

= Valhalla =

In Norse mythology , Valhalla (from Old Norse Valhöll " hall of the slain ") is a majestic , enormous hall located in Asgard , ruled over by the god Odin . Chosen by Odin , half of those who die in combat travel to Valhalla upon death , led by valkyries , while the other half go to the goddess Freyja 's field Fólkvangr . In Valhalla , the dead join the masses of those who have died in combat known as Einherjar , as well as various legendary Germanic heroes and kings , as they prepare to aid Odin during the events of Ragnarök . Before the hall stands the golden tree Glasir , and the hall 's ceiling is thatched with golden shields . Various creatures live around Valhalla , such as the stag Eikþyrnir and the goat Heiðrún , both described as standing atop Valhalla and consuming the foliage of the tree Læraðr .

Valhalla is attested in the Poetic Edda , compiled in the 13th century from earlier traditional sources , the Prose Edda , written in the 13th century by Snorri Sturluson , Heimskringla , also written in the 13th century by Snorri Sturluson , and in stanzas of an anonymous 10th century poem commemorating the death of Eric Bloodaxe known as Eiríksmál as compiled in Fagrskinna . Valhalla has inspired various works of art , publication titles , popular culture references , and has become a term synonymous with a martial (or otherwise) hall of the chosen dead .

= = Attestations = =

= = = Poetic Edda = = =

Valhalla is referenced at length in the Poetic Edda poem Grímnismál , and Helgakviða Hundingsbana II , while Valhalla receives lesser direct references in stanza 33 of the Völuspá , where the god Baldr 's death is referred to as the " woe of Valhalla " , and in stanzas 1 to 3 of Hyndluljóð , where the goddess Freyja states her intention of riding to Valhalla with Hyndla , in an effort to help Óttar , as well as in stanzas 6 through 7 , where Valhalla is mentioned again during a dispute between the two .

= = = = Grímnismál = = = =

In stanzas 8 to 10 of Grímnismál , the god Odin (in the guise of Grímnir) states that Valhalla is located in the realm of Glæðsheimr . Odin describes Valhalla as shining and golden , and that it " rises peacefully " when seen from afar . From Valhalla , every day Odin chooses from those who have died in combat . Valhalla has spear @-@ shafts for rafters , a roof thatched with shields , coats of mail are strewn over its benches , a wolf hangs in front of its west doors , and an eagle hovers above it .

From stanzas 22 to 24 , more details are given by Odin about Valhalla : the holy doors of the ancient gate Valgrind stand before Valhalla , Valhalla has five hundred and forty doors that eight hundred men can exit from at once (from which the einherjar will flow forth to engage the wolf Fenrir at Ragnarök) . Within Valhalla exists Thor 's hall Bilskirnir , and within it exist five hundred and forty rooms , and of all the halls within Valhalla , Odin states that he thinks his son 's may be greatest . In stanzas 25 through 26 , Odin states that the goat Heiðrún and the hart Eikþyrnir stand on top of Valhalla and graze on the branches of the tree Læraðr . Heiðrún produces vats of mead that liquor cannot be compared to , and from Eikþyrnir 's antlers drip liquid into the spring Hvergelmir from which flows forth all waters .

= = = = Helgakviða Hundingsbana II = = = =

In stanza 38 of the poem Helgakviða Hundingsbana II , the hero Helgi Hundingsbane dies and goes to Valhalla . In stanza 38 , Helgi 's glory there is described :

So was Helgi beside the chieftains

like the bright @-@ growing ash beside the thorn @-@ bush
and the young stag , drenched in dew ,
who surpasses all other animals
and whose horns glow against the sky itself .

Prose follows after this stanza , stating that a burial @-@ mound was made for Helgi , and that when Helgi arrived in Valhalla , he was asked by Odin to manage things with him . In stanza 39 , Helgi , now in Valhalla , has his former enemy Hunding ? also in Valhalla ? do menial tasks ; fetching foot @-@ baths for all of the men there , kindling fire , tying dogs , keeping watch of horses , and feeding the pigs before he can get any sleep . In stanzas 40 to 42 , Helgi has returned to Midgard from Valhalla with a host of men . An unnamed maid of Sigrún , Helgi 's valkyrie wife , sees Helgi and his large host of men riding into the mound . The maid asks if she is experiencing a delusion , if Ragnarök has begun , or if Helgi and his men have been allowed to return .

In the stanzas that follow , Helgi responds that none of these things have occurred , and so Sigrún 's maid goes home to Sigrún . The maid tells Sigrún that the burial mound has opened up , and that Sigrún should go to Helgi there , as Helgi has asked her to come and tend his wounds , which have opened up and are bleeding . Sigrún goes into the mound , and finds that Helgi is drenched in gore , his hair is thick with frost . Filled with joy at the reunion , Sigrún kisses him before he can remove his coat of mail , and asks how she can heal him . Sigrún makes a bed there , and the two sleep together in the enclosed burial mound . Helgi awakens , stating that he must " ride along the blood @-@ red roads , to set the pale horse to tread the path of the sky , " and return before the rooster Salgófnir crows . Helgi and the host of men ride away , and Sigrún and her servant go back to their house . Sigrún has her maid wait for him by the mound the next night , but when she arrives at dawn , she finds that he has not returned . The prose narrative at the end of the poem relates that Sigrún dies of sadness , but that the two are thought to have been reborn as Helgi Haddingjaskati and the valkyrie Kára .

= = = Prose Edda = = =

Valhalla is referenced in the Prose Edda books Gylfaginning and Skáldskaparmál .

= = = Gylfaginning = = =

Valhalla is first mentioned in chapter 2 of the Prose Edda book Gylfaginning , where it is described partially in euhemerized form . In the chapter , King Gylfi sets out to Asgard in the guise of an old man going by the name of Gangleri to find the source of the power of the gods . The narrative states that the Æsir foresaw his arrival and had prepared grand illusions for him , so that when Gangleri enters the fortress , he sees a hall of such a height that he has trouble seeing over it , and notices that the roof of the hall is covered in golden shields , as if they were shingles . Snorri then quotes a stanza by the skald Þjóðólfr of Hvinir (c . 900) . As he continues , Gangleri sees a man in the doorway of the hall juggling short swords , and keeping seven in the air at once . Among other things , the man says that the hall belongs to his king , and adds that he can take Gangleri to the king . Gangleri follows him , and the door closes behind him . All around him he sees many living areas , and throngs of people , some of which are playing games , some are drinking , and others are fighting with weapons . Gangleri sees three thrones , and three figures sitting upon them : High sitting on the lowest throne , Just @-@ As @-@ High sitting on the next highest throne , and Third sitting on the highest . The man guiding Gangleri tells him that High is the king of the hall .

In chapter 20 , Third states that Odin mans Valhalla with the Einherjar : the dead who fall in battle and become Odin 's adopted sons . In chapter 36 , High states that valkyries serve drinks and see to the tables in Valhalla , and Grímnismál stanzas 40 to 41 are then quoted in reference to this . High continues that the valkyries are sent by Odin to every battle , where they choose who is to die , and determine victory .

In chapter 38 , Gangleri says : " You say that all men who have fallen in battle from the beginning of the world are now with Odin in Valhalla . With what does he feed them ? I should think the crowd

there is large . " High responds that this is indeed true , that a huge amount are already in Valhalla , but yet this amount will seem to be too few when " the wolf comes . " High describes that there are never too many to feed in Valhalla , for they feast from Sæhrímnir (here described as a boar) , and that this beast is cooked every day and is again whole every night . Grímnismál stanza 18 is then recounted . Gangleri asks if Odin himself eats the same food as the Einherjar , and High responds that Odin needs nothing to eat ? Odin only consumes wine ? and he gives his food to his wolves Geri and Freki . Grímnismál stanza 19 is then recounted . High additionally states that at sunrise , Odin sends his ravens Huginn and Muninn from Valhalla to fly throughout the entire world , and they return in time for the first meal there .

In chapter 39 , Gangleri asks about the food and drinks the Einherjar consume , and asks if only water is available there . High replies that , of course , Valhalla has food and drinks fit for kings and jarls , for the mead consumed in Valhalla is produced from the udders of the goat Heiðrún , who in turn feeds on the leaves of the " famous tree " Læraðr . The goat produces so much mead in a day that it fills a massive vat large enough for all of the Einherjar in Valhalla to satisfy their thirst from it . High further states that the stag Eikþyrnir stands atop Valhalla and chews on the branches of Læraðr . So much moisture drips from his horns that it falls down to the well Hvelgelmir , resulting in numerous rivers .

In chapter 40 , Gangleri muses that Valhalla must be quite crowded , to which High responds by stating that Valhalla is massive and remains roomy despite the large amount of inhabitants , and then quotes Grímnismál stanza 23 . In chapter 41 , Gangleri says that Odin seems to be quite a powerful lord , as he controls quite a big army , but he yet wonders how the Einherjar keep themselves busy when they are not drinking . High replies that daily , after they 've dressed and put on their war gear , they go out to the courtyard and battle one another in one @-@ on @-@ one combat for sport . Then , when mealtime comes , they ride home to Valhalla and drink . High then quotes Vafþrúðnismál stanza 41 . In chapter 42 , High describes that , " right at the beginning , when the gods were settling " they had established Asgard and then built Valhalla . The death of the god Baldr is recounted in chapter 49 , where the mistletoe that is used to kill Baldr is described as growing west of Valhalla .

= = = = Skáldskaparmál = = = =

At the beginning of Skáldskaparmál , a partially euhemerized account is given of Ægir visiting the gods in Asgard and shimmering swords are brought out and used as their sole source of light as they drink . There , numerous gods feast , they have plenty of strong mead , and the hall has wall @-@ panels covered with attractive shields . This location is confirmed as Valhalla in chapter 33 .

In chapter 2 , a quote from the anonymous 10th century poem Eiríksmál is provided (see the Fagrskinna section below for more detail and another translation from another source) :

What sort of dream is that , Odin ? I dreamed I rose up before dawn to clear up Val @-@ hall for slain people . I aroused the Einherjar , bade them get up to strew the benches , clean the beer @-@ cups , the valkyries to serve wine for the arrival of a prince .

In chapter 17 of Skáldskaparmál , the jötunn Hrungnir is in a rage and , while attempting to catch up and attack Odin on his steed Sleipnir , ends up at the doors to Valhalla . There , the Æsir invite him in for a drink . Hrungnir goes in , demands a drink , and becomes drunk and belligerent , stating that he will remove Valhalla and take it to the land of the jötunn , Jötunheimr , among various other things . Eventually , the gods tire of his boasting and invoke Thor , who arrives . Hrungnir states that Thor is under their protection , and subsequently he can 't be harmed while in Valhalla . After an exchange of words , Hrungnir challenges Thor to a duel at the location of Griotunagardar , resulting in Hrungnir 's death .

In chapter 34 , the tree Glasir is stated as located in front of the doors of Valhalla . The tree is described as having foliage of red gold and being the most beautiful tree among both gods and men . A quote from a work by the 9th century skald Bragi Boddason is presented that confirms the description .

= = = Heimskringla = = =

Valhalla is mentioned in euhemerized form and as an element of remaining Norse pagan belief in Heimskringla . In chapter 8 of Ynglinga saga , the " historical " Odin is described as ordaining burial laws over his country . These laws include that all the dead are to be burned on a pyre on a burial mound with their possessions , and their ashes are to be brought out to sea or buried in the earth . The dead would then arrive in Valhalla with everything that one had on their pyre , and whatever one had hidden in the ground . Valhalla is additionally referenced in the phrase " visiting Odin " in a work by the 10th century skald Þjóðólfr of Hvinir describing that , upon his death , King Vanlandi went to Valhalla .

In chapter 32 of Hákonar saga Góða , Haakon I of Norway is given a pagan burial , which is described as sending him on his way to Valhalla . Verses from Hákonarmál are then quoted in support , themselves containing references to Valhalla .

= = = Fagrskinna = = =

In chapter 8 of Fagrskinna , a prose narrative states that , after the death of her husband Eric Bloodaxe , Gunnhild Mother of Kings had a poem composed about him . The composition is by an anonymous author from the 10th century and is referred to as Eiríksmál , and describes Eric Bloodaxe and five other kings arriving in Valhalla after their death . The poem begins with comments by Odin (as Old Norse Óðinn) :

'What kind of a dream is it , ' said Óðinn ,
in which just before daybreak ,
I thought I cleared Valh?ll ,
for coming of slain men ?
I waked the Einherjar ,
bade valkyries rise up ,
to strew the bench ,
and scour the beakers ,
wine to carry ,
as for a king 's coming ,
here to me I expect
heroes ' coming from the world ,
certain great ones ,
so glad is my heart .

The god Bragi asks where a thundering sound is coming from , and says that the benches of Valhalla are creaking ? as if the god Baldr had returned to Valhalla ? and that it sounds like the movement of a thousand . Odin responds that Bragi knows well that the sounds are for Eric Bloodaxe , who will soon arrive in Valhalla . Odin tells the heroes Sigmund and Sinfjötli to rise to greet Eric and invite him into the hall , if it is indeed he .

Sigmund asks Odin why he would expect Eric more than any other king , to which Odin responds that Eric has reddened his gore @-@ drenched sword with many other lands . Eric arrives , and Sigmund greets him , tells him that he is welcome to come into the hall , and asks him what other lords he has brought with him to Valhalla . Eric says that with him are five kings , that he will tell them the name of them all , and that he , himself , is the sixth .

= = Locations = =

Multiple places have been named after Valhalla . These include :

the Walhalla temple built by Leo von Klenze for Ludwig I of Bavaria between 1830 ? 1847 near Regensburg , Germany , and

the Tresco Abbey Gardens Valhalla museum built by August Smith around 1830 to house ship figureheads from shipwrecks that occurred at the Isles of Scilly , England , where the museum is

located .

A crater , Valhalla , located on the planet Jupiter 's moon Callisto , is named after the hall .

Valhalla Borgen in Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen , Denmark

Valhalla in Pleasure Beach Blackpool in Blackpool , England

Locations named after Valhalla also exist :

North America :

Valhalla , New York

Valhalla Centre , Alberta

Valhalla Golf Club in Louisville , Kentucky

Lake Valhalla in Washington

Mt . Valhalla in Chequamegon @-@ Nicolet National Forest , Bayfield County , Wisconsin

Walhalla , Michigan

Walhalla , North Dakota

Walhalla , South Carolina

and Walhalla , Texas

Walhalla , Victoria

Valhalla , Pretoria