

Norse mythology

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Norse, Nordic, or Scandinavian religion, is the body of myths belonging to the North Germanic peoples, stemming from Old Norse religion and continuing after the Christianization of Scandinavia as the Nordic folklore of the modern period. The northernmost extension of Germanic mythology and stemming from Proto-Germanic folklore, Norse mythology consists of tales of various deities, beings, and heroes derived from numerous sources from both before and after the pagan period, including medieval manuscripts, archaeological representations, and folk tradition. The source texts mention numerous gods such as the thunder-god Thor, the raven-flanked god Odin, the goddess Freyja, and numerous other deities.

Most of the surviving mythology centers on the plights of the gods and their interaction with several other beings, such as humanity and the *jötnar*, beings who may be friends, lovers, foes, or family members of the gods. The cosmos in Norse mythology consists of Nine Worlds that flank a central sacred tree, Yggdrasil. Units of time and elements of the cosmology are personified as deities or beings. Various forms of a creation myth are recounted, where the world is created from the flesh of the primordial being Ymir, and the first two humans are Ask and Embla. These worlds are foretold to be reborn after the events of Ragnarök when an immense battle occurs between the gods and their enemies, and the world is enveloped in flames, only to be reborn anew. There the surviving gods will meet, and the land will be fertile and green, and two humans will repopulate the world. Norse mythology has been the subject of scholarly discourse since the 17th century when key texts attracted the attention of the intellectual circles of Europe. By way of comparative mythology and historical linguistics, scholars have identified elements of Germanic mythology reaching as far back as Proto-Indo-European mythology. During the modern period, the Romanticist Viking revival re-awoke an interest in the subject matter, and references to Norse mythology may now be found throughout modern popular culture. The myths have further been revived in a religious context among adherents of Germanic Neopaganism.