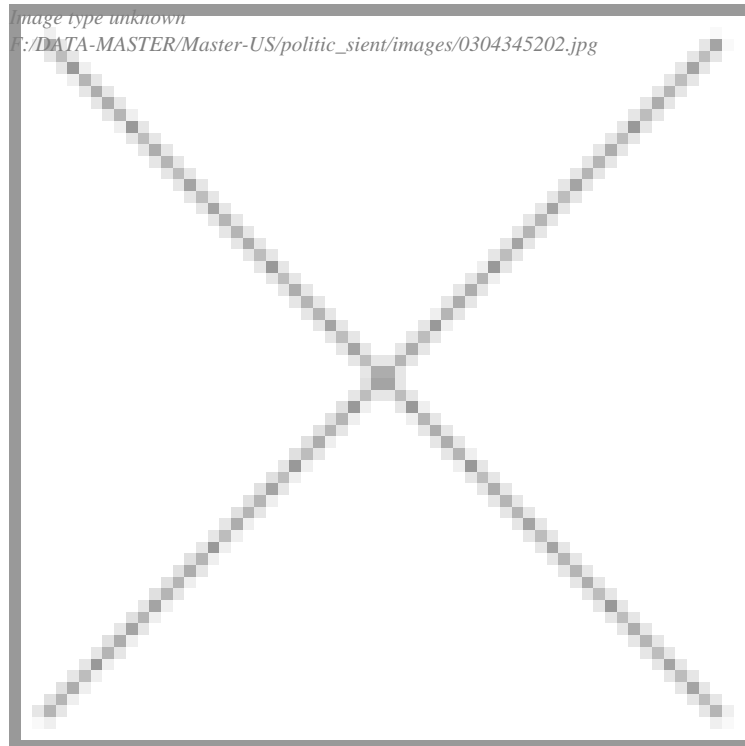


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Andy Orchard : Cassell Dictionary of Norse Myth and Legend before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cassell Dictionary of Norse Myth and Legend:

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for new paperback edition under a slightly different title. The Dictionary of Norse Myth and Legend by Andy Orchard, published in 1997 by Cassell, ISBN 0 304 34520 2, is also excellent. Despite the title, it also has entries on terms from non-Norse areas of the Germanic world. It is a somewhat larger book in terms of page size, and very nearly gives the impression of being a coffee table book. It is very attractive and is illustrated, howbeit not lavishly, with black and white photos. However, it is only 223 pages in length. It also has bibliographical information after the individual entries, but these are coded and you have to look them up in the back.

Did you know that the word "brag" is associated with a Norse god of eloquence? Or that "berserk" originally referred to fierce warriors who put themselves in pre-battle frenzies to overcome their fears? Hundreds of intriguing and valuable insights shed light on a world that for over a thousand years ruled Northern Europe and inspired a literature ranging from the poems of the Vikings to contemporary novels by Tolkien.

From Booklist There is much more to Norse myths than Wagnerian sopranos, and Orchard provides a reasonably priced survey of both the tales themselves and the characters who inhabited and created them. After an explanatory preface, a brief discussion on the nature of the sources, a short explanation of spelling and pronunciation conventions employed, and a list of illustrations come 187 pages of alphabetical entries ranging from one to several paragraphs. Topics covered include various sagas and other poetic and literary works, gods and heroes, real and mythical places, social and religious customs, literary practices and practitioners, and non-Norse historians of the Norse. Many entries have liberal quotations from the sagas or other literary or historical works. Entries are liberally cross-referenced. The writing is clear and accessible. Illustrations, which are black and white, include photographs and line drawings. There is an extensive bibliography, with titles grouped into reference books and general sources, primary sources, translations of primary sources, and secondary sources. Each title in the bibliography has been assigned a unique number, which is referenced in the dictionary entries. Appendixes include lists of the names and titles of Odin, the ruler of the gods; the names of the principal dwarfs; the names of the giants; and the names of the troll wives, giantesses, and Valkyries. There is a separate index of authors and passages cited in the text. This volume should work equally well for a reference librarian looking for a quick answer, or someone doing a report who needs more information. It is suitable for high-school and medium-to-large public libraries and most academic libraries with mythology collections. About the Author Andrew Orchard was born in North London in 1964, and is a sometime Scholar of both Exeter College, Oxford, and Queens' College, Cambridge. He is currently University Lecturer in the Department of Anglo Saxon, Norse and Celtic at Cambridge, where he teaches Old English, Old Norse and Insular Latin as a fellow of Emmanuel College. In addition to producing a wide range of scholarly works on the literature and learning of the medieval period, he has led walking tours in the mountains of Iceland for a number of years. This is his third bo