



A research about:

SCANDINAVIAN MYTHOLOGY

PRESENTED BY: MAJD ALIA

11th GRADE

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SUPERVISED BY: HIBA ABOOD

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INTRODUCTION

The Scandinavian mythology or the Norse mythology (its common name) is one of the greatest myths among the history of the European

nations according to the large area it spread in, the civilizations that believed in it and the accomplishments of the ones who believed in it and got motivated by its precepts. The Vikings and the people of Germania had an unusual believing and had an alternative way to imagine the universe. So how did it impact their culture, habits and life?

The mythology spread all over Europe and other regions from green land to eastern Europe so how come and why that happened?

How did they imagine the genesis and how was it so reasonable that all of them believed in it? And was it just a myth or an entire religion?

Who were the Vikings?

The Vikings are the people from the northern countries of the Scandinavia which includes: Norway, Denmark and Sweden, and that is why they were called the Norse men, as they are from the north. These people were religious and practiced Asatru* as their form of religion.

The Norse people comprised of different kinds of people who were farmers, merchant, craftsmen, arts men and warriors. Among these people, only the warriors were well and are still known by many people today.

The word Viking means raiding and that is how they were given the name. These people-the warriors were known as a result of their brutal and cruel attacks they subjected the on those they raided. The influence is believed to have started manifesting around 793 AD when a group of them attacked the Monastery in the eastern coast of England, this continued until they raided the whole of England on or about 1066 AD.

From What Period Are the Vikings from?

The Viking age is a period under which the Viking people are believed to have conquered almost all the lands they visited and built new economic friends. This age is estimated to have been from 793-1066 AD.

The main reason for the success of the Vikings in the Scandinavian was as a result of their great ships and navigational skills in the shallow rivers of Europe and the open ocean. This people lived in the Greenland parts of Canada 500 years before the Columbus.



Figure 1 (a Viking warrior)

*Asatru is a Scandinavian term consisting of two parts: ASA referring to the Germanic Gods and Goddesses and TRU meaning faith.

During this period, the population of the Vikings had started to increase and they therefore needed some more land to accommodate the raising population. It is during this time in the mid-9th century that the Vikings moved and raided most parts of Europe.

They took possession of the England and the European midlands all the Islands and the lands that were uninhabited. By the time they were settling down on these lands, they actively affected the environment through their activities by cutting down trees, hunting down unsuspecting animals for meat and their products for trade and planting crops.

The Vikings did not leave any land that they believe was uninhabited and left it unoccupied. They went forth and took it for their own benefits. This was referred to as 'landnam', which means land taking.

Scandinavian is made up of three major countries namely Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Well, no one can deny that Scandinavian countries are the main homeland of the Vikings. Each country in the Scandinavian wanted to extend their own power in several parts of Europe and this resulted in making them gain good trading networks during that time

What areas did the Vikings explore?

The Danish Vikings, also known as "the Danes" took their route to the eastern coast of England and the Western coast of Europe. During this time, they went raiding as far as the Mediterranean, Spain and most of the parts of Northern Africa.

The Swedish Vikings raided Eastern Europe and Russia to explore trade. They also went as far as the eastern Mediterranean.

They were very powerful in and had a great economic influence in all areas they raided. In addition, this is evident in the areas of the Black Sea, the Caspian and Eastern Mediterranean. In Russia, the Swedish Vikings were so powerful that they even had a dynasty founded that ruled the whole area of Kiev.



Figure 2 (places explored by Vikings)

Lastly, we have the Norwegian Vikings. While the other two groups of Vikings were raiding the eastern and western coasts of Europe, the Vikings from Norway were busy exploring the Western areas of Europe to the Iceland and went as far as the Greenland for trade and land.



Figure 3 (the voyages of the Vikings)

The Vikings from Norway are among those from the Scandinavian that were very famous. Examples of one famous Norwegian Vikings are Eric the Red and Leif Ericson. Eric the Red was born and in Norway and was a humble man, a farmer, hunter and a fisherman just like his fellow Scandinavian Viking of Norwegian origin.

The Vikings biggest accomplishment:

In 865 AD an army of Vikings sailed across the North Sea. This time they wanted to conquer land rather than just raid it. Over several years the army battled through northern England, taking control of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of North Umbria, East Anglia and most of Mercia. By 874 AD, almost all the kingdoms had fallen to the Vikings. All except for Wessex, which was ruled by Alfred the Great. King Alfred beat the Viking army in battle but wasn't able to drive the Vikings out of Britain. After years of fighting the Vikings and Alfred made a peace agreement. But even after this agreement, fighting went on for many more years. An imaginary dividing line was agreed to run across England, from London in the south towards Chester in the north west. The Anglo-Saxon lands were to the west and the Viking lands, known as the Danelaw, were roughly to the east.

THE CREATION

The Origin of the Cosmos

Before there was soil, or sky, or any green thing, there was only the gaping abyss of Ginnungagap. This chaos of perfect silence and darkness lay between the homeland of elemental fire, Muspelheim, and the homeland of elemental ice, Niflheim.

Frost from Niflheim and billowing flames from Muspelheim crept toward each other until they met in Ginnungagap. Amid the hissing and sputtering, the fire melted the ice, and the drops formed themselves into Ymir, the first of the godlike giants. Ymir was a hermaphrodite and could reproduce asexually; when he sweated, more giants were born.

As the frost continued to melt, a cow, Audhumbla, emerged from it. She nourished Ymir with her milk, and she, in turn, was nourished by salt-licks in the ice. Her licks slowly uncovered Buri, the first of the Aesir tribe of gods. Buri had a son named Bor, who married Bestla, the daughter of the giant Bolthorn. The half-god, half-giant children of Bor and Bestla were Odin, who became the chief of the Aesir gods, and his two brothers, Villi and Ve.

Odin and his brothers slew Ymir and set about constructing the world from his corpse. They fashioned the oceans from his blood, the soil from his skin and muscles, vegetation from his hair, clouds from his brains, and the sky from his skull. Four dwarves, corresponding to the four cardinal points, held Ymir's skull aloft above the earth.

The gods eventually formed the first man and woman, Ask and Embla, from two tree trunks, and built a fence around their dwelling-place, Midgard, to protect them from the giants.^{[1][2][3][4]}

<http://norse-mythology.org/index/norse-creation-myth>

[1] The Poetic Edda. Völuspá.

[2] The Poetic Edda. Vafþrúðnismál.

[3] The Poetic Edda. Grímnismál.

[4] Snorri Sturluson. The Prose Edda. Gylfaginning.




Life Comes from Death

The first of the three conceptual meanings embedded in this myth that we'll be considering in this article is that creation never occurs in a vacuum. It necessitates the destruction of that which came before it. New life feeds on death, a principle which is recapitulated every time we eat, to cite but one example. This constant give-and-take, one of the most basic principles of life, features prominently in the Norse creation myth. The world was not created *ex nihilo* ("out of nothing"), as it is in the Judeo-Christian creation myth, for example. Rather, in order to create the world, the gods first had to slay Ymir, the representative of primal chaos, whose undifferentiated state is shown by his being a hermaphrodite. As such, he is essentially an extension of Ginnungagap itself. After all, Ymir's kin, the giants, are constantly attempting to drag the cosmos back toward the chaotic nothingness of Ginnungagap (and, during Ragnarok, they succeed). Whenever they ate, cleared land for settlements, or engaged in combat, the Norse could look back to this tale of the gods killing Ymir as the archetype upon which their own efforts were patterned.

Flesh and Matter

In the modern world, we view the physical universe as consisting of inert, essentially mechanical matter, a view which can be traced back to two sources. The first, of course, is the Christian creation myth, where the monotheistic god fashions the world as a mere artifact, into which his divine substance never enters. The second source is the theological speculations of the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, who hypothesized that the world was created by the coming together of two wholly different principles: matter (inert physical substance) and form (God, whom Aristotle referred to as the "Unmoved Mover," one who forms matter but was himself never formed). For Aristotle, the Unmoved Mover provided him with a grand "First Cause" that enabled him to describe much of the physical world in terms of linear, deterministic cause and effect — a precursor to our own modern concept of "natural laws."

This view of the physical world as inert and non-spiritual is quite a young innovation, having been around for only about 2500 years out of the 150,000 or so that our species, *Homo sapiens*, has existed. Before this view



came to prominence – and long after in areas where this view had not yet become established, such as the Norse of the Viking Age – humankind held a very different view of the nature of the physical world. The overwhelming majority of all humans who have ever lived have seen the visible world as the organic manifestation of spirit, with consciousness and will being intrinsic properties of the world as a whole rather than the exclusive possession of one organ (the brain) of one species (humanity). This perspective is called animism. (The very word “matter” comes from the Latin word for “mother,” and references the archaic – and, in my opinion, extremely beautiful – view that the soil into which we go when we die is the womb of a goddess, “Mother Earth.”)

The Norse creation myth contains nothing like a monotheistic god or an “unmoved mover.” Even Niflheim and Muspelheim are largely the product of their interactions with the other seven of the Nine Worlds due to the fact that the trajectory of Norse mythology is cyclical rather than linear, meaning that the creation of the cosmos occurs after the cosmos is destroyed during Ragnarok. The cycle repeats itself eternally, without beginning or end. Accordingly, the indigenous worldview of the Norse and other Germanic peoples has no place for the concept of inert, insensate matter. Their creation narrative confirms this: the world is fashioned from the hot, bleeding *flesh* of Ymir, and is formed into the flesh of new living beings (just like our own bodies, when they return to the soil, give life to the other creatures who feed upon them).

This is why the twentieth-century French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whose philosophy as a whole forms an excellent conceptual compliment to animistic worldviews in general and Norse mythology in particular, speaks of all living creatures as intertwining limbs and sinews of a single but extremely amorphous “flesh”¹ – in the Norse perspective, the flesh of Ymir.

¹ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, 1968. *The Visible and the Invisible*. Edited by John Wild, translated by Alphonso Lingis.

THE NINE WORLDS

Yggdrasil: the axis of the worlds

At the center of the Norse spiritual cosmos is an ash tree, Yggdrasil which grows out of the Well of Urd. The Nine Worlds are held in the branches and roots of the tree. The name *Askr Yggdrasils* probably strikes most modern people as being awkwardly complex. It means “the ash tree of the horse of Yggr.”^[1] *Yggr* means “The Terrible One,” and is a byname of Odin. The horse of Odin is Sleipnir. This may seem like a puzzling name for a tree, but it makes sense when one considers that the tree as a means of transportation between worlds is a common theme in Eurasian shamanism.^[2] Odin rides Sleipnir up and down Yggdrasil’s trunk and through its branches on his frequent journeys throughout the Nine Worlds. “Urd” means “destiny.” The Well of Urd could therefore just as aptly be called the Well of Destiny.

In addition to the inhabitants of the Nine Worlds, several beings live in, on, or under the tree itself. The Eddic poem *Grímnismál*, “The Song of the Hooded One,” mentions many of them – but, unfortunately, only in passing. An anonymous eagle perches in the upper branches of the tree. A number of dragons or snakes, most notably Nidhogg, gnaw at the roots from below. A squirrel, Ratatosk, carries messages (presumably malicious ones) between Nidhogg and the eagle. Four deer, Dain, Dvalin, Duneyr, and Dyrathror, nibble the highest shoots.^[3]

[1] Simek, Rudolf. 1993. *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*. Translated by Angela Hall. p. 375.

[2] Eliade, Mircea. 1964. *Shamanism, Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Translated by Willard Trask. p. 37.

[3] The Poetic Edda. *Grímnismál*, stanzas 32-34.

FIRST level: Asgard: Home of the Gods

In the middle of the world, high up in the sky is Asgard. It is the home of the gods and goddesses. The male gods in Asgard, are called Aesir, and the female gods are called Asynjur. Odin is the ruler of Asgard, and the chief of the Aesir. Odin is married to Frigg; she is the Queen of the Aesir. Inside the gates of Asgard is Valhalla; it is the place where the Vikings that died in battle will go for the afterlife.



Figure 4
(Asgard: home of the Gods and Goddesses)

Valhalla was in Asgard: Home of the fallen Vikings

Valhalla is located in Asgard, the front of the big city of Asgard there are 540 doors. The doors are so wide that through each huge door, 800 warriors can walk side by side. The roof is covered with golden shields, and the walls around Valhalla are made from wooden spear shafts. This is the place where half of the Vikings who had died in a battle would come for their afterlife. The other half of the Vikings are given to the goddess Freya; she always has the first choice from every dead warrior. Each and every morning the Vikings in Valhalla will take their weapons and put on their armor and then walk out to the big plains in Asgard and fight. It did not matter if they got their arms, legs or head cut off. Because when the great dinner in the evening came they would all be restored to normal. In the evening they will return home to Valhalla and sit down and eat and drink. Saehrimnir "A giant pig" the pig is a magical pig. When the cook Andhrimnir cut steaks from the side of the pig, it will grow back immediately. There is also a goat named Heidrun, it is standing on the roof of Valhalla, and eats from the branches of the tree of life "Yggdrasil" While from its udder

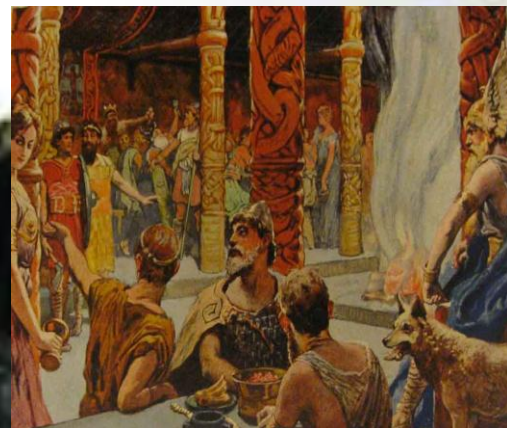



Figure 8 (imaginary picture of Valhalla)



floats a lot of mead, down to a huge tub, big enough to make everyone in Valhalla drunk every day. The Valkyries will serve the Vikings, pork and mead.¹

Vanaheim: Home of the Vanir

Vanaheim (In Old Norse Vanaheimr) is the home of the Vanir gods. The Vanir gods is an old branch of gods. The Vanir are masters of sorcery and magic. They are also widely acknowledged for their talent to predict the future. Nobody knows where exactly the land, Vanaheim is located, or even how it looks like. When the war between the Aesir and the Vanir ended, three of the Vanir came to live in Asgard, Njord and his children Freya and Freyr.¹

Alfheim: Home of the Light Elves

Alfheim (Old Norse *Álfheimr*, “The Homeland of the Elves”) is, as the name suggests, the world inhabited by the elves, a class of demigod-like beings in the pre-Christian mythology and religion of the Norse and other Germanic peoples.

Alfheim is never described in the sources that form the basis of our current knowledge of heathen Germanic religion, but is rather merely mentioned in passing in a few places. However, the elves are described as being luminous and “more beautiful than the sun,”² so we may suppose that their homeland was a gracious realm of light and beauty.

The Vanir god Freyr is said to be the ruler of Alfheim³ have long puzzled over what to make of this, and no wholly satisfactory conclusions have

¹ <http://www.viking-mythology.com/theNineWorlds.php#asgard>

^{1v} www.viking-mythology.com/theNineWorlds.php#vanaheim

² Snorri Sturluson. The Prose Edda. Gylfaginning 17

³ Snorri Sturluson. Edda. Grímnismál, stanza 5.

⁴ Hall, Alaric. 2007. *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England: Matters of Belief, Health, Gender and Identity*. p. 36.

been put forth. The relationship between the elves and the Vanir is highly ambiguous and involves considerable overlap between the two groups.⁴

SECOND LEVEL: Midgard: Home of the Humans

Midgard is one of the Nine Worlds of Norse mythology and an important concept in the pre-Christian worldview of all of the Germanic peoples. It's the inhabited world, and roughly corresponds to the modern English word and concept of "civilization." It's the only one of the Nine Worlds that's primarily located in the visible world; the others, while they may intersect with the visible world at various points, are first and foremost invisible locations.

The name "Midgard" ("Middle Enclosure") has a double meaning. The first meaning of the word refers to civilization's position "in the middle of" an otherwise wild world, which is reflected on the cosmological plane by Midgard's being surrounded by the uninhabited wilderness of Jotunheim, the world of the often-hostile giants. This is akin to the way in which the continents are surrounded by the oceans, which is, in the ancient Germanic perspective, also teeming with giants. The serpent Jormungand lives in the sea and encircles the terrestrial Midgard and the wilderness at its borders. The second and "vertical" sense of the word's meaning refers to Midgard's position below Asgard, the world of the Aesir gods and goddesses, and above the underworld. This vertical axis is represented by the world-tree Yggdrasil, which holds Asgard in its upper branches, Midgard at the base of its trunk, and the underworld amongst its roots. Both of these senses of the word's meaning ultimately refer to Midgard's place in the psych geographical distinction between the innangard and utangard, one of the most important concepts in the

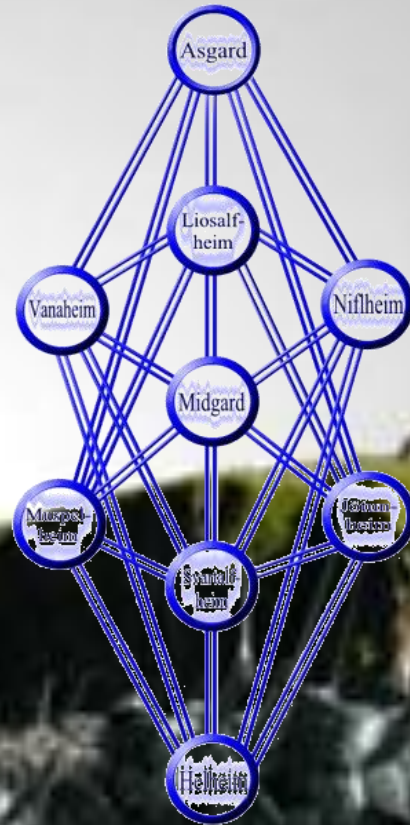



Figure 9 (a structure for the nine worlds)



ancient Germanic worldview. That which is innangard (“inside the fence”) is orderly, law-abiding, and civilized, while that which is utangard (“beyond the fence”) is chaotic, anarchic, and wild. This applies both to the geographical plane and the human psyche; thoughts and actions can be innangard or utangard just as readily as spatial locations. Asgard, the “Enclosure of the Aesir,” is the divine model of the innangard, while Jotunheim, the “Homeland of the Giants,” is the model of the utangard. Midgard is, once again, somewhere in the middle. But, as the *-Gard* element in the name implies, Midgard is – at least in theory – striving to be more like Asgard, more ordered according to the divine model upon which it’s patterned and it’s connected to Asgard by Bifrost “The Rainbow Bridge”.³ When the gods gave the world its initial shape, they slew the giant Ymir and created the various part of the world from his body parts. In order to protect Midgard and humanity from the giants, they built a fence around Midgard out of Ymir’s eyebrows. Building fences around farms repeated this paradigmatic act, marking off that which was within the fences as innangard and that which was outside the fences as utangard. During Ragnarok, the destruction of the world at the end of the Germanic mythical cycle, Midgard sinks into the sea, only to rise again, as green and fertile as ever, when the cycle begins again and the creation is repeated.⁴⁻⁷

Jotunheim: World of the Giants

(pronounced “YO-tun-hame”) is one of the Nine Worlds, and, as the name implies, the homeland of the giants. Jotunheim is also known as Utgard (pronounced “OOT-guard” “Beyond the Fence”), a name which establishes the realm as occupying one extreme end of the traditional Germanic conceptual spectrum between the innangard and the utangard. In fact, the very word “wilderness” comes from a Germanic language, Old English, where the word formed from the roots *wild-deor-ness* literally means “the place of self-willed beasts.”⁴ One would therefore expect the cosmological Utgard/Jotunheim to be symbolized as a vast, mighty wilderness that surrounds a more civilized world. In the Eddas, the dwelling-places of the giants are described as deep, dark forests, mountain peaks where winter never eases its grip, and similarly inhospitable and grim landscapes, and

this certainly seems to be how the heathen Norse and other Germanic peoples symbolically visualized the invisible Jotunheim itself.²

SVARTALFHEIM

Svartalfheim (In Old Norse Svartálfir) is the home of the dark elves. The dark elves hate the sun so they live in the murky underground. They are hideous and can be a great pain in the neck to the humans many describe them as being extreme annoying. The dark elves are nothing but trouble.

Many Norse thought that dark elves were also responsible for nightmares. These dark elves were called mare. A mare would sit on a sleeping person's chest and whisper bad dreams to haunt the person. A mare can also haunt animals, particularly horses. The dark elves cannot be exposed to the sun, if the sun's beams of light reached them they would instantly turn into stones.

THIRD LEVEL: Nidavellir

The dwarves are master smiths and craftspeople who live beneath the ground. Accordingly, Nidavellir was probably thought of as a labyrinthine, subterranean complex of mines and forges.



Figure 10 (home of the dwarves)

It is mentioned by name only once in the surviving sources that discuss elements of the pre-Christian mythology and religion of the Norse and other Germanic

¹ Quenstedt, 2003. A Handbook of Germanic Etymology. p. 264.

² Simek, Rudolf. 1993. Dictionary of Northern Mythology. Translated by Angela Hall. p. 214.

³ www.viking-mythology.com/theNineWorlds

⁴ Nash, Roderick Frazier. 1967. Wilderness and the American Mind. p. 1-2.
www.viking-mythology.com/theNineWorlds.php#svartalfheim

¹ Snorri Sturluson. The Prose Edda. Gylfaginning 34.

peoples.² The realm was probably considered to be one of the Nine Worlds of the Norse cosmology, although, since the worlds that comprise the Nine are never explicitly named, this must remain a tentative conjecture.


Muspelheim

Muspelheim (pronounced “MOO-spell-hame”) The word “Muspelheim” is recorded only in the *Prose Edda* of Snorri Sturluson, a late work that can’t be taken at face value as representing authentic pre-Christian Norse mythology. However, the basic cosmological principle it represents can be tracked far into the Germanic past. Cognates of *Múspell* can be found in Old High German and Old Saxon texts, meaning that the word and the concept it denotes likely go back to the Proto-Germanic period. Its oldest meaning, when one compares these various sources, seems to have been “end of the world through fire.”^[1] In earlier Old Norse poetry, the word seems to refer to a giant who leads his “people” or “sons” into battle against the gods during Ragnarok.^[2] Even if the idea of Muspelheim as a place rather than an event or a person is an invention of Snorri’s, it’s a relatively minor accretion, and one which is broadly consistent with the earlier uses of *Múspell*.

Muspelheim features in both the creation of the world and its downfall. In the creation narrative given by Snorri, fire from Muspelheim and ice from Niflheim meet in the middle of Ginnungagap and forge the giant Ymir, the first being from whose corpse the world was eventually shaped. During Ragnarok, the fire giant Surt, who should probably be identified with the *Múspell* of Old Norse poetry, arrives from the south (surely meant to be understood as the realm of heat and fire) with a flaming sword to slay the gods and burn the world.^{[3][4]} The continental Germanic meaning of the



Figure 11 (land of fire)



word also implies this connection with a cyclical eschaton (a theological word for the end of the world).

3

Niflheim: The World of Fog and Mist

Niflheim "Mist home" is the darkest and coldest region in the world. Niflheim was the first of the nine worlds; Niflheim is placed in the northern region of Ginnungagap. In the lands of Niflheim there is the eldest of the three wells, which is called Hvergelmir "bubbling boiling spring" protected by the huge dragon called Nidhogg.

It is said that all cold rivers come from Hvergelmir, and it is said to be the source of the eleven rivers. Hvergelmir is the origin of all living and the place where every living will go back.

Elivagar "ice waves" are the rivers which existed in Niflheim at the beginning of the world. They were the streams floating out of Hvergelmir. The water from Elivagar flowed down the mountains to the plains of Ginnungagap, where it solidified to frost and ice, which gradually formed a very dense layer. That is the reason that there is very cold in the northern plains. As the world tree Yggdrasil grew up into the sky, it stretched one of its three large roots far into Niflheim, and drew water from the spring Hvergelmir.

[1] Simeon Dalhoff, 1993. Dictionary of Northern Mythology. Translated by Angela Hall. p. 222-224.

[2] Ibid. p. 222-223.

[3] The Poetic Edda. Vafþrúðnismál, stanzas 50-51.

[4] The Poetic Edda. Völuspá, stanza 52.

THE MIGHTY GODS

There are some mighty gods in the Norse myths who led the rest of the gods and were worshipped by most of the people. I'll speak about some of them:

ODIN: Norse god Odin was the main Viking god. He is also called All-Father since he is the father of all the gods and actually goes by some 36 different names. The main reason for that is his tendency to disguise himself on his travels among ordinary people. Wearing a mask, a long hat and a green coat was his favorite disguise. He was the god of battle and also of wisdom, magic, and poetry¹. Odin is the wisest of the Viking gods and seeks his knowledge far, even to his arch enemies the giants. A lot of his knowledge comes from the giant Mimir. According to the story he went there to get a drink from the fountain of Mimir in order to gain supreme knowledge. Mimir didn't allow him that unless he sacrificed one of his eyes. From then on Odin has been with but one eye since the other one is still on the bottom of Mimir's fountain. He pulls his hood over the missing eye and that is one way of recognizing him when he is traveling among human.

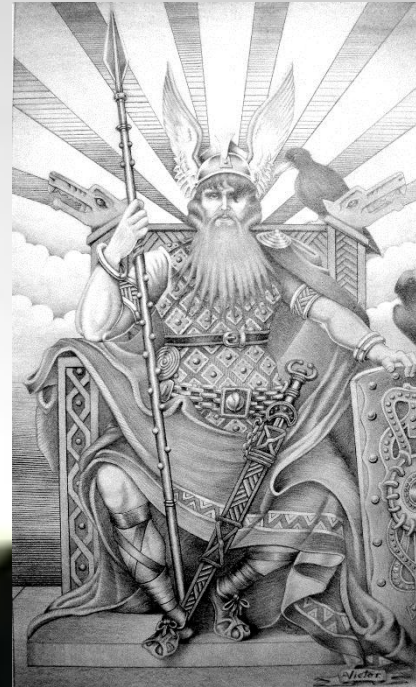



Figure 12 (the mighty Odin)

Frigg: (means the "Beloved one"), sometimes Anglicized as "Frigga," is the highest-ranking of the Aesir goddesses. She's the wife of Odin, the chief of the gods, and⁴the mother of Baldur.³ She is the only one of the many medieval Norse Gods and Goddesses allowed to sit on Odin's throne,

¹Myths and Legends of the World | 2001, Macmillan Reference, USA.

²www.vikings-history.com/norse-god-odin/

³Orel, Vladimir. 2003. A Handbook of Germanic Etymology, p. 114.



Hlidskjalf, where she could look out over the universe. She is the goddess of marriage and fertility. And the English word Friday is derived from her name.¹

THOR: Thor was one of the most important and famous gods in Thor was considered the storm-weather god of sky and thunder and also a fertility god. His wife was Sif, a goddess also linked to fertility. He had a red beard and eyes, he was huge in size, he had an insatiable appetite and not much wit. Thor was the strongest of all gods and men according to *The Prose Edda*². His courage and sense of duty are unshakeable, and his physical strength is virtually unmatched. He even owns an unnamed belt of strength that makes his power doubly formidable when he wears the belt. His most famous possession, however, is his hammer, Mjölnir ("Lightning")². For the heathen Scandinavians, just as thunder was the embodiment of Thor, lightning was the embodiment of his hammer slaying giants as he rode across the sky in his goat-drawn chariot. (Of course, they didn't believe he physically rode in a chariot drawn by goats – like everything else in Germanic mythology, this is a symbol used to express an invisible reality upon which the material world is perceived to be patterned.³

FREYA: Freya is the daughter of Njord and his sister Nerthus. She is married to Od, and has two children with Od, their names are Hnoss and Gersimi. Freya is the goddess of love, lust beauty, sorcery, fertility, gold, war and death. The name Freya means "lady". Freya is a former member of the Vanir. When the war between the Vanir and the Aesir ended, Freya and two others were sent to the Aesir as a token of truce. Freya is incredibly beautiful, and she have many admirers. Freya loved poems and love songs. When she was hovering over the ground, she scattered morning dew and sun light behind her. She shook spring flowers out of her golden hair. Freya can cry tears that turned into gold, or amber.⁴⁵

¹viking.source.com/Goddess-Frigg

²Turville-Petre, E.O.G. 1964. Myth and Religion of the North: The Religion of Ancient Scandinavia. P.81.

LOKI: Loki is the wily trickster god of Norse mythology. While treated as a nominal member of the Aesir tribe of gods in the Eddas and sagas, Loki occupies a highly ambivalent and ultimately solitary position amongst the gods, giants, and the other classes of invisible beings that populate the traditional spirituality of the Norse and other Germanic peoples.¹

In the tales, Loki is portrayed as a scheming coward who cares only for shallow pleasures and self-preservation. He's by turns playful, malicious, and helpful, but he's always irreverent and nihilistic. Loki alternately helps both the gods and the giants, depending on which course of action is most pleasurable and advantageous to him at the time. During Ragnarok, when the gods and giants engage in their ultimate struggle and the cosmos is destroyed and re-created, Loki joins the battle on the side of the giants. He and the god Heimdall mortally wound each other.²



Figure 13 (the tricky Loki)

¹ <http://www.ancient.eu/Thor/>

⁴ <http://www.viking-mythology.com/asynjur>

³ Grimm, Rudolf. 1993. Dictionary of Northern Mythology. Translated by Angela Hall. p. 195.

² Saxo Grammaticus. 1905. The History of the Danes. Book VIII.

CONCLUSION

Norse people believed that the universe consists of nine different worlds and there were plenty of gods who caused this so they worshiped them and offered sacrifices for them and they believed that the world will end by a huge battle called Ragnarok. And that was very reasonable for such people because of the circumstances of their life and environment.

That myth had a great impact on the people and affected their way of living there for they took hunting and raiding as a way of life and occupied many territories to claim their resources and spread their beliefs.

At the end the myths had the elements it needs to be called a religion since it has the gods to worship and the believers who believed in it and a good explanation about the beginning of the world and the end of it.

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