Asgard's Shame, Christianity's Tool:

Gender Roles, Seidr Magic and the Paradox of a Feminine Odin

By Isaac G.L. Daviet

Advisor: Nancy Caciola

Who Is the Feminine Odin?

As one of the most famous of the Norse Gods, Odin is often cast by modern culture as the epitome of Viking manliness; a god of ultimate valor dedicated to embracing a life of courage and honor. Pop culture has seized on his title as the "All-Father" to paint him as a wise, firm and decidedly benevolent patriarch devoted to protecting the Aesir tribe of gods and humanity. Unfortunately this modern interpretation of Odin does not necessarily reflect how the ancient Norse people perceived him. Our modern society tends to reinterpret ancient religions and mythologies through contemporary lenses that fit our current perspectives of the past. Odin is no exception. Even a casual reading of the texts from the era reveal a god much more aligned with the trickster archetype than that of the patriarch. He lives in these texts as a cunning and deceitful deity that is not afraid of using guile as a means to achieve his goals, a character who has much more in common with Loki the trickster than his son Thor the valiant. However, an in depth reading of the texts of this period reveals something even more peculiar, a god who is not above bending the gender roles of Norse society. A god so feminine a frequent insult against him is his unmanly soul.[1] So how did such a paradoxical figure arise? How did a society that prided itself on rigidly defined gender roles evolve with a feminine deity as the Patriarch of the Aesir Pantheon?

Answering these questions requires a journey through the hundreds of years of cultural and religious history of the Norse As the society of northern Europe changed, so did the perception of the deities worshipped by these people. Thanks to our lack of primary document, mapping the cultural evolution of early medieval Scandinavia is an arduous task. However the timeline of this paradox appears to correlate with the largest cultural shift to of

---

[1] Hollander, Lee M., trans. *The Poetic Edda*. 2nd ed. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1962. Stanza 24 of the *Lokasenna* (p.95): "Wovest spells like a witch; in warlock's shape; through the world didst fare: were these womanish ways, I ween."

this era, arrival of the Christian religion to this region. Due to the lack of primary sources from this era, there are significant problems in understanding this emergence and how it related to this paradox. It is only in the 13th century that written texts begin emerge in the area. By that point, however, the region had been thoroughly catholosized for generations. This meant that the vast majority of the sources we have today came from a Christian world that had already adopted the Christian perspective. When this new society analyzed the stories and myths of its past, the Roman Catholic authors that recorded them had a vested interest in portraying the ancient pagan gods as barbaric and antithetical to the Christianized Norse. However, through a careful analysis of the few primary sources we do have, and by taking into account the biases present in these sources, we can begin to paint a picture of the interactions between Norse paganism, Christianity, and the gender roles of both the divine and mortal worlds.

Few scholars have proposed theories that the interaction between Christianity and Norse paganism may have occurred in multiple phases, perhaps due to the inherent complexity in researching an era with so few primary sources. Due to the small amount of scholarship that exists on this subject, discussion on what little we do have is brief and usually acknowledges the presence of this paradox without providing an in-depth analysis of the topic. Often these discussions are limited to small paragraphs or sections within larger articles, failing to properly expand on the concepts presented within them. Thus, by reexamining what we do have on these topics, we are able to garner a deeper understanding of the germanic people and their perceptions of the interactions between fate and femininity. By weaving together the limited pre-Christian resources that have survived, with the many post-conversion works such as the *Eddas* and the Sagas, we can begin to notice a pattern that

we could not see before, revealing to us an unseen interaction Christianity had with Norse paganism.

We can thus begin to see how, in the early days of the conversion process, Christianity emphasized specific instances and episodes in Norse mythology that closely paralleled biblical stories and concepts as a tool to facilitate the spread of emerging religion. As centuries went on and Christianity became increasingly entrenched into Germanic society, these parallels eventually became not only a liability to the church, but also shifted the perspective on what was acceptable divine behavior. This was not due to an inherent change in Germanic society's cultural perceptions, but rather was by the introduction of the new deity that changed the Norse people and their perception of the Aesir gods. As a result, Odin and the rest of the Aesir fell from grace and never truly recovered their ancient prestige.

The close interactions between Norse gender expectations and Germanic concepts of fate added a distinctly feminine characteristic to Odin that the ancient pagans were able to justify. To them, it was a quest for the knowledge that would avert the prophecy of the end of the world: Ragnarok, the Twilight of the Gods. When Christian missionaries first arrived in the region, they greatly benefited from Odin's feminine side. By having Odin being bound so closely to the concept of fate, this femininity in turn aligned him with their own Judeo-Christian God. Thus, Odin could be used as the perfect tool explain Christian concepts and spread the new religion. However, as Christianity became firmly rooted in the region, Odin's justification for his embrace of feminine roles suddenly collapsed. Not only that, but seidr, the form of magic that he was associated with, also suddenly became completely unacceptable to the Christian evangelizers and now sought to remove it from Norse society. The shift in the perception of seidr magic was used to further discredit Odin and the rest of the Aesir gods by these evangelizers.

Illegal Femininity

To understand why these depictions of Odin as feminine are so peculiar, one must first understand the rigidly gendered society and culture of the ancient Norse. Prior even to the arrival of Christianity in the region, men and women of medieval scandinavia were expected to abide to strict gender roles. These expectations tended to fall in line with the rest of medieval Europe where men were expected to participate in warfare, hunting and physical defense. While on the other end of the spectrum, cooking, weaving and other home duties fell upon the women of the society.[2] Hallkarva explains that maintaining these roles was perceived as supremely important for the continued survival and prosperity of the family and community in the harsh environment that they occupied. By breaking these rules a man was seen as endangering the balance of his community.[3] Men were seen as being required to defend their families and communities, and to act valiantly and with bravery in the process. A detailed analysis of gender roles is not necessary for the purpose of this essay, but it is vital to understand that men had to exhibit valor, especially in combat, while women were to be found in the homes of these ancient Norse. In particular, one of the most important responsibilities for the women of this society would have been weaving clothes.[4] Meanwhile, a man failing to meet the standards society had set upon him by being a coward in life or engaging in activities seen as feminine, including weaving, would have dire consequences on his place within the community.[5]

---

[2] Hallakarva, Gunnora. "*The Vikings and Homosexuality*." Internet History Sourcebooks Project, Fordham University. Accessed March 21, 2018. https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/halsall/pwh/gayvik.asp. This article gives a good general overview of traditional gender roles expected of men and women as well an explanation as to why these gender roles were so rigid.

[3] *The Vikings and Homosexuality* indicates that "the needs of agricultural/pastoral living require reproduction not only to work the farm but also to provide support for the parent in old age" and that "[one was expected to conform] at least on the surface to societal norms so as not to disturb the community."

[4] Arnold, Bettina, and Nancy L. Wicker. *Gender and the Archaeology of Death*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2001. p.97

[5] Nedkvitne, Arnved. *Lay Belief in Norse Society, 1000-1350*. 1st ed. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2009. p. 294: "But so much *ergi* was involved with this art that men could not practise it without shame… so

A man that bent the gender norms of the time would be labeled as an Ergi, which is usually translated literally to mean "unmanly," "effeminate" or sometimes even "queer." [6] Ergi is the first concept that we need to redefine and expand on in order fully grasp the paradox in how Odin is depicted from the pre- to post-Christianized society of Scandinavia. Some scholars often translate Ergi to mean that these men were queer in the sense of being a homosexual. Homosexual activity is often described as the essential characteristic of an Ergi man.[7] Carol Clover and Catharina Raudvere in particular have used this argument to claim that Odin's deep connections to seidr magic do not warrant him being labeled as Ergi specifically because seidr lacks this characterization as "queer" or "homosexual." They claim that gender roles do not play an important aspect in the practice of seidr, and thus, analyzing both the character and the practice through this lense leads to a historically inaccurate representation of both.[8] Due to this lack of sexually deviant action, particularly of a homosexual origin, in the existing descriptions of seidr that we have, they claim that the practice was not gendered and would not necessarily have resulted in a man being labeled as Ergi. They argue that to the ancient Scandinavians, the concept of masculinity and femininity are fundamentally different than our contemporary concepts on these ideas, and that the Aesir

---

they taught to priestesses." Nedkvitne translates and briefly analyzes a line from the *Ynglinga saga*, making the point that any man performing women's activities would be denounced as argr. It is also congruent with "A Shirt for Thorvald," an episode within the *Laxdaela Saga* (from Press, Muriel A.C., trans. *Laxdaela Saga*. 1st ed. Cambridge, Ontario: In Parentheses Publications, 1880. Ch34, p.68-69) in which a cunning wife, desiring a divorce, makes a low cut shirt for her husband and tricks him into wearing it. By doing so, he wore "a low neck like a woman," giving grounds for his wife to divorce him. Therefore assumption of woman activities and or feminine dress will result in an *Ergi* label.

[6] *The Vikings and Homosexuality*: In the terminology section, Hallakarva translates ergi and its associated terms as "unmanly, effeminate, coward" and points out the implications of an Ergi man assuming a passive homosexual role. It is worth noting that only assuming a passive/receptive role (being the "bottom") would cause one to be labeled Ergi since it was seen as a man submitting himself to another.

[7] Raudvere, Catharina, Karen Jolly, and Edward Peters. *Witchcraft and magic in Europe: The Middle Ages*. Edited by Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark. 1st ed. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002, p.119: Raudvere expresses the correct statement that "there is no sexual activity of erotic symbolism expressed in the seidr narratives. It is debatable to what extent the connection between ergi/argr should be taken." However, this ignores the fact that other actions could earn a man the label.

[8] *Witchcraft and magic in Europe,* p.119

gods of these stories should be seen primarily as literary characters. Therefore, when authors like Snorri Sturluson describes Odin as an unmanly character, he does so intentionally in order to raise controversy, allowing him to build tension and drama, thus raising the level of interest in his work and further engrossing his audience.

Raudvere brings up the fact that by some counts male practitioners of magic appear almost as frequently as female practitioners and that Odin is never described as engaging in homosexual activity, which is true in the few primary sources that we have. However, it should be noted that Raudvere is appearing to conflate seidr and trolldomr magic[9] Trolldomr is a more general and non-gendered kind of magic, usually concerned with pleasing nature spirits known as landvaettirs.[10] From there, Raudvere argues that the lines between these different kinds of magic are inherently blurry and confusing, even to the ancient Norse who could not always tell the difference and thereby categorized both under the same umbrella term of magic.[11] While it is true, especially for modern audiences, that the distinction between seidr and more general forms of magic can be hard to clearly define, the core of seidr was inherently different than other forms of magic. It was centered on the desire to change someone's fate or destiny through the use of extensive weaving motifs and rituals. Trolldomr and other forms of non-fate magic were more interested in affecting local nature spirits through prayers, incantations, and amulets.

However, Raudvere's claim that seidr does not appear to have a sexual component is correct. Yet, as we have seen the lack of sexualized or queer activity does not necessarily mean that male practitioners would not have been labeled as Ergi. In the primary sources that

---

[9] *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe, p.119:* In this section, Raudvere compare Odin to a Volva, aka a witch that specifically practices seidr magic while simultaneously implying that both Odin and Volvas are practitioners of trolldomr, which is a completely different form of magic. While the two can sometimes overlap, they usually concerned very different fields.

[10] *Lay Belief in Norse Society,* p.281

[11] *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe,* p.80

we have today there is a wide variety of texts proving that men taking up non-sexual feminine activities could lead to an Ergi label.[12] This shows how the label of Ergi does not require sexual deviancy or homosexual acts,[13] and how any transgression, sexual or behavioral, could lead to a man becoming Ergi.

It must be noted though that Ergi was more than simply an descriptive insult that shamed a man for insufficient masculinity. The concept of Ergi held additional legal dimensions that made it more than simple adjective for the "unmanly." Ergi was first and foremost a powerful legal term, resulting in devastating legal and societal consequences if one was tried and convicted of unmanliness. The Gragas, a series of icelandic laws from the 13th century, specifically describe that calling a man Ergi was such a serious offense that "a man has the right to kill in retaliation of these words." [14] Furthermore, the same section also describes that the penalty for a man convicted of being Ergi is outlawry. In Norse society, outlawry was one of the most serious punishments any individual could receive, frequently being used instead of capital punishment since it would often result in the person's death. The gravity that such a sentence carried should not be understated when examining the usage of this term. Such a conviction indicated that a man was literally outside of the law and no longer protected by it. As Raudvere explains, "An outlaw had no more protection, either

---

[12] Footnote #5 discusses several examples of this.

[13] *The Vikings and Homosexuality* provides an in depth analysis of what, specifically in terms of homosexual behavior would have been deemed as deviant. While the concept of being in a long term homosexual relationship was not widely accepted in this culture, homosexual sex was still common, or at least not necessarily stigmatized until after the arrival of Christianity. However, this only applied to the active role. Being the receiver during anal sex was seen as extremely dishonourable and unmanly due to one's submission to another man. In fact there are episodes within Norse history indicating that the rape of a defeated enemy could be used as the ultimate act of humiliation. Hallakarva likens it to the rape culture found in modern prison systems. Similarly, the concept of male pregnancy was treated as an extreme form of sexual deviancy, especially if this gave birth to an animal. It led to an entire class of insults that could result in a duel to redeem the insulted man's honor. While an instance of male pregnancy may seem ludicrous to us in the mortal world, mythological instances, particularly regarding Loki, make this point worth remembering.

[14]Sørensen, Preben Meulengracht. *The Unmanly Man: Concepts of Sexual Defamation in Early Northern Society*. 1st ed. Odense: Odense University Press, 1983. p. 17.

socially or legally, than a wild beast. Killing an outlaw was even rewarded." [15] Thus we see that being called Ergi in the Norse society had potentially deadly consequences.[16]

Fate is a Female Weaver

Being accused of Ergi was an extreme insult that was seen as an incredibly brazen attack on the character of a man within Norse society. Therefore it is extremely odd that Odin contains such prominent feminine characteristics that appear multiple times throughout the the primary sources we we have today.[17] And yet there is only one instance where Odin's lack of adherence to the gender norms of the time lands him in trouble. The *Gesta Danorum*, an early work by Saxo Grammaticus, presents a reimagined semi-mythic history of the Danes and has a passage in which Odin is outlawed from Asgard for his feminine ways.[18] To understand why Odin is so heavily associated with the bending of gender norms we need to understand his deep, almost personal, connection to fate and how exactly that relates to Norse gender ideology. Therefore we must attempt to understand the completely different concept of germanic fate and how it differs from Judeo-Christianity.

---

[15] *Witchcraft and magic in Europe*, p159. The Gragas also deal at length with the issue of outlawry as can be seen in "Perkins, Richard. *Laws of early Iceland*. Translated by Andrew Denni and Peter Foote. 1st ed. Vol. 1. Winnipeg: Univ. of Manitoba Press, 1980." A significant portion of the text, especially p.139-138 and 195-238, list the the actions that could lead to outlawry and the potentially deadly consequences of being cast as an outlaw.

[16] An interesting anecdote can be gleaned in "Läffler, Frits. *Om Den Fornsvenska Hednalagen*. Translated by Simon Fiedler. Upsala, 1880." which contains a translation of an old Norse law known as the Hednalagen. It describes a form of duel known as a holmgang that could arise from a man insulting another as being unmanly. It was expected that the insulted man would challenge the accuser to duel for the sake of his honor. Should either the accuser or the accused not appear for their combat, that person would then be saddled with the "unmanly" descriptor. Events like this further show the seriousness an ergi accusation held in Norse times that even an informal, non-legal insult was expected to be answered for in a trial by combat.

[17] These mostly appear as insults, particularly in *Lokasenna,* the *Ynglinga Saga,* while the *Gesta Danorum* includes an instance of Odin's exile for feminine action. Each of these instances will be discussed at length throughout the paper.

[18] Grammaticus, Saxo. *Gesta Danorum: the History of the Danes*. Edited by Hilda Ellis Ellis Davidson. Translated by Oliver Elton. 1st ed. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1979. Book 3, p.78: Section describes the exile of Odin for taking up the garb of a maid in one of his plans to exact vengeance against one of his enemies.

Judeo-Christian theology has an interesting understanding of the interactions between fate, free will, and their all-powerful omniscient God. In Christian theology, free will plays a pivotal role in the interaction between humanity and God, who is virtually indistinguishable from the proceedings of fate. The entire premise of the Abrahamic religions is that believers must choose to believe in and obey God, which is something that cannot be forced upon anyone.[19] However, outside of this mental autonomy every other aspect of one's life and destiny is under God's complete control. The covenants might be the best example of this. Throughout the *Bible*, God establishes several pacts in which he guarantees a group's or individual's fate in exchange for the conscious dedication to his worship.[20] These deal mostly with the fates of entire societies, but the story of Job provides an example of how God controls even the fate of individuals. As the story of Job goes, God decided to test the devout Job's faith by sending any-and-all calamities he can think of, and still Job refuses to relinquish his faith.[21] In summary, Christian doctrine sees God as being indiscernible from fate. He literally is fate. However, humans' free will in reacting to His trials are their own, their free will is not an illusion.

The Norse concept of fate may initially appear quite similar but there are some key differences. To begin, one must understand the role the Norns played with regards to the concept of fate. Similar to the three Fates of Greek mythology, the Norns were wise women

---

[19] *The Holy Bible: King James Version*. Dan Cogliano, 2004. p.121: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, [that] I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." This section clearly delineates the power God has over every aspect of human life, including life itself. However, what is most telling is the inclusion of "blessing and cursing," indicating the level of control God, while having to "choose life" indicates that God does not have power over the free will expressed by humans.

[20] *The Holy Bible.* Genesis 9:8-17 (p.4-5) details the covenant securing the future of Noah's descendants while Genesis 15:18-212 mentions the covenant passed with Abraham, securing the future/fate of the people of Israel. These are but a few instances such contracts passed, but they effectively point out how God plays a vital role in the fates of peoples and individuals alike.

[21] *The Holy Bible,* Book of Job, p.295-308. Among the calamities sent by God unto Job is the death of his daughter, which which shows how this power over the destiny of humans also includes matters of life and death.

who wrote the fate of gods and men into the world tree Yggdrasil.[22] They were incredibly powerful entities that decided the fate of both men and deities alike. It should be noted that the Norns are also heavily associated with weaving activities, with multiple passages describing them as "weaving the web of fate."[23] Thus we begin to see the intricate linkage between traditionally feminine roles and those of destiny. Crucially, the Norns relay to us the main difference between fate in Christian and pagan Germanic cultures. To the ancient Germans, fate appears to be such a powerful entity that it cannot be linked or controlled by any one divinity or entity, Aesir or Norn. But more than being simply an uncontrollable force, the Germanic concept of fate appears to paint free will as an illusion, even for the almighty Aesir gods. For example, the fate of Freyr during Ragnarok, the Twilight of the Gods. His destiny is to confront the fire giant Sutr during Ragnarok, yet the prophecy of the *Voluspa* indicates that he will ultimately fail because he will not have his trusted sword.[24] Yet despite this knowledge, he still gives it away in order to marry his wife, the giantess Gerthr. This is such common knowledge that Loki openly chastises the stupidity of Freyr's actions in the *Lokasenna*.[25] We can see that even with the knowledge of their fate, the almighty gods are still unable to act autonomously of it, showing just how powerful this concept was within this mythology and culture.

---

[22] *The Poetic Edda,* Stanza 20 of the Voluspa (p.4): "They scores did cut, They laws did make, they lives did choose for the children of men, they marked their fates" in reference to Urth, Verthandi and Skuld, the three high Norns and their duties in choosing destinies. While this excerpt describes them cutting carving the fates of men, however, most other sources tend to use weaving metaphors and images when describing the task of the Norns.

[23] *The Poetic Edda,* Stanza 3 of the *First Helgkvida Hundingsbana* (p.180-181). "His fate thread span they; to o'erspread the world;... They gathered together; the golden threads, and in moon-hall's middle; they made them fast." The imagery of weaving here is very clear which Hollander, in a footnote, would like to note that this thread-spinning should be taken literally.

[24] *The Poetic Edda* Stanza 53 of the *Voluspa* (p.11)

[25] *The Poetic Edda,* Stanza 42 of the *Lokasenna* describes the berating of Freyr by Loki for giving away his sword while Stanzas 6-9 of the Skirnismal (p.66-67) relates the specific story in which the loss of the sword occurs..

The separation between fate and deity did not seem to have been isolated to just old-Norse paganism. Even God cannot fully fuse with the Germanic fate-entity when Christianity first ventures into the region. Perhaps the strongest argument for how entrenched this powerful perception was within Germanic culture can be seen within the *Heliand*, or the "Saxon Gospel". This fascinating primary source relays the story of Jesus, but written in a way that gives so many insights into how the Germanic peoples saw the world prior to Christianity. In particular, the book is full of small adaptations and language shifts that depict Christ as a warrior-chief from "David's Hill Fort" at odds with the authorities from "Fort Rome."[26] One sentence in particular sheds some light on how fate was a separate entity from God despite him being all powerful and all knowing. The text repeatedly uses the phrasing "The shining workings [of fate] and the power of God,"[27] specifically addressing how, while appearing to be working together, Fate and God were distinct from each other, with fate maybe being seen as its own entity.[28]

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the Germanic understanding of fate is how deeply intertwined it is with womanhood and femininity. Earlier we discussed the Norns' portrayal as the weavers of fate, an inherently gendered activity, but the association of women and fate, particularly the gift of prophecy, runs far deeper and goes back beyond just what was written in Norse mythology. Even the word that embodies the Germanic concept of fate,

---

[26] Murphy, G. Ronald, trans. *The Heliand: The Saxon Gospel*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992. p.15

[27] *The Heliand*, p.15-16: "The shining workings [of fate] and the power of God told Mary that on this journey a son would be granted to her," showing the quasi sentience and separation from God that fate seems to have. While this text does not necessarily imply that fate is outside of God's control, it does indicate that they were still viewed as separate, perhaps in a manner similar to the separation of the Holy Trinity.

[28] An interesting intersection between the Germanic and Christian concepts of fate can be seen in the story of Nornagest ("*The Thattr of Nornagest.*" Edited by Joseph Harris. Translated by J. Sephton. Harvard University. Accessed March 21, 2018. http://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~ext12129/Thattr/ThattrofNornagest.html.), which relates the story of the great Scandinavian Hero. According to legend, Nornagest was granted an extremely long life by the Norns who visited him on the day he was born by tying his lifespan to that of a candle; once the candle burned out, he would die. After having close to 300 years of heroic adventures, Nornagest is baptized to Christianity and willing lights his candle, thus dying. One possible interpretation of this story could be how eventually Christian scholars desired to prove God's superiority to both germanic fate and deities.

wyrd, is a feminine verb. It is also the etymological root of Urdr, one of the three high Norns, and of the well of fate, Urdarbrunnr, which waters the world tree Yggdrasil.[29] We also have texts from Julius Caesar and the Roman historian Tacitus that recorded the first iterations of female characters linked to fate from a thousand years prior. In his work Histories, Tacitus discusses the nearly divine figure Veleda, a woman from the Germanic Bructeri Tribe who had foretold the defeat of a Roman legion by the hands of the Germans.[30] She was more than a witch, prophetess or even priestess, thanks to her gift of prophecy and how she used it in warfare, she was also seen as an important political authority in the region, often being called upon to act as the arbiter in important cases.[31] This echoes the relationship between fate weaving and war that we will see with the goddesses Frigg and Freya.

Julius Caesar had a similar encounter with Germanic people, where he explains that "among the Germans it was the custom for their matrons to pronounce from lots and divination, whether it were expedient that the battle should be engaged in or not."[32] Thus women not only were woman deeply connected to fate, they also played an essential role in the decision of wars and battles through this connection. This was deeply rooted into the cultural fabric of Germanic cultures. Archaeological evidence further suggests that this connection between war and the weaving of the outcomes of battles endured for centuries. We know this due to the fact that weaving wands and weapons are often found side by side well into the Viking Age.[33]

---

[29] Hall, John R. Clark., and Herbert D. Meritt. *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*. 2nd ed. London: Cambridge University Press, 1916. p.771

[30] Tacitus. *Tacitus: Histories (Book IV)*. Edited by T.E. Page, E. Capps, W.H.D. Rouse, L.A. Post, and E.H. Warmington. Translated by Clifford H. Moore. 1st ed. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962. Chapter LXI (p.117 and 119)

[31] *Histories,* Chapter LXI (p.127 & 129): "This maiden of the tribe of the Bructeri enjoyed extensive authority according to the ancient German custom"

[32] Caesar, Julius, and James B. Finch. *Caesar's Commentaries on the Gallic Wars, Book 1*. New York, NY: Hinds & Noble, 1910. Chapter 50 (p.39).

[33] Harrison, Dick. *Vikingaliv*. Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2017. p.69 & 72. The author even makes references to women as "peace weavers" further exemplifying the pivotal, non-combative roles they played during battles. This can also be further seen in how the burials of some Iron Age women have spear points in them, with wear

This echoes the mythic character of Freya, who, in addition to being a fertility goddess and one of the patron deity of seidr magic, was also a war goddess responsible for choosing who died on the battlefield.[34] In most stories, she is given to the Aesir tribe as a hostage to end their war against the rival god tribe of the Vanir, literally as a peace weaver. Even more connected to seidr than Odin, Freya stands out as the most prominent practitioner of this form of magic as she is the one who brought it to the Aesir and taught Odin its secrets. [35] Similarly, another goddess heavily associated with fate, prophecy and seidr magic was Frigg, the wife of Odin. While often interpreted to be the ideal mother and wife, Frigg is known mostly for her gift of prophecy, which many sources claim made her close to omniscient.[36] Interestingly, many scholars have theorized that Freya and Frigg descend from the same proto-Germanic goddess.[37]

But even upon leaving this pantheon's divine world we still find that our own real history is no less surrounded with women who have an unprecedented amount of control over the fate of the world. The sagas are rife with stories like those of Thordis and Gudrid in the

---

pattern suggestion that they may have been used for weaving purposes (*Wicker*, p.xv), thus indicating the close links between warfare, weaving, and fate.

[34] *The Poetic Edda,* Stanza 14 of the *Grimnismal* (p.56): Describes Folvang, Freya's hall where she receives half of the warriors fallen in battle while the other half go to Odin's Valhalla.

[35] Sturluson, Snorri. *Heimskringla: History of the Kings of Norway*. Translated by Lee Milton Hollander. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press for the American-Scandinavian Foundation, 2005. Chapter 4 of the *Ynglinga Saga* (p.8): "It was she who first taught the Aesir magic such as was practiced among the Vanir." Freya is a goddess from a rival group of gods called the Vanir. She was given to the Aesir as a hostage at the conclusion of the Aesir-Vanir war where she taught this form of magic. As mentioned, this clearly harkens back to these female practitioners of seidr as maintainers of peace.

[36] *The Poetic Edda,* Stanza 29 of the Lokasenna (p.96): "I ween that Frigg; the fates knoweth; though she say it not herself." Ironically this description is provided by Freya, the other goddess associated with seidr.

[37] Lindow, John. *Norse Mythology: A Guide to Gods, Heroes, Rituals, and Beliefs*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002. P.129: Lindow provides a brief theoretical summary of the similarities Frigg and Freya have in common, which includes their names and similar characteristics as goddesses. However, what is perhaps most interesting is Freya's cryptic husband Odr, whose name shares the same etymology as Odin's. Both are derived from the old Norse term for soul or poetic inspiration and are also heavily associated with wandering. One of the only thing known about Odr is that he "went off on long travels" (*Prose Edda p.30)* similar to those Odin often undergoes. Thus we see Odin being linked in some manner to both of the most prominent goddesses of seidr/fate.

Saga of Eirik the Red[38] to wood-maidens of the *Gesta Danorum*.[39] These are all depictions of a very specific type of witch known as the volva, a female practitioner of seidr magic. As was mentioned previously, seidr magic was a unique form of magic concerned mostly with prophecies and the manipulation of fate. It relied heavily on weaving motifs and would thus have been seen as an extremely gendered practice to the ancient Norse, making the volvas almost exclusively female. In the stories that have survived, volvas are described as being equally feared, respected and reviled, usually living isolated on the outskirts of society. They were often wanderers, travelling from town to town and offering their services to the highest bidder. However, they were feared by the church as their form of magic was never able to be rebranded into a syncretic practice.[40] Despite their outsider status by the time Christian sources began to record their history, these mortal witches undoubtedly played a massively important role in the pre-Christian Norse society. They appear countless times in works such as the *Prose Edda*, even being brought back from beyond the grave by Odin whenever he would like to gain insight about the future. Even the most important section of the Poetic Edda, the *Voluspa*, translates to the "Prophecy/Song of the Volva" and describes the Norse

---

[38] *Lay Belief in Norse Society*, p.291-293: Nedkvitne relates the story of how Gudrid, a faithful Christian woman, participated in a volva's seidr rituals to change the destiny of her settlement. It what is interesting with regards to this story is that this episode of seidr magic does not seem to conflict with the Christian beliefs of the participants/witnesses, thus further exemplifying the dichotomy that existed between fate and God.

[39] *Gesta Danorum,* p.69: Tells the story of how Hother, an Aesir character, stumbled upon the retreat of some forest maidens, who declare that "their special function was to control the fortune of wars by their guidance and blessings. They were often invisibly present on the battlefield… [since] they were able to award success or defeat at pleasure." This incident harkens back to the Norns, the ancient women of Caesar & Tacitus, the volvas and to Freya herself, who is said to choose half of those who die in battle for her own hall, separate from Valhalla (*Poetic Edda,* Stanza 56 of the *Grimnismal* (p.56))

[40] *Lay belief in Norse Society,* p.288-296: In his section "Secular Honour's Ambivalent Attitude to Magic," Nedkvitne discusses how, rather than immediately consider all magic as evil or reprehensible, secular attitudes were more concerned with whether the practice resulted in an honourable outcome (harkening back to how men were expected to act with honour) and was not necessarily considered at odds with Christian doctrine. However, his description of seidr magic (p.293) not only describes a practice that the church actively saw as dangerous, but also one that secular society would prefer not be within their midst, as can be seen with the volvas appearing as outsiders of the community. Their depictions as wanderers is also an interesting parallel with Odin who is frequently depicted as travelling far outside of Asgard.

cosmology and the history of the world, from its creation to its destruction.[41] In such sources these witches are neither deities or norns. They are mortal wise-women who have been gifted with talents so great that the gods themselves summon them to hear their wisdom and prophecies.

Thus we can see the truly staggering connections that exist between womanhood and fate. By virtue of these connections, female practitioners of seidr, both divine and mortal, yielded great power in their society. Furthermore, by the very nature of this concept, any man who practiced the art of fate-weaving would have been labeled as Ergi. In a society where a man wearing a low cut shirt have significant social ramifications,[42] Odin's flagrant embracing of seidr would raise some eyebrows. And yet he was still somehow the high god of Asgard, patriarch of the Aesir and, by extension, of humanity in spite of his feminine presentation. So why did ancient Norse not have a problem with this gender-role bending god, and why di?

An Exception to the Rule

While we have focused a great deal on the paradox surrounding Odin's embracing of gendered principles, it should be noted that he is not the only divine character to subvert the expectations the ancient Norse had with regards to gender. These stories appear across historical sources, from the *Poetic Edda* to the *Gesta Danorum*. However, it is only Odin who receives this feminine characterization while the euhemerized *Gesta Danorum* is the only source in which that he suffers the consequences for engaging in this behavior.[43] This is the

---

[41] *The Poetic Edda,* Introduction to the *Voluspa* (p.1-2). Also known as the "Song of the Volva," this part of the *Edda* recounts the entire history of the world, from creation until its ultimate destruction in Ragnarok, as told through the mouth of a deceased volva that Odin has brought back to life. It is interesting to note that, as all powerful as he is, Odin himself will concede that his seidr abilities are no match compared to those held by women.

[42] See footnote #5 for a discussion on this episode from the *Laxdaela Saga.*

[43] The *Gesta Danorum* and the *Ynglinga Saga* are unique from other sources, particularly the *Eddas*, in that they treat the Aesir as highly advanced conquerors from the east rather than as gods involved in the creation of the world. Interestingly, the *Ynglinga Saga* and the *Prose Edda* were both written by Snorri Sturluson. While

sole instance of Odin being faced with outlawry because of his feminine characteristics that "had brought the foulest scandal on the name of the gods." [44] But outside this one incidence, the Aesir tend to not experience consequences for breaking gender norms. The *Poetic Edda* has multiple stories of the Aesir engaging in extremely Ergi activities without consequences. Thor and Loki, for example, dressed up as women to infiltrate the home of Thrymr the Frost Giant and retrieve Thor's hammer Mjolnir.[45] Similarly, an episode in the *Prose Edda* sees Loki transform himself into a mare and mate with the steed Skathilfari in order to impede a giant's construction of Asgard.[46] Such an act would be the most sexually deviant and shameful act any male could perform within the context of the Norse culture.[47] So clearly, the Norse gods were no strangers to a certain level of deviation from the traditional gender binary of the era. Yet only Odin is ever significantly chastised for his actions and only once with consequences.

Therefore one has to wonder why the majority of gods are allowed to act in such a feminine way without any serious backlash while Odin gets mocked for these connections. In the *Eddas*, the source of most of these stories, there does not appear to be any real consequences, with the possible exception of the *Lokasenna*, in which Odin and Loki are both

---

Snorri's *Prologue to the Prose Edda* (p.1-6) does attempt to head this dichotomy off by also describing the Aesir as conquerors from the east rather than gods, the rest of the text specifically details how the Aesir, especially Odin, were involved with the creation of the world, thus treating them more as gods than as mere human conquerors.

[44] *Gesta Danorum,* Book III p.78: Here we see that the Aesir are not completely immune to the shame one of their own can bring about through acts of Ergi. The response to such crimes is outlawry, in accordance with the expected punishment for any mortal man.

[45] *The Poetic Edda,* Stanzas 16-18 of the *Thrymskvitha* (p.107): Thor's protest to this plan ("A craven wretch may call me the gods") is silenced by Loki who points out, correctly, that without Mjolnir the Aesir are vulnerable to attack. Thor's concerns are understandable since this event is similar to the story from the *Laxdaela Saga* previously discussed, which resulted in a man being tricked and labeled unmanly.

[46] *The Prose Edda,* p.35-36: Details the story in which a mysterious giant is tasked with rebuilding the walls of Asgard within a single season. Convinced he will be unable to succeed within the allotted time, the Aesir bargain the sun, moon and goddess Freya as payment. Upon realizing the builder might complete his task, Loki transforms into a mare to distract the giant's steed Skathilfari, successfully disrupting the construction. In the process, he bore Sleipnir, Odin's eight legged horse.

[47] *The Vikings and Homosexuality*, see also the discussion with regards to this topic in footnote #13.

mocked for their supposed acts of Ergi. Yet, these moment do not result in banishment or outlawry.[48] It is only in slightly later sources, the euhemerized texts that actively paint the Aesir as magical humans rather than gods, that the Aesir and especially Odin have to face the consequences of their gender violations.[49] In general, one would expect the gods of a mythos to be perfect representatives of the society and culture they emerged from, so why, as Armann Jakobsson argued, were the Aesir apparently above the normal gender roles? Why did the pre-Christian Norse not have a problem with these transgressions? By analyzing the specific context for these stories, we can see a pattern that sets the actions of Odin apart from other and.

In his paper *Odin as Mother*, Jakobsson makes the argument that the gods, as beings inherently superior to humans, are not bound to the same rules as us. While this article does a good job explaining the bizarreness related to Odin's character, his conclusion is rather light on details. The paper ends with the simple argument that "The divine patriarch is above suspicion. Deviant behaviour cannot make him deviant since human restrictions are beneath him. He does not have to be straight since he cannot be queer. And in essence, the patriarch god does as he pleases." [50] The essay does not delve any further into the subject nor does Jakobsson ask why the gods were above human rules or why the Aesir were not held to the same standards as mortal men. While this argument does an interesting job in exploring the complexity of the situation and the wide variety of possible interpretations, they do not delve fully into the convoluted depths that surround all the concepts relevant to this discussion.

---

[48] While Loki is bound and punished at the end of the *Lokasenna*, it isn't because of his unmanly character, rather his actions in denigrating the gods goes to far.

[49] *Gesta Danorum,* p.78. This is an event that is confined to the *Gesta Danorum* since even though the *Ynglinga Saga* relates how the practice of seidr magic was so vile that it was only taught to women, it does not mention any consequences to Odin practicing it (*Heimskringla,* p.11)

[50] Jakobsson, Armann. "Óðinn as Mother: The Old Norse Deviant Patriarch." *Arkiv För Nordisk Filologi*, no. 126 (2011): 5-16. Accessed March 20, 2018. http://www.academia.edu/6857709/_Óðinn_as_mother_The_Old_Norse_deviant_patriarch_Arkiv_för_nordisk_filologi_126_2011_5_16.

However, the idea that the Aesir are above human concerns is a relevant point for this essay, albeit one that requires to be expanded on.

For the ancient Norse culture, divine status not only allowed the Aesir to skirt the rules of gender, it would actually require them to break these gender roles if the greater good were to be at sake. The gods, by their nature, are responsible not only for their own well being, but also for the well being of humanity and the world in general. Thus, if breaking the sacred gender roles is necessary for the continued safety of the gods and mankind, then it is acceptable to do so. Loki, for example, only mated with the steed in order to stop a giant from completing his task of rebuilding Asgard, which would have given him the sun, the moon and the goddess Freya as his wife. And because of this, nowhere in the text is he chastised for it.[51] Similarly, the story of the *Thrymskvitha* pulls on the same themes, however the expectation that the gods should bend gender roles if necessary is even more plainly stated. After Heimdall proposes to dress Thor as a bride in order to retrieve his hammer, Thor exclaims: “A craven wretch; may call me the gods; if I busk me; in bridal linen.” To which Loki responds: "Hush thee now, Thor; and heed these words: soon will the [giants] in Asgarth dwell, but thou fetch home; the hammer from them."[52] Thus Loki is blatantly clear that Thor’s desire to maintain his masculine pride is outweighed by the needs of the many. And again, nowhere do we see a chastising of either Loki or Thor because, as with the previous story, this was done in order to preserve cosmic order and protect Asgard.

---

[51] While Loki is chastised later in the Lokasenna as being an “unmanly one” for giving birth to Sleipnir, it should also be noted that he is accused of “milking the cows like a maid” which would be another justification for his Ergi label. On the other hand, Odin’s only known transgression of gender roles is his practice of seidr magic, for which he isn’t punished, and his assumption of the garb of a maid, for which he is.

[52] *The Poetic Edda,* Stanzas 16-18 of the *Thrymskvitha* (p.107). This section, and indeed the whole story, specifically drives the point that the breaking of gender roles was required and expected by the Aesir, if necessary. It is also worth noting that while Loki was not forced to undertake the series of Ergi actions; he could have chosen a more manly way to disrupt the construction. Thor is, however, forced by the other gods to renounce a part of his honor for the sake of his kin.

The question now arises, what reason, if any, does Odin have to justify his unmanly behavior. His exile in the *Gesta Danorum* is described as a consequence for his actions in attempting to produce an heir as a means to exact revenge on one of his enemies.[53] In this instance, his assumption of women's clothing was done for selfish gains which is not a justifiable reason to break gender roles and thus led to his exile. Thus we see that an embracing of Ergi for one's personal reasons was not condoned. However, this instance was an euhemerized account from a later source that depicts a very different Odin from those portrayed in the *Eddas* or even the *Ynglinga Saga*. In every other source, Odin's connection to seidr magic does not have a legal or social consequence, indicating that this indifference or tolerance was embedded deep in Norse culture, and that, at least to a certain level, the ancient ones didn't see a problem with Odin breaching his masculinity for control over destiny. Even in the *Ynglinga Saga*, Sturluson explicitly denounces the form of magic that Odin practices as extremely unmanly, but stops short of chastising Odin for practicing it.[54] And an explanation as to why may lie in Ragnarok.

Ragnarok, the Twilight of the Gods, is Norse equivalent to the apocalypse and plays a vital role in many of the mythological stories within the *Eddas*. It is an event which always appears to be in the back of the mind of the gods.[55] But it has always been a perplexing story.

---

[53] *The Gesta Danorum,* Book III, p.76-78: This section is an interesting retelling of the story of the death of Baldr, where he is voluntarily murdered by Hother for his pursuit of Nanni. After the death of Baldr, Odin receives a prophecy that a child born of the princess Rinda will avenge Odin by slaying Hother. He eventually disguises himself as a maiden and gets put in her service, where he eventually rapes her. Here, his exile is linked to his bending of gender norms in his selfish pursuit of vengeance. This can also be seen as an attempt to remove the gods from the story of the end of the world since the death of Baldr by Loki plays a pivotal role in story of Ragnarok.

[54] *Heimskringla*, Chapter 7 of the *Ynglinga Saga* (p.11): "It is called seith and by means of it [Odin] he could know the fate of men and predict events that had not yet come to pass… But this sorcery is attended by such wickedness that manly men considered it shameful to practice it, and so it was taught to priestesses." The following sentence details how Odin uses these arts to become famous and find hidden treasures. However nowhere does Sturluson specifically label him as Ergi nor does is he directly condemned for his use of seidr, instead seeming to imply that any other men that practice seidr were.

[55] The best example of this would be the existence of Valhalla, a hall in which Odin receives the greatest fallen warriors in preparation for Ragnarok, where they will ride and face the armies of Sutr for the ultimate battle (*The Poetic Edda,* Stanza 24 of the *Grimnismal*, p.58)

By its very structure, Ragnarok is the prophecy that relates the ultimate fate of the Aesir and of the world, sung by a Volva brought back from the dead. However, as we have discussed, fate in the Norse world is a tricky concept that implied a future that was both extremely rigid and yet also malleable. Seidr magic was one way by which individuals could attempt to change their fate or that of others. As we saw, Germanic cultures appeared to have a quasi obsession with fate, with women at the forefront in the attempts to change the future. Therefore, it is not an unreasonable interpretation of the texts to assume that Odin's constant quest for knowledge and his willing practice of feminine seidr magic would be an attempt to change his fate and that of the Gods. After all, we know that he is terrified of Ragnarok, as confirmed by the existence of Valhalla, a great hall in which all the great fallen warriors await the arrival of the Sons of Muspell, ready for the final battle. We know from the prophecy of Ragnarok that this final defensive act by Odin will fail and that the armies of Sutr will destroy the world as predicted.[56] But still Odin persists in his attempts to avoid the inevitable, and this extends to his pursuit of seidr magic, despite the unmanliness of it. A desire to save the entire world is certainly a cause valid enough to forgo the shame of being a male seidr practitioner.

The Surprising Benefits of a Feminine Odin

Now we that we have an understanding as to why ancient Norse culture accepted specific violations of gender norms, we can begin to ponder how these concepts interacted with Christianity.[57] One might expect that the arrival of Christianity would spell immediate doom for the old pantheon. However, a close reading reveals that this wasn't necessarily the

---

[56] *The Poetic Edda,* Stanza 47-65 of the *Voluspa*, (p.10-13): Describes in detail how all the gods will fall and how none will remain after Sutr the Fire demon sets the world ablaze.

[57] It is worth noting that Odin is the only Aesir who faces actual consequences to his bending of gender norms.

case. The few sources we have, such as the *Heliand*, reveal that the Aesir gods were not immediately discredited by church preachers and survived within the society generations after the arrival of the new Christian God. Even the sagas and the *Eddas* show how deep the parallels between the two belief systems ran. Surprisingly, it appears as though the Aesir were seen as a tool that was useful the spread of Christianity, being used to help complex Christian concepts to the Germanic cultures.

After the fall of the western Roman empire, Christianity survived and expanded mostly with the elite circles of society. When trying to convert new geographical regions, the church would often first attempt to convert the leaders and elites of the new society.[58] This makes sense from a practical perspective: kings and nobles, through their literacy and political power, offered many advantages and would make the conversion of the lower classes faster and easier. However, spreading this message accurately throughout the countryside and among the lay-people was an inherently difficult task. Progress was slow due to the limited numbers of priests capable of going on conversion expeditions and the large number of pagan unbelievers within these regions. In the process, the explanation of complicated concepts could get lost in translation, sometimes literally. A great example from outside of Scandinavia would be the story of Saint Guinefort, the holy greyhound. The story as related to us discusses the peculiar incident in which the christian monk Stephen de Bourbon came upon a remote French village that worshipped a deceased dog known as Saint Guinefort. Because it was not properly explained to them that only humans could achieve sainthood, the locals believed this dog to indeed be a Saint like any of those officially recognized by the

---

[58] Gregory, Bishop of Tours. *History of the Franks*. Translated by O.M. Dalton. 2nd ed. Vol. II. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1927. p. 66-69: This section of the *History of the Franks* details the events that lead to the conversion of the Frankish nobility. It is important to note how this was done within the noble class, as Clotilde is a noble queen that has already converted to Christianity and manages to convince her husband king Clovis to be baptised, at which point he begins working on converting the rest of his nobility.

church.[59] Stories such as these help us understand why Christian missionaries would embrace any method that might make communicating complicated religious topics easier to a completely foreign society as they spread their message beyond the already converted elites.

This method of evangelization is exactly the process we see in the *Heliand*. As mentioned before, this work was essentially designed in an attempt to bridge the gap between the pagan Germans and the Roman Catholic missionaries. We see terms like Jesus the Chieftain, Fort Rome and David's Hill-Fort.[60] But perhaps the most intriguing aspects of the language in the *Heliand* are those that describe God himself. These small shifts in the language paint a picture of God that is remarkably similar to Odin in many ways. For example, he is referred to as the All-Ruler,[61] a clear harkening back to Odin's title as the All-Father. Furthermore, the text makes several references to the "Creators Spell," and "the secret runes, the word of God." which harkens back to Odin's role as the God of poetry,[62] since he is heavily associated with song, poetry and frantic ecstasy, his name being etymologically linked with these concepts.[63]

---

[59] De Bourbon, Stephen. "De Supersticione: On St. Guinefort." Internet History Sourcebooks Project. September 8, 200. Accessed March 11, 2018. https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/halsall/source/guinefort.asp. Chapter 370: Whether this "saint" was an adaptation of an older pagan or folk belief isn't necessarily relevant to the conversation. Rather, it is a useful example as to how complicated concepts like sainthood were not necessarily well understood outside elite circle of clergymen and converted nobility. This can also apply to our previous discussion of fate.

[60] *The Heliand,* p.15: The title of song 5 is "The Chieftain of Mankind is Born in David's Hill-fort," in reference to Jesus Christ

[61] *The Heliand,* p.7: In this section, the angel Gabriel speaks and claim "I am always in the presence of the All-Ruler," in reference to God

[62] *The Heliand,* p.1: The title of the first song is "The Creator's Spell, by which the whole world is held together is taught to four heroes," while the very first line mentions the runes, a set of powerful and magical symbols discovered by Odin appear in the first line, and compares them to the Gospel, using the analogy that the story of Christ would reveal a hidden truth about the world much like runes would. In Norse mythology, runes are heavily associated with Odin since he was the one who discovered them by "sacrificing himself to himself" on the world tree Yggdrasil (*Lindow,* p.248). This phrasing is not only reminiscent of language within the *Heliand*, but of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross as well. It is also worth noting that, rather than being separated into chapters, each new section of the *Heliand* is called a song, thus further connecting the Heliand to Odin's role as a god of poetry.

[63] *Lindow, John:* p.250: "In Viking and medieval Scandinavia, few could have missed the connection with the word ó*ð*r, which could mean "poetry" and "frenzy." Furthermore, a well known myth of Odin involves him stealing the mead of poetry from a giant through deceit and trickery (*Lindow,* p.225-226)

The language in the *Heliand* is far from the only similarity we see between Odin and God. Other examples include the death of Baldr, Odin's son and deity of everything good in the world, who will be resurrected after Ragnarok to rule over a new world,[64] a myth that is similar to the story of Jesus, the son of God who will return to rule over an everlasting kingdom.[65] And the parallels between the pagan and Christian mythos don't stop there; Loki, as an archetypal trickster character, has many similarities with Satan. An integral part of the Norse pantheon, he has strong ties to Odin but his deceitful actions and constant antagonizing of the Aesir eventually go too far, leading even Odin to turn against him. He is of the Aesir but one day, because of his wicked ways and overconfidence, he is cast out from Asgard.[66] This follows the same general storyline of Lucifer, whereby he is originally a divinely-created character before his pride leads him to being cast out of heaven by God.

There are even more similarities between Odin and the Judeo-Christian God. Yet this is not something that would be expected given Christianity's anti-syncretic past. Indeed, it does not appear as though the original interaction between these two divine characters or their worshippers can necessarily be described as hostile. One might logically assume that Christianity would be eager to stamp out any similarities between the Christian and Norse deities in an effort to distance the two belief systems, yet this is clearly not the case. Rather, as we see in the *Heliand*, the inherent similarities between Odin and God were useful tools

---

[64] *Lindow,* p.69. The story of Baldr's death is related in *Baldr's Draumar* of the *Poetic Edda* (p.117-119) as well as Stanzas 31-33 & 62 of the *Voluspa* (p.6-7 & 12), with 62 specifically mentioning Baldr's resurrection and rule over the world post Ragnarok. *Lindow's* entry on Baldr makes clear the significance of this event, which to the Aesir represents the first fulfilled prophecy in the path to Ragnarok, at least according Snorri Sturluson. Thus we can see clear parallels between the death of Odin's son signaling the beginning of Ragnarok and the death of God's son as the beginning of the apocalypse. Furthermore, Baldr is usually a god associated with light, joy, mercy and forgiveness, clear parallels that align him with Jesus.

[65] *The Holy Bible,* Book of Revelations (p.713-721): The Book of Revelations details specifically the events of the Christian apocalypse, which will result in the establishment of a new world order.

[66] *The Poetic Edda,* The entirety of the *Lokasenna* (p.91-103) serves as a good summary of character of Loki, a deity that could be both friend or foe to the Aesir. His story harkens back to Lucifer's fall from grace after having been God's favorite. To quote *Lindow* "It seems that Loki's allegiance is for the most part with the æsir during the mythic present… and in the mythic future, at Ragnarök, he is unabashedly against them" (p.217)

for the preachers and missionaries, who used them to explain Christian concepts that might have otherwise not been understandable to the new converts. Thus, an enigmatic male character like Odin, one that often travels hiding his true self and is heavily connected with and exerting some level of control over fate, overlaps quite well with Christianity's own description of God. Or at the very least his character could serve as a good foundation for missionaries to build an analogy of God. The culmination of this can be seen in the *Heliand* whose language, as mentioned previously, draws heavy parallels between God and Odin.[67] But it isn't only within the *Heliand* that we get a glimpse of this early commingling of Christian and pagan ideals. The *Eddas* also have stories that closely parallel the themes of the *Bible*, indicating that these similarities ran deep within the Norse pantheon.[68] Finally, and most importantly, Odin and God are both deeply entangled with their respective concepts of fate, Odin, thanks to his practice of seidr, God, by virtue of him being all knowing and powerful. Therefore, we see that in the early interactions with Christianity, it is specifically Odin's feminine characteristics that align him so closely with fate and thus God. The ancient preachers saw this small amount of Ergi that the pagans had deemed acceptable and expanded on it, making it a large part of his personality in order to build on these similarities he had with their own God.

Of course, there are some limitations that unfortunately make analyzing this era rather difficult, the obvious one being a lack of primary sources from the pre-Christian era. We know that the accounts we have of the Norse gods are heavily modified by their Christian authors and by time, significantly complicating our ability to understand the subject. For

---

[67] *The Heliand,* p.1-15: See footnote #61 for an in depth discussion on these similarities

[68] A perfect example of this, as mentioned previously, the story of Baldr's death with shares many parallels with the death of Christ. Other sources that present the story of the Aesir in an euhemerized way, like the *Ynglinga Saga* and the *Gesta Danorum*, loose much of their Christian similarities and stories. For example, as previously discussed, the *Gesta Danorum* present a completely different version of the death of Baldr that disconnects this event to Ragnarok.

example, how exaggerated by the church were these parallels? Is it possible that the church completely fabricated some of these similarities for effect? If so, when were they added, before or after the success of Christianity?[69] While the specific details of the process may take many more years to answer, these enigmas do not necessarily affect this argument. We do not need to know exactly what or how these parallels occurred, simply that they did. Odin's core character traits, especially those revolving around his role in the creation of the world and of control over fate, are aligned with the Christian God. His ability to control fate, the discovery of the runes, the death of his son, his connection to poetry and song,... not only are these integral to the character of Odin that predate the arrival of christianity, they are also the traits he shares with God. We can trace them back even into our most ancient source, the Heliand, showing that, at some point in the conversion process of the Germanic territories, authors decided there was enough similarities to draw parallels between these two divine characters.

Conquerors From the East

Eventually, however, there came a point when Christianity not only was completely integrated into Norse culture, but a large component of it. This marked a turning point for the old society, where Christian hegemony began to redirect the culture. While fate could no longer exist as an entity separate from God, completely changing the Scandinavian worldview, the Aesir outlived their usefulness as a comparative tool for Christian doctrine. Because of this there was a sudden need to incorporate these mythological characters into the

[69] A good example of this difficulty would be the early chapters of the Gylfaginning in the *Prose Edda* (p.8-9), in which the main character, the king Gylfi, encounters three enthroned characters, High, Just-As-High and Third, who relate to him the story of the world and of the gods. These three characters are usually interpreted to be Odin as those three names appear in a list of pseudonyms he goes by (*Prose Edda,* p.21). The inclusion of Odin as a trinitarian deity does not appear in any other source and thus appears as a possible instance where Christian scholars simply added characteristics to Odin to align him more with God. Additionally, we do not know when this addition occurred or if Snorri Sturluson is even the one who added it.

newly created Christian Norse world. A significant effort was thus made to sanitize the ancient past, resulting in a series of euhemerized retellings of the Aesir. So far we have discussed the *Eddas* at length since the stories within them tend to accept the divinity the Aesir and only briefly discussed the euhemerized stories of the *Ynglinga Saga* and the *Gesta Danorum*.[70] These sources actively attempted to reimagine Scandinavian history in a way that included the Norse deities as non-divine characters. Works like the *Ynglinga Saga* or the *Gesta Danorum* show us the Aesir as a tribe of powerful humans from the east, who, with the help of Odin and his magic, conquered the Germanic territories and installed themselves as their rulers and as false gods.[71] Oddly enough, Snorri Sturluson, through his authorship of both the *Prose Edda* and the *Ynglinga Saga*, gives considerations to do both kinds of characterizations. Even within the *Prose Edda*, Snorri appears to contradicts himself in his attempt to present an euhemerized version of the Aesir, affirming in his prologue that they are the descendants of King Priam of Troy while simultaneously having them partake in the creation of the world.[72] Through this dichotomy of wanting to tell the story the Aesir as gods while simultaneously attempting to discredit their divinity, Sturluson points to the pattern that we see happening in the thirteenth century in which authors gradually begin to distance themselves from the divinity of the Aesir.

We see this pushed even further in the *Ynglinga Saga* and the *Gesta Danorum*, both of which reimagine the Aesir as a tribe of human conquerors. As in the prologue of the *Edda*,

---

[70] Interestingly enough, however, while the early chapters of the *Poetic Edda* do relate stories of the Aesir as divine beings, as the book goes on it deals increasingly with mortal adventures and stories, beginning to take on aspects of an epic poem rather than a mythological text.

[71] *Heimskringla,* Chapters 2-14 of the *Ynglinga Saga* (p.6-18). It should also be noted that references to the conquest of the Aesir feature Odin prominently performing magic, especially seidr magic, on his warriors in order to win battles, bringing us back to the concept of honourable and dishonourable use of magic discussed in *Lay Belief*. While Snorri doesn't indicate if this manipulation of fate was an honourable use of magic, the status of Odin as a mortal conquering for his own selfish desires opens the door to those questions mentioned by Nedkvitne. Furthermore, as discussed previously, Snorri did see the use of seidr by men as a shameful.

[72] *The Prose Edda*, p.3 & 9: Reference to Asgard as Troy appears in page 3 of the *Gylfaginning* while the creation of the Earth by the Norse Gods is referenced as early as page 9. It should be emphasized that the prologue emphasizes the humanity of the Aesir while the rest of the text refers to them as gods.

the *Ynglinga Saga* is firm in its affirmation that the Aesir and Vanir were tribes of men from the East, gifted in advance technology and a deep knowledge of magic, which allowed Odin to conquer the Scandinavian territories.[73] This pattern again reappears in the *Gesta Danorum* where the gods become cunning individuals from the east who manipulated the "torpor of the inhabitants" to set themselves up as the gods of the region.[74] However instead of originating from Troy, the *Gesta Danorum* claims the Aesir came from Byzantium, aka Constantinople.[75] This new perspective could serve a useful purpose for the Roman Catholic authors against their Eastern Orthodox rivals centered in Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire. This would put them at odds with the Catholic Scandinavian territories, especially after the Great Schism of 1054 between the Eastern and Western churches.[76] Therefore, by positioning the Aesir as coming from Constantinople, Saxo Grammaticus is pointing out a pattern of blasphemous ideology and fake religion that spring forth from the Eastern Empire. The author thus accomplishes two objectives and further discredits the divinity of the Aesir while simultaneously delegitimizing the Eastern church.[77]

But the pattern of discrediting the Aesir was not simply limited to the euhemerized sources. The *Lokasenna* provides examples of how the change in the perception of fate and seidr could be used to discredit the Aesir gods as a whole. This poem essentially follows Loki lambasting the entirety of the Aesir, from Bragi, god of poetry, to the almighty Odin.[78] In his introduction to the *Lokasenna*, Lee M. Hollander argued that the accusations put forth by

---

[73] *Heimskringla,* Chapters 2-4 of the *Ynglinga Saga* (p.7-8)
[74] *Gesta Danorum,* Book 1, p.25:
[75] *Gesta Danorum,* Book 1, p.25-26: "...and as an expression of their devotion sent it with the utmost show of piety to Byzantium"
[76] Cross, F. L., and E. A. Livingstone. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian church*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. Entry on "The Great Schism"
[77] It should also be noted that the structure of the religion established by the Aesir is rather similar to the principle of Caesaropapism (*Oxford Dictionary,* entry on Caesaropapism) found in eastern church in which the head of state/emperor is also the ultimate head of the church. This principle was a major source of contention between the two churches, with the Catholic church believing itself to be the superior of kings and governments.
[78] *The Poetic Edda,* the *Lokasenna* (p.90-103)

Loki should not be automatically believed as fact.[79] While this may be true for a couple of the accusations, particularly the ones which do not appear in anywhere else in the mythology,[80] many of the accusations are attested within other sources and portray a very damning but logical argument against the old pagan deities, calling into question the Aesir abilities as gods. Through his mocking, Loki uses logical points to expose the Aesir's impotence in the grand scheme of the universe.

This is most prominently displayed when Loki's mocks Freyr for his trading of his sword to gain his wife Gerthr. Loki reminds him that his lack of a sword during Ragnarok will leave him defenseless in his battle against Sutr, as foretold in the *Voluspa*.[81] Likewise, Loki mocks Frigg's supposed omniscience, revealing that despite her supposed omniscient prophetic abilities, she never discovered that he was the person behind Baldr's death.[82] Far from just being humorous, these accusations present the Aesir gods as powerless to the machinations of fate, deluding themselves in their belief that they have any power to change or even know the future. The attack on Frigg, as one of the patron goddesses of seidr, is especially potent against the practice of seidr magic. While God is not mentioned within this poem, it isn't difficult to see how he can come into play with the discrediting of the Aesir's connection to fate. Thus presented, these supposed gods have no power since God is ultimately the sole entity in control of fate.

---

[79] *The Poetic Edda*, Introduction to the *Lokasenna* (p. 90): Hollander claims that the Lokasenna was written "by a clever [poet] who conceived the idea of showing the solemn and glorious gods from their seamy side." While possibly true, its inclusion within the work is still significant.

[80] The tauntings of Bragi's lack of wealth (Stanza 13) and Syf's supposed infidelity (Stanza 54) appear particularly baseless. Loki does not offer any context, explanation or evidence for either of these accusations, and they aren't attested in other sources. These may be part of the accusations that cause Hollander to label as a joke poem.

[81] *The Poetic Edda*, Stanzas 41-42 of the *Lokasenna* (p.98-99): "But when Muspell's sons, through Myrkwood Ride; Thou shall weaponless wait, poor wretch."

[82] *The Poetic Edda*, Stanzas 28-29 of the *Lokasenna* (p.96)

And this pattern of discrediting can even be applied to Odin and his craft of seidr. At this point, any individual or character who claimed to be able to manipulate fate through seidr came across as a deluded heretic in the eyes of the now devout Norse Christians. Seidr magic as a concept cannot exist within the thoroughly christianize world since it is a practice that, by its very nature, assumes to have the power exclusively reserved to God. While other forms of magic can often be syncretized in Christianity by being portrayed as a deeper understanding of the natural world, seidr cannot. This is why the *Lokasenna* makes such a strong effort to mock this, especially Odin and Frigg's close connection to the form of magic. The Aesir as a whole are thoroughly mocked over these limitations and are displayed as powerless against the coming of Ragnarok.[83] The major shift from the pagan times however is that now, under these new Christian circumstances, readers would side with Loki. Odin's justification of the assumption of Ergi to avoid Ragnarok was no longer justifiable. When seidr was believed to be a valid form of magic, Odin was warranted in his pursuit of it to save the world from Ragnarok. But now that the destiny of the world, including the events of Ragnarok are solely in the hands of God, Odin suddenly becomes a god engaging in pointless feminine rituals, rituals that, if performed by a man, would label him as Ergi. This is the only instance that is affected by this shift in perspective. Neither Thor or Loki go impede on the divine power of God within their respective stories and even a euhemerized reading of their story would still allow for their gender role breaking to be justified. Even if we just imagine them to be powerful mortals, they were still acting for the good of their community and kin. Odin, however, while perhaps acting selflessly, was assuming the power of God, something that can't be accepted in Christian theology. This analysis combines well with Nedkvitne's argument that thirteenth century authors did not perceive any cultural differences between

[83] *The Poetic Edda*, Stanzas 28-29 of the *Lokasenna* (p.95-99)

themselves and their ancestors.[84] In order to reconcile this paradox, therefore, the only logical conclusion was to establish fault to one of the deities. Since God is all powerful and perfect, that unfortunately meant that the way Odin was perceived had to change.

As we have seen, Odin shared many similarities with God, therefore his discrediting is particularly tricky as it must delegitimize Odin without impacting God. By aligning him so closely with female acts and by emphasizing his unmanliness by performing magic with the witches of Samsey and for rewarding those least deserving,[85] the Roman Catholic authors are sending a powerful message to their readers that this was not a deity worthy of being worshipped. That Odin was a feminine coward, antithetical to the ideals Norse manhood. Nor is it a coincidence that the only legal consequence Odin ever faces for his feminine ways discussed within the later euhemerized *Gesta Danorum*, that has the most negative depiction of Odin.

It is important to discuss Hollander's claim that "The *Lokasenna* is not, and never was, in any sense, a popular lay" meant to be taken as a seriously.[86]While Hollander may be correct in his argument that the purpose of this text was mainly for entertainment and comedic reasons, I would still argue that the logical arguments Loki present within Loki's flyting are another example of the changing dynamic and motives the church had towards the pagan myths, emphasizing the stories that portrayed the Aesir as weak and impotent,

---

[84] *Lay Belief in Norse Society,* p.295: "There are no indications that thirteenth-century saga authors thought that the pagan saga heroes lived according to a different code of honor."

[85] *The Poetic Edda*, Stanza 22 of the *Lokasenna* (p.95). "As give thou shouldst not, mastery to worser men." This latter point is important because this would fall within the category of evil magic which could result in outlawry. As a reminder, not only was seidr magic heavily associated with female gender roles, but the manipulation of fate to give advantages to lesser deserving men would be seen as extremely cowardly and be a further justification to call a man Ergi (*Lay Belief in Norse Society*, p.295-300). While this accusation against Odin, like those against Bragi and Syf, might be unfounded, it still describes him further as an Ergi character, something which would have unsettled the Norse people.

[86] *The Poetic Edda,* Introduction to *Lokasenna* (p.90): "The *Lokasenna* is not, and never was, in any sense, a popular lay. It is the product of a witty and clever [skaldic poet] who conceived the idea of showing the solemn and glorious gods from their seamy side."

especially when compared to the all-mighty God. This text, because of its comedic value, was a powerful tool to be used against the Aesir in general and Odin in particular.

But this shift did not only affect Odin, it also had a direct impact on the perception of seidr magic as well. As mentioned above, seidr is not a practice that can be syncretized into Christian cannon as it infringes on the omniscience and power of God. Early thirteenth century secular attitudes did not automatically associate magic with evil and would rather have been treated as any other tool or weapon, with the consequences for its usage depending on how it was used, who used it, and what its effects were.[87] Even Christians who practiced seidr for the good of the community were often highly regarded, like Gudrid in the *Saga of Erik the Red*.[88] Interestingly, this story also reveals the relative flexibility in the honor system of Norse culture, whereby a Christian women who performs pagan rituals is forgiven by the Christian scholars writing about this since those rituals were performed for the good of the community. This echoes the previous pattern seen of forgiveness if a transgression was done for the good of the community, further proving how deeply ingrained this idea was within scandinavian culture.

However, despite this relatively relaxed attitude towards magic in general, Nedkvitne argues that early Norse writers were more hostile to seidr practices than they were to other forms of "trolldomr" magic. According to him, authors like Snorri Sturluson and other authors saw seidr as inherently evil.[89] To them, seidr was a blasphemous art form that had no

---

[87] *Lay Belief in Norse Society*, p.290: Nedkvitne mentions briefly that male practice of seidr, in addition to the female aspects of the magic, may have been considered Ergi since it could be seen as a man "cheating" his way through life.

[88] See previous discussion for a retelling of the story of Gudrid. For this section, it is only important to remember that Gudrid, a devout Christian woman, is convinced to participate in a seidr ceremony despite her objection to the pagan practice, thus saving the lives of her fellow settlers. For this, she is remembered fondly in many Christian historical texts.

[89] *Lay Belief in Norse Society*, p.293: Nedkvitne analyzes the same passage within the text but assumes that Snorri condemns seidr as a whole, rather than just condemning male practitioners of it. Furthermore, this quote does not in fact directly chastise Odin for performing it nor mention of the expected legal consequences for being labeled ergi despite heavily implying that his practice of it is very argr.

parallel to other forms of magic. This can be seen in the dichotomies between how secular and religious authorities interacted with seidr magic. Early secular authorities, like the scandinavian assemblies,[90] viewed in ways similar to other forms of magic, as a tool rather than an ungodly pact with the devil. As a result, when cases involving magic were brought in front of a court or discussed in a work of literature, the legal consequences depended on if this magic had a positive effect and if the person performing it honourable and justified. Christian clergy, on the other hand, saw the pagan connections to magic, especially seidr magic, and thus always took a strong stance against any form of magic.[91] So here we have two cultural forces that are seemingly at odds on how to legislate magic. However, as Christianity became increasingly intertwined with secular government, the latter's views eventually aligned itself with church doctrine.[92] This would eventually come to affect Odin as well, with his deep connection to the art form being used a way to discredit him to the Christianized Norse society.

The True Twilight of the Gods

Thus we can see how the complex Norse patterns of fate and gender interacted with the new religion of Christianity. A detailed dive into the complicated matters of gender roles and expectations show how these concepts permeated both pre and post conversion Scandinavia and expanded upon the extremely important legal consequences for a man being labeled as Ergi. We learned about the power of the germanic concept of fate and revealed how heavily connected with femininity it was. Thus it revealed to us how Odin's special

---

[90] Also known as "Things" within the scandinavian languages. Perhaps the most famous of these is the Icelandic Althing, the oldest parliament still in existence having been founded in 930

[91] *Lay belief in Norse Society*, p.295-300

[92] *Lay belief in Norse Society*, p.300: "Magic was a competitor to the religious services offered by the church… by all indications the church asserted itself successfully in this competition."

relationship to fate and the magic that controls it, seidr in particular, might appear to be contradictory with his role as the masculine patriarch of the Aesir but how an analysis of the myth of Ragnarok revealed the potent argument for allowing these transgressions.

Thanks to these transgressions, Odin's character was able to align more closely with that of the Christian God. It was thanks to these specific characteristics, to his embracing of the feminine aspects of fate and seidr, that Christian missionaries were able to use him as such an effective tool to aid in the spreading of complicated and nuanced topics. His ability to control fate because of these feminine qualities is oddly what aligned him so closely with the Christian God. But this could not last, and as Christian hegemony imposed itself atop of the old Norse ways, Odin's reason for embracing this gendered art could suddenly no longer justified. Not because of a change in secular culture, but because of the incompatibilities that emerged between the two religious traditions. While the stories of the other gods were left mostly intact, Odin saw his stories evolve and used as a weapon against him, a tool used by Christian scholars to actively discredit the once powerful patriarch. For while secular society simply evolved an new interpretation of the deity, christianity saw the how the power to control fate held by both Odin and seidr magic, posed a threat to the authority of God. Thus a concerted effort against these blasphemous forms of magic stamped out a once proud god and an influential form of magic designed around the inherent power of women and their connection to Fate. And yet despite all this, if one reads closely the old texts, the mysterious power of the feminine Odin still shines through.

Complete Bibliography

Arnold, Bettina, and Nancy L. Wicker. *Gender and the Archaeology of Death*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2001

Caesar, Julius, and James B. Finch. *Caesar's Commentaries on the Gallic Wars, Book 1*. New York, NY: Hinds & Noble, 1910.

Cross, F. L., and E. A. Livingstone. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian church*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

De Bourbon, Stephen. "De Supersticione: On St. Guinefort." Internet History Sourcebooks Project. September 8, 200. Accessed March 11, 2018. https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/halsall/source/guinefort.asp.

Grammaticus, Saxo. *Gesta Danorum: the History of the Danes*. Edited by Hilda Ellis Ellis Davidson. Translated by Oliver Elton. 1st ed. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1979.

Gregory, Bishop of Tours. *History of the Franks*. Translated by O.M. Dalton. 2nd ed. Vol. II. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1927.

Hall, John R. Clark., and Herbert D. Meritt. *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*. 2nd ed. London: Cambridge University Press, 1916.

Hallakarva, Gunnora. "*The Vikings and Homosexuality*." Internet History Sourcebooks Project, Fordham University. Accessed March 21, 2018. https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/halsall/pwh/gayvik.asp.

Harrison, Dick. *Vikingaliv*. Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2017

Hollander, Lee M., trans. *The Poetic Edda*. 2nd ed. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1962. Stanza 24 of the *Lokasenna*

Jakobsson, Armann. "Óðinn as Mother: The Old Norse Deviant Patriarch." *Arkiv För Nordisk Filologi*, no. 126 (2011): 5-16. Accessed March 20, 2018. http://www.academia.edu/6857709/_Óðinn_as_mother_The_Old_Norse_deviant_patriarch_Arkiv_för_nordisk_filologi_126_2011_5_16.

Läffler, Frits. *Om Den Fornsvenska Hednalagen*. Translated by Simon Fiedler. Upsala, 1880.

Lindow, John. *Norse Mythology: A Guide to Gods, Heroes, Rituals, and Beliefs*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Murphy, G. Ronald, trans. *The Heliand: The Saxon Gospel*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Nedkvitne, Arnved. *Lay Belief in Norse Society, 1000-1350*. 1st ed. Copenhagen: Museum

Tusculanum Press, 2009.

Perkins, Richard. *Laws of early Iceland*. Translated by Andrew Denni and Peter Foote. 1st ed. Vol. 1. Winnipeg: Univ. of Manitoba Press, 1980.

Press, Muriel A.C., trans. *Laxdaela Saga*. 1st ed. Cambridge, Ontario: In Parentheses Publications, 1880.

Raudvere, Catharina, Karen Jolly, and Edward Peters. *Witchcraft and magic in Europe: The Middle Ages*. Edited by Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark. 1st ed. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.

Sturluson, Snorri. *Heimskringla: History of the Kings of Norway*. Translated by Lee Milton Hollander. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press for the American-Scandinavian Foundation, 2005.

Sørensen, Preben Meulengracht. *The Unmanly Man: Concepts of Sexual Defamation in Early Northern Society*. 1st ed. Odense: Odense University Press, 1983.

The Holy Bible: King James Version. Dan Cogliano, 2004.

Tacitus. *Tacitus: Histories (Book IV)*. Edited by T.E. Page, E. Capps, W.H.D. Rouse, L.A. Post, and E.H. Warmington. Translated by Clifford H. Moore. 1st ed. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962.

"*The Thattr of Nornagest.*" Edited by Joseph Harris. Translated by J. Sephton. Harvard University. Accessed March 21, 2018. http://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~ext12129/Thattr/ThattrofNornagest.html.