



The term chicanery according to the Oxford English Dictionary suggests the use of deception or subterfuge to achieve one's purpose. The aims and objectives of this article are to give an account of the differences between the historical praxis that we know to be seiðr from what is purely speculative re-inventions of seiðr based on eclectic New Age adaptations taken from non-Northern European Traditions to total re-inventions of something that never was.

The Chicanery of Seiðr

Part One: The Historical Seiðr Praxis

©Rig Svenson 2015

ON: *Er þat ok margra heimskra manna náttúra, at þeir trúá því einu, er þeir sjá sínum augum eða heyra sínum eyrum, er þeim þykkir fjarlægt sinni náttúru, svá sem orðit hefir um vitra manna ráðagerðir eða mikit afl eða frábæran léttleika fyrirma nna, svá ok eigi síðr um konstir eða huklaraskap ok mikla fjölkynngi, þá þeir seiddu at sumum mönnum ævinliga ógæfu eða aldrtila, en sumum veraldar virðing, fjár ok metnaðar. Þeir æstu stundum höfuðskepnur, en stundum kyrrðu, svá sem var Óðinn eða aðrir þeir, er af honum námu galdrlistir eða lækningar.*

There are plenty of people so foolish that they believe nothing but what they have seen with their own eyes or heard with their own ears - never anything unfamiliar to them, such as the councils of the wise, or the strength and amazing skills of the great heroes, or the way in which *seiðr* [pronounced *sayther*] or skills of the mind ON *huklaraskap* and powerful sorcery ON *fjolkynngi* may *seiðr* death or a lifetime of misery for some, or bestow worldly honours, riches and rank on others. These men would sometimes stir up the elements, and sometimes calm them down, just like Othinn and all those who learnt from him these skills, of *galðr* and healing. Göngu-Hrólfs Saga Prologue ⁽¹⁾

Seiðr: ["sei:D.Yr_0] - pronounced *sayther is a modern Icelandic pronunciation which suggests the singing or chanting of magical charms. The very first specific study of seiðr came as far back as 1892 with Finur Jonson's landmark paper in Icelandic Festschrift to Pali Melsted although the earliest work seems to have been carried out discussing the role of seiðr by Johan Fritzner in 1877. *Seidr* was the subject of Strömbäck's masterly dissertation of 1935 and has been discussed extensively in recent years, but some points which are important in the present context have yet to be made. The main intentions behind conducting *seidr* seem to have been divination and the manipulation of targets states of mind to cause them harm or to facilitate their seduction. Stromback 1935, 142-59; cf. DuBois 1996, 44-50 ⁽²⁾

The etymology of *seiðr* remains disputed although etymological equivalents are known from Old High German and Old English (de Vries 1961). Those equivalent words mean 'cord, string' and 'snare, cord, halter'. The skaldic poetry also has an example of *seiðr* in the meaning 'cord' or 'girth, girdle' (*Ragnarsdrápa* 15, Finnur Jónsson 1912:4). Suggesting a 'snare, cord, string or halter but not in a binding sense. Cords can magically attract and this remains characteristic of seiðr (cf. Almqvist 2000:262ff). ⁽³⁾ In perhaps half of the prose sources, the effect of *seiðr* is that desired objects, persons or resources, like fish, are drawn to the sorcerer.

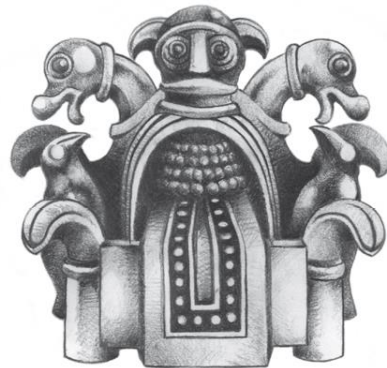
Research for a modern word definition on *seiðr* remains problematic as there is varying conflicting views on its meaning? Among common interpretations of *seiðr* are seething, magic, usually negative and even a type of fish? Let's look deeper and based on modern interpretations: Heggstad, Norro/n Ordbok (4th edition 1990): seidhr m. I. (-s and -ar) A kind of trolldom (with song), seid; efla (seidha) seidh, to perform such trolldom, to seid. Trolldom is simply a word meaning sorcery, witchcraft or black magic. Old Norse, *seiðr*, which may come from a word meaning "to speak" or "to sing", or possibly be cognate to the verb "to seethe", derived from the rituals of salt-boiling <Grimm, III:1047>. The mysterious term is cognate with French séance, Latin sedere; Old English sittan, and thus with a large group of terms based on the Indo-European root *sed-. *seiðr* as literally a séance -- a "sitting" to commune with the spirits. (Shamanism and Old English Poetry, p. 97)

Male seiðr practitioners: *Seiðrmaðr* (seiðrman), *seiðskratti* (evil seiðr sorcerer), *seiðrbendr* (seiðr carrier), *spamaðr* (prophesy man), *villusspamaðr* (false prophesy man), *galdramaðr* (galdr man), *galdrasmiðr* (galdr smith), *vitki* (sorcerer), *fjolkynngismadr* (sorcerer), *fjolkynngisbenr* (sorcerer bearer), *gandrekr* (ganðrman/warrior), *kunattumaðr* (man who knows magic), *tauframaðr* (charm man).

Female seiðr practitioners: *Völva* (staff bearer, seer, sibyl, bones woman), *seiðkona* (seiðr woman), *spákona* (prophesy woman), *spákerling* (old prophesy woman), *kveldriða* (evening rider), *trollriða* (rider of witchcraft), *myrkriða* (darkness rider), *munnríða* (mouth rider), *túnriða* (fence rider), *kaldriða* (cold rider), *Þaðriða* (thread rider), *galdrakona* (galðr woman), *galdrakerling* (old galðr woman), *galdraksnot* (galðr lady), *galdrakind* (negative galðr sorceress), *vitka* (sorceress), *fjolkynngiskona* (sorceress), *visendakona* (wise woman who knows), *heiðr* (sorceress with good intent), *fordæða* (evil witch), *fála* (witch with bad intent).

The twelfth century of Europe witnessed a paradigm shift in attitudes concerning magical practise due to the advancement of intellectual changes involving the impetus of a variety of economic, social and cultural evolution. The led to what was formerly considered demonic illusionary magical practises to be more distinctly categorised as high and low magic, white or black magic. <Ben and Constable 1982; Ward 1982> Collectively, these changes impacted on the general view today in modern paganism of the good versus evil in respect of magic workings which has stuck with us today in the modern mind-set of those who attempt to imitate or indeed reconstruct those original practices. I argue that the notions of good or evil magic simply did not exist back then for our honoured ancestors and that magic at least for those who practiced magic a thousand years ago under the auspice of *seiðr* either practised the *seiðrcraft* which carried a desired effect or had no effect just as it does today. Magic either works or it does not work for the sorcerer or witch. The idea of negative or evil magic is a modern concept based around religious Church doctrines stemming back to the Middle-Ages.

The Þorbjög Lítill-Völva's enigma



The Lejre figurine Denmark is a standard depiction of an aristocratic lady of the later 1st Millennium

In the Vinland saga, the forth chapter of *Eriks saga rauða* [or the Saga of Erik the Red] details one of the most extensive historical accounts of a *seiðr* ceremony. What is not considered however is that there were two versions of this treatise? The first version is the *Skálholt Book* possibly because it was written by a cleric at the Skálholt monastery in south-western Iceland. The second version is believed to be a more detailed account and is known as the *Hauk's Book*, written sometime around the year's c 1306 to 1308 by Hauk Erlendsson who lived from c1265 to 1334 and was a prominent Icelander. ⁽⁴⁾ But nowhere throughout either versions of the entire corpus of the Saga of Erik the Red does it mention within those pages or detail in any way whether any actual trance induced oracular spirit/god form possession ever took place with the seerest Þorbjög and especially on a "High-Chair". Not one single citation but despite what we factually know from the account, a misdirection remains today by many who still view the texts within the accounts in Chapter Fours of *Eriks saga rauða* as evidence that some sort of ecstasy trance state *seiðr* oracular divination took place.

Accounts suggest that the *vǫlva* Þorbjǫg was reluctant to give answers and remained silent on the first night. The actual texts show that that it took a long time before any answers came from the *Lítill-Vǫlva* <little seeress>, some two nights in fact but no details were ever expressed on the actual ceremony nor was the “high seat” ever emphasised in in *Erik’s saga rauða* for the *vǫlva* to go into a prophetic trance. What was written describes the preparations for the *seiðr* rather than the ritual. There is no mention within the texts about the *vǫlva*’s soul or any journey of the soul either in ecstasy or with the body lying down in any altered state of consciousness and this is important to note.

The *seiðrhjallr* <a raised platform for working *seiðr* magic with one or even two persons> and the *hasæti* <high seat place of honour> are two entirely different entities and certainly not synonymous. The *hasæti* in this case was simply a place of honour afforded to the *seiðkona* Þorbjǫg as was the custom back then during a time of crisis for the farmstead was experiencing a prolonged famine at that time. This was not a gothic experience but normal custom and practise for the head of the farmstead to invite and offer a place of honour to the *vǫlva* in the hope of gaining her favour to change their fortunes as well as obtaining advice via her divination into the course of events to unfold. The reputation of these holy women were so feared back then that people were afraid even of her gaze upon them. The key to the whole account lies with the Christian female Guðriður’s song *kvæði* as it seems that the spirits according to the *vǫlva* Þorbjǫg were pleased with the singing. In the saga accounts, nothing is said however as to whether Guðriður’s *kvæði* had any effect on the participants there. The folklorist and late esteemed scholar, Dag Strömbäck however argued in his interpretation of the meaning behind the *varðlokka* song that there must have been some trace of shamanic ritual: “*Varðlokkur* refers to that special song used to recall the soul of the one shamanizing to the body lying in a state of ecstatic exhaustion.” < Strömbäck 1935-139>

In 1874, Gubbrandur Vigfusson offered the following explanation for the term ‘*Varðlokkur*: feminine plural form (Scottish, warlock), a ward song (*varllsdngur*), a protection song (*verndarsdngur*).’ He hypothesised that the Scottish word ‘*warlock*’, used to describe a male magician or sorcerer, was a term derived from the Icelandic word ‘*varðlokkur*’. Dag Strömbäck took up the same topic in his book *Sejd* (1935), where he discusses the behaviour of shamans after their magical performances. He describes the shaman upon completion of a ceremony as being in a state of near lifeless exhaustion, and notes that a young girl would be required to recite a poem until ‘life returned’ to the shaman’s body again. He found parallels between this kind of recital and the one performed by Guðriður at the *seiðr* ceremony in Greenland. According to Strömbäck, the purpose of the poem that Guðriður performed was to call the soul of the seeress back to her body after its journey outside the body. On the basis of this, the term ‘*varðlokkur*’ would therefore have been the original name of Guðriður’s song.

Trolley (1995a:61) suggested that *varð* is derived from *vörðr* (pl. *verdir*) meaning guard, watch protector and *lokkur* suggests either fastenings or entice.

Varðlokkur.... guardian spirit fastenings.... what locks the spirit in under the power of the summoner

Varðlokkur... guardian spirit enticements.... what lures the spirits to be present

Ref: Eriks saga Rauða Jansson’s 1944 edition

Hrólfs saga kraka

The clearest example is Saxo's (109) version of the *seiðr* séance in *Hrólfs saga kraka* which cites "perita augurii femina" or "a woman skilled in augery". A *fornaldarsaga* taken from around 1400 but has analogues in other sources. Strömback (1935:84) view Saxo version as a closer preservation of the more ancient arts such as falling down as if dead which got substituted at some point within the Icelandic sagas by falling off the *seiðrhjallr*. The prophetess's task is to see where two boys are hiding, and Saxo says that they are "drawn out of their recess by the weird potency of the enchantress's [sic] spells and pulled under her very gaze" (Fisher and Davidson 1979–80 I:202). In Chapter three of *Hrólfs saga kraka*, King Froði engages a *völva* to reveal what is happening with the two boys who happen to be his nephews as well as his enemies from who King *Froði* has usurped the throne.

Two things stand out strongly from the *seiðr* accounts in *Eriks saga rauða*:

- 1) The *seiðr* described in *Eriks saga rauða* was dominated exclusively by women and that their collective collaboration was necessary to achieve the desired outcome.
- 2) The actual *seiðr* ritual praxis remains vague with many questions still unanswered regarding the *völva*'s actual divinatory process.

Old Norse: Völva ein var Þar komin, sem Heiðr hét. Han bað Froði konung at neyta listar sinnar ok vita hvat kynni at segja til sveinanna. Gerði hann þá gilda veizlu í moti henna ok setti hana á seiðrhjallr einn hávan. Konungr spurði þá hvat hon sæl til tíðenda, "þvi ek veit," sagði hann, "at nú mun margt fyrir þik ber, ok sé ek nú milka gæfu á þer, ok svara mér sem skjótast, seiðkona."

A *völva* arrived there called Heiðr. Froði asked her to put her skills to use and find out what she could tell about the boys. He had a magnificent feast prepared for her and set up for her on a high *seiðr*-platform. Then the King asked if she could see any sort of news, "because", he said "I know that many things will now appear before you, and I see now great luck upon you, so answer me as quickly as possible, *seiðr*-woman."

The efficatory uses of *seiðr* vary, by consists of effecting a physical change by means of magic-in other words they are spells; sometimes the spell is for good, as with Puriðr sundafyllir, who used *seiðr* to fill a fjord with fish in *Landnámabók* <101>but more often it is for sinister purpose such as murder (as when Kari is killed with *seiðr* in *Laxdæla saga* ch.7 <124> . A number of different forms of divinatory magic were practiced, believed in or at least witnessed to in Norse sources, of which *seiðr* is just one, they are surveyed in Dillman (2006:37-52) from which the following brief summary is derived. The phrase *ganga til fréttar* "to go for news", means to consult a diviner to get prophesies. The first example can be found in *Eyrbyggja saga* ch.4 where Þórólfr mostrarskeggtook part in a great deal of sacrificing, and went for prophesies from Þórr his beloved and the second example can be found in *Eiriks saga rauða* where the *völva* is seen giving prophesies to the people once she has made contact with the spirit world.

The homosexual males only can perform seiðr argument

Ergi it appears remains one of the on-going issues surrounding the researched subject of *seiðr*. The suggestion is that males who practise *seiðr* usually implied that they had transgress gender boundaries, bringing with this the Old Norse term of *argr*, a legally proscribed term of abuse. Chapter 7 of *Ynglinga saga*, suggests:

ON: *þessi fjölkynngi, er framid er, fylgir sva mikil ergi, at eigi totti karlmönnum skammlaust vid at fara, ok var gyðjunum kennd su itrott'*

This sorcery, when it is performed, brings with it such great *ergi* that engaging in that did not seem to men to be without shame, and that accomplishment was taught to priestesses'; ed. Bjarni Adalbjarnarson 1941–51, I 19).

ON: *Óðinn kunni þá íþrótt, er mestr mátt fylgði, ok framði siálfr, er seiðr heitr, en af þuí mátti hann bita ørlög manna ok óorðna hluti, suá ok at gera mönnum bana eða óhamingju eða vanheilendi, suá ok at taka frá mönnum vit eða afl ok gefa öðrum. En þessi fjölkynngi, er framid er, fylgir suá mikil ergi, at eigi þótti karlmönnum skammlaust við at fara, ok var gyðjunum kend sú íþrótt.*

Óðinn had the skill which gives great power and which he practiced himself. It is called *seiðr*, and by means of it he could know the *ørlög* <ON concept of fate> of men and predict events that had not yet come to pass; and by it he could also inflict bane on men, or loss of soul (*hamingja*) or waning health, or also take wit or power from some men, and give them to others. But this sorcery is attended by such *ergi* that manly men considered it shameful to practice it, and so it was taught to priestesses. -- *Ynglingasaga*, ch 7 ⁽⁵⁾

Consider however that *Ergi* and *argr* or *ragr* could also be regarded as specifying swearwords. *Ergi*, *argr* and *ragr* were the severe insults made by calling someone a coward, and due to its severity old Scandinavian laws demanded retribution for this accusation if it had turned out unjustified. The Icelandic Gray Goose Laws referred to three words that were regarded as equal to *argr* by themselves. Those were *ragr*, *strodinn*, and *sordinn*, all three meaning the passive role of a man included in same-sex activities among males. Another semantic belonging to *argr*, *ragr* and *ergi* was, from the Gray Goose, "being a sorcerer's friend." Grágás (Gray Goose) is a collection of laws created during the period of the Icelandic Commonwealth (930-1262). ⁽⁶⁾

“Viewed as a whole, it is true to say that the corpus of Icelandic Sagas, skaldic verse and Eddic Poetry is saturated with references to sorcery in general and *seiðr* in particular. Its practitioners are of both sexes and are given the variety of titles, but the constant prevalence of magic never subsides.....in view of the sheer cumulative volume of references to everyday 'witchcraft' it's surprising that so little work has been done on its integration into our models of the Viking World.”

Price N, The Viking Way Uppsalla 2002 pgs 67

My own personal point of view on the *Ergi* argument is this. As far as the historical records go taken from primary sources, it was common for both men and women to practise the craft we know today as *seiðr*. It also has to be remembered that the Icelandic writings of the Middle Ages carried with it also Christian biases against male effeminacy or indeed homosexuality. This is not to say that I agree on the inaccurate presumption by authors on the *Ergi* subject that all males who practised historical *seiðr* were homosexuals or that the practice of historical *seiðr* remains restricted because of the so called *Ergi* argument. This exclusion of male *seiðr* practitioners' from the tradition remains in my view an inaccurate post-modernist viewpoint.

Gunnora Hallakarva puts forward in her article, "The Vikings and Homosexuality":

"Bishop Þorlákr Þórhallson of Skáholt's Penitential (ca. 1178-1193 C.E.) lists penances of nine or ten years that include flogging for "adultery between males, or that committed by men on quadrupeds," and says of lesbianism that "if women satisfy each other they shall be ordered the same penance as men who perform the most hideous adultery between them or with a quadruped." (Sørensen 26)" It is clear from such accounts that Christian beliefs of the Middle Ages condemned both the active and passive roles of homosexuals which contrasts pagan Scandinavians attached disapproval only to the passive homosexual males. ⁽⁷⁾

The myths about Ergi

This off course conflicts with the neo-pagan wiccan based *Hrafnar Spæ* groups who claim on false etymology that **ergi* refers to homosexual male (it does not) or that only women only should practice *seiðr* (another myth). Or that Freya had a *seiðr* cult (there is no evidence for this) There is no indication that such a cult ever existed -- or that Freyja has any association with fertility, for that matter; she is associated with sex and war. The central thesis of Price's book is that *seiðr* was an adjunct to combat, a form of battle-magic, which could in itself explain its association with Freyja who is herself a Battle as well as a Sex Goddess. For females in their natural sexual roles "Ergi" implies an overwhelming sexual lust and desire by the female for sexual intercourse. Both the terms *œði* and *ópola* refer to burning pains that afflict the genitals.

Regarding the word "ergi" you should look at the poem *Skýrnismál*, 36 st.,

þurs ríst ek þér
ok þriá stafi,
ergi ok œði
ok ópola;

36. þurs I cut for thee,
and three letters more:
ergi, (lust) and oenði, (rage)
and ópola. (loathing)
So will I cut them out,
as I have cut them in,
if there need shall be.

Ref: Thorpe B För Skirnis eðr Skirnismál
The Journey or Lay of Skirnir.
According to the Bergen rune carving;

Ríst ek bótrúnar, ríst ek bjargrúnar, einfalt við alfum, tvífalt við trollum, þrífalt við þurs[um], við inni skoðu skag(?) valkyrju, svát ei megi, þótt æ vili, lævís kona, lífi þínu g[randu], ...ek sendi þér, ek sé *á þér, ylgjar ergi ok úþola. Á þér hríni úþoli ok ioluns(?) móð. Sittu aldri, sof þú aldri* ...ant mér sem sjalfri þér. Beirist(?) rubus rabus et arantabus laus abus rosa gaua

I cut runes of help; I cut runes of protection; once against the elves, twice against the trolls, thrice against the ogres against the harmful 'skag'-valkyrie, so that she never shall, though she ever would-evil woman!-(injure) your life ... I send to you, ***I look at you (=cast on you with the evil eye): wolfish evil and hatefulness. May unbearable distress and 'ioluns' misery take effect on you.*** Never shall you sit, never shall you sleep, (that you) love me as yourself. [Latinized magical words] and [magical words] ...

Ref: N B257 (N B257) - Søndre Gullskoen, Bryggen, Berge inscription; c1335;
Norway. Bryggens Museum, Bergen, Norway;

The main question is this; How do you threaten a female to be homosexual or to lesbian? In my rationale this is an escape rather than punishment! There is a thought that the word "ergi" means lust and then you have a harmony in the meaning. Lust + madness + restlessness = forever crazy; but there is also the thought that "ergi" means to be without sex or celibate/impotent and that can also be considered a threat to a woman, that is to say not to be able to have children, this understanding is received by looking at the text of Herodotus. The third solution to the meaning is a coward, to be considered the weaker sex, unmanly and a woman without having to be a homosexual, just a pure coward; remember who and what Snorri was. I suspect also the term *Ergi* is misunderstood in its original context and an Icelandic linguist I was researching this subject matter with suggests *Ergi* in its original context means to be impotent or not to partake of sex. *Ergi* in this sense within the semantics of this wording has nothing to do with being homosexual at all or unmanly. An important component in the semantic content got missed by scholars *Ergask*, the passive verb formed on *Ergi* shows how firmly fixed this semantic centre was; It means to lose one's virility (*karlmennska*) cf. the proverbial expression *sva ergisk hverr sem hann eldisk* (of the loss of male potency in old age) ⁽⁸⁾

Five categories of historical Northern European Sorcery & Seiðr

In his research paper, "The Archaeology Seiðr: Circumpolar Traditions in Viking Pre-Christian Religion, Neil Price stated: "Pre-Christian Scandinavian religion may have contained some elements of shamanism. Altogether more than 300 published works have appeared on the subject representing the work of some 150 scholars". Price further argues that there occur five categories of Northern European sorcery in the sources apart from seiðr namely *galður*, *ganðr*, *utisetá*, *odinnic sorcery* and *popular magic*. Price N: The Viking Way, Uppsala 2002, Chap 2, pgs 65 ⁽⁹⁾

1) Galður

Hjálmar H. Ragnarsson in his article, "A short history of Icelandic Music to the beginning of the 20th Century" suggests that the Icelandic words for charms are "galður" and "seiður". The former pertains to a rather sophisticated kind of magic while the latter to the magic of the common people. The word "galður" is associated with the Swedish verb "gala" which means to "chant" or possibly also "sing" and the word "seiður" is associated with the verb "seiða", i.e. to "attract" spirits as it were. *Galður* or *galður* is the most pronounced of them all and appears to be a relative form of magic using a high pitch form of singing. ⁽¹⁰⁾

The *Galdralag* ⁽¹¹⁾ or "magic spell meter" uses a fourth line which echoes and varies the third line of the stanza taken from the Eggjum grave stone, Sogn, Noway ca. 700 C.E.:

Hverr of kom Heráss á - As whom came War-god

hí á land gotna? - hither to the land of men?

Fiskr ór fjanda vim svimandi, - A fish from the torrent of enemies swimming,

fogl á fjanda lið galandi. - A bird against troop of enemies screaming.

But to clarify the differences between "galður" and "seiður" I would also like to point out that just as we have academic scholars and lay scholars today, the matter of "seiður" historical practitioners could be classed into a similar twofold model of professional **seiðurs* (Old Norse: means a worker of magic) and semi-professionals *seiðurs*. Neil Price in his dissertational work, "The Viking Way" pgs 93 argues that: "If we examine the description of Odinn's magical skills presented in *Ynglingasaga* 7, we can note that *seiður* is only one category among several. It is in fact possible to discern a certain pattern based on type of ability and form of sorcery (*fjölkyngi* is Snorri's collective term) with which it is associated".

Siden occurs in Old English only in *alfsiden*. There is a consensus that *siden* is cognate with the Old Norse strong verb *sida* (to give a broad and advised translation, work magic), and its derivatives *seiður* (the magic worked) and *sidi* (the magic-worker). *Siden* would derive from the infinitive stem of *sida*'s Germanic ancestor, with deverbative *-en* (on whose etymology see Kluge 1926, §150; Voyles 1992, §7.2.26). A notable reference to the use of *galður* is the Eddic poem *Oddrúnargrátr*, where Borgny could not give birth before Oddrún had chanted "biting galðrs" ⁽¹²⁾

7. þær hykk mæltu [Then no more]

þvígít fleira, [they spake, methinks;]

gekk mild fyr kné [She went at the knees]

meyju at sitja; [of the woman to sit;]

ríkt gól Oddrún, [With magic Oddrun]

rammt gól Oddrún, [and mightily Oddrun]

bitra galdra [Chanted for Borgny]

at Borgnýju. [potent charms.]

2) Ganðr

However the origins of ganðr go back much further than the Viking Age. Its basic meaning has been suggested to be that of magic but according to de Vries, ganðr is one of the primal forces associated with the formation of the Nine Worlds of Germanic Cosmology. Ganðr is also another name used to describe a staff for ritual (Fritzner: 1867). Fritzner in his 1867 Dictionary on Old Norse describes the Ganðr as either a stick or a staff employed especially as an instrument of sorcery either for general purposes or as part of a shape –shifting ritual.

3) Utiseta

Utiseta or sitting out is a magical technique used in communications with the dead which involves sitting out alone at night over grave mounds of your ancestors or by running water or even beneath the bodies of hanged men. This clearly is an Odinnic magical technique. Now the rituals carried out by the god Odinn form a magical category outside the area of seiðr or galðr and could be classed as Odinnic sorcery.

4) Oðinnic Sorcery

Oðinn is the most complex of the Scandinavian gods, contrary in appearance and ambiguous in character (Lindow 1985; Mitchell 1993). The god plays an important role in the mythical creation of the Germanic Worlds as emphasized within the creation accounts within the Poetic Edda as well as Snorra's Edda. Oðinn is considered to be the supreme master of the spoken word and the ultimate ruler of knowledge. The Rúnatal (Rúnatáls-thátr-Odhins or Odins Rune Song) is a section of the Hávamál (stanzas 138-146) of which Odin reveals the Secret of the Runes is one prime example of what is considered to be Oðinnic Sorcery.

*Veit ek, at ek hekk vindga meiði a [Oðinn I know I was hanging on a windswept tree]
nætr allar nío,[nine whole nights,]
geiri undaðr ok gefinn Oðni,[gashed with a spear, and given to Oðinn,]
sialfr sialfom mer,[myself to myself,]
a þeim meiði, er mangi veit,[on that tree of which no one knows]
hvers hann af rótom renn [from roots of what it originates.]*

Translation by Ursula Dronke Poetic Edda ⁽¹³⁾

According to Havamol stanzas 138-44, Odin fasts and suffers a form of *utiseta* by putting his own person through the ordeal of injury in order to gain knowledge. It could also be argued that what is considered Oðinnic Sorcery has also implications with the practice of *seiðr*.

5) Popular magic

The fifth category of Northern European sorcery refers to general sorcery better known as popular magic which in its vague sense covers all the other types of magic practices carried out by the common people rather than by professionally trained folk. Fjolkyngi (Sorcery) probably being one of the most common forms of folk magic.

To truly understand the original praxis of historical seiðr, you really need to commit yourself to a life time of dedication to research and practical work in order to re-discover the art as near as possible to her original praxis with an understanding of the *Geisteshaltung* ⁽¹⁴⁾ or mind-set of ancient heathen era, Germanic cultures as well as harshness of those times remembering that magical practices for these early Northern European peoples was as natural to them as the science we so heavily rely on today to drive our hard-core technological electronic marvels and advances. When you consider the varying and seemingly vast contradictory accounts, many still un-translated in the sagas as sources for the Viking Age on witchcraft, it is surprising that until very recently, so little has been done regarding the factual historical aspect of Northern European Shamanism but it is hoped that articles such as this one and others will fill that want! What has been heaped on us rather are non-historical unverified personal gnosis fantasy based constructs so very far removed from the original historical heathen seiðr praxis.

The Germanic concept of fate or Wyrð

O.E. *wyrð* "fate, destiny" (n.), lit. "that which comes," from P.Gmc. **wurthis* (cf. O.S. *wurd*, O.H.G. *wurt* "fate," O.N. *urðr* "fate, one of the three Norns"), from PIE **wert-* "to turn, wind," (cf. Ger. *werden*, O.E. *weorðan* "to become"), from root **wer-* "to turn, bend" For sense development from "turning" to "becoming," cf. phrase turn into "become." The modern sense of weird developed from M.E. use of weird sisters for the three fates or Norns (in Germanic mythology), the goddesses who controlled human destiny. Yngona Desmond has coined this as Wyrð Consciousness but for simplicity in order that the lay reader may understand better, let's call this an altered state of mind set and being based on the lore and especially the worldview of the heathen era in Northern Europe around the latter part of the Iron Age and her Germanic peoples.

'*Wyrð* is a continual presence and influence in the rituals, the artefacts, and everyday activities of the early Germanic peoples. Even though its symbolic attributes can be widely observed, and something of its sustentative and all-influencing power occasionally can be felt from the mute objects of the graves and the chance accounts of commentators with non-Germanic prejudices writing for non-Germanic audiences, these things tell us little about how this power was felt to operate within the lives and affairs of men on earth. How actions are meaningfully related to actions and how significance is to be discovered in the ordinary sequence of events are not recoverable from the kinds of materials examined so far. If we are to find evidence of the operation of *wyrð*, its sustentative power and its past, we will have to examine the literary remains of the Germanic peoples themselves; only they will be able to place events in what will be their proper order and to give them their proper significance.'

Wyrð The Well and the Tree: Bauschatz P ⁽¹⁵⁾

Seiðr as a form of Northern European Sorcery

The main intentions behind conducting *seiðr* seem to have been divination and the manipulation of targets states of mind to cause them harm or to facilitate their seduction (Strömbäck 1935, 142–59; cf. DuBois 1996 ⁽¹⁶⁾, 44–50). In this sense, *seiðr* should in my view really be classed as a Northern European form of shamanism, not to be confused with the shamanism of Siberia or later day reinvented Core Shamanism as expounded by Michael Harner. Therefore and in my view, those who fall under the umbrella of

modern reconstructions of what was historical *seiðr* have to achieve or at least need to possess some mastery of the very huge limitless knowledge pool that is an alternate state of mind and being of those peoples who lived in Northern Europe during the latter part of the Iron Age.

Of Prophecy

The mythology of Pre-Christian Scandinavia shows interest in questions of fate or destiny. It appears that *seiðr* served both as a ritualistic solutions of some considerable lengths in time to carry out as well as to solving immediate problems via divination or magic..

Orvar-Odds saga: Arrow Odd story

The witch Heiðr in *Orvar-Odds saga*, (Arrow Odd story) one of the Icelandic *fornaldarsögur* (stories of ancient times), provides a good example of the prophecy aspect associated with *seiðr*:

Old Norse: Kona er nefnd Heiðr; hon var vǫlva ok seiðkona ok vissi fyrir úorðna hluti af fróðleik sínum. Hon fór á veizlur víða um landit er boendr buðu henni til sagði hon monnum forlög sín ok vetrarfar eða aðr hluti. Hon hafði með sér xxx manna, fimmtán sveina ok fimmtán meyjar. Þat var raddlið mikit, þviat þar skyldi vera kveðandi milil sem hon var. Svá bar til um ferð hennar at hon var á veizlu skamt frá Ingjaldr.

There was a woman named Heiðr, and she was a *vǫlva* and a *seiðr* woman, and by her art she knew beforehand matters which had not happened. She went to events widely throughout the land, when farmers invited her; she told people their fortunes and the seasons and other matters. She had thirty people with her, fifteen lads and fifteen girls. It was a large company, since there had to be a great incantation wherever she was. So things went with her travels that she was at the feast not far from Ingjaldr

Orvar-Odds or Arrow's Odd was a legendary hero of whom an anonymous Icelander wrote in the latter part of the 13th century. The Orvar-Odds saga became very popular and it contained old legends and songs.

Glossary of terms

1) It should be pointed out that *Göngu-Hrólfs saga* is a legendary saga, written mainly for entertainment but I consider also that there is no doubt at least in Iceland, Norway and Scandinavia that some details of its Viking Age reality were remembered in such 13th/14th century medieval Viking Romances. Translation based on Hermann Palsson & Edwards 1980:27

2) Dag Strömbäck's classic work on *seiðr* from 1935, newly republished in an expanded edition from 2000: Strömbäck, Dag, *Sejd : och andra studier i nordisk själsuppfattning* (Hedemora 2000) ISBN 91-7844-318-0 (med bidrag av Bo Almqvist; redaktör: Gertrud Gidlund) Strömbäck, Dag, *Sejd : textstudier i nordisk religionshistoria* (Stockholm 1935)

3) Eldar Heide, "Spinning *seiðr*" (paper presented at the international conference Old Norse religion in long-term perspectives. Origins, changes, and interactions, Lund, Sweden, June 3–7, 2004).

- 4) Swedish scholar, Sven B. F. Jansson, carried out a detailed comparison of the two versions of "Erik the Red's Saga". Jansson, conclusion is that Hauk had edited a manuscript more or less identical to the *Skálholt Book*. Hauk made notes in the margin and clarified and added to some passages, and he is more specific with a suggestion that Hawk may have been drawing on surviving aspects of his own personal family tradition.
- 5) Ynglinga saga is a legendary saga, originally written in Old Norse by the Icelandic bishop, poet and historian Snorri Sturluson about 1225. It is the first section of his *Heimskringla*. It was first translated into English and published in 1844 by Samuel Laing.
- 6) Grágás seems to have been used until 1262–1264 when Iceland was taken over by the Norwegian crown. Grágás never actually existed in any one complete volume during medieval times. The laws are preserved in two separate manuscripts, *Konungsbók* (written c. 1260) and *Staðarhólsbók* (written c. 1280). The 1852 edition of Grágás is based on the *Konungsbók* text.
- 7) Sørensen, Preben M. *The Unmanly Man: Concepts of Sexual Defamation in Early Northern Society*. trans. Joan Turville-Petre. Odense Univ. Press. 1983. ISBN 87-7492-4362.
- 8) ; Ergi actually means to lose one's virility (*karlmennska*) cf. the proverbial expression *sva ergisk hvern sem hann eldisk* (of the loss of male potency in old age) Níð, ergi and Old Norse moral attitudes - Viking Society Web by Folke Strom pgs 17
- 9) *The Viking Way : Religion and war in late Iron Age Scandinavia* (Aun 31). 435pages, 159 figures, 3 tables. 2002. Uppsala: Uppsala University Department of Archaeology & Ancient History; 91-506-1626-9 (ISSN 0284-1347)
- 10) *Galður* or *galðr* is the most pronounced of them all and appears to be a relative form of magic using a high pitch form of singing Hjálmar H Ragnarsson was appointed first rector of the Iceland Academy of the Arts upon the academy's foundation in autumn 1998. Hjálmar has written articles and essays on various academic and cultural-political subjects, as well as lecturing on matters of culture, science and the arts.
- 11) The *Galdralag* or "magic spell meter" uses a fourth line which echoes and varies the third line of the stanza taken from the Eggjum grave stone, Sogn, Norway ca. 700 C.E. The article *Galdralag* in *Nationalencyklopedin* (1992)
- 12) A notable reference to the use of *galður* is the Eddic poem *Oddrúnargrátr*, where Borgny could not give birth before Oddrún had chanted "biting galðrs"
- 13) Translation by Ursula Dronke *Poetic Edda*
- 14) Understanding of the *Geisteshaltung* or mind-set of ancient heathen era
- 15) *Wyrd The Well and the Tree*: Bauschatz P (1982) explores the many different aspects of early Germanic concepts of time and perception. This dated treatise remains even today an important piece of Germanic philology that deserves close attention describing the relationship between concepts of past and reality as perceived by historical heathens in those days and between different aspects of myth and world.
- 16) DuBois, Thomas Andrew, "Seiðr, sagas and saami religious exchange in the viking age" i *Northern peoples - southern states : maintaining ethnicities in the circumpolar world* (Umeå 1996)

Part One End

The Chicanery of Seiðr

Part Two: Modern Reconstructions based on Historical Seiðr Praxis and other non-Northern European Traditions or New Age revisionism using the tag of “seiðr”.
©Rig Svenson 2015

Modern reconstructions of *seiðr* today fall mainly into two camps of thought and practice. These are either based closely to the historical or are historical revisionism of the former adapting outside traditions which are not Northern European based. One of the misunderstandings about *seiðr* today is that it only involves a type of trance possession oracular magic based on the “High Chair”. This is grossly incorrect, without any evidence whatsoever and sadly remains a bastardization of our traditional folkway.

Original praxis based heathen era seiðr

Seiðr or rather a specific type of Northern European Shamanism praxis was and very much remains the magical practices of our honoured and historical Germanic ancestors. However, the historical *seiðr* of our early Northern European folkway remains obscure and very misunderstood because there are so few folks representing this craft in its true and original form today. Based on my personal experiences and research in this area, the following are what I would class as historical heathen era *seiðr*:

1) Foretelling the future (divination) usually with a community impact

Many examples exist within the sagas where *seiðr* was cited as a way to find out about the future such as already mentioned in the case of *Orvar-Odds saga* ⁽¹⁷⁾ where the *vǫlva* Heiðr was called upon to give fortunes to the peoples in the family home of Berurjóðr. <SKB perg.74to, early fourteenth century and AM344a 4to, later fourteenth century>

2) Bestowing good fortune (blessing)

It was always a common belief that the very presence of a *vǫlva* in a community farmstead of the heathen era brought good fortune with her to all the peoples there. The folks back then were particularly careful not to offend their *vǫlva* guest in any way fearing retribution on their luck or good fortune if they did.< *Erik's saga rauða*>

3) Bestowing bad fortune (hexing)

Vǫlvas and other magical folk were also feared as they were revered. Just as these little bones women (*vǫlvas*) could bring good luck to the communities, they were or at least it was believed that these women could also reverse the fortunes of those who found disfavour with them. *Seiðr*, however, also had a darker side and could be employed to inflict physical or mental harm. There was a darker aspect to *seiðr* which Dag Strömbäck 1935; 2000 called “black *seiðr*” ⁽¹⁸⁾.

4) Manipulating the weather

In *Gisla Saga Súrssonar* ⁽¹⁹⁾. (17-19), weather magic is used to attack the foe of a man named Þorstein by his sorceress mother Auðbiörg who wakes up in the night with restlessness, walks anti-clockwise several times outside her house and changes a clear and cloudless night into a tempest which then causes an avalanche against the mountain side which falls on the house of Þorstein's adversary killing all twelve men there.

5) Attracting game animals or fish

In Landnamabók ⁽²⁰⁾ (194) þuriðr sundafyllir (sound filler) employs *seiðr* to stock a fjord with fish. *Seiðr* practitioners can also deprive an area of its resources.

ON: *þuriðr sundafyllir [...]* var Þvi kǫlluð sundafyllir, at hon seiddi [H seiði] til Þess I hallæri a Hálogalandi, at hvert sund var fullt af fiskum.

þuriðr sound filler [...] was so called because she performed *seiðr* to this end in a famine in Hálogaland, so that every sound was filled with fish.

Hálogaland is in Northern part of Norway close to what are Sámi territories. There is also evidence in the *Historia Norwegie* to suggest that the Sámi tribes used magic to entice the fish away from Christians. Adam of Bremen's "Descripto insularum aquilonis", Chapter 32 says of these inhabitants in the Northern remotest parts of Norway ⁽²¹⁾:

Latin: *Eos adhuc ferunt magicus artibus sive incantationibus in tantum prevalere, ut se scire fateantur, quid a singulis in toto orbe geratur; tunc etiam potenti murmure verborum grandia cete maris in littoral trahunt.*

They say they are so forward in magical arts and incantations that they say they know what is happening in every corner of the world; and moreover by means of a powerful murmuring of words they draw great sea-whales to shore.

6) Healing the sick

Sækja Sefi ⁽²²⁾: (Old Norse) translates roughly as a changed state of emotions or feelings some translate it as changed state of being. It is actually an ancient healing art. In Poetic Edda (Saemundar Edda Grogaldur 9) ok snúisk þeim til sátta sefi = turn them to agreement in mind the word *Sækja* (*sækja*) is common in Icelandic and is in many places. It has been argued that there is little to no evidence from the primary sources to suggest that *seiðr* was involved with healing beyond the fungus herbals belt suggested in Þorbjörg lítíl vǫlva in Eirík's Saga Rauða ch.4 (87). However I strongly argued against the fact that a lack of evidence is not proof that something did not exist! From the earliest stages of civilisation people have used various forms of medicinal or herbal practices to aid ailments and that healing was a significant activity in pre-Christian Scandinavia. I further argue that healing was simply forgotten in our primary sources written at a time when the Church was taking control away from the power of the historical vǫlvas/holy healers of old.

Pain Girl: A Finish Charm to banish pain

In this Eastern Finnish Poem, the cosmic focal point to which illnesses are banished is presented as a stone in the middle of a hill, with a hole drilled by an auger in the midst of the stone, into which pains would be thrust

Kiputyttö, tuonen neiti.....Pain girl, otherworld maiden
Joka istut kipu kivelläYou who sit on the pain stone
Joen kolmen juok[s]evassa,.....In the current of three rivers,
Vein kolmen jakaimessa,.....In the splitting of three waters:
Jauhata kipu kiveä.....Grind up the pain stone,
Kipu vuorta väännättele,.....Wring the pain mountain,
Kivut kiistele välehen.....Conjure the pains quickly

Kitahan kiven sinisen,.....Into the maw of a blue stone,
 Tahe vieretä vetehen,.....Or toss them in the water,
 Syytäse meren syvähän:Thrust them into the deep sea:
 Ui siellä, pahan pakana,.....Swim, wicked heathen,
 Kosken kuohuja kovia,.....The harsh surge of the rapids there
 Veit väljät väännättele,.....Turn the wide waters
 Veit ahtaat asuksi!.....Dwell on the narrow waters!
 Jos et sitä totelle,.....If you won't do this,
 Kivutar, hyvä emäntä,.....Girl of pains, good mistress
 Vammatar, valio vaimo,.....Girl of wounds, worthy woman,
 Käy kivut kereemässä.....Go gather the pains
 Kiviseen kippaseen.....Into a stony goblet,
 Vaivat vaskivakkaseen,.....The troubles into a copper basket,
 Kivut tuone viijäksesi,.....For you to take the pains there,
 Vammat vaivudellaksesi.....For you to sink the wounds,
 Keskelle kipu mäkeä,.....In the middle of the pain hill,
 Kipuvuoren kukkulalle;.....In the summit of the pain mountain
 Siellä keittele kipuja.....Boil the pains there
 Pikkusessa kattilassa.....In a little kettle
 Yhen sormen mäntävässä,.....The size of one finger
 Peukalon mahuttavassa.....The measure of a thumb
 Kivi on keskellä mäkii,.....A stone lies in the midst of the hill,
 Reikä keskellä kivii,.....A hole in the midst of the stone,
 Joka on vääty vääntijällä,.....Turned by an auger,
 Puhkaistu purasimella;.....Pierced by an awl,
 Kivut sinne kiskotaan,.....The pains are pulled in there
 Pahat vammat vallataan,.....The bad wounds seized,
 Tuskat tuimat tunketaan,.....The sharp agonies shoved,
 Pakko päivät painetaan.....The days of distress are pressed
 Öin yrittämättömiksi,.....Into not trying by night,
 Päivin pääsemättömiksi.....Not escaping by day
 Tuone mä kipuja kiistan,.....There I forced the pains
 Tuone tuskia manoan,.....There I banish distress
 Kivisiin kellariin,.....To stone dungeons
 Rautasiin kallijoihin.....To iron hills
 Kiviä kivistämään,.....To make stones ache
 Paasii pakottamaan,.....To make rocks needy
 Kivi ei kipuja itke,.....Stone does not weep at pains
 Paasi vaivoja valita,.....Rock cares nothing for troubles,
 Vaikka paljo pantasiin,.....However many are placed on it
 Määrätä mädetäsiin.....However much rots it
 Ref: SKVR VII1, 1760/45-92, Kitee, 1896

There are several examples in the sagas of fuþark runes being used for healing purposes although this may be argued to come under Odinic Magic. Healing through sorcery is listed as one of Odin's skills in Göngu-Hrólfs Saga.

Chapter 25 of *Sturlaugs saga starfsama* ⁽²³⁾: tell us that when *seiðr* is employed to heal someone but only after having the infliction placed on the person who was to be healed afterwards by the same sorcerers. The saga goes on to show how the man Framarr finds three *seiðmenn*, in a sunken dwelling and persuades them to perform magic on him to inflict his body with leprosy. The idea being also to be able to reverse the spell at will when Framarr wished it so.

Old Norse: *Fór Framarr til skips, ok halda út undir eyjar þær, er lágu næst landi. Þar lét Framarr tjalda yfir skipum sínum. Síðan tók Framarr sér kaupmanna gerð ok gengr til hallar ok biðr sér vetrvistar. Konungr veitir honum þat, ok er hann nefndr Gestr. Oft sat hann um at komast í skemmu konungsdóttur, en þat gat hann aldri leikit.*

Framarr went to the ship, and continued out in the lee of the islands that lay nearest the land. There Framarr had awnings pulled over his ship. Then Framarr took up a merchant's gear and went to the hall and asked for winter quarter. The king offered that, and he was named Gestr. He often sat around to get at the king's daughter's chambers, but he couldn't ever work it.

Old Norse: *Svá bar til einn dag, at hann gekk í burt frá höllinni ok eftir braut einni. Hann heyrði mannamál niðri í jöðinni hjá sér. Hann sér jarðhúss munna ok gengr niðr ok sér, at þar eru seiðmenn þrír.*

It went on until one day he went away from the hall along some path. He heard people talking below him in the earth near him. He saw the entrance to an earth house and went down and saw three *seiðmenn*.

Old Norse: *Hann mælti: "Þat er vel, at vér höfum fundizk. Ek skal segja eptir yðr." Þeir segja: "Ger eigi þat, Framarr, ok munum vér til vinna þat, er þú vilt, ok með hverju móti sem þat er." Þá Svarar Framarr: "þú skalt kasta manna líkþrá á mik, en ek skal þó þegar heill, er ek vil."*

He said, "It is good that we have met. I shall tell of you". They said, "Do not do that, Framarr, and we shall carry out whatever you wish, and in whatever way". Framarr answered, "You shall cast leprosy on me, but I shall be well whenever I wish".

Old Norse: *"Svá skal vera," segja þeir, "ok er oss eigi fyrir því at vinna þetta til." Þá sneru þeir um holdi hans öllu, svá at hann var eigi nema hrufur ok þrymlar einar á millum hæls ok hnakka, ok hverfr hann í burt ok til skemmu konungsdóttur ok settist undir skíðgarðinn.*

"So it shall be," they said, "and there is nothing to stop us achieving this". Then they turned his whole flesh so that he was nothing but scabs and knots from head to toe, and he turns away and goes to the king's daughter's chamber and sits down under the fence.

7) Causing mild harm to people, animals or property.

Sufficient examples can be found in the early sources to suggest that women were not held to be generally trustworthy and they were thought of as rather disreputable company. Furthermore it was believed that even the glance of a *vǫlva* if she did not favour you could bring misfortune to you, your animals and even your property.

Old Norse: *vǫlva Heiðr æ var hón angan illrar brudar* Ref: *Vǫluspá* 22
She was always the favourite of wicked women <or an evil wife>

8) Communicating or mediating with the dead

In Chapter 41 of *Færeyinga Saga*, ⁽²⁴⁾: a man called *Þrándr* performs a magical ceremony whereby he calls upon the dead to confirm his suspicions that *Sigmundr* and his entire party were murdered by *Þorgrímr*.

Old Norse: *Þrándr lætr þá kalla á þá Leif ok Sigurð ok biðr at Þorgrímr ok synir hans sé fjotraðir, ok svá var gert, at þeir eru fjotraðir ok ríkt bundnir. Þrándr hafði þá látit gera elda mikla í eldaskála, ok grindr fjórar lætr hann gera með fjórum hornum, ok nú reita rístr Þrándr alla vega út frá grindunum, en hann sezkr á stól milli elds ok grindanna. Hann biðr þá nú ekki við sik tala, ok þeir gera svá. Þrándr sitr svá um hríð.*

Then *Þrándr* has *Leifr* and *Sigurðr* called and orders that *Þorgrímr* and his sons should be fettered, and so it was done, and they were fettered and bound fast. *Þrándr* had had a great fire kindled in the hall, and he has four lattices set up at the four corners; he also draws nine squares out all ways from the lattices. Then he sits down on a stool between the fire and the lattices. He asks that no one speaks with him, and they do as he asks. *Þrándr* sits like this for a while.

Old Norse: *Ok er stund leið, þá gengr maðr inn í eldaskálann ok var allr alvotr. Þeir kenna manninn, at þar var Einarr Suðreyingr. Hann gengr at eldinum ok réttir at hendr sínar, ok litla hríð; ok snýr út eptir þat. Ok er stund líðr gengr maðr inn í eldahúsit; hann gengr at eldi ok réttir til hendr sínar ok gengr út síðan. Þeir kenndu að þar var Þórir. Brátt eptir þetta gengr hinn þriði maðr í eldaskálann. Þessi var mikill maðr ok mjök blóðugur. Hann hafði höfuðið í hendi sér. Þenna kenna þeir allir, at þar var Sigmundr Brestisson. Hann nemr staðar nokkura stund á gólfinu ok gengr út síðan.*

As time passed, there walks a man into the hall; he was dripping wet. They know the man for *Einarr* the Hebridean. He walks up to the fire and stretches out his hands to it for a short time, then turns away and goes out. As time passes, another man walks into the hall; he goes up to the fire, stretches his hands to it, and then goes out. They recognised that it was *Þórir* there. Soon after that, the third man walks into the hall. This was a big man covered in blood. He had his head in his hand. They all know him for *Sigmundr Brestisson*. He takes his place for a while on the floor and goes out.

Old Norse: *Ok eptir þetta ríss þrándr af stólinum og varpar mæðiliga ǫndunni ok mælti: "Nú megi þér sjá hvat þessum mönnum hefir at bana orðtð: Einarr hefir látizkr fyrst ok kalit í hel, eða drukknat, er hann var þeirra kraptaminnstr; þá mun Þórir hafa látizkr þar næst, ok mun Sigmundr hafa flutt hann ok dasazkr mest á því, en Sigmundr mun hafa komizkr á land máttlítill, ok munu þessir menn hafa drepit hann, er oss sýndizkr hann blóðigr ok höfuðlaus."*

After this þrándr rises from his stool and wearily draws a deep breathe, and said, “Now you can see what was the death of these men. Einarr lost his life first, frozen to death or drowned, for he was the weakest of them; and þórir must have lost his next, and Sigmundr must have carried him, and that must have tired him most of all; but Sigmundr must have come ashore very weak, and these men killed him, since he showed himself to us bloody and headless.”

9) Communicating or mediating with unseen worlds

Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*⁽²⁵⁾, Hadingus visits the underworld cites in the female Hadingus visit to the underworld <1.8.14> where she was endowed with magical powers as well as the ability to visit the underworld:

“When Hadingus was staying there as a guest, a remarkable portent occurred. As he was dining, a woman beside a brazier, bearing stalks of hemlock, was seen to raise her head from the ground and, extending the lap of her garment, seemed to be asking in what part of the world such fresh plants might have sprung up during the winter season. The king was eager to find out the answer and after she had muffled him in her cloak, she vanished away with him beneath the earth. It was I believe, by the design of the underworld gods that she took a living man to those parts that he must visit when he died”.

10) Communicating or mediating with the gods?

From the Old Norse perspective, there are four categories of what can be classed as Norse spirits

1) Divinity as defined by offerings given to deities in the form of votive offerings such as blót from the framework of the wider communities down to local and family level. *Æsir, vanir, álfar, desír* and *verðir*.

2) Fate: Some spirits are connected to fate and the death of individuals or families. These spirits include the nonir, desír (ancestral spirits) and the *valkyjur* (possibly a later development from desír). The word Valkyrie derives from Old Norse *valkyrja* (plural *valkyrjur*)

3) The land and its fertility. *Æsir, vanir, giants, dvergjar, álfar, desír, landvættir* and *verðir* are some of the spirits concerned with the primordial creation of the world.

4) Magic as such was used and practise not just by human beings but also by spirits such as the *æsir, vanir, giants, troll, álfar verðir, mǫrur* and *gandar*.

- The term *ganga til fréttar* < to go for news >, means to consult a diviner in order to get prophesies from a divinity or supernatural beings and may be communicated to directly to the host or via a medium.
- *Utiseta* < sitting out > usually in the nocturnal hours was practised by men and women alike whose objective was to get intelligence about unseen things such as the past of future to be from the spirit world or gods themselves.
- *Oneiromancy* or the foretelling from information discerned from dreams was a widespread practice and very much the magic of the common people.
- *Auspices* or divination through examining signs as highlighted in Tacitus *Germania* was very commonplace
- *Þhriefa* < probing someone’s body > to make prognostication for future events is attested in the sagas

11) War magic e.g. manipulating the minds of your enemies

Kári is killed using seiðr in Laxdæla saga ⁽²⁶⁾, chp 37 (102). There is also a connection with *seiðr* and the *vígspá* <war charm >

The gambanteinn or gamban twig with futhark runes carved on it (twig of potency, twig of power) made from a freshly cut sapling is alleged to possess the power to drive a person to insanity, cause sexual submission followed by uncontrollable lust. Three runes are used here causing burning pains to affect the genitals causing sexual itch and irresistible desire. The runes are translated as Extreme Lust, Burning [with genital connotations] and Unbearable sexual need. Ref: Skirnismal

The gambanteinn purpose was used for severely disordering a person's mind (Price N Viking Way 180)

12) Seiðr Staffs....there were many different types

The question as to exactly how seiðr staffs were used within a seiðr ritual is a difficult one as we simply do not know. However seiðr staffs it seems from the sources were in the main quite large and ornately fitted with brass set in gemstones.

No man shall have in his house staff or altar, device for sorcery or sacrificial offering or whatever relates to heathen practice.

Eiðsivafingslov 1:24 in NGL 1.383

- 1) Stafrs: an attribute of the vǫlva used in the course of summoning varðlokkur spirits as well as for for divination.
- 2) Seiðrstafrs ⁽²⁷⁾, attributed to a practising vǫlva but usually very ornate and large.
- 3) Járnstafr...belonging to spirit beings of the dreamtime and giants of old
- 4) Stafspota...used by spákonas in facial attacks on an enemy or to rob them of their memory and instil confusion.
- 5) Vǫlr...attributed to a practising vǫlur and has phallic connotations
- 6) Gandr/Göndul.... working of sexual magic, summoning gandr spirits for aid in clairvoyance or prophesy as well as night riding to inflict harm on another
- 7) Gambanteinn or gamban twig.... was a slender wooden pole or staff possibly with futhark runes carved on it (twig of potency, twig of power) made from a freshly cut sapling is alleged to possess the power to drive a person to insanity, cause sexual submission followed by uncontrollable lust. Three runes are used here causing burning pains to affect the genitals causing sexual itch and irresistible desire. The runes are translated as Extreme Lust, Burning [with genital connotations] and Unbearable sexual need. Ref: Skirnismal
- 8) Tamsvöndr or taming wand was a wand described in the Skirnismal. The tamsvöndr is described thus as capable of inducing the bearer's sexual will and prowess domination over its female victim who has no say or choice to resist her sexual partner: Tamsvendi ek þik drep / en ek þik temia mun, / mæ, at minom munom. "With a taming wand I touch you / for I will make you tame, / girl, to my wishes". Dronke U 1997:382

13) Sexual magic

Hér megið sjá heldur rösklegan

Here you may see a vigorous phallus

vingul skorinn af viggs föður

severed from a father of horses

þér er, ambátt, þessi Völsi....

For you, slave-woman this Völsi

Allódauflegur innan læra.

is not at all dull between your thighs.

Ref: Völsa þátr str 2 Tr. Turville-Petre 1964:265f

There remains a considerable amount of sexual imagery connected with *seiðr* and its performance. Tolley (1995a:70) effectively makes the point that none of this should surprise us, due to the general climate of "sexual anarchy" that attaches to the Vanir deities throughout the Old Norse Myth cycle. The prime example of this is naturally Freyja, the original mistress of *seiðr*, who was it seems notorious even amongst the gods for her incestuous relationships and liaisons with a range of beings.

Her sexuality is discussed by Boyer (1995:49-57) and Nasstrom (1995:65ff, 104-10) Margeret Clunies Ross (1994:209) in her book "Prolonged Echo's", argues on the penetrative aspects of *seiðr*, that we can see the act of spirit possession in terms of a woman allowing herself to be entered.....possibly by a spirit or a god. Regarding the masturbatory use of phallus during the heathen era within female magical rites, those interested in this area would do well to look up and research: Völsa þátr str 2 Tr. Turville-Petre 1964:265f

14) Death and pain relief

Veiztu hvé sóa skal? Do you know how one must stop up the breathe? Havamol 144
Ursula Dronke Vol III Mythological Poems 2011 translation

In my view magic as a means to quickly dispatch quickly and more importantly painlessly a very sick person from this life into the next was common place amongst the Scandinavian heathens of elder times. As an example, consider that one particular heathen era family in distress might approach the *völur* of their tribe and ask the question, "Can you do something to help him or her across?" This would be the only thing spoken and the *völur* would then use such skills and knowledge of fast action poisons possibly combined with body manipulation to ease pain and dispatch the seriously ill person after which she was paid for this service of dispatching the terminally ill and thanked for her services. Today this unspoken form of euthanasia continues in modern hospitals to which I have personally witnessed in the cancer wards. Some would argue that killing arts inferred specialised forms of magical curses or spell against an enemy. Yes *seiðr* magic was also used for such purposes but that area is for another discussion.

Historical working areas of seiðr

Seiðr is also a little known Icelandic word suggesting an action, which is used to call to the spirits to get news. But the seiðr based on my point of view from the lore has little to do with sitting in a highchair or playing a drum and especially being trance possession ridden in some sort of eclectic vodoun rede, but rather the ability of the individual to achieve a form of altered presence of mind that is fundamentally *wyrd* based in nature. There are five fundamental working areas of seiðr based on the lore, history and mythology based from my research on the subject area. They are for the purpose of categorising them:

1) **Galðr:** The Anglo-Saxon word *galðor* (ON: *galðr*) refers to a kind of magical charm that is chanted or sung but I would suggest that some of these songs had a deliberation to mislead the novice listener from the real reasons which are the deception arts.

2) **Runes:** Fupark runes were in my opinion used in conjunction with elixirs and potions as a means of simple timing as well as an illusion art to confuse a perspective client as to the precise nature of the spell work.

3) **Secrecy:** There were many reasons for secrecy. Amongst the most important in my view was to preserve the art from those who have no right to know, would steal it and twist our ways into something intangible. But more importantly, secrecy was paramount to the livelihood of the seiðr-witch in order to maintain a kind of captive market where only the limited few knew about her arts because her profession depended on it.

4) **Symbols:** (eg: Tree, Well). Symbols to me are a useful tool to enable passage to other realities or serve as a meeting/returning point and perhaps more

5) **Sexual Acts** Various heroic poems in Eddaic lore were extended to imply that the Valkyrie besides serving ale to the einherjar also gave sexual pleasure to the chosen warriors. Völurs by all accounts were considered sexually dangerous. Seiðr might also be used to cause impotence in males: some commentators see Heiðr's action in "vitti hún ganda" as referring to enchanting a phallus, assuming that ganda, normally a "magic wand" to be a kenning for the penis. (Jochens, *Völuspá*, 353 n. 21).

Ráðomk þér Loddfáfnir I advise you, Loddfáfnir,
en þú ráð nemir to accept advice;
njóta mundu ef þú nemr you'll do well if you do,
þér munu góð ef þú getr it will be good for you if you get it:
fjölkunnigri konu in the arms of a sorceress
skalattu í faðmi sofa, you must never sleep
svá at hon lyki þik liðom so she can lock you with her limbs –

Ref: Havamol 113 Ursula Dronke Vol III Mythological Poems 2011 translation ⁽²⁸⁾

The following according to scholarly research is what West Nordic seiðr purports to be:

1) Divining the future

The area of Odinnic sorcery is problematic because the ideas of Odinn as a Northern shaman god was developed around concepts of trance, soul journeying and even shape changing. For the most part, modern adaptations revolve around the use of rune divination or platform magic where a seeress takes a soul journey at night to forecast a possible future for her tribe.

2) Killing arts

Veiztu hvé sóa skal? Do you know how one must stop up the breathe? Havamol 144 Ursula Dronke Vol III Mythological Poems 2011 translation

3) Healing Arts

Amulets and curing stones were known in Iceland and formed some of the practices of healers who were in most cases female. A 13th century Icelandic law book called *Grágás*: suggest:

"People are not to do things with stones or fill them with magic power with the idea of tying them on people or on livestock. If people put trust in stones to ensure their own health or that of cattle, the penalty is lesser outlawry" (Christian Law, §7). Other Norse sources mention "stones of life," curing stones, stones to ease childbirth, stones which staunch bleeding, stones which cause the wearer to be invisible, and stones that can grant wishes (Meaney, 102).

My suggestion is that this technique was known as *Sækja Sefi* (ON) translates roughly as a changed state of emotions or feelings some translate it as changed state of being. It is actually an ancient healing art. In poetic edda (Saemundar edda) *Grogaldur* 9) *ok snúisk þeim til sátta sefi* = turn them to agreement in mind the word *Sækja* (*sækja*) is common in Icelandic and is in many places. There was also the laying-on of hands which Norse healing women throughout Scandinavia were familiar with as a magical technique. Usually this form of diagnosis was performed by a man's foster mother or mother, who would touch their sons all over before a battle, and would know as a result what wounds the men would receive (Ellis-Davidson, 27). Other magical healing techniques were used, but accounts of healing magic are rare in the sagas. Other healers include *Gríma* the Greenlander from *Fóstbræðra saga* and *Heiðr* from *Biarmiland* in *Haralds saga hárfagra* (Ellis-Davidson, 40-41)

3) Inflicting misfortune

Examples of cursing prevails throughout the Icelandic sagas and examples can even been found on runestones. NA Nielsen (1917) suggested in his essays on runic inscriptions that magic formulae designed to protect the monuments from desecration. The *Björketorp Runestone*: (Scandinavian Runic-text Data Base *DR 360 U*) in Blekinge, Sweden. ⁽²⁹⁾

Side A: A Haidz runo runu, falh'k hedra ginnarunaz. Argiu hermalauscz, ... weladauþe, saz þat brytz. Translation: I, master of the runes (?) conceal here runes of power. Incessantly (plagued by) maleficence, (doomed to) insidious death (is) he who breaks this (monument).

4) Depriving people of their wits, or augmenting them < see 5 >

5) Depriving people of their strength, or augmenting it

Oðinn kunnir þa íþrótt, er mestr mátt fylgði, ok framði siálfr, er seiðr heitr, en af þúi mátti hannvita þorlog manna ok óorðna hluti, suá ok at gera monnum bana eða óhamingiu eða vanheilendi, suá ok at taka frá monnum vit eða afl ok geta oðrum. En þessi fiolkyngi, er framið er, fylgir suá mikil ergi, at eigi þótti karlmonnum skammlaust við at fara, ok var gyðiumum kend sú íþrótt.

Oðinn had the skill which gives great power and which he practiced himself. It is called *seiðr*, and by means of it he could know the fate of men and predict events that had not yet come to pass; and by it he could also inflict death or misfortunes or sickness, or also deprive people of their wits or strength, and give them to others. But this sorcery is attended by such great *ergi* that men considered it shameful to practice it, and so it was taught to priestesses (*Ynglingasaga* 7).

6) Revealing the hidden

Grímnismál or The Lay of Grímnir (the Hooded One), is a mythological poem, spoken through the voice of Grímnir one of Odinn's many guises and is probably the best example of a warrior initiatory rite whereby Odinn in his guise of Grímnir sits between two fires for a similar 9 days and nights without food and thereby reveals though this vision quest secret magical knowledge.

Heitr ertu, hripuðr,	Hustler, you are hot
ok heldr til mikill.	And rather too huge;
Gongomk firr, funi!	Get further away from me flame!
Loði sviðnar,	The cloak is singeing
þott ek a lopt berak,	---though I catch it up high---
brennomk feldr fyr.	my mantle is burning despite me!
Átta netr	Eight nights
sat ek milli elda her,	I sat here in between fires
sva at mer mangi mat ne báuð,	yet nobody offered me food---
nema einn Agnarr,	except Agnarr alone,
er einn skal ráða---	who alone shall rule
Geirroðar sonr, Gotna lande.	Geirröðh's son the land of the Goths.

2011 Ursula Dronke in *The Poetic Edda*, Vol. III “The Lay of Grímnir”

The Ljodatal section of the Hávamál, the poem of Odinn's eighteen magic spells deals in part with those forms of Odinnic based sorcery.

The bulk of Havamal ⁽³⁰⁾ is made up of four original poems:

- 1) The Gnostic Poem (stt. 1-79);
- 2) The poem of Odinn's amatory adventures (stt. 84, 91-110);
- 3) Loddafnismal, a poem of largely Christian gnostic advice addressed to an otherwise unknown man called Loddafnir (stt. 111, 4-8 and 11, stt. 112-36);
- 4) Ljodatal, the poem of Odinn's eighteen magic spells (stt. 138-41, 146-61, 162, 1-3,

and 163).

þat kann ek it tólpta	I know a twelfth
ef ek sé á tré uppi	if I see up in a tree
váfa virgilná	a noosed corpse
svá ek ríst	I can so cut
ok í rúnum fák	and colour the runes
at sá gengr gumi	that the man will walk
ok mælir við mik	and talk with me

Hávamál strophe 157

7) Opening mountains, stones, underground places and burial mounds

*Odin could transform his shape: his body would lie as if dead, or asleep; but then he would be in shape of a fish, or worm, or bird, or beast, and be off in a twinkling to distant lands upon his own or other people's business. With words alone he could quench fire, still the ocean in tempest, and turn the wind to any quarter he pleased. Odin had a ship which was called Skidbladnir, in which he sailed over wide seas, and which he could roll up like a cloth. Odin carried with him *Mimir's head, which told him all the news of other countries. Sometimes even he called the dead out of the earth, or set himself beside the burial-mounds; whence he was called the ghost-sovereign, and lord of the mounds. Ynglinga Saga.*

*Mímir in Old Norse means "The rememberer or the wise one". Mímir is also known as Mim who is a figure in Norse mythology renowned for his knowledge and wisdom but who is beheaded during the Æsir-Vanir War. Afterward, the god Odin carries around Mímir head and it recites secret knowledge and counsel to him.

8) Binding the inhabitants to these places

Hällestad Stone 1 (around year 1000): In the middle of a long standard inscription we find the words: stin a biarki stuþan runum or 'a stone on the hill, made firm with runes.' The runes are not only decorating the stone, but they help it to remain standing. NA Nielson (1917) in two essays on runic magic formulae designed to protect the monuments on which they were carved argued that the curse inscribed on the stones was directed at a possible male desecrator's by likening his actions to the effeminacy of seiðr.

Post-modernist eclectic based reconstructed seiðr

It has been said that of all the reconstructed systems of archaic magical practices, seiðr seems to be one of the most misunderstood. But I strongly argue that this is because so much disinformation exists out there on the subject via the internet and especially the myriad of bootstrap style neo-pagan High Chair based oracular trance possession magic groups. These groups generally base their workings on eclectic reconstructions taken from mixing with other traditions such as the African voodoo current but with a veneer taken from scraps of modern English translations derived from the Greenland Sagas and from what best can be described as Core Shamanism.

Eiríks saga rauða better known as the Saga of Erik the Red is a saga on the Norse exploration of North-America that is preserved in two manuscripts in somewhat different versions; Hauksbók (14th century) and Skálholtsbók (15th century). Modern philologists believe the Skálholtsbók version to be truer to the original. The original saga is thought to have been written in the 13th century. In neither of both versions does it give a single mention as to whether the Vǫlva went into a trance possession state. Not a single citation. You think they would miss something like that out? So where did this trance possession nonsense come from? The historical *seiðr* experience never involved oracular arts alone! This is sadly a very modern tangent based on spiritualism, mixed in with elements of late 1950s out of the closet Wicca and New Ageism with a hint of Santeria voodoo practices thrown into the eclectic mixing traditions stewpot?

Moreover it is likely that a lot of this knowledge was acquired by trial and error medicinal practices spanning the entire life span of the *Vǫlva* or *seiðr* practitioner taking anything up to some 20 years or more to become proficient in. When you consider that the average lifespan of Viking Age women a thousand years ago was around 35 years of age, it make sense that each and every practising volva I argue would have taken on an apprentice female young girl to ensure that her art survives into the next generation. Now one can argue that there is nothing wrong with improvisation of other cultures esoteric and perceived magical practices but consider that The Old Norse Religion was and still remains today a vast Germanic based lore which spans a large but very specific Northern European landmass area and timeline:

“As anyone with any knowledge of archaeology or Nordic and Celtic folklore knows, the idea that there was ever one basic Nordic religion, or one Nordic mythology accepted and known by all of those living across the Nordic (and even Germanic) world is patently absurd. Religious ideas and beliefs in these areas have always varied by time and place, by fashion, by cultural and social environment, and by the general demands of society.” (31)

Ref: How Elvish were the Alfar by Terry Gunnell, Folklorist University of Iceland.

Consider also that what we call today the heathen tradition today is being constantly re-learned and understood as we begin to develop better ways of discerning ancient texts or translating some lesser known works into modern English. In the past it seems that the scholars of Old Nordic beliefs have regularly tended to work from the top down, applying modern concepts to those of earlier times and this is the problem with how our modern mind-sets attempt to re-construct the heathenry of a thousand years past into the 21st century. Much of the many of the translations available are somewhat flawed in syntax and meaning which is why there are many variances. An appreciation of the old texts in their original format therefore is advantageous to discern the differences and thus unlocking a whole new chapter in lore factual as to lore imagined or best guessed at. Therein lies the problem with re-inventing worldview originally committed to memory only but passed down the generations in a foreign language, let alone foreign mind-set/timelines and the inevitable frustration brought about by the realisation that no matter how fluent you think may get, you will never be as eloquent as the elder folks who once used it and the most frustrating part of it, that you will never be as innovative. The more creative you are in your native modern English tongue, the bigger the frustration when you try to learn another.

On the upside, once some level of achievement has been gained, you will have a distinct advantage over totally or partially monolingual individuals. This advantage consists in having been trained to almost automatically notice cross-check, compare, analyse and remember the structure and effectiveness of language constructions.

Unverifiable Personal Gnosis as lore? A friend argued once:

“So here is where the schism gets deeper. People who work in the "Oðinn did this, and I will try to see if I can walk his same path" sometimes find themselves working with gods directly. This is where the whole UPG comes in. Now, some of these people may be willing to say "Okay, in my meditation/work/experiences I found this to be true, and so I'm going to take the time to do some extra research to find out what academics say on this, as well as other people interested in similar things find”.

So what happens when they find that their personal experiences cannot be validated? Is this new information to be considered or is this total noise? Unverifiable Personal Gnosis or UPGs in my view should never be used as a teaching tool for others as it is unverifiable and without validity or reliability. But unfortunately there are far too many publishing houses and off course the World Wide Web domains that will suggest gnosis as instructional resources either in electronic or printed form on the runes or seiðr for that matter without any background checks on the subject matter.

Regarding the frequent and unnecessary use of controlled restricted substances. Perhaps my bias is showing but I hold a higher regard for the non-usage of controlled substances by seers rather than that which is currently being experienced within the pseudo **shamanic* world as a means to an end. My other observation of meditation based “knowledge” is that this information is erroneous with no two people ever having the same sets of visions or indeed information. This makes any information gained from such drug induced “vision quests” unreliable and highly suspect that what they may attempt to impart to you as a first-hand experience with the gods. One particular incident comes to mind in a 90s **Hrafnar* ⁽³²⁾ style seiðr session whereby the “horse” advised the seeker to kill the troublemaker. The “horse” at the time was supposedly possessed by Oðinn. Likewise, consider also the introduction of totally foreign magical currents such as Afro-Caribbean variants such as santeria voodoo. When African slaves were imported to the United States, they were taught Christianity, but some people continued to hold their traditional beliefs. The result was a blending of traditional West African beliefs with Christianity. Today, many Afro-American folk religions continue to be practiced in the Caribbean, particularly among the poor and less educated people.

These inclusions are unnecessary from my personal viewpoint and do little to reconstruct the actual practices from that timeline with any real relevance or accuracy but rather serves as some form of showboat entertainment theatre to impress a gullible general public on such bootstrap practices being casually passed off as factual historical seiðr which it is not! It must have taken a very long time to learn all these skills; A lifetime in my opinion usually from childhood and this I argue strongly invalidates totally modern notions of Seiðr-craft via bum parkers high chair trance possession"Spæ clubs" put together for such purposes of theatre entertainment to impress a gullible public. Oracular arts as far as I can see were a very small part of it.

This is partly because of its perceived sinister reputation, most likely due to Christian bias against heathen women in general leading to sexist notions even today that only women ever practised divination. All too often seiður is mistaken for the craft belonging solely to the vǫlvas or vǫlurs, where in reality these special cunning folk were only part of a much far wider practice.

Boot-strap seiður

Perhaps one of the most distinguishing features found today in any modern reconstruction of a seiður ceremony seems to be the seer sitting on a high chair or rather some modern day equivalent of a *seiðrkona* or *seiðrmaðr* performing a modern adaptation of what has been popular misunderstood as seiður usually with the help of an Irish *bodhrán* drum, some Gambian African bongo drums or with people singing or possibly chanting made up reinvented warlock songs. This idea is a modern adaptation of the seiður séance based loosely on Eiríks Saga Rauða or the Saga of Erik the Red which I have already established earlier on has not one single trance possession historical citation from the primary source whatsoever. It is completely made up!

“Enum morgininn, at áliðnum degi, ver henni veittr sá umbúningr, sem hon þurfti at hafa til at fremja seiðinn. Hon bað ok fá sér konur þær, er kynni froeði þat, semtil seiðsins þarf ok Varðlokur hétu” or Late next day she was supplied with the preparations she required for performing the witchcraft.

She asked for the assistance of women who knew the spells needed for performing the witchcraft, known as Warlock-songs <Varðlokur hétu> (*Eiríks saga rauða* chap. 4; Sveinsson and Þórðarson 1935, 207; translation Magnusson and Pálsson 1965, 82). The archaic English or Scottish term, Spæ or Spá is often referred to as spá-craft or spæ-craft, and the practitioners of spá as spá-kona or spæ-wife. Spá is intrinsically the art of determining *ørlög*, usually by intuition or personal gnosis. *Ørlög* is literally "ur", meaning ancient or primeval, and "lög" is law: *ørlög* is the law of how things will be, laid down by *wyrd* or fate by the three Nornirs.

There are many problems associated with this form of seiður or rather boot-strap seiður. The Hrafnar style reconstruction variants of seiður is particularly notorious for its burn out amongst her loosely selected participants/students taken at times from willing untrained individuals selected at random whilst practicing their santeria vodoun based tangents of seiður or spæ-working, certainly in my opinion not an original form of Northern magic more loosely related to core shamanism rather than any historical ancient Germanic worldview. The magical current is certainly not Northern European. During my experimental days in the early 1990s with trance possession work, it seems that a great many Irish style bodhran drums favoured by New Age Plastic “shamans” were used to promote the trance possession work many folks back then got to know as seiður and it seems that this very flawed drum beating practice has remained well into the 21st century. Arguments for the use of drums extended to the idea that drums within the shamanic context have been found and used amongst the Saami with the potential cross cultural pollination of culture within the Norse. Lokasenna 24 in which Óðinn is accused by Loki of practising seiður: the god is said to have: *draptu a vett sem vǫlor* or tapped on a vett like a vǫlur. (Vǫlor = seið-witch)

Fritzner was an early interpreter of the vett as a shamanic drum, along the same lines as those common in Sami culture (1877:196f)

However no trace of drums has been found whatsoever within the Norse Archaeological context. And this is a mystery when you consider the many Sami examples out there? Could it be that drums simply were never used in the first place amongst the Norse during their seiðr practices? This in my opinion invalidates the countless number of latter day seiðr/spæ practitioners who bash away with their adaptive forms of Irish bodhrán selling the idea that this was how seiðr/spæ was done. Also the inclusion of spiritualism “pathworkings” is not historical but used again in such re-adaptations. This is not the case but rather an adaptive eclectic form of Harner style modern day core shamanism utilising the drum with some form of modern New Age meditational “pathworking”.

I have also personally found the usage of drums to be inappropriate amongst certain people who had uncomfortable to disturbing experiences with them during magical practices with another drum beater. In his book, “Nordic Religions in The Viking Age” Thomas DuBois argues on the possibility of cross cultural influences. "The Intercultural Dimensions of the Seidr Ritual", examines the possible influences of Saami noaidevuohhta ("shamanism") on seiðr practices. Thomas DuBois unravels for the first time the history of the Nordic religions in the Viking Age and shows how these ancient beliefs and their oral traditions incorporated both a myriad of local beliefs and aspects of foreign religions, most notably Christianity. Another possibility is that vett was a kind of a lid, for a tub or a barrel, Stormback (1935:22ff) which Dronke also concurs (1977:362).

In one case though, the idea of vett as drum is reinforced by the use of certain kennings to imply the use of shields. Hildar vett from thjóðolfr Haustlong referring to the valkyrja Hildir. Like other shield kennings, this one clearly suggest the slightly bow form of the shield, and thus by analogy a drum. I for one would not totally write off the notion that some sort of beating object was used, pending further archaeological enlightenment. See also Morten Lund Warmind (1995:134) who compares the shield beating to the vapnatak, the clashing together of weapons that mark decisions taken at the thing. Revisit also the accounts of Risala by Ibn Fadlan. My inclination and belief today however is that the Norse folkway used soul songs and voice as the medium to their seiðr work rather than drums. It is also quite possible that the volva's staff may have been used in such ceremonies to help assist with timing of the songs rather than the modern usage of the drum.

Core-shamanism seiðr

“Of all the reconstructed systems of archaic magical practice, Seiðr seems to be one of the most misunderstood. This is partly because of its sinister reputation, and partly because of sexist notions that only women ever practised or a capable of performing oracular divination. All too often Seiðr is mistaken for the craft of the Volva, where in reality (if such a notion is useful) the Völvas were only part of a far wider practice.

Why don't you stick to information that is already written down? What's wrong with sticking to the lore?

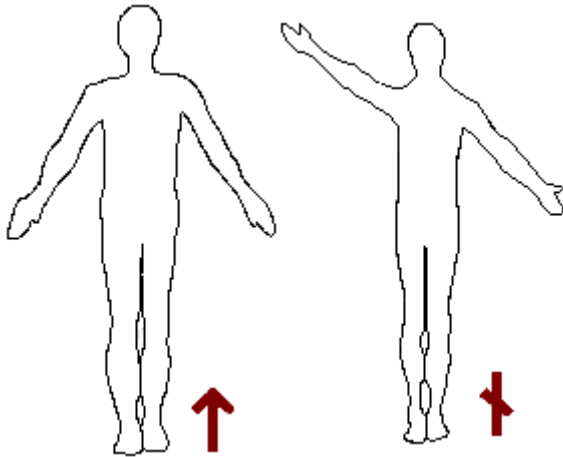
“Well, the Gods and spirits that I work with don't see it that way. If every time they told me to do something, I objected, "But wait! I can't do that unless you show me where it's written down in a book, preferably with an author who has an entire page of academic credentials," well, let's just say that it would get ugly real fast. So I use the lore as a jumping-off point, and then I keep going. In the meantime, I keep reading, because sometimes I find something that I've already been told to do. It's nice to be validated in that way, but it's not necessary. I'd do it anyway. I can't afford to be lore bound, not with Gods and wights on my tail. Except for places where certain contributing authors have given me whole essays with references, you won't find footnotes and references throughout this book, either. That's because such things contribute to the idea that this might be an academic research work, if a poor one, and I have no desire to enable that misunderstanding. These books fall into another category entirely, and I am very clear about that. Although I may mention subjects that I ran across in research, this book is primarily material gathered through the experiences of myself and others. We are the primary source material”.

Raven Kaldera ⁽³³⁾

Sometimes referred to as Northern-Tradition Shamanism, Core-shamanism seiðr is an eclectic modern re-invented worldview which may contain aspects of cross gender sexual fabrications based more on personal gnosis agendas and very personal biases rather than any factual or indeed historical known practices within the Germanic worldview of those times. It is a recreation of ideas taken from several different magical streams based without evidence and a different tradition from what once was. Core shamanism consists of the universal, near-universal, and common practices of shamanism not bound to any specific cultural group or perspective, as originated, researched, and developed by Michael Harner. Yngona Desmond in her article, “Core-shamanism, oracular seið, and what seiðr really is writes:

“Unfortunately, shamanic tradition has been infected by Harnerism, which has further corrupted those in Heathenry today who claim to practice and teach seiðr. Dr. Harner and his *Foundation for Shamanic Studies* have single-handedly tainted the definition of ‘shaman’; which is understandable in the neo-pagan community, but bothersome within Heathenry. ‘Bothersome’ because, as a heathen, this is my personal folkway – the ‘way’ of my ‘folk’ – which is historic fact, not alternative fabrication. Harner introduced his non-cultural approach to shamanism back in the 1970s; toss in a side of Castenada (from the 1960s), and you have the impetus of the modern neo shaman movement. If its adherents were more upfront about what they do this would not be an issue, but they continue to identify themselves as ‘shamans’ when they are simply drumming neo pagans without a community to minister to. Core-shamanism is a non-cultural hedgerow upon the path, one where most people stop and reside without ever making the effort to look over the boundary, let alone continue the journey”.

Stav seiðr



"Stav is a system to train the mind to see reality. The underlying concept of reality is the web which holds everything together in all dimensions including time."

Stav is claimed to be living tradition which has been passed down by the Hafskjold family over 1000 years? From the 5th century until the present day it is further claimed that the Hafskjold family have lived in the same part of Norway where their relative isolation enabled them to pass on their traditions from one generation to the next. This is highly improbable and it is by far more likely that "Stav" remains a modern construct spanning a few generations only and is an entirely invented tradition. The historical section of Stav remains scant to very sketchy. First there is the claim that Stav goes back to before 800ce and the Vikings etc, but was somehow maintained as a secret until the current "inheritor" Ivar Hafskjold decided to spread the word. Ivar Hafskjold, the head of Stav, is of Norwegian birth but married to a Japanese woman, and was a student of Jujutsu for some 14 years. He introduced Stav as the 'rune postures' of the Younger Futhark utilising some 16 rune stances.

ƵŃĐǂRƳ *†|†4 †BƳŃǂ
ƵŃĐƂRƳ ††|†' †ǂ†Ń,
fupark hnias tbmlr

long-branch (top line)

(also called Danish Runes even though Swedes and Norwegians used it)

short-twig or Rök Runes (middle line)

(also called Swedish-Norwegian Runes even though the Danish used it).

The bottom line in the diagram below are the runes sounds.

But let's get something cleared up here, Ivar Hafskjold adaptations of 19th century German Occultist Guido List Armanen stödhurs (rune-stances) 'Futharkh' extensions into the so called rune gymnastics/rune yoga stances remains to this day discredited by mainstream scholarship and considered to be an entirely modern invented magical system of Edred Thorsson's **internalizing the runes*. I would like to point out that Stádhagald, sometimes referred to as rune yoga is not runelore but rather a fanciful myth of 1930s German Occultist Friedrich Bernhard Marby, Siegfried Adolf Kummer and Karl Spießberger without any historical basis relying heavily on the racially biased works of Guido List utilizing his invented non historical Armanen fuþorc. F. B. Marby called this technology of internalizing the runes "runen gymnastik" (rune gymnastics). Both Kummer and Gorsleben began referring to this technology as "runenyoga" ("rune yoga"), although Kummer is credited with having coined the term.

It was Kummer who combined the practices of Marby with the theories of Guido von List. Then during the 1950s Frater Eratus (Karl Spiesberger) of the Fraternitas Saturni began to be known for his work with rune yoga. Frater Eratus adapted the runes to ceremonial magic (sorcery), experimenting with group rune positions, practices of sex magic, etc. These stádhagald (rune stances) and rune chants have remained with many rune practitioners today. Later, Hafskjold added stick and staff; now he has 'levels' (aka: belts). He has written a few articles claiming that Egill Skallagrímsson practiced Stav, and that he wore the coloured headband that denotes a particular level – as found in Hafskjold's practice. Controversy has followed him since the beginning of his claims, mostly in the areas of weapons protocol and alleged history – which he claims is a 1500 year old practice.

Likewise, Hafskjold is ever changing the practice, adding new features that he claims to be 'recently discovered'. One such example is bushcrafting also known as survival skills. Simply put: the Stav postures are ineffectual as a martial system, the rune postures are certainly not 1500 years old, and no Western fighting style has been passed through family lines as has been done in Asia. Hafskjold it seems ran afoul of general heathenry when he claimed that its modern interpretation and practice was wrong and that Stav remains the only and true Northern European folkway. Stav's variation of seiðr practices seems to involve the use of the volur staff, Harner style shamanism as well as trance possession disciplines similar to "platform magic" already being used extensively throughout Asatru reconstructs but also involves herbalism, massage therapy and working with nature.

Further reading:

Santeria: The Beliefs and Rituals of a Growing Religion in America by Miguel A. De La Torre

The Fraternitas Saturni Or Brotherhood Of Saturn: An Introduction To Its History, Philosophy And Rituals by Stephen E Flowers

Völva Stav Manual by Kari C. Tauring

Hrafnar: Twenty years of reinventing Heathenry: <http://www.hrafnar.org/about-us/>

Jan De Vries' *Altergermanische Religionsgeschichte*, and the examples cited there, and C. Tolley "A Comparative Study of some Germanic and Finnish Myths" (D. Phil Thesis, Oxford, 1993 p. 366-485).

In Conclusion

The appeal and interest in the Northern European magical practice known as *seiðr* today seems to be directed mainly at the eclectic approach with very poorly researched books and articles purporting to be *seiðr* when in fact it is nothing more than another adapted version of the very modern reconstructions known as core shamanism with a Norse veneer. As a guide if someone suggests that you paint runes and Sami like magic symbols on a bohran drum and afterwards lead you into a meditational path working, I would strongly suggest that this is not historical *seiðr*. Likewise quick solutions to life's problems via instant magic cook book recipes or online pseudo *seiðr* poorly reconstructed practices based on the vernacular of modern English. There remains no validity or reliability in any of the New Age fabricated philosophies let alone authenticity of historical based praxis despite the fact that so much literature and secondary sources exists perhaps still not yet translated from Icelandic on the Old Norse Religion. Most moderns who choose to call themselves **seiðr* workers have not steeped themselves into the culture, mind-set, language or true knowledge of the elder ways but instead choose only a veneer of heathenry mixing at will non related traditions from other cultures shouting out loud from their fragile soapboxes, "It works for me!" Until this intellectual laziness New Age trend changes, very little progress will be made and reclaiming our historical praxis will be left to the very few dedicated researches and historical Reconstructionist. For every one of us who is working on reclaiming this praxis based on the historical, there are at least 30 boot-strapers who are tainting it with their sci-fi / personal New Age fantasy / role-playing.

“The necessary first step in rediscovering the nature of heathen thought in Scandinavia is to discover how much has been caught up and preserved in the literature we possess, and to assess carefully the extent of the wealth at our disposal before we trace out its origins”. HRE Davidson *Road to Hel*

Glossary of terms

17) *Orvar-Odds saga* or "Arrow-Odd" also known as "Arrow's Point" is a legendary hero about whom an anonymous Icelander wrote a *fornaldarsaga* in the latter part of the 13th century. *Örvar-Odds saga*, the Saga of Örvar-Odd, became very popular and contains old legends and songs.

18) Black *seiðr* was the term Dag Strömbäck gave to the magical arts he researched to cover the aspects of the craft that involved its more aggressive forms such as revenge magic, mind bending and war-craft killing arts. Strömbäck's own daughter Gertrud Gidlund, 2000:325 commented of *seiðr*: perhaps the most inaccessible magical phenomenon in West Nordic history, namely *seiðr*.

19) *Gisla Saga Súrssonar* < Saga of the Icelanders > tells the story of Gisli, a tragic hero who must kill one of his brothers-in-law to avenge another brother-in-law. Gisli is outlawed and forced to stay on the run for thirteen years before he is finally hunted down and killed.

20) *Landnámabók* < Book of settlements > is a medieval Icelandic written work which describes in considerable detail the settlement (*landnám*) of Iceland by the Norse

during the 9th and 10th centuries AD. The book is divided into five parts and over 100 chapters. The first part tells of how the island was found. The later parts count settlers quarter by quarter beginning with west and ending with south. It traces important events and family history into the 12th century. More than 3,000 people and 1,400 settlements are described.

21) Adam of Bremen (Adamus Bremensis) was a German medieval chronicler. He lived and worked in the second half of the eleventh century. He is most famous for his chronicle *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum* (Deeds of Bishops of the Hamburg Church).

22) *Sækja Sefi* was a little known Norse *völva* healing magical art using carefully selected hot and cold stones with specialised runic incantations on the body to make a person whole again.

23) *Sturlaugs saga starfsama* is a legendary saga from the 14th century about Sturlaugr the Industrious, who was the son of a Norwegian Hersir. After having killed a competing suitor and chased away a second one, he married Ása the Fair, the daughter of a jarl. Her old foster-mother helps Sturlaugr with advice and predictions. The hero has to undertake a dangerous journey to find the horn of an aurochs and enquire about its origins, which is even more dangerous.

24) *Færeyinga Saga*, the Norse saga of Faroemen, is the story of how the Faroes were converted to Christianity and became a part of the Kingdom of Norway. It was written in Iceland shortly after 1200. The author is unknown and the original manuscript is lost to history, but passages of the original manuscript have been copied in other sagas, especially in three manuscripts: *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*, *Flateyjarbók*, and a manuscript registered as AM 62 fol.

25) *Gesta Danorum* "Deeds of the Danes" is a patriotic work of Danish history, by the 12th century author Saxo Grammaticus "Saxo the Literate", literally "the Grammarian" and a literary undertaking of medieval Denmark sourcing the nation's early history. It is also one of the oldest known written documents about the history of Estonia and Latvia.

26) *Laxdæla saga* or *The Saga of the People of Laxárdalr* is one of the Icelanders' sagas written around the 13th century. It tells of people in the *Breiðafjörður* area of Iceland from the late 9th century to the early 11th century. The saga particularly focuses on a love triangle between Guðrún Ósvífrsdóttir, Kjartan Ólafsson and Bolli Þorleiksson. Kjartan and Bolli grow up together as close friends but the love they both have for Guðrún causes enmity between them and, in the end, their deaths.

27) *Seiðr Stafis*: There exist three references in the sagas to the *stafis* wielded by the *völur* and the *spækonna*. The most detailed of these occurs in *Eiríks saga rauða*:
ok hvern hafði staf í hendi ok var á knappri hann var binn með mersingv ok settir steinum ofan um knappinn
And she had a staff in her hand with a knob on the top, adorned with brass set with stones on top

28) Havamol 113 Ursula Dronke Vol III Mythological Poems 2011 translation. In my opinion, the late and eminent Prof Ursula Dronke's work is probably the most accurate translation into modern English of The Poetic Edda originally written in Icelandic today.

29) The Björketorp Runestone (DR 360 U) in Blekinge, Sweden, is part of a grave field which includes menhirs, both solitary and forming stone circles. It is one of the world's tallest runestones measuring 4.2 metres in height, and it forms an imposing sight together with two high uninscribed menhirs.

30) Havamal is a collection of Old Norse poems from the Viking age. The poem, itself a combination of different poems, is largely gnomic, presenting advice for living, proper conduct and wisdom.

31) Terry Gunnell is an English Professor of Folkloristics, University of Iceland and has written several dedicated works on Old Norse Mythology as well as lecturing in the Old Norse Religion at his Icelandic University. <https://hi.academia.edu/TerryGunnell>

32) Hrafnar: is a word in Old Norse meaning "The Ravens", grew out of a rune class of around fifteen people started by Diana L. Paxson in January 1988 refers to a modern day neo-pagan reconstructionist kindred and community who practice an eclectic vodoun form of trance possession spæ workings based loosely around the ideas of platform magic and oracular seiðr taken from accounts of the Þórbjörg "Little Vala" who performs a particular form of seiðr in Greenland around the year 1000 A.D.

33) Raven Kaldera is a pagan priest, intersex transgender activist, parent, astrologer, musician, homesteader, and the author of "Hermaphrodities: The Transgender Spirituality Workbook" (XLibris Press). He is the founder and leader of the Pagan Kingdom of Asphodel, and the Asphodel Pagan Choir. He has been a neo-pagan since the age of 14, when he was converted by a "fam-trad" teen on a date. Since then, he's been through half a dozen traditions, including Gardnerian, Dianic, and granola paganism, Umbanda, Heithnir, and the Peasant Tradition.

Further Reading on Seiðr:

Adalsteinsson, Jon Hnefill. "The Vardhlokkur of Gudridur Thorbjarnardottir." Northern Lights : Following Folklore in North-western Europe. Dublin : University College Dublin P, 2001. (ISBN 1900621630)

Bäckman, Louis. "Types of Shaman: Comparative Perspectives." Studies in Lapp Shamanism. Eds. Louise Bäckman and Åke Hultkrantz. Stockholm Studies in Comparative Religion 16. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1978.

Behringer, Wolfgang. The Shaman of Oberstdorf: Conrad Stoeckhlin and the Phantoms of the Night. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1998.

Blain, Jenny. Nine Worlds of Seid-Magic: Ecstasy and Neo-Shamanism in North European Paganism. London: Routledge, 2002. (ISBN 0415256518)

Bourguignon, Erika, ed. *Religion, Altered States of Consciousness, and Social Change*. Columbus, OH: Ohio UP, 1973.

Boyer, Régis. "On the Composition of *Völuspá*. *Edda: A Collection of Essays*. Eds. Robert J. Glendinning and Haraldur Bessason. *U. of Manitoba Icelandic Studies* 4. Manitoba: U of Manitoba P, 1983. 117-133.

Buchholz, Peter. "Shamanism - the Testimony of Old Icelandic Literary Tradition." *Mediaeval Scandinavia*. 4 (1971): 7-20.

Chaney, William A. "Aethelberht's Code and the King's Number." *The American Journal of Legal History*. 6 (1962): 151-157.

Davidson, H. R. Ellis. "Hostile Magic in the Icelandic Sagas." *The Witch Figure*, Ed. V. Newell. Boston: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1973. 20-41. (ISBN 0710076967) see: tinyurl.com/5oavzo

Dillmann, Francois-Xavier. "Katla and Her Distaff: An Episode of Tri-Functional Magic in the *Eyrbyggja Saga*?" *Homage to Georges Dumézil*. Ed. E. Polomé. *Jour. of Indo-European Studies Monograph* 3. Washington, DC: Jour. of Indo-European Studies, Inst. for the Study of Man, 1982.

Dubois, Thomas. *Nordic Religions in the Viking Age*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1999. [see esp. chapter 6, "The Intercultural Dimensions of the Seidr Ritual", which examines the possible influences of Saami *noaidevuohhta* ("shamanism") on Seid practice]

"Seidr, Sagas, and Saami: Religious Exchange in the Viking Age." *Northern Peoples, Southern States: Maintaining Ethnicities in the Circumpolar World*. Ed. Robert P. Wheelersburg. *Northern studies*. Umeå [Sweden]: CERUM, 1996. 43-66.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Bollingen Ser. 76. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1964.

Ginzburg, Carlo. *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*. New York: Random, 1991.

Harris, Joseph. "Cursing with the Thistle: 'Skírnismál' 31, 6-8 and O-E Metrical Charm 9." *The Poetic Edda : Essays on Old Norse Mythology*. Ed. Paul Acker and Carol Larrington. New York: Routledge, 2002. 79-93.

Haugen, Einar. "The Edda as Ritual: Odinn and His Masks." *Edda: A Collection of Essays*. Eds. Robert J. Glendinning and Haraldur Bessason. *U. of Manitoba Icelandic Studies* 4. Manitoba: U of Manitoba P, 1983. 3-24.

Host, Annette. "Exploring Seidhr: A Practical Study of the Seidhr Ritual." *North Atlantic Studies*. 4.1-2 (2001): 73-79.

Jenny. "Old Norse Magic and Gender." *Scandinavian Studies*. 63.3 (1991): 305-317.

Kelchner, Georgia. *Dreams in Old Norse Literature and Their Affinities in Folklore*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1935.

Kress, Helga. "The Apocalypse of a Culture: Völuspa and the Myth of the Sources/Sorceress in Old Icelandic Culture." *Poetry in the Scandinavian Middle Ages: The Seventh International Saga Conference Under the High Patronage of the President of the Italian Republic, Francesco Cossiga, Spoleto, 4-10 September 1988*. Paroli: Spoleto Presso la Serede del Centro Studi, 1990. 279-302.

Liestøl, Aslak, 1963: *Runer frå Bryggen*. I: *Viking*. 27 (1963): 5–53

Masters, Robert. *The Psychophysical Method Exercises*. Pomona, NY: Kontrakundabuffer, 1983. (6 vols.)

-*The Way to Awaken : Exercises to Enliven Body, Self, and Soul*. Wheaton, Ill. : Theosophical, 1997.

Masters, Robert, and Jean Houston. *Mind Games: The Guide to Inner Space*. Wheaton, IL: Quest, 1998.

Monroe, Robert A. *Journeys Out of Body*. Mansfield, OH: Main Street, 1973.

Morris, Katherine. *Sorceress or Witch? The Image of Gender in Medieval Iceland and Northern Europe*. Lanham, MD: UP of Amer., 1991.

Motz, Lotte. "Old Icelandic völvur: A New Derivation." *Indogermanische Forschungen* 85 (1980): 196-206

Moyne, Earnest J. *Raising the Wind: The Legend of Lapland and Finland Wizards in Literature*. Newark: Prentice Hall, 1981.

Norlander-Unsgaard, Siv. "On Gesture and Posture, Movements, and Motion in the Saami Bear Ceremonialism." *Arv* 41 (1985): 189-99.

Palsson, Gisli. "The Name of the Witch: Sagas, Sorcery, and Social Context." *Social Approaches to Viking Studies*. Ed. Ross Samson. Glasgow: Cruithne, 1991. 157-168.

Pentikainen, Juha. *Shamanism and Culture*. Helsinki: Etnika, 1997.

Quinn, Judy. "Dialogue with a völvur: Völuspá, Baldrs draumar and Hyndluljóð." *The Poetic Edda : Essays on Old Norse Mythology*. Ed. Paul Acker and Carol Larrington. New York: Routledge, 2002. 245-274.

Raudvere, Catharina. "Trólldómr in Early Medieval Scandinavia." *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Middle Ages*. *Athlone Hist. of Witchcraft and Magic in Europe*. London: Athlone, 2001. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2002. (ISBN 0812236165;

0812217861 pbk) [see esp. her second chapter, which deals with seiðr; see review in Runa 12]

Schach, Paul. "Some Thoughts on Völuspá." *Edda: A Collection of Essays*. Eds. Robert J. Glendinning and Haraldur Bessason. U. of Manitoba Icelandic Studies 4. Manitoba: U of Manitoba P, 1983. 86-116.

Simpson, Jacqueline. "Olaf Tryggvason Versus the Powers of Darkness." *The Witch Figure*. Ed. V. Newell. Boston: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1973. 165-187. (ISBN 0710076967)

Sørensen, Preben Meulengracht. *The Unmanly Man: Concepts of Sexual Defamation in Early Northern Society*. Trans. Joan Turville-Petre. Viking Collection 1. Odense: Odense UP, 1983.