

= Geri and Freki =

In Norse mythology , Geri and Freki ( Old Norse , both meaning " the ravenous " or " greedy one " ) are two wolves which are said to accompany the god Odin . They are attested in the Poetic Edda , a collection of epic poetry compiled in the 13th century from earlier traditional sources , in the Prose Edda , written in the 13th century by Snorri Sturluson , and in the poetry of skalds . The pair has been compared to similar figures found in Greek , Roman and Vedic mythology , and may also be connected to beliefs surrounding the Germanic " wolf @-@ warrior bands " , the Úlfhéðnar .

= = Etymology = =

The names Geri and Freki have been interpreted as meaning either " the greedy one " or " the ravenous one " . The name Geri can be traced back to the Proto @-@ Germanic adjective \* geraz , attested in Burgundian girs , Old Norse gerr and Old High German ger or giri , all of which mean " greedy " . The name Freki can be traced back to the Proto @-@ Germanic adjective \* frekaz , attested in Gothic faihu @-@ friks " covetous , avaricious " , Old Norse frekr " greedy " , Old English frec " desirous , greedy , gluttonous , audacious " and Old High German freh " greedy " . John Lindow interprets both Old Norse names as nominalized adjectives . Bruce Lincoln further traces Geri back to a Proto @-@ Indo @-@ European stem \* gher- , which is the same as that found in Garmr , a name referring to the hound closely associated with the events of Ragnarök .

= = Attestations = =

In the Poetic Edda poem Grímnismál , the god Odin ( disguised as Grímnir ) provides the young Agnarr with information about Odin 's companions . Agnarr is told that Odin feeds Geri and Freki while the god himself consumes only wine :

The pair is also alluded to via the kenning " Viðrir 's ( Odin 's ) hounds " in Helgakviða Hundingsbana I , verse 13 , where it is related that they roam the field " greedy for the corpses of those who have fallen in battle " .

In the Prose Edda book Gylfaginning ( chapter 38 ) , the enthroned figure of High explains that Odin gives all of the food on his table to his wolves Geri and Freki and that Odin requires no food , for wine is to him both meat and drink . High then quotes the above @-@ mentioned stanza from the poem Grímnismál in support . In chapter 75 of the Prose Edda book Skáldskaparmál a list of names for wargs and wolves is provided that includes both Geri and Freki .

In skaldic poetry Geri and Freki are used as common nouns for " wolf " in chapter 58 of Skáldskaparmál ( quoted in works by the skalds Þjóðólfr of Hvinir and Egill Skallagrímsson ) and Geri is again used as a common noun for " wolf " in chapter 64 of the Prose Edda book Háttatal . Geri is referenced in kennings for " blood " in chapter 58 of Skáldskaparmál ( " Geri 's ales " in a work by the skald Þórðr Sjáreksson ) and in for " carrion " in chapter 60 ( " Geri 's morsel " in a work by the skald Einarr Skúlason ) . Freki is also used in a kenning for " carrion " ( " Freki 's meal " ) in a work by Þórðr Sjáreksson in chapter 58 of Skáldskaparmál .

= = Archaeological record = =

If the rider on horseback on the image on the Böksta Runestone has been correctly identified as Odin , then Geri and Freki are shown taking part in hunting an elk or moose .

= = Theories = =

Freki is also a name applied to the monstrous wolf Fenrir in the Poetic Edda poem Völuspá . Folklorist John Lindow sees irony in the fact that Odin feeds one Freki at his dinner table and another ? Fenrir ? with his flesh during the events of Ragnarök .

Historian Michael Spiedel connects Geri and Freki with archaeological finds depicting figures

wearing wolf @-@ pelts and frequently found wolf @-@ related names among the Germanic peoples , including Wulfhroc ( " Wolf @-@ Frock " ) , Wolfhetan ( " Wolf @-@ Hide " ) , Isangrim ( " Grey @-@ Mask " ) , Scrutolf ( " Garb @-@ Wolf " ) and Wolfgang ( " Wolf @-@ Gait " ) , Woldregil ( " Wolf @-@ Runner " ) , and Vulfolaic ( " Wolf @-@ Dancer " ) and myths regarding wolf warriors from Norse mythology ( such as the Úlfhéðnar ) . Spiegel believes this to point to the pan @-@ Germanic wolf @-@ warrior band cult centered on Odin that waned away after Christianization .

Scholars have also noted Indo @-@ European parallels to the wolves Geri and Freki as companions of a divinity . 19th century scholar Jacob Grimm observed a connection between this aspect of Odin 's character and the Greek Apollo , to whom both the wolf and the raven are sacred . Philologist Maurice Bloomfield further connected the pair with the two dogs of Yama in Vedic mythology , and saw them as a Germanic counterpart to a more general and widespread Indo @-@ European " Cerberus " -theme . Michael Speidel finds similar parallels in the Vedic Rudra and the Roman Mars . Elaborating on the connection between wolves and figures of great power , he writes : " This is why Geri and Freki , the wolves at Woden 's side , also glowered on the throne of the Anglo @-@ Saxon kings . Wolf @-@ warriors , like Geri and Freki , were not mere animals but mythical beings : as Woden 's followers they bodied forth his might , and so did wolf @-@ warriors . "

Bernd Heinrich theorizes that Geri and Freki , along with Odin and his ravens Huginn and Muninn , reflect a symbiosis observed in the natural world among ravens , wolves , and humans on the hunt :

In a biological symbiosis one organism typically shores up some weakness or deficiency of the other ( s ) . As in such a symbiosis , Odin the father of all humans and gods , though in human form was imperfect by himself . As a separate entity he lacked depth perception ( being one @-@ eyed ) and he was apparently also uninformed and forgetful . But his weaknesses were compensated by his ravens , Hugin ( mind ) and Munin ( memory ) who were part of him . They perched on his shoulders and reconnoitered to the ends of the earth each day to return in the evening and tell him the news . He also had two wolves at his side , and the man / god @-@ raven @-@ wolf association was like one single organism in which the ravens were the eyes , mind , and memory , and the wolves the providers of meat and nourishment . As god , Odin was the ethereal part ? he only drank wine and spoke only in poetry . I wondered if the Odin myth was a metaphor that playfully and poetically encapsulates ancient knowledge of our prehistoric past as hunters in association with two allies to produce a powerful hunting alliance . It would reflect a past that we have long forgotten and whose meaning has been obscured and badly frayed as we abandoned our hunting cultures to become herders and agriculturists , to whom ravens act as competitors .