

Odin and Mithra

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 24 Aug 2000

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akt — 24 Aug 2000, 10:19

Nacre said:

I've been unable to find any reference to Odin's becoming lame or receiving a wound in his leg or foot. I did, however, come across one interesting foot fact about Odin. During Ragnarok, Odin is swallowed by Fenrir and dies. His son Vidar avenges him by kicking Fenrir in the mouth with a giant shoe until the wolf's jaws are torn asunder--just one giant shoe, not one of a pair. I suppose that could cause a limp.

I was looking through H. R. Ellis Davidson's -Gods and Myths of Northern Europe- (for reasons entirely unrelated to this list) and was struck by this pair of sentences relating to Odin.

"He was the ancient one-eyed god, crafty and skilled in magic lore, a great shape-changer, and an expert in the consultation of the dead. He was the rider on the eight-legged steed, the wanderer up and down the earth, the god knowing the secrets of travel between the worlds."

The steed is, on Blue, an elephant. Odin had a pair of ravens and a pair of wolves. Horn has only one of each, but that's fair enough.

The companions of Mithra, OTOH, are a raven, a dog, a snake and a scorpion. We lack only the scorpion, so far (but we have a series of snakes). Moreover, Mithra is usually portrayed in ritual slaughter of a bull. That's what Silk does for a living too. I bring these fellas up to remind our pateras that Wolfe is nothing if not inclusive.

And speaking of Oreb (weren't we?) I agree with Falcon on the Scylla (or Kypris) question: it is not logical and it would make Oreb considerably less novelistically interesting than he is.

-alga

*This is WHORL, for discussion of Gene Wolfe's Book of the Long Sun.