the Legend of RAGNAROK

INTRODUCTION



rganised recreation in its many forms has been one of the hallmarks of civilisations through to the "Computer Age" of today. The great civilisations of ancient times devoted vast resources of time and manpower to organising sporting events of varying barbarity, keeping the masses supplied with sufficient thrills and excitement to distract them from overthrowing the despotic regimes that governed them. The members of these societies who were a little more cerebral and conceptual in their organised recreation, were the people who created some of the great board games which have been absorbed, in various forms, into the many different cultures of the world.

Acknowledged classic games such as Chess and Backgammon seem to have gone through many mutations as they filtered across the globe. Depending on which reference material you choose to consult, the origins of these classic board games are interchangeable between ancient China, India and Persia. The theme which does appear to be constant, a constant of historical convenience, taking the cynical view, is that these games and their derivatives all seem to have been brought up in Europe in the Middle Ages, by knights returning from the Crusades. This conjures up the fascinating image of columns of soldiers trudging back to their towns and hamlets, laden down with sackfuls of booty made up of myriad permutations of exotic boardgames. The returning heroes would turn up to grand boozy receptions at their local tavern and proudly display these marvellous new entertainments only to discover that

the playing instructions were written in Arabic and thus of little use to the wretched, would-be game players. It is at this point that the majority of those who expressed an interest in the new-fangled games, would return to their old stalwart pub game of King's Table, leaving the monks, who represented the local intelligentsia, to work out how to play the imported games. In this way, new rules and genres of the newly introduced board games came into being.

King's Table, the ancient European board game upon which the computer game "Ragnarok" is based, can be traced back having its origins amongst the Viking peoples of northern Europe and Scandinavia. The earliest evidence of the existence of King's Table style board game, has been the discovery of fragments of such a board in an Iron Age grave in Denmark, which has been dated as belonging to a period which ended around 400 AD. These game boards referred to as 'tafl' were known to have been carried by the Scandinavians on their travels to Iceland and Britain. Latin manuscripts from around 900 AD refer to a saxon version of tafl: 'Hnefatafi' this game having a religious motif. A typical 'Hnefatafi' board seems to have been made up of a grid of squares **18x18** on to which were placed various pieces carved in bone or wood, these representing the various characters in the game, the largest and most ornate was the Hnefi', the king, with smaller pieces representing lesser characters. The object of the game seemed to be to take rival characters thus weakening the opposing side and enabling the king to reach the distant edge of the board.

The game of King's Table, which you may also play within this software package in addition to Ragnarok, uses a board which is eleven squares by eleven. As in Draughts or Chess there are two sets of pieces, black and white, which are pitted against one another for one to achieve supremacy and win the game. It is the arrangement of the pieces on the board and the differing objectives of the two sides which sets the Kings Table apart from Chess or Draughts. The white pieces, numbering thirteen in total, are arranged in the middle of the board with one single large piece, the King, at their centre. Ranged in four separate groups of six in each of the four sides of the board are the black pieces, these are all uniform size and have no 'King'. The object of the game is for the white player to move the king to the haven of one of the corners of the board and thus win the game. The black pieces, of course, have to prevent this happening; this is done by surrounding the king on four sides and immobilising him; this is then victory for the black player.

As with the game of Draughts, King's Table has an inherent playability due to its simplicity. The game can be played with varying skill levels to deliver a stimulating challenge. The game of Ragnarok, Odin's adaptation of King's Table, with its addition of pieces with special powers, turns the game into a strategy contest to rival Chess.

4

RAGNAROK



The name "Ragnarok" is old Norse and refers to a point in time in the mythology of the Nordic peoples when the gods and their battalions gather together, to take part in a huge apocalyptic battle. This battle represents a watershed in the history of the earth and heaven, and is the means by which the world is purged of wrong and iniquity, to clear the way for a new and better world to be created thereafter.

Odin, the king of the gods, knows that he is fated to die at Ragnarok and is determined to try any method by which he might avoid his fate. Keeping this end in mind, Odin has taken the game of King's Table and with the addition of extra pieces with special powers representing his fellow gods, he has created a simulation of Ragnarok which is played on the King's Table board. The final part of Odin's strategy is to take his adapted game and descend from heaven to the world of man where he might play against nature's own most devious and conniving creation and thus discover a way to cheat destiny.

In the game, the player takes the role of Odin as he enters an ale house with his special board and meets the locals against whom he is to play.

Odin will find these players to be exactly the dubious and talented competitors that he had sought to test and inspire his plans. He will have to play each of the characters twice, once as white, once as black, in order to progress and meet the next opponent of increasing skill.

INSTALLING RAGNAROK IN YOUR COMPUTER

Whether you are going to play Ragnarok on a PC or you are playing the Amiga or ST version, the loading instructions for each format are simple to follow.

PC Version
Hard Drive installation. Insert Disk A; type: install
Then from Hard Disk directory type: Ragnarok

Amiga Version
Insert Disk A; press F1 for intro; F2 for Hard Drive installation. To play the game insert Disk B.

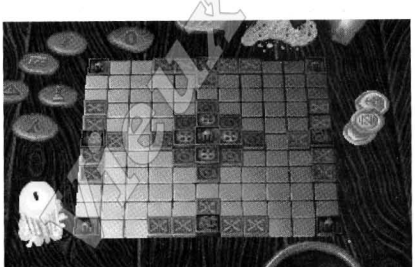
Atari ST Version
Insert Disk A; run through intro then insert Disk B, once completed game insert Disk A for end sequence.

Le Vieux Manoir

6

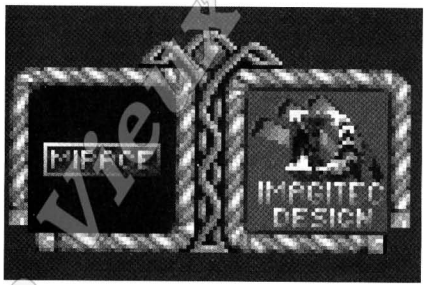
THE GAME

Once the game has been installed the player will see on the screen a computer controlled demonstration of the menu system, by pressing any key you are then ready to play. To the left of the board, on the tavern table there are six rune stones, four of which are used as switches for the game menu screens. By moving the cursor over a rune stone and clicking the left mouse button, a particular menu will appear.



The Info Menu

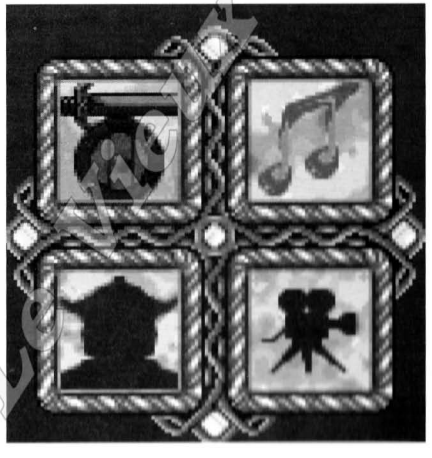
Clicking on the rune stone marked with an "i" will bring up the information menu. This menu consists of two windows, clicking on one will give information about the publisher Mirage, and the other lists information about the game designers Imagitec.



Le Viel Manuel

The Options Menu

Clicking on the rune stone marked with an "O" will bring up the options menu. As the game suggests, this menu allows the player to make a selections of which elements he/she would like to include in the game. Moving the cursor over the icon and clicking the left mouse button will make the selection. The options are (clockwise from top left) Opponent Cameos on/of, Replay Last Game, Music on/off, Conflict Animations on/off.

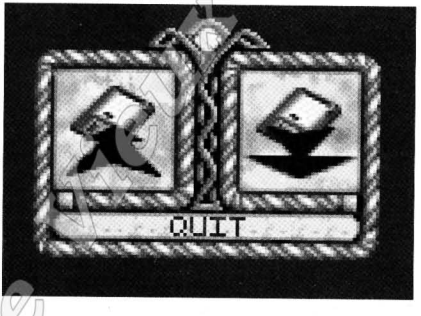


The File Menu

Clicking on the rune stone marked with a floppy disk symbol will bring up the File menu. This menu consists of two icons, Save As, Load Game, below these icons is one small window containing the text: "Quit" (exit to DOS). The save and load game icons and their dedicated windows are explained below:

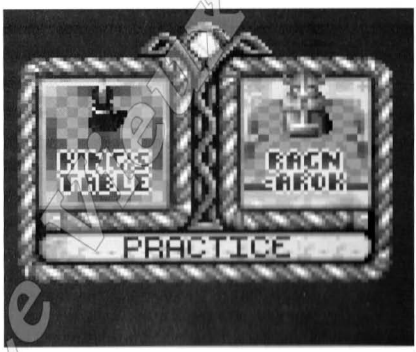
Save As

Load Game



The Game Menu

Clicking on the rune stone marked with a pawn symbol will bring up the Game Menu. This menu consists of two large icons marked "King's Table" and Ragnarok, respectively. Under these two icons is the smaller window marked "Practice". Clicking on these icons takes the player into his or her choice of game or allows the player to practice playing skills against one of the computer's in-built competitors, the locals from the tavern.



Le Vieux Manuel

The King's Table Game Menu

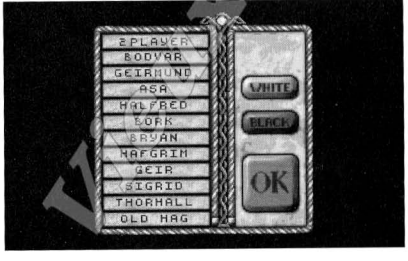
The King's Table Game Menu offers three choices to the player. Using the cursor, the player can elect to play white or black against the computer or opt for the two player game. The choice is confirmed by clicking on the "OK" icon, this action will then lead the player directly into the game.



Le Vieux Manoir

The Practice Menu

The Practice Menu allows the player to elect to play as white or black and as the selection is made, the list on the menu changes, listing all the special pieces available to the player having made his or her choice. The player has to select from the list of special pieces, the four characters to complete his "team". A list of these characters and their special powers is given on page 18 of this manual.



Le Valk Manuel

The Ragnarok board measures 11 x 11 squares. Some have special markings, to indicate where only Odin may land which are the four corners and centre square; others indicate where special pieces start the game.

The white pieces comprise of eight pawns, the "Einherirar", which are the reincarnated warriors who fight for the gods at Ragnarok. There is also Odin himself, and four special pieces which the player has to select from a menu of six of Odin's allies; each of these pieces has certain powers to be exploited in the game. The white pieces are arranged with Odin in their midst, in the middle of the board. The white side has thirteen members in total.

The black pieces comprise of twenty pawns, the Giants, and four special pieces which again the player has to select from a menu of powerful beings who oppose the gods at Ragnarok. The black side has twenty four members in total. In the game of Ragnarok, it is always the black which makes the first move.

Le Viking Hnefatafl

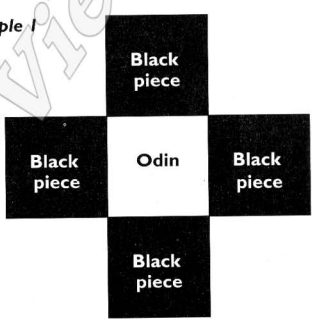
THE OBJECT OF THE GAME



Each side has a different goal in order to win the game. White's objective is to manoeuvre Odin from his starting square in the centre of the board, to the haven of one of the corner squares and thus win the game. Logically, Black's aim is to prevent the White side from achieving their goal. To do this, the Black side have to capture the Odin piece, which they can only do by using one of the following methods:

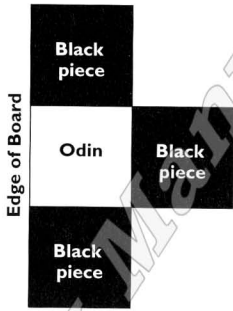
1. Surrounding Odin on four side with black pieces. The black pieces must occupy the squares which directly connect with Odin's square, i.e. in the sense of North, South, East, West.
2. Surrounding Odin on the remaining three directly adjacent squares, when the Odin piece is on a square on the edge of the board.
3. Surrounding Odin on three sides with black pieces, when the remaining fourth side is the board's centre square.

Example I

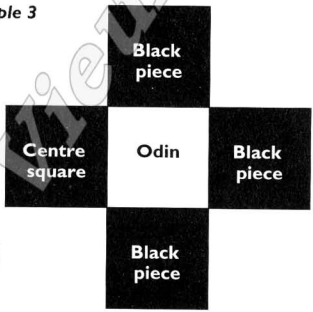


Le Viel Lewis

Example 2



Example 3



Le Vieux Manuel

MOVING PIECES IN THE GAME



The control method for moving pieces on the board is straightforward, the player has the choice of using either a mouse or the keyboard to carry out a move.

To move cursor:
Use cursor keys or mouse. You can now obtain information about your pieces.

"I" Key:
Pressing this key will give information about the particular piece under the cursor.

"M" Key:
It shows the player all legal moves that the piece can make.

"H" Key:
Pressing this key gives help, suggesting a possible move to make using the piece under the cursor.

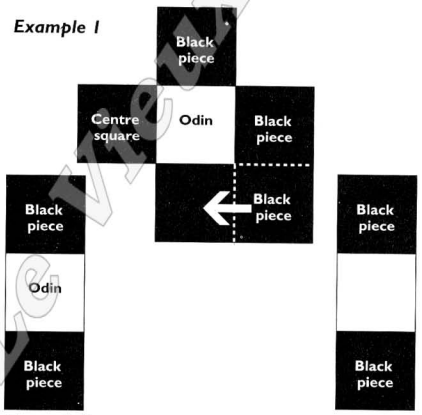
To pick up and drop a piece:
Move the cursor to the square of the piece you want to move; press left mouse button or delete key. Move the cursor to the square to which you wish to move the piece and click again, using either the delete key or the left mouse button. Your selected piece will now move to its new location. As you play Ragnarok or King's Table you will receive on screen prompts; these messages are self-explanatory, and are there to inform the player when it is his or her move, or for example, will inform the player if he/she attempts an illegal move.

Amiga Manual

TAKING OTHER PIECES

Just as the Black player has to capture Odin by surrounding him on four sides, the method of taking rival pieces and removing them from the game requires that the victim is sandwiched between two pieces from the opposing side. The "sandwich" has to be actively created by the aggressor, who must move a piece to constrain the victim.

There are two exceptions to this rule and these are Tyr, a white piece and Garm, a black piece. These two characters have to be surrounded on three sides before they are taken. Each time that a piece is taken during the game, there is a conflict animation which is superimposed over the main game board; this depicts the pieces in actual combat.



Le Viel Arsenal

LIST OF CHARACTERS AND THEIR SPECIAL POWERS

1. **Odin**: The Chieftan of the Gods, Odin replaces the King in the normal game.
2. **Thor:** God of Thunder and wielder of the mighty hammer Miolnir. Thor is fated to die in the great battle, and thus at any time he can move onto a square occupied by an opponent and exchange lives.
3. **Freyr:** Freyr is the God of Fertility and also a mighty warrior. This dextrous Lord of the Elves can move diagonally in any direction, but he cannot move horizontally or vertically.
4. **Vidar:** The son of Odin and the giantess Grid. Vidar moves two squares horizontally or vertically, but if he is taken he is replaced in any of the starting squares.
5. **Heimdall:** Heimdall is The Guardian of the Rainbow Bridge. His wisdom and knowledge allow him to move in any direction (including horizontal), but his lack of combat prowess only enables him to move one square at a time.
6. **Valkyries:** Valkyries: fly through the air at great speed, they must move two spaces, but they leap over any piece in the first square.
7. **Tyr:** The bravest of the Gods who lost his right hand to the wolf Fenrir. Tyr must be surrounded on three sides to be taken by an enemy piece.
8. **Loki:** The Wizard of Lies. Loki's warped cunningness allows him to move diagonally any number of spaces.

Leisure Manual

9. **Fenrir:** Fenrir the wolf is an offspring of Loki. Fenrir must move two spaces, but he can leap over any piece in the first square.

10. **Jormungand:** Jormungand, the world serpent acts in the same way as Thor. This does not work against Odin.

11. **Surt:** Surt is the lumbering King of the Fire Giants, he can move in any direction, but only one space at time.

12. **Garm:** Garm, the hound that guards the Gates of Hell. Garm must be surrounded by three pieces to be taken.

13. **Hyrm:** Captain of the ship Naglfari. As for Vidar.

14. **Giants:** move horizontally and vertically.

15. **Einherirar:** move horizontally and vertically.

Le Vieux Manuel

THE FIRST CHAPTER

- An introduction to the author
- An explanation of the author's purpose

THE SECOND CHAPTER

- The world of the Norsemen

The creation of all things

The gods and their exploits

ODIN

THOR

Thor and the giants

Thor and Jormungander

FREYR

The wooking of Gerd

LOKI

The building of Asgard

FENRIR – SPAWN OF LOKI

The binding of Fenrir by Tyr

TYR

HEL – SPAWN OF LOKI

JORMUNGANDER – SPAWN OF LOKI

HEIMDALL

The beginning of the end

The death of Balder and the Binding of Loki

Ragnarok

THE FINAL CHAPTER

- The Norsemen and their world
- The tale of Odin's game

Le Livre Manuel

THE FIRST CHAPTER

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE AUTHOR

Le Vieux Manuel

Call me brother Nemo. Who I am is of no importance to you, nor is the location of this abbey where I have been toiling these twenty long years at my table, writing and copying books for the enlightenment of humanity and the glory of God.

Each word, each sentence, each page that I copy is itself a copy. Each has been copied from other copies written by those that went before me. After I am gone my copies will in turn be copied by those that come after me. All this may seem tedious to you, it may even appear futile. But if this great work of endless repetition is not performed then how else are we to make books? Is there some magical process, some strange device by which books can be miraculously produced and copied without resort to pens, ink and months of labour? Of course, there is not: this is the only way, and I consider it an honour to play my part. Yet I remain anonymous, I am Brother Nobody, a mere messenger. My identity, my personality, the history of my life, are all of far less importance than the message I transmit. To wish it otherwise would surely be to commit the Sin of Pride, the first and greatest sin that damned Lucifer for all eternity and brought darkness and disorder into the world. Consider, if all those who have copied the books I now copy were to have identified themselves and left their marks upon those books, what purpose would it serve? How many pages would thus be wasted, filled with the meaningless names of the dead as a monument to human vanity.

My fingers are stained black with ink and scarred from constantly sharpening quills with my penknife. My eyes are dim from straining to see in the weak grey light of the horn windows by day and the flickering glow of tallow candles by night. My back aches from leaning over my books as I sit perched on my high stool. But I am glad to be a small link in the chain that binds Christendom together and holds it fast against the chaos and confusion of the warlike heathens.

We have for many years been afflicted by fierce raiders who sailed to our shores in great long ships. They came from lands to the North where there were said to exist mountains of ice and fire and where there was a cold darkness by day and the sun shone at night. They brought fire and slaughter to this country and are named Norsemen or Vikings.

They worship savage gods in whose names they raped, burned and put our people to the sword, destroyed our churches and laid waste our villages. Their religion seems dark and bloodthirsty beyond our comprehension. Sometimes these people do not seem human at all, but more like beasts or devils.

Chroniclers have told of the many shrines kept sacred to their greatest god, Odin, and of the offerings of severed limbs that hang there in their hundreds from holy trees. Live prisoners are also hung from the trees, their throats are cut and their life's blood collected in golden bowls by priestesses. Ritual hanging, often accompanied by stabbing, strangling or burning, is sacred to this Odin. His chosen creatures

are the wolves and ravens that feast on the dead. His horse is the eight legged steed Sleipnir, said to be the image of a dead man borne by four pall bearers. He is the shaman god of trances and divination, of battle-frenzy, intoxication and death.

In sacrifices to him, the spoils of war are systematically destroyed. Even precious breastplates, swords and helmets are hacked to pieces and cast into sacred marshes and rivers as a pledge of loyalty to this terrible, jealous god.

It is told that one of the Viking leaders, King Vikar once prayed to Odin for a favourable wind before embarking on a journey and lots were drawn to decide who should be made a sacrifice in return for this favour from the god. It fell to the King himself. To avoid fulfilling this pledge, the King's men decided to stage a mock sacrifice. The King was stood on a tree stump. A calf's intestines were tied around his neck and fastened to a tree branch above his head in place of a rope. One of his warriors stood beside him with a fir bough instead of a spear, and thrust it at the King, saying, 'I give this sacrifice to Odin.' But at this moment the bough became a spear, and pierced the King's body. The stump fell from beneath his feet, the calf's intestines became a stout rope and the tree branch above his head shot up and pulled the King into the air, whereupon he died. Such is the vengeance of Odin on those who would cheat him or question his will.

Those who are loyal to him and pledge themselves to him in battle, fighting in his name, are his chosen breed,

the Berserkers. These warriors are so filled with the ecstasy of battle that they wear no mailcoats when they fight, yet do not feel their wounds. They bite their shields in their frenzy and are as strong as boars, as frantic as dogs. Some paint their shields and bodies black to terrify their enemies. Others believe themselves to be transformed into bears or wolves in battle. This has come to be known as 'running berserk'.

They are a race apart from other men, these Berserkers. They are a race apart even from other Norsemen, by whom they are regarded with both reverence and fear. In battle they seek out the most ferocious of opponents and fling themselves upon them with wild screams, all eagerly competing for the favour of Odin. Those who fall thus in combat join their god in the afterlife to be greatly honoured by him. Their bodies are ceremonially burned; their names and reputations are celebrated in poetry and song by those that survive them.

For many years now we have been afflicted by the savagery of the Vikings. Their thirst for blood and mead seems to know no limit. So wild, so barbaric are they in their lust for fire and madness that they scorn books and cannot read or write. All their accumulated knowledge, their beliefs, their tales of heroes, are spoken around their fires and shouted in their mead halls. In this way every word is passed from generation to generation, from poet to poet – by memory alone.

As our ways have gradually established themselves in these dark and turbulent times, so theirs have faded.

The dawning of our faith in this land has meant the twilight of their gods. The truth of our religion, the One True Faith, has given our written words a power and a permanence that their barbarous speech can never hope to have. By the grace of God and the mystery of writing we have now almost silenced the voice of the heathen, which blows and rages like the wind then is gone. For when the speaker's dull eyes and empty lungs yield up his soul, he speaks no more, his words die with him and all his knowledge is lost forever. But for you, who will read these words long after my earthly body has returned to the dust from which it was formed, my words live on.

I may speak to you with a private voice, heard only in your mind, or with a voice that is your voice when you read aloud to others. My voice belongs to Nobody yet is part of everyone that reads my book. I write, I speak, I do not exist yet am with you here and now. This is my voice, the Voice of Brother Nobody.

Scribendo Nemo sum.

Le Vieux Livre

AN EXPLANATION OF THE AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

Le Vieux Manuel



t has fallen to me to record and copy some of the strange tales of the Norsemen, tales told by word of mouth and stored in the mind only. with their constant telling and re-telling there can be little regard for truth or accuracy in the manner of writing. As they sit at night around their roaring fires in their halls, full of boar's flesh and mead, as often as not bloodied and exhilarated from the frenzy of battle, ears still ringing with the sound of steel on steel and the screams of the wounded. how can they judge the truth or accuracy of what they hear?

There must be some general agreement amongst their storytellers and poets, for there exist tales that are widely known and that are generally the same wherever they are told. Therefore I believe these people must be most strict in the telling and the retelling of their stories, following their traditions and satisfying the expectations of their listeners. They tell of how the world came into being and of how it will end. They celebrate the exploits of heroes and of the gods they have created in their own, wild image.

But with the passing of the Norsemen from our land their tales and ideas will be lost forever. Despite their unholy lives and their passion for battle and madness it is not for us to judge these folk too harshly, as they remain ignorant of the True Faith. it is our duty here to record rather than condemn such people, for God and posterity will be their judges.

I have played my part in this recording, and have done so in all humility. But I am sorely troubled at the

inconsistencies that often exist in what has been collected and preserved. Some folk may speak of these gods and their exploits in one manner, while others may tell of them quite differently. Such are the imperfections of speech and memory. How then are we to know which is the true version?

Because I feel so unsure I have, after much deliberation, taken it upon myself to write this small book. It deals only with a fragment of the work in which I am engaged, but illustrates well the general uncertainty of my situation as I search for truth.

At the end of all things for the Norsemen and their gods comes a time known as Ragnarok, or the Destruction of Powers. These turbulent events have been well recorded and so are known widely. However, I have recently heard of a new and different tale regarding Odin and the events of Ragnarok, a tale that until now no one has written down in any book in Christendom. It is told only by some and is unknown by many. It may shed new light on the meaning of Ragnarok and the part played in it by Odin. Even if it fails to do this, the reader will at least be aware of the difficulties facing me in my work, for it is my intention to relate the tale, then leave it to the reader to decide on its truth and its meaning.

To do this, it may be of assistance to the reader ignorant in these matters – of whom there may be many – to first read a little concerning the creation of the world as related by Norse Folk. It will also be helpful to describe some of the individual gods and

their exploits. Lastly it will be necessary to relate something of those events that lead to the doom of the gods, culminating in Ragnarok itself.

Having read all of this by way of preparation the reader will be sufficiently well informed to encounter the tale I wish to tell, and perhaps to judge its worth alongside the others I have included.

It may well be that this new tale of mine is a falsehood, created merely for entertainment, and serving only as a diversion from truth for the serious Scholar.

But even if this is so, what does it matter? I am certain that many people read for entertainment or amusement rather than to be informed or morally uplifted, and surely not even the gravest scholar wishes to be compelled to seriousness at all times.

However this book is read, by its end the reader will know something of the strange world of the Norsemen and will perhaps be in a position to judge how best to treat the tale that I have taken the liberty of relating in this chronicle for the very first time.

Le Guide Manuel

THE SECOND CHAPTER

THE WORLD OF THE NORSEMEN

THE CREATION OF ALL THINGS

Le Vieux Manuel

In the Beginning, the world was created by Odin from the body of the great giant Ymir, father of the race of giants. Ymir had himself been formed in Ginnungagap, the great primeval void bounded on one side by Muspellheim, the abode of fire, and on the other side by Niflheim, a place of ice and snow. Where the heat from the fire met the water vapour from the melted ice at the centre of the void, Ymir took shape.

Odin slew Ymir and cast his body into the void. From the giant's blood came the sea, from his flesh the earth, from his bones the mountains, from his skull the dome of the sky. From his eyebrows was fashioned a huge wall to mark the boundary of Midgard, the world of humans.

Using sparks from Muspellheim, Odin and the other gods cast the stars across the sky and created the Sun and the Moon, the Day and the Night. They sent the Sun and the Moon riding around the Heavens in swift chariots pursued by wolves, and so caused Time to exist. When the greatest of the wolves finally succeeded in catching and swallowing the Sun and the Moon, this would signal the beginning of the end of all things, the doom of the gods at Ragnarok.

The gods dwelt in Asgard, which, like Midgard, was surrounded by a great wall. Each of the gods had his or her separate dwelling place there. The most renowned of these was Valhalla, the hall of the slain, which belonged to Odin. It was to Valhalla that the greatest and noblest of those who had fallen in battle

went after death. They were taken there by the handmaids of Odin, called the Valkyries or choosers of the slain. Under the direction of Odin, these women guided the outcome of battle and then conducted the chosen dead to the gates of Valhalla to be greeted by the god.

Valhalla had 40 doors, each of which could admit 800 warriors standing abreast, and was itself surrounded by a wall and a golden forest. The roof of Valhalla was made from shields, its beams from spears and it was lit by the gleam of swords and breastplates. It was built around the trunk of a great tree, on the leaves of which the goat Heidrun browsed. Each day Odin's chosen warriors, the Einherjar, would ride forth to do battle on Odin's field. Those who fell in combat would be raised again in the evening and all would return to spend the night feasting on boar's flesh and the inexhaustible supply of mead that flowed instead of milk from the udders of Heidrun. The Einherjar had pledged themselves to Odin in life; joining him in death they existed in a permanent state of intoxication – from battle frenzy by day and bouts of drinking by night.

Beyond Asgard at the centre of the world, holding the Cosmos together, was the mighty ash tree Yggdrasil. Its branches reached out across the Universe, its three great roots spread into three distant regions, far beyond Midgard.

The first reached into the realm of the gods where Asgard lay. The second reached into Jotunheim, home

of the giants with whom the gods were constantly at war. The third root reached into Niflheim, the underworld of cold, mists and darkness where it was gnawed by the Corpse-Tearer, a terrible dragon that dwelt in the kingdoms of the dead.

In each of these three regions there also flowed sacred Waters, vital to the creation and maintenance of the Universe.

In the first region was Urd, the Well of Fate where the gods assembled to hold their court of law, administer justice, and discuss their common problems. They travelled there each day over Bifrost, the rainbow bridge that led to Asgard.

In the second region was the spring of Mimir, the uncle of Odin, whose waters conferred wisdom. Odin once pledged one of his eyes for the right to drink there, and it was kept in the running water as confirmation of this pledge and in acknowledgment of Odin's wisdom. The severed head of Mimir, cut off during a feud between the gods, was kept by Odin as an oracle and was consulted by him as Ragnarok drew near.

In the third region was the great fountain Hvergelmir, the source of all rivers. It was from here that the waters had flowed all the way to Ginnungagap and frozen on the edge of the void, eventually creating the form of Ymir and thus the world.

THE GODS AND THEIR EXPLOITS

Le Vieux Manuel



There are many stories that reveal the nature of the gods and tell of their great exploits. A large number of these stories deal with a few gods in particular – Odin, Thor and Loki.

ODIN

Of Odin something has already been said. He is the supreme god of the Norsemen, the creator of all things, wise yet cunning and unpredictable. He is the terrible god of storms and battles, Leader of Hosts, Giver of Victory. Those who fall in battle belong to him, as do prisoners of war and those who die by hanging.

Sacred to him are the ecstasy of battle and of intoxication, states of mind that lead beyond the ordinary and the everyday. His is the secret knowledge obtained by the shaman through dreams and divination and on trance journeys to the spirit worlds and places of the dead. He is the source of poetic inspiration, the Father of Spells.

It is Odin who won knowledge of the runes, the sacred letters in which learning and magic may be written, by hanging on Yggdrasil for nine days and nine nights pierced through with a spear.

The shamans who worship him also undergo great suffering and painful rites of initiation to win the right of access to hidden lore, believing that they can leave their bodies as if asleep and journey abroad in the forms of beasts or birds.



From his throne Hlidskjalf situated in Asgard, Odin can observe the whole world. Each night his two ravens Huginn and Muninn, or Thought and Memory, come to him and tell him of what they have learned flying over the earth.

He is also fond of coming to earth himself and wandering disguised in human shape, requesting food, shelter or knowledge from those he meets. He takes many forms but favours that of an old, one-eyed man wrapped in a dark cloak.

THOR

Where Odin is the god of seers, heroes and nobles, Thor represents the interests of peasants and ordinary folk as well as warriors. Unlike Odin and Loki who often rely on cunning and wit, Thor's chief characteristics are his immense strength and his huge appetite for food and drink, for he is the strongest of all the gods.

He is young and tall, with a pleasant face and a huge red beard. When roused he has a wild temper and his burning eyes and terrible voice can strike fear into the strongest heart.

He is the owner of the gods' greatest treasure, the mighty hammer Mjollnir, the crusher, which he wields with the aid of iron gloves and a belt of strength and which always returns to his hand when thrown. Each day, when all the other gods ride to the well of Urd over Bifrost led by Odin on his steed Sleipnir, Thor is said to travel on foot instead, wading through four rivers to reach Yggdrasil.

He possesses a great chariot that is drawn by goats and whose wheels are the sound of thunder. When he is hungry on a journey he is said to slaughter and eat all his goats then lay their bones out upon their skins and, raising his hammer in blessing, restore them to life again.

THOR AND THE GIANTS

Thor spends much of his time battling with the giants and many tales are told of his feats. One such story told by the Norsemen deals with Thor travelling with his companions in Jotunheim, the country of the giants. At dusk, being unsure of their way, they took shelter in an empty building. Later that night there was a mighty earthquake and a great roaring wind, so they all made their way down the main hall of the building and into a passageway for safety. There they spent the night, with Thor keeping watch. Eventually, the tremors and the noise subsided, and they slept.

At day break they ventured out to see a huge giant asleep nearby. The mighty earthquake and the great roaring wind had been caused by his snoring in the middle of the night.

Presently the giant awoke, and stood up before Thor had a chance to strike him with his hammer. On seeing them he introduced himself as Skrymir and asked them if they had seen his glove. It then became apparent that this was where the companions had sheltered the previous night, the passageway being the thumb of the giant's glove.

Skrymir suggested that they all travel together and offered to carry everyone's supplies in his bag, then strode off and soon left them behind.

That evening they found him asleep beneath an oak tree and Thor, feeling hungry, attempted to open Skrymir's bag but was unable to do so, however hard he tried. In a fury he raised his hammer and struck Skrymir on the head. The giant stirred and asked if an oak leaf had fallen on his head Thor struck again. This time the giant asked sleepily if an acorn had dropped from the tree. In a rage, Thor struck a third time and the hammer sank into Skrymir's head all the way up to the handle. The giant woke briefly and enquired if a twig had landed on his head. At this, Thor gave up he and his companions went to sleep hungry.

The following day Skrymir left them and Thor and his companions continued on their way arriving at the hall of another, even greater giant called Utgardloki.

Here Thor was challenged by Utgardloki and the other giants to three trials of strength. He was offered a drinking horn and asked to drain it in three draughts, but was only able to make level drop slightly below the brim, however much he drank.

He was then requested to lift a great grey cat off the ground but, using all his strength, was only able to raise one if its paws.

Finally he was challenged to a wrestling match by an old woman who proceeded to force Thor to his knees and defeat him.

Review Manuel

Le Tresor Manuel

After enjoying Thor's humiliation, the giants offered him and his companions hospitality and so they stayed the night in the hall of Utgardloki.

When they were making ready to depart the following day, Utgardloki came to Thor and the others. He confessed that, using magic, he himself had taken the form of Skrymir. The bag that Thor had been unable to open had been bound around with iron bands. He then showed Thor three great pits in the side of a hill that had been thrown up as protection against the blows of Mjollnir.

Utgardloki then revealed that Thor's trials of strength had not been as straightforward as they had seemed. The end of the drinking horn lay out in the sea and Thor had drunk enough to drain the level of the sea down to the ebb tide.

The great grey cat had been the mighty Jormungander, the Midgard Serpent. The giants had been astounded because Thor had succeeded in raising it some way from its dwelling place at the bottom of the sea.

The old woman had in fact been Old Age, whom no-one can defeat.

Before Thor had a chance to react to this news Utgardloki, the hall and all the giants vanished, leaving Thor and his companions on a great plain surrounded by nothing but rocks.

THOR AND JORMUNGANDER

Another story involving Thor tells of his disguising himself in the form of a young peasant and going fishing with the giant Hymir. On being sent to find some bait he cut off the head of the giants biggest ox, and they set off to sea.

Thor took the oars and rowed at such a speed that the giant was astonished, then, as they rowed further and further out to sea and the pace did not slacken, he became fearful lest they disturb Jormungander, the Midgard Serpent.

They eventually stopped and Thor cast the ox head into the sea. Presently, the bait was indeed swallowed by Jormungander, much to Hymir's dismay.

Thor seized the line and pulled on it so hard that his feet smashed through the bottom of the boat and he dug his heels down into the sea bed. Pulling with all his strength, he managed to haul the serpent to the surface and they stared into each other's eyes.

Hymir was by now utterly terrified and as Thor raised his hammer to deal the serpent a mighty blow the giant cut the line and the serpent sank back into the sea.

Furious, Thor knocked the giant overboard and waded all the way back to the shore, leaving Hymir floating in the sea surrounded by the wreckage of his boat.

Levon Wardell



FREYR

Odin, the dark god of the sky and the spirits that dwell there, is often worshiped in the company of Thor and also of Freyr, the shining god of light and fertility, sunshine and rain. Sacred to Freyr are the pig and the horse, beasts that are powerful, strong and fertile.

Where offerings are made to Odin for victory in battle, sacrifices to Freyr ensure peace, plenty and continuity. He presides over the burial mound rather than the gallows, signifying a link with death made through contact with the ancestors rather than the slaughter of battle.

Freyr lives in Alfheim, home of the elves, who are said also to dwell in burial mounds and to assist with healing and childbirth.

He possesses two great treasures fashioned by the dwarves at the time they made Mjollnir, Odin's spear Gungnir, and the gold ring Draupnir.

The first is Gullinbursti, a great boar that shines in the dark and has bristles of gold. This boar is sometimes used as a mount by Freyr, for it is so swift that it can outrun any horse.

The second is Skidbladnir, a wonderfuL ship which is large enough to carry all the gods, yet which can be folded up like a cloth and carried in a pouch. This ship will always have a favourable wind, no matter where it sails, for Freyr is the son of Njord, the god of seafarers.

Le Roi Manuel

THE WOOING OF GERD

A tale told of Freyr describes the wooing of Gerd. One day, while seated on Odin's throne Hlidskjalf, Freyr caught sight of a most beautiful woman called Gerd. She was the daughter of one of the frost giants that lived in the underworld far to the north. Her skin was so radiant that its brightness lit up the sky and the sea.

Freyr became so consumed with desire for her that he could neither eat nor sleep. In desperation he sent his servant Skirnir to pay court to her, giving Skirnir his sword and his horse Bloodyhoof to ride.

It was a long journey to the north, and a difficult and dangerous courtship, for Gerd was surrounded by a circle of fire through which Skirnir had to ride. He offered her golden apples and also Draupnir, Odin's ring, from which eight other rings would drop every ninth night, but Gerd refused these gifts.

However, after much persuasion she finally consented to meet Freyr and eventually married him. So it is that the beautiful, white, unyielding winter is at length moved by the power of the spring and the sun each year.

LOKI

Of Loki there are many tales told. He is the Trickster, the Thief, the Shape Changer. He is handsome to look at but cannot be trusted, being sometimes friend and sometimes enemy of the other gods.

On the one hand, Loki took the form of a fly and repeatedly stung the dwarves whilst they were forging

Mjollnir and the other treasures of the gods, causing the shaft of the hammer to be a little too short. On the other he journeyed with Thor to Jotunheim and helped him recover the hammer after it had been stolen by the giants.

THE BUILDING OF ASGARD

At the beginning of the world when the gods were building Asgard, one of the frost giants offered to construct a great wall around it for them. Instead of taking payment he agreed on a wager. If he was able to complete the wall within a single winter he would have Freyja, goddess of fertility and sister to Freyr, and would also be given the sun and the moon. If he failed to finish the wall in time he would forfeit his life.

The giant set to work. To help him he had a mighty stallion which moved the great stones and which, being twice as strong as the giant, was able to work both day and night.

The winter passed and the giant and his horse laboured on. Three days before the start of the spring the giant was almost finished and the gods became fearful at the prospect of having to honour the wager.

Then Loki approached the wall and took on the form of a great mare. Whinnying to the stallion, he lured him away from his work, leaving the giant to carry on alone.

At the start of the spring the wall was still unfinished, so the giant was slain by Thor. Freyja, the sun and the moon were safe, and the gods were content.



In addition Loki gave birth to a mighty eight-legged foal, Sleipnir, which became the steed of Odin.

Three other offspring of Loki were Fenrir, Hel and Jormungander.

FENRIR, SPAWN OF LOKI, AND HIS BINDING BY TYR

Fenrir was a wolf that was at first reared in Asgard but grew so huge and became so fierce that none dared approach him except for a god named Tyr who fed him each day.

Eventually it was decided that Fenrir should be bound, but the wolf was now so strong that he broke every chain that was used to restrain him.

Finally Odin directed the dwarves to create a chain fashioned from the footfall of cats, the breath of fishes, the roots of mountains and other secret things. It was as light as a silken thread, but could not be broken.

When the time came to bind him, Fenrir would allow Tyr to approach with the chain only if the god placed one of his hands between the wolves jaws. Tyr agreed to do this and so lost his hand. Fenrir was bound and left in a dark deep place under the earth, his jaws fixed open with a spear. There he remains until he breaks free at Ragnarok.

Le Fleuve Manuel

TYR

Tyr is a god of war and of justice, presiding over matters of law and order both within and between communities on earth. The punishment of criminals and the duels between champions are seen as being the responsibility of his priests.

Many warriors take oaths on their weapons, the reliability of a man's word and that of his sword being inextricably linked in a world where weapons are often used to defend honour and both can break in moments of crisis. Life is lived with honour, and with dishonour comes death.

As a code of honour binds those who submit to it, whatever the cost, so Tyr bound Fenrir and sacrificed his hand.

HEL, SPAWN OF LOKI

Hel was Loki's daughter, brought forth by him after eating the half burnt heart of an evil woman. Odin feared Hel's power and cast her into Niflheim where she ruled over the various kingdoms where all those who had not died in battle went after death. At the entrance to this realm is the Gate of Corpses, guarded by the hell hound Garm, and at its centre stands Sleetcold, the palace of Hel.

Le Vieux Manuel



JORMUNGANDER, SPAWN OF LOKI

Jormungander, the Midgard Serpent, lies in the deep sea that encircles Midgard, wrapped around the world, biting its own tail. It was flung there by Odin and, apart from Its encounters with Thor, here it stays until it rises up again at Ragnarok.

HEIMDALL

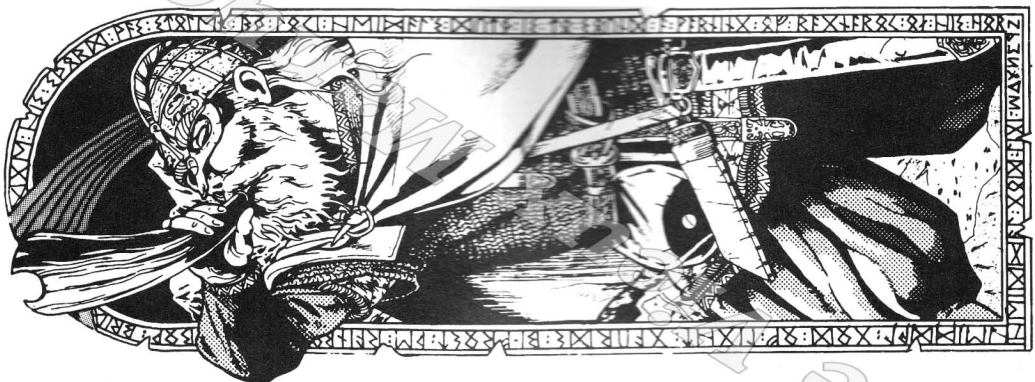
The sworn enemy of Loki is Heimdall, who fights with him daily for the recovery of Freyja's necklace, the wondrous Brisingamen. The necklace was stolen by Loki at the request of Odin after the goddess gained possession of it by spending a night in turn with each of the dwarves that fashioned it.

Heimdall is a god of light. He is the Watcher, who needs no sleep and dwells beside the rainbow bridge, guarding the frontiers of heaven against the frost giants.

His eyesight is so keen that he can see a hundred leagues by day or night. His hearing is so sharp he can hear the sound made by the wool growing on a sheep's back, or the grass growing on the earth.

He is the owner of the great horn Gjallarhorn, whose sound can be heard throughout all the worlds, and which is used to summon the gods at the time of Ragnarok.

Le vieux Manuel



Lendemuel

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

THE DEATH OF BALDER AND THE BINDING OF LOKI

Le Vieux Manuel

Balder, most beloved son of Odin and fairest of all gods, became troubled by dreams foretelling his death. All things in creation were therefore made to swear not to harm him, so that he would be protected.

The gods, pleased that Balder was now safe, amused themselves by hurling objects at him to convince him he was indestructible, and Balder soon forgot his dreams.

But Loki, in his cunning, learned that one thing on earth had not taken the oath. A shoot of mistletoe had been overlooked, being considered too small. Loki took the mistletoe and put it into the hand of the blind god Hoder. Hoder cast the shoot at Balder and Balder was slain.

Because the grief of all in Asgard was so great at the death of its fairest son, Hermod, another son of Odin, took Sleipnir and undertook the perilous ride to Niflheim to request the return of Balder from the kingdoms of the dead. At the end of the long journey they arrived at the Gate of Corpses, which Sleipnir cleared with ease, and rode on into Sleetcold.

On hearing the request for the return of Balder, Hel agreed to release him provided all things in creation wept for him.

So, at the urging of the gods, all things wept for Balder, humans and beasts, even the plants and the trees and things of metal and stone wept, in the way

that all things weep after the frost when the air grows warm again in spring.

But it was finally discovered that an old giantess, sitting alone in a distant cave, had refused to weep, and this turned out to be Loki. So Balder was lost.

The anger of the gods was so great at the loss of Balder that Loki was chased through the heavens and the earth and, despite changing shape many times, was finally caught.

He was bound to a rock and left lying beneath the earth under the mouth of a huge snake which dripped its venom onto his face. He was protected by his faithful wife Sigyn, who caught the poison in a bowl. But every time she went to empty the bowl the poison fell on Loki's face and the earth shook as he struggled to break free.

There Loki would lie until Ragnarok.

Le Vieux Manuel





RAGNAROK

Le Vieux Manuel



The doom of the gods is foreshadowed by many portents of disorder and destruction in Midgard.

Fimbulvetr, a great winter of snow, frost and freezing winds, covers all the earth and lasts for three whole years. During this time the natural bonds of family and community are broken, creating conflict and hatred. Everywhere there is war, and terrible deeds of murder and incest.

The great wolves pursuing the sun and the moon finally manage to catch them and swallow them. The stars fall from the sky, plunging the world into icy darkness.

The mountains split apart and break into pieces. The earth is rocked by massive tremors and Yggdrasil itself shakes at the force of the destruction.

In Niflheim the hell-hound Garm begins to bark and the awful sound can be heard all across the heavens.

At this time, no bonds or chains can hold, and all the monsters break loose from their places of confinement. Jormungander rises up from the raging sea around Midgard, blowing out great clouds of poison, and the sea floods the land. Fenrir shatters the chain that binds him and emerges from beneath the earth, his great jaws gaping wide enough to fill the gap between heaven and earth. Loki finally breaks free and sails forth on Naglfar, a ship crewed by the frost giants and made from the nails of the dead. Its steersman is the terrible Hyrm.

Le vieux Manuel

Le Manuel



The troops of Hel emerge from Niflheim to the north. To the south Surt, King Of Muspellheim, rides forth at the head of his fire demons with their shining swords. They cross Bifrost and the rainbow bridge shatters beneath their weight. The two armies come together on the plain of Vigrid and wait for the final battle.

Heimdall now sounds Gjallarhorn to summon the gods, and Odin rides on Sleipnir to the spring at the foot of Yggdrasil to consult the head of Mimir. Then he gathers his champions, the Einherjar, and joins the rest of the gods. Together, they move onto the plain and ride into battle.

It is now that the gods encounter their adversaries in the last terrible conflict.

Odin fights with the mighty wolf Fenrir and is destroyed. He is avenged by his son Vidar, the silent and strong god of the forest, who forces the wolf's jaws open and tears him apart.

Thor confronts Jormungander for the last time and, after a long and terrible struggle, slays it. But before he has walked nine paces he is overcome by floods of poison that pour from the serpent's body.

Heimdall and Loki do battle and slay one another, as do Tyr and the hell-hound Garm.

Freyr, having given away his own sword in the wooing of Gerd, fights Surt using a borrowed



weapon and is destroyed. In the terrible slaughter the gods fall, the monsters are destroyed and the heroes and giants all slain.

Finally, here is only Surt, who flings his fire across the world. The flames reach up to heaven and in the great heat humanity perishes. The lifeless earth then sinks back into the sea amidst boiling waves of steam and flame.

As it was in the Beginning, only a vast, dark, dead emptiness remains, bounded by the primeval realms of fire and ice.

Le Vieux Manuel

ᚠᚢᚦᚨᚱᚲᚷᚹᚺᚾᛁᛃᛇᛈᛉᛊᛏᛒᛖᛗᛚᛜᛞᛟ
ᚠᚢᚦᚨᚱᚲᚷᚹᚺᚾᛁᛃᛇᛈᛉᛊᛏᛒᛖᛗᛚᛜᛞᛟ

THE FINAL CHAPTER

AN EVALUATION OF THE NORSEMEN AND THEIR WORLD

Le Vieux Manuel

This, then, is Ragnarok. As told by the Norsemen, the doom of their gods and heroes represents a destruction so terrible and so complete that the imagination can scarcely grasp it.

It would seem to these heathens that the very bonds which hold humanity together in ties of loyalty, honour and kinship are in some way connected with the bonds which bind their monsters, holding them secure beneath the surface of the earth. When the former are broken, creating confusion and suffering, so the latter strain and snap, unleashing the forces of darkness to destroy the world. When we cease to behave according to the natural principles of law, justice and fraternity, it seems the very fabric of the world will crumble and fall apart in chaos.

Thus it is for those that dwell in Midgard, but what of Asgard and the gods?

According to the Vikings even Odin, supreme amongst the gods, creator of the earth and the heavens, could not avoid his fate. Even this god of battle, magic and the secrets of the spirit world lost his fairest son Balder to the underworld and fell in battle at Ragnarok. No use of spells, casting of runes or consulting of oracles was able to change the past or cheat the future.

Thus it is for the gods, then. Their world is bound to that of mortals. They brought us life and died with us also.

So it seems that despite their awesome powers and mighty feats even the gods must partake in the cycle of creation and destruction, passing at length into the void from which all things came and to which all things must return, into the great silent darkness that lies between fire and ice.

Like mortals, the gods must face their destiny, however terrible, and not flinch or show weakness. They must live and die in the manner that befits heroes and warriors, scorning pain and laughing in the face of adversity.

This is the legacy of the Norsemen. This is the lesson they would have us learn from Ragnarok, according to the tales they have told and I have written down.

It will, then, be all the more surprising to the reader to learn the nature of the newly discovered tale I wish to tell regarding Ragnarok, that same tale whose mention began this text, and which is soon to be told.

To some it may seem that this long introduction written to explain a single, brief tale represents an excessive or vain labour, an overly elaborate setting in which to mount a jewel of dubious worth.

But I say to those doubters that the tale which follows may well cast light in parts where others have left only shadow. Remember that God is called the Light of the World, and moves in ways that often seem mysterious to us. Where He chooses to banish the shadows, there we must look to see what His light shows us.

It is my belief that we are here shown a tale strangely different from all those that are already known, suggesting perhaps that even among the gods there is weakness and dishonour. Could it be that the great and terrible Odin is a hypocrite and coward? Has this tale come to light at last only after being suppressed by those fiercely loyal to this god and unwilling or unable to believe its message? Has it been fabricated to discredit Odin and his followers, or perhaps even devised as mere entertainment to amuse those in a later, more decadent age than the other tales?

Read for yourselves the tale that now follows. Judge for yourselves its meaning, and my wisdom in telling it.

Le Vieux Manuel

THE TALE OF ODIN'S GAME

Le Vieux Manuel

After the binding of Loki and the coming of Fimbulvetr there was a great sense of foreboding in Asgard.

Odin became troubled by dreams of terrible destruction and slaughter. Looking out over the world from his throne Hlidskjalf, he saw what was becoming of Midgard, and sensed something of what was to befall those who dwelt in Asgard.

All across the earth the terrible winter had taken hold and was tightening its grip. The ground was turned to iron by the frost, and nothing would grow. The freezing winds sharpened the air into blades and spear points that cut down young and old alike. Everywhere hungry wolves roamed, waiting without fear around the mead halls of even the greatest warriors to carry off those that ventured out.

Isolated, starving and demoralised, people began to murmur against the gods. Losing their faith, questioning their beliefs and values, communities turned in on themselves and vented their fear and frustration in savage and unnatural acts.

Seeing all this and meditating on his dreams Odin guessed the fates of Asgard and Midgard to be intertwined. Travelling in secret to the foot of Yggdrasil he consulted the head of Mimir, drinking deep at his uncle's spring once more to learn of the future.

At length Mimir's head spoke but its voice was unclear, uttering only whispers, like the wind rustling

through the branches of the World Ash. The speech of Mimir could not be fully heard but the waters from the sacred spring gave Odin wisdom to understand, forming pictures in the mind of the god.

In a trance, he remembered hanging from high on Yggdrasil pierced by a spear for nine days to win knowledge of the sacred runes. It came into his mind's eye that he, as a shaman, was able to read all things and all events as though they were runes, seeing the magic symbols written in places where others did not.

From this he could know the future.

He saw again all that he had seen from Hlidskjalf, high above the world. Looking for signs, he stared down at the cracks in the frozen earth, at the red marks of blood on ice, at the dancing of fire and smoke, at the prints left by wolves running through the snow.

It seemed that all things spoke with one voice of the doom of the gods, the end of all things in heaven and on earth. All roads led to Ragnarok, then ended in the void.

This troubled Odin greatly and he was filled with fear, desiring a way to survive the great destruction and even to cheat his destiny if a means could be discovered. He looked again across the earth, then journeyed invisible through the spirit worlds, but in vain. No sign contradicted what had already been foretold.

In his cunning Odin then decided to take on a human form and journey abroad in Midgard as he had so often done in the past. There he would study closely those he met, attempting to read them and their actions as though they were runes. Patterns of behaviour would surely emerge and speak to him in their secret language, and he would then know the shape of the future in this and all the other worlds. Thus he could discover a means of avoiding his doom at Ragnarok.

To achieve all this he knew he must devise some method by which he could attract and hold any mortal for a long enough time to observe them closely and decide on the significance of their actions.

He could not use his own magic to hold people, for this intervention would disturb the very forces he wished to observe, the complex and turbulent flow that moved people's lives as birds are borne on the wind. Any slight movement of people away from their destined courses would cause their actions to be different, giving false signs to read. Even the gentlest breeze will touch the wings of birds, the slightest movement of a single feather in flight meaning the difference between the open sky and the jaws of the wolf.

So it was that the wily god fashioned a wondrous game of strategy and skill to be played with those he encountered. Across a flat board like a great plain figures representing the gods and their opponents could be moved, each according to its nature. In the centre of the board was the king, Odin himself, protected by his hosts from the assaults of the enemy.

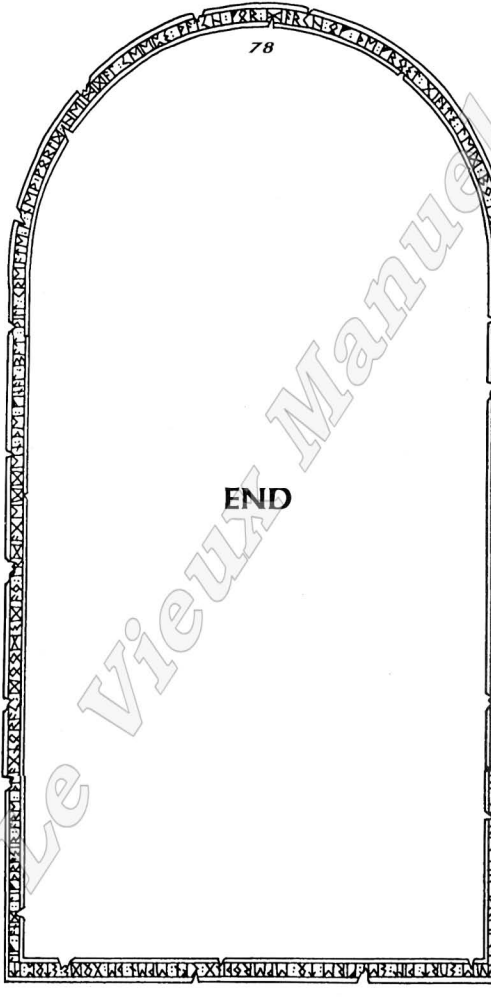
It was on the survival or destruction of the king that the entire game depended. Each player's awareness would thus be directed at all times towards Odin, their attention caught and held as if in a trance, acting willingly as an instrument of divination for the god as he sought a means of salvation.

Choosing carefully many types of people to encounter, their differing styles of play could be watched and interpreted, the outcome of each game yielding a fresh insight. Over the course of many games the accumulation of victories or defeats would surely be the most potent sign of how best to survive the coming destruction.

Having prepared himself, Odin flew secretly to earth in the shape of a raven then took on human form.

He travelled the frozen land, requesting food and shelter of those he encountered and inviting them to play his game. Even in those dark times of fear and violence there were still many willing to engage a stranger in conversation, offer him hospitality and confront him in a contest that involved no use of weapons or spilling of blood.

At length, after playing many games, Odin believed he had discovered a strategy by which he might cheat his fate. Returning to Asgard, he feigned ignorance of all that was to come. Using his secret knowledge he set about working to save himself and made ready for the doom of the gods at Ragnarok.



END

Le Vieux Manuel

Notes

Le Vieux Manuel

MIRAGE



IMAGITEC
DESIGN Inc.

MIRAGE TECHNOLOGIES (MULTIMEDIA) LTD.
P.O. BOX 202 CONGLETON, CHESHIRE CW12 4YR, ENGLAND.
TEL:(44) 0260 299909. FAX:(44) 0260 299403

©1993 IMAGITEC DESIGN INC. / MIRAGE TECHNOLOGIES (MULTIMEDIA) LTD.