

= Hjúki and Bil =

In Norse mythology , Hjúki (Old Norse , possibly meaning " the one returning to health ") and Bil (Old Norse , literally " instant ") are a brother and sister pair of children who follow the personified moon , Máni , across the heavens . Both Hjúki and Bil are solely attested in the Prose Edda , written in the 13th century by Snorri Sturluson . Scholarly theories that surround the two concern their nature , their role as potential personifications of the craters on the moon or its phases , and their relation to later folklore in Germanic Europe . Bil has been identified with the Bilwis , an agriculture @-@ associated figure that is frequently attested in the folklore of German @-@ speaking areas of Europe .

= = Attestations = =

In chapter 11 of the Prose Edda book Gylfaginning , the enthroned figure of High states that two children by the names of Hjúki and Bil were fathered by Viðfinnr . Once while the two were walking from the well Byrgir (Old Norse " Hider of Something ") ? both of them carrying on their shoulders the pole Simul (Old Norse , possibly meaning " eternal ") that held the pail Sæg between them ? Máni took them from the earth , and they now follow Máni in the heavens , " as can be seen from the earth " .

Hjúki is otherwise unmentioned , but Bil receives recognition . In chapter 35 of Gylfaginning , at the end of a listing of numerous other goddesses in Norse mythology , both Sól (the personified sun) and Bil are listed together as goddesses " whose nature has already been described " . Bil appears twice more in the Prose Edda book Skáldskaparmál . In chapter 75 , Bil appears within another list of goddesses , and her name appears in chapter 47 in a kenning for " woman " .

= = Theories = =

= = = Identification and representation = = =

As the two are otherwise unattested outside of Snorri 's Prose Edda , suggestions have been made that Hjúki and Bil may have been of minor mythic significance , or that they were made up outright by Snorri , while Anne Holtsmark (1945) posits that Snorri may have known or had access to a now lost verse source wherein Hjúki and Bil personified the waxing and waning moon . Holtsmark further theorizes that Bil may have been a dís (a type of female deity) .

Scholars have theorized that Hjúki and Bil may represent lunar activity , including that they may represent the phases of the moon or may represent the craters of the moon . 19th century scholar Jacob Grimm rejects the suggestion that Hjúki and Bil represent the phases of the moon , and states that Hjúki and Bil rather represent the craters on the moon seen from the earth . Grimm says that the evidence for this " is plain from the figure itself . No change of the moon could suggest the image of two children with a pail slung over their shoulders . Moreover , to this day the Swedish people see in the spots of the moon two persons carrying a big bucket on a pole . " Grimm adds that :

What is most important for us , out of the heathen fancy of a kidnapping man of the moon , which , apart from Scandinavia , was doubtless in vogue all over Teutondom , if not farther , there has evolved itself since a Christian adaptation . They say the man in the moon is a wood @-@ stealer , who during church time on the holy sabbath committed a trespass in the wood , and was then transported to the moon as a punishment ; there he may be seen with the axe on his back and the bundle of brushwood (dornwelle) in his hand . Plainly enough the water @-@ pole of the heathen story has been transformed into the axe 's shaft , and the carried pail into the thornbrush ; the general idea of theft was retained , but special stress laid on the keeping of the christian holiday ; the man suffers punishment not so much for cutting firewood , as because he did it on Sunday .

Grimm gives further examples from Germanic folklore until the time of his writing (the 19th century

) and notes a potential connection between the German word wadel (meaning the full moon) and the dialectal employment of the word for " brushwood , twigs tied up in a bundle , esp [ecially] fir @-@ twigs , wadeln to tie up brushwood " , and the practice of cutting wood out in the full moon . Benjamin Thorpe agrees with the theory of Hjúki and Bil as the personified shapes of moon craters .

Rudolf Simek states that the obscurity of the names of the objects in the tale of Hjúki and Bil may indicate that Snorri derived them from a folktale , and that the form of the tale of the Man in the Moon (featuring a man with a pole and a woman with a bushel) is also found in modern folklore in Scandinavia , England , and Northern Germany .

In both the story Hjúki and Bil found in the Icelandic Prose Edda and the English nursery rhyme " Jack and Jill " , two children , one male and one female , fetch a pail of water , and the pairs have names that have been perceived as phonetically similar . These elements have resulted in theories connecting the two , and the notion has had some influence , appearing in school books for children from the 19th century and into the 20th century . A traditional form of the rhyme reads :

Jack and Jill went up the hill
to fetch a pail of water
Jack fell down and broke his crown
and Jill came tumbling after .
Up Jack got and home did trot
as fast as he could caper .
He went to bed to mind his head
with vinegar and brown paper .

= = = Bilwis = = =

A figure by the name of Bilwis is attested in various parts of German @-@ speaking Europe starting in the 13th century . Scholar Leander Petzoldt writes that the figure seems to stem from the goddess and over time saw many changes , later developing " an elfin , dwarfish aspect and the ability to cripple people or cattle with the shot of an arrow " (such as in Wolfram von Eschenbach 's 13th century poem " Willehalm ") . Petzoldt further surveys the development of the figure :

During the course of the thirteenth century , the Bilwis is less and less frequently treated as the personification of a supernatural power but becomes increasingly identified as a malevolent human being , a witch . Still later , with the rise of the witch persecution at the end of the Middle Ages , the Bilwis was demonized ; she becomes an incarnation of the devil for the witch and sorcerer . A final development has taken place since the sixteenth century , especially in northeast Germany , the Bilwis has been conceived of as a grain spirit bringing wealth ; yet this latest manifestation of the Bilwis has its harmful side , the Bilwis @-@ cutter , who is blamed for the unexplained patterns that are formed among the rows of standing grain . The cutter is a sorcerer or witch that cuts down the corn with sickles that are fastened to its feet . He is classified as an essentially malevolent Corn Spirit . Thus , the Bilwis is exceedingly polymorphous , taking on many appearances and meaning in all German @-@ speaking areas throughout the Middle Ages . The Bilwis is one of the strangest and most mysterious beings in all folklore ; its varying forms reflect the concerns of a farm culture , and it serves to explain the eerie appearance of turned @-@ down rows of plants in cornfields .

= = = Toponyms = = =

The village of Bilsby in Lincolnshire , England (from which the English surname Billing derives) has been proposed as having been named after Bil .