

:EMPATHY:WISDOM:INSIGHT:ETERNITY:SEARCHING:ENDLESS:FUTURE:IMPRESSION:CONTEMPLATION:

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# the enduring mead

The seeress' brew





# völva

**The völvas were historical women, seeresses, who in ancient times had a special and legendary status in Nordic society.**

For many years, our brewer, was fascinated by these stories of these völvas, seeresses, and their perennial place in history, mysticism and nature. He was so fascinated and inspired, that he took it on himself to embark on a journey of discovery and creation, to pay tribute to their legacy through his passion of brewing mead in the traditional manner. What he found fascinated him, even Harald Bluetooth had a völva close to him!

Evidence of one such völva was found in a grave at a famous ring castle called Fyrkat. Where it is quite certain that a völva had been buried. In her grave was a little shrine that was incomplete with a piece missing. Belatedly a small matching piece of silver was then found at a new archeological site, at another ring castle in another part of the country. Miraculously, at this new site, traces of the same woman were found. Giving true evidence of how well regarded these women were in society and their value was to their nobility.



This proves just how valuable these women with such special abilities were, that even the king found it important to have a völva by his side wherever he travelled!

With this in mind, our brewer wanted to make a mead as a tribute to völvas through time, telling an immortal story for the modern age. Inspired by his imagination, his creativity was unleashed.

This eternal story of the völvas began to form pictures in his imagination of how a völva might have gone about working on brewing her natural elixir. Was it a mead that could be used on special occasions? Maybe in connection with 'seid' or just at a feast? So many possibilities.

How could he tell this story that would do justice to their legacy, and how could he replicate the elixirs of old?

The story continues as follows...







“  
*She knows the wisdom of nature and the properties of plants and herbs*

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### The Enduring Mead

Let us set the stage for this “Enduring Mead” — a völva’s brew. We ask you to let your imagination flow and visualize our völva as a hermit, alone, but who is intrinsically joined with nature at a transcendental level, way beyond our modern understanding. She knows the wisdom of nature and the properties of plants and herbs. She is also connected to the spiritual world and sees through prescience the future ahead of her. Being strongly connected with nature she constantly senses when to gather her remedies. Our völva walks around in her immediate area collecting herbs, fruits, berries and shoots. She has plenty of usage for them and dries, stores and cooks with them. She is at one with nature and the spiritual realm.

### The endless brew

Her mead has been constant. An enduring brew that she has filled with the best she collected in nature. An endless brew where she has refilled and refilled it. Constantly adding herbs, fruits and berries into the tub. Tapping of it, and when it started to drop in contents, it has been replenished with water, honey, herbs, shoots and fruits. It has been a constant brew—just as nature is a constant cycle.

“*She is connected to the spiritual world and sees the future*”



EMPATHY: WISDOM; INSIGHT; ETERNITY; SEARCHING; ENDLESS; FUTURE; IMPRESSION; CONTEMPLATION





“  
*In the spirit of  
the seeress*”



### The brewing

Our brewer started in 2022, in the same way as our völvá above, with honey and water and started the fermentation, then adding the herbs that grew in the immediate area. As the year went on, more herbs, fresh shoots, berries and fruits were added.

The following year, it was poured into a larger vessel and water, honey and apples were added. The brew thus gained new nourishment, taste and new life. Our völvá-brew is constant, which we will continue to feed from now. Every spring we will pick new fresh shoots and harvest the fruits and berries of summer and autumn, and keep feeding our brew too with honey and water, and never empty out, but continually replenish.

Our first bottling contains the nature around us in the form of yarrow, fresh shoots from raspberry and blackcurrant bushes, unripe gooseberries, spruce shoots, apples, walnuts and more herbs from summer walks in the forest.

Our völvá-brew is hereby given to you and we will from now on feed and guard the magic vessel. The spirit of the seeress lives in us!

### Ingredients:

water, Danish honey, apples, gooseberries, walnuts, spruce shoots, yarrow, hawthorn and many wild herbs and shoots from berry bushes.

Contains sulfite.





# The Völva

By: Morten Tirssøn Mathisen

## Who is the völvá?

Völva, Old Norse 'vǫlva' means 'staff bearer' and a völvá is in pre-Christian times a highly respected ritual specialist, including first and foremost a fortune teller who possesses the special quality of the ability to tell about the future of a people as well as about the threads of fate of individual people. The title 'völvá' is exclusively associated with the female gender. She is a life-wise soothsayer who is able to contact the spirit world and is typically depicted as an old woman carrying a staff. A seeress is always portrayed completely alone, without relatives or completely outside society, this despite society's great respect for her wit, abilities and insight.

There are also indications that she is a traveller with her calling as a wise wife, in Old Norse 'vísindakonunni', is perhaps roughly what we today call a clairvoyant? In any case, she concentrates on things that go beyond the mundane, including divination and sorcery. A seeress is probably what later becomes synonymous with a witch in modern language, although this can give some wrong associations with today's framework of understanding.

*a life-wise  
soothsayer*





### The seeress's divination skills

In pre-Christian times—and long after—omens were taken of nature, the song of birds, the behavior of animals, the direction of the wind, and the flight of clouds across the sky. Here, the seeress's abilities reach even further, despite the fact that she cannot give answers to everything. The soothsayer sees only what the powers allow her to see. From the saga literature, it seems that the seeress falls into a higher state of mind, a kind of ecstasy or trance, which serves as an explanation for why the seeress sometimes refers to herself in the third person.

Among other things, she possesses the ability to make a spirit journey by virtue of the form of sorcery called 'seid', which is why a 'völva' can traditionally also be called 'seidwife'. She thus differs from other people in that she is both part of the physical dimension and part of the spiritual dimension through her knowledge of seidation and other parts of her seeress.

Just as the 'god' and the 'gydj' are mouthpieces for the gods during the blót-ritual, the seeress can be claimed to have a similar connection to the Norns during the seid-ritual. Some suggest there is a masculine parallel title to a völva called a 'lytir'. A character named Vittolf is mentioned as the ancestor of all the vólva, and it is even said that Vilmeid is the ancestor of all the Vitkas, and Svarthofdi of all Seid people.

### The written sources about vólva

Information about vólvas appears sporadically in the written sources and we do not always know how much to expect it to reflect the reality of pre-Christian times. For example, we get the previously mentioned information about the origin of the vólva in a written source called *Völuspá hin skamma*, "The Short Prophecy of the Vólva", which is reproduced in the Edda poem in *Hyndluljóð*.

The best example from the sagas of a seeress and her practice can be found in Erik the Red's *Saga 4* in the story of the seeress Thorbjörg, who comes to Greenland to tell the population about the future. Here, a seid-ceremony where the seeress sits on a high chair, a so-called 'seidhjald', with her staff, while people sing the song *Vardlokur*, "the spirit-lure", a song that the seeress can travel on, and then make her prophecies. In the ancient saga *Qrvar Odd's Saga*, a written source that has by no means received as much attention as the aforementioned, it tells of a vólva who travels around prophesying for people about the coming winter. With her she has an entourage of 15 young men and 15 young women, who make up a large choir, in Old Norse 'raddlið', and helps prepare for the seid to be made the following night. This form of seid is called 'náttfarsseiður' or 'nattfarsseiðs', i.e. 'night-travell-sejd'.

part of the physical and  
the spiritual dimension







The seeress makes her seid with her entourage, and in the morning all the people come out one by one and are told what is decided for each one of them. Then she talks about what the winter will be like and much more that people didn't know before.

In the myths, we also meet several different seeres. Among other things, she herself takes on the role of narrator in *Völuspá*, the prophecy of the Seeress, where she preaches about the creation of the world, the Gods and Ragnarok. In this case, what often happens when you ask about the future is that you often get to know more than you want to hear, which of course emphasizes the irrevocable seriousness of looking into the future. For example, Odin receives information that he had not asked for in any way, namely information about his own death. In the same source, we also hear very early on about the seid-knowledgeable völva Heid, while Odin in *Baldr's draumar* seeks out a deceased völva to gain insight into the future. With the help of runic sorcery, Odin awakens the wise giantess, the völva, who rises from her grave and teaches Odin, who exonerates her about Balder's fate. She appears as a bitter, joyless and exhausted figure who belongs to the oldest times. Another wise völva is Groa, who uses magic songs to remove a piece of grindstone that Thor has sitting on his forehead after the fight against the giant Hrungner, a myth that is mentioned in both *Gylfaginning* and *Skáldskaparmál*.

### Archaeological remains of völva

Archaeology provides us with a number of unusual women's graves from the Viking Age, which, based on the contents of the grave goods, are considered to be völva graves. Here they have not only found tenweights, scissors, keys, purses and fine jewellery, which are considered to be typical grave goods in noble women's graves from that time; but they have also found what can be considered seid staffs, both large staffs of wood and some smaller ones of iron, intoxicating herbs and other strange remedies that do not seem to be able to have a general practical purpose, hence it is estimated that they must have served a ritual purpose. From Fyrkat near Hobro we know, for example, a woman's grave where the presumed völva is buried with toe rings, a box with animal bones, a distinguished bronze bowl, seeds from the hallucinatory bulbwort, a seid staff and a miniature seid amulet. In addition, the Fyrkat seeress is dressed in a noble blue cloak decorated with gold thread—and the blue cloak is one of the things that is emphasized in one of the previously mentioned descriptions we have of a völva.

the irrevocable seriousness  
of looking into the future





## The forgotten qualities of the wise wife

There is something that the woman can do that the man is not able to do to the same extent, which is related to the natural differences between the two sexes. The woman generally has a more worry-oriented personality structure than the man, which is part of the woman's caring gene and the mother's necessary attention and ability to recognize danger. But it also means that the woman naturally has a better intuition than the average man.

From ancient Scandinavia, the fortune teller, the seeress, the seid woman and later the witch are known as women with powerful and often also supernatural abilities. If one looks at the rituals and ceremonies practiced in pagan cultic practices, one finds the female 'gydje' as an equal counterpart to the male 'gode', a pagan priest. This is in sharp contrast to Christianity's rather oppressive view of gender equality, where it is only the man who can and must perform holy acts. We do not see the first female priests in Denmark's history until 1948, still with great opposition from the conservative church, as it is not Christian custom for women to possess abilities in that direction. Therefore, a Christian understanding becomes the entire basis for the "invention" of the witch we know today: evil, ugly and in league with the devil. She threatens the Christian man's domain with her power, she challenges the Christian god's will with her connection to nature, and finally she challenges the patriarchal society of the Enlightenment, because her skills are not part of the science of male doctors. But today we could be as far or perhaps even further with natural medicine as we are in the Far East, had Christianity not been introduced.

The whole idea of the wise wife is very much linked to paganism, which is clearly expressed through the perception of women's crucial role as psychics or diviners. In other words, the woman's opinion weighs very heavily in the decision of various matters in pre-Christian times. This is probably due to the woman's innate intuition and feeling as well as her presumably more well-developed ability to get closer to nature and spirits. Most often, it is a woman when we hear about a person who possesses innate abilities in seid, divination and other sorcery. The seeress, who tells her prophecy in *Völuspá*, appears to be ancient and very knowledgeable, in fact she remembers the oldest times, which as mentioned tells us that the function of the seeress is a very old profession. Such wise wives are also known from many folk and natural religions throughout the world.

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