

= Surtr =

In Norse mythology, Surtr (Old Norse " black " or " the swarthy one ") is a jötunn . Surtr is attested in the Poetic Edda , compiled in the 13th century from earlier traditional sources , and the Prose Edda , written in the 13th century by Snorri Sturluson . In both sources , Surtr is foretold as being a major figure during the events of Ragnarök ; carrying his bright sword , he will go to battle against the Æsir , he will do battle with the major god Freyr , and afterward the flames that he brings forth will engulf the Earth .

In a book from the Prose Edda additional information is given about Surtr , including that he is stationed guarding the frontier of the fiery realm Múspell , that he will lead " Múspell 's sons " to Ragnarök , and that he will defeat Freyr . Surtr has been the subject of place names and artistic depictions , and scholarly theories have been proposed about elements of Surtr 's descriptions and his potential origins .

= = Attestations = =

= = = Poetic Edda = = =

Surtr is mentioned twice in the poem Völuspá , where a völva divulges information to the god Odin . The völva says that , during Ragnarök , Surtr will come from the south with flames , carrying a very bright sword :

Following this , the völva says that " stone peaks clash " , " troll wives take to the road " , " warriors tread the path from Hel " , and the heavens " break apart " . The next stanza relates that Odin is to be killed by the wolf Fenrir , and that Surtr will go to battle against " Beli 's bane " , a kenning for the god Freyr , who slew the giant Beli . No further detail is given about the fight between Surtr and Freyr in the poem . In the stanzas that follow , a number of gods and their opponents are described as doing battle at Ragnarök , and that the world will be consumed in flames , yet afterward a new world rises from the sea , fertile and teeming with life , and the surviving gods will meet again .

In the poem Vafþrúðnismál , the wise jötunn Vafþrúðnir poses the question to Odin (disguised as " Gagnráðr ") " what the plain is called where in battle Surt and the sweet gods will meet " . Odin responds that the " ordained field " is Vígríðr , and that it stretches " a hundred leagues " in every direction . Later in the poem , Odin , still disguised and now questioning Vafþrúðnir , asks which of the Æsir will " rule over the possessions of the gods when Surt 's fire is slaked " . Vafþrúðnir responds that , " when Surt 's fire is slaked " the god Thor 's sons Móði and Magni shall possess Thor 's hammer Mjöllnir .

In the poem Fáfnismál , the hero Sigurd asks the mortally wounded dragon Fáfnir the name of the island where Surtr and the Æsir " will mingle sword @-@ liquid together " . Fáfnir says that the island is called Óskópnir , that all of the gods shall go there bearing spears , and that on their way there the bridge Bifröst will break beneath them , causing their horses to " flounder in the great river " . The late Eddic poem Fjölsvinasmál , stanza 24 , contains the line " Surtur sinn mautu " or " surtur sinn mantu " according to the best manuscripts . The last two words , which are otherwise without meaning , are sometimes emended to " Sinmöru " and the entire phrase is taken to mean that Surtr has a female companion named Sinmara . Based on the same passage , Lee Hollander tentatively identifies Sinmara as Surt 's wife , stating that she is " unknown elsewhere . "

= = = Prose Edda = = =

In chapter 4 of the Prose Edda book Gylfaginning , the enthroned figure of Third tells Gangleri (described as King Gylfi in disguise) about the location of Múspell . Third says that the bright and flaming region of Múspell existed prior to Niflheim , and it is impassable to those not native to the region . To defend Múspell , Surtr is stationed at its frontier . Third adds that Surtr has a flaming sword , and that " at the end of the world he will go and wage war and defeat all the gods and burn

the whole world with fire " . The stanza from Völuspá that foretells Surtr moving from the south is then quoted . In chapter 18 , Gangleri asks what will protect the fair hall Gimlé " when Surtr 's fire burns heaven and earth " .

In chapter 51 of Gylfaginning , High describes the events of Ragnarök . High says that " amid this turmoil the sky will open and from it will ride the sons of Muspell . Surtr will ride in front , and both before and behind him there will be burning fire . His sword will be very fine . Light will shine from it more brightly than from the sun . " High continues that when the sons of Múspell ride over the bridge Bifröst it will break , and that they will continue to the field of Vígríðr . The wolf Fenrir and the Midgard Serpent will also arrive there . By then , Loki will have arrived with " all of Hel 's people " , Hrym , and all of the frost jötnar ; " but Muspell 's sons will have their own battle array ; it will be very bright " . Further into the chapter , High describes that a fierce battle will erupt between these forces and the Æsir , and that during this , Surtr and Freyr will engage in battle " and there will be a harsh conflict before Freyr falls " . High adds that the cause of Freyr 's death will be that Freyr is lacking " the good sword " that he once gave his servant Skírnir .

As foretold by High further into chapter 51 Gylfaginning , Once Heimdallr and Loki fight (and mutually kill one another) , Surtr " will fling fire over the earth burn the whole world " . High quotes ten stanzas from Völuspá in support , and then proceeds to describe the rebirth and new fertility of the reborn world , and the survivors of Ragnarök , including various gods and the two humans named Líf and Lífthrasir that will have hid from " Surtr 's fire " in the wood Hoddmímis holt .

In the Epilogue section of the book Skáldskaparmál , a euhemerized monologue states that " what they called Surt 's fire was when Troy burned " . In chapter 2 , a work by the skald Eyvindr skáldaspillir is quoted that mentions " Surt 's deep vales " , using the name Surtr as a common noun for a jötunn , with " deep vales " referring to the depths of the mountains (specifically Hnitbjorg) . In chapter 75 , Surtr is included within a list of " very powerful " jötnar .

= = Theories = =

Scholar Rudolf Simek theorizes that " the concept of Surtr is undoubtedly old " , citing examples of Surtr being mentioned in works by the 10th century skalds Eyvindr skáldaspillir and Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld , in poems collected in the Poetic Edda , and that the name of the volcanic caves Surtshellir in western Iceland was already recorded in the Landnámabók manuscript . Simek notes that jötnar are usually described as living to the east in Old Norse sources , yet Surtr is described as being from the south , and that this " surely has to do with his association with fire and heat " . Simek says that " in Iceland Surtr was obviously thought of as being a mighty giant who ruled the powers of (volcanic) fire of the Underworld " , and Simek theorizes that the notion of Surtr as an enemy of the gods likely did not originate in Iceland . Simek compares Surtr to the jötnar Eldr , Eimnir , Logi , and Brandingi , noting that they all appear to be personifications of fire .

Scholar Bertha Phillpotts theorizes that the figure of Surtr was inspired by Icelandic eruptions , and that he was a volcano demon . Scholar Andy Orchard theorizes that the description of Surtr found in Gylfaginning " appears to owe something to biblical and patristic notions of the angel with a flaming sword who expelled Adam and Eve from paradise and who stands guard over the Garden of Eden . " Scholar John Lindow states that the name Surtr may imply Surtr 's charred appearance .

= = Place names and modern influence = =

Surtshellir , a group of volcanic tunnels in western Iceland recorded in the Landnámabók manuscript , is named after Surtr . In modern Iceland , the notion of Surtr as a giant of fire lives on ; Surtsey (" Surtr 's island ") , a volcanic island that appeared in 1963 in Vestmannaeyjar , Iceland , is named after Surtr . The description found in Gylfaginning of Surtr guarding the frontier of Múspell is depicted in John Charles Dollman 's painting The Giant with the Flaming Sword . Surtur , a natural satellite of the planet Saturn , and Surt , a volcano on the planet Jupiter 's moon Io , are both named after Surtr . Surtur , a character from the American comic series Thor , is based on Surtr (1963) . In David Lindsay 's A Voyage to Arcturus , the character Surtur is based on Surtr . In the video game

series Golden Sun there is a sword called Levatine , based on Surtr 's sword .