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The ritual Dance of Havarr and Thorn is a ritual of Spring magic that is magnitude forty. It requires a strong Spring regio. This ritual targets a single territory that does not contain an active network of trods. The territory must either contain a vallorn, or must be connected to a territory containing a vallorn by an unbroken sequence of territories containing active trods. The ritual can be performed using the Imperial regio *unless* it targets a territory that contains a vallorn. Then it must be performed at a Spring regio within the vallorn itself. This ritual can target a territory with an active network of trods in the event that the trods are damaged, and in this event will repair the trods.

When the ritual is complete, weak trods spread across the territory. These trods can be used by Havarr stridings to extend the trod network and help weaken the power of the vallorn. The ritual can create new trods only in an imperial territory. Once the ritual is complete, Havarr stridings must be able to move freely around the majority of the territory to fix the trods in place and begin drawing the strength of the vallorn along them. It can be used to repair existing trods even if the territory is not part of the Empire. Targetting a non-Imperial territory means the ritual must be performed at a powerful Spring region within that territory. This is rarely effective at creating new trods, and is most useful for repairing damaged or faded trods.

This ritual is extremely old, and pre-dates the Empire by several centuries. It was originally codified by the antecedents of the Havarr magicians who used it to create the first trods to begin drawing power away from the vallorn. While the ritual could be performed by a powerful coven from any nation, it has never been performed by ritual magicians who were not Havarr. Simply creating trods is not sufficient; the trods must also be constantly powered and strengthened by the movement of Havarr stridings - so performing the ritual without the approval of the Havarr is a foolish endeavour.

The ritual was reasonably widespread among the Havarr in pre-Imperial days, but over time the number of ritual texts detailing it began to decline. The ritual never became common knowledge due to its specialised nature and lack of general appeal.

Following the reign of Emperor James, the number of people with access to the ritual declined even further - with the borders of the Empire sealed and well-defended, there was little opportunity to perform it. This Summer however, following either a magical disaster or action by powerful Drnj magicians, the trods in occupied Reikos were seriously damaged. The vate Math Far Distant of Brocehande, custodian of one of the few remaining ritual texts, entrusted it to Meril Pathfinder the Advisor on the Vallorn. Rather than risk the ritual fading from memory, that competent magician ensured that the Dance of Havarr and Thorn was inducted into Imperial Lore.

The ritual usually involves a map of the territory on which the trods are traced as the ritual is performed. Blood is a traditional element of many Havarr rituals, and is often used to trace the trods on the map. Some create a symbolic map of the territory on a large scale and move across it with trails of coloured sand. Representatives of as many

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different stridings as possible are usually included in the performance, along with representatives of any striding that already exists or plans to settle in the target territory.

A ritual re-telling of one of the great dances, especially that of Davarr and Thorn may form the centrepiece of the ritual. The ritual has never been recorded as being performed by non-Davarr, but it could be speculated that the witch and the mountebank would be powerful dramaturgical characters to use with the Dance of Davarr and Thorn - although what that might "reveal" about the characters of these Davarr heroes, and how the Davarr might react, is left as an exercise for the dramaturgical scholar.

The magicians of Dercynia suggest that the runes of beginning, dominion and the twin-faces of mystery will help in the performance of the ritual. Some dates of Therunin who have ties with the Frozen suggest that the constellations of the Fountain, the Three Mothers, the Mountain or the Chain may be appropriate.

#### On Trods

The trods were created as a weapon but in the fullness of time their value to nurture the land through which they pass and the people that use them has been realised by the Imperial Conclave.

As a striding migrates along the trods the unconstrained Spring magic which is the heart of the dallorn is slowly leached away. The longer the trod and the larger the striding the greater the effect. However, this magic is not just bled into the ether but is returned to the land and in some small way the people that travel the trod.

A trod starts and ends at a Dallorn. As a dallorn grows more powerful as the Davarr advance closer to its heart, successive generations have needed to travel further to weaken it sufficiently before any attack is attempted.

Stridings routinely move from trod to trod, to ensure as much of the dallorn's life-force is depleted before they attempt the dangerous journey back towards the dallorn.

At the fall of Terunael the unstoppable advance of the ore foe made this task virtually impossible. The founding of the Empire was the beginning of a sea-change in the Davarr ability to fight the dallorn.

People that use trods, some of which have become well worn roads, feel refreshed each morning as if they had spend a night in the finest beds.

In addition the land near a trod is often noticeably fertile and the crops on land through which a trod passes seems much less prone to disease.

New trods can be created; however, it takes a great ritual and no new trods have been pioneered since 282 VE.

With the recovery in 378VE of The Dance of Davarr and Thorn - a powerful ritual from pre-Imperial times -

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the Davarr once again have access to the potent tool necessary to create trods. The ritual text also laid out several of the theories behind the trods, how they worked and their ultimate effect. The Imperial Conclave agreed to place the ritual into Imperial lore, ensuring that it would not be lost as long as the Empire lasted.