

N Hagalaz, Hail! N



Welcome to *The Lost Lands: The Northlands Saga Complete* from Frog God Games. This *Campaign Guide* is designed to aid players and GMs in enjoying exciting action-filled adventures from *The Northlands Saga Complete*, as well as creating their own adventures set in the milieu of the *NS* series. We want you to go beyond the published adventure series and explore the wild and furious lands of *The Northlands Saga Complete*. So, haglaz, traveler! Well met, indeed. We hope you find the spear-din and mind's worth to bring excitement and glory to your game.

The Northlands Saga Complete is a campaign setting and an adventure path all set in the Frog God Games' game world of the **Lost Lands**. Far at the northern edge of the world map where the continent of Akados connects to the frozen polar continent of Boros are the lands of the Northlanders huddled around the often-frozen North Sea and verging upon the gray-green swells of the Great Ocean Úthaf that circles the northern portion of the world.

The Northlands are a realm of rugged frontiers on the very edge of the arctic wilderness where the men of the North contend against the horrors of the icy wastes with little more than sinew, iron, and their own mind's worth. Here is a realm of gameplay for a classic Viking saga or adventures in the gritty north envisioned by Leiber or Howard. It is a land of epic sagas, savage creatures, and heroes of mythic proportions, and it is yours to play in.

History of the Northlands

The story of the Northlands is ancient; it goes far back to a time when the world sat differently in the Great Expanse and the Northlands were not yet cold. Even in those distant and ancient days, there were men dwelling in the Northlands. Yet despite the length of human habitation in the Northlands, the people currently known as Northlanders have actually lived there only for slightly less than 800 years and are, in fact, the third migration of human settlers, having arrived from a land much farther to the south. They are what is thought of when folk of the Lost Lands think of the Northlands, and their history is an epic worthy of the harsh lands they now hold. But no history of the Northlands can be told without speaking of the first humans to live there.

The first settlers of the Northlands were organized tribes of peoples clad in hides and wielding weapons of wood and stone. Some of these tribes even knew the secrets of working bronze, and these were the princes among the peoples known as the Andøvan. Tribes of these peoples existed across most of Akados, a savage remnant perhaps of the civilizations that fell with the great betrayal of Orcus. Known throughout most of Akados as the Ancient Ones by modern folk, in the Northlands they have retained their identity as the Andøvan if only due to the presence of the mountain

THE LOST LANDS: THE NORTHLANDS SAGA COMPLETE

range by that name that has survived in ancestral memory for thousands of years. These lost folk left behind only barrow mounds, earthen hill forts, and enigmatic rings of standing stones upon the heights. The ancients who once dwelt in the Northlands are still held in a mixture of awe and fear by modern Northlanders, their barrow fields still haunted by the specters of their civilization that walk the night-darkened hills and forests.

While it remains a mystery what happened to the many tribes of Ancient Ones that dwelt throughout Akados, in the Northlands the oracle Siljus spoke doom over the Andøvan when he said, “Seek you the mountains, tribes of the gray sea, and there you shall know your doom.” His words dutifully scribed on the Stone of Andøvan, the tribe’s chieftain ritually strangled the blind seer for such an ill-omened utterance, even though he protested his innocence to the last. Such measures did not save the Andøvan of the north, however, for they soon learned their doom when from the Stoneheart Mountains far to the west came a migration of giants, foremost among them were hordes of trolls and troll-kin. While the giants primarily took to the mountain peaks to make their homes in caves and rock shelters, the trolls descended upon the lowlands around the sea to claim their homes among the human-held lands. The Andøvan fought this onslaught for many years, but the tribes never fully united and ultimately they fell to the trolls one by one. Those who survived became thralls to their troll overlords, and the Andøvan ceased to exist in the north.

Not much lore of the Andøvan survived to modern times, for they were gone even before Oerson led the Legion of Hyperborea out of Boros to begin the colonization of Akados. Though the primary route of the Legion was to the west of the Northlands, the Hyperborean scouts that surveyed the area around the North Sea found the native Andøvan long gone. They did report, however, the presence of a great number of trolls and trollkin and described in ancient documents now held in the Imperial Library in Courghais a savage troll-blooded people they called the *thrydreg* — the last remnant of Andøvan blood long polluted in its thralldom to the trolls. Not wishing to bog down in a war with such savages, Oerson elected to circumvent the accursed region and continued his march south into Akados with little more than the occasional skirmish at the very edges of the troll territories.

More than a thousand years later, after the third great elven exodus, a tribe of wild elves known as the Nûk came upon the Northlands seeking a peaceful home far from the ever-encroaching Hyperboreans of the south. The *thrydreg* still held the coastal lowlands, and giants were plentiful in the mountain heights, but in the forests and plains north of the mountains, the elves found a new home that eventually became known as Nûkland. These elves did not build cities or large settlements but instead elected to remain in small bands, hunting among the forests to avoid the notice of the giants and to be able to pack up and move on quickly should human intruders show up in their territory once again.

When the poles of the world shifted nearly 1,500 years later, the Northlands suddenly found itself on the very edge of the arctic. Temperatures plummeted and powerful blizzards dumped vast amounts of snow over the formerly temperate lands. The *thrydreg* were ill-prepared for such changes, and famine and warfare overtook the troll-kin tribes as they competed for ever-dwindling resources. The agile Nûk fared better, quickly adapting to hunting among the snow-laden forests and across the newly formed tundra as the mega-fauna that they lived off of were able to adapt to the colder clime as well.

It was into these new subarctic conditions that a tribe of the wandering Shattered Folk, bands of the long-ago defeated Hundaei, arrived in the Northlands led by Hvrán Kalsong. Known as the Uln, this clan saw that ferocious bands of troll-kin still roamed the coastal lowlands and that elves held the arboreal forest to the north. A raid by the *thrydreg* killed Hvrán’s son and took his daughter as thrall. Knowing his people to be too weak to challenge the savage *thrydreg* or avenge his family, Hvrán led his people farther north until they came upon the Seal Coast and the Wailing Mountains. Beyond the mountains, they found ruined cities — abandoned by the ancient folk of Boros — that held shelter and resources unlike any they had found in their generations of wandering. The Uln settled in these cities, abandoning the nomadic ways of their forefathers and adopting the sedentary lifestyle of their ancient foes the Hyperboreans. Cursed for his shame at abandoning his daughter — even though to save his people — Hvrán and his wife bore no more children, and leadership of the Uln was divided among the cities upon their deaths. For saving his people, though, he and his wife were laid to rest in a special tomb in the waters off the Seal Coast.

The Uln thrived in their newly found cities and were able to weather the harsh climate of the Far North thanks to resources of the cities that were ready-to-hand. Unfortunately, they also found other things left behind by the missing Boreans that were less benign in nature. Among some of the storerooms of the cities were found certain icons and holy texts dedicated to elder gods of the cold and ice, including one called Althunak. Some of the Uln settlers turned to these ice spirits and Althunak in particular as a means to an easier existence among the ice and snow of the northern tundra. Before long, a cult had formed dedicated to the Lord of Ice and Cold.

Within a generation, the Cult of Althunak had risen to great power among the shores of an icy lake. The City of the Lord of Winter became a bastion to the cult and a place where they could begin to consolidate their power. Many Uln of the Borean cities saw this as a threat too great to be ignored and chose instead to relocate back to the Seal Coast where they took up the ways of their ancestors in hunting and fishing. They called themselves the Ulnat. Their departure was none too soon, because in that same year, slaving bands began to issue forth from the City of the Lord of Winter and take slaves from among the Uln cities nearby. These were brought back to the city by the lake and set to work making their bastion ever bigger.

As the cult gained power, it began to construct its own city on the shores of an icy lake. The City of the Lord of Winter became a bastion to the cult and a place where they could begin to consolidate their power. Many Uln of the Borean cities saw this as a threat too great to be ignored and chose instead to relocate back to the Seal Coast where they took up the ways of their ancestors in hunting and fishing. They called themselves the Ulnat. Their departure was none too soon, because in that same year, slaving bands began to issue forth from the City of the Lord of Winter and take slaves from among the Uln cities nearby. These were brought back to the city by the lake and set to work making their bastion ever bigger.

By the time 20 years had passed, the Cult of Althunak held sway over all the cities beyond the Wailing Mountains, and the Demon Lord of Ice and Cold was forming the beginnings of a new empire to match one he had established and lost long ago at the opposite end of the world. But just as the fates had conspired against the demon lord then when heroes and gods rose against him, this time too the strands of wyrd turned so that there came those to combat him. Among the tribes of the Seal Coast, there appeared a hero named Hvrán the Half-Born, a direct descendant of the daughter of Hvrán Kalsong who had been taken by the *thrydreg*. Being deformed and troll-blooded, Hvrán Half-Born was ill-received among the Ulnat until he saved one of their coastal settlements from the depredations of a vicious sea serpent. With that heroic act, however, the Ulnat realized him for a hero and saw in him a means of salvation from the Cult of Althunak.

Dozens of other heroes flocked to the banner of Hvrán, and soon he had raised a mighty army among the Ulnat of the Seal Coast. With this in tow, he and his champions crossed the Trail of Ravens to the plains beyond the Wailing Mountains where they found all in desolation. The former cities of the Uln were in ruins, their homes and settlements erased from the frozen tundra now called the White Field of Death. Though they faced harsh resistance, the Cult of Althunak was not prepared for an army of this size, and the Ulnat won through to the City of the Lord of Winter. There, Hvrán Half-Born and his fellow heroes faced the demon lord himself and slew him in battle. Of the two score champions accompanying Hvrán, only the Half-Born himself survived due to his trollish heritage, and then only long enough to see the demon’s corpse trapped beneath the waters of the Lake of Frozen Screams. Upon the submersion of the demon lord’s lifeless cadaver, the lake subsequently froze solid from his icy influence, creating a solid sarcophagus of ice.

The Half-Born succumbed to his wounds and was carried solemnly in state back across the Trail of Ravens with the battered remnant of his army, and interred with his forefather Hvrán the Third. The lands beyond the Wailing Mountains were abandoned and forgotten, considered a cursed realm, and the Ulnat separated into small bands and villages to resume the ways of their distant ancestors and never again dabble in the corrupt practices of “civilized” men.

Barely a century and a half after the rise and fall of the Uln in the Far North, a third migration of humans began for the Northlands. At the far southern end of the continent of Akados, on the aptly named Helcynngae Peninsula lived the Heldring, a barbarous people of feared warriors of great size and martial prowess who had sold the soul of their people to the goddess Hel in exchange for might and protection from the invading legions of the Hyperboreans. This contract had served well, for the Hyperboreans were never able to conquer these tribes and ultimately had

HAGALAZ, HAIL!

to wall off the entire peninsula with a defensive breastwork known as the Helwall. It was from this ruthless and bloodthirsty people that the final migration emerged.

Not all of the tribes among the Heldring were as devoted to the Lady of Pestilence and, at a time when her cult's power was waxing among the Heldring, one thegn called Swein Sigurdson turned his back on the wicked ways of Hel and sought an escape for his people. Swein gathered his family and related clans and headed north to cross the Helwall. The clergy of Hel, however, learned of his defection and sent an army in pursuit. Unable to reach the Helwall, Swein retreated into the mountains of Cumborian to find safety. The Helite council's army pursued doggedly and drove them ever deeper among the jagged clefts. Finally, Swein and his people were forced to seek shelter in a cave and await the arrival of their eminent executioners. However, even as the Helite raiders charged up the valley and Swein formed his shieldwall across the mouth of the cave, an earthquake struck the valley. The cliff face above the cave mouth collapsed, sealing it off and trapping Swein's people within while killing many of the charging Helite warriors.

Saved by seemingly divine intervention, Swein nevertheless despaired at the prospect of his people dying trapped within the collapsed cavern. However, when torches were lit, it was found that the back of the cave had likewise collapsed to reveal a series of natural tunnels that ran deep beneath the earth and into the Under Realms. For two years, the clans following Swein survived and forged their path through the darkness of the Under Realms on what they came to call the Neimbrall Trail. At some point during that journey the Æsir gods of their ancestors, long forgotten when Hel became the dominant deity of the Helcynngae Peninsula, reappeared to them. Swein received a vision from Wotan the All-Father of a distant land of snowy peaks and timbered forests, far from the

Helcynngae Peninsula, a land where they could hack their homes out of the wilderness and live as a free people.

Swein Sigurdson became the first godi and led his people toward this promised land. For nearly three years, the clans of Swein stumbled through the dark, being forged by the hardships they faced and tempered by the foes they fought until finally one day he led them into the light of day from beneath the a chain of mountains in a wide valley they named Storstrøm. Across the vale at the foot of another mountain range they found the Stone of Andøvan, which gave cryptic clues to what people had lived in the valley long before, and named these mountains for them as a result.

Unfortunately for Swein's people, the lands they had found were not unoccupied; the thrydreg still held sway in the lowlands around the North Sea. But the Æsir favored Swein's people and provided them with a stone fortress built upon a river from which they could defend themselves and begin their own expansion. Thus with the might of their faith in the Æsir behind them and the tempering they had endured on the Neimbrall Trail within them, Swein's clans made war upon the thrydreg. No longer as numerous as they had once been due to the faltering resources since the climate shift, and with most of their true troll overlords long since relocated into the mountains, the thrydreg fell before the onslaught of Swein and his people. In a few short years, the thrydreg had been driven from the Vale and the new society of Northlanders had been established.

Over the following decades, the Northlanders continued to push the thrydreg back. They mastered the art of crafting swift longships with which they could launch raids all along the coast, and soon the last pockets of thrydreg were destroyed or in hiding among the wildlands. Swein was named the first Kønig of Storstrøm Vale, and what became the first modern nation of the Northlands was begun.

Lost Lands Timeline of the Northlands

Imperial Record (I.R.)	Erylle Cycle (E.C.)	Huun Chronicle (H.C.)	
-6484	1		Elves retreat in First Exodus
-4572	1913		The paragon troll Thrydudir leads his horde east into the Northlands and attacks the Andøvan tribes there
-109	6376		Polemarch Oerson leads Hyperborean Legion out of Boros and into Akados
725	7209		Wild elves withdraw to the west in Third Exodus; Green Warders established
1021	8599		Nûk tribe of wild elves ends its wandering among forests along coast of North Sea and establishes Nûkland far from human influence
2491	8975		Poles shift; Ice sheet begins forming over continent of Boros and World Roof
2494	8978		Uln tribe of the Shattered Folk arrives in the Far North and begins to settle beyond the Wailing Mountains in abandoned cities of lost Boros
2516	9000	21	Cult of Althunak rises to power among the Uln
2528	9012	33	Cult of Althunak begins enslaving Uln settlements; Construction begun on City of the Lord of Winter
2553	9037	58	The Cult of Althunak holds sway over the Far North from the City of the Lord of Winter
2584	9068	89	Cult of Althunak overthrown by Ulnat uprising; City of the Lord of Winter abandoned; Althunak imprisoned beneath Lake of Frozen Screams; Ulnat tribes scatter along Seal Coast
2731	9215	236	Swein Sigurdson discovers the Neimbrall Trail in Under Realms, leads his tribe of the Heldring through tunnel away from Helcynngae Peninsula to escape worship of Hel
2734	9218	239	Guided by vision from Wotan, Swein Sigurdson leads his people to emerge in Storstrøm Vale; Colonization of Northlands begins; Swein Sigurdson named Kønig of Storstrøm Vale
2997	9481	502	Settlers on Hord Peninsula declare independence from Storstrøm Vale; Balfyr Longhair named first Kønig of Hordaland
3003	9487	508	Gerimund the Bold scales the World Tree, Yggdrasil, and woos the Norn, Skuld. The Daughters of Skuld are born of divine and mortal

THE LOST LANDS: THE NORTHLANDS SAGA COMPLETE

Imperial Record (I.R.)	Erylle Cycle (E.C.)	Huun Chronicle (H.C.)	
3030	9514	535	Beginning of Køenigs War as Hrolf Gundlaakson contests Swein Skúlison's right to rule Storstrøm Vale
3032	9516	537	Køenig Swein gains upperhand in Køenigs War; Hrolf Gunlaakson retreats to holdings on Jarvik Peninsula
3033	9517	538	Hrolf Gunlaakson declared Køenig of Hrolfland, consolidates power over Jarvik Peninsula; Køenig Hrolf assassinated, no Hrolf kinsman is able to garner the support to be declared the new Køenig of Hrolfland
3109	9593	614	The legendary Eleven Godi of the Hearth Stone gather to cast powerful spells and throw down the fortress of the infamous giant Gunnlaugr
3145	9629	650	Kein the Bearsarker leads Northlanders in the Forgotten Wars against the undead of the ancient Andøvan
3153	9637	658	Kein defeats the Longnight King at the Battle of the Barrow Lands ending the Forgotten Wars
3221	9705	726	Althing of Storstrøm Vale founded
3223	9707	728	Five siblings of Gat clan relocate to Bornhølm Peninsula in dissension from assembly form of government represented in Things and Althing; Gatland founded
3280	9764	785	Gat-Hrolf feud begins
3298	9782	803	Kraki Haraldson slays red wyrm Verthenstyr and recovers the sword <i>Kroenarck</i> from beneath Mount Helgastervän
3306	9790	811	Kraki Haraldson unites all jarldoms and named High Køenig of the Northlands
3316	9800	821	Oathbreakers assassinate Kraki Haraldson and flee to mountains of Seydiford Peninsula; High Køenig Kraki Haraldson interred with <i>Kroenarck</i> overlooking Storm River; Athils the Seer prophesies no High Køenig will rule the Northlands again until <i>Kroenarck</i> finds a worthy hand
3321	9805	826	Vastavikland founded by rebels on Seydiford Peninsula
3355	9839	860	Disappearance of Folkmar the Reaver after 30 years of raiding
3363	9847	868	First sighting of Jomsvikings with raid on Tallsinki
3378	9862	883	Jomsvikings raids increase in frequency around North Sea
3380	9864	885	Combined fleet of longships from Storstrøm Vale, Hordaland, Hrolfland, and Gatland defeat Jomsviking fleet at Battle of Kulding Swells; Allied fleet pursues surviving Jomsviking ships back to Jomsburg and are totally destroyed; Alliance falls apart, Northlanders avoid Jomsburg Island; Jomsviking raids greatly curtailed and focus farther abroad than North Sea
3401	9885	906	Hrolfs employ Southlander mercenaries to stymie Gat raids
3437	9921	942	Beast Cult of Shibauroth driven out of Storstrøm Vale
3452	9936	957	First Althing of Estinfird convened at Three Rivers trading post
3517	10,001	1022	Current year

A Word on Pronunciation

Pronunciation of words from a Nordic base is no easy task to a non-Nordic tongue, and many of the place names, and names of gods and heroes are just that. They are not, for the most part, intended to be a true rendering of Norwegian or even ancient Norse words and names, but they are meant to convey that flavor. As a result, there are some spelling habits that are perhaps strange to the eyes of many gamers. As a result, we've included a little bit of a pronunciation guide, though it is no way meant to be a didactic or exhaustive discussion of the subject in any real-life context. It merely explains the conventions we have used in the *Northlands Saga*. As with anything game related, they are there for you to use or ignore as you see fit.

Of immediate note is undoubtedly the fact that many names end in an 'r' that do not normally do so. This final 'r' of Nordic origin is often left off in Western renderings, but to lend the air of legitimacy to our Northlands setting, we have opted to go for the older, more obscure

spelling. However, in general the final 'r' is silent unless it follows a vowel, so that 'Thor' is still 'Thor', but 'Grimr' would be pronounced 'Grim'. In the case of 'Baldr', however, conventional use would still pronounce it 'Balder', so this rule is far from absolute.

For vowels, 'Æ, æ' is usually pronounced like 'eye' or 'ay'; 'Á, á' is pronounced like 'ow'; 'Ö, ö' and 'Ø, ø' are pronounced like 'oeh', and the other accented vowels are held longer. Unaccented vowels usually have their long sound. The letter 'Ð, ð' is called 'eth'. It is pronounced as a 'th' sound and is sometimes used interchangeably with the letter 'Þ, þ' (called 'thorn' and also pronounced with a 'th' sound).

While these hints by no means create a fully authentic pronunciation in terms of real ancient Nordic and Germanic languages, they will help you to catch the intended flavor and feel. However, if it is easier, just use the spellings for the look of them and make your pronunciations whatever is simplest for you. Use them as best fits your tastes.

Kennings

Throughout the **Northlands Saga**, you will notice the frequent use of *kennings* — word pictures expressed by the skalds and oral traditions of the Northlands cultures to paint a vibrant picture of what is being described. As the Northlands are a harsh and violent land, many of these kennings describe battle and bloodshed. Because of their reliance upon the sea for their livelihood and survival, a great many of them also describe the seas and the struggles of surviving upon them. Many kennings are self-explanatory, though others are often more opaque. It is considered a great skill among Northlanders to come up with new kennings that are simple to understand yet brilliantly illustrative and original. Certain renowned skalds are known for their expert kenning-play.

While many of the narratives of the adventures make use of kennings, it is up to you whether you choose to use them in your narration and dialogue as you run or play in Northlands adventures. We highly encourage you to do so in order to catch an authentic feel of the Northlands. Below is a list of some of the more common kennings so you will know what they mean when used, can employ them yourself, or can use them as a base from which to create new kennings of your own. For whatever purpose you decide to use them, we hope you enjoy the “word-dwimmer” that comes of it.

Common Kennings of the Northlands

Alfar dwimmer: magic

Baldr’s bane: mistletoe

battle-dew: blood

blood-ember: axe

blood-worm: sword

breaker of rings: Kœnig or jarl

Corpse-ripper: the dragon Nidhöggr, chews upon the corpses of murderers, adulterers, and oath-breakers

easer of raven’s hunger: generous leader

feeder of ravens: warrior

Freyja’s tears: amber

Hanged God: Wotan

Frigg’s thread: gold

icicle of blood: Sword or spear

Loptr’s favor: fire

Loptr’s mead: lies/deception

mind’s worth: courage/honor

moon distaff’s thread: silver

Rán’s hammer: waves

raven harvest: corpse

ring-giver: Kœnig or jarl

sea-steed: ship

shame of swords: shield

Sif’s hair: gold

sky-candle: the sun

slaughter-dew: blood

Slayer of Giants: Donar

spear-din: battle

swan of blood: raven

sword-sleep: death

wave-cutter: ship

wave-swine: ship

wave thread: sea serpent

Wotan’s children: raven

weather of weapons: war

whale road: sea

wolf-hearted: coward, oath-breaker, one without mind’s worth

wound-hoe: sword

wound-sea: blood

Special Non-Player Characters

There are lots of NPCs in this book who would normally need an individual description of special abilities and extra hit dice. The village blacksmith isn’t a fighter, but he’s much tougher than a “normal human” with 1d6 hit points. The hedge-witch who lives outside town isn’t a full-fledged magic-user, but can cast spells. The sly diplomat isn’t necessarily trained in anything, but he’s too important to be nothing but “normal.”

For purposes of describing the role of NPCs who fall somewhere into the gap between “normal human” and “character class,” we’ve stolen a couple of standard notations to avoid describing special abilities each and every time one of these NPCs appears, and to indicate a bit of information about their role or social status. This is especially important because in the lists of “Notable NPCs” for a settlement, there are many NPCs who appear only in that line, with no other description anywhere.

In all cases, these “special” NPCs have extra hit dice (d6), and a saving throw of 15 – HD, to a minimum of 8. If you can’t find this part of the book later on, just make up a number. Specifics aren’t important.

Adept (Adept): A minor spellcaster, falling short of being a true magic-user or cleric. Hedge-witches, shamans, and healers might be described this way. The number after “Adept” is the number of d6 hit dice. The hit dice also indicate (vaguely) the adept’s ability to use magic.

Aristocrat: Designates a noble or sedentary leader such as a mayor or a courtier. These people have less combat training than veteran fighters, but aren’t nearly as helpless as an ordinary, completely untrained human. The number after “Aristocrat” is the number of d6 hit dice.

Commoner: This is your standard village blacksmith, innkeeper, or dockside laborer: strong, but not battle trained. The number after “Commoner” is the number of d6 hit dice.

