

- Icelandic Sorcery & Witchcraft - A fascinating and unusual Museum in Strandir -

Magical Staves

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Magical Staves

Helm of Awe Ægishjálmur

This sign exists in various forms though all are a variation of crosses with three-forked ends. It is mentioned in the Eddic heroic poetry and was a fear inducer and protection against the abuse of power. It was to be carved in lead and pressed on one's forehead. The version above is in the county seal for the Strandir region.



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Necropants Nábrókarstafur

These were made with the intact skin of the lower part of the human body, dug up from a church yard. When worn they will become undistinguishable from one's own skin. The staff should be kept in the scrotum along with a coin stolen from a poor widow. Money will then constantly be drawn into the scrotum.

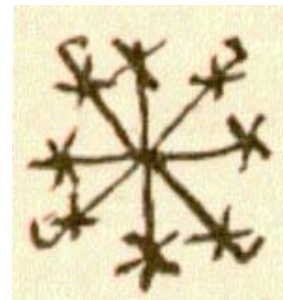


Go back

To find a thief Þjófastafur

If you want to know who has stolen from you, carve this staff on the bottom of of a wooden bowl, fill it with clean water and sprinkle yarrow over it.

Recite: *I invoke the nature of the grass and the power of the sign to reveal who has stolen from me and others. In nomine domini amen.* The thief's face will appear in the bowl.

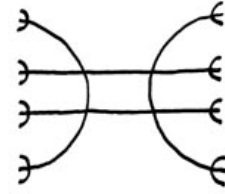


(From an Icelandic medical text in a 17th century manuscript (AM 434a 12mo, in the Arnemagnean Collection in Reykjavik).

Go back

Wrestling Staves Gapaldur og Ginfaxi

These two staves were kept in the shoes, Gapaldur under the heel of the right foot and Ginfaxi under the toes of the left foot, to ensure victory in bouts of Icelandic wrestling (glíma).



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Angurgapi

This sign should be carved on the lid or the bottom of a barrel. Ther purpose is unclear.

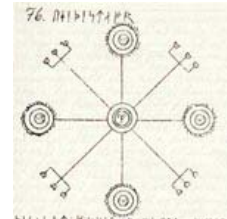
Go back



A Fishing Stave Veiðistafur

This stave should be drawn in wren's blood on a caul with a pen made of a raven's feather. Then put it in a gimlet hole under the prow of your ship and you will always have a good catch.

Go back



Trade Clincher Kaupaloki

To prosper in trade and business carve this sign on a tablet of beech and carry it on your breast.
(From a privately owned 19th century manuscript.)

Go back



Water Protector**Vatnahlífir**

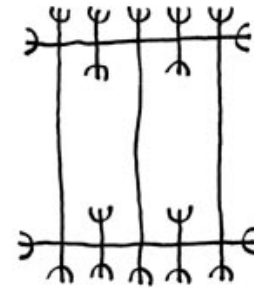
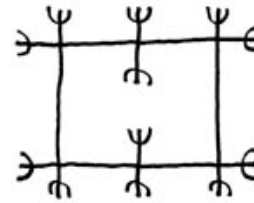
This staff should be kept under your right arm. It is a helpful amulet when crossing dangerous rivers.



Go back

Staves for Sharpening**Brýnslustafir**

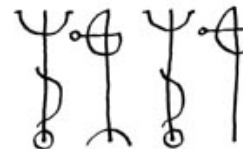
The sign at the top is to be laid over a sharpening stone and the bottom one under it. Then cover for a while with a piece of turf. The next time you sharpen your scythe turn it away from the sun and never look straight at the edge.



Go back

Dreamstaves**Draumstafir**

Carve these on silver or white leather on Midsummer's Night. Sleep on them and you will dream what you desire when the sun is close to the horizon.

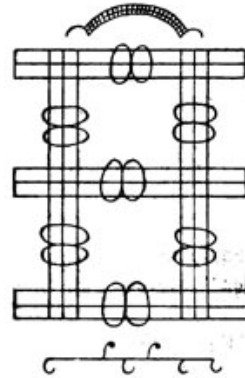


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Valdemar's Protection Stave Varnarstafur Valdemars

The sign increases favour and happiness if it is treated correctly. If somebody intends evil against you, lay it out with the gut of a plaice on the membrane inside a hen's egg and then place it inside your hat.

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Fear Inducer Óttastafur

To scare your enemy carve this on oak and throw it before his feet.

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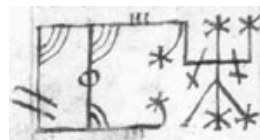


A Killing Rune Dreprún

This stave is to be written on a piece of paper and if a man has insulted you without reason, throw it where his horse has trodden and cover it. Some of his livestock will then die.

(From an Icelandic grimoire from the 17th century, in Antikvarisk-Topografiska Arkivet in Stockholm.)

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To make a Woman Pregnant Feingur

If you want a girl to become pregnant by yourself then carve this sign on a piece of cheese and feed it to her.



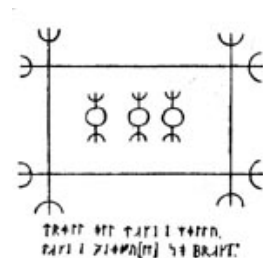
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Lockbreaker Lásabrjótur

To open a lock without a key, have in your mouth a man's bellyfat, stolen from the graveyard; and lay the staff upon the lock you wish to open. Then blow into the keyhole and intone:

*"I blow into the lock 'til its cylinder rattles and roars,
while hissing a bellyfat whistle.*

*May the fiend's foul breath blow fierce into the keyhole;
may the trolls tear it open;
may Puck's partisan imps pull it apart.
Bend back the bolt, all ye devil's urchins;
spring the shackle, all ye scoundrel spirits."*

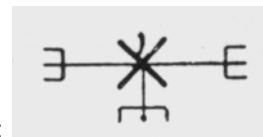


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To Get a Girl Að fá stúlku

This sign should be written in the palm of your right hand with blood from the tip of the thumb on the left hand. Take the girl's hand and recite:

My hand I lay in yours, my will in yours. May your bones burn lest you love me as much as I love you. These words shall be as passionate and powerful as eternity. All magic and sorcery turn your mind towards love of me and may all those who inhabit supterranean abodes assist me in this.

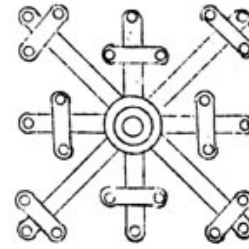


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To Open Hills

Hólastafur

Carve this character on a pole of rowan. Paint the lines with blood from under your tongue. Knock on hills or rocks with the rowan and they will open.



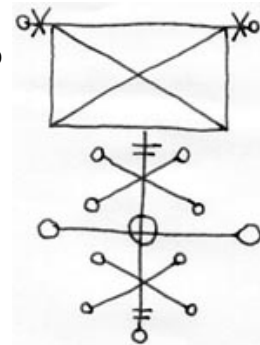
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A Stave to Raise the Dead

Stafur til að vekja upp draug

This sign can be used to wake from the dead, to exterminate a ghost, and it also has the power to drive away evil spirits. It must be carved on the skin of a horse's head with a mixture of blood from a seal, a fox, and a man. This verse must be recited with it:

*Þykkt blóð, þreytast rekkar.
Þjóð mörg vos öld bjóða,
grand heitt, gummar andast,
glatast auður, firrast snauðir.
Hætt grand hræðast dróttir
hríð mörg, vesöld kvíða,
angur vænt, ærnar skærur.
Illur sveimur nú er í heimi.*

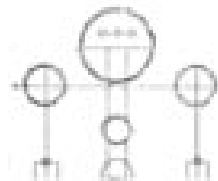


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A Lesser Circle of Protection

Rosahringur minni

Rosahringur must be carved on the flesh side of the skin of a brown bitch. Then colour the carving with the blood of a black tomcat which has been killed under a full moon. This is a powerful protection against ghosts and witchcraft. It helps to recite: I crave help from the earth, victory from the sun, happiness from the moon, assistance from the stars, and strength from the angels of God.



If the sign is to be used against a lightning ghost or a demon, you

should spit, throw urine and wave the skin reciting the following verse:

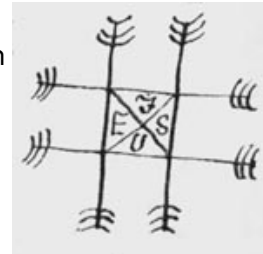
*Undan vindi vondan sendi,
óskir ferskar raski þrjóskum,
galdurs eldur gildur holdið
grenni, kenni og innan brenni.
Eyrun dára örin særi,
eitrið ljóta, bíti hann skeytið,
allur fyllist illum sullum
eyði kauða bráður dauði.*

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To Win in Court Máladeilan

Carve this on lignite and paint it with blood from the septum of your nose and keep it on your breast. If you fear losing your case in court have another one on your back and you will win regardless of the truth.

(From a 19th century manuscript, Lbs 4375 8vo, in the National Library in Reykjavík.)



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Against Witchcraft Stafur gegn galdri

These four signs are a protection against witchcraft from all four corners of the earth. Carry them on your body.

(From a 17th century manuscript, Lbs 143 8vo, in the National Library in Reykjavík.)



Go back

Against the Wrath of those in Power Við höfðingja reiði

If you want to avoid the wrath of chieftains then walk home before the sun turns red and talk to no man. Take the herb called millefolium (yarrow) and sprinkle it with your blood. Write a cross on your forehead with the herb and then walk before your overlord.

(From an Icelandic medical treatise from the 17th century, Am 434a 12mo, in the Arnemaganean Collection.)

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To ward off Foxes Tóustefna



This should be carved on a piece of oak and put under the threshold of your sheep-shed. Alternatively tie it in the wool of the eldest gelding.

(From a 19th century manuscript, Lbs 4375 8vo, in the National Library in Reykjavík.)

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Butterknot Smjörhnútur

The butterknot was carved on butter to ensure it was not made from milk stolen by a tilberi. This was a being created by a woman from a man's rib and used to steal milk from cows and sheep out in the pastures. The woman kept it on a teat on the inside of her thigh where it grew and fed on her body fluids. The preparations for creating a tilberi are very complicated.



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