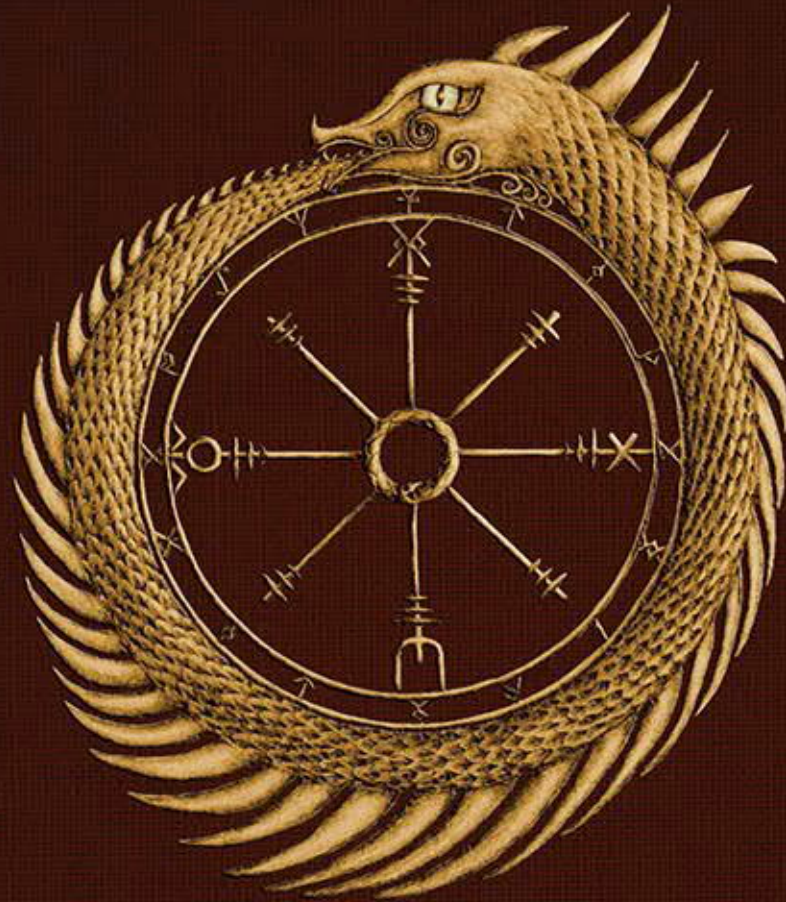




BLOOD-CLANS OF JORIKK



on wild LANDS
AND wild FOLK

On Wild Lands and Wild Folk

Welcome Wanderer to the **Blood-Clans of Jorikk!**

The warrior-gods Falkkr and Vorr call you hence.

To take up your horn and fill it with ale, pour in also the blood of elk, wolf, and man,
and drink deeply in oaths of brotherhood, war, and vengeance.

The old heroes call you also, ashen-faced from ages long passed,
to hear their legends sjald-sung in the mead-hall.

To feel the heart-stir of memories rekindled by a wolf's howl.

Memories borne upon the deepening hum of a war-horn rung out in the dawn, and faded by
the black stain of blood on a pebbled shore.

"We raise our horn to you, Wanderer.

May the yearning of spirit call you, and the pull of wanderlust bring you, unto a distant
northern shore, where man contends with fate and the gods for a name. Skrrrol!"



"Come, all Gultn
On to Dhourrin,
Morn's arising
Bloody tidings."

-opening stanza of the
Gult Chant of Dhourrin



Welcome!

Too long have pen-and-paper gamers gone without a worthy Nordic home wherein they may braid their beards (where applicable), sharpen their axes, and raise their horns to god-oath and ring-hoard. Too long have brave and lusty RPG'ers yearned without hope for a snow-hardened hall-land of gods and heroes, where bravery is measured in bloody deeds, and greatness immortalized in fame-song.

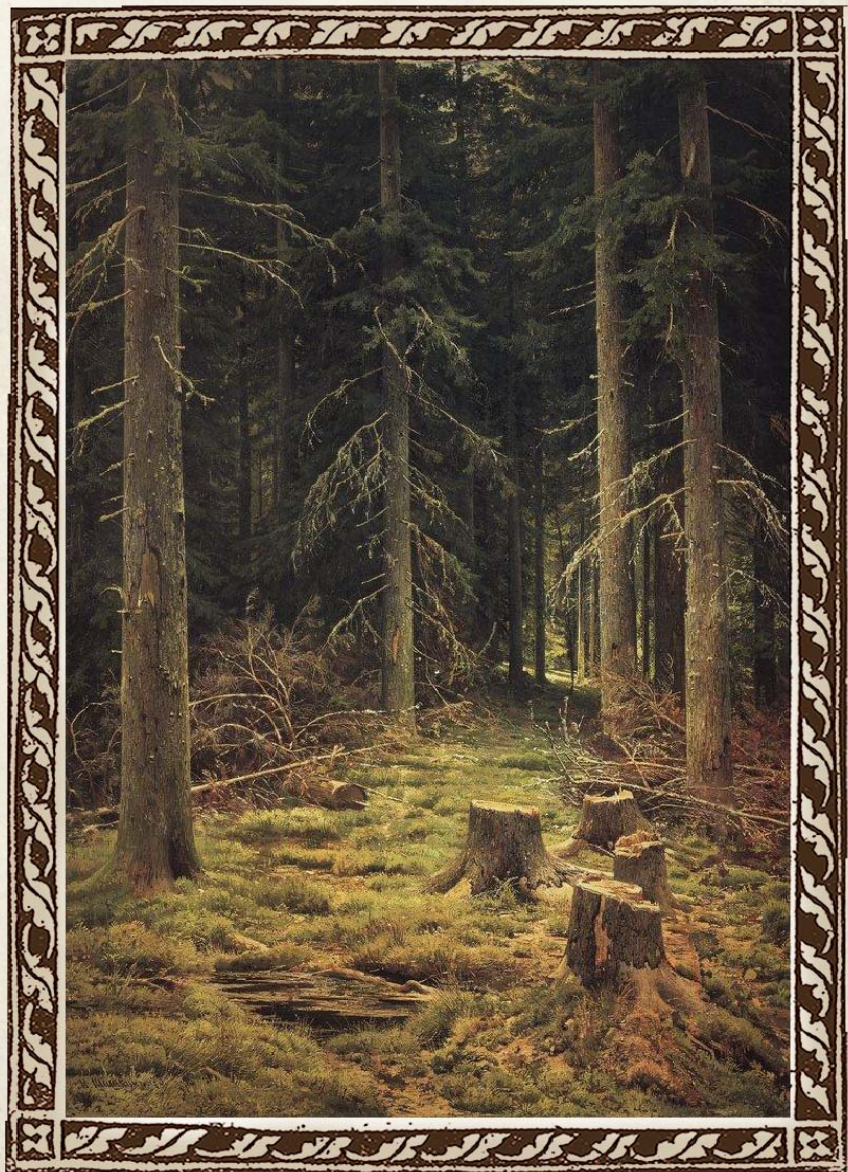
So do we venture into the remote Wilds of Jorikk, a vast wilderness of towering mountains, buckling glaciers, endless seas and sweeping boreal forests. A dark land, cold and unforgiving, stirred up from the deep currents of the Old Norse. A place of trolls, dragons, sea-serpents, blood-feuds, ring-hoards, fierce gods, and indomitable wills expressed in lonely places.

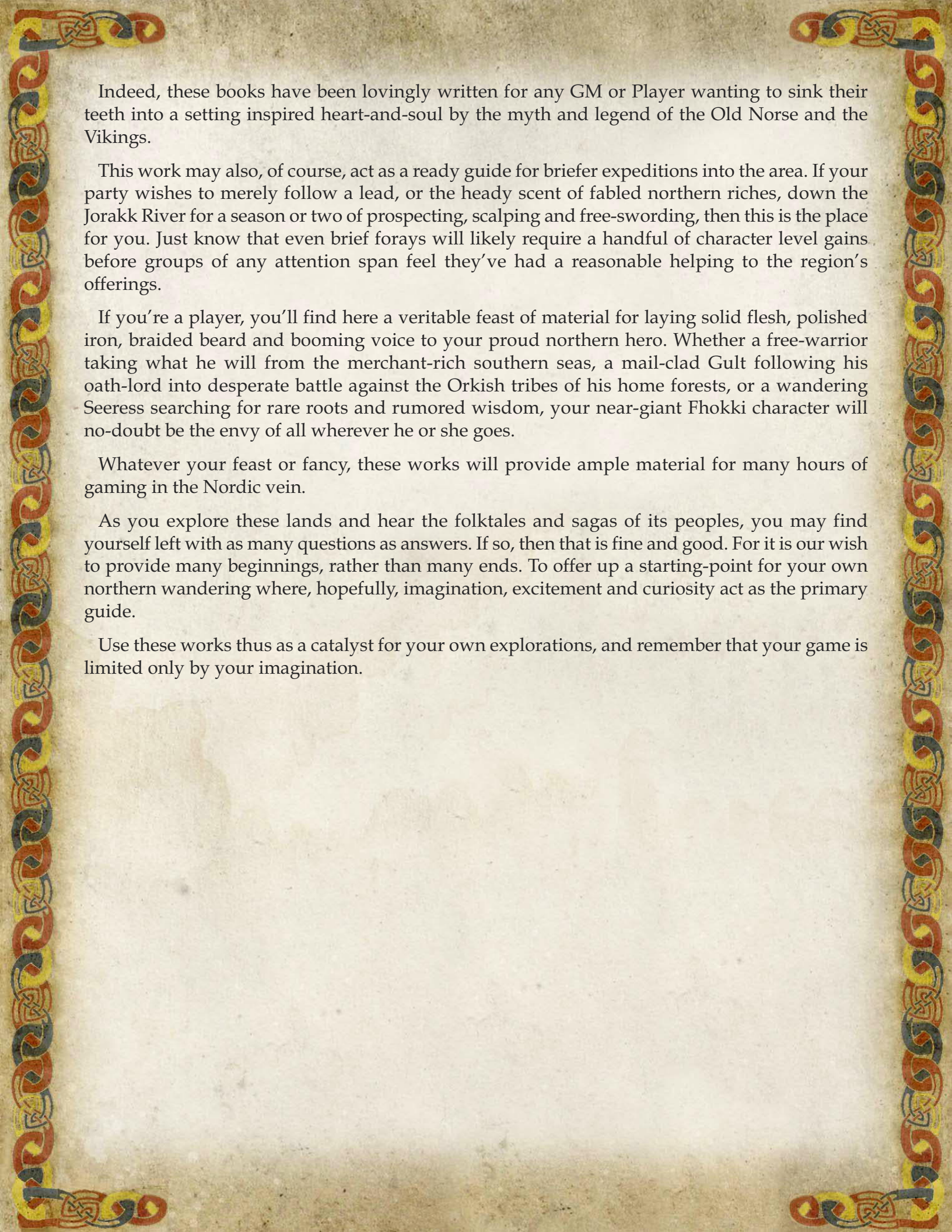
It is a place of desperate heroism and grim tales lost to time. The perfect canvas upon which to carve an epic campaign of pen-and-paper gaming.

What remains is for us to go there and live out the tales and legends. Roam wide through the boreal, hunting elk for meat and wolf for fur. Feast with proud men in timbered halls by the lakeshore, and oar out upon the mist-covered waters, raising sword and spear alongside powerful warriors, chanting battle-song as the shield-wall clamors for slaughter.

Within these pages you'll find what you need to begin such a journey.

As an RPG campaign setting, this grim landscape provides a Nordic home all but limitless in its scope and possibility. While integrally part of the greater HackMaster world of Tellene, the remote expanse of the Lake Jorakk Wilderness makes it possible to run a purely Nordic story with whatever Tabletop Fantasy RPG system you might like to use.





Indeed, these books have been lovingly written for any GM or Player wanting to sink their teeth into a setting inspired heart-and-soul by the myth and legend of the Old Norse and the Vikings.

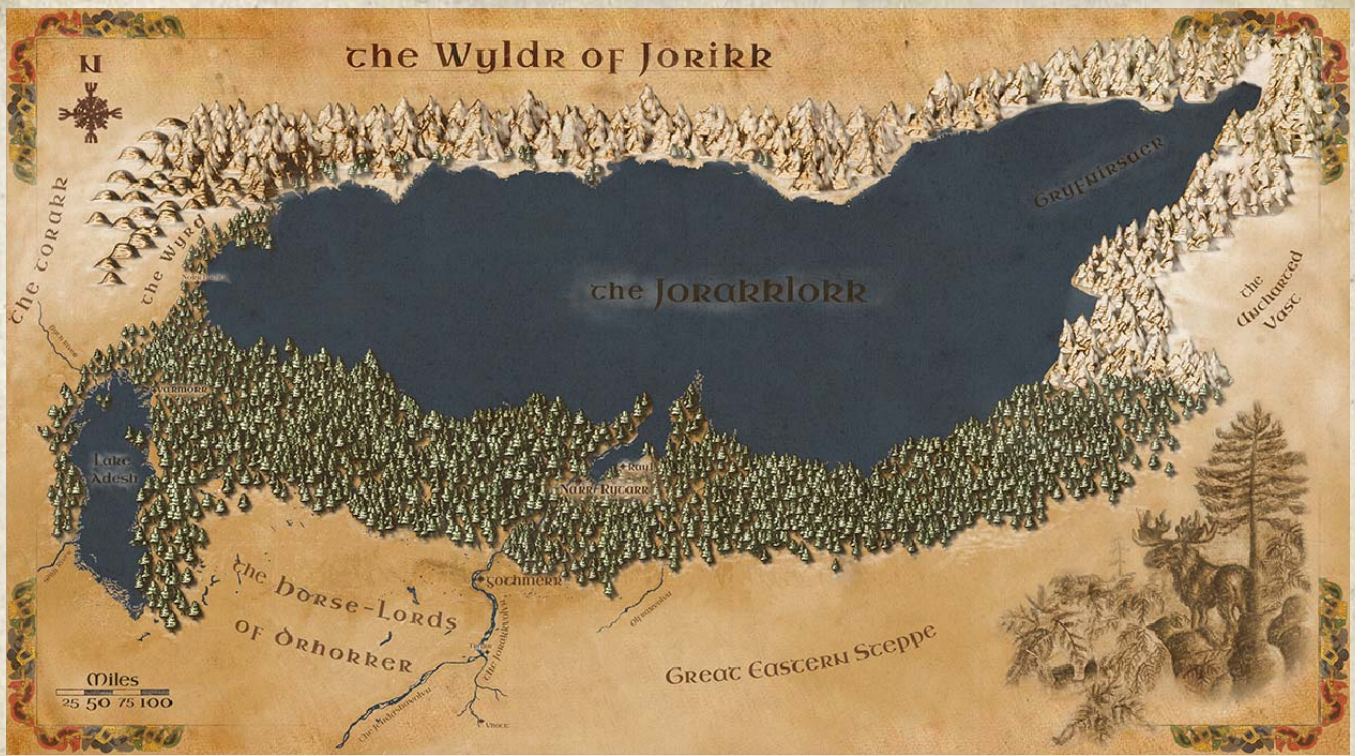
This work may also, of course, act as a ready guide for briefer expeditions into the area. If your party wishes to merely follow a lead, or the heady scent of fabled northern riches, down the Jorakk River for a season or two of prospecting, scalping and free-swording, then this is the place for you. Just know that even brief forays will likely require a handful of character level gains before groups of any attention span feel they've had a reasonable helping to the region's offerings.

If you're a player, you'll find here a veritable feast of material for laying solid flesh, polished iron, braided beard and booming voice to your proud northern hero. Whether a free-warrior taking what he will from the merchant-rich southern seas, a mail-clad Gult following his oath-lord into desperate battle against the Orkish tribes of his home forests, or a wandering Seeress searching for rare roots and rumored wisdom, your near-giant Fhokki character will no-doubt be the envy of all wherever he or she goes.

Whatever your feast or fancy, these works will provide ample material for many hours of gaming in the Nordic vein.

As you explore these lands and hear the folktales and sagas of its peoples, you may find yourself left with as many questions as answers. If so, then that is fine and good. For it is our wish to provide many beginnings, rather than many ends. To offer up a starting-point for your own northern wandering where, hopefully, imagination, excitement and curiosity act as the primary guide.

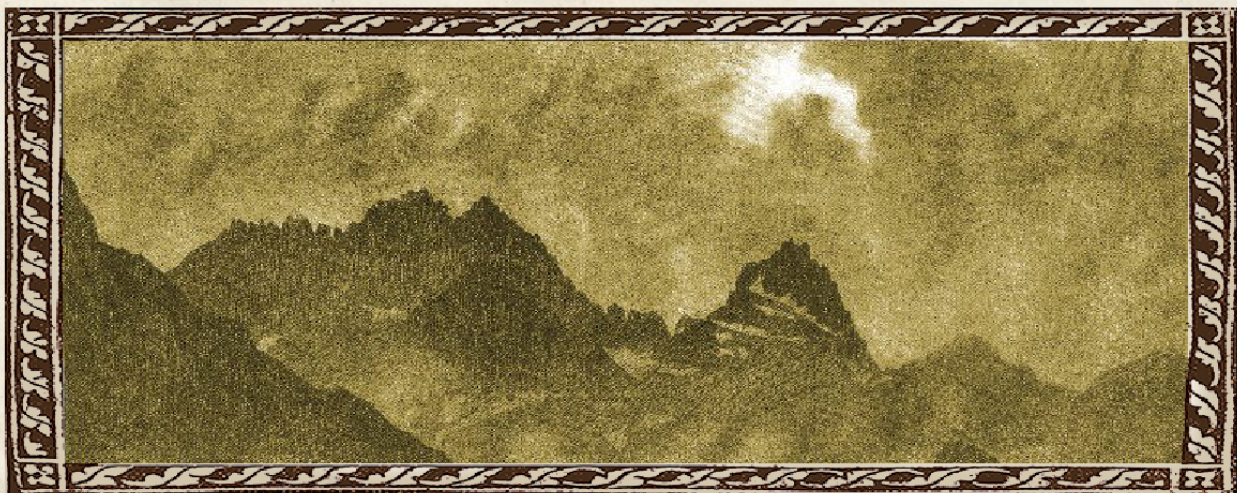
Use these works thus as a catalyst for your own explorations, and remember that your game is limited only by your imagination.



The Jorakk Wilderness is a place of severe grandeur, so vast it can be difficult to grasp the true scope and scale. It would not be untrue to say that, even had a man twenty lifetimes, of which he devoted every day to the pursuit, he could not hope to explore a tenth of its forests, bogs, rivers, streams, glaciers and mountain ranges. Much less could he bring a hundredth under his power.

Rising up from the northern shore are the massive Jorakk Mountains, stretching over a thousand miles from west to east and, some say, continuing north to the very end of the world and the Realm of the Gods. In the lower passes and valleys are said to dwell terrible Frost-Giants, Ogres, Trolls, Wyrms, Gryfn, and even Dragons.

Through long-winter, all the northern wilderness submits to the rule of deep snow, frigid winds and endless darkness where the sun never really rises. Tribes of Orcs roam the wilds, warring with each other and with the Blood-Clans over territory and spoils of war, and worse than Orcs dwell also in the deeper forests.





The Great Lake Jorakk

At over 900 miles long and an average of 200 miles across, the Great Lake Jorakk is an inland sea with a fresh-water surface area of over 180,000 square miles. Though the shoreline could probably never be accurately measured, it is estimated at well over 2500 miles, and while real depths of the lake remain unknown, in its central channels soundings of over a thousand feet do not touch bottom. Some myths claim that in the Eastern Rim the lake has no bottom at all, but continues down to the foundations of the netherworld. In those immeasurable depths slumbers a terror great enough to swallow forty men and their craft whole.



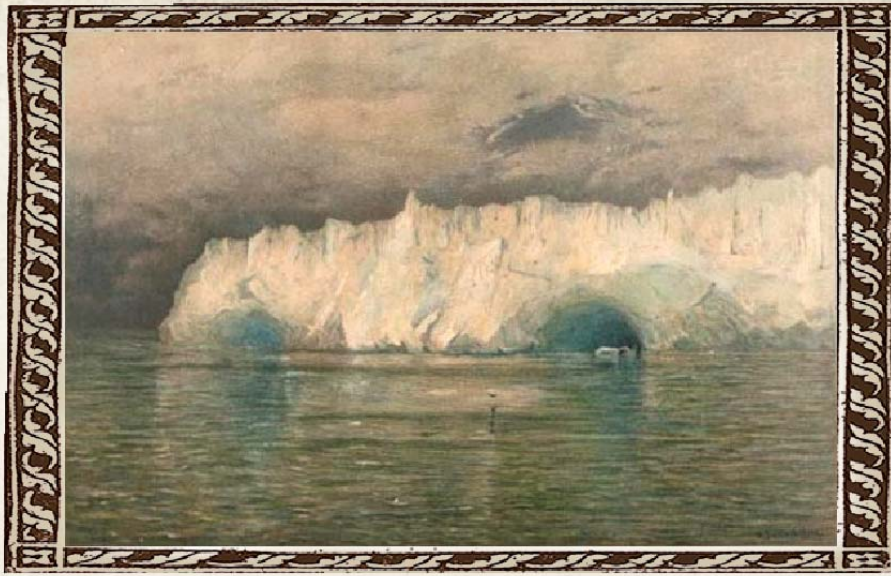
To circumnavigate the Jorakklokk would require countless months of lonely winding in-and-out of the hundreds of miles of coves and inlets which make up the twisting shoreline. Such a feat would need be measured in years, if even it were possible. And he who showed such resilience and competence to sustain himself through the mundane rigors of exhaustion, thirst, hunger, cold and heat would still need to contend with the many terrible beasts which make of the wilderness their home. In all the forests of Lake Jorakk are found myriad Orc tribes who know little of peace, and the Men of the Lake count those among the least fearsome of Jorakk's violent creatures.

Given a ship of average size and speed, and assuming favorable conditions, it would take about 4 days of continuous sailing to cover the entire breadth of Lake Jorakk, and about 24 hours to cross from south to north. There is a common blessing said before rare voyages to the northern shore: "By the gods, may your voyage see naught but two dawns."



Many countless rivers empty into Lake Jorakk out of the surround of vast forests and sweeping mountain ranges, the greatest flows being the Byth and the Jorakk. But it's a peculiarity of the Jorakklokk that no river flows out of it, and yet the water remains fresh. The only known exit point for Lake Jorakk's water is the Maw of Juttaulym, a great cleft in the soaring cliff called Thaekkrul's Face thought to extend far below the surface of the water. The massive current generated by this sucking chasm can be felt as far as 20 miles out, and legend calls it a river to the Deep-Realm of Nythrr.

The Eastern Rim of the lake, which forms a bowl around the Sea of Gryffn, is bounded by glaciers and jagged, towering spires. The greatest of those glaciers is the Vegglas, which rises three hundred feet up from the water and sheds massive bergs of ice into the lake in the summer months. The Vegglas glacier is 12 miles in width, fractured by countless crevasses, some of which are hundreds of feet wide, and is considered impassable.



In terms of weather, the lake generates massive storms that whip up swells large enough to make a sailor of the southern Reanaarian Ocean shrink respectfully back to shore. These storms are most prevalent in the late summer months, during which fishing and commerce on the greater lake all but cease. In the winter the lake freezes over completely, and is notorious for howling gale-force winds and subzero temperatures. Along the southern shore, snow banks of over 12-15 feet are the norm.

The River Jorakk

The Jorakkvolvn represents one of the greatest flows of water on Tellene. Where it enters Lake Jorakk via the Dunvaggr Bay it measures about five miles wide, at which width its further shore would not be visible if not for the rise of hills and mountains on either side. The river is, however, surprisingly shallow, being an average of 15-25 feet deep in the center. Most of the river freezes over in winter.

The Jorakk River stretches 300 hundred miles from its source in the Vrykarr Mountains to the lake. At the river's mid-point it picks up the mighty flow of the Jendasha River, which contains in its bulk the entire watershed of the southwestern Wild Lands, including the western Vrykkars and the Kakidela River Basin. The Jorakk River thus deposits into Lake Jorakk the cumulative watershed of almost the entire southern and southwestern Wild Lands: an impressive weight of water, indeed.



On the whole, its current is gentle, steady, and remarkably warm. Its waters are prolific with life, being home to several species of unique fish such as the Solmutter, Vertrout and Gliit, which provide a seemingly inexhaustible source of food for those who dwell along its banks. The nutrients it deposits in the Dunvagr Bay make that body of water one of the richest and most abundant sources of fish-life on Tellene.

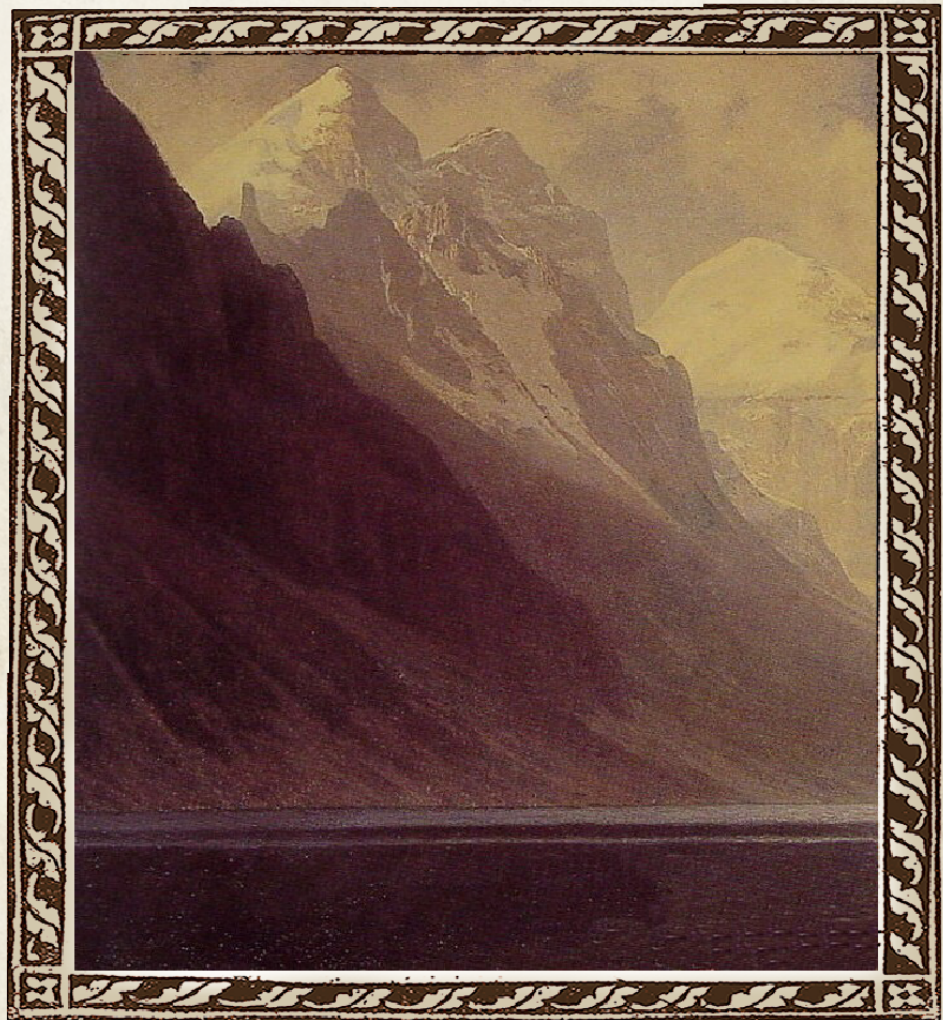
The Northern Jorakk Mountain Ranges

Rising dramatically up from the northern lakeshore to heights of over 23,000 feet, the peaks, crags and spires of the Jorakk Mountains are sobering in their size, scope and grandeur, and actually represent several distinct ranges which together stretch over 1300 miles from the Toes of Jorakk in the west to the Melirjorkn in the east.

All told, the Jorakks are a great mass of steeply rising valleys, glaciers and cliffs, all over-shadowed by towering snow-covered peaks. Glacial rivers rush out of countless valleys, in many of which grow forests of stunted pine that support a surprising array of wildlife.

It's said that no mortal eye, save perhaps of the Grevan-Kind, has seen the final northern reach of the Jorakks. Indeed, few in living memory have ventured further than a league into the deeper valleys.

Legends say that the Jorakks have no end. Or, at least, that their end cannot be found by mortals. They are said to be the very birth-place of the world, containing in their root the bed-rock of everything that is. Such tales claim that in the furthest north are peaks so tall that they cannot be seen, for they go beyond the sky to form a bridge between the World of Men and the Realm of the Gods.





The Wildernesses of Rytarr

Known as the Rytarrskegg in the Skarnic dialects, this great wilderness is one of the largest contiguous growths of forest existent on Tellene. Though its true size and dimensions are unknown, it's thought to have an average width of 100 miles from north to south, and to stretch over 900 hundred miles from the Toes of Jorakk in the west to the explored reaches of the Sakktwyldr and the Melirjorkn in the east. Like the northern Jorakk Mountain ranges, the ultimate eastern terminus of the Rytarr Forest has not been charted, or likely even seen, by men.

Though this massive wilderness is, as a whole, called the Rytarrskegg, it actually represents several distinct wilderness regions demarcated by geographical boundaries or variations in ecology. Each wilderness region represents in its own right a massive and bewildering expanse of boreal forest, rising hills, boggy muskeg, and scrubby barrens, all crisscrossed

by countless rivers and pocked by myriad lakes. The vast majority of these wilderness regions have yet to be explored much beyond a day's journey inland from those water bodies accessible from the shallow-drafted Dunvig longboat. Some regions, like the Sakktwyldr, Lokknwyldr, Hunttwyldr and Norrthaeln, remain almost entirely shrouded in the darkness of myth and legend.



Though the flora and landscape of the Rytarr Wilderness can vary dramatically from region to region, on a whole its lays are typical of a northern boreal forest. Stands of fir, hemlock, spruce, pine, birch and poplar predominate, with understories of thick moss and ferns beds, laurel, and wild berries.

Through many areas stretch hundreds of square miles of boggy muskeg, characterized by stunted or dead-standing spruce, pine and birch groves that strive to grow up out of the choke of moss and peat bogs precariously grown over deep pools of stagnant water and sluggish streams.



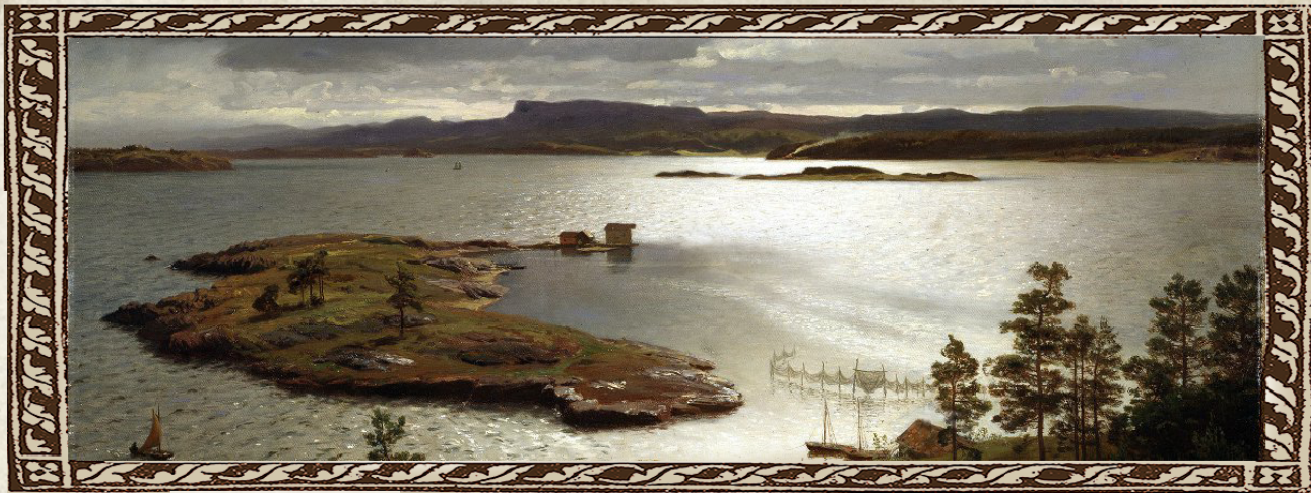
Some of the timber stands of the Rytarr Forest are breathtaking, with hemlock and fir canopies reaching as high as a hundred feet tall, and park-like under-stories characteristic of old-growth forests. Some regions, however, are known to be darkened by hundreds of square miles of stunted stands of short pine and spruce, where the trees grow so closely that it can be difficult to push through.

Throughout the Rytarr Forest's regions are found abundant populations of northern wildlife and game, such as moose, bear, elk, deer, boar, wolf, fox, beaver, ptarmigan, and quail. There are also greater beasts which haunt the deeper forests and hunt men on their own trails. Numbered amongst such terrors are the Great-Wolves of Warg and Sturmwulf, the White-Bear of the far northern ranges, and even Wyrms, Drakes and the mythical Fenrigwulff.

But most threatening to the survival of men are the Orkin-Kind which have for centuries fought with men, and each other, for control of the territories of the Rytarrskegg. These include many and varied breeds of Ork, Goblin, Ogre, Troll and even Gotrbjorg, or Goblin-Bear, all of which are notorious for their savagery, aggression and prolificacy, especially in the deeper wilds. It's said by the Men of Jorikk that, were it not for the greed and blood-lust which turns the Goblin-Kind against each other, they would have long ago overruled all the northern territories.

It's said also that some tribes of primitive Giants dwell in the valleys of the inner wilderness, and legends also tell of kingdoms of Fae-Folk in the deepest reaches, ruled by Elf-Lords or Goblin-Kings, depending on the tale and the teller.





Settlement in the Wilderness

Throughout all the wilderness regions of Lake Jorakk the preferred method of travel is by boat, as overland travel always represents an arduous undertaking filled with danger and uncertainty. All significant human settlement can thus be found on or near the shoreline of the lake, or by its greater rivers.

Deeper wilderness territories between the sparse and isolated Halls of Men remain unexplored, and certainly uncharted. Much of the interior remains under Goblin and Orc control, which violently contest their borders against each other as much as against men, and worse than even Goblins and Orcs lurk also under the darkened canopies of the boreal.

The most notable area of settlement has long been a safe-haven in the otherwise hostile wilderness: the Dunvaggr, or Bay of Man, where is found Narr'Rytar grown up on the ruins of Old Dunvdal, and the Dunvig clan-halls in Rayl.

Though much of the Dunvaggr is today reasonably free of Goblin-Kind, all the stretches of forest outside it are considered untamed and dangerous.

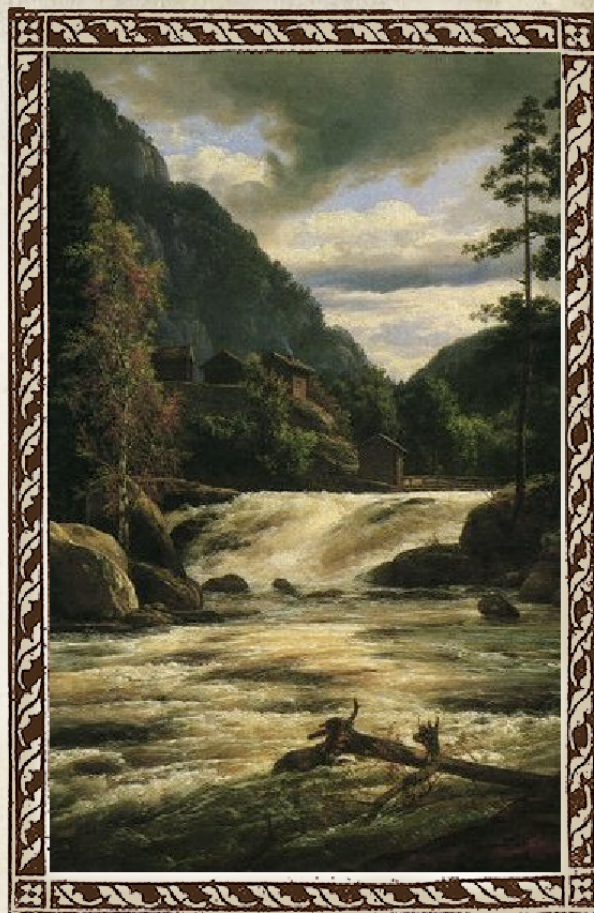
For several centuries, the Dunvaggr has been the primary hall-land of the Blood-Clans of Jorikk. Until forty years ago, folk of non-Dunvig blood were all but non-existent in the Dunvaggr, except for slaves and freemen living under Dunvig rule. It's said that at one time the whole of the bay was tamed and settled, with Dunvig Great-Halls rising up from all major points. However, after the Sundvulkk kinwar of over four hundred years ago, much of the Dunvaggr returned to wilderness, and in time even Old



Dunvdal was lost to incursions by the Orc tribes of Rull. Only in the last thirty years has the Dunvaggr become once again reasonably free of Orkin threat, largely as a result of the great immigrant rush into Narr'Rytar, though even that settlement was razed to the ground in its infancy.

Settlements outside the Dunvaggr are small, and few. Where they do exist, they are peopled by grim and determined warrior-folk, mostly of the Dunvig blood-lines, all wholly dependent on sword, axe, shield and the undying loyalty of brotherhood for survival. The largest of those Dunvig settlements are Thajy and Vrykk, far to the west of the Dunvaggr. Both are ruled by ancient lines of men who have for centuries upheld loyalties to the greater Blood-Clans.

Fukut and Fitvek, also situated on the greater lake, represent a new sort of settlement: violent and lawless frontier outposts made up of free-warriors, hunters and prospectors looking to make small fortunes off the Orkin scalp trade, conventional fur trade and rumored gold deposits of the inner Angitish Wilderness. Mayl is another such outpost, found fifty-some miles up the Maylurr River, a tributary of the Jorakk River close to its terminus.



Through the ages, settlement of the northern shore and the Jorakk Mountain Ranges has been all-but nonexistent. Indeed, the only permanent Dunvig stronghold to have ever existed in any of the ranges of the Jorakk Mountains is said to have been begun by Jorikk Unslld himself over eight hundred years ago. He called that hold the Dvergdungolfr, meaning the "Bond of Dwarf and Man," and for many generations it stood as a bulwark of strength against the northern Orc tribes, keeping the Duzgoltt River Valley open as a trade-route between the Garonakk Dwarf clans and their southern Dunvig allies. That hold fell at some point during the second decade F.C., however, and has for four centuries lain abandoned. The Garonakk were themselves overrun soon after, and today the iron trade, for which the Jorakks are renowned, is conducted with the Volgurnakk Dwarves, cousins of the ancient Garonakk, situated along the northwestern rim of Lake Jorakk and on the border of the Wyrd. That and Norr'Bharr, a sizeable Aronak of the Torakki people which has long

stood as a central trading outpost between the Dunvig clans and the tribes of the Torakk, are the only settlements to be found along the western shore.

Today the Jorakk Mountains remain almost entirely the province of Orks, Goblins, Ogres, Trolls and Giants, of which the Strolgtikkt Juttnorr are the most terrible. Many other fearsome creatures also inhabit the twisting mazes of glacial valleys, such as the Griffyn of the airy spires of Jeltsskatol, and Wyrms and Dragons in the deepest valleys and highest peaks.



The Torakk

Stretching from the western terminus of the Rytarr Forest and the Jorakk Mountains all the way to the feet of the Byth Mountains in the distant west, the Torakk is a seemingly endless expanse of frozen tundra. Though its eastern and western borders have some rolling feature where the tundra gives way to its bordering mountains, the central expanse is almost uniformly flat. In those places, a man can walk for days on end without seeing the slightest variation in terrain from one horizon to another. It's been told of men going mad from bewilderment and vertigo in those stretches, and becoming lost though they knew well how to navigate by the stars. As flat as are those parts, so are they sparse in variation of life, and though a Torakki tribesman might know how to eek a meal from them, foreign folk could well go weeks without seeing anything of game or edible vegetable.

Winter is long and hard upon the Torakk, locking the land in ice and wind-driven snow for six to eight months of the year. Even in summer, when the snow and ice does melt away for a time, the subsoil never truly thaws. Little thus grows upon the Torakk beyond the often brilliant and fiery oranges, reds and yellows of mosses and lichens, and the varying greens of short-grass. Countless pools and lakes pock the region, and much of the ground remains sodden and boggy.

Caribou, and their chief predator the saber-toothed Mastilidon, are the Torakk's largest animals, though elk, deer, moose and bear do sometimes wander out onto the tundra. White fox, small rabbits and varmints, and hardy game birds, are the only other species of note.

The disparate and primitive hunter-gatherer groups which make a home on the Torakk are necessarily nomadic, following the herds of caribou and making camps of hide lodges where good water and livable conditions allow survival. Caribou are central to the life of the Torakki, who use all parts of that animal for tool, clothing, shelter and food. Many Torakki domesticate and herd reindeer, even harnessing them to pull sleds in the icy months.

The far northern reaches of the Torakk remain bound by ice all year long, and few even of the Torakki go there. Some stories do tell of a folk that live in those distant, icy wilds, but for most of the Wild Lands' people the northern wastes are as untouchable as the other end of an ocean. They are a thing of myth and legend, hearkening back to the beginning of time, and the lands of gods and demons.

The Men of the Wild



The Fhokki

Remarkable physical stature and constitution are the hallmark of the Fhokki. Being renowned for towering height, broad frame, and imposing physique, they have a natural muscle-to-fat ratio superior to that of other humans who dedicate their lives to training for such. Few among them are less than six feet tall, and amongst the northern Blood-Clans heights of over seven feet are common. Fhokki are able to weather harsher climates for longer periods than any other man-folk, as well as get sick less, and sustain more abuse and hard toil.

Towering frame, notoriously passionate temper, and sometimes obstinate bent of mind, mean that all but the most diminutive and meek Fhokki represent a force to be reckoned with. In far-flung and distant lands they are sought as elite household guardsmen, prized mercenaries, gladiators, and slaves. Wherever they go, the Fhokki have proven themselves quite capable of surviving, thriving, and even ruling.

Today Fhokki blood can be found throughout all the lands east of the Byth Mountain Ranges, though the greatest concentrations of Fhokki are found along the Jorakk River, around Lake Jorakk, and in the Lands of the Skarrns in northern Reanaaria.

The tale of Fhokki migration through the Wild Lands is one of upheaval, migration, war and conquest.

Till a thousand years ago, nearly all the ancestors of the present-day Fhokki were nomadic hunters, gatherers and herders of the northern Torakki tundra, dependent on stone, wood, hide and tusk for all their tools and trade-able goods. They lived much as their distant tribal cousins, the Torakki, do today. But the bitter cold of northern ice, coupled with the burning tug of curiosity and wanderlust - all fortified by a healthy dose of desperation - caused some of the old tribes to leave. To venture out of the flat and frozen tundra which had for untold generations been home, to see what lay over the distant horizon.



And wherever the Fhokki went they changed the face of their new homelands forever. Indeed, it could be said of the Fhokki that where they've gone in number they've also come to rule, reshaping lands by force of will, charismatic influence, and bloody violence to fit their image, rather than the other way around.

But the success of the Fhokki in the Wild Lands, regardless of clan or region, cannot really be understood without a discussion on their close historical friendship with the Dwarves, called by the Dunnvigr the Dvergofr, or Dwarf-Bond. It would not be an exaggeration to say that this Dwarf-Bond has made the Fhokki what they are today.

The Dwarf-Bond goes deeper than simple trade or military alliance, though those have been instrumental as well. The Fhokki, and especially the Dunvig Blood-Clans, have borrowed so much in terms of culture and world-view from the Dwarven-Kind that they appear today, in all

There may be some evidence for distant Grevan influence in the blood-lineages of the Fhokki, which could explain their superior height and strength, as well as their lusts for exploration and violent adventure. This is especially true of the Dunvig Blood-Clans, whose folk are greater in stature than all others, and who elicit the warrior spirit in their young so readily that it is difficult to find one who does not seem to relish the trials of battle. There's also evidence that suggests early Fhokki migrations out of the Torakk were as much in response to widespread Grevan-War as to poor living conditions on the tundra. Indeed, some have said that the Grevan are more to blame than any other for the stature and present-day profligacy of the Fhokki throughout the Wild Lands. Few argue that the Grevan did in centuries past come often from out of the far northern ranges, though happily their kind have not much been seen in living memory. For more on the Grevan, please consult the Hacklopedia of Beasts

respects except size, more like those short bearded folk than their distant Torakki cousins. Indeed, were it not for the stark contrast in physical size between the Fhokki and Dwarven-Kind, one might be inclined to think them cut from the same stone. Still, the greatest gifts given to the Fhokki by the Dwarves have always been technological, for its doubtful that, without such aid, the Fhokki would have ever made it off the tundra.

Stone was the primary resource in the Wild Lands for centuries leading up to the ice age, at least for humans. But evidence suggests that Fhokki chiefs began to use bronze as early as -600 F.C., likely thanks to trade relationships established with the Dwarves of the Dshada Mountains. Though unable to work bronze themselves, those Fhokki chiefs traded furs and food for weapons, tools, utensils and jewelry of utilitarian and precious metals. The Dwarven tradition of gifting rings to vassals for courageous and honorable deeds was passed to the Fhokki early on.

As time moved on, bronze became more common among the tribes of the Torakk. Though it would seem not all Torakki took part in this technological renaissance, most of those tribes who left in the early migrations replaced stone with metal as their standard in war. Stone was still used by some for arrow-heads and clubs, because of its ready access and retained usefulness, but by and large the Fhokki were wielding spears and axes of bronze when they first encountered the Dejy of the western Wild Lands.

When fought, wars with the Dejy were likely long and bloody, but mostly localized. When the Fhokki moved south they did so as refugees, entering lands unfamiliar to them, owned by tribes which had hunted the local forests, hills and rivers for generations beyond counting. Though strong, hardy, imbued with futuristic technology from a stone-age perspective, and well accustomed to war, the Fhokki would have been at first little better than beggars in a foreign land.

Neither were the Dejy strangers to war, for they had waged it among themselves for centuries. When the Fhokki first arrived, they likely posed little threat to the well-established and proud steppe tribes, and it's possible many even offered assistance and support to the Fhokki, who were no doubt quick to accept it.



But tensions were inevitable, especially as more Fhokki migrated in and put increasing pressure on hunting grounds which had already been jealously guarded for generations. The Fhokki necessarily required land, and would not be content for long as beggars. But who among the Dejy would give up precious hunting ground? The answer, of course, was none, and so conflict ensued.

Still, war was waged on a tribe-by-tribe basis, rather than a single, continuous Fhokki-on-Dejy conflict. Even today, the idea of being "Dejy" or "Fhokki" remains more of an outsider's perspective of classification which the folk of the Wild Lands relate to very little. The Dejy are tribe minded, and the Fhokki clan minded. While some tribes and clans may have stood out above the rest in those days, it's doubtful any were strong enough to organize and speak for all.

Indeed, it's likely that many Dejy tribes welcomed the newly arrived Fhokki as temporary allies in their own longstanding blood-feuds, thinking to use them briefly to conquer old enemies, and having little fear of being themselves displaced. But, once established on lands taken from defeated Dejy tribes, the Fhokki did not leave, and could not be defeated. They built palisade walls and great-halls of timber, and with the aid of Dwarven bronze slew those who came against them.



The Fhokki migrations likely would have ended even before they'd begun had the Dejy formed as one to stop that tide. But, as it was, the progress of Fhokki into lower Wild Lands remained slow and sure, even as the ice age which pushed them out of the ancestral lands of their forefathers.

It's probable that many Fhokki clans had permanently established themselves throughout the western and central Wild Land prairies by as early as -400 F.C., in small timbered clan settlements surrounded by palisade and sustained by agriculture and grazing - technologies all learned from the Dwarves and made realizable by the milder climate and more fertile soils of the southern plains. By then it was too late for many lesser Dejy tribes, annihilated in wars of Fhokki conquest. And rumor of previous successes brought only more clans southward. While not a total end to the Dejy way-of-life, it was the end of their primacy on the grasslands. In the end, only the strongest tribes remained; their original lands diminished, and the face of their world changed

Tension between the nomadic Dejy tribes and the agrarian Fhokki of Drhokker and Skarrn continue today. As the Fhokki grow and expand, they continue to do so at the expense of the

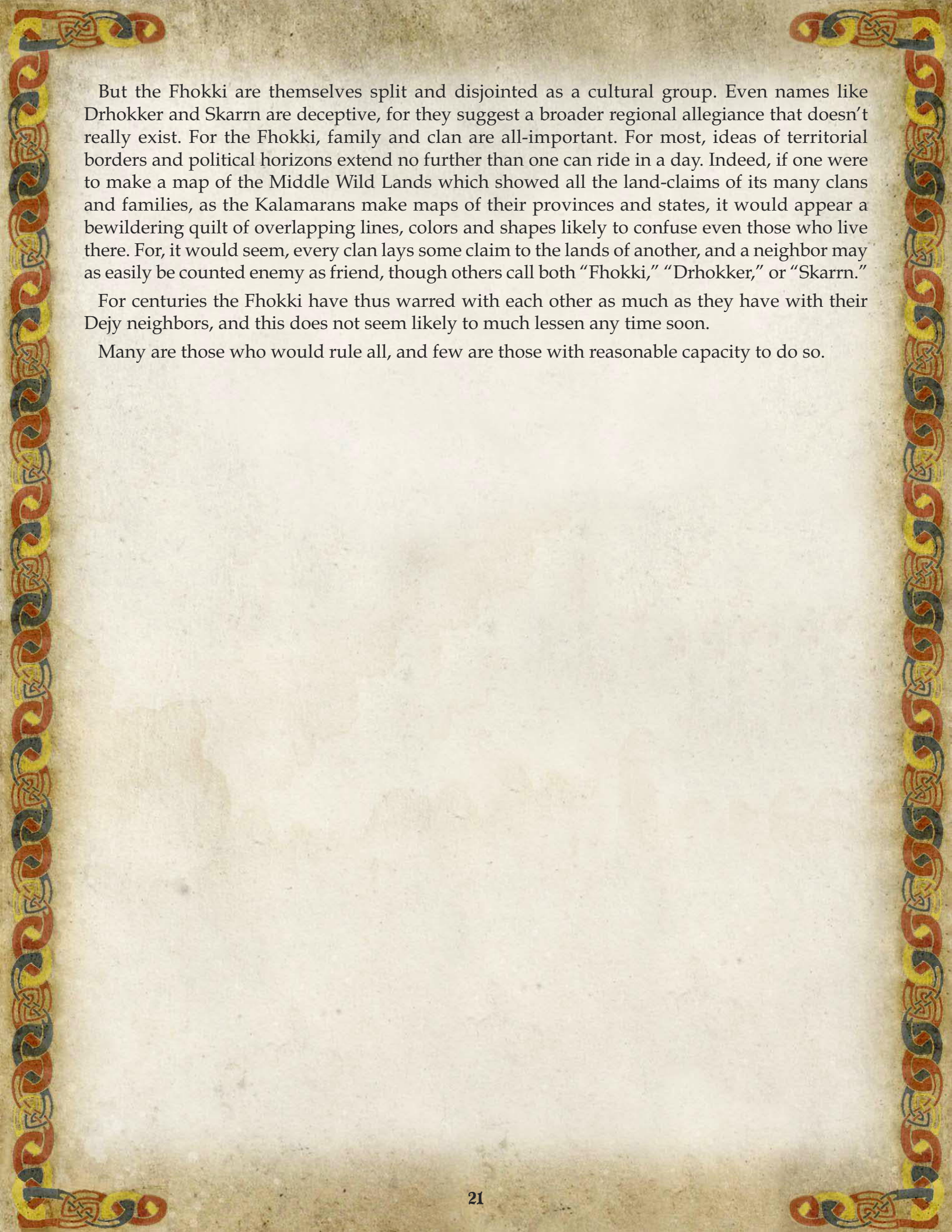
steppe tribes. Raids against each other remain quite common, and though some trade relationships do exist, for the most part both peoples keep to themselves, and more often than not distrust, if not outright hate, each other.

Where the Fhokki once had bronze, they now have iron, and even steel. While the Deji have such as well, it is mostly gotten by trade, making them dependent upon the very neighbors who threaten their way of life. Few of their kind seem interested in settling down or learning the ways of agriculture and iron-mongering, though some have taken up grazing. And for every Fhokki herd of cattle and sheep which goes out onto the sweeping grasslands of the Middle Steppe, another wild herd of buffalo or caribou is displaced.

There are Deji wise-folk who say that the growth and appetite of the Fhokki will never be stopped, and that those who keep to the old ways of the free horse-lords of the open steppe should band together. That otherwise all the land will one day be ruled by the Fhokki battle-lords, who master iron, wood, field and stone, and by those things grip the land so that others may not use it.

What will come of these tensions remains to be seen. Till now, only the Thybaji have been able to unite their disparate tribes into a single, cohesive people, and thus hold the inexorable hunger of the Fhokki at bay.





But the Fhokki are themselves split and disjointed as a cultural group. Even names like Drhokker and Skarnn are deceptive, for they suggest a broader regional allegiance that doesn't really exist. For the Fhokki, family and clan are all-important. For most, ideas of territorial borders and political horizons extend no further than one can ride in a day. Indeed, if one were to make a map of the Middle Wild Lands which showed all the land-claims of its many clans and families, as the Kalamarans make maps of their provinces and states, it would appear a bewildering quilt of overlapping lines, colors and shapes likely to confuse even those who live there. For, it would seem, every clan lays some claim to the lands of another, and a neighbor may as easily be counted enemy as friend, though others call both "Fhokki," "Drhokker," or "Skarnn."

For centuries the Fhokki have thus warred with each other as much as they have with their Dejy neighbors, and this does not seem likely to much lessen any time soon.

Many are those who would rule all, and few are those with reasonable capacity to do so.



The Dunvig Blood Clans of Jorikk

"I taste in life now one thing, and that is the spit of lament for our birth, for all we have been given we've squandered. Let us then die here together, and in that at least remain true." - from the Lament of Krym

The Blood-Clans of Jorikk, called also the Men of Blood, or Dunnvigr (dun-en-vig-uh) in the Skarnic dialect, are an ancient line of Fhokki tracing their lineages back over eight centuries to the mythical hero Jorikk Unslld, who was said to have lain with a goddess and taken the birthright of the Vegl-Lords, thus becoming as a god in his own lifetime. Through the ages, theirs has been a tale of endless struggle against the ferocity of the northern wilderness and, though they once stood as rulers of much of the southern lands, tragedy and sorrow has filled their cup in plenty, and for those who still hold to the Old Ways of Jorikk there is much to mourn.

On average, Dunvig folk stand around seven feet tall, and are broad of frame and long of limb compared even to other Fhokki. Next to non-Fhokki peoples, the Dunnvigr appear as lesser giants, and in terms of strength their equal cannot be found among the races of mankind. Dunvig physique is ideally suited to the rigors of war, and they rear their young, boys and girls alike, from an early age to axe, sword and spear. In equal battle few can stand against them, and compared with the rank and file of other nations even lesser Dunvig warriors appear as grim and hardened battle-lords. They are a warrior-people of fearsome strength and spirit, hardened by generations of battle in the tall forests of pine and fir, burning with a resolve which makes fear seem to them a thing for lesser men.

While the Dunnvigr can certainly be considered part of the broad and many-limbed Fhokki gene-tree, they themselves do not trace their ancestries further back than the mythical hero Jorikk Unslld. In fact, they don't acknowledge blood-connection with any Fhokki outside of their own lineages, and try to forget that their first-lord Jorikk was himself a Torakki, at least in the early days.

Dunnvigr means "Men of Blood," though it more fully translate as something closer to "True-Men of Blood," since Dun is a Skarrnic form of "man" connoting purity, or trueness. The Dunnvigr, as a rule, refer only to their own folk as "Dun," and call all others simply "mjund," which is "man." While "mjund" is not a pejorative in itself, and is indeed used by all other Fhokki as the singular word-form meaning "man," in the Dunvig Skarrn dialect, "mjund" connotes "other man" or "not-true man."

Another oft used term for non-Dunvig folk, especially southern Fhokki, is "surrmjund," a clear pejorative when proceeding from the Dunvig mouth meaning "southern-man," but carrying distinct connotation of "little man." When the Dunnvigr use this term, disrespect is intended. Of course, Fhokki unfamiliar with the nuances of Dunvig Skarrn could easily take it to just mean "southerner," which in their minds is usually fair-enough.

All these meanings are highly symbolic of Dunvig belief in themselves as a unique race of men, blessed by the gods, and destined to rule others. If one were to believe their own stories and creation myths, it would seem that the only races equal to their bloodlines are the Dwarves and Grevan.

Dunvig cultural superiority is rooted in the myths and legends of Jorikk Unslld, whom they say became as a god in his own lifetime and ruled all the Lands of Jorakk by virtue of will. Not only does Jorikk Unslld represent the utmost ideal of what a Dunvig man should be, it's said that his legacy of godhood is literally passed down through generational blood-lineages to his present-day Dunvig descendants.

What this means is that the Dunnvigr regard themselves as nothing less than distant blood-relatives to the gods themselves. Though few Dunvig men or women would openly presume such literal familiarity, the philosophical birthright which they lay claim to runs about that deep. It is, after all, fundamental to their prophecies that they will one day rule the entire world as direct oath-vassals to Jorikk Unslld's heir, who is said to be just a step down from the fully powered pantheon.

Whatever outsiders might say about Dunvig elitism and arrogance, few can deny that in size and strength their match cannot be found on Tellene. But the Dunnvigr are special in other ways as well, not least of which are their self-imposed and highly rigorous standards of courage, honor and ambition. While other folk also claim direct connection to the gods, many use such philosophies to justify sumptuousness and frivolity. By contrast, the Dunnvigr use their belief as a perennial standard next to which they must add up, or else risk ignominious disinheritance.

The Dunnvigr are a people who claim greatness, and take it, or die trying. Such is the example of Jorikk Unslld, which Dunvig clansmen strive to emulate in all things. Indeed, only in context of the mythical Jorikk can the Dunnvigr, who refuse to marry into "lesser bloodlines" and have successfully defended their halls against countless terrible foes through many centuries of tumultuous change, start to be fully understood.

If the Fhokki are known to love war, the Dunnvigr are known to love little else. They are a warrior-people, through and through, by necessity of the Orc and Goblin enemies which face them on all sides. In a very real way, the right to rule, and even live, is inseparable from war for a Dunvigr clansman.

They thus keep their blades keen, their shields mended, their minds sharp, and their bodies strong. They rear their young from a very early age to fight, and fight well. Youths are allowed into battle as early as their thirteenth year, and no age is considered too senior to take up axe and shield. While women are not called into voluntary wars and feuds, they are also not refused the honor of battle. Furthermore, they are expected to know how to fight beside their brothers, husbands, fathers and sons when the beat of Orc drum and Goblin horn draws near.

Such has happened often through their violent and bloody history, and many women have earned renown for themselves.

Indeed, in terms of complete readiness for war, no other human group on Tellene could be said to compare with the Dunnvigr, except for perhaps the Korakki and some Dejy tribes of the eastern Wild Lands, Ek'Gakel, and Svimozish. In their acceptance of battle as a way of life, their preparedness, and even love, for it, the Dunnvigr more closely approximate the Grevan, or possibly the Hobgoblins of Norga-Krangrel, than their own Human brethren.





Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Dunnvigr have been feared through the ages by the tribes and clans of the southern Wild Lands. Though the Dunnvigr have mostly kept to themselves through the last four hundred years, in ages long passed they ventured south and west up the Jorakk and Byth Rivers with regularity, bringing with them war and a thirst for plunder. There are told by many peoples throughout the Wild Lands ancient tales of terrible, giant warrior-kings from the forgotten north who rode against the summer river-flow on beasts of timber, bringing fire and iron to all who resisted them. Such tales corroborate similar legends told and re-told by the Dunnvigr, who say they once warred with, conquered, and ultimately ruled or received tributes from, many of the southern tribes. Though the Dunnvigr have receded to a shadow of their former selves in the last four hundred years, the distant memory of who they were still beats within them.

However, despite being a warrior-people of a dark northern wilderness, the Dunnvigr are not savage. On the contrary, they are highly cultured with rich traditions of saga and song, revering their sjalds and sages and their craftsmen of metal, stone and wood nearly as much as their battle-heroes. Whenever they may they feast, filling themselves with good food and fine drinks of beer, mead and liquor. They mark days and months by well-ordered festivals celebrating the gods, old heroes, and the change of season. They have complex laws to order themselves, and tell rich myths of the pantheon.

Held close to the Dunvig breast is the belief in a man's right to make his own destiny, being beholden to none but whom he should choose to serve. Their lords do not rule as tyrants, but must prove themselves equal to the task by being "the better of his brothers, a giver of good gifts, and a man of the gods." They believe that a man is inherently free. Though he may willingly bind himself to another, none can make him do so by virtue of parentage, wealth or station (unless he be born a slave). Regarding even slaves, the Dunnvigr say that a free-man may prove himself above servitude by deeds showing "skrraey," which means "as-noble." When a slave

shows "skrraey" his lord bears responsibility to provide a means to his freedom. Most of the freemen who live amongst the present-day Dunvig clans likely descend from such freed slaves.

Dunvig love and admiration for the beauty of their northern home is clearly mirrored in the craft and style of their architecture. Indeed, it's quite possible that the Fhokki tradition of fashioning towering great-halls first came from the Dunnvigr, who have long had easy access to the tallest timbers east of the Byth Mountains, and which re-create in their form the towering vastness of the northern wild. Dunvig halls are vaulting structures of thick beams and slate a-frame roofs, all covered in the intricate knotwork of runes and old wards carved by many generations of revered craftsmen.

To this day, the Dunnvigr boast some of the greatest marvels of engineering seen East of the Byth, thanks almost entirely to their long friendship with the Dwarf clans of the Jorakk Mountains. For example, for over seven hundred years the Dunvig longship has been the worthiest watercraft in the Wild Lands. That craft still rivals the Reanaarian Cog in terms of seaworthiness, and in many ways bests it in beauty and versatility. Additionally, it's said the Dunnvigr have used glass for six centuries, and enjoyed heated baths in their greater holds for at least as long. They love working gold, silver, precious jewels and strong iron, and common tales say their hoards are full of sparkling riches.



Dunwig success through the ages, and indeed their very survival in the northern wild, can probably be attributed to three primary factors.

The first is Iron, which was likely given to the Dunwigr by the Dwarves of the Jorakk Mountains many centuries ago, likely long before any of the lower Wild Lands tribes possessed such knowledge - to this day almost all the Dejy tribes rely on trade for iron tools, as do the Torakki. Furthermore, while the Dunwigr do not themselves know the secret of steel, their methods of pattern-welding are highly sophisticated, so much so that no other Wild Land folk, other than the Skarrns, have yet to adequately copy it. In terms of success in war, metallurgical knowledge has given the Dunwigr a decisive edge in battle against Orc and Man alike.

The second is the longship, the ingenious design of which the Sagas of Jorikk Unslld credit to a young boy named Knorr, who is said to have first thought to replicate in timbered construction the beautiful simplicity of nature's design, which bestows buoyancy upon an inverted fern leaf. Whoever invented it, Dunwig tales suggest they used ships as far back as eight centuries ago, when their first-lord Jorakk Unslld initially sailed with his people across the great lake to found their new home in the Dunvagg Bay. The Dunwig longship still stands as a remarkable and innovative achievement of sea mastery, rivaling the best of Reenarian and Kalamaran design in terms of functionality, versatility and beauty. That they would have possessed such technology even two centuries ago, much less eight, implicates them as true savants of seamanship. In practical terms, use of the longship for raiding and war has been a defining characteristic of Dunwig success through the ages. With the longship the Dunwigr have not only been able to explore distant lands otherwise unreachable by foot, but been able to engage in actions of their choosing, and support themselves over great distances via the river networks of the Wild Lands and beyond. In their homelands, the longship has been vital to their survival, as they can strike at Orkin enemies from shorelines and retreat before being overwhelmed. Without their knowledge of the longship, the Dunwigr would have likely been unable to accomplish a hundredth of what their tales claim. It's equally plausible that they would have long ago been destroyed by their violent Orkin neighbors, and receded without a trace into the ambiguity of time.

The third is the Dunwig heart itself, which cannot be overemphasized in the role it's played through the ages, both at home and abroad. Dunwig ambition, curiosity, courage and lust for the trials of combat have compelled them to use their technologies in ways that a more timid and short-sighted people would never have countenanced. Where many folk would content themselves to use iron for defense, and ships for trade, the Dunwigr have used both for war, and done so consistently, and effectively. Their resolve and courage led them to play a significant role in the defeat of Fulakar's Kalamaran expeditionary force, and their ambition led them to subsequently hold and rule much of the Middle Wild Lands for over a hundred years. And these qualities have served them well in the northern wilderness as well, where conflict is always close, death imminent, the gods severe, and no reprieve to be had beyond what is made by one's own hand. In such an environment the Dunwigr have not only survived, but thrived, where others would have long ago perished or fled.

Since the Sundvulkkr kinwar of four hundred years ago, the Dunnvigr have remained highly isolationist and inward-looking. They have largely kept to their northern halls, violently opposing foreign immigration into the Jorakk Lake region and venturing little further than Gothmerr.

But the last forty years, and the Rule of Vigurdr Dunrjorkk, has seen drastic change in how the Dunnvigr interact with other peoples. The opening of Narr'Rytar as a trading-post for southern merchants, and its subsequent boom into a bustling immigrant city famous for the lure of opportunity, as well as for its greed, violence and squalor, has been foremost in those changes. By it the Dunvig Vigurdr and Krym clans in Rayl have consolidated control of the vital iron trade with the Volgurnakk Dwarves, thus solidifying their position as a regional economic powerhouse.



While many Dunnvigr remain resistant to the reality of Narr'Rytar, few can argue that it has made all Dunvig clans, except for perhaps the Gothr, considerably stronger. Whereas the Dunnvigr were, only forty years ago, little more than characters of old tales meant to frighten southern children, unseen and unmet in a remote wilderness land, they are now a force to be reckoned with in the inter-clan politics of the eastern Wild Lands and beyond. Drhokkeran and Skarrnic battle-lords send gifts of gold and silver north to curry Dunvig favor, establish profitable trade agreements, and ward off potential future aggression.

Where the Dunnvigr go from here, and what will come of the future, remains to be seen. Will they further unify and consolidate control of the Dunvaggr, continuing the renaissance which has begun to unfold in the northern lands? Or will they use their new riches to hire a northern mercenary army and march it against southern lands in wars of conquest? In the near-term, such decisions will rest largely upon Vigurdr Dunrjorkk, who is the reigning head of the Dunvig Council of Lords. He seems inclined towards a balanced approach of controlled growth and the forming of beneficial alliances. However, the Dunrjorkk is aging, and though he may have many years

ahead of him, folk have begun calling for the declaration of an heir, so kin-strife can be avoided if he dies prematurely. When the Dunrjorkk does die, few could predict how things might go in coming years.

Whoever ends up leading the Dunnvigr through the coming decade will stand as

though poised at a crossroads, with eight centuries of history, a hoard of glimmering wealth, and the pressures of fate and the demands of the gods, behind him.

And, whichever course the Dunvig clan-lords take, it remains to be seen whether their strengths will once again become their weakness. For while Dunvig love of war, power, and wealth has made them strong, those qualities have also sown the seeds of inter-clan conflict, the greatest being the Sundvulkkr kin-war in the first years F.C., which turned the Dunvig clans against each other and reduced their number from eight to four. Later years saw their ancient clan-home at Dunvdal razed to the ground by powerful Orc tribes out of the Angitish Wilderness, and their keeps in the Dvergdungolfr fall to the Giant-Slaves of Krrusgdorz.

Generations of Dunvig men and women have sworn to avenge those losses, and wondered how to repay the terrible debt of oath-breaking and kinslaying which lies behind them. It's only in more recent times that the Dunnvigr have done more than hold tightly to what remains, and mourn what was lost.

When all things are considered, despite Dunvig gifts in stature, heart, resource and destiny, they can today boast little more than a meaningful consolidation of power in the Dunvaggr Bay, where the immigrant settlement of Narr'Rytar grows up like a bountiful weed from the bones of Old Dunvdal. Though a handful of smaller settlements populate the greater lake, in a region like Lake Jorakk, where a lifetime might be required to traverse its entirety, Dunvig ownership remains but a small foothold in a vast and untamed wilderness.

As it has been said of the Grevan so could it also be said of the Men of Blood, that they may have ruled the world were it not for their endless need to war.





The Torakki

These disparate, hunter-gatherer groups which make a home on the Torakk are necessarily nomadic, following the herds of caribou and making camps of hide lodges near good water and shelter. Caribou, or reindeer, are central to life on the Torakk, whose tribes use all parts of that animal for tool, clothing, shelter and food. Many Torakki domesticate and herd reindeer, even harnessing them to pull sleds in the icy months.

The Torakki are tribal, holding allegiance to none beyond their own Aronak, which can sometimes be little more than a small and closely knit family unit. Torakki are said to be highly territorial and suspicious of strangers, but it's also said that folk with honor, and something of value to trade, can hope to find shelter, sustenance, and aid in a Torakki camp. The Torakki do also seek trade with outsiders, especially for tools of iron and wood. Precious metals have little value to them, and they would almost always prefer to trade in goods rather than coin.



The Torakki are thought to be distant kin to all the Fhokki peoples of the greater Wild Lands. Primary evidence of such kinship exists in language, for the Torakki tongue is incredibly similar to the Skarnn and Hargg dialects of the Dunvig, Skarnnic and Drhokkeran Fhokki, respectively, though Torakki is somewhat more guttural. Some resemblance is also born in appearance, as the Torakki are also large of frame compared to most other humans, though they are smaller than the Drhokker, and the certainly the Dunnvigr. Many Torakki also favor beards, though not as much as their southern cousins (some Torakki men are unable to grow much facial hair at all). Torakki skin is generally red and tan compared to the lighter skin of the Dunvig, Skarnnic and Drhokkeran Fhokki.

The Dunnvigr have some contempt for the Torakki, oft referring to them as "Deurrg" - the name given to domesticated reindeer. The Dunnvigr view the Torakki as primitive and slow-witted, claiming they know not how to rule, but only to be ruled, because if they had willpower they would have long since left a home which offers naught but misery and hunger. This is, of course, says much more of Dunvig pride than Torakki worth for, in truth, the Torakki are a hardy, resolute and learned people, having survived, and even thrived, for generations in such a seemingly inhospitable land. Indeed, when the Dunnvigr themselves must take to the great western tundra for whatever reason, they look first for a Torakki to act as their guide.

