

GERM 148: Germanic Mythology, Religion, and Folkore

Spring Semester 2015, T/R 1:00 – 2:15 p.m., Wescoe 4049

Instructor: Professor William Keel, Germanic Languages & Literatures



Inevitability of Ragnarok [http://aryan-myth-and-metahistory.blogspot.com/2010_09_01_archive.html]

Ragnarok has the etymological meaning of the final destiny of the gods from *ragna* [genitive plural of *regin-* “gods or ruling powers” and *rok-* “end, fate”]. The term was wrongly transcribed by Snorri Sturluson as *Ragnarokr* which has caused its general mistranslation into “twilight of the gods” [Wagner’s opera *Götterdämmerung*]. Odin, chief god in Germanic mythology, chooses and calls out his *Einheriar* (“heroes”) who have been destined by *Wyrd* (“fate/destiny”) to incarnate at a specific time and in a specific place in order to fulfill the will of the *All Father*. It is not surprising that those who profess to be followers of Odin view themselves as strong individuals by nature who are distinct and separate from the masses. It is these men and women who, according to this belief system, will one day share in the governance of the earth under the coming generation of gods.

We will explore the pagan myths and beliefs of Teutonic (Germanic) antiquity and their survival in the popular traditions of Germanic countries, including adaptation in music (Richard Wagner *Der Ring des Nibelungen*) and politics (Nazism in 20th Century Germany), as well as remaining pagan traditions in the Alpine regions of Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Questions? Contact Prof. Keel at wkeel@ku.edu