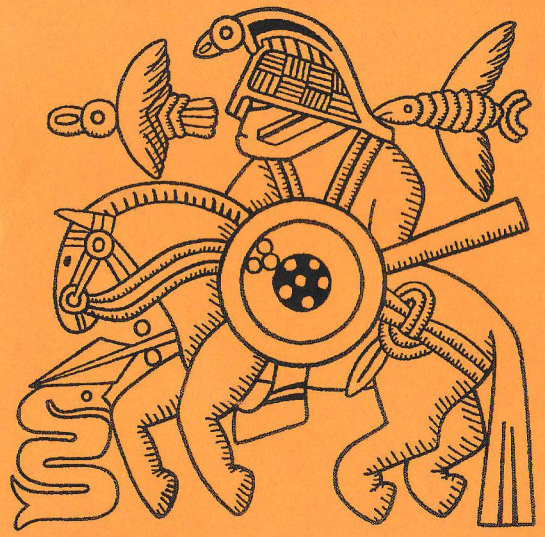
The Odinist Hearth



How to Form and Run a Group of the Odinic Rite

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Published by Authority
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Forward

HEARTH is the term that we apply to a group of friends meeting and worshiping the Gods of our ancient faith, often in the privacy of a members home or at an outdoor site. It is the basic organisational unit of the Odinic Rite. The Hearth was at one time traditionally the central and most important part of the house. In saga poetry it is called "the fire table". It is emblematic of the sun presiding over the miniature world of the home, symbolising security, warmth and friendship.*

It is of GREAT importance to remember Hearths are not autonomous units loosely affiliated to the OR; for the Odinic Rite is not a democratic cooperative or federation, but a movement, an order, and as such has responsibilities, obligations, discipline and structure. The long-term aim of leadership, the advancement of Odinism and the Odinic Rite. The immediate aim is to instruct members in the history and teachings of the Odinist religion, to work for the advancement of our holy movement the Odinic Rite, to allow Odinists to meet together, to actively practice our religion and not to just read about it, and to help our spiritual growth. For lone Odinist seeking a Hearth there is, at present, limited choice. There may not yet be a Hearth operating in your area. It must also be remembered that each Hearth will have a different character which reflects the interests, and so forth, of the members of that Hearth. For example, one Hearth may lean more to the esoteric aspects of Odinism, another may show more interest in the Cultural aspects, etc. The Hearth seeker may have different interests.

A member unable to find a suitable Hearth may decide to form, or raise, a Hearth themselves. Again this is not usually a simple or easy thing, but it does test the resolve of the member. A notice in ORBreifing asking if there are any members in such an such area who would like to join a Hearth or help form a new Hearth may be one step along the path. For those with dedication and initiative, ways exist, and remember do not expect instant results. Often formation of a Hearth is a long process.

In deciding to raise a Hearth you are stepping out of the ranks and assuming the mantle of the true Odinic priesthood. Merely by meeting and talking about Odinism you will be sowing seeds and we know that seeds have a surprising habit of suddenly springing up and blossoming. So it is with a full Hearth of the Odinic Rite.

The Court of Gothar

The Odinist Hearth. Full Hearth of the Odinic Rite.

And at the last we heard true tidings how they had raised them a Garth, and made a stronghold in the midst of the land.

William Morris

To be registered and recognised as a Full Hearth of the Odinic Rite the following minimum requirements must be met;

- There must be a minimum of three Odinic Rite members (Professed or Apprentice) to form a Hearth.
- The Hearth Guardian must be a Professed member of the Odinic Rite.
- The necessary altar furnishings (see relevant section of *The Book of Blotar)* must be obtaned. *The Book of Blotar* is one of these necessary items.

A name must be chosen by which the Hearth is to be known. It should be dedicated to some concept of divinity, to a national or local hero or heroine, or to some other person whose life exemplifies in some way one or more of the Odinist noble virtues. It could as well be named after some place, or locality hallowed by association with Odinist tradition or legend, or after an organisation (regiment, college etc) from which its members are drawn or with which it has special ties. Formal notification should be made to the Court of Gothar, giving the proposed name of the Hearth and the names of the proposed name of the Hearth can be used or not. This is needed for two major reasons:

- There may already be an existing Hearth, which uses that name.
- The name must be deemed suitable, as a Hearth is a unit of the Odinic Rite and therefore must, in all its actions (including usage of its name) be responsible to ensure that the Rite is not brought any disrepute.

Once the Court of Gothar has approved the Hearth's proposed name, then an inaugural Blot shall be held, the date of which should be notified to the Court of Gothar. A *Hearth Dedication* followed by a *Ceremony of Reception* for each individual member should form part of this inaugural Blot. *(When the Hearth is fully recognised by the Court of Gothar, we will send copies of these Blotar to the Hearth Guardian).* Keep up the memory of this important event by celebrating a special anniversary Blot each year.

Once these requirements are met the Hearth will be registered as a Full Hearth of the Odinic Rite and shall use the initials *OR* after the name to denote its full status, for example *Odinic Rite Hearth OR.*.

Notify the Hearths existence to other Rite members through ORBriefing. While this

does not cost anything, it does give other Hearths the opportunity to disseminate news, dates of Hearth Moots and other information. When the Hearth is firmly established you could start to publicise some of its activities; the local media, papers, radio and television is often receptive to anything likely to be of interest to its audience. However, any such approaches to the media *MUST* be authorised by the Court if you are going to represent or promote the *OR* in any way. Failure to obtain this permission may result in expulsion from the Rite. This precaution is taken to safeguard the Rite as much as possible from misrepresentation. Remember that the media cannot be trusted!

If the Hearth is negligent in any of its duties and obligations, its status can be revoked.

Membership

HEARTH membership should be available to anyone who supports the principles of Odinism, is prepared to attend the monthly moots regularly, and always providing that they are acceptable to the other Hearth members. Furthermore, it is not essential that all Hearth members are initially members of the Rite, but it would be expected that they do at least become Apprentice members in time.

It could well be some months before you get even one new member. However, this is no reason for despair. You will find that the most effective means of attracting new members to the Hearth is by personal contact. This can be achieved by encouraging members to invite a friend (or friends) to Hearth Moots. Keep on inviting them. They will sometimes want to come, if only out of curiosity. Let these "strangers" see what goes on at the Hearth and encourage them to take part in the discussion that takes place after the Blot. They will find themselves being gradually drawn into the fellowship all the while accepting and returning the comradeship that is offered to them.

Never put pressure on anyone to join the Hearth, but if they seem keen to attend regularly you should suggest they become members. Make them welcome and let them feel that they are among friends. Invite them to Hearth Outings and events and encourage them to bring their partner and children, if they have them and if it is a suitable occasion. And always remember, have patience.... Our people have followed The wrong path for 1500 years and personal restoration to our religion is often a slow process.

A family of mother, father and children could form a family Hearth, provided that at least one of them has been professed. Of course, they could invite friends and relatives on special occasion's.

An official welcome should always be given for new Hearth members. This takes place during the Blot immediately after the *Prose Reading*. If any member moves away fro the district or ceases to attend Hearth Moots for personal reasons try to keep in touch with them and encourage other members to do the same. There is always a danger that soil will be shaken off when the roots are lifted and that is something to be avoided. Similarly, if a member is in hospital or otherwise in distress we have a duty to ease their, and their family's lot in any way that we can.

If ever you, the Guardian, have to move away from the area or feel that, for some reason you cannot continue as Hearth Guardian, make sure that, if possible, someone has been nominated as your successor. If you are not able to do this, place the Hearth in a state of "suspended animation" or abeyance until someone can revive it: pass Hearth Records to the Court of Gothar and entrust the regalia to someone who is reliable (perhaps also the Court) and who will keep it in reverence and safely until that time arrives. An alternative might be for the Hearth to be amalgamated with another in the same region.

Again, it is stressed that "growth" is often slow, however do not be dismayed at all by this. Better to start with the minimum number required and grow little by little – than as we have seen where Hearths have felt compelled, it seems, to start with larger number and recruit regardless of true nature or calibre of such members. Such Hearths may start full of energy and fire, they have all the regalia needed and are full of plans and talk, only to burn out or disintegrate or in some way become unstable and collapse.

Remember a Hearth is comprised of individuals, if you allow unreliable or uncommitted members to join, it will often hamper the Hearth's advance or even lead to its demise.

The Hearth Guardian

The Hearth Guardian is usually the organiser or convener and as a Professed member, will have a sound knowledge of our religion, its ritual and worship. There is no need for a committee but, being in close and constant touch with members, the Guardian will be aware of and understand their feelings on any particular issue and always give them sympathetic consideration. A Hearth secretary and treasurer could be appointed in a very active Hearth but these functions are often carried out by the Hearth Guardian. However if such personnel are to be used then the names of the members undertaking such positions must be given to the Court of Gothar.

It is perhaps inevitable that you will sometimes feel that your time and efforts are being wasted, that they are leading nowhere very slowly. Remember that we all have our moments of despair and that *perseverance* is one of the Odinic Noble Virtues. So do not give in, you are not alone. Obstacles are there to be overcome.

The Hearth Guardian must ensure that their Hearth operates in a disciplined and positive way, that Blots are conducted properly for example. The Guardian should also find out what strengths the members have and, when needed and possible, use these to help the Hearth progress. Each member can play a useful role.

The Moot Hall

The Hearth may meet to hold Blots out or indoors. There is nothing wrong with holding the Moot/Blot at a members home. By tradition we call the Odinist meeting place when indoors the Moot Hall, even if in reality it is no more than a sitting room or a garden shed or garage. Many like to hold their Blots out of doors and the location chosen when outdoors is called the Blot site.

A Hof is a "temple" , a structure built or adapted explicitly for use for Odinic worship. Pictures, statues, plaques and tapestries depicting the Gods may decorate the Moot Hall. While a banner is not an essential item of Hearth furniture, the possession of one does tend to instil a sense of corporate identity among Hearth members. They can cost a great deal of money and thought might be given to the possibility of setting up a special fund for the purchase of one.

Only the best should be good enough for an Odinist Hearth, so if you can not get a banner that is truly worthy of its purpose don't try and make do with something that is cheap and tawdry.

If the Hearth holds Blot outside, it is of vital importance to remember that the site should be treated with the utmost respect. This means absolutely no litter, including cigarette ends. It is, of course, desirable that those who do smoke refrain entirely for the period of the Blot including a walk to and from the Blot site. Remember the land is our Mother.

The Hearth is going to a site for the observance of a religious act, and all should behave accordingly.

The Blot

The Hearth should meet for communal worship as often as possible but at least once a month. Professed members should wear the Torc, their symbolic Armour of Odin and sign of their dedication to the Rite and Odin's Nation, at Moots as on all religious occasions.

Here is a suggested program for a typical Hearth Moot:

- *The Blot:* The Guardian will have assured himself that the altar has been prepared with whatever items of regalia may be required for the festival being celebrated (*see The Book of Blotar).* It is usual, but not always the case , that the Hearth Guardian act as presiding Gothi / Gythia at Blots. Often they will be assisted by other Hearth members in the performance of the Blot. *Who* is doing *what* should be sorted out before the Blot in most instances Other Hearth members may also act as officiating Gothi/ Gythia if professed and if they wish to do so. Remember not everyone wishes to take such a role. On some occasions the Guardian or another with an important and pertinent message may make an announcement before the Blot. This is only done if it is relevant to the Blot. For example, if a comrade is going on a journey the Guardian or another member could ask that all present wish the comrade a safe return.

- *Following the Blot:* It is at this time announcements are made (unless of the kind mentioned above). An example of this type of announcement may include such a topic as business matter.
- *The Discussion:* Following the Blot and after announcements, members may wish to have some form of refreshment . This may be a feast on certain occasions or a far simpler affair at other times. If being held indoors, drinks may be made available. It is recommended that Hearth funds are used to provide refreshments. Seasonal foods such as Hot cross buns, mince pies are examples of refreshments that could also be handed round at the appropriate festivals.

Certain moots might be designated "Visitor's Moots", with each Hearth member inviting a non-Odinist friend. Members on holiday or business who attend other Hearths as visitors should find that the style there is similar and the Blot is the same with which they are already familiar. To enter a Hearth, should create a feeling that "here is home and these are my folk".

Obviously, adaptations will be made to suite either an indoor Blot or an outdoor Blot. While it is acceptable to hold Blots in or outdoors, wherever possible the Sun festivals should be celebrated in the open.

Guests, of course, are encouraged at some Blots in the interest of expanding the Hearth so members should bring them (where appropriate). However it is recommended that you keep the number/guest ratio heavily on the members side. It should be obvious that Guests may be unsure of the procedure and will most likely take a limited role in the Blot. While this is to be expected, there should be no problem so long as the member/ guest ratio is taken into account.

It must be remembered at all times that the post of Gothi/Gythia carries great responsibilities and requires total dedications and a great deal of self sacrifice. The Gothi/Gythia must study the religion and be able to answer questions raised by inquiries. They must constantly strive to advance and remember that their behaviour away from the Blot must also reflect the fact they are a priest/priestess of Odinism. It is also strongly encouraged that ritual robes are worn when conducting the Blot. This emphasises the religious nature of the event and acts to separate it more fully from the mundane aspects of life. The correct robe of the Odinic Rite currently are simple, an "Alb" or full length robe with a belt or sash, and a hood or cowl. The robe is usually white and the cowl or hood may be any colour but black, this is worn only by CG members.

Also the *Rite Garman's* vestments are all red so only those appointed as *OR Garmen (*who is responsible for security at OR events) may wear the all red vestment. The Rite does not encourage the wearing of "Viking" attire. While it is not always essential for every Blot that the full robes are worn, it is desirable that the hood is. Any questions/ advice on such may be addressed to the Court of Gothar. It should be noted that as the OR evolves and advances the religious vestments will reflect this.

The Discussion

A Hearth moot without a properly planned program is liable to turn into an evening of pointless, if interesting, gossip, argument, issues, or reminiscences that have been gone over countless times in the past; in a single word, chaos. It may be beneficial for the Hearth to include a Discussion, particularly if held indoors. Adequately prepared, it should be an informative and important part of the monthly moot.

Subject and opener will have been agreed at the last moot in order to give everyone time to prepare for the Discussion. It would be a good idea for the Discussion to be opened each month by a different member in turn so that even the most tongue-tied get a chance to put forward their views without interruption.

The opener should begin by making the Sign of the Hammer and follower this by introducing the subject (three to five minutes should be ample time for this).
The subject chosen (perhaps by the opener) could be based on an extract from the Eddas or some other work, from the Blot of the day, an article from an Odinist magazine, or it could be some matter of moral or ethical significance. It should never be too general and always concentrate on a specific subject, otherwise you find the same themes being repeated again and again. Politics should not be entered into. There are more than enough political groups in existence, and the Odinic Rite is a Religious organisation. Sometimes a talk followed by questions may be given by a member with some special knowledge or by a visiting speaker on something of interest to the Rite. The Guardian should bring the Discussion to a formal conclusion by making the Sign of the Hammer.

Some Hearths may wish to form study groups, meditation groups, healing circles or such, and following the Blot these activities would be entered into. Members should, of course, be trained as fully as possible in all aspects of the Odinic Rite. This we stress again is of particular importance for those who act as the priesthood.

The Symbel

The symbel is a ritualised social event; a feast at which those taking part sit round a table or in a circle. The Gods and Goddesses are saluted in Mead, Ale or wine while the Horn is passed around Sunwise with each person rising in turn to propose a toast and perhaps, relating a story, singing a song, reciting a poem, or otherwise addressing the company. It is emphasised this is not an excuse for drunkenness. *"A worse provision no man can take from table than too much beer-bibbing: For the more he drinks the less control he has over his own mind". (Havamal 12).*

Finance

Each Hearth is responsible for its own financial upkeep and a collection for Hearth expenses should be made at each Hearth Moot, or Hearth members could donate a specified amount on a regular basis. There are expenses in running a Hearth, regalia etc. It is important that Hearth members aid the Rite financially be becoming donating members. The Hearth Guardian should ensure the member's donations are paid on time by collecting them themselves and forwarding them to the Court of Gothar. Remember, failure to renew donation within a reasonable amount of time could mean the Hearth will cease to have any official existence.

Visitors as guest of the Hearth should not be asked for contributions, though they may wish to give anyway. It is good practice to announce the total of the evening's takings and the balance of the funds held on behalf of the Hearth; this reinforces member's involvement in the Hearth welfare and inspires confidence. A simple record should be kept of all financial matters and, indeed, consideration might be given to the opening of a checking account in the name of the Hearth.

Action Projects

Once your Hearth is firmly established members could initiate and carry out a program of *Action Projects:* arrange debates with members of other various (non-political) organisations, do something to implement one or other of the charges (eg. Help children's organisations, offer help with elderly, or an injustice).

The Hearth may be involved in some act of conservation or such.

It may be beneficial to inform the local press, radio and television stations if you think publicity will help our cause, but it is essential to check first with the Area Reeve and the Court of Gothar and get express authorisation. If there is no Reeve in your region then you must contact the Court of Gothar direct for authorisation. You will be representing the Rite not just yourself. Failure to again this authorisation may result in suspension or expulsion from the Odinic Rite. *Action Projects* must be properly planned and researched and always carried through to completion. When a *Project* calls for an approach that is of more than local interest, the co-operations of other Hearths might be called for. Care must be taken to avoid getting the Hearth involved in demos, pickets, or petitions, etc., organised by non-Odinist bodies. They could have undesirable political connections (and your presence may not always be welcome). Always inform the Court of Gothar when planning an *Action Project;* their advice could prove valuable.

The Hearth Guardian must send regular reports of Hearth activities, progress etc. to the area Reeve who will forward this to the Court of Gothar (If an area Reeve is not yet operating in the area in which the Hearth is based then these reports are to be sent directly to the Court). The Hearth Guardian does not necessarily have to write them themselves but must ensure they are sent. These Hearth reports should be sent regularly, at least every three months. The Hearth Guardian, of course, can also ask for advice, raise ideas etc. with the Reeve or the Court of Gothar. Other projects could include special fund raising activities to aid the Rite's purchase of equipment, produce a publication, or finance a number of other needs exhibited by the Rite. In addition, members may also find it of use to meet to study some aspect of our religion.

Social Activities

Organise visits to exhibitions and theatres, or outings to the country side. Encourage competitive sports and physical recreation or entertain visiting Odinists from other parts of the country and from Overseas. Furthermore, arrange weekend exchange visits with other Hearths. Such activities will enable members to relate their religious beliefs to daily life in a practical way. The more they become involved in social as well as spiritual activities, the more firmly they will be united in a firm bond of comradeship within the Hearth and the Rite.

Midsummer is one of the most important days in the Odinist year. Encourage members to take the day of Work, organise a Hearth outing to the sea or countryside for them and their families, end the day with a Blot and a symbel; at the very least, get them to take

Their family into the still magical parts of their Holy Land. Persaude them to send greeting cards (with an appropriate Midsummer theme) to their friends and relatives. (What about designing Hearth Midsummer and Yule cards?) Get this ancient festivals put back on the calendar of national events.

The Mother Night is another important event. This is usually spent with the family at home so the Hearth moot will probably take place a few days beforehand. Join with neighbouring Hearths to arrange a really festive celebration. It is a good idea to make decorations to hang on a tree at the Hearths site, these could be simple symbols of our faith made from biscuit or cake. This is a simple show of gratitude to Mother Jorth for the bounty she has supplied for us through out the year.

Hearth Planting

"Brand kindles brand till they burn out. Flame quickened by flame". Havamal

You should never allow your Hearth to become inward looking or too stagnate with smugness, but always be on the lookout for fresh ideas and opportunities to restore the faith. In nature the cell is able to accept new material and convert it to a substance useful in enlarging and enriching, not only itself but the whole body. So the ideal must be for the Hearth to grow and split for, if successful, its membership must eventually outgrow the available accommodation. The fellowship built up, perhaps over a number of years, must then sprout new branches. In the interest of the whole Nation of Odin it is something that cannot be avoided. One very effective way of doing this is by Hearth Planting, the expression is self-explanatory. When your Hearth is firmly rooted and you are nearing the limit of your membership you could look around (not only in the immediately neighbouring districts) and decide to "plant" an area that is likely to be able to eventually support a new Hearth. People living in new towns or new housing estates usually lack the sense of community that has been inherited by those living in city centres and villages and the older-established suburbs. They should prove fertile ground for planting a group which properly nurtured, will eventually become a self-supporting Hearth. Careful planning, persistence, and perseverance will be called for if you decide to do this.

First, find a place where you can hold an introductory meeting (it need not be too formal) to which interested members of the public can be invited (and don't forget refreshments for them); a small hall, perhaps, or a room in a hotel (a room over a pub will probably give strangers ideas about Odinism which will take a long time to live

Down and should be avoided). Invite reporters from local media. Remember, a crowded room always creates a better impression than a half empty hall.

For a time the new Group will be peopled largely by members of your own Hearth, so they must be prepared to travel often and to attend moots of the other Group. In time, when a local member is able to assume the Guardianship, the birth of a new Hearth will be announced!

Don't Forget The Children

Some thought might be given to the possibility of setting up a children's section, a junior Hearth. Teach them about their faith and their heritage, explain the Blots, organise a party when one of their number is professed (on reaching the age of twelve). Encourage them to live like Odinists. They are our future!

Apprentice Hearths

It may well be that someone wishes to form a Hearth but is unable at the time to act as Hearth Guardian because they are not yet Professed. Currently this is a genuine concern of members and it has therefore been decided that Apprentice members may form Hearths providing the following requirements are met.

- The Hearth must comprise of at least two members of the Odinic Rite. (Apprentice members shall count).
- It is the intention of the Hearth Guardian to become Professed as soon as possible.
- The Hearth Guardian will submit a report every two months (minimum) to the Area Reeve, or direct to the Court of Gothar if there is no serving Area Reeve in that Hearth's region.
- All other requirements are as those for a Full Hearth. (*Please review the contents of this book thoroughly).*

It is our full intention to further expand the Odinic Rite, and this effort we feel is a very worthwhile one... It allows those who have families to set up a Family Hearth straightaway. It also enables those who already have established groups (Kindreds etc) to join the Odinic Rite together to immediately be able to function as a unit of the Odinic Rite.

Note: An Apprentice Hearth will be denoted by the initials *AOR* after the Hearth name.

Conclusion

In closing, it is important to again realise what the Odinic Rite is: a religious movement whose aims are to bring about the New Awakening of our indigenous religion which today we call Odinism. The Rite is an organic movement, it can in fact be considered correctly as a living entity, for just as our bodies are comprised of countless individual living cells, so the Rite is formed of living cells; that is each member can be considered a living cell of the living body of the Odinic Rite. A Hearth then is a number of such cells working together to further the Odinist religion, the Odinic Rite as the vehicle for promoting the advancement of that religion and, of course, developing the individuals potential and spiritual growth. A Hearth should provide an environment where each individuals strengths can be maximised, and the weaknesses overcome, for each and every one of us have weaknesses and strengths. A Hearth should provide a place where individual members can both learn and teach. An individual can both receive and give support and loyalty. Each member of a Hearth should be committed to advancing the Odinic Rite so that each Hearth becomes an efficient and loyal unit of the Odinic Rite. A Hearth should not be regarded as a "hobby" or interesting diversion from the rest of life, of course it should foster an atmosphere of friendship and positiveness. It is not a debating society or a social club, but an important unit of a religious movement. What you do today decides the future, may the High Gods and Goddesses grant that we can by their will make this a noble and positive one.

Hail the High Gods and Goddesses!

Hail the Odinic Rite!

Hail the Holy Nation of Odin!

If you are interested in raising a Full Hearth or an Apprentice Hearth of the Odinic Rite, we invite you to contact.

The Secretary: The Odinic Rite
BCM RUNIC
LONDON
WC1N 3XX
ENGLAND

Please be so kind as to provide the Court of Gothar with a written letter containing the necessary information as detailed in this booklet. Also, enclose two first class stamps for a prompt rely.

THE NOBLE VIRTUES

As Odinists we should all strive to live our lives in accordance with the Noble Virtues and The Nine Charges.

Courage	**Truth**	**Honour**
Fidelity	**Discipline**	**Hospitality**
Industriousness	**Self-reliance**	**Perseverance**

THE NINE CHARGES

1, To maintain candour and fidelity in love and devotion to the tried friend: though he strike me I will do him no scathe

2, Never to make wrongsome oath: for great and grim is the reward for breaking of plighted troth.

3, To deal not hardly with the humble and lowly.

4, To remember the respect that is due to great age.

5, To suffer no evil to go unremedied and to fight against the enemies of family, nation, race and faith: my foes I will fight in the field nor be burnt in my house.

6, To succour the friendless but put no faith in the pledged word of a stranger people.

7, If I hear the fool's word of a drunken man I will strive not: for many a grief and the very death groweth from out such things.

8, To give kind heed to dead men: straw dead, sea dead or sword dead.

9, To abide by the enactments of lawful authority and to bear with courage the decrees of the Norns.

Published by the Odinic Rite Information
Committee by Authority of the
Court of Gothar of the Odinic Rite



Odinic Rite
BCM Runic
London
WC1N 3XX