of that which is inherent and hidden within our unconscious minds. Such is the function of the runes; to grasp them is to fully intuit their mystery and to know, for man knows little.

Odin is the sacral high god of the Aesir. Within Norse mythology, there are two core groups of deities – the Aesir and the Vanir. The Aesir are predominantly gods of conscious actions such as war, death, language and justice. The Vanir are associated with the natural cycles and fertility. Neither group is subservient to the other. The arrangement here is more representative of the need for union between the forces of natural cycles and fertility (Vanir) and those of conscious thought (Aesir) and is perhaps reflective of similar notions within other symbols such as the Shiva-Shakti union and the Yin-Yang amongst others. Norse mythology frequently tells as to how the male Aesir gods pursue a wife of Vanic origin, thus essentially they form the union between consciousness and carnal fertility – as seen with the goals of yoga. Interestingly, Odin's wife Frigg is not counted amongst the Vanir and yet holds influence over many non-Aesiric functions such as beseeching all of nature to refrain from wounding her son Baldr (with the fatal exception of mistletoe). Such leads to the suggestion that Frigg is likely a titular form of another and perhaps has ancestry or origins other than those of the Aesir and Vanir. This notion is significant for reasons that require some background information.

The Norse myths tell how the very first war resulted from the arrival in Asgard of the outsider Gullveig. In a display of extreme xenophobia, the

Aesir repeatedly attempt to murder Gullveig, only to find that she continually returns. Gullveig may well represent the proto-witch should we view the Gullveig-Freyja-Frigg trinity (the theory of which shall be made clear in the following paragraphs) as cognate with the Maiden-Mother-Crone one. We find the myth of Gullveig and her torment within the *Voluspa* (Seeress' Prophecy. Here we hear of the treatment of the non-Aesiric witch Gullveig, as the Aesir repeatedly murder her. She is reborn and returns three times to face them once more, each time she finds herself murdered by the Aesir. After the third rebirth, the interest of Odin is surely have been peaked as to what power the witch possessed. Verse twenty-two of the *Voluspa*'s claim that Gullveig, now known as *Heidr* (Bright One), is the favourite of the wicked women suggests a matronage to witches. It is important to read 'wicked' as 'wicce', with *wicce* a reference to a female practitioner of witchcraft. Such was likely an easy gloss for translation and a slight against the old ways that required portrayal as sinister and evil. Stephen Flowers (Edred, *Witchdom of the True*, 1999) explains the origins of *wicce* along with the etymology of the word and its modern reflection in the usage *Wicca* and *Wiccan*.

Gullveig- the witch who arrives in *Asgard* and is then killed and burned is significant in the representation of powers external to Odin and the Aesir. Her subsequent re-emergence and return means that after her triplicate murder by the Aesir, Gullveig demonstrates the existence of powers and knowledge that are beyond control by the wisdom of Odin. She also demonstrates the aspect of remanifestation in her return. Through her persistent re-emergence, she ultimately causes the war between the Aesir and the Vanir, the first war in the worlds as Norse mythology informs. It is possible that Gullveig is a necessary role and the deaths she undergoes are actually initiations that lead to her rebirth or renewal under a new name-that of Freyja.

Freyja is referenced in the myths as the sister of Freyr and daughter of Njordr and she is one of the Vanir, yet it is never explained how she comes to reside in *Asgard*, the home of the Aesir gods. There is no reference to her inclusion amongst the hostage exchange that ends the war between the Aesir and Vanir. Further to this absence of origin myth, Freyja is the witch with powers, those of *Seidr*, which even Odin seeks to learn from her. She is the progenitor of all witchcraft even down to her position as a sexual deity and symbol of fertility,

her affinity with cats and her associations with battle and death. Indeed, the division of the dead between Freyja and Odin, in conjunction with Odin's lust for her when no other god can look at her because of her beauty suggests that Freyja again undergoes another change in name. Freyja likely becomes Frigg through marriage to Odin and motherhood.

We find evidence in support of this notion in the mythical reference of Freyja's marriage to Odr, a god who takes a leave of absence to wander, an activity that repeats elsewhere with Odin and Frigg, the presumption is then later that he is missing and dead. The name Odin is derivative of the noun Odr and there is a suggestion that there is a probability that Odr and Odin is indeed the same god (the Troth, 2006, p. 367). Given the shared origins of Indo-European mythology with that of the Hindu gods, we also find a precedent for the Gullveig-Freyja-Frigg hypostases thesis. The goddess Parvati, companion to Shiva (Odin) also has three forms. As Parvati, she is the wife and mother, the Frigg archetype. Her hideous and aggressive form is that of Kali, a demonic witch form that holds similarity with that of Gullveig. The Freyja archetypal form manifests in the aspect of Durga. Like Freyja, Durga also rides into battle as a warrior goddess and has affinity with cats (Storl, 2004, p. 117). Thus, we find the Hindu trinity of KaliDurga-Parvati that reinforces the possibility for the GullveigFreyja-Frigg thesis.

Stephen E. Flowers argues against the link between Frigg and Freyja (Witchdom of the True, 1999). Flowers attributes their similarity to a collapse in the use of the names at the time of the Christianisation. In Flowers analysis of the name Frigg however, he suggests a possible link. There is no reference to Frigg as one of the *Vanir*; instead, we find her named as amongst the Asynjur – the feminine of Aesir. Perhaps the question should be if the *Vanic* origin of Frigg was at some point known in the past. Flowers traces the etymology of Asynjur to *ans-winjon* and suggests a connotation of 'consort of an ancestral god'. Flowers likens this term with the possible etymology for the word *Vanir* as one that means 'companions'. The similarity in etymology here suggests some common link. Freyja is identified with the Proto-Germanic root *fraujon* by Flowers, with the meaning of female ruler. It is here that we find the origin of the common perception of Freyja's name as that of 'Lady', whilst her brother Freyr has the masculine *fraujaz*, a Proto-Germanic root which means 'ruler', thus we have the 'Lord'. Flowers

proceeds to identify Frigg as a derivation of the Proto-Indo-European root *preih*, 'love'. The evolution of this term into *frij-jo* provides the interpretation of 'dear or loved one' in Flower's analysis.

What is absent from the analysis of Flowers is the discussion of how the female ruler, the Lady, Freyja, becomes the beloved queen and mother, thus we have the evolution of Freyja into Frigg. Flowers later suggests the origins of Freyja to be none other than Gullveig. Flowers traces the myth of the *Voluspa* and outlines the fate of Gullveig. Gullveig means 'greed for gold' and we know that Gullveig is latter known as Heith, 'the shining one'. The tears of Freyja shed for her lost husband Odr are also a known poetic kenning for gold – thus, she is the shining one. The mythic pursuit of the Brisingamen necklace by Freyja, which sees her offer sexual gifts in order to obtain it, also links Freyja with the Gullveig aspect of gold-lust. The analysis of Flowers supports rather than contests the transition of Gullveig-Heidr-Freyja. The question is then as to why if Odin may have a hundred names by which he is known, then why is it difficult to see the transition of Freyja into Frigg once her role becomes that of beloved queen and mother? Indeed, it is the possession of magical abilities inclusive of that of prophecy, which further link the two as titular names of one goddess. We find the symbolism of the role of Frigg as female ruler and mark of kingship within the body of Norse mythology, yet Flowers also suggests Freyja represents the embodiment of royal power.

We may therefore reason that Odin invites Gullveig into the realm of Asgard because of his lust for her beauty and her magical knowledge. It is at this point that Gullveig receives the title Freyja, which in turn becomes Frigg through her status and role as Queen of Asgard, wife of Odin. She maintains her association with the traditionally feminine magic's of Seidr, her origins in the Vanir and her control over the natural world as evidenced through Frigg's acquisition of assurances that nothing in the worlds will harm her son Baldr. Here we have a goddess who interferes in the fate of her son in an act of antinomian excellence, remanifests herself on many occasions and embodies knowledge of magic and divination rivalled only by that of Odin. Gullveig is of course a prime example of initiatory development and the power of her own will through her thrice murder and rebirth as Gullveig. The decision to use her knowledge of the fates of all gods to step in and seek the means to

prevent the death of Baldr, further shows her will to break her own rules in pursuit of a desired goal. Here it is notable that Frigg knows the fate of all gods yet never reveals this knowledge.

Gullveig-Freyja-Frigg is therefore the archetypal feminine counterpart to the masculine consciousness typified by Odin. She is temptation. She is the ultimate feminine. She is destruction. She is rebirth. She is Gullveig-Freyja-Frigg. Gullveig, to use her first known name and to hold both Freyja and Frigg as indicative titles suggestive of her role at various points or situations, has control over all feminine aspects of magic: prophecy, *Seidr*, reincarnation or renewal and all natural magic's. The origins of Gullveig-Freyja-Frigg are notable through the absence of an origin tale placing the deity within the Vanir lineage. Such may lead to the notion that they are perhaps of unknown Jotun descent. The Aesir, through the All-father Odin, are also descended from the Jotun. Whilst there is a lineage and origin myth for the Jotun, all the way back to the proto-being Ymir, three beings are outside of the scope of all origin myths and have a distinct relation to the runes and divination— the Norn.

The three Norn of Norse mythology are likely to be the same three fates of classical Greek mythology. The Norn are the weavers of *Wyrd*, the fabric of fate. First amongst the Norn is Urd who weaves that which has been. The middle Norn is Verdhandi, who weaves that which is coming to be. Finally, there is Skuld, responsible for the weaving of that which is most likely to happen. This tripartite structure fits comfortably with the current presiding understanding of past-present-future in a linear structure of time. It should however be stated that all three Norn weave concurrently, thus the past occurs at the same time as the possible future does so. We find support for such an idea within quantum physics and the multi-verse theory of non-linear time. The Norn pre-date the existence of even the ancient Jotun, with full inclusion of Odin, suggesting then that the Norn are the eldest and most powerful Wights³ in Norse mythology, given that even the gods and goddesses are subject to the fates woven into the *Web of Wyrd*. The *Web of Wyrd* is the pattern of manifest events that unfolds and is extremely relevant to the process of divination as discussed later.

As with quantum theory, the flow of time is nonlinear. Our perception of a

series of events provides it with a sequential flow that we understand to be linear only in its relationship to ourselves. For ease, it is best to imagine the *Web of Wyrð* as a giant tapestry. From our daily existence in the manifest world, our position is such that we have our noses to the fabric and are thus unable to perceive the larger picture. Only as we take a few steps away from our focal point of existence can we begin to see the larger patterns. These patterns of manifest events allow us to interpret the flow of energies and events that have passed and as with any pattern; we may estimate the likely future.

³ *Wights* – a term derived from Anglo Saxon *wiht*, which denotes a conscious being....

It is the absence of an origin for the Norn that is of interest to us in our enquiry. Like Gullveig, the Norn seemingly have a power that is beyond even the abilities of the great magician god Odin. The actions of Frigg, in an attempt to stay the prophesised death of her son Baldr, are futile as the weave of *Wyrð* has a power beyond even Frigg's influence. It would appear that once the Norn have deemed such a major eventuality as the death of the bright-shining god Baldr must come to pass, then no action taken by the Aesir or Vanir is able to prevent its occurrence. Even the mythological notion that Frigg has some association with the Norn (she is described as knowing the fates of all Aesir and yet she never reveals these) is unable to affect the outcome, yet the association may betray a common ancestry. Further evidence for the pre-eminent role of the Norn arises in the acceptance of fate that the gods take with them into battle at Ragnarok – the twilight of the gods. The stoic acceptance that some aspect of the future is subject to pre-determination as it fits with the larger scheme or plan of the Norn is a core factor in many aspects of Norse mythology and heroic sagas. It is however, essential to make clear that it is only key events that are subject to such pre-determination. Minor lives and issues are only subject to the fates that we forge for ourselves as possibilities before us. The river will ultimately flow into the sea – yet we have the option to alter the course it takes along the way.

Nowhere does any myth survive that hints at an origin of the runes. It is only possible to surmise that they are of a nonAesiric and non-Vanic origin.

Although it is entirely feasible that their origin lays with the Jotun, ancestors and rivals of the Aesir and Odin, it would be likely that reference to such an important myth would arise in some aspect of the extant body of lore. The vitriolic and bombastic battles of wisdom and wit, which take place between the Aesir and the Jotun, would certainly be the likely location to find a proclamation by a Jotun as to the origin of Odin's wisdom having a source in Jotun runes. The remaining possible association then is that of the runes and an origin with the Norn.

As the Norn lack a detailed origin myth, we know only that they dwell outside of Yggdrasil. When slaughtering the proto-being Ymir and re-ordering the remains into the structured cosmology of the world tree Yggdrasil, there is no described placement of the Norn. Yet, the mythic poem Gylfaginning describes how they bathe the roots of Yggdrasil daily with water and mud. Such would place them as external to Yggdrasil. Only a handful of beings are external to Yggdrasil. Perhaps of surprise, all beings external to Yggdrasil lack origin myths in the current body of lore. Foremost amongst these beings are the Norn and the great-serpent Nidhoggr.

As Odin, in the myth Havamal, sacrifices himself upon Yggdrasil and reaches out to grasp the runes, then we may deduce that Odin grasps the runes from location external to the ordered cosmos of Yggdrasil. It is impossible to discern from where the runes Odin retrieves the runes. We may however affirm that the runes are pre-existent to the formation of Yggdrasil. As such, that which is external to the consciously ordered cosmos is thus comparable with the Platonic Forms. If deities are the Jungian Archetypes, then the runes may be the forms that lay beyond the deific cave of which we know and experience daily. The Norse Midgard in which we dwell may then be a cave within a cave – we see the shadows of the archetypal deities, yet the deities see the shadows of the Norn. The runes then may be none other than the principal truths, the Socratic truths, upon which all else is based.

Norse Cosmology: The Nine Worlds

Within Norse/Northern Cosmology, there exist nine worlds, suspended within the branches of the world tree *Yggdrasil*. Without recitation of the full detail of the Norse creation tale here, as this information is readily available within the body of Norse mythological texts, this overview of the nine realms/worlds is suitably brief. The individual is encouraged to seek this information within the Edda's. Whilst far from essential in terms of utilisation of the runes for divination, an appreciation and understanding of Norse cosmology will inform the interpretation of the runes and the interplay of their energies.

In the mythology of Norse cosmology, the universe begins with a spark of fire from *Muspellheim*. This spark meets the primal ice waters of *Nifelheim*, which is full of potential—the very convergence that is the essential ‘big bang’ moment as currently sought by scientists. From this convergence, the resultant flow of energised water gives rise to the first beings—the proto-giant/god known as Ymir and the cosmic cow Audumbla. Ymir was a hermaphroditic being and spawned progeny, the Norse Jotun or giant, from the sweat in his armpit and other parts. Odin, Hoenir and Lodur are the sons of Bor and Bestla. Bor is similar to Ymir in that he has no paternal line and emerges forth from the ice by Audumbla. In order to bring structure and control to the universe, the brothers slay the proto-being Ymir and form the worlds from his body. The worlds align within the branches of the great tree *Yggdrasil*. The name *Yggdrasil* also translates as ‘Ygg’s steed’. The suggestion here is that *Yggdrasil* is the means of transport for a being named Ygg. Ygg itself translates as ‘the terrible one’ and Ygg is a known name of Odin. Thus, the implication is that the worlds align within the means of Odin to traverse between them easily. The worlds form as follows:

Muspellheim—existed prior to the murder of Ymir and is the source of the primal energy that brings life into existence. The sagas also tell us that this realm is home to the Fire-Jotun as led by Surt. It is Surt and his warriors whom will scorch the worlds at Ragnarok.

Nifelheim —also existed prior to the process that brought structure to the worlds. This icy cold land holds all potential. Home also to the Frost-Jotun who cause bitter cold winters and ice ages when they gain the upper hand over Midgard.

Helheimr — the realm of the Goddess from whom its name takes its root. Helheimr is the land of those that have died of old age or disease and now are under the care of Hel, daughter of Loki. Here they can spend their time in the afterlife, share their knowledge with their descendants through the journeys of a Seidr worker or await reincarnation. Contrary to the entire horrific image glossed onto Hel by Christian monks, Hel and her realm are quite clearly hospitable toward the dead. If this idea were otherwise, then Odin would act in a manner other than that described in the myths when he conspires with Loki to send Baldr there in order to survive Ragnarok. Shamanic journeys to speak with ancestral spirits often take the shaman on a journey to Helheimr. The mighty and primal serpent, Nidhoggr, dwells below Helheimr and gnaws upon the roots of Yggdrasil. Nidhoggr also functions as an agent of remanifestation through the consumption of dead matter, subsequently reabsorbed into the world tree Yggdrasil and returns to manifestation.

Svartalfheimr —this realm is the land of the underworld, beneath Midgard. Here we find the dwarven smiths of legend such as Weyland. The Svartalfar, or dwarves, are the great fabricators known through legends. These elves are responsible for the manifestation of potential into matter – i.e., the skilful art of manipulation of the atoms of our world into the materials with which we are so familiar. They are the crafters of the natural wealth found within the earth in the form of precious stones and metals. The dwarven smiths create the great magical weapons of the gods such as Thor's hammer, Mjolnir.

Jotunheim —this land is of the primal Jotun. Although there are variants of Jotun such as thurses and trolls, it is notable that some are other than the typical of the images of giants commonly depicted. We recall that the lineage of the gods is that of the Jotun. Odin is descended from Jotun on at least his mother's side, as are Thor and Loki. The Jotun are some of the oldest, wisest and strongest beings in existence. There are some amongst them who embody the concept of chaos. This chaos represents the ultimate potential for all

things to manifest as employed and manipulated with skill by Chaos magicians.

Vanaheimr —here we find the powers responsible for the natural cycles of the world. All of the gods and goddesses of the hunt and agriculture are here. The cycles of nature flow from here. The worship of the Vanir as nature gods is the basis for modern Wicca (Wicca) (Edred, Witchdom of the True, 1999).

Ljossalfheimr — is the realm of the light elves, ruled over by Freyr Ingve, brother to Freyja. Here we find the Alfar and Ljossalfar. The Alfar are enlightened souls that have once manifested as human, whereas the Ljossalfar are a higher form of consciousness. Some of the male disir of the ancestors who have knowledge to share or a role to fulfil in the care of *Vanaheimr* or Midgard are amongst the Alfar. It is appropriate to interpret the Alfar of Ljossalfheimr to be akin to the higher daemon as described within Greek mythology and philosophy, or the Holy Guardian Angel of Ceremonial Magic. These are what Judaeo-Christian adherents think of as angelic beings. The beings here are etheric and powerful. This realm may also be cognate to some degree with the realm of the Platonic Forms – the origins of what is manifest within the realm of shadow that is Midgard.

Asgard —this realm is the home of the Aesir-gods, the gods of consciousness, language and war. Whereas the Vanir gods are the gods of matter, the Aesir are the gods of the Jungian collective unconscious – the directorial archetypes that act beyond natural causation.

Midgard — is the realm in which we live, the realm of manifestation. Midgard is the middle-earth of Tolkien's lore, the manifest realm of Being. Here is the central axis point of the other eight worlds. Midgard is the crucible of Yggdrasil. Fire and ice meet in a clash between chaos and the seeds of fertility and thus life results. From this primal life we see death send beings to Hel and the dwarven smiths shape matter into goods to be pushed up to the surface for mankind and gods alike. The beings of Ljossalfheimr and Asgard guide their chosen humans to further themselves or the whole of mankind. Midgard influences little upon the other eight worlds, but all within it is the product of the pulse and flow of the equilibrium cycle between the other worlds.

Grasping the Runes

What follows is a syncretisation of the various historical rune poems. It is from these poems that we may garner a means by which to decipher the rune and form our own subjective interaction and interpretation of how each mystery interacts with our own personal reality. The emphasis here is largely upon the ‘subjective’ mystery. Each individual will ultimately form their own intuitive and personal understanding of the runes, in much the same manner as a Tarot reader does so with their cards. Given the highly subjective nature in which the runes interact with each of us, then that which follows is merely a guide and an example of the way in which the runes are for the author. Once you have a grasp of working with the runes, then the goal must be to form your own intuitive understanding of what the runes are to yourself. In conjunction with the personal interpretation of each rune, you will also form your own preferences for how to work with the runes.

For the formation of a unique, subjective and intuitive understanding of each rune, then follow these steps:

Begin with a view of the rune stave – its physical form. Draw the stave, largely, upon a sheet of paper. Use a bright red ink in order that the stave can emit its runic energy. Perhaps hold the paper in front of a lit candle flame in a darkened room. The light of the candle illuminating the rune within a darkened space focusses your visual memory upon the stave, energises the rune and reduces external extraneous stimulation of the mind. Meditate upon the stave. Ask yourself what the stave suggests to you. What impressions of energy or meaning do you intuit from its form?

The next step is to intone the galdr sounds whilst you meditate upon the stave form. Again, ask yourself what the rune is or represents to yourself and make notes in a journal.

Repeat the previous stage, this time with the additional incorporation of the stadha (yoga type) poses, as explained below and depicted in the images that accompany the discussion of each rune.

The penultimate step, in terms of this brief guided process, is to read the rune poems and the authors' subjective interpretation of such. The poems will likely confirm some of your own intuited notions about each rune, yet they will also shape and build upon your ideas and understanding.

Finally, combine all of the above into a continued series of meditations upon the runes. The runes never cease to become, they are eternally in a state of flux and so one may never wholly and truly 'know' the rune, other than in the way in which it interacts with the self. The runes are in a perpetual state of Heraclitean flux, the mystery of each has shifted and altered since the writing of the rune poems, shaped by its spatio-temporal and socio-historic relativism. A rune is thus entirely subjective. One rune will have degrees of similarity and variance in its meaning throughout history, across varied cultures and between those sat around a table studying the rune. The rune shifts and alters in its interaction with each individual. The core mystery remains, yet each of us shall see it through different lenses.

Identification of the poems found at the start of each section is as follows:

[OE] Old English

[OI] Old Icelandic

[ON] Old Norwegian

A presentation of the *galdr* sounds of each rune, along with the corresponding *stadhagaldr* or runic yoga position, is presented within *the Left-hand of Odin* (Cyneþsson, 2016), where I also present an overview of the magical applications and of these energies and forms. These are outside the scope of this work, with its focus upon the formation of a runic understanding through divination and self-initiation; therefore, neither the *galdr* nor *stadhagaldr* are relevant here.

Fehu

*[OE] Money is a comfort to everybody
although every man ought to deal it out freely
if he wants to get approval from the lord*

[OI] Money is the cause of strife among kinsmen, and the fire of the flood-

*tide,
and the path of the serpent.*

[ON] Money causes strife among kinsmen; the wolf grows up in the woods.

All three of the rune poems reference money. Money is essentially a mere representation of an owed amount of gold. The value of money can change without consultation of either debtor or creditor. It is best to view money as representative of wealth in general. Wealth is subjective and entirely referential. Water has a different value to a person in subSaharan Africa as compared to someone in England's Lake District. Whatever the form of wealth, the message remains equally applicable.

The Old Icelandic poem makes clear the role played by money as the cause of many issues within society. Within the poem, money is associated with the abilities of fire and the venom of the serpent as an agent of dissolution. Wealth, the gain and loss of, is ultimately responsible for the rise and fall of greatness – either in the form of great men or empires. Without an abundance of resources, a great empire cannot exist. The reliance of world economies upon 'perceived' stores of gold and the numerical wealth, as opposed to physical and real wealth, of the stock markets is evidence of the destructive nature of money. There should be no illusion as to the false wealth represented by money. Money is a tool rather than a goal.

Uruz

*[OE] Aurochs is fearless and greatly horned
a very fierce beast,
it fights with its horns,
a famous roamer of the moor it is a courageous animal. [OI] Drizzle is the
weeping of clouds, and the diminisher of the rim of ice, and the herdsman's
hate.*

*[ON] Slag is from bad iron;
oft runs the reindeer on the hard snow.*

The Aurochs, as referred to by the rune Uruz, is a long extinct, giant breed of

wild cattle that was similar in size to a bison. Visually, the aurochs would have looked like a much larger version of a Spanish bull or Texas longhorn, with equally large horns. The reference to this beast, extinct since the 17th century, occurs within the name of the rune and explicitly within the Old English poem.

The poetic reference within the English version is a key to the appreciation of the rune. The reference of the aurochs is as a fierce creature. Cattle fulfil a vital role within the natural cycle of the world. Through the digestion of herbaceous material, they in turn provide a remanifestation of the energy they consume, as they become food for carnivores.

Given the size and fierce nature of the aurochs, the effort and skill required to slaughter such a creature would be significant. The rewards would be vast however. There may have existed rites of passage for males within tribes as they defeat an aurochs. The risk and reward of the hunt would have reaped massive rewards as the meat, bones, and hide of the aurochs would have provided valuable resources for the tribe. Provisions would also have lasted for a considerably greater time than those of a smaller animal. As the embodiment of the raw and primal essence of nature, the English poem refers to this energy within the aurochs.

The Old Icelandic poem refers to the negative impact of drizzle. The key to the poem is within the reference to drizzle as “the diminisher of the rim of ice”. Another agent responsible for the thaw of ice within Norse mythology is *Audumbla*. *Audumbla* is the primal cow that catalyses the process that enables the flow of the icy waters of *Nifelheim* and brings forth the proto-being *Ymir*. Thus, as a catalytic agent, the Icelandic poem also references the ancestor of the aurochs.

The Old Norwegian poem is somewhat more abstract. The key line is that which refers to the reindeer. The animalistic will to run, without apparent threat from a predator, is the primal instinct to run free. Here we find the link to the other two forms of the rune poem.

The *Uruz* rune is that of primal instinct. The needs to feed, reproduce, and survive are our base animal instincts. Survival is the core instinct. Animals consume in order to survive. The desire to procreate is ultimately the urge to

survive through reproduction. The very term itself, to reproduce, infers that there is a continuation or renewal of the parent rather than a mere succession. It is within this core instinct that we find the essence of humanity, to strive towards immortality in a drive towards the continuation of our genetic line. The primal instinct for life is manifest within the release of adrenalin in situations that pose an immediate threat to life. Uruz is the survival instinct of the reptilian core within your brain. It is your primal essence, your ‘gut feeling’ and the unreasoned action.

Thurisaz

*[OE] Thorn is very sharp; for every thane
who grasps it; it is harmful, and exceedingly cruel
to every man
who lies upon them.*

*[OI] Thurs is the torment of women, and the dweller in the rocks.
And the husband of the Vardh-runar.*

[ON] Thurs causes the sickness of women; few are cheerful from misfortune.

Both the Old Norwegian and the Old English poems refer to the damage that a thorn may do. In the form of a *Thurs*, a reference to the pre-Aesir beings, these primal forces of chaotic energy desire to destroy the order of the manifested world and the existence of the Aesir gods. The standard interpretation of the *Thurs* rune maintains this association with the Wights of chaos. Within the Old Icelandic poem, we find a clue to the reason why the association with the thorn and the threat of destructive forces exists.

The reference within the Old Icelandic poem to the husband of the *Vardh-runar* is significant. With a *Vardh* as a reference to rocks or caves, there is an initiatory allegory here. Anthropology has shown that many shamanic cultures initiated the young of the tribe into the mysteries as the youth journeys into a cave to spend the night alone and in darkness – in full expectation of the visits of the spirits within the cave. Such a reference to this form of experience is also present within the tales of *Beowulf* and *Sigurd*. The journey into a cave reveals knowledge and is a

process of dissolution and becoming.

When *Sigurd* slays the dragon *Fafnir* in its cave, then *Sigurd* gains immense knowledge as alluded to in his ability to suddenly understand the song of birds and what they say to him. It is in this form of initiatory experience that we find the true sense of the *Thurs* rune. We may find the same core symbology within initiatory tales around the world such as Sigurd and Fafnir, Perseus and Medusa and St. George and the Dragon to name a few.

We also find this process within the works of Jung. When the hero enters into the mythic cave, dragon or other beast – he enters into a form of chrysalis state. In this state of regression, a form of self-analysis occurs. The resumption of progression is only possible after this analytical phase as the hero emerges into a new form. *Thurs* is the thorn that defends the desirable. Only those with the will to sacrifice and endure the pain thereof can fully embrace the reward beyond the thorn.

Ansuz

*[OE] God is the chieftain of all speech,
the mainstay of wisdom
and a comfort to the wise ones, for every noble warrior
hope and happiness.*

*[OI] Ase is the olden-father, and Asgardhr's chieftain, and the leader of
Valiholl.*

[ON] Estuary is the way of most journeys; but the sheath is swords.

The *Ansuz* rune is typically associated with the Allfather – Odin, or *Wodannaz* dependent upon which of the multitude of names or variants one ascribes to the dark stirrer of inspiration. It is the gift of Wod, and the inspired mental states associated with Odin, as referenced with the Old English rune poem.

The Old Icelandic poem refers to the combination of roles associated with death and war: Odin is the god of the warrior. The glorious battle fallen can

hope to win a place in Valhalla, where they will feast the night away and train for the battles of Ragnarok. The Old Norwegian poem is somewhat more cryptic and employs kennings that require a deeper appreciation. An estuary is the mouth of a river – the mouth is vital to the role of Odin and language.

The river-like flow of wisdom that results from the creation of language as a spoken and written symbology is essential in the development of mankind. Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote of the role in language in limitation of the formation of a defined world in the mind of man. Indeed, ontological debate between philosophers such as Bertrand Russell and Willard van Orman Quine heavily emphasises the importance of semantics alone. If words may shape the manifest, then they are none other than the most powerful magical symbols. Thus, the wordsmith may shape worlds and alter the path of a world. It is no coincidence that the greatest men to have lived have all been extremely skilled in the use of language. A cursory view of the works of William Shakespeare, Winston Churchill, Lord Byron, Napoleon Bonaparte, Friedrich Nietzsche etc. will attest to such. The role of Odin then as patron of the poets and writers resounds with the idea that through the use of language, Odin truly gave a defined structure and order to the realms. Here may also find an allusion to the Judaeo-Christian notion of the ‘word’ of YHVH.

The individual can take note of the inspiration offered by the *Ansuz* rune. Within the *Ansuz* rune, we find the inspiration to greatness. The manifest forms of this divine inspiration may alter between the battle rage (and invincibility of the warrior) and the intellectual inspiration of the philosopher.

It is possible to equate Nietzsche’s will to power with *Ansuz* – i.e., a force that leads the single warrior to overcome a platoon or for a man such as Napoleon to rise to greatness. *Ansuz* is the mystery of *Wod*. *Wod* is the black flame of sapience, which has set man apart from the animal world. Realisation of the mystery within in turn sets the individual apart from their fellow man.

Raidho

*[OE] Riding is in the hall to every warrior
easy, but very hard*

*for the one who sits up on a powerful horse
over miles of road*

*[OI] Riding is a blessed sitting, and a swift journey,
and the toil of the horse.*

[ON] Riding, it is said, is the worst for horses; Reginn forged the best sword.

Raidho is the rune of the journey. Like all poetry, there is a simplistic and metaphorical knowledge of its concept. The journey may be a physical journey undertaken or an alchemical journey of the individual. *Raidho* embodies the personal journey of transformation.

The Old English poem is perhaps the most complex of the three versions above. On a basic level, the poem describes the easy life of the warrior who remains within the mead hall in comparison to the mighty warrior who rides thousands of miles. Both the Icelandic and Norwegian poems allude that this action is easier on the rider than the horse. There is also the possibility to interpret the Old English poem in terms of the initiatory journey. The individual prepared to make the hard journey does ultimately reach their destination.

Kenaz

*[OE] Torch is to every living person known by its fire,
it is clear and bright
it usually burns
when the athlings
rest inside the hall.*

*[OI] Sore is the bale of children, and a scourge,
and the house of rotten flesh. [ON] Sore is the curse of children; grief makes
a man pale.*

Although the Old English poem appears to differ vastly in content to both the Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian, the rune referred to is entirely the same.

The Old English poem is perhaps the clearest and less cryptic of the three poems. In its description of *Kenaz* as a torch of a clear and bright flame, the poem encapsulates the idea of a controlled flame. The controlled flame may be one of illumination or one of a workman.

As a source of illumination, we may interpret the flame as that which allows one to find their way through the darkness. As Jung suggested, it is after all in the darkness that we find the greatest value. The flame of illumination can also serve as a great source of inspiration. The light in the distance that signifies rest and recuperation spurs the lonely wanderer who journeys the hard road of *Raidho*. No journey is ever easier than when the site of home comforts meets the eye.

In their references to *Kenaz* as a sore, both the Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian poems have a cryptic description. We have a description of sores as the curse of children. Children have the greatest zest for adventure and the increase of knowledge. To ask a child to sit still and be calm is to ask for the impossible. The energy builds to a crescendo where no child can remain and must investigate and seek out. It is this urge that the poems describe as the sore that torments
– the inflamed sore of hunger for excitement: the inflammation of inspiration.

The task of individuals is to identify their own inspiration. The flame that burns within requires the allowance to inspire to the point that a moment wasted becomes a torment. The flame must become the sore that irritates when no work takes place yet it must also be the glint on the horizon that beckons the individual forwards towards the unknown. *Kenaz* is the beacon that calls. It takes the form of the need for action, the need for adventure and the craving of new experiences

Gebo

*[OE] Gift is for every man
a pride and praise,
help and worthiness;
and of every homeless adventurer it is the estate and substance for those who
have nothing else.*

Gebo, or gift, appears only within the Old English rune poem. Earlier, we found *Fehu* to be a form of wealth relative to the individual's needs; *Gebo* is likewise the gift as valued by all – pride.

The poem itself makes clear that there is a gift for each individual. The gift itself may take many forms with each there is an affect upon which uplifts the morale of the recipient. The manifest form of the gift may be that of praise or a material reward.

The essence of the gift is that of pride in one's self. To achieve feats that one deems as such to be proud of is the ultimate achievement. Such pride in one's actions echoes within Friedrich Nietzsche's theory of eternal recurrence – to take all actions in the knowledge that one would happily repeat them over again. Within the *Havamal*, the words of the High One, Odin advises is to live such a life as then later suggested by Nietzsche:

*“Cattle die, kinsmen die,
the self must also die;
but glory never dies,
for the man who is able to achieve it”
(Havamal, 76)*

In order to give such a gift, one must give in recognition of the honourable actions of another and raise their awareness of themselves such that they may effectively receive the sensation of pride.

Wunjo

*[OE] Joy is had
by the one who knows few troubles pains and sorrows,
and to him who himself has
power and blessedness,
and a good enough house.*

Wunjo is another rune that only occurs within the Old English poem. The joy described within the poem is one of an easy existence. We find the key to a life free of trouble, hardship, pain and grief in the subsequent lines. The

descriptive text “to him who himself” indicates one who has taken or achieved for himself rather than as those born into an easy life.

In maintenance of the theme of the *Raidho* rune discussed earlier, then the *Wunjo* rune also suggests a reduced value to the individual of those things that come easily, as opposed to those for which an exchange with hard work occurs. In essence, the rune represents the strategic goal of the long-term, as opposed to the short-term drive of *Kenaz*. The strategic goal is one that takes an immense effort and amount of time, yet for the individual willing to work diligently towards such a goal, there are great rewards.

A common interpretation of *Wunjo* is as the rune that signifies a victory. Its symbolic representation as a rune stave depicts a victory flag such as raised after the capture of a strategic point. *Wunjo* is the “direction of the aim or the end of human endeavours” (Thorsson, *Alu: an advanced guide to operative runology*, 2012). Such an interpretation of the rune allows us to view it as none other than the flag of the finish line, as opposed to that of victory. *Wunjo* is the goal towards which one should aim and progress; it is thus the destination of the journey towards the achievement of the long-term strategic goal. As one get closer to their goal, they become ever more than what they were previously.

Hagalaz

*[OE] Hail is the whitest of grains, it comes from high in heaven showers of wind hurl it,
then it turns to water.*

*[OI] Hail is a cold grain, and a shower of sleet,
and the sickness of snakes.*

*[ON] Hail is coldest of grains;
Hroptr shaped the world in ancient times.*

Hagalaz is one of the more complex runes to decipher. Many runologists will take the view of *Hagalaz* as a representation the hailstone. As such, they view it as a destructive force. Such an interpretation is heavily reliant and influence

by both the Old Icelandic and Old Norse rune poems. To stop only at this interpretation of the rune, as the destructive hailstone, is to only see the mystery and rather than to understand it.

The depth of the rune lies within the final line of the Old English poem – “then it turns to water”. The rune poems do indeed describe the process by which the hailstone falls from the sky and destroys crops. The key is that the hailstone then melts and provides much needed water given that hail falls whilst thunderstorms rage at the height of summer. *Hagalaz* is the rune of the seed of remanifestation. The process described here is the catalyst that enables the *Solve et Coagula* of the alchemical process. *Hagalaz* is the mystery of how all forms of life must be broken down before new life may begin.

Naudiz

*[OE] Need is constricting on the chest
although to the children of men it often becomes a help and salvation
nethertheless,
if they heed it in time.*

*[OI] Need is the grief of the bondmaid, and a hard condition to be in, and
toilsome work.*

[ON] Need makes for a difficult situation; the naked freeze in the frost.

Naudiz is another rune where we find the Old English poem able to provide a much greater insight into the mystery than either the Old Icelandic or Old Norwegian poems. The Old Icelandic poem describes the need for hard work by the individual in times of need. Within the Old Norwegian poem, we find this time of need expressed as that of a “difficult situation”.

It is common to read the *Naudiz* rune as that of the need-fire. The rune stave is often viewed a depiction of the friction and motion of two sticks in the creation of a flame. Such an interpretation does fit with the descriptions of hard work and as that needed in a difficult situation. Anyone who has ever tried to start a fire with only sticks and a twine will appreciate the difficulty entailed within the task. We find such amplification of a degree of difficulty

only within a survival situation.

It is such a survival situation that we find within the Old English poem. The poem describes an internal fire as opposed to that of a physical flame for survival. The key to the interpretation of the Old English poem is to be found within the lines “Need is constricting upon the chest” and the latter “becomes a help and salvation... if they heed it in time”. The constriction of the chest as described here is the tension that grips the body when a surge of adrenaline rushes through it. It is the bodily activation of the ‘fight or flight’ instinct. The hormonal response to a survival situation is simply another example of the *Naudiz* rune – it is the mystery of ability to do things beyond the norm when the situation demands such in order to facilitate the survival of the manifest form.

Isa

[OE] Ice is very cold and exceedingly slippery; it glistens, clear as glass, very much like gems, a floor made of frost is fair to see

[OI] Ice is the rind of the river, and the roof of the waves, and a danger for fey men.

[ON] ice, we call the broad bridge; the blind need to be led.

Isa is the mystery of ice. As with the rune of *Hagalaz*, that of *Isa* also operates on many levels. The Old Norwegian rune poem refers to the bodies of frozen water that allows for use as a bridge. The idea that ice may be of assistance is important here. This idea is in contrast to the portrayal of ice as dangerous, within the Old Icelandic poem. The Old English poem combines both of these portrayals of ice – ice is dangerous and has the potential to aid those that can brave it. The poem describes ice as cold and slippery.

In the comparison of ice to gems, there is the suggestion as to the value hidden within the ice. A greater knowledge of Norse mythology is required before the individual may fully understand the mystery of *Isa*. On a basic level, ice represents a dangerous challenge and the constriction of energy flows. The individual must be aware that stagnation will lead to such a

formation of unrealised potential that may block their progress. Such a challenge may occur at any time, perhaps commonly known as ‘writers block’, or other forms of such mental challenges. *Isa* may also present as physical, emotional or financial challenges. As within the Old Norse poem, the ice can also be the bridge beyond. The individual must be mindful that the bridge is treacherous. It is the journey across the bridge which bypasses the blockage of potential is and the energy released anew.

Knowledge of the mythology behind the mystery of *Isa* will inform the realisation of the potential that lies within *Isa*. The icy flows of water from *Nifelheim* provided the initial flows of matter for the formation of the nine worlds within the void of *Ginnungagap*. Without this challenging *Prima Materia*, there can be no coming into being. When combined with the raw energetic spark of energy embodied within the fires of *Muspelheimr*, then there then occurs the release of the potential energies within the flow of icy water. The worthy individual will be able to unlock the potential within *Isa*, as with the heroic triumph over the thorns that guard in the poem for the *Thurs* rune.

Jera

*[OE] Harvest is the hope of men, when god lets,
holy king of heaven,
the earth gives
her bright fruits
to the noble ones and the needy*

*[OI] Good harvest is the profit of all men, and a good summer,
and a ripened field.*

[ON] Good harvest is the profit of men, I say that Frodhi was generous.

The rune of *Jera* is representative of the harvest. Each of the rune poems describes *Jera* as either the profit of men or the hope of men.

Only the Old English poem qualifies the harvest as meant for the noble and needy. The rune embodies that we harvest the products of our labours or

behaviours. This harvest may take the form of material, emotional, mental or fiscal gain in exchange for our work. It is vital however to understand that there is equal potential for the reaping to result in a negative harvest in any of these forms. *Jera* is then the settling of the account at the end of an endeavour, the grading of our work and the process by which we receive that which is due to us.

To those better versed in Norse mythology, the rune of *Jera* has significance to the work of the Norn. As with the Greek Fates, the Norn weave the *Web of Wyrð*. The Norn predate the existence of even the ancient Jotun, with full inclusion of Odin, then the Norn are the eldest and most powerful Wights⁴ in Norse mythology.

The *Web of Wyrð* is the pattern of manifest events that unfolds. As with quantum theory, the flow of time is nonlinear. Our perception of a series of events provides it with a sequential flow that we understand to be linear only in its relationship to ourselves. The three Norn are *Urd*, *Verdhandi* and *Skuld*. *Urd* weaves that which has been, *Verdhandi* that which is currently in a process of manifestation, and *Urd* weaves that which is likely to come.

For ease, it is best to imagine the *Web of Wyrð* as a giant tapestry. From our daily existence in the manifest world, our position is such that we have our noses to the fabric and are as such unable to perceive the larger picture. Only by a few steps away from our focal point of existence can we begin to see the larger patterns. These patterns of manifest events allow us to interpret the flow of energies and events that have passed and as with any pattern; we may estimate the likely future.

⁴ *Wights* – a term derived from Anglo Saxon *wiht*, which denotes a conscious being....

The individual is under the influence of the actions of their ancestors over thousands of years. A single decision could have changed the lineage, or even ended it at any time. In Norse mythology, these past actions by those in our bloodlines are termed our *orløg*. It may help to think of this concept as its more commonly form – the concept of Karma. The flow of one's current life is ones *wyrð* (pronounced weird – *wyrð* is the origin of the term i.e., 'that is *wyrð*!') Ones actions and those of

your ancestors shape the potential one has to achieve great things or no acts worthy of remembrance. The result of these actions is what one may harvest in the future.

Eihwaz

*[OE] Yew is on the outside a rough tree
and hard, firm in the earth, keeper of the fire,
supported by roots,
joy in the estate.*

Eihwaz is a rune that only occurs within the Old English poem. As a representation of the Yew tree, the rune has a number of deep and interlinked interpretations. The Yew is a sacred tree. It is present in many graveyards where the churches in the British Isles are 800 or more years old. Given its presence, within these graveyards, the tree has acquired a symbolic link to death that is more than appropriate.

The Yew tree is a native evergreen within the British Isles. It is also special because of the manner in which the new life of the tree grows within the old, dead, and decay ridden trunk of the tree. With a poisonous secretion, the yew is both perpetually dead, and eternal.

The shape of the rune stave symbolises this duality with a hooked end reaches into the higher and lower planes. These planes are the higher worlds of the gods and spirits, as well as the lower realms of material manifestation and the dead. As some interpret the Norse world tree *Yggdrasil* to be a Yew, rather than the typical Scandinavian Ash, then the rune stave also perfectly symbolises this world axis as a link between the three planes.

The Yew also has a link to Odin. Given the poisonous secretion of the tree, it is unwise to sleep under a Yew tree, as the toxic odours are likely to induce nausea, sleep and hallucination. The individual may well equate this property with the shamanic actions of Odin. In the act of self-sacrifice, Odin hung for nine days upon the world tree. Here we have a link of shamanic journeys and a symbolic death with the world tree. The associations of the Yew with death, the *Eihwaz* rune as the world axis, the toxic properties of the Yew that can

induce hallucination and the actions of Odin all suggest that the Yew may well be the relative of *Yggdrasil*.

As with the flow of the *Web of Wyrd* that that influences what may come to be in the harvest rune of *Jera*, the axis of *Eihwaz* links the actions of the ancestor, that which manifests into the present, and the influence of higher forms of consciousness. *Eihwaz* is thus the link that provides spiritual guidance or divine inspiration to the individual.

Perthro

[OE] *Lot box is always play and laughter
among bold men,
where the warriors sit in the beer hall,
happily together.*

Referenced only within the Old English rune poem, the mysteries of *Perthro* are those of the Norn. The “lot box” is the fate dealt to each individual. The pattern woven by the Norn, shaped by the actions of the past, dictates the possibilities for the future pattern of events that may unfold before the individual. Where the *Jera* rune is the harvest of such energies, *Perthro* is the formative agent. It is the shaping of one’s likely future. An analogy, which may clarify the process, is that of shopping and cooking. *Jera* may represent the act of cooking, whereby the individual chooses what to make with the foodstuffs that they possess. *Perthro* is then the prior shopping trip that acquires ingredients as needed for possible meals.

The “lot box” may also represent the ale cup over which men speak at parts of the ritual *blot*⁵ or *symbel*⁶. The act of where an oath is spoken over the ritual ale or mead shaped the flow of *wyrd* for the speaker, with the *wyrd* of the tribe is influenced in accordance.

The role of the drink is that of a receptacle for the vibrations of the spoken word. Vibration of the air by the human voice is one of the most simplistic forms of magical transference of will available to the initiate. The vocalisation of the vibration reflects the will of the magician and directly transfers the will into the air and the liquid of the drink. The speaker of the

oath later consumes their share of the fluid; they take their oath into their own self. The vessel, which contains the fluid to receive oaths within ritual, is also the “lot box” of the *Perthro* rune. The honour bestowed upon those that fulfil their oaths, to themselves and to others, is vital for the individual to be able to fulfil their upmost potential. Although an oath can be broken, the loss of honour that may result where the reasons for such an action may be dishonourable is likely to have a negative impact upon the social levels and perception of the initiative. Given the value of honour in the determination of the future manifestation of events for the individual, then the role of *Perthro* is one of upmost vitality. Only in view of the grander scheme or plan should the oath be broken, as seen with the actions of Odin.

⁵ **Blot:** ritual blessing wherein a drink is loaded with the blessing of a god. Attendees then consume the drink and pour a libation of the ale as an offering to the god.

⁶ **Symbol:** Ritual act of charging blessed ale with the restatement of events of the past, which then merge with the promises of what will come to be. Speaking the boasts and oaths over the ale charges it with vibrational energy.

Eolhaz/Algiz

*[OE] Elk's sedge has its home most often in the fen,
it waxes in the water
and grimly wounds
and reddens with blood
any man
who, in any way,
tries to grasp it.*

*[OI] Yew is a strung bow, and a brittle iron,
and Farbauti of the arrow.*

*[ON] Yew is the greenest wood in the winter; there is usually, when it burns,
singeing.*

Eolhaz , or *Algiz*, presents one of the more subjective mysteries of the Elder

Futhark. Within modern runology, the common view of this rune is as one of protection. There exist also associations of the rune with the mysteries of life and death. The association with the polarities of life was largely a product of the Nazi era where the rune came to symbolise life (in the form shown above); with the inverted form and its symbolism of death – a form that has retained use within some white supremacist groups. There is however no historical basis for this usage. *Algiz* is the name more in reverence with the Old Norse/Germanic language, which is likely the etymological origin of the latter Anglicized *Eolhaz*.

The Old English poem varies from its Scandinavian counterparts. Historical accounts relate the name to Elk's sedge. The influence of the work of Tacitus and the alliterative sound of the rune to the plant result in this relation. The interpretation of *Eolhaz*, as cognate to Elk's sedge describes a plant that is painful to grasp. Although the plant does exist, the poem is more allegorical than literal. Reinforcement of this idea is in the fact that there is no known native European plant recorded with the name Elk's sedge – although there is such a plant in North America that has the properties suggested within the poem. A person who learnt the Old English rune poem may have named this plant; or, more likely by someone whom recalls similarities to a plant in Europe that knew to be the Elk's sedge referred to in the poem. If we read the Old English poem as an allegory, then we need to keep in mind the properties of so many plants that appear harmless. With properties of self-defence such as nettles and toxic secretions, then the hidden strength of these plant types is a continuation of the interpretation of the rune as one of protection.

Protection is a theme present within the Scandinavian poems. The Old Icelandic poem refers to the strength of the Yew trees wood for use in weapons – whether used in a hunt or warfare, the utilisation of a weapon is in one's defence. The Old Norwegian poem again refers to the Yew wood – as the symbolic signs of life in winter and as a slow burn firewood. Given the harsh Norwegian winters, then the Yew again fulfils the role of protection as it keeps the cold temperatures at bay. The toxic nature of the Yew also represents the trees defensive mechanism and links to the notion of death as discussed above.

The *Algiz* rune is one of hidden strength. Nature contains many forces whose

beauty conceals their impressive power. A small stream of water may seem harmless, yet given time, it will carve a path through a mountain. Likewise, a small plant with beautiful plumage may be toxic to the touch. Strength, for the individual, may be internalised and intellectual rather than an outward projection of physical superiority.

Sowilo

*[OE] Sun is by seamen always hope for
when they fare far away over the fishes' bath until the brine-stallion they
bring to land.*

*[OI] Sun is the shield of the clouds, and a shining glory,
and the life-long sorrow of ice.*

[ON] Sun is the light of the lands; I bow to the holiness.

The three rune poems all portray the rune of *Sowilo* as representative of the Sun. The Old Icelandic praises the heat brought forth, whilst the Old Norwegian poem praises the light it brings. Both references have validity given the prevalence of ice and darkness in these countries. The Old English poem praises the Sun as the guidance beacon of the sailors. Such a reference would have held great significance for the great sailors of the Germanic tribes.

In all poems, the value of the Sun is in the means of provision of that which is required – either as heat, light or guidance. The mystery of *Sowilo* is that of the crystallised energy in the form most required by the initiate. Such a manifestation may be in the form of a flash of inspiration or destruction. The “shield” of the Old Icelandic poem may also be representative of the occult veil – that which lays in the darkness unseen beyond the light of the sun that blinds is often the unknown secret knowledge of the greatest value.

The symbolic stave bears a resemblance to the lightning strike and a serpent. As a lightning strike, it may be the flash of inspiration that spurs on the individual to a great deed. Equally, as the serpent, *Sowilo* may represent the dissolutive energies of the serpents' venom and provide a process similar to

that of the *Hagalaz* rune. In order to remanifest one's self; the individual needs to dissolve their present form. The process of dissolution and remanifestation is that of death and rebirth, similar to that of the natural cycle of the seasons or the self-sacrifice of Odin.

The *Sowilo* stave is common as two or more staves that overlap to provide either the solar wheel or black sun. Despite the misuse of the solar wheel by the National Socialist Party of Germany, the religious veneration of the solar wheel remains and occurs around the world. It is possible to interpret the form of the solar wheel or black sun as a solar shield – as described within the Old Icelandic poem.

Tiwaz

*[OE] Tir is a star, it keeps faith well
with athlings,
always on its course over the mists of night it never fails.*

*[OI] Tyr is the one-handed god, and the leavings of the wolf, and the ruler of
the temple.*

[ON] Tyr is the one-handed among the Aesir; the smith has to blow often.

All three poems equate the rune of Tiwaz to the god Tyr. References to Tyr are sparse within Norse mythology. Yet, we know enough to equate Tyr with battle, justice and strength. Tyr. Likewise, its forms of Tiw and Tiwaz remain present within the modern world in the form of Tuesday (Tyr's day) and in relation to the Greek Zeus.

Both the Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian poems refer to Tyr as the one handed god. The mythological reference here is to Tyr as the god who possessed sufficient strength of character to step forth and offer his hand as a guarantee that the gods will not permanently bind the great wolf Fenrir. Tyr takes this action in full knowledge of the intention of the Aesir to trick the wolf and that he will lose his hand. These poems recall this courage in the face of certainty.

The Old Icelandic reference to Tyr, as the ruler of the temple is somewhat odd. Given the settlement of Iceland came after Tyr was referred to as the highest of the gods; and, the majority of settlers there held Thor as their patron deity then the reference is somewhat out of place.

There is a mythological reference to Tyr one of the three highest gods, along with Thor and Odin. There are suggestions that Tyr at one time was in receipt of more sacrifice and worship than Odin and Thor. Given Thor's joint role in battle and the protection of the common man, then he is likely to have a wider appeal. As a god of the warrior, then Tyr would have been more popular with warrior classes that would have held eminence in a timocracy. Odin's popularity is with the elite, perhaps those of a monarchy or oligarchy, and he remains a god able to induce fear – even for the warrior kings. In a structured society of classes, Tyr represents the warrior king, Odin the magician king or priest king and Thor is the farmer-soldier, the common man and the defender of the homestead.

The Old English poem equates Tyr with the star that is always on course. In the northern hemisphere, this reference is to the North Star and as such, we find the equation between Tyr and the world axis. As the world axis, Tyr forms the pillar of unmovable strength around which all other aspects revolve. The myth of Tyr being the only Aesir-god with the courage to place his hand in the mouth of the monstrous wolf Fenris attest the strength and courage of Tyr. The shape of the Tiwaz rune stave also calls to mind the form of the great Irminsul pillar, which represents the world axis. The world axis is also Yggdrasil – the world tree.

It is important to acknowledge Tyr's role as a god of justice. In this respect, Justice is other than that of legal matters, where Forsetti is the dominant god. Tyr is the god of orlög justice – similar in many respects to karmic law. The actions of the past determine the judgment handed out.

The runer may find it helpful to view the rune stave as a depiction of a balance scale. Balance is essential in life in order to progress. If one emphasises actions too often or too greatly in favour of one side of the multitude of polarities present, then the risk is that one may become unbalanced. To become unbalanced is to become either an addict or an ascetic. The individual would do well to recall the aeonic word of Anton

Szandor LaVey: “Indulgence” in one’s desires is less harmful than to allow them to consume one's self. However, indulgence may lead to addiction. Control of the desire is required at all times. Here the strength of Tyr is required in order to balance out the needs of both polarities, forming the grey from the extremes of black and white, good and evil, addiction and asceticism.

Berkano

[OE] Birch is without fruit but just the same it bears limbs without fertile seed; it has beautiful branches, high on its crown it is finely covered, loaded with leaves, touching the sky.

[OI] Birch twig is a leafy limb, and a little tree, and a youthful wood.

[ON] Birch twig is the limb greenest with leaves; Loki brought back the luck of deceit.

Although all three poems refer to *Berkano* as the Birch tree, the mythological symbolism is of greater importance than the actual species. The Old Norwegian poem refers to the abundant fertility of the tree. The second line is important, perhaps more so than the first: for, Loki often managed to procure great gains for the Aesir gods because of his deceit. Such is testimony of his worth to the Aesir.

Without Loki’s slyness, many situations would have ended badly for the Aesir. Regardless of how one may view Loki, his talent for the transformation of bad situations to the benefit of the Aesir was invaluable to the gods. The magus can learn much from the mythology of Loki. Such an application of Machiavellian manipulation in many situations is inspirational. If we take a Jungian view of Loki as an archetype, then we see the great trickster as the Shadow of the Odin archetype. Such a view provides us with a further insight as to how the initiate must be able to shift through and manipulate the mundane world whilst in pursuit of continual growth and

knowledge

The Old Icelandic poem espouses the fertility of the tree itself. This reverence for the self-sufficient fertility echoes within the detail of the Old English poem.

The poem describes a fruitless and seedless tree, yet one that is both beautiful and fertile regardless. The tree described here is other than the Birch tree. The name *Berkano* may be an archaic reference or name for another species of tree, although perhaps one similar to the Birch.

The Old English and Old Icelandic poems both focus upon the beauty and fertility of the tree. The mythological references here may be the beauty and fertility of *Freyja* as a goddess of lust. The tree aspect of the poems may refer to the tree from which *Idunn* gathers the sacred apples that renew the god's youthfulness daily.

The rune stave itself may symbolise the fertility of the feminine. The symbol perhaps depicts the pregnant female with swollen abdomen and bosom. Such a process of renewal from within would be to maintain the poems description of a fruitless fertility. The renewal process should also resonate as a cycle of manifestation. The rune is then the feminine power to bring into being. Such may take many forms as to what exactly is birthed into existence, yet it is the power to do so which lays at the core of *Berkano*.

Ehwaz

*[OE] Horse is, in front of the earls the joy of athlings,
a charger proud on its hooves; when concerning it, heroes – wealthy men –
on warhorses exchange speech,
and it is always a comfort
to the restless*

Present only within the Old English rune poem, the rune of *Ehwaz* is one of partnership. With a rune stave that resembles the reflection of the *Laguz* rune stave against itself. It is a rune addressed later in the text in maintenance of the sequential nature of the *aett*. The symbol itself offers a depiction of a

supportive partnership. The rune stave for *Ehwaz* is then two individual, organic energies; *Laguz* rune staves in support of each other.

In the description of the horse within the poem, we find a clear allusion to the value placed upon a noble steed. In analysis of the poem, it is important to recall the advantage that a great horse would afford a man in the past. Such an advantage was commonplace worldwide until the mass production of the motorcar began. The horse provides a status symbol of wealth for the rider, the swiftness of travel, and military superiority. The cavalry was of vital importance until the advent of the tank in the twentieth century.

To truly understand this rune, the individual must grasp the dynamics of the relationship between man and horse. Such interdependence was more effective than that of man and dog. Whilst a man will care for and work with a dog, the dog is only capable of the return of affection and some assistance for the hunt or protection. The requirement is for the rider to train, feed and care for the horse. In exchange, the horse provides some friendship whilst massively repaying the rider/carer through sheer work. The work rate of the horse is paid tribute in the measure of the motor vehicles engine power – such is the reverence placed upon the work ethic and might of the horse even in the modern world. The horse can provide strength to plough a field, speed of travel (beyond that of any similar sized creature), and military superiority upon the battlefield. Whether it was chariots, mounted cavalry or solitary knights – the horse provided the speed of manoeuvre, vantage point, and a defensive position superior to those on foot. The recent reintroduction of the British riot horse pays tribute to the ability of the mounted police officer to control and dominate a violent crowd. A small group of mounted warriors can easily control a hundred unmounted men.

The mystery of the rune is other than the simple might and reverence of the horse. The horse alone is an unbridled beast that acts, as any other wild animal would do so. The partnership forged between horse and rider is one of major significance and interdependence as described above. As a partnership of two *Laguz* runes, it is possible to view *Ehwaz* as the union of organic energies – the male and female energies. Such a union is the goal of Yoga (itself meaning ‘union’). *Ehwaz* thus represents the power of the union between varied forms; it is complimentary energies of the Yin-Yang, the

ShivaShakti union or that of Braham-Shakti, the male and female, the dark and light. *Ehwaz* is the mystery of the power of union, the ability to work in partnership despite polarised natures.

Mannaz

*[OE] Man is in his mirth dear to his kinsman;
although each shall
depart from the other;
for the lord wants to commit, by his decree,
that frail flesh
to the earth*

[OI] Man is the joy of man, and the increase of dust, and the adornment of ships.

[ON] Man is the increase of dust; mighty is the talon-span of the hawk.

Mannaz , as seen within all three rune poems above, refers to man. The Old Icelandic poem reiterates the mortality of man in its reference to man as “the increase of dust”. Man’s physical mortality is an inspiration to some, yet a curse and nightmare to others who pursue eternal youth.

The Old Icelandic poem describes man as “the joy of man”. In our greatest moments, we refer to the greatness of ‘man’ – ‘mankind achieved this...’ or ‘mankind will not...’ The societal structures created by man far exceed those known within the animal kingdom. The interplay of political systems, commercial enterprise, class systems and the interplay between the minority elite and the majority all form a series of forces and tensions that result in an organic social movement referred to as ‘man’.

The Old English poem also refers to these interplays of various ideologies within society in man’s willingness to collaborate with one’s fellow men for a common goal. There is reference to the ranks of the class system also. The mythological provision of order upon society by Heimdallr in the *Rigsthula* suggests that such complexity of organisation and is part of an intelligent design. In the current political climate, it is unpopular to suggest such divine order of workers, soldiers and aristocratic classes. Within the rune stave of

Mannaz, we can see the partnership of *Ehwaz* and the gift of *Gebo* and the symbolism here should be clear. The union of man in society is thus the gift of divine ordering. The structuring of society is in such a way that we may support each other in order to elevate each other and the whole towards greatness. Here we find the gift of *Gebo* in the form of Heimdallr's structuring of society – the union of man in a cohesive effort towards greater achievement. Such renders the reading of the rune as of a partnership between beings or even organisations.

There is also the interpretation of the rune on a personal level. The gift of sapience, *wod*, or the black flame is the presence of divinity within every human. It is through the union of the internal aspects of the individual, the goal of Kundalini yoga, that we may realise the divinity within. Here, the *Mannaz* rune then represents the power of internal union, the yogic goal of Jungian individuation, whereby the self is realised and empowered.

Laguz

*[OE] Water is to people seemingly unending
if they should venture out on an unsteady ship
and the sea waves
frighten them very much, and the brine-stallion does not heed its bridle.*

*[OI] Wetness is churning water, and a wide kettle,
and the land of fish.*

[ON] Water is which falls from the mountain; as a force; but gold are costly things.

In *Laguz*, we find the runic mystery of water. Water is the source of life in our world. Evolutionary theory tracks all things back to the primordial bodies of fluid wherein all fauna have ancestors within the great seas. The Old Norwegian poem alludes to the value of water and its hidden strength as it cuts its path through material before it. The Old Icelandic poem refers to the energetic flows of water as it churns and boils in the hot springs of Iceland.

The Old English poem provides a greater depth. Herein we find the

intimidation and vastness of the oceans clearly described. For example, the fear which induced in all men should the sea turn against them and render their ship useless against the ebb and flow. In Norse mythology, there is a superstition about those whom venture forth on ships and how they take with them gold with which to appease Ran (the angry wife of Aegir). Ran enjoys the act whereby she takes sailors down to the bottom of the sea.

Within the rune *Laguz*, the individual may find the potential released from that of *Isa* – the abundant flow of potential for events and materials to manifest. *Laguz* is the substance in which the icy flows of potential, as it seeps out of *Nifelheim*, find raw energy in as it flows from *Muspellheim*. In *Laguz*, we have the quantum potential for any and all to manifest – it is the substance of chaos in which the *Jotun* thrive, whereby all potentialities are ready to emerge into being. It is this process that leads to an organic growth, an organic energy that comes into being. This organic growth is the result of the union between the potential of *Nifelheim* and the energy of *Muspellheim*.

The mystery of *Laguz* lies outside the form of water. The human body is composed of some two-thirds to three-quarters of water. Such potential to manifest out of this substance is then present within each person. In a similar manner to which the sacred oath can use the vibration of the human voice over a jug of mead or ale to shape and influence the *wyrd* before oneself, then the initiate may apply this process to their own body. In *Laguz*, we find the alchemical potential for all things within the self. In *Laguz*, we find the emergent results of the union within the self as mentioned above in discussion of the *Mannaz* rune.

Ingwaz

*[OE] Ing was first,
among the East-Danes, seen by men
until he again eastward went over the wave; the wain followed on; this is
what the warriors called the hero.*

The runic mystery of *Ingwaz* appears only within the Old English poem. In reference to *Ing*, the poem refers to the god known as *Ingve Freyr*; oft called simply by his title of *Freyr*.

The poem refers to *Ing* as the progenitor of the Danish kings, with the *Ynglinga* Saga also key in the identification of his role as the father of the kings of Sweden. Given the fertility of those lands in comparison with other parts of Scandinavia, then the association has a mythological precedent. As part of the brother and sister tandem most commonly associated with fertility, *Freyr* and *Freyja*, then *Ing* is a perfect ancestral god for such lands.

The rune stave itself has the symbolic interpretation of a seed. The *Jera* rune stave supports such an interpretation. If we split open the seed form of *Ingwaz*, then one fractures the rune stave and we find therein the remains resemble the rune stave of *Jera*. The symbolism of the stave also supports the rune poems reference of the god *Ing* and his role in the fertility of the land. The seed and the harvest are the first plantation and result of the fertile potential.

The seed encapsulates the full potential of the individual. Only through the energetic destruction of the seed is the potential released to manifest as new life. The seed form is and contains what may be. Like the seed, the individual is the product of their *orlög* – the manifestation of the past. An appreciation for this notion allows the individual to ‘plant seeds’ within their life, deliberately beginning works that they hope to harvest later. The form of the seed may be varied. It may take the form of a small act, which alters the perception of the individual by others. The seed may take the form of the commencement of a new study course may open further career paths in years to come. Actions now form the seeds for what the individual may harvest in the future. The seed is potential. Without creation of the potential, then there is no chance to harvest the desired result.

Dagaz

*[OE] Day is the lord's messenger, dear to men,
the ruler's famous light;
mirth and hope
to rich and poor
is useful for all*

Dagaz is a rune of extreme importance to the individual as well as the order

of the runes in their use as a guide to the development of the self.

Found only within the Old English rune poem, the description of the rune *Dagaz* is as the “messenger”, “famous light” and “hope”. The description here refers to the dawn of a new day. A new day carries forth the much lusted for hope of what may come to be, as well as the relief that the dark of night has receded. Although the night is currently less dangerous for man (in comparison with how it may have been a thousand or more years ago), the night is still a time of fear in the psyche. The prevalence of night and darkness within the horror genre of film provides ample evidence of the continued role that the night plays in the terrors of the mind. The dawn of a new day is symbolic for the renewal of a cycle as well as hope and relief. The rune stave for *Dagaz* reflects the cycle and bears resemblance to the equilibrium symbol.

In the mythology of the sun, the night signifies the death of the Sun god and the dawn is the rebirth as the god emerges from the underworld. We find such a mythological symbolism in an array of mythologies including those of Egypt, Norse myth and even the Christ mythos. The individual undergoes a similar process throughout various stages of life. Psychologically, these are termed ‘imprints’ and occurs at stages of immense experiential development such as the first steps of a child, the first word, puberty, first love interests and the loss of virginity. In essence, these experiences are initiatory and relate well to the initiatory rites of the ancient, and modern, mystery cults such as those of Egypt. The process of the symbolic death, dissolution and rebirth is the core message of all initiations from those of baptism through to masonic rituals. The mystery of the *Dagaz* rune is that of renewal and rebirth. As one day is never truly the same as the previous. As such, like the river of Heraclitus, the individual is never the same as they once were.

Othala

*[OE] Estate is very dear to every man,
if he can enjoy what is right and according to custom in his dwelling,
most often in prosperity.*

The traditional view holds *Othala* as the final rune in the Elder Futhark. It

appears within the Old English rune poem. In reference to the estate, the poem equates the *Othala* rune to that of ancestral heritage and places a value upon custom and the home. The rune poem here may refer to a common origin of the common phrase that ‘an English man’s home is his castle.’ This phrase refers to the idea that every Englishman will defend the sanctity of his home and is happier nowhere else. For the runer, the *Othala* rune is then representative of either the home or that inherited from ancestors. It is vital to understand that ancestral inheritance may be other than in the forms of physical or fiscal wealth. As with the prior discussion of Wyrð, it may be the inheritance of ancestors’ actions. It may also take the form of an inherited genetic trait.

Othala is also associated with Odin, whom as the Allfather is the ancestor of all of Aesir gods and mankind. Through the gift of *Wod*, Odin is the giver of that which sets man apart from the animal kingdom. The shared concept of this gift of will, spirit, and sapience that defines man as a supernatural entity occurs within many mythical tales including those of Prometheus. Such suggests that there is an archetypical origin, which takes shape in accordance with local interpretation. Those who find and grasp the truth of the origin of this archetype may unlock the fullest knowledge and realisation of this gift in relation to the inherent divinity within man.

Divination with the Runes

The means in which you cast and read will become unique to yourself. Your interpretation will be in a way that mirrors the personal variances that are evident in the many variants of divination systems such as the Tarot with its multiple forms of card spreads, or indeed, even the wide variance in which various rune-masters have described means to cast and read the runes in an array of texts over the years. Ultimately, each of us has a starting point from which we learn and begin to assimilate an understanding of the runes into our own lives. Start here – it is as good a place as any. If you have worked with the Tarot, then you will work elements of that into your use of the runes. There is no wrong way to work with the runes.

When you source a rune set, you either have the option to make your own or source what is available in your market place. Sourcing and creating your own set is naturally preferable. Through the process of finding a suitable wood, cutting it, risting (carving or marking) the runes upon it and reddening them (see below), then the energy bond between the individual and the runes is infinitely more powerful and thus effective. The chosen type of wood should be one that has a strong association to the individual.

Mythologically, the Ash or Yew would be appropriate for their associations with Yggdrasil and Odin. The same selection criteria are applicable in the purchase of ready-made rune sets. If you are able to find a Vitki (magician) who specialises in the use and production of runes, then these are inherently preferable over mass production versions. The prevalence of metal, stone or crystal-based runes within many New-age mystical stores offer a series of option best avoided. Whilst it is possible to achieve good results with these, the lack of mythological and magical links to the metaphysical runes creates a void of energy that, then supplemented by draining such energy from the operator. The author makes and sells rune sets for divination made with Yew and Ash if you wish to purchase such an appropriate set. The authors contact details are at the start of this work and details of the Runic and magical curios created by the author are available at the website listed inside the cover of this book.



The most common form of runes for divination is that of a circular piece, formed from a cross-sectional slice of a piece of wood. Tacitus (Agricola and Germania, 2009) describes the selection and cutting of small twigs from a branch which were then marked and used for divination by the Germanic peoples. The twig form witnessed by Tacitus may have born similarity to the Ogham staves common within Celtic tribes. Ultimately, the form of the runes for divination is both an aesthetic and practical choice of the runer. A set of runes marked upon stones may be pleasant to the touch, yet heavy if you wish to carry them with you. Wooden tiles may appeal for both naturalistic aesthetics and the mythological associations of the wood type. Twigs may resonate with Celtic individuals, yet they may prove bulky to transport. Given the wholly subjective nature of the runes, then you will find yourself drawn towards a certain form of the runes, the shape and material speaking to you on an unconscious level. If you are skilled in craftsmanship, then it is likely that you work with certain materials. If you have only what is available to purchase from which to select, then go with the runes that immediately draw you. Follow your first and natural instinct, resisting the urge to over think associations of materials etc. Let the runes call to you and draw you to the

correct set for you.

Upon receipt or creation of a new set of runes for divination, it is then reddening, as per tradition in order to energise them and link them to your own force, is preferable. The means by which to achieve this binding is traditionally by blood. There is also sufficient suggestion that the use of red ochre pigment carries enough symbolic energy to achieve the same effect. The red colour of both blood and ochre gives rise to the term 'reddening'. For those who wish to redden with blood, then the use of a sterile lancet, as used by diabetics to test their own blood, is advisable. Historically, and magically, it is possible that the use of a specific ritual blade, likely marked with runes, would have been used to perform a small cut from which the blood could be sourced. Given the advance of society and knowledge of infection, as well as the risks associated with scarce tissue, then such an historic approach is ill advised. The author takes no responsibility for any who take this approach. For those reluctant to make use of blood, there remains the use of ochre pigment. Where ochre is difficult to obtain, many people obtain results through the use of salt water, energised with the auric energy of the individual through a process that sees the hand held over the water, effectively a blessing and consecration of it with their own inner deific energy.

Single Rune Draw

The single rune draw is the most basic and quickest method by which to employ the runes for divination or guidance. The approach is simple:

Ensure all of your runes are contained within their bag or container.

Focus your mind upon the issue for which you are seek guidance. It is vital that you refrain from asking questions for which there is a restrictive polar questions, which is one with a yes or no answer. The runes will show you aspects that are manifest or influencing upon a situation. They will never provide simple yes or no answers and are not likely to give you a description of your future lover! Mentally phrase or even vocalise the issue you seek insight into in such a framing that you can receive guidance rather than a direct answer. If you wish to know about how a job interview will go for you, then resist the urge to ask, “Will I get the job?”, rather focussing upon the query “what does my career hold in store for me?” General readings of the path of your thread in the Web of Wyrð are also effective by merely focussing upon a wish to know more about your role.

Ask the Norn to permit a glimpse of guidance into the weave of Wyrð. The words need be no more complicated than “Urd, Verdhandi, Skuld – guide my hand as I reach out and grasp the rune as key to the pathway before me!”

Give the bag that holds the runes a series of three firm shakes, one for each of the Norn.

Reach into the bag and grasp the rune to which your fingers are drawn. Hold tight to that rune and withdraw it, alone, from the bag.

The rune may have an immediate revelatory effect, or, as so often happens, the meaning will remain hidden. Where the meaning of a rune towards a situation is at first unclear, the rune will often become clear in terms of the issue you sought guidance for within a dream or event over the next few days. You are able to aid such if you resist the temptation to continually focus upon the rune, rather it is best to put it aside and forget about it. The rune will

become clear when you are ready, the revelation providing the answer or guidance you sought as and when needed. Continued intense focus upon the rune will merely cloud your mind and judgement and likely have a negative impact upon the situation.

Once the meaning is clear and you have decoded the rune in terms of the situation for which you sought guidance, then the rune returns to the bag. Some may prefer to instantly return the rune to the bag immediately whilst awaiting a clarity of interpretation and such is fine – in fact, it is my own preference to immediately return the rune to the bag in this manner.

The speed of the one rune draw makes it extremely practical. It is possible to quickly draw guidance from beyond the manifest realm in a mere minute. In this manner, consultation of the runes is rapid and therefore available as frequently as needed. There is no protracted ceremony and no overly complicated divinatory process for the reader to decipher. It is a simple issue of the maintenance of an open subjective mind in order to decode the rune and its interplay with the events the draw was associated with.

Three-Norn Draw

The three-Norn draw is the runic version of the threecard draw in Tarot. The runes represent each of the Norn and their weaving of the past, present and likely future. As such, the three-rune approach can give insight into the present, the past that has shaped the events and offer insight into the most likely future outcome.

It is important to hold at least a basic comprehension of the Norn and temporal flux in Norse cosmology. As the Norn are cognate with the three Fates of Greek myth, then their functions are those commonly attributed to the notions of past, present and future. Whilst this attribution holds some merit, it is not strictly correct. The Norn weave the Web of Wyrð. The Web of Wyrð is best conceptualised as a tapestry. Your life is merely a single thread that depicts a minute aspect of detail within a much larger picture. As such, whilst we are involved directly in a scene, we are unable to decipher our part in the larger narrative. Essentially, we are too close to the weave and must remove ourselves and step back in order to appreciate the greater narrative and the beauty of the tapestry. This relative aspect clouds our judgement. We may think that we are acting in the correct way in a given situation, yet hindsight may reveal that we ultimately acted in a manner that had far greater negative consequences in the wider narrative. For example, the French Revolutionaries may have sincerely believed that they were acting in the interests of liberty for all man. Historic perspective may assess that the French Revolution gave rise to Napoleon, whose crushing victories over the Prussian's ultimately led to the sequence of events and changes in Prussia that led to the rise of one of the most oppressive states in history, Nazi Germany. We may never know the inflationary value of our actions or their further reaching consequences within the Web of Wyrð. It is all too easy to alter an individual's life and change the future history of the world.

The Web of Wyrð, conceived as a tapestry, is a work continually adjusted and created. The three Norn, being Urd, Verdhandi and Skuld, work concurrently to write the past, present and future. As the tapestry is continually a work in progress, then the past, present and future all occur

concurrently. It is only our perception of experiences that create a linear flow of time. Time itself is fluid and the tapestry is representative of the quantum universe in which we find ourselves. A basic psychological approach is to 'reframe' a past experience in order to alter the effect upon the present and future. Such is a basic form of psychological time-travel whereby the change of a past negative experience into one viewed in an inverse manner alters the experience of an individual in both present and future. Thus, what was once a negative perception, which may have limited the ability of an individual, can be 'reframed' to become a moment of empowerment from which strength is drawn.

When we draw the three-Norn runes, we draw Urd (past), Verdhandi (present) and Skuld (future) in this order. The drawn runes are always subjective. The Runes meaning may not be entirely obvious at first glance. Refrain from dismissal of the runes if you are unable to draw firm associations and understandings at first glance. Write the drawn runes down, make a note of the rune shapes or take a picture. Resist the urge to dwell on the draw and the meaning will become clear when you are ready for it. The Urd (past) rune may associate an event from the past that you were previously unaware of its link to the current situation. Likewise, the Skuld (future) rune may reveal an unforeseen outcome rather than one you are consciously aware of.

The approach is as follows:

Ensure all of your runes are contained within their bag or container.

Focus your mind upon the issue for which you are seeking guidance. Alternatively, keep a clear mind if it is a general reading which you are seeking. As with the single rune draw above, refrain from asking polarised questions with yes or no type of answers. Ask instead about the situation or field of your life rather than about a specific instance.

Ask the Norn to permit a glimpse of guidance into the weave of Wyrð. The words need be no more complicated than "Urd, Verdhandi, Skuld – guide my hand as I reach out and grasp the runes as keys to the Weave of my Wyrð!"

Give the bag in which the runes are a series of three firm shakes, one for each of the Norn.

Reach into the bag and grasp the rune to which your fingers are drawn. Hold tight to that rune and withdraw it, alone, from the bag. Place this rune, the Urd rune, before you.

Reach into the bag and select the Verdhandi rune. Withdraw this rune from the bag and place this rune to the right of the Urd rune.

Reach once more into the bag and select the final rune, the Skuld rune. Remove the rune from the bag and place this rune to the right hand side of the others.

Your runes should now be laid out as:

Urd Verdhandi Skuld

Thus representing:

Past Present Possible-Future



FIGURE1:

THREE-NORNDRAW

Note your first intuitive interpretation of the runes. What do their shapes suggest to you? Are the shapes similar in any way?

Once you have made your initial interpretation, turn to the earlier sections on each of the runes or refer to Appendix I. for brief guidance as to the esoteric interpretation of the runes before you.

The runes may have an immediate revelatory effect, or, as so often happens, the meaning will remain hidden. Where the meaning of a rune towards a

situation is at first unclear, the rune will often become clear in terms of the issue you sought guidance for within a dream or event over the next few days. Aid the subconscious interpretation in manifestation as you resist the temptation to continually focus upon the runes, rather it is best to put it aside and forget about it. The runes will become clear when you are ready, the revelation providing the answer or guidance you sought as and when needed. Continued intense focus upon the runes will merely cloud your mind and judgement and likely have a negative impact upon the situation.

Full Cast

The full cast is a far more intuitive means of divination than the previous Single or three-Norn draw means of using the runes. In a full cast, it is more than simply the meanings of all twenty-four runes that are able to influence the reading. The possibility for runes to land facedown or on their side also plays a role. There is also the subjective reading of the manner in which the runes fall. It is possible to read meaning into the distribution of the runes across your reading cloth and the proximity of certain runes to each other and the centre of your cloth.

Given the subjective nature of a full cast reading, then it is advisable to obtain a degree of comfort with the meaning of each rune prior to attempting such a cast. It is not that a reading is impossible for the beginner. Rather, it is that a full cast reading may easily become a torturous endeavour if the beginner has need to refer to the text continually to decipher twenty-four mysteries and their subjective interplay of energies as revealed in their distribution in the cast. Only a masochist is likely to find enjoyment in such an arduous task and even then, the focus upon deciphering via reference to the book is highly likely to cloud the subjective reality of what the runes have revealed to you.

The full cast offers the greatest mystery, combined with the greatest potential. It is a glimpse into the wider tapestry that is being woven around you, allowing you some perspective as to how the thread of your own path may interact and be somewhat steered in accordance with your will. Whilst the simple one and three-Norn draws offer a quick and concise glimpse at the patterns of Wyrd, the simplicity of the methods limits the potential. The simpler draws are akin to the reading of a solitary page from a great novel, or attempting to grasp the breadth of the English language through a study of a singular page of a dictionary. Each approach has its merits, yet a mere glimpse into the breadth and intricacy of the totality shall never be the equal of a total and complete grasp of the work.

Reading the Cast

The full rune cast is, by way of its nature, more subjective and chaotic than the single rune or three-Norn draws. Each runer will develop their own intricacies and variations on the casting and reading of the runes. What follows is merely a basic guide in order to provide a platform from which you may develop. There is a list of recommended works at the end of this book, in order to further your exoteric knowledge of the runes. It remains vital however to hold in mind the truth that the runes are esoteric and subjective. The interactions with one runer will vary to those of another. The way in which you work with and interpret the runes is ultimately unique to yourself. There is no right or wrong method, only what works.

When casting the runes for divination, a recommendation is that you lay a cloth upon the surface onto which you intend to cast. The thicker the cloth, the more it will cushion the arrival of the runes. If you cast the runes onto a hard surface, with minimal shock absorbance from a cloth, then the result is that the runes bounce and roll away from yourself. Avoid chasing runes across a room as it breaks the mental link with the act of divination. The historic record of Tacitus describes the Germanic act of casting lots for divination as employing a white cloth (Tacitus, 2009, p. 39). Whilst a white cloth may be historically accurate, it is likely that other coloured cloths found use in variation between Germanic tribes. Black cloth has proven to work well for the author over the years. Black is a receptive colour, given that it signifies the absence of light, and is therefore a perfect medium for the reception of the runic energies when engaged in divination. Again, as with the selection of a rune set or material discussed above, then the choice of material and colour for a rune reading cloth is entirely personal. Your instinct will draw you to your unconscious associations and reveal the colour upon which the runes will work best with yourself.

The basics of casting the runes for divination then are:

Ensure all of your runes are contained within their bag or container.

Focus your mind upon the issue for which you are seeking guidance or keep a clear mind for a general reading, perhaps only focussing your thoughts or words upon your own process of becoming. Again, refrain from asking polarised questions with yes or no type of answers. Ask instead about the situation or field of your life rather than about a specific instance.

Ask the Norn to permit a glimpse of guidance into the weave of Wyrð. The words need be no more complicated than “Urd, Verdhandi, Skuld – guide my hand as I reach out and grasp the runes as keys to the Weave of my Wyrð!”

Give the bag that holds the runes a series of three firm shakes, one for each of the Norn.

Cast the runes, all twenty-four, upon your casting cloth. When performing a full cast, you may wish to further link the runes to your energy by breathing into the bag or speaking the names of the Norn (Urd, Verdhandi and Skuld) into the bag prior to casting the runes. There are two approaches to casting. Firstly, you may elect to simply turn your rune bag upside down and give it a sharp shake to expel the runes towards the casting cloth. Such a method does work well. Alternatively, if your hands are sufficiently sized to do so, you may wish to reach in and grasp all twenty-four runes in your hand, as is the author’s preference, before you then throw them into the air above the cloth.

As the runes land and settle upon your cloth, you will form an instant impression. Did the runes land in a pattern or are they chaotically spread? Are they collected towards a certain point of the cloth – such would possibly indicate a dominant field of the reading, or widely dispersed to the contrary? Are certain runes more prominent in your first view? Whatever your initial thoughts are, hold these in mind, as they are invaluable in shaping your reading of the runes. It is essential to remember that this instinctive reading is free of all conscious interference. When we over think any activity or process, we are often guilty of over complication and thus we fail to see the simple truth before us.

There are various approaches, unique to each runer, as to how to treat runes that are face down or upside down. Some work with face down runes as hidden runes that are unseen within the manifestation of the energies around an issue. Others invert the reading of the rune – Fehu inverted may thus for instance represent the loss of that which is valued. Some runers apply this approach of inversion to runes, which face upwards, yet the stave’s direction of orientation is away from the runer. The best advice here is to work with what feels true to yourself. Over the years, I have concluded that the runes are either in effect or not, those that land face down thus being those of no relevance to the reading. The inversion of a rune may then be deciphered

through the reading itself. Fehu may appear face up, yet its adjacent runes and location on a cloth may suggest a loss rather than a gain.



FIGURE 2: FULL CAST WITH FACE-DOWN RUNES SHOWN

Given that I here describe the method in which I read the runes, then I now remove any runes that have landed either face down or balanced perfectly on their side. Discount any rune that has somehow left the casting cloth from the reading.



FIGURE 3: FULL CAST WITH 'HIDDEN' RUNES REMOVED

Continue now to read the runes that remain. Runes which are close together are deemed to be directly influencing upon each other e.g. if Hagalaz and Fehu are touching, then it is suggestive of a change in wealth or what is valued. The reading of runes that are isolated is of energies in their own right, having very little influential exchange with the other runes.

The position of the runes upon the cloth also alters the perception of the reading. Each runer uses various methods, as with Tarot reading. For those with experience in the field of astrology, then you may find the application of aspects provides an intuitive and formidable system by which you may interpret the interplay of the runes. You will ultimately develop your own runic map for reading casts. Edred Thorsson (*Runecaster's Handbook: the Well of Wyrð*, 1999) outlines a reading based upon his mapping of the nine realms of Yggdrasil and the associations of the realms. Alternatively, Katie Gerrard (*Odin's Gateways*, 2009) suggests a model based upon a temporal mapping whereby runes closer to the centre are more immediate in effect upon a situation. What follows is a syncretic mapping of the cast that has developed over many years of reading the runes and the synthesis of aspects of others methods. Naturally, the work of Thorsson and others has fused with

experiences in work with the Tarot and formed my own interpretation. As with all aspects of the runes, each person forms their own subjective relationship and reading. Find a base system that works for yourself and as you attune your intuition, develop your own system.

The following is the author's mapping as projected mentally upon the casting cloth in order to read the rune cast:

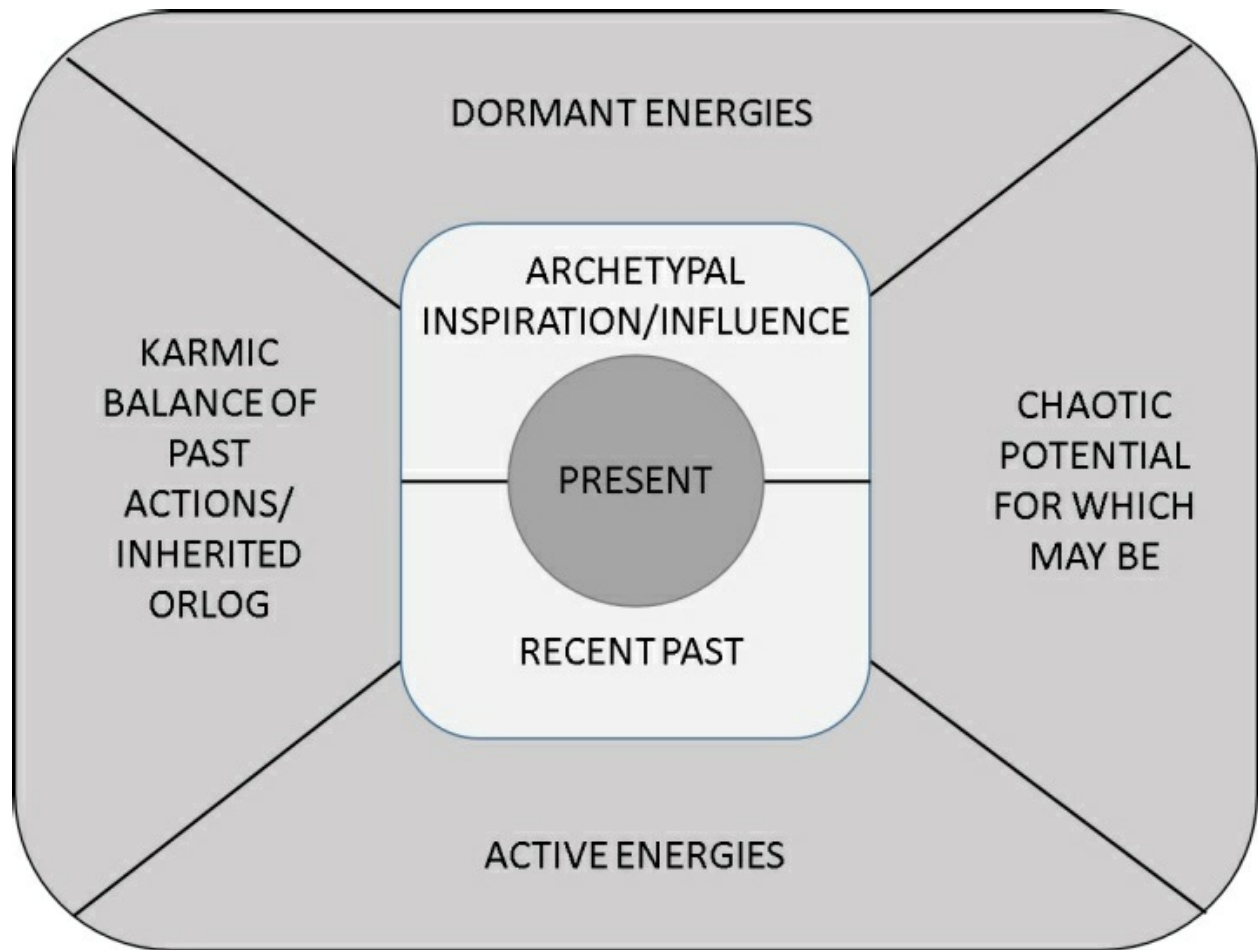


FIGURE 4: FULL CAST READING MAP

Runes that fall in the centre of the cloth are those deemed to be that which are currently manifesting, thus they are representative of the now.

Those runes located just above the centre of the cloth represent the influence of archetypal and deific conscious entities upon the situation or individual. An example of such may be the presence of the Ansuz rune within this space. Such would possibly suggest the influence of Odin to inspire the individual or influence a situation.

The interpretation of runes that fall just below the centre of the cloth is as those that have influenced the recent past, ultimately leading to the present, manifest moment. If Hagalaz were to be located here, then it may be that the issue or individual has recently emerged from a significant change such as the break-up of a relationship or change in circumstance.

The very top part of the cloth represents those energies that are dormant, yet have the potential to come into play. An example would be the presence of Ehwaz that suggests a possible partnership that is yet to manifest.

The bottom of the cloth represent the energies which have an influence upon the situation, yet may also be focussed in order to bring those dormant energies at the top of the cloth into play. If Fehu represented a dormant energy of wealth at the top of the cloth, then the presence of Hagalaz as an influencing energy at the bottom may indicate that the individual needs to embrace change in order to realise the true value in their life.

Energies to the very left of the casting cloth are representative of Karmic balance and the cycles of life, growth and death. Runes here represent natural processes that sow the actions of the past, in order to allow the reaping of them later in a Karmic balance. These are separate to the field of the recent past, located just below the centre of the cloth. These may be ancestral issues, laid down in one's orløg and passed through generations. Such may manifest as hereditary conditions, inherited wealth or status. Runes here are those that are coming into being and will begin to affect the present.

The far right of the cloth is the realm of potentiality. Runes falling here are representative of what possibilities lay in the distant future of the situation or individual. These possibilities are quantum in nature and thus may either be brought into being or avoided through appropriate action.

Tarot Draw

WARNING! What follows is volatile and unorthodox in nature! It is advisory that those who hold strict views against the syncretisation of varied systems should skip the section that follows in order to avoid offence. Return to this section once you find yourself comfortable with it. The runes are well suited to reading in conjunction with the Tarot, with both forms of divination reinforcing and expanding upon the reading. It is therefore perfectly reasonable to combine a common Tarot spread with the runes in order to provide yet another means by which to divine. Those who lack a natural psychic gift may find the greater structure of a Celtic Cross Tarot layout aids their interpretation of the runes in divination.

The Celtic Cross is perhaps the most commonly used spread amongst Tarot readers. It is the base system into which many receive tutelage when learning the Tarot and provides a clear process and relationship by which to unlock the esoteric reading of the runes. Those experienced with the Tarot will find this approach beneficial in learning to read the runes, which lack the detail of the Tarot cards and thus require a greater insight into the mysteries on behalf of the reader as there are limited visual clue to trigger interpretation.

To perform a rune reading with the Celtic Cross Tarot spread, follow these steps:

Ensure all of your runes are contained within their bag or container.

Focus your mind upon the issue for which you are seeking guidance.

Alternatively, keep a clear mind if it is a general reading which you are seeking. As with the single Rune draw above, refrain from the urge to ask polarised questions with yes or no type of answers. Ask instead about the situation or field of your life rather than about a specific instance.

Ask the Norn to permit a glimpse of guidance into the weave of Wyrð. The words need be no more complicated than “Urd, Verdhandi, Skuld – guide my hand as I reach out and grasp the runes as keys to the Weave of my Wyrð!”

Give the bag in which holds the runes a series of three firm shakes, one for

each of the Norn.

Reach into the bag and grasp the rune to which your fingers are drawn. Hold tight to that rune and withdraw it, alone, from the bag. Place this rune before you in position one as indicated on the below diagram of the Celtic Cross Spread. Place the runes as you draw in terms of the number sequence shown as follows in Figure 6: The Celtic Cross Read for Tarot and Runes

Repeat the drawing of runes until you have placed ten runes in the positions indicated.

Interpret the runes as per the relationships and associations indicated in Figure 6: The Celtic Cross Read for Tarot and Runes, which follows.



FIGURE 5: HOW THE TAROT BASED CELTIC CROSS APPEARS WITH RUNES

10

9

8

7

6

The Celtic-Cross Read

1. The Situation
2. Unseen situation (perhaps known only to the person)
3. Root of situation (perhaps family history etc.)
4. Influence (external/deific/archetypal etc.)
5. Recent Past
6. Near Future
7. The Self
8. External (how others view the situation/person)
9. Hopes and Fears
10. Possible Future

4

5

1

2

3

FIGURE 6: THE CELTIC CROSS READ FOR TAROT AND RUNES

Combining the Runes & Tarot in a reading

Throughout the time that I spent learning to read and make use of the Tarot, my tutor suggested that I make use of my knowledge of the runes and combine a runic reading with that of the Tarot. As with the Tarot draw for the runes above, this is an irregular and non-historical application. It has however proven to be worthwhile in many readings. Frequently, the process of drawing runes after first reading the Tarot cards has provided a reading of the rune that both supports and elaborates upon that of the Tarot. I frequently now make use of a basic Three-Norn draw of the runes to conclude a Tarot reading. Whilst this provides further depth to a Tarot reading, it is also a good introduction to the runes for many who I provide a reading for. When performing divination for myself, I widen this approach and perform a full rune cast in conjunction with a Tarot reading. For those adept with the Tarot, then the use of the runes in this way will accelerate the realisation and understanding of the runes. Further, those aware of the initiatory key elements within the Tarot will then grasp the initiatory runic path that follows.

Runic initiatory stages

Those familiar with the use of Tarot are likely to have knowledge of its use as the descriptor of an initiatory journey of an alchemical nature. The mysteries as described by the poems discussed above, represented symbolically in their rune staves, also describe such a process. The process that follows, first published in an earlier assessment of the relationship of Odin and the initiation of the individual upon the left-hand path (The Left-hand of Odin, 2016), provides the keys to the mystery within the self. It has since developed and is thus included here in an updated version. The initiatory pathway of the runes is important given the mythological association with Odin's initiatory sacrifice in order to gain the runes. It is also relevant given the way in which the runes, once grasped and brought into your life, will alter the manner of your Being. The decision to work with the symbols of mystery that are powerful enough to lure a deific being such as Odin, are naturally able to affect changes in your life also.

The presentation of the runes of the Elder Futhark is in three *aetts* – three rows, each made of eight runic mysteries. It is possible to view these *aetts*, along with the individual runes, as stages of initiation. Each rune is a step in the process, with each *aett* represents a phase of the individual's journey.

If we list the runes and their core significances, then the result is as follows:

Rune Symbol

Wealth

Primal instinct

Chaotic destruction/ Initiatory challenge

Inspired will

Journey

Beacon of inspiration/ short-term goal

Gift

Strategic long-term goal

Hail/ deconstruction and remanifestation

Need

Ice/challenge

Harvest of past deeds
Transcendent pathway
Secret agent of fate Rune Symbol
Hidden strength
Manifest energy
Balanced justice/ Courage
Fertility of becoming
Partnership/ Union
The ascendancy of mankind/ Social structure
Organic potential
Seed-form of all potential
Cycle of becoming
Ancestral heritage

If we arrange the runes into the three *aetts*, then we have the structure as follows:

If we look at the process of each of the *aetts*, then we find a process that may hold similarity to the three-pillar approach to the qabalah in terms of the personal alchemical process:

The first *aett* suggests an initial assigned value of existence (Fehu) of primitive life and primal instinct (Uruz) that has the potential (achieved by overcoming the challenge represented by Thurisaz) and is shaped and inspired (Ansuz) to further itself as it ventures (Raidho) forth towards the waymarker flame (the beacon of Kenaz) where the gift (Gebo) of glory in the achievement of the grand-strategic goal, the teleological purpose (Wunjo) awaits.

The second *aett* suggests a remanifestation (the destruction and renewal of the hailstorm Hagalaz) in accordance with the need (the labour required to attain that which is desired as represented by Naudiz) to overcome the challenges (the treacherous challenge of Isa) before the self. To overcome this challenge manifests the reward (reaping the benefits of earlier hard work in the harvest of Jera) whereby the individual fully understands the material and spiritual worlds (the union along the axis-mundi of Eihwaz) with respect to the unknown final destiny or dharmic teleology of the individual (the secrets of Wyrð embodied in the lot cup or Perthro). Such a secret requires

earnest protection (Eolhaz/Algiz) of the seed until it manifests beyond a sapling stage and is mature and able to fend off challenges until rationalised mind is subject to the flash of inspiration (Sowilo) as to the individual's teleology.

The third *aett* shows the process of a courageous (through the Karmic strength of Tiwaz) rebirth (the remanifestation of the individuated self through Berkano) as a component in union with all aspects of the self and in external interaction (an active partner engaged with others as represented by Ehwaz) in society (Mannaz) where the organic growth (Laguz) of the inner potential (the original teleological seed of sapience that is Ingwaz) leads to the remanifestation of the self (the continual cycle of becoming that is the Heraclitean flux of Dagaz) in accordance with what has been (the inheritance of Being and Orlög that is Othala).

The generally accepted order of the Elder Futhark is that *Dagaz* is in twenty-third place, with *Othala* as the twenty-fourth and final rune. We have a reason, in review of this analysis, to position *Dagaz* in the final place. Such would render the final *aetts* process with an alternate implication. The third *aett* would show a balanced rebirth as a component in society where the organic growth of the inner potential is set by achievements prior to the commencement of a new phase of Being.

The significance of such an order is that of man's origin as a simple and functional component of the animal kingdom and the inherent entelechy of man's being, realised only through a continual process of alchemical remanifestation. Through a change thrust upon man, thus, acquirement of the ability to evolve beyond the mere physical needs to facilitate survival, man began the journey towards his potential. The process involves a sometimes painful and destructive remanifestation of the self-when required. The transcendent mind begins to understand what has been, what may be and where the fullest potentiality of the mind may lay, although the final destiny of the individual will remain unknown. The process of remanifestation and evolution of the self continues, as the individual grows powerful, both internally and externally, because of their construction upon their ability with each subsequent remanifestation -- a manifest addition upon that which was. The final remanifestation sees it all begin again -- unless the individual can

and chooses to close out the process of rebirth. We find this process within many initiatory schools, especially those with a focus towards Western alchemy or Eastern Yoga.

A reversal of the *Dagaz* and *Othala* runes also provides a significant journey of initiatory experience. Such a journey bears immense similarity to the journey of the archetypal hero of mythology, whom journeys into the ground to gain insight and power and returns greater than at the start of the journey. We find reference to such an initiatory path in the tales of Sigurd and Beowulf, or as seen in Amazonian tribal initiations.

As stated throughout, the mysteries embodied within these poems, sounds and symbols are subjective in their resonance with individuals. Indeed, from the very first rune of *Fehu* in its reference to wealth, we find the mysteries open to the individual's interpretation. What one man would do for fiscal wealth, another would do for water. The given outlines of the runes function as tools, as an order of applicability in the development of the self. The means and aim of employment for these tools is entirely personal.

The runic initiatory pathway outlined above may take many forms. You have already began your own journey along this path. In seeking the runes alone, you have ventured forth in pursuit of the beacon that is *Kenaz*, as it calls to you on an unconscious level. As you have taken the step to overcome any doubts or fears you had about the runes, the challenge of *Thurisaz*, has brought you this far. Even at the remanifestation that is *Dagaz*, the process merely resets and begins once more in a perpetual cycle of development. Your journey is entirely subjective and you may even fail to realise that you have undergone such a journey. The subsequent map may assist you in realisation of where you are in your own cycle of becoming:

Raidho

Commencement of your journey towards your goal



Naudhiz

Effort applied towards the continuation of your work



Algiz

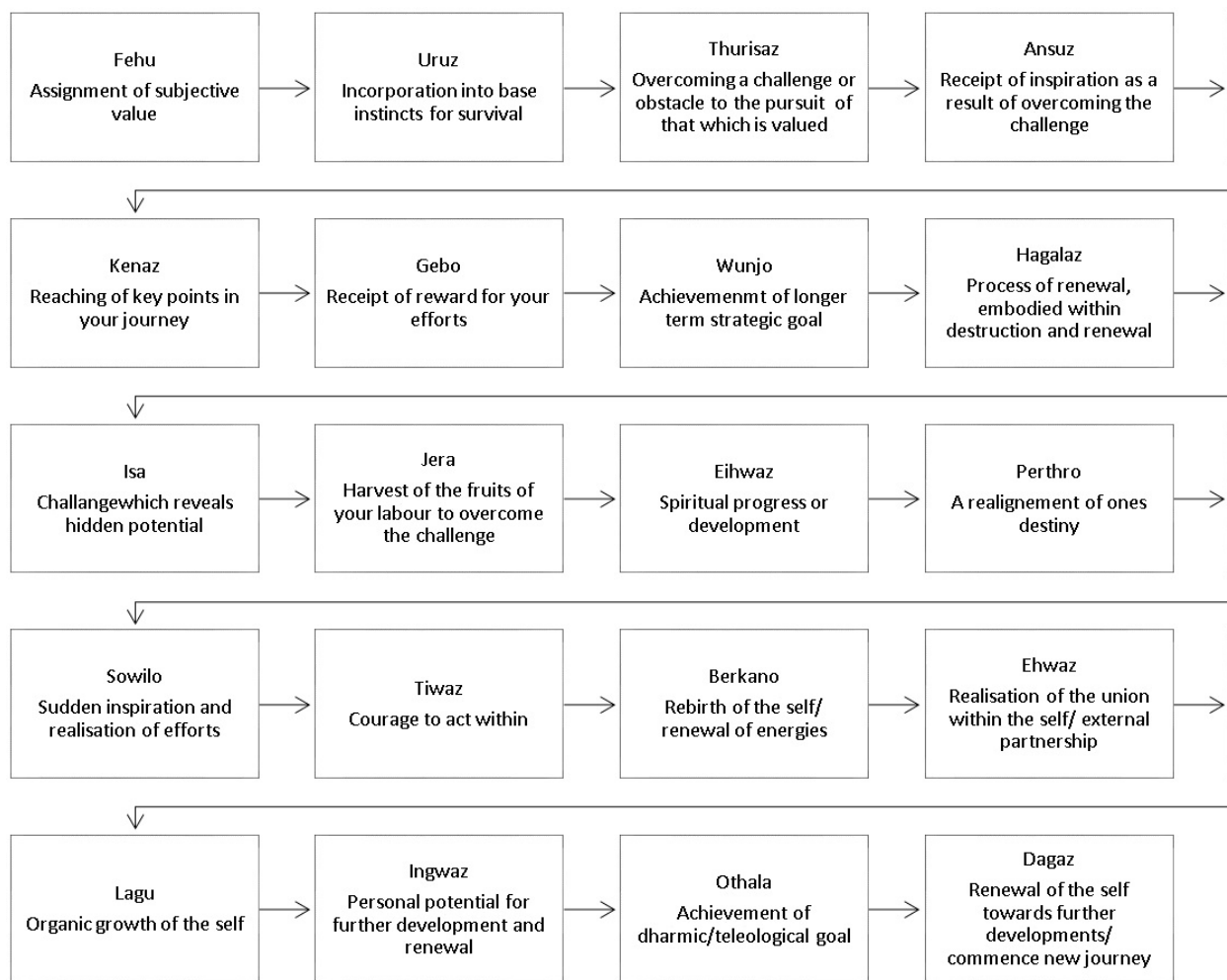
A protective stasis which may appear as a lull in activity



Mannaz

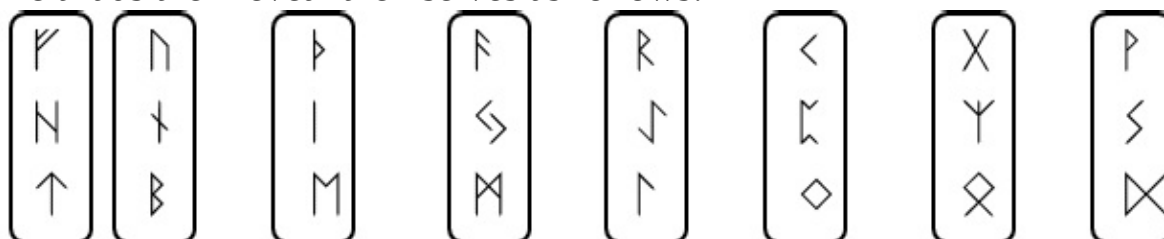
Dharmic interaction with society/ realisation of divinity within





Within the revised structural ordering of the aetts, as proposed above, there is a further key to these mysteries that we are then able to investigate. The alignment of the aetts reveals triads of runes along the vertical axis of the aett structure.

The triads then reveal themselves as follows:



We may investigate these runic correspondences in order to discern their value as keys to the mysteries.

Fehu- Hagalaz- Tiwaz

Here we find the subjective value of Fehu subject to the destructive remanifestation of Hagalaz. The interaction of the Tiwaz rune may represent a karmic alignment of the subjective values post-remanifestation. A more likely role for Tiwaz is that of the courage for the individual to subject their value system to a complete destruction and revaluation. Such may relate to the revaluation of morals as suggested by Nietzsche (Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ, 2003).

Uruz-Naudiz-Berkano

In the runic-triad of Uruz-Naudiz-Berkano, we find the direct interaction between the primal instinct to survive (Uruz) and the motivation to overcome difficulty (Naudiz) in order to comply with this instinct. Such an achievement, the overcoming of a challenge to one's existence represents an intense initiatory experience from which one is reborn (Berkano) and will never be as they were prior to that very experience.

Thurisaz-Isa-Ehwaz

This runic triad represents another initiatory experience. Here we find the mythic tales of heroes, like those of Sigurd discussed above, whereby the hero overcomes a great foe or challenge and receives a great reward. The combined challenge of Thurisaz and Isa represents a great difficulty. The dual challenge may allude to the union of organic aspects within the Ehwaz rune, as discussed above. Thurisaz then represents the challenge to the conscious mind. Isa is the challenge to the sub-conscious and natural instincts. Here we have a yogic path. The mastery of the conscious and the subconscious energies, as represented commonly in the form of the kundalini, allows for the union of these polarities. Here we have the runic form of the goals of yoga and alchemy. In the mastery of the challenges of Thurisaz and Isa, there is the realisation of the individuated self through the mastery and union of the male and female, the conscious and subconscious, the acausal and causal.

Ansuz-Jera-Mannaz

The interaction between this runic triad represents the receipt of divine inspiration. Either Mannaz here may represent the structures of society, as guided by deity, or the interaction between the realised individual and the

spark of divinity within that is unlocked as a result. In order to unlock the inherent gift of divinity, the individual must accomplish the union discussed in the prior runic triad of Thurisaz-IsaEhwaz. With achievement of Ehwaz secure, then the inner flame of self-deification is kindled.

Raidho-Eihwaz-Laguz

The runic triad of Raidho-Eihwaz-Laguz represents the entelechy of man. The journey (Raidho) of discovering one's own spirituality (Eihwaz) leads to a natural and organic growth (Laguz) of ones being as one journeys towards the discovery of one's own essence.

Kenaz-Perthro-Ingwaz

Kenaz here presents the beacon, the guide that draws the individual towards an unknown destiny (Perthro). Here is a process that draws the individual towards the discovery of a new beginning, the seed of Ingwaz, which will ultimately allow for the complete remanifestation of the self. This runic triad may present as a new interest or sudden urge towards new experiences. Following on from the spiritual journey of the previous Raidho-Eihwaz-Laguz triad, then such may ultimately represent a spiritual or intellectual pilgrimage of sorts, which may result in profound changes to one's being.

Gebo-Algiz-Othala

Here we find the realisation of the origin of the self. The origins of man's sapience, that which has set mankind aside from the animal kingdom, are divine. This triad represents the gift (Gebo) of Prometheus, which set man apart and protected him (Algiz) from the harsh world around him. It is the secret gift bestowed upon man (Gebo) that is locked away (Algiz) within each individual, the origins of our consciousness (Othala) that betray our inherent potential for deification. In each person, the mind protects the hidden truth of the gift that we know as our mind – that our minds are all part of the same ancestral deity, the deific mind from which arise all others.

Wunjo-Sowilo-Dagaz

The final triad of Wunjo-Sowilo-Dagaz represents the culmination of the

initiatory pathway. Here we see the achievement of the grand strategy (Wunjo), the teleological purpose. With this great achievement comes the realisation of one's potential (Sowilo). The rune Sowilo here also represents the lightning strike; the flash of inspiration, which breaks apart the earlier seed-form of Ingwaz and in doing so, propels the individual towards remanifestation (Dagaz).

Appendix I. The Elder Futhark



FEHU is that which is of value to the individual at any given point. It may be fiscal wealth, love, companionship, knowledge, food or many other forms that are valuable.



URUZ is the primal instinct, the will to life. It manifests as the need to feed or reproduce. It is the will to survive in order to fulfil ones destiny.



THURISAZ is the thorn upon the rose bush. As in fairy tales and myths, it represents the defence of that which is valued. That which Thurisaz protects is of great value and the challenge admits only the worthy. Thurisaz is both protection and the challenge by which we may become empowered if we succeed in overcoming it.

ANSUZ is the rune of Odin. It is the rune of Odinic inspiration. Odin, as god of war and language has many ways in which to inspire. It may manifest as the battle fury of the warrior or the divine inspiration of the writer or poet.

RAIDHO is the rune of journeys. This journey may be either a physical one, or one of individual change within the self.

KENAZ is the runic beacon, the inspiration that draws the weary traveller towards the comforting light of home. It is the flame that also burns if one remains still too long, motivating one to move on. It is the short-term motivator.

X

GEBO is the exchange of gifts, given value by the honour of the parties involved. An honourable gift, such as the bravery of a warrior, is given and rewarded with honourable titles by the chieftain.

P

WUNJO is the distant goal, the grand strategy, the potential that awaits each of us. It is the ultimate goal for which we should strive.

N

HAGALAZ is the process by which things are broken apart. This process of dissolution is required in order to rebuild and improve. It is the alchemical *Solve et Coagula*. It is the burning of the field to revitalise it. It is the forest fire that renews life afresh.

†

NAUDIZ is the need fire – the manifestation of that which is essential, yet only achievable through hard work. It is the striking of the campfire. It is the ability to excel beyond the norm when a situation demands it.

|

ISA is the treacherous challenge of walking across ice. It is also the stagnant potential. By overcoming this difficulty represented by Isa, it is possible to release the potential.

↔

JERA represents the harvest, the coming into being of energies sown in the past. It may be the finalisation of actions began long ago, or it may be the karmic balance. Seeds sown today are equally that which we may harvest in

the future.



EIHWAZ is the world tree, Yggdrasil. It links the realms along its axis. It is the union of consciousness and matter. It links ancestors and deities, energy and matter; representing the transcendence of the mind in journeying beyond the physical.



PERTHRO is the unseen fate, woven by the Norn. Whereas Jera is that which is coming into being now, Perthro is the unknown which likely awaits in the future.




EOLHAZ/ALGIZ is a rune of protection. It is the hidden strength of many plants and trees such as the Yew. Whilst appearing outwardly vulnerable, many harbour unseen toxins as defence mechanisms. The Algiz rune is thus one of subtle protective strength, rather than an overt display.



SOWILO as a rune represents the crystallised energy, the conversion of the sun's energy into usable forms. It is also the lightning flash of inspiration.



TIWAZ is the balance scale of justice, rewarding actions in a manner akin with karma. It is also the rune of Tyr, representing the gods' courage and strength of character in taking actions.  **BERKANO** represents fertility. It is the ability to bring forth gifts, energies or even new life.



EHWAZ is the rune of partnership, a joint venture towards a common goal. It is the strength of the combined to achieve beyond that which the units may achieve by themselves. Ehwaz is the union that proceeds towards the growth

of Laguz, the yogic totality of self, the alchemical marriage and the Jungian individuation of 'self'.



MANNAZ is the partnership of Ehwaz in combination with the gift of Gebo. Mannaz is the structure of society, the give and take of commerce and the responsibility of man to make use of that given by the gods.



LAGUZ is the rune of released potential, the realisation of that constrained within Isa. It is the potential for organic growth, a natural development.



INGWAZ is the seed of potential. It is that seed which is able to be stored and then broken apart to release the energies at a later point.



DAGUZ represents the dawn of a new day, a new beginning and the return of light. It is the renewal of a cycle that continually develops, changing subtly from that which precedes it.



OTHALA is the ancestral heritage. It is all that we inherit, both within our DNA and in property terms. It is also a rune commonly representing Odin as the All-father.

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Äsruþr Cyneapsson is an autodidactic magus and philosopher. Born near to Birmingham, England and raised without indoctrination into any theistic system, he had reign to discover for himself. The culmination of a quest to seek answers to the nature of Being drives Äsruþr to undertake a study and application of comparative mythology, Neo-Platonism, existentialist philosophy, metaphysical realism, runology, Asatru, alchemy and chaos magic in pursuit of selfdeification.

Äsruþr's works chart his own journey, whilst they also form a part of greater

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Current works available via Amazon and CreateSpace sales channels:

The Lone Wanderer: a Journey to Asgard The Left-hand of Odin
Wake Up to Die