

Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| List of illustrations | <i>page</i> vii |
| Preface and acknowledgements | ix |
| Introduction | i |
| I Holy places | 13 |
| 1 Sacred landmarks | 13 |
| 2 Images of the gods | 16 |
| 3 Mounds and standing stones | 19 |
| 4 The pillar and the tree | 21 |
| 5 The enclosed sanctuary | 27 |
| II Feasting and sacrifice | 36 |
| 1 The fixed festivals | 37 |
| 2 Ceremonial drinking | 41 |
| 3 The sacrificial meal | 45 |
| 4 Varieties of sacrifice | 56 |
| 5 Human sacrifice | 58 |
| III The rites of battle | 69 |
| 1 The taking of heads | 71 |
| 2 Dedicated warriors | 78 |
| 3 Feats and skills | 82 |
| 4 Odin and Lug as battle gods | 89 |
| 5 The battle goddesses | 92 |
| IV Land-spirits and ancestors | 102 |
| 1 Scandinavian land-spirits | 102 |
| 2 Guardian spirits | 106 |
| 3 Celtic goddesses | 112 |
| 4 The bright Other World | 113 |
| 5 Fertility deities | 119 |
| 6 Rebirth of the dead | 122 |
| 7 Offerings to the fertility powers | 131 |

MYTHS AND SYMBOLS IN PAGAN EUROPE

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| V Foreknowledge and destiny | 134 |
| 1 Consulting the gods | 135 |
| 2 Interpretation of dreams | 137 |
| 3 Seeking hidden knowledge | 143 |
| 4 Divination and war | 149 |
| 5 Seers and druids | 155 |
| 6 Seeresses | 159 |
| VI The Other World | 167 |
| 1 The Scandinavian cosmos | 168 |
| 2 The central tree | 170 |
| 3 Myths of the beginning | 173 |
| 4 The sacred tree in Ireland | 178 |
| 5 Visits to the Other World | 181 |
| 6 The world's ending | 188 |
| VII The ruling powers | 196 |
| 1 Interpretation of myth | 196 |
| 2 The community of the gods | 201 |
| 3 Thor and the Dagda | 204 |
| 4 The grouping of the gods | 207 |
| Conclusion | 217 |
| References | 229 |
| Bibliography | 246 |
| Index | 259 |