

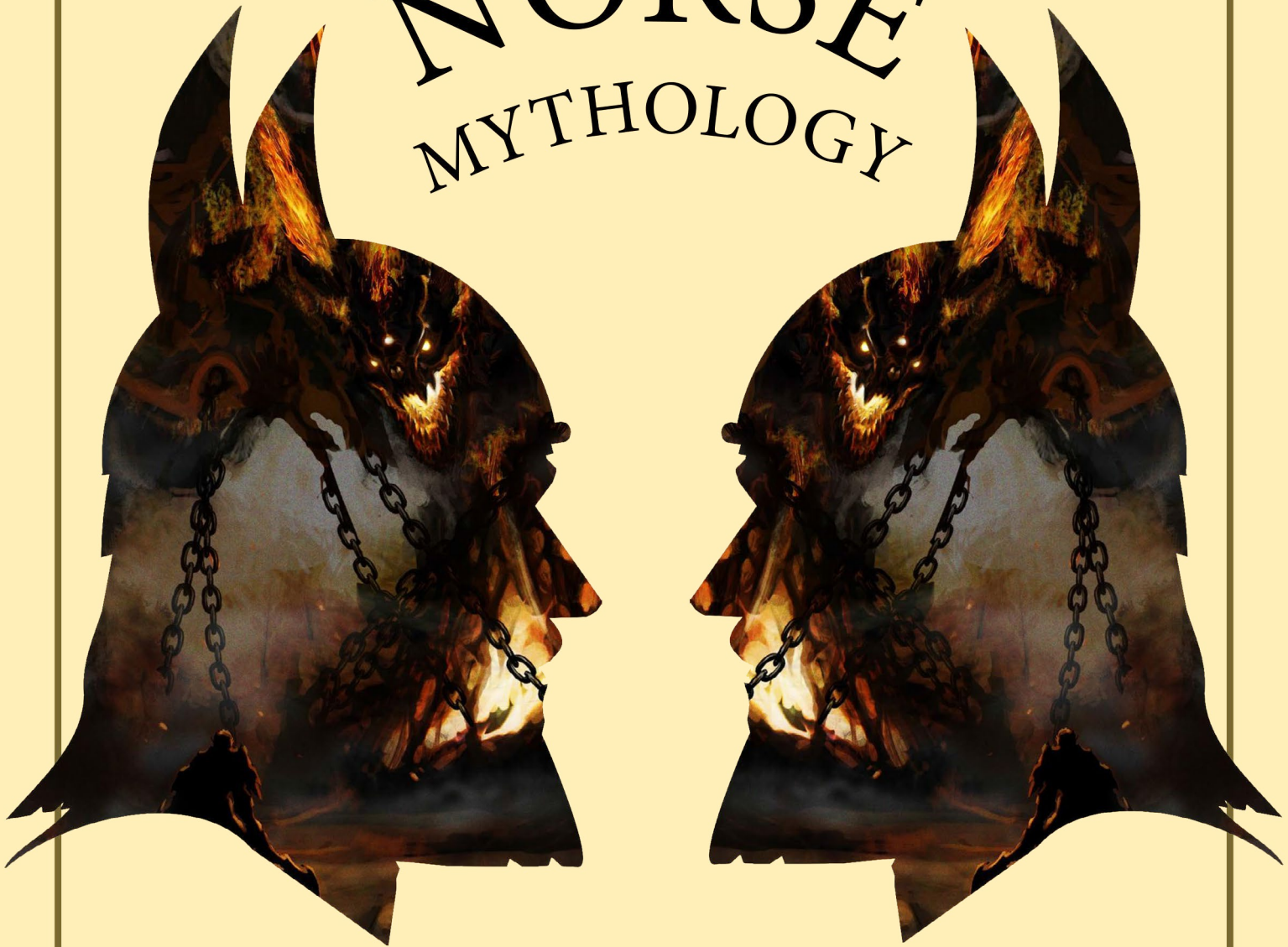
NORSE

MYTHOLOGY





NORSE MYTHOLOGY



Before the Norse or the Vikings and other Germanic peoples were converted to Christianity during the Middle Ages, just like other peoples in the world, they had their very own indigenous paganistic religion. Although there is no true name for their religion and people only called in "tradition." People who continued to follow the old Viking ways were called "heathens." Coining the term "the heathen Germanic religion."

The pre-Christian Germanic religion was animistic, polytheistic, pantheistic, and held a cyclical view of time.



Norse Mythology

The collective myths of the Scandinavians, people from Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Iceland were the main sources for Norse mythology. There is no one set of doctrinal beliefs for the Scandinavians.

Norse mythology is the set of religious stories that the Vikings told to one another. If Catholics had the stories in the Bible, the Vikings had Norse mythology. You are probably familiar with the characters in their mythology since they are still told in present popular culture. I am talking about the characters such as Odin, Thor, Freya, and Loki.

These stories, just like biblical stories, were narratives that gave life meaning and inspiration.

The mythology was orally transmitted in the form of poetry and our knowledge about it is mainly based on other medieval texts written down during and after Christianization.

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Origins

The shaping of Norse mythology itself took place in Germanic Europe. Norse mythology is actually the best-preserved version of the older common Germanic paganism, which also includes the closely related Anglo-Saxon mythology. Germanic mythology, in itself is developed from an earlier Indo-European mythology.

Some aspects of Norse mythology passed into Scandinavian folklore and have survived to modern day times. Others have recently been reinvented as Germanic neopaganism. Norse mythology also remains as an inspiration in literature as well as in modern productions like movies.

If you're a person of northern European descent, you've probably got Germanic blood in you. It must mean your ancestors practiced something very close to the religion represented by Norse mythology.



ODIN

RULER OF THE GODS

Odin was the main Viking god, the king of the gods. Odin's home is called Valhalla (Hall of battle slain). It is a magnificent place with 640 doors.

He is the Father of all who also goes by 36 different names, mostly because Odin loves to be in disguise in his travels and among his people. Although his favorite one would be a long hat and a green coat. How do you know it's Odin? Well, he pulls his hood over his missing eye to show you.

Odin has two ravens, Huginn and Muninn, and they sit on his shoulders. He sends them each day to all corners of the world to seek news and they whisper in his ears everything that they see and hear.

But if Odin wants to see things for himself, he can just sit on his throne, the Hlidarskialf, and from there he can see all worlds.

The One-Eyed God

Odin is the wisest of the Viking gods and seeks his knowledge far, legend has it that his knowledge comes from the giant Mimir. According to the story, he went to get a drink from the fountain of Mimir in to gain supreme knowledge. Mimir didn't allow him to unless he sacrificed one of his eyes. For Odin, wisdom is more important and dutifully sacrificed his other eye in pursuit of it. From then on, Odin has

been with just one eye. His other eye rests on the bottom of Mimir's fountain.

Mimir The Giant

When Mimir was killed by Vanir, Odin got his head and from it he got many secrets. He would ask the very same head for advice in many important situations.

Knowledge of Runes

Odin conducted his wizardry through usage of runes. Runes have always been a mystery to most and not a lot of people understood or knew how to use them. He mastered the knowledge of the runes by hanging from a tree for nine nights without food or drink and with a spear in his side. It is through that suffering that he gained full knowledge of the runes.

Odin's fate is to be eaten by the wolf Fenri in the final battle against the giants.

Symbolism

Call upon Odin if you need advice and wisdom. He likes to solve problems, so if you have a lot of problems, he is the right god to do spiritual work with. Odin can be very ruthless, so treat him with the utmost respect. Odin will constantly test you to see how far you can go with all your bravery, and if you survive it, you will come out stronger than you thought you were.







Freyja

Goddess of Abundance and Fertility

Freyja is the Goddess of abundance, fertility, and wealth. She is the sister of Freyr whose attributes were all-encompassing. She inherited many of which from various personifications of the Great Goddess who far preceded the Gods of Valhalla. The goddess Freya is depicted with her falcon wings. And on her breast she wears “the jewel whose power cannot be resisted,” the Brisingamen. Brising, meaning fire. It represents the fire of the sun and the fire of the enlightened mind of men.

Freyja is the modern day equivalent of the “It” girl. She was famed for her great beauty, and was known as “The Fair One”. She embodies the sensuality of the lover and mistress. She is as strong, beautiful and wise as any of the “Eldest Ones.” Freyja was quite independent. And being the chief of the Valkyries and the lady of the hall of the battle-fallen in Valhalla, she would select the noble and heroic dead and would carry them to the Realm of the Gods.

She is the patroness of women who attain wisdom, status, and power. In the earlier days she also rewarded good housewives, though in later times Frigga has become more the patron of the home. She is also connected to magick and divination.

Freyja could take on the aspect of a bird. She owned a magical cloak of hawk’s feathers, which allowed her to transform at will.

In the ancient times the winter constellation which we today know as Orion was at that time called “Freyja’s Gown” by the Norse and Teutons, and the sword belt in Orion was called “Freyja’s Girdle.”

Honoring Freyja Today

Making offerings to Freyja is good if you wanna make improvements in your love life, most especially in the sexual aspect of it. Stuff like honey, chocolate, and other aphrodisiacs are a good start. Do not forget to perform a ritual in her honor.

You can also call upon Freyja for protection, especially in situations of domestic violence. Connecting with Freyja as you are trying to work through it all will give you the strength and courage to get out and move forward with your life.

You can set up a shrine to Freyja in your home and decorate your altar with symbols of femininity and strength. Freyja is the goddess of abundance and fertility and will draw in wealth in many forms in your life.

The God of Thunder

THOR

Thor is the almighty god of thunder and giant-slayer in Norse mythology. Thor is known for his red hair and bad temper. He is the son of Odin and Fjörgyn. Being the strongest of all the gods and the protector of mankind in Midgard, he is associated with thunder, lightning, storms, oak trees and strength. He also had a day named after him: Thursday.

While Thor may be the strongest of the Gods, he is not the smartest nor the wisest. He is always teased or fooled by the giants in Jotunheim, which makes Thor furious and makes him grab his hammer Mjölfnir while enraged. And this is what causes thunder and lightning in the skies. This makes the giants fear Thor, and Thor would always come out the winner in every fight.

Thor has another enemy whom he defeated in Ragnarok: Jormungand. The giant serpent who encircled Midgard.

Thor lives in a huge place in Asgard called Thrudheim, together with his wife, Sif.

Thor's Goats

Thor rides out from Asgard in his chariot which is pulled by two goats whose names are Tannngnjostr "Teeth barer" and Tanngrisnir "Teeth grinder". The chariot also

gives out sparks and lightning from their wheels as they fly across the sky.

Thor's Hammer

Mjölfnir is Thor's hammer. It's one of the strongest, powerful, and most frightening weapons. Mjölfnir can send out lightning bolts and is capable of leveling mountains. Mjölfnir can also hit any target. And after the target is hit, Mjölfnir will return to Thor's right hand all by itself.

Mjölfnir not only kills and destroys, but also revives people or animals. It can be magically shrunk to fit inside Thor's shirt. Mjölfnir is also used in ceremonies for birth and death.

Thor also has some other powerful items, like a pair of iron gauntlets and a magical belt, when he wears both of these magical items it makes him twice as strong. The belt is called Megingjord and the iron gauntlets are called Járnglófar.

The Vikings look to Thor for protection and strength. He is the most venerated god in the Norse pantheon; more than Odin. The Vikings would don the Mjölfnir, which they understood as the symbol of Thor, in many forms such as necklaces, bracelets, and markings. Thor is protective of not only his friends and family, but also humans as well.



LOKI

THE TRICKSTER

Loki is known as the trickster god. This doesn't mean he is evil, but this also doesn't mean he is good. Loki lives in Asgard even though he is from Jotunheim, the land of the giants. What he likes to do is to create trouble for anyone and everyone especially for the gods and goddesses in Asgard.

Loki is the son of giants: Farbauti and Laufey, He also has two brothers Helblinde and Býleistr and is the mother of Sleipnir. He married Sigyn. They have two children together, Narvi and Vali. Loki was also married to the giantess, Angrboda and she bore their children: Hel, Fenrir the Wolf, and The Midgard Serpent.

THE PRANKSTER

It also doesn't help that he is both cunning and clever and he always comes up with new ideas to annoy and embarrass people. Loki just loves to prank people, and in many ways, is the original prankster! Yet, after he pranking people, he saves them from further trouble due to his pranking, making him a hero. This is why Loki is neither good nor bad.

SHAPESHIFTER

Loki has the amazing ability to shapeshift into almost any living being. He can appear as a salmon, a mare, a seal, a fly, and an elderly woman.

CAVE-DWELLER

After Loki had made one prank too many for the gods and goddesses in Asgard, he was banished to a cave and the gods placed a poisonous snake above

his head. Loki's wife Sigyn, stayed with Loki in the cave and held a bowl over his head to catch the poison from the snake.

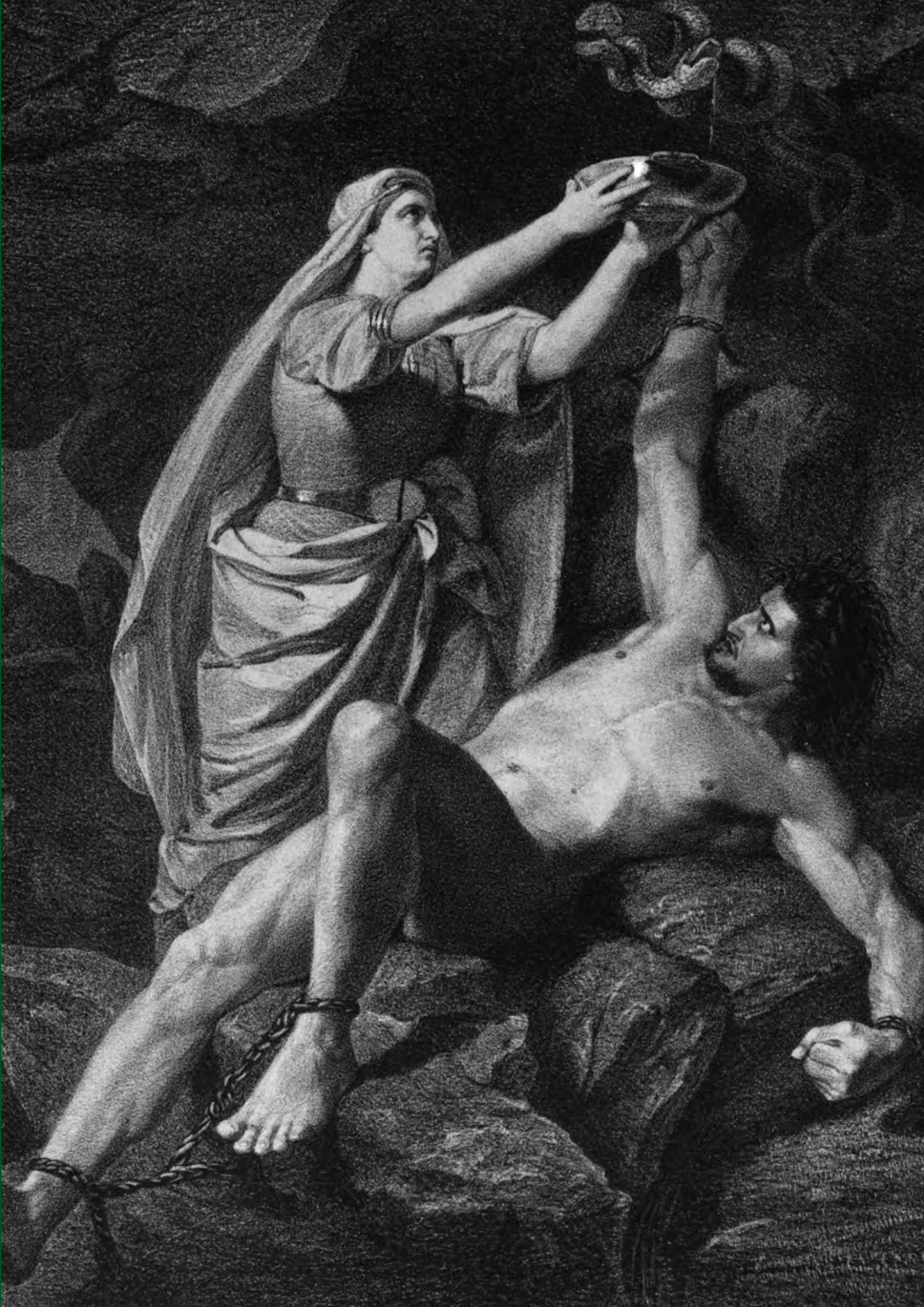
LOKI'S CHILDREN

When the Aesir were told that Loki's children were born in the land of the giants, they knew this would bring great evil to the world because of their father. So Odin had the children collected and brought to Asgard. When they got there, Odin threw the Midgard into the deep sea. The Midgard serpent grew so big, enough to bite its own tail wrapping it around the world. He threw Hel in the underworld, where she made her own lair, which is now known as Helheim: a place where all who die of illness or old age go. Odin kept the Fenrir wolf in Asgard, for the time being until he would be removed and bound to a rock.

SYMBOLISM

It seems counterintuitive to call upon Loki but when you are in need of sharper intelligence, cleverness, and cunning, Loki is someone you can call upon.

Loki had a great sense of humor and loved putting up shows for the gods and goddesses. He was a master entertainer. If you are in this field, Loki would be an excellent god for you. Loki was also bisexual, so if you are one and need strength to overcome discrimination, call upon Loki. Lastly, Loki also has dominion over the fire element, both creative and destructive; use it to your advantage.



HEL

GODDESS OF THE UNDERWORLD

Hel, also known as Hella, Holle or Hulda, was the Queen and Ruler of the Underworld, which was known as Helheim or the Kingdom of the Dead.

Exposed Bones

The name Hel, quite literally means “one that hides” or “one who covers up.” This is because Hel had been born with the bones on one side of her body and fully exposed. This made things extremely difficult for Hel, because her appearance caused the other gods to feel so uncomfortable that they avoided having anything to do with her.

Leaving Asgard

She was seen as very odd so she was avoided and had no friends. Hel was extremely unhappy and lonely, so much so that she went to Odin and explained to him how difficult her life was there and asked for his permission to leave Asgard.

Odin sympathized with Hel and granted her wish and gave her the world of Niflheim to rule. He also named it after Hel. And that’s how she became known as the Goddess of the Dead.

Hel the Goddess of the Underworld

Odin also gave Hel certain responsibilities that she had to carry out in that realm. He put her in charge of caring for the souls of people who died from sickness or old age, and for the souls of any other people who did not die through violence or in battle.

When warriors died in battle, their souls were split

evenly between the Goddess Freyja and Odin. But when Hel settled into her realm, the souls of the deciding if their souls were good or evil and gave each soul its just reward. Hel has the eye of the fire, which means you cannot hide anything from her.

There are nine levels of Helheim and it starts with a form of heaven and goes all the way down to the horror-filled Nostrand, where the souls go to be punished by having snakes drop venom on them.

Symbolism

While the Vikings feared Hel, they saw her as a gentler and kinder form of death and transformation. They saw Hel as an earth mother deity known as Mother Holle, who consisted of pure nature.

They saw Hel to have great maternal aspects, and she was also known to help people in their times of need. Hel is also capable of becoming vengeful when someone interferes with the progression of natural law.

Hel is someone who should be respected and admired and not feared, unless you are doing something evil in your life.

Hel is actually a great symbol of courage and strength against diversity. She may have been born with physical deformities but that did not stop her from seeking out her place in the world and eventually finding meaning and purpose despite her circumstance.

Call upon Hel when you are facing adversity and when you feel like everyone is against you or pulling away from you, that she may bless you with her courage and strength. Hel also used her excellent judgement and ability to see what’s truly within people to determine where to place their souls. Call on her when you need to make a good judgement call and when you need to make decisions.



TYR

THE WARRIOR GOD

Tyr is regarded as one of the principal war gods of the Norse, along with Odin and Thor. He is the Norse equivalent of Greek Zeus.

He ended up becoming a relatively minor Aesir god in Viking Age Norse mythology after being usurped by by Odin. Lord Tyr actually pre-dates Odin and was the original All-Father of Gods and Men.

Tyr's symbol was the spear, the same symbol that is also used by Odin. The rune named for Tyr is also in the shape of a spear. He was also one of the gods who had a day of the week set aside to honor him, and the day is Tuesday, which means Tiw's-Day.

The One-Handed God

Tyr was known for his courage, which was on display when the gods decided to shackle the wolf Fenrir. The beast broke every chain they put on him. Eventually, they had the dwarves make a magical ribbon called Gleipnir, but Fenrir sensed this and refused to be bound with it unless one of them put his hand in the his mouth as a pledge of good faith. Only Tyr was brave and honorable enough to comply with the beast's request. When Fenrir found himself unable to break free, he bit the Tyr's hand. And this is how Fenrir was bound till the day of Ragnarok and how Tyr lost his hand.

The tale of his courage, bravery, and loss is the reason why Tyr is called upon in matters of war, law, justice, honor, oaths, and upholding traditional sources of authority.

One of Tyr's roles was that of a guarantor of justice, one before whom oaths were sworn. This role remained consistent up through the Viking Age.

Tyr may now have a humble place in Viking Age religion and mythology, but he was once as indispensable as daylight in the minds and hearts of the Germanic peoples.



HEIMDALL, PROTECTOR OF ASGARD

Heimdall, the son of Odin, is one of the Aesir gods and the guardian of the gods' stronghold, Asgard. He is ever so vigilant that he requires less sleep than a bird and his eyesight is so sharp that he can see for hundreds of miles by day or by night. His hearing is so sharp that he can hear grass growing on the ground and wool growing on sheep.

Certain verses in Old Norse poetry make up Heimdall to be the father of humankind, and was also the one who established the hierarchical structure of Norse society.

HIMINBJÖRG

His dwelling place is called Himinbjörg or sky cliffs, which sits at the top of Bifrost, the rainbow bridge that leads to Asgard. It is the place where he watches and listens, holding his horn called the Gjallarhorn, which he sounds when he sees intruders approaching.

RAGNAROK

During Ragnarok, the sound of Heimdall's horn signaled the oncoming doom of the gods, which meant that the giants were about to cross the rainbow bridge to storm Asgard and kill the gods. Heimdall and his nemesis, Loki, slay each other as the world burns and sinks into the sea.

SYMBOLISM

Heimdall is often associated with the ram, which is Heimdall's most sacred animal. Rams are skillful creatures that can navigate rocky areas that other creatures can't. Just like Heimdall, they are known for their extremely keen long range vision, keen sense of smell and keen sense of hearing.

The ram is also the symbol of the first zodiac sign, Aries. Aries traits are impetuosity, immense creativity, fearlessness, virility, passionate, forward-looking, and intellectually brilliance. Aries is also associated with the sun and new beginnings because they stand at the beginning of things.

People call on Heimdall when they need help attain the traits of the ram. For example, virility and fertility. Legend has it that Heimdall, in the guise of Rig, traveled all over the earth fathering children!

When you need help with authority, power, leadership, or if you need help with having a sharper intellect and senses, call on Heimdall or seek out the ram as a symbol.



Baldur

God of Light

*Baldur is the dead God of Light in Norse mythology.
His name means “prince” or “brave”.*

Baldur was the youngest son of Odin and Frigg. He was the most beautiful of all the Aesir or sky gods. White light shone from him wherever he went, and was cheerful and kind was loved by everyone in Asgard. Baldur was always with his sacred plant, the Chamomile. He married Aesir goddess Nanna, and the two of them lived in a hall called Breidablik where everything was beautiful and nothing impure could live. Their son Forseti eventually became the God of Justice.

Baldur's Nightmares

Baldur began having dreams that something bad was gonna happen to him and reported them to his parents. His mother Frigg panicked and walked the Nine Worlds asking every living thing to promise not to harm her son. She asked every little thing to make a promise except the mistletoe plant, thinking that it was too young to make such an oath.

Baldur made a game of it all and soon enough the other gods would line up and throw anything at him, thinking nothing could harm him.

It would be through this very same method that Baldur would meet his end.

Loki's revenge

Loki, who was angry with the Aesir for killing his wife Angrboda and imprisoning his son Fenrir had been plotting vengeance against the Aesir. He disguised himself as an old woman and made Frigg admit that she hadn't asked the mistletoe for an oath. He made a small dart of mistletoe and waited until

the missile games began. He guided Hoder, Baldur's blind brother's hand into throwing a missile, and that very same dart killed Baldur.

The whole of Asgard mourned the loss of their god of light. Many gods offered to chase Loki but Odin prevented them from doing so. He did not want his family sullied by an act of vengeance.

Many speculated that Loki would slay Baldur so Baldur would come back to life and rule Asgard after Ragnarok. If he were alive during Ragnarok, he would simply be killed.

Other stories go that Odin and Loki arranged the whole killing in order to keep Baldur in the safest possible place, which is the Realm of the Dead.

Baldur was a solar god sacrificed to die just to be reborn eventually.

Baldur Shines A Bright Light

Baldur indeed shone a light wherever he went. He is the light in the darkness. He even brought light to the Underworld. He is the light that can be found when one is in the deepest and darkest place.

Which is why people called on him whenever they were at their darkest moments in life. When Baldur is called on, he gives solace to those who are in need of some light in their lives.

Simply lighting a candle in the dark and call for him will make him come to your aid.



MJOLNIR

The Mjolnir, pronounced as 'miol-neer', is the name of Thor's hammer. The Mjolnir is described as one of the most powerful weapons in Norse mythology. It was so powerful in fact that Thor used it to guard Asgard, the stronghold of Gods and Goddesses.

Norse Mythology

In Norse mythology, Thor, the god of thunder, lightning, storms, oak, and strength, used a Mjolnir, to represent his power over lightning and thunder. Thor, the son of Odin, was a large man with red hair and a beard. His size matched the ferocity of his temper. It's a good thing he was on our side. He was the protector of mankind who was blessed with fertility and healing skills.

Thor would use the Mjolnir to strike as he wanted, and wherever he was aiming, the hammer would not fail him. Wherever he threw it, he would never miss, and the hammer would never fly so far from his hand that it could not find its way back.

Origin

Thor's hammer was made by dwarves for Thor. It was carefully crafted to be very powerful. The Mjolnir can smash the highest mountains, most evil orcs, and everything else that gets in its way. But the thing is, the Thor's hammer has a flaw. When the Dwarf brothers made the hammer, they actually intended to make the handle long enough to swing with both hands. But Loki interrupted their work, thus making the hammer's handle much shorter than intended.

This error turned out to be an advantage, because this way, Thor could swing and throw the hammer single-handedly, while keeping the other hand on his chariot.

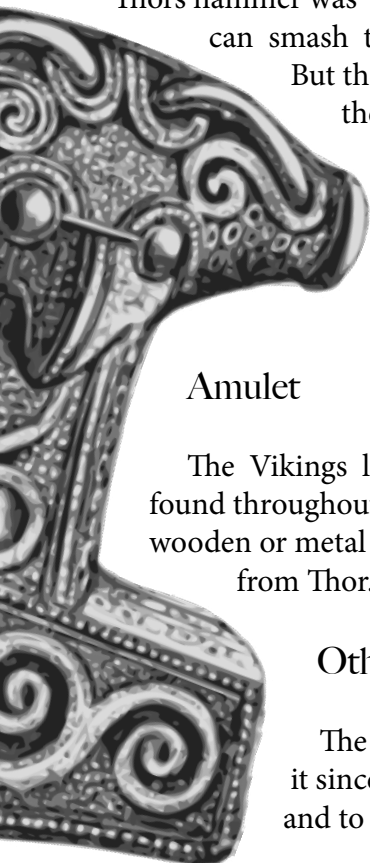
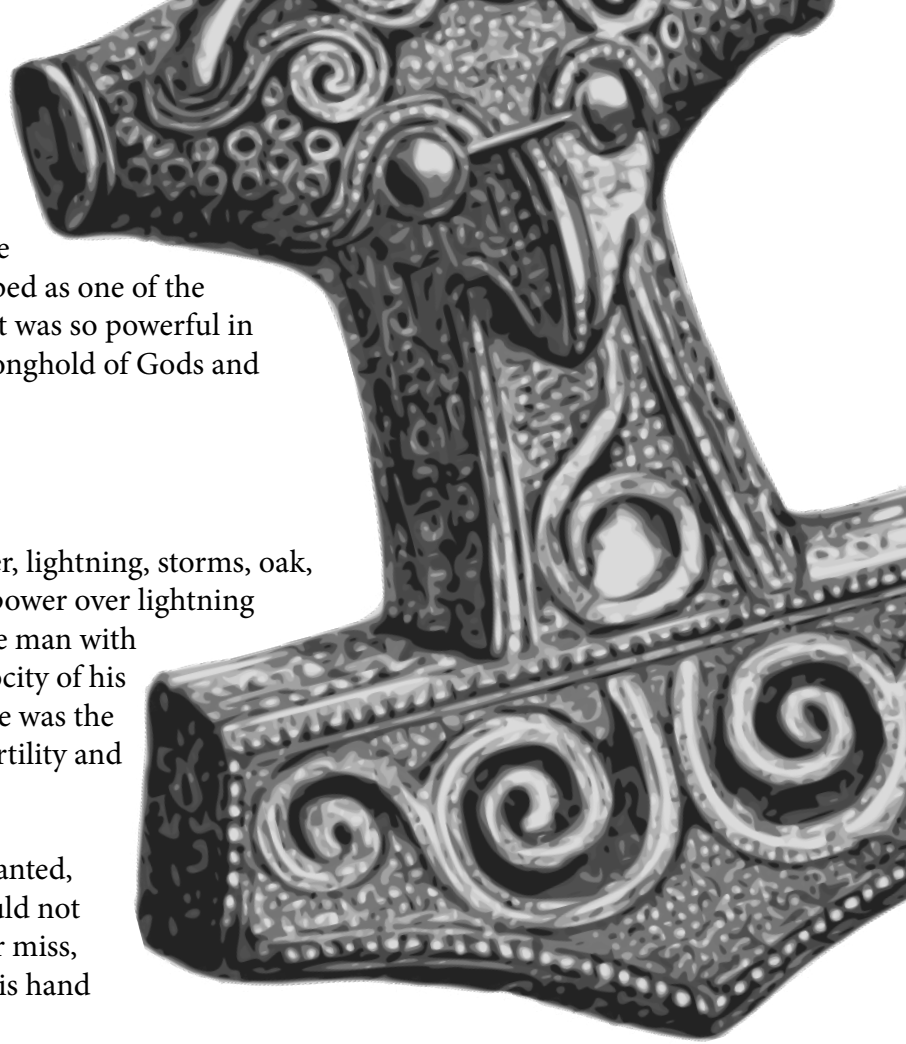
Amulet

The Vikings loved making Thor's Hammer Pendants. There were more than 50 Mjölknir amulets found throughout Scandinavia. Most of them dating back from the years between 900 and 1100. Be it in wooden or metal form, the people then would wear the pendants to give them strength and protection from Thor.

Other Uses

The Mjolnir was a handy tool to have around, and the owner need not worry about losing it since it always returned to its rightful owner. The Mjolnir was also used in cleansing rituals and to bless marriages, births and funerals.

The early Pagan Norsemen would wear Mjolnir pendants as amulets for protection, even long after Christianity had moved into their world. This still rings true today, as it is still worn by those of Asatruar and Norse heritage, and even those from other Pagan traditions, like Wiccans.



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