

EXCERPTS FROM THE THEGAINVALDE, OR THE LAY OF THEGAINE

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(Accompanies the Translation of Book 1 of 65)

True written records from the early First Era are almost entirely Merethic, originating either from the substantial cruxi-catalogues of Ayleid torture poets, from the Chimeri-Velothi Theophagia (which remain inscrutable to all but the most ardent Dunmeri scholars), or from the Direnni Man-Mer epic verses which rose to prominence in Glenumbrian aristocratic passion-plays after the publishing of Beredalgo the Signifier's translations. Dwemer writing was rare and will not be discussed here. Nedic accounts -- whose mythic echoes still shape contemporary visions of history -- were largely dependent on oral tradition and were compiled several hundred years after the [Alessian](#) Rebellion in 1E 243. Such writings were reflective of Alessian values and subject to the approval of that restrictive censorship so common in early Cyrodillic government. Thus while they remain instructive to understanding the cultural milieu in which they were written, their credibility as primary sources is dubious. The Nordic peoples credit [Ysgrammor](#), their arch-father with adopting writing from falmeric scripts and suitably name him "the First Historian." As in so many ways, Ysgrammor proved the exception rather than the rule. The practice of writing and record keeping remained uncommon among early Atmoro-Nordic society. It was not until the reign of King Harald and the theo-cultural collision of Nordic Totem-worship and proto-Alessian Eight Divines (prior to the codification of the Alessian Order into a strictly monotheistic cult) that writing became widespread within Skyrim.

This makes the Thegainvalde, or the Lay of Thegaine, all the more important for its rarity. Thegaine was a Merethic/early First Era explorer who chronicled firsthand the Atmoran invasion of Tamriel. Unlike the apocryphal [Songs of the Return](#), which were written much later and serve to elevate the deeds of those early Atmoran warbands, the Thegainvalde provides a glaringly honest depiction of the deeds of the Five Hundred Companions. One need only look to the author's conflicted depiction of the central figure, [Ylgar Ysgrammored](#) (second son to Ysgrammor), to understand the truth of this. Ylgar is portrayed alternately heroic and cruel, wise and impulsive. He is impressively human, bearing little of the Nordic hero-myth which would come about (and remain after) the Second Era.

The origins of Thegaine are unknown, although scholars believe him to be a warrior or a retainer to the Five Hundred Companions. No established Nordic geneologies trace their lineage to Thegaine, which implies that either his line was ended or that he did not bear noble blood (hence a retainer). If so, he was a retainer of some importance, for his personal relationship with the blind prince is apparent even to the casual reader. In the years that followed the initial invasion, Thegaine fought and followed Ylgar through his initial conquests against the Falmer. Secondary to Ylgar in importance is an object which Thegaine calls [the Eye](#), which is almost a character in itself. Summarily named The Eye, The Jewel, The Jewel of the Falmer, The Eye of the Falmer (bearing no relation to the famous moonstone jewels of the same name), and Hoflahgolz (an untranslatable Atmoran name), this singular gem acts as the focus and passion of Ylgar. It is unknown whether such a gem exists, although given the otherwise apparent veracity of the source I am inclined to believe it did. Certainly it presents a credible casus belli for the Atmoran campaigns, if one were ever needed.

Ylgar's first campaign against the Falmer, the armistice, and his second campaign make up the first book of the Thegainvalde. The second book begins some time later, when Thegaine has begun his journeys across Tamriel. These writings make up the majority of the work, and document his interactions with many of the great nation-states of that time, including the Ayleid kings, the oligarchic Orsimium magistrate, the Camoran kingdom, the splintered Kahjiti Mane-autocracies, and even various interactions with ancient Argonian tribes.

The Thegainvalde was not published, but was recovered almost in its entirety by Umberto Saugandra of the Antiquarian Circle in Solitude, Skyrim. It was not found in a tomb as might be expected, but in a cache buried on a hillock overlooking the southern bank of the Yorgrim tidal delta, just south of Windhelm. It was written on multiple journals, with remarkably little damage given the age of the work. Some pages had been removed, apparently intentionally, either by the author or by another. These gaps are noted. A deeply personal work, the Thegainvalde is presented in as honest a translation as possible.

Signed

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