SCANDIA
Journal of Medieval Norse Studies

"OK HUGÐA EK ÞAT ARGS AÞAL!": QUEERNESS IN OLD NORSE SOCIETY AND MYTHS

"OK HUGÐA EK ÞAT ARGS AÞAL!": QUEERNHEIT IN DER ALTEN NORDISCHEN GESELLSCHAFT UND MYTHEN

Jess Nevins[1]

Abstract: The Æsir, the gods of the Norse myths, are not a cis-heterosexual monolith, despite the traditional interpretations of the myths. Over the past thirty years scholars have exposed or teased out the queerness within the pantheon and the myths. I use a queer theoretical framework to interpret the gods' actions and characters and to locate them within a queer context. I then show how their transgender elements belong to a tradition of transgender deities which began among the people of the Corded Ware Culture (ca. 2,800 B.C.E.). I turn to the specific cultural influences of the Germanic tribes which influenced Norse society in their regard of queer and transgender behavior and individuals. After discussing some of the anticipated objections to my arguments, I then demonstrate how several of the major gods of the Norse pantheon are either queer, transgender, or both.

Keywords: Norse gods, queer theory, transgender, queer Óðinn

Résumé: Les Ases, les dieux des mythes nordiques, ne sont pas un monolithe cis-hétérosexuel, malgré les interprétations traditionnelles des mythes. Au cours des trente dernières années, les chercheurs ont exposé ou démasqué la queerness au sein du panthéon et des mythes. J'utilise un cadre théorique queer pour interpréter les actions et les personnages des dieux et pour les situer dans un contexte queer. Je montre ensuite comment leurs éléments transgenres appartiennent à une tradition de divinités transgenres qui a commencé parmi les gens de la Culture Corded Ware (environ 2 800 avant notre ère). Je me tourne vers les influences culturelles spécifiques des tribus germaniques qui ont influencé la société nordique en ce qui concerne le comportement et les individus queer et transgenres. Après avoir discuté de certaines des objections anticipées à mes arguments, je démontre ensuite comment plusieurs des principaux dieux du panthéon nordique sont soit queer, soit transgenres, soit les deux.

Mots-clés: dieux nordiques, théorie queer, transgenre, Óðinn queer

[1] MA in Cultural Studies from Bowling Green State University (1993). Lone Star College-Tomball, Tomball, TX, USA. E-mail: jjnevins@ix.netcom.com. ORCID ID 0009-0005-7206-7479

Introduction

The situation for queer people in Norway during the Viking Age (ca. 750-1066 C.E.) is usually described as dire. The 12th-century Icelandic law codes, the *Grágás*, and the 13th-century Norwegian law codes, the *Gulaþingslǫg*, are clear on the punishments for the accusations of homosexual acts and for those men who commit homosexual acts. (The laws do not address lesbians). Old Norse vocabulary which described homosexuality and homosexual acts (*nið, ergi, ergask, argr*) equated those acts with sexual perversity, passivity, cowardice, effeminacy, and weakness (Gade, 1986; Jochens, 1996b, p. 381-390). Based on these facts, scholars have projected these homophobic attitudes backwards into Norse society during the Viking Age (Sørensen, 1983; Jochens, 1996b; Ármann Jakobsson, 2008), working under the assumption that the homophobia of post-conversion Norway was matched by a pre-conversion homophobia.

Recently, scholars have begun to re-examine these attitudes in the Norse myths (Solli, 2008; Franks, 2018; Richardson-Read, 2020). These scholars have concluded that Óðinn, Þórr, and Loki each have queer or transgender elements. In this paper I will argue that the homophobia of the Viking Age was at the least more nuanced than the homophobia of post-conversion Norway. While Ármann Jakobsson asserts that Óðinn "is not queer. Being a god, he is above such categories" (Ármann Jakobsson, 2011, p. 10) and reference works such as John Lindow's *Norse Mythology* simply leave out all mention of Óðinn's queerness/transness, I will argue in this paper that the queerness and transness of Óðinn, Þórr, and Loki were a known and tolerated aspect of Norse society during the Viking Age and were reflected in the queerness and transness of several other Æsir. I will argue that there was a historical continuity for the transgression of cis-heterosexual gender boundaries from the pre-Migration Germanic tribes up to the Norse of the Viking Age, which created a continuity of queerness and transness which the Norse were the latest inheritor of and participant in.

My analysis of the Æsir will primarily rely on textual sources, primarily the *Prose Edda* and the *Poetic Edda*, committed to vellum ca. 1220 and ca. 1270, respectively (Clunies Ross, 2016, p. 18, 23). Due to the late date of their composition, neither *Edda* can be said to be without problems, as has been discussed extensively by other scholars. However, both sources remain valuable thanks to their bases in the oral compositions and traditions of the late Viking Age. Similarly, the skaldic poems quoted in this paper have late dates of being committed to print but much earlier dates of composition and oral transmission.

This paper uses several specialized terms and phrases that may not be familiar to all readers. *Transgender*, as used in this paper, refers to an individual who has moved away from the gender assigned to them at birth and toward either the opposite gender or toward a position of negation of the gender binary altogether (Stryker, 2017, p. 36-37). *Cisgender* is a term which refers to an individual whose designated sex at birth matches with their lived and experienced gender; this paper's author was assigned male at birth and has never felt other than male, and thus is *cisgender*.

Gender-defiant individuals are those who deliberately and with full awareness transgress the socially created and socially imposed borders and limitations of the genders. *Transgender* ("trans" for short) individuals are born in a body with the "wrong" gender; no choice is involved in the matter. *Gender-defiant* individuals, conversely, make a decision to choose a different gender or to behave according to the standards of a different gender in defiance of cultural gender boundaries and restrictions. There are *gender-defiant transgender* individuals, but most *transgender* individuals are not *gender-defiant*.

Third gender refers to someone who does not feel either male or female and who defies the cultural expectation that individuals are either masculine or feminine (Haefele-Thomas, 2019, p. 11). In recent centuries in the West, sexual dimorphism has been assumed to be the natural order of things, but this view begins to fall apart when the historical examples of *third genders* are examined, such as the eunuchs of Byzantium and China and the "men-women" of Anglo-Saxon England (Knüsel and Ripley, 2000).

The preceding terms are subsumed under the heading of *queer*, which in this paper refers not specifically to same-sex orientation and attraction but to bisexuality, transsexuality, pansexuality, and in general the movement away from and in opposition to *heteronormativity*, meaning the assumption that all people are attracted to members of the oppose gender, and in opposition to *cis-heteropatriarchy*, meaning a society or culture in which heterosexual men act as oppressors toward women.

As used in this paper, *transgender* and *third gender* individuals, while both *queer*, are different; *transgender* individuals either move along the male-female gender binary or negate it altogether, while *third gender* individuals belong to an alternate gender than male or female.

Of course, the modern connotations of terms like "queer" and "transgender" are quite difficult to apply to Norse figures from the Viking Age:

> The ways in which transgender/binary people are ontologically and epistemologically conceptualized today cannot be neatly mapped onto pre-Christian Scandinavia or early medieval English perceptions of gender or sex (Menton, 2020, p. 41).

But at the same time "it is not impossible to combat cissexist assumptions and thus not assume that every figure fits into the gender and sexual binary model of male/female as it is understood today" (Menton, 2020, p. 44-45).

Transgender and Queer Theory

Queer Studies scholars traditionally define queerness as "an ongoing and necessarily unfixed site of engagement and contestation" (Berry and Jagose, 1996, p. 11) and "by definition *whatever* is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant" (Halperin, 1995, p. 62). This seems to have been only somewhat the case with queer Norse of the Viking Age. As described below, *guldgubbar* showing queer couples or queer married pairs appear rarely (Ratke, 2009, p. 154), making them numerically at odds with but still a part of the dominant relationship structure. The transgender *baugrýgr* ("ring ladies") were common enough to be enshrined in the *Grágás* (Castellino, 2020, p. 47), making them a part of the dominant legal structure.

As this paper will demonstrate, queerness defined in this way was not an exception to the rule of heterosexuality among the Æsir and Vanir; based on seven of the major Norse gods and goddesses, heterosexuality was the exception.

It does seem to be the case that the uses of *ergi* and variations of *argr* in the *Eddas* and in the vocabulary of Old Norse place queer people (and gods) in opposition to the dominant moral structure of the Norse. Yet as I hope to show, even homophobic vocabulary and rhetoric did not translate to a fully or even mostly homophobic social structure.

In the following section I will set out some of the scholarly theories of Norse gender structures and add my own.

I do not attempt to define "queer" with any degree of specificity in the following, nor do I attempt to describe with any exactitude the degree of queerness and transgenderness that the Æsir and Vanir embody. I am using "queer" in a broad, non-political sense. Traditionally in Viking Studies, terms like *argr* and *ergi* have been euphemistically defined by various translators, who provide the connotations for the terms but not a strictly accurate definition of them:

> The interpretation of the word *argr* (acc.: *argan*) differs from one translator to another. It has been variously translated as "a pervert / perverse" (Larrington), "craven" (Terry), "sexual perversion" (Heinrichs), "unmanly" (Jochens), and "effeminate, or emasculate" (Dronke). In the sole instance in the Poetic Edda where *arg* is associated with a female (Fréyja) - Dronke gives it the additional meaning of "lust" enhanced by elements of "bewitchment". (Dronke, 413, v. 36/1- 4) (Frankkl, 2012, p. 428).

Yet the true meaning of *argr* has always been clear:

> According to the opinion of the time, the application to a man of the term *argr* (or its synonym by metathesis *ragr*) meant that he was 'unmanly' in various ways, and in particular that he was a coward and a homosexual (Ström, 1974, 4).

My use of "queer" as the definition of *argr* and *argan*, then, is both a non-euphemistic translation of the slur and a reclamation of the term, using "queer" as an umbrella term covering homosexuality, bisexuality, and pansexuality.

The traditional scholarly analysis of the Norse gender structure is that it was basic, not to say primitive: male good, female bad, male energetic, female passive, male dominant, female subordinate, male penetrator, female receptor, etc. (Shepherd, 1998). Within the past thirty years scholars have begun to question this. Nikki Sullivan is undoubtedly correct that, regarding gender categories, "identity categories are never discrete or self-contained. Rather the supposed boundaries between them are permeable, undecidable, constantly shape-shifting" (Sullivan, 2003, p. 116). Downs puts this well:

> The distinction drawn between biological sex, understood as the material and unchanging ground of one's identity, and the infinitely malleable carapace of gender, a socially constructed series of behaviours that code one as male or female, but that vary across time and space in such a way as to reveal their constructed nature (Downs, 2010, p. 3).

This formation of gender as "socially constructed" allows for a reading of the *Eddas* and sagas in which sex and gender are not directly related to each other and in which cis-heteronormativity is but one combination of sex and gender of many. Downs' statement that "gender[s]…vary across time and space" (Downs, 2010, p. 3) further allows us to place sex and gender in their historical and cultural contexts.

Both Norse society and the Norse gods seem to have been patriarchal, with masculinity being favored. However, this does not mean that the active binary was based on biological sex:

> What I am suggesting is that this is the binary, the one that cuts most deeply and the one that matters: between strong and weak, powerful and powerless or disempowered, swordworthy and unswordworthy, honored and unhonored or dishonored, winners and losers. Insofar as these categories, though not biological, have a sexual look to them, the one associated with the male body and the other with something like the female one, and insofar as the polarity or complementarity or antithesis that modern scholarship has brought to bear on

> maleness and femaleness applies far more readily, and with less need for qualification, to the opposition *hvatr*/*blauðr* or *magi*/*uimagi*, they might as well be called genders (Clover, 1993, p. 380).

Clover's argument is that within Old Norse/Old Icelandic literature, *blauðr* was defined as "feminine" rather than "female" *hvatr* meant "masculine" rather than "male." These oppositional terms could be applied to any person of any sex or gender, and social power and social status, rather than being based on anything physical, were determined by the words they were described with. Amy Jefford Franks' statement about distinguishing masculinity from maleness and femininity from femaleness is particularly appropriate: "by separating masculinity and femininity from sites of male and female bodies, we can instead interpret more nuanced pictures in which individuals present a mix of masculinity and femininity" (Jefford Franks, 2019, p. 34).

The rhetoric credited to the Norse and the Norse gods in the *Eddas* and poems seems to support a more primitive perspective on gender and masculinity and femininity. Óðinn's statements in the *Hávamál*, for example, present what we would now think of as a crude and essentialist view of men and women. And yet there are examples from the *Eddas* and poems and surviving biographical accounts of Norse men and women and gods and goddesses who didn't conform to the primitive gender binary, who were gender-defiant and trans and queer—enough examples, in fact, that they cannot be considered freak occurrences or mere exceptions to a dominant rule. For every historically prominent example of these individuals, like Auðr-Unn the Deep-Minded and Þornbjörg/Þórbergr of *Hrólfs saga Guatrekssonar*, there were thousands of women we do not know about now who took control of their farms or businesses while their husband was away and acted in an aggressive, energetic, "male," fashion. For every Thorgeir and Thormod of *Fóstbræðra saga*, there were thousands of unknown men who were queer in their personal life or loved their partners or spouses enough to allow them to be the dominant individual in the relationship. Nor would these men and women exist in isolation; they would have been members of communities in which they had friends and family members who loved them and found their gender transgressions inoffensive or possibly even approved of them.

The preceding in no way negates the homophobic rhetoric of the Norse, their queer-hating legal codes, and their queer-bashing poems, prose, and myths. It merely means that some large percentage of the Norse held mutually incompatible views on gender without experiencing undue cognitive dissonance, a human trait found in many cultures past and present. There are contemporary Americans who love their friends Bob and Frank, the gay couple, while still believing that laws banning gay marriage are a good thing. So too, most likely, with the Norse of the Viking Age.

I am in agreement, therefore, with Sami Rainen's statement that:

> Instead of a stable selfhood being contained inside of a separate body, the Scandinavian person was extended and dispersed onto his/her social relations and incorporated or possessed materialities, being in a constant state of flux. Such a 'dividual' mode of personhood…could incorporate both male and feminine attributes at the same time (Rainen, 2008, p. 20).

This 'dividual' state of personhood could not only incorporate both male and female attributes at the same time, but also differing and incompatible views on matters like gender. "Cognitive dissonance" can be defined as the mental stress generated when an individual believes two or more mutually contradictory beliefs; the Norse of the Viking Age seem not to have felt that stress.

Before the Viking Age

An implicit assumption of homophobic Norse rhetoric and legal codes is that cis-heteropatriarchy was the norm and that queer men were loathsome aberrations. Scholars have reinforced this assumption by omitting discussion of Norse homosexuality or downplaying its existence in reference works on the Norse gods (for example, Lindow, 2001, p. 216-219, on Loki) and Norse society (Christiansen, 2002, p. 32, 285). But as I will demonstrate, the Norse were the early medieval inheritors of queer cultural and religious traditions dating back millennia.

The natives of Scandinavia ca. 2,800 B.C.E. were the Indo-European Corded Ware Culture. 1,200 years later, they were succeeded by the cultures of Bronze Age Norway, who were in turn displaced by the Germanic tribes during the ca. 400 C.E. Migration Period (Myhre, 2003; Siiriäinen, 2003; Price, 2015).

Louise Olerud, writing of the Corded Ware Culture in Bavaria and Jutland, notes that while gendered burials commonly took place, based on the surviving grave goods and the positions in which male and female bodies were buried "there was a possibly third, 'male and female' way of burying" corpses, and further that "in Jutland, there may have been an additional 'male'" way of burying bodies (Olerud, 2019, p. 170). Olerud concludes that it is quite possible, even likely, that the gender-binary-transgressing positions and grave goods of the bodies represent the gender-binary-transgressing identities of the people while they lived.

Jan Turek's findings corroborate Olerud's. Turek notes that in one large Moravian Bell Beaker Culture cemetery "out of 14 burials with male gender attributes were 12 individuals biologically male and two determined as biological women…out of seven children buried in the female position only one was biologically female" (Turek, 2016, p. 348). Turek further notes

that in some graves "there are elderly men buried with body orientation and grave goods typical of female burials, suggesting that some elderly men switched their gender to female" (Turek, 2016, p. 352-353).

Robb and Harris, in discussing the European Bronze Age as a whole, note the existence of "the archaeological evidence for often quite clear and explicit gender structures" (Robb and Harris, 2018, p. 132) but also state that:

> No gender system can ever be simple and totalizing, and there is evidence of divergent or contradictory identities in these periods…indeed, paradoxically, it seems likely to us that clearly recognized third (and fourth, and so on) genders may emerge *more* often in societies such as those of Bronze Age Europe, characterized by strongly prescribed gendered behavior, than when gender is more fluid and more latitude is tolerated (Robb and Harris, 2018, p. 132-133).

Based on these examples it can be reasonably concluded that gender-switching, whether by personal choice or as something imposed on an individual by family, outsiders, or their society, was an accepted part of Corded Ware Culture and the Bronze Age societies in Norway.

As below, so above. This ignoring of and transgressing of gender boundaries when desired and/or when appropriate was reflected in the "transfunctional goddess" (Puhvel, 1987, p. 62). One of the archetypal deities worshiped by the Corded War Culture, among other ancient cultures (Dexter, 1997, p. 595-596), the transfunctional goddess was the paradigmatic pre-Iron Age transgender deity. The transfunctional goddesses have both male (war and/or priestly) and female (personal and crop fertility) aspects and functions. However, the transfunctional goddesses were neither wholly male nor wholly female and were transgressors of gender boundaries. They (the appropriate pronoun for the transfunctional goddesses) were transgender deities.

Transfunctional goddesses appear in both the Corded Ware Culture and in the cultures of the Bronze Age. In Norway the most significant event of the Bronze Age was the beginning of the Germanic Migration Period (ca. 400 C.E.). While our knowledge of the Germanic tribes' goddesses is slim, the Norwegian culture that the tribes established and which eventually produced the Vikings had transfunctional goddesses, and as Joyce Salisbury has argued, "if people believed the same things in two separate periods of time, we might assume a similar belief in the central, though undocumented period" (Salisbury, 2015, p. 21).

As above, so below. The Norse worshiped trans deities among the Æsir; we should assume, following Salisbury, that trans deities were worshiped during the Germanic Migration Period. We do not need Salisbury's logic to declare that gender-transgression and

queer and transgender behavior took place during those centuries, as there are numerous Classical and post-Classical writers who attest to their existence. As Clark puts it:

> It remains an intriguing matter of fact that the pre-Migration Germanic tribes who were the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons are recurrently associated with institutionalized practices of pederasty and same-sex activity by Classical ethnographers; that no secular Germanic law-codes contain penalties for same-sex acts (the Visigothic code shows clear clerical influence); that, although effeminacy seems to have been stigmatized in many Germanic societies, the Norse for instance seem to have made a distinction in status between active and passive roles in same-sex activity (Clark, 2009, p. 40).

As Neill puts it regarding Germanic tribal society,

> Because... the women were expected to adhere to strict rules of chastity, and were punished severely for violating them, heterosexual outlets for the warriors were virtually nonexistent. As a result, homosexuality in the form of institutionalized pederasty of the sort described by Ammianus Marcellinus and Procopius is understood to have been the rule within the Germanic warrior societies (Neill, 2009, p. 121).

Knüsel and Ripley provide several examples of pre-Viking Age trans individuals, including Siberian shamans and *galli* (priests) of the Phrygian deity Cybele (Knüsel and Ripley, 2000, p. 164-167); they go on to describe the Anglo-Saxon equivalent of the Indigenous North Americans' "two-spirit" individuals (Knüsel and Ripley, 2000, p. 169-191).

We can reasonably conclude that there was a millennia-old tradition of queerness and transness, in real life and in religion, which was inherited by the Norsemen and women of the Viking Age.

During the Viking Age

This tradition manifested itself in both Norse society and Norse religion. What homophobia there was did not prevent the appearance and qualified social acceptance of queer and trans individuals and couples.

Of course, the question remains as to the degree of queerphobia which the Norse actually possessed and practiced. Chapter 32 of the *Gulaþingslǫg* states that "if two men enjoy

the pleasures of the flesh and are accused and convicted of it, they shall both suffer permanent outlawry" (Gade, 1986, p. 124). There was no word for "queer" or "gay" or "homosexual" in Old Norse with any positive connotations. Those words which did refer to queer folk were damning:

> The concept of *níð* has attracted much attention in Old Norse studies recently. It denotes an extensive discourse in which stigma is attached to men who show themselves to be 'unmanly' by taking on the inappropriate gender role. The noun *ergi*, verb *ergjask*, and the adjective *argr* and its metathesized form *ragr* represent he ultimate insult to a man, implying that he is not merely effeminate but specifically has been the passive partner in anal intercourse, also represented by the adjective *(sann)sorðinn* '(truly) buggered'. Indeed, under medieval Icelandic law a man accused of *níð* can kill his slanderer with legal impunity (Clark, 2009, p. 51-52).

These facts, however, should be examined in their contexts. The *Gulaþingslǫg* was an 11th- and 12th-century collection, with Chapter 32 being written by King Magnús Erlingsson and Archbishop Eysteinn in 1164. But:

> The provision in Chapter 32 of the *GulL* is an isolated occurrence in both Scandinavian and 12th-century Continental Law. Not until the latter half of the thirteenth century did homosexual acts start to incur severe penalties in most legal complications (Gade, 1986, p. 126).

Regarding *nið* and the vocabulary terms accompanying it, it has been reasonably argued that, because of the great specificity and complex nuances of *ergi* that *ergi* is "not a simple synonym for 'homosexuality,' and should not be interpreted as such" (Menton, 2020, p. 42). Ármann Jakobsson notes that *ergi* "in its medieval context, appears to be linked to concepts of masculinity and femininity, and is used to reference sorcery, cowardice, male homosexuality, female lust, and women more broadly" (Jakobsson, 2011, p. 9-10). This *ergi*-is-for-passive-homosexual-men-only approach would tie into the "dividual" type of personhood that Rainen wrote of; with personality and perspectives in flux, selective homophobia seems a predictable outcome.

Queer relationships existed in Norse society in the Viking Age; it would be extraordinary if they did not. The homophobic laws could only have been written as a reaction to a reality of queer sex, queer people, and queer relationships; without at least the perception of a crime as a reality, a law does not come into existence.

Gade writes of queer sex that:

> Such behavior was not punishable by Church or secular law, except as a sin mentioned in the penitentials. It is not known to what extent the provision in chapter 32 of the *GulL* was enforced; the fact that the section was not retained in Norwegian law when homosexual behavior began to incur severe penalties on the Continent shows that the regulation must have been alien to medieval Scandinavian legislation (Gade, 1986, p. 135).

Carol J. Clover, cited above, argues that the gender binary which the Norse lived with was strong/weak rather male/female, and that there were numerous examples of strong women to accompany the litany of weak men (Clover, 1993, p. 380). Marianne Moen, drawing on substantial gender archaeological and mortuary archaeological evidence, sees that "a binary approach to gender, as two strictly segmented and fundamentally different categories, is not particularly well suited to understanding the Late Iron Age, or presumably the earlier Iron Age either" (Moen, 2019, p. 109-110). She concludes that:

> The interpretation offered here is that gender in the Viking Age was more complex than a time when men were men and women were their pawns. The idea of a social reality governed by such strict ideals as the *innanstokks/utanstokks* principle is called into question as lacking in nuance, and instead the suggestion that a focus on a wider array of social considerations is furthered (Moen, 2019, p. 280).

Ing-Marie Back Danielsson goes further in arguing that:

> The individuality of the Late Iron Age in Scandinavia probably was far different from our modern sense. A coherent, constant and fixed self (that is, an individual) was probably the opposite of what a person was considered to be during the (Late) Iron Age, and especially at places where transformations took place (such as "transit halls"), cloaked as handicraft activities, commemorative practices, feastings, weddings, etc. Rather, the dividuality of persons and things was a prerequisite for acquiring desired outcomes; new or modified relationships, objects (persons), exquisite jewelry, etc. (Back Danielsson, 2007, p. 226).

In this view Viking Age homophobia is a conditional, occasional attitude rather than a constant position.

Also, what are usually stated to be the basic assumptions of the male-female gender binary often do not seem to be closely tied to the historical reality. The "recognized pattern of antithesis in Norse sexual symbolism"—female/male, passivity/activity, inertia/energy, subordination/dominance, receptor/penetrator (Shepherd, 1998)—seems insupportable if applied to a simple biological framework; there are too many examples, in poetry and real life, of men and women acting contrary to conventional gender dictates. Most Norse in their personal lives would have known women who were active, energetic, and dominant, and men who were passive and subordinate; most Norse men were at least part-time farmers, and the wives of men who farm part-time and are *vikingr* part-time could not be passive or subordinate. If, as seems likely, Viking Age literature was not merely self-reflexive but actively shaped historical discourse (Phelpstead, 2003), then a reevaluation of what is to be learned from Norse literature seems to be necessary.

In other words, non-biological gender frameworks seem far more plausible and apposite to the Norse than the traditional male-female binary. This being the case, it is no surprise that there were instances of queer and transgender individuals among the Norse. They were inheritors of the traditions of behavior of the Germanic tribes and earlier northern European and Scandinavian peoples and the tradition no doubt made Norse society more accepting of them, despite whatever homophobia was present.

Neill compares the *berserks* to Germanic warrior bands and notes that the analogous Celtic warriors had "pederastic relations" and an "initiatory homosexuality" with youths newly entered into the Celtic warrior bands (Neill, 2009, p. 121). The "blood brother" relationships (Neill, 2009, p. 121) among Norse warriors were ancient in origin and based on warrior traditions that included homosexuality and male-male pair bonding (Neill, 2009, p. 121).

A literary example of a queer relationship in the Old Norse corpus can be found in *Fóstbræðra saga* ("The Blood-Brothers' Saga"), involving the close friends Thorgeir and Thormod, the former of whom "cared little for women" (Neill, 2009, p. 123) and the latter of whom pursued women but "was never able to involve himself with" them (Neill, 2009, p. 123).

Deckers, Croix, and Sindbæk write, regarding the 2017-2018 discovery in Ribe, Denmark, of casting molds for producing figures of armed women, that these figures, when worn, "harnessed the potency of ritual actions involving the transgression of social—especially gendered—norms" (Deckers, Croix, and Sindbæk, 2021, p. 54-55).

The practice of *seiðr*, or magic, was strongly associated with women for the Norse, but at the same time there were male practitioners; these men were called *ergi* and *seiðberendr* (a

particularly abhorrent term for the female genitalia; Solli, 1988, p. 346), while their female counterparts were not. Male practitioners of *seiðr* were supposed to have significantly transgressed the boundaries of gender and their own masculinity in doing so, but as Neil Price argues, the ritual practice by men of *seiðr* "seems to have placed so great a demand on their performers as to mark them with a different form of gender identity, outside the conventional norms of Viking-Age society" (Price, 2019, p. 34). For the male *seiðberendr*, the knowledge of *seiðr* they gained was automatically accompanied by a transition—not to femininity but to a third gender (Solli, 2008, 197).

In writing of the v*ǫlur* and the bodies in the graves accompanied by *vǫlva* staffs, Neil Price notes:

> Can we be sure that the people in the majority of the 'staff graves' examined in chapter 3 were gendered women? No, we cannot. They may have taken on a man's social role, while retaining a woman's identity (cf. Clover 1993). As Solli has persuasively shown (1998, 1999a & b, 2002, 2008), queer theory also provides a potentially fruitful means of engaging with these individuals. Their sense of self may have been, in our terms, non-binary or gender-fluid; identity may also have been something to negotiate, to choose and re-choose every day (e.g. Reeder 2008; Geller 2017). A transgender reading is also possible, and in a sense consistent with some of the shamanic patterns observed in chapter 5, though we should remember that – like much of our terminology – this is a politicised, intellectual, and Western term of the last century, and as such problematic (some would say impossible) to apply to people of the more remote past. All this is also inevitably speculative, considering the limitations of the material (Price, 2019, p. 341).

The *baugrýgr* was a role played by daughters who had no living brothers and who were called upon to do the man's job of paying or collecting the main share of *wergild*, or the fine paid or collected for having killed a man; if need be, physical revenge would be sought by the *baugrýgr* in a legal and blameless fashion (Castelino, 2020, p. 47-51). The *Grágás*, a 12th-century collection of Norwegian laws, states that if the daughter of a dead man has no living male relatives, she may accept or collect the *wergild* "like a son:"

> In other words, when the slain man has no male relatives in the first tier (no son, brother, or father), but *does* have a daughter (unmarried), that daughter shall function as a son....thus the law itself contemplates a situation in which, in the genealogical breach, a woman becomes a functional son, not only in the transaction of the *wergild*, but also in the manner of inheritance and also, at least in principle, in the actual prosecution of feud (Clover, 1993, p. 369-370).

While the *Grágás* and *Gulaþingslǫg* declare that a woman who dresses like a man should be punished with lesser outlawry, and while women who dressed like men were usually seen as "being headstrong, or bold, a troublemaker" (Norrman, 2000, p. 377), in the literary narratives neither prosecution nor punishment of gender transgressors are ever mentioned. In *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks* the transgender warrior Hervǫr is not punished for changing gender, nor is Auðr, who wears a man's breeches, in the *Laxdæla saga*, nor is Brynhildr in the *Vǫlsunga saga*. What the law says the Norse should do with regard to gender defiance and transgression seems to have been a long distance from what the Norse actually did.

Hrólfs saga Guatrekssonar unusually features a trans male hero who is wholly supported by the saga-writer. In the saga, the king's only child, his daughter Þornbjörg, is good at both the masculine and the feminine arts, but wants to be put in charge of part of the kingdom so that she can try her hand at governing. Þornbjörg changes her name to the masculine, "skyldi ok engi maðr svá djarfr, at hana kallaði mey eða konu, en hverr, er þat gerði, skyldi þola harða refsing" ("At the same time she changed her name to Þórbergr, and anyone so bold as to call her a maiden or woman was in serious trouble"; Northcraft, 2022, p. 47). After that, as Northcraft puts it, "no other [trans—JN] characters in the canon receive the level of social validation that Þornbjörg/Þórbergr receives" (Northcraft, 2022, p. 16).

There is also material evidence for queer individuals engaging not just in same-sex behavior but in same-sex relationships. Two *guldgubbar*—small beaten gold pendants which often showed loving couples and were often buried with one member of the couple— found in Norsborg, Sweden, and in Roskilde, Denmark show a woman-woman couple holding arms in the style of married couples, and show a male-male couple embracing (Back Danielsson, 2006, p. 70-74). *Guldgubbar* more usually showed different-sex couples kissing, embracing, holding hands, etc. That the two same-sex couple *guldgubar* were made, portrayed, and buried in the same way that different-sex couple *guldgubber* were, is important; it shows a formal social support for same-sex relationships, if not marriages, that the Norse laws may not have been in favor of. Two *guldgubbar* with same-sex couples portrayed out of approximately 3,000 total *guldgubbar* found does not argue for a numerically high incidence of same-sex couples in Scandinavia during the Viking Age, although the number of *guldgubbar* with a trans man or woman and an opposite-sex partner are impossible to estimate—trans men and women do not always partner with a member of the same sex. But the facts that the same-sex *guldgubbar* were made at all, and that a number of the 3,000 total *guldgubbar* are indecipherable due to age and damage or to ambiguous art and therefore could portray same-sex couples (Ratke, 2009, p. 154), indicates that, however small, there was room in Norse society for queer couples and transgender individuals in relationships.

On the one hand, homophobic language, homophobic legal codes, and homophobic moments from the *Gísla saga Súrssonar* and the *Bjarnar saga Hítdœlakappa* (Clark, 2009, p. 52).

On the other hand, examples of queer and transgender behavior and relationships, including queer relationships or possibly marriages celebrated in gold, as well as queer deities (see below). How to resolve this paradox?

The resolution, I believe, is a combination of the mosaic-like "dividuality" type of personhood and a less toxic form of homophobia than is generally believed. The Norse would have seen homophobia as the proper response under certain circumstances and would have seen homophilia as the appropriate response under certain circumstances. The Norse would have been able to carry these incompatible viewpoints because of homophobia's lessened importance and even irrelevance; homophobia simply wouldn't have mattered to the Norse most of the time. In personal relationships, a homophilic aspect would have manifested itself, as with the likely acceptance of gay and lesbian couples (potentially married couples) as shown on the *guldgubbar*. This acceptance and validation via gold seems to have applied to both partners shown on the *guldgubbar*, meaning that the contempt for the passive partner in a gay couple expressed by *ergi* and stated by Meulengracht Sørensen as a fact (Meulengracht Sørensen, 1983) would have been absent.

Even with the dividuality of self, differently constructed gender limitations, and living and dead examples of queer and transgender individuals, Norse society still maintained somewhat traditional gender roles. Men were hunters or farmers or warriors or merchants or traders, while women worked other jobs to support the family, whether purely domestic or as keeper of the keys of the farm or as co-merchants. While there were numerous opportunities for more powerful or wealthy men and women to socialize (Jochens, 1995; Raffield, Price, Collard, 2017), the great majority of men and women were less powerful and less wealthy and undoubtedly had fewer opportunities to interact to any significant amount. Even within marriages, the various jobs required of both husbands and wives would have kept them too busy for prolonged socializing and would have confined them to the company of their own sexes.

For Norse men, whether farmers, traders, or raiders, this same-sex company would have been the core group in which they did their socializing. Women interacted with these groups in ritual functions (Enright, 1996, p. 2-10). But on overseas trading and raiding missions, on the battlefield, and while hunting and skiing in groups, these *männerbunde* ("bands of men") were usually only comprised of men. It's not known whether the initiation into the *männerbunde* involved sex, in the way of the Germanic war bands, but many other *männerbunde,* past and present, were, if not actively homosexual (MacDuff, 1996; Leupp, 1995), then fraught with homoerotic tension (Oosterhuis, 1997, p. 195-202), or contained situationally queer men (Hefner, 2018). It would not be unusual for members of the all-male *männerbunde* of *berserks*, levies, ship's crews on trading missions, Vikings on raiding missions, or long-range hunting parties to have engaged in queer sex and formed queer couples, however constrained and momentary or long-term.

The Deities of the Æsir and Vanir

As below, so above, but more so. The Norse gods reflected Norse society's acceptance of queer and trans behavior and individuals but did so in a widespread and remarkably overt way, much more emphatically than Norse society's limited and conditional acceptance.

Ármann Jakobsson is arguably the most articulate of the opponents of the notion of queer Norse gods. He wrote, "gods can never be marginal or deviant or queer, only humans can truly be guilty of *ergi*. The gods are above morality, not subject to it…being a god, he [Óðinn – JN] is above such categories" (Ármann Jakobsson, 2011, p. 10). This is an assertion, not an argument, however. Ármann Jakobsson's basic assumption is that the Norse would have viewed the gods as either above mortal judgment for their behavior or as deserving of praise only from mortals. Yet as demonstrated in this paper, the Norse were simultaneously capable of following legal codes which used an accusation of *ergi* as the grounds for outlawry and of formally validating queer relationships. The idea that the Norse were solely condemnatory of queerness is false, so why wouldn't the Norse have found a god that exhibited queer traits praiseworthy? Given the Norse conditional acceptance of gender fluidity, perhaps they saw Loki as the god of queerness and gender fluidity and gender transgression? Ármann Jakobsson's statement implies that queer behavior is incompatible with morality; as shown, this position would not have been held by the majority of the Norse--or the Æsir themselves.

Also, while we can never know how completely the Norse believed in their gods—much time and effort has been spent on the question without any substantive conclusion (Raudvere, 1996, p. 41-43)--an apposite comparison for the Norse and their religion would seem to be the Classical Greeks and their religion. As A.B. Drachmann noted, one strain of belief among the Classical Greeks, as exemplified by the philosopher Xenophanes (ca. 570-ca. 478 B.C.E.), was belief in the gods while at the same time seeing them as flawed beings (Drachmann, 1922, p. 15-17). As Paul Veyne puts it, the Greeks "seem less to censure the pagan gods for not existing than to reproach them for not being good ones" (Veyne, 1988, p. 113). Combined with the sometimes-humorous, sometimes-cynical approach to the gods shown in the *Eddas* and sagas, in works such as the *Þrymskviða*, the *Lokasenna*, and the *Hávamál*, a picture is presented in which Norse worship of their gods was leavened with the same jaunty bleakness that produced Ragnarr *loðbrók*'s supposed last words: "the piggies would grunt if they knew of the old boar's death" ("*Gnyðja mundu grísir, ef galtar hag vissi*"; Shippey, 2018, p. 35).

So, contra Ármann Jakobsson, queerness and transness, though mortal qualities in real life, were present in the Norse gods and would have been viewed by worshipers as being subject to morality—and likely approved of for it—rather than being above it. That the Æsir and Vanir are shown to be married and have children in the myths is merely an indication that bisexuality was a commonly understood concept among the Norse.

Óðinn

Óðinn is a contradictory figure. He is the "Allfather" of the gods and the "god of male bands, in this world and the next" (Schjødt, 2008, p. 51). He is the "leader of the possessed" (Hedeager, 2011, p. 7), the "possessed" being the *berserks*, the members of his secret cult, and the "weapons dancers" (Maddox, 2020, p. 5). He is "the *manliest* god of warriors" (Solli, 2008, p. 195).

Yet Óðinn is "not only a patriarch but also a deviant, a sorcerer, a queer" (Ármann Jakobsson, 2011, p. 7). Brit Solli's full statement about Óðinn is that he is "the *manliest* god of warriors, but he is also the *unmanly* master of seid" (Solli, 2008, p. 195). In the *Skáldskaparmál* Óðinn is labeled *geldnir* ("eunuch;" Faulkes, 2012b, p. 172) and *jálkr* ("gelding;" Faulks, 2012b, p. 172). In the *Lokasenna* Loki even calls Óðinn *args* ("queer;" Pettit, 2023, p. 296).

How did Óðinn come to be so many contradictory things at once? The answer is Óðinn's quest for *seiðr*. *Seiðr* was a woman's matter and a woman's domain, not a man's; it was something that "is accompanied by such great perversion that it was not considered without shame for a man to perform it, and the skill was taught to the goddesses" (Faulkes, 2011, p. 11). But Óðinn lusted for knowledge of the magic runes, so to get them he sacrificially hanged himself on Yggdrasill:

> Veit ek að ek hekk vindga meiði á
>
> nætr allar níu,
>
> geiri undaðr ok gefinn Óðni,
>
> sjálfr sjálfum mér,
>
> á þeim meiði er mangi veit
>
> hvers hann af rótum renn
>
> Við hleifi mik sældu né við hornigi,
>
> nýsta ek niðr nam ek upp rúnar,
>
> oepandi nam fell ek aptr þaðan. (Pettit, 2023, p. 112)
>
> I know that I hung on a gallows-tree

nine entire nights,

spear-wounded and given to Óðinn

himself to himself

upon this tree no man knows

from what roots it rises

They gave me neither bread nor a drinking horn

I peered down I took up the runes

I screamed I fell backwards from there (my translation)

Through this ritual sacrifice, shamanic in nature (Solli, 2008, p. 197; Jakobsson, 2011, p. 10), Óðinn gained mastery of the eighteen magic runes he describes later in the *Hávámal*. Later, Óðinn becomes regarded as the master of *seiðr* in general, presumably having been taught the art by Freyja, the former Vanir who introduced *seiðr* to the Æsir (Faulkes, 2011, p. 8).

The association of *ergi* with *seiðr* should mean that Óðinn is regarded by the Norse in a negative fashion, as only Ármann Jakobsson's "deviant" and "queer." Óðinn is not, however; Óðinn remains both *ergi* and "manliest god of warriors." The reason for this is that after the ritual hanging on Yggdrasill, Óðinn is no longer a male. He gained female attributes via the hanging and becomes trans.

Consider what Óðinn says in the *Hávámal* about the immediate effects of gaining mastery of the runes:

Þá nam ek frǫvaz ok frjǫþ va

vaxa ok vel hafax (Jónsson and Wimmer, 1891)

Then I began to bear fruit and became fertile

thrived and did well (my translation)

The feminine rather than masculine connotations of his words sit awkwardly with his usual very masculine boastful manner but make sense if the ritual hanging on Yggdrasill changed Óðinn physically as well as cognitively.

Also, *Hávámal* 138's "spear-wounded" is ambiguous in one respect: the wound's location. The placement of Óðinn's spear wound would ordinarily be of little relevance but for the fact that Óðinn's sacrificial hanging has similarities to shamanic rituals (Price, 2017, p. 59; Solli, 2008, p. 199-200). These rituals, for shamans in several Asian cultures from Eurasia to the north Pacific, resulted in the shamans becoming a third gender (Balzer, 2003, p. 242-261). Given the parallel between Óðinn's self-sacrifice and the gender-transitioning shamanic rituals, the logical assumption is that Óðinn, like the shamans, used the ritual on Yggdrasill to transcend his birth gender and become transgender and perhaps third gender. Óðinn's spear wound would have aided this transition if it were properly placed. In other words, if Óðinn castrated himself with the spear wound, he would have been regarded as that much more appropriately transgender. Óðinn castrating himself would also explain his kennings "eunuch" and "gelding" in the *Skáldskaparmál*.

There is also the *Lokasenna*, in which Loki throws the following in Óðinn's face:

> En þik síga kóðu Sámseyju í
>
> ok draptu á vétt sem vǫlur
>
> vitka líki fórtu ver þjóð yfir
>
> ok hugða ek þat args aþal! (Jónsson and Wimmer, 1891)

> But you went down into a trance at Sámsey
>
> You struck the skin of the drum like a seeress
>
> In the form of a wizard you went among the common people
>
> And felt desire I thought was truly queer (my translation)

The preceding begs the question of how truthful Loki is in the *Lokasenna*: is he telling the truth through his insults, or is he simply making up the most hurtful accusations possible? The gods' reactions to Loki's insults seem to point toward the former, meaning that Loki is telling the truth and that Óðinn is queer—a statement Óðinn does not deny when Loki makes it.

Þórr

Presumably Þórr was seen as a model of masculinity by the Norse; certainly, the persona of Þórr seen in the *Eddas* presents as extremely masculine (Lindow, 1988, p. 120-130). So, too, with Þórr's sexuality; the list of his sexual encounters in the poems would presumably paint him as emphatically heterosexual to the Norse audience.

However, the misogyny of these poems, the *machismo* of Þórr's boasts, the bragging recitation of his kills in the poems, can reasonably be taken as clues pointing in a much different direction. As Lindow notes, the great majority of Thor's foes are female, whether giant, witch, troll, or dwarf; "Thor's adversary relationship with things female may be pursued even into his dealings with the other *æsir*" (Lindow, 1998, p. 129). The poems and sagas, ranging from *Skáldskaparmál* to *Gautreks saga* to *Hervarar saga*, are a litany of female foes lethally dealt with by Þórr. One might reasonably conclude that Þórr hates non-*æsir* women.

Certainly, the poems seem to give him good reason to. In the *Hárbarðsljóð* the women that Þórr kills are "presumably chthonic," with the "feminine equated with the unnatural" (Lindow, 1998, p. 129). The *Hárbarðsljóð* not only supports Þórr's misogyny (although Óðinn criticizes him for it in stanza 38) but shows Þórr's opponents as being crooked, bent, multi-limbed, multi-headed—all "unnatural" aspects. The message of the poems is that not only is Þórr right to hate women, but the women themselves are innately hateful.

There's no hint in the poems that Þórr's violence against and hatred for women has a sexual component; Þórr is no rapist, unlike Óðinn. However, the consistent portrayal of Þórr's female opponents as being hateful and "unnatural" ultimately strikes the modern reader as either the product of intense misogyny on the part of the poems' authors, or as the product of a satirical mindset. While Viking society was misogynistic, it seems unlikely that multiple poets would all have shared such a deep hatred for women. More likely is the satirical mindset; the poems themselves are exaggerated satires of Þórr's hatred for women, with the source of that hatred being Þórr's true, queer sexuality.

A satirical basis for the poems based on Þórr's homosexuality would also explain the subtext of male hysteria in Þórr's boasts and in the praise-poems sung or chanted to him—shrill notes of Þórr trying too hard to be the most macho of the gods, such as in *Hárbarðsljóð* 23, when he claims that "the race of giants would be large/if all lived/hardly a man/would be in Midgard" (my translation; Lindow, 1998, p. 128).

There is also the famous cross-dressing sequence from the *Þrymskviða* to be considered. Traditionally and in modern scholarship, the story of Þórr dressing as a bride to regain his hammer Mjǫllnir is seen as one of the finest comic poems of the entire Viking Age (see Frankki, 2012, among many others). However, examined through queer and transgender lenses, the *Þrymskviða* becomes a tragedy about "a normative-defying Þórr who ultimately cannot accept their queerness or the risk of others perceiving it" (Richardson-Read, 2021).

The nameless author of the *Þrymskviða* sees Þórr's character and their queer transness as subjects worth satirizing. Modern comedy, with its rule of "punch up; don't punch down,"

would not find these subjects fitting targets for a well-wrought poem like *Þrymskviða*. But the Norse temperament was to find a harsh, even cruel humor in everything, regardless of whether the target of the humor deserved it (Shippey, 2018, 27-36).

Þrymskviða easily lends itself to a sexual interpretation; the very first stanza describes Þórr's frightened reaction to the loss of his hammer, Mjǫllnir, which is usually viewed as Þórr's heterosexual terror at the emasculating loss of his external phallic symbol, his hammer. In the trans interpretation, however, Þórr's reaction is so extreme because he's not heterosexual, but is a closeted trans woman who relies on Mjǫllnir to maintain his heterosexual façade. The loss of Mjǫllnir threatens this façade.

This interpretation depends on the Norse audience of *Þrymskviða* understanding enough of trans life to know about the stressors which the closeted life can inflict. That the Norse understood this psychological situation may seem hard to credit. Yet the usual interpretation of the *Þrymskviða* relies on the Norse audience having enough insight into male sexuality that they understood the concept of heterosexual terror. Given that, as this paper intends to show, the Æsir themselves provided trans role models for the Norse, an understanding of the psychological pressure on closeted trans folk does not seem too extreme for the Norse audience to possess. Nate Richardson-Read states:

> I agree that Mjölnir represents a characteristic, or collection thereof, for Þórr but I would argue that it is a means for Þórr to perform in a normative fashion in order to remain within the community of the Æsir and be accepted by them. Mjölnir provides Þórr with a 'mask', a means of performing a particular role as Ing-Marie Back Daniellson describes which connects Þórr with transformational and transitional situations. Without Mjölnir Þórr must begin a journey towards a new identity, one that is different from what is accepted amongst the Æsir and is thus an emotional, chaotic experience that is played out in Þrymskviða (Richardson-Read, 2021).

Richardson-Read's error here is in conceiving of Þórr as a character in a story who evolves and changes rather than as a god in a myth whose psychological state is unchanging. But Richardson-Read is not wrong in seeing Þórr in transgender terms, and in interpreting the loss of Mjölnir as the opening of the closet door.

Loki's offer to help Þórr retrieve his hammer, and Loki's later magical change of shape into the body of a woman (Þórr/Freyja's "maid"), makes him a genderfluid figure to contrast Þórr with. As someone who is both comfortably pansexual and confidently genderfluid Loki stands out starkly compared to Þórr: out rather than closeted, confident and comfortable rather than stuck acting out a performative version of exaggerated masculinity—what Þórr would like to be rather than what Þórr is.

Mjǫllnir is Þórr's mask, and without his mask Þórr is clearly terrified of what the other Æsir will think of him—as he says later, when the prospect of his wearing a bridal gown is raised:

> Mik munu Æsir argan kalla
>
> ef ek bindask læt brúðar lini! (Pettit, 2023, p. 332)

> The Æsir will call me queer
>
> If I let myself be bound in a bride's linen (my translation)

What Þórr objects to is not the act of wearing the bridal gown, but what the other gods will say about him if he does so; Þórr is secretly gender-defiant, if not a closeted queer or trans god (an "egg" in the parlance of the trans community), but also fearful of what his community will say about him. In the company of Loki, who is figuratively out and proud—and in this case accepted for being so, as none of the other Æsir raise any objections to his becoming a woman to help Þórr--Þórr can hardly be blamed for being angry and frustrated. Loki represents what Þórr would like to be, and Þórr is angry and frustrated at not being able to be who he wants to be.

After Loki's discovery of Þrymr's guilt and of the ransom Þrymr demands in exchange for Mjǫllnir, and after Freyja's refusal to become Þrymr's bride, the Æsir gather to consider how to recover Mjǫllnir. The suggestion to clothe Þórr in Freyja's bridal gown as a way to fool Þrymr is made by Heimdallr, "whitest of the Æsir" ("hvítastr Ása," *Þrymskviða* 15). The emphasis placed here on Heimdallr's white color is important. White, for the Norse, was a color most often used to describe women, and had connotations of cowardice and perceived femininity (Crawford, 2014, p. 99-100). In view of this, Heimdallr's recommendation that Þórr wear Freyja's wedding dress becomes the recommendation and even encouragement of one not-so-closeted queer to a closeted queer to step out of the closet.

The bridal outfit that Þórr wears bears a moment's consideration:

> Bundu þeir Þór þá brúðar líni
>
> ok inu mikla meni Brísinga,
>
> létu und honum hrynja lukla,
>
> ok kvennváðir um kné falla,

en á brjósti breiða steina,

ok hagliga um hǫfuð typþu! (Pettit, 2023, p. 334)

Then they bound Þórr in a bride's linen

and the great necklace of the Brísngar

they had keys clanging at his belt

and women's skirts falling to his knees

and on his breast broad jewels

and on top they wound it tightly (my translation)

That the bridal dress is only knee-length is significant; Norse women of the Viking Age wore knee-length dresses called *serkr*, but not as formal garments (Ewing, 2006, p. 45). Carvings of women wearing *serkr*, such as the one found at Kirbymoorside showing a woman wearing a bead necklace to accompany her *serkr*, and the figure carved in stone of the wolf-riding troll-wife Hyrrokin (mentioned in *Gylfaginning* 48) found in Hunnestad, Sweden, show the *serkr* with a long, slit neck (Ewing, 2006, p. 44-45).

Some conclusions can be drawn from this. The fact that Þórr's *serkr* is knee-length means that he must have shaved his legs from the knee down in order to fool Þrymr, Þrymr's sister, and the other giants into thinking Þórr was actually Freyja—hairy legs were not seen as feminine by the Norse. And the fact that Þórr's *serkr* had a long, slitted neckline, combined with attention paid by the poem to the "broad jewels" on Þórr's breast, means that Þórr must have shaved his chest (so as not to ruin his disguise as "Freyja") and must have had something stuffed in his bodice (so as to show that "Freyja" has breasts rather than the flat, muscular chest of Þórr). Too, Þórr, known for his red beard, apparently has no beard at this moment, for Þrymr makes no comment about it. Þórr must have shaven it off, as he did his chest hair and calf hair.

Þórr's knee-length skirt, shaven legs, shaven chest, artificially enhanced breasts, and clean-shaven face accentuate his femininity as "Freyja." That his skirt is the same kind famously worn by a female troll associates him, in the minds of the audience of the *Þrymskviða*, with troll-women, dynamic shapechangers by nature (Ármann Jakobsson, 2017, p. 140-141) and thus constant violators of gender boundaries. In other words, when Þórr wears the bridal

linen he is hyper-feminine and gender-crossing, as well as similar to gender-defiant troll-women. The audience of the *Þrymskviða* cannot help but understand that Þórr was born a male but is trying to become female.

In stanza 27, Þrymr tries to kiss Þórr but is startled by the glare from his eyes, which Þrymr describes as "ǫndótt," or "fiery, awful, fearsome, terrifying." Þrymr cries, "It seems to me that fire is burning from her eyes!" ("Þikki mér ór augum eldr um brenna!," Pettit, 2023, p. 334). The traditional interpretation is that Þórr can't help but show his fury in his eyes, but as Richardson-Read argues, perhaps Þórr's fury springs from frustration at not being able to display his true self.

> Þórr exists as Freyja/a woman in these moments and is desired by another, in this there is an acute queer pain. This pain is the tension between performing in a way that sets an individual apart from their home or against their community, in taking the risk of exploring a new identity and being desired while embodying it…the fear Þórr experiences in these moments as Þrymr's bride-to-be (Richardson-Read, 2021).

When Þórr regains his hammer, he goes on a violent rampage, killing Þrymr and the other giants. The traditional interpretation of the rampage is that Þórr at this moment acts out of anger, but it's equally as plausible to say that Þórr's rage springs from his fear of being found out as a trans æs by Þrymr, and that lethal violence, to Þórr, seems the only appropriate response. Susan Stryker defines "transgender rage" as springing from a "failure to satisfy norms of gendered embodiment" (Stryker, 2006, p. 253), said norms being the constraints of cis-genderism, heteronormativity, and patriarchy. As Nate Richardson-Read says, "Þórr fails to satisfy norms as Þórr 'the powerful god' and also as Freyja/Þrym's bride, a crushing collapse of identity in which Þórr's only means of continuing comes through taking up Mjölnir once again" (Richardson-Read, 2021).

The portrayal of Þórr in *Þrymskviða* seems to be one long attempt by an egg trying very hard not to be cracked, despite that being what they really want.

Loki

Loki is the most obviously transgender and queer/pansexual of the gods. Famously so, for whatever charges of *ergi* and *argr* the other Æsir lob at him, he continues blithely on his way, utterly unconcerned with what the gods or anyone else says about them. This is a part of the trickster tradition Loki is a member of (Bassil-Morozow, 2017), but is especially striking in the Norse myths, where cool wit is at a minimum and hot bombast is the norm.

The source material for the idea of Loki as transgender is plentiful. In *Lokasenna* 23, Óðinn charges Loki with

> átta vetr
>
> vartu fyr iǫrð neðan
>
> kýr mólkandi ok kona
>
> ok hefir þú þar bǫrn of borit
>
> ok hugða ek þat args aðal (Dronke, II, 1997, p. 338)

> eight winters
>
> you were under the earth
>
> milking cow and mother
>
> and you've borne babies
>
> and that seems a queer thing to me (my translation)

Similarly, in the *Gylfaginning* the god "High," who is probably Óðinn in disguise, states that, "En Loki hafði þá fǫr til Svaðilfera at hann bar fyl" (Faulkes, 2012a, p. 62) ("But Loki then had been in the company of Svaðilfera and he bore a foal" (my translation)), that foal becoming Óðinn's horse Sleipnir. Again, there is no recorded account of Loki feeling any shame over this.

In the *Gylfaginning*, when Baldr has good-humoredly challenged the other gods to shoot and strike and stone him as a way to prove his invulnerability, Loki "changed his appearance to that of a woman" to get from Frigg the knowledge that mistletoe will harm Baldr. After Baldr's death, when all the world is weeping for him, the gods find Loki in the form of Þǫkt, a giantess, who refuses to weep for Baldr, thereby condemning him to Hel (Faulkes, 2012a, p. 75, 77).

Finally, in the *Hyndluljód*, Loki is first described as having had a child by Angrboða, a giantess, and then having eaten the burned heart of a woman (traditionally Gullveig, a.k.a. Freyja) and "become pregnant by the woman; from him came all the monsters" ("varð Loptr kviðugr af konu illri; þaðan er á foldu flagð hvert komit"; my translation; Pettit, 2023, p. 818).

Ármann Jakobsson's assertion that the gods are above mortal terms and categories of moral judgment is especially flawed in the case of Loki; Loki may not care what the Æsir and Vanir think of him, but they certainly find his much of his behavior offensive and wrong—reactions that would not exist if, per Ármann Jakobsson, the gods are above judgment.

Frigg

Frigg is represented in the myths less often than Óðinn, Þórr, or Loki. When she does appear, it is usually alongside Óðinn, although their marriage is less than harmonious. In the *Ynglinga saga*, Frigg sleeps with Óðinn's brothers:

> Óðinn had two brothers. One was called Vé, the other Vílir. These brothers of his governed the realm while he was away. It happened once, when Óðinn had gone far away and had been away for a long time, that the Æsir lost hope of his return. Then his brothers began to divide up his estate between themselves, but his wife, Frigg, they made partner to them both. But soon after Óðinn came back. Then he took back his wife (Faulkes, 2011, p. 7).

In Saxo Grammaticus' *Gesta Danorum*, Frigg sleeps with one of her slaves out of jealousy of Óðinn's fame and after having had a statue of Óðinn destroyed.

To all appearances Frigg is heterosexual. However, the possibility that Frigg was the origin of the goddess Freyja, and that at one time Frigg and Freyja were the same goddess, opens up new possibilities for Frigg's character.

Frigg and Freyja, after all, share Óðinn as a bedmate—Frigg is famously his wife, and Freyja is, as seen in the *Sorla þáttr* in the *Flateyjarbók,* Óðinn's mistress. Both Frigg and Freyja cheat on Óðinn, Frigg in the *Gesta Danorum* and Freyja in the *Sorla þáttr.* "Either a single myth has been duplicated for Óðinn's two women, or else Óðinn's original wife has been separated into two goddesses, both of whom retain the attribute of the necklace and its associated infidelity with a person or persons of lower social status" (Grundy, 1996, p. 57). Interestingly, Freyja appears nowhere in the *Sorla þáttr*, although her brother Freyr does:

> Given his [Saxo Grammaticus—JN] his tendency to moralize at every turn, it seems unlikely that he would have left such a fruitful field as Freyja's sexuality unploughed had he known of her; whereas it is probable that the author of *Sorla þáttr*, who does not mention Frigg, did at least know the antiquarian pantheon as presented by Snorri (Grundy, 1996, p. 57-58).

Snorri Sturluson writes that Frigg and Freyja are different goddesses. But he says that Freyja "was wedded to someone named Óðr" (Faulkes, 2012, p. 53). Freyja's name is part of some kennings tying her to Óðinn, including "Óðinn's bed-friend" ("Óðs beðvina" in Einarr Skúlasson's *Øxarflokkr*) and "Óðinn's maid" ("Óðs *mær*" in *Vǫluspa*). The lack of myths about Óðr, and the similarity between the ones he is mentioned in and those which Óðinn is mentioned in, have led several scholars to identify Óðr as Óðinn. There are several arguments for and against Óðr being Óðinn, but none are conclusive. As Simek says:

> If the two gods were indeed identical, then Snorri would surely not have mentioned them separately; on the other hand, the names Óðr and Odin are so close that a complete differentiation between the two gods can hardly be achieved (Simek, 1993, p. 250).

If, as seems likely, there was some association between Frigg and Freyja, then Frigg's reputation would have become entangled with Freyja's—which was that of a sexually promiscuous goddess.

However, in the *Hyndluljóð* Freyja's interaction with the giantess Hyndla is described in what can easily be interpreted in a sexual way. In *Hyndluljóð* 1, when Freyja says, "Wake up, my maid!" ("Vaki, mær meyja;" Pettit, 2023, p. 811), there's the very real possibility that Freyja is waking her from the other side of the bed; given the connotations of "virgin" in the word "mær," Freyja's use of "mær" is no doubt ironic. In *Hyndluljóð* 6, when Hyndla tells Freyja "You're treacherous, Freyja, when you test me, when you turn your eyes toward us in that way" ('Flá ertu, Freyja, er þú freistar mín, vísar þú augum á oss þannig"; Pettit, 2023, p. 811), the accusation has distinctly sexual overtones, as if Freyja is a *femme fatale* leading Hyndla toward an unpleasant end. Freyja's possible bisexuality is further reinforced in *Lokasenna* 30, when Loki says of her that "of the gods and elves who are gathered here each one as thy lover has lain" ("Ása ok álfa er hér inni eru, hverr hefir þinn hór verit!"; Pettit, 2023, p, 299). Loki seems to be using "gods and elves" to cover gods, goddesses, and female and male elves.

If, as seems likely, Freyja had the reputation as a bisexual, how much of that reputation would have accreted onto Frigg? Although the Norse of the Viking Age likely saw them as different goddesses, the similarities between the two would likely have led to an entanglement of reputations, leaving Frigg to be viewed as bisexual, just like Freyja.

Freyr

Freyr is a rare case where a god's reputation among the Norse likely sprang not from the mythology but from the behavior of the god's worshipers in real life.

Freyr's worshipers were, from surviving accounts, devoted to him and excessive in their celebrations. For them, Freyr was the god of fertility, with (per Adam of Bremen) his statue at the temple in Uppsala being adorned with a "mighty phallus" (Adam: *cum ingenti priapo*) (Simek, 1983, p. 92). Freyr worship was centered in Sweden but had enthusiastic worshipers in Norway as well (Simek, 1993, p. 92).

But most Norse probably found Freyr to be, in the modern parlance, problematic due to his incestuous relationship with his sister Freyja, as noted in *Lokasenna* 32 (Bugge, 1867, p. 104) and in *Ynglinga saga* 4 (Faulkes, 2011, p. 8). It should be kept in mind that Freyr was portrayed by Snorri Sturluson as not just another member of the Vanir or Æsir, but "as a god of equal importance to Óðinn" (Mundal, 1990, p. 297). Examples such as *Skírnismál* 3's description of Freyr as "*fólkvaldi goða*" ("chieftain of the gods;" Pettit, 2023, p. 212) reinforce this description. At least during what Mundal calls "the last phase of paganism" (Mundal, 1990, p. 296), Freyr was viewed as being among the supreme of the gods, and enthusiastically worshiped. Yet, given the cultural and legal prejudice against incest, this perception and worship of Freyr would at the least have been tinged with disapproval, if not half-full of it.

The reality of Freyr-worship and Freyr's worshipers would have created in the minds of the Norse the idea that Freyr was at least bisexual if not queer. According to Adam of Bremen, the temple of Uppsala, which was "very famous" (Tschan, 2002, p. 323), is:

> …entirely decked out in gold, the people worship the statues of three gods in such wise that the mightiest of them, Thor, occupies a throne in the middle of the chamber; Wotan and Frikko have places on either side. The significance of these gods is as follows: Thor, they say, presides over the air, which governs the thunder and lightning, the winds and rains, fair weather and crops. The other, Wotan—that is, the Furious—carries on war and imparts to man strength against his enemies. The third is Frikko, who bestows peace and pleasure on mortals. His likeness, too, they fashion with an immense phallus. But Wotan they chisel armed, as our people are wont to represent Mars. Thor with his scepter apparently resembles Jove (Tschan, 2002, p. 323).

"Frikko" is the name Adam of Bremen uses in this passage for Freyr. The description of Freyr-worship is expanded upon by Saxo Grammaticus in the *Gesta Danorum*:

> There he spent seven years in a leisurely stay with the sons of Frø, after which he departed to join Haki, a jarl of Denmark, for, living at Uppsala in the period of sacrifices, he had become disgusted with the womanish body movements, the clatter of actors on the stage, and the soft tinkling of bells. It is obvious how far his heart was removed from frivolity if he could not even bear to watch these occasions. A manly individual is resistant to wantonness. (Fisher, 2015, p. 385).

"Frø" is Freyr. What Nate Richardson-Read calls "cross-dressing" (Richardson-Read, 2021) is, per Saxo Grammaticus, carried out by actors on stage accompanied by "womanish body movements." Combined with the "mighty phallus" on Frikko's statue and Frikko's bestowing of "pleasure" on mortals, the temple and worship of Freyr no doubt had an aura of *ergi* for the Norse of the Viking Age, with Freyr sharing in the *ergi*—it is not to be credited that only women visited the temple or that the Norse thought that no men took part in the festivities. Neither Saxo Grammaticus nor Adam of Bremen are completely reliable, of course, and based much of their writings on hearsay, but the offense both obviously feel about the Freyr-worship at the temple seems genuine.

Freyr, in other words, would have been seen as the patron deity of the orgiastic rituals and festivities at the temple, and as is usually the case what is seen to be below (the orgiastic rituals) comes to be seen above—if Freyr oversees the bisexual orgy of worship at the temple, he must also approve of it, and it must be a part of him.

Freyja

The argument for Freyja being queer consists largely of the passages mentioned above in the Frigg and Freyr sections. Freyja's reputation for sexual adventurousness/promiscuity is reinforced in the *Hyndluljóð*, when Hyndla accuses Freyja:

> Rant at oeði, ey þreyjandi –
> skutusk þér fleiri und fyrirskyrtu!
> Hleypr þú, eðlvina, úti á náttum,
> sem með hǫfrum Heiðrún fari! (Pettit, 2023, p, 820)

> You ran in a frenzy, ever yearning –
> many thrust themselves under your foreskirts!
> You rush, friend of vipers, outside at night,
> as with he-goats goes Heiðrún! (my translation)

Earlier in the *Hyndluljóð*, as mentioned above, Freyja's interaction with Hyndla has friendlier overtones, with Freyja's words seeming to indicate a previous sexual intimacy between the two. It is easy enough to simply say that Freyja is bisexual and was making sexual

advances toward Hyndla, but that understates Freyja's licentiousness. As Loki says in the *Lokasenna*,

> Þegi þú, Freyja! Þik kann ek fullgerva,
>
> era þér vamma vant;
>
> Ása ok álfa er hér inni eru,
>
> hverr hefir þinn hór verit! (Pettit, 2023, p.298)

> Be silent, Freyja! I can see quite clearly
>
> you are not without blemishes;
>
> Gods and elves who are in here,
>
> each one you have committed adultery with! (my translation)

Excessive, uninhibited lust in the myths and poems can be associated with women, as with the term *ergi* (Ármann Jakobsson, 2008, p. 55), but most often the sort of rampant sexual desire that Freyja is repeatedly charged with having demonstrated is associated with men—comparing them to women, true, but nonetheless an attribute of a certain class of men. Too, in the *Hyndluljóð* Hyndla chooses not to compare Freyja to a female goat in heat—a state of sexual receptiveness similar to that described by *ergi* and which the Norse farmers that probably made up the audience of the *Hyndluljóð* would be familiar with—but to male goats, whose constant sexual heat during the mating season would also be familiar to the Norse farmers. In other words, Freyja was seen not as a promiscuous bisexual woman on the prowl but as someone similar and comparable to males—i.e., Freyja was a trans god on the prowl. Her desire for women is not simply bisexual but rather is a case of gender-defiance of the Norse expectations of what a woman is, does, and prefers, sexually.

Because of this, the sexual relations between Freyja and Freyr would probably have been seen as not just incestual but *ergi*, and the rituals of Freyr-worship at the temple of Uppsala would have been seen as not merely wanton and bisexual but as queer.

Heimdallr

Relatively few surviving myths or poems portray Heimdallr's behavior; most tell what and who he is and does, but with the exception of the *Þrymskviða*, in which it is Heimdallr's

suggestion for Þórr to dress as Freyja, and the *Rígsþula*, in which Heimdallr, in disguise as "Rígr," fathers the ancestors of all the thralls, karls, and jarls in Norse society, the audience never sees/hears Heimdallr in action, as it were. Heimdallr's own poem, the *Heimdallargaldr*, is mentioned in *Skáldskaparmál* but is lost; presumably the poem in some way describes the *galdr*, or magic power, of Heimdallr, in addition to his recovery of the Brisingamen and battle with Loki.

So, there are few examples of Heimdallr's words or actions to judge him by, and what follows by necessity is mostly an analysis of what others have said about him.

Most of the appellations attached to Heimdallr in the myths and poems are clear. He is "the gods' watchman" in the *Grímnismál* (Pettit, 2023, p. 177), "whitest of the Æsir" in the *Þrymskviða* (Pettit, 2023, p. 333), "the white god" ("hvíti ass") in the *Gylfaginning* (Faulkes, 2012, p. 43), "son of nine mothers" ("son níu móðra eða") in the *Skáldskaparmál* (Faulkes, 2012, p. 147)—this is expanded to nine giants' daughters in the *Hyndluljóð*—and "stud-glorious man" ("nadd-gǫfugr mann"), referring to the "studs" or beams of light emanating from Heimdallr, in the *Hyndluljóð* (Pettit, 2023, p. 816).

Heimdallr's whiteness/state of being fair and brightness is emphasized in the myths and poems. However, the Norse audience likely did not see Heimdallr's whiteness as a wholly or even minimally positive thing; "when applied to men, however, *hvítr* often acquired a derogatory implication of 'effeminate, cowardly'" (Sturtevant, 1952, p. 119), and on at least one occasion meant "child of a hermaphrodite when born" (Crawford, 2014, p. 197)—the term "hermaphrodite" here being the traditional scholarly gloss for "queer." These implications are close enough to *ergi*'s definition that we can accept that the two are the essentially same—which forces the modern reader or listener to revise their perceptions of Heimdallr and reconsider how the Norse felt about Heimdallr.

If Heimdallr were seen to be queer, then his recommendation that Þórr dress as Freyja in the *Þrymskviða* would have been seen by the Norse audience as being a recommendation only a queer god would make, crossdressing being seen as *ergi* and outlawed. The lines in the *Vǫluspá*, "Veit hon Heimdallar/hljóð um fólgit/undir heiðvǫnum/helgum baðmi" (Pettit, 2023, p. 754), or "She knows of Heimdallr's/hearing hidden around/under brightly-accustomed/holy tree" (my translation), actually describe Heimdallr having undergone an Óðinn-like sacrifice/emasculation, with "hljóð" being used "as a substitute for an ear." The Norse could not be faulted for having seen an equivalence made between Heimdallr and Óðinn and assuming that Heimdallr also possessed Óðinn's queerness.

Loki's insult of Heimdallr in the *Lokasenna*,

> Þegi þú, Heimdallr! Þér var í árdaga
>
> it ljóta líf um lagit;

aurgu baki þú munt æ vera,

ok vaka vǫrðr goða! (Pettit, 2023, p. 302)

Be silent, Heimdallr! At the first dawn

the ugly life was allotted to you

a muddy back you must always have

and stay awake as the gods' watchman! (my translation)

can be interpreted as a "muddy back" due to his proximity to the mud-smeared Yggdrasill, but given the queerness of Heimdallr a "muddy back" may also be Loki's insinuation that Heimdallr laid on his back during sex, a position that for the Norse only women were supposed to assume during sex—which would explain why Loki (no stranger to homophobic insults) stated that Heimdallr was doomed to a "ljóta" life. Alternatively, "aurgu" may be related to "ǫrgu," a derivation of "argr" ("sexually perverse and effeminate").

In the *Hyndluljóð*, when Heimdallr is labelled the "nadd-gǫfugr mann" (Pettit, 2023, p. 816), or "stud-glorious man," it may be that the poet satirically labelled the god Heimdallr as a "man" because they wished to demean so obviously queer a god to being only a man.

In *Gylfaginning* 26 Heimdallr's sword is labelled "Hǫfuð," or "man-head." The reference here is obscure, although heads are a recurring motif in the commentary and poems about Heimdallr. It may be that the emphasis in the world should be placed on "man" rather than "head;" if Heimdallr is seen as *ergi* due to his queerness, then his head would be that of an *ergi*, so that it is only with his sword—a "man-head"—that he is deadly, rather than being deadly in himself.

Finally, there is the *Rígsþula*. In the poem Heimdallr, in the guise of "Rígr," fathers mankind's thralls, karls, and jarls on three different women. Yet the poem describes matters in what seems to be an ambiguous way.

In the poem Heimdallr impregnates the women Edda ("great-grandmother"), Amma ("grandmother"), and Móðir ("mother"), all wives of mortal men. When Heimdallr has sex with Edda, in stanza 5, "he laid himself down then in the middle of the bed/and on either side the married couple" (Pettit, 2023, p. 789), a line repeated in stanza 19 regarding Heimdallr's sex with Amma. When Heimdallr has sex with Móðir, in stanzas 30 and 33, he first seats

himself "in the middle of a bench, and on either side of him the married couple of the household," and then offers them "advice" and "prepared the bed."

It is significant that in each stanza the poem refers to "them" or "the married couple" rather than just Edda, Amma, and Móðir, and that Heimdallr lies down "in the middle of the bed" in-between the husband and wife. If Heimdallr is queer, the likelihood is that he made love to both the husband and the wife, rather than just the wife.

Was Loki, then, not the sole Norse god of queer folk? It may be that Loki was seen as the god of trans folk, and Heimdallr the god of queer folk, each with a different portfolio and function. The conflict between them in *Heimdallargaldr* might then have been seen as a conflict between two different queer communities among the Norse, just as there was friction between Óðinn's worshipers (jarls) and Þórr's worshipers (karls).

Týr

There is no textual evidence for Týr being queer or trans. The only textual moment that might be taken as sexual regarding Týr is when he loses his hand to Fenrir in *Gylfaginning* 32, a symbolic castration akin to the episode in the *Laxdæla saga* in which Þuriðr takes her husband's sword and gives him her baby in exchange, which as H. Kress says "not only castrates him, but also feminizes him, making him into a mother with a baby in his arms" (Kress, 2001, p. 91). Týr's loss of hand is certainly a figurative castration, leaving him less of a man in the eyes of his fellow Norsemen, just as his betrayal of his oath to Fenrir leaves him less of a man, but there is nothing in the Old Norse corpus of poetry and prose that would even hint at Týr being *ergi*.

However, an argument can be made that extra-textual evidence would lead the Norse to associate him with queerness.

Týr's origins are obscure, but it seems likely that he predates the Viking Age. In Germanic mythology he is known in "Tiw" (Old English) and "Ziw" (Old High German). These names, like Týr's, come from the Proto-Germanic *Tiwaz ("God"), the Germanic god of war, the skies, and the Þing. The word "týr" occasionally makes appearances in Nordic poetry and in the kennings of Óðinn and Þórr as "god," as in "Fimbultýr" ("mighty god") for Óðinn.

Relatively little is known about *Tiwaz, but his transformation into Týr was probably a measured one. Archaeological evidence and place-name evidence shows that Týr's worship was concentrated in modern-day Denmark (Brink, 2008, p. 63-64) before the Viking Age, but there is a lack of both archaeological evidence and Týr-related place names in modern-day Norway and Sweden dating to the Viking Age itself.

Likewise, Týr is repeatedly mentioned in the younger Eddic lays, such as the *Lokasenna*, *Hymiskviða*, and *Sigrdrifumál*, but is comparatively unimportant in the myths of the Eddas, despite Snorri naming him frequently as one of the more important Æsir: in *Gylfaginning* 20 the "High" (Óðinn in disguise) describes Týr as "the bravest and changeable in his mind and he has a lot of control over victory in battles. It is good for men of action to pray to him. There is a saying that a man is *týr*-valiant who surpasses others" (Faulkes, 2012, p. 43, 45)

But apart from the loss of his hand to Fenrir, Týr does not play a vital part in any myths.

Still:

> On the other hand, he must have played a more important role at some stage as is clear from the plural of his name *tívar* means "gods," as well as the fact that in skaldic poetry his name could be used as the basic word in kennings for other gods, especially Odin; this proves that his name originally, but still in Viking times, could simply mean "god" (Simek, 1993, p. 337).

The conclusion to be drawn, backed by the Danish archaeological evidence and place-name evidence, is that Týr was formerly the primary god—the sky god—of the Germanic tribes in Denmark, but that he was displaced by the Germanic god Wōdanaz at some point before the Viking Age. Týr's lack of dynamic presence in most of the myths is because he was seen as someone of the past, someone still present in the pantheon of the gods but someone whose time had passed and who had been relegated to a much lesser role.

The question can therefore be asked: given the identification by the Norse of Týr with the Germanic past, did the Norse also associate Týr with the "institutionalized practices of pederasty and same-sex activity" (Clark, 2009, p. 40) which the Germanic tribes were known for? David Clark lays out the ethnographic material from Classical authors portraying the Germanic and Celtic tribes describing their same-sexual activities (Clark, 2009, p. 40-49) and ties the Norse discourse of *nið* and use of *ergi* to the Germans (Clark, 2009, p. 51-52). The Norse may not have consciously linked Týr to the Germans and may not have consciously or deliberately associated him with the Germans' non-stigmatized same-sex activities, but the attitudes toward Týr may have been there all the same as a kind of enduring half-conscious cultural memory.

It is not out of the realm of possibility—and in the view of this writer something of a likelihood—that the association of Týr with *Tiwaz and the pederastic Germans would have led to Týr being viewed as a pederast, just as the Germans were. Týr was already diminished in Norse eyes, between his betrayal of his honor with Fenrir in *Gylfaginning* 20 and his role as the god of war—it is probable that the Norse viewed their warrior bands as groups in which queer acts took place, just as "homosexuality in the form of institutionalized pederasty of the

sort described by Ammianus Marcellinus and Procopius is understood to have been the rule within the Germanic warrior societies" (Neill, 2009, p. 121). The association with *Tiwaz would have left him viewed very poorly, indeed.

Conclusions

This paper has demonstrated that queerness, far from being a despised aberration in Norse society and Norse mythology, was in fact common in the myths and uncommon but not rare in Norse society.

I have reframed the debate about how the Norse viewed gender so that, rather than bearing a simplistic one-size-fits-all perspective, the Norse are shown to have a realistic combination of internally contradictory viewpoints.

I have demonstrated that the queerness of the Norse gods and the Norse men and women was neither a new development nor something that Norse society objected to, but rather an ongoing state of affairs which linked the Norse present to the Germanic past.

I have shown that when the sources used in this paper are reassessed without the commonly used framework of cis-heteropatriarchy, a new picture of the Norse gods, the Norse myths, and Norse society emerges: one of a gender-defiant and emphatically queer space, mythology, and society, in which gods and goddesses and men and women function together regardless of the socially imposed restraints of their birth genders.

By readjusting this picture, we can better understand the nature of Norse society and mythology and the meanings of being queer in Norse society and mythology.

Bibliographical references:

Primary Sources:

BUGGE, Sophus. *Sæmunder Edda Hins Fróða*. Christiana: F.T. Mallings Forlagsboghandel, 1867.

CHURCH, Alfred John; BRODRIBB, William Jackson. "Cornelius Tacitus, *Annals.*" In CHURCH, Alfred John; BRODRIBB, William Jackson (Eds.). *Annals of Tacitus, Translated into English, with Notes and Maps*. London: Macmillan and Company, Limited, 1876.

DRONKE, Ursula. "Anonymous, *Lokasenna*." In DRONKE, Ursula, ed. *The Poetic Edda, Volume II: Mythological Poems*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

FAULKES, Anthony. "Snorri Sturluson, *Gylfaginning*." In PÁLSSON, Heimer, ed. *The Uppsala Edda*. London: University College, 2012a, p. 10-99.

FAULKES, Anthony. "Snorri Sturluson, *Skáldskaparmál*." In PÁLSSON, Heimer, ed. *The Uppsala Edda*. London: University College, 2012b, p. 124-249.

FAULKES, Anthony. "Snorri Sturluson, *Ynglinga Saga*." In FAULKES, Anthony, and FINLAY, Alison (Eds.). *Heimskringla Volume 1*. London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2011, p. 6-47.

FISHER, Peter. "Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*." In FRIIS-JENSEN, Karsten, ed. *Gesta Danorum: The History of the Danes*, vol. 1. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2015.

GADE, Kari Ellen. "Magnús Erlingsson and Eysteinn, *Gulaþingslǫg*." In GADE, Kari Ellen. "Homosexuality and the Rape of Males in Old Norse Law and Literature." *Scandinavian Studies*, 1986, 58, 2, p. 124-141.

JÓNSSON, Finnur, and WIMMER, Ludwig F.A. (Eds.). *Handskriftet nr. 2365 4 to*. København: Kgl. Bibliothek, 1891. http://www.germanicmythology.com/works/CODEXREGIUS.html

MATTINGLY, H. "Cornelius Tacitus, *The Agricola and Germania*." In KNÜSEL, Christopher, and RIPLEY, Kathryn. "The *Berdache* or Man-Woman in Anglo-Saxon England and Early Medieval Europe." In: FRAZER, William O.; TYRRELL, Andrew (Eds.). *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*. London: Leicester University Press, 2000, p. 162-163.

ORCHARD, Andy. "Anonymous, *Lokasenna*." In ORCHARD, Andy, ed. *The Elder Edda: A Book of Viking Lore*. London: Penguin, 2011, p. 82-96.

PETTIT, Edward, ed. *The Poetic Edda – A Dual-Language Edition*. Cambridge, U.K.: Open Book Publishers, 2023.

TSCHAN, Francis J. "Adam of Bremen, *The History of the Arch-Bishops of Hamburg-Bremen*." In TSCHAN, Francis J, ed. *The History of the Arch-Bishops of Hamburg-Bremen*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.

Secondary Sources:

ÁRMANN Jakobsson. "Óðinn as Mother: The Old Norse Deviant Patriarch." *Arkif för nordisk filologi,* 2011, 126, p. 5-16.

ÁRMANN Jakobsson. *The Troll Inside You: Paranormal Activity in the Medieval North*. Santa Barbara, CA: Punctum Books, 2017.

ÁRMANN Jakobsson. "The Trollish Acts of Þorgrímr the Witch: The Meanings of *Troll* and *Ergi* in Medieval Iceland." *Saga-Book*, 2008, 32, p. 36-68.

BACK DANIELSSON, Ing-Marie. "Masking Moments: The Transitions of Bodies and Beings in Late Iron Age Scandinavia." PhD. Dissertation, Stockholm University, 2007.

BAGGE, Sverre. *Society and Politics in Snorri Sturluson's Heimskingla*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991.

BALZER, Marjorie, Mandelstam. "Sacred Gender in Siberia: Shamans, Bear Festivals, and Androgyny." In: HARVEY, Graham, ed. *Shamanism: A Reader*. London: Routledge, 2003, p. 242-261.

BASSIL-MOROZOW, Helena. "Loki then and now: the trickster against civilization." *International Journal of Jungian Studies*, 2017, 9, 2, p. 84-96.

BELL, JACOB. "Magic, Genderfluidity, and queer Vikings, ca. 750-1050." *History Compass*, 2021,

19, 5, 1-9.

BERRY, Chris & JAGOSE, Annamarie. "Australia Queer," *Meanjin*, 1996, 551, 5-15.

BLACKMORE, Chelsea. "How to Queer the Past without Sex: Queer Theory, Feminisms and the Archaeology of Identity." *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress*, 2011, 7,

1, p. 75-96.

BOEDEKER, Deborah. "Hecate: A Transfunctional Goddess in the Theogony?" *Transactions of the American Philological Association (1974-2014)*, 1983, 113, p. 79-93.

BOSWORTH, Rev. Joseph. *A Compendious Anglo-Saxon and English Dictionary*. London: John Russell Smith, 1848.

BRINK, Stefan. "Naming the Land." In: BRINK, Stefan, and PRICE, Neil (Eds.). *The Viking World*. New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 57-66.

BULL, Andrew. "'Am I not a woman like thyself?' – The Transvestite Male Rapist Narratives of Óðinn and Rindr, and Ewen and Thaney." *Kyngervi,* 2019, 1, p. 37-56.

CASTELINO, Ashley, "*Baugrýgjar*: Old Norse 'Ring Ladies' and Legal Husband-Killing in *Yngling Saga*." *Kyngervi* 2020, 2, pp, 40-55.

CHRISTIANSEN, Eric. *The Norsemen in the Viking Age*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002.

CLARK, David. *Between Medieval Men: Male Friendship and Desire in Early Medieval Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

CLAY, Jenny Strauss. *Hesiod's Cosmos*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

CLEASBY, Richard, and VIGFUSSON, Gudbrand. *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1874.

CLOVER, Carol J. "Regardless of Sex: Men, Women, and Power in Early Northern Europe."

Speculum, 1993, 68, 2, p. 363-387.

CLUNIES ROSS, Margaret. "The Transmission and Preservation of Eddic Poetry". In: LARRINGTON, Carolyne; QUINN, Judy; & SCHORN, Brittany (Eds.). *A Handbook to Eddic Poetry: Myths and Legends of Early Scandinavia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016, p. 12-32.

CRAWFORD, Jackson. "The Historical Development of Basic Color Terms in Old Norse-Icelandic." PhD. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2014.

DAIMON, Rei. "How White is Heimdallr?" *Viator*, 2020, 51, 1, p. 121-136.

DAVIDSON, H.R. Ellis. *Myths and Symbols in Pagan Europe: Early Scandinavian and Celtic Religions*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1988.

DECKERS, Piertjan; CROIX, Sarah; and SINDBÆK, Søren. "Assembling the Full Cast: Ritual Performance, Gender Transgression and Iconographic Innovation in Viking-Age Ribe." *Medieval Archaeology*, 2021, 65, 1, p. 30-65.

DEXTER, Miriam Robbins. "Transfunctional Goddesses." In: MALLORY, J.P.; ADAMS, D.Q. (Eds.). *The Encyclopedia of Indo-European Culture*. London: Fitzroy and Dearborn Publishers, 1997, p. 595-596.

DOWNS, Laura Lee. *Writing Gender History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

DRACHMANN, A.B. *Atheism in Pagan Antiquity*. London: Gyldendal, 1922.

ENRIGHT, Michael. *The Lady with the Mead Cup: Ritual, Prophecy, and Lordship in the European Warband from La Téne to the Viking Age*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996.

EWING, Thor. *Viking Clothing*. Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus, 2006.

FRANKKI, James. "Thor's Cross-Dressing in the *Þrymskviða*: '*Mic muno aesir argan kalla.*'" *Scandinavian Studies*, 2012, 84, 4, p. 425-437.

FRANKS, Amy Jefford. "*Valfǫðr, Vǫlur, and Valkyrjur*: Óðinn as a Queer Deity Mediating the Warrior Halls of Viking Age Scandinavia." *Scandia: The Journal of Medieval Norse Studies*, 2019,

2, p. 28-65.

GADE, Kari Ellen. "Homosexuality and the Rape of Males in Old Norse Law and Literature." *Scandinavian Studies*, 1986, 58, 2, p. 124-141.

GALLUP. "In Depth: Topics A to Z. LGBTQ+ Rights." Gallup, 5 June 2023. Accessed 1 July 2023. https://news.gallup.com/poll/1651/gay-lesbian-rights.aspx

GRIMM, Jacob. *Teutonic Mythology*, vol. 1. London: George Bell and Sons, 1886.

GRUNDY, Stephan. "Freyja and Frigg." In BILLINGTON, Sandra, and GREEN, Miranda (Eds.). *The Concept of the Goddess*. London: Routledge, 1996, p. 56-67.

HAEFELE-THOMAS, Ardel. *Introduction to Transgender Studies.* New York: Harrington Park Press, 2019.

HALPERIN, David. *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

HEDEAGER, Lotte. *Iron Age Myth and Materiality*: *An Archaeology of Scandinavia AD 400-1000*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2011.

HEFNER, M. Kristen. "Queering Prison Masculinity: Exploring the Organization of Gender and Sexuality within Men's Prison." *Men and Masculinities*, 2018, 21, 2, p. 230-253.

HERDT, Gilbert, ed. *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*. New York: Zone Books, 1993.

JOCHENS, Jenny. *Women in Old Norse Society*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995.

JOCHENS, Jenny. *Old Norse Images of Women*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996a.

JOCHENS, Jenny. "Old Norse Sexuality: Men, Women, and Beasts." In: BULLOUGH, Vern L., and BRUNDAGE, James A. *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*. New York: Routledge, 1996b, p.

369-400.

KNÜSEL, Christopher, and RIPLEY, Kathryn. "The *Berdache* or Man-Woman in Anglo-Saxon England and Early Medieval Europe." In: FRAZER, William O.; TYRRELL, Andrew (Eds.). *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*. London: Leicester University Press, 2000, p. 157-191.

KRESS, H. "Taming the Shrew: The Rise of Patriarchy and the Subordination of the Feminine in Old Norse Literature." In: ANDERSON, S.M., and SWENSON, K. (Eds.). *Could Counsel: The Women in Old Norse Literature and Myth*. London: Routledge, 2001, p. 159-166.

KRISTIANSEN, Kristian, and LARSSON, Thomas B. *The Rise of Bronze Age Society: Travels, Transmissions and Transformations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

LASSEN, Annette. "The Early Scholarly Reception of *Vǫluspa* from Snorri Sturluson to Árni Magnusson." In: GUNNELL, Terry; LASSEN, Annette (Eds.). *The Nordic Apocalypse: Approaches to Vǫluspa and Nordic Days of Judgment*. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2013, p. 3-24.

LEUPP, Gary P. *Male Colors: The Construction of Homosexuality in Tokugawa Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

LINDOW, John. "Addressing Thor." *Scandinavian Studies*, 1988, 60, 2, p. 119-136.

LINDOW, John. *Norse Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Heroes, Rituals, and Beliefs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

MACDUFF, William. "Beautiful Boys in Nō Drama: The Idealization of Homoerotic Desire." *Asian Theatre Journal*, 1996, 13, 2, p. 248-258.

MADDOX, Timmis. "A Storm of Swords and Spears: The Weapon Dancer as an Enduring Symbol in Prehistoric Scandinavia." *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 2020, 7, 1, DOI: 10.1080/23311983.2020.1747804

MALLORY, J.P., and ADAMS, D.Q. *The Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Proto-*

Indo-European World. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

MCCANN, Christine. "Transgressing the Boundaries of the Holy: Sexual Deviance in the Early

Medieval Pentitential Handbooks of Ireland, England and France 500-1000." Thesis, Seton

Hall University, 2010.

MCCARTHY, Justin. "U.S. Same-Sex Marriage Support Holds at 71% High." Gallup, 5 June

2023. Accessed 1 July 2023. https://news.gallup.com/poll/506636/sex-marriage-support-

holds-high.aspx

MENTON, Kel Alexander. "Of Monsters and Thems: Problematising Cis-Heteronormativity in

Old Norse and Old English Scholarship." PhD. Dissertation, University College Cork, 2020.

MEULENGRACHT SØRENSEN, Preben. *The Unmanly Man: Concepts of Sexual Defamation in*

Early Northern Society. Odense: Odense University Press, 1983.

MOEN, Marianne. "Challenging Gender: A Reconsideration of Gender in the Viking Age using

the Mortuary Landscape." PhD. Thesis, University of Oslo, 2019.

MORAY, R. "Beowulf's Androgynous Heroism." *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*,

1996, 95, 4, p. 486-496,

MUNDAL, Else. "Coexistence of Saami and Norse culture—reflected in and interpreted by Old

Norse Myths." In: BARNES, Geraldine Margaret Clunies Ross (Ed.).: *Old Norse Myths,*

Literature and Society. Proceedings of the 11th International Saga Conference, 2–7 July, 2000.

Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2003, p. 346–355.

MUNDAL, Else. "The Position of the Individual Gods and Goddesses in Various Types of

Sources---with Special Reference to the Female Divinities." In: AHLBÄCK, Tore, Ed.

Old Norse and Finnish Religions and Cultic Place Names. Åbo, Finland: The Donner Institute for Research in Religious and Cultural History, 1990, p. 294-315.

MYHRE, Bjørn. "The Iron Age." In: HELLE, Knut (ed.). *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia: Volume I: Prehistory to 1250*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 60-93.

NEILL, James. *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations in Human Societies*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009.

NORRMAN, Lena. "Woman or Warrior? The Construction of Gender in Old Norse Myth." In: BARNES, Geraldine Margaret Clunies Ross (Ed.).: *Old Norse Myths, Literature and Society. Proceedings of the 11th International Saga Conference, 2–7 July, 2000*. Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2003, p. 375-385.

NORTHCRAFT, Theo Zolton. "Reclaiming Premodern Icelandic Literature: The Trans of *Þrymskviða* and *Hrólfs saga Gautrekssonar*." Thesis, University of Iceland, 2022.

OLERUD, Louise. "Battle-Axes and Binary Prehistorians: A reassessment of the gender ideology of the supra-regional Corded Ware culture, in Europe of the third millennium BCE." Thesis, Leiden University, 2019.

OOSTERHUIS, Harry. "Medicine, Male Bonding, and Homosexuality in Nazi Germany." *Journal of Contemporary History*, 1997, 32, 2, p. 187-205.

ORCHARD, Andy. *A Critical Companion to Beowulf*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003.

OVERING, G.R. *Language, Sign, and Gender in Beowulf*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University' Press.

PAVLINICH, Elan J. "Queer Authority in Old and Middle English Literature." PhD. Dissertation, University of South Florida, 2019.

PHELPSTEAD, Carl. "Size matters: Penile problems in Sagas of Icelanders." *Exemplaria,* 2007, 19, p. 420-437.

PRICE, Basil Arnould. "Potentiality and Possibility: An Overview of *Beowulf* and Queer Theory." *Neophilologus*, 2020, 104, p. 401-419.

PRICE, Neil. *The Viking Way: Magic and Mind in Late Iron Age Scandinavia*. Philadelphia: Oxbrow Books, 2017.

PRICE, T. Douglas. *Ancient Scandinavia: An Archaeological History from the First Humans to the Vikings*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

PUHVEL, Jaan. *Comparative Mythology*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.

RAFFIELD, Ben; PRICE, Neil; COLLARD, Mark. "Polygyny, Concubinage, and the Social Lives of Women in Viking-Age Scandinavia." *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia*, 2017, 13, p. 165-209.

RAINEN, Sami. "Queer Vikings? Transgression of gender and same-sex encounters in the Late Iron Age and early medieval Scandinavia." *Suomen Queer-tutkimuksen Seuran lehti*, 2008, 3, 2, p. 20-29.

RATKE, Sharon. "Guldgubber—A Glimpse into the Vendel Period." *Lund Archaeological Review*, 2009, 15, p. 149-159.

RAUDVERE, Catharina. "Now you see her, now you don't: some notes on the conception of female shape-shifters in Scandinavian traditions." In: BILLINGTON, Sandra, and GREEN, Miranda (Eds.). *The Concept of the Goddess*. New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 41-55,

RICHARDSON-READ, Nate. "The Marriage of Þorr: Violence and (Trans)formation." *Queer Disrupt: Mystical Transformations – Gender in Mythology and the Occult*. 25 October 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDcz_MKu82c

RICHARDSON-READ, Nate. "Queer Themes in Old Norse Mythology." PhD. Dissertation, University of Highlands and Islands, 2020.

ROBB, John, and HARRIS, Oliver J.T. "Becoming Gendered in European Prehistory: Was Neolithic Gender Fundamentally Different?" *American Antiquity*, 2018, 83, 1, p. 128-147.

SALISBURY, Joyce E. "Before the Standing Stones: From Land Forms to Religious Attitudes and Monumentality." In: DÍAZ-GUARDAMINO, Marta; GARCÍA SANJUÁN, Leonardo; WHEATELY, David (Eds.). *The Lives of Prehistoric Monuments in Iron Age, Roman, and Medieval Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 19-34.

SCHJØDT, Jens Peter. "Eddic Poetry and the Religion of Pre-Christian Scandinavia." In: LARRINGTON, Carolyne; QUINN, Judy; & SCHORN, Brittany (Eds.). *A Handbook to Eddic Poetry: Myths and Legends of Early Scandinavia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016, p. 132-146.

SCHJØDT, Jens Peter. *Initiation Between Two Worlds: Structure and Symbolism in Pre-Christian Scandinavian Religion.* Odense: The University Press of Southern Denmark, 2008.

SHEPHERD, Deborah J. 1998. "The Elusive Warrior Maiden Tradition, Archaeology, and the Social Meaning of Bearing Weapons in North European Society Before the Christian Conversion." Paper presented at Society for American Archaeology meeting, Seattle, 26 March, 1998.

SHIPPEY, Tom. *Laughing Shall I Die: Lives and Deaths of the Great Vikings*. London: Reaktion Books, 2018.

SIIRIÄNEN, Ari. "The Stone and Bronze Ages." In: HELLE, Knut (ed.). *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia: Volume I: Prehistory to 1250*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

SIMEK, Rudolf. *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*. Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1993.

SOLLI, Brit. "Narratives of Encountering Religions: On the Christianization of the Norse around AD 900-1000." *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 1996, 29, 2, p. 89-114.

SOLLI, Brit. "Odin the *Queer*. On *Ergi* and Shamanism in Norse Mythology." In GUSTAFSSON, Anders, and KARLSSON, Hákan (Eds.). *Glyfer och arkeologiska rum - en vänbok till Jarl Nordbladh*. 1998, Gotarc Series A 3, p. 341–350.

SOLLI, Brit. "Queering the Cosmology of the Vikings: A Queer Analysis of the Cult of Odin and "Holly White Stones." *Journal of Homosexuality*, 54, ½, 2008, p. 192-208,

SOLLI, Brit. "Queering the Cosmology of the Vikings: A Queer Analysis of the Cult of Odin and 'Holy White Stones'". *Journal of Homosexuality*, 2008, 54, 1-2, p. 192-208.

STRÖM, Folke. *NÍÐ, ERGI, and Old Norse Moral Attitudes.* London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1974.

STRYKER, Susan. "My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage". In STRYKER, Susan, and WHITTLE, Stephen (Eds.). *The Transgender Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, 2006, p. 244-256.

STRYKER, Susan. *Transgender History, Second Edition: The Roots of Today's Revolution*. New York: Seal Press, 2017.

STURTEVANT, Albert Morey. "The Contemptuous Sense of the Old Norse Adjective Hvítr 'White, Fair.'" *Scandinavian Studies* 1952, 24, 3, p. 119-121.

SULLIVAN, Nikki. *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*. New York: New York University Press, 2003.

TEAL, Janae, and CONOVER-WILLIAMS, Meredith. "Homophobia without Homophobes: Deconstructing the Public Discourses of 21st Century Queer Sexualities in the United States." *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations,* 2016, 38, pp, 12-27.

TUREK, Jan. "Sex, Transsexuality and Archaeological Perception of Gender Identities." *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress*, 2016, 12, 3, p. 340-358.

VEYNE, Paul. *Did the Greeks Believe Their Myths*? Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

ZACHRISSON, Inger. "Gåvor eller handel?" In ZACHRISSON, Inger, ed. *Möten i gränsland. Samer och germaner i Mellanskandinavien. Statens historiska museum/Stockholm Monographs* 4. 1997, 4, p. 148-150.