

The ‘Home of their Shapes’ : Old Norse Mythology and the Archaeology of Shamanism

Neil Price

University of Uppsala

For over a century comparative theologians and philologists have debated the possible presence of shamanic elements in Scandinavian pre-Christian religion, concentrating on the cult of Óðinn. Archaeologists have come relatively late to this discussion, and have encountered many problems caused by an often superficial grasp of the sources and an inadequate grounding in wider shamanic research; certain categories of material (such as the gold bracteates) have also been focused upon at the expense of others – including the necessary study of *all* the Viking Ages peoples of Scandinavia, both Germanic and Sámi – and will focus on the implications that a shamanic interpretation has for our understanding of Old Norse society and its world-view.