



# Saga of the Nine

AN ARCTIC FUSION OF MYTH, ERRONEOUS GEOGRAPHY, AND SPECULATIVE HISTORY

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GAME RULES V.1.1.1 (NOV 2023)

Saga of the Nine (S9) is a *Diplomacy* variant for nine players. Saga of the Nine provides rules for two different scenarios: **S9 Basic** and **S9 Complete**.

S9 Basic uses very few special rules. It is similar in complexity to *Hundred* [Schwarz] or *1900* [VonPowell].

S9 Complete incorporates more advanced features such as Diplomacy Points (DP), Heirs, Minor Neutral Powers, Thrall Powers, and Vassal Powers. It is comparable in complexity to *Ambition & Empire* (VonPowell, Kase, & Ronke).

All standard rules of *Diplomacy* apply, except where explicitly contravened by these rules.

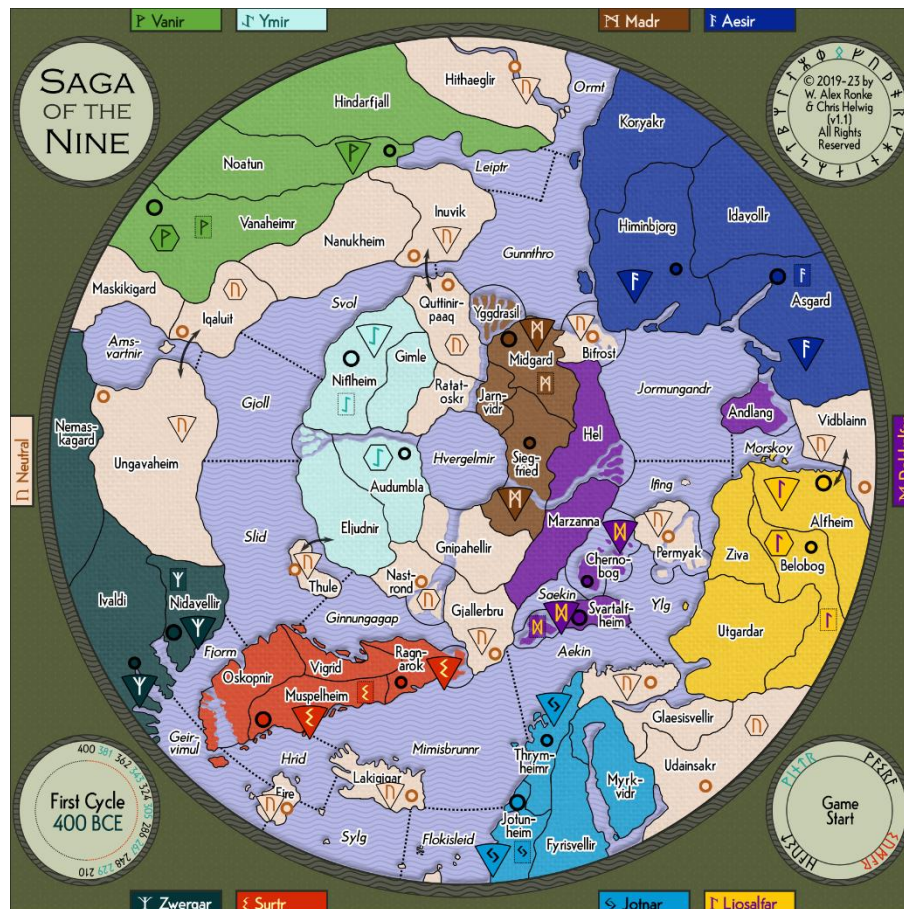
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# 1.0 - Introduction

Saga of the Nine takes place in an alternate version of Earth's history and geography. A considerably warmer global climate has driven early civilizations further from the equator. Surrounding the North Pole, instead of a solid ice cap, lies a cold but arable continent called Arctica or Hel. Several feudal states have grown and thrived in and near Hel despite its sunless winters and nightless summers.

Each player will lead one of nine powers in the region: the Aesir, Dokkalfar, Jotnar, Ljosalfar, Madr, Surtr, Vanir, Ymir, and Zwergar. Centuries later in this alternate Earth, the stories of these nine powers and their conquests will be spun and reshaped until they reach mythical proportions. These nation-states led by mortal humans will be transformed by generations of storytellers into giants, dwarves, elves and deities; they will become the basis of the [Nine Worlds](#) of Norse mythology.

## 1.1 - S9 Complete: Power Types

S9 Basic only includes Major powers, each played by a single player, as is standard for Diplomacy variants. In S9 Complete, however, there are four types of powers: Major, Minor, Thrall, and Vassal powers.

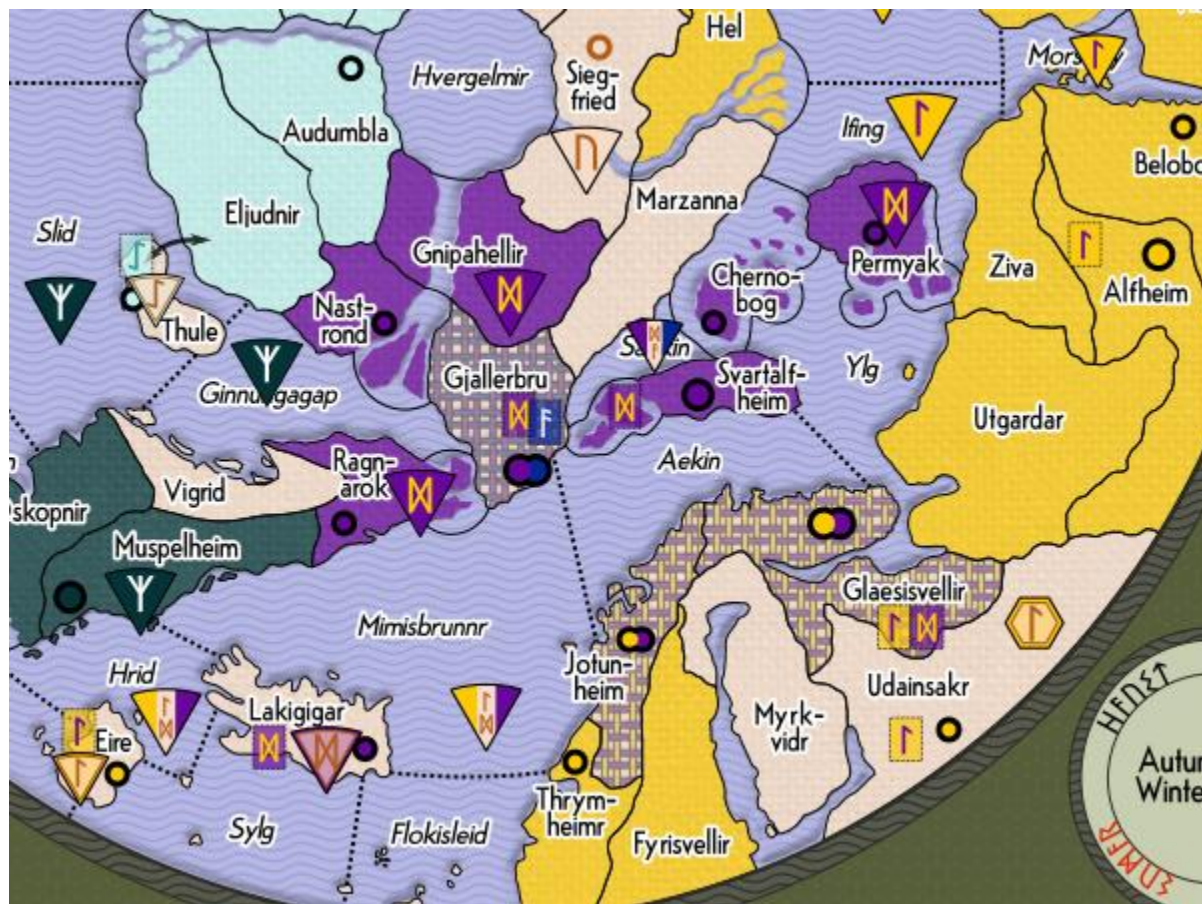


Figure 1 SCs possessed by Major, Minor, Thrall, and Vassal Powers

The above image, which comes from the first playtest of S9 Complete, contains examples of how the different powers, SCs, and units are displayed on the map. Major



powers are solid-colored with like-colored SC dots, like the Dokkalfar in Svartalfheim or the Zwergar in Muspelheim. Neutral minor powers are tan-colored with similar dots, like Siegfried. Thralls like Eire, Lakigigar, and Udainsakr have tan-colored territories but with SCs in the colors of their controlling players. Vassal territories and units contain both their controlling players' colors, as seen in Glaesisvellir (a Vassal that was controlled jointly by Ljosalfar and Dokkalfar) as well as Gjallerbru (a Vassal controlled jointly by Dokkalfar and Aesir).

**Major powers** are the standard powers normally seen in *Diplomacy*. Each major power is controlled by a single player. Each major power controls two home centers at the game's start, one of which is a Capital (§ 5.6).

**Minor powers** are neutral powers that each possess a single unit and occupy a single neutral SC. A minor power's army or fleet differs from their normal counterparts in that they are **stationary** (§ 7.2); their units will never occupy any space other than where they started. No single player controls the orders performed by minor powers' units. Instead, their orders are determined each turn via secret DP allocations (§ 9.0).

**Thrall powers** are similar to neutral powers and are created when a player marries an Heir to a minor power (§ 10.3). They also occupy a single SC, their units are also stationary, and their orders are determined via DP allocations. However, Thrall powers are indirectly "controlled" by a single player whose DP allocations are valued higher than other players'. The Thrall's SC also counts toward the player's SC total (for victory purposes only).

**Vassal powers** are jointly created and controlled by a pair of players, both of whom count the Vassal's SC total towards their own for victory purposes. Vassals are created through the marriage of two players' Heirs (§ 10.4). Like minor and thrall powers, their orders are determined by DP allocations, though such allocations are limited to the two joint-controlling players. Unlike minor and thrall powers, Vassals are mobile. They can capture supply centers and build further units in their Capitals.

## 1.2 - S9 Complete: A Brief Introduction to Heirs

Major powers possess armies and fleets as well as a new unit type: **Heirs** (§ 7.1). Heirs are represented on the map by small rectangles. Heirs are always attached to a supply center, signifying that supply center's status as a Thrall, as the Capital of a Major power, or as the Capital of a Vassal power. They do not participate in combat adjudication, but they provide the following strengths and weaknesses:

1. Heirs increase a player's per-turn DP total (§ 9.2).
2. Heirs can be married to Minor powers to create new Thrall powers (§ 10.3).
3. Heirs can be married to other players' unmarried heirs to create new Vassal powers (§ 10.4).
4. Heirs can be killed (§ 10.1) when the SC they are attached to is captured. This can lead to a player's early elimination from the game.

## 1.3 - S9 Complete: Elimination

In S9 Complete, a player can be eliminated in two ways:

1. **Normal Elimination:** the player loses control of all their major power's directly-controlled SCs.
2. **Early Elimination:** The player loses control of their Capital (§ 5.6) and has no living Heirs.

Further details about the specific timing and adjudication of Early Elimination can be found in section 3.4.

## 2.0 - Starting Year & Turn Structure

---

In standard *Diplomacy*, phases of a turn are labeled according to the seasons of a year: Spring Orders, Spring Retreats, Fall / Autumn Orders, Fall Retreats, and Winter Adjustments / Fall Builds. S9 preserves nearly the same turn structure and naming conventions, but what would normally correspond to one game-year in classic Dip instead corresponds to a Cycle of 19 years.

Thus, the first “year” of the game (what would be 1901 in classic Dip) is referred to as either the First Cycle or 400 BCE. The second “year” of the game is referred to as the Second Cycle or 381 BCE.

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The peoples of the Arctic Circle have no standardized calendar, but they track history using the [Metonic Cycle](#), a period of approximately 19 solar years or 235 synodic lunar months between points at which the Winter Solstice and the New Moon coincide.

### 2.1 - S9 Complete: Autumn Census

After Autumn Retreats have processed, but before the Winter Adjustments phase begins, S9 adds a phase: Autumn Census. The Census is not *actually* a new phase so much as a formal label for an existing set of standard game bookkeeping tasks; it does not require any player interaction and can be handled entirely by a human GM or automated adjudicator.

During the Autumn Census, SCs occupied by powers other than their current owners change hands. SCs are counted to evaluate victory criteria, pending builds, and pending disbands. In **S9 Complete**, additional actions related to the rules for Heirs and early power termination also take place during the Census.

### 2.2 - S9 Complete: Order of Operations

The order in which marriages and early elimination are resolved with respect to retreats and adjustments can be confusing. The following is a summary of the order of operations handled by a GM for a standard Cycle.

1. Spring
  - a. Process Spring Orders
  - b. Process Spring Retreats
  - c. Process Spring Thrall Marriages
2. Autumn
  - a. Process Autumn Orders
  - b. Process Autumn Retreats
  - c. Process Autumn Thrall Marriages
3. Autumn Census
  - a. Change SC ownership based on unit positions (standard captures).
  - b. Execute Heirs in captured SCs where applicable.
  - c. Eliminate Players or Vassals when applicable.
  - d. Process Autumn Vassal Marriages.
  - e. Change SC ownership based on player/vassal eliminations and marriages.

- f. Disband units based on player/vassal eliminations and marriages.
- 4. Winter
  - a. Process Winter Adjustments
    - i. Include rebuilds of neutral / thrall units in applicable vacant SCs.

## 3.0 - Victory Criteria & Game Length

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S9 Basic and S9 Complete have the same overall victory criteria, though SC totals for S9 Complete include Thralls and Vassals affiliated with each player.

### 3.1 - S9 Basic & Complete: Standard Victory Criteria

There are 33 supply centers (SCs) in the game. Solo victory is achieved when a single player controls a total of 16 SCs at the end of the Autumn Census. That player must **also** have the highest total of SCs of any player, with no other players tied for highest total.

The game may alternatively end in a draw, with house rules determining how draws may be constructed, proposed, and voted upon. House rules also determine whether a draw is considered “equally shared” by all surviving players or not, particularly if a scoring system is to be applied to the game’s result.

#### Example 3.0.1: Two Players Tied for 16 SCs

At the end of an Autumn Census, the Aesir player has a total of 16 SCs, the Zwergar player has 16 SCs, the Jotnar player has 1 SC, and all other players are eliminated. In this scenario, neither the Aesir nor the Zwergar have achieved solo victory, and the game continues to the next Cycle.

**For S9 Complete**, were this the Census of the Eleventh and Final Cycle of the game (see below), then the game would immediately terminate in a draw that includes Aesir, Zwergar, and Jotnar.

### 3.2 - S9 Complete: SC Total Adjustments

The SCs occupied by a player’s controlled Thrall powers count toward that player’s total for *determining victory criteria only*. Likewise, SCs held by Vassal powers, which are controlled jointly by two players, count toward *both* controlling players’ SC totals for victory criteria only.

Neither Thrall powers nor Vassal powers count toward a player’s SCs for their Major power when calculating pending Winter Adjustments, as each Major, Thrall, and Vassal power handles builds and disbands separately.

### 3.3 - S9 Complete: Final Cycle

S9 Complete includes a timing mechanism by default. No game of S9 Complete will last more than eleven cycles. At the end of the 11th Autumn Census (210 BCE), if no player has achieved Solo victory, then the game ends immediately in a draw that includes all surviving players.

A GM can set this cap higher or lower or may eliminate it completely.



## 3.4 - S9 Complete: Early Power Elimination Rules

During the Autumn Census, if a player has no living Heirs (§ 10.0) and has lost control of their power's Capital City (§ 5.6), then that player is immediately eliminated. Likewise, if a major power controls no SCs of its own, that power's controlling player is also eliminated. Follow this procedure to convert that player's remaining Supply Centers into Minor neutral powers.

1. Any remaining units belonging to the eliminated power are immediately disbanded.
2. Any supply centers belonging to the power (i.e. those not already captured) are converted into Neutral supply centers. Each of those centers becomes a new Minor power of its own.
3. During the subsequent Winter phase, each of the new Minor powers will build the unit type that was present in that center at the start of the game, as per the build rules (§ 8.9).
4. If the player controlled any Thrall powers, they are converted to ordinary Minor powers.
5. If the player jointly controlled a Vassal power, and that Vassal's other controlling player has not yet been eliminated, then that other player may continue to control the Vassal on their own (§ 10.4) but must still allocate DP to set that power's units' orders.

### 3.4.1 - Early Vassal Elimination

A Vassal power will be eliminated early during Autumn Census if its Capital city is captured. Likewise, a Vassal power will also be eliminated if its two controlling players are both eliminated. In either case, the Vassal power's supply centers should likewise convert to new Minor powers using the same procedure described in steps 1-3 above, with its units disbanded and rebuilt by said Minor powers during the subsequent Winter.

### 3.4.2 - Optional Rules for Handling Dropped Players

At the GM's discretion, if a player drops out or is kicked out of the game for NMRs or other unsavory behavior, and a replacement player cannot be found to take over that player's position, the GM may elect to force that player's Major Power to undergo the Early Elimination procedure. This must occur during an Autumn Census phase. The exact timing and specific parameters for invoking this option should, if possible, be spelled out in the GM's house rules.

## 3.4 - S9 Complete: Alternate Endgame Criteria

In S9 Complete, Solo victory can also be achieved when exactly **one** surviving player remains at the end of the Autumn Census.

However, if **no** surviving players remain at the end of Autumn Census, then **all** players have lost the game.

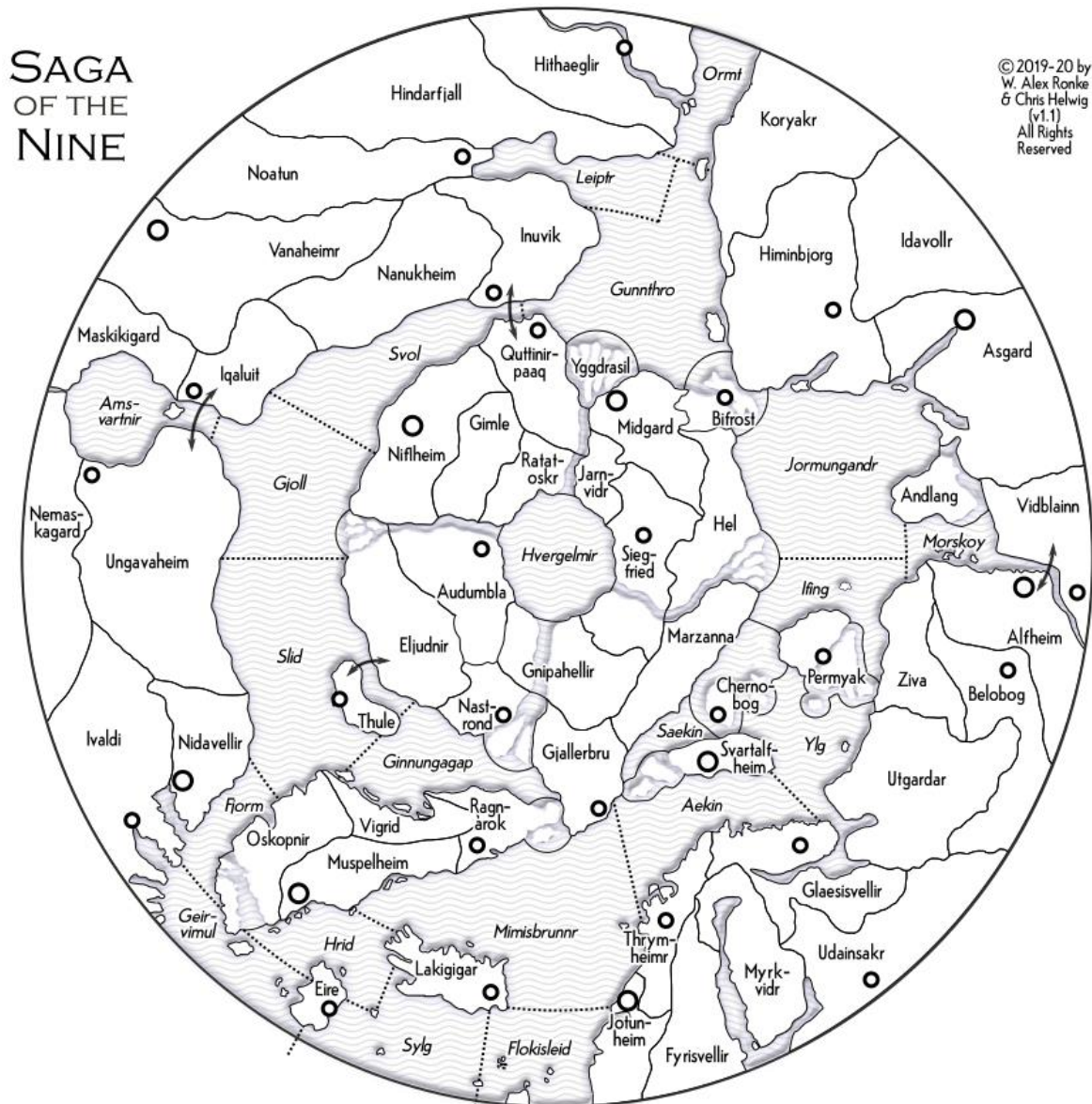
## 4.0 - Maps

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The following are reference maps for the Saga of the Nine. Note that the setups differ between S9 Basic and S9 Complete. In S9 Basic, there are no Heirs or neutral Minor power units. In S9 Complete, the starting units for Minor powers are tan-colored and marked with the ∩ rune.

In the maps shown in sections 4.2 and 4.3, Armies are represented by hexagonal icons. Fleets are represented by pie-piece-shaped icons (a.k.a. sails).

#### 4.1 - Greyscale Map, Outlines and Names Only



Full resolution copy: <https://diplomacyvariants.files.wordpress.com/2023/11/20200317-outlines-map-1.1.png>

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First Cycle 400 BCE

Game Start

Legend:

- Vanir
- Ymir
- Neutral
- Mad
- Aesir
- Zwergar
- Surtr
- Jotnar
- Ljosalfar
- Dokkalfar

Locations and Features:

- Hithaegir
- Ormt
- Koryakr
- Himinbjorg
- Idavollr
- Asgard
- Vidblainn
- Morskoj
- Alfheim
- Belobog
- Utgardar
- Glaesisvellir
- Udainsakr
- Fyrissvellir
- Thrymheimr
- Jotunheim
- Flokisleid
- Sylg
- Lakigigar
- Eire
- Hrid
- Muspelheim
- Oskopnir
- Geirvimul
- Fjorm
- Nidavellir
- Ivaldi
- Ungavaheim
- Nemas-kagard
- Ams-vartnir
- Iqaluit
- Maskikigard
- Vanaheimr
- Noatun
- Hindarfjall
- Leiptr
- Inuvik
- Nanukheim
- Sval
- Gimle
- Niflheim
- Gjoll
- Slid
- Eljudnir
- Audumbla
- Hvergelmir
- Ratat-oskr
- Jarn-vidr
- Sieg-fried
- Marzanna
- Svartalfheim
- Aekin
- Ylg
- Permyak
- Ziva
- Andlang
- Jormungandr
- Bifrost
- Midgard
- Yggdrasil
- Quttinir-paaq
- Gunnthro

Full resolution copy: <https://diplomacyvariants.files.wordpress.com/2023/11/s9-basic-starting-map-1.1.png>



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First Cycle 400 BCE

Game Start

Legend:

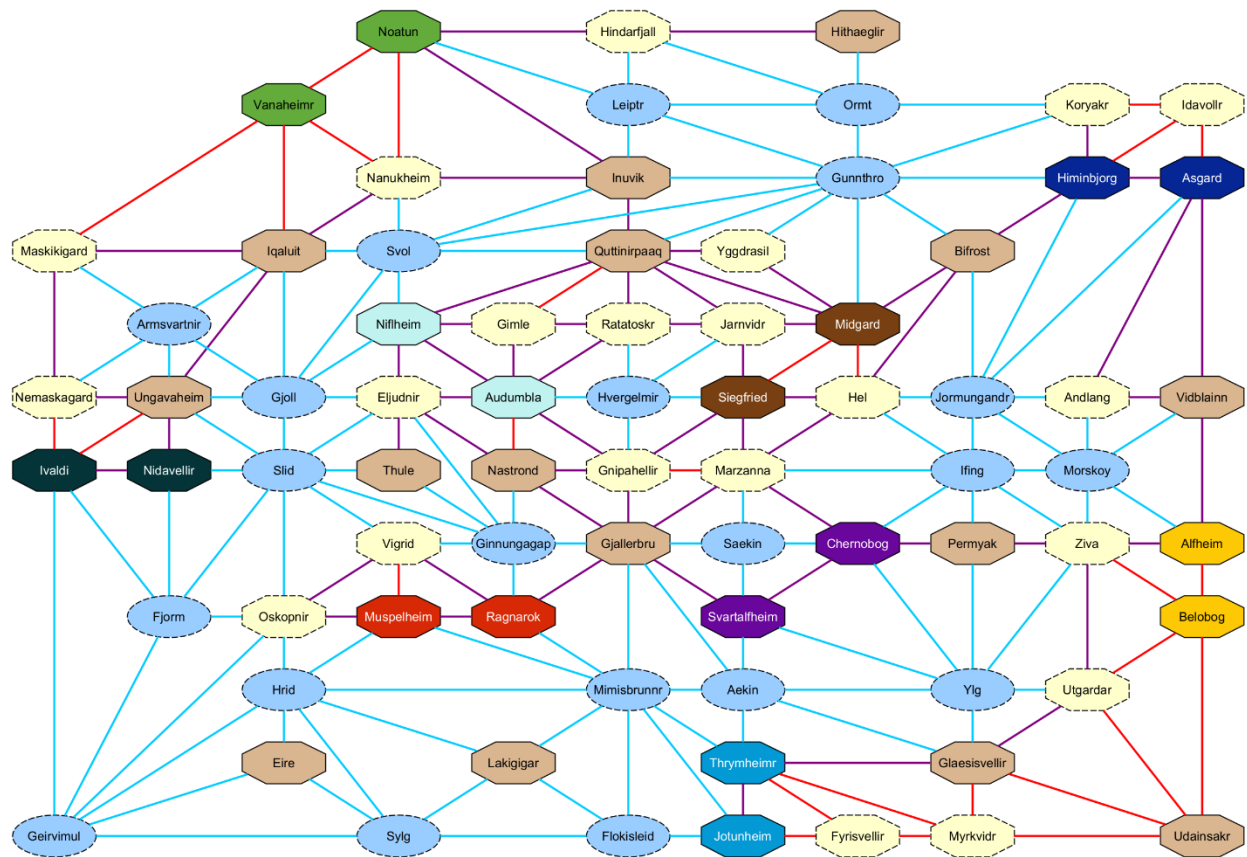
- Vanir
- Ymir
- Mad
- Aesir
- Neutral
- Dokkalfar
- Zwergar
- Surtr
- Jotnar
- Ljosalfar

Map Labels:

- Hindarfjall
- Noatun
- Vanaheimr
- Nanukheim
- Inuvik
- Leiptr
- Ormt
- Koryakr
- Himinbjorg
- Idavollr
- Asgard
- Vidblainn
- Morskoj
- Andlang
- Jormungandr
- Bifrost
- Gunnthro
- Yggdrasil
- Quttinir-paaq
- Ratat-oskr
- Jarn-vidr
- Sieg-fried
- Hel
- Marzanna
- Svartalfheim
- Aekin
- Glaeisvellir
- Udainsakr
- Myrk-vidr
- Fyrissvellir
- Jotunheim
- Floksleid
- Sylg
- Lakigjaar
- Hrid
- Geir-vmul
- Oskopnir
- Muspelheim
- Vigrid
- Ragn-arok
- Mimisbrunnr
- Ginnungagap
- Nast-rond
- Gnipahellir
- Gjallerbru
- Thule
- Slid
- Eljudnir
- Audumbla
- Hvergelmir
- Gimle
- Niflheim
- Gjoll
- Ungavaheim
- Ams-vartnir
- Iqaluit
- Maskikigard
- Nemas-kagard
- Ivaldi
- Nidavellir
- Fjorm
- Utgardar
- Belobog
- Ziva
- Permyak
- Ylg
- Cherno-bog
- Saekin
- Thrymheimr

Full resolution copy: <https://diplomacyvariants.files.wordpress.com/2023/11/s9-starting-map-1.1.png>

## 4.4 - Adjacency Diagram



Full resolution copy: <https://diplomacyvariants.files.wordpress.com/2023/11/saga-of-the-nine-v1.1-clean-nodes.png>

The above diagram shows lines of adjacency between locations in Saga of the Nine. Red lines connect locations that only Armies may treat as adjacent. Blue lines connect locations that only Fleets may treat as adjacent. Purple lines connect locations that either unit type may treat as adjacent.



## 4.5 - Reference Map, Mercator



Full resolution copy: <https://diplomacyvariants.files.wordpress.com/2023/11/mercator-1595.jpg>

The above map, drawn by Mercator in 1595, was an attempt on his part to predict the geography of the Arctic Circle based on the knowledge available at the time. This map served as a major inspiration for Saga of the Nine.



## 5.0 - Map Notes

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This section details features of the map for Saga of the Nine that might not be immediately clear upon viewing it.

### 5.1 - Names & Abbreviations

Any space in S9 may be referred to by the first three letters of its name.

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Each named space begins with a unique permutation of three letters, so there should be no ambiguity in this regard.

The following is a list of all space names in S9.

Aekin	Hithaeglr	Niflheim
Alfheim	Hrid	Noatun
Amsvartnir	Hvergelmir	Ormt
Andlang	Idavollr	Oskopnir
Asgard	Ifing	Permyak
Audumbla	Inuvik	Quttinirpaaq
Belobog	Iqaluit	Ragnarok
Bifrost	Ivaldi	Ratatoskr
Chernobog	Jarnvidr	Saekin
Eire	Jormungandr	Siegfried
Eljudnir	Jotunheim	Slid
Fjorm	Koryakr	Svartalfheim
Flokisleid	Lakigigar	Svol
Fyrisvellir	Leiptr	Sylg
Geirvimul	Marzanna	Thrymheimr
Gimle	Maskikigard	Thule
Ginnungagap	Midgard	Udainsakr
Gjallerbru	Mimisbrunnr	Ungavaheim
Gjoll	Morskoy	Utgardar
Glaesisvellir	Muspelheim	Vanaheimr
Gnipahellir	Myrkvidr	Vidblainn
Gunnthro	Nanukheim	Vigrid
Hel	Nastrond	Yggdrasil
Himinbjorg	Nemaskagard	Ylg
Hindarfjall	Nidavellir	Ziva

### 5.2 - Lots of Canals

Several land spaces on the map also function as canal spaces. These spaces operate identically to Constantinople or Kiel in standard Diplomacy. Fleets may travel through and along those canals as they would coastlines, but fleets located in those canal spaces may not convoy armies. The exact connections those canals provide are detailed in the Adjacency Diagram (§ 4.4).

**There are no split coastlines** in Saga of the Nine (*i.e.* no spaces equivalent to Spain or Bulgaria from classic Dip).

## 5.3 - Island Spaces

Some spaces, such as Permyak and Thule, operate as island spaces. Islands may be occupied by fleets or armies. Armies and fleets may move freely between them and any space with which they share a border. Thus a fleet in Thule may move to Eljudnir or an army in Permyak to Ziva. Fleets occupying island spaces may not convoy units.

## 5.4 - Arrows

Arrows connecting two spaces (and crossing a water space) indicate the presence of a narrow inlet or land bridge. The connected spaces should be considered adjacent for all purposes.

- Iqaluit & Ungavaheim: This arrow indicates that Iqaluit, Ungavaheim, Armsvartnir, and Gjoll should all be considered mutually adjacent.
- Inuvik & Quttinirpaaq: This arrow indicates that Inuvik, Quttinirpaaq, Svol, and Gunnthro should all be considered mutually adjacent.
- Eljudnir & Thule: This arrow indicates that Eljudnir, Thule, Slid, and Gunnungagap should all be considered mutually adjacent.
- Belobog & Vidblainn: This arrow indicates that Vidblainn, Belobog, and Morskoy should all be considered mutually adjacent.

Please check the Adjacency Diagram (§ 4.4) if there is any confusion.

## 5.5 - Impassable spaces

Spaces without listed names are impassable, such as the sea space adjacent to Udainsakr (which would correspond to the Baltic Sea on a real map). Accordingly, neither Fyrisvellir, Myrkvidr, nor Udainsakr should be treated as having a coastline and may not be occupied by fleets.

## 5.6 - S9 Complete: Capital Cities

Each of the nine Major Powers possesses one Supply Center that is also a Capital City. The Capital City is where Heirs are generated or initially placed. A player that loses control of their own Capital will not be able to generate new Heirs. A player that loses control of their Capital and also has no living Heirs will be subject to Early Power Elimination (§ 3.4) during the Autumn Census.

Likewise, each Vassal power possesses its own Capital city (§ 10.4). Should it lose control of that Capital, it is also subject to Early Power Elimination.

## 6.0 - Major Powers and Starting Units

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The following are the nine Major powers of Saga of the Nine. Each of these major powers is controlled by a single player. This section additionally contains notes about the counterfactual histories of each power.

### 6.1 - Aesir (F)

- **Color:** Navy blue
- **Starting Units / Home SCs:**
  - F Asgard
  - F Himinbjorg
- **S9 Complete Setup:** An Heir begins in the Capital of Asgard.



---

The Aesir, whose name may share etymology with a term meaning “people of Asia,” are thought to be ancestrally related to the Koryak, Ainu, and other indigenous peoples of northeast Asia.

### 6.2 - Dokkalfar (M)

- **Color:** Purple
- **Starting Units / Home SCs:**
  - F Svartalfheim
  - F Chernobog
- **S9 Complete Setup:** An Heir begins in the Capital of Svartalfheim.



---

The Dokkalfar, also known as the Svartalfar or “Dark Elves,” are thought to be ancestrally related to modern-day Slavic and Uralic ethnic groups. It is hypothesized that the Dokkalfar were originally a faction of the Ljosalfar that settled in Arctica and seceded from a larger Bronze Age proto-empire.

### 6.3 - Jotnar (S)

- **Color:** Teal Blue
- **Starting Units / Home SCs:**
  - F Jotunheim
  - F Thrymheimr
- **S9 Complete Setup:** An Heir begins in the Capital of Jotunheim.



---

The Jotnar are thought to be ancestrally related to the Scandinavian peoples of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. Artifacts found in Greenland seem to suggest that, at some point prior to the rise of the Surtr as an independent people, the Jotnar or Ymir may have ruled there as well. Other evidence suggests some cultural connection between the Jotnar and Ymir even though DNA analysis does not appear to suggest a close common ancestry.

## 6.4 - Ljosalfar (𐌺)

- **Color:** Yellow
- **Starting Units / Home SCs:**
  - F Alfheim
  - A Belobog
- **S9 Complete Setup:** An Heir begins in the Capital of Alfheim.



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The Ljosalfar, also known as the Alfar or “Light Elves,” are thought to be ancestrally related to modern-day Slavic and Uralic ethnic groups. They spoke a Finno-Ugric dialect similar to the language of the Dokkalfar, and it is hypothesized that these two powers were at one point part of a shared proto-empire in Bronze Age Eurasia.

## 6.5 - Madr (𐌺)

- **Color:** Brown
- **Starting Units / Home SCs:**
  - F Midgard
  - F Siegfried
- **S9 Complete Setup:** An Heir begins in the Capital of Midgard.



---

The Madr, who referred to themselves using their word for “men” or “people,” settled the Pacific quadrant of Arctica in the eighth century BCE. They are considered one of the great puzzles of archaeology: their written language was clearly Nordic in origin, but fossil records and genetic analysis suggest a stronger connection to Aboriginal Australians.

## 6.6 - Surtr (𐌺)

- **Color:** Red-orange
- **Starting Units / Home SCs:**
  - F Muspelheim
  - F Ragnarok
- **S9 Complete Setup:** An Heir begins in the Capital of Muspelheim.



---

The Surtr, or Muspel, described themselves in religious texts as a formerly enslaved populace that rebelled against a larger empire of either Jotnar or Ymir (depending on the translation). Archaeologists have been unable to independently verify the exact timing of this rebellion, but genetic analysis has shown evidence of common ancestry between the Surtr and other Nordic, Arctic-American, and indigenous Greenlandic ethnic groups. Ymir and Aesir writings from the period describe the Surtr in near-superstitious tones, warning of calamity should they ever seek to expand their borders beyond the plains of Ragnarok.

## 6.7 - Vanir (P)

- **Color:** Green
- **Starting Units / Home SCs:**
  - A Vanaheimr
  - F Noatun
- **S9 Complete Setup:** An Heir begins in the Capital of Vanaheimr.



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Of the nine major peoples of the period, the Vanir were likely the most successful agrarians. They appeared to have maintained frequent contact with the Aesir across the Bering Straits, though not all such interaction was peaceful in nature. The Vanir are most likely ancestrally connected to the First Nations peoples of the Pacific Northwest.

## 6.8 - Ymir (J)

- **Color:** Ice blue
- **Starting Units / Home SCs:**
  - F Niflheim
  - A Audumbla
- **S9 Complete Setup:** An Heir begins in the Capital of Niflheim.



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The Ymir (pronounced either “ee-meer” or “ae-meer”) ruled an early proto-empire that stretched across multiple quadrants of Arctica and possibly into modern-day Greenland. By this period, their empire had experienced considerable decline, with many city-states like Thule, Nastrond, and Gjallerbru having declared independence years earlier. Human remains of the Ymir have proven difficult to link ancestrally to any modern-day cultures with even a slight degree of certainty.

## 6.9 - Zwergar (Y)

- **Color:** Charcoal
- **Starting Units / Home SCs:**
  - F Nidavellir
  - F Ivaldi
- **S9 Complete Setup:** An Heir begins in the Capital of Nidavellir.



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The Zwergar or Dvergar, though their name shares an etymology with the Germanic noun “dwarf,” do not appear to have been, in actuality, a people of reduced height. The Zwergar settled the far northeast Atlantic coast of North America during and share common ancestry with the Algonquian and Iroquois.

## 7.0 - S9 Complete: Unit Types

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In addition to the standard Armies and Fleets of *Diplomacy*, S9 Complete adds new mechanics for Heirs and stationary units.

### 7.1 - Heirs

There is one new core unit type: Heirs. Heirs are represented by small semi-transparent rectangles. Each player begins with one Heir in their Capital city.

Heirs are a totally nonstandard unit. They are not part of a player's unit count. They do not perform standard orders. They can co-locate with other Heirs and unit types. They do not participate directly in combat. They cannot defend themselves, and neglecting them can lead to a player's early elimination (§ 3.4 & 10.1). Heirs are only ever located in Supply Centers, and they can only be relocated through marriage.

An Heir may only be built by a major power in its own Capital city (§ 8.3). An Heir may be referred to either by its current location or its controlling power. For instance, an unmarried Aesir Heir can be referred to as Heir Aesir, Heir Asgard, or H Asg.

Only an unmarried Heir may be granted orders, and their only available order types are Hold or Marry. Section 10 will provide further rules about Heirs and Marriages.

### 7.2 - Stationary Units

Minor Powers and Thrall Powers possess only stationary units. The rules for stationary units should be familiar to anyone who has played a DP-based variant before, and it is recommended that the player familiarize themselves with the [Common Ruleset for DP-based Variants](#), a section of which is quoted below.

#### Stationary Units & Sortie Attacks

All Minor Powers' units are stationary. Stationary units can be given orders just like any other unit. They can be ordered to hold, support, move, or (when applicable) convoy. They can be ordered to move via convoy as well.

However, while stationary units can be ordered to move, they will never actually move. Instead, their moves will always bounce. This is called a Sortie. For example, a stationary unit's move order can be used to cut an adjacent unit's support or protect an adjacent empty province from a potential invader.

Because stationary units cannot leave their current locations, they cannot dislodge other units.

#### Stationary Units & Retreats

Stationary units cannot retreat. If a stationary unit is dislodged, it is always destroyed during the Retreat phase. If a stationary unit's move order bounces in an otherwise uncontested province, that province is not an eligible retreat location during the subsequent Retreat phase.

Please note that while the above quoted rules apply to Thralls as well, they do not apply to Vassal powers (§ 10.5), whose units are standard mobile armies and fleets.



## 8.0 - Build Rules

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There are different build rules for S9 Basic and S9 Complete.

### 8.1 - S9 Basic Builds

In S9 Basic, players may build in any vacant supply centers they control.

### 8.2 - S9 Complete: Builds by Major Powers

In S9 Complete, Major powers may **only** build armies and fleets in their original two home centers.

### 8.3 - S9 Complete: Building Heirs

In S9 Complete, a player's Major power may build an Heir in their Capital city during the Winter phase only if the following are all true:

- That player currently controls their own Capital.
- The Capital does not currently contain an Heir.
- That player did not build an Heir during the most recent prior Winter phase.

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Effectively, this means that a player may, at most, build an Heir every *other* Winter, starting with the first.

### 8.4 - S9 Complete: Builds by Minor, Vassal & Thrall Powers

A Vassal power may only build in its Capital city. Its build orders are set by the players that jointly control the Vassal, with preference given to legal orders given by the Vassal's Dowry Giver (§ 10.5).

Should a Minor power or Thrall power enter the Winter phase with a controlled-but-vacant SC, that power will automatically build a unit of the type present in that SC at the start of the game.

## 9.0 - S9 Complete: Diplomacy Points

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Every neutral SC on the board begins the game with a neutral unit. Each of these initially belong to are "Minor Powers." The orders given for neutral units are determined through secret Diplomacy Point (DP) allocations.

Those unacquainted with Diplomacy Points should familiarize themselves with the [Common Ruleset for DP-based Variants](#). S9 Complete uses a variation of these standard DP rules for setting the orders for Minor Powers, Thrall Powers, and Vassal powers. A section of that standard set of rules is quoted below.

### From the Common Ruleset for DP-based Variants

Diplomacy Points (DP) are the system by which players determine the orders of Neutral units. Each Orders Phase, every player receives an allotment of DP; the amount allotted varies by variant. That DP is use-it-or-lose-it; none can be stored or carried over into the next turn.

## Allocating & Adjudicating DP

Along with orders for their own units, players can submit potential orders for one or more neutral units. Each potential order must come with a DP allocation, and the total DP allocated by a player must not exceed their total allotment for that phase. The DP expenditures act like "votes" for that order. Other players may vote for that same order and allocate DP to it. A single player with 2 DP, for instance, can potentially spend 2 DP on a single unit's order or allocate 1 DP each to two different unit's orders.

At the time of adjudication, the GM analyzes all the submitted DP allocations for a given unit. The order that has the most DP spent is the one that will be given to the unit. If two or more orders tie for DP spent, or if no DP is allocated to that unit, it will be given a default order instead. Except where specified in the specific variant's rules, the default order for any neutral unit is Hold.

All DP allocations are kept secret. Only the "winning" orders will be known publicly but not which players (if any) allocated DP to those orders. For most variants, all DP allocations will remain secret until the entire game has completed.

## Limitations on DP Allocations

Individual variants tend to come with additional restrictions regarding who a neutral unit or Minor unit will attack or support, which players may spend DP on a given unit, and how much DP may be spent on a single order per turn. These restrictions tend to be customized to reflect the setting of the variant and the affiliations of the Minor Powers. However, one rule is nearly universal, particularly for stationary minor powers.

## The Attacking & Allocating Rule

**If a player's own unit is attacking (or supporting an attack on) a minor power, that player may not allocate DP to that minor power during the turn the attack or support is taking place.**

*This rule lessens some of the inherent "gullibility" of minor powers. Most commonly, it prevents a player from allocating DPs to a minor power for having the minor power unit move, thereby making it ineligible to receive support-to-hold during the player's attack on that minor power.*

## 9.1 - DP Allocation Specifics for S9

The above rules apply in full for all non-Major power units, with the following changes:

- A. A Minor neutral power may also be ordered via DP allocation to **Marry** a player's Heir (§ 10.3), which if successful will create a new Thrall power. For combat adjudication purposes, treat a Marry order the same as a Hold order. *However*, DP allocated to a minor neutral unit to Hold should not count as DP allocated toward a Marry order, nor vice versa; they are still two distinct order types.
- B. For DP allocation purposes, Thrall powers can be considered identical to Minor powers, except that every DP spent on an order for a Thrall power by that Thrall power's controller is worth double its normal value (§ 10.3).

### Example 9.1.1

Ljosalfar controls a Thrall power in Glaesisvellir. During an Orders phase, Ljosalfar secretly allocates 1 DP to F Glaesisvellir, ordering it to move to Aekin (sortie). Meanwhile, Jotnar secretly allocates 1 DP to F Glaesisvellir, ordering it to support F Jotunheim to Aekin. Provided there are no other DP allocations to this unit, F Glaesisvellir will move/sortie to Aekin, as that order effectively has the equivalent of 2 DP allocated to it.

- C. Units belonging to Vassal powers (§ 10.4) are also ordered via DP allocation. However, Vassal powers' units are not stationary. Their move orders are not to be treated as sorties, they may retreat, and they are not subject to the **Attacking & Allocating Rule**. Also, the only players that may allocate DP to a Vassal unit's orders are the two players that jointly control that Vassal power.

## 9.2 - DP Totals per Player per Turn

Major powers receive a total pool of Diplomacy Points during each Orders phase that they may split between allocations to Minor, Thrall, and Vassal powers' units. These points, if not spent, are lost at the end of the turn and do not carry over into subsequent Orders phases.

The total DP each Major power receives is calculated as follows:

- +1 DP if the Major power controls its own Capital city
- +1 DP if the power's Capital city contains an unmarried Heir
- +1 DP for each controlled Thrall power
- +1 DP for each controlled Vassal power (both players that control a Vassal will receive this DP)

Accordingly, during the first Spring Orders phases of the game, each Major power will have 2 DP each to allocate: one for its capital, and one for its unmarried Heir. A Major power that has lost its Capital but still controls one Thrall power and one Vassal power will have 2 DP to allocate that Orders phase.

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It is hypothetically possible, but highly unlikely, for a single player to have 7 DP to allocate per Orders phase. Because Heirs can only be built every other Winter (§ 8.4), and S9 Complete lasts no more than 11 Cycles (§ 3.3), this is the maximum possible DP for a single player.

## 10.0 - S9 Complete: Heirs, Thralls, and Vassal Powers

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Heirs are a new unit type for S9 Complete. They are not part of the standard unit count, they are not part of standard combat mechanics, and they only ever reside in Supply Centers. Heirs start in their controllers' Capital cities but may be relocated via marriage. Successful marriages create new Thrall powers and Vassal powers.

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Heir mechanics are based partly on the 2018 rules for *Diplomacy of Ice & Fire* (based on the works of George R. R. Martin, with original variant & map design by Alex Maslow & Matt Kremer), a play-by-forum variant adapted and GM'd by Chris Helwig.

Heirs' primary purpose is to act as a weakness. They provide means of more quickly eliminating players from the map. If we draw an analogy to a game of Capture the Flag, for instance, the Heirs and Capital are the flags. Marrying heirs spreads flags across the map. An S9 Complete player that never orders a successful marriage for their Heir will only ever have one such "flag" in their Capital city, and that Capital can be said to be that player's Achilles' heel.

### 10.1 - Building & Executing Heirs

Each Major power starts the game with one unmarried Heir in their Capital city. As seen in the build rules for S9 Complete (§ 8.3), a player may build a new Heir during a Winter phase only if:

- That player currently controls their own Capital.
- The Capital does not currently contain an Heir.
- That player did not build an Heir during the most recent prior Winter phase.

If the SC where an Heir is located is captured, the Heir is **executed** during the Autumn Census and removed from the board. This is true even if the Heir belongs to the player doing the capturing (i.e. if a Major power captures its own controlled Thrall power or the capital city of a controlled Vassal power, the Heir is still executed).

During the Autumn Census, if a player has no living Heirs and has lost control of their power's Capital City, then that player is immediately eliminated (§ 3.4).

### 10.2 - Marrying Heirs

Heirs start unmarried and reside in the Capital city of their Major power. Only one unmarried Heir may reside in the Capital at a time. They can be relocated to other supply centers on the board using the **Marry** order. They may be married to the heirs of other major powers OR to any minor power on the board.

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The genders of the Heirs are unimportant and left to the imaginations of the players.

In order to be successful, Marry orders must come in pairs and must be given during the same Orders phase. The procedure differs on whether the marriage is between two Major powers' heirs or between a Major power's heir and a Minor power.

Once an heir is married, they may not remarry or divorce. Effectively, they will remain at the supply center where the marriage took place until the end of the game (or until they are executed).

## 10.3 - Marriage to Minor Powers: Thrall Powers

Marriages to minor powers may be issued in either spring or fall turns and create Thrall powers. The marriage requires the following:

- A. At the start of the applicable orders phase, the Minor Power must still possess an army or fleet at its location.
- B. The Heir must be given the order to Marry the minor power at the chosen SC.

### Example 10.3.1

#### Aesir Orders

Heir Asgard Marry Permyak

- C. The Minor power unit must be given a corresponding order to Marry the Major power's heir. As detailed previously (§ 9.1), this order is not set *directly* by any one given player but rather must be the succeeding result of DP allocations.

### Example 10.3.2

#### Aesir DP Allocations

2 DP to F Permyak Marry Heir Aesir

#### Dokkalfar DP Allocations

1 DP to F Permyak S Svartalfheim - Ylg

#### Resulting Order for Permyak

F Permyak Marry Heir Aesir

- D. The Minor power's unit must not be dislodged during that orders phase.

If one or more of the above requirements are not met, the marriage fails, and the Heir remains at the Capital.

If the requirements are met, however, then the marriage succeeds! During the retreat phase that immediately follows the successful pair of Marry orders, move the Major power's Heir to the Minor power's supply center. That Minor power converts into a new **Thrall** power.

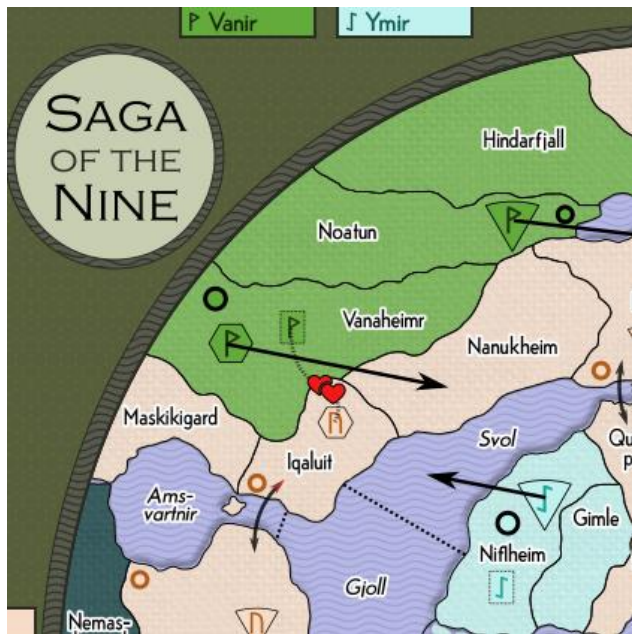


Figure 2 Vanir Heir Marries Iqaluit

Thrall powers are “controlled” by the player whose Heir resides there, and that player may count the Thrall’s SC toward their total for victory purposes. However, that control is indirect. The orders given by a Thrall power’s unit are still set via DP allocations, though each DP allocated to a Thrall by its controller’s is worth double its normal value (§ 9.1).

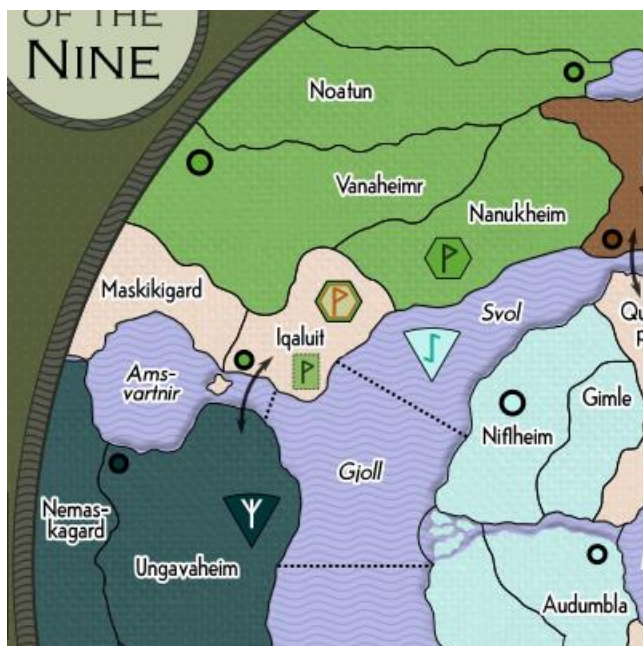


Figure 3 New Vanir Thrall in Iqaluit

Thrall power units, like those of Minor powers, are stationary and may not retreat. They are also to be considered separate powers from their controller; a Thrall may cut their controller’s support order as well as



support a dislodging move targeting their controller. A Thrall power is eliminated (and the residing Heir killed) if any other power, including their controller, captures their supply center.

### 10.3.1 - Frequently Misunderstood Concepts: Marriage & Thralls

1. There are always two orders per marriage. To create a Thrall, one order must be set for the Heir, and one order must be set for the Minor power's unit.
2. To create a Thrall, the Minor power's unit has to be ordered to marry the Heir.
  - a. This order is set via DP allocations.
  - b. The DP allocated for the Minor power's unit's order can come from any player in the same manner as any other order can be bid on by any player.
  - c. As with other DP orders, players' DP allocations to Neutrals' marriage orders are secret.
3. The Heir, however, must be ordered by their owner to marry the Minor power in question.
  - a. The Heir and its own order **do not require any DP**.
  - b. The Heir's order will not be a secret. Even if the marriage fails, the attempt at marriage by the Heir will be revealed as part of adjudication.
4. Thrall-creating marriages happen concurrently with Retreats.
  - a. This means an Heir may potentially use marriage to a Minor Power in order to "escape" the imminent capture of its Capital.
  - b. This is not the case for Vassal-creating marriages between two powers' Heirs.

### 10.4 - Marriages between Major Powers: Vassal Powers

Unlike marriages to Minor powers, marriages between the Heirs of two Major Powers can **ONLY** occur during Autumn orders phases. If they succeed, they will create a new Vassal power during the subsequent Autumn Census.

In a marriage between two Major powers, the two players whose Heirs are to be matched must decide on a **Marriage Location** where the new Vassal power will have its own new Capital. This location must be a supply center belonging to one of the Major powers, and it may not be one of the starting Home centers of either Major power. This SC is the dowry (or bride price) for the marriage. For the rest of the game, or until the Vassal is eliminated, the player that donates this SC will be that Vassal power's **Dowry Giver**, and the other player in the marriage will be the Vassal power's **Dowry Receiver**.

The marriage also requires the following:

1. The two players seeking to marry their Heirs must not already share joint control of another Vassal power.

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Players may create multiple Vassals over the course of the game, but each pair of players can only share control of one Vassal at a time.

2. At the start of the applicable orders phase, the Marriage Location must not contain a unit belonging to anyone other than the Dowry Giver.
3. Each Heir must be given the order to Marry the other Heir. Each order must also include the Marriage Location (*e.g.* Heir Jotnar Marry Heir Zwergar at Thule).
4. The Marriage Location may not be captured during that Autumn Orders phase or its subsequent Retreats phase. If it is, the marriage fails.
5. Neither of the two Major Power's Capital cities may be captured during that Autumn Orders phase or its subsequent Retreats phase. If either is, the marriage fails.



Figure 4 The Aesir Heir marries the Madr Heir in Bifrost, even as the Madr capture Himinbjorg

Assuming the above stipulations are all met, a new Vassal Power is created. At the start of the Autumn Census, control of the Marriage Location SC is transferred from the Dowry Giver to the new Vassal. Next, the previously unmarried Heirs of both Major Powers are relocated from their respective Capital cities to the Marriage Location.

The Marriage Location now becomes the new Vassal's own Capital. If the Dowry Giver possessed a unit at that location, it is immediately disbanded. The Vassal power may then build a new unit there during the subsequent Winter. The two married Heirs residing in the Capital still belong to their respective Major powers, though they will be given no further orders and will remain there until they are killed (or the game ends).



Figure 5 First Build for new Madr-Aesir Vassal in Bifrost

At the GM's discretion, the players may optionally select a new name for the Vassal. References to that new power may be abbreviated as **vGR**, with the **G** replaced by the first initial of the Dowry Giver and the **R** replaced by the first initial of the Dowry Receiver.

#### Example 10.4.0

Assume Dokkalfar has captured Permyak on a prior turn and has a fleet there. Assume that both Aesir and Dokkalfar have unmarried heirs in their respective Capitals. The following are orders that could lead to a marriage between their two heirs.

##### Aesir Orders

Heir Aesir Marry Heir Dokkalfar at Permyak

##### Dokkalfar Orders

Heir Dokkalfar Marry Heir Aesir at Permyak  
F Permyak Hold

Assume the marriage succeeds. A new Vassal power, vDA, is created in Permyak during the Autumn Census. Permyak's SC ceases to belong to Dokkalfar and belongs to vDA instead. The fleet in Permyak disbands. Both players' unmarried Heirs are moved to Permyak.

For the rest of the game, or until the Vassal is eliminated, vDA's Dowry Giver will be the Dokkalfar player, and vDA's Dowry Receiver will be the Aesir player. Permyak is now vDA's Capital city. If Permyak's SC is ever captured by any power, vDA will be subject to Early Elimination (§ 3.4).

During Winter phases, vDA may be eligible to build a unit in Permyak. Because Dokkalfar was the Dowry Giver, that means that a valid Build order given by Dokkalfar will take precedence over one given by Aesir.

### 10.4.1 - Frequently Misunderstood Concepts: Marriage & Vassals

1. There are always two orders per marriage. To create a Vassal, corresponding orders must be given for each of the two Heirs.
  - a. Each Heir must be ordered to marry by its owner.
  - b. The Heirs' orders **do not require any DP**.
  - c. The Heirs' order will not be a secret. Even if the marriage fails, the attempt at marriage by one or both parties will be revealed as part of adjudication.
2. Vassal-creating marriages happen **after Retreats** have been processed.
  - a. The marriage actually takes place immediately after captured SCs change ownership and after executions.
  - b. This means an Heir may not potentially use marriage to another Heir in order to "escape" the imminent capture of its Capital.
  - c. This differs from Thrall-creating marriages, which occur before SCs change ownership.

## 10.5 - Vassal Power Orders & Gameplay

A Vassal power's units and controlled territories are represented by icons and graphics that incorporate the colors and/or symbols of the two players that jointly control the Vassal.

Unlike Minor Powers and Thralls, which cannot move their units, Vassal powers may move their units, retreat, and capture SCs. They may even capture SCs belonging to either of the players that jointly control them. It's even possible for a Vassal power to deliver the killing blow that eliminates either its Dowry Giver or Dowry Receiver.

Like a Major power, a Vassal power maintains a unit count of fleets and armies that corresponds to the total number of SCs it possesses. If that unit count permits, a Vassal power may build during Winter, but may only do so in their Capital city. Vassals may **not** produce their own new Heirs and may not engage in further marriages.

The SCs belonging to a Vassal power count towards the victory condition for both players that control the Vassal.

If a Vassal power ever loses control of its Capital city SC, the two Major powers' heirs residing there are killed, and the Vassal power is subject to Early Elimination (§ 3.4).

### 10.5.1 - Orders Phases

Vassal powers' units' orders are still set via DP allocation (§ 9.0-9.1), similar to those of Minor powers or Thrall powers. However, Vassal powers' units are not stationary. Their move orders are not to be treated as sorties, they may retreat, and they are not subject to the Attacking & Allocating Rule (§ 9.0). The only players that may allocate DP to a Vassal unit's orders are the two players that jointly control that Vassal power.

### 10.5.2 - Retreat & Winter Phases

Either player may issue retreats or build/disband orders to the Vassal power without spending DPs (as DPs are not used during Retreat phases or Winter). However, if the orders of the two players conflict, the GM must give preference as follows:

1. If only one player submits orders, those orders stand.
2. If one player submits legal orders, and the other submits illegal orders, then the legal orders stand.
3. During a Retreat phase, if both players submit legal retreats (or both submit illegal retreats), then the orders given by the **Dowry Receiver** override those of the Dowry Giver.
4. During a Build phase, if both players submit legal adjustments (or both submit illegal adjustments), then the orders given by the **Dowry Giver** override those of the Dowry Receiver.

# 11.0 - Summary of Changes Between Versions

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This section contains a brief description of changes made between versions of the rules and map.

## Changes for Version 1.1.1

- Version change summary section added.
- Rules for S9 Complete were amended to bring them in line with similar changes in [Order of the Dragon](#) v1.1.1.
- Map & Unit Changes
  - No map adjacency/topology changes.
  - Updated the Adjacency Diagram in section 4.4.
  - Ljosalfar begins the game with a fleet in Alfheim instead of an army. Map images were updated to reflect this change.
- Rules Changes
  - The cycle limit mechanic has been clarified and now states that a GM can choose to modify it or ignore it altogether.
  - Marriages no longer require players' capital cities to be empty of other players' units at the start of the orders phase.
  - If a Dowry Giver's unit is located in an SC when it is converted into a Vassal, it is immediately disbanded. This has the effect of allowing the Vassal to always have a build on its first Winter phase.
- Rules Clarifications
  - Sections 10.3.1 and 10.4.1 were added to attempt to clarify some of the most frequently misunderstood rules regarding Heirs and marriages (particularly those regarding timing and heir executions).
  - Correction to example 10.4.0 (previously 10.4.1) to bring it in line with the updates to rules regarding creating new Vassals.
  - Section 2.2 added for clarifying Order of Operations.
  - Links to the Common Ruleset for DP-based variants were updated.
  - A few illustrations and captions were added.



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