

My relationship with other cultures has been stimulated since early childhood. When I learnt to read at the age of five, my first two favourite books were about world history and Greek mythology. What I particularly enjoyed was seeing how belief systems and the real world influence each other: how the gods of the Greco-Roman pantheon were extremely vengeful, yet valued art, philosophy and regalities like no other; whereas on the far north we can find gods closer to humans in behaviour, and always ready for battle, even if only at a game of backgammon. Whether it be ancient or contemporary, the way people live their lives in various places of the world still fascinates me – sometimes it fills me with awe, at others, horror, but always with a sense of respect.

In advancing this passion of mine by travelling and reading, I have developed a particular interest in three specific cultures: Old Norse, mediaeval Celtic and French. My sources of information have been mostly books and academic papers: the Eddas (both the Poetic and Snorri's rendition), Volsunga saga, Táin Bó Cúailnge, and 19th century French literature gave a glimpse into how money and capitalist values replaced honour in people's thinking, their beliefs ranging from pagan to Catholic and to an extent, their everyday lives, either attuned to the cycles of Nature, or almost completely nocturnal in the high society of Paris. These inspired me to do further research. Opportunity presented itself with "The Medieval Icelandic Sagas", an online course offered by the University of Iceland, where I was introduced to additional reading material, which helped me understand the role of women in early Scandinavian society, another revered topic of mine. The two most thought-provoking were the so-called 'one-sex model' mentioned by Carol J. Clover in her article *Regardless of Sex: Men, Women, and Power in Early Northern Europe* and the feminine archetypes presented by Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir in *Women in Old Norse Literature: Bodies, Words and Power*, which opened my eyes to new ways of understanding how some women could be presented as equals of men in the sagas, or why they could rise to the highest military ranks (of which we now have archaeological evidence). However, my favourite area of study is one which ties the topic of beliefs and women, and all three cultures together: the perception of magic and witchcraft throughout the centuries.

In my opinion, foreign languages, research skills, and the processing and sharing of information are four of the most important competences one can acquire during their school years. Therefore, I instantly gravitated towards our school's Model UN club in year 9. That year we attended the Budapest International MUN conference, which was a wonderful opportunity to put these skills

into practice. The next year, I ended 19th at the National Olympiad (OKTV) in English Language as the youngest competitor. Last year I finished 4th, 25th and 6th at the National Olympiads in English, French and Literature, respectively. Aside from speaking these two languages at a high level, I self-study Modern Irish and Latin. My admiration of folklore combined with a love for the stage led me to my favourite pastime: dance. I have been taught a great many styles, but Irish and Hungarian folk dance are what I excel in. A few years ago I started helping my teacher with the younger teams, making choreographies for me and others as well. We have finished on the podium many times, and hold the title of National, European, and World champions.

The lack of sources due to the local nature of these subjects renders the study of Viking and Celtic cultures difficult and most of the related material is accessible only in the British Isles, the historical connecting point for these peoples. Therefore, studying in the UK would be a wonderful opportunity for me to explore these areas, challenge myself further and acquire knowledge and skills that are unique to the field.