



Ask Rose Ariadne
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German Pagan Symbols

The mythology and legends of the ancient Viking, Norse, and Indo-European cultures gave way to the birth of paganism in Germany. Germans were proud of their Norse heritage and many of the pagan symbols are derived from it..

Thor was a major God associated with the Norse Mythology. Thor's weapons included a hammer called Mjölnir or Mjöllnir which was believed to be one of the most fearsome weapons which used the power of lightning to level even huge mountains. The symbol of Thor's hammer was used by pagans to show strength and bravery at times of danger. Modern day pagans who follow the Heathen culture also revere this symbol. This symbol was used to adorn weapons and was also worn as amulets and pendants. Sometimes, people carried iron or silver replicas of the Thor's hammer inside their tunics for protection.

About the time that Christianity was founded, square crosses that depicted the Christ's crucifixion came into existence. Pagans in increasing numbers started to wear Thor's hammers as pendants in defiance of the increasing oppression and proselytizing from the new converts of this religion.

The shape of Thor's hammer changed with the times and regions. Some were cross-shaped while others were in the shape of a T or in the shape of an arrow. Even after converting to Christianity, many of the pagan symbols were carried over to the next generations. For example, it was customary for the groom to carry an axe at the wedding. Also, the rings that they exchanged were circular symbolizing eternal love or the cycle of birth and death.

The symbol of the swastika was used in India as early as the Neolithic period (9500 BCE). The earliest use in Europe was in the early 19th century. People used the symbol to repel evil in life as well as in death. Many of the cremation pots of early Europeans





have the swastika along with dragons or serpents. The swastika is also imagined as the design that is created when Thor's hammer is thrown and spins over and over again.

Unfortunately, the nazis took over the Swastika for their use to drive evil into the hearts of people. Thankfully that era is over and now we can regain the beauty and wonder of that sacred symbol. This symbol may be called a fylfot and it was used during the Germanic Migration Period around 300CE. The swastika or fylfot is so common on funeral urns that it looks like it had special association as a funerary symbol.

The Celtic cross is also used by Europeans including Germans to depict the sun as the center of the Universe or as the tree of life. It is also called the sun cross and is the oldest and most popular of symbols. This symbol has been recovered from the Paleolithic caves in the Pyrenees as well as the cities of Mohenjo-daro in the Indus River valley.

Since life began on Earth, the symbol of the apple has been connected with fertility and longevity. This symbol was holy to ancient Germanic and Celtic religions depicting everlasting youth. Altars would be decorated with apples dedicated to the fertility goddess. German mythology characters such as Idun and Idunna created young human beings from apples dipped into a magical well.

Ravens are also sacred symbols in Germanic Mythology. Ravens were also connected with the god Wodan and they flew over the nine worlds every day. These birds were associated with battle, death and victory.

Other animal symbols connected with ancient Germanic Mythology are Eagles, horses and Boars. Items that were sacred to the culture included ships, pillars (fertility), wagons, wolf-hooks, Quertenbaums, black suns, Trees, Thunder brooms, valknuts, shieldnots, Triqueta, Horn Triskelion, spears, Footprints, hex signs, heart, oak leaves, keys, etc.

Although the repulsive nazi regime abused many of our beautiful, meaningful pagan symbols, it is our duty to use them, revive them and to teach the future generations about their significance.

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