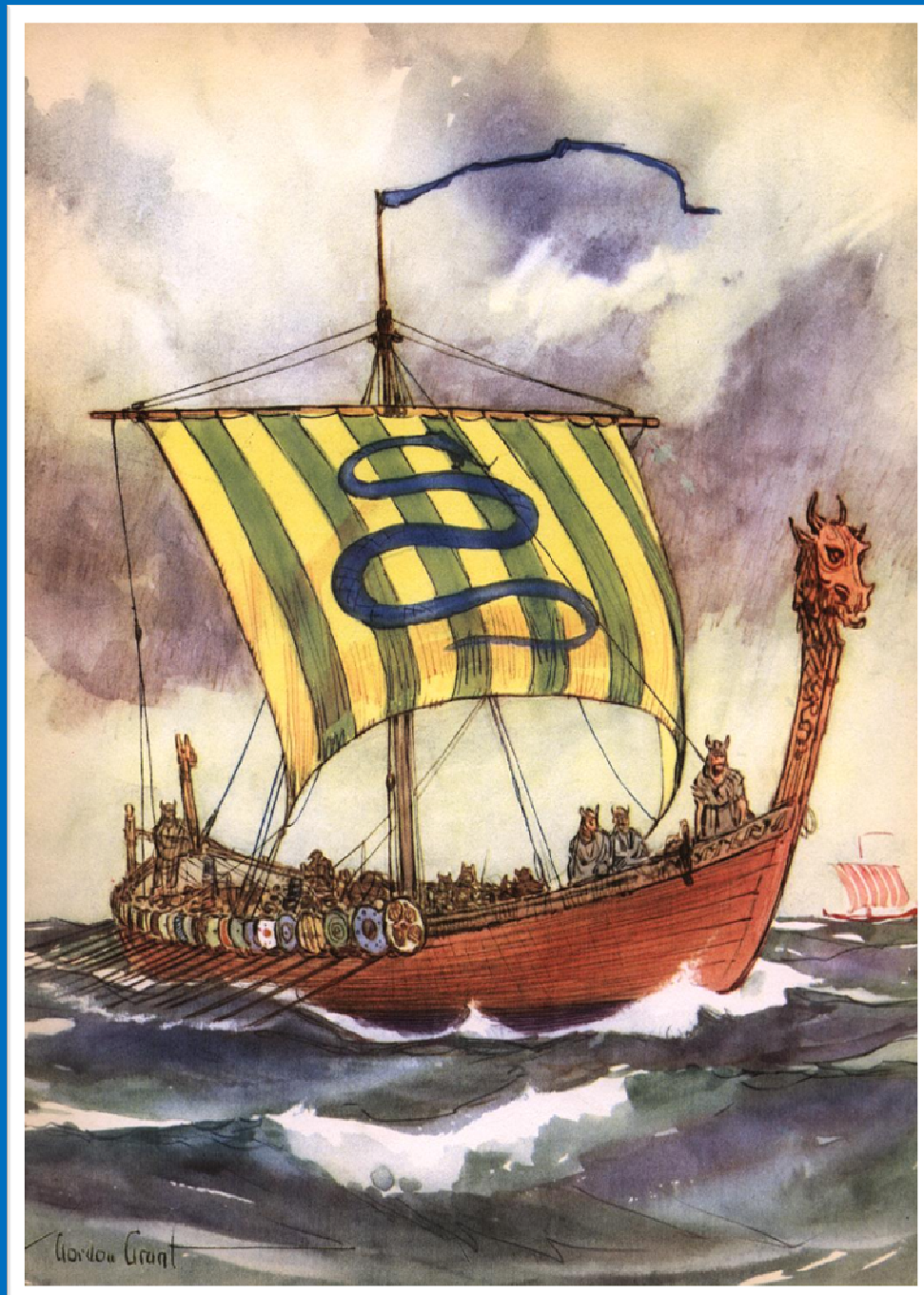


VIKINGS & VALKYRIES

A NEW WORLD OF ADVENTURE FOR MAZES & MINOTAURS



FOREWORD

VIKINGS & VALKYRIES is the first instalment of the new *Worlds of Adventure* line of supplements for the *Mazes & Minotaurs* role-playing game – a line which, as its name implies, takes the *Mazes & Minotaurs* system away from its classic setting inspired by mythic Greece and sword-and-sandal movies to other legendary universes, each with its own deities, monsters and special rules.

Vikings & Valkyries uses the familiar and popular game mechanics of *Mazes & Minotaurs* to recreate the brutal action of Viking adventuring on your tabletop, complete with runes, trolls, dragon-headed ships, sword-biting berserkers and, of course, horned helmets - which, incidentally, were never used by real Norsemen but who cares?

Each title in the *Worlds of Adventure* series details a stand-alone, alternate game setting, with all the new rules and information needed to bring this new world to life in game terms. Each WoA book uses the same six-chapter format:

Chapter I: Characters describes new or alternate classes, equipment, special options etc.

Chapter II: Systems presents rule adjustments or addenda for combat, adventuring and pretty much everything else except for magic.

Chapter III: Magic details new or alternate realms of magic, modified powers and special restrictions.

Chapter IV: The World is the equivalent of the first chapter of the *Maze Masters Guide* for the new setting, covering deities, cosmology, geography etc. In the case of V&V, this setting is the fantasy world of Midgard, based on Norse myth, Icelandic sagas, Hollywood movies, comic books and pulp fiction.

Chapter V: Bestiary details new creatures, as well as which existing M&M creatures can be transposed or adapted to the new setting.

Chapter VI: Mythic Items does the same for magic items and legendary artifacts.

So welcome to a new *World of Adventure* – and don't forget your horned helmet!

Credits

Written by **Olivier Legrand & Peter Larsson**.

Extra 2012 material by **Andrew Pearce**.

Edited by **Olivier Legrand**, with the invaluable help of **Kevin Scrivner**, **Andrew Pearce** and **Matthew Rees**. Thanks to **Colin Chapman**.

Map of Midgard by **Pontus Karlsson**

Illustrated by Various Artists

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2010 Edition Comments

A New World of Adventure

Greetings, fellow gamer, and welcome to the facsimile PDF of *Vikings & Valkyries*!

Vikings & Valkyries was originally published back in 1990 – dammit, is that TWENTY years, already?

Back then, Legendary Games Studio was trying hard to expand *Mazes & Minotaurs* beyond its basic formula to compete against more recent (and, at the time, highly successful) fantasy roleplaying games such as *Heroic Journeys*, *Mythic Realms* or *Infernal Incursions* – back then, these now-forgotten RPGs were the rising New Wave and the idea that the early 21st century would see some sort of Old School renaissance, revival, resurrection (or whatever you wish to call it) was simply inconceivable.

But let's get back to V&V. As its brief foreword proudly and boldly announces, it was supposed to be the first in the new "*Worlds of Adventure*" (WoA) line of supplements... but as some of you might recall, V&V was actually the only WoA supplement ever published.

A Celtic *Fiannas & Fomors* and an untitled Oriental spin-off inspired by Hong Kong movies like *A Chinese Ghost Story* were mentioned in some LGS previews but never saw print and the whole WoA idea soon sank into Oblivion.

If some rumors are to be believed, the original manuscripts of several never-published WoA books are still sleeping somewhere in an old LGS storage locker full of floppy disks, A4 binders and tons of unsold copies of *Into the Vortex*, the time travel roleplaying game which largely contributed to LGS's financial downfall.

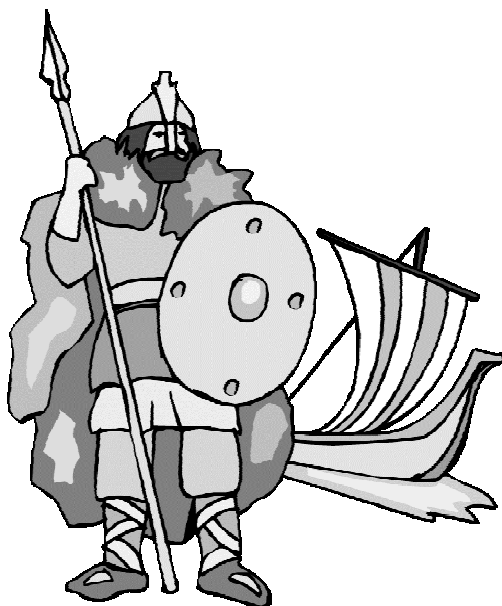
And speaking of time travel...

This supplement is humbly dedicated to the memory of Poul Anderson (1926-2001), skald of sagas and stellar storyteller.

Note: This M&M supplement was updated and expanded in May 2012, with extra material taken originally published in *Minotaur* n°9.



I: CHARACTERS



A typical Viking posing proudly before his drakkar

Vikings & Valkyries characters are created exactly as in *Mazes & Minotaurs* but have a different choice of classes and patron deities.

Character Classes

The twelve classes normally available to *Vikings & Valkyries* characters are:

Warriors	Magicians	Specialists
Berserkers	Elementalists	Hunters
Half-Giants	Elves	Thieves
Princes	Priests	
Valkyries	Skalds	
Vikings	Sorcerers	

Unless otherwise noted, most of the *Vikings & Valkyries* classes are exact equivalents of existing *Mazes & Minotaurs* classes, with the same primary attributes, special abilities, starting equipment and improvement possibilities. Each of these twelve classes is examined in detail below.

Optional Classes

Maze Masters may also consider allowing the optional Shapeshifter class detailed in the *M&M Companion*. Another optional class which could work well in the V&V setting is the Mariner, especially in campaigns which focus on grand sea voyages and maritime exploration.

Warriors

Berserkers

Berserkers are warriors who enter a spectacular, savage fury when fighting. Their antisocial, beastly behavior makes them difficult to deal with in times of peace – but their battle madness makes them invaluable allies in times of war. In game terms, Berserkers are the exact equivalent of *Mazes & Minotaurs* Barbarians, with the extra gift (or curse?) of Battle Madness (see chapter II for more details).

Berserkers usually fight with a two-handed axe or with a shield and a one-handed sword or axe ; those with a Skill of 13+ are also known to use the Two Weapons special melee technique, fighting with a sword or a one-handed axe in each hand, for the usual +2 Melee bonus (see *Players Manual*, p 24).

Their patron deity may be Odin, Tyr or Thor.

Half-Giants

Half-Giants are, as their name implies, half-human, half-giant (*jotun*) hybrids. They are 7' or 8' tall, are monstrously stronger than mortals and are viewed with superstitious awe by most humans... but are not especially clever and tend to be quite ugly. See the next page for the detailed characteristics of this new, V&V-specific warrior class. Half-Giants always have Ymir as their patron deity.

Princes

Princes are warriors of noble or royal blood – sons or kinsmen of the various kings of Midgard. In game terms, they are the exact equivalent of *Mazes & Minotaurs* Nobles and, like them, often claim to have a divine or mythical ancestry.



A noble Prince of Midgard

HALF-GIANTS



Primary Attributes: Might and Luck

Gender: All Half-Giant adventurers are male.

Basic Hits: 18

Amazing Strength: Half-Giants stand 7 or 8 feet tall and are extraordinarily strong. In game terms, their heritage gives them 18 Basic Hits (instead of 12) and also adds +6 to their Might, up to a truly superhuman score of 24. Those with a Might score of 19-20 will be able to wield enormous clubs or axes in combat (see *Players Manual*, p 22). Those with a Might of 21-22 have a Might mod of +5 and can wield enormous weapons with both hands but without reducing their Initiative by half. Finally, Half-Giants with a Might of 23-24 have a mod of +6 and can wield these enormous weapons single-handed, allowing them to combine their use with shields. Lastly, their great size gives Half-Giants a basic Movement of 90' (as opposed to 60' for humans).

Magic Resistance: Like their Jotun parents, Half-Giants are highly resistant to magic. They replace Grace by Might when calculating Mystic Fortitude.

Big & Dumb: There is, however, a downside to Giant heritage. Half-Giants are, well, often quite dumb and their heavyset frames, coarse features, ill-proportioned limbs and uncouth appearance do not make them very attractive: in game terms, their Wits and Grace are reduced by 6 points, once the rolled scores have been distributed.

Weapon of Choice: Enormous club.

Level Benefits: Each level beyond the first gives a Half-Giant +4 Hits, +1 to Luck and +2 to either Might (max 24) or Will (max 20).

Background Talents: If the Background Talents rules from the *M&M Companion* are used, all Half-Giants have the Wrestler and Mountaineer talents.

Possessions: Half-Giants start the game with an enormous weapon (club etc) and that's about it.



A valiant Prince in search of adventure

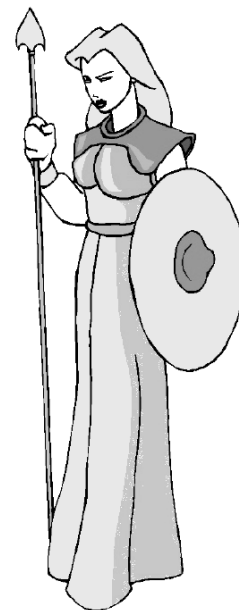
The Prince class can encompass characters like the great legendary hero Beowulf, son of King Hygelac and gifted with extraordinary Might, or more civilized (and deeply anachronistic) nobles à la *Prince Valiant* or even tragic characters like Hamlet, the doomed Prince of Denmark.

Most Princes have Odin as their patron deity.

Valkyries

Valkyries are warrior women. In cultural terms, they are the equivalent of M&M Amazons and, like them, come from a unique, matriarchal "queendom" (see chapter IV for more details).

In game terms, however, Valkyries have the same attribute requirements, special abilities and weapon skills as M&M Spearmen, with the same mastery of spear-and-shield fighting (which explains why they are often called "shield maidens"). All Valkyries have Odin as their divine patron.



A proud Valkyrie shield maiden

Vikings

Vikings are warriors who sail the seas of Midgard in search of adventure, loot and fortune. All Vikings are skilled warriors and seamen. No adventuring party is complete without at least one Viking! This all-purpose, versatile warrior class does not really have an equivalent in standard M&M terms; see below for its detailed description.

Most Vikings have Odin, Thor, Tyr, Heimdall or, more rarely, Njord as their patron deity.

VIKINGS



Primary Attributes: Might and Skill

Gender: All Vikings are male.

Basic Hits: 12

Battle Prowess: Vikings add their Might mod to their melee Initiative when fighting with their weapon of choice.

Shield Combat: When fighting with a shield and their weapon of choice, Vikings add their Skill mod to their EDC against melee attacks.

Weapon of Choice: Sword, axe, great axe or spear.

Level Benefits: Each level beyond the first gives a Viking +4 Hits, +1 to Luck and +2 to another attribute, chosen among Might, Skill, Wits or Will.

Background Talents: If the Talents rules from the *M&M Companion* are used, all Vikings have the Sailor talent plus a second talent from the following list: Armorer, Beastmaster, Drinker*, Equestrian, Healer, Mountaineer, Orator, Tactician, Woodsman, Wrestler. (* see p 16)

Possessions: Vikings start the game with their weapon of choice, a shield, a helmet, a dagger and 3D6 x 10 silver pieces worth of wealth. Characters who want a mail corselet will have to buy it (150 sp).



Never question a Half-Giant's choice of weapon (or hairstyle) in his presence

Weapons for Warriors

In Vikings & Valkyries, warriors must always select a melee weapon as their weapon of choice:

Berserkers: Sword, axe or great axe.

Half-Giants: Enormous club.

Princes: Sword, axe or spear.

Valkyries: Spear.

Vikings: Sword, spear, axe or great axe.

Reputation in Midgard

In the world of Midgard, oral tradition and stories of one's most famous deeds have a much more important role than in the more civilized and literate world of Mythika, making the prestige of the warrior classes and the aura of superstitious awe surrounding wielders of magic correspondingly stronger.

In *Vikings & Valkyries*, a character's *reputation effect* (*Players Manual* p 46-47) is not restricted to a specific category of NPCs and applies to all his Personal Charisma rolls, unless he is travelling incognito (or outside the Norselands).



A high-level V&V magician – or Odin in disguise?

Magicians

Elementalists

Elementalists in V&V only have access to three elements: Air, Fire and the new element of Ice (see the Magic chapter for more details). Like their classic *Mazes & Minotaurs* counterparts, they must choose two of these elements as their magical repertoire – and one of these two as their *primary element*. Unlike their M&M homologues, however, V&V Elementalists do not suffer any restriction in the choice of their elements; indeed, many Norse Elementalists choose to master the conflicting forces of Ice and Fire. Like Sorcerers, they also have access to the Dwarf Option (see p 8).

An Elementalist's patron deity will be either Odin or, if one of the character's two elements is Fire, Loki.



V&V Air Elementalism in action



A beautiful female Elf

Elves

In *Vikings & Valkyries*, Elves (also known as Alfs) are NOT a race of forest-living, slender humanoids with pointed ears (like the M&M Sylvans – see *Creature Compendium*, p113) but ageless incarnate spirits of Nature – Norse Nymphs, in other words.

In game terms, Elves have the same profile as M&M Nymphs except that they can be either male or female and are *not* divided into six different Kins; their gender, however, has a major impact on their abilities, as detailed below. Their magical talent is called *Elven Enchantment* (rather than *Odylic Charm*) but works exactly the same way. They have the same concealment abilities as Dryads.

Female Elves

Female Elves have the same characteristics and magical abilities as Nymphs. Their *Nature's Gifts* mix the powers of M&M Dryads and Napaea, as detailed in chapter III.

All female Elves have Freya as their patron deity.

Male Elves

The magical powers of male Elves are more limited than those of their ladies and maidens: in game terms, male Elves only have access to the first four *Nature's Gifts* – the Magnitude 5 and 6 powers remain the exclusive privilege of female Elves (see chapter III for more details on these powers).

At first level, this limitation is counterbalanced by the following advantages: male Elves have 10 basic Hits (instead of 8), receive a +2 bonus to their Skill score and can select a *weapon of choice* (bow or sword), as if they were warriors or specialists. Each level beyond the first gives a male Elf the following benefits: +3 Hits, +3 Power points, +1 to Luck and +2 to any other attribute (Might, Skill, Wits, Will or Grace), chosen by the player.

Male Elves may select either Freya or her brother Freyr as their patron deity.



A wise Priestess, V&V style

Priests

Just like Mythika, the world of *Vikings & Valkyries* has a variety of deities - including a dozen major gods and goddesses, divided into two originally separate divine clans: the earthy, nature-attuned Vanir and the mighty, tempestuous Aesir. See chapters III & IV for more details about the deities of Midgard and the powers they confer to their Priests.

Major Aesir Deities

Odin (god of power and wisdom)

Thor (god of thunder and lightning)

Tyr (god of war)

Frigg (goddess of wives and mothers)

Heimdall (god of vigilance)

Bragi (god of poetry)

Baldur (god of beauty)

Loki (god of strife and fire)

Uller (god of the hunt)

Major Vanir Deities

Njord (god of the seas)

Freyr (god of nature and virility)

Freya (goddess of nature and beauty)

Other very important deities in the world of *Vikings & Valkyries* include Hel (goddess of death and the underworld), the three Norns who preside over Fate and Ymir, the Father of all Giant-kin.

Merfolk & Nixes



Elves are not the only beings from Norse legends which can be translated in game terms as a variant of the Nymph class. Maze Masters may also allow players to create Merfolk and Nixe characters.

Nixes are the V&V equivalent of Naiads, while Merfolk are the equivalent of Nereids. Male members of the Merfolk are known as Mermen and females as Merrows (not to be confused with Mermaids). Such characters would work well in a seafaring campaign, as shown in Poul Anderson's novel, *Children of the Merman*.

Like Elves, Nixes and Merfolk player-characters can be of either gender, with the same consequences in game terms: only females have access to the Magnitude 5 and 6 Gifts of their Kin but males receive a +2 bonus to their Skill score as well as different level benefits.

Runes & Literacy



Literacy is far rarer in the *Vikings & Valkyries* world of Midgard than in the classic *Mazes & Minotaurs* world of Mythika. In this world, all non-magician characters (including Princes) are illiterate; writing takes the form of Runes, an ancient sacred script which is only taught to (and is only used by) magicians: Elementalists, Elves, Priests, Skalds and Sorcerers.

See chapter iii (Magic) for more details about Runes and chapter IV for more details about the various languages of Midgard.



A suitably romantic Skald

Skalds

Skalds are masters of poetic magic. Their role, status and game abilities are *exactly* the same as those of M&M Lyrist. Their magical talent should be renamed *Skaldic Gift* (instead of *Orphic Voice*). All Skalds have Bragi as their patron deity.

Sorcerers

Sorcerers in V&V have exactly the same abilities and profile as their regular M&M equivalents – and are usually viewed with an even greater degree of mistrust. Male Sorcerers have access to the special *Dwarf Option* detailed in the sidebar.

A Sorcerer's patron deity is either Odin or Loki.



Yes, this is what a typical V&V Sorcerer looks like...

The Dwarf Option



In Norse sagas and legends, the greatest magicians are often dwarves; these dwarves are not the proud and stubborn warriors found in so many fantasy novels and RPGs, but crafty, elusive tricksters with an affinity for magic.

A player who wants to play an Elementalist or a Sorcerer may choose to make his character a Dwarf; In fact, Maze Masters may even decide to make this option a *mandatory requirement* for male members of these classes, thereby restricting the practice of Elementalism and Sorcery to either women or dwarves. At the Maze Master's discretion, the Dwarf Option may also be applied to the Thief class, making it the only non-magician class available to Dwarves.

Dwarf characters are subject to the following attribute score adjustments: Might -2, Wits +2, Grace -2. Starting age (and approximate life expectancy) should also be multiplied by 5.

Specialists

Hunters

Hunters in V&V may belong to the Kvenir people, a non-Norse culture inspired by the ancestors of the Sami people. All Kvenir player-characters should be Hunters. A Hunter's patron deity will be Uller, god of the hunt, unless he is of Kvenir origin, in which case he will follow the shamanistic beliefs of his people.

Thieves

For various cultural, economic and fictional reasons, adventurous burglars and tomb robbers seem a bit out of place in this alternate setting. That being said, the Thief character class does exist in *Vikings & Valkyries* but is far less common than in *Mythika* and fills a somewhat different niche, at least as far as player-characters are concerned; most Thieves in a V&V campaign will actually be spies, scouts and "men of cunning" in the service of a king or prince rather than classic fantasy rogues.

Depending on his status, role and background, a Thief's patron deity will be either Loki or Odin.

Weapons & Armor

Armor

In *Vikings & Valkyries*, the main form of armor is not the breastplate but the **mail corselet**.

In game terms, a mail corselet has exactly the same Defense Class bonus (+2), Encumbrance (3) and price (150 silver pieces) as a breastplate.

Shields and helmets look, of course, quite different from their M&M homologues but also have the same characteristics in game terms.

Thus, a Viking wearing a helmet, mail corselet and shield would have a +6 bonus to his Defense Class.

Weapons

The *Mazes & Minotaurs* rules divide melee weapons into the four following broad categories: daggers, swords, spears and barbarian weapons (the big axes and swords used exclusively by Barbarians).

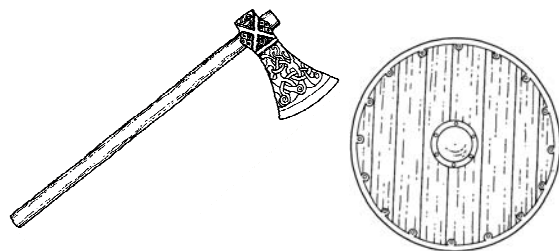
Since the Barbarian class as such does not exist in *Vikings & Valkyries*, this weapon classification must be modified slightly to reflect the cultural differences between the worlds of Mythika and Midgard in the art of mayhem.

In *Vikings & Valkyries*, all typical Viking battle weapons (swords, battle axes etc) are treated as "barbarian weapons" in game terms (i.e. they can only be used one-handed by characters with a Might score of 13+ and have an Encumbrance of 2) but can be used by all warrior classes.

In the V&V setting, the standard *Mazes & Minotaurs* sword (Enc 1, no Might requirement) is actually a short or light sword and would mostly be used by non-warriors or as a secondary weapon.

And then, there is the **great axe**, a big, long-hafted nasty battle axe which has an Encumbrance value of 3, can only be used two-handed (which precludes the use of a shield) *and* also requires a Might of 13+... but this massive weapon also confers a +2 bonus to the attacker's Melee score.

A great axe costs twice as much as a standard axe (60 sp, the same price as a good quality sword).



An ornated great axe and a typical Viking shield

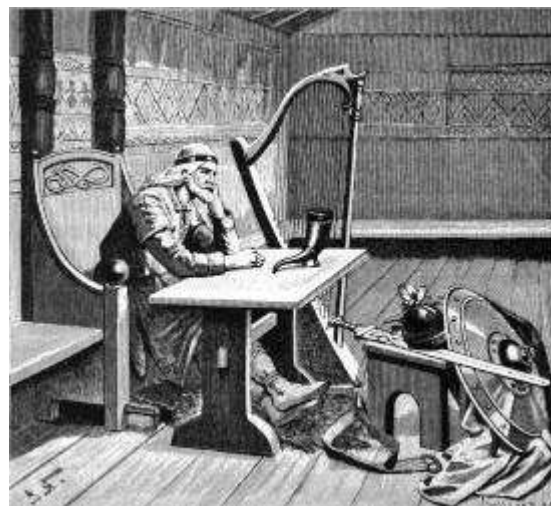


*You can never have too many weapons
(old Viking saying)*

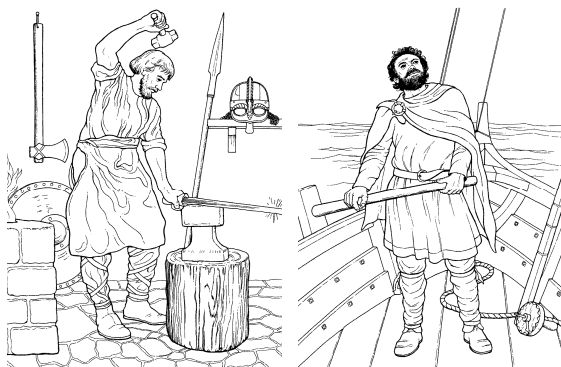
Wealth & Equipment

Unless otherwise stated, V&V characters who belong to classes which are similar to those detailed in the *Players Manual* start the game with the same equipment (or its local equivalent) as their M&M counterparts. Thus, Princes will automatically start the game with a mail corselet, since M&M Nobles receive a breastplate; this will also be the case with Valkyries, since they have the same game profile (and, thus, starting equipment) as Spearmen.

For simplicity's sake, *Vikings & Valkyries* uses the same system of coinage as standard M&M – silver pieces, gold coins etc. It should be noted, however, that such coins are somewhat rarer in the world of Midgard than they are in the world of Mythika; barter is still the main mode of trade in V&V, with a wide variety of monetary equivalents, from gold, silver and jewels to luxury goods of all sorts (such as rich fabrics, furs or ivory tusks from large sea creatures).



Wealth, Vikings-&-Valkyries-style



Background talents work very well in the V&V setting

Background Talents

This option works as well in *Vikings & Valkyries* as it does in standard M&M. Maze Masters may choose to change the names of the Scholar and Tactician talents to *Sage* and *Warlord* respectively to better fit the more, well, Viking atmosphere of V&V.

V&V characters should be given the same choice of talents as their equivalent M&M classes: all Skalds automatically qualify as Orators and Musicians, V&V Princes should be given the same choices as M&M Nobles, Valkyries should be given the same choice of talents as Spearmen (rather than Amazons) etc.

The *Drinker* talent should be added to the lists of background talents of all warrior classes - see chapter II for full rules on alcohol consumption, drinking contests and similar topics.

Divine Agents

For all sorts of cosmic and cultural reasons, intrigue, power struggles and rivalries are far less frequent among the Norse gods of V&V than they are among the Olympians of Mythika. As the god of strife, Loki may be seen as the proverbial exception but even his influence is not enough to turn Asgard into a hotbed of power plays and hidden agendas.

For these various reasons, the gods of *Vikings & Valkyries* never work their plans through divine agents; when they want something done, the Aesir and Vanir just do it themselves. Many of them often walk the world of man in human guise, especially Odin, who seems especially fond of playing the 'lonesome wanderer' part (so beware of mysterious one-eyed wayfarers with wide-brimmed hats).

Alternate Cults

Maze Masters who really, really, I mean *really* want to introduce Christianity as an optional "new faith" in the world of V&V may give Christian Priests the same variant Divine Prodigies as the Priests of Mithras (see the *M&M Companion*).

At the Maze Master's discretion, Druidic Faith (see the *M&M Companion*) may also exist in V&V's world of Midgard, but only among the Fir wildmen (see *The World* chapter for more details).



2010 Edition Comments

Kitsch & Klichés

V&V was warmly welcomed by a portion of the M&M community – for some strange reason, you can never go completely wrong with Vikings when it comes to gamers... but the book was also shot down in flames by some critics who went berserk (ah!) about the way V&V turned Viking culture and "true" Norse mythology.

In the now defunct (and, to be honest, slightly pretentious) *Gamesmith* magazine, which was a major trendsetter of the early nineties, *Vikings & Valkyries* was kindly described as:

"a sub-pop culture travesty of horned helmets, historical inaccuracies and gross mythological mistakes, which should rather have been named K&K, for Kitsch & Klichés".

The same irate reviewer scornfully commented that *"V&V's approach to Norse mythology has more to do with The Mighty Thor than with the Prose Eddas or the Volsunga Saga..."* without ever realizing that this was precisely what the authors of the supplement had in mind.

The point that many detractors of V&V failed to grasp was that the way it "mistreated" Norse myth was perfectly consistent with the way *Mazes & Minotaurs* had treated Greek myth in the first place. In short, the Midgard of V&V is to the "real" Midgard of Scandinavian myths and sagas what Mythika is to the "real" Mythic Greece of Homer and Hesiod...

Rules & Recycling

Another frequent criticism had to do with the way *Vikings & Valkyries* systematically recycled existing M&M concepts, adapting them to its pseudo-Viking setting (sometimes with no more than a mere change of name – as exemplified by Skalds, Princes and even Elves) instead of presenting entirely new classes, creatures or realms of magic firmly rooted in Norse lore.

But this "rule recycling" approach also had its staunch supporters, who understood that V&V was not trying to be a new game, but simply a spin-off of an existing, well-established system, making transition from M&M to V&V a real cinch as far as game mechanics were concerned.

II: SYSTEMS



Melee practice, Viking-style

New Combat Options

Vikings & Valkyries combat should be fast, furious, bloody and spectacular; Maze Masters are strongly advised to use the optional rules for Critical Hits and Fumbles detailed in the *M&M Companion*.

This section also details some new combat options, which are setting-specific and should *not* be made available in regular *Mazes & Minotaurs* campaigns.

Going Berserk

In addition to the damage and defensive bonuses granted by their *Battle Might* and *Battle Fury* special abilities, Berserkers also have the power to enter a state of mindless battle madness when fighting in the middle of melee.

Whenever a Berserker has been fighting in melee combat for at least one battle round, his player may decide that his character will *go berserk*. This decision can be made at the start of any battle round and will affect the character's behavior and combat abilities for the remainder of the fight. In fact, the effects of this mindless blood frenzy might even last after the fight is over, if the Berserker fails to come back to his senses (see below).

While in this state of **Battle Madness**, the Berserker adds his Might bonus to his Initiative and Melee scores, as if he were *Charging into Battle*. Note that these Battle Madness bonuses cannot be combined with those of a Charge, since the character must already be fighting in order to go berserk.

Note that the extra Melee bonus granted by Battle Madness will also increase the chance of scoring a Critical Hit, making a battle-mad Berserker's attacks not only more effective but also more dangerous.

There are, of course, a few drawbacks. A Berserker in Battle Madness does not get any defensive bonus from his shield (assuming he does carry one) and cannot use the *Weapon Parry* or *Subterfuge* special tactics (but Berserkers are not known for their battle cunning, anyway), nor can he try to *disengage* from melee; as long as there is at least one foe standing, the Berserker will continue to fight to the death, regardless of the risks. Even if all foes have been killed or taken out of action, the mad Berserker will continue to fight, blinded by his manic bloodlust, attacking the nearest ally in sight, unless he manages to regain his self-control (see below) or is neutralized by combat or magic.

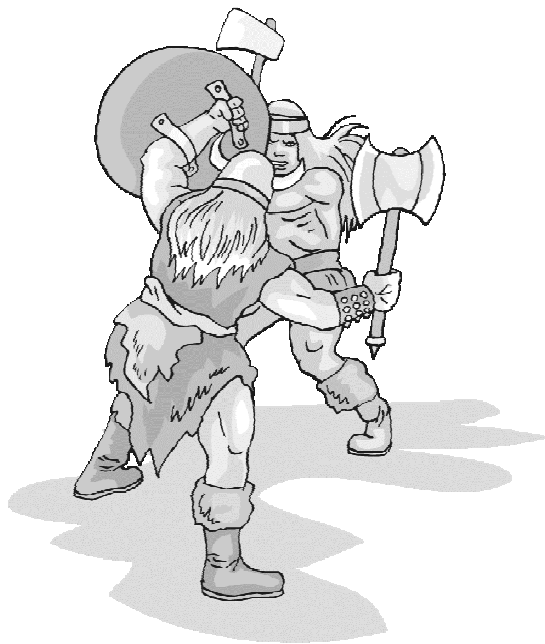
A battle-mad Berserker is totally immune to all forms of verbal persuasion or communication, even from his best friends or closest comrades.

Every time a battle-mad Berserker actually wounds a friend or ally, he may attempt to regain his self-control; this requires a successful Danger Evasion saving roll against a target number of 10, made after the damage roll. If this saving roll is successful, the Berserker will come to his senses and the player will regain full control of his character; otherwise, the battle-mad Berserker will continue to attack his friends until he makes a successful saving roll or runs out of friends to slaughter.

Magic also provides several methods of calming a battle-crazy Berserker, such as an Elf's Nature's Seduction, a Sorcerer's Compelling or a Skald's Song of Soothing. If such powers are successfully used against a battle-mad Berserker, they will take effect normally and will also calm his inner rage... until a new opportunity for Battle Madness arises!



Can you feel the madness?



It's shield-breaking time!

Shield Breaking

This new special melee attack allows an attacker to target his opponent's shield, instead of attacking the opponent himself. It can only be attempted with an axe or great axe and requires a Might score of at least 13. If it succeeds and does enough damage, it will shatter the shield, making it completely useless.

Hitting an opponent's shield is not that difficult; the actual attack requires a Melee roll against the opponent's Basic Defense Class (12 + Luck mod), rather than against his total DC, since the armor *you* are wearing will not protect your shield. Warriors who receive a Skill-based bonus to Defense Class while fighting with a shield (Vikings and Valkyries) will still benefit from their special defensive bonus.

If the attack succeeds, the opponent suffers no injury but damage is still rolled (with any appropriate bonus for class, magical weapons etc): if the final damage roll is 5 or more, the shield is shattered. If the damage roll is less than 5, the blow simply has no noticeable effect on the shield (and the attacker has just wasted a precious attack).

Magical shields are totally immune to such attacks. It should also be noted that this trick can only be used in a world like *Vikings & Valkyries'* Midgard, where shields are (at least partly) made of wood and thus far likelier to break under a mighty blow.

Axe Throwing

One-handed Viking axes are actually balanced for throwing, provided you have a 13+ in Skill. They have an effective range equal to the thrower's Might in feet and a maximum range of (Might x 2) – but like thrown knives, thrown axes do not receive any short range attack bonus.

Maiming Opponents

Viking tales and movies are full of one-handed or one-eyed protagonists, along with the occasional disfigurement. The following optional rules allow you to add such gruesome possibilities to the M&M combat system for an extra touch of Viking carnage and also detail their effects in game terms.

Instead of simply trying to wound his opponent, a character engaged in melee combat may elect to cause him a more specific (and permanent) form of injury by severing one of his hands, piercing one of his eyes or leaving him disfigured. These three options are covered in detail below. Other specific mutilations are of course possible but are left to the imagination of creative players and Maze Masters.

Whenever a character rolls a critical hit in melee combat (see *M&M Companion*), he may deliberately choose to inflict one of the three aforementioned mutilations on his opponent (sever his hand, pierce his eye or disfigure him) *instead of* rolling on the Critical Hit table. Note that this optional rule can also be used even if you do not normally use the Homeric Combat tables in your games. If these new Maiming options are allowed to player-characters, they should also be extended to Major NPCs (unlike the optional Critical Hits from the *M&M Companion*, which are strictly restricted to player-characters).

Severed Hand

This critical wound can only be inflicted using a cutting weapon, such as a sword or axe. Damage from the blow is rolled normally and subtracted from the victim's Hits Total as per the normal rules. In addition, if this damage is equal to or greater than 5 Hits, the victim's hand is severed.

A character who loses a hand will obviously be unable to wield two-handed weapons and perform tasks which require the use of both hands. Loss of a hand does not prevent you from using a shield.



- Well, at least I got the last word!



- Don't overlook these new optional rules!

If the severed hand was the character's "sword hand", he will have to re-educate his other hand to make it his new sword hand through constant and arduous training. In game terms, a character fighting with his off-hand suffers a penalty to his Melee rolls; this penalty is normally equal to -4 but characters with a positive Skill mod subtract it from the penalty.

Thus, a character with a Skill of 13 or 14 (and a Skill mod of +1) would only suffer a penalty of -3 when fighting with his off-hand.

This penalty is reduced to 0 for characters with a Skill of 19 or more; in other words, such characters are assumed to be perfectly ambidextrous. The only way for a character to "re-educate" his off-hand is to increase his Skill in order to reduce this penalty or perhaps even remove it completely by reaching a truly outstanding Skill score of 19.

Characters who have lost a hand also lose 2 points of Grace, permanently.

This option can obviously only be used against opponents who do have hands, making it useless against Beasts and many Monsters. Severing the hand of a Large or Gigantic creature requires an extra 5 Hits of minimum damage per Size category (which means a minimum damage of 10 for Large targets and 15 for Gigantic ones), making this an impossible feat without a magical weapon or the Berserker's Battle Might ability. Severing the hand of a Small-sized target does not require a minimum amount of damage, while Tiny creatures are far too small to be specifically maimed in that manner.

Pierced Eye

This critical wound can only be inflicted using a sword or spear. Unlike the other two options described in this section, it can also result from a missile critical hit with an arrow or javelin. Damage from the attack is rolled and applied in the usual manner; in addition, the target loses one of his eyes, regardless of the amount of damage inflicted.

Characters who lose an eye suffer a penalty of -2 on all their Missile attack rolls. At the Maze Master's discretion, this penalty may also apply to detection rolls in situations where peripheral vision or depth perception is a major factor. One-eyed characters also lose 2 points of Grace, permanently.

This option can also be used against creatures of Small or greater Size, as long as they have eyes. The eyes of Tiny creatures are simply too small to be targeted by human attackers.

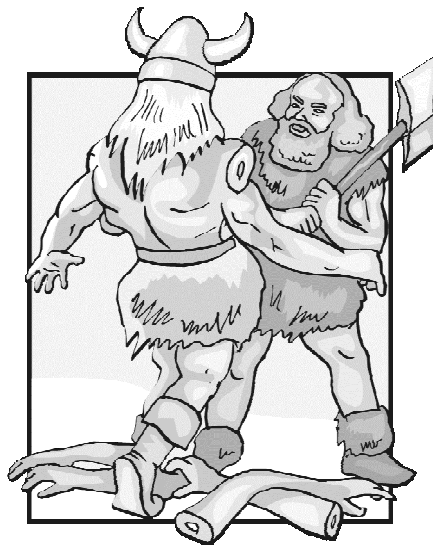
Disfigurement

Many wounds leave more or less nasty scars but disfigurement represents the deliberate destruction of an opponent's good looks. It can be inflicted using any melee weapon except spears. Depending on the weapon being used, it may involve cutting off an opponent's nose, beating his facial features to a pulp, leaving a really big and ugly scar etc. Damage from the attack is rolled and applied as per the usual rules. The victim also suffers the permanent loss of 6 Grace points, as well as the possibility to increase this attribute in the future.

This option is useless (or simply irrelevant) against creatures, who usually don't give a damn about how nice (or how ugly) they look.

Maiming Player-Characters

As noted above, Maze Masters who choose to allow player-characters the use of these Maiming rules should also make them available to Major NPCs, unlike the optional Critical Hits tables from the *M&M Companion*, which are the exclusive privilege of player-characters. In other words, player-characters in a *Vikings & Valkyries* game may be victims of such gruesome mutilations, but only at the hands of their cruellest and most vicious enemies – enemies who would rather have them maimed and miserable rather than killed off for good. In game terms, such wicked, dastardly foes can only be Major NPCs.



The ultimate anti-maiming countermeasure

The Decapitation Option



Maze Masters who use the optional Maiming rules given above may choose to go further and add yet another extra touch of blood and gore to combat by using the following option, which is simply a logical extension of the new optional Maiming rules detailed on the previous page.

Player-characters and Major NPCs who score the equivalent of a critical hit with a sword or axe may choose to cut off their opponent's head, instead of simply maiming him.

Needless to say, this means instant death, no matter how many Hits you have left. That being said, cutting off another human being's head (not to mention a Troll's or a Dragon's) is not as easy as it may appear in some movies. If an attacker does choose the decapitation option, damage from the attack is rolled normally and then multiplied by 2 before being applied to the target's Hits Total. If this doubled damage is equal to or greater than 10 Hits, the unfortunate target is decapitated.

Player-characters should be allowed to escape such a horrible fate with the same Luck sacrifice as for other mutilations (see above).

This critical attack can also be used against creatures (except Tiny ones), as long as they do have a proper head. The required amount of damage varies according to the Size of the creature: 5 if Small, 10 if Medium, 15 if Large and 20 if Gigantic. Thus, only Berserkers with an extraordinary Might or characters with a very powerful damage-boosting magical weapon may have a chance of actually beheading a Giant or Dragon with a single blow (as opposed to cutting its head off after slaying it).

In the case of creatures with Multiple Heads, the loss of a single head will NOT cause death but will deprive the creature of the advantages of having an extra head, as detailed in the description of the Multiple Heads special ability in the *Maze Masters Guide* (+1 to Initiative and detection rolls, as well as one extra attack per round). Creatures who have Multiple Heads and Regeneration will be able to grow a new head in two battle rounds.

That being said, losing a hand or being disfigured might not be everybody's idea of heroic fun (as opposed to meeting a glorious end in battle). For this reason, players whose characters are placed in such dire situations should be given the choice between the intended mutilation and the permanent sacrifice of 1d3 Luck points. If this option is taken, the character still suffers normal damage from the attack but not its additional, permanent effects.

Since Luck affects many derived scores, including Melee and saving rolls, losing 1-3 Luck points may have a tremendous effect on a character's abilities, so choosing the mutilation may sometimes be a wiser option (unless, of course, you are about to lose your second eye or hand).

This 'Luck sacrifice' option should be restricted to player-characters only - so those Major NPCs do have something to worry about now, don't they?

Brawling & Wrestling

While wrestling is quite popular among Norsemen, the fine art of pugilism is totally unknown in V&V. Instead, characters use the much cruder form of unarmed combat known as *brawling*, which involves punches, kicks, head butts, eye-gouging etc.

As far as game mechanics are concerned, the differences between *brawling* and *pugilism* are actually purely aesthetic: in game terms, Viking brawling should be treated *exactly* like pugilism.

Maze Masters who use the optional Maiming rules given above (or the Homeric Combat tables from the *M&M Companion*) may also allow player-characters to score critical hits in unarmed combat, adding an extra touch of gore and senseless violence to Viking brawling and wrestling.

For brawling, such critical attacks will either turn the rolled subdual damage into regular combat damage or cause double subdual damage. For wrestling, such a critical attack will result in (1d3 + Might mod) Hits of regular damage *unless* the victim manages to *break free* first. A character who scores a critical hit in unarmed combat can always decide to ignore this result if he so wishes.



The great Prince vs Berserker wrestling contest

Viking Games

Vikings and other warriors are fond of games and contests – *especially* ones which emphasize brute strength, stamina and drunkenness over strategy, patience or cleverness. This section details a few new rules which can be used to handle such fun events in your V&V games.

The rules given below should only be used for player-characters and Major NPCs. Games and contests involving Minor NPCs are unimportant and do not need to be resolved in detail. Conversely, player-characters should only challenge Major NPCs to such contests – for the purposes of such activities, Minor NPCs should never be treated (or presented) as ‘worthy opponents’.

When performed during great feasts in a king’s hall, in the presence of the king himself (and only then), each of these games and contests can bring 10 extra Glory points to the winner. Each type of game also has special victory conditions which must be met in order to reap this Glory.

Arm Wrestling

Roll 1D3 and add the result to each contestant’s Might score; the higher total wins the bout. In case of ties, just roll again. Note that if your opponent’s Might exceeds yours by more than 2 points, you have absolutely no chance of winning.

As mentioned above, when such a contest occurs during a great celebration, in the presence of a king, victory may bring you 10 points of Glory but only an unexpected victory against an exceptionally strong opponent can bring you Glory. In game terms, your opponent’s Might must be at least 17 *and greater than your own*. Multiple victories against the same opponent will not bring you any extra Glory.

Braid Cutting

This game is the Viking version of the well-known knife throwing routine, except that you must replace circus knives with throwing axes and the smiling lady assistant / human target by a terrified female slave with braided hair. The goal is to cut each spread braid with a thrown axe – without, of course, mangling the poor girl (but if this should happen, well, she’s just a slave...). This game may be run as a simple show of individual skill or as a duel between two contestants, in which case each of them is supplied with his own target and is given a limited number of throws – usually three.

Each time the axe is thrown, roll 1D20 and add the character’s Missile mod.

If the total of the roll is 20 or more, the expertly-thrown axe cuts one of the braids. If the total is less than 20 but is still equal to or higher than 10, the axe misses its target altogether, without harming the human target. If, on the other hand, the total is less

than 10, draw your own conclusion and roll 1D6 for damage. Also note that such a botched throw usually breaks the mood, bringing the game to a sorry and messy end.

You may only gain 10 Glory points for winning this game if you manage to cut the two braids without missing a single throw.

Shield Running

This game is another Viking classic. It involves at least two contestants, plus an indefinite number of assembled warriors. The warriors hold their shields overhead, forming a kind of precarious shield-roof on top of which the contestants must run as quickly and nimbly as possible, without losing their balance.

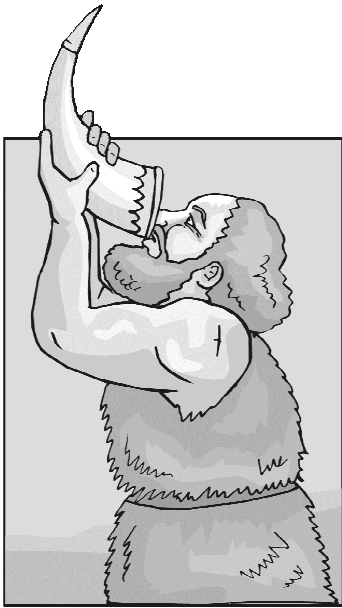
In game terms, such a contest of shield-running is resolved by a series of Athletic Prowess saving rolls, versus the usual target number equal to the runner’s Encumbrance total.

A failed roll means that the character falls off and is taken out of the game. All contestants must keep on rolling until only two of them remain. When there are only two contestants left standing (or if there were only two contestants to start with), the first one to fail a saving roll loses (and the other obviously wins); if both contestants fail their Athletic Prowess saving roll, then the contest ends in a show of clumsiness and frustration, with no winner.

You may only gain 10 Glory points for winning this game if you succeed at five saving rolls or more.



- Now, on to the drinking rules!



I'm doing some serious playtesting, here!

Drinking

No Viking game would be complete without rules for alcohol intoxication and drinking contests!

Holding your Liquor

Characters have a Drinking Limit equal to $(2 + \text{Might mod})$. Thus, a Viking with a Might of 17 (+3) will have a Drinking Limit of 5, while a Sorcerer with a Might of 10 will have a Drinking Limit of only 2.

A character who engages in serious drinking must keep track of the number of cups, mugs or horns of mead or other strong alcoholic beverage he ingests.

When this number reaches his Drinking Limit, he must make a Physical Vigor saving roll against a target number of 10 (see below for more details on the consequences of failure).

When the number of drinks reaches twice the character's Drinking Limit, he must make a second Physical Vigor saving roll, this time against a target number of 15.

Finally, if the number of drinks ever reaches three times the drinker's Limit, he must make a third (and last) saving roll, this time against a target number of 20. Drinking beyond this point is simply impossible.

Each failed roll means that the character suffers a cumulative -2 to all his saving rolls (including the next Physical Vigor rolls) as well as to his Missile rolls, Personal Charisma, Initiative and Defense Class (but his Melee rolls remain unaffected).

If the total rolled on the Physical Vigor saving roll is lower than 5, the character passes out for 1d6 hours and will still suffer the aforementioned penalties upon waking up.

On the other hand, if the total rolled is 20 or more, the character actually gains a +2 Melee bonus.

These bonuses and penalties last for the next 2d6 hours. Once this period is over, the hangover creeps in: the penalties (or the odd Melee bonus) are halved and continue to apply for the next 1d6 hours.

Characters with the *Drinker* background talent are *advantaged* on all their Physical Vigor rolls made to resist the effects of alcohol.

Drinking Contests

These drinking rules can also be used to run drinking contests between several characters; in this case, victory simply goes to the last man standing.

If the contest took place in a king's hall and in the presence of the king, the winner gains 5 points of Glory for each Physical Vigor saving roll he has successfully made; in other words, winning such a drinking contest may bring you up to 15 points of Glory, if you reached the third and final (Drinking Limit $\times 3$) threshold and made your Physical Vigor roll against a target number of 20. If two characters with the same DL reach this final stage at the same time and both succeed at their saving roll, victory will go to the one who rolled the higher total.

Magic & Drunkenness

Magicians who are foolish enough to engage in such heavy drinking suffer additional penalties. The -2 penalty for each failed saving roll also applies to their magical talent rating (but, oddly enough, not to Mystic Strength – in other words, a drunk magician will have difficulties using his powers but his magical attacks will not become *easier* to resist).

If this takes the character's magical talent to 0 or less, the character becomes unable to use his powers until he has recovered from his wild excesses. For this reason, magicians should really refrain from engaging in serious drinking activities.



The sensible Priest watches a Prince drinking himself into a coma without losing his Princely bearing (so far)



A heroic warrior finally gets his one-way trip to Valhalla (as well as a posthumous 1000 Glory reward)

Death

Wergild

Despite what the existence of things like berserkers and battle-axes might imply, Viking society actively discourages mindless carnage – at least in times of peace between Norsemen. Whenever a Norseman kills another, he must pay a *very* hefty fine (in money, treasure, livestock or trade goods) called the Wergild. In game terms, a character's Wergild is equal to his level multiplied by 100, in *gold coins* (not silver pieces). This is doubled for Princes and other people of royal blood. Minor NPCs have a Wergild of 10, unless they are slaves, in which case their life is literally worth nothing. Inflicting specific mutilations (see p 12) will also require payment of a portion of the victim's Wergild: one-fifth for a lost eye or disfigurement, one-half for a severed hand.

This law obviously does not apply to opponents killed in wartime but does apply to victims of blood feuds between rival families, which are explicitly prohibited by the royal laws of kings. Also note that this custom does not actually prevent such blood feuds from occurring – in fact, some families and individuals even hoard vast quantities of wealth in preparation for such bloody vendettas...

Non-payment of the Wergild is also a very common motive for carrying out such blood feuds, so perhaps it was not such a good idea after all.

Going to Valhalla

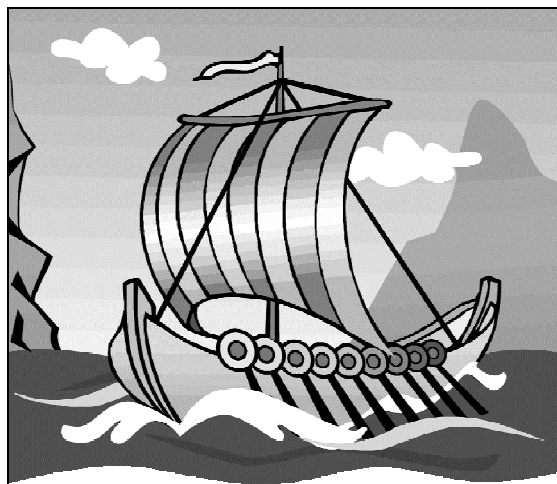
As detailed in the *Players Manual* (p 23), characters who are reduced to zero Hits and roll 20 or more on their Physical Vigor saving roll may keep on fighting as long as they do not suffer any more damage.

In *Vikings & Valkyries*, when a warrior dies under such heroic circumstances (mortally wounded and still fighting), he is deemed worthy enough by Odin the Chooser of the Slain to enter Valhalla. On such epic and fateful occasions, the sky opens and celestial shield maidens come down from the clouds to carry away the fallen warrior to the great halls of Valhalla where he will feast forever in the company of his peers until the day of Ragnarok.

Such a fate brings the dead warrior a posthumous bonus award of 1,000 Glory points ; note that this is merely a symbolic reward, since the character is dead and can no longer be played, but still.

In addition, the spectacular intervention of Odin's celestial Valkyries will always cause *surprise* among the dead warrior's enemies, giving his surviving comrades a whole battle round to act freely – which, in some desperate situations, might just make the difference between life and death.

Note that only warriors may know such a glorious final fate. Nobody really knows what happens to the rare magician or specialist who actually dies in such a heroic manner.



A nice illustration of a Viking longship (see below)

Ships

Ships and sailing are *at least* as important in *Vikings & Valkyries* as they are in regular M&M. In Midgard as in Mythika, entire campaigns can be built on the perilous voyages and heroic expeditions of a seafaring band of adventurers, whose travels may take them to the shores of mysterious islands or to fabled lands full of wonders, gold and dangers.

For the sake of simplicity, the various types of ships available to *Vikings & Valkyries* characters have the same characteristics *in game terms* as their M&M counterparts (see the *Players Manual*, p 42-43), but with different, more Viking-sounding names; round ships (also called merchant ships) become *knorrs*, while war galleys should be called *longships* and usually sport an impressive carving of a dragon's or some other fantastic beast's head at their prow, rather than the brightly painted eyes found on Greek and Mythikan ships. For this reason, longships may also be called *dragon ships*.

There's nothing much to add, really – but we felt we just *had* to have a section about ships since this is a Viking supplement (and we also had some really nice longship illustrations in store).



Another nice illustration of a longship (see above)



2010 Edition Comments

Mixed Reactions

As usual, the various optional rules presented in this supplement had their staunch supporters as well as their relentless detractors. Here are a few chosen comments from various reviews and letters published in gaming magazines after the release of *Vikings & Valkyries*.

"The new options on battle madness, maiming and decapitation add a whole new dimension of manic bloodshed and epic carnage to combat."

"At last! Decapitation! This should have been added years ago to the regular rules!"

"I mean what had they drunk when they devised those drinking rules?"

"No rules for vomiting, though."

"What is this nonsense about arm-wrestling, shield-running and other silly clichés? And why are there no rules at all on truly interesting topics, such as the intricacies of Viking law or how to calculate order of speech at a Thing..."

"The rules about Valhalla left me dumbfounded. I mean – what's the POINT? You're DEAD!!!"

"I know, it seems hardly possible but the section on ships is even more a joke than the original sailing rules in M&M."

"Drunken berserkers decapitating monsters and breaking shields with two-handed battle axes... Come on, who could ask for more?"

Check the Minotaur!

Various past issues of the **Minotaur** webzine include several optional or variant rules which may be of particular interest to *Vikings & Valkyries* Maze Masters – such as the optional Fate points system from the *Griffin Archives* of issue 6 for those who want to give more importance to the Norse concept of Wyrd (destiny) in their games or the additional rules about "wrestling for blood" in issue 5, which definitely have a Beowulfy flavor.

III: MAGIC

Realms of Magic

The magic of Midgard includes the five realms of magic detailed in chapter III of the *Players Manual* (Divine Prodigies, Elemental Magic, Nature's Gifts, Poetic Magic and Sorcery). While Poetic Magic and Sorcery follow exactly the same rules as in standard M&M, the three other Realms of Magic are subject to some slight adjustments to reflect the differences between the magical realities of Midgard and Mythika, as detailed in this chapter.

Divine Prodigies

The Divine Prodigies of Midgard Priests are the same as those of Mythika, with specific Divine Blessings (Magnitude 1) and Gifts (Magnitude 4) for each Aesir or Vanir deity, as detailed below. In addition, Priests of the Norse deities need to use specially-made runesticks to call a *Divine Vision*. This is known as *casting the runes*.

Divine Blessings

Odin	Thor
Danger Evasion	Defense Class
Melee	Melee
Mystic Fortitude	Mystic Fortitude
Personal Charisma	Physical Vigor
Tyr	Frigg
Defense Class	Danger Evasion
Melee	Mystic Fortitude
Physical Vigor	Physical Vigor
Heimdall	Baldur
Defense Class	Defense Class
Melee	Mystic Fortitude
Mystic Fortitude	Personal Charisma
Uller	Njord
Danger Evasion	Danger Evasion
Missile	Mystic Fortitude
Mystic Fortitude	Physical Vigor
Freyr	Freya
Danger Evasion	Danger Evasion
Mystic Fortitude	Mystic Fortitude
Physical Vigor	Personal Charisma
Loki	Bragi
Danger Evasion	Mystic Fortitude
Mystic Fortitude	Personal Charisma



Divine Wrath, V&V-style

It should be noted that Midgard Priests tend to have a narrower repertoire of Blessings than their Mythika counterparts (see *Players Manual*, p 30); only two of the twelve gods (Odin and Thor) give access to four possible Divine Blessings, and two of them (Loki and Bragi) only give access to two possibilities.

Divine Gifts

Odin: Presence	Thor: Victory
Tyr: Victory	Frigg: Endurance
Heimdall: Vigilance	Bragi: Presence
Baldur: Presence	Loki: Stealth
Uller: Accuracy	Njord: Strength
Freyr: Endurance	Freya: Endurance

New Divine Gifts

Stealth: The character automatically succeeds at his stealth rolls, regardless of his actual Encumbrance total, and all detection rolls made against him automatically fail – unless this Gift is countered by the Gift of Vigilance.

Vigilance: This Divine Gift makes the recipient completely immune to the sorcerous powers of Confusion, Illusion and Cloak, as well as to the effects of the Stealth Divine Gift (see above); in addition, the character always succeeds at his detection rolls, regardless of target number.

As all Divine Gifts, these powers have a duration in rounds equal to the Priest's Spiritual Aura.

Elementalism

Elementalism in Midgard does not include the elements of Earth and Water as defined in the M&M rules. A V&V Elementalist can only select his two elements from the following three elements: Air, Fire and the new element of Ice (see below).

A V&V Elementalist's choice of powers is, however, free of any sort of metaphysical restriction; in other words, nothing prevents a V&V Elementalist from selecting the opposite elements of Fire and Ice - which are in fact a very popular combination.

Element of Ice

Magnitude 1: Wall of Ice

This power allows the Elementalist to erect an impregnable wall of magical ice before him. This barrier is roughly rectangular, with a maximum height equal to (Elemental Mastery x 5') and a maximum width of (Elemental Mastery x 10').

The Wall will stop all melee and missile attacks (from both sides); it cannot be crossed or damaged by any physical force - with the exception of Fire powers (see *Fire & Ice* below). The base of the wall can be set up to 10' away from where the magician stands but cannot be raised above the ground.

Once created, the Wall of Ice cannot be moved and will remain in existence for a maximum number of rounds equal to the magician's Mastery, during which the Elementalist must remain fully concentrated and cannot use any other power. This duration is doubled for Elementalist who have Ice as their primary element. Once this time limit is reached, the Wall will disappear; erecting a new Wall will take an entire round (and 2 Power points). The Wall will also disappear if its creator is killed, injured, seriously distracted etc.

Magnitude 2: Hoar Frost

With this power, an Elementalist can create a zone of intense, freezing cold, covering all victims in the area with frost and hindering their freedom of action. In game terms, this power works exactly like the Water power of *Swirling Flood*, except that victims save with Physical Vigor instead of Danger Evasion.

Magnitude 3: Ice Titan

This power can only be used near a large body of ice (at least 20 yards across). It allows the magician to create and animate a Large statue of ice.

The Ice Titan (which has the same stats as a Stone Titan) will obey all the commands of its creator for (5 minutes x Elemental Mastery), after which it will petrify, reverting to its original form as an inanimate statue. Elementalist with Ice as their primary element double the duration of this power.



An Ice Titan melting from exposure to Fire powers

In game terms, this power is similar to the Earth power *Animate Statue* - with a significant extra edge, since it does not require an existing statue; unlike Stone Titans, however, Ice Titans are very vulnerable to the effects of Fire magic.

Fire & Ice

As mentioned above, Fire powers may be used to destroy a **Wall of Ice**. Darts of Fire will have no effect but a **Blazing Sphere** which comes into contact with a Wall of Ice has a good chance of melting it; at the end of each round, the Wall must make a special saving roll, using the Mystic Fortitude of its creator against a target number equal to the Mystic Strength of the magician who commands the Blazing Sphere. If the saving roll is failed, the Wall melts; this will inflict no direct damage to individuals protected by the Wall but will of course make them vulnerable to further damage from the Sphere or any other source.

A **Volcanic Eruption** will automatically destroy a Wall of Ice in one round - but those who stand behind it will only take 1d6 damage (instead of the usual 2d6 damage) if they fail their initial Danger Evasion saving roll (see *Players Manual*, p 34).

Ice Titans are also particularly vulnerable to Fire Magic and always take 1d6 extra damage from such attacks when they fail their saving rolls; thus, a **Dart of Fire** will cause them 2d6 damage, a **Blazing Sphere** will do 3d6 damage and a full-blown **Volcanic Eruption** will cause 3d6 damage on the first round and 2d6 on each subsequent round.

Nature's Gifts

As mentioned in chapter I, the powers of Elves are the same as those of classic M&M Nymphs, with the following adjustments and particularities. Elves have the same *Nature's Favor* (Magnitude 4) power as Dryads. Their *Nature's Curse* (Magnitude 5) and *Nature's Command* (Magnitude 6) powers, which are only possessed by female Elves, are the same as those of Napaea (*Affliction* and *Kiss of Life*).



- So you wanna be a rune master, eh ?

Runes & Runic Lore

Who uses the Runes?

In the world of *Vikings & Valyries*, oral traditions are generally far more valued than written ones. No self-respecting warrior or hunter would ever show the slightest interest in learning how to read, whilst the only value of a book to a thief is the price that some magician might pay for it.

And even magicians are very careful about how and when they exercise this talent. Skalds, for instance, pride themselves in their great recall of memory, and the skill which they employ in conjuring forth images with words, rhymes and kennings. To be called a 'book-learn't Skald is a pretty damning insult. Even the great Snorri Samundson, author of three of the epic poems recorded in the *Book of Eddas*, is remembered more for his ability to enthral an audience with his charismatic presence and verbal dexterity, than for the undoubtedly literary skill he exhibits in the *Eddas*.

This is not to say that written records are completely scorned, of course. Indeed, the Norse peoples believe that the runes which are used in writing are of divine origin. They were first 'discovered' by Odin, who sacrificed one of his eyes in order to gain insight into their use. Odin shared his discovery with his fellow gods, and with the Elves, and later still with the priests and skalds of the Norse.

Sorcerers and Elementalists are a different matter, and there are several, conflicting tales as to how these magicians gained access to the secrets of the runes. The most widely accepted belief is that the trickster god Loki impetuously shared this knowledge within them, to the intense annoyance, it is said, of Odin (Odin later came round, of course, and many Sorcerers and Elementalists today follow Odin rather than Loki).

The Runic Script

The runic script of Midgard is made of 24 different letters, including both vowels and consonants. It is an austere, angular one (in strong contrast to the rounded, flowing script of the Imperial alphabet of the South). It is ideally suited to inscriptions on wood, bone and stone: indeed, it is only in the last century or so of the Age of Adventure that writing on animal skins (vellum) has become more common.

Each of the runes is named after a being, object, or occasionally an abstract state, usually one that begins with the same sound as that which the rune represents. So, for example, the first rune of the runic script is called **Fyr** (meaning 'cattle') and represents the letter 'f'.

The Power of the Runes

In addition to their linguistic representation, each rune has a mystical meaning. These mystical meanings are well-understood by magicians, and are used as part of their spell-casting. However, the most significant magical function of the runes is in the form of the rune-sticks used by Norse priests when calling a *Divine Vision*.

Each of the twenty-four runes has a variety of meanings, ensuring that any *Divine Vision* (especially of future events) will have a degree of uncertainty about its interpretation. The following list gives the most common symbolic associations of the various runes:



Fyr (f), meaning '**cattle**'. Cattle are the livelihood of most Norse clans and families, and so this rune generally symbolises wealth and success; but it can also, negatively, stand for greed or excess. This rune is also associated with the Vanir Freyr, the god of wealth and plenty, and also with the Dwarves.



Ur (u), meaning '**auroch**'. The rare and majestic auroch requires great skill to hunt, and so this rune symbolises strength, speed and survival. This rune is also associated with the Aesir Ullr, the god of hunting.



Thuris (th), meaning '**thorn**'. Thorn-bushes represent obstacles, and so this rune symbolises difficulty, struggle, anger and pain. This rune is also associated with storm giants and trolls, with the giant god Ymir, with Jotunheim and Trollheim, and with the East.



Ansuz (a), meaning '**mouth**'. This rune governs communication, and symbolises signs, intellect, insight and inspiration, especially of divine origin. This rune is associated with the Aesir god Bragi, the patron deity of skalds, and also with Odin, the patron of wise sorcerers and many rune-masters.



Raedo (r), meaning '**rider**'. This rune symbolises change, discovery, riding and journeys. This rune is associated with the Aesir god Odin in his aspect as the One-eyed Wanderer.



Kaen (k), meaning '**torch**'. This rune symbolises passion and wildfire. As both can be difficult to control, it can also symbolise chaos. This rune is associated with both Freya, the goddess of passion, and Loki, the trickster god of fire. It is also associated with the fire giants, with Muspellheim, and with the South.



Gyfu (g), meaning '**gift**'. This rune symbolises not only gifts, but also the spirit of openness, generosity and hospitality itself. Sometimes known as the friendship rune, it is also associated with the Aesir god Baldur.



Vyn (v), meaning '**happiness**'. This rune symbolises joy, fulfilment and harmony. It is associated with the blessings of the realm of Asgard itself.



Haegal (h), meaning '**hail**'. Sometimes known as the weather rune, this rune can symbolise disruption but also cleansing. It is also associated with the Aesir god Thor, the god of storms.



Nyd (n), meaning '**need**'. This rune symbolises necessity, purpose, doom and duty. It is associated with the three Norns, the goddesses of destiny.



Isa (i), meaning '**ice**'. This rune can symbolise clarity and truth, or alternatively inaction and stubbornness. It is associated with the frost giants, with winter, with Nifellheim, and the North.



Jera (j), meaning '**harvest**'. This rune symbolises autumn, reaping and reckoning, the earning and receiving of rewards, endings and beginnings. It is associated with the goddess Frigg.



Yr (y), meaning '**yew-tree**'. The yew-tree is an ancient keeper of knowledge, but is also known for its poisonous berries. This rune symbolises many things, including dangerous sorcery, dark desires and even death. It is also associated with darkness, monstrous creatures, Dark Elves, and Hel, the goddess of the dead. It is generally regarded as the rune of ill-fate.



Pyrth (p), meaning '**cup**'. This rune depicts the dice-cup used in games of chance, and represents changing fortunes, uncertainty and unpredictability. It is, not surprisingly, also associated with the Aesir god Loki.



Algiz (z), meaning '**elk**'. This rune is a pictorial representation of an elk, with its massive antlers. It is seen as a rune that symbolises shielding and protection. It is also associated with Heimdall, watchman of the gods.



Sigel (s), meaning '**sun**'. This rune symbolises summer, light, health, wholeness, happiness and good fortune. This rune is associated with the Aesir god Baldur.



Tyr (t), meaning '**Tyr**'. This rune, the warriors' rune, is named for, and associated with, the Aesir god Tyr. It symbolises fame, honor, heroism, sacrifice, justice, and victory in battle.



Berk (b), meaning '**birch-tree**'. Named for the birch-tree, which is noted for its ability to survive fire and regenerate quickly, this rune symbolises protection, fertility, spring, growth, nurturing and motherhood. It is associated with the goddess Frigg.



Ehwaz (e), meaning '**horse**'. Named for one of man's closest allies in the animal kingdom, this rune symbolises loyalty, partnership and progress. It is associated with Odin, via his faithful steed Sleipnir.



Man (m), meaning '*mankind*'. This rune symbolises humanity and friendship, and can also represent a person's individual destiny, the self. It is also associated with the Aesir god Heimdall, in his aspect as defender of the human race. This rune can also represent Midgard, the world of men.



Lagu (l), meaning '*water*'. As well as the obvious representation, this rune symbolises emotion, fertility, intuition and womanhood. It is associated with the Vanir god Njord, the god of the sea, but can also represent the fertility goddess Freya, his daughter. It can also represent the West.



Ing (ng), meaning '*Ing*' (an obscure name for the Vanir god Freyr). This rune symbolises growth, change and creativity. As well as Freyr himself, this rune is also associated with the Light Elves, and their realm of Alfheim.



Othila (o), meaning '*home*'. This rune symbolises family and home. It can also represent ancestry or lineage. This rune is associated with both Odin and Frigg, as joint heads of the household.



Daeg (d), meaning '*day*'. This rune symbolises clarity and purpose, honesty and hard work. It is also associated with the Aesir god Thor, as patron of the labouring classes.



- Do you know the secret of the Runes?

Using Runes in Adventures

Although the 24 Runes of Midgard are based upon the 24 runes of the *Elder Futhark*, the earliest runic script used by the Germanic peoples, some of the names, values and mystical associations are somewhat different. There is, in any case, no universally agreed interpretation of the supposed mystical value of the Norse runes – be it historic or modern-day.

There are many possible ways in which Maze Masters may use rune-sticks in V&V adventures. One possible way is the **Rule of Three**: i.e. to give a rune-casting reading of three runes whenever a priest casts *Divine Vision*. It is suggested that the Maze Master chose three runes that he feels may accurately reflect aspects of the adventure ahead (or, alternatively, a past event, or a present dilemma), and that he offers a single line **possible** interpretation (emphasis on the word 'possible'). He may allow the priest casting the *Divine Vision* to 'ask' up to three questions of his deity, to further refine the possible meaning of the runes – the answer given will always be truthful, but not necessarily clear or complete.

Although most thoughtful Maze Masters will 'prepare' a set of runes in advance should his adventuring include a priest, particularly daring Maze Masters may allow a player character using *Divine Vision* to make a rune-casting reading for themselves (using a previously prepared set of runes – marked pieces of card will be perfectly sufficient). The Maze Master must then try to ensure that subsequent events can fit some kind of reasonable interpretation of the runes cast. This requires some skill, and is recommended for confident and flexible Maze Masters only, but could bring an added dimension of atmosphere to a *Vikings & Valkyries* campaign.

Remember, the interpretation of rune-sticks will always be rather uncertain, given the many possible meanings attached to each rune. Take the following three runes, for example:



One possible interpretation might be: 'Shield yourself against a friend who will cause you great pain'. Another possible interpretation might be: 'Heimdall will protect you on your journey to Jotunheim.' Two very different interpretations: but both consistent with the runes. So beware against over-confidence in casting the runes!



2010 Edition Comments

The Great Magic Outcry

Although it was only 2-pages long (or perhaps *because* it was only 2-pages long), the Magic chapter attracted an inordinate amount of sharp criticism and negative comments. During the four months that followed the release of V&V, the letters page of *Griffin* magazine included at least two negative letters on the subject of V&V Magic (perhaps because the editors felt it made a welcome change from the heated discussions about initiative order and tactical movement). Here is a small selection of what became known as the Anti-V&V Magic Season:

"TWO pages? Come on, guys! This is not a chapter! This is a hack job!"

"Where are the rules about Rune Magic?"

"Much could be said about the hidden reasons which led the authors of this supplement to ignore the topic of Odinic Necromancy..."

"And what if I want to play a Kvenir Shaman?"

"Treating the Norse gods as mere local variants of the Greek deities, with exactly the same approach to priestly magic, simply makes no sense (...) Do the authors of V&V really believe there ever were guys like Priests of Heimdall?"

"They also seem to have overlooked the fact that Baldur is supposed to be DEAD (as opposed to, say, dead and resurrected), which does not make him a very credible purveyor of Divine Prodigies, does it?"

"But the most ridiculous element has to be the existence of Priests of Loki – I mean who is ever going to TRUST these guys? Hi, folks, I'm a Priest of Loki, god of strife and mischief, how about going on a quest together?"

Perhaps not so surprisingly, these complaints were soon followed by an avalanche of articles in gaming fanzines (as well as a few in the *Griffin* itself!) presenting alternate magic rules for *Vikings & Valkyries*, including at least half-a-dozen Runic Magic systems which often proved to be overly complex, unwieldy in play and seriously unbalanced; the irony of it all is that such systems were not really more faithful to Norse legends than what V&V offered – but at least they had RUNES.



*Odin, supreme god of the Aesir
(and big winner of the Magnusson Variant)*

The Magnusson Variant

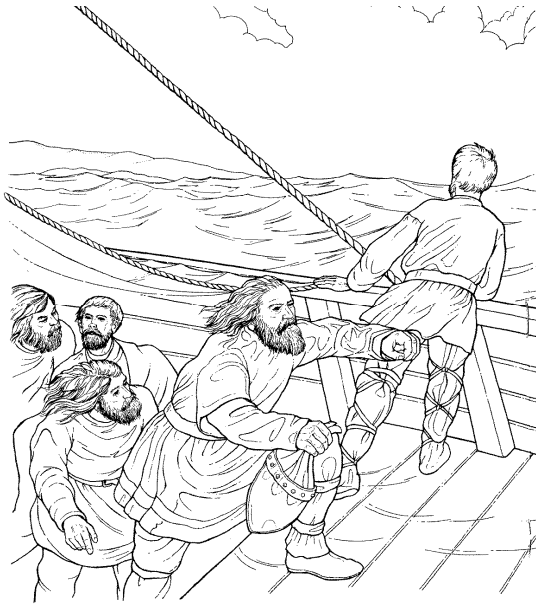
One of the most interesting (and popular) alternate approaches to V&V priestly magic was known as "the Magnusson Variant". Written by one Olav Magnusson and published in the *Griffin* letters page, it advocated a "radical simplification of the Divine Prodigies system" to make V&V Priests more "Norsey":

"Only two of the deities listed in V&V should have Priests in the usual M&M sense of the term: Odin (for male Priests) and Freya (for female Priestesses). This would be a far better reflection of the position of authority held by these two deities in their respective pantheons: since Odin is the ruler of the Aesir, his Priests oversee all Aesir worship in Midgard; a similar reasoning applies to Freya, who is recognized by the other Vanir as the matriarch of their clan.

Of course, the other Aesir and Vanir gods may still be chosen as patron deities by characters; the rituals and ceremonies of their specific cults are conducted by part-time religious officiants who do not have access to any form of real magic and never go on adventures – known locally as *godi*, these minor priests are the exact V&V equivalent of the Acolyte NPCs described in the *M&M Companion*."



IV: THE WORLD OF MIDGARD



A whole new world of adventure to explore!

A New World of Adventure

Vikings & Valkyries adventures can be set during the historic Viking age or in imaginary worlds with a Norse flavor. The following pages detail such a setting: Midgard, an imaginary world reminiscent of early medieval northern Europe. It is centered on three frozen northern kingdoms – fantasy versions of the Scandinavian countries. It should be noted that, like the M&M world of Mythika, the Midgard of V&V takes at least as much inspiration from myth, legends and history as from movies, fantasy novels, comic books and other pop culture sources.

Midgard is a world of adventure and exploration, full of perilous places to explore and deadly creatures to battle. Midgard is itself surrounded by even stranger worlds, the various otherworldly realms of **Outgard**: **Jotunheim**, the land of giants; **Asgard**, the fortress of the gods; **Alfheim**, the celestial home of elves and fertility gods known as the Vanir; and **Helheim**, the underworld where the dead gather. This chapter presents a brief overview of Midgard and Outgard, divided into the following sections:

Geography (including a map of the world)

Culture & Customs (including languages)

Mythology (the three ages of the world)

Recent History (major events in the last century)

Deities (the main Aesir and Vanir gods)

Other Realms (Asgard and other fantastic places)

Geography

The world of V&V is a giant disc which contains two great realms. The inner realm, Midgard, is the realm of men protected by the gods. The outer realm, Outgard, lies like a ring around Midgard and is an elemental wasteland of monsters and giants.

Midgard

Midgard is the land of men, warded from the primeval forces of the land of the giants. Once it held giant empires and lofty cities, but now these mighty nations have fallen. On this stage of ruin and disrepair three northern kingdoms are set to lay claim to the treasures of the past.

The Norse Kingdoms

The Kingdom of **Beornia** is an old and proud country founded by King Beor, son of the war god Tyr. The latest of his line is King Rothgar, who rules from his great hold in the city of Kingsgard. Beornia is rich, with great halls and proud warriors. To the south it is shielded from the wild woods of the Fir by a massive earthwork called Beor's Dyke.

Across the waters, north and west of Beornia, lies **Havmark**. This mountainous and sparse kingdom is crisscrossed by deep fjords and thundering rivers. The people of Havmark make their living through fishing, raiding and exploring. Their adventurous sailor-king, Olaf Farsegel, makes his berth in the capital-port of Fjordhaven.

In the middle of the inland sea which separates the Norse kingdoms lies the island of **Valkya**, home of the Valkyries, where no man is suffered to live. These warrior maidens are devoted to Odin, the king of gods. They are ruled by Queen Brynhild, a mighty warrior and high priestess of Odin, from the Ring, a massive stone citadel devoted to the Aesir.

Vedland lies eastward, beyond the Valkya Sea. It is a woodland realm of isolated huts and hovels hemmed in by the soaring peaks of the Jotun Mountains to the east, the placid waters of the Valkya Sea, and never-ending ice and cold to the north. Most Vedlanders are farmers, but the Kvenir hunter-gatherers often cross into Vedland from the north and the east.

The last and latest of the Norse realms is an icy island far off the shores of Havmark. The island of **Faroy** was recently settled by refugees and pioneers fleeing family feuds in Havmark and the Norse Kingdoms. The Freeman of Faroy govern themselves without a king. Instead, decisions are made at the Thing, an assembly of all Faroyese. These hardy pioneers have sent explorers to the far corners of Midgard and even into Outgard.



Surrounding Realms

Surrounding the Norse Kingdoms are exotic lands brimming with danger – and treasure!

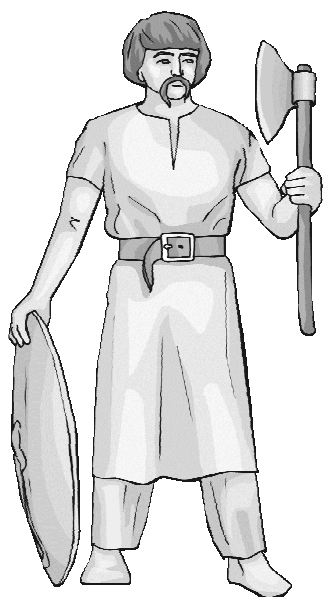
To the south and west of Beornia, beyond Beor's Dyke, lies **Firland**. Full of overgrown ruins and lost treasures, these dark woods were once the verdant fields of a mighty empire, overrun by the ancestors of the Fir at the end of the Age of Legend. The Fir tribes are proud and warlike savages, endlessly at war with the Norse over some long-forgotten slight. Their clans are often locked in internecine warfare or bloody feuds, and their druids perform blood-curdling rites and sacrifices in the name of gods who seem to be but mockeries of the Vanir.

The **Golden City**, where an Emperor still rules, lies to the south and east of the Norse Kingdoms. Upholding traditions from the Age of Legend, the Golden City is opulently rich, but lacks the power to dominate its surroundings. It is a city-state, a decadent remnant of a once great empire.

To the east of the Golden City, far from the Norse Kingdoms, are vast plains and steppes ruled by the **Hungol** hordes. The Hungol are keen hunters, herdsman and warriors. The steppes are also home to gryphons and other monsters.

North of the Hungol steppes, running all the way to the borders of Vedland and east to the limits of Midgard, is mountainous **Trollheim**. This wild land, which continues into the frozen north, is home to half-giant chieftains and Kvenir tribes.

The **Kvenir** are reindeer-rearing nomads who journey with their livestock. All of the frozen north, from west to east, is their home and they trade as readily with the Norse as with giants or trolls. The **far north** is a land of ice and glacier, home to the ice-witch Baba Pohja and her realm of darkness.



A typical Fir barbarian warrior



A wise Norse king holding court in the open

Culture & Customs

Despite their quarrels and physical distance from one another, the Norse communities share some common cultural traits and values. A Viking from Faroy or Vedland may still feel at home at the Beornian court or on a ship from Havmark. The following section highlights some of the most important cultural traits.

Hospitality

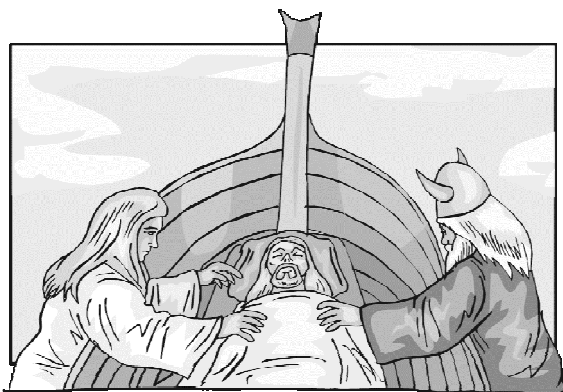
In the harsh world of Midgard, common folk must depend on each other. Honorable Norsemen will never turn away a traveler in need and will provide him with food and shelter.

There is, of course, also a limit to hospitality, and abusing it is almost as bad as not providing it. Lords and kings take hospitality to an excess, lavishly providing their henchmen and visitors with gifts, food and favors. For this reason, the lords of the Norse Kingdoms are known as the "Givers of gifts."

Bravery

For a Norseman, it is important to give proof of bravery and composure in the face of death. The brave go to Valhalla and sit at the table of Odin, but the timid dead linger in the unhallowed halls of Hel.

A coward's infamy lives beyond his death; he will be remembered for his lack of backbone. For this reason, many Norsemen utter terse, laconic and ironic statements even when receiving a fatal blow to show their disregard for death and pain.



A typical Viking funeral (you knew we couldn't avoid it)

Vendettas

Family ties are very strong in the Norse Kingdoms, and family members can always call upon their relatives in times of need. This also means that every Norseman will have angry family members to avenge his death or misfortune if needs be.

Sometimes, vicious, bloody vendettas are waged through generations. To avoid the extinction of entire families, the Norse gather regularly for public assemblies, called Things, where they can settle their disputes, often by paying a blood-fine or *wergild*. On Faroy, this Thing has taken the place of a royal court, and governs the entire island.

Language

Norscan is spoken throughout the Norse Kingdoms. All player-characters are assumed to be perfectly fluent in this common language. Other Midgard languages include Kvenish, Firian, and Troll speech.

Because of their shared language, the Norse Kingdoms of Midgard also share a very rich oral tradition of rhyme and poetry, with intricate word-weaving a fitting pastime for skalds and princes.

The following section lists all the major languages of Midgard, including the main nonhuman tongues.

Human Languages

Norscan: The common tongue of the Norse realms, used in the Three Kingdoms, Valkya and Faroy. It is also the native language of the Aesir gods.

Kvenish: The native tongue of the Kvenir nomads.

Firian: The native tongue of the Fir barbarians.

Hungolese: The native tongue of the Hungol tribes.

Imperial Tongue: The language of the Golden City, used as a common tongue in the so-called civilized nations of the South, which were once provinces of a now fallen empire.

Nonhuman Languages

Alfan: The beautiful and poetic native language of Elves (as well as Merfolk and other related beings); it is also the tongue of the Vanir gods.

Dwarvish: The secret, often enigmatic native language of Dwarves and Duergar.

Jotunian: The crude and coarse native language of Giants, Half-Giants and other Giant-kin.

Trollish: The even cruder and coarser native language of Trolls and other Troll-kin.

Characters & Languages

Starting Languages

For simplicity's sake, all player-characters are assumed to be perfectly fluent in Norscan.

With the exception of Berserkers (who only speak Norscan), all **warriors** start the game with one extra spoken language in addition to Norscan; this may be either a human language (such as Firian or Imperial) or a nonhuman language (such as Alfan or Dwarvish).

Hunters and other specialists start the game with two extra languages (with Kvenish being the language of choice for Hunters).

Magicians start the game with three extra languages in addition to Norscan. At least two of these three languages must be Nonhuman; in the case of Elves and Dwarves, these three languages include their native tongue.

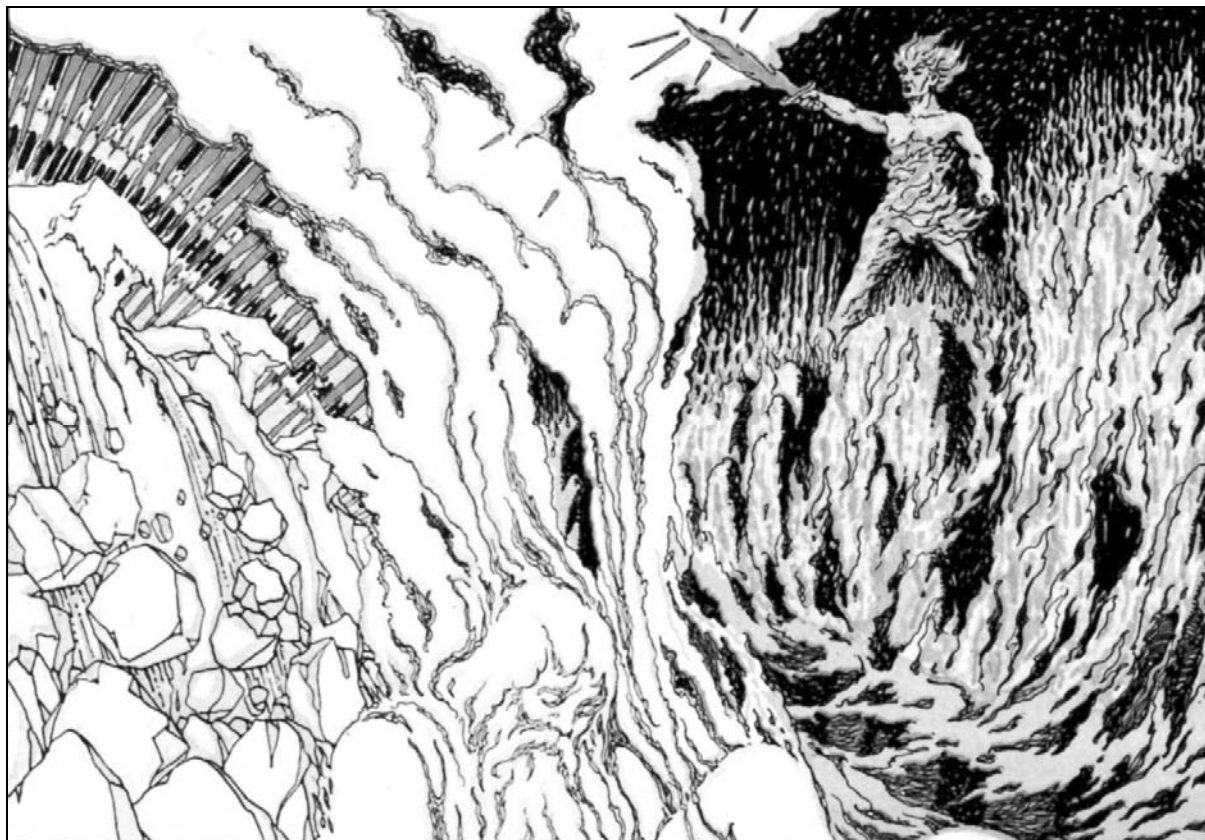
Other languages can be learned during play, as per the rules given in the *Maze Masters Guide*.

Literacy

All non-magician characters are assumed to be *illiterate*. Literacy is extremely rare in Midgard and is regarded as an almost wizardly form of knowledge. The only form of writing known in the Norse lands is the **sacred runic alphabet**, which is only taught to (and used by) magicians, including Dwarves and Elves.

The only other system of writing which exists in the wider world is the **imperial alphabet**, used by the so-called civilized scholars of the South and generally unknown in the Norse; the only ones who'd have a reason to learn it would be the magicians – and they have no reason to do so, since they have the sacred runic alphabet.

And no, neither the Giants nor the Trolls have anything resembling a written language.



Ginnunagap, the great primal abyss between the glaciers of Nifelheim and the flames of Muspelheim

Outgard

Outgard is a realm of monsters, giants and dragons. No man knows all that Outgard holds. Some, who have been daring enough to make the trip across multiple times, swear that the land changes with every visit. Lost valleys and cities, verdant landscapes and harsh wilderness, all can be found there. Outgard is also the rim of the great disc that is the earth; if you travel too far into the unknown, you may well fall off the edge. Still, some areas of Outgard are well known, whether from experience or from the sagas:

Nifelheim is an arctic wasteland of glaciers and icebergs. At its very heart lies a secret and verdant valley, **Asgard**, over which perches the great fortress of the gods: **Valhalla**. It is from here that the Aesir survey their creation. Asgard can only be reached by a great bridge which can be seen from Midgard on certain rainy days. Men call it *Bifrost* or *the Rainbow*.

The land of the giants rises in the east, the lofty peaks and rugged crags of **Jotunheim**. This volcanic tract is home to the keeps and halls of mountain kings and giant chieftains. It is a land of sorcery, violence and ancient secrets.

Near the rim of the world, the volcanic streams merge at the fiery inferno of **Muspelheim** and the palace of Surtur, king of the fire giants.

The border between the rocks and flames of Jotunheim and Muspelheim on the one side, and the ices and turrets of Asgard and Nifelheim on the other hand is **Ginnunagap**, the old primordial gap that existed before the world did. Only here does it surface, but the cracks and crevasses of that ancient abyss run under all of Outgard and Midgard, and they are filled with hidden tunnels, secretive dwarves and old monstrosities.

To the south is a desolation of hot winds and fiery deserts, home to trickster spirits, ancient dragons and lost civilizations.

To the west is the **Great Sea**, dark blue waters that only the Norsemen dare to sail. Seafarers speak of isolated islands lost in the mists and fumes of the great seas. Some of these are forgotten kingdoms ruled by vicious witch-kings, others are unexplored and presumably uninhabited. Beyond these, the most daring sailors say, is a distant continent, **Skrelland**. Many attempts to find and to colonize it have failed, and those that survive to tell the tale whisper of fierce resistance from the native tribes.



Ymir, the primordial giant of creation

Mythology

Before the World

In the beginning was nothingness. There was no sea or earth or heaven, only a yawning gap. The north bank of that gap was a frosty glazier, called Nifelheim. The south bank was a furnace of flames called Muspelheim. In time, the flames of Muspelheim thawed the ices of Nifelheim, forming a brooding, massive figure: the giant Ymir. His offspring were the giants, the trolls and the witches.

But the ices continued to thaw, and from the firmness of the ice were formed shapely men and women. These were the gods. They went to war against the giants and forced them into the wilderness. They seized and killed Ymir, creating earth and sea and heavens from his cut-up parts. But the giants hid themselves in the rocks and mountains surrounding the world that had just been created by the gods.

The Age of Creation

Now the gods created all life-forms that crawl, fly and swim. Odin, king of the gods, took up two logs and shaped them into man and woman. He breathed life and intelligence into them.

The gods feared that their creation would be set upon and torn to pieces by the giants. Some decided that the best way to safeguard the world was to set up watch over the lands and the people they had created. These gods, led by Odin, built a giant fortress in the frosty fastness of Nifelheim and called themselves the Aesir.

The other gods chose to ward off the evil of the giants through protective spells woven around the world of men. These gods are called the Vanir. The creation of the world, or Midgard, and the separation of the gods into Aesir and Vanir marked the end of the Age of Creation.

The Age of Legends

Nourished by the Vanir and taught by wandering Aesir, the newly created humans began to take possession of Midgard. They tilled the earth and built homesteads and halls. Great castles and cities were built, and mythic kings expanded those cities into civilizations. Never has such splendor been seen in Midgard. The blessings of the Vanir and the wisdom of the Aesir protected the humans and allowed them to flourish.

But the giants plotted against them. Their cunning intrigues set Vanir against Aesir in a great fratricidal war. Savage tribes overwhelmed the empires of mankind, and giants broke into Midgard.

Only at the brink of disaster did the gods realize their mistake and quickly struck a fragile peace. Imperiously they strode the ravaged earth, chased dragons back into their holes and giants into the hills. But the land was broken, and all that was left of man were scattered tribes. The Age of Legend ended in wreck and ruin.

The Age of Adventure

The current era is an age of dark, empty woods and isolated, desolate kingdoms. The lands of the fallen empire are ruled by fierce clans; of its splendor only a decadent great capital remains. The world of man is now a wilderness, surrounded by the greater wilderness of Outgard.

This is an age for intrepid explorers and adventurers to venture anew where man once dwelt, and sometimes beyond. Their curiosity and courage will shape the Age of Adventure.

The seers and priestesses speak of more Ages to come. First will be the **Age of Strife**, when brothers will kill brothers and wolves roam Midgard. After that **Ragnarok** and the end of time will come. It is not surprising, then, that men of the North seek adventure and wealth before it is all too late.



From the Age of Legend to the Age of Adventure!



Queen Brunehild, proud founder of Valkya

Recent History

Beornia

The kingdom of Beornia was the first of the Norse kingdoms to arise from the barbarian tribes that inhabited the peninsulas.

Its founder, Beor, was a legendary warlord who rallied his people against invading Fir clans and raised Beor's Dyke as a defense against them. From him stems the oldest and most prestigious line of kings in the Norse kingdoms: the current king Rothgar is his direct descendant. According to legend, Beor was no ordinary man but the son of Tyr, the god of war. Ever since his days, the Beornians have launched raids against the Fir or defended themselves against incursions. Beornia seems to be full of impatient youths who wish to prove themselves in battle or by other exploits.

Vedland

Second of the Norse kingdoms, Vedland was founded by King Volse, who gathered the tribes of the woodlands around him and built a great temple to the Vanir gods Frey and Freya. The Vedlanders battled trolls and half-giants from the mountains; it is rumored that Volse and his descendants, the Volsungs, were of half-giant stock themselves.

Vedland is now a country divided. A few years ago, a cunning adventurer, Ragnar One-eye, managed to trick the rightful ruler and kill him in an ambush. The heir apparent, Prince Orm, managed to escape the usurper's plot; he is now amassing warriors and rebels in the deep woods in hope of reclaiming the throne. In the meantime, Ragnar has married Orm's sister Skuld, the High Priestess of Freya, and is trying to unite the country under his harsh rule.

Valkya

The island of Valkya was first settled by female devotees of Odin led by a self-appointed priestess of royal blood named Brunehild, the ancestor of the current Queen Brynhild. Brunehild built a hallowed fortress called the Ring in response to visions and foresights from the great god. She forbade men to live on Valkya, and for that reason the Valkyries travel to Midgard to find mates. The mettle of Valkya's women was put to the test when waves of Fir invaders assaulted the island and its keep. Though outnumbered, they were victorious.

Since then, all Valkyries are trained in the art of war at a very young age. Valkya tends to stay aloof of the politics and feuds of the surrounding realms. Its aspirations are spiritual, and many Valkyries venture forth to search for sacred relics or mythic items. They can be quite ruthless during these quests as they judge the petty aspirations of common men and women to be of little significance. As devotees of Odin, the Valkyries tend to support followers of the Aesir over or even against those of the Vanir, whom they perceive as weak, obsolescent deities.

Havmark & Farroy

The youngest of the Norse kingdoms is Havmark. A few generations ago, the local chief of the port-town of Fjordhaven united the petty chiefdoms dotting the coast and peninsula. Since then, the inhabitants have turned their attention from in-fighting to exploration and colonization. One of their chief accomplishments was the settlement of the island of Faroy, located in the empty seas to the west. The island's population boomed as dissenters and rebels fled the iron hand of the king of Havmark.

Eventually the Freemen of Faroy declared their independence and now live without a king, ruling through their common assembly: the Thing. Olaf Farsegel, the current king of Havmark, has so far tolerated their insolence but many fear that this state of affairs won't last long. Indeed, ships are currently being built all over Havmark as if in preparation for an invasion.



A meditative Freeman of Faroy



The Aesir feasting in the halls of Valhalla – can you spot Odin and Bragi?

Aesir Deities

Baldur

Baldur is the god of beauty, friendship and wisdom. He is the son of Odin and is best liked of all the gods. He is also fated to die and unleash the battle of Ragnarok and the end of the world according to dire prophecies.

Symbol: A radiant sun

Typical Worshipers: Princes and lovers.

Bragi

Bragi, the younger brother of Odin, is the god of poetry and of Skalds, of inspiration and music. He is a master of metaphors, riddles and *kennings*.

Symbol: The Harp

typical Worshipers: All Skalds

Frigg

The goddess of home, hearth and wisdom, Frigg is also closely associated with Fate and the Norns, as well as with the gift of foresight. She is the wife of Odin, and the foremost of the Aesir goddesses.

Symbol: The spinning wheel.

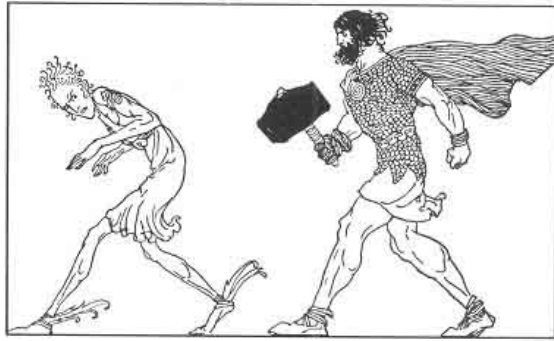
Typical worshipers: Women of all social classes

Heimdall

Heimdall keeps an ever-vigilant watch over the domains of the gods and the bridge of Bifrost – known to men as the rainbow. If giants or other foes advance on Asgard, he is the first to raise the alarm by sounding his great horn, the Gjallarhorn. He is a noble and warlike god.

Symbol: A great, curved horn

Typical Worshipers: Princes, Hunters, watchmen.



The shifty Loki and the thunderous Thor

Loki

Loki is the trickster, the liar and the cheat among the gods. Sometimes his capers serve as amusement for the Aesir, but sometimes his deeds are darker and have far-reaching consequences. Loki is also the lord of fire and the consuming flame. His preference for trickery also makes him a master of spells and riddles.

Symbol: A flame

Typical Worshipers: Thieves, Sorcerers, Fire Elementalists.

Odin

Odin is the king of the gods. Powerful and wise, his domains are sorcery, war and death. He commands the army of the heroic dead, the Einherjar. Despite his power and majesty, Odin is also a subtle god. He sacrificed his left eye, plunging it into the well of Mimir (the slain god of wisdom) to gain knowledge of all things.

Symbol: Sleipnir, the eight-legged horse.

Typical Worshipers: Berserkers and Valkyries are the special protégés of Odin. Princes and Sorcerers also venerate him.



Odin, king of the gods



The mighty Thor posing for our illustrator

Thor

Thor is the god of thunder and storm - a strong and warlike god, who battles with giants and other monsters. His hammer, Mjolnir, is the most potent weapon in the world. Known for his fierce temper, Thor is also a loyal protector of mankind.

Symbol: The hammer of Thor

Typical Worshipers: Viking warriors, Berserkers, peasants and blacksmiths.

Tyr

Tyr is the god of war and bravery. He lost his left hand to the jaws of the great Wolf Fenrir. A proud and self-sacrificing deity, he is known for his courage and self-control.

Symbol: A sword

Typical Worshipers: Vikings and Princes

Uller

The god of hunting, sports and outdoorsmanship, Uller is a great skier and protects those who travel through the wild.

Symbol: Bow and arrow

Typical Worshipers: Hunters, seafarers, travelers

Vanir Deities

Freya

She is the goddess of beauty, love and nature. Like her brother Freyr, she is a divinity of fertility and growth. But she is also the goddess of carnal love and romance. She rides a chariot drawn by cats and is guarded by a vanguard of fallen heroes, whom she gathers from the battlefield.

Symbol: A cat

Typical Worshipers: Princes, lovers and peasants



Freyr and Freya riding out in their own inimitable Vanir style

Freyr

The god of nature, fertility and virility, Freyr is the provider of plenty and riches. He makes the crops grow, and animals multiply. Freyr is seen as a noble and lordly god who distributes his riches to those who are loyal to him, just like a lord distributes wealth among his followers.

Symbol: A boar or a bull.

Typical Worshipers: Vikings, Princes, peasants.

Njord

Njord, father of Freyr and Freya, is the lord of the seas and protector of fishermen and sailors. He can summon great storms or calm the winds to let ships pass. Seagulls and other sea birds are his spies.

Symbol: A fish

Typical Worshipers: Vikings and seafarers

Other Deities

Ymir

Ymir is the primeval Giant, the origin of the elements and the world. Although dead, his base spirit stills guides all Giants. When they roar in anger, it is with the rumbling voice of Ymir from beyond the grave.

Symbol: A mountaintop

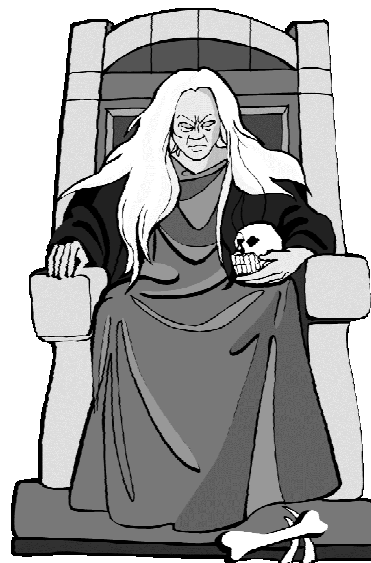
Typical Worshipers: Giants, Half-Giants, some Ice Elementalists

Hel

A capricious and tyrannical deity of death, Hel is feared and reviled throughout Midgard. She rules the underworld of Helheim, where all the dead who were not chosen for Valhalla suffer an afterlife of torment. She sometimes appears as an old crone and sometimes as a horribly scarred woman, one half of her face radiantly beautiful, the other half a terrible skull.

Symbol: A skull

Typical Worshipers: Trolls, witches, murderers



The goddess Hel, queen of the underworld



Yes, that's Thor again. Just in case you thought Freya looked a bit silly with her cat-drawn chariot

Other Realms

Other worlds exist apart from or within the main realms of Midgard and Outgard. Many of them can only be reached through magical means and are maintained by the divine power of their rulers.

Some of the places listed below exist in their own alternative dimensions; others can be found within Outgard. Each of these realms serves some specific purpose or is home to a certain group or people.

Asgard

Situated among the ices of Nifelheim, Asgard is separated from the world of Outgard by powerful spells. Towering, snow-capped peaks and glaciers surround its pleasant vales and majestic hills and cliffs, shielding them from the chilling winds of Nifelheim. Asgard contains a multitude of different realms and palaces, one for each deity.

Jotunheim

The home of the giants looms among the volcanic peaks of eastern Outgard. It is a rocky region of sorcery, gigantic keeps and wild beasts. At its easternmost end lies the fiery fortress of Surtur, the great fire giant who will one day fight the gods at Ragnarok.

Alfheim

This sanctuary dimension is ruled by the Vanir and is a place of great natural beauty and tranquility. The birthplace of Elves, Alfheim is a celestial realm of floating islands and wind-swept plains where blue cattle are herded by proud elven folks.

Helheim

In the underworld, the inglorious dead are massed in great armies of ghoulish troops, waiting for the great battle at Ragnarok. It is not impossible for brave souls to venture into Helheim to reclaim a lost loved one or long-forgotten knowledge, but it is soul-wrenchingly dangerous. Sometimes, the queen of the underworld sends her restless minions to the world of the living to feed on living flesh.

Svartalfheim

The ancient crevasse of Ginnunagap runs the length of Midgard and Outgard. Most of Ginnunagap is covered by land, water or mountain. Under the seemingly peaceful soil, this massive abyss yawns, full of warrens, tunnels and secret caverns. This is where the Dark Elves make their home. Twisted caricatures of the Elves, these malicious beings shun the light and worship the goddess Hel. It is said that many of the sooty warrens of Svartalfheim lead straight to Helheim.

Well of Udr

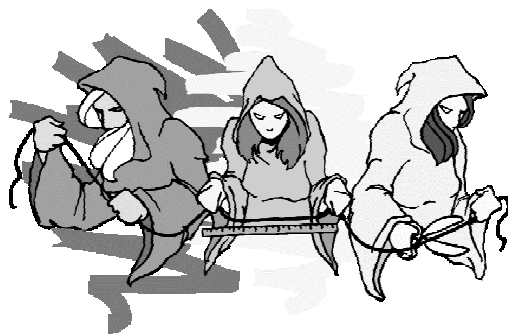
The three Norns sit at the roots of the world, measuring out the length of men's lives as yarn on a spinning wheel. This is a holy place of intense mystery where everything that is, has been or will ever be is stored. For that reason, spinning and the spinning wheel are associated with mystery, fate and prophecy.

Well of Mimir

This is the well of knowledge, wherein Odin cast his eye to be able to see all things. The Well of Mimir belongs to the Vanir, and is well-guarded. Mimir, their former lord, was murdered in the war between the gods. Only his talking head remains, spouting wisdom at the edge of the well.

Hvergelmir

The fountain of all life, Hvergelmir is a great well from which water pours eternal. Should Hvergelmir ever fail, all seas and rivers and lakes would soon dry up because an amount of water equal to its output is plummeting over the world's edge.



Urd, Verdandi and Skuld, the Three Norns



Viking Adventures

Midgard... and Beyond!

Vikings & Valkyries draws most of its inspiration from the heroic tales of the Norse sagas as well as from modern adaptations of these tales, such as the classic comic book series *Prince Valiant*.

A typical *Vikings & Valkyries* campaign will involve bloody battles against horrible monsters, exploration of caves deep underground and lightning raids on coastal settlements.

Vikings & Valkyries adventures can be divided into two broad groups: those that take place in Midgard, and those that take place in Outgard. Of the basic scenarios outlined below, the first three detail typical adventures that may take place in Midgard (but they may also bring the adventurers across the borders to more terrible lands). Finally there is a section on adventuring in the weird wilderness of Outgard.

Gathering the Heroes

But before play begins, the Maze Master and the players should decide *where*, *how* and *why* the heroes begin their adventures. Here are a few typical possibilities:

Defend the Land: The adventurers are the brave retainers and warriors at the hall of a King or Lord, or stalwart champions of a region. The people look to them to defend the land from curses, gods, monsters, raiders and other dangers. If the heroes succeed, lavish rewards, or the gratitude of the people, await them.

Follow A Leader: The adventurers are the loyal friends of a lord, ruler or prince who has been exiled and now wanders across the world trying to find some way to regain his throne. As his closest allies, they carry out all kinds of dangerous quests and heroic challenges to aid him in this daunting task.

The Gods Command It! : The adventurers have been chosen by a god (or Odin, king of the gods himself) to carry out a series of quests and challenges, which they cannot refuse. Perhaps the heroes have angered the god in the past or committed a crime. Sometimes the god selects an earthly king to hand out the god's requests and orders. Sometimes the god personally appears to heroes between adventures.

Monster Slaying

Norse myths are full of terrifying monsters and savage beasts. Dragons, wolves, trolls and other terrible creatures need to be slain for the good of men and the defense of the land.

Sometimes the monster is just a large and more dangerous version of a normal animal (like the Fenris Wolf) and the adventure takes the form a proper hunt. In other cases the monster is an unnatural beast, and the adventure must make a perilous raid on its underground lair.

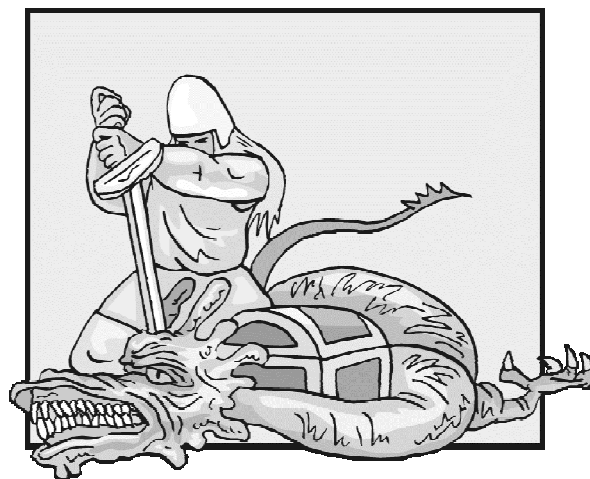
There are many reasons to kill a monster. Perhaps the hellish creature is terrorizing the great hall of a king or lord, or perhaps it is guarding some valuable treasure. The death of the beast itself might actually be the prize; perhaps some part of its body is valuable – dragon scales or venom, or a magic pelt. A simple monster hunt might be a quick and easy task, especially if the lair of the beast is well known. Sometimes killing an unnatural beast might be truly heroic task (such as when Beowulf slew Grendel) that requires the full ingenuity of the slayer.

Treasure Quests

Vikings are always hungry for loot, and they are especially keen on legendary artifacts and weapons.

A treasure quest could be for the silver of the Fir, for the gilded statues of the Golden Cities or for legendary items such as the divine bracelet Draupnir or Siegfried's famous sword Balmung. The steps to finding these artifacts can be many and varied. The quest will often involve traveling to exotic locations in distant parts of the world: mysterious islands, lost mountains, strange lands.

Such epic quests may require information to be discovered, enemies and guardian monsters to be defeated, puzzles to be solved, and traitors to be uncovered. Sometimes the "treasure quest" is more mundane: overpowering guards, stealing into treasuries and ambushing caravans.



Monster Slaying & Treasure Quest Combined

Whatever the nature of the quest, the heroes should be ready for surprises such as cursed artifacts and crafty ambushes. Often a treasure quest will spiral out of control – a sacred artifact may be guarded by the gods or be of symbolic rather than actual value. If a wealth-laden caravan is under the protection of a mighty lord, the plunderers may find themselves outsmarted, defeated or even enslaved. They then may need to rescue their comrades or to break free themselves. As warrior-slaves in a far flung corner of Midgard they could rise to fame and influence in the armies of the Golden City. A resourceful Viking will see an opportunity in any twist of fate.

Heroic Wars

Wars are common in the world of *Vikings & Valkyries*, both skirmishes and great battles leading up to the greatest battle of them all, Ragnarok. Heroes can get embroiled in warlike adventures very easily. The player-characters are the elite hird (retinue), the leaders, commanders and commandoes of any battle that they take part in, and combat hinges on them. They are the heroes mentioned by name in the sagas and in the Eddas.

Where is the war? Why is it occurring? Who are the participants? Who are the allies? Are there any crucial situations that may arise in the fighting to turn the tide? How will the heroic adventurers stop them or encourage them? What are each side's weaknesses, and can they be exploited or protected? Heroes may be following a leader into the war, or fighting for their city or even their god. Lesser folk, spear-armed commoners, can follow the heroes' lead, and mop up afterwards.



Ready for a Heroic War!

Raids

What would Viking adventuring be without lightning attacks on mysterious islands, well defended villages, and coastal keeps? An important part of a raid is the sea journey. Looking for plunder and adventure, the adventurers must cross churning, uncharted seas using ancient maps and word of mouth. Upon landing they'll encounter secrets, plots, traps, witches and tyrannical kings.

A single location might form the focus of the adventure or it can be a stopping point or episode on a longer journey. The differences between voyaging in Outgard and Midgard are clear. The seas of Midgard are frothy and challenging; those of Outgard are pitch black and torrential. Islands in Midgard harbor cunning pirates and other human foes in addition to the odd supernatural being. Outgard isles are more likely to contain lost or cursed cities, wraith-kings, and chained gods.

Outgard

No place is more packed with adventure, more ripe for exploration than the many realms of Outgard. Men think of Outgard as a single elemental wasteland, but these vast lands actually hide secret kingdoms and pocket dimensions outside the laws of nature and order that the Aesir have imposed on Midgard. Heroes who venture there had best be prepared for anything.

Outgard can be reached by crossing the frothing western seas or by travelling east or north or south over land and across mountains or glaciers. It can also be reached through the deep chasms that leads down to Hel and the underworld.

Adventures in inhospitable Outgard are similar to raids in that the journey is an important part of the story. In addition to the usual uncharted territories – ruins, misty islands, lost valleys and hidden caves – voyagers will encounter enchantments and powerful mystical creatures. They'll discover that often wit is as important as brawn when facing clever giants or ancient worms (*Jack and the Beanstalk* might be apt inspiration). Even more than in the realms of men, a wrong turn can result in a horrible fate.

Finally, there are many places scattered throughout Midgard that function as gateways to Outgard. An oddly shaped rock arch might lead to the land of the Frost Giants, and a deep well might lead to watery graves filled with serpentine monstrosities. The chaotic realm of the giants is full of rocky crags, acid seas, lakes of fire, massive keeps and fortresses, magical rivers, oddly shaped rocks, giant footprints, haunting enigmas inexplicable noises, and bizarre wildlife. The geography of the place does not make sense and may not stay consistent; an island easily hailed on the outward trip may not be there on the return journey. The adventurers should clearly feel that they "*aren't in Beornia anymore*"...



2010 Edition Comments

A New World

The world of Midgard – or, to put it correctly, the world of Midgard as presented in V&V – was clearly designed as an alternate fantasy version of Dark Ages Northern Europe, centered around Scandinavia and with gateways to the fantastic, otherworldly realms of Outgard.

The three Norse Kingdoms of Beornia, Havmark and Vedland were respectively based on Denmark, Norway and Sweden (with an extra bit of Finland), with Faroy completing the picture as V&V's version of Iceland.

The Kvenir were the V&V version of the Sami people of northern Europe and the Hungols..., well, their name says it all, doesn't it?

Following the grand M&M tradition of 'creative archaeology' (or 'pseudo-historical nonsense', as one *Wargamist* editorialist once put it), the rest of the world was NOT based on Europe in the Viking / Carolingian era (circa 800 AD) but was more reminiscent of the earlier Merovingian Europe (circa 500 AD) – but without the unifying and civilizing force of Christianity.

The Fir barbarians were obviously based on the various Germanic tribes which dominated Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire (such as the Franks, Goths and Burgundians) but also seemed to incorporate a few Celtic traits like druids and internecine feuds – typical M&M 'cultural collage' at its finest.

Following the same "alternate reality" pattern, the world of Midgard also had its own Rome and Constantinople, coalesced into a single Golden City, as well as its own America (or Vinland), known as Skrelland – two faraway destinations waiting to be explored, plundered or conquered by the Vikings of Midgard!

Skrelland in particular seemed to inspire quite a few Maze Masters, giving birth to a V&V variant informally known as "Vikings versus Indians". The *Head of the Gorgon*, one the most active (and 'alternative') of the M&M fanzines of the nineties, even published a whole campaign set in Skrelland, with Skrelling natives as player-characters and a set of comprehensive (but overly complicated rules for Native American shamanism (which, the authors insisted, could also be used as a basis for Kvenir shamanism).

Recommended Reading & Viewing

The following lists include books, movies and other sources of inspiration for Maze Masters interested in running a *Vikings & Valkyries* campaign - or for M&M players who simply wish to get the feel of what V&V is all about.

Books

It would of course be a hopeless task to attempt to list every work of fantasy or pseudo-historical fiction featuring Vikings and Norsemen; the following works only represent a very small fraction of this immense field and were selected first and foremost for their coolness and very high V&V vibe.

The Broken Sword, Hrolf Kraki's Saga and The Merman's Children by Poul Anderson (who also wrote the historical trilogy *The Last Viking*, about the eleventh century King of Norway Harald Hardrada).

The **Cormac Mac Art** stories by Robert E. Howard, great pulp adventure tales about a sixth century Irish Gael gone Viking, featuring his partner-in-piracy, the unforgettable Wulfhere the Dane.

The Hammer and the Cross trilogy (*The Hammer and the Cross*, *One King's Way* and *King and Emperor*) by Harry Harrison, a Viking uchronia set in an alternate ninth century Europe.

Comics & Graphic Novels

Thorgal by Van Hamme and Rosinski, one of Europe's most famous and longest-running graphic series – complete with Vikings, longships, fantasy islands, strange realms and a red-haired sorceress.

Everything published by Marvel Comics about the **Mighty Thor** and the world of Asgard – especially the Asgardian stories from the sixties and seventies.

The **Vinland Saga** manga by Makoto Yukimura – a sprawling historical saga of war, power and vengeance, mainly set (despite what the title might suggest) in eleventh century England.

Movies

The Vikings (1958) - Richard Fleischer's classic starring Kirk Douglas and Tony Curtis. Hollywood Vikingry at its best. A must-see.

Erik the Viking (1989) – a fresh-spirited Viking fantasy movie by Terry Jones of Monty Python fame (featuring, among other things, an interesting take on the Norse gods and a memorable Berserker).

The Thirteenth Warrior (1999) – a gritty retelling of the Beowulf tale, starring Antonio Banderas as an Arab emissary among the barbarians.

Pathfinder (2007) – Indians vs Vikings. Nuff'said.

V: BESTIARY

Compendium Creatures

The *Creature Compendium* already contains quite a few beasts, monsters and other creatures which can readily be transposed to *Vikings & Valkyries*. These various creatures are listed below; in some cases, their transposition to V&V requires a slight change of name or appearance, as detailed below.

Beasts

With a few exceptions (such as the Elephant and Lion, which would obviously not be at home under the colder climes of Midgard), most of the common animals detailed in the *Creature Compendium* also exist in the world of V&V. Simply assume that all the animals commonly found in Dark Ages Scandinavia are also common sights in Midgard. The various magical Beasts detailed in the *Compendium* are also perfectly at home in the V&V setting. Here are a few extra notes about bears, boars and wolves:

Bears

The V&V world has room for all types of Bears, including the formidable Great Hyperborean Bear, simply known here as the Great White Bear.

Boars

Whether they are normal, giant, juggernaut or even magical, boars are definitely at home here.

Wolves

Wolves and Dire Wolves (also known in Mythika as Hyperborean Wolves) are, of course, completely at home in the V&V world.



- And that's another 30 Glory for Sven Wolfslayer!



A typical double-tailed Norse Mermaid

Folks

Acteons, Bearmen, Boarmen, Lycans, Cynocephals, Tragos and other classic Mythikan Beastmen would not fit very well in the spirit and mood of Viking adventures – and simply do not exist in Midgard. And since Beastmen do tend to be the “spear-fodder” of typical *Mazes & Minotaurs* adventures, their absence from the V&V world does have some significant impact on the lives of adventurers and Maze Masters, who will probably have to make a more frequent usage of the fewer humanoid Folks present in this variant setting, including the new ones, such as Trollmen or Duergar.

Hawkmen & Icarians

Although they do not really have an equivalent in Norse myth, these winged folks could easily find a niche in a V&V setting, under a variant name - such as the *Winged People*, *Wind Children* or *Skyfolk*.

Humans

The Soldier profile should be used for rank-and-file Vikings, Huscarls (“house warriors”) and Valkyries, as well as for Golden City soldiers; the Barbarian NPC profile should be used for minor Berserker NPCs as well as for typical Fir and Hungolese warriors. Kvenir hunters and herdsman should be given the stats of Bandits. All Major NPCs should of course be given a class, a level and detailed stats.

Megalopodoi

These shy, peaceful bigfoot-like beings can be found in the coldest mountains of the far north; the local Kvenir Hunters call them **Snow Walkers**.

Mermaids

Akthough Tritons seem to be unheard of, Norse Mermaids have the same powers and appearance as their classical cousins – except that they are double-tailed, as shown in the illustration above.

Ogres

Ogres do exist in the *Vikings & Valkyries* setting, where they are known as *Wendols* (as in the 1976 novel *Eaters of the Dead* by Michael Crichton).

Sons of Dagon

Such beings could work well in a *Vikings & Valkyries* setting, under an alternate name such as, say, the *Sea Devils* or the *Fish Folk*.

Sylvans

In the V&V setting, these beings simply become rank-and-file *Elves* (see chapter I and p 46).

Troglodytes

Since they are not, strictly speaking, half-human, half-animal hybrid Beastmen, Troglodytes could work well in V&V, as the degenerate remnants of a pre-human reptilian, cavern-dwelling race.

Monsters

Monsters are an essential element of the *Vikings & Valkyries* world. Many classic Monsters from the *Creature Compendium* can easily find their own niche in the supernatural ecology of Midgard, along with some typical Norse creatures, including several types of Giants and the ubiquitous Trolls.

Abominathol

Although it has no real equivalent in Norse legends, this creature could easily find a niche in a *Vikings & Valkyries* setting, inhabiting the same cold regions as the gentler Megalopodoi (see previous page).

Albinotaur

If we *really* must include Minotaurs in a *Vikings & Valkyries* game, then the snow-hued Albinotaurs are definitely the ones to choose!

Black Stalker

This creature was originally designed with Grendel as its inspiration, so Black Stalkers are definitely at home here! See also the section on Trolls (p 43).

Dragons

Goes without saying! Dragons are actually more at home in V&V than in classic M&M.

Fomoros

Although they originate from Irish myth, these evil sea giants could make very interesting foes in a V&V campaign (and if you need two good reasons for this, keep in mind that (a) the Vikings did conquer Ireland (or at least some parts of it) and (b) the bloody Fomoros were able to find their way into Mythika so why not Midgard?).

Giants

Along with Trolls (see below), Giants are among the most iconic creatures of the V&V setting. The world of Midgard has room for all the Giants described in the *Creature Compendium* and even includes three new branches of Giant-kin: **Fire Giants**, **Frost Giants** and **Storm Giants**, all of which are covered in detail in the following sections.

Giant Animals

Some of these oversized beasts may be encountered in the V&V setting, as part of the regular fauna of Jotunheim.

Ice Worm

Let's face it: this creature seems even more at home in V&V than in regular M&M!

Rugog

In the V&V setting, these bizarre creatures are actually *Two-Headed Trolls*!

Sea Horrors & Sea Serpents

Such creatures are almost mandatory ingredients of any epic, high-level Viking sea odyssey! In V&V, Sea Horrors are of course known as *Krakens*.

Telchines

Despite being rooted in Greek myth, these beings would work well in V&V, with an alternate name (*Fin Folk*) and probably a slightly different background.

Trolith

In *Vikings & Valkyries*, these big, blue humanoids actually correspond to the commonest type of **Troll**, which are as ubiquitous and emblematic in V&V as Minotaurs in regular M&M, with many different subtypes and variations. See p 43 for more details.



So I'm a Common Troll, now?

Spirits

Eolians & Flamoids

Such elemental Spirits could easily exist in the V&V world, where they would probably have alternate, simpler names, such as *Wind* and *Flame Spirits*.

Empusa

While intangible Ghosts are not really part of Norse myth, more corporeal types of undead are perfectly at home in the V&V world – especially evil, devious, strife-spreading, life-draining undead who may even sometimes have sorcerous powers; in game terms, such undead beings, who are known as *Draugar*, should be given exactly the same characteristics as Empusae but can be either male or female.

Hags

Hags definitely exist in the grim world of V&V. Some of them (like Grendel's mother) are even *Sea Hags*, with the additional *Amphibian* special ability.

Shadows

In V&V, Shadows come from the realm of Helheim, ruled by the goddess of Hel.

Animates

With the notable exception of **Ice Titans** (see p 20) and **Sea Wights** (see p 48), Animates have no real place in V&V; the various Harryhausenian Bronze beings detailed in the *Creature Compendium* would feel strangely out of place in a world inspired by Norse myth – as would most magical Animates. Skeletons, for example, are likely to be replaced by far more powerful undead Spirits, and while Stone and Wood Titans may seem okay at first, their existence in M&M is directly tied to some *Nature's Gifts* which do not normally exist in V&V.

Giants & Giant Kin

Along with Trolls (see below), Giants are among the most iconic creatures of the V&V setting. The world of Midgard has room for the three types of Giants described in the *Creature Compendium* p 44-45 (Common, Mountain and the rarer Two-Headed Giants) and even includes three additional branches of Giant-kin: Fire Giants, Frost Giants and Storm Giants, all of which are covered in detail below.

As living embodiments of elemental forces, these three new types of Giants are even mightier than the mightiest Giants described in the *Compendium*. In addition to all the usual abilities of Giants, these beings' elemental nature gives them Invulnerability as well as an extra, unique special ability, making them truly formidable foes, even for groups with a lot of magical firepower...



Beware the fiery wrath of the sons of Surtur!

Fire Giant

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: Fire Giants appear as mighty giants with fiery hair and beards; they come from the realm of elemental Fire, Muspelheim. Their king, Surtur, is said to be the mightiest of them all.

Size: Gigantic

Ferocity: Deadly

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 120'

Initiative: 15

Melee Attack: +10

Damage: 3d6 (weapons)

Defense Class: 23

Hits Total: 60

Detection / Evasion: 0

Mystic Fortitude: +6

Special Abilities: Charge Into Battle (Initiative 21, Melee +16), Crushing Damage (after Grapple), Crushing Missiles, Grapple (Might = 24), Elemental Immunity (see below), Fearsome, Invulnerability, Magic Resistance, Supernatural Vigor, Trample.

Awards: Glory 1200, Wisdom 60.

Elemental Immunity: Fire Giants are completely immune to all the effects of fire and fire-based attacks, including the powers of Fire Elementalists and the fiery breath of Dragons and Fire Wyrms. This ability has a basic Glory award of 5 (for a total Glory bonus of +50 because Fire Giants are Gigantic Monsters) and a Wisdom award of 10.



A typical Frost Giant – complete with his horned helm, snow-white beard and ice-cold glare

Frost Giant

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: Frost Giants have pale blue skin and white, frosty hair and beards. They come from the realm of elemental Ice, Nifelheim. Their king, Thrym, is said to be the mightiest of them all.

Size: Gigantic

Ferocity: Deadly

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 120'

Initiative: 15

Melee Attack: +10

Damage: 3d6 (weapons)

Defense Class: 23

Hits Total: 60

Detection / Evasion: 0

Mystic Fortitude: +6

Special Abilities: Charge Into Battle (Initiative 21, Melee +16), Crushing Damage (after Grapple), Crushing Missiles, Elemental Immunity (Ice), Grapple (Might = 24), Fearsome, Invulnerability, Magic Resistance, Supernatural Vigor, Trample.

Awards: Glory 1200, Wisdom 60.

Elemental Immunity: Frost Giants are completely immune to all the effects of cold and cold-based attacks, including the powers of Ice Elementalists. This ability has a basic Glory award of 5 (for a total bonus of +50 because Frost Giants are Gigantic Monsters) and a Wisdom award of 10.

Storm Giant

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: Storm Giants are the most powerful and magically inclined members of Giant-kin. They are even taller than other Giants, with a true aura of majesty around their person. They tend to view themselves as the only true Giants and can only be encountered in the remotest parts of Jotunheim, well beyond the borders of Midgard.

Size: Gigantic

Ferocity: Deadly

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Eldritch

Movement: 120'

Initiative: 16

Melee Attack: +10

Damage: 3d6 (weapons)

Defense Class: 24

Hits Total: 60

Detection / Evasion: 0

Mystic Fortitude: +8

Special Abilities: Charge Into Battle (Initiative 21, Melee +16), Crushing Damage (after Grapple), Crushing Missiles, Grapple (Might = 24), Fearsome, Invulnerability, Lightning Bolt (see below), Magic Resistance, Supernatural Vigor, Trample.

Awards: Glory 1400, Wisdom 80.

Lightning Bolt: Like the Curetes (see *Creature Compendium* p 29), Storm Giants have the power to hurl lightning bolts at their opponents. In game terms, this ability is treated exactly like a Breath Weapon, with the same effects (3d6 damage in the case of Storm Giants), range (one-third of their Movement rate, or 40') and Glory / Wisdom awards.



Now, that's what I call a seriously Gigantic Giant!

Half-Giant

The following stats should always be used for all Half-Giant NPCs, as opposed to player-characters, who represent what we might call a “heroic minority” among the otherwise quite unheroic Half-Giant folk.

Taxonomy: Folk

Description: See p 4.

Size: Large

Ferocity: Aggressive

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 90'

Initiative: 12

Melee Attack: +4

Damage: 2d6 (weapons)

Defense Class: 12

Hits Total: 24

Detection / Evasion: 0

Mystic Fortitude: 0

Special Abilities: Charge Into Battle (Initiative 16, Melee +8), Grapple (M = 20), Supernatural Vigor.

Awards: Glory 60, Wisdom 10.

Trolls & Troll Kin

Along with Giants, Trolls are among the most iconic creatures of the V&V setting, with half a dozen sub-types, including Cave Trolls, Green Trolls and even Sea Trolls - all of which are detailed below. In their own, unique, trollish way, Trolls are as ubiquitous and diverse in *Vikings & Valkyries* as Minotaurs in standard *Mazes & Minotaurs*.

Regardless of their actual sub-type, all Trolls share a number of characteristics and abilities. With the exception of the hybrid Troll-men (see p 45), all Trolls are Large-sized man-eating Monsters: their Ferocity is Dangerous or Deadly, their Cunning is usually Average (and that's a charitable description) and their Mystique is usually Normal (except for a few *really* Weird sub-types).

In addition to the abilities of their particular sub-type, all Trolls have Magic Resistance, Supernatural Vigor and either Tough Skin or Natural Armor. Most of them also have Regeneration.

Common Troll

Also known as Blue Trolls, these creatures, which form the most common sub-type of Trolls, are the same beings as the Trollith described on p 121 of the *Creature Compendium*.



A big, dumb, ugly Cave Troll

Cave Troll

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: These grey-skinned, hunch-backed Trolls are even uglier, dumber and tougher than their more common Blue cousins, among which they are often found. Perhaps they fill the same niche in Blue Troll society (if such a thing does exist) as the Berserkers in Viking society.

Size: Large

Ferocity: Deadly

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 90'

Initiative: 13

Melee Attack: +8

Damage: 2d6 (big club)

Defense Class: 16

Hits Total: 36

Detection / Evasion: 0

Mystic Fortitude: +4

Special Abilities: Charge into Battle (Init 17, Melee +12), Crushing Damage (after grapple), Grapple (Might 20), Magic Resistance, Natural Armor, Regeneration (2 Hits / rnd), Supernatural Vigor.

Awards: Glory 340, Wisdom 40.

Some Cave Trolls also have *Multiple Heads* (usually two, which give them an Initiative of 14, a Detection of +1, an extra attack and raise their Glory award to 380 and their Wisdom award to 50).

Green Troll

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: As their name implies, these Trolls have sickly green skin – but they are also much gaunter and skinnier than other Trolls, which gives them a very distinctively emaciated look. Their claws and fangs are significantly sharper than those of other Trolls, which allows them to dispense with using weapons in combat.

Size: Large

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 90'

Initiative: 12

Melee Attack: +6

Damage: 2d6 (claws)

Defense Class: 15

Hits Total: 30

Detection / Evasion: 0

Mystic Fortitude: +6

Special Abilities: Grapple (20), Magic Resistance, Regeneration (2 Hits per round), Stealthy (10), Supernatural Vigor, Tough Skin.

Awards: Glory 260, Wisdom 40.

Additional Lore: Nobody knows the reason for their unusual (even by Trollish standards) appearance but other Trolls do appear to consider Green Trolls as 'sick', which may imply that their greenish hue and abnormal gauntness are actually the symptoms of some weird Troll disease.



A mangy, sickly Green Troll



Grendel, Shadow Troll Extraordinaire

Shadow Troll

These beings are already described in the *Creature Compendium* as *Black Stalkers* (p 14). Because of some odd magical mutation, Shadow Trolls lack the Regeneration ability of other Trolls - it should be noted, however, that many of them tend to exhibit variable special abilities in addition to the ones listed for Black Stalkers in the *Compendium*. The infamous Grendel was an especially deadly and vicious Shadow Troll, with the additional abilities of Fearsome, Lightning Fast, Uncanny Agility and, yes, Regeneration, making him a most formidable foe.

Sea Troll

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: These amphibious, green-skinned Trolls lurk beneath the surface of fjords. They share the same skin hue and powerful claws as the Green Trolls but are much more powerfully built.

Size: Large

Ferocity: Deadly

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 90'

Initiative: 13

Melee Attack: +8

Damage: 2d6 (claws)

Defense Class: 15

Hits Total: 36

Detection / Evasion: 0

Mystic Fortitude: +6

Special Abilities: Amphibian, Crushing Damage (after grapple), Grapple (Might = 20), Magic Resistance, Regeneration (2 Hits per round), Supernatural Vigor, Tough Skin.

Awards: Glory 320, Wisdom 40.



The Stone Troll: rock-bottom stupidity incarnate

Stone Troll

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: This sub-category of Cave Trolls share all the usual characteristics of their parent breed but are even more stupid – in fact, their stupidity is such that it makes them Mindless. It is often said that their brain is as thick and rock-hard as their skin. They are incapable of using weapons.

Size: Large

Ferocity: Deadly

Cunning: Average (so to speak)

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 90'

Initiative: 13 *

Melee Attack: +8

Damage: 2d6 (after grapple)

Defense Class: 16

Hits Total: 36

Detection / Evasion: 0

Mystic Fortitude: +4

Special Abilities: Crushing Damage (requires successful grapple), Grapple (Might 20), Magic Resistance, Mindless, Natural Armor, Regeneration (2 Hits per round), Supernatural Vigor.

Awards: Glory 340, Wisdom 50.

** Since this creature's only attack is Grappling, it always attacks at the end of the round, as per the usual rules.*

Additional Lore: Stone Trolls are actually Cave Trolls who are slowly turning into inert stones, because of some strange disease, curse or innate disorder which appears to affect quite a few of them. The whole petrification process actually takes years, if not decades – and not a single sunrise as some over-enthusiastic folk tales would have you believe.

Trollmen

Taxonomy: Folk

Description: Also known as Half-Trolls, these creatures look like man-sized humanoids with Trollish physical features – and are indeed the remote descendants of some foul human / Troll hybridization. They share the same fondness for human flesh as their larger cousins but, unlike true Trolls, they tend to live in large clan-based colonies (often sharing their territory with Common or Cave Trolls), which makes them a growing threat to many human settlements in mountainous regions.

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Aggressive

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Normal

Movement: 60'

Initiative: 11

Melee Attack: +2

Missile Attack: +1

Damage: 1d6 (weapon)

Defense Class: 14 (16 with shield)

Hits Total: 12

Detection / Evasion: 0

Mystic Fortitude: 0

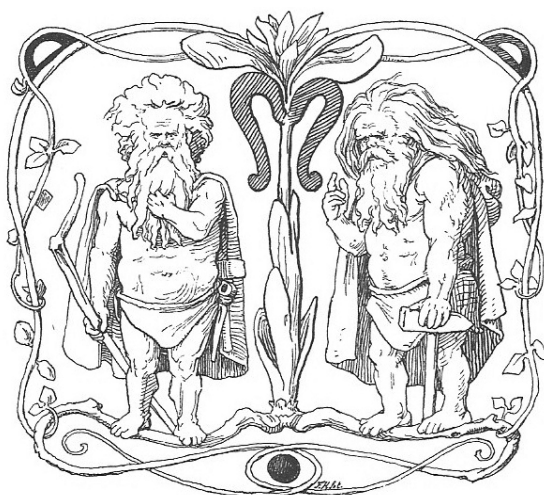
Special Abilities: Missile Weapons (javelins, 120') Supernatural Vigor, Tough Skin.

Awards: Glory 30 (35 with shield), Wisdom 10.

Note: Although they lack the Large Size and the most powerful abilities of true Trolls (including Magic Resistance), Trollmen are still tough fighters and tend to band together against stronger opponents. It should be noted that they are the only Troll-folk to use shields and missile weapons.



50% human, 50% troll, 100% mean



Midgard Dwarves: Sorcerers & Smiths

Dwarves

Common Dwarves

The Dwarf option detailed in chapter I should always be used for the more magically-adept members of the Dwarven folk, who should always be treated as Major NPCs. The stats given below should be used for their less important compatriots.

Taxonomy: Folk

Size: Small

Ferocity: Aggressive

Cunning: Clever

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 45'

Initiative: 13

Melee Attack: +2

Damage: 1d3 (weapon)

Defense Class: 13

Hits Total: 12

Detection / Evasion: +4

Mystic Fortitude: +6

Special Abilities: Magic Resistance, Stealthy (18), Supernatural Vigor.

Awards: Glory 9, Wisdom 30.

Duergar

These particularly evil, greedy and devious Dwarves have the same stats as Common Dwarves, except for their Crafty Cunning, which raises their Initiative to 14, their Detection/Evasion to +6, their Stealthy score to 20 and their Glory award to 10. Their leaders also possess sorcerous abilities which they use to trick, deceive and subjugate their victims.



A typical Wood Elf

Another, less mythologically orthodox option would be to simply treat the Duergar as Derros (*Creature Compendium*, p 35) – complete with anachronistic high-tech weapons and degenerate Morlock troops.

Elves

Wood Elves

The **Elf** class described in chapter I represents the nobility of the Elven folk (also known as High Elves or *Alfar*). Elves of commoner rank (often known as Wood Elves) are far less powerful – and are actually categorized as Folks rather than as Spirits. In game terms, these Wood Elves should be given the same stats as Sylvans (*Creature Compendium*, p 113).

Dark Elves

The Dark Elves of Svartalfheim, also known as *Svartalf*, have the same stats as Alseids (see *Creature Compendium*, p 5) – but have a different (and highly distinctive) physical appearance, with jet-black skin and silver-white hair.



A black-skinned, silver-haired Dark Elf

Additional Creatures

The following section details a few extra creatures which can be encountered in the V&V world; some of them are Norse variants of creatures already familiar to Maze Masters, while others have no real equivalent in the classic M&M bestiary.

Fenrir Wolf

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: A breed of monstrosly Large wolves, endowed with unnatural vigor and cunning; they are said to descend from the mythical wolf Fenrir, who bit off the hand of the god Tyr (and will also devour the sun when Ragnarok comes).

Size: Large

Ferocity: Deadly

Cunning: Clever

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 90'

Initiative: 15

Melee Attack: +8

Damage: 2d6 (bite & claws)

Defense Class: 13

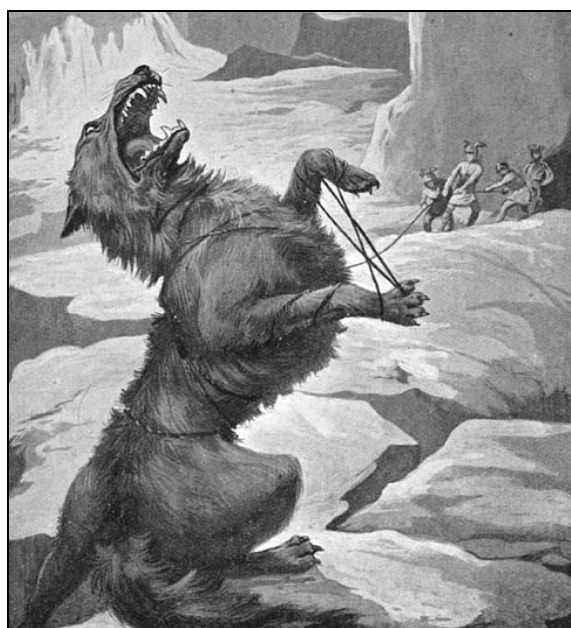
Hits Total: 36

Detection / Evasion: +8 / +4

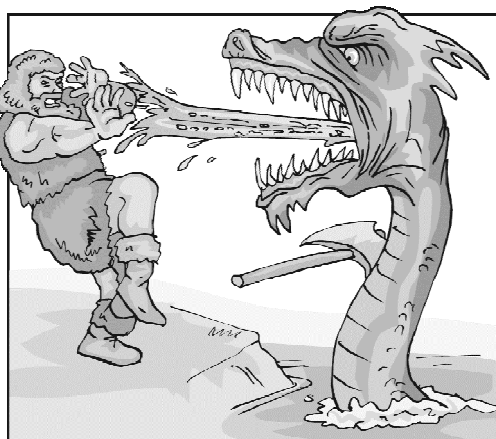
Mystic Fortitude: +6

Special Abilities: Charge into Battle (Initiative 19, Melee +12), Gallop, Magic Resistance, Sharp Senses, Stealthy (14), Supernatural Vigor.

Awards: Glory 300, Wisdom 30.



(These men are professionals; don't try this at home)



- Aw, stop it, will you?

Fjord Serpent

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: A smaller (but still very Large) breed of Sea Serpent which can sometimes be found in the cold fjords of the North. While they are not big enough to damage ships, they share most of the traits and characteristics of classic Sea Serpents, with the added (and fairly unique) ability to spout mighty blasts of icy water from their reptilian maw.

Size: Large

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 90'

Initiative: 13

Melee Attack: +6

Damage: 2d6 (bite)

Defense Class: 15

Hits Total: 30

Detection / Evasion: +2

Mystic Fortitude: +6

Special Abilities: Aquatic, Breath Weapon (30', supernatural icy water, 2d6 damage), Crushing Damage (constriction, after successful Grapple), Grapple (M = 20), Magic Resistance, Regeneration (2 Hts / rd), Supernatural Vigor, Tough Skin.

Awards: Glory 380, Wisdom 60.

Sea Hag

Description: An aquatic utterly evil, inhuman crone with sorcerous powers; according to some legends, the mother of Grendel was one such creature (or perhaps she was just an especially wicked Sea Troll). In game terms, they are classic Hags (see *Creature Compendium* p 54), with the *Amphibian* ability; they can also use their sorcerous powers to animate and control Sea Wights (see below).



A Sea Hag (left) animating a Sea Wight (right)

Sea Wight

These amphibian undead are actually the bodies of drowned men, reanimated and Enslaved by the sorcerous powers of a Sea Hag. To create a Sea Wight from a drowned corpse, a Sea Hag must spend 6 Power points, as if using her Enslavement power – but since the target is dead, it doesn't even get a saving roll. Once reanimated, the Sea Wight must be counted toward the Sea Hag's maximum total of Enslaved creatures and will cease to 'unlive' if the supernatural bond with its mistress is broken (either by the Hag's choice or by her death). Note that this form of sorcerous control is unique to Sea Hags and cannot be duplicated by other Hags (or Sorcerers, for that matter); it is also a blatant exception to the rule which normally prevents a Mindless being from being Enslaved.

Taxonomy: Animate

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Aggressive

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 60'

Initiative: 11

Melee Attack: +2

Damage: see below*

Defense Class: 13

Hits Total: 12

Detection / Evasion: 0

Mystic Fortitude: +6

Special Abilities: Amphibian, Grapple (Might 16), Magic Resistance, Mindless, Supernatural Vigor.

Awards: Glory 40, Wisdom 40.

** Sea Wights do not usually use melee weapons; their usual tactic is to Grapple their opponents and take them underwater to drown them.*

Six-Armed Berserker

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: The name says it all, really (not to mention the illustration below). These twisted, grotesque (but very deadly) parodies of Norse warriors were created by the goddess Hel from the corpses (and reassembled body parts) of warriors who died on the battlefield but were not deemed worthy enough to enter Valhala (see p 17). It is said that the monstrous Six-Armed warriors will form Hel's personal army on the days of Ragnarok. In the meantime, the evil goddess sometimes sends her Six-Armed Berserkers in Midgard to slay those who have personally angered her (including heroes who have made a habit of cheating death).

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Deadly

Cunning: Average

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 60'

Initiative: 13

Melee Attack: +6

Damage: 1d6 (weapon)

Defense Class: 13

Hits Total: 20

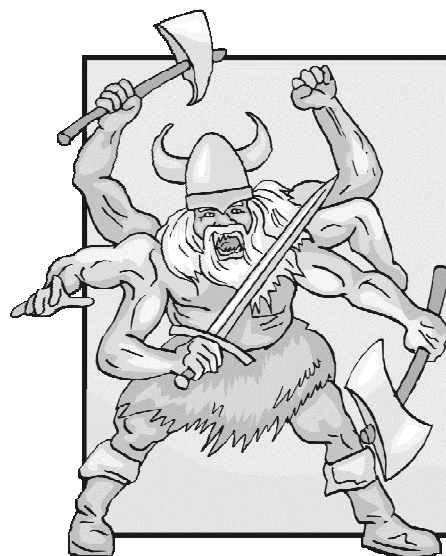
Detection / Evasion: 0

Mystic Fortitude: +2

Special Abilities: Charge into Battle (Init. 15, Melee +8), Extra Arms* (4), Mindless, Supernatural Vigor.

Awards: Glory 160, Wisdom 20.

** See Creature Compendium, p 115 for the description of this very special ability. Thanks to his extra arms, the Six Armed Berserker can make up to three separate melee attacks per round against man-sized targets.*



- Come on! I take you all at once!



- Here we gooooo!

Sleipnir Horse

Taxonomy: Beast

Description: These eight-legged horses are the offspring of the original Sleipnir, Odin's famous mythic steed. While they are an exceptional sight in Midgard, whole herds of wild Sleipnir horses can be found grazing in the enchanted plains of Asgard.

Size: Medium

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Clever

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 120' (480' galloping)

Initiative: 20

Melee Attack: +5

Damage: 1d6 (hooves; 2d6 when Trampling)

Defense Class: 19

Hits Total: 16

Detection / Evasion: +8/+14

Mystic Fortitude: +6

Special Abilities: Charge into Battle (Init. 22, Melee +7), Extra Legs*, Gallop, Lightning Fast, Magic Resistance, Sharp Senses, Supernatural Vigor, Trample, Uncanny Agility.

Awards: None.

* The four extra legs of a Sleipnir Horse add +40' to his basic Movement, +4 to his Defense Class and Evasion and an extra damage die for Trample attacks.

Wurm

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: Large (as opposed to truly Gigantic), unwinged dragonlike creatures with a long serpentine body. They come into two main varieties: Fire Wyrms (which have a reddish hue and breathe fire) and Frost Wyrms (which have a white/blueish hue and breathe rays of supernatural cold).

Size: Large

Ferocity: Deadly

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 90'

Initiative: 18

Melee Attack: +8

Damage: 2d6 (bite & claws)

Defense Class: 13

Hits Total: 36

Detection / Evasion: +2

Mystic Fortitude: +6

Special Abilities: Breath Weapon (30' range, flames or ice, 2d6 damage)*, Crushing Damage (constriction, requires successful Grapple), Grapple, Magic Resistance, Natural Armor, Regeneration (2 Hits / round), Supernatural Vigor.

* Targets of a Frost Wurm's icy Breath Weapon save with Physical Vigor instead of Danger Evasion.

Awards: Glory 440, Wisdom 60.

Additional Lore: The first Fire Wyrms were born in the eternal flames of Muspelheim, while the first Frost Wyrms were born in the icy realm of Nifelheim. Both types of Wyrms can now be encountered in Midgard, usually in remote places connected to their respective elemental realms.



The only good Wurm is a dead Wurm



2010 Edition Comments

Giants, Trolls and... WHAT?

Even more than the new breeds of Giants, **Trolls** proved to be the most popular (and the most iconic) of the new monsters. As one Maze Master friend of mine once said: *"Trolls put the T in V&V just like Minotaurs put the M in M&M."*

The **Six-Armed Berserker** was, on the other hand, almost universally booed and reviled. As the same Maze Master friend of mine once said: *"I can't believe someone like Olivier Legrand could come up with THIS."*

Obviously, we couldn't write this 2010 Edition without asking Legrand about this – and now, at last, after 20 years of wild speculation, sheer disbelief and embarrassed silence, we are finally able to bring you the shocking truth about the Six-Armed Berserker, as revealed to us by a sobbing, desperate, oh-god-how-could-I-sink-to-such-depths Legrand. Brace yourselves, guys, 'cos it ain't pretty. To quote the man himself:

"You HAVE to understand... we had this stupid illustration of a six-armed Viking in stock... and we also had a blank half-page that HAD TO BE FILLED... and the deadline was closing on us like Ragnarok and, well... I... I did it. (long, awkward silence)"

Now...I wish I had never done it, of course. And I wish people would just FORGET about the whole damn' stupid business... but... that won't happen, right?"

Hey, hold on a minute! Since you are doing the PDF, perhaps you could delete the whole thing and replace it with some 2010 comments... Surely this can be done... What do you mean 'impossible'? You b... (various expletives deleted – some of them in French)"

WAIT! I remember the true story, now! I... I don't know why I got my facts mixed up... All this was a long time ago, you know. Anyway, here's how it really happened: it was Luke G. Reynard's idea.

Allô? Allô? Is there anybody there?"

Check the Minotaur – again!

Some of the creatures described in the *Mythic Bestiary* column of the **Minotaur** webzine would feel right at home in the V&V world of Midgard or in one of its various Outer Realms.

These particularly V&V-compatible creatures include: the **Killer Fish**, **Large Octopus** and **Merion** (#1); the **Spectral Hound** (#2), the **Ice Dragon**, **Stone Dragon** and **Wyvern** (#4); the Hyperborean **Children of Ymir**, **Dwimmerlaik** and **Wight** (#6) and the **Undines** (#8).



2010 Edition Comments

Creatures & Crossovers

Mere weeks after the release of V&V, some Maze Masters began experimenting with what soon became known as "creature crossover", pitting their V&V adventurers against Hydras, Cyclops, Minotaurs and other classic creatures of Mythika... and using some of the new V&V creatures in their regular M&M games; after all, if Mythika had Trolliths, there was no logical reason to forbid the intrusion of the other Troll subraces in M&M's original reality. Or Fire Wyrms. Or Frost Giants. Or even Six-Armed Berserkers - no, wait, on second thoughts, I don't think anybody actually went *that* far.

By the mid-nineties, this crossover trend had escalated to a more cosmic dimension – back then, I knew of at least three M&M campaigns in which the Aesir fought against the Olympians in some grand "war of the gods", using the two worlds of Mythika and Midgard as battlefields – you know, the kind of crazy stuff which (back then) could only happen in RPGs.

Treasures of the North

For various practical reasons tied to the more esoteric aspects of page layout, the following comment about the final chapter of V&V (Mythic Items) was included on this page, before the chapter itself – yes, that's editorial logic for you.

Like the Bestiary, the chapter on Mythic Items proved very popular - and contributed to the whole crossover madness, with V&V items finding their way in Mythika and vice versa. In the case of unique artifacts, this gave birth to some truly fascinating pieces of mythological collage – with Thor's hammer Mjolnir being revealed as the work of Hephaestus, bitchy Aphrodite scheming to steal the Brisingamen necklace from Freya or Thor's Goat Chariot (an all-time favorite!) being hijacked by Dionysus...

And Then... Ragnarok!

As mentioned in the first 2010 Comments box, this supplement was the first and only release in the *Worlds of Adventure* series. It was also the last M&M supplement published by the original LGS company before its collapse. But thanks to the *Mazes & Minotaurs* Revival movement), the spirit of *Vikings & Valkyries* lives on!

Keep on gaming!

VI: MYTHIC ITEMS

Mythic Items in Midgard

Many of the classic mythic items described in the *Maze Masters Guide* can be directly transposed to the V&V setting; in some cases, this transposition will require a slight change in name or appearance, as noted below. In some cases, however, the nature of an item is so inherently tied to Greek myth that it has no real place in the V&V setting. The following sections examine such adjustments and restrictions and also detail various new, V&V-specific mythic items, many of them based on Norse mythology.

Most mythic items existing in Midgard were crafted during the Age of Legends (usually by the Elves, the Dwarves or, sometimes, the Gods themselves) using powerful enchantments which can no longer be worked in the less magical environment of the Age of Adventure (also known as the Age of Man).

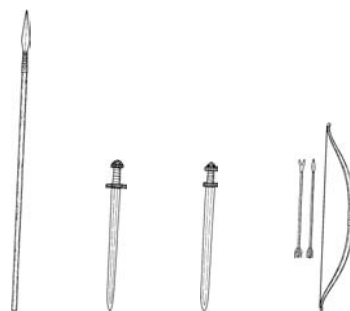
Magical Armament

Magical weapons, shields and other armaments are by far the most popular mythic items among Vikings and other Norse warriors. Most of these wondrous pieces of equipment were forged during the bygone Age of Legends, either by dwarven smiths or by the famous Wayland himself, the greatest weaponsmith of all times - and a very mysterious character; depending on which tale you choose to believe, he was either a mortal, an elf, a dwarf, a giant, a god or a man with either elven or divine blood.

M&M Item	V&V Equivalent
Aegis	Enchanted Shield
Arrows of the Saggitarius	Arrows of the Elves
Bow of Apollo	Bow of Uller
Bow of Artemis	Bow of the Elves
Breastplate of Ares	Corselet of Tyr
Helmet of Athena	Helm of Heimdall
Quiver of Artemis	Quiver of Uller
Spear of Athena	Spear of Skill
Stargold	Dwarven Silver
Sword of Ares	Sword of Skill
Weapons of Hephaestus	Weapons of Might

Magical armaments which can be used in the V&V setting without any cosmetic or linguistic change include the following: *Javelin of Destiny*, *Lightning Bolt*, *Spear of Casting*, *Spear of Conquest*, *Spear of Defense*, *Spear of Striking*, *Spear of the Dragon*, *Spear of Vigilance*. *Sword of Ruse*.

The following magical armaments are not really appropriate to the V&V setting: *Acheronian Arrows*, *Arrows of Plague*, *Boar Helmet*, *Bow of Herakles*, *Breastplate of Apollo*, *Cestus of Pugilism*, *Dagger of Aphrodite*, *Helmet of Ares*, *Helm of Hermaphrodite*, *Sling of Fortune*, *Sword of the Underworld*.



Axe of Giant Slaying

This two-handed battle axe (see p 9) does an extra die of damage when used against Giants and Giant-Kin (including Half-Giants). (Enc = 3).

Axe of Troll Slaying

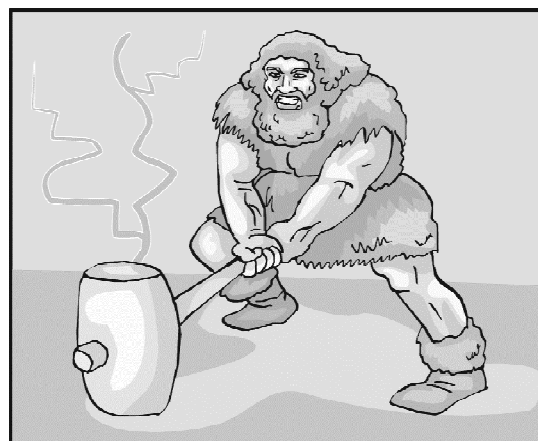
This two-handed battle axe (see p 9) does an extra die of damage when used against Trolls of all types (including Trollmen). (Enc = 3).

Glove of Grid

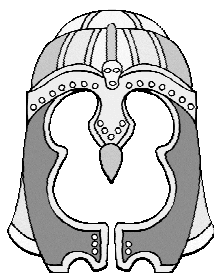
These magical iron glove allows the wearer to inflict (1d3 + Might mod) Hits of regular damage using only his fists. Such attacks are delivered as regular pugilistic attacks (see *Players Manual*). (Enc = 1)

Hammer of Giant Power

Not to be confused with Thor's unique hammer Mjolnir (see p 58), these enormous stone hammers can only be used by Half-Giant characters; they have all the usual characteristics and restrictions of oversized weapons - see *Players Manual* p 22, as well as the description of the Half-Giant class in chapter I of this book (see p 4) - but do an extra die of damage, for a truly formidable amount of 3d6.



- Now, that's what I call REAL power!



A Helm of Invisibility (not currently working)

Helm of Invisibility

This enchanted helm has exactly the same powers as a Ring of Invisibility (*Maze Masters Guide*, p 43), in addition to its normal protective effect of +2 to the wearer's EDC. (Enc = 1)

Helm of Protection

This enchanted helmet provides twice the usual protection (+4 to EDC), as well as a +2 bonus to the wearer's Mystic Fortitude. (Enc = 1)

Helm of Valor

This enchanted helm adds +4 to the wearer's EDC (instead of the usual +2) and to his Leadership, as well as a +2 bonus to Mystic Fortitude. (Enc = 1)

Shield of the Dragon

This magical shield doubles its effectiveness (+4 to EDC instead of the usual +2) against the melee attacks of Dragons and Wyrms; it also grants a +4 bonus to the Danger Evasion rolls made against the Breath Weapon attacks of such creatures (Enc = 2).

Shirt of Elven Steel

This enchanted mail corselet provides twice the usual protection (+4 to EDC) and is extremely lightweight (Enc = 1).

Spear of Dragon Slaying

This magical spear does an extra die of damage against Dragons and Wyrms when used in melee or as a missile weapon (Enc = 2).



Our Helm of Protection also protects the ears!



Testing the Sword of Cleaving

Sword of Cleaving

This magical sword can only be wielded by warriors of superior strength (Might 13+) - and even such mighty individuals need both hands to wield this weapon. It does 2d6 damage and will also cut through solid stone as if it was wood; its blade is indestructible and never loses its edge. The sword has two drawbacks, however; it is very heavy (Enc = 3) and (obviously) cannot be used with a shield.

Sword of Maiming

This magical sword, of Dwarfish origin, has a very nasty knack for severing hands, piercing eyes and inflicting similar mutilations. It inflicts the usual d6 of damage - but every time a natural 6 is rolled on its damage die, it also inflicts a maiming effect (which normally requires a critical hit, as detailed on p 13). This maiming effect cannot be the dreaded Decapitation Option (see p 14), which still requires a critical hit. Scoring a critical hit with this weapon brings no extra benefit. (Enc = 1).

Sword of Tyr

This magical sword adds +2 to its wielder's Melee and damage rolls; in addition, this bonus is doubled (to +4) if the weapon is used by a warrior *with a severed hand*. (Enc = 1).

Sword of the Wyrmslayer

This sword gives a +3 bonus to Melee and damage when used against Dragons and Wyrms (Enc = 1).



Thunder Hammer

This mighty weapon was obviously inspired by Thor's unique (and much more powerful) hammer Mjolnir. It can be used either as a one-hand melee weapon or as a missile weapon (with the same range as a thrown axe, see p 12). In both cases, it gives a +2 bonus to attack and damage, doubled to +4 if used against Giants and Giant-kin. Last but not least, the Thunder Hammer also functions as a *Rod of Lightning* (*Maze Masters Guide*, p 42) but only against Giants and Giant-kin creatures. (Enc = 2).

Valkyrian Flame Spear

When this spear is held by a Valkyrie, its tip is set ablaze with a magical blue flame which gives it a damage bonus equal to the Valkyrie's Will mod. This spear also has the power to harm *Insubstantial* creatures, which suffer its full damage. (Enc = 2).

Potions & Consumables

Most of the items from this category listed in the *Maze Masters Guide* do not exist in the V&V setting, with a few notable exceptions: **Golden Apples**, *Mead of Poseidon* (**Mead of Njord**) and *Mead of the Muses* (**Mead of Inspiration**).

Mead of Kvasir

Kvasir was the wisest man of the Age of Legends and his learning was appreciated even by the gods. Unfortunately, the greedy dwarves Falar and Galar murdered him and filled a large jar with his blood. Mixing Kvasir's blood with honey, they created the magical drink known as the Mead of Kvasir. The foolish dwarves lost their prize after boasting too much of it, and the Mead was eventually recovered by Odin, who from time to time graciously offers a draught to those who especially please him.

Drinking of the Mead of Kvasir will add 1d3 points of Wits permanently (up to a maximum of 18). The Mead can only be drunk once in a lifetime.

Staves & Wands

Items from this category which can be directly transposed to the V&V setting include the following: *Staff of Command*, *Staff of Light*, *Staff of Power*, *Wand of Air*, *Wand of Fire*.

Items which are NOT appropriate to this setting include: *Beta-Ray Wand*, *Caduceus*, *Rod of Lightning* (but see *Thunder Hammer* above), *Staff of Earth*, *Staff of the Serpent*, *Staff of Water*.

Sceptre of Ice

This magical wand (Enc = 1) can only be used by an Elementalist who masters the element of Ice. It allows the character to halve all Power costs when using Ice elemental magic.

Staff of Skirnir

This is named after the magical staff used by Skirnir, the servant of Freyr, which helped him to 'persuade' the giantess Gerd to marry the love-sick Freyr. This staff, made from enchanted ash, gives a +2 Mystic Strength bonus to any Sorcerer using it. (Enc = 2)

Rings & Amulets

Aside from a few exceptions (*Amulet of Dreams*, *Armlet of Janus* and *Armlet of the Dioscuri*), all the items from this category described in the *Maze Masters Guide* also exist in the V&V setting. This includes such classics as the *Ring of Invisibility*, *Ring of Good Fortune* and *Amulet of Health*.

A few Amulets have variant names:

M&M Item	V&V Equivalent
Amulet of Aphrodite	Amulet of Freyr / Freya*
Amulet of Artemus	Amulet of Uller
Amulet of the Nereids	Amulet of the Selkies

* *Amulets of Freya must be worn by women and affect men, while Amulets of Freyr must be worn by men and affect women; the shape of each Amulet is quite explicit, leaving no doubt as to which deity it is connected with.*

Magical rings are particularly frequent in Norse myth; for this reason, most classic M&M Amulets also exist in ring format in Midgard. Alternatively, such enchanted items may also take the form of finely-crafted brooches and cloak-pins (items which the Vikings were especially fond of).

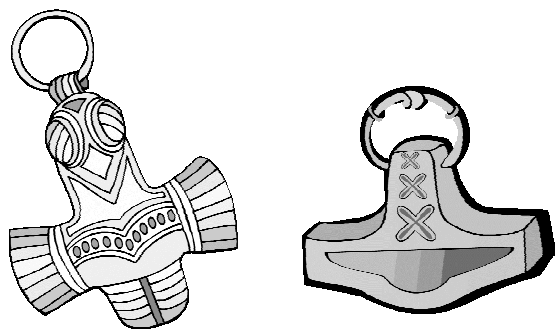
Amulet of Cold Protection

This item makes the wearer immune to the effects of natural cold and adds +4 to his Physical Vigor saving rolls against the effects of supernatural cold (such as the *Hoar Frost* power of Ice Elementalists or the *Breath Weapon* of Frost Wyrms). Also exists in Ring and Cloak forms.

Amulet of Fire Protection

This item makes the wearer completely immune to the effects of natural fire and adds +4 to his Danger Evasion rolls made against magical flames (such as the powers of a Fire Elementalist or the fiery *Breath Weapon* of Dragons, Fire Wyrms etc). Also exists in Ring and Cloak forms.





Two different Amulets of Thor
(more models available)

Amulet of Thor

This hammer-shaped protective amulet is quite common in Midgard. It acts as a standard Amulet of Protection (see *Maze Masters Guide*), except that its bonus is doubled (+2 to Defense Class, Mystic Fortitude and Danger Evasion) if the wearer has Thor as his patron deity.

Amulet of Horsemanship

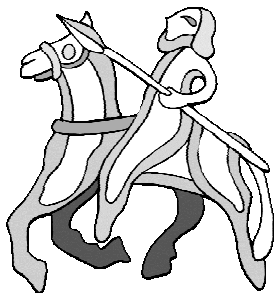
This amulet (or cloak pin) is crafted in the shape of a mounted horseman. It gives its wearer a +4 bonus to all his Danger Evasion rolls made while riding, as well as to his mount's own Evasion rolls.

Amulet of Seamanship

This amulet (or cloak pin) is crafted in the shape of a longship. It gives its wearer a +4 bonus to all his Danger Evasion rolls made when sailing (including rolls made on behalf of the ship itself, but only if the wearer of the amulet is the captain).

Armlet of Draupnir

Every ninth night, eight gold arm rings drop from Draupnir, the gold arm-ring of Odin. These copies of Draupnir are given by Odin to brave warriors and princes, and many have found themselves into the treasure-hoards of kings and rich jarls. Wearing an *Armlet of Draupnir*, as these rings are called, adds +2 to the wearer's EDC against all attacks, as well as to his Mystic Fortitude and Personal Charisma.



No, this is not an Amulet of Seamanship (try again)



- This Necklace of Majesty was really made for me...

Necklace of Majesty

This beautiful gold and silver necklace only reveals its magical virtues when worn by a female of superior comeliness (Grace 13+) and presence (Personal Charisma of +1 or more), highlighting the wearer's natural beauty and bearing into a truly enchanted aura of power.

In game terms, the wearer doubles her Personal Charisma and adds her Grace bonus to her Defense Class and Mystic Fortitude; she also becomes completely immune to the sorcerous powers of *Compelling* and *Enslavement*. Lastly, if the wearer happens to be a female Elf, this Grace bonus also extends to her Elven Enchantment and Mystic Strength scores.

These necklaces were undoubtedly inspired by the goddess Freya's Brisingamen necklace (a truly unique - and much more powerful - artefact).

Ring of Giant Strength

This ring gives the wearer a Might score of 24, with the corresponding Might bonus of +6.



Mmmh, I guess this is a Ring of Giant Strength...

Garments & Accessories

Most of the items from this category described in the *Maze Masters Guide* are not available in the V&V setting, aside from the following exceptions:

M&M Item	V&V Equivalent
Cloak of Concealment	Cloak of Concealment
Girdle of Protection	Belt of Protection
Girdle of Strength	Belt of Strength
Sandals of Hermes	Boots of Speed
Tunic of Fortune	Shirt of Fortune

Cap of Invisibility

Also known as a *tarnkappe*, this cap-like hat has the same powers as a *Ring of Invisibility*.

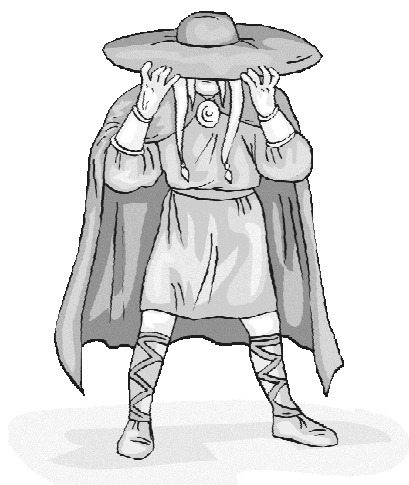
Falcon Cloak

This enchanted cloak is made of falcon feathers; it gives the wearer the power to change into a falcon (and, of course, revert back to human form when needed). The transformation is automatic and takes one full round of concentration.

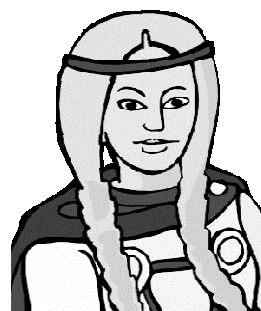
While in falcon form, the wearer loses all his class-based abilities (including, for magicians, the ability to use their powers) and has the same game stats and special abilities as an Eagle (see *Creature Compendium*, p 38) – including the bird's Evasion of +10 and Mystic Fortitude of 0.

Hat of Odinic Power

When worn by a male Sorcerer, this broad-brimmed hat adds +2 to his Psychic Gift (which also applies to his Mystic Strength score) as well as to his Mystic Fortitude and Personal Charisma. When worn by any other type of individual (including Sorceresses), the hat has no special powers. (Enc = 1)



Aha! The Hat of Odinic Power is mine, at last! Mine!



-Golden lock of Sif...because I'm worth it!

Lock of Sif

As a prank, Loki the trickster god once cut off the golden tresses of Sif, the wife of Thor. Later, Loki made recompense by arranging for some Dwarfs to made for Sif a new head of hair made of pure gold.

However, locks of Sif's original hair have survived down the ages, and still retain considerable magical power. Any woman who braids a golden lock of Sif into her own hair will gain 2 points of Grace (up to a maximum of 18) for as long as she wears it – but she will also incur the wrath of any Priest of Thor whom she encounters, and who spots the lock. The Priest will demand the lock, in order to burn it as an offering to Thor and Sif (and to remove any physical evidence of Sif's shame). Failure to comply is likely to have unfortunate consequences. (Enc = 0).

Miscellaneous Items

Aside from a few exceptions (**Bag of Winds**, **Harp of Poetic Insight**, **Silveroak**), most items from this category described in the *Maze Masters Guide* are not available in the V&V setting, because of their essential connection to Greek mythology or to the pseudo-bronze age feel of classic M&M.

Book of Eddas

The Book of Eddas is a compendium of myths and legends in poetic verse, compiled by Snorri Samundson, one of the greatest of Midgard's Skalds, in the early part of the Age of Adventure. Three of the poems were written by Snorri himself.

The *Book of Eddas* is inscribed on sheets of thick vellum parchment, with each chapter taking up several double-sided sheets. A complete set of the Eddas is made up of seven chapters, but most Books are incomplete, and are made up of only a few chapters. Snorri's work is written in runes, and can therefore be read by any magician - but only Skalds will gain inspirational benefits from them.

Any Skald reading portions of this work will receive 100 Wisdom points per chapter for the first four and 200 Wisdom points for each one of chapters V to VII (which deal with the Story of Creation, the Death of Baldur, and Ragnarok, the most important tales concerning Midgard's past and future).

The *Book of Eddas* is a far rarer work than its Mythikan equivalent (the Complete Works of Homeros), and it is a very rare Skald indeed who has ever caught sight of a complete copy of these epic tales. If a Book of Eddas is to be found, a 1 D6 roll is made to find out how many chapters it contains (thus a roll of 4 means chapters I to IV): if a roll of 6 is made, make a second 1D6 roll (on a roll of 6, the Book is made up of chapters I to VII, otherwise chapters I to VI). (Enc 1 for each chapter).

Book of Runic Lore

The Book of Runic Lore is an extraordinary work that contains arcane magical knowledge that is only of benefit to Sorcerers. They are identified by their chapter numerals (I to VII). Any Sorcerer reading portions of this work will receive 100 Wisdom points per chapter for the first four and 200 Wisdom points for each one of chapters V to VII. It is as rare a work as the *Book of Eddas*; use the same system to to ascertain the composition of any copy found.

Chains of Laeding

The monstrous wolf Fenrir is bound until Ragnarok by the silken fetter Gleipnir. Before successfully binding him with Gleipnir, the Aesir unsuccessfully tried to shackle him with two incredibly mighty – though lesser – chains, one of which was named Laeding. Fenrir shattered Laeding into a hundred pieces, each of which is made up of a hundred links. Each of these fragments is absolutely unbreakable (except by direct Divine Intervention) – and can be used to chain *anything*, including most gigantic monsters (provided they have been subdued first...) but not unique, semi-divine creatures like Fenrir, Jormungand the Midgard Serpent etc.



- Yes, m'lord, these are authentic Chains of Laeding!



Mmmh... let's say Melee AND Mystic Fortitude!

Harp of Heroic Prowess

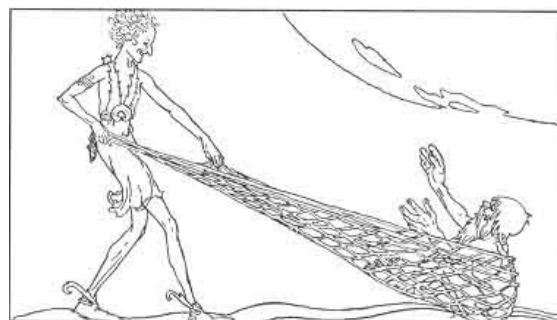
When used by a Lyrst to perform a Song of Inspiration (*Players Manual*, p 37), this enchanted harp allows the Lyrst to boost two modifiers (instead of a single one) by +2 among his audience's Melee, Missile and saving rolls. (Enc = 2)

Horn of Heimdall

The sound of this beautifully carved ivory horn can be heard within a number of miles equal to the user's level even if the user is deep underground, underwater etc. (Enc = 1)

Net of Entrapment

When used as a weapon (see *M&M Companion*), this enchanted net can only be avoided with a successful Danger Evasion roll against a target number of 20 (as opposed to 15 for standard nets) and has an effective Might of 24 (as opposed to 16 for standard nets). (Enc = 1)



- Come on, man, this net only has a Might of 24!



Wow! Another fish!

Net of Fortunate Fishing

When used to fish in a lake, river or sea, this net will *always* catch enough fish for one person (for every try), making it an invaluable piece of equipment for seamen and explorers alike. (Enc = 1)

Perpetual Drinking Horn

Every time the user raises this beautifully crafted drinking horn to his lips, it automatically refills itself with the most delightful brand of mead. (Enc = 1)

Portable Longship

Also known as a *skidbladnir*, this item looks like a miniature, foldable replica of a longship – but when unfolded, it magically takes the dimensions of a full-size, seaworthy longship (with a Fortune mod of +2), complete with sails, oars etc.

The process of unfolding the ship is quite complex, however, and requires a number of battle rounds equal to (6 – the character's Wits modifier), during which no other activity is possible. Thus, a character with a Wits of 16 (and a corresponding mod of +2) will be able to unfold the ship in 4 rounds.

Folding the ship back into miniature mode takes the same amount of time but entails a flat 10% chance that the ship will be destroyed in the process. It can only be done once it has been emptied of all crew, passengers, captives etc. Trying to fold the ship with someone inside it will simply not work. (Enc = 1)



Now, how in Asgard does this thing work?

Skis of Uller

These allow the user to move at up to 240' per battle round over snowy terrain and also adds +2 to his Defense Class (against all attacks) and +4 to his Danger Evasion; however, characters cannot perform any other actions whilst using them. When not worn, they have an Enc of 4 (2 per ski).

Unique Artifacts

Like Mythika, the world of *Vikings & Valkyries* also has its own unique, mythical artifacts – which, just like their Mythika counterparts, should never be used as “adventure treasure” and should only come into play as the central “Mac Guffins” of large-scale, epic quests – or even entire campaigns.

Other famous Unique Artifacts from Norse myth include Gungnir, Odin's spear, Draupnir's, Odin's self-multiplying gold ring, Vidar's enchanted shoes, the mistletoe arrow used to kill the god Baldur and (of course), Freya's cat-driven enchanted chariot.

Brisingamen

The enchanted Brisingamen necklace was made by the finest dwarven goldsmiths and jewelers for the goddess Freya. Its jewels shine with a unique, stellar light – and, indeed, the light within these gemstones is the light of the stars themselves.

Should the Brisingamen ever come into mortal hands, it should be treated as a *Necklace of Majesty* with doubled effects (i.e. adding *twice* the wearer's Grace bonus to her Defense Class and Mystic Fortitude) and effectively *quadrupling* her Personal Charisma, giving her a truly divine majesty).

It is highly possible that the Brisingamen possesses other, more mysterious powers – which should be left to the imagination of the individual Maze Master.



- And you say it is called the Brisin... what?



Yes, they're actually biting their shields

Chess Pieces of the Aesir

Originally a set of 32 chess pieces, the chess pieces of the Aesir were stolen by Loki, playing one of his characteristic tricks on the gods, and were hidden, a piece at a time, in the chess sets of princes and wealthy jarls of Midgard.

Made of walrus ivory (like most of the chess sets of the Norse lords), they are not immediately obvious as anything other than ordinary playing pieces.

However, if thrown into a hot fire, a divine chess piece will spring out of the flames, greatly enlarged, with the same characteristics and special abilities as a Bronze Colossus (*Creature Compendium* p 18).

The chess piece will stay animated as long as its master (the person who threw it into the fire) wishes (or until it is 'killed', i.e. reduced to zero Hits, at which point it will shrink back to normal size, ready to be re-animated by the next person who picks it up and throws it into a fire. It is said that only after Ragnarok will Baldur and the new gods of Asgard recover the lost chess pieces of the Aesir, and play once more on golden boards in Gimli, the hall that will replace Valhalla. (Enc = 1 for each piece).

Mjolnir

Thor's legendary hammer has all the abilities of a *Thunder Hammer* (see p 53), with the following additional powers and restrictions:

It is an oversized weapon and is subject to all rules, restrictions and Might requirements governing the use of such items (see *Players Manual*, p 22 and the description of the Half-Giant class, p 4).

Its enormous size gives it a basic damage of 2d6 but its magical attack and damage bonuses are doubled; in other words, Mjolnir gives a +4 Melee bonus and inflicts 2d6+4 damage, except when used against Giants, in which case its Melee bonus is raised to +8 and its damage roll to 2d6+8.



-It's hammerin' time!

Mjolnir can only be used as a missile weapon by characters Mighty enough to wield it in one-hand (i.e. with a Might of 23 or more); when it is used in this fashion, it 'only' does 2d6 damage (with no magical bonus) but will automatically come back into the thrower's hand, whether or not it hit its target.

Needless to say, Mjolnir is *absolutely* indestructible.

Thor's Goat Chariot

Okay, so it does look a bit silly but Norse legends leave no doubt about this: Thor did travel around in a flying chariot pulled by... goats. But magical, enchanted goats from Asgard, mind you.

In game terms, Thor's Chariot is an indestructible Large-sized vehicle, able to fly at up to 480' per round or to travel all across Midgard in a few hours (it also functions perfectly in all Outer Realms, making it a truly all-terrain vehicle). The Goats themselves are Large, enchanted creatures endowed with Supernatural Vigor, Lightning Fast quickness, Magic Resistance, Uncanny Agility and other extraordinary abilities.



- And now It's time to go-goat