

Viking gods

Odin

Odin was the king of the Æsir. He is a god of war and death, as well as a sky god and the god of wisdom and poetry. Along with being a god, he is the All-Father of all the Nordic Gods. He is also heavily associated with magic. Odin rides on an eight-legged horse called Sleipnir, and his famous spear is called Gungnir. He also has a precious arm ring called Draupnir, and two ravens called Hugin and

Munin who tell him all the things happening around the world. Odin only has one eye, because he sacrificed one to drink from the fountain of wisdom.

Half of the souls of heroes slain in battles will be guided by the Valkyries, battle maidens, to Odin's hall, Valhalla. The other half belongs to the goddess Freyja.

His wives are Frigg and Jord, the Earth.

His eldest son is Thor, god of thunder.

Odin would be swallowed by Loki's son, the wolf Fenrir at Ragnarok.

In German, Odin is named Wotan. In

older English, Odin is named Woden. It is

from that name the weekday Wednesday in English comes from "Wodens day".

In Old Norse he is named Oden and the weekday Wednesday is today, in

Scandinavia, "Onsdag", from "Odens day". Odin sacrificed his eye for wisdom.

He threw his eye into a well of wisdom. He also impaled himself to a tree for many days, driving a spear through himself, and discovered runes. He got his wish, wisdom.

Odin was one of the foremost practitioners, along with Freya, of magic known as seidr. In traditional Germanic society a man engaging in seidr was an extremely emasculating act. But such was Odin's thirst for knowledge he was prepared to sacrifice his honour and was subject to ridicule thereafter.



Loki

Loki is the god of mischief, guile, cunning and trickery in Norse mythology. He is also seen as the personification of chaos and evil as well as being the Lord of Lies. At one point in time he was also known as being the God of Fire. Loki is one of the most important gods in Norse Mythology. He is able to change his appearance and has been a fish, a horse, a fly and even an old lady. One of the earliest references to him is in a 13th century collection of Norse poems known as the Poetic Edda. The poems were passed down from generation to generation. His father was a giant and his mother may have been a giantess. He had several children, including Jormungand, a giant snake living in the sea surrounding the known world.

Loki asked a giant to help build Asgard, one of the nine worlds of the gods. The giant asked for the sun and moon if he completed the work on time. However, Loki made sure that the giant did not finish the work on time. He led the giant's horse away, without which the

giant could not finish the work. Loki is known for his part in the death of Baldur, the son of Odin. He killed him with a spear made from mistletoe, thrown at Baldur by the blind god, Hod. The gods became tired of Loki's jokes and mischievous behaviour. They chained him to a rock where poisonous serpent dripped venom onto him, his shouts of pain supposedly caused earthquakes. The face of Loki was said to have appeared on a 1,000 year old stone found in Denmark in 1950. He can also be seen on part of a 10th century stone cross in St. Stephen's Church in Cumbria. Loki appears as a villain in Marvel comics, fighting Thor. He appears in several films, including the 2011 film Thor.



Thor

Thor is the red-haired and bearded god of Thunder. He is the son of Odin and Jord. The ancient Norse believed that during Ragnarok, Thor would kill and be killed by Jormungand. Thor was one of the most amazingly powerful Norse gods. He was well known for his fights with the race of giants. He was said to protect Asgard (the home of the god)

His wife is called Sif. With his mistress, the giantess Járnsaxa, Thor had his sons Magni and Modi, and with Sif he had his daughter Thrud. Thor also had a stepson called Ull who was a son of Sif.

Possessions. Thor was said to travel in a chariot drawn by goats. He would slay the goats every evening to feast and they would reappear the next day.

According to writings known as sagas, Thor owned a short-handled war hammer, Mjolnir. When the hammer was thrown, it returned magically to the owner. Thor also used it to cause thunderclaps. With the hammer, Thor performed his giant-killing duties. In the English calendar, the day 'Thursday' is named after Thor.

Popular culture

Thor is a character in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. He is god of thunder and a member of the Avengers. Loki is his supposed younger adopted brother. Sif is not his wife, but his friend. In the movie The Avengers, Chris Hemsworth plays the role of Thor. A protector of the human race who prefers the Midgard to Asgard.



Freyja

Freyja is a goddess in Norse and Germanic Mythology. She is the twin sister of Freyr and the daughter of Njord. She was originally worshipped as a fertility goddess but in the Eddas she was often portrayed as a goddess of love, beauty and attraction. She was also associated with war, battle, death, wealth, magic and prophecies. Freyja was said to be the most beloved, honoured, and renowned among goddesses. She is one of the most popular deities of Norse mythology.

The Valkyrie collects the souls of heroes killed in battles and brings them to Valhalla, where they will become warriors of the gods. Freyja shares with Odin half of these heroes. Her sacred realm is Folkvang (Warriors' Field), here lies her great and fair hall Sessrumnir (Room of Seats). At this hall, she decides where her warriors shall sit. Freyja married a god called Odr She deeply loves her husband, but he often went away on long journeys, and Freyja cried red golden tears



for him. Her tears become gold and amber when they fall to Earth, therefore gold was called "Freyja's tears". They have two beautiful daughters called Hnoss and Gersemi.

Freyja often rides in a chariot pulled by big blue cats, or on a golden battle boar. She is called "The Fair One". In the myths, there were three giants who wanted to marry Freyja, but they were all killed by Thor, the god of thunder.

Freyja also has a precious necklace called Brisingamen (Jewellery of Fire). The god Loki once stole this necklace, and Freyja had to ask the god Heimdall for help. Heimdall won the fight with Loki and gave the necklace back to Freyja. For this, Loki is also called "Thief of Brisingamen", and Heimdall is also called "Seeker of Brisingamen".