

WHEN WINTER CAME TO SKEDEMOSSE

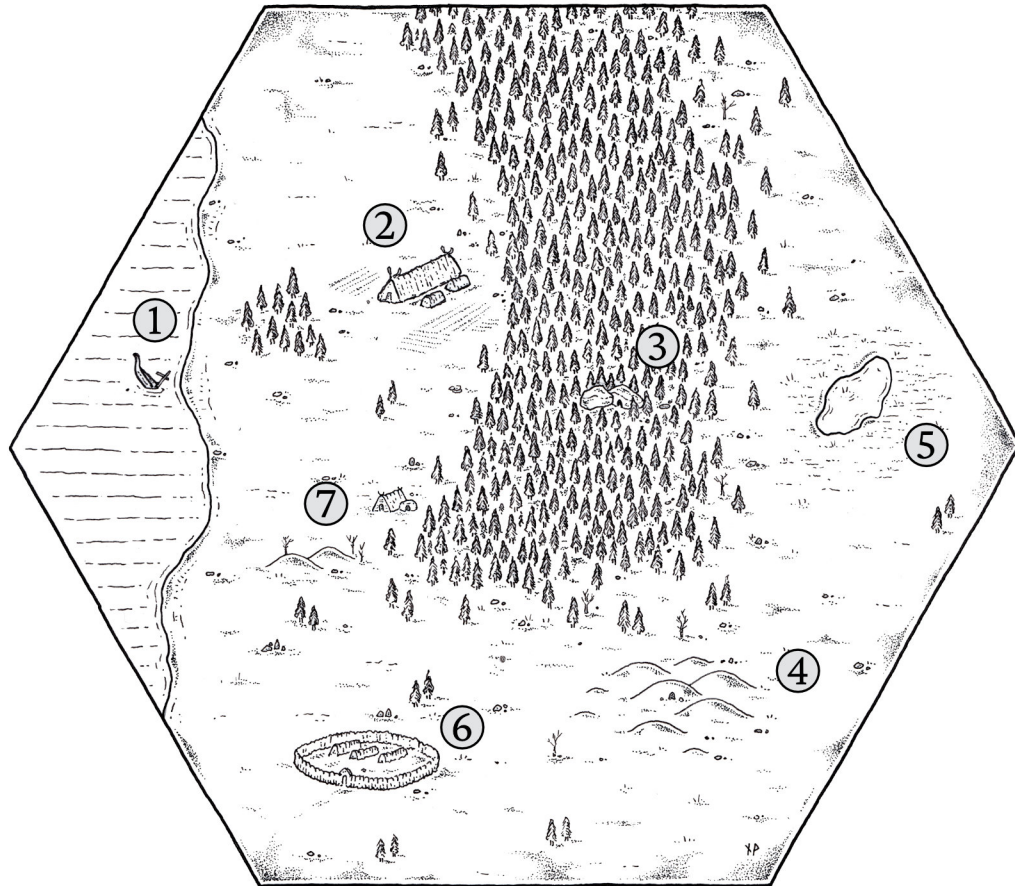
A SCANDINAVIAN IRONAGE ADVENTURE



DESIGNED FOR USE WITH
**OLD-SCHOOL
ESSENTIALS**

FOR TRADITIONAL
ROLEPLAYING GAMES BY
**CHRISTOPHER
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THE LOCAL REGION



1. The Beach

2. Thorir's Farm

3. The Troll Lair

4. The Ancient Grave Mounds

5. The Sacred Bog

6. The Abandoned Ring Fort

7. Floki's Smithy



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Thanks to: Daniel (bronsochblod.com) for inspiration, and the rest of the play testers: Kent-Inge & Oliver

INTRODUCTION

This is an adventure written for old school roleplaying games and is completely compatible with Old School Essentials. The adventure is set in **600 AD in Scandinavia** in a **low-fantasy historical setting**.

The adventure takes place on Öland in old Svithiod (what later becomes modern-day Sweden).

PLAYING IN VENDEL PERIOD

Vendel Period starts in **Scandinavia** during the *Migration Period* and ends with the start of the *Viking Age (540-790AD)*. It was a time of strife and heroism. The time of the famous heroes such as Beowulf and monsters like Grendel. Pagan kings ruled the North guarded by their elite warriors.



This adventure is not written with the intent of making a game setting that is just like the Vendel age actually was, but rather *how it might have been perceived to be* during the era.

The gods *were* real. There were things, *sentient things*, hiding in the woods, in the ancient mounds, in the mountains and under the waves. Runes held *real* power. Your ancestors *did* conspire to protect you.

Here follows some suggestion of modifications to the rules to allow a more flavorful experience.

Available classes

I suggest limiting the available classes to the following

Warrior (Fighter/Barbarian), **Skald** (Bard), **Thief**, **Goði**

Weapon	Damage	Weight (coins)	Cost (sp)	Qualities
Axe	1d6	40	4	Melee, Missile(5'-10'/11'-20'/21-30')
Seax	1d6	30	7	Melee
Spear	1d6	30	4	Brace, Melee, Missile(5'-20'/21'-40'/41-60')
Sling	1d4	20	2	Blunt, Missile(5'-40'/41'-80'/81-160')
Bow	1d6	30	25	Missile(5'-50'/51'-100'/101-150'), Two-handed
Dane axe	1d8	50	7	Melee, slow, two-handed
Sword	1d8	60	10	Melee

(Cleric), **Hunter** (Ranger).

Money

Silver was typically used as monetary instrument in this era, so if you wish to have an authentic feel I suggest you convert from a gold based system to silver based system by simply converting the rulebooks gold pieces one to one for silver pieces (1gp = 1sp).

Typically silver bands worn around the arm were used for trade. They could be cut to achieve the desired weight needed for a trade. Coins were also used.

Weapons

Feel free to get creative with the weapons list but here is a proposed table for Scandinavian Vendel Era weaponry.

Armor

Keep the existing armor list as is but remove the option for plate mail.

Note that chainmail did exist at this time but was very expensive and wearing one will make the person stand out as a warrior of great wealth or status.

Helmets were also a prestigious piece of armor to wear.

Helmet +1 AC

Religion

The Germanic pantheon was large and many Gods were worshipped. The religion during the Vendel Period just preceded the Viking age and you can find a lot of inspiration for the religious practices during the era by reading the works of *Snorre Sturlarsson* or other re-tellings.

Typically every man and woman would have a deity they were closest to, their “best friend”.

Every religious character that makes an effort to support their patron with sacrifice and prayer will be granted some protection in life.

Pick one deity from the list and grant the character the associated bonus.

Tyr +1 INT

Tor + 1 STR

Frey/Freya +1 CHA

Odin +1 WIS

Ull +1 DEX

Njord +1 CON

The Gods demand sacrifice and worship and will in return grant strengths and victories.

Breaking an oath will remove this advantage and it can not be regained until proper amends have been made for breaking the oath.

Society

Small kingdoms make up the north. Many of the former large power centers have lost their status when Europe transitioned from bronze to iron based societies.

On the top of the social hierarchy were the **Kings**, under them came the **Jarls**

(“earls”), then came the freemen, the **Karls**. Under the Karls there existed a slave cast called **Thralls**.

Languages spoken

Northern Speech or Norse, is the “common” of Vendel Period Scandinavia. It has four distinct dialects, all are comprehensible between each other but they help mark where someone is from.

Archaic Old Norse - older version of Norse, mostly used by ancient beings like Trolls and Dwarves. Can be found on old carvings

West Norse - Spoken in what is modern day **Norway** (and later on **Iceland** but it was not populated by the Norse until 9th century)

East Norse - Spoken in what is modern day **Sweden** and **Denmark**

Gutnish - Spoken on the Baltic islands of **Gotland** and **Bornholm**

There are a myriad of other languages that are possible to encounter especially if the characters leave Scandinavia. Such as *Anglic* and other *Germanic languages*. *Saami* (to the north) and *Latin* (to the far south).

These might be more or less comprehensible for a Norse speaker and I advise further research if you go that path (or just wing it: *we are here to have fun*).

Common names

Male	Female
1. Agmundr	1. Alfildr
2. Bjorn	2. Dagrún
3. Egill	3. Fríða
4. Gudleif	4. Gulla
5. Hákon	5. Guðrún
6. Hjalmar	6. Hjördis
7. Oddvarr	7. Ingríðr
8. Ragnarr	8. Ragna
9. Sveinn	9. Sigríðr
10. Ulfr	10. Sólveig
11. Yngvarr	11. Valdís
12. Þórvaldr	12. Þóra

THE ADVENTURE

The adventure is set during winter in 600 AD. It is a location based sandbox covering a single six mile hex. Feel free to use it as a *whodunnit one-shot* or as part of a larger campaign.

It should also be runnable as a more conventional fantasy adventure with little to no modifications.

Assume **THACO 19[0]** and **120'** movement if nothing else is stated.

Weather

Weather (roll daily)

1. **Sunny**
2. **Overcast**
3. **Slight breeze, cold**
4. **Strong winds, very cold**
5. **Light snowfall, cold**
6. **Snow storm, very cold**
(CON check or suffer -2 on all reasonably affected ability checks)

Winter has arrived and a first

layer of snow covers the ground. The cold air is crisp and unforgiving. The snow makes a crackling sound as you step on it.

Suggested hook

Returning from Bornholm traveling back home to Svithihod the characters have made the risky decision to make a push for it, hoping to finish the last bit of travel before the long winter sets in. Traveling by boat up the coast they are surprised by a harsh winter storm and the ship gets wrecked against the cliffs of the baltic island Öland.

They wake up as the first morning light clears the storm and they find themselves on the beach with their belongings strewn about them. Parts of the ship can be found broken into pieces along the waterfront.

Except for the boat and the food only one important thing seems to be missing: the ancestral arm ring.

This ring is of grave importance to one of the characters. Having been in the family for six generations, granted to his ancestral father by a Dane King after performing deeds of valor at his hall. *It must be recovered.*

The troll has the ring

Welcome to the holy land of Öland.

The hex

Drop the hex in your existing hex crawl or simply place it on the west coast of Öland just south of the town **Köpingsvik**.

The hex is about 6 miles and so an unburdened traveler (with good traveling conditions) could cross the tile 4 times in a day.

Most locations, *except the troll's lair* are well known by the locals and I recommend having the NPCs talk about, and give directions, to them.

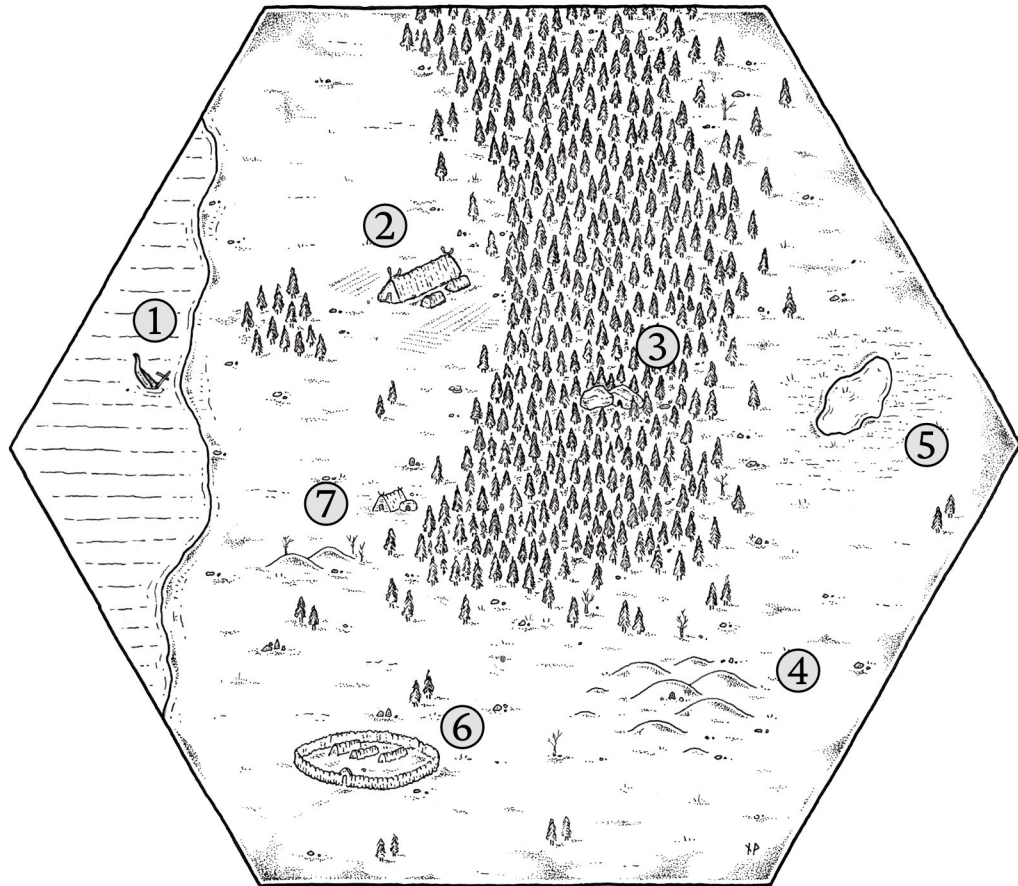
THE EVENTS TIMELINE

These events will take place if the characters do not intervene.

The first night after waking up on the beach

- **Eira** will tie the dogs in the guest sleeping section at the farm and unlock the main door before going to bed
- **Six armed men** will sneak in to the farm in the middle of the night with intent of stealing the gold hidden under Thoris's sleeping cot (1-in-6 characters wake up before they have killed anyone)
- They will **murder Thorir** and d4 other in their sleep and make away with the gold through the woods towards the abandoned ring-fort
- If they make it there they will stay another night to divvy up the gold and celebrate and then travel north to Köpingsvik

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Random encounters in the wilderness (roll twice a day)

1-4. 1d6 **robbers** from the ring fort (see page 27)

5-8. 1d6 **farmers** traveling to Köpingsvik, the trade hub to the north. *HD 1 (6hp). AC 9 [10]. Morale 7. Attack: hand-axe (1d6)*

9-10. A **hunting party**. 4 **hunters** on steeds and their 3 **hounds**. Earlier in the day an altercation within the group resulted in a dead hunter, the body was hidden. Their conscience and nerves are eating away at the group **Hunter**. *HD 1 (6hp). AC 9 [10]. ML 7. Att: bow (1d6)*. **Hounds** *HD 1 (4hp). AC 5 [14]. ML 8. Att: bite (1d8)*

11. *Eilifr* the Dwarf (see page 38)

12. The Troll (see page 28)

1. The Beach

- The snow has been disturbed, almost looking like large **footprints** close to the person who carried the arm ring, they lead inland but disappear under newly fallen snow
- All characters's equipment can be found strewn about the beach, as well as the broken remains of the boat
- Spending a full round combing the beach reveals some ember worth equivalent of 1d10 SP
- All rations are ruined by the water
- Very cold, as it is freezing temperatures and everyone is wet from the storm
- Chimney smoke rises from behind some trees nearby (**Thorir's farm**)



2. Thorir's Farm

The well maintained homestead is owned by Thorir. He lives here with his wife, children, brother and farm-hands.

- Smoke rises from the long-house roof. Smells of burning birch
- Trails in the snow lead between the houses and around the farm

- Sound of Halfdan chopping wood can be heard during the morning hours

Thorir will honor custom and house any guest that show up at his doorstep. He will offer place by the fire, food, mead to drink and dry hay to sleep in.

He will not accept insolence from his guest. Baring this he will show the utmost respect and hospitality.

Pigsty

Pigsty is warm and contain several well fed and wooly pigs that are happy for visitors.

There is a separate section where fresh hey is stored, the room is warmed by the pigs and can sleep a few people (if they can stand the smell)

Shed

A well kept shed lined with farming equipment and tools. A small **sailing boat** lies upside down packed away for winter (seats 6 people) behind the house, the sail can be found in the shed.

The völvas hut

A small hut marked by an oxen skull above the doorway. Next to the door sits three large, blood caked, wooden idols.

- Messy interior with herbs, pots and rune-carved bones strewn through the room
- *Alfhild* the völva lives here and spends most the time

during winter indoors

- Two tiny goat can be found rummaging about the living space (standing on tables, shelves etc)

What are people talking about?

1. The cold weather and how it is a bad time to travel
2. The smith has always been an odd character, but stranger than usual lately
3. Excitement about the upcoming Yule celebrations at the fortress on the *She-isle* in Skedemosse. Horse races and sacrifices are the main event
4. Harvest was plentiful and stores are full, but the signs still indicate a cold winter this year. It is thus good that the island does not have any wolves to bother them. *However legend talk about them swimming over from the main land in harsher years*