



Master's Thesis Projects

## The Retrospective Methods Network

# RMN

### Newsletter

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### Artemis, Diana, and Skaði: A Comparative Study

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The Norse goddess Skaði is somewhat of a Nordic enigma in that she seems to be much more complex than what we can make from mentions of her in the myths, which are scarce and yet surprisingly detailed. The question of her role within Norse mythology is still largely unanswered, and while her complexity has captured the attention of many of the finest minds in the field, no study has yet succeeded in individuating her role in the late pagan period. As such, this thesis seeks to insert itself into the discussion by attempting a different course of research in the investigation of the Norse goddess.

Specifically, this project attempts a reconstruction of the goddess' role by placing her into a wider European context, using Artemis and Diana as terms of comparison, as they seem to share some superficial similarities, albeit only concerning their connection with animals, hunting and landscape. Drawing from a series of literary sources from the Germanic and Classic tradition, together with William Paden's

approach to comparativism (1996) and Jens Peter Schjødt's concept of *semantic center* (2013), a comparative analysis is carried out using Artemis and Diana as tools for (re)constructing a more detailed idea of Skaði's late pagan role through the individuation of similarities and differences in their relationship with wild nature and wildlife. It is concluded that, while Skaði bears a significant connection to darkness, skiing and winter, her core is to be found within the frames of dry-land wildlife; however, the question of her semantic center, and thus her distinctive role in the late pagan period, remains open.

#### **Works Cited**

- Paden, William E. 1996. "Elements of a New Comparativism". *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 8(1): 5–15.
- Schjødt, Jens Peter. 2013. "The Notions of Model, Discourse and Semantic Center as Tools for the (Re)Construction of Old Norse Religion". *RMN Newsletter* 6: 6–15.