

THE POETIC EDDA

Translated With an Introduction and Explanatory Notes

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CONTENTS

General Introduction	Vii
The Prophecy of the Seeress	1
The Sayings of Hór	17
The Lay of Vafthrúthnir	48
The Lay of Grimnir	61
The Lay of Skirnir	75
The Lay of Hárbarth	85
The Lay of Hymir	97
The Flyting of Loki	105
The Lay of Thrym	121
The Lay of Alvís	127
Baldr's Dreams	136
The Lay of Rig	140
The Lay of Hyndla	150
The Short 'Seeress' Prophecy'	159
The Lay of Svipdag	
The Spell of Gróa	
1110 2203 01 2 1012 1 1012	
The Lay of Grotti	
The Lay of Volund	
The Helgi Lays	
The Lay of Helgi Hiorvarthsson	
The First Lay of Helgi the Hunding-Slayer	211
The Second Lay of Helgi the Hunding-Slayer	223
Sinfiotli's Death	238
The Prophecy of Gripir	240
The Lay of Regin	252
The Lay of Fáfnir	261
The Lay of Sigrdrifa	273
The Great Lacuna	283
Fragment of a Sigurth Lay	285
The First Lay of Guthrún	290

For a note on pronunciation see p. 386.

The Short Lay of Sigurth	295
Brynhild's Ride to Hel	307
The Fall of the Niflungs	311
The Second (or Old) Lay of Guthrún	312
The Third Lay of Guthrún	321
The Plaint of Oddrún	324
The Lay of Atli	331
The Greenlandish Lay of Atli	343
Guthrún's Lament	369
The Lay of Hamthir	375
The Catalogue of Dwarfs	383
Abbreviations	385
Index	387

INTRODUCTION

What the Vedas are for India, and the Homeric poems for the Greeck world, that the Edda signifies for the Teutonic race: it is a repository, in poetic form, of the mythology and much of their heroic lore, bodying forth both the ethical views and the cultural life of the North during late Heathen times.

Due to their geographical position, it was the fate of the Scandinavian tribes to succumb later than their Southern and Western brethren to the revolutionary influence of the new world religion. Christianity. Before its establishment, they were able to bring to a highly characteristic fruition a civilization stimulated occasionally, during the centuries preceding, but not overborne, by impulses from the more Romanized countries of Europe. In the formative arts, little that is notable was accomplished, and still less has come down to us, owing to the prevailing use of wood for structural purposes and ornamentation; though a definite style had been evolved in wood-carving, ship-building, and bronze work. But the surging life of the Viking Age restless, intrepid, masculine as few have been in the world's history—found magnificent expression in \mathbf{a} literature which may take its place honorably beside other world literatures.

For the fixation of these treasures in written form we are, to be sure, indebted to Christianity: it was the missionary who brought with him the art of writing on parchment with connected letters. The Runic alphabet was unsuited for that task.

But just as in the Merovingian kingdom, in Germany, and in England, fire and sword no doubt wrought more conversions in the North, too, than peaceful, fruitful missionary activity. Little would have been heard of sagas,

and Eddic Lays, and Skaldic poetry, had it not been for the fortunate existence of the political refuge of remote Iceland.

by Norwegian nobles and yeomen who fled their native land when King Harold Fairhair sought to impose on them his sovereignty and levy tribute, this colony long preserved and fostered the cultural traditions which connected it with the Scandinavian soil. Indeed, for several centuries it remained an oligarchy of families intensely proud of their ancestry and jealous of their cultural heritage. Even when Christianity was finally introduced, and adopted as the state religion by legislative decision (1000 A. D.), there was no sudden break, as was more generally the case elsewhere, partly because of the absence of religious fanaticism, partly because of the isolation of the country which rendered impracticable for a long time any stricter enforcement of Church discipline in matters of faith and of living.

The art of writing which came in with the new religion was enthusiastically cultivated for the committing to parchment of the lays, the laws, the lore of the olden times, especially of the heroic and romantic past immediately preceding and following the settlement of the island.

Even though Christianity got to be firmly established, by and by, wealthy freeholders and clerics of leisure devoted themselves to accumulating and combining into 'sagas', the local traditions which had been current orally, and to collecting the lays which were still remembered—indeed, they would compose new ones in imitation of them. Gradually, huge codices thus came into being which were reckoned among the most cherished possessions of a family. Already Saxo Grammaticus (about 1200) speaks in praise of the unflagging zeal of the Icelanders in this matter.

The greatest name in this early Icelandic Renaissance (as is has been called) is that of Snorri Sturlason (1178-1241), the powerful chieftain and great scholar, to whom we owe the *Heimskringla* or 'History of the Norwegian

Kings', and the Snorra Edda—about which later; but he stands by no means alone. And thanks also to the fact that the language had undergone hardly a change during the Middle Ages, this antiquarian activity was continued uninterruptedly down into the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century, when it was met and reinforced by the Renaissance with its romantic interest in the Past.

In the mean time the erstwhile independent island had passed into the sovereignty of Norway and, with that country, into that of Denmark, then at the zenith of its power. In the search for the origins of Danish greatness it was soon understood that a knowledge of the earlier history of Scandinavia depended altogether on the information contained in the Icelandic manuscripts. In Saxo's preface to his Historia Danica, edited by the Danish humanist Christiern Pedersen in the beginning of the Sixteenth Century, it was stated in so many words that the substance of his work is based on Icelandic sources, at least for the earliest times. To make them more accessible, toward the end of the same century the learned Norwegian, Peder Clausson, translated the Heimskringla which, with the kings of Norway in the foreground, tells of Scandinavian history from the earliest times down to the end of the Twelfth Century.

Since it was well known that many valuable manuscripts still existed in Iceland, collectors hastened to gather them in although the Icelandic freeholders jealously "brooded over them like the dragon on his gold," as one contemporary remarked. As extreme good fortune would have it, the Danish kings then ruling, especially Frederic III, were liberal and intelligent monarchs who did much to further literature and science. The latter king expressly enjoined his bishop in Iceland, Bryniólfr¹a Sveinsson, a noted antiquarian, to collect for the Royal Library, then founded, all

¹An abridged translation had been made even earlier by the Norwegian, Mattis Störssön (ca. 1560).

¹aFor value of diacritic marks, pronunciation, abbreviations, etc., cf.

manuscripts he could lay hold of. As a result, this collection now houses the greatest manuscript treasures of Northern antiquity. And the foundations of other great manuscript collections, such as that of the Royal Library of Sweden and the libraries of the Universities of Copenhagen and Uppsala, were laid at about the same time.

This collecting zeal of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries may almost be called providential. It preserved from destruction the treasures which the Age of Enlightenment and Utilitarianism looked down upon as relics of barbarian antecedents best forgotten; until Romanticism again invested the dim past of Germanic antiquity with a new glamor.

It was at the height of this generous interest in the past when a learned Icelander, Arngrím Jónsson, sent the manuscript (now called Codex Wormianus) of the Snorra Edda to his Danish friend Ole Worm. Knowledge of this famous work of Snorri's had, it seemed, virtually disappeared in Iceland. Its author was at first supposed to be that father of Icelandic historiography, Sæmund Sigfússon (1056-1133), of whose learning the most exaggerated notions were then current. A closer study of sources gradually undermined this view in favor of Snorri; and his authorship became a certainty with the finding of the Codex Upsaliensis of the Snorra Edda, which is prefaced by the remark that it was compiled by Snorri.

To all intents and purposes this 'Edda' of Snorri is a 'textbook'—one of the most original and entertaining ever written. In it is set forth in dialogue form the substance and technique (as we should say) of skaldship, brought conveniently together for the benefit of those aspiring to the practice of that art. The first part, called Gylfaginning or 'the Duping of Gylfi', furnishes a survey of Northern mythology and cosmogony; the second, called Skáldskaparm l or 'the Language of Skaldship', deals with the subject of 'kennings',' whose origin is explained by

²Cf. p. xxi.

citations from older Skaldic poems and other lore; the third, called *Háttatal* or 'the Enumeration of *hættir* (metres)', contains Snorri's encomiastic poem in 102 stanzas on King Hákon and Duke Skúli, exemplifying as many metres employed in skaldship.

Among the scholars eagerly scanning this precious find the conviction soon made itself felt that the material in it was not original with Snorri: they saw that much of the first two books was on the face of it a synopsis from older poetic sources which, in their turn, were by them ascribed to Sæmundr; hence when that lucky manuscript hunter. Bishop Bryniólfr, discovered (about 1643) the unique and priceless codex containing what we now call the 'Poetic Edda' it was but natural that he should conclude this to be the 'Edda of Sæmund' whose existence had already been inferred theoretically. And this conclusion was unhesitatingly subscribed to by all, down to modern times. fact is though that the connection of Sæmundr with the Poetic Edda—if not purely arbitrary—has no documentary evidence whatever. Moreover, it is inherently improbable. But, since the great bulk of poems which we have come to regard as 'Eddic' is handed down precisely in this manuscript, the name of 'Edda', which properly belongs to Snorri's work, has been retained for want of another collective title.

We know with a fair degree of certainty that Snorri himself named his handbook of poetics 'Edda'; but as to the meaning of this word we are dependent on conjecture.

Quite early, the name was taken to be identical with that of Edda, progenitress of the race of thralls, according to the 'Lay of Ríg', whose meaning is 'great-grandmother'. This was adopted by the great Jakob Grimm, one of the first to undertake a scientific edition of the collection. In the taste of Romanticism he poetically interpreted the title as the ancestral mother of mankind sitting in the circle of her children and children's children, instructing them in the lore and learning of the hoary past.—However, as it

happens, neither did Snorri in all likelihood know the 'Lay of Ríg'; nor does this fanciful interpretation agree at all with the prosy manner in which the Icelanders were accustomed to name their manuscripts, or—for that matter—with the purpose and nature of Snorri's work. It is altogether untenable.

Another explanation was propounded early in the Eighteenth Century by the Icelandic scholar, Arni Magnússon, and has been accepted by many. According to him, Edda means 'poetics'—a title which (from a modern point of view) would seem to be eminently fitting. Later scholars who have provided a more solid philological underpinning for this theory than Arni was able to, also point out that the simplex δpr which signifies 'reason, soul,' and hence, 'soulful utterance, poem', from which Edda may be derived, excellently agrees with the related Latin $v\bar{a}tes$ and the Old Irish faith 'seer, poet'. Nevertheless, this explanation does not quite satisfy, for the word Edda in the meaning 'poetics' is nowhere attested.

Simplest, and agreeing best with the matter-of-fact Icelandic style of naming their writings, is the proposal of the Icelandic-English scholar, Eiríkr Magnússon. He reminds us that Edda may mean 'the Book of Oddi'. This was the name of the renowned and historic parsonage in West Iceland which under that remarkable mind, Sæmundr Sigfússon. had become a center of learning whither flocked gifted youths eager for historical or clerical instruction. After his death, in 1133, the estate continued to prosper, and kept up its tradition for learning, under his two sons, and especially under his grandson, the wise and influential chieftain. Jón Loptsson. It was he who fostered and tutored the three-year-old Snorri and under whose roof he lived until his nineteenth year. What is more likely than that Oddi with its traditions and associations played a profound rôle in Snorri's entire development? To be sure, whether Snorri wrote his work there in later years, whether he gave it the title in grateful recognition of the inspiration there received, or whether he wished thus to indicate an indebtedness to manuscript collections of poems owned in Oddi—these are mere surmises.

Magnússon, indeed, believed that Snorri, while in Oddi, had used a manuscript containing about all the lays comprised in the codex found by Bishop Bryniólfr, and from them made the synopses found in the Gylfaginning. In this he was mistaken however; for it seems well-established now that Snorri could have had before him only VoluspéVafbrúbnismél, and Grímnismél.

Subsequent finds added a very few lays of Eddic quality to those preserved in Bryniólf's codex which thus remains by all means our chief source for them. This famous manuscript, now known as Codex Regius No. 2365 of the Royal Library of Denmark, is a small volume consisting of 45 sheets4 closely covered with writing. No distinction is made between prose and poetry, except that the beginning of every lay is marked off by a large colored initial, and every stanza by a smaller one. The whole is in one firm. legible hand which paleologists agree in assigning to an Icelander of the last half of the Thirteenth Century. must have copied it from one or more manuscripts before him, for the nature of a number of mistakes shows that he did not write from memory or from dictation. As to the date when the lays were first collected, various considerations make it probable that this occurred not earlier than the middle of the Thirteenth Century.

Next in importance comes the manuscript Fragment 748 of the Arnamagnæan Collection of the Copenhagen University Library, dating from the beginning of the Fourteenth Century. Among other matters it contains, in a slightly different form, and in a divergent order, part of the 'Lay of Hárbarth', 'Baldr's Dreams' (for which it is the sole source), part of the 'Lay of Skírnir', the 'Lay of

³Bdr., Ríg., Hynd., Svip., Grot.

^{*}Concerning the six sheets missing cf. what is said on the Great Lacuna, p. 283.

Grímnir', the 'Lay of Hymir', and part of the 'Lay of Volund'. For all the differences, scholars are unanimous in holding that it derives, ultimately, from the same source as *Regius*.

The large Manuscript Codex No. 544 of the Arnamagnean Collection, called Hauksbook, from the fact that most of it was written by the Icelandic judge, Haukr Erlendsson, about the beginning of the Fourteenth Century, is important for Eddic study in that it supplies us with another redaction of the 'Prophecy of the Seeress'.

For the 'Lay of Rig' we are entirely dependent on the *Codex Wormianus* of the *Snorra Edda* (above referred to) written in the second half of the Fourteenth Century, where it is found on the last page.

The huge Codex No. 1005 folio of the Royal Library, known as the Flateyarbook because Bryniólfr Sveinsson obtained it from a farmer on the small island of Flatey, is the source for the 'Lay of Hyndla'.

The 'Lay of Grotti' occurs only in the Codex Regius Manuscript No. 2367 of the Snorra Edda, dating from the beginning of the Fourteenth Century, where the poem is cited in illustration of a kenning based on the Grotti myth.

There exist also a considerable number of *Paper Manuscripts*; but aside from the fact that some of them contain, in addition, the undoubtedly genuine 'Lay of Svipdag' they are of no importance as they all date from the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries and are essentially derived from the same source as Regius, if not from that collection itself. But, to be sure, they bear eloquent testimony to the continued interest of Icelanders in these poems.

The 'Eddic' lays which are found in these manuscripts, utterly diverse though they be in many respects, still have three important characteristics in common which mark them off from the great body of Skaldic poetry: their matter is the mythology, the ethical conceptions, and the heroic lore of the Ancient North; they are all composed in

a comparatively simple style, and in the simplest measures; and, like the later folksongs and ballads, they are anonymous and 'objective'. This unity in apparent diversity was no doubt felt by the unknown collector who gathered together all the lays and poetical fragments which lived in his memory or were already committed to writing.

A well thought-out plan is evident in the ordering of the whole. In the first place, the mythic and didactic lays are held apart from the heroic, and those of each group disposed in a sensible order.

The opening chord is struck by the majestic 'Prophecy of the Seeress', as the most complete bodying forth of the Old Norse conceptions of the world, its origin and its future. There follow three poems, in the main didactic, dealing chiefly with the wisdom of the supreme god, Othin (The Lays of Hór, of Vafthrúthnir, of Grímnir); then one about the ancient fertility god, Frey (the 'Lay of Skírnir'); five in which Thór plays the predominant, or at least a prominent, part (The Lays of Hárbarth, of Hymir, of Loki, of Thrym, of Alvís). The poems following ('Baldr's Dreams', the Lays of Ríg, of Hyndla, of Svipdag, of Grotti) are, it will be remembered, not contained in Regius.

The Heroic Lays are found arranged in chronological order, as far as feasible, and joined by Prose Links so as to form an interconnected cycle. The procedure is especially clear in the case of the Niflung Cycle. Not only has the Collector been at pains to join the frequently parallel lays, but he tries hard to reconcile contradictory statements. Connection with the Helgi Cycle is effected by making Helgi Hundingsbani a son of the Volsung, Sigmund. The tragic figure of Queen Guthrún then links the Niflung Cycle with the Ermanarich lays.

There has been a great deal of discussion as to the authenticity and age of the Prose of the collection, but it is clear now that (excepting the piece about 'Sinfiotli's Death'

⁵Possibly by a mistake of the copyist, the 'Lay of Volund' precedes the 'Lay of Alvís'.

which no doubt is a prose rendering of a lay now lost) the Prose Links for the most part add nothing of independent value—nothing, indeed, which could not have been inferred from the poems themselves. We shall hardly err in attributing these links to the interested, but not very gifted, compiler of the collection.

The case is somewhat different, perhaps, with the narrative which binds together the fragments of the 'Lay of Helgi Hiorvarthsson' and those of the 'Second Lay of Helgi', and the Prose Links of the Sigurth Cycle from the 'Lay of Regin' to 'Brynhild's Ride to Hel'. Especially the latter group in manner notably resembles the genre of the Fornaldarsaga—prose with interspersed stanzas, a form exceedingly common in Old Norse literature and which, for aught we know, may have been the original form in this instance. Still, even here the suspicion lurks that the Prose is but the apology for stanzas, or whole lays, imperfectly remembered: there is such discrepancy between the clear and noble stanzas and the frequently muddled and inept prose as to preclude, it would seem, the thought of their being by the same author.

Even greater diversity of opinion obtains concerning the age and home of the lays themselves. As was stated above, in sharp contradiction to Skaldic poetry, we know nothing about the author of any Eddic poem. Nay, in none but a very few, as e.g. the 'Lay of Grípir', or the 'Third Lay of Guthrún', can one discern so much as the literary individuality of the authors. In consonance with Medieval views, they were probably felt to be merely continuators, or elaborators, of a legendary tradition. Thus, to illustrate by a very clear case: A Gothic lay about the death of Hamthir and Sorli is known to have existed already in the Sixth Century. So the person who indited or, perhaps, trans-

⁶As in *H.Hv.* and *Sigrdr.*—Such remarks as 'that was the belief in olden times', *H.H.II* end, and similarly in *Fáfn.* after 1; and the tenor of the Concluding Prose of *Brot*, certainly do not point to contemporaneity of composition!

lated, or possibly, added to, such a song could not well lay claim to be an 'inventor' and hence, worthy of being remembered. Skaldic art, on the other hand, may also deal with myth and legendary lore; but, note well, only to drive home a personal point, and subjectively. Hence, there the author is faithfully recorded if we owe him but a single stanza: just as was the troubadour and the minnesinger.

Thus it is that we are entirely dependent on internal evidence for the determination of the age and the origin of the Eddic poems, individually and collectively. And here, experience has taught that we must sharply differentiate between the subject matter of the poems and the form in which they have been handed down to us. Failure to do so was responsible for fantastic theories—such as the uncritical notions of the Renaissance, that they harked back to the Old Germanic songs in praise of the gods Tuisco and Mannus, or else to the barditus, as Tacitus calls the terrifying war-songs of the ancient Teutons, and the speculations of the Age of Romanticism which claimed the Eddic poems as the earliest emanations of the Spirit of the Germanic North, if not of all German tribes, and would date them variously from the Fifth to the Eighth Century.

It was not until the latter third of the Nineteenth Century, when the necessary advances in linguistic knowledge and philological method had been made, that it was established beyond contradiction that the Eddic poems have West Norse speech forms; that is, are composed in the language that was spoken only during the Viking Age and after in Norway, Iceland, and the other Norwegian colonies in the Atlantic, and hence, in their present form, could have originated only there. In the second place, they can under no circumstance be older than about 700 A. D.—most of them are much later—because it has been shown experimentally that the introduction of Older (Runic) forms of Old Norse would largely destroy the metric structure. This date a quo is admirably corroborated by comparison with the language of the oldest Skaldic poems, whose age is definitely known.

Then, more general considerations make it plausible that even the oldest of the lays could hardly have originated before the Ninth Century. As to the Heroic lays, precisely those which also otherwise appear to be the oldest, breathe the enterprising, warlike spirit of the Viking Age with its stern fatalism; while the later ones as unmistakeably betray the softening which one would expect from the Christian influences increasingly permeating that Age. And the Mythical lays, by and large, speak of a period when belief in the old gods was disintegrating thanks to contact with the same influences. In particular, the 'Seeress' Prophecy' reads like the troubled vision of one rooted in the ancient traditions who is sorrowfully contemplating the demoralization of his times (which we know a change of faith always entails) and who doubtfully looks to a better future.

There is also the testimony of legendary development. To touch on only one phase of the matter: we do not know when the Volsung and Nibelung legends were first carried to Norway; but sparing allusions in the oldest Skaldic verses from the early Ninth Century would point to the Seventh or Eighth Century, thus allowing several generations for the complete assimilation and characteristic Northern transformation of the material. Some lays, indeed, show traits of a legendary development which had not taken place in Germany before the Ninth Century—in other words, presuppose another, later, stratum of importation.

As a whole, the Heroic lays belong to a somewhat later period than the Mythical lays beginning, say, with the Tenth and reaching into the Eleventh or, for some, even the Twelfth Century. To sum up: though there is little unanimity among scholars as to the dating of individual lays, the composition of the corpus of Eddic poetry may safely be said to be, not the product of a single generation, or even a century, but of three or four centuries at the very least.

Intimately connected with the question of the date is that of the home, of Eddic poetry. There is fair agreement about only two poems, viz. the 'Lay of Atli', which is generally allowed to be of Greenlandish origin, and the 'Prophecy of Grípir', which no doubt was composed by an Icelander of the Twelfth Century or later who had the entire collection before him. But concerning the bulk of the lays there exists a strong diversity of opinion.

For one thing, the evidence of language is unavailing, for the Old West Norse of the Edda was spoken with scarcely a dialectal variation throughout the far-flung lands of the North Atlantic litorals and archipelagoes.—Again, all attempts to seek definite and convincing clues in climatic or topographic references, or in the fauna and flora mentioned in the poems have proved vain. Did they originate in the motherland, Norway; or in Iceland; or in the British or North Atlantic islands?

Those who claim the bulk of the Eddic poems for Norway have contended that the related Skaldic poetry, established since of old, flourished there especially throughout the Tenth Century, favored by a period of comparative calm following the organization of the realm by Harold Hairfair: whereas Iceland, from its first settlement down to the beginning of the Eleventh Century was in a condition of constant turmoil which could not have favored the rise of a body of literature like that of the Edda. Undeniably, Norway furnishes the cultural background for the Weltanschauung of nearly all of the poems, both mythologic, gnomic, and heroic. In every respect their milieu is that of a cold, mountainous land by the sea. One lay, the 'Lay of Hyndla', directly refers to a Norwegian princely race; another, the 'Lay of Rig', glorifies the institution of monarchy based on an aristocracy; both poems but poorly agreeing with Icelandic, republican, conditions.

The theory of origin in the British Islands settled by Norwegians—the Orkneys, the Hebrides, Man, and the litoral of Ireland, Scotland and Northern England, is based on the following considerations. These regions furnish precisely the stage where the rude Vikings first came in contact with the cultural conditions of a more advanced kind already deeply infused with Roman and Christian elements. Indeed, Celtic influences are undeniable in the apparel, the architecture, the wood-carving, of Scandinavia. In literature, the type-form of the saga, possibly even Skaldic verse-art, seem to owe their inception to Irish models. A number of both mythical and heroic motifs occuring in the Edda and the sagas are demonstrably Celtic. And some Anglo-Celtic loanwords and idioms in the Edda point in the same direction.

Those who argue Icelandic origin—and they seem to the present writer to have the best of the argument-admit that Anglo-Celtic influences are evident, but insist that this can amply be accounted for by the fact that a very large proportion of Icelandic settlers had come from Norway by way of the North British Islands and litoral where they had sojourned for a shorter or longer time, frequently even wintering, and whence they had brought with them a goodly number of Celtic slaves and freedmen. Again, on their return journeys to the motherland they frequently touched at the North British, and especially Irish, trading towns, interchanging goods and ideas. As to the milieu being that of a cold, mountainous land, this holds of course also for Iceland. There, the general state of unrest attending the first times was by no means unfavorable to the intense cultivation of the Skaldic art—witness such poets as Egil Skallagrímsson, Hallfræth Óttarsson (vandræðaskáld), Sighvat Thórtharson, not to mention scores of others-and hence probably neither to conditions for the inditing of Eddic lays. The first families of Iceland were notably proud of their origin from the princely races of the motherland—whence the aristocratic note of some lays—as indeed the whole people clung to their cultural traditions all the more tenaciously for being separated from it. general, the defenders of Icelandic origin would put the

burden of proof on those who contend that the Eddic lays did not take their final shape, at least, in the land where arose, and where was perpetuated, virtually all of Old Norse literature. This does not preclude a number, particularly of gnomic, stanzas representing the stored wisdom of the race, from having originated in Norway.

One of the distinguishing features of Eddic, as against Skaldic, poetry consists in its comparative simplicity of style and diction. This is true notwithstanding the fact that we have to deal with poems composed by different poets working centuries apart, and differing in subject matter and structure. Essentially, this style is akin to that of the alliterative poetry of the other Old Germanic tribes, especially in the use of 'kennings' and the retarding epic devices of 'variation' and parenthetical exclamations. It is to the rather more extensive employment of these stylistic features that Old Norse poetry owes its peculiar physiognomy which, in Skaldic art, frequently becomes a caricature.

The figure of speech called 'kenning' is a kind of condensed metaphorical expression. It most often contains a real, or implied, comparison; or else defines a conception with reference to something else. Thus, a ship (which may be thought of as galopping over the waves) is called 'sailsteed'; a warrior, 'helm-tree' because, helm-clad, he stands proudly erect like a tree, braving the 'shower-of-arrows' (as the battle is designated for obvious reasons).—Instead of naming a person or object directly, there is a reference to somebody, or something, else. Thór, e.g. is called, simply, 'Sif's husband' or 'Hrungnir's bane', or in allusion to his typical activity, 'Breaker-of-thurs-heads'. Similarly, blood is termed 'dew-of-wounds' or 'dew-of-sorrow'; gold, 'the burthen-of-Grani' (Sigurth's steed which bears away the Niflung hoard); a prince, most often 'breaker-of-rings', 'reddener-of-swords', or similarly, with reference to the

⁷Cf. Tennyson's 'drops of onset';

two qualities most highly admired in rulers—generosity and bravery.

Figures like these are common to the poetic speech of all races and all times. The important difference is that whereas elsewhere they are coined ad hoc, as the situation demands, and struck in the heat of poetical fervor,⁸ in Old Germanic, and particularly Old Norse, poetry they have become stereotype; that is, entirely independent of the situation in hand, and hence are apt to appear to us farfetched and frigid, at first, until by longer acquaintance we arrive at the deeper insight that they are part and parcel of a 'style', like the ever-recurring 'dragon motif' of Scandinavian carvings.

In Skaldic poetry the systematic and unlimited use of kennings marks that style of composition off from anything known elsewhere in world literature. Only two Eddic lays, the 'Lay of Hymir' and the 'First Lay of Helgi Hundingsbani' show a frequency of kennings approaching from afar Skaldic usage. In the 'Lay of Alvís' it is the express didactic purpose to cultivate copiousness of diction by enumerating the 'unknown names' and kennings by which common objects may be designated.

Somewhat less prominently, 'variation' or parallelism, is a stylistic device characteristic of all Old Germanic poetry—as it is, indeed, of the poetry of many nations. Only the more important features will be enumerated here, especially such as come out clearly in a somewhat faithful rendering. There is variation of words, of conceptions, of verses; and refrain.

The repetition of words, or synonymic variation, more particularly found in gnomic poetry, is on the whole not frequent in the Edda. The following stanza will furnish an example:

⁸Or else, at most, used as epitheta ornantia; such as Homer's $\gamma \lambda a \nu \kappa \tilde{\varphi} \pi \iota s$ 'A $\theta \dot{\eta} \nu \eta$ —essentially a kenning, too.

'To his friend a man

should show friendship aye,

and pay back gift for gift; laughter for laughter he learn to give, and eke lesing for lies.'9

More frequent, as also more characteristic, is the repetition of related, or contrasting, conceptions. These are mostly joined by alliteration, and occasionally by rime, so as to form together a half-line. Thus: 'bark nor bast'; 'he gives and grants'; 'shalt drivel and dote'; 'in wine and in wort'; 'whet me or let me'.¹0

Peculiar to Eddic poetry is the repetition, with or without variations, of entire half-lines. One example for many will suffice:

"I issue bore as heirs twain sons, as heirs wain sons to the atheling."

With variation:

"I saw but naught said, I saw and thought."12

Repetition (with variation) of a 'full-line' occurs in the socalled galdralag or 'magic measure' stanza of the $li\delta\bar{\sigma}a$ $h\acute{a}ttr$; e.g.:

"No other drink shalt ever get, wench, at thy will, wench, at my will."

13

Refrain—as e.g. the 'know ye further, or how' of the 'Seeress' Prophecy'—and 'incremental repetition'—especially in the gnomic poetry^{13a}—are occasionally used with telling effect.

⁹HOv. 42.

¹⁰In order: H\(\phi\)v. 50; Hynd. 2; Skirn. 30; Sigrdr. 19; Brot 14.

¹¹Guð. hv. 14.

¹²*H Q v*. 111.

¹³Skírn. 37.

 $^{^{13}}$ aAs e.g. in Vaf. 11f. where the last lines of the question-stanza become the first of the answer-stanza.

Only less characteristic than the unlimited use of kennings is the employment in Skaldic art of parenthetical expressions—mostly containing an accompanying circumstance. In the Edda the device occurs sparingly, and especially in the 'First Lay of Helgi', which also with respect to use of kennings approaches Skaldic art; e.g. (stanza 18):

'But high on horseback Hogni's daughter—was the shield-din lulled—to the lord spoke thus, etc.'

In contrast with Old West Germanic poetry, which is stichic, and quite generally uses run-on lines, Old Norse poetry is strophic, the stanzas as a rule being of four lines each. Each stanza again is most commonly divided into two *visuhelmings* or 'half stanzas', by a syntactic cæsura.

This is the rule; but imperfect stanzas occur too frequently to be explained away in all cases by defective tradition. It is certainly worth while pondering that unexceptional regularity is found, on the one hand, in poems whose question-answer form offered a mnemotechnic help; and on the other, in those that belong to the youngest strata, whereas lays which, for a number of reasons, seem the oldest, as e.g. the 'Lay of Volund,' are quite irregular. The inference seems plausible that stanzaic structure was a later and specifically Scandinavian development, the bulk of Old Norse monuments being younger, both chronologically and developmentally, than the West Germanic monuments.

Like the majority of Old Germanic poetic monuments, the Eddic lays are composed in 'alliterative' verse; in verse, that is, whose essential principles are stress and concomitant alliteration.

The rhythmic unit of alliterative verse is the so-called 'half-line'. By convention, it is represented in metrics as dipodic, with a bar separating the feet. These, as will be seen, may be of very different lengths. In the normal

'half-line' there are four or five syllables, very rarely three, two of which are stressed, the position of stress depending on the natural sentence accent. The rhythmical stress generally requires a long syllable, when it is conventionally represented thus: -'. However, it may also be borne by two short syllables ('resolved stress'), thus: 0'0; for instance: a sal'ar stéina which may be paralleled by 'that et'ins beer'hall; or else by one short syllable immediately following a stressed long syllable, thus: -'|0', (especially in type C), e.g. mun Báldr kóma. In the unstressed syllable, quantity is indifferent, marked thus: x.

The juxtaposition of two stresses, without intervening unstressed syllable, so offensive to the modern ear, is not only permitted but a distinctive feature, in Old Germanic poetry. It gives rise to types C and D (see below), where a strong primary, or secondary, stress may fall on important suffixal or compositional syllables, and stem syllables of the second member of compounds, e.g. es hann váknáði, hétímbrúðu. The following may serve as English examples: 'The sún knéw not', 'a háll stándeth', 'till trústíngly.¹6

Always, two half-lines, each an independent rhythmic unit, are joined together by alliteration to form the 'long-line'. Alliteration, or initial rime, consists in initial consonants 'alliterating', or riming, with the same consonant (but sk, sp st only with themselves), and a vowel alliterating with any other vowel; but, note well, only when occurring at the beginning of stressed syllables. As the verse is addressed to hearers, not to readers, 'eye-rimes' are not permitted. Again, only syntactically stressed syllables may bear the alliteration.

In Old Norse, alliterating initial sounds are called stafir 'staves', the one of the second half-line, $ho fu \delta stafr$ 'main-stave', as governing the whole line. Somewhat greater

¹⁴Vsp. 4; 30.—In order to avoid confusion, the accents marking length in the Old Norse are omitted in the following examples.

¹⁵Ibid. 54.

¹⁶ prym. 1, Vsp. 7, 5, 31; Hym. 4 in the order mentioned.

latitude than in Anglo-Saxon is allowed in Old Norse in the matter of this 'main-stave' falling only on the first stress of the second half-line. In the first half-line, either stress, or both—they are called *stublar* 'props'—may receive the alliteration.

With regard to the rhythmical structure of the half-line, certain fundamental types, five in number, seem to have been adhered to in all Old Germanic poetry—unconsciously, no doubt. These (Sievers) types¹⁷ are as follows:

Type A: $-'X \mid -'X$ example: Geýr nu Gármr mjǫk (='Gárm bays lóudly').

Type B: X -' | X -' example: hann sjáldan sítr (='he séldom síts').

Type C: $X -' \mid \mathcal{L} X$ example: $mun \ Báldr \ kóma$ (='will Báldr cóme then').

Type E: -' \- X | -'

example: ginnheilug $go\ddot{\sigma}$; cf. 'sundered are shields',18

In other words, of the six possible mutations of four elements, but one is not admissible, viz. the one with a purely rising inflection. And this is just what we should expect in the spontaneously developed metre of a language group having strong recessive accent.

¹⁷It cannot, of course, be the purpose here to go into detail as to sub-types, etc.

¹⁸In order: *Vsp.* 50, 18, 54, 47&33, 6&37.

A stanza of eight half-lines all following one or the other of these types is said to be in fornyröislag or 'Old Lore Metre'. This is the measure in which the great majority of Eddic poems are composed.¹⁹

In the closely related málaháttr or 'Speech Metre (?)' essentially the same types occur, expanded however to structures of from five to seven syllables. The effect is one of heavy stateliness. Only one poem, the Greenlandish 'Lay of Atli', shows this measure in its purity, whereas the 'Lay of Atli' and the 'Lay of Hamthir' contain a considerable admixture of 'Old Lore' lines.

The measure called *ljóðaháttr* or 'Song Metre' is a stanzaic form consisting of two symmetrical half-stanzas, each of which again is made up of the usual *fornyrðislag* long-line followed by a so-called 'full-line' without cæsura and, as far as can be made out, definite structure, which alliterates in itself.²⁰ The number of syllables in this full-line may vary from four to eight, and the alliteration may fall on two or three of the stressed syllables. About one-third of the corpus of Eddic poems, mostly of gnomic contents, follow this scheme.²¹

The 'Lay of Harbarth' follows no ascertainable scheme but seems to differ from prose only by a certain rhythm and the general use of alliteration.

In view of the utter difference from any modern scheme of versification, an adequate comprehension of the principles of Old Germanic verse technique is essential for the correct reading and understanding, nay, for entering at all into the spirit, of Old Germanic poetry. It is hoped that the reader will acquaint himself with the facts above

¹⁹Vsp. Hym. þrym., Bdr., Ríg., Hynd., Vol., most of H.Hv., H.H. I and II, Gríp., part of Reg. and of Fáf., Brot, Guð. I-III, Sgkv., Hel., Od., Guð. hv., Grot.

²⁰As to the *galdralag*, cf. p. xxiii.

²¹ (Most of) $H\acute{e}v$., Vaf., Grimn., Skirn., Lok., Alv., (part of) H.Hv., (most of) Reg. and of $F\acute{a}f$., Sigrdr., Svip., and parts of other lays.

set forth before attempting to recite Eddic lays—as, indeed, he should do; for they are meant for the ear, not the eye.

In doing so it should ever be kept in mind that the strongly expiratory nature of Germanic verse demands very strongly stressed, and correspondingly weak or slurred unstressed, syllables. Juxtaposed stresses must by no means be avoided. We must ever be on the alert, guided by the alliteration, to ascertain which words or syllables bear the main stress and are, hence, syntactically predominant. Thus e.g. we must be careful not to read 'who made Mithgarth', but 'who made Mithgarth'.

The translator has endeavored to follow faithfully the rules of Eddic metrics above explained—at least in spirit. Naturally, in an analytic tongue like English many more particles, pronouns, prepositions, must be used than in the highly inflected Old Norse. A liberal use of anacrusis (Auftakt) cannot well be avoided to dispose of them, swelling the number of syllables countenanced by the original. This should not, however, interfere with reading half-lines of the same metre in about the same time. Thus, 'much that is hoarded and hidden' should not occupy more time than the following line 'eke the halls of Dánp'.²²

As the specialist will recognize, Gering's text has been followed (but by no means always); because, for the purpose in hand, a constructive text is called for—one not fatuously sceptic of the results won by a century of devoted study. I can see no harm in adopting the brilliant emendations of great scholars, some of them guided by the poet's insight in solving desperate textual problems, always providing they be shown as such.²³ In fact, this course must

 $^{^{22}}Akv.$ 5.

²³Interpolations are put into brackets [...], emendations etc. into parentheses (...).

be chosen to accomplish an æsthetically satisfying translation of poems which, at best, are strange and difficult for the modern reader, both as to matter and manner. Naturally, not all, or even most, changes could be so indicated. Nor is that called for in a work intended, not as a critical text, but as an interpretation for the student of literature, of folklore and folkways. Still I have thought it wise to give warning whenever the terms of the translation might give rise to misconceptions.

I hope I shall not be criticised for confining myself to the poems generally considered as comprising the Poetic Edda. I am, of course, aware of the existence of other lays fully deserving to be admitted to the corpus—indeed, it is my hope to include these in a future publication; but neither in this respect nor in the ordering of the material was it my intention to rival Genzmer-Heusler's rifacimento.

As to the principles which I have endeavored to follow. I may be permitted to quote from my program 'Concerning a Proposed Translation of the Edda':24 "... while scouting any rigorously puristic ideas, I yet hold emphatically that, to give a fair equivalent, Germanic material must be drawn upon to the utmost extent, and later elements used most sparingly and only whenever indispensable or unavoidable, and even then only after anxiously considering whether consonant with the effect of the whole. stylistic feeling of the translator must here be the court of last instance; ... At the same time I do not mean to be squeamish and avoid a given word just because it is not found in Anglo-Saxon before the battle of Hastings, or because I have preconceived notions about the relative merit of Teutonic and French-Latin elements. Any one who has given the matter thought knows that no amount of linguistic contortions will furnish Germanic equivalents in English for such oft-recurring words as: battle, hero, glory, revenge, defeat, victory, peace, honor, and the like. Still, wherever possible, Germanic words ought to be chosen . . .

²⁴Scandinavian Studies and Notes, V 197f.

because of the tang and flavor still residing in the homelier indigenous speech material . . .

"Another difficulty: the old Germanic poetry, however scant in content, and in however narrow a circle it moves, is phenomenally rich in vocabulary, and shines with a dazzling array of synonyms for one and the same conception. Scherer has shown how this state of affairs was brought about by the very principle of alliteration, and in its turn finally gave rise to the empty verbiage and jingling of Skaldic poetry, where sense is drowned in a flood of heiti and kennings. The Edda shows almost all stages in this development short of the final consummation, from the austere art of the Volundarkviða to the ornate art of the Hymiskviða. It stands to reason that, to approach this wealth even from afar, and to avoid the overhanging danger of monotony, all the resources of the English vocabulary ought to be at one's disposal. I have, therefore unhesitatingly had recourse, whenever necessary, to terms fairly common in English balladry; without, I hope, overloading the page with archaisms.

"The proper rendition of Old Norse proper names presents a knotty problem to the would-be translator. he translate them all, to the best of his knowledge—and that is a difficult task; or some only, and if so which? Or shall he leave all untranslated—much the easiest course. Or shall he try to render only those parts of proper nouns which are of more general significance? E.g., shall he call the dwarf, Alvis or Allwise; Thór, Síthgrani's son or Longbeard's son: the seeress. Hyndla or Houndling: the localities Gnipalund and Hátún, Cliffholt and Hightown? Shall we say Alfheim, Elfham, or Alf-home? Are we to render Skioldungar, Ylfingar by Shieldings and Wolfings? not desitate to say that on the translator's tact and skill in meeting this problem—for dodge it he cannot—will depend in large measure he artistic merit of his work and its modicum of palatableness to the modern reader." For this reason, absolute consistency in this respect was not striven for or even thought desirable.

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THE PROPHECY OF THE SEERESS

Volusp&

The poem referred to in the Prose Edda of Snorri as $Volusp^{Q1a}$ significantly occupies first place in the Codex Regius collection of Eddic songs. It was probably felt to be the most comprehensive and representative of them all, at the same time furnishing a kind of philosophic introduction to Norse cosmogony, and embodying the outlook of thoughtful heathen of the later Viking Age. It makes a similar appeal now: notwithstanding the deplorable condition of the poem as handed down it thrills us as vision after vision of a Norse apocalypse rises before us, of the fates of gods and powers of the eld—the past and future of the world. Norse terseness, at its best here, accomplishes a triumph in condensing a world of meaning into narrowest compass. A certain stern ethical pathos in some passages is consonant to the sombre tone of the whole.

None of the Eddic poems has been a greater theme for controversy; which is not to be wondered at, seeing the condition of the text, with its vague outlines, the hopeless confusion of statement—even beyond the inevitable self-contradictions of any primitive cosmogony—, the puzzling gaps, the abrupt transitions, the obscure allusions—all of which makes elaborate comments indispensable to the understanding. Indeed, there is little agreement among scholars on the fundamental points of the purpose and the structure of the poem.

Othin, it seems, has summoned the seeress from her grave to appear before the assembled gods. To legitimate herself, she tells of first-created things, and

In the beginning how the heavens and earth Rose out of Chaos—

how man was given the breath of life. A golden age of innocence (among the gods) ends with the coming of the Norns (the Fates) and the (ill-understood) slaying of Gullveig, a Pandora-like figure sent to the Æsir by the Vanir, an older race of gods. A war between these powers results disastrously for the Æsir whose battlements are laid low. In their rebuilding, broken oaths embroil the (now united?) gods with the world of giants, representative of brute force and darkness. Baldr, god of light, is slain, and evil enters into the world. Then, with strokes of tremendous dramatic power, the 'doom of the gods' is foretold, the breaking

¹aVala, gen. volu, 'seeress'; sp∅ 'prophecy'.

loose of all the powers of destruction, and the cataclysmic end of the old world. Out of its ruins, a new world is born in which Baldr and other benign gods will establish a reign of justice and peace.

In the concluding lines, some scholars have seen an adumbration of the coming of Christ, and traces of Christianity in the poem as a whole; but at present the best scholarship would declare as an interpolation (because at variance with the prevailing spirit of the poem) the very passages on which such an inference could be based.

However, this does not preclude a general acquaintance with the fundamental concepts of Christianity such as pervaded the North in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries—times when its imagination was stimulated vigorously through the multifarious activities of the 'Viking Age'. A study of the language and versification (fornyröislag) of the poem has led to similar conclusions. For all that, much of the matter of the poem may be of considerably earlier date.

The Volump 2 is found in the Codex Regius and in the Hauksbook. The latter version, though on the whole inferior to that of Cod. Reg., has a better text sometimes. Besides, we have the paraphrase in the Snorra Edda which also quotes, in part or in full, nearly half of the stanzas, some in variant versions.

- 1. Hear me, all ye hallowed beings, both high and low of Heimdall's children: thou wilt, Valfather, that I well set forth the foremost fates which befall the world.
- 2. I call to mind the kin of etins which in times long gone did give me life.

 Nine worlds I know, the nine abodes of the wondrous world-tree,³ the welkin beneath.

¹According to the Lay of Ríg, the god Heimdall (Ríg) was the progenitor of the three estates of slaves, freemen and nobles.—Heimdall 'the Brightly Shining' (?) is the warder of the gods. 'Hallowed beings' probably refers more specially to the gods.

² The Father of the Battle-slain' (Othin), who are gathered into Valholl; cf. Grimn. 8.

³The ash-tree Yggdrasil; see 11. 19, and Grimn. 25f. It is not certain to what the number nine has reference.

3. In earliest times did Ymir⁴ live:

was nor sea nor sand nor salty waves,

neither earth was there nor upper heaven,

but a gaping nothing, and green things no
where.

4. Was the land then lifted who made Mithgarth, shone from the south on the ground then grew

aloft by Bur's sons⁵ the matchless earth; the sun on dry land, the greensward soft.

by the side of the

5. From the south the sun,

heaved his right hand the sun knew not the moon knew not the stars knew not moon, over heaven's rim;⁷ what seat he had, what might he had,

what stead they held.

6. Then gathered together the gods for counsel, the holy hosts, and held converse; to night and new-moon their names they gave, the morning named, and midday also, forenoon and evening, to order the year.

7. On Itha-field⁸ met shrines and temples forges they formed tongs they did shape the mighty gods; they timbered high, to fashion gold, and tools they made;

^{4&#}x27;Roarer'; the world was made of his carcase; cf. Vaf. 20, Grimn. 40, 41.

⁵According to Snorri's account, *Gylfag*. chap 6, they are Othin, Vili, and Vé.

^{6&#}x27;Middle World', the earth as the abode of men; cf. Grimn. 41.

⁷Hoffory suggested that conditions near the Arctic Circle are alluded to in these lines, when the summer sun, advancing from the south, at midnight wheels from west to east along the horizon before mounting again in the sky. However, what follows seems to refer, rather, to unordered chaos.

^{8&#}x27;Field of Work' (?).

- 8. Played at draughts in the garth:

 they were,
 nor aught lacked they of lustrous gold;—

 till maidens three⁹ from the thurses came,
 awful in might, from etin-home.¹⁰
- 9. To the coast then came, kind and mighty, three great æsir from that meeting; on the land they found, of little strength, Ask and Embla, unfated yet.
- 10. Sense they possessed not, soul they had not, being nor bearing, nor blooming hue; soul gave 6thin, sense gave Hænir, and blooming hue.
- 11. An ash I know, hight Yggdrasil, 15 the mighty tree moist with white dews; thence come the floods that fall a-down; evergreen stands at Urth's 16 well this tree.

⁹The Norns (cf. 12), who introduce the note of fate. They are of giant (thurs) kin.

¹⁰Scholars are agreed that the so-called Catalogue of Dwarfs following here in the original is an interpolation. It is given p. 383 ¹¹'Ash and Elm' (?). In many folktales the new-born babes are fetched from trees.

¹²Anglo-Saxon Wōden, the supreme deity of the Teutonic race.

¹³His name and function are as yet unexplained; cf. also 55, and Reg. Intro. Prose.

¹⁴Probably identical with Loki.

¹⁵'Ygg's (Othin's) Horse'; for the explanation of the kenning, cf. HQv. 139. This 'World-tree' is the symbol of the ordered universe.

^{16&#}x27;Fate'; by popular etymology conceived as meaning 'the Past'. The names of the two other norns, or goddesses of fate, Verthandi 'the Present', and Skuld 'the Future', are now understood to be learned inventions of the Twelfth Century, on the pattern of the three Parcæ or Μοῖραι of Classical Antiquity. Like them, they 'spin the thread of Fate'; cf. H.H. 1, 3.

- 12. Thence wise maidens under spreading boughs their bower stands—; [Urth one is hight, Skuld the third: they scores did cut,] they laws did make, for the children of men three betake them—
 there betake them—
 there betake them—
 they betake them betake them—
 they betake them betake them—
 they betake them b
- 13. ¹⁷I ween the first war in the world was this, when the gods Gullveig gashed with their spears, and in the hall of Hór¹⁸ burned her—three times burned they the thrice re-born, ever and anon: even now she liveth.
- 14. Heith¹⁹she was hight where to houses she came, the wise seeress, and witchcraft plied—cast spells where she could, cast spells on the mind: to wicked women she was welcome ever.
- 15. Then gathered together the gods for counsel, the holy hosts, and held converse: should the Æsir a truce with tribute buy, or should all gods share in the feast.²⁰

¹⁷This difficult stanza is generally interpreted in connection with those immediately following. Gullveig 'Essence, or Spirit, of Gold (?)', possibly represents the Vanir (as gods of commerce ?) in their power to corrupt—she is a witch. The vain attempts of the Æsir to annihilate her bring about war between them and the Vanir in which the latter are victorious (16). Hostages are exchanged, then, and the two races of gods rule the world together. Cf. also 40, note.

^{18&#}x27;The One-eyed', Othin. Cf. 19, note, and 21.

¹⁹A name frequently borne by witches.

²⁰I.e. both Æsir and Vanir share in the sacrificial feast offered up by men?

- 16. His spear did óthin speed o'er the host:21
 the first of feuds was thus fought in the world;
 was broken in battle the breastwork of Asgarth,
 fighting Vanir the field trampled.
- 17. Then gathered together the gods for counsel, the holy hosts, and held converse:

 who had filled the air with foul treason, and to uncouth etins oth's wife given.²²
- 18. Thewy Thór²³ then overthrew the foe,—
 he seldom sits when of such he hears:
 were sworn oaths broken, and solemn vows,
 gods' plighted troth, the pledges given.
- 19. Where Heimdall's horn is hid, she²⁴ knows, under heaven-touching holy world-tree; on it are shed showery falls

²¹A ceremonial shot by which Othin, the god of war, dedicates the opposing host to death.

²²She was not, indeed, actually handed over. Snorri, in his Gylfag., chap. 42, relates how, after the castle wall of Asgarth (the dwelling of the Æsir) had thus been battered down, a giant offered to erect within three years' time walls proof against the attack of the giants. As price he demanded Sun and Moon and the goddess Freya, Oth's wife. The gods accepted, providing the work was done within one year; but when it neared completion, Loki by a stratagem foiled the builder; and when he remonstrated about this manifest breach of faith, Thor slew him (18).

²³'The Thunderer'. The god of strength, arch-enemy of the giants. He is often hasty in his actions.

²⁴I.e. the seeress. Alternation between the first and the third person, used by the speaker of himself, is frequent in the Edda.

from Fiolnir's pledge:25 know ye further, or how?26

- 20. Alone she sat out²⁷ when the lord of gods, 6thin the old, her eye did seek:
 "what seekest to know, why summon me?
 Well know I, Ygg,²⁸ where thy eye is hidden."
- 21. She knows that óthin's eye is hidden in the wondrous well of Mímir; each morn Mímir his mead doth drink out of Fiolnir's pledge: know ye further, or how?
- 22. Gave Ygg to her armrings and gems for her seeress' sight and soothsaying:

 (the fates I fathom, yet farther I see,)29
 see far and wide the worlds about.
- 23. The valkyries' flock from afar she beholds, ready to ride to the realm of men:

 Skuld held her shield, Skogul likewise,

^{25&#}x27;Fiolnir's pledge' is Othin's one eye: "But under that root (of Yggdrasil) which spreads over the home of the frost giants there is the well of Mímir (or Mím) in which wit and wisdom are hidden; and is he hight Mímir who owns that well. He is full of knowledge because he drinks its water out of the Giallarhorn (see 38). Thither came Othin and asked for a draught from the well, but got it not before giving his one eye as a pledge." (Gylfag. chap. 15) Cf. 21.—Othin's eye being hidden in the well, its water may in skaldic language be said to come from 'Fiolnir's pledge' (Fiolnir 'the Multiscient' is one of Othin's names).

²⁶This dark and challenging refrain is used with the events of the present and the future divined by the seeress.

²⁷'Sitting out' is the technical expression for the witches' and sorcerers' communing with spirits, out of doors and at night.

²⁸ The Terrifier', Othin. He is often pictured as a grey-beard, strong, wise, crafty, and cruel.

²⁹Supplied after the corresponding passage in 36.

³⁰Literally, 'Choosers of the Slain'—the shield-maidens of Othin, who ride through the air over the battlefield, marking with their spears those who are to fall, and conducting the battle-slain to Valholl, 'the Hall of the Slain', Othin's abode. Another catalogue of valkyries is given in *Grimn*. Their names have to do with war and weapons.

Guth, Hild, Gondul, and Geirskogul:

[for thus are hight Herian's³¹ maidens, ready to ride o'er reddened battlefields].

24. I saw for Baldr,³² the Ygg's dearest son, green and glossy, the trees among, the trees among,

the blessed³³ god, what doom is hidden: there grew aloft, the mistletoe.

- 25. The slender-seeming sapling bècame a fell weapon when flung by Hoth;³⁴ but Baldr's brother³⁵ was born full soon: but one night old slew him Othin's son.
- 26. Neither cleansed his hands nor combed his hair

till Baldr's slayer³⁶ but Frigg³⁸ did weep the fateful deed:

he sent to Hel;³⁷
in Fensalir
know ye further, or how?

^{31&#}x27;Warrior', Othin.

^{32&#}x27;The Lord' or 'the Glorious'. He is the son of Othin and Frigg. 33Following Bugge's emendation.

^{34&#}x27;Hate' (?), the blind god. The beautiful story is told more fully in Gylfag. chap. 49: "Baldr had had heavy dreams about his early death. Then Frigg took an oath of all beings and all things not to harm him. When thus assured of Baldr's life, the gods in sport shot and hewed at him: but Loki in malice found out that the mistletoe had not been sworn in, as too weak. He gave it to blind Hoth as a missile, and he shot Baldr dead."—Loki's punishment is told in 27, and the Final Prose of Lok.

³⁵Váli, engendered by Othin with the giantess Rind, since the gods could not avenge the deed on one of their own; cf. *Bdr.* 11.

³⁶I.e. Hoth.

³⁷Hel 'the Concealer' is the goddess of the lower world where the shades of the dead dwell in cold and darkness (as in the Greek Τάρταρος). Hence, 'to send to Hel' comes to mean merely, 'to slay'.

³⁸(The Beloved' Othin's wife who dwells in Fensalir 'the Ocean

^{38&#}x27;The Beloved', Othin's wife, who dwells in Fensalir 'the Ocean Halls'.

- 27. A captive lies in the kettle-grove,³⁹ like to lawless Loki in shape;⁴⁰ there sits Sigyn, full sad in mind, by her fettered mate: know ye further, or how?
- 28. There flows from the east,⁴¹ through fester-dales, a stream hight Slíth,⁴² filled with swords and knives.
- 29. ⁴³Waist-deep wade there through waters swift mainsworn men and murderous, eke those who betrayed a trusted friend's wife; there gnaws Níthhogg⁴⁴ naked corpses, there the Wolf⁴⁵ rends men —wit ye more, or how?
- 30. Stood in the north a dwelling golden which the dwarves did own; an other stood on ókólnir,⁴⁷ that etin's beer-hall who is Brimir hight.

With meshes mighty made the gods then girding fetters out of Váli's guts.

This Váli (not to be confused with Othin's son, 25) was a son of Loki. The gods transformed him into a wolf.

³⁹I.e. the grove about hot springs (?).

⁴⁰That is, Loki 'The Ender' (?) himself.—Instead of these lines, the *Hauksbook* has the following:

⁴¹The east is the home of the frost-giants: from the point of view of the Norwegians of the western coast who had in mind the snowy mountain wastes of the interior.

^{42&#}x27;The Frightful'. It is 'poisonous' and 'cutting' with cold.

⁴³This stanza is transposed from its position in the original where it follows 31.

^{44&#}x27;The Dastardly Hewing', a dragon. Cf. the last stanza of the poem, and *Grimn*. 32, 35.

⁴⁵The Fenris-wolf; cf. notes on 32.

⁴⁶ The Dark Fields'. The stanza evidently is interpolated, perhaps from some other poem, because of its analogy to the following one. ⁴⁷ Ever-Cold' (?).

- 31. A hall standeth, from the sun so far, on Ná-strand's shore: turn north its doors; drops of poison drip through the louver, its walls are clad with coiling snakes.
- 32. In the east sat the old one,⁵⁰ in the Iron-wood,⁵¹ bred there the bad brood of Fenrir;⁵² will one of these, worse than they all,

the sun swallow, in seeming a wolf.

- 33. He feeds on the flesh of fallen men, with their blood sullies the seats of the gods; will grow swart the sunshine⁵³ in summers thereafter, the weather woe-bringing: do ye wit more, or how?
- 34. His harp striking, on hill there sat gladsome Eggthér,⁵⁴ he who guards the ogress; o'er him gaily in the gallows-tree crowed the fair-red cock which is Fialar⁵⁵ hight.
- 35. Crowed o'er the gods Gullinkambi; 56 wakes he the heroes with Herian who dwell; another crows the earth beneath in the halls of Hel, of hue dark red.

^{48&#}x27;The Strand of the Dead', where Hel's hall stands.

⁴⁹The direction of evil omen; cf. Rig. 26.

⁵⁰ Probably, the giantess Angribrotha, about whom cf. note below.

⁵¹This is the typical name for an old and monster-infested forest.

⁵²Or Fenris-Wolf: a mythical wolf engendered by Loki with the giantess Angrbotha 'Boder of Ill'; cf. above and Hynd. 42. Others of this brood are Skoll and Hati, of whom the former will swallow the sun, the latter, the moon (*Grimn*. 39), and Garm, 36.

⁵³Blood-red sunsets, dim sunshine, and famine years presage the end of the world; cf. Vaf. 44.

^{54&#}x27;Servant of the Sword', the husband of the ogress (?).

⁵⁵ Multiscient'. He wakes the giants to the last combat.

^{56&#}x27;Golden-comb'.

36. ⁵⁷Garm bays loudly tears him free Fenrir The fates I fathom, of the mighty gods

before Gnipa cave, and fares to battle. yet farther I see: the engulfing doom.

37. Brothers will battle
and sisters' sons the
woe's in the world,
[axe-age, sword-age—
wind-age, wolf-age,
will the spear of no man

to bloody end,
their sib betray;
much wantonness;
sundered are shields—
ere the world crumbles;]
an spare his brother.58

38. Mímir's sons dance;59
when blares the gleaming
loud blows Heimdall,
in Hel's dark hall h

the doom doth break g old Giallar-horn;⁶⁰ the horn is aloft, horror spreadeth.⁶¹

Jamque nocens ferrum, ferro nocentius aurum prodieret . . . non hospes ab hospite tutus, non socer a genero; fratrum quoque gratia rara est. imminet exitio vir conjugis, illa mariti . . .

⁵⁷He is the $K\epsilon\rho\beta\epsilon\rho$ of Hel, cf. Bdr. 2. This portent, together with the following lines, is repeated as a refrain.

⁵⁸The breaking down of all moral laws forewarns of the end of the world.—The bracketed lines elaborating this conception of an 'Iron Age' are generally thought to be interpolated. It is interesting to compare Ovid's description, Metamorphoses I. 141f:

⁵⁹According to Müllenhoff's thoughtful (but not generally accepted) explanation the sons of Mímir are the brooks and rivers which betray the general unrest in nature by overflowing their banks and spreading chaos.

^{60&#}x27;The Loud Horn', in possession of Heimdall; cf. 19.

⁶¹Line 4 is put here, instead of line 3 of 39, following Much.

- 39. Trembles the towering tree Yggdrasil, its leaves sough loudly: unleashed is the etin; 62 once more othin with Mim's head speaketh 63 ere the sib of Surt 64 doth swallow him.
- 40. What ails the æsir and what the alfs? 65
 In uproar all etins— are the æsir met.
 At the gates of their grots the wise dwarfs groan
 in their fell-fastnesses: wit ye further, or how?
- 41. Garm bays loudly before Gnipa cave, tears him free Fenrir and fares to battle!

 The fates I fathom, yet farther I see: of the mighty gods the engulfing doom.
- 42. Fares Hrym⁶⁶ from the east, holding his shield; the Mithgarth-worm⁶⁷ in mighty rage

⁶²I.e. the wolf Fenrir, the offspring of evil etins. Below, he is called the 'Sib of Surt'.

⁶³Cf. note. 61.—According to Snorri's Ynglingasaga (Heimskringla chap. 4), at the conclusion of the war between them, the wise Mímir (and Hænir) had been sent by the Æsir as hostages to the Vanir who, suspecting treason, hewed off Mímir's head and returned it to Othin. He embalmed it and by his magic got it to speak with him and to tell him of many hidden things.

⁶⁴Fenrir. As to Surt, cf. 44.

⁶⁵Here, as 'Light-alfs' practically identical with the Vanir; whereas the 'Swart-alfs' are sinister dwarfs.

⁶⁶He is the leader of the giants, whose home is in the east.

⁶⁷The great serpent encircling the world of men (Mithgarth), the fruit of Loki's intercourse with the giantess Angrbotha; see note 52. Cf. the Greek $^{\prime}\Omega\kappa\eta\epsilon\alpha\nu\delta$, the Hebrew Leviathan.—In Gylfag. chap. 51 it is said that "now the sea rushes up on the land, because the Mithgarthsworm wallows in giant-rage...".

scatters the waves; screams the eagle, 68 his nib tears the dead; Naglfar 69 loosens.

- 43. Sails a ship from the north with shades from Hel; o'er the ocean-stream steers it Loki; in the wake of the Wolf⁷⁰ rush witless hordes who with baleful Býleist's brother⁷¹ do fare.
- 44. Comes Surt⁷² from the south with the singer-of-twigs,⁷³ the war-god's⁷⁴ sword like a sun doth shine; the tall hills totter, and trolls stagger, men fare to Hel, the heavens rive.
- 45. Another woe awaiteth Hlín,⁷⁵
 when forth goes **6thin** to fight the Wolf,
 and the slayer of Beli⁷⁶ to battle with Surt:
 then Frigg's husband⁷⁷ will fall lifeless.
- 46. Strides forth Víthar, ⁷⁸ Val-father's son, the fearless fighter, Fenrir to slay;

⁶⁸Viz. in gleeful anticipation of the carnage to follow; cf. e.g. *H.H.* I, 6.

^{69&#}x27;The Ship of the Dead' or 'the Nail-ship'; but the explanation of Gylfag. loc. cit. that "it is made of the nails of dead men, and it is therefore reprehensible if a man die and be buried with nails uncut" seems somewhat ad hoc.

⁷⁰ Fenrir.

⁷¹I.e. Loki himself, cf. Hynd. 42; followed by 'witless hordes' of giants.

^{72&#}x27;The Swart', the ruler over Múspelheim, the world of fire, thought to be in the south. In the final battle he slays the god Frey, Lok. 42.

⁷³A kenning for 'fire'.

⁷⁴Here in a general sense: Surt's.

⁷⁵Othin's wife, Frigg. Her first sorrow is Baldr's death, 26.

⁷⁶According to Gylfag. 37, the giant Beli's slayer is Frey.

⁷⁷ I.e. Othin, who is swallowed by Fenrir.

^{78&#}x27;Far-ruler' (?); cf. Vaf. 53, Grimn. 17.

to the heart he hews the Hvethrung's on; avenged is then Vithar's father.

- 47. Comes Hlóthyn's son,⁸⁰ the hammer-wielder; gapes the grisly earth-girdling Serpent when strides forth Thór to stay the Worm.
- 48. Mightily mauls Mithgarth's warder⁸¹—
 shall all wights in the world wander from
 home⁸²—;
 back falls nine steps Fiorgyn's offspring⁸³—
 nor fears for his fame— from the frightful
 worm.
- 49. 'Neath sea the land sinketh, the sun dimmeth, from the heavens fall the fair bright stars; gushes forth steam and gutting fire, to very heaven soar the hurtling flames.
- 50. *Garm bays loudly before Gnipa cave, tears him free Fenrir and fares to battle. The fates I fathom, of the mighty gods before Gnipa cave, and fares to battle. yet farther I see: the engulfing doom.
- 51. Again see I, bright green afresh, the earth arise from out of the sea; fell-torrents flow, on hoar highlands hunting for fish.

⁷⁹Probably, one of Loki's names.

^{80&#}x27;The Son of Earth', Thór.—The reading of this stanza is uncertain.

⁸¹Another kenning for Thór, who is the protector of the world of man (Mithgarth) from all sorts of monsters.

⁸²I.e. the world which, after Thór's death, becomes uninhabitable.

⁸³Like 'Hlóthyn's Son' (above), Thór.

⁸⁴Like the last thunder of a passing storm, this burthen which has resounded with lyrical power to accompany the destruction of the old world, now heralds the creation of a new one in the future.

- 52. Again the æsir on Itha-field meet, and speak of the mighty Mithgarth-worm, go over again the great world-doom, and Fimbultýr's⁸⁵ unfathomed runes.
- 53. Then in the grass the golden tablets, so the far-famed ones, which they had owned (the foremost gods the golden tablets, so will be found again, in olden days, and Fiolnir's kin).
- 54. On unsown acres the ears will grow, all bale will be bettered; will Baldr come then.

 Both he and Hoth with Hrópt⁸⁸ will dwell

Both he and Hoth with Hrópt⁸⁸ will dwell and the war-gods alway: do ye wit more, or how?

- 55. Will high-souled Hænir handle the blood-wands, 89 and Ygg's brother's sons 90 forever will dwell in wide Wind-home: 91 do ye wit more, or how?
- 56. I see a hall than the sun more fair, thatched with red gold, on Gimlé's⁹² heights. There will the gods all guiltless throne, and live forever in ease and bliss.

^{85&#}x27;The Great God', Othin.

⁸⁶With which they had, of yore, played at draughts, 8.

^{87&#}x27;He of Many Shapes', Othin. This line is added from the Paper Manuscripts.

⁸⁸One of Othin's names.

⁸⁹That is, divine future events as the priest of the gods; cf. *Hym.* 1. ⁹⁰Ygg's (Othin's) brothers are Vili and Vé, cf. *Lok.* 26; and note 5, above.

⁹¹A kenning for 'the Heavens'.

^{92&#}x27;Gem-roof' or 'Fire-shelter'. It is worthy of note that in the corresponding passage in *Gylfag*. chap. 78, the abode of the blessed itself is called Gimlé; which would lend strength to the former interpretation.

- 57. A-down cometh to the doom of the world the great godhead⁹³ which governs all.
- 58. Comes the darksome dragon flying, glossy Níthhogg, from the Nitha-fells;94 he bears in his pinions as the plains he o'erflies.

naked corpses: now he will sink.

He settles strife, sits in judgment, and lays down laws which shall last alway.

94'The Dark Fells'.

⁹³The unknown (Christian?) god.—This half-stanza with its Christian tinge does not occur in Cod. Reg. but only in the Hauksbook, and is therefore rejected by some editors. The Paper Manuscripts add the following lines:

⁹⁵The interpretation of this stanza is doubtful. If the reading of the main manuscript: 'now she will sink' be retained, with some editors, the meaning must be that the seeress is about to disappear again, having completed her prophecy; cf. the situation in Bdr., Hynd., Gróug. But adopting the reading as above, the dragon must be meant who is seen on his usual flight, carrying corpses, but will sink out of sight in the new order of things.

THE SAYINGS OF HOR1

H $\varrho vam \varrho l$

This, the longest of the Eddic poems, is largely didactic in nature. Here, more abundantly than in any other monument, do we find that homely wisdom, that sternly realistic view of life, those not ignoble ethical conceptions, which find such classic illustration in the Icelandic sagas.

At least five separate portions can be made out.

The first, consisting of 79 stanzas (in *ljóðaháttr*), is a series of counsels on the more common relations of life. They stress especially the laws of hospitality, the rules of decent conduct, circumspection in one's dealing with men, moderation in eating and drinking, the vanity of mere wealth as against true merit—all in the spirit of Germanic heathendom, with with many a pearl of shrewd wisdom, of terse humor, of noble sentiment. We may single out for admiration the deeply felt stanzas on having a home of one's own, however humble (36, 37), and those magnificently asseverating the lastingness, in a world subject to the law of change, of a fair name (77,78).

The ensuing stanzas (80-90) are of irregular structure and more largely proverbial in substance. They form the transition to the so-called Ensamples of Othin (91-110, in *ljóðaháttr*) which deal in a frankly cynical spirit with man's relation to woman; in particular, with woman's inconstancy and treachery, but also with her gullibility, as instanced by the two love adventures of Othin, told in the first person.

Without any connection there follows the so-called 'Lay of Loddfáfnir' (111-138, for the most part in irregular *ljóðaháttr*). It contains miscellaneous counsels on love, friendship, etc., purporting to have been given to the 'thul' Loddfáfnir by Óthin himself. As a whole, this portion is notably inferior to the first.

A fourth part, the so-called Rune Poem, composed of somewhat incoherent stanzaic forms, deals obscurely with Runic wisdom as acquired and taught by Othin.

Last, there are 18 magic visur (stanzas) efficient to dull swords, cure disease, calm the sea etc., if used with the proper 'runes'. We

¹Othin. Etymologically, 'the One-Eyed', but interpreted already by Snorri (Gylfag. chap. 2) as 'the Exalted'.

¹a'Sage, bard, spokesman' (Ags. byle).

shall meet with similar collections in the Sigrdrifum Ql and $Gr \acute{o}ugaldr$.

Manifestly, the poem is not a homogeneous whole, but a congeries of aphorisms, proverbs, magic lore, and the like, which we owe to some early collector. To establish the age and provenience of such a collection is, from the nature of the case, not feasible. However, Norwegian origin seems likely for the most of it. We know that at least certain stanzas existed in the Tenth Century; for they are quoted (or composed, for all we know) by the noted skald Eyvind skáldaspillir who died toward the end of that century.—The Codex Regius is our sole source for this monument.

1. Have thy eyes about thee when thou enterest a door,

be wary alway, be watchful alway;

for never one knoweth when need will be to meet hidden foe in the hall. 1b

- 2. All hail to the giver! A guest hath come: 2 say now where shall he sit?

 In haste is he to the hall who cometh to find at the fire a friend.
- 3. The warmth seeketh who hath wandered long and is numb about his knees; meat and dry clothes the man needeth over the fells who hath fared.
- 4. A drink needeth to full dishes who cometh, a towel, and the prayer to partake; good bearing eke, to be well liked and be bidden to banquet again.

^{1b}Disregarding this elementary caution of parlous times, the famous Einar Tambarskiælvir and his son were slain (*Heimskringla*, Harald Hardruler's saga, chap. 44).

²Generosity is one of the cardinal virtues of Germanic antiquity. The stranger—by that same token a guest—is to be given a quick and friendly reception.—The last two lines of the stanza are difficult.

³Water for washing one's hands, and a towel were offered before a meal.

- 5. Of his wit hath need who widely fareth—
 a dull wit will do at home;
 a laughing-stock he who lacketh words
 among smart wits when he sits.
- 6. To be bright of brain let no man boast,
 but take good heed of his tongue:
 the sage and silent come seldom to grief
 as they fare among folk in the hall.
 [More faithful friend findest thou never
 than shrewd head on thy shoulders.]
- 7. The wary guest to wassail who cometh listeneth that he may learn, openeth his ears, casts his eyes about: thus wards him the wise man 'gainst harm.
- 8. Happy is he who hath won him the love and liking of all; for hard it is one's help to seek from the mind of another man.
- 9. Happy is he who hath won him both winning ways and wisdom; for ill led is oft who asketh help from the wit and words of another.
- 10. Better burden bearest thou nowise than shrewd head on thy shoulders; in good stead will it stand among stranger folk, and shield when unsheltered thou art.
- 11. Better burden bearest thou nowise than shrewd head on thy shoulders; but with worser food farest thou never than an overmuch of mead.

⁴Probably a later addition; cf. 10, 11.

⁵Cf. 9, which seems a variant.

- 12. For good is not, though good it is thought, mead for the sons of men; the deeper he drinks the dimmer grows the mind of many a man.
- 13. The heron of heedlessness⁶ hovers o'er the feast, and stealeth the minds of men.

 With that fowl's feathers fettered I was when I was Gunnloth's guest.⁷
- 14. Drunk I became, dead drunk, forsooth, in the hall of hoary Fialar; that bout is best from which back fetches each man his mind full clear.
- 15. Let a king's offspring be sparing in words, and bold in battle; glad and wholesome the hero be till cometh his dying day.
- 16. The unwise man thinks that he aye will live, if from fighting he flees; but the ails and aches of old age come, though spears have spared him.
- 17. The fool doth gape when to folks he cometh, he mumbleth and mopeth about; soon is seen, when his swill he had, what the mind of the man is like.

⁶Apparently, the state of mind superinduced by the magic use of the heron's feathers, line 3. (Cf. Scandinavian Notes and Studies 1914, 259ff).

⁷The reference seems to be to Othin's adventure with Gunnloth, 104ff (in whose cave he, however, by no means loses the powers of his mind).

⁸Cf. Vsp. 34, note. Identical with Suttung (103), if above reference is correct.

- 18. Only he is aware who hath wandered much, and far hath been afield, what mind doth move every man that liveth—if he be not wanting in wit.
- 19. The cup spurn not, yet be sparing withal:
 say what is needful, or naught;
 for ill breeding upbraids thee no man
 if soon thou layst thee to sleep.
- 20. The greedy guest gainsays his head and eats until he is ill; his belly oft maketh a butt of a man, on bench 'midst the sage when he sits.
- 21. The herd do know when home they shall, and gang from the grass to their stalls; but the unwise man not ever learneth how much his maw will hold.
- 22. The ill-minded man who meanly thinks, fleers at both foul and fair; he knoweth not, as know he ought, that he is not free from flaws.
- 23. The unwise man waketh all night, thinking of this and that—tosses, sleepless, and is tired at morn: nor lighter for that his load.
- 24. The unwise man weeneth that all who laugh with him, like him, too; nor seeth their scorn, though they sneer at him, on bench 'midst the sage when he sits.
- 25. The unwise man weeneth that all that laugh with him, like him, too;

- findeth he then, when to thing he cometh, few spokesmen to speed his cause.
- 26. The unwise man weens him all-knowing, since from harm he is far at home; but knows not ever what answer to make when others ask him aught.
- 27. The unwise man among others who cometh, let him be sparing of speech; for no one knoweth that naught is in him, but he open his mouth too much.
- 28. Clever is he who is keen to ask, and eke to answer, all men; 'tis hard to hide from the hearing of men what is on every one's lips.
- 29. Much at random oft rambleth he whose tongue doth ever tattle; a talker's tongue, unless tamed it be, will often work him woe.
- 30. No mock make thou of any man,
 at a drinking bout though it be;
 he knowing weens him whom no one hath
 asked,
 and dry-shod hies him home. 10
- 31. A wise man he who hies him betimes from the man whom he has mocked; for at table who teases can never tell what foe he may have to fight.¹¹

⁹The assembly.

¹⁰Literally, 'remains with his skin dry'—having escaped a shower. For the meaning, cf. 26.

¹¹ I.e. what new foe, made over the cups; cf. 29, 32.

- 32. Many a man meaneth no ill, yet teases the other at table; strife will ever start among men when guest clashes with guest.
- 33. An early meal aye a man should get him, lest famished he come to the feast:

 he sits and stuffs as though starved he were, and naught he says to his neighbors.
- 34. To false friend aye a far way 'tis, though his roof be reared by the road; to stanch friend aye a straight way leadeth, though far he have fared from thee.
- 35. Get thee gone betimes; a guest should not stay too long in one stead; lief groweth loath if too long one sitteth on bench, though in he was bidden.
- 36. One's home is best though a hut it be:
 there a man is master and lord;
 though but two goats thine and a thatched
 roof,

'tis far better than beg.

- 37. One's home is best though a hut it be:
 there a man is master and lord;
 his heart doth bleed who has to beg
 the meat for his every meal.
- 38. From his weapons away no one should ever stir one step on the field; for no one knoweth when need might have on a sudden a man of his sword.

39. Of his worldly goods which he gotten hath let a man not stint overmuch; oft is lavished on foe what for friend was saved,

for matters go often amiss.

- 40. So free-handed never found I a man but would gladly take what is given; nor of his goods so ungrudging ever, to forego what is given him. 12
- 41. With weapons and weeds should friends be won, as the wise man knoweth full well; those who give to each other will aye be friends, once they meet half-way.
- 42. To his friend a man should show friendship aye, and pay back gift for gift;

laughter for laughter¹³ he learn to give, and eke lesing for lies.

43. To his friend a man should bear friendship aye,—

to him and the friend of his friend; but his foeman's friend befriend thou never, (and keep thee aloof from his kin).14

44. If friend thou hast whom faithful thou deemest,

and wishest to win him for thee:

ope thy heart to him nor withhold thy gifts,
and fare to find him often.

¹²In return for his gifts.

¹³I. e. the scornful laughter of enemies.

¹⁴Added by the translator.

- 45. If another there be whom ill thou trustest, yet wouldest win him for thee: speak fair to him though false thou meanest, and pay him lesing for lies.
- 46. And eke this heed: if ill thou trust one, and hollow-hearted his speech: thou shalt laugh with him and lure him on, and let him have tit for tat.
- 47. Young was I once and went alone, and wandering lost my way; when a friend I found I felt me rich: man is gladdened by men.
- 48. He who giveth gladly a goodly life leadeth, and seldom hath he sorrow; but the churlish wight is chary of all, and grudgingly parts with his gifts.
- 49. In the fields as I fared (for fun) I hung
 my weeds on two wooden men;¹⁵
 they were reckoned folks when the rags they
 wore:

naked, a man is naught.

- 50. The fir-tree dies in the field that stands,—
 shields it nor bark nor bast;
 thus eke the man who by all is shunned:
 why should he linger in life?16
- 51. Than fire hotter for five days burneth love between friends that are false; it dieth down when dawneth the sixth, then all the sweetness turns sour.

¹⁵Probably, wooden idols as signposts beside the road, intended to protect the wayfarer from evil powers.

¹⁶Cf. Hamth. 4 for the same thought expressed with a similar figure.

- 52. Not great things, needs, give to a man:
 bringeth thanks oft a little thing;
 with half a loaf and a half-drained cup
 I won me oft worthy friend. 16a
- 53. A little lake hath but little sand:
 but small the mind of man;
 not all men are equally wise,
 each wight wanteth somewhat.¹⁷
- 54. Middling wise every man should be:

 beware of being too wise;

 for he is hardly happiest in life

 who knoweth more than is needful.
- 55. Middling wise every man should be:

 beware of being too wise;

 for wise man's heart is happy seldom,

 if too great the wisdom he won.
- 56. Middling wise every man should be:

 beware of being too wise;

 his fate let no one beforehand know

 who would keep his heart from care.
- burnt it is:
 thus fire is kindled from fire;
 by the words of his mouth a man is known,
 but from his dumbness a dullard. 19

57. Kindles brand from brand, and burns till all

58. Betimes must rise who would take another's life and win his wealth; lying wolf never got the lamb, nor sleeping wight slew his foe.

^{16a}Which was Cyrus' means of gaining and retaining friends; Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1, 9.

¹⁷The meaning of this line in the original is uncertain.

¹⁹In the give and take of intercourse, when 'one thought kindles another', it betrays stupidity to have nothing to say.

- 59. Betimes must rise who few reapers has, and see to the work himself; much will miss in the morn who sleeps: for the brisk the race is half-run.
- 60. What lathes and logs will last him out,
 a man may reckon aright,
 and of wood to warm him how much he may
 want
 for many a winter month.20
- 61. Well-groomed and washed wend to the thing, though thy clothes be not the best; of thy shoes and breeks be not ashamed, and still less of thy steed.
- 62. With lowered head sweeps, to the sea when he comes, the eagle o'er the ocean-stream; thus eke a man among a throng who finds but few to befriend him.21
- 63. Both ask and answer let every one who wishes to be deemed wise; let one know it, nor none other: if three know, thousands will.
- 64. A wise man will not overweening be, and stake too much on his strength; when the mighty are met to match their thews,

'twill be found that first is no one.22

²⁰One misses a stanza here telling of what man *cannot* forearm against.

²¹I.e. he walks about anxiously, trying to find some one he may know or seek a favor from, like the vulture peering for his prey.

²²Cf. Fáfn. 17.

- 65. (Watchful and wary every one should be, nor put too much trust in a friend;) 23 his reckless words, rashly uttered, have undone oft a doughty man.
- 66. Too late by far to some feasts I came; to others, all too soon; the beer was drunk, or yet unbrewed: never hits it the hated one right.
- 67. Here or there would they have me in, if no meat at the meal I craved, or hanged two hams in my good friend's home, after eating one of his own.
- 68. A bonny fire is a blessing to man, and eke the sight of the sun, his hearty health, if he holds it well, and to live one's life without shame.
- 69. All undone is no one though dreary his fate:
 some with good sons are blessed,
 and some with kinsmen, or with coffers full,
 and some with deeds well-done.
- 70. Better alive (than lifeless be):24
 to the quick fall aye the cattle;
 the hearthfire burned for the happy heir,—
 out-doors a dead man lay.25

²³Supplied after the Paper Manuscripts.

²⁴Rask's emendation.

²⁵The meaning is, probably: however miserable (cf. 69), life is preferable to death. Some good fortune may always befall one; but once dead and 'outdoors', no warm fire will cheer one—but only the 'laughing heir'.

- 71. May the halt ride a horse, and the handless be herdsman, the deaf man may doughtily fight, a blind man is better than a burned one, aye: of what gain is a good man dead?
- 72. To have a son is good, late-got though he be, and born when buried his father; a stone^{25a} seest thou seldom set by the road-side but by kith raised over kinsman.
- 73. It takes two to fight;^{25b} oft tongue is head's bane; a fist I fear 'neath every furry coat.
- 74. Of the night is fain whose knapsack is full; [short are the yards of a ship:]²⁶ fickle are the nights in fall; there's both fair and foul in five days' time—still more so within a month.
- 75. He who knoweth nothing knoweth not, either, how wealth may warp a man's wit;²⁷ one hath wealth when wanteth another, though he bear no blame himself.²⁷
- 76. A full-stocked farm had the Fatling's²⁸ sons:

 now they stoop at the beggar's staff;

 in a twinkling fleeth trothless wealth,

 it is the ficklest of friends.

^{25a}I.e. a memorial stone.

^{25b}Conjectural. The stanza consists of three proverbs.

²⁶Possibly: make short etc.—that is, as we should say: reef your sail!

²⁷Conjectural.

²⁸I.e. a man as well-nourished as a fatling calf.

- 77. Cattle die and kinsmen die,
 thyself eke soon wilt die;
 but fair fame will fade never,
 I ween, for him who wins it.
- 78. Cattle die and kinsmen die,
 thyself eke soon wilt die;
 but one thing, I ween, will wither never:
 the doom over each one dead.
- 79. The unwise man who calleth his own wealth or the love of a woman—his overweening waxeth but his wit never,—he haughtily hardens his heart.
- 80. 29'Tis readily found if the runes thou ask, made by mighty gods, known to holy hosts, and dyed deep red by óthin:30 that least said is soonest mended.
- 81. At eve praise the day, when burned down, a torch,³¹ a wife when wedded, a weapon when tried, ice when over it, ale when 'tis drunk.
- 82. Fell wood in the wind,³² in fair weather row out, dally with girls in the dark—the day's eyes are many,

²⁹Arrangement of lines following Mogk.

³⁰Cf. 143.

³¹Generally rendered: 'a woman when burned'; cf. *Maal og Minne* 1922, 175.

³²That is, probably, in the windy seasons, winter or spring, before the sap rises.

- choose a shield for shelter, a ship for speed, a sword for keenness, a girl for kissing.
- 83. By the fire drink ale, skate on the ice, buy a bony steed, a rusty blade, feed your horse at home and your hound in his hutch.
- 84. A wench's words let no wise man trust,
 nor trust the troth of a woman;
 for on whirling wheel their hearts are shaped,
 and fickle and fitful their minds.
- 85. A brittle bow, a burning fire, a gaping wolf, a grunting sow, a croaking crow, a kettle boiling, a rising sea, a rootless tree,
- 86. A flying dart, a foaming billow, ice one night old, a coiled up adder, a woman's bed-talk, the play of cubs, a king's scion, 32a
- 87. A sickly calf, a self-willed thrall, the smooth words of a witch, warriors fresh-slain.
- 88. Thy brother's banesman, though it be on the road,³³
 a half-burned house, a horse most swift—
 worthless the steed if one foot he break—:
 so trusting be no one to trust in these!

³²aHis promises?

³³That is, though you meet him on the main-traveled road, in the presence of others.—Stanzas 88, 89 transposed, following Dietrich's proposal.

- 89. Early-sown acres let none ever trust,
 nor trust his son too soon:
 undoes weather the one, unwisdom the other:
 risk not thy riches on these.
- 90. The false love of woman, 'tis like to one riding on ice with horse unroughshod— a brisk two-year old, unbroken withal—, or in raging wind drifting rudderless,— like the lame out-running the reindeer on snow-cliff.
- 91. Heed my words now, for I know them both:

 mainsworn are men to women;

 we speak most fair when most false our

 thoughts,

 for that wiles the wariest wits.
- 92. Fairly shall speak, nor spare his gifts, who will win a woman's love,—
 shall praise the looks of the lovely maid:
 he who flatters will win the fair.
- 93. At the loves of a man to laugh is not meet for any one ever; the wise oft fall, when fools yield not, to the lure of a lovely maid.
- 94. 'Tis not meet for men to mock at what befalls full many a one:

 a fair face oft makes fools of the wise by the mighty lure of love.
- 95. One's self only knows what is near one's heart,

each reads but himself aright;
no sickness seems to sound mind worse
than to have lost all liking for life.

- 96. 34"That saw I well when I sat in the reeds, waiting the maid I wooed:
 - more than body and soul was the sweet maid to me,

yet worked I my will not with her.

- 97. "Billing's daughter on her bed I found sleeping, the sun-bright maid; a king's crown I craved not to wear, if she let me have her love."
- 98. "At eventide shalt, Othin, come if thou wilt win me to wife: unmeet it were if more than we two know of this naughty thing."
- 99. "Back I went; to win her love I let myself be misled; for I did think, enthralled by love, to work my will with her.
- 100. "When next I came at night-time, then, all the warriors found I awake, with brands high borne and burning lights: thus was my wayfaring wasted.
- 101. "Near morn when I once more did come, the folks were sound asleep; but a bitch found I the fair one had bound fast on her bed!
- 102. "Many a good maid if you mark it well is fickle, though fair her word; that I quickly found when the cunning maid

³⁴There is hardly any connection to be sought with the preceding stanza.—96–102 recount Othin's love escapade with Billing's daughter who is, possibly, identical with Gunnloth, 106.

I lured to lecherous love; every taunt and gibe she tried on me, and naught I had of her.

- 103. "Glad in his home, to his guest cheerful, yet shrewd should one be; wise and weighty be the word of his mouth, if wise he would be thought.

 A ninny is he who naught can say, for such is the way of the witless.
- 104. 35"The old etin I sought—now am I back; in good stead stood me my speech; for with many words my wish I wrought in the hall of Suttungs' sons.
- 105. "With an auger I did eat my way,
 through the rocks did make me room!
 over and under were the etins'-ways;36
 thus dared I life and limbs.
- 106. "Gunnloth gave me, her gold-stool upon, a draught of the dear-bought mead; an ill reward I her after left for her friendship faithful, for her heavy heart.

36Kenning for 'rocks'.

³⁵Another, and more successful, amorous adventure of Othin is referred to in stanzas 104–110: in his quest for the 'mead of skaldship' he discovers that the precious drink is hidden in a mountain where it is guarded by the giantess Gunnloth, the daughter of Suttung. With an auger he bores a hole and creeps through in the form of a snake. Gunnloth allows him to stay with her for three days and permits him to drink of the mead. After his escape he spews it out into vessels held ready by the gods. True skalds are allowed a drink of it; *Bragar*. chaps. 57, 58.

- 107. "Of the well-bought mead^{36a} I made good use:
 to the wise now little is lacking;
 for Othrærir³⁷ now up is brought,
 and won for the world of men.
- 108. "Unharmed again had I hardly come out of the etins' hall, if Gunnloth helped not, the good maiden, in whose loving arms I lay.
- 109. "The day after, the etins fared into Hór's high hall,—
 to ask after Bolverk: whether the æsir among, or whether by Suttung slain.
- 110. "An oath on the ring did Othin swear:39 how put trust in his troth?

 Suttung he swindled and snatched his drink, and Gunnloth he beguiled."

111. 40'Tis time to chant on the sage's chair:

at the well of Urth⁴¹

I saw, but naught said, I saw and thought,

listened to Hór's lore;⁴²

³⁶a Following F. Jónsson's emendation.

³⁷ Exciter of Inspiration (?)'; here, the name of the mead of skaldship, but 141 and in *Bragar*. the name of the vessel in which it was kept.

³⁸ Evildoer', Othin's name assumed while among the giants. This conclusion differs from the one in *Bragar*.

³⁹Scil. that such a person was not among the gods. The oath on the ring attached to the heathen altar was a specially solemn one. ⁴⁰Beginning of the 'Lay of Loddfáfnir', so called.

⁴¹There, the gods assembled for council, cf. Vsp. 19 and Grimn. 30.

 $^{^{42}}$ In the original, $H \not\in vam \not\in l$, according to the generally accepted emendation, whence the title.

- of runes I heard them speak readily, at the hall of Hór, in the hall of Hór, and thus I thought them say:
- 112. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, and heed it well, learn it, 'twill lend thee strength, follow it, 'twill further thee: at night rise not but to be ready for foe, or to look for a spot to relieve thee.
- 113. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, and heed it well, learn it, 'twill lend thee strength, follow it, 'twill further thee: in a witch's arms thou ought'st not sleep, linking thy limbs with hers.
- 114. She will cast her spell that thou car'st not to go to meetings where men are gathered; unmindful of meat, and mirthless, thou goest, and seekest thy bed in sorrow.
- 115. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, and heed it well, learn it, 'twill lend thee strength, follow it, 'twill further thee:

 beware lest the wedded wife of a man thou lure to love with thee.
- 116. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, and heed it well,
 learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,
 follow it, 'twill further thee:
 on fell or firth if to fare thee list,
 furnish thee well with food.

⁴³This is, probably, the name of the sage or singer (*pul*) who pretends to have had the following redes of Othin addressed to him at a meeting of the gods.

- 117. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, and heed it well, learn it, 'twill lend thee strength, follow it, 'twill further thee:
 - withhold the hardships which happen to thee from the knowledge of knaves;
 - for, know thou, from knaves thou wilt never have

reward for thy good wishes.44

- 118. A man I saw sorely bestead through the words of a wicked woman; her baleful tongue did work his bane, though good and unguilty he was.
- 119. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, and heed it well,
 learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,
 follow it, 'twill further thee:
 if faithful friend thou hast found for thee,
 then fare thou to find him full often;
 overgrown is soon with tall grass and bush
 the trail which is trod by no one.
- 120. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, and heed it well,
 learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,
 follow it, 'twill further thee:
 a good man seek thou to gain as thy friend,
 and learn to make thyself loved.
- 121. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, and heed it well,
 learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,
 follow it, 'twill further thee:
 the first be not with a friend to break
 who was faithful found to thee;
 for sorrow eateth the soul of him
 who may not unburthen his mind.

^{44&#}x27;Good wishes' are here to be understood, it seems, as kind disposition toward him one confides in.

- 122. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, and heed it well, learn it, 'twill lend thee strength, follow it, 'twill further thee:
 to bandy words with a babbling fool will aye prove witless work.
- 123. For from evil man not ever wilt thou get reward for good;
 a good man, though, will gain for thee the love and liking of many.
- to his bosom-friend all that him burdens; few things are worse than fickle mind:

 no friend he who speaks thee but fair.
- 125. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, and heed it well,
 learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,
 follow it, 'twill further thee:
 not three words shalt with a worse man
 bandy;

oft the better man forbears when the worse man wounds thee. 45

- 126. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, and heed it well, learn it, 'twill lend thee strength, follow it, 'twill further thee:
 - neither shoemaker be nor shaftmaker, either, but it be for thyself:
 - let the shoe be ill-shaped or the shaft not true, and they will wish thee woe.
- 127. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, and heed it well, learn it, 'twill lend thee strength, follow it, 'twill further thee:

⁴⁵Scil. on slight provocation.

- if wrong was done thee let thy wrong be known, and fall on thy foes straightway.
- 128. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, and heed it well,
 learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,
 follow it, 'twill further thee:
 in ill deeds not ever share,
 but be thou glad to do good.
- 129. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, and heed it well,
 learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,
 follow it, 'twill further thee:
 look not ever up, when fighting,—
 for mad with fear men then oft grow—45a
 lest that warlocks bewitch thee.
- 130. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, and heed it well, learn it, 'twill lend thee strength, follow it, 'twill further thee: if thee list to gain a good woman's love and all the bliss there be, thy troth shalt pledge, and truly keep: no one tires of the good he gets.46
- 131. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, and heed it well,
 learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,
 follow it, 'twill further thee:
 be wary of thee, but not wary o'er much;
 be most wary of ale and of other man's wife,
 and eke, thirdly, lest thieves outwit thee.
- 132. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, and heed it well, learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,

⁴⁵aThe panic fear which (according to the Konungs Skuggsjá chap. 11) often seizes young and inexperienced warriors.

46I.e. she will be true to you in turn.

follow it, 'twill further thee:
never laugh at or mock, or make game of,
guest or wayfaring wight.

- of what kin be they who come;
 no man so flawless but some fault he has,
 nor so wicked to be of no worth.
 [Both foul and fair are found among men,
 blended within their breasts.]
- 134. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, and heed it well, learn it, 'twill lend thee strength, follow it, 'twill further thee: at hoary singer sneer thou never: there is sense oft in old men's saws; oft wisdom cometh out of withered bag that hangs 'mongst the hides, and dangles 'mongst the skins drying under roof, with the rennet.
- 135. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, and heed it well, learn it, 'twill lend thee strength, follow it, 'twill further thee:

 beshrew not the stranger, nor show him the door,

but rather do good to the wretched.

136. That bar must be strong which unbars the door

to each and every one:48

⁴⁶aOnly in the Paper Manuscripts.

⁴⁶bIn the original, bul; cf. Intro. note 1a.

⁴⁷The old man's wrinkled mouth is compared to a bag (cf. *Hamth*. 27); which metaphor again suggests the rustic interior of the following lines.

⁴⁸The meaning seems to be: only a strong bolt can last in the door which is unbarred to every one. In other words: do not be too generous and hospitable. On the other hand, etc.

give the beggar something, lest he bear thee ill-will and wish thee all manner of mischief.

and heed it well. 137. Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, learn it. 'twill lend thee strength, follow it. 'twill further thee: when ale thou drinkest choose earth for thee;49 'gainst ague, [for earth is good 'gainst ale, fire,50 'gainst straining.⁵¹ acorns, 'gainst witchery, steel. 'gainst hate,58 'gainst house-strife, the elder,⁵² the moon. 'gainst the rabies,54 earth-worms, 'gainst ill luck, runes—1

of help to the sons of men,
of harm to the sons of etins;
hail to whoever speaks them,
hail to whoever knows them!
Gain they who grasp them,
happy they who heed them!

for earth takes the waters all.

* * * *

⁴⁹I.e. as a remedy against any injurious effect therefrom.—The bracketed lines, containing several folk-medicinal remedies, are undoubtedly a later addition. Their translation is, for the most part, conjectural. Cf. *Maal og Minne* 1923, 1ff.

⁵⁰Probably, in the form of a glowing iron.

⁵¹I.e. tenesmus; relieved by the astringent decoction from acorns. ⁵²In folklore, the elder bush exercises a pacifying influence.

⁵³Such ailments as rickets, the king's evil, etc. were thought to be superinduced by 'hate', i.e. the evil eye.

⁵⁴Or, 'bites'; cured by the application of worms.

139. ⁵⁵I ween that I hung on the windy tree all of nights nine, wounded by spear, bespoken to othin, bespoken myself to myself,

[upon that tree of which none telleth from what roots it doth rise.] 56

140. Neither horn^{56a} they upheld nor handed me bread;

I looked below me— aloud I cried—fetched up the runes and fell back then.

- 141. From the son of Bolthorn, 57 Bestla's father,

 I mastered mighty songs nine,
 and a drink I had of the dearest mead,
 got from out of othrærir.
- 142. Then began I to grow and gain in insight, to wax and to feel right well; one word grew out of the other word, one work out of the other.

order to discover the runes, and through them to become possessed of secret wisdom, Othin sacrificed himself by hanging himself on the World-Ash and wounding himself with the spear. Hence the World-Tree is called Yggdrasil, i. e. Ygg's ('the Terrible One's', Othin's) Horse. The manner in which Othin sacrificed himself is instanced also otherwise. According to the Gautreks saga, chap. 7, the hero Starkath sacrificed King Víkar to Othin by transfixing him with a spear and suspending him from a tree." (Gering) It is difficult, however, to avoid the conclusion that the conception of the first two stanzas (cf. also 146) is ultimately derived from the Crucifixion Scene of the Bible, as Bugge has endeavored to prove.

⁵⁶These lines seem to have gotten here from Fj. 14. ⁵⁶aScil. drinking-horn.

⁵⁷In the 'Gylfag. chap. 6 we learn that the giant Bolthorn had a daughter Bestla who, by Bur, becomes the mother of Othin, Vili, and Vé. It has been conjectured that the wise Mímir is this giant's son (cf. Vsp. 19, 21). Thus, Othin's wisdom is derived from three sources: from his self-sacrifice, from Mímir's well, and from a drink out of Othrærir (cf. 107 and note).

143. Runes wilt thou find, and rightly read them, deep-red dyed by 6thin, 57a made by the holy hosts, runes which are mighty, runes which are matchless, which are wrought by Ragna-Hrópt. 58

144. Othin among æsir,⁵⁹ for alfs, Dáin,⁶⁰

Dvalin⁶¹ for the dwarfs,

Alsvith⁶² among etins, (but for earth-born men)⁶³

wrought I some myself.

145. Know'st how to write,⁶⁴ know'st how to read, know'st how to dye,⁶⁵ know'st how to delve, know'st how to ask, know'st how to speed, know'st how to spend?

146. Better unasked than offered overmuch;
for aye doth a gift look for gain;
thus did othin write ere the earth began,
when up he rose in after time.66

147. Those spells I know which the spouses of kings^{66a}

wot not, nor earthly wight:

⁵⁷aviz. with blood, which is thought especially potent in magic.

^{58&#}x27;God of Gods', Othin.

⁵⁹Supply: wrought runes.

⁶⁰Cf. p. 383.

⁶¹Cf. ibid.

^{62&#}x27;The All-Wise'; cf. Alvis, the dwarf, Alv.

⁶³ Conjecturally supplied by Gering.

⁶⁴Scil. the runes.

⁶⁵Cf. 143. The translation of the following lines is mainly conjectural. They deal with the correct making and interpretation of runes, and with their proper use in sacrifice and magic.

⁶⁶Cf. 139 and note.

⁶⁶aSuch as Sigrdrifa and Grimhild.

'Help' one is hight with which holpen thou'lt be

in sorrow and care and sickness.

148. That other I know which all will need who leeches list to be:

(on the bark scratch them of bole in the woods

whose boughs bend to the east).67

- 149. That third I know, if my need be great to fetter a foeman fell:

 I can dull the swords of deadly foes, that nor wiles nor weapons avail. 68
- 150. That fourth I know, if foemen have fettered me hand and foot:

 I chant a charm⁶⁹ the chains to break, so the fetters will fly off my feet, and off my hands the halter.
- 151. That fifth I know, if from foeman's hand
 I see a spear sped into throng,
 never so fast it flies but its flight I can stay,
 once my eye lights on it.
- 152. That sixth I know, if me some one wounds with runes on moist root written;⁷⁰ or rouses my wrath by reckless speech: him blights shall blast, not me.

 $^{^{67}}$ I.e. the 'limb-runes'; cf. Sigrdr. 12, from which these lines are supplied by the translator.

⁶⁸On this stanza cf. Ríg. 44 and Gróug. 16.

⁶⁹Consisting also of 'runes'. In Beda's Historia ecclesiastica IV, 22 a prisoner who frees himself from his fetters is asked 'an forte litteras solutorias, de qualibus fabulæ ferunt, apud se haberet.' Also the theme of one of the Merseburg charms.

⁷⁰In which manner Grettir's death is brought about (Grettis saga chap. 81f).

- 153. That seventh I know, if o'er sleepers' heads
 I behold a hall on fire:
 however bright the blaze I can beat it down—
 that mighty spell I can speak.⁷¹
- 154. That eighth I know which to all men is needful, and good to know: when hatred runs high, heroes among, their strife I can settle full soon.
- 155. That ninth I know: if need there be to guard a ship in a gale, the wind I calm, and the waves also, and wholly soothe the sea.⁷²
- I scare them with spells so they scatter abroad, heedless of their haunts.
- old friends to the fray:

 under buckler I chant⁷⁴ that briskly they fare
 hale and whole to battle,
 and hale wend to their home:
 hale whereever they are.
- 158. That twelfth I know, if on tree I see a hanged one hoisted on high:

⁷¹Cf.Ríg. 45.

⁷²Cf. *Gróug*. 11.

⁷⁸I.e. their own 'skins' or forms which they leave behind on their rides. The incantations cause the witches to forget both their original forms and their homes.

⁷⁴Cf. the barditus mentioned by Tacitus in his Germania chap. 3, produced 'objectis ad os scutis.'

- thus I write and the runes I stain⁷⁵ that down he drops and tells me his tale.⁷⁶
- 159. That thirteenth I know if a thane's son I shall wet with holy water:⁷⁷
 never will he fall, though the fray be hot,
 never sink down, wounded by sword.
- 160. That fourteenth I know, if to folk I shall sing and say of the gods:

 æsir and alfs know I altogether—

 of unlearned few have that lore.
- 161. That know I fifteenth which Thióthrærir⁷⁸ sang,
 the dwarf, before Delling's door:⁷⁹
 gave to æsir strength, to alfs victory
 - 162. That sixteenth I know, if I seek me some maid.

by his song, and insight to othin.

to work my will with her:
the white-armed woman's heart I bewitch,
and toward me I turn her thoughts.

163. That seventeenth I know, (if the slender maid's love

I have, and hold her to me: thus I sing to her)⁸⁰ that she hardly will leave me for other man's love.

⁷⁵Cf. 143.

⁷⁶Othin seeks the wisdom of the dead, cf. also Bdr. 5, Hárb. 43.

⁷⁷In the heathen rite of baptism; cf. Rig. 7, note.

⁷⁸Unknown elsewhere.

⁷⁹Kenning for 'dawn' (?). As to Delling, cf. Vaf. 25.

⁸⁰ Supplied by the translator.

164. In this lore wilt thou, Loddfáfnir, be in need anon and ever: thy weal were it, if this wisdom thine—'tis helpful, if heeded, 'tis needful, if known.

165. That eighteenth I know which to none I will tell,

reither maid nor man's wife—
'tis best warded if but one know it:
this speak I last of my spells—
but only to her in whose arms I lie,
or else to my sister also.⁸¹

 $^{^{81}}$ This is, perhaps, the same unfathomable secret Othin whispered in Baldr's ear as he lay dead, Vaf. 55.

THE LAY OF VAFTHRUTHNIR.

Vafþrúþnismél.

This lay is frankly didactic in purpose, offering fragments of cosmogonic and mythological information which is brought out in the course of a senna or 'flyting' between the king of the gods and the wise giant Vafthrúthnir.¹ The narrative frame chosen is not unskilfully handled.

Othin has heard of the wisdom of the giant and, against the wishes of his anxious spouse, fares to see him in his hall, there to match his lore against the giant's. After an initial test of the 'wisdom' of his guest who has, so far, insisted on standing on the floor, Vafthrúthnir urges him to occupy the high-seat, there to continue the wager the stake of which is the loser's head. Othin now becomes the interrogator and finally propounds the unanswerable question. Through it, but too late, the doomed giant recognizes who is his opponent.

The measure is *ljóðaháttr*, the typical vehicle of gnomic poetry, whose regular dialogic form has, in this as in other cases, favored the preservation of the text. It is handed down completely in the *Codex Regius*, and, partly, in the *Codex Arnamagnæanus*. Besides, some nine stanzas of it occur in Snorri's paraphrase in the *Gylfag*., in various places. There are no clues as to place of origin. The purely heathen tone has led scholars to assign the poem to the Tenth Century; but we may well suspect it to be a later, skaldic, effort.

Óthin said:

1. "Give rede now, Frigg,2 to fare me listeth to wise Vafthrúthnir.

Much I wonder if in wisdom my like the all-wise etin be."

Frigg said:

2. "At home had I Heriafather's rather, in the garth of the gods;

^{1&#}x27;Strong in Entangling', i.e. in questions.

²'Beloved', Othin's wife.

⁸'Father of Hosts', Othin.

there's no match in might among thurses to that all-wise etin."

óthin said:

3. "Far have I fared, much afield have I been, and have striven in strength with gods; now I wish to know how Vafthrúthnir lives in his high-timbered hall."

Frigg said:

- 4. "All hail to thy going! all hail to thy coming! all hail to thee, hence and hither!

 May thy wit not fail thee, Father of Men,4 if with words ye war."
- 5. Went then of thin his wisdom to match with the all-wise etin:
 came to the hall of Hym's father.
 In went Ygg forthwith.

othin said:

6. "Hail, Vafthrúthnir! to thy hall I am come to see thee, etin, myself; to know me listeth if lore thou hast, or art all-wise, etin."

Vafthrúthnir said:

7. "What wayfaring wight such words dareth hurl at me in my hall?

Alive shalt thou never leave this hall if thou showest thee lesser in lore."

⁴Othin.

⁵Not to be confused with Hymir (of the *Hymiskviþa*). Nothing is known of this son of Vafthrúthnir.

^{6&#}x27;The Terrible One', Othin.

8. "Gagnráth" my name; as guest I come to thy threshold thirsty, oh thurs!

Needful of welcome I wandered long; now I hope thou'lt harbor me."

Vafthrúthnir said:

9. "Why then, Gagnráth, greet me from floor?

In the hall seat thee on settle!

Moot then may we who most knoweth,

whether guest or grizzled thul.""

óthin said:

10. "In want who comes to a wealthy man—
let him say what is needful, or naught!

Too much babbling is bad for him
to cold-hearted host who comes."

Vafthrúthnir said:

11. "Say then, Gagnráth, as unseated thou wilt match thy lore with mine:

how the horse is hight which heavenward brings every day at dawn to mankind?"

óthin said:

12. "He is Skinfaxi" hight which skyward brings every day at dawn to mankind; of horses best he to heroes seems, his mane glisters like gold."

^{7&#}x27;Giving Good Counsel', i.e. for victory.

⁸Cf. H&v., note 1a.

^{9&#}x27;Shiny-Mane'; the Sun-horse.

Vafthrúthnir said:

13. "Say then, Gagnráth, as unseated thou wilt match thy lore with mine:

how the horse is hight which the hallowed night

doth bring to the blessed gods?"

óthin said:

14. "He is Hrímfaxi¹º hight which the hallowed night

doth bring to the blessed gods.

As he fares, foam doth fall from his bit;
thence cometh the dew in the dales."

Vafthrúthnir said:

15. "Say then, Gagnráth, since unseated thou wilt match thy lore with mine:

how the flood is hight which flows between the garth of the gods and the etins?"

óthin said:

16. "Is hight Ifing the flood which flows between the garth of the gods and the etins; will it ever and ay unfrozen stay, ice there is never on it."

Vafthrúthnir said:

17. "Say then, Gagnráth, since unseated thou wilt match thy lore with mine:

how the field is hight where as foes will meet Surt¹¹ and the sacred gods?"

^{10&#}x27;Rime-Mane'.

¹¹The god of fire; cf. Vsp. 44, note.

18. "Is hight Vígríth¹² the field where as foes will meet

Surt and the sacred gods; a hundred leagues in length it is; far doth stretch that field."

Vafthrúthnir said:

19. "Wise art, wayfarer! On Vafthrúthnir's bench let us sit, and speak in the seat.

Let our heads be stakes, my hall within, and wins he whose wisdom is greater."

óthin said:

20. "Say then swiftly, for sage thou art and thou, Vafthrúthnir, doest wot: whence came the earth and the upper heaven at the outset, etin?"

Vafthrúthnir said:

21. "Of Ymir's flesh was the earth then shaped, the barren hills of his bones; and of his skull the sky was shaped, of his blood the briny sea."

Othin said:

22. "Say thou this second, for sage thou art and thou, Vafthrúthnir, doest wot: whence the moon did come who rides men above,

and the sun also?"

^{12&#}x27;Field of Battle':

¹⁸ See especially Grimn. 40, 41; also Vsp. 3, note, and Hynd., 35.

Vafthrúthnir said:

23. "Mundilferi¹⁴ is hight the Moon's father, and the Sun's also; they daily wander the welkin about, to tell the time for men."

óthin said:

24. "Say thou this third, in thy thought if it dwells

and thou, Vafthrúthnir, doest wot: whence the day springeth, in the dales which shines,

and eke the night and new-moon?"

Vawthrúthnir said:

25. "Is one Delling¹⁵ hight, he is Day's father; but Night was born to Nor; waxing and waning moon the wise gods made to tell the time for men."

óthin said:

26. "Say thou this fourth, if thou fathom it, and thou, Vafthrúthnir doest wot: whence winter came and warm summer, in the beginning, for gods?"

Vafthrúthnir said:

27. "Is one Vindsval¹⁶ hight, he is Winter's father.

and Summer is Svósuth's son;

¹⁴According to Gylfag. chap. 11, he had named his daughter after the sun, and his son after the moon. In order to punish him for his presumption the gods set them to drive the wains of the sun and the moon.

¹⁵ The Shining'. According to Gylfag. chap. 11, a god who with Nótt 'Night' engendered a son, Dagr 'Day'.

¹⁶'Wind-Cold', a giant, as is V & sup 'Hardship' (?) and Sv & sup 'Beloved', father of Summer.

(but Vindsval was to Vósuth born: cold-hearted all that kin)."17

óthin said:

28. "Say thou this fifth, if sage thou art and thou, Vafthrúthnir, doest wot: who the oldest etin of Ymir's kin was in the world's first days?"

Vafthrúthnir said:

29. "Ages before the earth was made,

Bergelmir¹⁸ came to be;

Thrúthgelmir was that thurs' father,

but Aurgelmir oldest of all."

óthin said:

30. "Say thou this sixth, if sage thou art and thou, Vafthrúthnir doest wot: whence Aurgelmir and all his sib at the outset, wise etin?"

Vafthrúthnir said:

31. "Out of Élivágar¹⁹ spurted venom drops, and waxed till there was an etin; 'tis thence our kin came altogether; hence wrathful and rugged our ways."

óthin said:

32. "As a seventh say, if sage thou art and thou, Vafthrúthnir, doest wot: how children gat the grim etin, as misshapen she-thurs none was?"

¹⁷Supplied with Bugge, after Gylfag. chap. 19.

¹⁸The meaning of these giant names is not certain.

^{18&#}x27;Stormy Waves (?)', imagined as a 'venom'-cold river in the Far North, Gylfag. chap. 5.

Vafthrúthnir said:

33. "The ice-etin's strong arms beneath there grew both girl and boy; one with the other, the wise etin's shanks begat a six-headed son."

óthin said:

34. "Say as an eighth, if sage thou art and thou, Vafthrúthnir, doest wot: what oldest of eld the earth above; for all-wise, etin, thou art."

Vafthrúthnir said:

35. "Ages before the earth was made,

Bergelmir came to be;

that first I wot that the wise etin

lifeless was laid in the grave."20

óthin said:

36. "Say as a ninth, if sage thou art and thou, Vafthrúthnir, doest wot: whence the wind cometh o'er the waves which blows,

yet is never seen itself?"

Vafthrúthnir said:

37. "One Hræsvelg²¹ hight sits at heaven's end, an etin in eagle's shape:
from his wings is wafted the wind which blows

over all who live."

²⁰The interpretation of this line is doubtful. ²¹ Corpse-Gulper'.

"Say as the tenth, if the sacred gods' fate thou, Vafthrúthnir, doest wot: why Niorth²² did come to Nóatún,²³ yet was not begot by gods?"

Vafthrúthnir said:

39. "In Vanaheim²⁴ Vanir begat him, and gave him as hostage to gods; at the world's last weird he will wend again home to the wise Vanir."

óthin said:

40. 24a"Say as eleventh where e'erliving men smite each other with swords; fighting they fall, then fare from battle and drain goblets together."

Vafthrúthnir said:

41. "This all the einheriar²⁵ who in 6thin's garth smite each other with swords: fighting they fall, then fare from battle and drain goblets together."

²²The name of this Van god corresponds exactly to that of the goddess *Nerthus* 'Terræ mater' whose rites are described by Tacitus in the famous 40th chapter of his *Germania*. Originally doubtless a fertility god, in Old Norse mythology he rules over the wind and the sea.

^{23&#}x27;Ship-stead, harbor'.

²⁴ The Home of the Vanir'. As a return hostage, the Æsir sent Mímir, Vsp. 39, note.

^{24a}The stanza is restored conjecturally.

²⁵'Protagonists', the fallen warriors who are gathered by the valkyries into Othin's hall, Valholl (Valhalla).

42. "Say as the twelfth how the sacred gods' fate thou, Vafthrúthnir, doest wot?

Of the etins' lore, and of all godheads, thou sayest but sooth, thou all-wise etin!"

Vafthrúthnir said:

43. "Of the etins' lore, and of all godheads, sooth, and but sooth, I say, for in all the worlds I wandered;

Niflhel²⁶ beneath nine worlds I saw, to which the dead are doomed."

óthin said:

44. "Far have I fared, much afield have I been, have oft striven in strength with gods: what wights will live when that winter²⁷ is over.

to earth-dwellers awful?"

Vafthrúthnir. said:

45. "Lif and Lifthrasir;28 in the leafage they will hide of Hoddmimir;29 the morning dews their meat will be, they will rear the races of men."

²⁶Dark Hel' or Niflheim, the realm of Hel, the abode of the dead. ²⁷The so-called *fimbulvetr* 'Chief of Winters', foretold also *Vsp.* 33, *Vsp. sk.* 15, as preceding the end of the world. It consists of three winters with no summer between.

^{28&#}x27;Life' and 'Longing for Life' (?).

²⁹This tree is identical with the world-tree Yggdrasil, V_{sp} . 3ff, and the 'Tree of Mimir', F_j . 14.

46. "Far have I fared, much afield have I been, have oft striven in strength with gods: how soars the sun on the smooth heavens, when swallowed by Fenrir's fangs?"³⁰

Vafthrúthnir said:

47. "A daughter orb was to Alfrothul³¹ born, ere that swallowed her Fenrir's fangs; on her mother's path will the maiden fare, the time the fair gods fall."

óthin said:

48. "Far have I fared, much afield have I been, have oft striven in strength with gods: what wise maidens, the wide sea over, full many swiftly fare?"

Vafthrúthnir said:

49. "Three throngs of maidens³² over Mogthrasir's

thorp do throw themselves:
good hap they bring where to homes they
fare,

though of etins' kin they are."

óthin saids

50. "Far have I fared, much afield have I been, have oft striven in strength with gods:

⁸⁰Cf. \(Vsp. 32.

^{81&#}x27;Alf-Beam', a kenning for the sun.

³²"These maidens are norns who assist at childbirth, cf. Fáfn. 12, 13. Mogthrasir 'Desirous of Sons' is a symbolic designation for mankind, 'Mogthrasir's thorp', for the world" [F. Jónsson].

of gods that were who will wield the sway, when Surt's fire is slaked"?33

Vafthrúthnir said:

51. "Víthar³⁴ and Víli³⁵ will ward the gods' homes, when Surt's fires are slaked;

when Surt's fires are slaked;

Móthi and Magni³⁶ will Miolnir have,

when Thór have thrown it last."

óthin said:

52. "Far have I fared, much afield have I been, have oft striven in strength with gods: what wight will end All father's life, when draws near the dreaded doom?"

Vafthrúthnir said:

53. "Will the Wolf⁶⁷ swallow Valfather then; but Víthar will be his bane:

he will smite asunder the slayer's jaws and avenge his father's fall."

óthin said:

54. "Far have I wandered, much afield have I been, have oft striven in strength with gods:

⁸³Cf. Vsp. 44ff.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 46 and the following note.

⁸⁵ Ibid. 25, note.

³⁶ The Courageous' and 'the Strong', who both are sons of Thór and hence inherit his hammer *Miolnir* 'Crusher'.—Other divinities inhabit Ithafield according to *Vsp.* 54.

⁸⁷I.e. Fenrir; cf. Vsp. 45.

what did óthin whisper in the ear of his son, ere Baldr on bale was laid?"38

Vafthrúthnir said:

55. "Knows not dweller on earth what in days of yore

thou saidst in the ear of thy son:
with fey mouth fondly I flaunted my lore
and spoke of the day of doom.
With 6thin now my insight I matched:
of all beings thou art wisest born."

³⁸The same question is put by Othin in the $Hervarar\ saga$ chap. 9. Cf. $H \cite{Q}v$. 165 and note.

THE LAY OF GRIMNIR

Grímnismél.

Like the foregoing poem, the Grimnism l has a didactic purpose, instruction in the mythology, the heavenly geography, and the nomenclature of the Northern Olympus. It is conveyed in Othin's monologue, addressed first, as a reward, to young Agnar who takes pity on his plight, and finally to his erstwhile favorite Geirræth, to whom the god gradually reveals his dread identity. The epic framework has elements in common with a fairy-story, still told in our days in northern Norway, of two brothers who sail to a monster-infested island where the one brother abandons the other to his fate in order to claim the kingdom for himself.

"The form of the narrative is very symptomatic. The reader is to gather that the old cotter has given Geirræth the counsel to make away with his brother; from the conversation between Othin and Frigg, that it was they who fostered the youths; again, that Frigg, in maligning Geirræth as a miser had a double purpose—in the first place, to induce Othin to visit the king whom by her emissary she renders hostile to the disguised god . . . in the second place, to destroy Geirræth, since Othin would of course not let his ill treatment go unavenged." a

The poem has suffered chiefly from accretion: its monologic form no doubt tempted copyists to interpolate stray bits of lore—sometimes of great value—which they were anxious to have preserved within its framework. For the most part, these differ in form from the otherwise regular *ljóðaháttr*.

There are no positive indications as to time of composition (Tenth Century?) or place of origin. The poem is handed down completely both in the *Codex Regius* and the *Codex Arnamagnæanus*; and embedded in Snorri's paraphrase in the *Gylfaginning* are preserved some twenty stanzas.

King Hrauthung¹ had two sons, Agnar and Geirræth.² Agnar was ten years old, Geirræth eight. One day they were rowing in a boat with their tackle, to catch small fry, when the wind blew them out to sea. In the darkness of night they were dashed against the land. They made the

aDetter-Heinzel II, 172.

¹Cf. Hynd. 26.

²Spear-peace' (?), i.e. peace gained by the spear.

shore and found a cotter. They stayed there that winter. The goodwife fostered Agnar, the goodman, Geirræth and taught him his lore. In spring he got them a boat, and when he and his wife led them down to the shore he spoke secretly with Geirræth. They had a fair wind and came to their father's landing-place. Geirræth was forward in the boat. He lept out on shore and thrust the boat back into the sea and said: "Now go where all trolls may take thee!" Agnar drifted out to sea; but Geirræth went up to the people. He was warmly welcomed, and as his father had died he was made king and became a great leader.

One day, óthin and Frigg were sitting in Hlithskialf³ and were looking out upon all the worlds. Then said othin: "Canst thou see Agnar, thy fosterson, how he begets children with an ogress in a cave? But Geirræth, my fosterson, is king in the land." Frigg answered: "He is so grudging about his food4 that he lets his guests die of hunger when he thinks too many have come." othin said that this was a big lie, and so they laid a wager about this matter. Frigg sent her chambermaid Fulla to Geirræth to tell him to beware lest he be bewitched by a warlock who was then come into the land. She told him that he could be told by this that no dog was so fierce as to rush at him. But it was evil slander, to say that King Geirreth was not generous about his food. Yet he had that man taken captive whom his dogs would not set on. He was clad in a blue cloak and gave his name as Grímnir,5 and said no more about himself though he was asked. The king tortured him to make him speak, by setting him between two fires; and there he sate for eight nights. Geirræth had a son ten years old, who was named Agnar after his brother. Agnar went

³'Hall of Gates' or 'Gate-Tower', Othin's seat in Valholl. "When he seats himself in the high-seat he can see all the world and the doings of every man." Gylfag. chap. 9.

⁴A cardinal sin in a king, according to Old Norse conceptions.

^{5&}quot;The Masked One', Othin. He is frequently pictured as concealing his countenance by a wide cowl.

up to Grímnir and gave him a full horn to drink from and said that the king did ill to torture one who had done no wrong. Grímnir emptied it. By that time the fire had come so near him that his cloak began to burn. He said:

- 1. Hot art thou, blaze, and too high, withal!

 Get, fire, thee farther away!

 My frieze-coat is singed though I flung it aloft,

 flares up the fur in the flames.
- 2. Eight nights famished 'twixt the fires I sate, nor did any one fetch me food, but Agnar only who after shall rule, Geirræth's son, o'er the Goths.6
- 2. All hail to thee, for happiness is given thee, Agnar, by óthin.

 Better reward, I ween, shalt never have for one beaker of beer.
- 4. The land is holy which lies yonder, near to æsir and alfs; in Thrúthheim, there shall Thór aye dwell, till draws nigh the doom of the gods.
- 5. On Ýdal's plains Ull hath reared him his hall timbered on high.

 For Frey's tooth-fee was fashioned of yore Alf-home, as gift by the gods.

⁶Here, as frequently, used in a general and honorific sense for 'warriors'.

^{7&#}x27;Land of Strength'.

^{8&#}x27;Yew Dales'. Ull 'Glorious' is the god of archery. His weapon, the long-bow, was made of the yew. He is, possibly, a hypostasis of Othin, or of Týr, the god of war.

⁹'Lord'. He is the god of fertility and prosperity. Like Niorth (cf. Vaf. 39), his father, he is said to be of Van origin. The 'toothfee' is a gift to an infant when he cuts his first tooth.

- 6. A third hall still, all thatched with silver, was built by the blessed gods:
 in Valaskialf¹⁰ hall did house himself
 6. Othin in olden days.
- 7. Sokkvabekk¹¹ called is the fourth, which cool waters

ripple round about; there othin and Sága¹² drink, all their days, glad from golden cups.

8. Gladhome is hight the fifth where goldenshimm'ring

Valholl¹³ is widely spread out; here othin chooses every day many war-slain wights.¹⁴

- 9. Easily known to Ygg's chosen are the heavenly halls:
 the rafters, spear-shafts; the roofs, shield-shingled;
 and the benches strewn with byrnies.
- 10. Easily known to Ygg's chosen are the heavenly halls:
 a wolf hangeth o'er the western gate, and hovers an eagle on high. 15
- 11. Thrymheim¹⁶ is hight the sixth, where Thiatsi dwelled.

the etin of awful might;

^{10&#}x27;Hall of Slain Warriors' (?), the first of Othin's three halls.

¹¹ Sunken Hall' (?). Cf. Fensalir, V_{sp} . 26.

^{12&#}x27;Seeress', Frigg. The name is in no wise to be connected with the Norse word for 'history, story'.

^{18&#}x27;Hall of Slain Warriors'; cf. Valaskialf, above, and, Vaf. 40, 41.

¹⁴I.e. the slain warriors chosen by Othin.

¹⁵Wolf and eagle, as scavengers of the battlefield, are symbolic of Othin's warlike activities. Their carved images adorn the gable ends of his hall.

^{16&#}x27;Storm-Home'.

the god's bride there her bower hath, Skathi, where her father before.¹⁷

12. Breithablik¹⁸ the seventh; there Baldr the good

hath reared him his bright abode: in that land it lies where least I know falsehood and faithlessness.

13. Himinbiorg¹⁹ the eighth; there Heimdall, they say,

guards the holy hall;

there the gods' warder in goodly stead the mead drinks, glad in mind.

- 14. Folkvang 20 the ninth, where Freya21 doth say who seats shall hold in her hall: half of the slain are hers each day, and half are Othin's own.
- 15. Glitnir²² the tenth, which on gold standeth, and is shingled with shining silver; there Forseti²³ unflagging sits, the god that stills all strife.
- 16. Nóatún²⁴ the eleventh, where Niorth hath him reared his bright abode; there Skathi's spouse, the spotless god, holds sway in high-timbered hall.

¹⁷She is Niorth's wife; cf. also Hárb. 19, Lok. 50.

^{18&#}x27;The Far-Shining'; properly the seat of Baldr, the god of innocence, justice, and light.

¹⁹'Heavenly Mountains'; concerning Heimdall, cf. Vsp. 1, note. ²⁰'Field of Warriors'.

²¹'Mistress, Queen' (feminine of Frey), the goddess of love. She is the daughter of Niorth and the sister of Frey.

^{22&#}x27;Shining'.

²³ The Presiding One', Baldr's and Nanna's son.

²⁴ Ship-stead'; cf. Vaf. 38 and above, 11.

- 17. Greenwoods do grow, and grasses tall, in Vithi, 25 Víthar's land: from horseback leaps the hero, eager his father's slaver to fell.
- 18. By Andhrímnir²⁶ (the cook) in Eldhrímnir²⁷ (the kettle)

 Sæhrímnir²⁸ (the boar) is boiled,
 the best of bacons; though 'tis barely known
 what the einheriar^{28a} in Valholl eat.
- on the flesh of fallen men; but the wise war-god by wine only lives his life alway.
- 20. The whole earth over, every day,
 hover Hugin and Munin;30
 I dread lest Hugin droop in his flight,
 yet I fear me still more for Munin.
- 21. Thund³¹ roars loudly; sports Thióthvitnir's³² fish in the foaming flood; the strong stream seems too stiff to wade for warriors to Valholl bent.^{32a}

²⁵ Wood-Land'. As to Víthar, cf. Vsp. 46.

²⁶ Sooty in the Face', the cook of Valholl.

²⁷ Sooty from the Fire'.

²⁸ Sooty Black' (?).

²⁸a cf. Vaf. 41.

 $^{^{29}\}mbox{Both names signify 'the Greedy One'.}$ They are $\mbox{Othin's two wolves.}$

³⁰ Thought' and 'Remembrance', Othin's ravens which bring him intelligence.

³¹ The Noisy' (?), a river probably thought to flow around Valholl.

³² The Great Wolf', Fenrir. The passage is of doubtful meaning. ³² Doubtful.

- 22. Valgrind³³ is the gate that wards the gods, holy, nigh holy doors; old is that bar, 'tis barely known how that latch is locked.
- 23. Five hundred doors and forty withal

 I ween that in Valholl be:
 eight hundred warriors through one door hie
 them
 when they fare forth to fight the Wolf.³⁴
- 24. Five hundred rooms and forty withal I ween that in Bilskirnir³⁵ be; of all the halls which on high are reared the greatest I see is my son's.
- 25. Heithrún, the goat on the hall that stands, eateth off Lærath's³⁶ limbs; the crock she fills with clearest mead, will that drink not e'er be drained.
- 26. Eikthyrnir,³⁷ the hart on the hall that stands, eateth off Lærath's limbs; drops from his horns in Hvergelmir³⁸ fall, thence wend all the waters their way.
- 27. 39Síth and Víth, Sækin and Eikin, Svol and Gunnthró, Fiorm and Fimbulthul,

^{33&#}x27;The Gate of the Battle-slain'.

³⁴ Fenrir; cf. Lok. 22, note.

³⁵Of uncertain meaning. It is the hall of Thór, who is a son of Othin.

³⁶Lærath seems to be identical with the tree Yggdrasil, which suffers still other harm, cf. 26 and 33ff.

^{37&#}x27;Oak antlers' (?).

³⁸A well at the foot of Yggdrasil.

³⁹The following catalog of rivers is plainly interpolated. Their names refer, some to swiftness, others to coldness and depth. For Slíth, cf. Vsp. 36; for Leiptr, H.H. II, 30.

Rín and Rinnandi,

Gipul and Gopul, Gomul and Geirvimul, all these flow through the garth of the gods:

Thyn and Vin, Tholl and Holl, Gróth and Gunnthorin.

- 28. Vínó is hight one, Vegsvin the other, the third, Thióthnuma;
 Nyt and Not, Nonn and Hronn,
 Slíth and Hríth, Sylg and Ylg,
 Víl and Vón, Vond and Strond,
 Gioll and Leiptr, by the land of men flow, but hence fall to Hel.
- 29. Kormt and Ormt and the Kerlaugs twain,
 Thor wadeth through

every day, to the doom when he fares 'neath the ash Yggdrasil;

- for the bridge of the gods⁴⁰ burneth alway, hot are the holy waters.
- 30. 41Glath and Gyllir, Glær and Skeithbrimir, Silfrintopp and Sinir,

Gísl and Falhófnir, Golltopp and Lettfeti, these steeds ride heavenly hosts

every day, to the doom when they fare 'neath the ash Yggdrasil.

31. Three roots do spread in threefold ways beneath the ash Yggdrasil:

dwell etins 'neath one, 'neath the other, Hel, 'neath the third, Mithgarth's men.

⁴⁰The rainbow bridge, Bifrost (or Bilrost), 'The Road With the Many Colors'. The passage is not clear.

⁴¹The catalog of steeds likewise is interpolated. Their names refer to speed, bright appearance, etc.

^{42&#}x27;Middle World' or 'The Enclosure', viz. against the outer world of giants, monsters, etc.

- 31a. 43 (An eagle sitteth on Yggdrasil's limbs, whose keen eyes widely ken;
 'twixt his eyes a fallow falcon is perched, hight Vethrfolnir, and watcheth.)
- 32. Ratatosk⁴⁴ the squirrel is hight which runneth ay

about the ash Yggdrasil: the warning words of the watchful eagle he bears to Níthhogg⁴⁵ beneath.

- 33. 46Four harts also the highest shoots ay do gnaw from beneath:
 Dáin and Dvalin, Duneyr and Dyrathrór.
- 34. More worms do lie the world-tree beneath than unwise apes may ween:

 Góin and Móin, which are Grafvitnir's sons,

 Grábak and Grafvolluth;

 Ofnir and Sváfnir⁴⁷ ay, I fear me,

 on that tree's twigs will batten.
- 35. The ash Yggdrasil doth ill abide,
 more than to men is known:
 the hart browsing above, its bole rotting,
 and Níthhogg gnawing beneath.
- 36. 48Hrist and Mist the horn shall bear me,— Skeggiold and Skogul as well;

⁴³This stanza is lacking in the original. We are able to reconstruct it from Snorri's close paraphrase, *Gylfag*. chap. 16.—The eagle and the falcon possibly symbolize the watchfulness of the gods. ⁴⁴'Rat-Tooth'.

⁴⁵Cf. Vsp. 31. The dragon is here conceived as gnawing the roots of Yggdrasil; see 35.

⁴⁶The following two stanzas are very likely interpolations.

⁴⁷Several of these names have reference to the burrowing activities of worms and snakes. The last two are names of Othin; see 54 and note.

⁴⁸The names of the valkyries indicate their warlike activities, like those Vsp. 23.

- but Hild and Thrúth, Hlokk and Herfiotur, Goll and Geironul,
- Randgrith and Rathgrith and Reginleif, to the einheriar ale shall bear.
- 37. Arvakr and Alsvith,⁵⁰ they up shall draw the sun's wain wearily; but under their bellies the blessed gods have hidden the 'icy irons'.⁵¹
- 38. Svalin⁵² is hight, the Sun before,
 a shield from the shining god.
 Would smoke and smoulder both sea and land,
 if from him it ever should fall.
- 39. Him Skoll, the wolf, in the sky doth dog to the warding woods;⁵³ but Hati⁵⁴ the other, Hróthvitnir's son, follows the fair orb ^{54a} too.
- 40. Of Ymir's flesh the earth was shaped, of his blood, the briny sea, of his hair, the trees, the hills of his bones, out of his skull the sky.
- 41. But of his lashes the loving gods made

 Mithgarth for sons of men;

 shaped from his brain were the shifting clouds

 which in the heavens hover.

⁵⁰'Early-awake' and 'Very Swift', the sun-horses. cf. Vaf. 12; Sigrdr. 17.

⁵¹Snorri, in his *Gylfag*. chap. 11, has the following prosy explanation of these: "Under their shoulders the gods placed two bellows to cool them, and in some lays these are called 'icy irons' (?)".

^{52&#}x27;Cooling'.

⁵³The passage is of doubtful meaning.

 $^{^{54}}$ 'Hate', the son of Hróthvitnir 'the Famous Wolf', i.e. Fenrir (who according to Vaf. 47 himself swallows the sun).

⁵⁴aThe Moon.

⁵⁵Cf. Vaf. 21.

- 42. Will Ull⁵⁷ befriend him, and all the gods, who first the fire quenches; for open lie to the æsir all worlds, when kettles are heaved from the hearth.⁵⁸
- 43. In earliest times fvaldi's sons⁵⁹
 Skithblathnir, the ship, did shape,
 the best of boats, for beaming Frey,
 the noble son of Niorth.
- 44. The ash Yggdrasil is of all trees best;
 Skíthblathnir, the best of boats;
 of holy gods, óthin; of horses, Sleipnir;
 of bridges, Bilrost;
 of hawks, Hóbrók;
 of hounds all, Garm.
- 45. Now my looks have I lifted aloft to the gods: 64 help will come from on high,

⁵⁷Cf. above, 8.

⁵⁸The words of the second part of the stanza seem clear, but their meaning has so far resisted convincing explanation.

⁵⁹According to Gylfag. chap. 43, they are skilful dwarves who make a present of the ship Skithblathnir 'the Thin-planked' to Frey. "It is so large that all gods may find room in it with all their equipment". Also, it has a favorable breeze whenever its sail is raised, and can sail both on sea and over land. It may be laid together like a cloth, and be put in one's pocket.—Stanzas 43, 44 are evidently interpolated.

⁶⁰'The Runner', Othin's horse. It has eight feet. According to the story in Gylfag. chap. 42 it was begotten on Loki by the stallion of the giant who built the wall around Asgarth; cf. Vsp. 17, note, and Vsp. sk. 13.

⁶¹Cf. 29, note.

⁶²The god of poetry and eloquence. Bragr signifies 'poetry'. It is uncertain whether Bragi Boddason (Ninth Century), the first skald whose name and verses have come down to us, was the prototype of the god.

²⁶a'High-leg'.

⁶³Cf. Vsp. 36.

⁶⁴The translation here offered is somewhat of a guess, no interpretation being altogether acceptable.

from all the æsir which in shall come on Ægir's benches, at Ægir's feast.65

- 46. 66Grím is my name, and Gangleri,67
 Herian and Hialmberi,68
 Thekk and Thrithi,69
 Helblindi and Hór.70
- 47. Sath and Svipal and Sanngetal,⁷¹

 Herteith⁷² and Hnikar,

 Bileyg, Báleyg,⁷³

 Bolverk, Fiolnir,⁷⁴

 Grím and Grímnir,

 Glapsvith, Fiolsvith,⁷⁵
- 48. Síthhott, Síthskegg, Sigfather, Hnikuth, Alfather, Valfather, Atríth, Farmatýr: 76 by one name was I not welcomed ever, since among folk I fared.
- 49. Grímnir my name in Geirræth's hall, but Ialk in Asmund's.

⁶⁵ As in the Hymiskviba, 1.

⁶⁶The following five stanzas are obviously interpolated.

⁶⁷Grim=Grimnir, cf. the *Prose* above.—Gangleri 'the Way-Weary' (?).

^{68&#}x27;War-God' (?) and 'Helm-Bearer'.

⁶⁹ The Welcome One' and 'the Third', i.e. with Hór (below) and Iafnhór (49). This trinity seems to betray Christian influence.

^{70&#}x27;One-Eyed'; but, as evidenced by Iafnhor 'Equally High', it was at an early time confused with the homonymous word meaning 'high'.

⁷¹The Truthful', 'the Changeable', and 'Truthfinder'.

^{72&#}x27;Glad in Battle' and '(Spear-)thruster'.

^{73&#}x27;Fiery-Eyed'.

^{74&#}x27;Bale-Worker' and 'Wise in Lore'.

^{75&#}x27;The Much-Experienced'.

⁷⁶In order: 'Long-Hood', 'Long-Beard', 'Victory Father', '(Spear-) thruster', 'Father of All', 'Father of the Battle-slain', 'Attacker by Horse' (?), and 'Lord of Boat-loads'. The latter epithet shows Othin in his (historically earlier) rôle as god of the merchants; cf. Mercury—Hermes with whom he shares other important characteristics.

Was I Kialar hight when the hand-sled I drew, 79

but Thrór^{so} at things, Vithur in wars,

- óski and ómi, Iafnhór, Biflindi, Gondlir and Hárbarth⁸¹ among gods.
- 50. Svithur and Svithrir 82 at Sokkmímir's was I, when the old etin I hid, and when Mithvitnir's, the mighty one's, son I slew alone.
- 51. Thou art muddled, Geirræth! Too much thou hast drunk;

 (bereft of reason)⁸³ rashly thou losest

 Othin's and einheriars' favor.
- 52. Full long I spake, but little thou mindedst:
 faithless friends⁸⁴ betray thee:
 before me I see my fosterson's sword,
 its blade all dripping with blood.
- 53. A death-doomed man will soon drink with Ygg:85 not long the life which is left thee.

⁷⁹ Neither of the two adventures of Othin alluded to is known.

^{80&#}x27;Inciter to Strife' (?); Hárb. 24.

^{81&#}x27;Bearer of the (Magic) Wand' and 'Greybeard'.

⁸²Both epithets signify 'the Wise'. We know nothing of the myth alluded to.

⁸³ Added with the Paper Manuscripts.

⁸⁴Probably Frigg and her minion who had—we are to understand—made him go counter to Othin's instruction to be kind to guests, given Geirreth the time he was fostered by Othin.

⁸⁵I.e. in Othin's (Ygg's) hall.

The norns wish thee ill: now óthin mayst see; come thou near if thou canst.86

54. Now óthin 's my name. Ygg was I hight,

Thund was my name ere then,—

Vak⁸⁷ and Skilfing, Vófuth and Hróptatýr,⁸⁸

Gaut ⁸⁹ and Ialk among gods.

Ófnir and Sváfnir,⁹⁰ they all have become

one with me, I ween.

King Geirræth was sitting with his sword on his knees half unsheathed. But when he heard that it was óthin who had come to him, he arose and wanted to take him from between the fires. His sword slid from his hands with its hilt downward. The king stumbled and fell forward, the sword pierced him and thus became his bane. Then óthin vanished; but Agnar was king in that land for a long time.

⁸⁶After these words Othin probably vanished as, in a similar situation, he vanished in the hall of king Heithrek, *Hervararsaga* chap. 9. The last stanza which botches this excellent ending is no doubt a later addition.

^{87&#}x27;Wakeful'

^{88&#}x27;Wayfarer' and 'God of Gods'.

^{89&#}x27;The God of Goths', i.e. of men (?).

^{90&#}x27;The Entangler', i.e. in questions; cf. Vafthrúthnir, Vaf. 1, and 'He Who Lulls to Sleep or to Dreams'.

THE LAY OF SKIRNIR

Skirnism !!

Hardly another poem in the Edda so appeals to the modern and, probably, to universal taste. Indeed, here we see the epic-dramatic technique of the North at its best—and the subject is a romantic love-myth that speaks to us all. The workmanship is excellent. Though entirely dialogic, the poem never leaves us in doubt of either place or drift of the action—the explanatory prose might well be dispensed with; and with surprising skill we are made to visualize the appearance, and divine the character, of the actors.

Beginning and ending with love-sick Frey, the poet delegates all the action to the god's alter ego, his devoted follower and friend Skírnir who with intrepidity accomplishes his mission and overcomes the resistance of the fair giant maiden by the fear of his rune magic, after both promises of gifts and threats of force have failed.

In point of the arrangement and the handling of his material the poet probably owes little to the myth. It has recently been urged with some plausibility that we have in this 'lay' actually the dramatized rites of a Frey cult celebrating the god's annual union with the fertility goddess. We can, however, just discern the consciously working author, in frequent verbal reminiscences of other Eddic lays, and in his struggle with the material to be fashioned. Most interesting in his treatment of the *ljóðaháttr* stanzas which, regular at the beginning, become swaying and incoherent, with barbarous assonances, when the terrific imprecations fill them to overflowing, but resume their regular gait toward the tranquil end.

The tradition is, on the whole, fair. Only some of the courses defy certain interpretation. The poem is found complete in *Cod. Reg.*, whereas *Cod. Arn.* breaks off after 27. Snorri's paraphrase is significantly brief: for his purposes, the lay seemed deficient in epic details.

Norway is (doubtfully) assigned as the home of the lay, on account of the mention of the thistle, which was not indigenous in Iceland. There are no definite clues as to the time of its origin (Tenth Century?).

Frey, the son of Niorth, had seated himself one day on Hlithskialf and looked over all the worlds. Then saw he in

¹Cf. Grimn. 5, note.

²Cf. *ibid*. Introd. Prose, note.

the world of etins a fair maiden as she went from the hall of her father to her bower. And that sight made him heavy of heart. Skírnir³ was the name of Frey's follower. Niorth bade him to make Frey speak out. Skathi⁴ said:

1. "Arise now, Skírnir, and ready make thee to summon my son, and find out this from the wise youth, whom he doth hate."

Skírnir said:

2. "For waspish words I well make look, if I summon thy son to find out this from the wise youth, whom he doth hate."

Skírnir said:

3. "Wilt tell me, Frey, foremost among gods, and answer me as I ask: why sittest thou lonely, my lord, all day on Hlithskialf in the hall?"

Frey said:

4. "How tell thee my yearning, oh youth, as thou wishest—

why heavy my heart?
The alf's-beam⁵ shineth all these long days,
but lesser grows not my longing."

³ 'The Resplendent'; possibly an epithet (or hypostasis) of Frey himself.

⁴Frey's mother, cf. Grimn. 11.

⁵Kenning for 'the sun'; cf. Vaf. 47.

Skírnir said:

5. "Thy heart's not so heavy, I hold, but thou mayst

open it to another;

for in days of yore we young were together: truly thou mightest trust me."

Frey said:

- 6. "From on high I beheld in the halls of Gymir's a maiden to my mind;
 - her arms did gleam, their glamour filled all the sea and the air.
- 7. "This maiden is to me more dear than maiden to any man; but æsir and alfs all will have it that strangers aye we stay.
- 8. '("In my behalf her hand shalt ask, and home bring her hither, her father let or allow it:

 good shall thy guerdon be.")

Skírnir said:

9. "Thy steed then lend me to lift me o'er weird ring of flickering flame,

the sword also that swings itself against the tribe of trolls."

Frey said:

10. "My steed I lend thee to lift thee o'er weird ring of flickering flame,

⁶A giant.

⁷This stanza is not in the original; but the paraphrase of Snorri (Gylfag. chap. 37) shows that a stanza no doubt has dropped out here. It is supplied, following Gering.

⁸Frey will miss his sword in the last combat; cf. Lok. 42, where Loki alleges that it was given away as a bridal gift to Gerth.

the sword also which swings itself, if wise he who wields it."

Skírnir said to his steed:

11. "Night is it now, now we shall fare over moist mountains, to the thurses' throng; scatheless we both shall scape their might, or else both be ta'en by the trolls."

Skírnir rode into etin-home and to Gymir's court. There were savage dogs tied to the gate of the enclosure which was about Gerth's bower. Skírnir rode to where a shepherd sate on a mound, and greeted him:

12. "Say thou, shepherd, sitting on hill, who doest watch all ways:

how win I the welcome of the winsome maid through the grim hounds of Gymir?"

The shepherd said:

13. "Whether art thou doomed, or dead already, (in the stirrup who standest)?"

Never shalt thou win the welcome to have of the good daughter of Gymir."

Skírnir said:

14. "Ne'er a whit will whine, whatso betide, who is eager on errand bent; my fate is foretold me to the time of a day, laid out is all my life."

Gerth said:

15. 9a"What outcry and uproar within our courts hear I now, handmaid?

⁹Inserted with Grundtvig.

^{9a}We must assume that Skírnir has caused his steed to leap over the wall of flame.

The earth doth shake and all my father Gymir's high halls."

The handmaid said:

16. "By his steed here stands a stranger hero, unbridles and baits him; (he wishes, I ween, welcome to have from the good daughter of Gymir)".10

Gerth said:

17. "Bid to my bower the bold-minded come, to meet me and drink our mead; though far from us, I fear me, is not my brother's banesman."

Gerth said:

18. "Whether art of the alfs or of æsir come, or art thou a wise van?"

Through flickering flame why farest alone to behold our halls?"

Skírnir said:

- 19. "Neither alf am I, nor of æsir come nor, either, a wise van; through flickering flame yet fared I alone to behold your halls.
- 20. "Apples eleven have I all golden; to thee, Gerth, I shall give them, to hear from thy lips thou lovest Frey, and deemest him dearest to thee."

¹⁰An obvious gap here is supplied, following Bugge's suggestion. ¹¹That is, either Skírnir has slain the shepherd who was her brother; or else the allusion is to Frey's (Skírnir's) slaying of the giant Beli; cf. *Vsp.* 45.

¹²The different races of gods.

Gerth said:

21. "Thy apples eleven not e'er shall I take to do any wight's will; nor shall I ever with Niorth's son Frey dwell while our lives do last."

Skírnir said:

22. "Draupnir¹³ the ring thy dowry shall be, which with Baldr was burned; eight rings as dear will drop from it every ninth night."

Gerth said:

23. "Draupnir the ring I do not want, though it with Baldr was burned; gold I lack not in Gymir's halls, to deal out daily."14

Skírnir said:

24. "This mottled blade, doest, maiden, see it which here in my hand I hold?

Thy haughty head I hew from thy neck but thou yield thy love to the youth."

Gerth said:

25. "Nor gold nor sword will gain it over me to do any wight's will; if Gymir, my father, did find thee here, full soon would he slay thee."

^{18&#}x27;Dripper'. This ring had been given Othin by a dwarf (Skáld. chap. 35). After Baldr was burned on the pyre, he returned the ring to Othin from Hel (Gylfag. chap. 49).

¹⁴Which is the wont of princes; cf. e.g. Ríg. 39.

Skírnir said:

- 26. "This mottled blade, dost, maiden, see it. which here I hold in my hand?

 Before its edge the etin falls, and is thy father fey.
- 27. "With this magic wand bewitch thee I shall, maiden, to do my will; where the sons of men will see thee no more, thither shalt thou!
- 28. "On the eagle-hill¹⁵ shalt ever sit, and nod toward Niffhel; thy food shalt find far more loathsome than men the slimy snake.
- 29. "An ugly sight when out thou goest,

 even Hrímnir¹' will stare at

 and every hind glare at;¹8

 more well-known wilt be than the watch of

 the gods,¹9

 and grin through the grate.²0
- 30. "Shalt drivel and dote, and drag thy fetters, with salt tears shalt sorrow; shalt sit as I say, with sorrow heavy, and twofold torment.²¹
- 31. "Imps shall nip thee, all the long days thou art with the etins;

¹⁵Possibly, a kenning for 'mountain peak'.

^{16&#}x27;Dark Hel', the abode of the dead.

^{17&#}x27;Frost Giant' (?).

¹⁸There is rime here in the original.

¹⁹I.e. Heimdall, the warder of the gods. Cf. Lok. 48.

²⁰She is to be kept a prisoner of the giants, which also the following stanzas imply.

²¹A very difficult stanza.

for play shall weeping thy pastime be: live a loathly life with tears!

32. "With three-headed thurs thou then shalt dwell.

or else unwedded be; lust shall lash thee, weakness waste thee:

be like the thistle which is thrust under, when the harvest is brought home.²²

- 33. "To the woods I wended, to the wet forest, a magic wand me to make, and a magic wand I made me.
- 34. "Thou hast angered othin, the uppermost god;

Frey will frown on thee,
thou wicked wench! Woe betide thee,
thou hast got the great gods' wrath.

- 35. "Hear ye, frost-giants, hear ye etins, ye sons of Suttung,²³ all ye sibs of the æsir: how I forbid, how I debar men's mirth to the wench, men's love to the wench.
- 36. "Hrímgrímnir is hight who shall have thee, a thurs,

Niflhel beneath:
thou shalt fare each day to the frost-giants hall.

cringe under curse, cringe under care.

²²In explanation of these lines, M. Olsen has called attention to the Esthonian harvest custom of laying a thistle weighted with a stone into an window opening, which is to prevent damage from malicious grain demons.

²³Cf. H&v. 103. Here, for the giant-tribe in general.

37. "Slavering slaves shall serve thee 'neath tree-roots

with staling of stinking goats.

No other drink shalt ever get, wench at thy will, wench at my will!

38. A 'thurs'-rune²⁴ for thee, and three more, I scratch:

lechery, loathing, and lust;
off I shall scratch them, as on I did scratch
them,

if of none there be need."

Gerth said:

39. "Hail, rather, hero, and hold to thy lips this crystal cup with mead—; though hardly thought I that hence I should fare,

a van's wife to be."

Skírnir said:

40. "My errand I would know altogether, ere home I hie me: when art minded to meet the strong one, and welcome the wise son of Niorth?"

Gerth said:

41. "Barri is hight, as both we know, for true love a trysting glade: after nights nine to Niorth's son there will Gerth grant her love."

²⁴The symbol *b*, in Old Norse called *thurs*.—The runes (probably scratched on the limb of a tree, as in *Sigrdr*. 10) may be scraped off again, when their magic effect ceases.

Then rode Skirnir home. Frey stood without and greeted him and asked what tidings he brought:

42. "Say now, Skírnir, ere thou unsaddle the steed

and set a foot forward:
what errand bringest thou from etin-home,
of mark for thee and me?"

Skírnir said:

43. "Barri is hight, as both we know,
for true love a trysting glade.

After nights nine to Niorth's son there
will Gerth grant her love."

Frey said:

44. Long is a night, longer are two,—
how shall I thole three?

Shorter to me a month oft seemed,
than half this hovering time."25

²⁵The last line is uncertain.

THE LAY OF HARBARTH

Hárbarthsljóþ

The two main divinities of the North are here made to confront each other in a senna (or flyting) and a mannjafnaör (or matching of men against one another with respect to accomplishments and prowess): Othin (Hárbarth), the god of the toil-abhorring, restless viking—warlike, cruel, amative, haughty; and Thór, the god-natured, mighty-thewed, and impetuous, but somewhat simple, god of the yeoman. In keeping with their characters, the exploits boasted of are, with Othin, gallant adventures with giantesses whose spouses or fathers he overmasters by strength or cunning, and warfare for its own sake; with Thór, rather monotonously, the slaying of the giant-brood, to make the earth habitable for men.

We do not long remain in doubt where lie the sympathies of the poet: in the battle of words, from first to last, Thór loses out when his slow wits are pitted against the superior irony and smooth readiness of speech of the god of runic wisdom. Also, Thór's unquestionably useful activities are made to appear a bit prosy, and his plight after arduous combats a bit ridiculous, when compared with the more knightly pursuits and bearing of Othin. The laughs are always on Othin's side, especially when we consider that the meaning of a number of the insulting flings which so incense Thór completely eludes us.

For a not too squeamish taste the effect, though a little burlesque, is sprightly and entertaining—which was probably the aim of the gifted improvisor.

The lay is notable among the poems of the Edda for the absence of any recognizable verse scheme. For all we know, it was conceived in the main as we now have it: there are absolutely no reliable criteria as to omissions or interpolations.

The text is preserved completely in Cod. Reg., whereas Cod. Arn. contains only the latter part of it, from stanza 19 to the end. It is generally assumed that the poem belongs to about the Tenth Century and was composed in Norway; mainly, because the opposition between nobility and yeomanry which is apparent in it never existed in Iceland.

Thór was on his way back from the East¹ and came to a

¹That is, from the giant-world, whither he goes frequently "to slay trolls". cf. 23.

sound. On the other shore there was the ferryman² with his boat. Thor called out:

1. "Who is the fellow there by the ferry who stands?"

The ferryman said:

2. "Who is the fellow there over the firth who calls?"

Thór said:

3. "Ferry me over the firth! I shall feed thee this morn:

In the basket on my back is the best of foods.

My fill of it had I by my fireside, of herrings and oats,3 ere from home I fared."

The ferryman said:

4. "An early deed thou deemst thy meal; but doest thou know that down-hearted thy home-folks? I heard thy mother was dead."4

Thór said:

5. "That sayest thou now which seemeth to all most mournful to hear: that my mother be dead."

The ferryman said:

6. "Me thinketh unlikely that three farms thou ownest,⁵

²Note that here, as in *Sinf.*, Othin appears as a ferryman (for the dead); cf. Hermes-Mercurius.

⁸The homely fare of the yeoman's god.

⁴Thór's mother is Fiorgyn 'the Earth' (cf. below 56 and Vsp. 48), whose death would fill everyone with dismay.

⁵The connection is probably this: you are of too little account that the death of your mother should make such a stir.

for barefoot thou art, and in beggar's clothes; scarce whole are the breeks on thy buttocks."

Thór said:

7. "Steer hither the dugout, the haven I shall show thee; but who owns the boat which thou hast yonder?"

The ferryman said:

8. "He is Hildolf⁶ hight who bade me helmsman be, the swift sea-king by Ráthsey-sound who dwells; he bade me to fetch not ragged fellows nor horse-thieves, but goodly men only whose goings I knew.

Now say thy name if over the sound thou wilt."

Thór said:

9. "I shall utter my name though outlawed I were, and eke of all my kin: I am óthin's son, Meili's brother, Magni's father, a god strong in thews: 'tis with Thór thou speakest.

This now I ask what thy name be."

The ferryman said:

10. "I am Hárbarth" hight, I hide my name but seldom."

^{6&#}x27;Battle-Wolf', i.e. 'Warrior'.

[&]quot;Strength". The name and functions of Meili remain unexplained.

^{8&#}x27;Hoar-Beard', i.e. Othin; cf. Grimn. 49.

Thór said:

11. "Why shouldst thou hide thy name but thou hadst good cause?"

Hárbarth said:

12. "Even though sought I were: from such as thou I would fend my life but I were fey and doomed."

Thór said:

13. "A weary thing it were to me to wade through the water to thee, and so wet my nether parts; would I maul thee, knave, for thy mocking speech if I could but come over the sound."

Hárbarth said:

14. "Here shall I stand till thou hither comest; no hardier foe shalt find, now Hrungnir¹o is dead."

Thór said:

15. "How Hrungnir I fought thou hast heard aright, the stubborn etin who a stone bore as head; yet felled I the fiend, before me he lay.

What didst thou meanwhile. Hárbarth?"

⁹I.e. for some misdeed; outlawed.

¹⁰A mountain giant, the largest of the tribe. He challenges Thór to single combat and is felled by the hammer; Skáld. chap. 17.

on that island which is Algrœn hight;

16. "Was I with Fiolvar full five winters there war we did wage and waded in blood, tried many deeds, and maidens lured."

17. "Was I with Fiolvar full five winters and waded in blood, tried many deeds, and maidens lured."

Thór said:

17. "Did you win the love of the women?"

Hárbarth said:

18. "Merry had been the maids, if but meek they had been; friendly had been the women, if but fond they had been:

of sand under waves they wound their ropes, out of deep dales they dug forth the ground.

With wily words I outwitted them all, with the sisters seven I slept, my will I worked with them all.

What didst thou meanwhile, Thor?"

Thór said:

19. "Strong Thiatsi, the thurs, I overthrew in battle,14 and the awful eyes of Alvaldi's son15

¹¹Nothing is known about this myth. Is it merely a hoax to satisfy Thór's curiosity? At any rate, the names Fiolvar 'The Very Cautious' and Algræn 'All-Green' i.e. the Earth', seem gotten up $ad\ hoc$.

¹²Othin is still teasing Thór with his if's.

¹³These activities seem to have reference to river or sea goddesses. The ropes of sand are the ripple marks in the sand near the shore of the sea and in rivers; the mountain torrents dig deep gashes.

¹⁴According to *Bragar*. chap. 56, all the gods slew him; cf. also *Lok*. 50.

¹⁵I.e. Thiatsi. His eyes were cast up to the sky (by Othin. Bragar. 56) and became stars, to appease his daughter Skathi.

I cast on the cloudless sky; those be the mighty marks of my great works, which all men since may see. What didst thou meanwhile, Hárbarth?"

Hárbarth said:

20. "With love-spells mighty I lured witch-women,

and made them forsake their mates; a hardy thurs Hlébarth me seemed: a magic wand he gave me, but I wiled him out of his wits."16

Thór said:

21. "Then thou gavest back ill for good."

Hárbarth said:

22. "One man's ill is the other man's luck; in such things each for himself!

What didst thou meanwhile, Thór?"

Thór said:

23. "In Eastland was I and etins slew, wanton wenches who warred on mountains: much might had the etins if all did live, little might had men then in Mithgarth's round.

What didst thou meanwhile, Hárbarth?"

Hárbarth said:

24. In Valland¹⁷ was I and waged battles, egged on the athelings, nor ever made peace.¹⁸

¹⁶Nothing is known of the exploits referred to in this stanza.

^{17&#}x27;Land of the Battlefields'.

¹⁸This is the prevailing conception of Othin's activities.

Gets 6thin all earls slain by edge of swords, but Thór, the breed of thralls."19

Thór said:

25. "Uneven wouldst thou deal to æsir their followers, if too great might were given thee."

Hárbarth said:

26. "Enough strength hath Thór, but a stout heart nowise:

in faint-hearted fear wast fooled in a glove, and in utter dread thou didst not dare to fart or sneeze, lest Fialar heard it." 20

Thór said:

27. "Hárbarth, thou coward, to Hel I would send thee, if but over the sound I could reach."

Hárbarth said:

28. "Why shouldst thou reach over the sound, as
I slighted thee nowise?
What dist thou meanwhile, Thór?"

Thór said:

29. "In the East was I and Ifing²¹ guarded, when Svárang's sons sought to kill me:

¹⁹As this assertion is not borne out elsewhere it seems made to twit Thór.

²⁰The reference (cf. also *Lok*. 60, 62) is to Thór's unlucky expedition to the giant world, when he and his companions found shelter for the night in the glove of the huge giant Skrymir (here called Fialar 'the Allwise'); cf. *Gylfag*. chap. 45.

 $^{^{21}}$ Cf. Vaf. 16. In the original, only 'the river'. Svárang's sons are the giants.

huge stones they hurled, yet they strove in vain, they begged for peace when overborne they were.

What didst thou, meanwhile, Hárbarth?"

Hárbarth said:

30. "In the East was I, in my arms I held the white-armed maiden with wheedling words, gladdened the gold-dight one till she gave me her love."

Thór said:

31. "Good was then the wench to thee!"

Hárbarth said:

32. "Of thy help then had I great need, to hold fast the white-armed maiden."

Thór said:

33. "I would have given it gladly, if on the ground I had been."

Hárbarth said:

34. "And I would trust thee, if thou hadst not betrayed me."

Thór said:

35. "No heel-biter am I, like an old hide-shoe in spring!"

36. "What didst thou meanwhile, Thór?"

Thór said:

37. "Against berserk women²² I warred on Hlésey; with wickedness they bewitched all men."

Hárbarth said:

38. "T'was unworthy of thee to war on women."

Thór said:

39. "She-wolves were they, not women, indeed; they shook my ship which was shored on land, threatened me with iron clubs, and drove off Thialfi.28

What didst thou meanwhile, Hárbarth?"

Hárbarth said:

40. "On the harrying was I which was hither made, raising the war-flag and reddening spears."

Thór said:

41. "To my mind thou callest that thou camest to war on us."

²²A berserk (literally 'bear-skin') is a person who is supposed to be able to change himself at will into a bear; then, more generally, a fierce warrior.—The reference to their wives on the island of Hlésey (the sea-god Hlér's Island in the middle of the Kattegat) seems to point to sea goddesses (cf. 39) whose iron clubs are the breakers on the shore.

²⁸Thór's servitor.

42. "I shall make that up with a mickle ring, as daysmen may deem in dooming between us."24

Thór said:

43. "Whence hast thou these haughty words; for haughtier ones heard I never."

Hárbarth said:

44. "My words I have from wights so old who dwell in the hows-of-the-home."25

Thór said:

45. "A good name givest thou to the graves, indeed, when thou callest them hows-of-the-home!"

Hárbarth said:

46. "Thus think I of such things."

Thór said:

47. "Thy glibness of tongue I would gag full soon, so soon as I wade o'er the water; than the wolf louder I ween thou wouldst howl,

if the hammer struck thy head."

²⁴"Hárbarth has done harm to Thór by disturbing the work of the farmers" (Gering). Now, Hárbarth offers a ring in composition. Just in what lies the gibe referred to in 43 is not clear at all.

²⁵The 'home' is the world of men, the hows-of-the-home, hence, graves. Othin gathers wisdom from the dead, cf. $H\delta v$. 158. The force of this remark too escapes us.

48. "With Sif²⁶ some one sleeps in her bower; thy strength thou shouldst stake against his!"

Thór said:

49. "With wicked words sayst thou what worst would seem to me; but, craven knave, I know that thou liest."

Hárbarth said:

50. "No lie I tell thee, full late art thou now; far hadst thou been had I ferried thee over."

Thór said:

51. "Cowardly Hárbarth, thou hast held me here over-long."

Hárbarth said:

52. "Never had I thought that Thór would brook a ferryman to fleer at him."

Thór said:

53. "Now give heed to my words and row hither thy boat; let mocking be and fetch Magni's father over."

Hárbarth said:

54. "Get thee from the firth! I shall not ferry thee over."

²⁶ Sib, kin', Thór's wife. Cf. Lok. 54.

Thór said:

55. "Then show me the way, since thou wilt not ferry me over the firth."

Hárbarth said:

56. "Tis not long to show, all the longer to fare: a while to the stock, and a while to the stone; then take thy way to the left till to Verland²⁷ thou comest.

Will Fiorgyn there meet Thór her son, and show her kinsman the road, how he may come to óthin."

Thór said:

57. "Will I get thither to-day?"

Hárbarth said:

58. "With hard work thou wilt get thither with setting sun."

Thór said:

59. "Scant now be our speech, since thou but scoffest at me; my might thou shalt feel if we meet again."

Hárbarth said:

60. "Go now where all trolls may take thee!"

²⁷'Land of Men', where the earth goddess Fiorgyn will show him the way to Valholl. Othin is, of course, sending Thór on a fool's errand.

THE LAY OF HYMIR

Hymiskvipa

Were it not for the striking ballad motifs and some unforgettable scenes thoroughly representative of Northern creative imagination, the *Hymiskviþa* would hardly be reckoned among the best known and best liked lays of the Edda; for on closer examination it is seen to be pieced together of at least four distinct Thór myths which the poet has not succeeded in welding into an organic whole. The main story, the fetching of the brewing kettle, is thrown into the shade by the tremendous motif of Thór's fishing for the Mithgarth's-serpent, and equalled in interest by his other feats of strength. The allusion to still another myth, the maining of the goat, has so little to do with the lay as a whole that the stanzas dealing with it have been suspected of being an interpolation.

Again, notwithstanding the conscientious and mediating labor of scholars, there is evident a vagueness, and looseness of structure which seems inherent in the original.

For another matter, the subordinate rôle played by Týr is unworthy of the redoubtable god of war. It would seem as though he is here—ill-advisedly—substituted for crafty and resourceful Loki who so often functions as the intermediary between gods and giants.

Fornyröislag is used, the typical metre for narrative lays.—In point of language the Hymiskvipa is notable for a superabundance of kennings^{1a} bordering on the mannerism of the skalds, which render the style turgid in places, in others, to be sure, peculiarly impressive. A number of points speak for fairly late Icelandic origin (Eleventh or Twelfth Century?), notwithstanding the naively Heathen spirit that seems to prevade the poem.

The text is handed down complete both in Cod. Reg. and Cod. Arn. It is not mentioned by name in the Snorra Edda whose excellent paraphrase is, indeed, based on other sources.

1. Much game gathered the gods, of yore; on wassail bent the wands they shook, with blood besprent, for brewing kettle, and found that Ægir full many had.²

¹aCf. General Introduction, p. xxi.

¹The future was foretold from wands dipped in the blood of sacrifical animals.

²According to the reading of Cod. Reg. the passage may mean: "they found that Ægir had plenty of ale".—Ægir (whose name is etymologically connected with the word for 'water') is the god of the sea.

- 2. Sate the sea-god, smiling blandly, before Mistarblindi's mighty offspring.³
 With threat'ning eye Ygg's son him faced:
 "To æsir aye thou ale shalt brew."
- 3. Quick in quarrel

 he vengeance vowed

 bade Thór fetch him

 "in which for all

 he quelled the thurs—4

 on vanir⁵ thereafter;

 a fit caldron:

 ale I shall brew."
- 4. Nor did they know, the noble gods, the glorious ones, where got it might be; till, trustingly, Týr⁶ did give a helpful hint to Hlórrithi.⁷

Týr said:

5. "There lives eastward of Élivágars wisest Hymir, at Heaven's end; a kettle there keeps my kinsman mighty, a rost around is the roomy caldron."

Thór said:

6. "Knowest thou if we may win that boiler?"

Týr said:

"Ay, friend, if wily we work this deed."

³Following Boer's emendation, Mistarblindi is Óthin; his son, Thór. Cf. the same kenning (Ygg's son) below.

⁴Ægir, who is of giant kin.

⁵General for 'gods'.

⁶(Anglo-Saxon Tiw; cf. Latin divus, etc.) 'god', originally doubtless the predecessor of Othin. In Old Norse mythology Týr is more specifically the god of war.—Stanza 8 shows that he is here conceived to be the son (by Othin?) of Hymir's wife—some goddess, possibly, who is united with the giant against her will.

⁷Thór

⁸I.e. in etin-home; cf. Vaf. 31.

⁹I.e. a league.

- 7. Then forth they fared, a full day's ride, etinhome-ward, till to Egil¹⁰ they came—he guarded the goats with golden horns; then went to the hall where Hymir dwelled.
- 8. His grandam^{10a} loathly swart heads she had but an other dame, and brow-white, bore

there greeted Týr: a hundred times nine; all dight in gold, the beer to her son.

(The fair one said:)

9. "Sib-of-the-etins,
'neath Hymir's kettles
my wedded mate
is glum with guests,

I shall set you twain
to hide you from him:
many a time
grim in his mind."

10. The lubberly fiend home from hunting,The icicles clinked the churl had his

was late in coming heavy laden. as in he strode: chinbeard frozen.

mv well-beloved:

(His leman said:)

11. "Welcome, Hymir, thy kinsman is come,

and crossed thy threshold, from long wayfaring.

him we looked for With him he has man's well-wisher,

from long wayfaring Hróthr's slayer, 11 who is Véur hight.

12. "They hide them here 'neath the back stone-post standing, to 'neath the back stone-post standing, the back stone-post standing, the back stone-post standing, the back stone-post standing stand

'neath the hall's gable, to withstand thy glance."

The beam did burst straight as struck them

and brake asunder, the stare of the etin.

¹⁰A giant; cf. 39, note.

¹⁰aTýr's grandam by actual relationship; cf. 4, note. The phantastic number of heads points to late invention.

¹¹Kenning for Thór. Nothing is known of Hróthr. Véur 'protector' (?).

13. And shattered rolled from their shelf eight kettles—but hard-hammered, one whole stayed of all. Then forth they came. The fell etin grimly eyed then his old foeman.

14. Evil him thought the Thund'rer to see—
he oft made sorrow the sib of the etins.
Three stout steers then from their stalls
were ta'en:
to broil he bade the beeves together.

Then on the spit they speared the three.

Ate Sif's yokemate, 12 ere to sleep he went, twain of the oxen all by himself.

16. A mighty mouthful Thór's meal did seem to hapless Hrungnir's hoary playmate. 18

(He said:)

"Another evening, when out we row, what we bag shall be our bellies' fill."

17. Full ready was Thór to row out to sea, if the blustering thurs a bait him gave.

Hymir said:

18. "Turn to the herd if thou trustest thee, breaker-of-thurs-heads, a bait to find; I ween that there, a bait from my bulls best thou fetchest."

¹²Thór; cf. *Hárb*. 48.

¹⁸I.e. Hymir; cf. *Hárb*. 14, note, and 15.

¹⁴Thór's hammer; cf. Vaf. 51.

19. To the woods wended his way the swain: a black bull there bellowing stood. the breaker-of-thurs-Broke from the bull heads the high head-castle, horny-guarded.¹⁵

Hymir said:

- "Thy work meseems much worse by far, 20. steerer-of-ships, than when still thou sittest."
- Threat'ning him, Thór bade the thurs to row, 21. the offspring-of-apes,16 farther out to sea; but little he listed longer to row the roller-horse¹⁷ for the reiner-of-goats.¹⁸
- 22. Up with his angle the etin drew two mighty whales; from midmost main but aft in the stern did Óthin's son. wise Hlórrithi, hook a strong bait.
- 23. To the hook fastened the head of the ox the Serpent's slayer^{18a} and savior-of-men: gaped on the angle the all-engirding the Mithgarth's-worm.19 mighty monster.
- Doughtily drew undaunted Thór 24. on board the boat his hammer hit of grisly Garm's

the baneful worm; the high hair-fell²⁰ greedy brother.21

¹⁵Kenning for 'the bull's head'.—To judge from Snorri's paraphrase, Gylfag. chap. 48, some lines describing their setting out are missing here.

¹⁶Late kenning for 'giant'.

¹⁷Kenning for 'ship'. Boats were drawn up on land, after use. by the help of rollers.

¹⁸ Kenning for Thór, cf. 38.

^{18a}In the last combat, cf. Vsp. 47. 48.

¹⁹Cf. Grimn. 41, Vsp. 42.

²⁰Kenning for 'head'.

²¹Both are begot by Loki with the giantess Angrbotha, Vsp. 32. note.

- 25. Then screeched all scars and screamed all fiends, then shook and shivered the shaggy hills.

 In the sea then sank that serpent again.²²
- 26. Down-hearted was Hymir as homeward they rowed; nor at the oar would ought he speak, when back the twain brought the boat to shore.

Hymir said:

- 27. "Wilt thou still win and help to hoist homeward the whales through wild wooded (or fetter and fasten half the work with me, homeward the whales wolds to the hall, firmly our sea-buck)?"28
- 28. Stem and stern raised, unstaggered, Thór; both boat and bilge he bore up amain, alone lifted the laden sea-horse,²⁴ hauled the surf-hog²⁴ to the home of the thurs.
- 29. But still stubbornly his strength likened the uncouth etin to othin's son: said a man not proved though he pulled an oar, if the crystal cup he could not shatter.
- 30. In his hand when he had it, Hlórrithi threw the gleaming glass through the granite walls,—sitting, struck through the stone pillars; yet whole they handed to Hymir it back.
- 31. Till that his lovely leman did give a helpful hint to Hlórrithi:

²²In the version of the *Gylfag*. chap. 44 this is due to Hymir's cutting the line.

²³Transferred here from the end of 29, with Grundtvig.—Sea-buck is a kenning for 'ship'.

²⁴Kennings for 'ship'.

"strike Hymir's head! That harder is, foe-to-etins, than any cup."

32. Then rose in wrath the reiner-of-goats, on his knees standing he strongly hurled it: whole stayed Hymir's head-piece above, but the shock shattered the shining wine-cup.²⁵

Hymir said:

- 33. "A treasure great is gone from me since I lost from my lap my lief goblet."

 And quoth also: "Nor, either, can I unsay the word which unwitting I gave.²⁶
- 34. "Ye may keep the caldron if fetch ye can the ale-mixer out of our hall."

 Twice did stout Týr try to budge it; but stood without stirring, though he strained, the kettle.
- from the dais striding heaved on his head the hard on his heels the h

then grasped the rim,
down through the hall,
the heavy kettle:
the handles rang.

- 36. Nor long they fared ere looked behind him othin's offspring on etin-home:
 beheld out of hills with Hymir rush a many-headed host of etins.
- 37. Standing, he lowered the lifted caldron, swung murderous Miolnir with mighty hands:

²⁵A motif which recurs frequently in Northern lore.

²⁶After Bugge's emendation of this difficult passage.—We must suppose that they were promised the caldron provided they could shatter the goblet.

the whales-of-the-waste²⁷

he whelmed altogether.

38. ²⁸Nor long he fared half-dead, one of Was the harness-horse brought this about

ere lay in the traces, Hlórrithi's goats.

halt on one leg:
baleful Loki.

39. And heard ye have—
more learned in lore,
what amends did make

who begged Thór take

or who of you can,
enlighten us better?—
for the maimed one
the thurs,
both his children.

40. Thus did Thór come hauling the kettle

Now the æsir shall drink their ale at

to the thing of the gods,
Hymir had owned.
until winter²⁹
Ægir's beer-hall.

²⁷Kenning for 'giants'.

²⁸This and the following stanza (rather irrelevantly) introduce material which is otherwise found in a different connection (Thór's journey to Skrymir). According to Gylfag. chap. 44, Thór in company with Loki drives to the world of giants in his goat chariot. They spend the night with a 'farmer' (=Egil). Thór slaughters his goats, flays them, and has them boiled for supper. He invites the inmates of the house to partake, warning them, however, to throw all the bones back on the skins; but the son of Egil had (on Loki's malicious advice?) already split one of the shank-bones to get at the marrow. Next morning when Thór resuscitates the goats, one of them is lame. The frightened farmer appeases Thór's wrath by giving him his son Thialfi and his daughter Roskva as servitors.

²⁹The rendering of this line is purely conjectural.

THE FLYTING OF LOKI

Lokasenna

It is safe to say that the Lokasenna is not, and never was, a popular lay, in any sense. It is the product of a witty and clever skald who conceived the idea of showing the solemn and glorious gods from their seamy side.^a As interlocutor he uses Mephistophelian Loki who engages the various gods and goddesses in a senna (a flyting, or running dialogue of vituperation) of at times very spicy quality in which each and every one gets his or her share of defamation, until the disturber of the peace is finally put to flight by Thór's threat of violence. The result is a veritable chronique scandaleuse of the Northern Olympus.

It follows from what has been said that we need not implicitly believe that all—or any—of the 'sly god's' accusations are true or must agree with the generally accepted lore. They are, for the most part, imputations which the gods cannot, or care not to, controvert, for they are more easily made than disproved.

Technically, the poem is skilful both in composition and in the handling of the song metre. The connection between the stanzas is effected by the simple device of having one godhead defend the other, to be reviled in his turn by Loki.

The present position of the poem beside the *Hymiskviþa* is in all likelihood due to the Collector, who also wrote the very inept Final Prose about the capture and punishment of Loki which in the *Snorra Edda* more properly follows Baldr's death.

For the text of the lay we are altogether dependent on the Cod. Reg. Very characteristically, it was not used as a source by Snorri (except for one stanza). The weight of evidence points to Norway as place of origin. It may have been composed in the latter half of the Tenth Century.

Ægir, who was also hight Gymir, had made ale for the gods when he had gotten the kettle, as now has been told. To this feast came óthin and his wife Frigg. But Thór was not there, because he was in the East. His wife Sif²a

aIt is impossible to believe that the Lokasenna was composed in any spirit of serious propaganda, or even with a faith in the gods, as some eminent scholars claim.

¹Not identical with the giant who is Gerth's father, Skirn., 6, and below, 41.

²This does not agree with the conclusion of Hym.

^{2a}Cf. Hárb. 48, note.

came, as also Bragi³ and his wife, Ithun.⁴ Týr was there; he was one-handed, for the Fenriswolf had bitten off his hand, the time he was bound.⁵ There were also Niorth and Skathi⁶ his wife, Frey⁷ and Freya,⁸ and Víthar,⁹ the son of óthin. Loki was there, and Frey's servitors, Byggvir and Beyla.^{9a} Besides, there was many another ás and alf.¹⁰

Ægir had two servitors, Fimafeng and Eldir.¹¹ Shining gold served there for light, and the cups filled themselves with ale. It was a place of great peace.¹² Now they who were there praised greatly the servantmen of Ægir. Loki hated to hear that and slew Fimafeng. Then the gods shook their shields and raised an outcry against Loki and drove him away to the woods. Then they returned to the feast. Loki came back again and found Eldir without. Loki greeted him and said:

1. "Say thou, Eldir, nor before set thou one foot forward:

what the æsir speak, at their ale sitting, here the hall within."

³Cf. Grimn. 44, note.

^{4&#}x27;The Rejuvenating One', the goddess of youth.

⁵When the gods, after several vain attempts, had at last obtained fetters strong enough to hold Fenrir, the Wolf consented to be bound only if one of the gods would place his hand in his jaws as a pledge. Týr did so, and when the fetters proved unbreakable Fenrir bit it off. Thus Gylfag. chap. 34.

⁶Cf. Vaf. 38, note.

⁷Cf. Grimn. 5, note.

⁸Cf. ibid. 14, note.

⁹Cf. Vsp. 46.

⁹a'John Barleycorn' (?) and 'Milkmaid' (?).

¹⁰With the vanir, the races of gods of the Northern Olympus. NB. nom. sg. ás, nom. acc. plur. æsir, gen. plur. ása.

^{11&#}x27;Handy' and 'Fire-Kindler'.

¹²I.e. a sanctuary where no deed of violence might be committed.

Eldir said:

2. "Of their weapons speak, and of warlike deeds, the glorious gods; of the æsir and alfs who within do sit not one speaks well of thee."

Loki said:

3. "In I shall, though, into Ægir's hall—fain would I see that feast; brawls and bickering I bring the gods, their mead I shall mix with evil."

Eldir said:

4. "If in thou goest into Ægir's hall,
and fain wouldst see that feast:
if hate and mocking thou heap'st on the gods,
they will throw it back on thee."

Loki said:

5. "If with words we war, we two alone, then full well thou wotst,

Eldir, that I will uppermost be,

if foul of me thou fallest."

Then went Loki within the hall; but when they who were there saw who had come in, they all became hushed.

Loki said:

6. "Thirsty cometh to these high halls

Lopt, 13 from long wayfaring,

to ask the æsir if that any one

would pour him the mellow mead.

^{18&#}x27;Air' (?), one of Loki's names.

7. "Why are ye hushed, ye haughty gods, nor think me worth a word?

A seat on bench at your banquet give me, or else bid me hie from hence."

Bragi said:

8. "A seat on bench, our banquet to share, will the æsir not ever give thee; for well they wot what wights at the feast it behooves them to have."

Loki said:

9. "Art mindful, óthin, how in olden days we blended our blood together?"

Thou saidst that not ever thou ale wouldst drink but to us both it were borne."

óthin said:

10. "Arise, then, Víthar, let the Wolf's father¹⁴
be benched at our banquet;
lest that Loki fling lewd words at us
in Ægir's ale-hall."

Then arose Vithar and poured ale for Loki; but before he drank he hailed the gods:

11. "Hail to you, gods, hail, goddesses, hail to all hallowed hosts, but to one god only who with you sits, Bragi, on his bench!"

¹³aWe are not told elsewhere of this blood-brothership. For the rite, cf. Brot. 13, note.

¹⁴Loki, who is the father of the Fenris-wolf, cf. Vsp. 32.

Bragi said:

12. "My sword and saddle-horse, I beseech thee, Loki,

take, and eke mine arm-ring—
lest to holy hosts thy hatred thou showest:
beware of the æsirs' anger!"

Loki said:

13. "Of steeds and rings small store, ween I,
hast, Bragi, thou to boast!

Of all æsir and alfs within this hall
thou art most afraid in a fray,
and most shy at the shiv'ring of spears."

Bragi said:

14. "If without I were— as within I am—

Ægir's hallowed hall:

in my hands would I have thy head full soon:

for thy lies 'twere thy lot.

Loki said:

15. "Thou art swift in thy seat but slow to fight,
Bragi, thou pride of the bench;
come to battle, if bold thou art;
not a whit would a stout heart stay."

Ithun said:

16. "I beg thee, Bragi, to bear in mind that of Othin's kin he is:15 tease not Loki with taunting words in Ægir's ale-hall."

¹⁵I adopt Falk's interpretation of this difficult passage.

Loki said:

17. "Hush thee, Ithun: of all women thou art most mad after men, for thy shining arms on the shoulders lay of thy brother's banesman."

Ithun said:

18. "I tease not Loki with taunting words in Ægir's ale-hall;
I but soothe Bragi with beer who is crazed, lest the bold ones do battle."

Gefion¹⁶ said:

19. "Ye æsir twain, within this hall why do ye war with words?

for Loki knoweth what nag he bears:

he loathes all living things." 16a

Loki said:

20. "Hush thee, Gefion, I have in mind who did lure thee to lust:

the fair-haired swain^{16b} sold thee the necklace, ere thou threwest about him thy thighs."

óthin said:

21. "Bereft of reason and raving thou art,
to earn thee Gefion's grudge;
for the world's weird she, I ween, doth know
even as well as I."

^{16&#}x27;The Giver' (?). According to Gylfag. chap. 35, she is a virgin goddess who assembles in her hall all girls who die unwedded.

¹⁶aThe rendering of these lines is uncertain.

^{16b}The god Heimdall.—As to the (Brisings') necklace which, in other myths, is Freya's property, cf. *prym.* 12, note.

Loki said:

22. "Hush thee, óthin; not ever fairly didst allot men luck in battle; oft thou gavest, as give thou shouldst not, mastery to worser men." 17

óthin said:

23. "Granted I gave, as give I should not, mastery to worser men:
thou winters eight wast the earth beneath,
[milking the cows as a maid,
and there gavest birth to a brood:]18
were these womanish ways, I ween."

Loki said:

24. "But thou, say they, on Sáms-isle¹9once wovest spells like a witch:
in warlock's shape through the world didst
fare:
were these womanish ways, I ween."

Frigg said:

25. "Your doings ye should deeply hide, nor tell these tidings abroad; what in olden times ye twain have wrought, keep it from ken of men."

Loki said:

26. "Hush thee, Frigg, who art Fiorgyn's²⁰ wife: thou hast ever been mad after men.

¹⁷⁰thin is frequently accused of this. Cf. Sigrdr. 5, Helr. 8. His defense is (Eiríksmél 7) that he needs the best heroes for the final fight with the Wolf.

¹⁸The myth alluded to is not known.

¹⁹A Danish island north of Funen.

²⁰I.e. Othin's. This name of the supreme deity is identical with that of Thór's mother, cf. Vsp. 48, $H\acute{a}rb.$ 56.

Both Vili and Vé²¹ thou, Vithrir's²² spouse, didst fold to thy bosom both."

Frigg said:

27. "Forsooth, had I in Ægir's hall a son as Baldr so brave: thou 'dst not get thee gone from the gods in hall, before thou hadst fought for thy life."

Loki said:

28. "Be mindful, Frigg, what further I tell
of wicked works of mine:
my rede wrought it that rides nevermore
hitherward Baldr to hall."28

Freya said:

29. "Thou art raving, Loki, to reckon up all the ill thou hast done:

I ween that Frigg the fates knoweth, though she say it not herself."

Loki said:

30. "Hush thee, Freya, I full well know thee:
neither thou art free from fault:
all æsir and alfs within this hall
thou hast lured to love with thee."

Freya said:

31. "Thy slanderous tongue, 'twill thy sorrow be, and still will work thee woe;

²¹'Will' and 'Holiness'; conceived as Othin's brothers, but probably only hypostases of Othin.

^{22&#}x27;Lord of the Weather', Othin.

²⁸Cf. *Vsp.* 25 and note.

wroth are the gods and goddesses, thou'lt fare sadly home from hence."

Loki said:

32. "Hush thee, Freya, a whore thou art, and aye wast bent on ill; in thy brother's bed the blessed gods caught thee,

when, Freya, thou didst fart."

Niorth said:

33. "Little sin me seemeth, though beside her mate a wedded wife have a lover: that the unclean ás with us should dwell,

I wonder, who was a woman."24

Loki said:

34. "Hush thee, Niorth, thou hence wast sent as hostage for holy gods,25 and Hymir's handmaids had thee as pot, and used thy mouth as midden."

Niorth said:

35. "My meed had I that holy gods as hostage sent me from hence:
a son I gat²⁶ on whom smile all wights, who is highest held among gods."

²⁴Loki gave birth to Othin's horse Sleipnir, cf. Grimn. 44, note.

²⁵We are told (Vaf. 39) that he was thus sent by the Vanir gods to the Æsir, but nowhere, that he was sent by them to the giant Hymir.

²⁶Frey who, as well as his sister Freya, is begotten by Niorth with his (unnamed) sister.

Loki said:

36. "Have done now, Niorth, thy darling to praise;

I'll no longer let it be hidden:
with thy own sister that son didst get,—
a wonder he is not worse."

Týr said:

37. "Frey is the best among blessed hosts here in the garth of the gods: aggrieves not maids nor men's wives, and frees all bondsmen from fetters."

Loki said:

38. "Hush thee, Týr, ne'er no heed givest thou that man meet man half-way;²⁷ thy sword-hand from thee was snatched, I ween, by Fenrir's greedy fangs."

Týr said:

39. "I lost my hand, Hróthvitnir²8 thou, a baleful loss to us both: in bondage now must bide his time the Wolf, till the world's doom."

Loki said:

40. "Hush thee, Týr, with thy housewife²⁹ I slept, so a son she bore; nor a penny didst get to pay pay thee back for this foul wrong, thou wretch."

²⁷Like Othin, the god of war is not a reconciler of men.

^{28&#}x27;The Famous Wolf', Fenrir.

²⁹We are nowhere told of Týr's wife.

Frey said:

41. "By the River^{29a} fettered Fenrir will lie till draws nigh the doom of the gods; and near to him, but thou hush thee now, wilt be bound, thou breeder of ill."

Loki said:

42. "With gold thou boughtest Gymir's daughter,30 and sold the thurses thy sword; but when Múspell's sons31 through Myrkwood32 ride what weapon, wretch, wilt then wield?"

Byggvir said:

43. "If an as I were like Ingunar-Frey,33 and such blessed abode were mine,
I should crush to marrow this crow of ill, and break his every bone."

Loki said:

44. "Who is that wee wight, pray, who wags his tail,

and sniffling snoops about?

About Frey's ears art ever hovering, or cluckst around the quern."

^{29a}The river Ván, formed by the spittle from the jaws of the fettered wolf (Gylfag. 34).

³⁰Gerth; cf. Skirn. where, to be sure, nothing is said about Frey's giving his sword to any one but his trusty servitor Skirnir, nor about Frey's winning Gerth with his gold.

³¹Cf. Vsp. 44 and note.

³²'Dark Wood', typical name of a forest. In this case, the boundary against Surt's world of fire.

³³Probably the same as Yngvi (-Frey), H.H. I, 57, Reg. 14.

Byggvir said:

45. "I am Byggvir hight, and brisk in work, as both æsir and einheriar³⁴ know;
I glory now that Grímnir's sib³⁵ all are drinking the beer I brewed."

Loki said:

46. "Hush thee, Byggvir, at board thou dealest but ill their mead to men; in the straw of the floor men strove to find thee, when forth to fight they went."

Heimdall³⁶ said:

47. "Ale-crazed art and out of thy mind:
why let not, Loki, be?

O'ermuch of mead aye maketh one
know not what twaddle he talks."

Loki said:

48. "Hush thee, Heimdall, to a hateful life wast doomed in days of yore: with a stiff back thou must stand alway, and wake as the watch of the gods." 36

Skathi said:

49. "Thou art lusty, Loki, but long thou wilt not a loose tail wag as thou list; for on a rock with thy ice-cold son's guts will bind thee the gods." 37

³⁴The fallen warriors gathered in Valholl.

³⁵ Othin's, Cf. Grimn. Intro. Prose, note.

³⁶He keeps watch at the Giallar-bridge, against the giants.

³⁷Cf. The Concluding Prose.

Loki said:

50. "If on a rock with my ice-cold son's guts will bind me the gods:

know that first and foremost in the fray was I,

when Thiatsi, thy father, we felled."38

Skathi said:

51. "If first and foremost in the fray thou wast, when ye felled my father Thiatsi: from my holy groves and hallowed shrines will cold counsel ever come for thee."

Loki said:

52. "More of love didst lisp to Laufey's son,39 when thou bad'st me share thy bed: if our faults and blots to bare we are, this truth shall also be told."

Then came Sif forward and poured mead for Loki in a crystal cup, and said:

53. "Hail to thee, Loki! To thy lips now raise this beaker full of good beer, so that me alone among the gods without a blot thou letst be."

He took the goblet and drank of it (and said):

54. "That one thou wert, if thou wert indeed shy and didst shrink from men; but one I wot, whom well I know, made a whore of Hlórrithi's wife [sly Loki, Laufey's son]."

³⁸Cf. *Hárb*. 19, note.

³⁹I.e. Loki, the son of the giantess Laufey.

⁴⁰ I.e. Thór's.

Beyla said:

55. "The mountains shake: fares Miolnir's wielder,

Hlórrithi, hitherward;

he will quickly quell the quarrelsome knave who mocks both æsir and men."

Loki said:

56. "Hush thee, Beyla, who art Byggvir's wife, and ever bent on ill;

a worser wench never was with the gods: all dirty art thou, drab!"

Then came up Thór, and said:

57. "Hush thee, ill wight, or my hammer of might,

Miolnir, shall shut thy mouth;
I shall shatter thy shoulder-cliff, 41—
no longer then wilt thou live."

Loki said:

58. "The son of Iorth⁴² now in hath come:
why threaten and bluster now, Thór?
Not so forward wilt be to fight the Wolf:
he will swallow Sigfather⁴³ himself."

Thór said:

59. "Hush thee, ill wight, or my hammer of might,

Miolnir, shall shut thy mouth;

⁴¹ Kenning for 'head'.

^{42&#}x27;Earth'; identical in meaning with Fiorgyn, Vsp. 56, Hárb. 48.

^{48&#}x27;The Father of Victory', Othin.

up I'll hurl thee to etin world where men will see thee no more."

Loki said:

60. "Of thy eastern jaunts⁴⁴ not ever shouldst thou boast to any wight born:
in a glove's thumb since, thewless, didst crouch, and seemed not Thór himself."⁴⁵

Thór said:

61. "Hush thee, ill wight, or my hammer of might,

Miolnir, shall shut thy mouth:

my right hand will hew thee with Hrungnir's

bane,46 and break every bone in thy body."

Loki said:

62. "To live I hope a long time yet,
though with the hammer thou threaten:
Skrymir's strings seemed stout to thee,
nor mightest thou get at thy meat⁴⁷
[and, unharmed, thou wast hungry]."

Thór said:

63. "Hush thee, ill wight, or my hammer of might,

Miolnir, shall shut thy mouth:

⁴⁴Cf. Hárb. Intro. Prose.

 $^{^{45}}$ The same unlucky adventure of Thór's is alluded to $H\acute{a}rb$. 26.

⁴⁶ Kenning for Thór's hammer. Cf. Hárb. 15.

 $^{^{47}}$ On the adventure referred to, the giant Skrymir carried Thór's knapsack and secured it so stoutly that Thór was unable to unfasten the knot; Gylfag. chap. 45.

will Hrungnir's bane to Hel send thee, even to Nágrind⁴⁸ beneath."

Loki said:

- 64. "To the æsir said I, and to ása sons, what my heart did whet me to say; for thee alone I leave the hall, for I well know thy hammer's weight.
- 65. "Ale mad'st thou, Ægir, but not ever shalt henceforth brew for a banquet: all that thou hast this hall within may flames set on fire and burn on thy back!"

Thereupon Loki hid himself in the Fránangr waterfall in the shape of a salmon, and there the gods caught him. They bound him with the guts of his son Váli;⁴⁹ but his son Norfi became a wolf. Skathi took a venomous serpent and hung it above Loki's face so that its poison dripped on him. Loki's wife, Sigyn,^{49a} sat by him and held a bowl under the poison, and she carried it out whenever it was full; but meanwhile the poison dripped on Loki. Then he tossed so fearfully that all the earth shook: men call this 'earth-quakes' nowadays.⁵⁰

^{48&#}x27;The Gates of the Dead', at the entrance of Hel.

⁴⁹He bears the same name as the son of Othin who avenges Baldr, Vsp. 25, note.

^{49a}Cf. Vsp. 27 and note.

⁵⁰The similarity with the story of the giant Typhœus confined under Ætna (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* V, 346) is striking.

THE LAY OF THRYM

þrymskviða

This is the best known, and deservedly the most famous, poem in the collection; indeed, one of the few great ballads of world literature—a classic in so far as purely Northern material has here found its most adequate and most characteristic expression. One does not know what to admire most, the happy choice of subject, the marvellous characterization—effected with an admirable economy of means—, the robust humor, the immense elasticity of the action.

It is a satisfaction to know that this high evaluation is not one of modern taste alone: the lay was a favorite also in the olden times, as is attested by the existence, in all lands inhabited by Scandinavians, of folk-ballads clearly based on it. The fact is therefore all the more surprising that Snorri makes no reference to it and that we are entirely dependent on the text as found in the Cod. Reg. which is, fortunately, in a good state of preservation.

The date of composition is most generally set quite early in the Tenth Century. Assuming this to be correct, Norwegian origin is likely.

- 1. Wroth was Vingthór¹ when awaking he Miolnir² missed, his mighty hammer; his beard gan shake, his shaggy head Fiorgyn's first-born,³ he fumbled about him.
- 2. These words then first fell from his lips: "hear thou, Loki, what loss I have, which no wight knows,— neither on earth nor in heaven: my hammer is stolen!
- 3. To Freya's bower they bent their steps; these words then first fell from his lips:

 "Wilt thou, Freya, my hammer to seek, if haply I find it?"

^{1&#}x27;The Hurler' (?), an epithet of Thór.

² The Crusher'. It never misses in its aim and always returns into Thór's hands.

³I.e. Thór, cf. Hárb. 4, note.

⁴The goddess of fertility and love; cf. Grimn. 14. Her bower is called Folkvang, ibid.

Freya said:

- 4. "Though of gold it were I gave it to thee, and for thy sake, though of silver it were." Flew then Loki, the feather-coat whirred, left behind him the halls of the gods, and winged his way to the world of etins.
- 5. On a mound sate Thrym,⁵ the thurses' lord; golden halters for his hounds he twined, and sleeked the manes of slender horses.6

Thrym said:

"What ails the æsir, what ails the alfs?"
Why art thou come to etin home?" 6.

Loki said:

"Tis ill with the æsir, ill with the alfs: doest hide Hlórrithi's hammer with thee?"

Thrym said:

7. "Hlórrithi's hammer I hide with me Miolnir no wight may win from me, but he Freya bring

full eight rosts deep the earth beneath; as bride to me."

8. Flew then Loki, the feather-coat whirred, left behind him the home of the etins, and winged his way to the world of gods.

^{5&#}x27;The Noisy'.

⁶A Homeric situation. The action (like the fashioning of bow and arrow etc., Rig. 27) is typical of the lord; also, sitting on a mound.

⁷Cf. *Vsp.* 40, note.

⁸I.e. Thór's.

^{9&#}x27;Leagues'.

Thór met him there in middle court.

These words then first fell from his lips:

9. "What welcome word rewards thy toil?

Tell while aloft thy long¹⁰ tidings:

sitting one oft his errand forgets,
and lying, tells lies altogether."¹¹

Loki said:

- 10. "A welcome word rewards my toil:
 Thrym has thy hammer, the thurses' lord.
 Miolnir no wight may win from him,
 but he Freya bring as bride with him."
- 11. To Freya's bower they bent their steps.

 These words then first fell from his lips:

 "busk thee, Freya, in bridal linen,
 we twain shall wend to the world of etins."
- 12. Wroth grew Freya, foamed with rage, the shining halls shook with her wrath, the Brísings' necklace¹² burst asunder: "most mad after men thou mayst call me, if I wend with thee to the world of etins."
- 13. To the thing of forthwith fared all gods, and all goddesses gathered together.

 Among them mooted the mighty gods how they Hlórrithi's hammer'd win back.

¹⁰I.e., however long they be.

¹¹The meaning of these curious lines may be that, the longer the delay, the less accurate the report: a night's 'lying' may pervert it utterly—out of regard for the host?

¹²The Brisinga men was a necklace (torque) fashioned (according to the late Sorla páttr) by four dwarfs. It is no doubt identical with the precious Brosinga mene in Beowulf (1199).

¹⁸The assembly.

14. Whereon Heimdall, whitest of gods,—14 he fathomed the future foreknowing as van-:15

"Busk we Thór then in bridal linen, and buckle on him the Brísings' necklace.

15. "Let a house-wife's door-keys16 dangle about him.

let woman's weeds be worn by him. Let him bear on breast a hood on his head,

bridal jewels, as befits a bride."

Then thus spake Thór, the Thunderer: 16. "a craven wretch may call me the gods if I busk me in bridal linen."

Then quoth Loki, Laufey's son:17 17. "Hush thee now, Thór, soon will the etins in Asgarth¹⁸ dwell, but thou fetch home

and heed these words: the hammer from them."

- 18. Busked they Thór then in bridal linen. buckled on him the Brisings' necklace. let a house-wife's door-keys dangle about him, and woman's weeds be worn by him: bridal iewels. on his breast he bore as behooves a bride. a hood on his head
- Then quoth Loki, Laufey's son: 19. "with thee I will, to wait on thee, we twain shall wend to the world of etins."

^{14&#}x27;The One Shining Above the World', a light divinity; cf. Vsp. 1, Lok. 48.

¹⁵We are not told elsewhere that the vanir gods were prophetic (as were some of the æsir, viz. Othin, Frigg, Gefion).

¹⁶Cf. Ríg. 23.

¹⁷Cf. Lok. 52, note.

¹⁸The habitations of the æsir.

20. Then home the goats¹⁹ rode Óthin's son²⁰

to the hall were driven, haltered with ropes to run with the wain: the mountains brake, the earth burned in fire, to etin-world.

- Said Thrym these words, the thurses' lord: 21. "stand up, etins, put straw on the benches:21 to be my bride they bring me Freya, Niorth's daughter from Nóatún.²²
- "In my garth there graze golden-horned 22. kine.23 oxen all black, to etins a joy; many rings have I, many riches have I, Freya alone I lacked, methinks."
- 23. Soon had the sun set in that land;24 on the etins' table; then ale was borne ate there an ox and eight salmons, dealt for women. bolted all dainties three measures of mead drank Miolnir's wielder.
- Said Thrym these words, the thurses' lord: 24. "where sawest thou bride bite more sharply? Ne'er saw I bride bite more broadly, nor more of mead a maiden drink."
- The waiting-maid wise these words then found, 25. to the etin thus she answer made:

¹⁹Thór's wain is drawn by he-goats.

²⁰Thór, by the giantess Fiorgyn or Hlóthyn.

²¹This was done on festal occasions; cf. Bdr. 6.

²²Cf. *Grimn*. 16.

²⁸Cf. H.Hv. 4, note.

²⁴Because of the location of the frost-giants in the far North (-east); but the line may be interpreted:

early at eve they in had come.

"naught ate Freya for full eight nights, so eager was she for etin-world."

26. He looked 'neath the veil, longed to kiss her: back reeled the rash one through roomy hall: "why are so fearful Freya's eyes?

Methinks that fire flames in her eyes."

27. The waiting-maid wise these words then found,

to the etin thus "slept not Freya so eager was she she answer made: for full eight nights, for etin-world."

28. In stepped the etin's starveling sister,²⁵
bridal gifts she dared beg from her:

"Rings of red gold give thou to me,
if fain wouldst have my friendship and love,
all my friendship and fondness too."

29. Said Thrym these words, the thurses' lord:

"Bring the hammer the bride to bless;26

on the maiden's lap Miolnir lay ye,
in Vór's27 name then our wedlock hallow!"

30. Laughed Hlórrithi's hear when his hammer beheld Thrym he slew first, the then crushed he all the e

heart within him, the hardy one; the thurses' lord, the etin's kin.

31. Struck the etin's for shillings she got a grinding blow
Thus Hlóthyn's son²⁸

starveling sister,—
a shock of the hammer,
for golden rings.
his hammer got him.

²⁵ The etin's sister' is, probably, a kenning for 'giantess'—some kinswoman.

²⁶A consecration with the hammer is known also elsewhere, though not in the wedding ceremony. The hammer is a phallic symbol.

²⁷Oath', a goddess, seemingly a hypostasis of Frigg, goddess of marriage.

²⁸Cf. note on 20, above.

THE LAY OF ALVIS.

Alvíssměl.

Like the Vafprúpnism l, this poem has a didactic purpose, viz. to impart, in a form easy to be memorized, a synonymic vocabulary for the use of skalds, of the appellations 'in all the worlds' of thirteen common things.¹

The situation which serves as a framework for this versified scholastic lore is pleasingly told: Thor on his return from etinhome meets the dwarf Alvís who, in the Thunderer's absence, has induced the gods to relinquish to him¹a Thor's daughter¹b and who now precipitately hurries home with her. Thor halts him, but promises his consent providing the dwarf can answer all his questions. With these he delays Alvís until daylight surprises the dwarf and transforms him into stone.

The unusual traits attributed to Thór—cunning and eagerness for knowledge—but ill agree with the established character of the god and render the authenticity of the story questionable: it is no doubt invented ad hoc. Again, the fact that the material is strung along without a purposeful order; that the appellations given the various objects are not uniformly characteristic of the beings said to use them; and that it is almost hopeless to assign consistently the six beings mentioned in each stanza to one of the 'worlds', makes the poem approach in character the heitatol (versified lists) of the early Icelandic renascence of learning in the Twelfth Century; which is, hence, given by the majority of scholars as the date.

The text is in good condition, due no doubt here as elsewhere to the regular dialogic form ($lj\delta\delta ah\acute{a}ttr$). It is handed down in Cod. Reg., but a couple of stanzas are quoted in $Sk\acute{a}ldskaparm \acute{\varrho}l$.

Alvís¹ said:

1. "To put bolster on bench² shall my bride now with me

make haste homeward;

¹According to Olrik, these words are not so much skaldic terms as 'noa' words for 'tabu' objects, and show similarity to expressions still used among Shetland fishermen. But the reason for putting them together remains the one indicated above.

¹aIn payment for Miolnir? Cf. note on 3.

^{1b}Cf. Vsp. 17, 18.

^{1&#}x27;The Allwise.'

²One of the duties of the housewife, especially for a festive welcome; cf. Bdr. 6, prym. 21.

a hasty match this to many will seem: they'll not rob me my rest at home."

Thór said:

2. "What wight is this? Why so wan about thy nose?

Didst dwell with the dead last night?

Akin to thurses methinks thou art, nor born to have this bride."

Alvís said:

3. "Alvís am I, dwell the earth beneath,
there standeth my house under stones;
for the weapons' worth to Valholl I came:
let none his bounden faith break!"

Thór said:

4. "I shall break it; for the bridegroom's choosing falls as father on me;

in Valholl I was not when was wedded to thee among gods whom but I can offer."

Alvis said:

5. "What man is this, of the winsome maid who feigns he is father?

Thee feckless fellow but few will know: what bitch bore thee, pray?"

⁸Probably in a general sense: not of divine origin.

⁴Accepting Bugge's ingenious emendation: Thór's hammer Miolnir (as well as Óthin's spear, Gungnir) was made by the dwarfs, whose payment is opposed by Thór; but the line may also mean:

To Valholl I came to see the wain's owner' (a kenning for Thór, cf. *prym.* 29).

⁵Gering's emendation.

Thór said:

6. "I am hight Vingthór,⁶ I have wandered far,—
Síthgrani's⁷ son I am;
by my leave never shalt the maiden take,

by my leave never shalt the maiden take, and have her as wedded wife."

Alvís said:

7. "Thy leave full soon thou wilt let me have, to win her as wedded wife; to marry I mean, nor to remain without, the slender, snow-white maiden."

Thór said:

- 8. "The maiden's love I shall let thee have, thou wise guest, as thou wishest, if of every worlds thou canst tell me all that I list to learn."9
- 9. "Tell me, Alvís, for all the worlds
 I deem that, dwarf, thou knowest:
 how the earth is hight, before all out-spread,
 in all the worlds so wide?"

Alvís said:

10. "Tis hight 'Earth' among men, among æsir, 'Land';

call the vanir it 'Ways',

⁶Cf. *prym.* 1.

[&]quot;Longbeard', i.e. Othin.

⁸Cf. Vsp., 2, and the following note.

⁹Here the Paper Manuscripts insert the following stanza, generally regarded as spurious and unnecessary:

[&]quot;Thou mayst ask, Vingthór, if eager thou art to learn what lore I have: the nine worlds over oft have I fared, and mindful am I of much."

'All-Green', the etins, the alfs, 'Garden', the mighty gods, 'Moist'."

Thór said:

11. "Tell me, Alvís, for all the worlds

I deem that, dwarf, thou knowest:

how the heaven is hight that to (Hronn) 10

was born,

in all the worlds so wide?

Alvís said:

12. "Tis hight 'Heaven' among men, 'High-Arched' among gods; call the vanir it 'Wind-Weaver', the etins, 'Upper World', the alfs, 'Fair Roof', the dwarfs, 'Dripping Hall'."

Thór said:

13. "Tell me, Alvís, for all the worlds

I deem that, dwarf, thou knowest:

how the moon is hight which men do see,
in all the worlds so wide?"

Alvís said:

14. "'Tis hight 'Moon' among men, 'Mild Light''

among gods;

call the wights in Hel it 'Wheel',

the etins, 'Speeder', the dwarfs, 'Splendor',

and the alfs, 'Teller-of-Time'."

¹⁰Translated according to Bugge's daring surmise. Hronn 'billow' is one of Ægir's daughters and, hence, may stand for 'the sea': in late Classical mythology, the sea-goddess Tethys is the mother of the sky.

¹¹Conjectural.

Thór said:

15. "Tell me, Alvís, for all the worlds

I deem that, dwarf, thou knowest:

how the sun is hight which is seen by men,

in all the worlds so wide?"

Alvís said:

16. "Tis hight 'Sun' among men, but 'Sunlight' among gods; call the dwarfs it 'Dvalin's Doom',12 the etins, 'Everglow', the alfs, 'Fair Wheel', 'All-Bright', the ása-sons."13

Thór said:

17. "Tell me Alvís, for all the worlds

I deem that, dwarf, thou knowest:

how the clouds are hight that carry showers,

in all the worlds so wide?"

Alvís said:

18. "They are hight 'Clouds' among men, 'Rain-carriers' among gods; call the vanir them 'Windblown', the etins, 'Rainhope', the alfs, 'Weather-might', the Hel-dwellers, 'Hiding Helm'."

Thór said:

19. "Tell me, Alvís, for all the worlds

I deem that, dwarf, thou knowest:

how the wind is hight which widest fares,
in all the worlds so wide?"

¹²Dvalin is a dwarf. The kenning is illustrated by the fate of Alvís himself, 35 below, and H.Hv. 29, 30.

¹³I.e. the sons of the æsir.

Alvís said:

20. "Tis hight 'Wind' among men, but 'Wafter' among gods; call the most high it 'Whinnier', the etins, 'Roarer', the alfs, 'Dinfarer', the Hel-dwellers, 'Whistler'."

Thór said:

21. "Tell me, Alvís, for all the worlds

I deem that, dwarf, thou knowest:

how the calm is hight which quietly lies,
in all the worlds so wide?"

Alvís said:

22. "Tis hight 'Calm' among men, 'Sea-Quiet' among gods; call the vanir it 'Windlull', the etins, 'Sultry', the alfs, 'Day-Balm', the dwarfs, 'Day's Haven'."

Thór said:

23. "Tell me, Alvís, for all the worlds

I deem that, dwarf, thou knowest:

how the sea is hight which is sailed by men,
in all the worlds so wide?"

Alvís said:

24. "Tis hight 'Sea' among men, 'Wide-Sweeping' among gods;

call the vanir it 'Wave', the etins, 'Eelhome', the alfs, 'Water', call the dwarfs it 'the Deep'."

Thór said:

25. "Tell me, Alvís, for all the worlds

I deem that, dwarf, thou knowest:

how the fire is hight which flames for men,
in all the worlds so wide?"

Alvís said:

26. "Tis hight 'Fire' among men, but 'Flame' among gods; call the vanir it 'Warmth',14 the etins, 'Greedy', 'Glut-All', the dwarfs, the Hel-wights. 'Fast Whelmer'."

Thór said:

27. "Tell me, Alvís, for all the worlds

I deem that, dwarf, thou knowest:

how the wood is hight, in men's world that

grows,

in all the worlds so wide?"

Alvis said:

28. "Tis hight 'Wood' among men, 'Earth's Mane' among gods; call the Hel-wights it 'Seaweed-of-Slopes', the etins, 'Firewood', the alfs, 'Fairbough', call the vanir it 'Wand'."

Thór said:

29. "Tell me Alvís, for all the worlds

I deem that, dwarf, thou knowest:

how the night is hight which to Nor¹⁵ was

born,

in all the worlds so wide?"

¹⁴Conjectural.

¹⁵Cf. Vaf. 25.

Alvís said:

30. "Tis hight 'Night' among men, but 'Murk' among gods; call the most mighty it 'Mask', the etins, 'Lightless', the alfs, 'Sleep's Ease', the dwarfs, 'Weaver-of-Dreams'."

Thór said:

31. "Tell me, Alvís, for all the worlds

I deem that, dwarf, thou knowest:

how the seed is hight which is sowed by men,

in all the worlds so wide?"

Alvís said:

32. "'Tis hight 'Barley' among men, but 'Breadstuff'16 among gods; call the vanir it 'Well-Grown', the etins, 'Eating', the alf-kin, 'Grain',16 the wights of Hel, 'Waving'."

Thór said:

33. "Tell me Alvís, for all the worlds

I deem that, dwarf, thou knowest:

how the beer is hight which is brewed by

men,

in all the worlds so wide?"

Alvís said:

34. "Tis hight 'Ale' among men, among æsir, 'Beer';

call the vanir it 'Wassail-Brew',

¹⁶Transposed here.

'Clear Must', the etins, 'Mead', the Hel-wights, the sons of Suttung,¹⁷ 'Feast-Draught'."

Thór said:

35. "I never learned like lore to dwell in the breast of any wight born; with wily words outwitted thou art: above ground finds thee, dwarf, the day; was the sun seen in thy hall."

¹⁷The giants, cf. Hév. 104

BALDR'S DREAMS

Baldrs draumar

This little poem purports to be a supplement to the Volump Q, elaborating the Baldr episode. As there, a secress is summoned by Othin from her grave at the gate of Hel, to which she returns after giving the desired prophecy.

At first sight the poem seems forceful and of one piece, but a closer examination shows that it yields no new information beyond that contained in the Volusp & and that it has grave structural defects, at least in its present form. Certain verbal similarities to the Voluspo and the prymskviða (where the passages involved are integral) lend color to the suspicion of several scholars that it is not an original but the work of a skilful imitator of the ancient manner-say of the Twelfth Century; whereas other students, with less probability, insist on a much earlier origin (Tenth Century).

The text which is, on the whole, in excellent condition, is preserved only in Cod. Arn. and was, apparently, not known to Snorri. metre is a regular fornyrðislag.

- 1. To the thing forthwith and all goddesses Among them mooted
 - fared all gods. gathered together. the mighty æsir¹ why Baldr the Bright had baleful dreams.2
- 2. Up rose othin, oldest of gods,³ and on Sleipnir⁴ the saddle laid: to the nether world rode, to Niflhel⁵ dark. A hound he met which from Hel did come.6
- About his breast 3. was he blood-besprent. and long did bark at Baldr's father.

¹The abruptness of the beginning may be due to direct loan (from brym. 13) of the preceding lines.

²For this myth, cf. Vsp. 24-26 and notes.

³Conjectural.

^{4&#}x27;The Runner', Othin's steed. Cf. Grimn. 44, note.

⁵Dark Hel'; cf. Vaf. 43.

⁶Viz. Garm: cf. Vsp. 36.

till the halls so high

Rode othin on— the earth did quake of Hel he neared.

- 4. Then Othin rode to the haunted howe there spells he chanted till unwilling arose
- to the eastern gate, of the hoary seeress; to charm up the dead, the witch and spake:
- "What man is this, to me unknown, 5. who maketh me fare Was I buried in snow and drenched with dew, dead was I long."

such fear-fraught ways? and beaten by rain

óthin said:

"Vegtam' my name, I am Valtam's son; 6. say of misty Hel as of Mithgarth I: for whom are the benches bright with armrings, and the dais decked with dazzling gold?"8

The seeress said:

7. "For Baldr the beer a shield⁹ lies over in sorrow are sunk I was loath to speak, now let me cease."

brewed here standeth, the shining drink; the sons of Othin. 10

óthin said:

8. "Cease not, seeress! answer the asker who will Baldr slay, and send hither

till said thou hast, till all he knows: the blameless god. the son of Othin?"

^{7&#}x27;The Wayfarer'. Valtam, 'the Warrior'.

⁸The usual preparations for the advent of an honored guest.

oIn the sense of a paten covering the caldron?

¹⁰I.e. the gods.

The seeress said:

9. "Hoth" will the hero hitherward send, he will Baldr slay, the blameless god, and end the life of othin's son.

I was loath to speak, now let me cease."

óthin said:

10. "Cease not, seeress, answer the asker till all he knows: the hateful deed who will avenge, and Baldr's slayer who send to Hel?"

The seeress said:

11. "Rind bears Váli in Western Halls;
but one night old will Váli slay him:
neither cleanses his hands nor combs his hair,
till Baldr's slayer he sends to Hel.
I was loath to speak, now let me cease.

óthin said:

12. "Cease not, seeress, till said thou hast: answer the asker till all he knows: who are the girls that greet so sore, and their kerchief corners cast to the sky?" 12

¹¹Cf. Vsp. 25ff.

¹²Answer: the waves. Probably, there is a pun intended, for the words of the original here translated 'kerchief corners' may also mean 'the corners of the sail'.—Similar riddles are propounded by Gestumblindi (Othin) in the *Hervararsaga* chap. 9 To account for the riddle being introduced here it has been suggested that the lines refer to the sail of the ship bearing dead Baldr's body (Gylfag. chap. 49), which dips into the sea.

The seeress said:

13. "Thou art not Vegtam, as I had thought, but rather óthin, oldest of gods."

óthin said:

"Thou art no seeress nor sage woman, but rather of thurses three the mother."

The seeress said:

14. "Homeward hie thee, happy in mind:
no chanted spells will charm me up
until Loki is loose from his bonds¹³
and the day will come of the doom of the
gods."

¹³Cf. Vsp. 27 and Lok. Final Prose.

THE LAY OF RIG

Rígsþula

The Lay of Rig fills exactly the last sheet of the Codex Wormianus of Snorri's Edda. The lost conclusion evidently stood on a following one. However, notwithstanding this fragmentary condition, it is clear that the lay was intended as a glorification of the existing (aristocratic) order in the Scandinavian homeland—not in republican Iceland,, whether in Denmark or Norway; and more specially as a vindication of the divine origin of kingship.—But this is as far as agreement among scholars goes: about few Eddic poems has there been such a diversity of opinion in almost every other respect. Thus, one famous scholar is convinced that the author had Norwegian conditions in mind, that the lay is therefore Norwegian, that it dates from the Tenth Century, that the young Kon may represent Harold Hairfair himself. Another scholar agrees that it is composed early in the Tenth Century, as the poem seems to presuppose Heathendom undisturbed, but holds that it is by some Icelandic skald celebrating the Danish royal house.12 perhaps King Gorm the Old, or Harold Bluetooth. Still another held the view that the lay had its origin on one of the Scottish islands.

Again, up to the present the lay has been universally regarded as a valuable source of information on social conditions in the earliest times; but this seems open to doubt with the growing feeling that it may be the didactic-antiquarian effort of a learned skald. At any rate, in its list of names (in free fornyrbislag) there is a suspicious similarity to the nafnapulur (rigmaroles) and the heitatol of the Thirteenth Century, and to such a poem as the Alvissmel; so that we may not be far wrong in assigning the lay to the Eleventh or Twelfth Century, but hardly later, as serfdom was abolished in Norway at the end of the Twelfth Century.

But whatever its authenticity, the lay does stand out as unique among Eddic poems, and will always be read with interest for its vivid and colorful, though brief, contrasted descriptions of the life of the thrall, the freeman, and the noble in ancient Scandinavia.

It is told by men in olden tales that one of the gods whose name was Heimdall, fared forth along the seashore until he

^{1a}See 49, notes.

came to a farm. There he called himself Rig. Of this the following song dealeth:

- In old times, say they, 1. there wended his way rugged and mighty,—
- on earth-paths green a wise god ancient. Ríg was he hight.
- in middle ways;2 Walked unwearied 2. was the door let down.3 to a dwelling he came, on the ground was a fire.4 In gan he go, at the hearth, hoary, sate husband and wife— Ái and Edda. in old head-gear.
- 3. Well knew Ríg betwixt the twain
- wisely to counsel: on middle seat he sate him down, of the toft benched him.
- 4. Then took Edda of bread hard-baked a bowl then bore filled with the broth
- a thick loaf heavy and full of bran; on the board Edda. of boiled meat.
- Well knew Ríg 5. he rose up thence, on middle bedstead betwixt the twain

wisely to counsel; ready for sleep; his berth he made. of the toft laid him.6

In no other source does Heimdall bear this name, which is probably Celtic, meaning 'king'. The fact that in Vsp. 1 'all hallowed beings' (men?) are mentioned as his children, 'high and low', has led to the conjecture that the author took these lines as his 'text'.

²Generally understood as 'in the middle of the way'. It may mean, here, 'on earth'.

⁸Uncertain. Cf. 26, note.

⁴In Old Germanic times the hearth-fire was built on the ground, the smoke escaping through the louver.

⁵Still used in Modern Icelandic for 'grandfather' and 'grandmother'.

⁶In the oldest times it was not uncommon in the North, as is still the case among primitive races, for the host to offer his wife or daughter to the honored guest.

- 6. And there stayed he three nights together; then walked unwearied in middle ways.

 Moons full nine went meanwhile by.
- 7. Gave Edda birth to a boy-child then, in clouts she swathed the swarthy-skinned one.

 Thrall they called him, and cast on him water³ (dark was his hair and dull his eyes).⁹
- 8. On his hand the skin was scraggy and wrinkled, (nasty his nails), 10 his knuckles gnarled, his fingers thick, his face ugly, his back (hulky), his heels were long.
- 9. He gan to grow and gain in strength, and eke did take to try his might: bast-ropes to bind, to bear faggots home the whole day long.
- 10. Came to his cot a crook-legged wench—
 full sore her soles, and sun-burned her arms,
 her nose bent downward; her name was
 Thír.¹¹
- 11. On middle seat she sate her down, by her side did sit the son of the house:

⁷Guests generally remained three days.

⁸This is the old Germanic baptismal ceremony of 'name-fastening' which had grown up (probably) independently of the Christian rite. Cf. HQv. 159.

⁹Supplied after Sijmons' suggestion, to correspond with the description in stanzas 21 and 34. The stanza is more defective than shown in the translation.

¹⁰Supplied after Grundtvig's suggestion. Sallow complexion, dull eyes, and an unlovely appearance in general, are the standing characteristics of the slave in Old Norse tradition.

^{11&#}x27;Drudge'.

whispered and laughed and lay together Thrall and Thir whole days through.

- 12. In their hut, happy, they had a brood:

 I ween they were hight¹² Haygiver, Howler,
 Bastard, Sluggard, Bent-back and Paunch,
 Stumpy, Stinker, Stableman, Swarthy,
 Longshanks and Lout: they laid fences,
 put dung on fields, fattened the swine,
 herded the goats, and grubbed up peat.¹³
- 13. Their daughters were:

 Tail,

 Slattern, Serving-Maid,
 Stout-Leg, Shorty,
 Spindleshanks eke,
 thence are sprung

 Drudge and DaggleTail,

 and Cinder-Wench,
 Stumpy and Dumpy,
 and Sputterer:
 the breed of thralls.
- 14. At his staff Ríg strode, and straight forth fared; to a dwelling he came, were the doors let down.14

In gan he go, on the ground was a fire, Afi and Amma¹⁵ owned that house.

15. Sate husband and wife, with their work busy:

a warp-beam he out of wood was shaping—
his beard was brushed, and banged his hair—
sate in kirtle tight; was a trunk on the floor.

¹²Some of the names in this list, as well as in those following, are doubtful. The translator has not followed the order of the original. ¹³In the *Orkneyinga saga* chap. 7 we are told that it was Earl Einar, the Norwegian ruler of the Orkneys in the Ninth Century, who first taught the islanders how to use peat. But the digging of peat was probably very old in the treeless portions of the North. Already Pliny (*Hist. nat.* XVI, 1) describes the method of curing it as practiced on the shores of the North Sea.

¹⁴Doubtfully, as above.

^{15&#}x27;Grandfather' and Grandmother'.

- 16. The good-wife sate and swayed her distaff, spread out her arms, for spinning made ready, with a snood¹⁶ on her head and a smock on her breast, a neckerchief, and clasps on her shoulder.
- 17. Well knew Ríg wisely to counsel,

 (on middle seat he sate him down,
 betwixt the twain of the toft benched him).17
- 19. (Well knew Ríg wisely to counsel), 17 he rose up thence, on middle bedstead betwixt the twain wisely to counsel), 17 his berth he made, of the toft laid him.
- 20. And there stayed he three nights together (then walked unwearied in middle ways). ¹⁷
 Moons full nine went meanwhile by.
- 21. Gave Amma birth to a boy-child then.

 Karl¹⁸ they called him, clothed him in linen;

 ruddy his hue, and rapid his eyes.
- 22. Then gan he grow and gain in strength, tamed the oxen and tempered ploughshares, timbered houses, and barns for the hay, fashioned carts, and followed the plough.
- 23. A bride they brought him with bunch of keys dangling, in goat-skin kirtle, gave her to Karl.

¹⁶In the original, rather 'hood'.

¹⁷The bracketed portions are supplied, after Bugge's very plausible suggestion, from the corresponding passages.

^{18&#}x27;Carle', (free) man of the common people.

Snær¹⁹ was she hight and sate under veil,²⁰ [a house they reared them and rings bestowed,]²¹ their linen they spread, and the larder stocked.

- 24. In their homestead, happy, hight Man and Yeoman, Husbandman, Farmer, Bound-Beard, Steep-Beard, Broad, Steep-Beard, Broad, and Smith.
- 25. By other names were known their daughters:
 Woman, Gentlewoman, Wife, Bride, Lady,
 Haughty, Maiden, Hussif and Dame:
 thence are come the kin of carles.
- 26. At his staff Ríg strode steadfastly on; a hall he saw then, was southward the door, raised on high,²⁴ with a ring in the door-post. He strode in straightway on the straw of the floor.
- 27. Sate there the good-folk, Father and Mother, with their fingers playing; on the bench sate he, bent the elm-wood, 26 a bow-string twining, and arrows shafted.

^{19&#}x27;Daughter-in-Law'.

²⁰Cf. the description of Thór as bride, brym. 18, 19.

²¹Probably interpolated: the dealing out of rings is typical of the noble, rather (cf. H.H. I, 18 note); the exchange of rings in the Christian marriage ceremony (which has been suggested) seems utterly foreign to the passage.

²²Possibly referring to unknown fashions of wearing the beard. ²³Nickname of the burly, proud farmer.

²⁴South is the direction of good omen. The Old Icelandic door raised up-and-down, in hinges. It is raised, in the house of the noble, to indicate his hospitality.

²⁵Probably as an outward sign of leisure.

²⁶I.e. the bow made of elmwood.

- 28. Sate the lady, looked at her arms, stroked the linen, stiffened the sleeves, with a brooch on her breast, and a bonnet on her head, a long train of silk, and sark all blue.

 Was her brow brighter, her breast lighter, her neck whiter, than whitest snow.
- 29. Well knew Ríg wisely to counsel, on middle seat he sate him down, betwixt the twain of the toft he benched him.
- 30. Of bleached flax then a broidered cloth did Mother take, and the table covered; a light-baked loaf she laid on the table, of wheaten meal, white and thin.
- 31. A full trencher on the table she put, wound with silver, 29 and set forth then flitches of bacon and steaked fowl; there was wine in a crock, were the cups goldwound; they drank and chatted till the day was ended.
- 32. Well could Ríg wisely counsel;
 he rose up thence, ready for sleep;
 (on middle bedstead his berth he made,
 betwixt the twain of the toft he laid him.) 30
- 33. And there stayed he three nights together; then walked unwearied in middle ways.

 Full nine months went meanwhile by.

²⁷Uncertain.

²⁸The rime is not in the original.

²⁹Probably, silver-inlaid.

³⁰ Supplied from the corresponding passages.

- 34. A son bore Mother, in silk they swathed him, sprinkled water on him and called him Earl. Was his hair flaxen, and fair-hued his cheek, his eyes awfully like an adder's, blazed.³¹
- 35. Up grew Earl within the hall,
 gan bucklers wield and the bowstring fasten,
 gan the elmwood bend and arrows shaft;
 gan hurl the spear and speed the lance,
 gan hunt with hounds,
 gan swing swords eke, and swim in the sea.
- 36. Out of rough woodland came Rig striding, came Rig striding, and taught him runes; his own name gave him as heir and son, bade him make his own the udal lands, the udal lands and olden manors.
- 37. He dauntless rode through darkling woods, over frosty fells, to a far-away hall.
- 38. Shields he shattered and shafts he hurled, swung his sword and swiftly rode; he wakened war and warriors slew, with wound-red weapons he won him land.
- 39. He made him master of manors eighteen, gan share his wealth and shower it on all: silver and gold and slender steeds; squandered rings and scattered gold.
- 40. His heralds drove on dew-wet paths, and came to the hall where Hersir³² dwelled;

³¹Flashing eyes were regarded as a sure token of noble birth. Cf. Tacitus' acies oculorum of the Teutons.

^{32&#}x27;Lord', chieftain of a district.

a daughter had he, fair-haired and wise, dainty-fingered, was she hight Erna.²³

- 41. For her hand they asked, and home drove her, gave her to Earl, gowned in linen; they lived together and loved each other, had many children, and cheerfully lived.
- 42. Boy was the oldest, then Issue and Child, Youth, Heir, and Squire, Offspring and Lad—they sports did learn—Son and Scion—learned swimming and 'tables'; 34

 Kund one was called, was Kon35 the youngest.
- 43. Up within hall grew Earl's children; spearshafts they shook, with shields they fended, swift steeds bestrode, and straightened arrows.
- 44. But Kon only could carve runes,

 36 runes lasting aye, life-keeping runes;
 could warriors ward from wounds in battle,—
 he dulled sword-edges and calmed the sea,
- 45. Knew the calls of birds could soothe sorrows in his arms the strength

and quenched fires, and the sick mind heal; of eight men had.

^{38&#}x27;The Efficient' (?).

³⁴This was a board-game, a kind of chess. Cf. the German (Schach-) zabeln. It was a royal accomplishment, like those mentioned above.

³⁵The last two names are etymologically akin and signify 'noble descendant'. In the original, Kon(r) ungr (Kon the Young) yields Old Norse konungr 'king' by juxtaposition (and popular etymology).

³⁶For this and the following rune-magic cf. H O v. 148f and Sigrdr. 6f.

46. With Rig the Earl³⁷ with wiles he warred, thus got for him, the name of Rig,

in runes he matched him, and outwitted him; and gained to own, and runes to know.

- 47. Rode Kon the young through copse and woods, the birds he shot with bow and arrow; then quoth a crow, cackling on branch: "why killest thou birds with bow and arrow?
- 48. "Rather shouldest thou ride on horses — and slay foemen.
- 49. "Have Dan and Danp³⁸ a dwelling richer, and lands larger, than are left to thee; are they skilled in steering on stormy seas, in trying swords and slaying heroes." ³⁹

³⁷Ríg the Earl, viz. his father, the son of Ríg (Heimdall). He now bestows the title of Ríg 'king' on Kon as his true heir.

 $^{^{38}}$ In all probability these are eponymous kings of Denmark. Cf. Akv. 5.

³⁹The poem ends here abruptly. From the whole tenor of the poem we cannot doubt that Kon follows the advice of the bird (as does Sigurth in Fáfn.) and wins the lands of Dan and Danp. According to the synoptic account of the (lost) Skioldungasaga made by the learned Icelander Arngrim Jónsson (1597), King Ríg marries Dana, the daughter of Danpr of Danpstead; and their son Dan was the mythical king who united Denmark under one rule.

THE LAY OF HYNDLA18

Hyndluljóð.

Owing to its sadly confused and faulty preservation (in the large manuscript codex called the Flatisland Book (Flateyarbók), written in Iceland toward the end of the Fourteenth Century, this poem has given rise to the most varying interpretations. One thing is clear, viz. its didactic purpose to impart information about the genealogy of Ottar, the scion of a princely house which ruled the Norwegian shire of Horthaland (around the Hardanger Fiord) and—we assume—the forbear of a distinguished family in Iceland. The story within which this lore is framed is not made out without difficulty.

As the text is handed down to us, the following interpretation seems most plausible: the goddess Freya, riding on her boar, awakens the wise giantess Hyndla (cf. the situation in 'Baldr's Dreams' and 'Gróa's Spell') and invites her to mount her wolf to ride to Valholl with her. There, Othin and Thór are to grant success to Freya's protégé, Ottar: he has wagered with Angantýr, another hero, and staked his all on it, as to who is of nobler descent. On the way, so Freya proposes, they are to match their genealogical lore. Notwithstanding Freya's denial the giantess knows that the boar is Ottar in disguise, and addresses to him the information desired; whereupon Freya demands, still further, that she give him to drink of the 'memory ale', so that he may keep in his mind until the third day what has been told him. This, the giantess refuses, but is compelled by the threat of encircling fire. Her curse on the drink is neutralized by Freya's blessing.

Many minor and major alterations have been proposed to render the action more plausible. Most radically, Finnur Jónsson claims that stanzas 31-34, 2 should precede 11, as furnishing the compulsion to make the giantess divulge her lore; and, indeed, this re-arrangement would eliminate a number of difficulties.

As to the genealogies of Ottar's race, three groups may be discerned—that of the kings of Horthaland, to which he belongs by immediate descent; the line of Hálfdan the Old, mythical ancestor of all the lordly races of the North; and famous legendary heroes whose kinship is claimed. To be sure, no two scholars are agreed as to what is to be regarded as genuine or interpolated in these lists.

¹aExclusive of the Short 'Prophecy of the Seeress' which, in the original, comes between stanzas 29 and 30.

That they seemed authentic to learned Icelanders of the Thirteenth Century is attested by the fact that they are drawn on, both by Snorri, in his Skáldskaparmél (chap. 64), and in the story entitled 'How Norway was Settled' (Hversu Noregr bygðist).1b

To most scholars, the poem has the earmarks of rather late and learned Icelandic origin, say the Twelfth Century; but it must be acknowledged that some elements do point to a much earlier time. perhaps the end of the Tenth Century.

Freya said:

- awake, my friend, 1. "Awake, good maiden, who sleepest in cave: sister Hyndla.1 'tis darkest night,2 so now let us ride the hallowed stead. hence to Valholl,³
- "We shall ask **óthin** 2. he gives and grants to Hermóth gave he to king Sigmund,

our errand to speed, gold to his followers: helm and byrnie, his keenest sword.

3. "He gives riches to some, to some, victory, word-skill to wights, sea-breeze to sailors, gives manfulness to many a warrior.

wisdom to others. song-craft to skalds,

4. "I shall worship Thór, that he shall not ever though else he love not

and this ask of him do ill to thee. etin women.

^{1b}Flateyarbók I, p. 24ff.

^{1&#}x27;Bitch'. As to Freya's wheedlingly calling her friend', cf. 6 and 31.

²The time when the beings of the nether world may be abroad.

^{3&#}x27;Hall of the Slain', Othin's hall.

⁴Ags. Heremod, 'He of Warlike Courage'. It is uncertain whether the god. Othin's son, is referred to or, more probably, the famous hero who is the predecessor of Skiold, cf. 11.

⁵Viz. the sword Gram 'troll' which, later, becomes Sigurth's weapon.

5. "Take one of thy wolves from his wonted stall, with my boar let him leap on our way."

Hyndla said:

"Slow runs thy boar on the road to Valholl, nor will I weary my worthy steed.

6. "False art, Freya, to befriend me now; thy eye seemeth to say to me thou leadest thy lover on his last journey,8 Ottar9 the Young, Innstein's son."

Freya said:

- 7. "Dull art, Hyndla, and dreamest, ween I, to believe my lover on his last journey: my boar gleameth, golden-bristled, Hildisvíni, by smiths twain shaped of dwarfish kin, Dáin¹² and Nabbi.
- 8. "Let us strive¹³ as we sit astride our saddles, match our lore of lines of lordly races, of the kin of kings who came from othin.¹⁴

 $^{^6}$ The wolf is the mount of trolls and witches; cf. H.Hv., Prose introductory to IV.

⁷The boar is elsewhere the animal sacred to her brother Frey; cf. reference in note above. Generally, Freya's chariot has a span of cats.

⁸I.e. as a slain warrior to join the heroes in Othin's (or Freya's) hall; cf. *Grimn*. 8, 14.

⁹Cf. Ags. Ohthere; cf. the genealogy below.

¹⁰Known a one of 'Hálf's Warriors', who figure in the *Hálfs saga*. ¹¹'Battle-Swine'.

¹²Cf. p. 388.

¹³Viz. with words. The passage is doubtful.

¹⁴All the royal families of the North trace their ancestry ultimately back to the gods.

9. "Wagered have they for Welsh gold, ottar the Young and Angantýr: 15 to help I am bound, lest he fail to have his father's share.

10. "He a high-altar made me all glary have grown and reddened anew them of heapèd stones—the gathered rocks16—with neats' fresh blood;

for aye believed ottar in the ásyniur.17

11. "Reckon up in order the oldest sib, and call to mind the kin of men:
a Skioldung who, a Skilfing¹⁸ who,
(an Othling who,) an Ylfing who?
Who a land-holder, who of lordly stock,
Who of most worth are in the world of men?"

Hyndla said:

12. "Thou art, Ottar, from Innstein sprung; but Innstein was born to Alf the Old, and Alf to Ulf, Ulf to Sæfari;20 Sæfari's father was Svan the Red.

¹⁵ Ags. Ongenbēow.

¹⁶By the fire of repeated burnt-offerings which in the earliest times were made on rude stone altars.

¹⁷Plural of ásynja 'goddess'.

¹⁸Ags. Scyldingas, Scylfingas; their progenitors are Skiold and Skelfir.

¹⁹Supplied here from 16. According to Skáld. chap. 62 the Othlings were descended from an eponymous King Auth.—The Ylfings (Ags. Ylfingas), descendants of Ulf 'Wolf', are of the same race with Helgi Hundingsbani (H.H. I, 5).—Note that in the corresponding passage (16) the Ynglings (descendants of the god Yngvi) are mentioned instead.

^{20&#}x27;Sea-Farer'.

13. "As mother hadst thou
I ween she was hight
was Fróthi her father,
this race was wholly

a high-born maiden, Hlédís the Priestess; Friaut her mother:²¹ ranked with the highest.

14. "Of old was Authi²² a before was Hálfdan²³ many wars in the world to the welkin were wafted

among earth's greatest; highest of Skioldungs; waged the bold one, his works abroad.

15. "Befriended by Eymund, foremost among men, he slew Siggtrygg with the sword's edge; he home led Almveig,24 the most high-born woman,—

they issue had of eighteen sons.

16. "Thence the Skioldungs, thence the Skilfings, thence the Othlings, the land-holders thence, who of most worth are in the world of men: thy sib all these, silly ottar!

17. "Her²⁵ mother, hold I, was Hildigunn, the child of Sváva and of Sækonung;²⁶

²¹All three are unknown.—Fróthi (Ags. $Fr\bar{o}da$) 'the Wise' bears a name common among the mythical Danish kings; cf. Grot.

 $^{^{22}}$ Accepting Jónsson's emendation for the Áli of the original. According to $Sk\acute{a}ld$. chap. 62 Authi was a son of Hálfdan.

²³Ags. *Healfdene*, 'Half-Dane'; i.e. Hálfdan the Old, a legendary king of the Danes. He is always 'the High', which may have reference to his stature.

²⁴The Skáld., loc. cit. indicates that she was the daughter of Eymund, King of Russia. Her sons by Hálfdan (born nine at a birth) were the mythical progenitors of the royal families of the North.

²⁵Almveig's?

²⁶These are unknown otherwise.—Sækonung 'Sea-King'.

thy sib all these, silly óttar!
Thou needs must know this,— wilt know still more?

- 18. "Dag²⁷ married Thóra, mother of heroes; in that kin were born the best of men:
 Fráthmar and Gyrth, and the Freki brothers,
 Am, Iofurmar, and Alf the Old;
 thou needs must know this,— wilt know still
 more?
- 19. "Was Ketil their kinsman, Klyp's oldest son, your own mother's mother-father; Fróthi, Kári before that time lived, and Hálf the hero²⁹ to Hild was born.
- 20. "Then was Nanna born, Nokkvi's daughter; her son your father's sister did wed; of forefathers old still further I tell: thy sib all these, silly ottar!
- 21. "fsolf and Asolf, and Olmóth's sons, and Skúrhild's eke, among them are with many heroes; thy sib all these, silly Ottar!
- 22. "Gunnar Midwall, Grím the Hardy, Ironshield-Thórir, Ulf the Gaping,

²⁷Day', one of Hálfdan's sons (Skáld., loc. cit.)

²⁸Ketil 'Helmet' is Ottar's great-grandfather on the spindle-side, as Frothi (13) is on the spear-side.

²⁹Probably, the King Hálf of Horthaland of whom the *Hálfs saga* deals. The others are unknown.

³⁰ The name of this uncle of Ottar's is not mentioned.

³¹The relation of all these persons to Ottar is obscure.

Brodd and Horvi— both I knew them they house-carles were with Hrólf the Old.³²

- 23. "Hervarth, Hiorvarth, Hrani, Angantýr, Búi and Brámi, Barri and Reifnir, Tind and Tyrfing, and the two Haddings: 33 thy sib all these, silly Ottar!
- 24. "In Bolm in Eastland were born these twelve, the sons of Arngrim and Eyfura; the blare of these berserks,34 their baleful deeds,

like wildfire swept over sea and land: thy sib all these, silly ottar!

- 25. "Were given to the gods the goodly men, king Iormunrekk's kinsmen all—:35 he was Sigurth's sib— what I say heed thou—the folkruler's, who Fáfnir slew.
- 26. "Was Svanhild's sire the son of Volsung and of Hiordís, of Hrauthung's^{35a} kin—she Eylimi's, the Othling's,³⁶ daughter: thy sib all these, silly Ottar!

³²The arrangement of this and the two following stanzas is Bugge's.—Excepting Thórir and Grím, these 'house-carles' (members of the king's bodyguard) are unknown elsewhere. The company is that of King Hrólf of the *Hrólfs saga Gautrekssonar*.

³³These twelve sons of Arngrím occur prominently in the *Hervarar* saga and in the *Qrvar Odds saga*.

³⁴Wild warriors; cf. Hárb. 37.

³⁵As he was the husband of Svanhild, Sigurth's daughter by Guthrún, both the Volsungs and the Niflungs may be said to be his 'kinsmen'. For the names and occurrences touched on in this and the two following stanzas, general reference is made to the entire cycle of lays dealing with the fates of the Volsungs and Giúkungs (Gríp. to Hamő.)—'Given to the gods' probably means 'slain'.

³⁵aA king of this name occurs in Grimn., Prose Intro.

³⁶Only here is Eylimi, Sigurth's grandfather, called an Othling.

27. "Gunnar and Hogni of the same sib was but Gotthorm was not though a brother thy sib all these,

were Giúki's sons, their sister Guthrún; of Giúki's kin, to both his sons:37 silly óttar!

28. Of Hvethna's sons but Hiorvarth was

Haki was best, Hyethna's father.³⁸

29. Harold War-Tooth³⁹ the sower-of-rings:
Auth the Deep-Minded
Ráthbarth was

was to Hrœrek⁴⁰ born, he the son was of Auth;⁴¹ was fvar's⁴² daughter;

Ráthbarth was thy sib all these,

Randvér's⁴³ father: silly óttar!"⁴⁴

Freya said:

30. "To my boar bring thou, that he bear all in mind,

a cup⁴⁵ so he can

keep all these words,

³⁷In other words, he was Giúki's stepson; which is of importance in the slaving of Sigurth, cf. Sig. sk. 20.

³⁸The connection of these persons with Ottar is not known.—These lines are transposed here with Bugge. Cf. Vsp. sk. 5, note.

³⁹The epithet 'War-Tooth' probably signifies 'Warrior'. He is the famous, historic, king of Denmark (Tenth Century). His connection with Ottar is not explained.

⁴⁰Ags. *Hrēthric*, 'Glorious Ruler'. The epithet here given him is one typical of a generous, ring-dispensing prince (cf. *H.H.* I, 18); but in this case the name is ironic: according to the ancient 'Lay of Biarki' he cast away his gold to buy off his assailant King Hrólf kraki.

^{41&#}x27;The Wealthy' (?). Her namesake, a famous woman colonist of Iceland, bore the same epithet.

⁴²This famous viking plays a rôle in the *Ragnarssaga loðbrókar*.

⁴³Shield-Warrior'. Not identical, of course, with the son of Iormunrekk; cf. *Guð*. hv. Introductory Prose.

⁴⁴After this stanza the Manuscript, without the indication of a break, inserts the Short 'Prophecy of the Seeress' which quite evidently has no connection whatever with the matter in hand.

⁴⁵Containing the 'ale of memory'; cf. Sigrdr. Prose after 4; and below, 34.

and think of them on the third morning, when the twain shall tell of their kin."

Hyndla said:

- 31. "Wend thy way now, I wish to sleep; but little good wilt get from me, in the night who runnest, in her heat as Heithrún⁴⁶ the he-goats among.
- 32. "Wert ever eager with 6th⁴⁷ to lie: under thy apron still others have crept, in the night who runnest, thou noble friend, in her heat as Heithrún the he-goats among."

Freya said:

33. "The evil hag I hedge with fire: unscathed shalt not escape from hence."

Hyndla said:

34. "A fire see I burn,
he who loveth his life
in the beaker I bear
with venom brewed:

flameth the earth:
will release him gladly:
the beer to Ottar,
may it work thy bane!"

Freya said:

35. "Thy wicked wish though, etin woman, for drink shall he may all gods then

shall work no harm thou evil threatenest; the goodly draught: lend ottar help!"

^{45a}Ironic, with reference to Freya's speech when approaching her; cf. note 1.

⁴⁶The name of the mythical she-goat mentioned in Grimn. 25.

⁴⁷Her husband; cf. Vsp. 17. The meaning, possibly, is this that, notwithstanding her pretended faithfulness to him—after he had left her she sought him in many lands, Gylfag. chap. 34—she had accepted other lovers. A similar accusation is made by Loki; Lok. 30.

THE SHORT 'SEERESS' PROPHECY'.

Voluspé en skamma.

Though in no wise marked off in the Manuscript of the *Hyndluljóþ* in which they occur, it is certain that the stanzas here printed have nothing to do with that poem. Moreover, we are in the fortunate position of having Snorri's reference to them by the above title.^{1a}

From the evident discontinuousness of the poem it may be inferred that the original was longer but probably was not recalled in its entirety by the person who handed it down. As we now have it, the contents are largely cosmogonic, paralleling the Volusp 0, of which it is no doubt an imitation, both in matter, structure, and refrain. This likelihood, coupled with certain stylistic features, and the fact that the system of twelve gods is referred to, which is late, indicate it to be the work of a learned and not untalented Icelander of the Twelfth Century who knew a number of the older Eddic poems and perhaps some which have since been lost.

- 1. Eleven only the æsir were,
 when down did droop in death Baldr.
 Then Váli revenge did vow on him
 who murdered his brother in mainsworn wise.
- 2. Was Baldr's father² Bur's eldest son,
- 3. Frey wedded Gerth,³ Gymir's daughter, of etin kin, with Aurbotha.

 Thewful Thiatsi⁴ to them was in kin, the skulking⁵ etin; was Skathi his daughter.

^{1a}Gylfag. chap. 4, before his quotation of stanza 5.

¹For the story of Baldr's death and Váli's revenge, cf. Vsp. 24, 26 and notes.

²Othin.—From Gylfag. chap. 6 we learn that the sons of Bur 'the Begotten' (cf. Vsp. 4) were Othin, Vili, and Vé.—The remainder of a stanza seems to be missing.

³As told in Skirn.

⁴Concerning him and Skathi, cf. Hárb. 19, note, and Lok. 49f.

⁵Conjectural.

- 4. I tell thee much, yet more lore have I; thou needs must know this,— wilt know still more?
- 5. ⁶Heith and Hrossthióf, Hrímnir's kinsmen.⁷
- 6. From Vitholf⁸ are all witches sprung; the tribe of warlocks, from Vilmeith all; the soothsayers, from Svarthofthi; and all etins are of Ymir's kin.
- 7. I tell thee much, yet more lore have I, thou needs must know this,— wilt know still more?
- 8. In days of yore a youth was born, of sturdy strength, of the stock of gods; at the edge of the earth, etin-maids nine gave birth and suck to the brightest of gods.

⁶This line evidently is the fragment of a stanza. In the Manuscript it follows *Hynd*. 28.

⁷Probably giants' names. Heith may be identical with the witch mentioned Vsp. 14.—Hrossthióf 'Horse-Thief' is a name borne also by a berserk in the Hrólfssaga Gautrekssonar. As to Hrímnir cf. Skirn. 29.

s'Forest-Wolf'; probably a giant, as well as Vilmeith 'Wish-Granter' i.e. 'Soothsayer' (?) and Svarthofthi 'the Black-Headed'. As to Ymir, oldest of giants, cf. Vaf. 21, 28.

⁹Heimdall; cf. *prym.* 14. According to *Gylfag.* 26 he was borne by nine maidens, sisters all. In the same chapter, Snorri quotes the following lines from a lay, unknown otherwise, called Heimdall's Spell (*Heimdallargaldr*):

Mothers nine made me, of sisters nine the son I am. These have been doubtfully identified with the stormwaves, to which also their names seem to have reference. The light-god would, then, seem to have been conceived as arising out of the ocean 'at the edge of the earth', the horizon. Cf. in this connection Alv. 11.

9. Giolp did bear him, bore him Eistla and Eyrgiafa, bore him Ulfrún and Angeya, Imthr and Atla, and Iarnsaxa.

- 10. He was nursed and grew on the sap of the ground, on the ice-cold sea and the sacred boar's blood. 10
- 11. Was a mighty one born, he was nursed and grew on the sap of the ground; most high-minded he ones, in sib with all sires¹¹ matchless in strength, on the sap of the ground; and sons of earth.
- 12. I tell thee much, yet more lore have I:
 thou needs must know this,— wilt know still
 more?
- 13. Gat Loki the Wolf and Sleipnir he bore but of all ill wights is Býleist's brother's¹⁴

with wild Angrbotha,¹² to Svathilferi;¹³ most awful by far baleful offspring.

14. A half-burned heart it was a woman's—

which he had found—ate wanton Loki:

¹⁰The same lines occur in Guő. II, 21, where they seem to belong originally.

¹¹Accepting Boer's emendation: Heimdall is the sire of the three estates of men, cf. Vsp. 1 and Rig. passim.—In the original, the stanza follows 15.

¹²Cf. Vsp. 32 and notes.

^{18&#}x27;Toiler': cf. Grimn. 44, note.

¹⁴I.e. Loki, cf. Vsp. 43. His most baleful offspring is, probably, the Mithgarth-Serpent, cf. Vsp. 42, note.

with child he grew thence are on earth from the guileful woman:18 all ogres sprung.

¹⁶The stormy sea **15.** overwhelms the land, then are doomed to die

to the stars is tossed. the heavens give way; then come great snows and sweeping blasts; the drooping gods.

¹⁷A god will come then, **16.** I dare not speak Farther forward than Othin fighting

a greater one: his dreaded name. few can see now the Fenris-wolf. 18

¹⁵Parallels to this curious myth are sparingly found in Eastern folklore.

 $^{^{16}}$ Cf. with this stanza V_{Sp} . 49 which also gives the signs in nature foreboding, or accompanying, the doom of the gods.

¹⁷With the following lines cf. Vsp. 57 and note.

¹⁸Cf. Vsp. 45.

THE LAY OF SVIPDAG

$Svipdagsm \'el^1$

The two poems here printed under a common heading are handed down only in a number of late paper manuscripts none of which is older than the second half of the Seventeenth Century. Notwithstanding many discrepancies and obscurities, necessitating numerous emendations, these are seen to go back to a common lost original.

That these poems do belong together is evident from the connection, and from the similarity in their style, language, and metre $(lj\delta\delta ah \acute{a}ttr)$. Moreover, we have the witness of a number of closely related Swedish and Danish ballads^{1a} which treat the material as a unit. But it is difficult to decide whether both poems were originally an undivided whole, united by a stanza, or stanzas, now lost—which would account for the abrupt beginning of the $Fjolsvinnsm \acute{o}l$ proper; or independent treatments, by the same poet, of the two phases of the myth—the fairy-story motif of Sleeping Beauty.

I. 'The Spell of Gróa' (Gróugaldr): Young Svipdag is given the task by an evil stepmother to win the hand of Mengloth in Giant-Land (whom, as we gather from the ballads, he has never seen, but loves nevertheless). He seeks the grave of his mother Gróa, a wise-woman, and wakes her from her death sleep to ask for the help she had promised him in his hour of need. She sings for him nine spells which are to aid him in his dangerous undertaking.

II. 'The Lay of Fiolsvith' (Fjolsvinnsm&l): Svipdag (after overcoming all terrors of the journey, as we must assume) at last stands before a castle perched on mountain top, surrounded by a wall of flickering flames. A giant watchman, Fiolsvith, rudely bids him be gone and asks his name, which Svipdag conceals. However, the hero learns, in set question and answer, that Mengloth dwells in the castle, and that it is inaccessible save to one chosen hero—Svipdag. He reveals his true name, the gates open, and the maiden hails him as her deliverer.

These poems are peculiar in that they, to a far greater extent than any other, are a conglomerate of mythical elements and verse

¹The name of Svipdagsm'ell as a name for both poems was suggested by Bugge.

^{1a}Grundtvig, Danmarks Gamle Folkeviser II, 245.

fragments loaned from a score or so of unquestionably older poems in the collection, which fact stamps them as unauthentic. And yet the poet—no doubt a scholar of the Icelandic Renaissance living, say, at the end of the Twelfth Century—has shown remarkable skill in putting these borrowed feathers together to form a well-organized and, but for the didactic portions, engaging whole which simulates the Old Norse color surprisingly well; so much so that several scholars of weight have been led to assign it to the Tenth Century. The lyrical portions, in particular Mengloth's expression of longing and exultation, are most pleasing.

THE SPELL OF GROA.

Svipdag¹b said:

1. "Awake, Gróa,¹ good woman, awake!

At the doors of the dead² I wake thee:

doest bear in mind how thou badest thy son
to thy grave-hill to go?"

Gróa said:

2. "What aileth now my only son,
what maketh heavy thy heart,
that thy mother thou callest under mould who
lieth,
and hath left the world of the living?"

Svipdag said:

3. "To a cursed task called me the crafty woman' in her arms who folded my father:

¹b'He Whose Countenance Shines Like the Day' (?).

¹From Cymric groach 'witch'. Like Heith, Vsp. sk. 5, this is the typical name of a witch or seeress.

²I.e. her grave.

⁸His stepmother.

where come one cannot, to come she bade me, fair Mengloth⁴ to meet."

Gróa said:

4. "Long is the way and wearisome, but longer man's love doth last; if thou winn'st what thou wishest 'tis well for thee,

but the norns' work natheless."5

Svipdag said:

5. "Speak thou such spells as will speed my way, as will shield and shelter thy son: full of danger, ween I, the dreaded way for one so young in years."

Gróa said:

6. "That first then heed, which most helpful I know, the which Rind spoke for Ran: from thy shoulders shake what shocking seemeth;

seek thou thy way thyself!

7. "This other heed thou, if ever thou must wearily wend thy way:

^{4&#}x27;Glad in Her Necklace'.

⁵The interpretation is not certain. The meaning seems to be that, betide what may, or whatever help I may give, you will succeed only if you are fated to succeed: which is, indeed, the gist of the fairy-story.

⁶In explanation of the names, Gering suggests that the Rind here referred to is Váli's mother (cf. Bdr. 11), and that, hence, Ran stands for Váli, the avenger of Baldr.

- may Urth's magic songs⁷ on all sides guard thee, when with mocking words thou art met.
- 8. "This third heed thou, if in threat'ning waters thou fearest to find thy death:
 to Hel hence let fare Hronn and Uth,*
 may be dry the deeps for thee!
- 9. "This fourth heed thou, if foemen beset thee, ready to do thee to death:

 let their hearts withhold their hands from thee, and be made to meet thee halfway.
- 10. "This fifth heed thou, if fettered thou art, fastened hand and foot:

 a loosening spell I will speak o'er thy limbs, so the locks will burst off thy legs, the fetters from off thy feet."
- 11. "This sixth heed thou, if on sea riseth weather more wild than men wot: wind and water will my witchcraft lull; then fearlessly fare thou forth!10
- 12. "This eighth heed thou, if without find thee a misty night on the moors:

⁷Doubtful.

^{*}Following Bugge's emendation of the names: Hronn, and possibly also Uth 'Wave', is one of the rivers flowing to Hel (Grimn. 28) *For this spell, cf. H & v. 150.

¹⁰The same charm $H \delta v$. 155.

- lest ill overtake thee, or untowardness, from the wraith of a Christian wretch!¹¹
- 13. "This ninth heed thou, if with haughty thurs thou wouldest war with words:12 wit nor words be wanting ever, at behest of thy heart!13
- 14. "May thy errand no longer seem evil to thee, nor let thee from thy love:

 on earth-fast stone I stood within doors,14

 these spells while I spoke for thee!
- 15. "Of thy mother's words mindful thou be, in thy heart let, darling, them dwell: luck everlasting in life shalt have, the while my words thou heedest!"

THE LAY OF FIOLSVITH.

1. ¹⁵From far without up he saw rise the high-timbered hall of the etins. ¹⁶

¹¹In the original, 'Christian Woman'. The line certainly points to the conception that the ghosts of Christian women are especially dangerous to a Heathen hero.

¹²Cf. the situation in Vaf.

¹³Conjectural.

¹⁴Instanced also in other places as a practice of sympathetic magic: the spells are as trustworthy as bedrock.

¹⁵As to the abrupt beginning, cf. the Introduction.

¹⁶Possibly, a kenning for 'mountain'.—The entire first part of the stanza is highly controversial.

(Svipdag said:)17

"What foul fiend is it in the fore-court who stands,

about the hot fire hovering?"18

Fiolsvith19 said:

2. "What seekest thou, for what thy search, wayfarer, and what thy wish?

On wet ways²⁰ thou wend straight henceward:

no hearth for the homeless here!"

Svipdag said:

3. "What foul fiend is it in the fore-court who stands, and welcomes not the wayfarer?"

Fiolsvith said:

"Friendly welcome, I ween, hadst thou never: so hie thee home from hence!

4. "I am Fiolsvith hight, have fathomed much, but of my food am not free:21 within this court comest thou never: be off now, outlaw, away!"

¹⁷The following speech is by several editors attributed to Fiolsvith which, however, both the use of $flag\delta$ 'fiend' and the parallelism of 3, 1 seems to forbid.

¹⁸The 'flickering flame' that surrounds Mengloth's castle like Brynhild's wall of fire; Sigrdr. Introductory Prose.

¹⁹ The Very Wise'; which is also an epithet of Othin (Grimn. 47.) ²⁰ Scil. over the high mountains.

²¹I.e. not hospitable to strangers.

Svipdag said:

5. "To feast his eye full eager is he on a lovely thing who looketh: the gates do gleam about golden hall: my home would I fain have here."

Fiolsvith said:

6. "To whom art born, and of what blood, youth, from what house doest hail?"²²

Svipdag said:

- "Vindkald²³ my name, Várkald my father, Fiolkald his father was.
- 7. "Tell me, Fiolsvith, for I fain would know, answer thou as I ask: who holdeth sway in this seemly hall, so richly wrought with gold?"

Fiolsvith said:

8. "She is Mengloth²⁴ hight, whom her mother bore

to Sváfrthorin's son:

²²Cf. Fáfn. 1 where, too, the hero attempts to conceal his identity. Not acknowledging himself as the chosen hero, Svipdag must inquire into the conditions—impossible of fulfilment—through which access to the castle may be gained.

²³'Wind-Cold'; Várkald 'Spring-Cold'; Fiolkald 'Very Cold'. Gering suggests that, by giving these fictitious names, Svipdag wishes to make Fiolsvith believe that he, too, is of giant kin.

²⁴Gróug. 3, note. The name and status of her ancestor remain unexplained.

'tis she who holds sway in this seemly hall, so richly wrought with gold."

Svipdag said:

9. "Tell me, Fiolsvith, for I fain would know, answer thou as I ask:

how the wicket is hight than which 'mong the gods

none is more fraught with fear?"

Fiolsvith said:

10. "Thrymgioll²⁵ is hight that wicket which three sons of Sólblindi²⁶ made; with fast fetters the wayfarer it holds

with fast fetters the wayfarer it holds who will heave it out of its hinges."27

Svipdag said:

11. "Tell me, Fiolsvith, for I fain would know, answer thou as I ask:

how that wall is hight than which 'mong the gods

none is more fraught with fear?"

Fiolsvith said:

12. "Tis Gastropnir²⁸ hight, which most goodly I built

of Leirbrimir's,20 the etin's, limbs;
'tis so stanchly propped that stand it will so long as men do live."

^{25&#}x27;The Loud-Grating'.

^{26&#}x27;Sun-Blinded'—dwarfs whose abode is in the darkness.

 $^{^{27}}$ Like the gate described Sig.~sk. The Old Norse door raised up. Cf. Rig.~26. note.

^{28&#}x27;Strangling the Intruder' (?).

^{29&#}x27;Clay-Giant' (?)—is it built of bricks?

Svipdag said:

13. 30"Tell me, Fiolsvith, for I fain would know, answer thou as I ask:

how that ash is hight which out doth spread its limbs over all the land?"

Fiolsvith said:

14. "Tis hight Mimameith,31 but no man knoweth from what roots it doth rise;

by what it falleth the fewest guess: nor fire nor iron will fell it."³²

Svipdag said:

15. "Tell me, Fiolsvith, for I fain would know, answer thou as I ask:

of the fruit what becomes of that farspreading tree,

since nor fire nor iron will fell it?"

Fiolsvith said:

16. "Of its berries thou shalt bear on fire, for ailing women to eat:

then out will come what within was held—such strength is bestowed on that tree."33

Svipdag said:

17. "Tell me, Svipdag, for I fain would know, answer thou as I ask:

 $^{^{80}}$ In the original, stanzas 13 to 18, dealing with the tree Yggdrasil (cf. Vsp. 11), come after 24. They are probably interpolated, having nothing to do with the subject in hand.

^{81&#}x27;Mimir's Tree'. His well is under Yggdrasil, Vsp. 21.

⁸²Cf. *Grímn*. 35.

⁸⁸I.e. (possibly) its roasted fruit which, in some trees, has an emmenagogical effect; but the interpretation is conjectural.

how that cock is hight, in the high tree sitting,

which gleameth all golden?"

Fiolsvith said:

18. "He is Vithófnir hight and watchful³⁵ standeth on the branches of Mímameith: with dreadful fear he filleth the hearts of Surt³⁶ and Sinmara."

Svipdag said:

19. "Tell me, Fiolsvith, for I fain would know, answer thou as I ask:

how the hounds are hight which about the hall grim and greedy do prowl?"

Fiolsvith said:

20. "Gifr⁸⁷ is one hight, Geri the other, if to wit thou wishest: strong watch-dogs they, and watch they keep, till draws nigh the doom of the gods."

Svipdag said:

21. "Tell me, Fiolsvith, for I fain would know, answer thou as I ask:

whether any man within may come, when the hungry hounds do sleep?"

³⁵The word in the original is not well understood.

³⁶The fire giant, cf. Vsp. 44. His wife (?) Sinmara is unknown elsewhere. According to Vsp. 34ff, 43, the crowing of the cocks gives warning of the approach of the destroying elements.

³⁷Both names signify 'Greedy'.

Fiolsvith said:

22. "At the same time never asleep they were, since to their watch they were set: sleeps one at night, at noon-tide the other, so no one without may enter."

Svipdag said:

23. "Tell me, Fiolsvith, for I fain would know, answer me as I ask:

if moreal there he which men might throw

if morsel there be which men might throw them,

and slip in the while they eat?"

Fiolsvith said:

24. "Neath Vithófnir's limbs lie wing-bits³⁸ twain, if to wit thou wishest:
that meat alone may men throw them, and slip in the while they eat."

Svipdag said:

25. "Tell me, Fiolsvith, for I fain would know, answer thou as I ask:

if weapon there be which Vithófnir may send to the halls of Hel?"39

Fiolsvith said:

26. "Tis Lævatein⁴⁰ hight, which Lopt⁴¹ did forge, Niffhel beneath;

in an iron kettle keeps it Sinmara, there hold it hard locks nine."

³⁸The exact meaning of the word in the original is not clear.

⁸⁹I.e., slay him.

^{40&#}x27;Wand-of-Destruction', a kenning for 'sword'.

⁴¹Loki; cf. Lok. 6. The line is doubtful.

Svipdag said:

27. "Tell me, Fiolsvith, for I fain would know, answer thou as I ask:
will home wend him the wight who goes and seeketh to win that wand?"

Fiolsvith said:

28. "Home will wend him the wight who goes and seeks to win that wand, if that he fetch which few do own, to give to the goddess-of-gold."42

Svipdag said:

29. "Tell me, Fiolsvith, for I fain would know, answer thou as I ask:

if any one owns ought of great worth, to make fain that fallow ogress?"

Fiolsvith said:

30. "The shining feather then shalt thou pluck which from Vithófnir's start thou must steal.48

ere sullen Sinmara will sell to thee the weapon to lay him low."

Svipdag said:

31. "Tell me, Fiolsvith, for I fain would know, answer thou as I ask: what the hall is hight which is hedged about by wall of flickering flame?"

⁴²Conjectural. If correct, it is a kenning for 'woman': Sinmara.

⁴³The interpretation of these lines is doubtful.—The circle of impossibilities is closed: no one may enter the castle.

Fiolsvith said:

32. "Lýr^{43a} is it hight, and long will it hover on sword's point on high;⁴⁴ of this shining hall from hearsay ever men have learned alone."

Svipdag said:

33. "Tell me, Fiolsvith, for I fain would know, answer thou as I ask:

of the gods, who made the golden floor,

within the hall so high?"45

Fiolsvith said:

34. 46"Uni and fri, Iari and Bari,
Var and Vegdrasil,
Dóri and óri, and Delling were there,
the time Lithskialf was locked."47

Svipdag said:

35. "Tell me, Fiolsvith, for I fain would know, answer thou as I ask: what the mountain is hight which the maiden doth

dwell on, aloft and alone?"

⁴³aFollowing Bugge.

⁴⁴In other words, it is inaccessible.

⁴⁵The half-stanza is difficult. Both this and the following seven stanzas are irrelevant and, possibly, interpolated.

 $^{^{46}}$ Most of the following names of dwarfs remain unexplained. Several occur also in the Vsp. catalogue of dwarves.—The holy number nine plays a considerable rôle in both poems.

⁴⁷Conjectural. If this reading is adopted the castle bears the same name as Othin's seat in Valholl, cf. *Grimn*. Intro. Prose and note.

Fiolsvith said:

36. "Tis Lyfiaberg⁴⁸ hight, and long has it been for the sick and the halt a help:

for hale grows wholly, though hopeless she seem,

the woman who wins its hight."

Svipdag said:

37. "Tell me, Fiolsvith, for I fain would know, answer thou as I ask: what the maids are hight before Mengloth's knees

that sit in sisterly wise?"

Fiolsvith said:

38. "Hlíf one is hight, Hlífthrása another, a third, Thióthvara; eke Biort and Bleik, Blíth and Fríth, Eir and Aurbotha are there."

Svipdag said:

39. "Tell me, Fiolvar, for I fain would know, answer thou as I ask:

do they help award to their worshippers, if need of help they have?"

Fiolsvith said:

40. "Aye they help award to their worshippers, in hallowed stead if they stand; 50

^{48&#}x27;Mountain of Healing'.

⁴⁹The nine maidens bear names appropriate to their salutiferous activities.

⁵⁰Viz. to offer up sacrifice.

there is never a need cometh nigh to man, but they lend a helping hand."

Svipdag said:

41. "Tell me, Fiolsvith, for I fain would know, answer thou as I ask:

if to any man Mengloth will grant
in her soft arms to sleep?"

Fiolsvith said:

42. "No man liveth to whom Mengloth will grant in her soft arms to sleep, but Svipdag only; the sun-bright maiden was given him to wed for wife."

Svipdag said:

43. "Let gape the gates, and give wide berth!

Here mayst thou Svipdag see.

Now hie thee hence, in the hall to learn

if lief to Mengloth my love."

Fiolsvith said:

44. "Hear thou, Mengloth, a man hath come,—
go thou to greet the guest!

The hounds bay welcome, the house doth
open:

meseems that Svipdag it be."

Mengloth said:

45. "May hungry ravens hack thy eyes,
as high on gallows thou hangest,
if a lie it be that from long ways afar
the hero hath come to my hall."

46. "Whence comest thou, and what thy kin, what wert hight at home?

Thy father's name tell, that token I have thy bride that I should be."

Svipdag said:

47. "I am Svipdag hight, Sólbiart⁵¹ my father; thence wandered I wind-cold ways; against Urth's⁵² awards winneth no man, unearned the ill though it be."

Mengloth said:

- 48. "My wish have I won: welcome be thou; with kiss I clasp thee now; the loved one's sight is sweet to her who has lived in longing for him.
- 49. "Full long sat I on Lyfiaberg, bided thee day after day:

 now has happened what I hoped for long, that, hero, thou art come to my hall.
- 50. "Heart-sick was I, to have thee I yearned, whilst thou didst long for my love.

 Of a truth I know: we two shall live aye our life and lot together."

^{51&#}x27;Sun-Bright'.

⁵²One of the norns, cf. Vsp. 12 and note: 'all is ordered by fate'.

THE LAY OF GROTTI.

Grottasongr.

We owe the preservation of this spirited poem to the interest of a copyist of Snorri's Edda. It is found only in the *Codex Regius* Manuscript and the *Trajectinus* Paper Manuscript of that work. In all probability, Snorri contented himself with the citation of the first stanza, after briefly explaining the skaldic kenning for 'gold' as 'the Flour-of-Fróthi', by a short reference to the legend.¹a

It will be at once apparent that the account of the introductory Prose, while in some measure dependent on the poem, differs from it in a number of respects. Whereas in the lay the wishing-mill goes to pieces when Fróthi's good fortune ends, in harmony with the tragic conception of the theme, in the Prose the fall of Fróthi is, rather ineptly, combined with a fairy-story widely spread in the North—'how the sea grew salt'. In the other manuscripts of the Prose Edda this is localized by the statement that Mýsing's ships sank in the Pentland Firth; where, indeed, the story is still current. It is hardly open to doubt that the version of the lay is the more authentic.

The curiously mixed nature of the lay itself has given rise to many interpretations—most poetical, although not quite satisfactory, the one of Olrik who (while fully acknowledging that the poet has given his creation full human similitude in the figures of the giant maidens) conceives the song to contain an allegory of the mountain streams descending into the land of men, sweeping all before them (as 'valkyries'), but at length harnessed and reduced to servitude; until, overworked and abused, they finally rebel and overthrow the hated mill and spread general havoc.

There are frequent allusions to the quern legend in skaldic poetry, the first occurring about 950; so that we may assume the poem to have been in existence by that time, with which it also agrees as to style. There is no dependable clue as to its home. The measure is fornyrðislag.

Skiold¹ was a son of othin from whom the Skioldungs are sprung. He dwelled and ruled in that land which is now called Denmark, but which formerly was called Gotland.² Skiold's son was Frithleif³ who ruled over the land

¹aSkáld. chap. 43.

^{&#}x27;Shield'; cf. Hynd. 11.

²I.e. the present Jutland and, pars pro toto, Denmark.

^{3&#}x27;The Heir of Peace or of Friendship'.

after him. Frithleif's son was Fróthi.4 He succeeded his father at the time when Augustus Cæsar made peace in all the world and Christ was born.⁵ And because Fróthi was the most powerful king in all the Northern lands, peace was named after him wherever the Danish tongue⁶ is spoken, and all people in the North call it the Peace of Fróthi. long as it lasted, no man harmed the other, even though he met the slayer of his father or of his brother, free or bound. Then was there no thief or robber, so that a gold ring lav (untouched) three years by the high road over the Ialangr-Heath.7 It happened that King Fróthi went to a feast given by King Fiolnir⁸ in Sweden, and there he bought two bond-maids whose name was Fenia and Menia.9 They were both tall and strong. At that time there were in Denmark two millstones which were so large that no man was able to turn them. And these stones had the power to grind out whatever he who turned them bade them grind. This quern was named Grotti,10 and Hengikiopt11 the man who had given the king this mill. Fróthi had the maids led to the mill and bade them grind him gold; and so they did, and at first ground for Fróthi gold and peace and happiness. Then he gave them rest or sleep no longer than whilst the cuckoo was silent, or a lay could be sung. said that then they chanted the lay12 which is called the Lay of Grotti; and before it was at an end they had ground

^{4&#}x27;The Wise'.

⁵Of course, this chronology is due to a learned combination of the writer.

⁶I.e. the Scandinavian languages, differentiated at that time only by slight dialectal variations.

⁷The present Jællinge in Jutland.

⁸One of Othin's names, cf. Grimn. 47, and possibly the god himself.

^{9&#}x27;Water-Maiden (?)' and 'Jewel-Maiden (?)'

^{10&#}x27;Grinder'.

¹¹'Hang-Chaps', also a name of Óthin: in disguise, he prepares Fróthi's ruin by these gifts.

¹²The grinding at the (hand-)mill is everywhere accompanied by song.

this for him that on that very night came there the seaking Mýsing¹³ who slew Fróthi and took much booty—that was the end of the Peace of Fróthi. Mýsing took with him the mill Grotti and also Fenia and Menia, and bade them grind salt for him. At midnight they asked him whether he had not enough salt, but he bade them grind on. They ground but a little while longer before the ships went down. At that spot is now a whirlpool in the sea, where the waters rush in through the eye of the millstone. Since then is the sea salt.

- 1. Now are they come to the king's high hall, the foreknowing twain, Fenia and Menia; in bondage by Fróthi, these sisters mighty as slaves are held.
- 2. To moil at the mill the maids were bid, to turn the grey stone to lag in their toil the song of the slaves the maids were bid, as their task was set; the would let them never, unceasing would hear.
- 3. The chained ones churning ay chanted their song¹⁵

 "Let us right the mill and raise the mill-stones."

 He gave them no rest, to grind on bade them.
- 4. They sang as they swung the swift-wheeling stones, till of Fróthi's thralls most fell asleep.

 Then Menia quoth. at the quern she stood:

^{13&#}x27;Mouse-Grey'. Olrik explains this curious name to be that of the grey 'sea-cattle' of folklore: according to another tradition, Fróthi was killed by a monster arising out of the sea.

¹⁴Giants are often described as having prophetic gifts.

¹⁵The line is difficult.

"Gold and good hap grind we for Fróthi, 5. a hoard of wealth, on the wishing-mill;

he shall sit on gold, he shall sleep on down. he shall wake to joy: well had we ground then!

- 6. "Here shall no one harm his neighbor, nor bale-thoughts brew for others' bane. nor swing sharp sword to smite a blow, though his brother's banesman bound he should find."
- This word first then fell from his lips: **7**. "Sleep ye shall not more than cock in summer.16 or longer than I a lay may sing."

(Menia said:)17

- "A fool wert, Fróthi, and frenzied of mind, 8. the time thou, men's friend,18 us maidens didst buv: for strength didst choose us and sturdy looks. but didst not reck of what race we sprang.
- "Hardy was Hrungnir,19 but his sire e'en more; 9. more thews than they old Thiatsi²⁰ had. Ithi and Orni are of our kin: are we both born to brothers of etins.
- 10. "Scarce had Grotti come out of grey mountain. from out of the earth the iron-hard slab.

¹⁶Conjectural. Possibly also, 'than the cuckoo', which in the long summer day of the high north sings almost unintermittently.

¹⁷The assignment of the voices according to Olrik.

¹⁸A kenning for 'king'.

¹⁹Cf. *Hárb*. 14.

²⁰Cf. *ibid*. 19.

nor had mountain-maids now to turn the millstone, if we had not first found it below.^{20a}

- 11. "Winters nine we grew beneath the ground; under the mountains, we mighty play-sisters did strive to do great deeds of strength: huge boulders we budged from their bases.
- 12. "The rocks we rolled out of etins' realm:
 the fields below with their fall did shake;
 we hurled from the heights the heavy quernstone,
 the swift-rolling slab, so that men might
 seize it.
- 13. "But since then we to Sweden fared, we fore-knowing twain, and fought among men;21 byrnies we slit and bucklers shattered, we won our way through grey-coated warriors.
- 14. "One king we overthrew, to Gotthorm the good stern was the struggle ere Knúi was struck.
- 15. "A full year thus we fared among men; our name was known among noble heroes.

 Sharp spears we shot through linden shields, drew blood from wounds, and brands reddened.
- 16. "Now we are come to the king's high hall, without mercy made to turn the mill;

²⁰aA difficult line.

²¹Scil. as valkyries.

mud soils our feet, frost cuts our bones; at the peace-quern we drudge: dreary is it here.

17. "The stone now let stand, my stint is done; I have ground my share, grant me a rest."

(Menia said:)

"The stone must not stand, our stint is not done, before to Fróthi his fill we ground.

- 18. "Our hands shall hold the hard spear-shafts, weapons gory: Awake thou, Fróthi!

 Awake thou, Fróthi, if listen thou wilt to our songs of eld, to our ancient lore.
- 19. "My eye sees fire east of the castle; battle-cries ring out, beacons are kindled!

 Hosts of foemen hither will wend to burn down the hall over the king's head.
- 20. "No longer thou Leire²² shalt hold, rings of red gold, nor the mill of riches.

 Harder the handle let us hold, sister; our hands are not warm yet with warriors' blood.
- 21. "My father's daughter doughtily ground, for the death of hosts did she foresee; even now the strong booms burst from the quern, the stanch iron stays— yet more strongly swing!"

²²The famous royal seat of the Danish kings in prehistoric times, corresponding to the hall Heorot of *Béowulf*. It was probably situated near the present town of Roskilde, Zealand.

(Fenia said:)

22. "Yet more strongly swing: the son of Yrsa²³
Fróthi's blood will crave for the bane of Half
dan—²⁴
he Hrólf is hight, and is to her
both son and brother, as both of us know."

23. The mighty maidens, strained their young limbs of giant strength; the shaft-tree quivered, the quern toppled over, the spinning millstones sprang asunder.

24. Quoth the mighty maiden of the mountain giants:

"Ground have we now, more than thou needest; we have toiled enough at turning the mill."

²³'She-Wolf'. By her father, Helgi, she has a son, the renowned hero-king Hrólf kraki (Ags. $Hr\bar{o}\partial ulf$) who is thus 'to her both son and brother'.

²⁴According to the *Hrólfs saga kraka*, Fróthi murdered his brother Halfdan in order to ascend the throne.

THE LAY OF VOLUND

V olundar kvi "o" a

Stark and powerful as few others in the collection is the Lay of Volund the Smith. If, as has been said, revenge is the ecstasy of Germanic antiquity, then this lay is its glorification. It stands by itself in richness of invention, in grim compactness. Limned with a few bold strokes the characters stand before us indelibly: the tragic figure of the captive artificer, the greedy but weak king, his cruel queen, the lads with their childlike curiosity, princess Bothvild in her helpless despair.

The motif belongs essentially to Germanic hero lore; although it is difficult to deny some ancient connection with the Greek story of Daidalos, held prisoner by the evil king Minos, who fashions him and his son wings to escape; and with the limping smith of the gods, Hephaistos. Our poem gives the tradition its most authentic expression. It is antedated, however, by the Anglo-Saxon song of 'Dēor's Lament' and by the scene on the Franks Casket—generally referred to the Seventh Century. Later, and with many new details, is the novelistic account of the biðreks saga.

There can be little doubt that the poem originated in Norway. Both metre—a free fornyrðislag—and treatment place it among the

¹It begins as follows:

Wayland learned bitterly banishment's way, earl right resolute; ills endured; had for comrades Care and Longing, winter-cold wanderings; woe oft suffered when Nithhad forged the fetters on him, bending bonds on a better man.

That he surmounted: so this may I!

Beaduhild mourned her brother's death,
less sore in soul than herself dismayed
when her plight was plainly placed before her,—
birth of a bairn. No brave resolve
might she ever make, what the end should be.
That she surmounted: so this may I!

Gummere, The Oldest English Epic, p. 186. The poem is preserved in a manuscript of the Eleventh Century, but is manifestly much older.

earliest in the Edda; that is, about the Ninth Century. And this may account also in some degree for the sad condition of the text.¹a It is preserved only in the *Cod. Reg.*

There was a king in Sweden hight Níthoth.² He had two sons and a daughter whose name was Bothvild.3 lived three brothers, sons of a Finnish king. Was one hight Slagfith,4 the second Egil, and the third, Volund.5 They ran on snowshoes, hunting game. They came to the Wolfdales and made them a house there by a water called Wolf Lake. Early one morn they found by the shore three women who were spinning flax. By them lay their swan skins, for they were valkyries.6 They were the two daughters of King Hlothvér,7 Hlathguth8 the Swanwhite, and Hervor the Allwise; and the third was Olrún, the daughter of King Kíar of Valland. The brothers took them home with them. Egil took Olrún to wife; Slagfith, Hlathguth; and Volund, Hervor. Thus dwelled they seven years. Then flew they away to be at battles, and came not again. Then went forth Egil on his snowshoes to search for Olrún, and Slagfith, to look for Swanwhite; but Volund stayed

^{1a}Only the most important emendations etc. have been referred to in the notes.

²Ags. Nīðhād, 'Envious Hater.'

³Ags. Beaduhild, 'War-Maiden'.

^{4&#}x27;Finn-Smith'.

⁵O.H.G. and Ags. Weland. The name has not yet received a satisfactory explanation.

⁶The motif of the swan-skins (cf. *Helr*. 7) is but faintly stressed here. By taking them away, the brothers obtain possession of the maidens; but their departure is due, here, not to their regaining the swan-skins, as one might expect, but to the inborn longing to be valkyries again.

⁷Corresponding to the Frankish King, Chlodowech, as Kíar may correspond to King Kiarval (*Cearbhall*) of Valland (here meaning 'Wales').

⁸The names of the maidens signify, in order, 'the Necklace-Adorned Warrior-Maiden', 'the Warder of the Host', and 'the One Knowing Ale-Runes' (cf. Sigrdr. 7).

behind in the Wolfdales. He was the most skilful of men of whom olden tales tell. King Níthoth had him taken captive, as is told in this lay.

- through Myrkwood⁹ from Three maidens flew 1. Southland. in wars to try them; young valkyries, they sate by the lake. their limbs to rest, the Southron ladies. fair linen spinning:
- Hlathguth and Hervor, Hlothvér's daughters. 2. Kíar's offspring. and wise Olrún. wind her white arms Did one of them about Egil. to her bosom held him;
- 3. and Hlathguth fair, (as friend to her but Hervor, the third winded her arms

the swanwing-flighted, folded Slagfith);10 of these sisters. 'round Volund's neck.

Thus sate the sisters 4. but on the eighth but on the ninth longed the maidens the young valkyries,

5.

seven winters. aye in yearning, they needs must part: through Myrkwood to fly, to try them in war.

(from hunting weary, Slagfith and Egil,

Came the weather-wise

ing. Volund the smith,) 11 found empty the hall, went out and in, with their eyes seeking.

from the woods strid-

Fared Egil eastward. 6. fared southward Slagfith. but Volund alone in Wolfdales stayed—

Olrún to seek. Swanwhite to find: (bided till back his bride would come);12

^{9&#}x27;The Murky Forest'; typical name of a forest.

¹⁰Supplied after Grundtvig.

¹¹After Bugge, from 11.

¹²After Bugge and Grundtvig.

- 7. with red gold rimmed richest jewels, with bast his rings then bound together; for the white-armed woman he waited long, biding till back his bride would come.
- 8. This heard Níthoth, the Niara-King,¹³ that Volund alone in Wolfdales dwelled: at night fared the men, were their mail-coats studded,¹⁴ their shields did shine by the sheen of the moon.
- 9. From their horses leapt, at the hall's gable-end, and in went they throughout the hall; saw on bast the rings bound together, full seven hundred the smith did own.
- 10. Off they took all, put them on again; but one ring away did take. 15
- 11. Came the weather-wise from the woods striding, from hunting weary, Volund the smith.

 To broil gan he a bear's meat then, soon flamed the fire of faggots dry, the wood wind-dried, on Volund's hearth.
- 12. On bear-skins resting the rings then told the alfs' folk-warder, and one he missed:

 hoped that had it Hlothvér's daughter, that the young valkyrie had wended home.

¹⁸It is not understood what people is referred to.

¹⁴Scil. with bosses of metal.

¹⁵They take no more than the one ring, in order not to arouse suspicion. Fearing the super-natural powers of Volund—he is termed a prince of the alfs (stanza 12)—they mean to overcome him sleeping, and so lie in wait for him until he returns weary from the chase.

13. Long time sate he, till asleep he fell; awakened then to woeful lot: on his hands had he heavy shackles, were his feet fastened by fetters strong.

Volund said:

- 14. "What warriors have wound about me the rope of bast and bound me thus?"

 Then called out Níthoth the Niara-King:
 "Where didst win, Volund, in the Wolfdales living, thou lord of alfs, our gold rings?
- 15. "That gold was not on Grani's path, and far hence are the hills of the Rhine." 16

Volund said:

- 16. "Better treasure I trow we had, in the hall when we at home did sit." ¹⁷
- 17. (Stood Níthoth's cunning queen without);¹⁸ in now went she to endmost gable, on floor standing with still voice said:¹⁹ "There is hate in him in the holt who dwelled."

King Níthoth gave his daughter Bothvild the gold ring which he had taken off the bast-rope in Volund's hall, and he himself bare the sword which Volund had owned. But his queen said:

¹⁶The king implies that it was stolen from him; for the hills of the Rhine are distant where the dragon brooded over the Niflung gold (cf. the 'Lay of Regin' etc.). After slaying him, Sigurth laid the burthen on his horse Grani's back.

¹⁷That is, in his father's hall (?).

¹⁸Supplied by Bugge.—The scene is shifted, as frequently, without indication,—here to the king's hall.

¹⁹She speaks in a low voice, not to be overheard by Volund.

18. "Are his eyes awful as adder's the speckled, his teeth he bares, the blade as he, and my daughter's dear ring he sees: sever ye soon his sinews' might, let him sit henceforth in Sævarstath."20

And so was done. They hamstrung him, and set him down on an isle which lay not far from land and was hight Sævarstath. There he wrought in metal and made the king all manner of costly things. No one dared to go to see him but only the king.

Volund said:21

- 19. "The sword see I at Níthoth's side
 the which I whetted as I had the skill,
 the which I hardened by hand, till fit.

 Now the flashing blade from me is gone;
 ne'er to Volund's smithy will I see it borne.
 Now bears Bothvild my bride's armlet,
 the gold-ring red I'll not gain ever."
- 20. Sate he nor slept, wrought Volund wily To his door drifted sons of Níthoth,

e'er smote with hammer; works for Níthoth.^{21a} one day the young in Sævarstath.

21. For the keys called they

was their ill fate sealed

Much wondrous wealth
the younglings, of gems

to the chest when they came—when in they looked.²² they weened to see, and of yellow gold.

^{20&#}x27;Stead by the Sea'.

²¹Viz. to himself.

²¹aCf. the Ags. expression Welondes geweore for all kinds of skilful work in metals.

²²For in that moment Volund conceives his plan of revenge.

Volund said:

- 22. "Come again, lordlings, come alone on the morrow, the gleaming gold I shall give you then; from your nurses hide, and from household folk, from every wight, that ye wend to me."23
- 23. Full soon one brother said to the other, and lad to lad: "let us look at the rings!"
- 24. For the keys called they to the chest when they came—
 was their ill fate sealed when in they looked.
 He hewed off the heads of the hapless lads, their bodies buried 'neath the bellows' pit.²⁴
- 25. With skill their skulls 'neath the scalp that lay in silver he set^{24a} and sent them to Níthoth; of the bairns' eye-balls shining beads he wrought and gave to the cunning queen of Níthoth.
- 26. But out of the twain's teeth made Volund beautous brooches which to Bothvild he sent.
- 27. Did proud Bothvild then praise the ring—25 to Volund bore it as broken it was:
 "I durst not tell this but to thee only."

²³In the *biöreks saga*, chap. 73, Volund tells the boys to return when fresh snow had fallen, and to walk backwards to his door. After their disappearance, Volund is suspected but clears himself by showing the tracks leading from his door.

²⁴This is the scene pictured on the Franks Casket.

^{24a}Viz. as drinking vessel.

²⁵After Niedner. The text is disordered here.

Volund said:

"Whate'er harm it has taken, I shall heal the 28. ring

that to thy father 'twill fairer seem, and to thy mother by much better, and to thyself the same as before."

29. Did wily Volund outwit her with drink, so that on settle asleep she fell.

(Volund said:)

"Are avenged the deeds which were done to me. save one only, on the wicked queen.26

- "Fain would I fare on my feet",27 quoth 30. Volund. "whose might from me Níthoth's men have taken."28
- 31. Laughing, aloft lifted him Volund. weeping, Bothvild went from the isle, his flight fearing, and her father's wrath.
- 32. Stood Níthoth's cunning queen without; in now went she to endmost gable; but on house-wall high awhile he²⁹ rested: "art waking. Níthoth. thou Niara-King?"30

²⁶Conjectural.

²⁷The line is difficult.

²⁸Here, no doubt, several lines have dropped out: "but lacking them, I must take to the wings I have fashioned me." (?)

²⁹I.e. Volund.

³⁰ Probably the queens speech: she calls attention to Volund's presence.

Níthoth said:

- 33. "I am wakeful ever, nor wait me joy, ever since my sons died I slept but little: cold was thy counsel,31 cold is my head;32 now wish I this of Volund to ask:
- 34. "Make answer, Volund, thou alf-warder! What hath become of my hapless boys?"

Volund said:

- 35. "Ere shalt thou swear all oaths to me, by ship's bulwark and shield's border, by swift steeds shoulder and sharpest sword: that to Volund's wife thou work no harm, nor brew for my bride baleful counsel, though wife I have whom well ye know, or child I have thy hall within.
- 36. "To the smithy wend, there the bellows shalt I hewed off the heads and their bodies buried

for Volund builded, all bloody find: of thy hapless boys, 'neath the bellows' pit.

37. "With skill their skulls 'neath the scalp which lay in silver I set and sent them to thee:

in silver I set and sent them to thee;
of the bairns' eye-balls shining beads I wrought
and gave to the cunning queen of Níthoth.

38. "But out of the twain's teeth made Volund beauteous brooches and to Bothvild sent them; and now Bothvild is big with child, your only daughter, dear to you both."

³¹In the Old Norse proverb, 'woman's counsel is cold', i.e. cruel.

³²With despair?

Níthoth said:

- 39. "Ne'er saidst thou word which saddened me more nor I wished, Volund, but so high no one, nor so strong, belike, so high since hoverest which saddened me more to avenge: to haul thee down, from below to shoot thee, so high since hoverest 'neath very heaven."
- 40. Laughing, aloft lifted him Volund, in sorrow Níthoth sate behind, then.
- 41. Then spake Níthoth, the Niara-King:

 "Rise up, Thakkráth,33 of my thralls thou best,
 and bid Bothvild with brows shining,
 and fairly dight, go with her father to speak."
- 42. "Is it true, Bothvild, as told I am, that Volund with thee was on the isle?"

Bothvild said:

43. "Tis true, Níthoth, as told thou art:

Volund with me was on the isle
an hour of shame: it should not have been.

No strength had I to strive against him,
no wit had I 'gainst Volund to strive."

³³Ags. and Norman Thankrēd, M.H.G. Dancrât 'He Who Gives Pleasant Counsel'.

THE HELGI LAYS

A certain similarity of theme, treatment, and locality holds the three Helgi poems together. The predominant motif is that of the hero beloved of a valkyrie. They thus form a group by themselves. And although a connection with the Volsung cycle has been brought about by making the second Helgi a son of Sigmund, and thus a half-brother of Sigurth and Sinfiotli, and both Volsung and Ylfing, it is fairly certain—through the evidence of the names of persons and localities—that originally Helgi is a purely Danish hero.¹ Indeed, this very attempt to weld the two cycles together argues a relatively late origin—say the Tenth or Eleventh Century, which is further borne out by the testimony of verse technique and language.—Except for trifling fragments, the three lays are preserved only in the $Cod\ Reg.^{12}$

¹The names of Sigar and Helgi definitely belong to Danish tradition. And the localities, so far as they are not symbolical or doubtful, all cluster about the Eastern Baltic—thus 'Sigar's-Field', 'Hringstead' (now Sigersted and Ringsted, on the island of Zealand); 'Hlés-Isle' (now Læsö, in the Kattegat); 'Hethin's-Isle' (now 'Hiddense', an island near Rügen); 'Svarin's Hill' (now Schwerin); etc.

^{1a}H.Hv. follows H.H. I in the Codex.

THE LAY OF HELGI HIORVARTHSSON

Helgakviða Hjorvarbssonar

It is obvious that this poem is not of a piece, but consists of fragments of lays joined together by the Collector whose Prose is here awkward, rambling, and absent-minded even more than is usual with him. By the relative copiousness of its Prose, the lay forms a transition stage, as it were, between the heroic lay and the legendary saga in which it often is a matter of doubt whether the interspersed stanzas and lays are meant merely to serve as an authentication of the narrative; or the narrative, to explain, or connect, these stanzas or lays.

The first two fragments are in no sense notable efforts. An almost elegiac note distinguishes the stanzas on Helgi's death (fragment IV) which, in a way remind one of Hialmar's Death Song in the Hervarar saga; only, there is too little imaginative energy, the main figures are too faintly outlined, to awaken our sympathy.

Internal evidence makes it rather certain that the 'flyting', or word-duel, of Atli with the giantess Hrímgerth (fragment III), which also stands out by different metre (lioðaháttr) is of a later date than the other fragments. It may be well to remind the reader—as in the case of the Lokasenna—that, however offensive its coarseness to the more delicate taste of a later age, the genre as a whole is not devoid of a certain interest, in showing the obverse and animal side of the Viking Age, as contrasted with the frequently stilted and stereotype idealisations of Heroic Poetry. In this particular case, a robustious, though low, humor redeems what elsewhere degenerates into a mere scolding match.

I.

Hiorvarth² was the name of a king, and he had four wives. One was called Alfhild, whose son by him was called Hethin;^{2a} another, Særeith, whose son was Humlung; a third, Sinrióth, whose son was Hymling. King Hiorvarth had vowed to marry the handsomest woman he

^{2&#}x27;Protector by the Sword'.

²aAgs. *Heoðen*, most likely abbreviated from *Ulfheðin* 'Wolf-Coat, Werewolf'.

could find. Now he had heard that King Sváfnir³ had a most fair daughter, hight Sigrlinn. (It had happened in this wise:) One day Atli,⁴ the son of his earl Ithmund, was standing by a clump of trees, but a bird⁵ sate in the branches above him which had heard how the king's men had called Hiorvarth's wives the fairest of all women. The bird twittered whilst Atli listened to what it said:

1. "Hast seen Sigrlinn, the fairest maiden handsome though be in Glasir Grove.

n, Sváfnir's daughter, in Munarheim? e Hiorvarth's women and goodly withal."

Atli said:

2. "Wilt to Atli, Earl Ithmund's son, wise bird on bough, unburthen thee?"

The bird said:

"I will if thou wilt worship me, and of Hiorvarth's chattels I may choose at will."

⁸The king of Svávaland (below) which is to be identified, it seems, with the original home of the Suevi, now Brandenburg. Sváfnir's daughter is here called Sigrlinn, but the name is probably to be interchanged with that of Sváva.—The Prose following had to be somewhat rearranged, to make sense.

⁴As to his name, cf. 15, note.

⁵The bird is evidently the same Earl Fránmar in disguise who, later, for reasons of his own, opposes both Hiorvarth's and Hróthmar's suit. The latter invades Sváfnir's lands, when Atli surprises and slays Fránmar; Prose after 5.—Atli, by the restrictions he places on his possible demands, is intent on saving his king from the plight of Jephthah.

^{6&#}x27;The Home of Love' (?); one of the many, probably symbolic, names occurring in the Helgi lays.—Glasir 'the Resplendent'.

Atli said:

3. "Choose thou nor Hiorvarth, nor Hiorvarth's sons,

nor the folk-warder's the winsome women let us fairly deal, fair-haired women, of the war-leader; as friends seemeth."

The bird said:

4. "Choose I hallowed shrine and holy places, golden-horned kine" from the king's stables, in his arms if sleeps Sváfnir's daughter, and not unwilling sleeps with the king."

Atli dwelled throughout the winter⁸ with King Sváfnir. Earl Fránmar was King Sváfnir's earl who had fostered up Sigrlinn. His own daughter was hight Álof. This earl counselled the king not to give Sigrlinn to King Hiorvarth; so Atli journeyed home; but when he came home and the king asked what tidings he had, he said:

5. "No welcome word rewards my toil, our horses wearied on high mountains; swift Sæmorn's flood we forded then, nor fetched whom we sought, Sigrlinn, for thee,

the ring-bedight daughter of Sváfnir.

The king bade him fare a second time, and rode along himself. And when they came over the mountain they saw in Svávaland great fires, and great clouds of dust raised by horses. Then rode the king down from the mountain into the land and halted for the night by some river. Atli stood guard and set over the river. He found a house,

⁷It was not unusual to gild the horns of favorite animals. Cf. brym., 23.

⁸Custom demanded that, the more important the errand, the longer the guest remained before broaching the matter to his host.

and on it sate a large bird, guarding it, and was fast asleep. Atli killed the bird with his spear; but in the house he found Sigrlinn, the king's daughter, and Alof, the earl's daughter, and took them both with him. It was Earl Fránmar who had taken on the form of an eagle and had warded them from the foes by witchcraft; but Hróthmar was the name of the king who had (vainly) sought the hand of Sigrlinn and had slain the king of Svávaland and harried and burned the land. King Atli took Sigrlinn to wife, and Atli, Alof.

II.

Hiorvarth and Sigrlinn had a son who was large of body and handsome. He spoke little, and no name would cling to him.⁹ One time he sate on a hill and saw nine valkyries riding by. One of them was the stateliest. She said:

6. "Not soon wilt, Helgi,10 hold sway over rings nor, reddener-of-swords, screamed the eagles early11— if aye thou sayest naught; though stout-hearted, hero, I ween thee!"

Helgi said:

7. "What gift¹² goes with the given name which, white-armed maid, to me hast given? Bethink thee well what thou wilt say:

I'll have none of the name, if not eke thee."

⁹Possibly, because the name given him at birth did not suit the nature of the indolent (?) and tongue-tied youth.—He sits 'on a hill', here as a shepherd, being regarded as an 'ashie-pattle'.

 $^{^{10}}$ Ags. $H\bar{a}lga$, 'the Hallowed', i.e. one dedicated to the gods.

¹¹Eagles screaming early betoken the birth of a hero; cf. H.H. I, 1.

¹²He who bestowed a name or cognomen, whether on a child or an adult, was expected to add a gift. This custom of 'name-fastening' is frequently attested in the Northern monuments.

The valkyrie said:

- 8. "Swords know I, lie in Sigarsholm,¹³ a full fifty but four, I ween; of the bitter brands the best is one, a wound-dealing wand all wound with gold.¹⁴
- 9. "There is Praise in the hilt, Power in the blade,
 Awe in the edge, for whoso owns it;
 on the blade winds him a blood-hued worm, but on the sword-guard a snake lies coiled."

Eylimi was the name of a king, and his daughter was hight Sváva. She was a valkyrie and rode through air and sea. It was she who gave Helgi this name, and she often afterwards shielded him in battles. Helgi said:

10. "Thou takest not, Hiorvarth, wholesome counsel, leader-in-war, though wide thy fame,—sacking with fire the seats of kings who hardly have done harm to thee;

11. "but Hróthmar lettest lavish gold-rings which that our kin in keeping had:—
but little fears he that foemen live,
but deems he wields dead men's riches."

Hiorvarth answered that he would help Helgi with an army if he wished to avenge his mother's father. Then sought Helgi the sword which Sváva had told him of, and

^{13&#}x27;Sigar's Island'.

¹⁴The hilts of swords were often wound with gold wire.—'Wand (-of-wounds)' is a kenning for 'sword'.

¹⁵The red snake annulation probably indicates damascening. The other properties are given the sword by the appropriate magic runes engraved on it.

fared forth with Atli. They felled Hróthmar and did many a great deed.

III.

Helgi killed the giant Hati¹⁶ whom he found sitting on a mountain. Helgi and Atli had moored their ships in the Hatafirth. Atli kept the watch during the first part of the night. Hrímgerth, Hati's daughter, said:

12. "Who be the heroes in Hatafirth?

Are the ships girded with shields;"

unflinching ye fare, seem to fear but little:

make known the name of thy king!"

Atli said:

13. "He is Helgi hight, and no harm whate'er canst thou do the doughty leader; iron-clad is the atheling's fleet,18 so no witches may work us ill."

Hrímgerth said:

14. "What art thou hight, thou haughty man, and of what kin art come?

Much faith in thee the folk-leader hath, that thou dwell'st in the fair ship's fore-castle." the fair ship's fore-castle."

^{16&#}x27;The Hateful'; the firth is named after him.

¹⁷The shields of the crew were hung along the bulwarks of the dragon-ships.

¹⁸Probably not to be taken literally. The iron of the shields' bosses served as protection against evil spirits.

¹⁹The $stafnb\acute{u}i$, or forecastle-man, on a man-of-war had the place of greatest responsibility and honor as leader in battle and as spokesman; cf. H.H. I, 34.

Atli said:

- 15. "Atli am I, and awe thee I shall,20 most hateful am I to hags; in the brine-washed bow was my berth full often, when night-riders21 did I to death.
- 16. "Of what kin comest thou, corpse-greedy ogress?

What father hadst thou, hag?
Full nine leagues shouldest be the earth beneath,
thy bosom o'ergrown with bushes."22

Hrimgerth said:

17. "Am I Hrímgerth hight, was Hati my father, mightiest of all the etins; many's the maid he made off with, ere Helgi sent him to Hel."

Atli said:

18. "Twas thou, hag, then, who held up his ships, in the firth as thou lay'st before us; to Rón²³ wouldst have given the ring-breaker's men,

if his spear had not spitted thee."

²⁰In the original, there is a play on the supposed meaning of Atli's name ('the Grim, Awful').

²¹That is, witches riding on sticks; cf. H & v. 156.

²²Compare the curses in Skirn.

²⁸The sea-god Ægir's wife. She gathers up the drowned in her net.

Hrímgerth said:

- 19. "Mistaken art, tricked by a dream,
 now thou wrinklest thy brow in rage:
 'twas my mother who moveless held you:
 drowned I Hlothvarth's sons in the sea."²⁴
- 20. "Thou wouldst gambol and neigh if gelt thou were not, now Hrímgerth tosses her tail;

 I ween thy heart in thy hinder part be, though strong like a stallion's thy whinny."

Atli said:

21. "A stallion in strength, if I stepped on land, and frisky, thou wouldst find me;
I would beat thee so, if but I wished, thou wouldst lower thy tail in a twinkling."

Hrímgerth said:

22. "On land step then, if thy strength thou trustest:

in Varinsfirth I'll wait thee;
I shall stave thy ribs, steersman Atli, if thou comest within reach of my claws."

Atli said:

23. "I may not go ere the men awake who have watch and ward of my lord; small wonder were it if, witch, of a sudden thou camest up under our keel."

²⁴Nothing further is known of them.—A stanza seems missing here in which Atli likens Hrímgerth to a mare, a term of particular opprobrium in the North.

Hrimgerth said:

24. "Awake, Helgi, and to Hrimgerth atone for felling Hati, her father; if one night she slept with the warder-of-men she would hold her harm made good."

Helgi said:

25. "Lothin²⁵ shall wed thee, hag loathly to men, the thurs that in Tholl-Isle²⁶ dwells, that wisest etin and worst of trolls: there is mate who is meet for thee."

Hrimgerth said:

26. "Wilt have her,27 rather, who the haven scanned

last night, with thy men, mail-clad; the gold-dight maiden is mightier than I; here stepped she from ship on to strand, and made fast your fleet.

'Tis owing to her that I cannot slav the sea-king's men."

Helgi said:

27. "Hearken, Hrímgerth, if thy harm I make good,

then canst thou clearly tell me:
was it one valkyrie who warded the ships,
or fared they all in a flock?"

^{25&#}x27;Hairy'.

^{26&#}x27;Pine Island'.

²⁷Sváva, who, unbeknown to Helgi, had guarded him against malignant powers.

Hrímgerth said:

28. "There were thrice three maidens although one led,

a white-armed maid 'neath helm;
when their steeds stirred them, astride as
they sate,
[ran dew from their manes in deep dales,
fell hail into high woods;
thence come to men good crops:]28

'twas hateful for me to behold."

Atli said:

29. "Look east,29 Hrímgerth; hath Helgi now dazed thee with deadly runes: in the haven safe lies the sea-king's fleet, and safe are his men also."

Helgi said:

30. "Tis day now, Hrímgerth, thy death it is that Atli hath held thee here: as harbor-mark, mocked by sailors, standeth thy likeness in stone."

IV.

King Helgi was a mighty warrior. He fared to King Eylimi and asked for the hand of his daughter. Helgi and Sváva sware oaths to each other, and their love was great. Sváva stayed at home with her father, but Helgi was in the wars; yet was Sváva a valkyrie as before. Hethin was at home with his father, King Hiorvarth, in Norway. One

²⁸It would seem as if these lines had crept in from some description of the valkyries, as in Vsp. 23.

 $^{^{29}}$ Viz. at the rising sun which transforms dwarfs and trolls into stone; cf. Alv. 36.

time Hethin was coming home alone from the forest on Yule eve. He met a troll-woman riding on a wolf, with snakes as reins. She asked his leave to keep him company, but he would not. She said: "That shalt thou rue when drinking from the hallowed cup." In the evening vows were made: the sacrificial boar was led in, men laid their hands on him and sware dear oaths as they drank from the hallowed cup. Hethin made a vow that he would have Sváva, Eylimi's daughter, the maiden beloved by Helgi his brother; but he forthwith rued it so greatly that he hastened South on wild ways till he found his brother Helgi. Helgi said:

31. "Hail to thee, Hethin! What hast to tell of weighty news from Norroway? Why hast, hero, hastened away and fared alone to find me here?"

Hethin said:

32. "A wretched wrong I wrought on thee,

(far greater, brother, than good I can

make):"

on holy beaker in banquet hall
thy bride I chose me, the child of kings."

Helgi said:

33. "Taunt thee no more, thy vow on beaker, on holm I was bidden³² for true will come for both of us:

by hero bold,

³⁰The above is a concise description of the Yuletide feast, celebrated at the time of the winter solstice. This was the occasion for making vows for the coming year. The boar, symbol of fertility, is sacred to Frey; cf. *Hynd*. 5–7; also for the wolf as mount of witches.

³¹Supplied, following Bugge.

³²The single combats were fought on 'holms' (river islands), in plain view of the hostile armies.

in three days' time I much fear me then without harm we there shall meet. that from it I wend not; all may happen thus."

Hethin said:

34. "Thou heldest, Helgi, of great gifts from thee, More seeming is it than thy fell foeman

Hethin worthy
thy good will to have.
thy sword to redden,
feebly forgive."33

Helgi had spoken thus because he thought himself fey, and that it was his wraith Hethin had met with when he saw the woman riding on the wolf. King Alf, the son of Hróthmar, had challenged him to do battle with him on Sigarsvoll³⁴ on the third day. There was a great battle, and Helgi fell, wounded unto death.

35. Sent then Helgi
King Eylimi's
"bid her quickly
if her lord she

Sigar, to fetch only daughter: come hitherward alive would find.

Sigar said:

36. "Helgi hath me to say to thee, he longeth sorely the hold baron's

hitherward sent
Sváva, these words:
to see thee, ere
breath have left him."

Sváva said:

37. "What harmed Helgi, King Hiorvarth's son? Most heavy is my heart with sorrow:

⁸³The meaning probably is: "cut me off, do not weakly forgive me!"

^{84&#}x27;The Plains of Sigar'.

if sea him swallowed, or sword wounded, my wrath shall reach the wretch full soon."

Sigar said:

"He fell this morn at Freka Stone, 34a 38. under heaven who was of all heroes best: 'tis Alf hath won in the weapon-play.35 In evil hour it all did happen."

Helgi said:

- 39. "Hail to thee, Sváva! Sorrow thou not, though nevermore we meet together: in the blood of my wounds I welter here: all too near the steel struck to my heart.
- "I beg of thee, my bride, weep not; **4**0. but my words. Sváva. I beseech thee, hearken:

with my brother let young Hethin

thy bed share thou, have thy love.

41. "A witch-woman in the gloaming. full well saw she Sigrlinn's son

on wolf did ride wished to go with Hethin: that soon would fall on Sigarsvoll."

Sváva said:

42. "That vow made I when Helgi gave me that never would I. in unfamed heroe's

in Munarheim. gold-rings many. if not in his. arms lie willing."

⁸⁴a'Wolf-Stone'.

⁸⁵A kenning for 'battle'.

Hethin said:

43. "Kiss me, Sváva: I come not ever,
Rogheim to see, nor Rothuls-fell,
ere avenged I have King Hiorvarth's son,
under heaven who was of all heroes best."

Of Helgi and Sváva it is said they were born again.³⁶

 $^{^{36}}$ Viz. As Helgi the Hunding-Slayer and Sigrún; cf. the Introductory Prose of H.H. II.

THE FIRST LAY OF HELGI THE HUNDING-SLAYER

Helgakviða Hundingsbana I

All things considered, this lay is perhaps the truest, though certainly not the finest, expression of the spirit of the 'Viking Age', when Scandinavia—vagina gentium—poured forth, as the last wave of the Great Migration Age, those swarms of dragon-ships, manned with the boldest sailors and fiercest warriors of the time, which swept like angry storm clouds over the coast-lands of the Western World. In no other lay is there an equal concentration of vision, to the exclusion of all else, on the warrior's life as the only occupation worthy of men-the joyance in dangers on land and on sea of eager for war'. In no other lay, too, does the 'athelings ever / paucity of contents verge so nearly on monotony and thinness of invention. Barring the word-duel between Sinfiotli and Gothmund, it is all about Helgi's warlike deeds, beginning with his birth, and leaving him at the zenith of power, with Sigrún won and the Hundings' lands his-we hear nothing of the tragic end hinted at in stanza 5. Characterization is totally absent and, indeed, not aimed at: both scenes and men are typical and representative, not individ-But within the limits of his art the poet has achieved some truly magnificent stanzas, in the Northern mood; such as the grandiose figure of the norns affixing the fate-threads of the newly born hero to the very heavens; the storm at sea; the appearance of the valkyries in the uproar of the elements and the clash of battle.

Otherwise the poem is notable in the Collection for its unusually numerous kennings—for hero, battle etc.—which make it approach in somewhat the later artificialities and fulsome praises of Skaldic poetry.

1. 'Twas in olden times, as eagles screamed, and holy streams flowed from the Heaven Fells,¹ when in Brálund Borghild² bore to the world a hero high-hearted, Helgi by name.

¹The hero child is born in a tempestuous hour,—eagles screaming and rain pouring down from the 'fells of heaven'. The names seem symbolical.

²King Sigmund's wife; see 6, below, and H.H. II, Intro. Prose.

2. At night in hall the norns did come, to the lord allotted his life and fate:
to him awarded under welkin most fame, under heaven to be among heroes first.

- 3. His fate-thread³ span they to o'erspread the world for Borghild's bairn in Brálund castle; they gathered together the golden threads, and in moon-hall's⁴ middle they made them fast;
- 4. in East and West the ends did hide: the liege's lands lay there between; on the Northern side, Neri's sister did hang one end to hold forever.
- 5. One evil only the Ylfing⁶ theatened, the maiden eke who the atheling bore:

Croaked a raven hoarsely, on high tree sitting hunger gnawed him— "I know something:

6. "In his byrnie stands who was born at night," who was born at night," now the sun is risen!

³The fate-thread spinning of the norns is here taken literally.

⁴Kenning for 'the heavens'; cf. Alv. 12.

⁵One of the norns.

⁶Cf. Hynd. 11, H.H. II, Intro. Prose.

⁷No gap is indicated in the Manuscript. Did the missing lines, or stanzas, contain the curse of one of the weird-sisters, as is the case with ólaf, the son of Frithleif, as told by Saxo I, 27?—The impending evil certainly does not refer to the wars foretold by the raven: only by fighting can glory be won.

^{7a}This is, probably, to be interpreted, not literally, but as meaning that on Helgi from his tenderest childhood is imposed the duty to avenge his father.

His eyes flash fire, atheling-wise; he will feast the wolves: fain let us be!"

- 7. A true king he to the house-carles seemed: they hoped to have good harvest years;

 Sigmund himself, from the sword-play coming, to the lordling brought a leek most noble. 10
- 8. Named him Helgi, Sun Fell, Snow Fell, Hringstead, Hótún, eke a seemly sword,
- and Hringstead gave him, and Sigar's Field¹¹ and Himing Meadows, to Sinfiotli's brother.¹²
- 9. Under kinsmen's care the king's son grew, the high-born elm-tree, in happiness; gave and granted gold to his house-carles, nor spared the hero the hoard blood-spattered. 18a
- 10. Not long the lord delayed battle, when fifteen winters¹⁴ the folk-warder;

⁸Ravens, wolves, and eagles rejoice at the birth of a hero who will feed them on the carcases of his slain foes—a standing conceit in Old Germanic poetry.

⁹It is one of the attributes of a great king to bring to his land good harvest years.—A house-carle is a member of the king's bodyguard.

 $^{^{10}\}mathrm{As}$ a fast-growing plant the leek seems symbolic of rapid access in royal power. Cf. the virga (rod) used, beside the sceptre, in the coronation of the early English kings.

¹¹In all probability, these and other names in the poem are symbolical.

¹²According to the *Volsunga saga*, Sinfiotli is Sigmund's son by his own sister, Signý. Another half-brother of Helgi's is Sigurth; cf. *Sinf*.

¹³ Kenning for 'warrior'.

¹³aAs gained by warfare.

¹⁴According to the ancient laws in Norway a lad was of age when he had reached his fifteenth year.

Hunding he slew, the hardy king who long had ruled

over lands and thanes.

Then Hunding's sons 11. swiftly summoned thirsted, forsooth, for their father's fall

for hoard and rings king Sigmund's child; to pay the thane and wealth from him taken.

But Helgi would hear not 12. nor weregild award them.

of haggling gifts, though they wanted

to the sword-tryst

then

and whelming-storm-

but await rather the wrath-of-óthin. of-whining-spears.15

Fared the sons of kings 13.

> at Loga Fell: by foemen broken.

the island about.

which the lords had set was Fróthi's Peace¹⁶ ran Óthin's hounds¹⁷

14. Sate him Helgi when slain he had Alf and Eyolf, 'neath Eagle Rockeke Hiorvarth and Hávarth, the Hunding's sons: had the king then killed all the kin of the warrior.

A light shone then from Loga Fell, **15.** and out of that light lightnings flashed: the maidens rid-(saw the matchless hero ing) 18 high and helmeted, to heavenly realms.

¹⁵Kennings for 'battle'.

¹⁶This is the standing poetic phrase for the beginning of hostilities; cf. Grot. Intro. Prose.

¹⁷The wolves, as scavengers after battle.

¹⁸Supplied after Bugge.

Were their byrnies **16.** from their spear-points

blood-bespattered. bright sparks flew forth.

At earliest dayspring, 17. asked Sigmund's son if with the heroes at time of night—

in wolf-forest¹⁹ the Southron maiden^{19a} home she would fare twanged the bowstrings.

But, high on horseback, 18. was the shield-din lulledHogni's daughter to the lord spoke thus:

"Other deeds, I deem, breaker-of-rings,20

we must do ere night, than drink thy beer.

"Hath my father 19. to wed Granmar's²¹ yet have I, Helgi, that the king callow my faith plighted grim son Hothbrodd: of Hothbrodd said like a kitten seemed.22

"Will he fare hither 20. (to fetch home with him but to battle on holm or from the king carriest the maiden."

in few days' time Hogni's daughter).28 thou biddest him.

¹⁹ Doubtful; possibly a kenning for 'battle-field' (as the abode of wolves).

¹⁹aI.e. Hogni's daughter, Sigrún; cf. 56, and H.H. II, Prose before I.

²⁰ Kenning for '(generous) ruler, hero': before the use of coins became general in the Germanic North, the ponderous spiral armrings of gold and silver were cut or broken in pieces which served as payment and reward.

²¹Concerning Granmar and his sons Hothbrodd, Gothmund, and Starkath, see H.H. II, Prose after 12.

²²Doubtful.

²³Supplied, following Grundtvig.

Helgi said:

- 21. "In awe stand not of fsung's slayer:24 (our swords shall say -will be din of fight-- ere dead I lie."
 - and settle first. who Hogni's daughter's husband shall be) 25
- 22. Over land and sea the lord did send, to gather together his goodly hosts: rich meed pledged he as reward to warriors

of the river-hoard²⁶ and warriors' sons.

23. There he waited many hundred heroes

"Bid them swiftly to board their ships, to set sail then to sea from Brand Isle!" till thither came from Hethin's Isle.27

Straightway also 24. rode dark warships. Then asked Helgi of Hiorleif²⁸ this: "Hast thou mustered

from Stave Ness thither all decked with gold. the mighty host"?

The young sea-king said to the other: 25. "Twere lengthy to tell from Tronu Strand. which in Orva Sound^{28a}

the long-necked ships teeming with men, outbound hovered.

"Are there twelve hundred trusty warriors; 26. yet more by half in Hótún stand 'neath the king's banner— battle I wait me."

²⁴I.e. Hothbrodd. We know nothing about his antagonist.

²⁵Supplied, following Gering.

²⁶Kenning for 'gold': the Niflung treasure, the treasure par excellence, was thrown into the Rhine.-To be sure, it must have been known that gold was washed out of the sands of rivers, especially the Rhine.

²⁷Probably, the island of Hiddense, north of Rügen.

²⁸Some follower of Helgi's.

²⁸a'Arrow Sound'.

- 27. Off the awnings²⁰ the atheling drew, so that awaked the warrior host, his doughty men, and saw the dawn; then hoisted the heroes high on mast-tree the woven sails in Varins Firth.
- 28. Rose the din of oars, of iron clashing, crashed shield 'gainst shield with shock of rowing,30 as dashed through the waves the warrior's fleet; the stanch wave-steeds31 stood out to sea.
- 29. It burst on the ears when, buffeting, the long ship keels met Kolga's sister, 32 as if surf with cliff did clash in storm.
- 30. Then higher Helgi bade hoist the topsails, the crews shunned not when the dreadful would overwhelm bade hoist the topsails, daughter of Ægir the hawser-steeds.33
- 31. But Sigrún on high hovering above did shield them stoutly, and their ships also; the king's brine-hogs³³ out of Rón's clutches glided safely at Gnipa Grove.
- 32. Floated the fair-dight fleet at ease then in Una Bay, at eventide; sullenly saw them from Svarin's Hill³⁴ the sons of Granmar, and sorrowfully.

²⁹At night, awnings were stretched over the (undecked) dragonships, for the crews to sleep under.

³⁰Cf. H.Hv. 13, note.

³¹ Kenning for 'ship'.

³²One of Ægir's daughters; hence 'the wave'.

³³ Kenning for 'ships'.

³⁴Cf, the modern Schwerin.

- 33. Asked then Gothmund, of goodly kin:
 "Who the highborn hero, leading these hosts hither to harry on us?"
- 34. Quoth Sinfiotli³⁵— to the sailyard hoisted the red war-shield,³⁶ with rim of gold— in the stem standing to strive with words, to athelings who could answer make:
- 35. "Tonight say thou, when the swine thou feedest, and givest to hungry hounds their meat,37 that the Ylfing hosts from the East have come, girded for war, from Gnipa Grove:
- 36. "Here may Hothbrodd find Helgi now, in the midst of his fleet, the fearless hero who sated eagles oft and anon, by the quern whilst thou didst kiss bondmaids."

Gothmund said:

- 37. "Thou speakest rashly nor reck'st old wisdom, when untruth thou of atheling tellest.
- 38. "Thou hast made thy meal of the meat of wolves, and been the bane of thy brothers twain;

^{35&#}x27;The Stained (Piebald) One' (?)—perhaps referring to his illegitimate origin (cf. Ags. Fitela).—He is Helgi's forecastle man, like Atli, H.Hv. 14, note.

³⁶A red shield indicated warlike intentions, a white one, peace. ³⁷I.e. when made a slave?

with thy cold snout hast oft sucked men's wounds. and hateful to all hast hid in the waste."38

Sinfiotli said:

- 39. "A witch wast thou on Varin's Isle. didst fashion falsehoods and fawn on me. hag: be wed but to me. to no wight wouldst thou but to Sinfiotli. to no sword-wielding swain
- 40. "Thou wast, witch-hag, a valkyrie fierce in Allfather's hall, hateful and grim: all Valholl's warriors had well-nigh battled, wilful woman, to win thy hand.
- "On Saga Ness full nine wolves we 41. had together— I gat them all."

Gothmund said:

42. "The father wast not to Fenris-wolves, 39 though older thou than all of them; for gelded wast thou

near Gnipa Grove by thurs maidens on Thór's Ness. before.

43. "As Siggeir's stepson⁴⁰ 'neath stones didst dwell in woody wastes, with the wolves howling;

³⁸According to the Volsunga saga, both Sigmund and Sinfiotli roam the woods as werewolves until they see their chance to avenge themselves on King Siggeir who had slain Sigmund's and Signý's father, Eylimi. Coming to Siggeir's hall, Sinfiotli slew the two boys whom his sister Signý had born to Siggeir and who, hence, are his half-brothers.—The imputations otherwise heaped on each other cannot be verified. As to this, cf. Loki's accusations, Lok.

³⁹That is, to wolves as fierce as the wolf Fenrir; cf. V_{SD} , 32.

⁴⁰Since his mother Signý was married to Siggeir.

'twas ever thy share thy own brother's and mad'st thee known to do shameful deeds: breast thou torest, 41 by nameless deeds.

44. "Wast Grani's bride⁴²
for the race ready
full many a space
slender 'neath saddle,

on Brávoll Field,43
with reins all-golden;
I spurred thee on,
till thou slunk'st downhill."

Sinfiotli said:

45. "A foul-mouthed fellow I found thee to be, the time thou Gollnir's she-goats didst milk; another time, as Imth's daughter, a tattered troll-wench. Wilt taunt me longer?"

Gothmund said:

46. "At Freka Stone would I feed, rather, ravening ravens on thy riddled body, than give your hungry hounds their meat, or the swine their swill: go snarl with the trolls!"

Helgi said:

47. "Twere, Sinfiotli, more seeming far to swing your swords and sate eagles, than with words to wage war between you, though the ring-breakers' wrath is kindled.

⁴¹Perhaps an allusion to a combat between Sigmund and Sinfiotli in their werewolf condition, when Sigmund bit Sinfiotli's throat; Volss. chap. 8.

⁴²Cf. Lok. 23, Grimn. 44.

⁴³A plain in eastern Sweden. It is the scene of the great (legendary) battle between the kings Sigurth Ring and Harold Bluetooth.

⁴⁴The two events referred to are unknown elsewhere.

- 48. "No good I wait me from Granmar's sons, yet befits it kings no falsehood to say; at Móïnsheim⁴⁵ right manfully their wands-of-wounds⁴⁶ they wielded boldly."
- 49. They⁴⁷ spurred the steeds to speed amain,
 Sviputh and Sveggiuth, to Sólheim castle—
 through dewy dales and darksome glens;
 the earth did quake where the king's sons
 rode.

At the gate met they the mighty ruler,—said that foemen were faring hither.

50. Without stood Hothbrodd, in helmet dight—had cast his eyes on his kinsmen's riding:

("Say ye, kinsmen, whom seen ye have:) 48

what rouses, Niflungs, 49 your wrath so sore?"

Gothmund said:

- 51. "Are swiftly swimming to sandy shore mast-stags⁵⁰ many with mighty sailyards, with shining shields and shaven oars, a goodly host of gladsome warriors; fifteen thousand set foot on land, but seven more in Sogn are waiting.
- 52. "Foregathered lie before Gnipa Grove blue-black brine-hogs,50 ablaze with gold: by far the most of the foes are there—will Helgi haste the hail-of-arrows."51

⁴⁵Possibly, the Danish island of Möen.

⁴⁶Kenning for 'swords'.

⁴⁷I.e. Hothbrodd's sons.

⁴⁸ Supplied by the translator.

⁴⁹Here, used as honorific epithet for 'warriors'.

⁵⁰ Kenning for 'ships'.

⁵¹Kenning for 'battle'.

Hothbrodd said:

- 53. "Let the reined steeds run to Regin Thing,
 Melnir and Mylnir to Murkwood dark,
 and Sporvitnir to Sparin's Heath.

 Each man bestir him, nor stay behind
 who the flame-of-wounds⁵² can wield in battle.
- 54. "Bid Hogni come, and Hring's sons eke,
 Atli and Yngvi, and Alf the Hoary,
 athelings ever eager for war;
 let us warmly welcome the Volsung's sons!"
- 55. With swift swoop then the flashing swords at Freka Stone: was aye Helgi, the Hunding's Slayer, foremost in fray where fought heroes; fierce in fighting, stout-hearted hero was Helgi ever.
- 56. From high heaven came helmeted maidens—
 waxed the shafts' shrilling— who shielded
 the king;
 then said Sigrún— sang the arrows—

then said Sigrún— sang the arrows— the ogresses'-horse ate the eagles'-food—:53

- 57. "Hail to thee, hero! In happiness live, Yngvi's scion, hold sway over men: unfleeing foe felled now hast thou, in sword-play who slew sea-kings many.
- 58. "Now, folk-warder, the red gold-rings and ruler's daughter; hale shalt, hero, Hogni's daughter and Hringstead eke, victory and wealth:

 befit thee well and ruler's daughter; and Hringstead eke, is the war ended."

⁵² Kenning for 'sword'.

⁵³That is, 'the wolf ate the slain', cf. *H.Hv.*, Prose before IV, note; but the line is doubtful.

⁵⁴Yng is the mythical progenitor of the earliest Swedish kings. Here, only an honorific epithet.

THE SECOND LAY OF HELGI THE HUNDING-SLAYER

Helgakviða Hundingsbana II

The same theme as in the preceding poem is here treated by another poet,¹ doubtless; and in a minor key, with all stress laid on the loves of Helgi and Sigrún. The result is by far more appealing to the modern taste.

It does not seem necessary to assume, with some investigators, that we have here, as in the Lay of Helgi Hiorvarthsson, a number of fragments pieced together by the collector; or a sort of gleaning of various snatches about Helgi which were not utilized in the preceding poems: with the exception of the first five stanzas,² the twenty-second, and the thirty-ninth, it is essentially one in idea—the valkyrie's absolute devotion to the hero, involving the destruction of her kin, and beyond death. If this view is correct—and a study of both style and versification serves but to confirm it—the complete lay must have been one of the glories of Heroic Song.

As it stands, there are lacunæ, awkwardly bridged by the Collector who with a maladroit hand mars the continuity by inserting a variation of the flyting between Sinfiotli and Gothmund, oddly enough after referring back to it! Besides, there are a few telling but disconnected stanzas from some poem about Helgi's youth.

Even in its present sadly mutilated condition the lay cannot fail to make the impression of simple power. Its diction is noble and restrained, the treatment worthy of the intrinsic interest. Famous throughout the North, in ancient as in modern times, is Sigrún's terrific curse over her traitor brother, and her proud praise of the splendid hero—hinting at defiant love beyond the grave. Nor has time diminished the deep appeal of the passionate lovers' meeting in the barrow—the first appearance in literature of this romantic theme of so many later ballads.³

The casual mention by the Collector that the original title of the poem was 'the Old Lay of the Volsungs' may indicate that its composition antedates that of the other two. Nevertheless it seems

¹Similarly, other favorite themes received parallel treatment by two or more poets; thus the Death of Brynhild, the Fall of the Niflungs, Guthrún's Plaint.

²Possibly, remnants of the Káruljóð mentioned in the final Prose. ³In England, 'Sweet William's Ghost'; see Child's The English and Scottish Popular Ballads II, 226.

best to retain the order of the collection; especially as the death of the lovers makes a fitting conclusion of the cycle.

Ι

King Sigmund, the son of Volsung, had to wife Borghild from Brálund. They named their son Helgi, after Helgi Hiorvarthsson. He was given to Hagal⁴ in fosterage. Hunding was hight a mighty king from whom Hundland⁵ has its name. He was a great man of war and had many sons who were out on forays. There was hatred and feud between King Hunding and King Sigmund, and they slew one the other's kinsmen. King Sigmund and his kin were hight Volsungs⁶ and Ylfings.

Helgi went as a spy in disguise to the hall of King Hunding. Hæming, one of the sons of King Hunding, was at home. Now when Helgi was about to leave, he met a shepherd boy and said:

1. "Say to Hæming whom in byrnie in the hall had ye whom King Hunding

that Helgi remembers the heroes felled:⁷ the grey heath-dweller⁸ thought Hamal to be."

Hamal was the name of Hagal's son. King Hunding sent men to Hagal to seek Helgi, and Helgi could not save himself but by putting on the clothes of a bond-maid and turning the millstone. They searched but found Helgi nowhere.

^{4&#}x27;The Skilful'.

⁵Probably invented *ad hoc*. It is not the same as the Hunland over which Buthli, and after him Atli, held sway.

⁶Seeing that in the lays, Helgi is the kinsman of Sigmund and Sinfiotli, the Collector infers that he is a Volsung. Whether this corresponds to the oldest stratum of the legend is another matter.

⁷It is not certain who is meant. One of Helgi's kin?

⁸Kenning for 'wolf': an allusion to the name of Helgi's race, the Ylfings, i.e. 'Wolfings'.—Hamal 'Wether'.

- 2. Then Blind⁹ said thus, aye bent on ill:

 "bright are the eyes of Hagal's bond-maid;
 no cotter's quean at the quern who standeth:
 the bin breaketh, burst the millstones.¹⁰
- 3. "A harsh fate hath the hero fettered, since the bold one now must barley grind; the hilt rather of hero's sword, than the mill-handle, that hand befitteth."

Hagal answered and said:

- 4. "Little wonder, though throbbeth the bin, since queenly maiden the mill-handle turns: she was wont to ride the welkin above, and viking-wise wielded the sword;"
- 5. "ere that Helgi her led home as thrall, (and the mighty maiden at the mill did drudge;) 12 a sister she of Sigar and Hogni, hence awful the eye of the Ylfing maid."

Escaped Helgi thence and went on a war-ship. He slew King Hunding and was thereafter called the Hunding-Slayer.

II

One time he lay with his fleet in Bruna Bay and made a cattle raid on land, and his men ate the meat raw.¹³ Hogni was the name of a king whose daughter was Sigrún. She

⁹ The Blinding, Deceiving One' the typical name of an evil counsellor.

¹⁰Cf. the situation in Grot.

¹¹That is, she is a valkyrie.

¹²Supplied after Bugge.

¹⁸This barbaric practice of the earlier vikings was condemned in later times.

was a valkyrie and rode through both air and water. She was Sváva born again. She rode to Helgi's ships and said:

steereth the fleet? "To the steep bank who 6. your homestead lies? Where, ye heroes, For what bide ye in Bruna Bay? Whither list ye now to lay your course?"

Helgi said:

"Tis Hamal steers to steep bank the fleet, 7. on Hlés-Isle¹⁴ lies; the warriors' homestead in Bruna Bay, a good breeze bide we and East list we to lay our course."

The valkyrie said:

"Where hast, hero, 8. or fed Gunn's fowls16 Why is thy byrnie with blood besprent, 17 why, clad in armor, eat ye raw meat?"

hoisted war-shield.15 with fallen men?

Helgi said:

"This, last of all did the Ylfing's son 9. if to wit thee list, west of the sea. that bears¹⁸ we bound in Braga Grove. and with sword sated the sib of eagles: said have I now why my sark is red; and by strand why little we steak our meat."19

¹⁴In the Kattegat, between Jutland and Sweden; cf. Hárb. 37.

¹⁵Cf. H.H. I, 34.

¹⁶Gunn 'Battle' is a valkyrie, her fowls hence the birds of preyeagles and ravens.

¹⁷Conjectural.

¹⁸Figuratively for 'men made captives'.

¹⁹He excuses his warriors,—they are ravenous after long privations.

The valkyrie said:

10. "Of the fight tell'st thou when fell in battle, by Helgi's hand, Hunding the king; clashed ye in combat thy kinsmen to avenge: streamed the blood then o'er the brand's edges."

Helgi said:

11. "How wist thou, woman, that we the men who in combat clashing their kinsmen avenged?

No lack is there of lordly kings' sons in all like to our kindred."

The valkyrie said:

- 12. "Not far was I, young folk-warder, when yestermorn but Sigmund's son to hint of that battle young folk-warder, the mighty king fell; most sly I ween with hidden runes.20
- 13. "I watched thee eke on warship standing, on bloody bow, breasting the waves—they cool did play the keels about.

 Now strives the hero to hide him from me, but to Hogni's daughter is Helgi known."

III

Granmar was the name of a mighty king who lived at Svarin's Hill. He had many sons. One was hight Hothbrodd, another Gothmund, and a third Starkath. At a meeting of kings, Hothbrodd plighted himself to Sigrún, the daughter of King Hogni.²² But when she heard of that

²⁰It was considered part of wisdom in a warrior to conceal his identity; cf. Fáfn. 1f.

²²With her father's consent; cf. 17.

she rode through air and water with her valkyries to seek Helgi. He was then at the Loga Fells and had fought against the sons of Hunding, and there he had felled Alf and Eyolf, Hiorvarth and Hervarth,²³ and was now all wearied with battle, and was seated beneath the Eagle Rock. There Sigrún found him, and flung her arms about his neck and kissed him and told him the tidings; as is told in the Old Lay of the Volsungs:

- 14. Sought then Sigrún the gladsome sea-king, and hastened Helgi's his hand to grasp, helmeted king with kiss greeted; to the maiden turned then his mind the lord.
- 15. Nor hid her heart's wish Hogni's daughter; said that Helgi's love she would have, that dear had been, and dwelled in her heart, the son of Sigmund ere seen by her.
- 16. "Was I given to Hothbrodd before gathered host, but for other hero my heart did long;

though fear I, king, for thwarted have I my kinsmen's wrath, the thanes' dearest wish."

Helgi said:

17. "Reck thou shalt not nor of the ill-will of with me shalt now, nor dread I, dear one,

of Hogni's wrath,
of all thy kin;
young maiden, live;
thy doughty brothers."

IV

Helgi drew together a great fleet and sailed to Freka Stone.²⁴ At sea a fearful storm arose. Flashes of lightning shone about them and struck the ships. They saw

²³Cf. H.H. I. 32.

²⁴The following Prose reproduces the contents of H.H. I, 22f.

nine valkyries ride aloft and knew again Sigrún. Then the storm fell and they made land unharmed. The sons of Granmar were keeping watch on a mountain when the ships neared land. Gothmund leaped on his horse and rode to a hill by the harbor to find out whose fleet it was. The Volsungs were then taking in their sails. Then said Gothmund, as is written above in the Lay of Helgi:²⁵

"Who the highborn hero, leading these hosts hither to harry on us?"

Sinfiotli, the son of Sigmund, made answer to him, and that also is written there.

Gothmund rode home with these tidings of war. Then gathered the sons of Granmar an army. Many kings came there, and among them Hogni, Sigrún's father, and his sons Bragi and Dag. A great battle followed, and there fell all the sons of Granmar, and all their leaders but only Dag, the son of Hogni. He was given quarter and sware oaths to the Volsungs. Sigrún went upon the battlefield and found Hothbrodd nigh unto death. She said:

18. "Wilt not Sigrún of high-born Hothbrodd, have lost their lives—grey-coated wolves—

of the Seva Fell,

l, e'er hold in thy arms;

men's limbs tear now
all of Granmar's sons."

Then found she Helgi and was most glad. He said:

19. "Not good only although ill norns fell this morning Bragi and Hogni—

was given thee, Sigrún, in this had share: at Freka Stone my brand slew them;

²⁵I.e. the First Lay, 33ff.

- 20. "and at the Hlé Fells, Hrollaug's sons, and at the Styr Cliffs, Starkath²⁷ the king: of goodly warriors I grimmest ween him—his body battled albeit headless.
- 21. "On the field have fallen by far the most, slain by the sword, of Sigrún's kinsmen; in war hast won great woe only, since strife didst stir 'mong sturdy lords."

Then wept Sigrún. He said:

22. "Take heart, Sigrún, a Hild28 though thou'st been to us: avails not fight against fate."

Sigrún said:

"Alive I could wish who are lying dead, if, friend, to my heart I could fold thee."

\mathbf{v}

Thus spoke Gothmund, the son of Granmar:

23. "What king is it these keels who steereth? His golden banner at the bow floateth, his proud prows seem a blood-red glow²⁹ no peace to betoken, forebodeth war."

²⁷He is identical in name and behavior in death with the Starkath, the son of Stórverk, who bulks large in Saxo Grammaticus as the typical representative of the Heroic Age. The stanza is no doubt a later interpolation.

²⁸The reference probably is to that famous Hild who was the cause of everlasting combat between her father, King Hogni, and her lover. However, the line is doubtful. The entire stanza, differing both in metre (ljóðaháttr) and sentiment from the rest, is a fragment of another lay.

²⁹Most likely, from the red war-shields.

Sinfiotli said:

24. "Here mayst, Hothbrodd, find Helgi now in the midst of his fleet, the fearless hero; the Fiorsung's lands on the field he won him, all the gold eke which owned thy kin."30

Gothmund said:

25. "Before shall, foeman, at Freka Stone our slaughterous swords settle between us; 'tis time, Hothbrodd, to take revenge, since by them oft overborne we were."

Sinfiotli said:

26. "Before shalt, Gothmund, the goat-flocks herd. in clefts of cliffs clambering about, and hold in thy hand a hazel-rod: that's better for thee than battling with swords."

Helai said:

- 27. 31"'Twere, Sinfiotli, more seeming by far to swing thy sword and sate eagles, than with words to wage war between you, though the ring-breakers' wrath is kindled.
- 28. "No good I wait me from Granmar's sons, yet befits it kings no falsehood to say; at Móïnsheim right manfully their wands-of-wounds they wielded boldly."

³⁰The meaning of the second half of the stanza is obscure. Possibly, Sinfiotli begins to taunt him-'your lands and treasures are as good as won'?

⁸¹Identical with 47, 48 of H.H. I.

VI

Helgi wedded Sigrún and had sons by her. Helgi lived not long. Dag, Hogni's son, sacrificed to óthin that he should help him avenge his father, and óthin loaned Dag his spear.³² Dag found Helgi, his sister's husband, in a grove which is hight Fiotur Grove.^{32a} He ran Helgi through with his spear. Helgi died, and Dag rode to the Seva Fells and told Sigrún the tidings:

29. "Loath am I, sister, of sad things to tell; for unwilling was I to work thee harm:33 fell this morning by Fiotur Grove under heaven who was of all heroes best, and set his foot on sea-kings' necks."

Sigrún said:

- 30. "Shall all the oaths which to Sigmund's son by light-hued, leaping and eke by Unn's³⁵
- ever strike thee
 thou swarest of yore
 Leiptr's³⁴ water,
 ice-cold stone-cliff.
- 31. "The boat shall budge not wich beareth thee, a fair wind though do fill its sails; the steed shall run not thou ridest on, though fain thy foeman flee thou wouldest!

Akv. 32.

³²Thus also Sigmund finally succumbs to Othin's spear, Volsunga saga chap. 11.

³²a'Fetter Grove'. Probably identical with the one in the land of the Semnones mentioned by Tacitus (Germania chap. 39): est et alia luco reverentia: nemo nisi vinculo ligatus ingreditur.

³³He is forced by the duty of blood-revenge.

³⁴Leiptr is one of the rivers of the nether world, *Grimn*. 28. Hence an oath by its water corresponds to the Greeks' swearing by Styx. ³⁵ The Wave', one of Ægir's daughters; cf. *Guő*. III, 3 and

- 32. "The sword shall bite not which is swung by thee, but it sing o'er thyself and smite thee down, (nor shield shelter but be shattered quickly,) 36 (though sore needed when set upon.) 37
- 33. "Then had I vengeance for Helgi's death, if a wolf thou wert in woods abroad, wretchedly roving, and ravenous, and feed to bursting on foul carrion."

Dag said:

- 34. "Bereft of reason and raving art thou, to wish thy brother, such baleful fate: of all evil is othin father:

 he strife did stir "mong sturdy lords.38"
- 35. "Weregild I give thee,— red-golden rings, all Vandil's Shrine and Víg Dales also,— half our home-land, for the harm done thee, Sigrún, sister, and to thy sons."

Sigrún said:

- 36. "Shall I sadly sit at Seva Fells, nor late nor early in life be glad but on lord and liege-men fall light again,39 and on Vígblær's back the bold one ride home, on gold-bitted steed: would I greet him fondly.
- 37. "Were filled with fear his foemen all, their kinsmen eke, cowed by Helgi,

³⁶Supplied after Bugge's and Grundtvig's suggestion.

³⁷Supplied by the translator.

³⁸See the like statement *Hárb*. 24.

³⁹That is, unless I see him back in the light of day, alive.

as from the wolf will wildly run fell-grazing goats aghast with dread.

38. "High among heroes did Helgi stand, like shapely ash-tree 'mong shrubs and thorns; or as dew-dripping deer doth tower above all other beasts of the woodlands: glow his horns on high to very heaven."

A mound was thrown up over Helgi. But when he came to Valholl, óthin let him have sway over all things together with himself.

Helgi said:

39. "Thou shalt, Hunding, hearth-fires kindle, and wash the feet of every wight; shalt herd horses and the hounds tether, give the swine their swill ere to sleep thou goest."

VII

One of Sigrún's bond-maids went at eventide past the barrow and beheld Helgi riding toward it with many men. The bond-maid said:

40. "Is't a dream-sight only my eyes behold, or the doom of the gods: dead men riding⁴²—!

 $^{^{40}}$ At early dawn; cf. Grimn. 26. The same simile $Gu\ddot{o}$. 1, 17 and $Gu\ddot{o}$. II, 2.

⁴¹As Gering observes, the sentiment here expressed is altogether unbecoming Helgi as spoken to a brave foe felled in honorable combat since it goes straight counter to Northern conceptions of etiquette. The stanza is probably a fragment of a flyting between Helgi (?) and Hunding before battle.

⁴²At the trump of doom the lower realms will pour forth their dead, cf. Vsp. 44.

With spurs ye urge or may the heroes

to speed your horses: wend home again?"43

Helai said:

41. "No dream-sights only nor world's end is't. with spurs urging to speed our horses: nor may the heroes

thy eyes behold, though us thou seest wend home again."

The bond-maid went home and said to Sigrún:

"Come out. Sigrún **42**. of Seva Fells. if the folk-warder to find thee list: his howe open: Helgi is here. his wounds do bleed: he begs of thee to stay the bloody stream from his breast."

Sigrún went into the mound to Helgi and said:

- 43. "As fain am I to find thee, Helgi, as óthin's hawks,44 hungry for meat, when war they scent and warm corpses, and dew-besprent the daylight see.
- "The lifeless king 44. ere the bloody byrnie thy hair, Helgi, with dew-of-wounds45 Clammy the hands how shall I, hero, find help for that?"

to kiss I list. thou unbucklest: 'tis hoar with frost. all wet art thou of Hogni's kinsman;46

⁴³ They are not allowed to return 'home' to earth, but only for a last stav.

⁴⁴The ravens.

⁴⁵ Kenning for 'blood'.

⁴⁶This is Helgi's status as his daughter's husband.

Helai said:

- "Tis Sigrún's doing, of Seva Fells, **45**. that Helgi drips with the dew-of-sorrow:45 woman sun-bright, southern,47 ere to sleep thou goest, thou ceaseless, sadly salt tears weepest; falls each one, bloody, on the breast of the king, icy, festering, full of sorrow.
- "This wondrous wine a welcome drink, 46. though life and lands be lost for aye; songs of sadness shall no one sing, albeit my breast doth bleed with wounds: now hath my bride into barrow come, the maid praised of men, to me, the dead!"

Sigrún made ready a bed in the mound. She said:

47. "A bed made I ready for both of us, 'tis free from care, kingly Helgi; in thy arms will I, atheling, sleep, as in life, lief one, I lay with thee."

Helgi said:

"No wonder, ween I, will unwonted seem, 48. sooner or later, at Seva Fells. since lies with lifeless leader's body in the howe, Hogni's white-armed daughter—with the dead the quick, the queenly woman."

(When morning dawned, Helgi arose and said:)

49. "Along reddening roads to ride I hie me. on fallow steed aery paths to fly:

⁴⁷Cf. H.H. I, 17.

to the West shall I ere Valholl's warriors

of Windhelm's 48 bridge, wakes Salgofnir."49

Helgi and his men rode on their way, but Sigrún and her women wended home. On the next evening, Sigrún had a maid watch by the mound. But when the day was at an end, Sigrún came to the mound and said:

50. "Come had by now, in the son of Sigmund little hope that hither now the eagles perchand all hosts hie them."

if to come he wished,
from the seat of Othin;
the hero will ride,
on ash-tree limbs,
m to the home of
dreams."50

The bond-maid said:

51. "'Twere folly, lady, thou Hogni's daughter, All dead men's ghosts as daylight darkens

to fare alone,
to dead man's howe.
do grow more dread
to dimness of night."

Sigrún lived but a short while longer, for grief and sorrow. It was the belief in olden times that men were born again, but that is now called old women's superstition. Helgi and Sigrún are said to have been born again as Helgi Haddingiaskati and Kára, the daughter of Halfdan, as is told in the Lay of Kára. She was a valkyrie.

⁴⁸That is, heaven's bridge, Bifrost; cf. Grimn. 44.

⁴⁹Cf. the cock Gullinkambi, Vsp. 35.

⁵⁰That is, when men court sleep?

 $^{^{51}}$ Now lost. It was known to the author of the $Hr\'{o}mundar$ saga Greipssonar.

SINFIOTLI'S DEATH12

Fra dauða Sinfjǫtla.

Sigmund, son of Volsung, was king over Frankland. His eldest son was hight Sinfiotli,1 the second, Helgi, and the third, Hámund. Borghild, Sigmund's wife, had a brother called ...; but Sinfiotli, her stepson, and ... wooed the same woman. So Sinfiotli slew him. When he came home, Borghild bade him betake himself away; but Sigmund offered her weregild, and this she must take. At the arvel, Borghild handed ale about. She took poison, a big drinking-horn full, and handed it to Sinfiotli. But when he looked into the horn he saw that there was poison in it and said to Sigmund: "Muddied is the ale, father!" Sigmund grasped the horn and drank of it. It is told of Sigmund that he was proof against poison, so that it would not harm him within nor without. But his sons could stand poison only without, on their skin. Borghild brought Sinfiotli another horn and bade him drink of it. and all happened as before. Still a third time she handed him the horn, shaming him if he drank not. Sinfiotli spoke as before to his father. Sigmund said: "Drink boldly. my son!"³ Sinfiotli drank and forthwith fell down dead. Sigmund carried him a long way in his arms until he came to a firth which was both long and narrow. There lay a small boat, and in it was a man.4 He offered to ferry Sigmund

^{1a}This link—in very mediocre prose—was placed here by the Collector to form a transition to the Sigurth lays. It might with equal justice be entitled 'Of Sigurth's Origin'.

¹Cf. H.H. I, 34, note.

²There is a space left here in the manuscript for the insertion of the other suitor's name, which is not known to the Volsunga saga, either.

³The passage also permits of the (less probable) translation: "Let it be filtered through your beard."

⁴The ferriman is none other than Othin who thus himself accompanies the hero on his journey to the Realm of the Dead.

over. But when Sigmund had borne the body into the boat there was no more room in it for another. The man told Sigmund to walk around the firth; then he shoved the boat off and forthwith vanished.

King Sigmund dwelled for a long time in Denmark in Borghild's realm, after marrying her; but afterwards he fared south to Frankland to the kingdom over which he himself had sway. There he married Hiordís, the daughter of King Eylimi, and their son was Sigurth. King Sigmund fell in battle against the sons of Hunding. Then Hiordís married Hálf, the son of king Hiálprek.⁵ The boy Sigurth grew up at his court. Both Sigmund and all his sons were far above other men in strength, in growth, in hardihood, and in all manly feats; but Sigurth⁶ was foremost of them all, and about him men are at one in the olden tales, that he was the noblest of men and the greatest of leaders in war.

 $^{^5}$ Of Denmark, according to the Volss. The name corresponds to that of the West Frankish king, Chilperich.—In the Volss it is explained how this comes about: Alf happens to arrive on the scene of battle with his fleet, and there finds Hiordís and one of her maids by the side of the dying Sigmund. He carries them off as bond-maids, but later marries Hiordís when her true status becomes known. Her son by Sigmund, Sigurth, may thus be said to have been born in captivity; cf. $F\acute{a}fn$. 7, 8.

^{6&#}x27;Warder of Victory'. The German form Sigfrit means 'Bringer of Victory'.

THE PROPHECY OF GRIPIR

Grípisspé

'The Prophecy of Grípir' was chosen by the Collector to introduce the Sigurth poems immediately following—no doubt because it contained a sort of epitome of them all. This sufficiently evinces his lack of critical discernment; for even a slight acquaintance with the Heroic Lay teaches us that this one is of a different class: it is but a sapless versified excerpt, in the form of a gnomic dialogue, utterly lacking originality of treatment, and full of ineptitudes and contradictions, at that! Poetically worthless, it is of interest because its author—no doubt some Icelander of the Thirteenth Century—still had before him the poems of the Great Lacuna.

In form, the jejune stanzas (in fornyrðislag) are flawless. It may be noted that the alternation between the first and the third person, as used by the speaker of himself, occurs commonly enough in Old Norse poetry, but not to the wearisome extent seen in this piece.

Grípir¹a was the name of Eylimi's son, and he was the brother of Hiordís. He ruled a kingdom and was the

Curiously enough, the *Nibelungenlied* shows traces of a similar confusion (VI, VII); and the bird prophecy in *Fáfn*. is ambiguous.

1aBoth person and name are probably the invention of the poet.

¹In particular, grievous confusion was wrought, in the poem (and in the account of the *Skáld*. chap. 41 based on it) as well as in some modern treatments, by the author's inability to discern that there were current two, incompatible, versions of Sigurth's relations with Brynhild and with Guthrún; or else by his trying to reconcile them in true medieval fashion:

I. According to Fáfn. Sigkv., Helr. and the Nibelungenlied, the hero first proceeds to Giúki's court and wins Guthrún. When there, he is prevailed upon to win Brynhild for Gunnar by riding through the wall of fire and assuming Gunnar's shape. He rouses Brynhild from her sleep, lies three nights beside her, his sword separating them, and then yields her to Gunnar.

II. In the *Volss.*, the *Nornagests páttr* based, it seems, on poems now lost, in the *Sigrdr.*, and in the *piðreks saga*, Sigurth first delivers, and pledges himself to, Brynhild. He then proceeds to Giúki's court where a 'drink of forgetfulness,' given him by Grímhild, makes him oblivious of his former love, and he marries Guthrún.

wisest of men and had foreknowledge of the future. Sigurth rode alone and came to Grípir's hall. Sigurth was easily known. Outside of the hall he met a man whose name was Geitir.² Sigurth greeted him and said:

1. "This high-built castle what king houseth, known by what name his knights among?"

Geitir said:

"The gold-ring-giver is Grípir hight o'er land and lieges who lordeth it here."

Sigurth said:

2. "Is the high-born hero home in the land?
Would the noble king hold converse with me?
A man unknown hath need of it,—
would he forthwith find the folkwarder.

Geitir said:

3. "Will the gladsome king" of Geitir ask with whom he is to hold converse.

Sigurth said:

"I am Sigurth hight, to Sigmund born, and Hiordís is the hero's mother."

- 4. Then went Geitir, Grípir to tell:

 "an unknown man without doth stand,
 of lofty mien this lord seemeth:
 would he, noble king, hold converse with
 thee."
- 5. Out of hall hied him the house-carles' lord to greet as guest the goodly warrior:

^{2&#}x27;Goat-herd'. Cf. the situation in Skirn. and Fj.

⁸Standing epithet; cf. Fáfn. 29.

"Welcome, Sigurth,— why no sooner here? Thou, Geitir, stable Grani his steed."4

The thoughtful thanes of things many 6. gan tidings tell, true-heartedly.

Sigurth said:

"Make known to me, my mother's brother, what life will Sigurth lead hereafter?"

Grípir said:

7. "Among sons of men, the sun beneath, free with thy gold, to flee unready,

wilt be held of heroes the highest born,in thy words most wise, and wondrous fair."

Sigurth said:

"Still further, king- far more I ask-8. say to Sigurth. if 'tis seen by thee: of my fate what first befalls me now, when from thy hall I fare on the morrow?"

Grípir said:

"Wilt first, folk-warder, thy father avenge, 9. and Eylimi eke, for evil deed:
the hardy sons to Hunding born
thou wilt lay low, the lieges doughty."4a

Sigurth said:

10. "Say clearly, king, to thy kinsman here, thy sister's child, right cheerfully:

seest deeds of daring done by Sigurth, which soar highest the heavens beneath?"

⁴See the Prose at the end of Fáfn.

^{4a}Cf. Reg. 15-26.

Grípir said:

11. "Thyself wilt slay the serpent glitt'ring which greedy lieth on Gnita Heath; to both brothers wilt bring quick death, to Regin and Fáfnir: aright saith Grípir."

Sigurth said:

12. "Great wealth I win if I work it so, as sooth thou sayest, and slay these twain. Scan yet longer the skein of fate: what will further fall to my lot?"

Grípir said:

13. "Then Fáfnir's lair wilt find anon, and have from the heath the hoarded wealth; wilt load the gold on Grani's saddle: then rides to Giúki⁷ the gladsome king."

Sigurth said:

14. "Shalt, wise folk-warder, my weird tell further and, sage sea-king, say still onward: when Giúki's guest goes on his way, what will still further fall to my lot?"

Grípir said:

15. "On the fell sleepeth the folk-warder's daughter" ter" in weeds of war, since wound-dead Helgi;

⁵Supposed to be in Germany, by the Rhine; cf. Vol. 15.

⁶As is told in Fáfn. and Reg.

⁷The Burgundian king, Grímhild's husband, and father of Gunnar, Hogni, and Guthrún. His name corresponds to M.H.G. Gibeche 'the Generous'.

⁸Brynhild.

⁹It has been suggested that this Helgi is identical with the Hialmgunnar who is mentioned in the Prose of the Sigrdr. and Helr. 8.

with keen edge wilt cut her byrnie,

slitting with sword which slew Fáfnir."

Sigurth said:

16. "The mail is slitted, as from her sleep she sitteth up then.

To thy sib Sigurth what saith the lady, which to the leader

good luck will bring?"

Grípir said:

17. "Will she teach thee runes, doughty ruler, which all men are eager to learn,—teach thee to talk the tongues of men, and healing leech-craft:10 hail to thee, king!"

Sigurth said:

"Learned is the lore which lords should know; 18. ready am I to ride from thence. Scan yet longer the skein of fate what will further fall to my lot?" the skein of fate:

Gripir said:

19. "To Heimir's 11 halls wilt, hero come, and gladly dwell as guest with the king: at an end is now all my knowledge—

ask no more of thy mother's brother."

Sigurth said:

"Sorrow see I in what thou sayest 20. since, folk-warder, farther doest know: too great the grief Gripir weeneth, hence more wilt not to me now sav."

¹⁰These Runic instructions form the main contents of the Sigrdr. ¹¹Brynhild's foster-father. Her father, in Norse tradition, is Buthli; her brother, Atli. See 27, below.

Grípir said:

21. "In light most lieth thy life before me which in youth thou, nor in truth can I at an end is now all my knowledge."

nor beyond wilt lead: foretell thy fate:

Sigurth said:

"Is no man known 22. who forward sees hide not from me,

beneath heaven further than thou: unhappy though be my life and lot. and luckless my end."

Grípir said:

"Learn and listen, lordly hero: 23. no fault nor flaw thy fate doth blot: know that most noble thy name will be the while, warrior, the world lasteth."

Sigurth said:

"Little I like it; now leave taketh 24. from thee Sigurth, though thus it be;

the way now show,—
my mother's brother,
his weird none fleeth—
to me if thou wilt."

Grípir said:

25. "To Sigurth shall I now say fully since, war-worker, thou wilt it thus:—
thou know'st full well that naught I lie that naught I lie— I see the day thy death will bring."

Sigurth said:

"The wise folk-warder's **26.** but the good rede of Gripir, rather:

wrath I wish not,

to wit I wish, though welcome nowise. what fate lieth before Sigurth."

Grípir said:

27. "Fosters Heimir a fair maiden who is Brynhild¹² hight, his hall within— Buthli's daughter, the brave folk-king's; of hardy mind is this maiden fair."

Sigurth said:

28. "To me what is't, a maid though be fostered at Heimir's, fair to behold? Thou shalt, Grípir, tell altogether: before thee lieth my fate clearly."

Grípir said:

29. "Of glee and gladness will the girl rob thee

who is Brynhild hight, no sleep thou sleepest nor seekest thing¹⁸ nor men's meetings, but the maid thou seest."

Sigurth said:

30. "Is aught for easement to the atheling given? Say thou, Gripir, if 'tis seen by thee: will I the dear one by dowry win, the folk-warder's daughter, so fair to see?"

Grípir said:

31. "Oaths will pledge ye altogether, will pledge fully, but few thou holdest: art with Giúki a guest one night, from thy mind then falls Heimir's fosterchild."

^{12&#}x27;Maiden in Byrnie'.

¹⁸The popular assembly. Cf. Hév. 114.

Sigurth said:

32. "How so, Grípir? Will I faithlessly

Nor hide from me: is fickle found the folk-warder's mind? fail the maiden to whom my whole heart I had given?"

Grípir said:

33. "A wicked woman's wiles will snare thee: will Queen Grímhild¹⁴ beguile thy mind and offer to thee her own daughter, the lovely maiden, and lure thee on."

Sigurth said:

"Then Gunnar's kinsman the king15 will be, 34. when that as wife he weds Guthrún. Full well wedded then would I be, if the ruler¹⁵ rued not the wrong that's done."

Grípir said:

35. "Will Grimhild beguile thee altogether, and egg thee on to ask Brynhild for Gunnar's16 wife, the Gothic¹⁷ king's: thy faith wilt thou forthwith plight him."

Sigurth said:

36. "Ill hap draws nigh— I behold it well foresight Sigurth, I fear me, lacks

^{14&#}x27;Maiden in Helmet (Vizor)'. She corresponds to the Uote of the Nibelungenlied. Her daughter is Guthrún, M.H.G. Kûdrûn, 'Knowing War-Runes', whose rôle is that of Kriemhilt in the Nibelungenlied.-Much of what follows is taken from the poems of the Great Lacuna.

¹⁵Sigurth.

^{16&#}x27;Leader in Battle'. Both name and person correspond to the Gunther of the Nibelungenlied.

¹⁷Here, as often, used as an honorific epithet.

if I shall ask for other man her whom my whole heart I had given."

Grípir said:

37. "Oaths will pledge ye altogether, Gunnar and Hogni¹⁸— thou, hero, too; each other's form, when faring to her, takest thou and Gunnar: Grípir lies not."

Sigurth said:

38. "How may this happen shift face and form when faring to her?
Still other falsehoods will follow after, all fraught with sorrow; but say on, Grípir!"

Grípir said:

39. "Wilt borrow Gunnar's bearing and form, but keep thy speech and spirit eke; wilt pledge the troth winsome woman: fate wills it so."

Sigurth said:

40. "Little I like it; a loathly deed all thanes will think it, if thus I do. With wiles I would not woo for Gunnar as bride Brynhild, best of maidens."

Grípir said:

41. "Together will both bridals be drunk,20 Sigurth's and Gunnar's, in Giúki's hall.

¹⁸The Hagene of the Nibelungenlied.

¹⁹As is told in Brot.

²⁰Such is the case in the Nibelungenlied.

The sham shapes then will ye shift at home, though each within him his own thoughts kept."

Sigurth said:

42. "Will the war-worker²¹ the good woman,— three nights although with me did sleep?

win thereafter
this, Gripir, tell me!—
the thane's fair bride
A marvel were it."

Grípir said:

43. "Wilt, Sigurth, sleep at the side three nights of the maiden, as though thy mother she were;22 will hence be known thy name, great king, the while, warrior, the world lasteth."

Sigurth said:

44. "What hap thereafter will have we twain,23 when wedded thus? I wish to know.

Will Gunnar's lot be good, thereafter, and eke my own? I ask thee, Grípir."

Gripir said:

45. "The oaths thou'lt remember, yet utter them not, wilt grudge not Guthrún thy goodly body; but Brynhild will ween her a bride mismated: the woman will of the wiles avenge her."

²¹Gunnar.

²²He laid his sword between himself and Brynhild; see *Brot* 20, *Sigkv.* sk. 4 and 68.

²³Gunnar and Sigurth.

Sigurth said:

46. "What will I give, the grief to allay of the woman, since we with wiles tricked her?

Hath the fair one from me false oaths many, lying pledges, but little joy."

Grípir said:

47. "To Gunnar goes she, will grimly tell how that thy oaths most ill didst keep, when altogether Giúki's son had, the lieges' lord, believed in thee."24

Sigurth said:

48. "How now, Grípir, give me answer: did in truth I betray the king?

Or lied on me the high-born lady²⁵—on me and herself? Say now, Grípir!"

Grípir said:

49. "In anger will deal ill with thee, in moody mourning, the mighty queen: no whit hast thou harmed the lady, though the king's wife ye with wiles did trick."

Sigurth said:

50. "Will Gunnar and Hogni, and Gotthorm²⁶ eke, be egged thereafter against their oaths?

 $^{^{24}}$ For this and the following events see Brot, Sigkv. sk., and $Gu\ddot{o}$. II.

²⁵Brynhild.

²⁶Gunnar's stepbrother, who had not sworn Sigurth oaths; see Brot 21, 22, and $Gu\ddot{o}$. II, 7.

Will Giúki's sons their swords redden in Sigurth's blood? Say on, Grípir!"

Grípir said:

51. "With grim grief will be Guthrún's heart filled, the time her brothers betray her foully; nor love ever the lady hath, nor gladness, after:27" 'tis Grímhild's fault."

Sigurth said:

52. "Fare thee well, then: 'gainst fate wins none.
Thou'st done my bidding as best thou couldst;
a fairer fate thou fain hadst told me,
Grípir, ungrudging, if granted it were."

Grípir said:

53. "May aye this ease is this lot, leader, will no better hero weath sun in heaven the atheling's heart: to thy life given:

be borne in the world than, Sigurth, thou!"

²⁷The contents of the Guthrún Lays.

THE LAY OF REGIN

Reginsmél

The present title of this collection of (two or more) fragments was suggested by Bugge, in analogy with the traditional title of the following poem.

In the introductory Prose the fateful Niflung gold is traced to its source in dim antiquity, when the gods walked the earth and became involved in guilt through Loki. In scattering stanzas we are told of its baneful influence on the kin of Hreithmar. Sigurth is introduced: through him, Regin hopes to obtain the treasure. But first, the hero feels called to avenge his fallen kinsmen on the sons of Hunding. In this portion we note the fine passage in the heroic style, describing a storm at sea.

With some good will we may consider these stanzas to hang together; but it is hardly credible that this was the original shape—the two patches of gnomic and dialogue stanzas in *ljóðaháttr* stand out too clearly from the remainder, which is cast in narrative fornyrðislag.

The complete text is found in Cod. Reg., a number of stanzas also in the paraphrases of Volss. and Normag. There are no clues as to where and when the lay originated; though it seems in spirit to belong to the Heathen period (before 1000).

Sigurth went to Hiálprek's stud and chose him a horse, which later bore the name of Grani.¹ At that time had come to Hiálprek's court Regin,¹a the son of Hreithmar. He was more skilled in crafts than any other man. He was a dwarf in size, wise, cruel, and a wizard. Regin fostered up Sigurth, taught him, and loved him greatly. He told Sigurth about his own forbears and of how, once upon a time, Othin, and Hænir, and Loki² had come to the waterfall of Andvari. In that waterfall there were many fish. A dwarf named Andvari dwelled in it in the shape of a pike and got him food there. "Otr was the name of

¹According to V_{Qlss} chap 13, Othin himself gave Sigurth the horse, which is stated to descend from the god's own steed, Sleipnir. ^{1a}'Counseller' (?).

²Cf. Vsp. 9, 10.

our brother", said Regin, "and he often came to the waterfall in the shape of an otter. He had caught a salmon and was eating him with half-closed eyes.³ Then Loki threw a stone at him and killed him. The gods thought they had made a lucky catch and flayed the otter. That same evening they came to Hreithmar for nightquarters and showed him their bag. Then we bound them and laid on them as a ransom to stuff the otter-skin, and also to cover it on the outside, with red gold. Then sent they Loki to fetch the gold. He went to Rón⁴ and borrowed her net. Then he fared to the waterfall of Andvari and cast the net for the pike, and it lept into the net. Then said Loki:

1. "What fish is this in the flood that swims and cannot keep him from harm?

To Hel's dark hall art headed now, but thou fetch me the fire-of-the-flood."

Andvari said:

2. "I am Andvari, oin my father,
in many a flood have I fared;
in days of yore was I doomed by norns
in swirling waters to swim."

Loki said:

3. "Tell me, Andvari, if on earth thou wilt, dwarf, live a longer life: what doom is dealt to men who wound each other with words?"

⁸Volss. chap. 14 explains that he was wont to eat his food with half-closed eyes and alone because he could not bear to see it diminish.

⁴The sea goddess; cf. H.Hv. 16.

⁵Kenning for 'gold'; cf. H.H. I, 22 note.

Andvari said:

4. "A heavy doom is dealt to men who in Vathgelmir's waters wade: he who untruth utters and on others lies. long will he linger there.

"Loki saw all the gold which Andvari owned. Now when he had given up all the gold but one ring which he kept for himself, Loki took that from him too. The dwarf went into his cave and said:

"The glittering gold the bane will be of brothers twain. and to eight athelings

which Gust⁸ did own bring untimely death: he who holds my hoard will e'er hapless be."10

"The æsir gave Hreithmar the gold. They stuffed the otterskin with it and raised it on its feet. Then were the gods to heap the gold round about it until it was covered altogether. When that had been done, Hreithmar stepped near and saw one beard-hair of the otter, and bade them cover that too. Then Othin took forth the ring which Andvari had owned and covered up the hair. Then said Loki:

⁶A river in Hel, only mentioned here; but similar to the river in which the mainsworn and the murderers are condemned to wade, Vsp. 31. It has been suggested that Loki wishes by his question to induce the dwarf to tell the truth.

According to Skáld. chap. 39, this ring had, like Othin's ring Draupnir (cf. Skirn, 22), the power to renew itself. It is the 'Ring of the Niflungs.'

⁸Andvari himself, or one of the former owners of the ring.

⁹The two brothers are Fáfnir and Regin; the other eight athelings, possibly, Sigurth, Gotthorm, Gunnar, Hogni, Atli, and the three sons of Guthrún by Iónakr.

¹⁰The ring is to be fatal to any one possessing it, according to the prose versions.

6. "The gold thou hast gotten, but great has been the worth thou laidst on my life; 'twill sorrow bring to thy son and thee, it will work the bane of you both."

Hreithmar said:

7. "Gifts thou gavest, but grudgingly, nor gavest with whole heart; but little life were left to you, if aware I had been of this woe." 11

Loki said:

8. "Still worse by far— I ween to know—
is kinsmen's hapless hate:

unborn the lords, I believe, as yet,
on whose life this curse will alight."

Hreithmar said:

9. "My hoard of gold to hold I mean the while my life does last; not a whit dread I thy deadly threat: now hie you home hence!"

Fáfnir¹³ and Regin asked Hreithmar for their share of the weregild for their brother Otr. But he would not yield it up. Then Fáfnir thrust his sword into his father Hreithmar while he slept. Hreithmar called out to his daughters:

¹¹The guests' life must be spared since weregild has been offered and accepted; which Hreithmar would not have done had he known of the curse attaching to the gold.

¹²The line is doubtful. The reference seems to be to the fateful feuds among the Giúkungs.

^{13&#}x27;He Who Surrounds With His Arms', Regin's brother.

10. 14"Lyngheith and Lofnheith! Know that my life is ended:

much I crave of my kin"!

Lyngheith said:

"Though their father be felled few sisters would seek their brother's blood."

Hreithmar said:

11. "Wolf-hearted woman, if in wedlock a son be not born to thee, then bear thou a daughter; give the maid to a man will their son then in thy mighty need: to thy need see." 15

Then died Hreithmar; but Fáfnir took all the gold. Regin asked for his share of the inheritance after his father; but Fáfnir said no to that. Then Regin sought counsel of his sister Lyngheith, how he should win his share. She said:

12. "Thy kinsman shalt in kindness ask thy fee and a fairer mind; not seeming is it with the sword thou should'st ask of Fáfnir thy own."

¹⁴The following stanzas very evidently do not fit in properly. They are, possibly with 12, fragments of another lay.

¹⁵Since the daughter refuses to avenge her father on her brother Fáfnir, this duty devolves upon her son or, if she bear a daughter, on the son born of her in wedlock. We may then, with Grundtvig, suppose that either Lyngheith, or her daughter, marries King Eylimi. Their grandson, Sigurth, who slays Fáfnir would thus be the avenger. To be sure, this connection is not authenticated by any source.

¹⁶Then, according to *Skáld*. chap. 40 (and *Volss*. chap. 14), "Fáfnir fared to the Gnita Heath and made him a lair and transformed himself into a dragon and brooded on his gold."

All this told Regin Sigurth.

One day when he came to Regin's house, he was greatly welcomed. Regin said:

- 13. "Hither has come the kinsman of Sigmund, the keen atheling, to our hall; hardier he than hero tried, from warlike wolf I wait me strife.17
- 14. "Foster shall I the fearless lordling, now Yngvi's kinsman¹⁸ has come to us; under high heaven among heroes first, his fate-thread is spun to overspread all lands."¹⁹

Sigurth stayed with Regin. He told Sigurth how Fáfnir lay on the Gnita Heath in the shape of a dragon and had the Helm of Terror, of which all living things are a-dread. Regin made Sigurth a sword called Gram,²⁰ which was so sharp that when he dipped it into the Rhine, and let a flock of wool float down with the stream against it, the flock was cut in two as though it had been water. With this sword did Sigurth cleave asunder Regin's anvil. Thereafter Regin egged on Sigurth to slay Fáfnir; but he said:

15. "Soon would sneer then the sons of Hunding, they who ended Eylimi's life,²¹ if more keen the king²² to crave red gold than blood for blood of his father's banesmen."

¹⁷An Icelandic proverb; but 'warlike-wolf' (Ylfing) may also be taken as a kenning for 'hero'.

¹⁸The fabled progenitor of the royal Swedish line; but here more generally as an honorific epithet.

¹⁹For the figure, cf. H.H. I, 3, 4.

²⁰'Ogre, troll'. According to *Volss*. chap. 15, it was made from the fragments of Sigmund's sword which Hiordis had preserved.

²¹According to Sinf. it was his father, Sigmund, who fell in this battle.

²²Sigurth.

King Hiálprek gave Sigurth a fleet so that he might avenge his father. A great storm²³ arose when they were sailing past some ness. A man stood on the cliff and said:

16. "What men ride there on Rævil's steeds²⁴ the weltering waves, the wild-tossing sea?

Doth salty sweat the sea-nags²⁴ fleck,
will the wave-horses²⁴ not weather the storm."

Regin made answer:

17. "On the sea-trees²⁴ sit toward Hel bears us over stem and stern sink the roller-horses:²⁴

young Sigurth's men, a heavy wind; the storm-waves fall, who is it asks?"

The man said:

18. "I was Hnikar²⁵ hight when the hawks I gladdened, son of Sigmund! and slain had many.

Now mayst thou call me cliff-dweller old.

Now mayst thou call me cliff-dweller old Feng or Fiolnir: let me fare with you!"

They sailed near to the land, and the man came on board. Then the storm abated. Sigurth said:

19. "Tell me, Hnikar, for the twain thou know'st:
what be good signs for gods and men;
what bodeth best on battle-ground,
the time that swords are swung?"

²³Nornag. chap. 5 tells us that this is a magical storm produced by the sons of Hunding.

²⁴Kenning for 'ship'.—Rævil is the name of a sea-king.—As to 'roller-horse', cf. *Hym.* 21, note.

²⁵For these names of Othin cf. Grimn. 47.—Feng signifies 'Gain'; i.e. bringer of good fortune.

Hnikar said:

- 20. "Signs there are many, if men but knew, which are good at the swinging of swords: to doughty hero the dusky raven's flight is a following fair.
- 21. "Another this: when out thou goest, and ready art forth to fare, and beholdest good heroes twain, and stout-hearted, stand on the path.
- 22. "The third is this: if thereafter a wolf howl in the woods; good hap thou'lt have among helmet-bearers, if first thou seest them fare.
- 23. "His foe let no one fight withershins;26 into setting sun see thou never; for victory is theirs whose view is best, of the war-workers who in wedges array them.27
- 24. "Then art thou fey if thy foot stumbles, when thou goest to the swinging of swords.

 Will guileful ghosts²⁸ glower at thee—

 would fain see thee fall.
- 25. "Combed and clean-washed should the keen man be, and have early eaten his fill:

²⁶In duels, sun and wind were shifted fairly. Cf. also $H\acute{e}v$. 129. ²⁷The 'wedge' or phalanx was supposed to be Óthin's invention, taught by him to his favorite heroes.

²⁸In the text, 'guileful disar (female spirits) on either side of thee'.

for unsure is it were at eve he be:
'tis ill to forego one's gain."29

Sigurth fought a great battle with Lyngvi, the son of Hunding, and his brothers. After the battle Regin said:

26. "With the bitter brand now the bloody eagle³⁰ was slashed in the back of Sigmund's banesman;

bolder in battle no baron ever dyed red the earth and the ravens gladdened."

Then fared Sigurth home to Hiálprek; but Regin egged on Sigurth to slay Fáfnir.

 $^{^{29}}$ Cf. $H\acute{e}v$. 33, 61. The meaning of the last line is presumably that he who is unprepossessing, or he who has to cast about for food at midday, is not likely to be fortunate.

³⁰In the oldest times, enemies were often sacrificed to the gods by severing their ribs from the backbone and pulling out the lungs. This was called 'carving the blood-eagle'.

THE LAY OF FAFNIR

Fáfnismél

Though set off in the original by a different—and not very appropriate—title this lay is, both in matter and manner, unquestionably but a continuation of the preceding lay; so that, here too, it is a matter of dispute whether we are dealing with a number of fragments of diverse origin joined together by the Prose of the Collector, or whether the whole was planned thus. The unsuitableness of several stanzas in the dialogue with Fáfnir, and the unusual change from lióðaháttr to fornyrðislag in the middle of the bird chorus certainly lend color to the former assumption.

Æsthetically considered, no one portion of the lay is satisfactory to the modern taste; yet the total impression is pleasing, thanks no doubt to the poetic glamor thrown over it by the story of Young Sigurth.

The poem is found in its entirety only in the Cod. Reg., but pieces from it are quoted in a number of sources, attesting its popularity. The paraphrase of it in the $Volsunga\ saga$ is a particularly close one.

Sigurth and Regin went up to the Gnita Heath and found there the tracks of Fáfnir where it was his wont to go for water. There dug Sigurth a great ditch and hid himself in it. Now when Fáfnir left his lair on the gold, he spewed poison, and it flowed from above on Sigurth's head. But when Fáfnir crept over the ditch, Sigurth thrust his sword into the dragon's heart. Fáfnir shook himself and beat (the ground) with his head and his tail. Sigurth lept out of the ditch, and then they saw one another. Fáfnir said:

1. "Thou fellow bold,— what thy father's kin?
Youth, from what house doest hail?
In Fáfnir's blood thy brand is reddened:
in my heart standeth thy steel."

Sigurth withheld his name; for it was the belief in olden times that the words of a doomed man had great might, if he cursed his foe by name. He said:

¹Similar beliefs are held throughout the world among primitive races; cf. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* III, 320f.

2. "Stag² I am hight, homeless I wandered,
I am a motherless man;
no father had I as folks do else:
ever fare I unfriended."³

Fáfnir said:

3. "If father thou hadst not as folks do else, how wast thou, boy, then born? (not knowing thy name, though now I die, I little doubt thou liest.)"

Sigurth said:

4. "My forefathers to fame are known,5 of myself I say the same:

Sigurth thou seest here, was Sigmund my father; thou know'st now whose sword smote thee."

Fáfnir said:

5. "Who whetted thee, and why didst wish to seek, Sigurth, my life?

Thou keen-eyed boy, thou hadst bold father, (such daring deed to do.)"

²In the original, 'noble animal'; but cf. H.H. II. 38.

³Unless we are to assume that Sigurth deliberately misrepresents, this version is at variance with his princely rearing at Hiálprek's court; but indeed, according to the German story of Sigfrit (also biðreks saga chap. 168), he came to Regin's smithy as a foundling; so that there may be traces of this conception in this and the following stanzas.

⁴Supplied after the paraphase in Volss. chap. 18.

⁵After Cederschiold: in the original, 'unknown'; which does not agree with Fáfnir's knowing Sigmund (below, 5) and the circumstances of Sigurth's birth.

⁶The text here is corrupt, the translation of the line hence purely conjectural.

Sigurth said:

6. "My hands did help as my heart did whet, and eke my bitter brand; brisk will not be as bearded man who was afraid when fledged."

Fáfnir said:

7. "Forsooth, if 'mong kinsmen thou couldst grow up,

thou bold in battle wouldst be; but unfree art, nor thy own master, and aye are fearful the fettered."⁷

Sigurth said:

8. "Since far I am, Fáfnir, from my father's kin thou scornfully scoffest at me:

no bondsman am I, as babe though taken:

unfettered thou feltest me now."

Fáfnir said:

9. "But words of hate to hear thou weenest; yet I tell thee this for truth: the glistening gold and the glow-red hoard—the rings thy bane will be."

Sigurth said:

10. 7a"For wealth doth wish each wight that's born,

to have till the day of death; sometime, for sooth, shall each son of man fare hence to Hel."

⁷On this and the following stanzas, cf. Sinf., note 5.

^{7a}This stanza, as well as several others following, seems to have belonged originally to some collection of didactic sayings like H Q v.

Fáfnir said:

11. "The norns' doom before the nesses threatens:

a fool's fate will be thine; in the water will drown in the wind who rows:

all spells death to the doomed one."

Sigurth said:

12. "Say now, Fáfnir, for sage thou art, and much learned in lore: which norns are near when need there is to help mothers give birth to their babes?"

Fáfnir said:

13. "Unlike, I believe, are the lives of the norns, from the same sib are they not; from gods are some, and some from alfs, and some are Dvalin's daughters."

Sigurth said:

14. "Say now, Fáfnir, for sage thou art, and much learned in lore: how that holm is hight where the holy gods and Surt shall blend their blood?"

⁸The 'windy nesses' threaten the unwary sailor with destruction.

⁹Evidently not the fate-goddesses (Vsp. 12) but minor divinities, the fays of folklore. After describing these, Snorri (Gylfag. chap. 15) adds "yet are there other norns who come to every child that is born, to shape its fate, and are these sprung from the gods; but others are from the race of the alfs; and still others, from the dwarfs." Whereupon the above stanza is quoted.

¹⁰A dwarf; cf. 383.

Fáfnir said:

"Tis Óskopnir" hight; there all the gods **15**. will unsheath their shining swords; Bilrost¹² will break, on the bridge when they ride.

their steeds will stem the stream.13

16. "With the helm of fear¹⁴ I affrighted men while I lay on the hated hoard; for the might of all men a match I weened me.

nor e'er worthy foeman found."

Sigurth said:

"The helm of fear 17. hideth no one. when bold men bare their swords: when many are met to match their thews. 'twill be found that first is no one."15

Fáfnir said:

18. "I spewed venom as I sprawled on the hoard of my father's gleaming gold; (by noon or night no one neared me. nor weapons nor wiles I feared.)"16

Sigurth said:

19. "Thou hateful worm, great hissing thou madest. on thy gold grimly brooding;

¹¹Probably identical with the Vígríth of Vaf. 18.

¹²Cf. *Grímn*. 44.

¹³The bridge breaks down under the hosts of Múspelheim (Lok. 41), "and their horses must swim over great rivers." Gylfag. chap. 13.

¹⁴Cf. Reg. Prose after 14.

¹⁵Cf. Hov. 64.

¹⁶Supplied by the translator after the paraphrase in Volss. chap. 18.

but harder grow the hearts of men if that helm they have."

Fáfnir said:

20. "Hear thou, Sigurth, and heed it well:

Ride thou home from hence!

The glistening gold and the glow-red hoard—

the rings thy bane will be." 17

Sigurth said:

21. "Warning thou'st given; now wot that I ride to the gold hoarded on heath; but thou, Fáfnir, shalt flounder in death till Hel harbor thee."

Fáfnir said:

22. "Regin bewrayed me, will bewray thee too, will be the bane of us both;

Fáfnir is doomed to die full soon, greater thy might was than mine."

Regin had taken himself off, the while Sigurth slew Fáfnir, and showed himself again when Sigurth was wiping the blood from his sword. He said:

23. 18"Hail now, Sigurth, thou hast slain Fáfnir: well hast thou won the day; of all the men on earth that walk I call thee bravest born."

¹⁷These stanzas would seem to belong more properly after 9.

¹⁸Sigurth modestly replies to Regin's fulsome praise, but claims for himself full share of both praise and blame for slaying Fáfnir. Regin, with an eye on the hoard, admits that it would not have been done but for his egging on, but maintains that it could not have been done but for the wondrous sword he had fashioned.

Sigurth said:

24. "When men are met to match their thews, who knows who is bravest born?

Full many are brave who brand never reddened

in the blood from foeman's breast."

Regin said:

25. "Glad art, Sigurth, hast slain thy foe, and driest now Gram on the grass; my own brother thy brand did slay, yet had I a hand in his death."

Sigurth said:

26. "Afar thou wert while in Fáfnir's blood
I reddened my slaughterous sword;
my strength I strained to strive with the
worm,
whilst thou in the heather didst hide."

Regin said:

27. "Long had lived in his lair on heath that age-old etin,19 if the sword thou hadst not which myself did make, the blade which bites so sore."

Sigurth said:

28. "Courage is better than keenest steel, when bold men bare their brands; oft beheld I whole-hearted swain with dull sword win his way.

¹⁹Both Regin and Fáfnir are originally of giant race.

29. "The fearless aye, but the fearful nowise, will fare the better in fray; to be glad is better than of gloomy mind, whether fair or foul betide."20

Sigurth said:

30. 21"Thy rede was it that ride I should over high mountains hither;
Fáfnir still held his hoard and life, hadst thou not egged me on."

Then Regin went up to Fáfnir and cut out his heart with the sword which is hight Rithil; and then he drank the blood which flowed from the wound. He said:

31. "Sit now, Sigurth— I shall sleep the while—
and hold Fáfnir's heart o'er the fire;
for this morsel I mean to eat
after gulping this gory drink."

Sigurth took Fáfnir's heart and steaked it on a spit. When he thought it was done, and the blood ran foaming out of the heart, he touched it with his finger to see whether it were fully done; but he burned himself and stuck his finger in his mouth. Now when Fáfnir's heart-blood touched his tongue, he understood the speech of birds. He overheard some titmice speaking in the bushes. One titmouse said:

32. "There sits Sigurth, all smeared with blood, and Fáfnir's heart he holds over the fire; wise would be the war-leader if the hated worm's bright heart he ate."

²⁰Cf. HQv. 15.

 $^{^{21}}$ It has been suggested that a stanza is lacking before 30 in which Regin reiterated his charge of 25. Indeed, words to this effect are found in Volse. chap. 18.

(A second said:)

33. "There lies Regin, and racks his brain, will betray the boy take him to task in tricky ways; will the base one now his brother avenge."

(A third said:)

34. "Hew off the head of the hoary wizard, let him fare to Hel from hence; then lord art alone of the lustrous gold, of the heapèd hoard of Fáfnir."

(A fourth said:)

35. "Crafty were he and keen of mind, if ear he gave to us sisters,—
took heed for himself and the hawks gladdened:22 look out for the wolf when his ears ye see!"23

(A fifth said:)

36. "Crafty were not the king's offspring²⁴—
as ought to be armed men's leader—
if he let scotfree escape the brother,
when he Fáfnir first felled with the sword."

(A sixth said:)

37. "Witless were he, unworthy his kin, if he spared his fell foeman;
Regin lies there who has lied to him: let him guard against his guile!"

²²I.e. by furnishing another carcase.

²³Icelandic proverb: Regin's speech has been suspicious. Cf. Ex ungue leonem.

²⁴Sigurth.

(A seventh said:)

38. "Cut off the head of the cold etin, and take his red gold rings; of Fáfnir's hoard then, on the heath where it lies.

the only owner wilt be."25

Sigurth said:

39. "Tis not written that Regin shall wreak him on me,

and ever be my bane;
for both brothers shall by my hand
full soon fare hence to Hel."

Sigurth hewed off Regin's head. Then he ate Fáfnir's heart, and drank the blood of both Regin and Fáfnir.²⁶ Then heard Sigurth what the titmice said (further):

- 40. "Gather now, Sigurth, the golden rings,—
 to flinch in fear befits not a king:
 a maiden²⁷ I know, of many most fair,
 in golden weeds: a wife for thee.
- 41. "Green²⁸ are the paths to Giúki's hall, fate doth further the fearless man;

²⁵Grundtvig suggested that the bird chorus has three voices only. The calmer stanzas, 32, 35, and 33, 36 (in fornyrðislag) he would assign to the first and second titmouse, respectively, whereas the excited advice of stanzas 34, 37, 38 (in ljóðaháttr) would represent the third. Bugge pointed out that the suggestion would seem to be corroborated by the wood-carving on the portals of the old Hyllestad Church, Norway, representing this scene, where only three birds are seen.

²⁶There is a widely spread belief among many primitive peoples that the drinking of the blood, or the eating of certain vital parts, of the slain animal or foe will transfer to the slayer the powers that resided in them.

²⁷Guthrún, the daughter of Giúki.

²⁸I.e. 'pleasant'.

the folk-king hath a fair daughter: with the gold, Sigurth, mayst thou gain her hand.

- 42. "A high wall standeth on Hindar Fell,29 all enfolded is it by fire without; cunning craftsmen this castle builded of the glistering gold of rivers.
- 43. "A valkyrie³⁰ rests on the rock in sleep, flickering fire flames about her; with the sleep-thorn Ygg³¹ her erst did prick: other heroes she felled than he had willed.³²
- 44. "There mayst thou see the maiden helmdecked which steered from battle the steed Vingskornir; stern doom."

Sigurth followed Fáfnir's tracks till he came upon his lair, and found it open. The doors and door-posts were of iron. Of iron, too, were all posts in the house, and the whole was let into the ground. There found Sigurth a

²⁹'Fell of the Hind'.

³⁰Brynhild. Cf. the situation in Fj.

³¹ Othin; cf. Grimn. 54.

³²Cf. Sigrdr. 4ff and Helr. 8ff.

³³Brynhild's steed.

³⁴Most likely, another name for 'valkyrie' (meaning, probably, 'Giver of Victory'). It was misunderstood by the Collector as the name of a second valkyrie, a supposition which is altogether uncalled for. As to the confusion produced, cf. *Grip*. note 1.

³⁵'Descendant of Skiold', the mythical progenitor of the royal race of Denmark. Here used in a general sense for 'hero'; cf. *H.H.* I, 50, 58; etc.

great hoard of gold, and filled two chests with it. He took from thence the Helm of Terror, and a gold byrnie, and the sword Hrotti,³⁶ and many other things of great worth, and loaded Grani therewith; but the steed would not stir before Sigurth got on his back, too.

⁸⁶Cf. Hrunting, Beowulf's sword.

THE LAY OF SIGRDRIFA

Sigrdrífumél

There is no break in the Codex Regius between this lay and the Lay of Fáfnir which it resembles in style and manner¹—short narrative portions and lyrical and didactic stanzas (in *ljóðaháttr* and irregular verse-forms), with the connecting Prose. Indeed, it has been suggested that, together with the 'Lay of Regin', these snatches were collected into an original whole dealing with Sigurth's youth.

The few remaining stanzas belong to the best in Eddic poetry, especially the fine invocation spoken by the valkyrie on awaking.—As with the two preceding lays, there is no definite clue for place of origin or date (before 1000?).

Sigurth rode over the Hindar Fell and made his way South to Frankland. On the fell he saw a bright light, as though a fire were burning there, and it shone to very heaven. When he drew near, he found there a wall of shields, and a banner loomed up above it. He went into this wall of shields and saw that in it slept some one in full war-weeds. Sigurth first lifted the helmet off the sleeper's head, and then he saw that it was a woman. Her coat-of-mail was tight about her as though it were grown to the flesh. With his sword Gram he slit the byrnie, from the neck down, and also both sleeves, and took it off. Then she awoke and sate up, and beheld Sigurth, and said:

¹The separate title—itself based on a misconception (cf. Grip., note 1)—is found in the Paper Manuscripts and is adopted by most editors for the sake of convenience.

^{1a}The realm of the Giúkungs, conceived to lie somewhere in Southern Germany.

1. "What bit my byrnie? How was broken my sleep? Who lifted from me the leaden weight?" 2

Sigurth said:

"Tis Sigmund's bairn— on Fáfnir's body ravens batten—; 'tis Sigurth's brand."

(She said:)

- 2. "Hail to thee, day! Hail, ye day's sons!

 Hail, night and daughter of night!

 With blithe eyes look on both of us:

 send to those sitting here speed!
- 3. "Hail to you, gods! Hail, goddesses!

 Hail, earth that givest to all!

 goodly spells and speech bespeak we from you,
 and healing hands, in this life."

Sigurth sate him down and asked her name. She said her name was Sigrdrífa and that she was a valkyrie. She said that twain kings fought:

4. "(Was Hialmgunnar' hight a hoary warrior; had Valfather's vowed victory to him.)"

Was the other Agnar, Autha's brother, to whom none ever help had given."

²Scil. of sleep imposed on her.

³The passage is doubtful.

⁴The 'day's sons' and the 'daughter of night' are, probably, symbolic deities of light and darkness.

⁵In the sense of 'victory'.—Stanzas 2-4 in the order suggested by Müllenhoff.

⁶See 10.

^{7&#}x27;Helm-Gunnar'. Cf. Helr. 8f.

⁸⁰thin; cf. Vsp. 1.

⁹Suggested by Bugge, instead of the Prose to the same effect.

Sigrdrifa felled Hialmgunnar in the battle, but othin in revenge pricked her with the sleep-thorn¹⁰ and said that she should never henceforth fight in battle, but be wedded. "But I too made a vow that I should never be wedded unto a man who knew fear." (Then took she a horn full of mead and gave it to him, to bind him to her.)¹¹ She said:

5. "Long was my slumber, asleep was I long, long to the luckless is life:'tis Valfather's will that wake I could not, nor rid me of runes of sleep."

Then Sigurth asked that she teach him wisdom, if so it be that she had knowledge from all the worlds. Sigrdrífa said:

- 6. "Ale I bring thee, with strength iblent 'tis mixed with magic with goodly spells.—
- thou oak-of-battle,¹²
 and brightest honor;
 and mighty songs,
 wish-speeding runes.
- 7. "Learn victory-runes if thou victory wantest, and have them on thy sword's hilt—on thy sword's hilt some, on thy sword's guard some,

and call twice upon Týr.14

8. Learn ale-runes eke, lest other man's wife betray thee who trusted in her: 15 on thy beer-horn scratch it, and the back of thy hand, and the Nauth-rune 16 on thy nails.

¹⁰I.e. a thorn on which 'sleep-runes' are scratched, 5. Cf. the spindle in the story of *Dornröschen* (Sleeping Beauty).

¹¹Literally, 'to strengthen his memory'; cf. *Hynd.* 46.—The passage is transferred here from the Introductory Prose.

¹² Kenning for 'warrior'.

¹⁴The god of war; cf. Hym. 4.

¹⁵As did Grimhild, see Grip. 31ff, and Borghild; see Sinf.

¹⁶Nauth 'need' is the name of the rune (written +) for n.

- 9. "Thy beaker bless to banish fear, and cast a leek" in thy cup:

 (then know I that never thou needest fear that bale in thy beer there be). 18
- 10. "Learn help-runes eke if help thou wilt a woman to bring forth her babe:19 on thy palms wear them and wind them about her,20 and ask the disirs'21 aid.
- 11. "Learn sea-runes eke if save thou wilt
 the sail-steeds²² on the sea:
 on the bow scratch them and on rudderblade,²³
 and etch them with fire in the oars:
 howe'er beetling the billows and black the
 deep,
- 12. "Limb-runes learn thou if a leech wouldst be, and wishest wounds to heal:

 on the bark scratch them of bole in the woods whose boughs bend to the East.24

vet comest thou safe from the sea.

13. "Speech-runes learn thou, to spite no one, lest out of hate he harm thee: these wind thou, these weave thou,

¹⁷To counteract possible poison or magic.

 $^{^{18}}$ Supplied from the corresponding passage in $V\varrho lss.$

¹⁹A kingly accomplishment; as in later times the laying on of hands, 'the royal touch'.

²⁰On her garments.

²¹The disir are female guardian spirits.

²²Kenning for 'ship'.

²³The rudder on the dragon-ship consisted of a broad oar-blade on the right hand in the stern; whence our term 'star-board.'

²⁴By so doing the wound is transferred to the tree: sympathetic magic.

and gather them all together when men to moot are met at the thing,²⁵ and all thing-men are there.

14. "Mind-runes learn thou if among men thou wilt

be wiser than any wight: them did guess, them did grave, them did hit upon Hrópt.²⁶

- made of the sap which seeped in drops out of Heithdraupnir's head, out of Hoddrofnir's horn.
- 16. "On the brink stood he26 with Brimir, the sword; on his head had he a helm: then muttered Mimir's head

then muttered Mimir's head wisely first this word, and sooth said of this:

17. "Said on the shield graven²⁸ before the shining god²⁹ which stands,
on Arvakr's³⁰ ear, and on Alsvith's³⁰ hoof,
on the wheel which turns 'neath (Hrungnir's
bane's)³¹ wain,
on Sleipnir's³² teeth, and on the sleigh's strapbands,³³

²⁵The popular assembly.

²⁶Othin.—On this and the following stanzas cf. the introduction.

²⁷Probably, epithets of Mimir; cf. Vsp. 19, 38.

²⁸Scil. runes.— The stanza hardly contains Mímir's prophetic words.

²⁹The sun; cf. Grimn. 38.

³⁰The sun-horses; see *ibid*. 37.

³¹Following Bugge's and Jónsson's emendation: the giant Hrung-nir's slayer is Thór.

³² Othin's steed; cf. Grimn. 44.

³³The withy bands by which the sleigh is fastened on the runners. Very likely, the sleigh mentioned *Grimn*. 49 is alluded to here.

18. "On the paw of the bear and on Bragi's³⁴ tongue, on the old wolf's claw and on the eagle's beak, on the bloody wings³⁵ and on the bridge's head, on the midwife's hand and on the healing spoor,³⁷

19. "On glass and on gold and on good luck token,38 in wine and in wort and on wonted seat, on Gungnir's39 point and on Grani's40 breast, on the nail of the norn and the night-owl's beak.

20. "Off were scraped all which on were scratched, and mixed with the holy mead,41 and sent about and abroad.

The æsir have them, the alfs have them, and some have wisest vanes, and some, mortal men.

21. "These beech-runes be, and birth-runes eke, and all ale-runes, and mighty, magic runes:
for whoe'er unspoilt, and unspilt, eke, for his help can have them:
 gain he who grasps them,
till that the dread doom cometh!

³⁴The god of poetry.

³⁵Cf. Reg. 26, note.

³⁷Of feet running to aid?

³⁸That is, on the amulet.

³⁹Othin's spear.

⁴⁰Sigurth's steed.

⁴¹The runes were scraped from the objects on which they had been graven and then mixed with the mead—here the mead of poetry which was shared by Othin with the beings here mentioned.

22. 42"Now shalt thou choose, since choice thou hast, hero 'neath shining helm, to say or naught say: with thyself rests it!

Meted out is all evil."43

Sigurth said:

23. "Flee I shall not though fey I know me:
since a babe my breast knew no fear.
Thy loving counsel I lief would have
as long as my life doth last."44

Sigrdrífa said:

- 24. "This counsel I first: of kinsmen of thine at no time fall thou foul: curb thy revenge, though cause there be: 'twill boot thy dying day.
- 25. "This other I counsel, that oath thou swear not

but thou tell the truth:
for baleful doom follows breach of truce,
ill fares the breaker of oaths.45

26. "This third I counsel, that at thing thou never bandy words with witless wights;

⁴²These words are addressed to Sigurth, whether he will decide to bind her to him forever.

⁴³I.e. all is fore-ordained.

^{**}Sigurth's reply: he will not flee the early death which she has, in stanzas probably lost, foretold would result from their union. *Volss.* chap. XXI, has kept the gist of at least two other stanzas: "'Wiser woman liveth not in the world than thou art . . . and this swear I, that I shall wed thee, for thou art after my wish.' She answered: 'Thee would I have though I had choice among all men.' And that pledged they each other with oaths."—These stanzas no doubt formed the conclusion of the original poem. Sigurth's words seem to have suggested the later addition of the remaining gnomic stanzas.

⁴⁵Cf. Reg. 4.

for unwise man full often says worser words than he knows.46

- 28. "That fourth I counsel, if foul witch live by the way thou wishest to fare: to go on is better than be her guest, though that the night be near.48
- 29. "Foresight is needful to knights alway, wheree'er in the fray they fight; oft harmful hags do haunt the way, who dull both weapon and wit.
- 30. "That counsel I fifth: though fair women, and brow-white, sit on bench: let the silver-dight one not steal thy sleep, nor lure thou women to love!
- 31. "That counsel I sixth: though swaggering speech*9

and unkind be made o'er the cups:
with drunken warriors no words thou bandy,
for wine steals many a one's wits.⁵⁰

⁴⁶Cf. HQv. 121, 124.

⁴⁷The bracketed lines seem a later addition.

⁴⁸Cf. *H*Øv. 112.

⁴⁹Here, the text of Cod. Reg. breaks off. The remainder of the lay is supplied after the Paper Manuscripts. Cf. 'The Great Lacuna'. ⁵⁰Cf. H&v. 13.

- 32. "Quarrels and ale have often brought sorrow to sons of men—foul death to some, ill fate to others: much woe is wrought in the world.
- 33. "That counsel I seventh: if for cause thou fight against stout-hearted heroes:

'tis better to battle than be burned alive within his own house and home.⁵¹

- 34. "That counsel I eighth, to keep thee from evil, nor dally with dastardly deeds; no maiden mar thou, nor married woman lure thou to love with thee.
- 35. "That counsel I ninth, that corpses thou bury,⁵²

 wheresoe'er on earth thou find them—
 whether sickness slew them, or in the sea they drowned,
 or whether they fell in fight.
- 36. "A bath shalt make for the dead man's body, and wash both his hands and head; dry and comb him, ere in coffin laid, and bid him sleep sweetly.53
- 37. "That counsel I tenth, that thou trust never oath of an outlaw's son;

⁵¹Which was frequently resorted to in revenge.

⁵²Literally, 'render the last services to the dead'; which in Heathen times consisted in closing the nostrils, eyes, and mouth of the departed.

⁵³All this according to Christian custom and sentiment.

[whether art his brother's bane, or felled his father:]

a wolf oft sleeps in his son, though young, and glad of the gold though he be.⁵⁴

- 38. "Seldom sleepeth the sense of wrong nor, either, hate and heart-ache.

 Both wisdom and weapons a warrior needs who would fain be foremost among folk.
- 39. "That counsel I eleventh: to keep thee from evil,

whencee'er it may threaten thee: not long the lord's life, I ween me. Have fateful feuds arisen."55

⁵⁴He may ponder revenge even though having consented to accept 'weregild' for the slain.

⁵⁵A dark hint of Sigurth's early death.

THE GREAT LACUNA

There is a gap of eight Manuscript pages¹ in Codex Regius after stanza 31, 1 of the 'Lay of Sigrdrífa'. Then follows all that is left of a 'Lay of Sigurth' (Brot). This is the so-called Great Lacuna. Of the poems thus lost to us, only the 'Lay of Sigrdrífa' can be pieced out from several Paper Manuscripts—of unknown source—although it too is fragmentary. For the remainder we are dependent on the paraphrase of the Volsunga saga (chaps. 21–29) which in all likelihood renders the substance of the missing pages; but unfortunately in such a manner that it has proved impossible to arrive at any agreement among scholars as to what they contained, because the author of the saga has demonstrably rounded out his narrative with passages from the biöreks saga and paraphrases of the 'Lay of Grípir'.

However, we may be fairly sure that a major portion had as subject the winning of Brynhild for Gunnar, Sigurth's ride through the wall of flames (see stanzas A and B below), and the deception practiced on her; another, the famous quarrel between the bathing queens, when Brynhild for the first time learns of the deception (which no doubt contained some magnificent lines), the continuation of the quarrel on the next morning (see stanza C), and Sigurth's vain attempt to console Brynhild—also a powerful scene (see stanza D). Then there was, possibly, one dealing with Guthrún's anxious dreams of her winning, but soon losing, Sigurth and of her remarriage to Atli.

(Gunnar attempts vainly to ride through the wall of flames. Then Sigurth urges on his steed Grani: cf. Volss. chap. 27).

A The flickering flames the earth quivered but few¹ then dared to ride through the fire

upflared to the skies, with awful fire; of the folkwarders unflinchingly.

B His Grani Sigurth the fire was quenched with sword did urge: before the king,

¹As the Manuscript consists altogether of 45 pages it is evident that about one-sixth of the whole is lost, or approximately 300 stanzas.

¹I.e. no one.

the flames bated before the bold one, the byrnie glistered, by Regin given.

(On the morrow after their quarrel Guthrún endeavors to reconcile Brynhild and to convince her that her husband Gunnar is second to no one; but Brynhild answers that it was Sigurth who slew the dragon and that this weighs heavier with her than all of Gunnar's power: *ibid.* chap. 28)

C "Will not ever after on earth be forgotten how Sigurth slew the grim serpent; but thy brother brooked in nowise to ride through the fire unflinchingly."

(Brynhild rejects all attempts on the part of Sigurth to console her: ibid. chap. 29).

D From the talk turned him the trusted thane, the son of Sigmund, sorrowing greatly, at his sides so that his sark did rive, of iron woven, on the atheling.

FRAGMENT OF A SIGURTH LAY

Brot af Sigurþarkviðu

Following the *Great Lacuna* there is, on page 33 of the *Codex Regius*, a fragment of 20 odd stanzas, constituting the conclusion—or rather, part of the conclusion—of what must have been one of the proudest lays in the Edda: very possibly the four fine stanzas cited above are taken from it. That it was probably also one of the longest, may be inferred from the fact that the other Sigurth lay, with some 70 stanzas, is called the 'Short Lay of Sigurth'.¹a The text is in a rather disordered condition.

Both poems deal with the same, central, theme of the Sigurth legend—in the main, the hero's stay at Giúki's court, the wooing and betrayal of Brynhild, her quarrel with Guthrún, Brynhild's instigation of Sigurth's death, and the queens' lament; so that we have a parallel treatment, as in the cases of Helgakviða I and II and Atlakviða and Atlam Ol. In most of the lays following, a knowledge of the 'story' is assumed. The poet is interested chiefly in the emotions aroused (here, especially in Brynhild's breast) by the tragic situation. In other words, they are dramatic lyrics with an epic frame.

The paraphrase of the *Volsunga saga* (chap. 29) seems based, partly on the 'Short Lay of Sigurth', partly on still other poems, now lost.—Most scholars would assign the 'Fragmentary Lay' to, say, the earlier part of the Eleventh Century, and therefore to Iceland.

(Hogni said:)

1. "What hateful harm hath he done thee, that Sigmund's son thou slain wouldst have?"

Gunnar said:

2. "To me hath Sigurth oft sworn dear oaths,2 hath sworn dear oaths which all were false;

^{1a}In the concluding Prose of Guő. I.

¹Cod. Reg. begins again with the words equivalent to 'done harm, that thou etc.'

²Viz. that he would not deprive Brynhild of her virginity after his ride through the wall of flames—as she alleges he had: 20.

and then betrayed me the trusted one—he ought not have been—in all these oaths."

Hogni said:

- 3. "Envious Brynhild to evil deed in hate did whet thee, much harm to do: begrudges Guthrún her goodly husband, and also thee, in her arms to lie."
- 4. Some a wolf did steak, some a worm did bake,3—
 of the grim beast gave they Gotthorm4 to eat ere, eager of evil, the angry men on high-born hero their hands could lay.
- 5. Slain was Sigurth south of the Rhine.⁵
 A raven on tree had wrathfully cawed:

 "Atli's sword blade your blood will redden,
 your mainsworn oaths will murder you."
- 6. Without stood Guthrún, Giúki's daughter.

 These words then first fell from her lips:

 "Where lingers Sigurth, my lord and brother, since all my kin are come before him?"
- 7. To which Hogni only did answer make:

 "With our swords we sundered Sigurth's body;

 now stands the grey steed by stricken hero."

³There is rime here in the original.—Only after having fed Gotthorm ('He Who Honors the Gods') the flesh of serpents and wolves (to infuriate him) were they successful, with his aid, in slaying Sigurth. Cf. Sig. sk. 20, 4 note.

⁵That is, in the forest, as is the case in the German versions of the legend. Cf. the Prose at the end of the lay.—The stanza is transposed here (following Grundtvig) from its original position after 10.

⁶Middle High German *Etzel*; the historic Attila, king of the Huns. In Eddic tradition, he is the son of Buthli, and Brynhild his sister.
⁷She stands outside of the hall to receive her returning kinsmen.
⁸Cf. *Guö*. II, 5.

- 8. Then quoth Brynhild, "May ye fearless now hold folk-lands and arms: would Sigurth alone have had sway over all if but little longer his life he had held.
- 9. "Unseeming were it if sway he had over Giúki's gold and Gothic⁹ hosts, and to fend him from foes sons five gat him, 10 swordplay-eager young athelings."
- 10. Laughed then Brynhild— her bower rang—one time only, out of inmost heart:
 "long may ye live to rule lands and thanes, ye twain who felled the foremost hero."
- 11. Then quoth Guthrún, Giúki's daughter:

 "with fey mouth sayst thou foul words many:
 let trolls Gunnar take who betrayed Sigurth!

 Thy thoughts bloodthirsty crave threefold revenge."
- 12. Deep the men drank— the dark night came—many winsome words then warmed their hearts. 11

 By sleep summoned they slept in their beds,
 - Gunnar only of all did wake:
- 13. Much gan mutter, and move his feet, gan bethink him the thanes' leader what on greenwood tree the twain had said, raven and hawk,¹² when home they rode.

⁹Here used as an honorific epithet.

¹⁰According to Sig. sk. 12 Sigurth had only one son (Sigmund): Brynhild refers to the sons he might have begotten.

¹¹Probably, the song of the minstrel, to dispel the uneasy feelings that arise in their hearts at nightfall after the deed.

¹²Cf. 5 where, however, only a raven is mentioned.

14. Awoke Brynhild, Buthli's daughter, the queenly woman, ere coming of day:

"Whet me or let me,13 the harm is done now, whether I say my sorrow or cease therewith."

15. Were silent all when said these words fair-browed Brynhild, nor fathomed her speech, when wailing wept the woman the deeds which laughing she had led them to do.

Brynhild said:

- 16. "Me dreamed, Gunnar, a gruesome dream, that chill our chamber and cheerless my bed; but thou didst ride bereft of joy, fastened with fetters, in foemen's throng.14
- 17. "Thus shall be stricken the strength of the Niflungs,15 the mainsworn kin unmindful of oaths.
- 18. "Forgettest, Gunnar, altogether how your blood ye both did blend under sward?"

 Him now hast thou with hate requited, and foully felled, who foremost made thee."

¹⁸In the sense of 'to hinder'.

¹⁴Prophetic of his fate at Atli's court, cf. Akv. 30.

¹⁵ Sons of the Mist'; cf. Niflhel (Vaf. 43), the Middle High German Nibelungen—a demonic race, the original possessors of the treasure. In the Edda the name is applied to the kinsmen of Giúki.

¹⁶The ceremony of swearing foster-brothership is here referred to. This was accomplished by standing underneath a strip of upraised sod, and letting one's blood flow on the same spot in the ground with that of the brother-to-be. The act is probably symbolic of common issue from the same womb.

¹⁷Volss. dwells on the increase in wealth and power of the Giúkungs through their alliance with Sigurth.

- 19. "Was seen fully, when Sigurth rode through flickering flame to fetch me thence, how the high hero had held before the oaths he sware to serve the king:
- 20. "His wand-of-wounds,19 all wound with gold, the trothful king betwixt us laid; in hot fire wholly was hardened Gram, its blade blazoned with bitter poison."

We are told in this lay of the death of Sigurth in such wise, as though they had slain him out of doors; but others say that they slew him while asleep in his bed.²⁰ But German men have it that he was felled in the forest; and in the Old Song of Guthrún²¹ we are told that Sigurth was slain while on his way to the thing with the sons of Giúki; but all are at one in saying that they overcame him by treachery and killed him while lying down and unawares.

¹⁹Kenning for 'sword'.

²⁰In his bed: Sig. sk. 22; Guő. hv. 4; Hamő. 6, 7. In the forest: as instanced in the Nibelungenlied and the piöreks saga (whose account is based on German stories).

²¹I.e. Guð. II, 4—a misunderstanding.

THE FIRST LAY OF GUTHRUN

Guðrúnarkviða I

There are a number of indications, in sentiment, style, conception, and invention, which argue this short lay—or, rather, 'lament'—to belong to the youngest in the collection, perhaps the Twelfth Century. It is not likely that the compiler of the *Volsunga saga* knew it.

The theme is manifestly taken from the 'Second Lay of Guthrún' from which, indeed, a number of expressions are loaned bodily. But this in nowise detracts from the originality and depth of its conception. Unfortunately, the artistic effect of the lay is marred, for our modern taste, by a certain lack of unity in bringing in Brynhild's fierce love and hate. The intensity of Guthrún's grief still lives for us in Tennyson's poignant lyric 'Home They Brought Her Warrior Dead'.

Guthrún sate over dead Sigurth's body. She wept not, like other women, yet her heart was nigh bursting with sorrow. Went both men and women to speak cheer to her; but that was not easy. Men say that Guthrún had eaten of Fáfnir's heart and hence understood the speech of birds.¹ This song, too,² was made of Guthrún:

- 1. Erst Giúki's daughter unto death was nigh, as o'er Sigurth she sate sorrowfully; she whimpered not, nor her hands she wrung, nor wept, either, as do women else.
- 2. Went to the widow wise earls kindly, the heavy heart of her to ease; nor yet Guthrún her grief could weep, in her bosom though her heart would burst.
- 3. Sate then with her the wives of earls, with Giúki's daughter gold-dight women:

¹This remark—perhaps a reminiscence of the Sigurth motif—entirely falls out of the context.

²That is, besides others that had been made of her.

their greatest griefs they gan tell her, the fellest which had befallen them.

- 4. Then quoth Giaflaug,³ Giúki's sister:

 "On earth am I most utterly wretched:
 five high-born husbands have I buried,
 and eight brothers; yet on I live."
- 5. Nor yet Guthrún her grief could weep, so sore her sorrow o'er Sigurth's fall, so cold her heart o'er the king's body.
- 6. Then quoth Herborg, the Hunnish queen:
 "Sadder sorrow suffered I still:
 my seven sons in the Southland all
 fell whilom in battle, my husband the eighth.
- 7. "Both father and mother and four brothers I lost on the waves, on wind-tossed ship, when the billows brake 'gainst the ship's bulwarks.
- 8. "Myself needs buried the bodies all, needs laid them out and their limbs straightened.

 This woe befell me in one half year—to soothe my sorrow no soul did try.
- 9. "As captive was I kept in bondage—that very half-year this happened to me; then trimmed I the tresses,4 and tied the shoes, for the earl's housewife every morning.
- 10. "With jealous scorn she scolded me, urged me to work with angry stripes;

³She is unknown elsewhere and probably the poet's own invention, like Herborg and Gullrond.

⁴Freely translated.

more friendly master found I never,⁵ but harsher housewife had I never."

- 11. Nor yet Guthrún her grief could weep, so sore her sorrow o'er Sigurth's fall, so cold her heart o'er the king's body.
- 12. Then quoth Gullrond, Giúki's daughter:
 "Though old and wise, but ill know'st thou, fostermother, how the mourner to comfort", and bade them bare the king's body,
- 13. Swept the sheet from Sigurth's corse and brought the bolster to the brooding one's knees:

 "To the lief one's lips lay thou thy mouth, as when didst hug when hale, the warrior!"
- 14. Then cast one glance saw the dear one's hair all dank with blood, saw the folk-warder's and the baron's breast breached by the sword.
- 15. Then sank Guthrún swooning on bolster her hair loosened, her cheeks grew hot, a rain of tears ran to her knees.
- 16. Then wept Guthrún, Giúki's daughter, that through her tresses the tears did flow, and in the garth the geese sang out, the far-famed fowl which the fair one owned.
- 17. Then quoth Gullrond, Giúki's daughter: "knew I never beneath heaven greater love than was given thee:

⁵Which is probably the cause of her 'jealous scorn'; cf. the similar situation of Kûdrûn in Normandy.

⁶The word is doubtful.

⁷Cf. Sig. sk. 29.

without nor within at ease thou wast but at Sigurth's side, thou sister mine!"

Guthrún said:

- 18. "Seemed my Sigurth 'mongst the sons of Giúki like the garlic, grown like a bright stone set on band of gold, a gleaming jewel, the great ones among.
- 19. "Was I honored higher by the king's heroes than any one of othin's maidens; so little am I as the leaves hanging on sallow-twigs, now Sigurth is dead.
- 20. "At board I miss, and in bed also, my bosom's friend: 'tis my brothers' guilt; 'tis my brothers' guilt that this grief I bear, their own sister, and sore tears weep.
- 21. "May ye lose your land, and lieges also, as ill ye kept the oaths ye sware; no good, Gunnar, of the gold will come: the dwarves' treasure thy death will be, since to Sigurth oaths thou swarest.
- 22. "There was greater glee in the garth often, the time my Sigurth did saddle Grani—the time they wended to woo Brynhild, that ill wight, in evil hour."
- 23. Then quoth Brynhild, Buthli's daughter:
 "May that hag ne'er have husband nor children

⁸In some German dialects the garlic still bears the name Gruserich, i.e. 'King of the Grasses.' Cf. the similes in H.H. II, 38 and $Gu\delta$. II. 2.

⁹I.e. than Othin's maidens, the valkyries, are honored in Valholl.

who again taught thee and this morn gave thee

thy tears to shed, the might of speech!"

- 24. Then quoth Gullrond, Giúki's daughter: "Hush thee, Brynhild, thou hated by all: athelings' ill fate thou hast ever been, and all did call thee a curse to them—a sore sorrow to seven kings,10 and hast brought woe to many a wife."
- 25. Then quoth Brynhild, Buthli's daughter:

 "From Atli all this evil springs,
 —to Buthli born, my brother he—
 'mongst Hunnish hosts in the hall as we the worm-bed's-fire¹¹ on the warrior saw. But woe did bring their wending thither: ever since see I that sight before me."

 12
- 26. Neath stone-post stood she, strained all her might,—burned in Brynhild's, Buthli's daughter's, her eyes a fire: she foamed with wrath¹³ when the wounds she saw on Sigurth's body.

Guthrún then fared to the woods and wastes until she came to Denmark. There she stayed seven half-years with Thóra, the daughter of Hákon.¹⁴ Brynhild would live no longer after Sigurth's death. She had eight of her thralls and five of her bond-maids slain. Then she slew herself with her sword, as is told in the 'Short Lay of Sigurth'.

¹⁰This accusation is probably not to be taken literally; cf. *Helr.* 2 and 4.

¹¹I.e. Fáfnir's hoard, the gold.—The evil entered, she avers, with the ill-fated visit of Sigurth and the Burgundian kings to woo her. The treasure corrupted Atli.

¹²The rendition is doubtful; cf. Sig. sk. 36.

¹³Literally, 'spewed poison'.

¹⁴Cf. Guð. II, 14.

THE SHORT LAY OF SIGURTH

Sigurþarkviða hin skamma

The accepted title of the 'Short Lay of Sigurth'—thus it is called in the Prose of the Codex Regius immediately preceding-is decidedly a misnomer; for the tragedy, not of Sigurth's, but of Brynhild's, life forms its chief contents; just as the 'First Lay of Guthrún' contemplates Guthrún's sorrows. The performance of the poet is uneven. The introduction strikes one as perfunctory and grudging, as though to furnish just enough background to make Brynhild's behavior comprehensible. Even Sigurth's dying words contain no memorable lines. It is only when 'the fiendish woman's' fierce jealousy is at work, when she eggs on Gunnar with scornful threats, when she prepares to be reunited with Sigurth in death; and also when Hogni sternly repels Gunnar's treachery and refuses to hinder Brynhild from slaying herself, that the lines rise to a dark grandeur. The latter part of the lay falls off in power and contains elements which one would like to consider interpolations. Thus, the prophecy of Guthrún's fate reminds one of the style of the Gripisspé, besides being psychologically out of place. And unfortunately it cannot be said that the character of Brynhild has been brought humanly near to us.

For reasons, both of composition and legendary development, the poem is generally attributed to an Icelander of the latter part of the Eleventh Century. In particular, it is a later, Icelandic development to make Brynhild a sister of Atli, likewise the whole relation of Gunnar with Oddrún hinted at, especially as a motivation of the Fall of the Niflungs. The Volsunga saga which makes extensive use of the lay allows of fairly close control. The metre is an, at times, rather irregular fornyrðislag.

- 1. In times long gone came to Giúki's hall Sigurth the Volsung— had he slain Fáfnir—; in the troth was taken of the twain brothers: to each other sware oaths the kings.
- 2. The maid they gave him with much treasure, Guthrún the young, Giúki's daughter;²

¹Gunnar and Hogni; cf. Brot. 18.

²In this version, then, Sigurth's marriage does not take place simultaneously with that of Gunnar (as in *Grip.* 41).

drank together days full many
Sigurth the young and the sons of Giúki.

3. Then wended their way rode Sigurth with them to seek her hall, Sigmund's young son, the sea-ways knowing³—for himself had won her if fate had willed.

4. His naked sword laid the Southron king betwixt them twain, his trusted blade; nor did he kiss the queenly woman, the Hunnish hero, nor held her to him, but yielded to Gunnar the youthful maiden.

5. In all her life no ill knew she, and in her fate no flaw, either; of blemish none yet cruel norns came between them.

6. Without she sate at eventide; gan Brynhild rashly to raise her voice: "I shall hold Sigurth, within my arms, his end though it be.

7. "In wrath spoke I: I shall rue it after—
his wife is Guthrún, and Gunnar's, I.
Our longing (lengthened) loathly norns."

³Inserted by the translater: no sea-journey (like that in the *Nibelungenlied*) is indicated in the original; but cf. Am. 34.

⁴This adjective has been taken to hint the German origin of this version of the legend. However, like 'Hunnish' below, it is an honorific epithet.

⁵"She asked what that signified. He said it had been decreed that thus must he wed his wife or else suffer death." Volss., chap. 27.

⁶Fate, not any fault of her own, is the cause for his refraining from her: he is bound by his oath to Gunnar and his marriage with Guthrún; moreover, he has been weaned of his love for Brynhild by the magic potion.

⁷Following Grundtvig's emendation.

- 8. Twithout went she, wishing them evil every evening with ice-cold heart, when both they to bed did go, Sigurth and Guthrún, to sleep together.
- 9. "(Now Giúki's daughter him gladly kisses)?
 and the Hunnish king clasps his lady:
 I have nor husband nor happiness,
 must seek my glee in grim revenge."
- 10. In hate-filled breast she brooded murder: "Shalt, Gunnar, forego altogether my demesnes and me also: thy love I list not, liege, to have ever.
- 11. "Will I fare thither to my near kindred, there dully dwell, but thou do to death and greatest grow, where before I was, my kinsmen dear,—and dream through life Guthrún's darling, Gunnar, of all.10
- 12. "Let the son fare eke with his father, nor keep too long the cub of the wolf: easier never is revenge than when slain warrior's son still lives." 11
- 13. Then hung his head, brooding darkly he say nor did he know in many what were for him what were for him what were for him and loth he was to los

heart-sick, Gunnar;
he sate all day,
in nowise clearly
wisest to do,
worthiest to do,
he had sworn dear oaths,
to lose the Volsung.

⁸I follow B. M. Olsen's and Bugge's interpretation.

⁹Supplied by Bugge.

¹⁰Cf. *Brot.* 8f.

¹¹Of all the slain one's kin, no one is more likely to seek revenge than his son; but the passage is doubtful. For that matter, Sigurth's son (Sigmund) plays no rôle whatever in the legends; cf. below, 26.

- 14. Both this and that in thought he weighed: Ere now was it nowise known that ever from her king a queen did go.
- 15. "To me is Brynhild, above all others, and my life liefer than of her riches¹² Buthli's daughter, the best of women; would I lose, by far, bereft to be."
- 16. Summoned he Hogni
 to whom he could
 "Wilt bewray Sigurth
 'Tis good to gain
 to have and to hold
 and at our ease to

ni to secret speech,
wholly trust him:
rth for the sake of gold?
the golden rings,
the hoard-of-the-Rhine,
to own this wealth?"

- 17. To him hardy Hogni answered:
 "Twould ill beseem us, for the sake of gold with swords to sever oaths which we sware—
 our former oaths, the faith we plighted.
- 18. "On earth are not more honored kings, the while we four" o'er folk hold sway, and here the Hunnish nor beneath heaven more highborn sib; if we begat us goodly sons" still greater grew then the Giúkung kin.
- 19. "Full well know I whose wiles these be: 'tis queen Brynhild's unbridled hate." unbridled hate." whose wiles these be:

¹²Thus the original. A number of editors, misled by our more sentimental taste, have emended the word in question to 'love'; but cf. stanzas 10, 36, 39, 51. Gunnar's avarice is plainly shown in the next stanza.

¹³Sigurth's treasure was later thrown into the Rhine (Akv. 29); hence this—or any other treasure—is the 'hoard-of-the-Rhine'.

¹⁴Gunnar, Hogni, Sigurth, Gotthorm.

¹⁵Sigurth, cf. above, 14.

¹⁶There is here an implied criticism of Gunnar: he has never accomplished the love of Brynhild.

¹⁷No doubt several lines are missing here—in Volss., chap. 30, Hogni continues: "and her counsels will bring us shame and harm."

Gunnar said:

"Egg we Gotthorm¹⁸ 20. our younger brother. he stood without our former oaths.

to the evil deed. a boy as yet: the oaths we sware. the faith we plighted."

21. 'Twas easy to egg the o'ereager one—19

stood in Sigurth's

heart the steel.

22. Arose in the hall and after the rash one cast the king's hand gleaming Gram—

the hero, to wreak him, in anger threw: the keen-edged sword, on to Gotthorm flew it.

23. Then fell on the floor his head and hands the nether half

his foe, sundered: did hasten on. into hall fell back.

At Sigurth's side had slept Guthrún, 24.

in carefree slumber, at the side of the king.

A worm they took, and thereof gave with drink of mead magic matter (ere, eager of evil, on high-born hero

of wolf's meat others, Gotthorm to eat. and many another

the angry men their hands could lay)."

(The bracketed lines supplied after Bugge's suggestion from the corresponding stanza (4) in Brot.)—He is won over, and twice approaches the bed where lie Guthrún and Sigurth, but is frightened off both times by Sigurth's penetrating glance. Only at the third attempt does he slay the hero.

¹⁸He is Giúki's stepson; cf. Hynd. 27.

¹⁹Here, too, we must assume a considerable gap in the tradition. In Volss. ibid. we read: "They call him to them and offer him gold and great power if he would do this; they took a serpent and some wolf's meat, and had it cooked, and gave it to him to eat—as the skald has it:

To wild woe now awakened she, in the blood of Frey's friend²⁰ as she weltered.

- 25. Her hands wrung she so ruefully that bold Sigurth by the bed him lifted: "Weep not, Guthrún, nor wail so sore, my young bride: thy brothers live.21
- 26. "Too young the heir²² who after me lives to flee afar from his father's slayers; they rashly wrought the reckless deed nightly and knavish, but newly sworn.
- 27. "Like sister's son at their side ne'er rides, though seven sons thou suckle hereafter;23 full well know I whose wiles are these: this bale was wrought by Brynhild alone.
- 28. "Me she loved more than any man; yet Gunnar's trust betrayed I never, but always kept him the oaths I sware, lest I be called the queen's lover."
- 29. Her senses lost she, his life the king—
 her hands wrung she so ruefully
 that in the cupboard and in the garth the geese sang out.
- 30. Laughed then Brynhild, Buthli's daughter, one time only, out of inmost heart,

²⁰Only in a transferred sense: the god Frey is the progenitor of the royal race of Sweden, the Ynglings; cf. H.H. I, 57.

²¹He speaks as though, at first, he knew not who were the perpetrators of the deed: on her brothers devolves the revenge.

 $^{^{22}}$ According to Volse. chap. 31 his son Sigmund was only three years old when he was slain at Brynhild's bidding.

²³That is, in a later marriage.

on her couch when the loud greeting²⁴

came to her ears of Giúki's daughter.

31. Said then Gunnar. "Thou laughest not. so gleefully as though glad thy heart: wherefore wholly fiendish woman?

the goodly king: vengeful lady, hueless grow'st thou. I ween thee fev.25

32. "But right were it, that before thy eyes and with bloody wounds with bloody wounds.

wretched woman, were Atli slain, thy brother lay, for thee to bind."

Brynhild said:

- "No fault find I: thou hast foughten well;26 33. but little Atli thy anger fears: longer will he live than thou, and in might will ever o'ermatch thee, Gunnar!
- "Say I shall now what thyself knowest, 34. how ye Giúkungs grew guilty full soon: my freedom had I. nor was fettered in aught on my brother's benches, with bounty dowered.
- "Nor did I wish to be wedded ever, 35. to our halls did ride. till high on horseback matchless, ye Giúkungs mighty kings three: had wended thither! Would that ye never
- "That hero's wife 36. I wished to be sate. rich in gold; who on Grani's back

²⁴In the sense of 'weeping'.

²⁵"According to Scotch tradition, men become violently hilarious, fey, just before a violent death." (Bugge)

²⁶ Irony?

his eyes were ay unlike to yours, nor were ye like him in looks or shape, folk-kings though ye called yourselves.

37. "And Atli said in secret to me that with me he would not his wealth e'er share—

gold nor lands— if my love I gave not, nor aught else of the olden treasures in earliest youth which and in earliest youth to own gave me.

- 38. "Then did I dwell in doubt, full long, whether wars to wage, and wend to battle in byrnie bold, my brother to spite:27 had that forth gone far to many folks, and to many been a mournful fate.
- 39. "Our bond then made we which bound us together:
 in my heart hoped I for the Niflung hoard,—
 Sigmund's son's silver and gold;
 nor wanted I another's wealth.²⁸
- 40. "But him I loved, nor other lord.

 A fickle heart I had nowise;

 will Atli all this hereafter know,

 when that he hears how to Hel I fared.
- 41. "Light-heartedly let no woman another's husband hold in her arms.²⁹

²⁷When the Giúkung's rode into Atli's hall she had the choice to remain a free valkyrie and wage wars but forego her dowry; or else marry Gunnar (in Sigurth's guise) and gain both dowry and the Niflung hoard. This variant of the legend occurs only here.

²⁸I.e. Gunnar's.

²⁹Striving to avert the catastrophe, Sigurth had offered to lie with her. This she rejects: "I will not have two kings in one hall; and rather will I die than deceive King Gunnar." Volss. chap. 29. Cf. Great Lacuna, stanza D.

(Now will I slay me my heavy harm then

and Sigurth follow):30 have I avenged."

- 42. Up rose Gunnar, Giúki's son; his arms laid he round the lady's neck—31
- 43. Summoned he Hogni to secret speech:

 "I will have all heroes in the hall gather, both thine and mine— much we need them— how we hinder that to Hel she fares; until in time we turn her from it: some means must we meanwhile find."
- 44. With kindly thoughts the high-born heroes, and though thrust she nor would be hindered all came thither, her hands to stay:

 all thanes from her, Hel-ward to fare.
- 45. To him hardy Hogni answered:

 "hinder her not Hel-ward to fare,
 whence back never she be born again!
 Wicked left she her mother's womb,
 to the world was she sadness and sorrow to sons of men."
- 46. Angry turned him²² from talk away when the gold-dight one her gifts bestowed: on all looked she which she had owned, eke lifeless bondmaids³³ and ladies-waiting,
- 47. her in gold-byrnie sheathed, grim in her mind, ere with the sword she slew herself; back on bolster her body sank: dying bethought her of her dear ones.
- 48. "Now shall hither my hand-maids³⁴ come if gold they wish, and wealth, from me;

³⁰ Supplied after Heusler's suggestion.

³¹No doubt there have dropped out a number of lines.

³²It is not certain whether Hogni or Gunnar is meant.

³³I.e. the slaves who had been slain to be burned on the funeral pile with her.

gilded trinkets I give to each, broidered bed-clothes, bright-hued raiment."

49. Were silent all when said these words, and all together this answer made: "no more shall die: we mean to live; 'tis unseeming honor to us women."

50. Thereon the lady so young in years, "unfain I wish none nor lose his life

in linen dight,
full yare did say:
to follow me,
who is loth to die.

51. "On your bodies' bones will burn, hereafter, far fewer rings when forth ye come—nor Menia's meal— when we meet in Hel.35

52. "Seat thee, Gunnar; I say to thee thy brow-white wife awaiteth death; nor is thy ship in shelter, either, even though thy bride have breathed her last.

53. "Will Guthrún soon forgive thee this, though oft the queen at thy court, Gunnar, will think in sorrow on Sigurth dead.

Is a maid-child born— her mother she— of hue whiter than the very heavens, than the sun even, Svanhild36 hight.

54. "Wilt give Guthrún that bringeth sorrow³⁷ nor will she wed will Atli wed her he, born to Buthli,

to goodly hero—
to sons of men—;
whom wish she might:
and to wife get him—
my own brother.

⁸⁴She offers gifts to others, possibly her free-born servants, to induce them to follow her in death.

⁸⁵I.e. "when you ultimately die and join me in Hel you will have fewer ornaments burned with you; scil. than I would have given you."—'Menia's meal' is a kenning for 'gold', cf. Grot. Introd. Prose.

⁸⁶Cf. Guð. hv., Introd. Prose and stanza 15.

⁸⁷ Conjectural.

- 55. "Am I mindful much how with me ye did, how ye bewrayed me wretched one: no hap was mine the while I lived.
- 56. "Thou wilt Oddrún³⁸ then ask for wife, but Atli will not thy wishes heed; still under linen ye twain will lie: will she hold thee dear, as I had done if kindlier weird had willed it so.
- 57. "Will Atli then deal ill with thee, in dungeon wilt with worms be laid.
- 58. "Will lose his life not long thereafter
 Atli, when all this ill is wrought;
 for Giúki's daughter, grim in her mind,
 with sword full soon will slay him in bed.39
- 59. "For thy sister more seeming were it to follow in death if good counsel or heart like mine more seeming were it her first husband, were given her, she had in her breast.
- 60. "Unsparingly speak I; yet, spite of us, her life she keepeth a long time after: towering billows will toss Guthrún beyond the sea to Iónakr's lands.40
- 61. "(Will she issue have, as heirs twain sons, as heirs twain sons,) o'er the sea Svanhild will she send abroad, Sigurth's daughter, to sorry fate.
- 62. "Will be her bale Bikki's counsels, for Iormunrekk will ill reward her.

 Slain are then all Sigurth's kin, but greater still are Guthrún's sorrows.42

³⁸'Knowing Weapon-Runes'—Brynhild's sister. For the story, cf. Od.

³⁹This is told in $Dr\acute{a}p$ and the succeeding lays.

⁴⁰As is related in Guo. hv. and Hamth.

⁴¹Supplied after Bugge from Guð hv. 14.

⁴²Cf. her lament, Guð. hv.

63. "One boon shall I yet beg of thee, which in this life my last will be: on meadow make thou of many logs a pyre reared, with room for all who after Sigurth did seek their death.

- 64. "Hide it wholly with hangings and shields, with well-dyed weeds and Welsh thralls⁴³ many: let the Hunnish hero burn hard by me.
- 65. "On the Hunnish hero's other hand let burn of my bondmaids, bracelet-decked, twain at his head, (twain at his feet, the hero's hounds) 44 and hawks eke twain; then all is ordered evenly.
- 66. "Let the wand-of-wounds⁴⁵ be once more laid betwixt us twain true-hearted ones, as when we both one bed did share, though hight we were husband and wife.
- 67. "On his heels fall not the shining hall's ring-handled gate, 46 on hinges rolling, if him follow my faithful thralls: at our rich riding shall rail no man.
- 68. "For he is followed by five bondmaids and eight henchmen of honest kin, my playmate eke and all the dowry the which Buthli to Brynhild gave.
- 69. "I told thee much, yet more would say but for my fate: my speech fails me, my voice weakens, my wounds do burn: but truth I told thee— my time is come."

⁴³Many slaves were made in Celtic lands. According to Old Germanic custom not only a man's property, but also his slaves and favorite animals followed him in death: he was to maintain his standing in the world beyond.

⁴⁴ After the Paper Manuscripts and Volss. chap. 31.

⁴⁵ Kenning for 'sword'.

⁴⁶Of Hel, probably.

BRYNHILD'S RIDE TO HEL

Helreib Brynhildar

Though plainly the product of a later age than even the preceding poems (Twelfth Century?), as is evidenced by a number of legendary traits which have no parallel elsewhere and must be of the poet's invention, and also by the minor key of a post-heroic age; and though by no means among the best lays of the Edda, there is here accomplished what is manifestly the aim of the preceding lays: the winning of our sympathy for Brynhild. Indeed, it may be styled a biographic justification, as against the accusations of the giantess, representing a hostile world, in an elegiac strain: there has been nothing in her life but woe. After an idyllic and harmless youth (as an orphan?) at Heimir's court she unwittingly offends Othin by aiding a young hero she loves, as against an older suitor; but the youth is (no doubt) slain (by Othin's spear?), and she is doomed to sleep behind the wall of flame until awakened by Sigurth. however, cruelly betrayed, here too, and by a remorseless fate compelled to seek the death of the very hero she loves best. To her, it has been a world full of sorrow; but in a future and better life, Sigurth and she shall live together forever-clearly a Christian thought, foisted on an arch-heathen theme!

The poem is not used in the paraphrase of the *Volsunga saga*; but is (with one slight omission) cited in full in the *Nornagests báttr*.

After the death of Brynhild two funeral piles were made, one for Sigurth, and that one was kindled first; but on the other, Brynhild was burned, and she was laid in a wain which was lined with cloth of gold.¹ It is said that Brynhild rode in this wain on her way to Hel. She came to a dwelling where lived a giantess.

The giantess said:

1. "Thy wain halt there! Thy way lies not through my homestead, standing on stones upraised."

¹As will be seen, these indications differ from those given in the preceding poem. In all likelihood the prose is based on the lay following.

²Her cave: the way to Hel is conceived as lying through the habitations of the mountain giants.

'Twere better for thee than in Hel to hanker

in thy bower to weave, after Guthrún's husband.

2. "From the land of the quick why comest thou fickle-hearted woman? to the thurses' house. high-born lady. From thy hands hast thou, washed the blood of warriors many."

Brynhild said:

3. "Upbraid me not, thou bride of thurses, that in full many frays of us both. I ween. uncouth to mankind

I fought with heroes:3 the better am I: thy kin is ever."

The giantess said:

"And thou, Brynhild, 4. to most woe wast thou to Giúki's offspring and low didst lav their lordly house."4

Buthli's daughter, of all women born: but ill thou broughtest,

Brynhild said:

- 5. "As the wiser one from my wain I shall tell thee, witless woman. if to wit thee list. how Gunnar's lies my love did steal. how the false one's guile faithless made me.
- 6. "In Heimir's hall was I hight ever Hild⁵ beneath Helm by whomever knew me.

³Scil. as a valkyrie; cf. 8.

⁴She prophetically speaks of the fall of the Giúkungs as though it had already taken place.

^{5&#}x27;Battle', a valkyrie; cf. Vsp. 23. In the paraphrase of Skáld. this is Brynhild-Sigrdrifa's name.—As to Heimir, cf. Grip. 19. In the original, this stanza follows 7. It is changed as above by practically all editors.

7. "The fearless king⁶ eight sisters we— Was I winters twelve,

our feather-coats took an oak beneath.7 if to wit thee list, when to Agnar I dear oaths did swear.

- 8. "To Hel I sent the Gothic⁹ king. but bestowed victory then Othin wreaked
 - Hialmgunnar old,8 all gashed with wounds, on stout-hearted Agnar: his wrath on me.
- "With shields he screened me in Skata-9. lund,-10 a ring he raised of red ones and white ones,11 and bade my sleep be sundered by him who naught would fear, nor be faint of heart;
- 10. "made the waster-of-wood,12" as the welkin high, burn all about my bower to southward; bade him only over it ride who would fetch me the gold which Fáfnir owned.
- 11. "The giver-of-gold¹³ rode Grani then where my foster-father¹⁴ his folk-land ruled; did Sigurth seem, the sea-king of Danes,15 worthiest of all. among weapon-wielders

⁶Agnar; see below.

⁷Just as Volund and his brothers gain possession of the three swan-maidens in the Wolfdales, Vol., Introd. Prose.

⁸The same is told in Sigrdr. 4ff.

⁹Purely honorific, here.

^{10&#}x27;Grove of Heroes' (?). It corresponds to the Hindarfell of Sigrdr.

¹¹Ordinarily, a white shield is a sign of peaceful intentions, a red shield, of war. Do they symbolize, here, the red and white flames?

¹² Kenning for 'fire'.

¹³Kenning for 'prince'.

¹⁴Heimir, cf. 6.

¹⁵Here, an honorific epithet.

- 12. "Neath linen we twain did lie together, as though born we were brother and sister: in nights full eight neither of us his hands did lay in love on the other.
- 13. "Yet Guthrún said, Giúki's daughter, that I had slept in Sigurth's arms; then grew I aware, as I would not, rather, how they beguiled me Gunnar to wed.
- 14. "Women and men to their lives to live in our lives we no longer Sigurth and I,— sin

to the world are born, in longing and sorrow; shall live apart, sink now,16 thurs-bride!"

¹⁶I.e. 'Avaunt!' Cf. note on the last line of Vsp.

THE FALL OF THE NIFLUNGS¹

Dráp Niflunga

Then Gunnar and Hogni took all the gold which Fáfnir had owned. Feud arose between the Giúkungs and Atli. for he laid Brynhild's death at their door. To atone for it, Guthrún was to be married to him, and they gave her a drink (to blot out what had gone before) ere she would be wedded to Atli. She bore Atli two sons, Erpr and Eitil; but Svanhild was the daughter she had by Sigurth. Atli bade to him as his guests Gunnar and Hogni, and sent to them his man hight Vingi or else Knéfræth. Guthrún had knowledge of his wiles, and sent word to them by runes that they should not come, and as token she sent to Hogni the ring Andvaranaut,2 and fastened within it a wolf's hair. Gunnar had asked the hand of Oddrún, Atli's sister, but Atli said nay to that. Then wedded he Glaumvor, but Hogni's wife was Kostbera. Their sons were hight Sólar, Snævar, and Giúki.³ But when the Giúkungs came to Atli's court, Guthrún begged her sons to have the lives of the Giúkungs spared, but they would not.4 Hogni's heart was cut out of his breast, but Gunnar was thrown into a dungeon with serpents. He struck his harp and put the worms to sleep; but one adder bored into his liver.

¹I.e. the Giúkungs, as possessors of the Niflung hoard.—This awkwardly written prose link (separated by most editors from the following poem) was no doubt meant by the Collector to form a transition to the Atli lays. It has no independent value whatever, its statements being on the face of them, derived from the following lays, especially Am.

²Cf. Reg. Introd. Prose. Volss., chap. 28, relates that Sigurth deprived Brynhild of it in the bridal night and gave it to Guthrún.

³In Am. 28 the first two are mentioned as Hogni's sons.

⁴This statement is at variance with all other tradition. It looks as though a motive was sought to justify Guthrún's murder of her (infant!) children, Akv. 39, Am. 74.

THE SECOND (OR OLD) LAY OF GUTHRUN

Guðrúnarkviða II (hin forna)

In this lay we may recognize the prototype of the various other 'laments' of the Collection. It is unquestionably older than most—or any—of them, as is attested, not only by its title (see *Brot* Concluding Prose), but also by the fact that it contains, in organic connection, the themes from which most of the other lays are derived. Moreover, its legendary form shows an early stage of the development of the Sigurth legend—Brynhild is not mentioned at all, and Gunnar's and Hogni's jealousy of Sigurth is the cause of his death. There are, to be sure, some later elements, too.

The greater age (early Tenth Century?) may also account for the disordered and fragmentary condition of the text. A number of stanzas and the end are missing. In fact, it may fairly be questioned whether the lay as we have it is really of one piece and not, rather, patched together from an imperfect recollection of two or more lays. Certainly, there are remarkable discrepancies which it is hopeless to reconcile. Thus, the elaborate description of the drink of forgetfulness which has no recognizable effect on Guthrún's memory of Sigurth and the misdeeds of her brothers! It is just as futile to expect geographical consistency in the descriptions of Guthrún's wanderings, her journey to Atli's court etc. But making allowances for the poor transmission, there are some vigorous passages and some touching lines, especially in Guthrún's plaint over Sigurth.

The Volsunga saga cites a couple of stanzas in full, and paraphrases the whole rather closely. The first five stanzas are there given as a monologue, the remainder is treated as a narrative. As to the Collector's statement that the lay is Guthrún's plaint addressed to Thióthrek, it may be derived from $Gu\tilde{\sigma}$. III, 4. But in all likelihood the poem was conceived as a monologue.

Thióthrek¹ had been with Atli and had there lost most of his men.² Thióthrek and Guthrún rehearsed their sorrows to one another. She spoke to him and said:

1. "Me, fairest of maids, my mother reared; in bower, happy, my brothers I loved,

¹Historically, Theodoric, the King of the Ostrogoths, who reigned toward the end of the Fifth Century.

²According to the German tradition, as embodied in the *Nibelungen-lied*, he loses them in battle against the Burgundians.

till that Giúki with gold me dowered, with gold me dowered and gave me to Sigurth.

- 2. "Was my Sigurth 'mongst the sons of Giúki like the garlic grown the grass above, or the high-legged hart the hinds among, or glow-red gold amidst grey silver.
- 3. "Then Giúki's sons did grudge me this—
 that my husband was mightier than they;
 nor could they sleep nor sit in judgment,
 before Sigurth was slain by them.
- 4. "Back galloped Grani, his gait I knew, but still Sigurth himself came not; with sweat were wet the saddle-horses, oft made to moil, which the murderers rode.
- 5. "To Grani weeping went I to speak, with tear-wet cheeks tried his tale to gather. His head drooped Grani to the grass adown: his owner knew he on earth no longer.
- 6. "Long I tarried, at a loss in my mind, ere after him I asked the king.
- 7. "His head drooped Gunnar; but Hogni told me of my lord Sigurth's sorrowful death:

 'By the sword slain lies he who slew Gotthorm,4 to the ravens given, beyond the Rhine.5
- 8. "'In Southland seek thou Sigurth's body, there mayst thou hear the hoarse ravens, the cry of eagles, eager for meat, the howls of wolves thy husband about.'

³Conjectural. Similar figures are used Guő. I, 18. and H.H. II, 38.

⁴Cf. Sig. sk. 23.

⁵Literally, 'beyond the flood'.

9. "'Thou art hardy, Hogni, thus hatefully Sigurth's widow this woe to tell: should ravens rive thy ruthless heart, in far-away lands alone shouldst die.'

10. "Answered Hogni only thuswise, grim in his mind, with gloomy words: 'But greater grew, if ravens rived my ruthless heart.'

11. "Then turned I me in the woods to gather I whimpered not, nor wept, either, as I sate sorrowing

from talk away,
what wolves had left;
nor my hands did wring,
as women else,
over Sigurth's corse.

- 12. "Dark night and moonless to me it seemed, as in sorrow I sate over Sigurth's corse.

 (The wolves heard I howling about me, and hungry ravens, hoarsely croaking.)
- 13. "Far better meseemed if my brothers had slain their sister after Sigurth, and had burned me like birchen wood.
- 14. "On the fells fared I five days together, till to Hálf's high-built hall I wended.

 I sate with Thóra seven half-years,
 Hákon's daughter, in Danish lands."
- 15. "In gold she broidered, to gladden me,
 Danish swans and Southern halls;
 kingly war-play the cloths did show,
 our handiwork, and hero's thanes;
 red shields of war eke, ready henchmen,
 helm-clad, sword-girt Hunnish war-host;

⁶Supplied after Bugge's suggestion.

⁶aSigurth's stepfather; cf. Sinf.

⁷In all likelihood the episode is peculiar to the author of this poem.

16. "sea-ward sailing, with golden dragons in the web we weaved Sigar and Siggeir,8 King Sigmund's ships, and graven stems; the wars which fought south by Funen.⁹

- 17. "Then heard Grímhild,10 the Gothic11 queen, that soothed I was somewhat in mind:12 flung down her web and fetched her sons; to ask gan she most eagerly, whether amends make they would not for Sigurth slain and his young son.
- 18. "Was Gunnar ready gold to offer,
 Hogni also, to heal my sorrows.

 Further asked she who to fare was ready,
 to hitch the horse to the wheeled chariot,
 [to sit his horse and the hawk let fly,
 to shoot from yew-bow the shafted arrow.]

 18. "Was Gunnar ready gold to offer,
 who to fare was ready,
 to shoot from yew-bow the shafted arrow.]
- 19. "In then wended, atheling-wise, the folk-warden's thanes;14 were their frieze-coats red, their byrnies short, their helms blazoned, were they girt with swords and swart of hair.

Eke Valdar the Dane, with Iarizleif, Eymóth third, and Iarizkar, which are evidently also out of their context.

⁸The names belong to the Siklings, a royal race of Denmark.

⁹The large Danish island.

¹⁰Guthrún's mother; cf. Grip. 33 and note.

¹¹Here, merely an honorific epithet.

¹²After Zupitza: the text is defective, here.

¹⁸These lines clearly do not belong here. They read as though they originally belonged to Rig. In the Manuscript there follow the lines:

¹⁴These are Atli's (Hunnish) emissaries, come to sue for Guthrún's hand: at least one stanza seems to be missing in which their journey, and Guthrún's return to the court of the Giúkungs, was described.

20. "Would all choose me their choicest gifts, that of many sorrows win me a truce: b

their choicest gifts, and speak cheer to me I might in time but I trusted them not.

- 21. "Gave me Grímhild a goblet to drink, cool and bitter: my cares I forgot; was the mead mixed with the might of the earth, with ice-cold sea, and the sacred boar's blood.
- 22. "Rune-staves full many stood on the horn stained and graven— I guessed them not: a long serpent from the Haddings' land, 16 an uncut ear, the inwards of beasts.
- 23. "Were brewed in this beer many baleful things: all worts of the woods, wilted acorns, soot of the hearth, sacred entrails, a swine's boiled liver: these my sorrow deadened.
- 24. "Then altogether forgot I him,
 my Sigurth, slain by sword in hall:17
 to my knees came then three kings from Hunland,18
 ere Grímhild herself did say to me:

¹⁵Cf. H & v. 137 and Vsp. sk. 10.

¹⁶According to Hynd. 23 they are famous vikings. In the skaldic manner 'the Haddings' land' would be the sea; and 'a long serpent from the Haddings' land', a fish or an eel.—The text allows also of the translation 'the Hadding's land. Now, Saxo Grammaticus tells (book I, 31, Holder) of a King Hadingus who visited the nether world. If he is referred to, the expression would stand tautologically for 'serpent'.

¹⁷The line is difficult.

¹⁸Kings tributary to Atli.

- 25. "'Gold I give thee, Guthrún, to have, the fair folk-lands thy father had, with their hangings eke Hlothvér's¹⁹ castles, and all the wealth the warrior owned;
- 26. "'Hunnish maidens, handicraft-skilled in gold to broider, to gladden thee; alone shalt wield the wealth of Buthli, be with gold endowed, and given to Atli.'

(Guthrún said:)

27. "'Nevermore I wish wedded to be, nor Brynhild's brother's his bed to share; not seeming is it with the son of Buthli to beget children and live in gladness.'

(Grímhild said:)

28. "'Harbor no more hateful counsels, though we have, truly, wrought wicked deeds; thy lot will be lief, as though living still were Sigurth and Sigmund, if sons thou bear him.'

(Guthrún said:)

29. "'Not may I, Grímhild, in gladness live, nor hold out hopes to the Hunnish king since Sigurth's heart-blood the hungry wolves and greedy ravens drank together'.

(Grímhild said:)

30. "'Among heroes he is highest of kin, and foremost found where foes are met.

¹⁹The name corresponds to the Old Frankish *Chlodovech*, German *Ludwig*. The West Franks were neighbors of the Burgundians and are here, possibly, conceived as the vassals of the Giúkungs or of Sigurth ('the warrior').

His wife shalt be till wanes thy life—or no husband have, save him thou takest.'

(Guthrún said:)

- 31. "'No longer lure me, nor lend thy words thus eagerly to that evil kin: on Gunnar will he grimly wreak him, and the heart tear out of Hogni's breast.'
- 32. "Weeping, Grímhild the word did hear which boded ill to both her sons, to her offspring an awful fate:

 'Lands I give thee, and lieges eke, thy own forever, to ease thy heart.'

(Guthrún said:)

- 33. "Then choose I him the chieftains among, by Grímhild driven, against my will; though hardly can I this husband love, nor my brothers' slaughter save my children:
- 34. "'(I shall slay full soon my sons by him—thus grimly avenge the Giúkungs' fall;) 20 nor will I rest ere reft I have the lusty life of the leader-in-war.'21
- 35. "Their steeds forthwith bestrode the thanes; were the Southron women upon wains lifted. For seven days we drove through cold lands, for other seven the salt waves cleft, for still other seven dry steppes we rode.22

²⁰Supplied after Heusler's suggestion.

²¹I.e. Atli. The remainder of the stanza transposed here (with Bugge) from its original position after 31.

²²The stanza describes the journey of Guthrún (and the Giú-kungs?) to the realm of Atli.

- 36. "The castle wardens, ere in we went, undid the bars of the door-way's gate,23
- 37. "Atli waked me;— he weened that I was grim in my mind for kinsmen murdered.

(Atli said:)

38. "'Nightly norns me but now awakened—:'
Was I to make out his evil dream—
'Meseemed, Guthrún, Giúki's daughter,
that with stealthy steel thou didst stab me
through.'24

(Guthrún said:)

39. "'A burning bodes it, if of blades thou dream; if of woman's wrath, wealth and gladness: burn thee25 shall I 'gainst bale and woe, and as leech nurse thee, though loth to me.'

(Atli said:)

- 40. "'Meseemed in my garth two saplings fell, though greatly wished I to let them grow, by the roots uptorn, reddened with blood; which, borne to my bench, thou didst bid me eat.
- 41. "'Meseemed from my hand two hawks did fly, famished for food, to the fateful house; their hearts, meseemed, with honey I ate in sorry mood,— were they swoln with blood.

 $^{^{23}}$ Several stanzas seem to be missing here which must have dealt with her marriage and the fall of the Giúkungs. Volse. affords no help.

 $^{^{24}}$ Cf. Akv. and Am. for the deeds here prognosticated in Atli's dreams.

²⁵Perhaps some cauterization is meant.

"'Meseemed from my hand two whelps were **42**. loosed:

the young yearlings yelped bitterly: their flesh, meseemed, I was made to eat.

though foul become, all unwilling.'

(Guthrún said:)

""Tis that the swains of slaughter speak, 43. and hew off the heads before day-break— for folks to eat.'26

of white-haired cattle: they are fey to fall within few nights' time,—

(Atli said:)27

44. "'Meseemed I lay, nor to sleep listed, upon my bed— I will bear it in mind."

²⁶Cf. Am. 19.—The rendering of the stanza is doubtful.

²⁷It is uncertain who speaks. The following lines have been variously interpreted.

THE THIRD LAY OF GUTHRUN

Guðrúnarkviða III

The legend, fairly current in Germany, of a queen who is falsely accused of adultery, and clears herself by the ordeal is here amalgamated with the Niflung story, showing Guthrún in a rôle which but ill agrees with the generally accepted turn that she slavs Atli immediately after the fall of her brothers. No wonder the lay is not used in the Volsunga saga.

Apparently, the poem is wholly Christian and Medieval in spirit but only apparently: the oath "upon the white and hallowed stone" and the punishment allotted Herkia point in the very opposite direction. We know that the ordeal of boiling water was introduced from Germany into Norway at the beginning of the Eleventh Century, in the reign of Olaf the Saint; but then, in the poem it is still regarded as a new and foreign practice requiring the ministration of a 'Saxon'. Neither do language and versification afford a clue. However, we shall probably not err greatly in suspecting the pleasing little poem to be the work of an Icelander of, say, the late Twelfth Century who cleverly counterfeited the earlier manner.

Herkia¹ was the name of one of Atli's bond-maidens. She had been his leman. She told Atli that she had seen Thiothrek and Guthrún together. This made Atli very downcast. Then said Guthrún:

"What is it, Atli, 1. Art sad in mind? 'Twould seem better

that aileth thee? Why smil'st thou never? to barons in hall if thou spak'st to men and on me didst look."

Atli said:

"I grieve, Guthrún, Giúki's daughter, 2. o'er what in hall Herkia told me: that thou with Thióthrek. Thióthmar's son, hast lain in love 'neath linen cover."

¹Historically, Kreka. In the Nibelungenlied, Helche is the name of Atli's first wife.

²Historically, Theodemer, who actually was in Attila's service.

Guthrún said:

- 3. "I swear to thee all sacred oaths upon the white and hallowed stone: that we twain never and nowise did what for maid and man is unmeet to do.
- 4. "I never kissed the Gothic king, the noble warrior, one time even:
 for other was our welcome then,
 when full of sorrow we sate together.
- 5. "Thanes full thirty followed Thióthrek hither: none after liveth of all these men.

 Of my brethren didst rob me, the byrnie-clad men, didst rob me of all my next of kin.
- 6. "Gone is Gunnar, nor greet I Hogni—
 I will see no more my sweet brethren twain; with his sword would Hogni this slur avenge,—
 now myself I must of this sin clear me.
- 7. "Send for Saxi," the Southron lord, for he can bless the boiling kettle."—
 In hall foregathered when Atli's queen to the kettle went.
- 8. To the bottom plunged she her bright forearm, and out she fetched the flashing gems: "Behold, ye heroes, upheld my honor by holy award, though the water boil."

³Probably, a phallic symbol; cf. the similar oath in H.H. II, 30.

⁴According to Sievers' emendation.

⁵Cf. Guð. II, Introd. Prose.

⁶Conjectural.

^{7&#}x27;The Saxon' i.e. 'German'.

9. Laughed the Hunnish king's heart in his breast, when whole he saw the hands of Guthrún.

"Let Herkia come to the kettle now, she who to Guthrún this grudge did bear."

10. No sadder sight was seen ever than when Herkia's hands were wholly burnt.

To stinking moor was the maid then ta'en.—

Thus was Guthrún all guiltless seen.

⁸This is the Old Germanic mode of capital punishment for women

THE PLAINT OF ODDRUN

Oddrúnargrátr

Oddrún's love for Atli, a specifically Northern development of the Niflung legend, hinted at also in the 'Short Lay of Sigurth', is here elaborated into a whole poem—perhaps the most elegiac of the whole Collection, as it is probably one of the youngest. It was not known to the compiler of the Volsunga saga. The very beginning as well as the whole feel of the lay attest its late origin: the many archaising turns and allusions¹² occurring are due to the conscious effort of an Icelandic poet of the late Twelfth Century to imitate the earlier manner. It will be noted, in this connection, that Gunnar's and Hogni's death at Atli's hands is here motivated by the enmity aroused by Gunnar's relations with Oddrún—an unauthentic perversion of the legend. Esthetically, too, the poem is inferior. It is full of inconsistencies and irrelevancies, to the problematic condition of the text, as in the preceding poems, but rather to the mediocrity of the poet.

Heithrek¹ was the name of a king, and his daughter was hight Borgný.¹ Vilmund¹ was the name of her lover. She could not give birth to her children ere that Oddrún, Atli's sister, came to her help. Oddrún² had been the leman of Gunnar, the son of Giúki. Of these matters dealeth this lay.

1. I have heard it told how that came a maid not any one could, lend a helping hand in tales of yore to Mornaland;³ the earth above, to Heithrek's daughter.

^{1a}As e.g. the invocation of Frigg and Freya, 8. Note on the other hand Oddrún's general (Christian) altruism.

^{1b}As e.g. the purposeless bringing in of the fates of Sigurth and Brynhild.

¹These personages seem to be the poet's own invention. Heithrek is conceived as the king of one of Atli's domains, cf. 4, 2.

²Cf. Sig. sk. 56 and Dráp.

³Unknown elsewhere.

Then heard Oddrún, Atli's sister, 2. and saddle laid

that this maid lay in throes full long; the bitted steed from stall she drew, on the swart-hued horse.

3. The even earth-ways till the high-built hall and swung the saddle from slender steed. These words then first fell from her lips:

she eagerly rode of Heithrek she saw,

4.

"I fain would find if befallen hath evil. as I have heard, in Hunnish lands?"

The handmaid said:

"Here lieth Borgný by labor o'ercome, thy friend, Oddrún,— fly to her help!"

Oddrún said:

"Who did this harm to Heithrek's daughter, 5.

and brought Borgný to the brink of death"?

The handmaid said:

"Vilmund is hight a hero proud: Ifor five winters,

under warm cover he kept the maid,5 so her father knew not.]"6

- Nor more spoke they, the mournful ones; 6. nigh her, Oddrún did kneel to help: stern spells she spake. for womb-bound woman
 - strong spells she spake. witchcraft mighty.7
- 7.

Two bonny babes were born to the world, son and daughter, to the slayer of Hogni;8

⁴Cf. note 1, above.

⁵Euphemistically.

⁶Probably an interpolation.

⁷Cf. the spells referred to Fáf. 12 and Sigrdr. 10.

⁸The lay stands alone in stating Hogni to have been slain by Vilmund.

then said the maid sick unto death. nor any word she ere that spoke:

"May hallowed wights 8. Frigg and Freya,9 and full many gods. as off thou wardedst evil from me

bring help to thee. (and hastened hither help to bring me)".10

Oddrún said:

9. "Not hastened I hither help to bring thee, as though worthy ever thou wert of it: an oath I swore, and ever kept, that the ailing all 'gainst ill I would guard."

Borgný said:

10. "Bereft of reason and raving art, since spiteful words thou speakest to me; yet faithfully I followed thee, as though born we had been to brothers twain."

Oddrún said:

- 11. "Not unmindful am I how meanly thou spok'st when to Gunnar I gave the evening goblet,11 saying: such shame never should be known of any maid, but of me only."
- 12. Then sate her down the sorrowful queen, 12 to tell her tale of trials great:

⁹Frigg (Cf. prym. 3), the goddess of marital love, and wife of Othin, whose aid was invoked at births; sometimes confused with Freya (cf. Vsp. 26), the goddess of love and the sister of Frey.

¹⁰Added by the translator.

¹¹Probably to be understood as an euphemism.

¹²Oddrún.

- in hall I was born. 13. To high heroes Mv life I led beloved of most whilst lived my father—13 fair was my lot—; but I fatherless drooped when five winters.
- 14. "These words then spake the weary king when last in life his lips he oped: that gifted, and garbed in golden weeds I be given in Southland to Grimhild's son. 14
- "But to Brynhild he the helmet gave: **15**. she should, said he, a shield-maid be. 'No better maiden was born in the world to be a queen,' he quoth, 'while she lives.'15
- "In her bower Brynhild gold braids did 16. weave. as lady lorded it o'er land and folk; the earth quivered, and all the sky. when Fáfnir's slaver¹⁶

first saw her hall.

- "Then Sigurth's sword **17**. did smite amain, broke the stronghold which Brynhild nor long it lasted, but little while,¹⁷ which Brynhild owned: till of all wiles she aware did grow.
- "Revenge full hard 18. vowed she therefor, and took felly, as we found ourselves: to farthest folklands will fly the tale how at Sigurth's side she slew herself. 18

¹³Buthli.

¹⁴Gunnar is meant.

¹⁵Buthli wishes Brynhild to become a 'shield-maiden', i.e. a valkyrie, rather than to marry.

¹⁶Sigurth,—who approaches her bower (here apparently conceived as a fortress) with the Giúkungs to lay siege to it. Cf. Sig. sk. 38 and note.

¹⁷It was not until her return as Gunnar's wife that she became aware of the deception. Cf. ibid. 39.

¹⁸The theme of Brot. and Sig. sk.

1

19. "To Gunnar then gladly to the breaker-of-rings, 19 to Atli they20 offered of bright gold rings,

I gave my love, as Brynhild did not; untold riches to my brother dear.²¹

20. "Bade he fondly for me fifteen manors and Grani's burden,²² if gold he wished; but Atli spurned to bespeak ever a dowry gift from Giúkung's kinsmen.

21. "Yet could we not overce to the goldring-giver²³ I

Then muttered among them and spoke they had spied

overcome our love;
I gave myself.
them many kinsmen,
spied us together.

22. "Still Atli thought all stainless stayed, yet should no one or believe another, that I forsooth nor stooped to ill; be sure of this, if love's at stake.

- 23. "Sped Atli forth his spies full soon through Myrkvith's²⁴ fastness, to find me out: they came indeed where come they should not, 'neath linen where we lay together.
- 24. "With red rings we lest they Atli told but home in haste

richly tried them, ought of our love; they hied them back,

¹⁹Kenning for 'prince': Gunnar.

²⁰The Giúkungs.

²¹As weregild for Brynhild, to appease her brother Atli.

²²I.e. the Niflung treasure.

²³Kenning for 'prince': Gunnar. Uddrún has evidently been staying at the court of the Giúkungs.

²⁴ The Dark Forest', which is here supposed to separate the realm of the Burgundians from Atli's kingdom. Cf. Akv. 3, 5, 13.

and in evil hour they Atli told; but hidden wholly from her²⁵ kept it who all of it ought to have known.

- ²⁶"Then the hoofs of horses we heard full loud 25. when Giúki's sons in the garth did ride; then Hogni's heart the Huns cut out, in dungeon laid him who was dear to who was dear to me.27
- "His harp then struck the hapless king **26**. (with the toes of his feet that far it rang).28 Thought the high-born king that I quickly would hasten to help if I heard this song.

"Gone was I then to Geirmund's²⁹ court, **27**. the beer to brew for a banquet there; his harp I heard from Hlés-isle far. how the strings he struck, bested full sore.

"I bade my handmaids to hold them ready: 28. the lord's dear life I longed to ward; full swiftly sailed the sound over, till I beheld the halls of Atli.

29. "Then out did crawl Atli's mother, the evil wretch— may she rot foully!30

Into Gunnar's heart she hewed her teeth that I might not save the matchless king.

²⁵That is, from Guthrún who meanwhile has married Atli: if she had known of this relation she would have had an (additional?) reason to warn her brother not to come when Atli invited the Giúkungs to his court.

²⁶We gather that Oddrún has been called back by Atli.

²⁸Supplied after Am. 62.

²⁹Unknown elsewhere. We are told below that his castle is on the Danish island of Hlésev.

³⁰ The poet seems to forget here that Atli's mother is her own also. This motif is not found elsewhere.

- 30. "I often wonder, woman gold-dight, why alone longer I live on earth, when dead the doughty whom more I loved than my own self.
- 31. "Thou sat'st listening as I laid before thee manyfold woe, both mine and theirs; thus live we all as liketh us—32 sad Oddrún's plaint is ended`now."

³¹ Kenning for 'prince': Gunnar.

³²That is, we obey the dictates of love (as Borgný, too, had done).

THE [GREENLANDISH] LAY OF ATLI

Atlakviða [hin grænlenzka]

It so happens that in Old Norse poetry the grand theme of the Fall of the Niflungs is preserved only in two lays which are curiously parallel in respect of their theme and outer form; but differ decisively in conception and style. Without a doubt the shorter $Atlakvi\delta a$ is both more authentic than the $Atlam \delta l$ and esthetically by all means superior— in fact, one of the best in the Collection.—Unfortunately its text is one of the worst preserved, presenting many problems in higher and lower criticism. There is, indeed, a strong likelihood that the lay as we now have it is composed of parts of two (or more) poems. For one thing, it is difficult to account satisfactorily for some ten indispensable and excellent scattered fornyrðislag stanzas which differ markedly in style from the remaining málaháttr stanzas. Again, there are grievous lacunæ and many obscure, because corrupt, passages.

It is nevertheless evident that we are dealing here with a poet of no mean power—one, in fact, who has an uncommon epic-dramatic gift. He commands a rich and ornate diction all his own, and he accomplishes with truly epic breadth the ineluctable fate of the lordly Niflungs. The main characters are brought out with astonishingly few strokes—by deeds, not by words—; yet they are unforgettable individuals: Hogni, fearless unto death; Gunnar, gallant and constant; Guthrún, implacable, 'demonic'.

With regard to the legendary form it is noteworthy that, in both lays, Atli's avaricious longing to obtain the Niflung gold is the reason for the invitation—not Guthrún's desire for revenge (as in the Nibelungenlied and the other Eddic Lays). On the contrary, she is consistently solicitous about the welfare of her brothers. It is this circumstance which has suggested the thought that the Atli Lays may preserve the very oldest form of the legend, and that connection with the Sigurth motif was effected only later.

Scholars are satisfied that $Atlakvi\eth a$ and $Atlam \rlap/el$ are independent treatments of the legend. Of the two, $Atlakvi\eth a$ is generally considered the older (Tenth Century?): the stark Heathen tone, details of legendary form, style, its poor state of preservation, all point in that direction. With reference to the lay being called the 'Greenlandish' Lay of Atli (in the Codex) it seems likely that the Collector mistakenly borrowed from $Atlam \rlap/el$ whose title is rendered fairly certain, not only by the old superscription and the immediately preceding Prose, but also from internal evidence. But whether Iceland or Norway is the place of origin, that is another matter.

In the Volsunga saga (chaps. 33-38) the compiler may be seen clinging generally to the more detailed narrative of the $Atlam \ell l$, but supplementing it occasionally with passages from $Atlakvi\delta a$. Cf. also $Dr\acute{a}p$.

Guthrún, Giúki's daughter, avenged her brothers, as has become widely known. She first slew Atli's sons, then she slew Atli himself and burned his hall, and all his house-carles in it. Of these matters this song telleth.

- 1. Of yore sent Atli on errand to Gunnar a cunning king's-man— Knéfræth was he hight; to Giúki's court came he, and to Gunnar's beer-hall, to the benches hearth-girding, to the beer of welcome.
- 2. The doughty ones drank, their dark thoughts hiding, in the hall of Gunnar, fearing Hunnish wrath. Called out then Knéfræth with cold-hearted words—was he sent from Southland—as he sate on high-seat:
- 3. "Atli hath sent me his errand to ride, on charger bit-champing, through cheerless Myrkvith,3 to bid you, Gunnar, that to his benches ye come, with helmets ring-dight,4 to the halls of Atli.

¹Before the introduction, in the Middle Ages, of the hearth properly speaking, the fireplaces were on the ground, in the middle of the hall, flanked by rows of benches on the longer sides. In the North, the 'high-seats' were located in the middle of these, one occupied by the host, the one opposite, by the most honored guest. The benches (and walls) were hung with arms.

²The Giúkungs.

³The 'Dark Forest', conceived as lying between Gunnar's and Atli's dominions, cf. 5.

⁴Conjectural. Helmets of Old Germanic times were ornamented with bands of plaited rings.

- 4. "Shields may ye choose there, and shafts of ash-tree, eke helmets gold-burnished and blades full many, silver-gilt saddle-cloths and sarks gory-red, darts and battle-spears and bit-champing steeds.
- 5. "He will give you the whole of wide Gnitaheath's field, will give shrilling shafts and ship-prows gilded—
 much that is hoarded and hidden, eke the halls of Danp, and the mighty forest which is Myrkvith hight."
- 6. His head turned Gunnar, and to Hogni said:

 "What sayest thou, young hero, when of such
 we hear?

 Red gold I ween not on Gnita-heath hidden
 but we two do own of it even as much.
- 7. "Seven lofts have we, with swords filled each one, whose hilts are made of heavy gold; my steed I ween swiftest, and my sword sharpest, my bows bench-seemly, my byrnies all golden; and my helmet ring-dight, from the hall of Kíar, to me liefer is than thy liege's hoard."

⁵Cf. Gríp. 11.

⁶Cf. Ríg. 49.

⁷Possibly identical with the King Kíar mentioned in the Introd. Prose of Vol.

Hogni said:

- 8. "What swayed our sister to send us a ring all wound with wolf's hair? Some warning it meaneth: the heath-dweller's hair was hidden in the ring: wolfish would be our way to the Huns."
- 9. Neither whetted nor letted the lordly kinsmen, nor did faithful friends further the emprise; quoth then Gunnar as a king befitteth, and a mighty warrior, in his mead-hall sitting:
- 10. "Arise now, Fiornir!" Thou shalt fill with mead, and hand to the heroes, the horns all-golden.

 (Let us wine drink unwincing, for well may it be that in this world ne'ermore ye thanes sit together.) 10 gether.)
- 11. "The Niflung gold-hoard old grey-coated wolves may grasp greedily, once Gunnar is fallen, and black-skinned bears, biting with foxteeth, to dog-packs give game if Gunnar return not."
- 12. The lord of the land was led by weeping, faithful kinsmen from the court within.

 $^{^8}$ Cf. $Dr\acute{a}p$ and Am. for a similar warning attempted by Guthrún.— One or more stanzas must have dropped out here in which Gunnar's sudden change of mind was motivated.

⁹Gunnar's cup-bearer.

¹⁰Supplied after the corresponding passage in Volss.

¹¹The translation of this stanza is largely conjectural—the compiler of *Volss*. did not understand it any better! The meaning seems to be that, for aught he cares, the beasts of the wild may run through the halls, should the Giúkungs perish.

Said then the last-born "May no ill befall you

son of Hogni:¹²
wherever you may
fare!"

13. Through the hills the heroes the chargers bit-champing, shook the Hunnish heath their steeds lash-fearing

in haste did spur through cheerless Myrkvith; where they haughtily rode, on green fields did trample.

- 14. Atli's halls they beheld then, the high-builded towers;—
 on the bastions above stood Buthli's warriors;
 was the Southron's hall with seats engirded, with long rows linked of white linden shields.
- 15. Within did Atli (and his earls) 14 drink wine; without, his watchmen on the walls did sit, to warn him if Gunnar with war-shield drew nigh, with shrilling spear-shafts and unsheathed swords.
- 16. Their sister first saw them

 both her dear brothers,—

 "Betrayed art, kinsman;

 against the Huns hold thee?

 as the seats they

 neared,

 little beer had she

 drunk—:

 for how couldst

 thou, Gunnar,

 From the hall

 flee quickly!

 $^{^{12}}$ Cf. $Dr\acute{a}p$. In Am. 28, 49 Hogni's two sons accompany them to Atli's realm.

¹³Following Bugge: Buthli is Atli's father.

¹⁴A gap in the Manuscript is here supplied, following Bugge's suggestion.

17. "Better were it, brother, and ring-covered helmet, and in the saddle sat'st all the sun-hot day, (and the ravens didst feed are thou rodest against all the sun-hot day, on reddened battle-field,) 15

- 18. "and the women madest weep their war-dead heroes, and Hunnish shield-maidens to shame didst put,16 but Atli himself amongst the adders didst throw; now that loathly life-end your lot will be."
- 19. (Then gainsaid Gunnar, the goldring-breaker:) 17

 "Too late now, sister, to summon the Niflungs:
 'twould take long to look for our liege-men doughty,
 for the brave ones and bold ones from the banks of the Rhine."
- 20. ¹⁸They held Gunnar fast, and in fetters laid him, the brave one from Burgundy, and bound him firmly.
- 21. Seven Hogni slew with sword sharp-cutting, the eighth he flung into the fire of the hearth:

¹⁵Supplied after Grundtvig.

¹⁶Doubtful.

¹⁷These lines are transposed here from their original position before 25, following Grundtvig.—The Niflungs rode with only few followers.

¹⁸It would seem that some stanzas are lacking here which described the battle and the slaughter of all the Burgundians except Gunnar and Hogni.

so shall stout-hearted thane stem the foes' tide, as 'gainst Hunnish hosts Hogni shielded Gunnar.

- 22. They asked the liege if his life he would, the Gothic¹⁹ king, with his gold-hoard buy.
- 23. (Then gainsaid Gunnar, the goldring-breaker:) 20

 "First shall Hogni's heart in my hand be laid, from the bold one's breast all bloody cut, from the son of Giúki, with sword sharp-gashing."
- 24. (Beguile they would when a gibbering thrall they thrust down and slaughtered:)²¹

 The heart they hewed out of Hialli's²² breast, on a board laid it, and brought it to Gunnar.

Gunnar said:

- 25. "Now behold I the heart of Hialli, the thrall, unlike the heart of Hogni the fearless, since much it beats on the board as it lies: but e'en more it beat in his breast as it lay."
- 26. Then laughed Hogni, to the heart as they cut the whittler-of-shields, for whine he would never.

 (Took the hard one's heart then the Hunnish warriors),23
 on a board laid it and brought it to Gunnar.

¹⁹Only honorific, here.

²⁰Supplied as in 19.

²¹Supplied, after Grundtvig's suggestion; cf. Am. 57f.

²²A typical thrall's name.

²⁸Scil. alive. The evident gap supplied after Volss., chap. 37.

Gunnar said:

- 27. "Now behold I the heart of Hogni the fearless, unlike the heart of Hialli, the thrall, since little it beats on the board as it lies; but even less it beat in his breast as it lay.
- 28. "As little, Atli, will eyes behold thee as our hoard in thy hands thou wilt hold ever.24
- 29. "To no one but me is known where lieth the hoard of the Niflungs, now Hogni lives not.

 Mistrust had I ever whilst we two did live:

Mistrust had I ever whilst we two did live: now alone I live I no longer fear.²⁵

- 30. "Let the Rhine rather the red gold hide, the fast-flowing flood, let the rings rather than shine on the hands the red gold hide, evil Fáfnir's hoard; under rolling waves shine of Hunnish maidens."
- 31. (Called then Atli, the king of the Huns:) 26

 "Let the wheel-wain fetch now fettered Gunnar."

 To his death27 then drew the doomed hoardwarder, the bold brand-wielder, a bit-shaking steed.28
- 32. Rode Atli Glaum, his goodly charger, hedged round by shields and shining swords;

²⁴Both lines are doubtful.

²⁵Viz. that the secret of the treasure might be betrayed by some one.

²⁶Supplied after Grundtvig.

 $^{^{27}}$ I.e. to the place of execution? Am. 54, Atli has Gunnar first hanged on the gallows, then cast into the snake-den.

²⁸In the original, the last two lines follow after 33. They are transposed here, following Bugge.

but white-armed Guthrún, sprung from gods on high, her tears withheld as in hall she came.²⁹

Guthrún said:

- 33. "May it go with thee, Atli, as to Gunnar thou swarest with holiest oaths,30 oft and anon, by the southward sun by his outer bed-post32 and eke by Ull's33 mereship."34
- 34. Living they laid into loathly dungeon, alive with adders, the lordly Niflung; but Gunnar, unyielding, grim in his mind, with his hands did strike the harp all golden; the strings rang out strongly. With stout heart thus should high-born hero hold to his own.
- 35. His horse Atli spurred, to his halls returning, the earth-stamping steed, to the stall from murther.

 In the court-yard was din of capering chargers, eke of clash of weapons, from the woods as they came.

²⁹The translation of the entire stanza is doubtful. So much seems clear that the following speech is Guthrún's monologue, spoken when she descends into the hall where the fight had raged.

³⁰ Scil.: as it should go with him if he violated these oaths.

³¹ Othin; cf. the similar oath H.H. II, 30.

³² Conjectural.

³³Cr. *Grímn*. 5.

³⁴ After Egilsson's conjecture.

 $^{^{35}}$ According to the paraphrase of the Volse, chap. 37, it was Guthrún who conveyed the harp to him. Cf. also Od. 26f.

- 36. Out went then Guthrún forth to Atli the king, with golden goblet to greet the folk-warder: "Thou art welcome to have in thy hall, my lord, most gladly Guthrún's young game to eat." 36
- 37. Atli's gold-cups did clink wine-filled, when the Hunnish heroes in the hall foregathered; long-bearded henchmen bench-ward in strode: (those who in Myrkheim had murthered Gunnar).37
- 38. Forth bore then the beer (who had born him sons, the daughter of Niflungs,) 38 bedight with gold-rings; grudging she brought to the Buthlung 39 his meat, and unwilling; then wildly spoke these words of hate:
- 39. "Now hast thou, sword-giver, of thy sons twain eaten the blood-dripping hearts, with honey seasoned; hast swallowed the meat of slaughtered kinsmen, which at thy behest from the high-seat was sent.

³⁶She expresses herself ambiguously on purpose—she has slaughtered her 'cubs'.

³⁷Transferred here (with Grundtvig) from its original position in 45.—Myrkheim 'the Dark Abode' is possibly identical with the Myrkvith above.

³⁸ Supplied freely by the Translator.

³⁹I.e. Atli, the son of Buthli.

40. "Wilt thou nevermore now to thy knees call the twain,

Erp and Eitil, 10 when ale hath cheered thee, nor see them sitting on settles in hall,

gold-rings dispending and spear-shafts smoothing." 141

41. Rose uproar on benches, wept Hunnish warriors, but one wept not—Guthrún, her bear-hearted brothers, so young and so guileless,

men's angry shouts, there was wailing 'neath hangings;⁴² who wept not ever nor her boys so dear, begot with Atli.

- 42. Sowed then gold-snares the swan-white lady, and with ruddy rings enriched the house-carles; to fulfill their fate⁴³ she flung out treasure, nor recked ought the woman to rob the coffers.
- 43. Unwary was Atli, his wits were befuddled, had not with him his weapons, nor bewared of Guthrún.

 Erstwhile the athelings more ease did have, the time king and queen fondly clasped in hall.
- 44. To their bridal bed she gave blood⁴⁴ to drink with murtherous hands, and the hounds she loosed:⁴⁵

^{40&#}x27;The Dark-Brown' and 'the Gnarled One' (?).

⁴¹Which are the occupations of the nobly born, cf. Rig. 27ff.

⁴²Rich cloths and tapestries were hung on the walls.

⁴³She bribes them to maintain silence and to lull their suspicions about her further designs. We may also think of a sleep potion given them.

⁴⁴Viz. Atli's blood.

⁴⁵They are loosed, and the house-carles wakened, so that they may not perish in the flames.

into hall hurled she— the house-carles were waked—burning fire-brands,— thus her brothers avenged.

- 45. To the fire she gave all who within did sleep. Flaming fell then the far-famed temples, 46 the Buthlungs' beer-hall; burned eke the shield-maids, bereft of their life, in the roaring flames.
- 46. This tale is ended; nor will ever more thus byrnie-clad woman her brothers avenge; to death she did dear folk-lords three,⁴⁷ the swan-white lady, ere herself she died.

Yet more fully is spoken (of this) in the Greenlandish Lay of Atli.

⁴⁶In the sense of 'treasure-houses' (?).

⁴⁷I.e. Atli and his sons.

THE GREENLANDISH LAY OF ATLI

Atlamél hin grænlenzku

In a number of ways the poem under consideration answers to the designation of the 'Greenlandish Lay of Atli' given it in the Codex Regius. It has proved hazardous to infer the home of an Eddic poem from the mention of certain plants or animals in it, or from supposed allusions to local conditions. Yet here, for once, we seem to have firm ground under our feet. We may be reasonably sure that Kostbera's dream of an white (Polar) bear, and its interpretation by Hogni as a fierce eastern gale, point to a far Northern home, the Greenland settlements established by Norwegians and Icelanders in the Eleventh Century. Again, the conditions as described in the lay are small, even mean. The innumerable hordes of Atli have here shrunk to thirty henchmen, and 'King' Gunnar disposes over only ten house-carles.—Still further, the general tone corresponds. The splendid heroes have become small farmers. In the course of their scolding match. Guthrún reproaches Atli for never having held his own at the thing; whereas he reminds her that their barns always were well-stocked and there had been plenty of good things etc. The boorish buffoonery with Hialli-good of its kindtakes up a disproportionate amount of space and breaks into the tragedy of the heroes' death. Over the whole there hangs a grey pall of Northern gloom which we may well believe was the mental atmosphere of those ill-fated settlements.—Even the language is provincial, commonplace, prosaic; and the invariable, painfully regular feminine ending of the half-lines suggests that the author slavishly adhered to a model which, in the hands of the Atlakviãa poet, shows itself not unadapted to a certain stateliness. Hence, we shall not go far wrong in assigning the Atlam & to an Eleventh Century Greenlandish poet.

This again tallies well with the half-Christian, half-Heathen expressions toward the end, and also with the numerous indications that in legendary form it is decidedly younger than the *Atlakviða* which, however, was hardly known to the author.

It would serve no useful purpose to point out in detail the short-comings of the $Atlam \ell l$ —its repetitiousness, its lachrymose tone, its lack of breeding, its general air of 'a sad tale done into song'—conditioned, we may surmise, by the depressing mental atmosphere in which it originated. For all that, the lay has its own peculiar place in Old Norse literature precisely in thus affording a valuable foil and contrast to the $Atlakvi\delta a$.

- 1. Heard have full many how that men had gathered for counsel together— of which gain had the fewest: how that wiles they weaved then of which woe came, only, to them and the Giúkungs who beguiled were by them.
- 2. The folkwarders' fate grew:

 the heroes.

 Unwise was Atli, his insight failed him:

 threw his strong stays down,

 brought him:

 sent them word swiftly to seek him nor tarry.
- 3. Wise was the lady, full well understood she what in stealth they whispered; a hardship she held it: would fain help give them: on sea went they sailing, but herself not with them.3
- 4. Runes had she graven, had ravelled them Vingi—
 on their bane bent was he—
 ere to the brothers he gave them;
 to the Firth of Lim fared, then, afar whom
 Atli
 had sent to the Giúkungs, Guthrún's stout
 kinsmen.

¹I.e. approached its fulfilment.

²That is, by bringing about the death of his kinsmen by marriage, who might otherwise have been 'pillars of his might'.

³Guthrún overhears the plottings of Atli and is anxious to warn them, but is not allowed to go personally with the messengers.

⁴In the sense of 'confused'.

⁵An arm of the sea, the Lim Firth (North Jutland) is supposed to separate the domains of Atli and the Giúkungs.

- 5. Fires they lit for them, and as friends welcomed from afar who had ridden, nor of falsehood bethought them; the great king's gifts took they which the guests awarded, hung them up on the wall-posts,6 nor aught mistrusted.
 - 6. Came then Kostbera, who the queen was of Hogni, a woman warm-hearted, and welcomed the strangers; glad was eke Glaumvor, King Gunnar's housefulfilled what was fitting to refresh guests weary.
 - 7. They bade home to them Hogni, if with him they fared, rather: nor was hidden the falsehood, if heed they had given.

 His word gave Gunnar if with him fared Hogni, and fain was Hogni to follow his brother.
 - 8. Bore mead the fair maidens, of meat was there plenty, many full horns were handed, till his fill had every one.

⁶Cf. Akv. 1, note.

^{7&#}x27;The Stewardess'; like Glaumvor 'the Cheerful', doubtless the poet's invention.

⁸The meaning seems to be: the messengers invite the Giúkungs to follow Hogni as their leader, so as to inspire them with confidence.

(Then up rose the sea-kings and to sleep betook them,) husband and wife eke, as the wise ones held seemly.

- 9. Clever was Kostbera, had cunning of runesigns;
 she conned o'er the letters¹0 by the light of
 the fire;
 tied was her tongue, though, when she tried
 to read them:
 so muddled were they she could make them
 out nowise.
- 10. To bed went both then, (but little slumbered nor hid she from Hogni what she had been dreaming, but said to the sea-king so soon as she wakened:
- 11. "From hence would'st, Hogni, but heed thou my counsel:—
 but few are rune-wise— fare thou some other time!

 The rune-signs I have guessed now, graven by thy sister:
 has the white-browed one not bidden thee to her.
- 12. "At one thing I wonder, nor can well make out: why ravelled the runes are which were written by Guthrún;

⁹Supplied after Bugge's suggestion.

¹⁰Graven on one of Atli's presents, or else on a separate rune-stave.

¹¹The shorter form Bera, for Kostbera, occurs twice in the poem.

¹²Supplied, following Grundtvig's suggestion.

for so seemed to me their secret meaning that your bane it would be if Atli's bidding ye follow: one rune she wanteth, or 'tis the work of another." another."

Hogni said:

13. "Idle fears have women, which are far from my thinking; bad deeds I reck not till back we must pay them."

The good king will give us many glow-red arm-rings, no dread had I ever, dire things though boded."

Kostbera said:

- 14. "Will be ill the ending if ye are eager thitherward:

 a friendly welcome awaits you not this time.

 Hear my dreams, Hogni, some ill will befall you, I fear me greatly.
- 15. "Thy bed-clothes saw I burning in fire, the high flames whelming through our hall swept roaring."

Hogni said:

"Linens may lie here which little thou prizest—
they will burn suddenly, as my bed-clothes
seemed."14a

¹⁸That is, the deletion.

¹⁴I.e. until, or unless, they are committed.

^{14a}In the original, this is the only half-line ending on an accented syllable.

Kostbera said:

16. "A bear saw I coming, he broke up the planking and shook his paws at us, so that shelter we sought from him; with his muzzle he caught many, but our might had left us: there was trampling 'neath rafters, truly not little."

Hogni said:

17. "There'll be wild weather, with wind-storms dreadful: the white bear thou sawest eastern blasts betokens."

Kostbera said:

18. "An eagle beheld I through our hall flying—
great battles that bodeth— which with blood
us sprinkled
(from his gory pinions, ere out of gable-end
flying):16
in evil seeming like Atli looked he."

Hogni said:

19. "Full soon we shall slaughter, and shall see much blood, then: often for oxen of eagles one dreameth."

No harm means us Atli, whate'er thou dreamest."

Then more they said not nor their mouths again opened.

¹⁵Viz. of those trying to escape.

¹⁶Freely supplied by the translator.

¹⁷Cf. Atli's dream, Gub. II, 43.

20. Awoke the well-born ones, 18 were their words of like things: aghast was Glaumvor with grievous dreamsights, but gainsaid her Gunnar with more goodly meaning. 19

Glaumvor said:

- 21. "A gallows saw I threat'ning, for thee to hang on, and worms thee becrawling,20 unwounded otherwise—came the doom of all godheads: what deemst thou it meaneth?21
- 22. "A bloody sword saw I out of thy sark taken—
 for a husband's hearing unhappy dreams
 these.

 A spear eke thought I thrust through thy
 middle,
 with hungry wolves howling at haft and
 spear-head."

Gunnar said:

23. "Small dogs will be running with din and barking; oft the hounds' baying bodes whistling of spear-shafts."

¹⁸Gunnar and his wife Glaumvor.

¹⁹The rendering of the last two lines is doubtful on account of an evident lacuna in the text.

²⁰The rendering is doubtful.

 $^{^{21}}$ As neither this dream nor its interpretation are mentioned in Volss, we may conclude that a stanza was lacking even then.

Glaumvor said:

24. "A stream beheld I through our hall flowing, the roaring river rushed 'gainst our benches, breaking the legs of you brothers, Gunnar: naught spared the waters. That forewarneth evil!"

Gunnar said:

("Acres waving ween I what water thou thoughtest, our feet oft stumble as o'er the fields we wander.") 22

Glaumvor said:

25. "Methought in the darkness came dead women hitherward, clad in weeds of mourning, and wished to fetch thee, beckoned and bade thee to their benches forthwith:

I fear that the goddesses have given thee over."23

Gunnar said:

26. "Too late is't to stay us:

(I dread me hereafter that dire will our fate

be):24

our fate we may flee not,25 we shall fare on

the morrow,

though likely it seemeth that our life be a

short one."

²²Supplied following Bugge, after the paraphrase *Volss*. chap. 35. ²³They seem to be the dísar (Cf. *Reg*. 24, note) beckoning to Hel him who is 'fey'.

²⁴Supplied after Grundtvig's suggestion.

²⁵The rendering is doubtful.

- 27. When the dawn lighted heaven the heroes were ready on their way to be wending; but with warnings some held them. Five, all told, fared they, though fewer by half this than they had house-carles: 'twas hot-brained and thoughtless.
- 28. Snævar and Sólar,26 sons they of Hogni; was eke one hight Orkning who to Atli them followed, Kostbera's brother,— blithe was the shield-tree.27 Fair-dight fared with them to where the firth them parted, the women ay warning, but they would not heed them.
- 29. Spake Glaumvor these words then, who was Gunnar's house-wife, to Vingi spake she as well it seemed to her: "Reward ye fittingly the feastings we gave you: were a foul shame your coming if befalls us ill from it."
- 30. Answered her Vingi, nor wavered in speaking:

 "May the etins take him28 in ought who betrays you, and the gallows his body who his faith breaketh."

²⁶Cf. Dráp.

²⁷Kenning for 'warrior'.

²⁸Note the ambiguity in his using the third person.

- 31. Spake Bera these words then, blithe in her heart she:

 "May ye sail safely and snatch victory;29 godspeed I wish you, let no wight gainsay it!"
- 32. Hogni made answer, his own kin loved he:

 "Be of good cheer, ladies, whate'er guile befall us;
 a kind fate bespeak many, yet miss it oft greatly:
 the wishes that go with him many a wight avail little."
- 33. They looked at their lief ones and lingered ere parting, their weirds awaited them as their ways led asunder.
- 34. Amain they gan row, then, to rift the keel almost, on the oars bent them backward wrathfully; the oar-thongs they sundered, the tholes they shattered, their flood-horse³⁰ they fastened not when from it they wended.³¹
- 35. Nor long it lasted— I lag not in telling—
 ere they saw the buildings which Buthli had
 dwelt in;
 harshly the gate grated when Giúki's son
 struck it.
 These words said then Vingi, more wisely unspoken:

²⁹It was customary to wish the departing ones 'victory', even though no battle was anticipated.

³⁰ Kenning for 'boat'.

^{**}The Germanic equivalent for burning one's bridges behind one. They do not expect to return. Cf. the similar situation in the Nibelungenlied where Hagen destroys the boat on which the host has been ferried across the Danube.

- 36. "Fare ye far from hence— 'tis fraught with death to you, full soon shall they slay you and swiftly burn you: with fair words I bade you, but falsehood dwelt in them—or else wait outside till up is the gallows."
- 37. Then Hogni spake forth, not to spare him thought he, nor of ought was fearful, whatever betid them:

 "Think not of threat'ning, a thankless task were it:
 not one more word or 'twill be worse for thee after."
- 38. They hewed down Vingi, and to Hel sent him, with axes gashed him till his ghost he breathed out.
- 39. Atli's men foregathered, and in mail-coats arrayed them; thus went they forward till the wall lay between them.³²

 Each host angrily to the other cried out: "Full long had we settled to slay all of you."

(Hogni said:)

40. "It seems but little that settled ye had it: still unready are ye, one of your henchmen, Hel-ward sent by us."

 $^{^{32}}Volss$. here has a passage in which Atli demands the Niflung treasure, which Gunnar defiantly refuses. In the *Nibelung enlied* it is Kriemhild who makes the demand at this point.

- 41. Hot with wrath waxed they reached them, bestirred their fingers in stringing their bows then, with arrows shot sharply and behind shields hid them.
- 42. In came the tidings that without were struggling, before hall, the heroes—they heard a thrall tell it; dreadful was Guthrún at these dire tidings, the necklace-decked one:down threw she everything, slung down the silver, that asunder the rings³³ brake.
- 43. Out went she after, wide open the doors flung, nor fearful was she, to welcome her kinsmen; to the Giúkungs she turned her—their last greeting was it—her mind she spoke truthfully, and eke more, thus-wise:
- 44. "I had sought to save you, to forsake not your home-stead: 'gainst the norns wins no one: hither nathless came ye!"

 Many sage words said she, to settle between them; but naught would they listen, and 'no' said all of them.
- 45. Beheld the high-born one how they did struggle, then took courage unwomanish, her cloak she flung off.

³³Of her necklace.

a keen sword she caught up and her kinsmen shielded: nor light were the blows which she lavished on foemen.

- 46. Felled Giúki's daughter to the ground two warriors:

 Atli's brother her blade smote— they must bear him away thence—, so fiercely fought she and an other struck she that he stood not up after, but to Hel hied him; yet her hands shook not.
- 47. A fight they fought there which was famed widely, greater than any deed which the Giúkungs had done else.

 'Tis told that, as long as alive were the Giúkungs, they made a sword-fight, slit through the byrnies, and hewed the helmets, as their hearts bade them.
- till mid-day was All the morning fought they, 48. over. and the day followat dusk and at dawn eke. ing. With blood flowed the battle-field ere the brunt was ended: ere they fell, over eighteen the upper hand had then the two bairns of Bera,34 and her brother with them.

⁸⁴Cf. 28.

- 49. Angrily eying them, King Atli spake thus:

 "Tis an ill sight to look at, I lay it at your door:
 before, we told thirty, thanes of the doughtiest,—
 but eleven live now: great loss I hold it.
- 50. "We were five brothers when Buthli died from us.

 In Hel dwell now half of them, two hacked by your swords lie; great are ye Giúkungs— gainsay I cannot— and a grim wife is Guthrún, of whom good had I never.
- 51. "Were we happy seldom to my hands since thou camest—: hast killed my kindred, of my coffers robbed me, and to Hel sent my sister:35 that my heaviest sorrow."

Guthrún said:

52. "Doest hint that, Atli? And what of thy deeds?

Thou took'st my mother and murderedst her for gold-rings, and my keen-thoughted sister didst in cave to death starve.36

I laugh to hear thee rehearse the wrongs done thee, and thank the gods that have given thee sorrow."

³⁵Brynhild? There is hardly a reference here to her being, indirectly, the cause of Brynhild's death.

³⁶A trace of this deed is found in *bibreks saga*, chap. 428, where we are told that Hogni's son let Atli starve to death in a cave. Her other allegation stands alone.

Atli said:

- 53. "Ye earls, I egg you now to the utmost to heighten the woes of this woman: I would fain behold it; and get ye goodly Guthrún to whimper, my heart it would gladden unhappy to see her.
- 54. "Seize ye bold Hogni and slit him with knifeedge,
 cut the hero's heart out: hold yourselves
 ready;
 and stout-hearted Gunnar on the gallows
 fasten;
 see that ye do this: in the snake den then with
 him!"37

Hogni said:

- 55. "Do thy worst and forbear not, I abide it gladly: thou shalt find me steadfast, I have stood much ere this.

 A beating had ye the while hale we Giúkungs:—
 now we are wounded and weary thy way thou mayst have."
- 56. Up then spake Beiti,—

 "Let us spare Hogni,
 the foolish fellow,³⁹
 too long now liveth

 he was Atli's steward:
 and Hialli slaughter,
 he is fey for a long time;
 that lout, good for nothing."

³⁷Atli's hot vengefulness seems to prompt him to order two modes of death for his vanquished foe.

³⁹Conjectural.

58.

57. Scared was the scullion and scampered away
fast,
crept in all corners, cackling with terror;
'twas a sore plight, quoth he, to pay for their
warfare,
to end his days dolefully and die from his
swinery,
from the fat fare which before he had eaten.

On Buthli's baster they brandished the knife, then:

cried out the coward ere the cold edge he felt
e'en—
he would do it this day yet, he would dung the meadow,
nor shun any drudgery, if from death they would spare him:
"happy were Hialli if he had but his life left."

59. Pleaded then Hogni— as had done the fewest—
the thrall to unfetter that thence he might hie him:
"for us it were easier this ill game to play with you;"
why should we here wish to hear that yelping?"

60. They laid hands on Hogni then; hard was it for them the life to lengthen of the lordly hero. 41

Laughed then Hogni,— heard it all warriors—steadfastly bore it, well stood he the torture.

⁴⁰That is, to have his own heart cut out.

⁴¹I.e. they had no other choice but to obey Atli.

61. His harp took Gunnar, the strings grasped with his foot-twigs; on well could be play it, who could best hear him; of his wrongs he told her: burst the rafters asunder.

62. Then died the doughty ones:

was the day still young then.

To the last lived in them their lofty manhood.

63. Great thought him Atli:

both Giúkungs had
he slain now,
told her loss to the lady,
with no little taunting:
"'tis morning now, Guthrún,—
no more are
thy dear ones;
to thyself in somewhat thy sorrow thou
owest."

Guthrún said:

64. "Right merry art, Atli, of the murdered to tell me; but thou'lt rue thy rash deed when wrought is all of it.44

This left they after them, and I let thee know it: ill hap will haunt thee the while I live, too."

⁴¹aKenning for 'toes'.

⁴² That is, Guthrún; but cf. the similar situation in Od.

⁴³It is not clear whether the rafters of Atli's hall or the boards of the harp are meant.

⁴⁴The ambiguity is intended: all the consequences of the deed-her murder of his sons—are to be reckoned with. As it is, she hints darkly of suicide.

Atli said:

65. "In naught I believe this: another way see I, by far more fitting— oft we fail to take such—: with gifts and girl-slaves I shall gladden, wife, thee, and with snow-white silver, as thou wilt have it."

Guthrún said:

- 66. "Thy hope is hollow:

 my wrath I wreaked oft

 wilful they weened me,

 yet had I forborne it

 I'll have none of these:

 for wrongs that were

 lesser;

 but worse I shall be

 now,

 yet had I forborne it

 I'll have none of these:

 for wrongs that were

 lesser;

 but worse I shall be

 now,
- 67. "In one hall we both were gether, in the grove we grew up and gambolled playfully; queen Grímhild gave to us gold-rings and necklaces: no amends can'st make e'er for my murdered brothers, nor by aught work it that e'er I forgive thee.
- 68. "Woman's lot is worsened ay by warriors' recklessness: the oak's strength is stunted⁴⁵ when stripped are its branches, the tree will topple when torn are its rootlets: in all may'st now, Atli, thy own will follow."⁴⁶

⁴⁵The passage is doubtful.

⁴⁶The meaning apparently is: to be sure, woman always is the sufferer by men's deeds: Atli is being lulled into false security by Guthrún's seeming resignation following her outburst of v agefulness.

- 69. The lord too lightly believed her and trusted, nor was hidden the falsehood if heed he had given; crafty was Guthrún, well could she shuffle, twain shields showed she him⁴⁷ and shammed cheerfulness.
- 70. Great arvel made she after her brothers, and after his own dead No more they said, then; but the goodly gathering was nor gladsome nor merry.
- 71. Then, hard-hearted, hoped she to harm his kin greatly, most fearful vengeance she vowed on her husband: she lured her little ones, laid them 'gainst high-seat; the wild ones were frightened yet wept not nor whimpered, sought the arms of their mother and asked what she wanted.

Guthrún said:

72. "Ye had better not ask me: you both I shall slaughter, was I eager ever of old age to heal you."

(The boys said:)

"To make away with us no wight can hinder thee: thy wrath will be sated when 'tis wrought altogether."

⁴⁷That is, she played a double game. The shield bore the insignia of the prince under whom one fought.

⁴⁸An unexpectedly philosophic reply; but the text is fairly clear.

73. Unbending, she blotted out the brothers in their childhood, their heads she hewed off—for her 'twas unseemly.

Where the boys were playing asked Buthli's son then, his small sons twain, as he saw them nowhere.

Guthrún said:

- 74. 49"Went I over to tell now nor will Grímhild's daughter begrudge thee ought of it:
 but little 'twill gladden thee great sorrows didst summon when thou slewest my brothers.
- 75. "But seldom slept I ever since they have fallen.

 Grim meed I foretold thee: I mind thee now of it.

 Of that morrow spakest thou,50— to mind I call it:

 'tis evening turned now and tidings I have for thee.
- 76. "Lost hast thou thy lief sons, which should have last betid thee: know that their brain-pans as beakers thou usest; the mead thou drinkest was mixed with their heart blood.

⁴⁹As elsewhere in the Edda, there is here an unannounced change of scene: Guthrún has left her woman's bower and gone over to the king's hall. Her speech is addressed to him.

⁵⁰Cf. 64.

77. "The hearts of the striplings I steaked o'er the fire, calfs' hearts I called them when I carried them to thee.

Thou atest all up, nor aught of it leftest, didst chew greedily with thy grinders working.

78. "But few befalls worse: their fate now knowest thou.

I brought it about, all; yet boast I not of it."

Atli said:

79. "Cruel wast thou, Guthrún, that thou couldst do thuswise, to brew beer for me from the blood of my children.

Thou'st slain those nearest thee, which thou never should'st have.

Naught but ill from thee has befallen me ever."

Guthrún said:

- 80. "In sooth, sweet were it naught is enough for so knavish a king as thou; for misdeeds dreadful nameless, as never were known the like of.
- 81. "Into greater guilt hast now, and more ghastly, fallen than e'er was heard of: thy own arvel drankest now." est now." st

⁵¹That is, by eating his own children's hearts; which necessarily draws after it his own death. Hence he is darkly said by Guthrún to have drunk his own arvel.

Atli said:

82. "On stake they should burn thee, but stone thee beforehand: then hadst earned what thou e'er hankeredst after."

Guthrún said:

"On the morrow early be mindful of such things: by a fairer death shall I fare to the other light."52

- 83. Thus sate they together, bore a grudge to each other, words of hate they bandied, but happy was neither.

 Waxed Hniflung's hatred, of high deeds bethought him, set forth to Guthrún his grim hate of Atli.
- 84. To her mind she called then how they murdered her brother.

 Good hap she held it if Hogni avenged were; then laid low Atli, nor lingered in doing it Hniflung, Hogni's son, and high-born Guthrún.
- 85. Quoth the stout-hearted one, starting from sleep up—
 from the wound well knew he that it needed no binding:

 "Say ye in sooth now: who slew King Atli?
 Not lightly ye dealt with me: my life-blood is ebbing."

⁵² Note the Christian expression!

⁵³He is a son of Hogni, as is told in the following stanza. His assistance seems uncalled for.

⁵⁴That is, he was past help from bandaging.

Guthrún said:

86. 55"Tis I who wrought it, that ended thy life now, and Hogni's son eke, that to Hel thou wendest."

Atli said:

- "Full swiftly thou slewest me, unseemly the deed, though: 'tis ill to betray him who trusteth his friendship.
- 87. "Unwilling went I to woo thee, Guthrún; wast praised in thy widowhood, and proud they called thee.

 Nor was it falsehood: all too well I found out.

 Thou camest home hither, a host of men following.
- 88. "A life most lordly we led, my hall within: dearth was there never of noble athelings; our barns, well-stocked were and in state lived we, had great wealth of gold-rings which we gave to many.
- 89. "A great dowry I paid thee, with jewels, gave thee thralls thirty, seven thrifty bondmaids—were seeming such gifts— and of silver a great store.
- 90. "Thou didst reck it nowise, as though naught were all, but didst long for the lands aye left me by Buthli;

⁵⁵A line (=75, 2) is omitted here by the translator.

with wiles thou didst work it, nor wouldst
have aught else. 56
My mother madest thou shed mournful tears
oft;
were we, wife and husband, e'er unhappy
after."

Guthrún said:

- 91. "That liest thou, Atli, I smiled on thee seldom: wast thou swelled up o'ermuch; 57
 e'en as striplings ye struggled, was strife
 'mongst you brothers,
 to Hel half of them from thy hall wended: 58
 what good should have given thee, to grief it turned all.
- 92. "Twain brothers had I, headstrong they called us; we fared from our folk-lands and followed Sigurth; forth strode we stanchly, steering his ship each one, our fates we followed, till that east we landed.59
- 93. "We carved us a kingdom, its king overthrew we; fell at our feet then, fearful, the barons;

⁵⁶The rendering of the line is doubtful.

⁵⁷Conjectural.

⁵⁸Gering points out that the historic Attila had his brother Bleda slain to become sole ruler.

⁵⁹No other source speaks of Guthrún and the Giúkungs following Sigurth in the free Viking life described in these stanzas (92–94). Also for other reasons they seem suspicious.

Atli!

him who fled his fellow-men freed we from outlawry, and mighty made him without means who had been.

94. "Fell then the Hunnish⁶⁰ king, my fate soon worsened; keen was my sorrow to be called widow; but worse grief to the glad one to be given to

A hero once had me: ill hap to lose him!

95. "From thing camest never—so that we heard thereof—having pleaded pluckily,61 but peace ever soughtest; in gavest at all times, thy own never holding, but quietly took'st all (as a king should never)."62

Atli said:

96. "That liest thou, Guthrún; but little it betters the lot of either: our lives are blasted.—
Forget thou not, Guthrún, nor grudge it to me, us both to honor. that out I be borne well."

Guthrún said:

97. "A sea-steed will I get thee, and a stained coffin,68 a sheet will I wax well to shroud thy body, to all look that is needful, as though we loved one another."

⁶⁰ Sigurth; the epithet is merely honorific.

⁶¹The rendering is doubtful.

⁶² Supplied following Grundtvig's suggestion.

⁶³ Note the mixture of Heathen and Christian rites: he is to be buried in a coffin which is to be sent out to sea in a (burning?) ship.

- 98. Lifeless sank Atli, great loss felt his kinsmen; carried out the lady all she had pledged her to. To the flood she fared then, her fate to hasten; but her days were lengthened, she died another time.
- 99. Happy is he who hath him begotten children as great as Giúki did foster: in all lands will live aye one the lips of every one, where'er men hear of it, their hardy bearing.

⁶⁴Cf. Guð. hv. 13.

GUTHRUN'S LAMENT

Guðrúnarhvot

Not yet are ended Guthrún's sorrows. Her dearest child, Svanhild, had been fostered at King Iónakr's court, out of harm's way. Thither, Guthrún is carried by the waves, after vainly trying to end her life by drowning—a development of the legend peculiar to the North. She marries the king. Her sons by this marriage are sacrificed in an attempt to avenge Svanhild's death on King Iormunrekk—this, a theme from old Gothic legend touched on already by Jordanes (Sixth Century). Their fall leaves Guthrún utterly bereaved and unwilling to live longer.

Of the two lays dealing with this matter, the 'Lay of Hamthir' and 'Guthrún's Lament,¹ the former is unquestionably the older and more original. However, here as elsewhere, the order of the *Codex* is followed; which is advantageous also by reason of its introductory Prose.

After iterating, in a somewhat modified form, the first stanzas of the older lay, the poet gives us lonely Guthrún's lament before the self-immolation which her rival, Brynhild, had suggested to her after Sigurth's death.² Indeed, one is tempted to regard the Lament as an elaboration of the hint there given. In its essence the poem is a biographic monologue (like $Gu\delta$. I, II, Hel. Od.), not devoid of lyrical power.³ The break between this tenderly elegiac portion and the first stanzas, whose spirit is that of the $Ham\deltaism\ell l$, is unmistakable. Toward the end, a reminiscence of the Sweet William motif of the 'Second Lay of Helgi' appears. These beautiful stanzas are, to be sure, by some scholars considered to have originally belonged to some other poem about Sigurth.

The measure of the lay is fornyröislag. It is generally referred to the Eleventh Century, and was most likely composed in Iceland. The Volsunga saga, chap. 41 gives a close paraphrase of it.

When she had slain Atli, Guthrún went down to the sea to drown herself; but she could not sink. She floated across

¹The title of the original means 'The Egging on of Guthrún'. This, however, has reference only to the introductory stanzas. and not to the body of the poem which is essentially a 'Lament'.

 $^{{}^{2}}Sg. \ kv. \ 59.$

⁸It may be remarked in passing that a *crescendo* of comparison is scarcely attempted in stanzas 17-19.

the bay to the land of King Iónakr.⁴ He took her to wife, and their sons were Sorli, Erp, and Hamthir.⁵ There was also fostered Svanhild, her daughter by Sigurth. Svanhild⁶ was given in marriage to King Iormunrekk⁷ the Mighty. Bikki was his councillor: it was he who led on Randvér, the king's son, to wish to wed her himself. This, Bikki told the king. He had Randvér hanged on the gallows and Svanhild killed under the hoofs of horses.⁸ But when Guthrún heard of this she spake to her sons (as is told here).

1. Wickedest words, out of hate-filled heart when, unflinching, Guthrún her sons

most woe-bringing, heard I spoken egged to slaughter with grim speeches.

⁴His name is supposed to be Slavic, and his lands hence across the Baltic; or else, a corruption of *Odoacher*, the Germanic ruler of Italy during the Fifth Century.

⁵According to *Hamth*. 14, and the indirect evidence of the lay itself which has the dual form in Guthrún's address to her sons, Erp was Iónakr's son by another woman.—His name signifies 'the Brownish One'. The names of his half-brothers are of doubtful meaning.

^{6&#}x27;(She who fights) in Swan Garment'.

⁷Historically, *Hermanarich*, King of the Ostrogoths in the Fourth Century.

^{*}According to the more detailed account of Volss. chap. 40, and similarly Skáld... chap 42, Randvér and Bikki had been sent to Iónakr to sue for Svanhild's hand. On their return journey the king's son follows Bikki's false counsel and makes love to her. It is returned. They are subsequently betrayed by Bikki. Before mounting the gallows, Randvér plucks a hawk of all his feathers and sends him to his father. The king understands from this token that by the deed he will be shorn of honor as the bird of feathers, and orders him taken off the gallows; but too late. Whereupon, again instigated by Bikki, the king's wrath turns on Svanhild as the origin of his dishonor. "Then she was bound in the castle gate and horses were driven over her. But when she opened her eyes the horses dared not tread on her. When Bikki saw this he said that a sack should be drawn over her head, and so was done, and then she lost her life."

2. "Why sit ye still nor loathe to speak when Iormunrekk her, Svanhild hight,

and sleep through life, light-hearted words, your young sister, had by horses trampled.

3. "Ye are little like nor like to Hogni's your sister's slayer if bold ye were

4.

beloved Gunnar, stout heart is yours: would ye seek forthwith like my brothers twain."

"not so highly thought'st thou of Hogni's deed when from sleep they waked Sigurth, thy spouse:

with blood was thy black and white bedlinen reddened from grievous gashes, in his gore as he lay.

Said then Hamthir. the hardy-minded:

- 5. "Bitterly didst thou thy brethren avenge, for thyself most sadly, when thy sons didst murder; with the youths¹¹ could we Iormunrekk kill, our sister's slayer,— of the same mind all.
- 6. "The helmets¹² bring of the Hunnish kings—hast whetted us to hateful strife."
- 7. Laughing, Guthrún and kingly crests she and long byrnies the hardy heroes

to the garner wended, from coffers chose, brought to her sons: on horseback lept.

⁹The translator has omitted two lines here $(=Ham\delta. 3, 3-4.)$

¹⁰Cf. Brot. Concluding Prose, and Sg. sk. 24ff.

¹⁰aI.e. with black and white strips, like the sails of the ships of those times?

¹¹Her sons by Atli, Erp and Eitil, slain by her to avenge the death of the Niflungs; cf. 11 and 12, Akv. 37ff, Am. 74ff.

¹²In the original, 'precious things' (='heirlooms'?)

(Hamthir said:)

- 8. "So will hie him home to his mother's hall the god-of-spears, in Gothland slain, that for all of us thou mayst arvel drink: for Svanhild, our sister, and thy sons also."
- 9. Weeping, Guthrún, Giúki's daughter, sate her sadly beside the hall' with tear-wet cheeks, to tell her sorrow, her weary tale, in many a way.
- 10. "Three homes knew I, three hearth-fires; was I brought to the hall of husbands three; matchless 'mong men was my Sigurth—he whom murdered Hogni and Gunnar.
- 11. "More woeful wife, ween I, never lived, (nor was ever wight in the world thus bewrayed); to me when the athelings to Atli gave me.
- 12. "The keen-eyed youths16 I called to me:
 to wreak my wrath I wrought it thus:
 I hewed off the heads of the Hniflung heirs.
- 13. "To the sea I wended, weary of life, the hateful norns I hoped to thwart:17 tossed me, nor drowned, the tow'ring billows, on land me lifted, to live on doomed.

¹³Kenning for 'hero'. He foresees his own death.

¹⁴Iormunrekk's dominions.

¹⁵Supplied after Bugge's suggestion.

¹⁶Erp and Eitil; cf. 5.

¹⁷Viz. by cutting short the life allotted to her by them.

- 14. "The bed I mounted— had better fate hoped— once more mated, with a mighty king.18

 I issue bore— as heirs twain sons, as heirs twain sons to the atheling.
- 15. "About Svanhild seated sate her bond-maids, whom of all my children I cherished most: of hue whiter, my halls within, than bright sun-beams were Svanhild's brows.
- 16. "In gold I 'rayed her and goodly cloths, ere that to Gothland I gave her away.
- 17. "The saddest this of my sorrows all, when horses' feet the fair hair trod on Svanhild's head, besmirched in mire.
- 18. "But sorest this, when my Sigurth they did murder foully, but bitterest this, the glittering snakes when my brother Gunnar slavered over.
- 19. "But hardest this, when to the heart of hardy Hogni King Atli hewed.

 I call to mind many sorrows—

 (why should I bide to bear still more?) 19
- 20. "Bridle, Sigurth, the black-hued steed, let the fleet-footed horse hitherward run: here sitteth with me nor son's wife nor daughter to give Guthrún golden trinkets.20

¹⁸ Iónakr.

¹⁹Supplied after Bugge's suggestion.

²⁰She is utterly alone now, foreseeing the death of her last begotten sons, with neither kinsman nor kinswoman to comfort her; cf. *Hamō*. 24.

21. "To mind call thou what to me didst say, the time we, Sigurth, that from Hel, hero, as would I to thee

sate together: wouldst hither wend, out of the world.

22. "Raise up, ye earls, the oaken heap, under heaven let it the highest be, that fire may burn

the hate-filled breast's carks and cares, and quell all sorrows.

"May it lighten your lot, ye earls, 23. and ye, noble women, (of Guthrún's sorrows,

your woe also, to have hearkened to the harrowing tale Giúki's daughter)."21

²¹Supplied after Grundtvig's suggestion.

THE LAY OF HAMTHIR

Hamðismél (hin fornu)

The 'Lay of Hamthir' enjoys the sad distinction of having been handed down in a more fragmentary condition than any other of the longer Eddic Lays. A number of stanzas are certainly missing, others clearly interpolated, and still others under suspicion. And the genuine material left has needed much surgery and sympathetic treatment to be at all intelligible. Nevertheless, enough is discernible to recognize that it brought the great Eddic cycle of Heroic songs in this Collection to a worthy, as well as logical, conclusion.

As pointed out above, several stanzas of 'Guthrún's Lament' seem to have originally belonged to the lay and are fairly considered in this connection. As a whole, they and the following stanzas breathe a sinister power equal to the best in Eddic poetry—the unwilling brothers dashing away unto their doom, snorting with rage, their mother's wild laugh yet ringing in their ears—a doom which they seal by venting their wrath on her favorite son, their half-brother Erp. And the scenes in Iormunrekk's hall, however fragmentary, are full of energy and passion.

The measure is, variously, málaháttr and fornyrðislag, which in itself constitutes a sufficient reason for considering the lay as it stands a composite of two or more older, fragmentary poems. That another lay existed seems to follow from the fact that the Volsunga saga (chap. 42) paraphrases only the fornyrðislag stanzas (quoting stanza 28, 1-2), and none of the málaháttr stanzas from which, indeed, the version of the saga differs considerably.

The origin of the lay is sought, with little conclusiveness, in Norway. Both vocabulary and style point to the Tenth Century.

1. [Sorrowful deeds unwelcome dawn, thus early morn and every sorrow

the dayspring saw, the alf-folk's grief;¹ the ills of men and sadness quickens.]²

2. 'Twas not but now, nor newly, either, but ages ago, time out of mind,

¹However, dawn is the grief only of the swart-alfs, the dwarfs, and of the giants whom it transforms into stone. Indeed, the sun is called the 'wheel of the alfs', Alv. 16.

²The whole stanza is generally regarded as spurious.

[of all things older than any, this,]³ when Guthrún egged on, Giúki's daughter, her young sons to avenge Svanhild the fair.

- 3. "A sister had ye, was she Svanhild hight; her Iormunrekk in wrath had trampled by white and black steeds, on high-road faring, by grey, war-hardened Gothic horses.
- 4. "Ye alone are left of my lordly strain; but not keen are ye as those kings of yore—
 (ye are little like beloved Gunnar or Hogni, his brother, bear-hard in mind.)4
- 5. "On earth I am lonely like to asp in holt,5 amidst foes unfriended like fir stripped of boughs, of gladness bereft as the greenwood of leaves when the waster-of-twigs6 on a warm day cometh."
- 6. Said then Hamthir, the hardy-minded:
 "not so highly thought'st thou of Hogni's deed
 when from sleep they waked Sigurth, thy
 husband—
 on thy bed wert seated,— but his slayers
 laughed.
- 7. "With blood was thy black and white bedlinen reddened, from grievous gashes, in his gore as he lay;

⁸This absurd line must be interpolated.

⁴Supplied after Grundtvig's suggestion from the similar third stanza of $Gu\ddot{o}$. hv.

⁵Viz. of evergreen trees. Similarly $H \varrho v$. 50.

⁶Kenning, probably for 'fire'. Cf. Vsp. 44...

by the side of Sigurth thou sat'st when he died, no glee thee gladdened: thus Gunnar willed it.

- 8. "When thou endedst Eitil's, and Erp's life, too, thou wouldst harm Atli, but didst harm more thyself; so ought each one work ill on his foe with slaughterous sword that himself he harm not."
- 9. Said then Sorli with seemly wisdom:

 "with our mother I wish not idle words to bandy;

 not yet wearied are ye of words, meseemeth: whate'er bid'st thou, Guthrún, but will bring thee grief?
- 10. "Thou bewailest thy brethren and both thy dear sons," thy trusted kinsmen, betrayed full foully: shalt thou us, Guthrún, eke bewail now; we sit fey on our horses, and afar we shall die."
- 11. ¹⁰Said the high-born lady, before the heroes standing, the slim-fingered one, "are your lives at stake if ye list not to me:

⁷It is precisely Guthrún's tragic fate that she cannot ever heed this counsel. Cf. $Gu\delta$. II, 10..

⁸Erp and Eitil.

 $^{^9}$ Stanzas 6-8 of $Gu\delta$. hv. most likely contain material from $Ham\delta$. now lost.

¹⁰The text of this stanza is badly mutilated, and the translation hence largely conjectural.

how could two men else strike down and fetter ten-hundred Goths in their stronghold, alone?"¹¹

- 12. Then rashly rode they, wrathily snorting, (Sorli and Hamthir, the sons of Guthrún,) 12 frowardly fared over fells cloud-dripping, on their Hunnish horses, Svanhild to avenge.
- 13. On the way found they their wily brother.13

(Hamthir said:)

"This brownish bastard

will bring us help?"

14. Answered them Erp,
"Full quickly I come
as one hand hastens
or one foot fain would

of another born: to my kinsmen's help, to help the other, its fellow help."

(Hamthir said:)

- 15. "Scarce could one foot its fellow help, or one hand hasten to help the other!"
- 16. Said Erp these words as on they fared—
 high on horseback the hero sate—
 "I reck not to show the road to a craven."
 Then called they their brother a bastard son.
- 17. From the sheaths they drew their sharp swords forth, the gleaming wound-gashers, to gladden Hel:

¹¹Scil. as they can now, in their charmed armor: Volss. chap. 42 tells how Guthrún gave her sons armor impenetrable to iron, but bade them 'not to hurt therewith stones and other large matter' (sic!), as else it were their death.—Transposed from the original position (after 23), following Bugge.

¹²Supplied after Grundtvig's suggestion.

¹⁸Their half-brother Erp, the 'Brownish One'.

the twain overthrew a third of their strength when they struck down to earth young Erp, their brother. 14

- 18. Their fur-cloaks they shook and fastened their swords, in silken sarks then themselves arrayed. 15
- 19. Still further they fared on their fateful path, till their sister's stepson¹⁶ they saw on the gallows, the wind-cold wolf-tree,¹⁷ to the west of the castle, by the cranes'-food¹⁸ becrept— uncouth was that sight.
- 20. There was glee in the hall, ale-gay the throng, and the horses' hoof-beats they heard not at all, ere a hero stout-hearted his horn did blow (the tidings to tell of the twain coming). 19

¹⁴Volss. ibid. continues: Then they went on their way, and but a little while after, Hamthir slipped and put his hand out and said: "Erp may have said sooth—I would have fallen if my hand had not steadied me." Soon after, Sorli stumbled, but put forth his foot and thus steadied himself. He said: "I would have fallen now if both my feet had not steadied me." Then both said that they had done ill by their brother."

¹⁵They have arrived in the confines of Iormunrekk's castle and change their garments—arraying themselves in the magic (silken) armor.

¹⁶Randvér: he is called thus in Saxo, who also tells this story, and here by conjecture (the original has 'sister's son'); which is quite in keeping with the Old Norse way of thinking: he is Svanhild's stepson as the son of her husband.

¹⁷Kenning for 'gallows'. 'Wolf' was the designation of outlaws who had been proscribed and who were hanged wherever seized.

¹⁸Kenning for 'serpent'. Doubtful.

¹⁹Supplied after Grundtvig's suggestion.

21. Went then to warn the wassailing king of the helm-clad twain on horseback seen:

"Be on guard now, ye Goths, wend they grimly hither, the mighty kinsmen of the maid ye trod down."

22. Chuckling, Iormunrekk his chin-beard stroked, with wine wanton, he welcomed the fray; his dark locks shook he, at his white shield²⁰ did look, in his hand upholding the horn all-golden.

23. "Most happy were I if behold I might
Hamthir and Sorli my hall within:
bind them would I with bow-strings long,
the good sons of Guthrún on gallows fasten."

24. There rose outcry in hall, ale-cups fell down

— — — — — — —

in the blood they stood from the breasts of

Goths.²¹

(Hamthir said:)

25. "Thou didst wish, Iormunrekk, that we should come, we brothers twain, thy beer-hall within: let us hew off his hands, let us hew off his feet,22 hurl Iormunrekk into hot fire!"23

²⁰Here, probably not the white shield of peace (cf. H.H. I, 34) but a shield made of the white wood of the linden-tree.

²¹In stanza 4 of the skald Bragi's Ragnarsdrápa (Ninth Century) Iormunrekk is described as falling prone into the ale on the floor with which is mixed his own blood.

 $^{^{22}}$ According to the account of $Sk\acute{a}ld$. chap. 42, Guthrún advised them to attack Iormunrekk at night in his bed: "was Sorli and Hamthir to hew off his hands and feet, but Erp his head." They follow her advice, but Erp is lacking at the critical moment to perform his share.

²³The (ever blazing) hearthfire in the middle of the hall. Cf. Rig 2, Akv. 1, note.

Then roared the king, **26**. bold in his byrnie, as a bear would roar: cast stones, ye men,

akin to gods. as steel will bite not, nor iron swords, on the sons of Iónakr.24

(Sorli said:)

27. "Ill didst thou, brother, to ope that bag:25 from wordy bag oft cometh baleful speech; thou art hardy, Hamthir, but a hot-spur ever: much wanteth he who witless is."

(Hamthir said:)

- "Off were his head if Erp lived still, 28. our warlike brother, on the way whom we slew. the stout-hearted hero whom hateful norns egged us to kill, who ought have been hallowed.
- 29. ["I ween we were of wolfish kind, since our brother we sought to slav. like the wolfs of the waste, wild and greedy. that howl in the hills.126
- "We fought full well and felled many Goths, 30. stand on athelings slain likes eagles on tree; glorious we die, whether to-day or to-morrow: lives till night no man when the norns have spoken."

²⁴In Volss., ibid., it is Othin who gives the counsel to stone the brothers.

²⁵I.e. thy mouth.—Is a stanza lacking here in which Hamthir taunted the king with their invulnerability to iron?

²⁶This stanza (in *ljóðaháttr*) is generally supposed to be an interpolation. But the following stanza invites suspicion as well for its lyric note. The simile of the brothers standing on (the limbs of) the fallen like eagles on the branches of a tree also smacks of the later skaldic manner.

31. There fell Sorli, slain at the gable, at the hall's hind-wall stooped Hamthir then.

This song is called the Old Lay of Hamthir.

THE CATALOGUE OF DWARFS

(Dvergatal) Vsp. 9ff.

Then gathered together the gods for counsel, the holy hosts, and held converse: who the deep-dwelling dwarfs was to make of Brimir's blood and Bláïn's bones.

Mótsognir rose, mightiest ruler of the kin of dwarfs, but Durin next; molded many manlike bodies the dwarfs under earth, as Durin bade them.

Nýi and Nithi,²

Austri and Vestri,³

Nár and Náïn,

Bífur, Bófur,

An and Ónar,

Northri and Suthri,

Althióf, Dvalin,

Níping, Dáïn,

Bombur, Nóri,

Aï, Miothvitnir.

Vigg and Gandalf, Vindalf, Thráïn,
Thekk and Thorin, Thrór, Vit, and Lit,
Nýr and Regin, Nýráth and Ráthsvith;
now is reckoned the roster of dwarfs.

Fili, Kíli, Fundin, Náli,
Heptifili, Hannar, Svíur,
Frár, Hornbori, Fræg and Lóni,
Aurvang, Iari, Eikinskialdi.

¹The meaning of a number of names in this *pula* or rigmarole is uncertain, that of others, quite obvious. Most seem to refer to the nether world of death, cold, dissolution, a few to natural phenomena and to the skill for which the dwarfs were known.—It will be noted that some names are applied also to other beings—gods, giants, and men—mentioned in the Collection.

²Waxing and Waning Moon.

³North, South, etc.

The dwarfs I tell now in Dválin's host, down to Lofar, for listening wights—they who hied them from halls of stone over sedgy shores to sandy plains.4

There was Draupnir and Dolgthrasir, Hór and Haugspori, Hlévang, Glóin, Dóri, Óri, Duf, Andvari, Skirfir, Virfir, Skáfith, Áï,

Alf and Yngvi, Fialar and Frosti, will ever be known, the line of dwarfs

Eikinskialdi,
Fith and Ginnar;
while earth doth last,
to Lofar down.

⁴Conjectural.

ABBREVIATIONS

Akv. : Atl'akviba Am. : Atl'am\(l \)

Alv. : Al'vissmol

Bdr. : Baldrs draum'ar Bragar. : Brag'aræður

Brot : (Brot) af Sig'urbarkviðu Lok. : Lok'asenna

Cod. Arn.: Codex Arnamagnæ- Nornag.: Norn'agests þáttr anus

Cod. Reg. : Codex Regius Dráp: Dráp Nisl'unga

Fáfn. : Fáfn'ism\langle l Fj.: Fiol'svinnsm\(\ \ \ l \)

Gríp. : Gríp'issp\(\) Grot. : Grott'asongr Gróug. : Gró'ugaldr

Guð. I, II, III : Guð'rúnarkviða I, II, III

Guð. hv.: Guð'rúnarhvot Gylfag. : Gylf'aginning Hamp. : Hamp'ism\langlel

Hárb. : Hárbarþsljóð

Helr. : Hel'reib Bryn'hildar

H.H. I, II : Helg'akviða Hund'ingsbana I, II

H.Hv. : Helg'akviða Hjor'varþs-

sonar

H
otin v. : H
otin v am otin lHym. : Hym'iskviða Hynd.: Hyndl'uljóð

Od.: Odd'rúnargrátr Reg. : Reg'insm\langlel Ríg. : Rígs' bula

Sigrdr. : Sigr'drífum\(\) l Sigkv. : Sig'urþarkviða hin

skamma

Sinf. : Frá dauð'a Sin'fjotla Skáld. : Skálďskaparměl Skírn. : Skírn'ism\langlel

brym. : bryms'kviða Vaf.: Vaf' þrú þnism \(\forall l Vol.: Vol'undarkviða Volss. : Vols'unga saga

Vsp.: Vol'usp ?

Vsp. sk. : Voľuspý hin skamma

PRONUNCIATION

Accent is indicated (only in the Index) by an acute after the stressed syllable (e.g. Borg'hild).

Length is marked by an acute over the vowel (e.g. Sigrún).

Vowels:

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\alpha as in 'artistic'.
á as in 'father'.
e as in 'men'.
é as in 'where', but more closed.
i as in 'it'.
i as in 'ravine'.
o as in 'omit'.
ó as in 'ore'.
o as in 'not'
                  (used only in italicized words).
é as in 'off' (
u as in 'would'.
ú as in 'rule'.
æ as in 'there' (with open pronunciation).
œ as in 'slur'.
y as in French une, German Hütte.
ý as in French sûr, German Tür.
au as in 'house', but with the a broader.
ei as in French paysan (or in the 'cockney' pronunciation of long
         a, as in 'lady').
ey as in French oeil.
```

- Note 1) that i before vowel (as in ia, iau, io, io, io, iu) is always semivocalic; thus iu as in 'few'.
 - 2) ái, éu, ía, óa, ói, óu, úi must be pronounced as entirely separate vowels.

Consonants: Their value is as in English, with the following cautions:

- 1) g is always pronounced as in 'go' (except ng, as in 'long'). It is never pronounced as in 'giant'.
- 2) s is always voiceless, as in 'sing'; never voiced, as in 'wise'.
- 3) in the combinations hl, hn, hr, hv, h is pronounced about as in 'hew'.
- 4) p is voiceless th, as in 'throw'; δ , voiced th, as in 'father' (both used only in italicized words).

INDEX

Æg'ir, 72, 97f, 104f, 130, 203,	Atl'i (Attila, Etzēl; son of
217, 232.	Buthli), 224, 286, 294f, et
	passim.
Æs'ir (nom. pl.; nom. sg., ás;	
gen, pl., ása) 1, 5 et passim;	Atl'i (son of Ithmund), 197f,
106.	218f.
Af'i, 143.	Atl'i (son of Hring), 222.
Agn'ar (brother of Autha), 274,	At'rith, 72.
309.	Attila, 366.
Agn'ar (son of King Geirræth)	Augustus Cæsar, 180.
62f, 74.	Aur'botha, 159, 176.
Agn'ar (son of King Hrauthung),	Aur'gelmir, 54.
61.	
	Aur'vang, 383.
A'i (a dwarf), 383, 384.	Austr'i, 383.
A'i (a man), 141.	Auth (King), 153, 157.
Alf (a dwarf), 384. Alf (King), 208f.	Auth the Deep-Minded, 157.
Alf (King), $208f$.	Auth'a, 274.
Alf (the Hoary), 222.	Auth'i, 154.
Alf (son of Hunding), 214, 228.	Baldr, 1, 8, 13, 15, 47, 60, 65, 80,
Alf (the Old), 153, 155.	112, 136f, 159, 166.
alf (s), 12, 43 et passim.	Bál'eyg, 72.
	Rar'i 175
Alf'hild, 197.	Bar'i, 175.
Alf-home, 63.	Barr'i (a grove) 83f.
Alf'rothul, 58.	Barr'i (a noble), 156.
Al'græn, 89.	Beda, 44. Beit'i, 357.
Ál'i, 154.	Beit'i, 357.
Allfather, 59, 72, 219.	Bel'i, 13, 79.
Alm'veig, 154.	$Bar{e}owulf$, 123 , 184 .
\mathbf{A}' lof, 199 \mathbf{f} .	Ber'a (Kostbera), 346, 352, 355.
Al'svith (a giant?), 43.	Ber'gelmir, 54f.
Al'svith (sun-horse), 70, 277.	Best'la, 42.
Al'thicf 282	Beyl'a, 106, 118.
Al'thióf, 383.	Biark'i, Lay of, 157.
Al'valdi, 89.	DW/k 1, Lwy 0), 101.
Al'vís, 43 , $127f$.	Bifl'indi, 73.
Am, 155.	Bif'rost (Bil'rost), 68, 71.
Amm'a, $143f$.	Bif'ur, 383.
An, 383.	Bikk'i, 305, 370.
Anabasis, 26.	Bil'eyg, 72.
And'hrimnir, 66.	Bill'ing, 33.
And'varanaut, 311.	Bil'skirnir, 67.
And'vari, 252f, 384.	Biort, 176.
Ang'antýr (Ong'enthēow), 150f.	Blá'inn, 383.
153, 156.	Bleda, 366.
Ang'eya, 161.	Bleik, 176.
Angr'botha, 10, 12, 101, 161.	Blind, 225.
Arn'grim, 156.	Blíth, 176.
Arn'grim Jónsson, x, 149.	Bóf'ur, 383.
Arn'i Magn'ússon, xii.	Bolm, 156.
Ar'vakr, 70, 277.	Bol'thorn, 42.
As'garth, 6, 71, 124.	Bol'verk, 35, 72.
Ask, 4.	Bomb'ur, 383.
	Borg'hild, 211f, 238f, 275.
As'mund, 72.	Dong'nt 294f
As'olf, 155.	Borg'ný, 324f.
Atl'a, 161.	Both'vild (Beaduhild), 186, 190f.

Brag'a Grove, 226. Brag'i (a god), 71, 106, 108f, 278. Brag'i (son of King Hogni), 229. Brá'lund, 211f. Brám'i, 156. Brand Isle, 216. Brá'voll Field, 220. Breith'ablik, 65. Brim'ir (a giant), 9, 383. Brim'ir (a sword), 277. the Bris'ings' necklace, 110, 123f. Brodd, 156. Brun'a Bay, 225f. Bryn'hild, 168, 246f, 327f, et passim. Bú'i, 156. Bur, 3, 42, 159. Burgundy, 336. Buth'li, 224, 246f, 287f, et passim. Buthl'ung, 340f. Byggv'ir, 106, 115f. Bryn'iólfr Sveins'son, ixf. Bý'leist, 13, 161. Catalogue of Dvarfs, 4. Cearbhall, 187. Chlodowech, 187. Christ'iern Pederson, ix. Codex Regius, xiii, et passim. Codex Upsaliensis, x. Codex Wormianus, x. Cyrus, 26. Dag (a god?), 53. Dag (a noble), 155. Dag (son of King Hogni), 229. 232f.Daidalos, 186. Dá'in (a dwarf), 43, 152, 383. Dá'in (a hart), 69. Dan, 149. Dan'a, 149. Danmarks gamle Folkeviser, 163. Danp, 149, 333. Danp'stead, 149. Dell'ing, 46, 53, 175. Dēor's Lament, 186. dís'ar, 259, 350. Dolg'thrasir, 384. Dór'i, 175, 384. Dornröschen, 275. Draupn'ir (a dwarf), 384. Draupn'ir (a ring), 80, 254. Duf, 384. Dun'eyr, 69. Dur'in, 383. Dval'in (a dwarf), 43, 264, 383f. Dval'in (a hart), 69, 131. Dyr'athrór, 69.

Eagle Rock 214, 228. Edda xif, 141f. Egg'thér, 10. Eg'il (a brother of Volund), 187. Eg'il (a giant), 99, 104. Eg'il Skall'agrímsson, xx. Eik'in, 67. Eik'inskialdi, 383. Eik'thyrnir, 67. ein'heriar (plur.), 56, 70, 73. Eir, 176. Ei'ríkr Magn'ússon, xii. Ei'ríksm\langlel, 111. Eistl'a, 161. Eit'il, 311, 341, 371. Eld'hrimnir, 66. Eld'ir, 106f. Él'ivágar, 54, 98. Embl'a, 4. Ensamples of Othin, 17. Ern'a, 148. Erp (son of Atli), 311, 341, 371. Erp (son of Iónakr), 370, 378f. Ey'fura, 156. Ey'limi (father of Hiordís), 156, 239f. Ey'limi (father of Sváva), 201f, 238f, 257. Ey'móth, 315. Ey'mund, 154. Ey'olf, 214, 228. Eyr'giafa, 161. Ey'vind skáld'aspillir, 18. Fáfn'ir, 156, 243f, 255f, 261f, 290, 295, 309, 338. Fal'hofnir, 68. Farm'atýr, 72. Fatling, 29. Feng, 258. Fen'ia, 180f. Fen'rir, Fen'ris-wolf, 9, 10, 12, 13, 58f, 66f, 106, 108, 111, 114, 118, 161f, 219. Fen'salir, 8, 64. Fial'ar (a cock), 10. Fial'ar (a dwarf), 384. Fial'ar (a giant), 91. Fial'ar (Suttung), 20. Fil'i, 383. Fim'afeng, 106. Fimb'ulthul, 67. Fimb'ultýr 15. fimb'ulvetr, 57. Fiol'kald, 169. Fioln'ir, 6, 7, 15, 72, 180. Fiol's with (a giant), 163f.

INDEX

	,
Fiol's with, (Othin), 72.	
Fiol'var, 89.	(
Fiorg'yn, 14, 86, 96, 111, 118, 121.	(
Fiorm, 67.	Č
Fiorn'ir, 334.	(
Fiors'ung (?), 231.	Ġ
Fiot'ur Grove, 232. Fit'ela, 218.	Č
Fith, 384.	Ò
Flat'eyarbók, xiv, 150f.	Č
Folk'vang, 65, 121.	
For'seti, 65.	(
Fræg, 383.	t.
Frán'angr, 120.	(
Frankland, 238f, 273.	
the Franks Casket, 186, 192.	C
Frán'mar, 198f.	(
Frár, 383.	(
Fráth'mar, 155.	Ç
Frek'a Stone, 209, 220f, 228f.	(
Frek'a Stone, 209, 220f, 228f. Frek'i (a noble), 155.	(
Frek'i (a wolf), 66. Frey, 13, 63, 65, 71, 75f, 106, 113f, 152, 159, 207, 300.	
Frey, 13, 63, 65, 71, 75f, 100,	(
113 <i>f</i> , 152, 159, 207, 300.	Č
Frey'a, 6, 65, 106, 110f, 121f.	•
150f, 324f.	(
Frigg 8 13 48f 61f 73 105	Ò
Frigg, 8, 13, 48f, 61f, 73, 105, 111f, 124f, 324f. Frith, 176.	Ò
Frith 176.	Ò
Frith'leif, 179 <i>f</i> , 212.	Č
Frost'i, 384.	C
Fróth'i (father of Hlédís), 154f.	(
Fróth'i (King), 179f, 214.	0
Full'a, 62.	
Fund'in, 383.	0
Funen, 315.	t
Gagn'ráth, 50f.	(
Gand'alf, 383.	(
Gang'leri, 72.	(
Garm, 11f, 71, 101, 136. Gast'ropnir, 170.	(
Gast'ropnir, 170.	_
Gaut, 74.	(
Gaut'reks saga, 42.	
Gef'ion, 110, 124.	(
Geir'mund, 329.	C
Geir'onul, 70.	C
Geir'rœth, 61f, 72f. Geir'skogul, 7.	•
Goir'vimul 69	G
Geir'vimul, 68. Geit'ir, 241f.	Ğ
Ger'i, 66, 172.	Ğ
Germania (of Tacitus), 45, 56,	Ğ
232.	Ğ
Gerth, 77f, 105, 115, 159.	Ğ
Gest'umblindi, 138.	
Giaf'laug, 291.	C
C,	

Giall'arbridge, 116. Giall'arhorn 6, *11*. Gífr, 172. Gim'lé, 15. Ginn'ar, 384. Gioll, 68. Giolp, 161. Gip'ul, 68. Gísl, 68. Giúk'i (Gib'eche), 157, *243f, et* passim. Giúk'i (son of Hogni), 311. the Giúk'ungs 156, et passim. Gladhome, 64. Glær, 68. Glap'svith, 72. Glas'ir Grove, 198. Glath, 68. Glaum, 338. Glaum'vor, 311, 345f. Glit'nir, 65. Gló'in, 384. Gnip'a Cave, 11*f*. Gnip'a Grove, 217f. Gnit'a Heath, 243, 256f, 261f. 333. Gó'in, 69. Goll, 70. Golln'ir, 220. Goll'topp, 68. Gom'ul, 68. Gondl'ir, 73. Gond'ul, 7. Gop'ul, 68. Gorm the Old, 141. Goth mund, 211, 215f, 227f. the Goths, 63. Gothland, 372f. Got'land, 179. Got'thorm (a king), 183. Got'thorm (son of Giúki), 157, 250, 286, 299, 313. Grá'bak, 69. Graf'vitnir, 69. Graf'volluth, 69. Gram, 151, 257, 267, 273, 28**9**. 299. Gran'i, 190, 220, 242f, 252, 2**72,** 278, 283, 301, 309, 312, 328. Gran'mar, 215f, 227f. Greip, 161. Grett'ir, Grett'is saga, 44. Grím (Óthin), 72. Grím the Hardy, 155. Grím'hild, 43, *247f*, 275, 315*f*. 327, 360f. Grím'nir, *62f*, 72, 116.

Gríp'ir, 240f. Gró'a, 163f. Gróth, 68. Grott'i, 179. Gull'inkambi, 10. Gull'rond, 291f. Gull'veig, 1, 5. Gungn'ir, 128, 278. Gunn, 226. Gunn'ar (Gunt'her), 157, 247, 283f, 371f. Gunn'ar Midwall, 155. Gunn'loth, 20, 33, 34, 35. Gunn'thorin, 68. Gunn'thró, 67. Gust, 254. Guth'rún, 156f, 247f, et passim. Gylf'aginning, x, et passim. Gyll'ir, 68. Gym'ir (Ægir), 105. Gym'ir (a giant), 77f, 115, 159. Gyrth, 155. the Hadd'ings, 156, 316. Had'ingus, 316. Hæm'ing, 224. Hag'al, 224f. Hak'i, 157. Há'kon, 294. Hálf (King of Horthaland), 155. Hálf (son of Hialprek), 239, 314. Half'dan (brother of Fróthi), Half'dan (father of Kára), 237. Half'dan (King), 150, 154f. Hálfs saga, 152, 155. Hall'frœth Ott'arsson (vand'ræðaskáld), xx. Ham'al, 224, 226. Ham'thír, 269f. Há'mund, 238. Hann'ar, 383. Hár'barth, 73, 85f. Harold Hairfair, viii, 140. Harold War-Tooth, 140, 157, 220. Hat'afirth, 202. Hat'i (a giant), 202f. Hat'i (a wolf), 10, 70. Hátťatal, xi. Haug'spori, 384. Hauks'bók, xiv, 2, 16. Há'varth, 214. Heaven Fells, 211. Heim'dall, 2, 6, 10, 65, 81, 110, 116, 124, 140f, 160f. Heim'dallar galdr, 160. Heim'ir, 244f, 307f. Heims'kringla, viiif, 12.

Heit'atol, 127, 140. Heith, 5, 160, 165. Heith'draupnir, 277. Heith'rek, 324f. Heith'rún, 67, 158. Hel, 8, 10, 11, 12, 57, 68, 80, 91, 120, 136f, 166, 173, 254, 263, 304, 356, 378. Hel'blindi, 72. Helg'i (Danish King), 185. Helg'i (Hadd'ingiaskati), 237. Helg'i (=Hialmgunnar), 243. Helg'i Hior'varthsson, 197f. Helg'i Hund'ingsbani, 153, 210f. Heng'ikiopt, 180. Heor'ot, 184. Hephaistos, 186. Hept'ifili, 383. Her'borg, 291. Her'fiotur, 70. Her'iafather, 48. Her'ian 7, 10, 72. Herk'ia (Kreka, Helche), 321f. Hermes, 72, 86. Her'móth, 151. Hers'ir, 147. Her'teith, 72. $Her'varar\ saga,\ 60,\ 74,\ 138,\ 156,$ 197. Her'varth (son of Arngrim), 156. Her'varth (son of Hunding), 228. Her'vor, 187. Heth'in (Heoðen), 197, 206f. Heth'in's-Isle, 196, 216. Hiall'i, 337f, 343, 357f. Hialm'ar's Death Song, 197. Hialm'beri, 72. Hialm'gunnar, 243, 274f, 309. Hiálp'rek (Hilperich), 239, 252. Hild (a lady), 155. Hild (=Bryn'hild), 308. (? Hild daughter King Hogni), 230. Hild (a valkyrie), 7, 70. Hild'igunn, 154. Hild'isvíni, 152. Hild'olf, 87. Him'inbiorg, 65. Him'ing Meadows, 213. Hind'ar Fell, 271f, 309. Hior'dís, 156, 239f. Hior'leif, 216. Hior'varth (father of Helgi), 197f. Hior'varth (son of Arngrim), 156f.

INDEX 391

Hrólfs saga Gaut'rekssonar, 156, Hior'varth (son of Hunding), 214, 228. 160. Hrólfs saga krak'a, 185. Historia Danica (of Saxo), viiif, Hrol'laug, 230. 212, 316. Historia ecclesiastica, 44. Hró'mundar saga Greips'sonar, Hlath'guth, 187. Hlé'barth, 90. 237. Hronn, 68, 130, 166. Hrópt, 15, 277. Hlé'dís, 154. Hrópt'atýr, 74. Hross'thióf, 160. Hróth'mar, 198f. Hlé Fells, 230. Hlés'ey (Hlés-Isle), 93, 196, 226, 329. Hróthr, 99. Hlé'vang, 384. Hlíf, 176. Hlíf'thrasa, 176. Hróth'vitnir, 70, 114. Hrott'i (Hrunting), 272. Hrungn'ir, 88, 100, 119f, 182, Hlín, 13. Hlith'skialf, 62, 75, 76. 277. Hlokk, 70. Hlór'rithi, 98, 102f, 117f, 122f. Hrym, 12. Hug'in, 66. Huml'ung, 197. Hund'ing, 214f, 234, 238f, 257, Hloth'varth, 204. Hloth'vér (Chlodovech, Ludwig), 260.187, *317*. Hlóth'yn, 14, 125f. Hund'land, 224. Hun'land, 224, 316. Hnisl'ung (son of Hogni), 364. Hnik'ar, 72, 258. the Huns, 334f. Hnik'uth, 72. Hó'brók, 71. Hver'gelmir, 67. Hvers'u Nor'egr bygð'ist, 151. Hodd'mimir, 57. Hodd'rofnir, 277. Hvethn'a, 157. Hvethr'ung, 14. Hœn'ir, 4, 12, 15, 252. Hyllestad Church, 270. Hogn'i (brother of Sigar), 225. Hogn'i (father of Hild), 230. Hogn'i (father of Sigrún), 215f. Hym, 49. Hym'ir, 49, 97f, 113. Hyml'ing, 197. Hyndl'a, 150f. Hogn'i (Hag'ene, son of Giúki), 157f, 248f, 285f, 325f, 371f. Iafn'hór, 72f. Ial'angr-Heath, 180. Ialk, 72, 74. Iar'i, 175, 383. Iar'izkar, 315. Hór (a dwarf), 384. Hór (Othin), 5, 17, 35f, 41, 72. Horn'bori, 383. Horth'aland, 150. Iar'izleif, 315. Horv'i, 156. Hoth, 8, 15, 138. Hoth'brodd, 215f, 227f. Hô'tún, 213, 216. Hræ'svelg, 55. Hran'i, 156. Iarn'saxa, 161. If'ing, 51, 91. Imth, 220. Imthr, 161. Ing'unar-Frey, 115. Inn'stein, 152f. Hrauth'ung, 61, 156. Hreith'mar, 252f. Iof'urmar, 155. Ión'akr, 305, 369f. Hrím'faxi, *51*. Ión Lopts'son, xii. Hrím'gerth, 197, 202f. Iorm'unrekk (Hermanarich), 156, Hrím'grímnir, 82. 305, 369f. Hrímn'ir, 81, 160. Hring, 222. Iorth', 118. f'ri, 175. Hring'stead, 196, 213, 222. Ironwood, 10. Hrist, 69. fs'olf, 155. Hríth, 68. Ís'ung, 216. Hrœ'rek (Hrēth'ric), 157. Ith'a-field, 3, 15, 59. Hrólf (Hrōð'ulf) krak'i, 185. Ith'i, 182. Hrólf the Old, 156f.

Meln'ir, 222. Ith'mund, 197. Ith'un, 106, 110. f'valdi, 71. f'var, 157. Kár'a 237. Kár'i, 155. Karl, 144. Kár'uljóð, 223, 237. Kattegat, 93. Kerberos, 11. Minos, 186. Ker'laug(s), 68. Ket'il, 155. 127f.Kettle-grove, 9. Kial'ar, 73. Mist, 69. Kí'ar, 187, 333. Kiar'val (Cearbhall), 187. Kíl'i, 383. 101*f*, 161. Klyp, 155. Kné'fræth, 311, 332. Mith'vitnir, 73. Knú'i, 183. Kol'ga, 217. Mog'thrasir, 58. Mó'in, 69. Kon, 140, 148. Kon'ungs Skugg'sjá, 39. Morn'aland, 324. Móth'i, 59. Kormt, 68. Kost'bera (Ber'a), 311, 343, 345f. Mótsognir, 383. Kriem'hilt, 247. Kûd'rûn, 247, 292. Mund'ilferi, 53. Kund, 148. Mun'in, 66. Mú'spell, 115. Læ'ráth, 67. Læv'atein, 173. Lauf'ey, 117, 124. Leiptr, 67f, 232. Myln'ir, 222. Myrk'heim, 340. Leir'brimir, 170. Leir'e, 184. Mýs'ing, 179f. Lett'feti, 68. Nabb'i, 152. Leviathan, 12. Líf, 57. Lif'thrasir, 57. Nagl'far, 13. Ná'grind, 120. Lim, Firth of, 344. Ná'in, 383. Lith'skialf, 175. Nál'i, 383. Lodd'fáfnir, Lay of, 17, 35f. Lof'ar, 384. Lofn'heith, 256. Nár, 383. Log'a Fell, 214, 228. Ná'strand, 10. Lok'i, 4, 6, 8, 9, et passim, 105f, 121f, 139, 158f, 252f. Nauth-rune, 275. Lón'i, 383. Ner'i, 212. Lopt, 107, 173. Loth'in, 205. Nerthus, 56. Nib'elungen, 288. Lóth'ur, 4. Lyf'iaberg, 176f. Lyng'heith, 256. Lyng'vi, 260. Magn'i, 59, 87, 95. 173, 288. mann'jafnaðr, 85. Mattis Störs'sön, ix. Meil'i, 87.

Men'gloth, 163f. Men'ia, 180f, 304. Mercury, 72, 86. Merseburg Charms, 44. Metamorphoses, 11, 120. Mi'm'ameith, 171f. Mim'ir (or Mim), 6, 7, 10, 12, 42, 57, 171, 277. Mioln'ir, 59, 100, 103, 118f, 121f, Mioth'vitnir, 383. Mist'arblindi, 98. Mith'garth, 3, 12, 68, 70, 90f, 137. Mith'garth-worm 12, 14, 15, 97, Mó'insheim, 221, 231. Mun'arheim, 198, 209. Mú'spelheim, 13, 265. Myrk'vith (Myrkwood), 115, 188, 222, 328, 332f. Nafn'abulur, 140. Nann'a (a lady), 155. Nann'a (Baldr's wife), 65. the Niar'a (r), 189, 193f. Nibelungenlied, 240, 247f, 289, 296, 312, 331, 352f. Nifl'hel (Nifl'heim), 57, 81f, 136, the Nifl'ungs, 156, 221, 288f. Niorth, 56, 63, 65, 71, 75f, 106, 113f.

INDEX

Nip'ing, 383.	Rand'grith, 70.
Nith'a-fells, 16.	Rand'vér, 157, 370, 379.
Nith'a-fields, 9.	Rat'atosk, 69.
Níth'hogg, 9, 16, 69.	Ráth'barth, 157.
Nith'i, 383.	Rath'grith, 70.
Nith'oth (Nīthhād), 186f.	Ráths'ey-Sound, 87.
Nó'atún, 56, 65, 125.	Ráth'svith, 383.
Nokk'vi, 155.	Reg'in, 243, 252f, 284, 383.
Nonn, 68.	Reg'inleif, 70.
Nor, 53, 133.	Reg'in Thing, 222.
Norf'i, 120.	Reifn'ir, 156.
Nór'i 282	Rhine, 190, 216, 257, 298, 313,
Nór'i, 383. Norn(s), 1, 4, 212, 264.	336f.
Norn'agests báttr, 240, 307.	Ríg (Heimdall), 2, $140f$.
	Rín, 68.
Northr'i, 383. Not, 68.	Rind, 8, 166.
	Rinn'andi, 68.
Nótt, 53.	Rith'il, 268.
Ný'i, 383. Ný'ráth 383	Rog'heim, 210.
Ný'ráth, 383.	Rón, 203, 217, 253.
Nyt, 68.	Roskv'a, 104.
Odďrún, 295, 305, 311, 324f.	Roth'ulsvoll, 200, 210.
Od'oacher, 370.	
Offrin (a someont) 60	Rune Poem, 17, 42.
Of'nir (a serpent), 69.	Sæ'fari, 153. Sæ'hrimnir, 66.
O'in, 253.	Sæ'konung, 154.
Okeanos, 12.	
Ó'kólnir, 9.	Sæ'morn, 199. Sæ'mundr Sig'fússon, xf.
O'laf, 212.	
Olaf the Saint, 321.	Sæ'reith, 197.
Ol'móth, 155.	Sæv'arstath, 191.
Ol'rún, 187.	Ság'a, 64.
Óm'i, 73.	Sag'a Ness, 219.
On'ar, 383.	Sal'gofnir, 237.
ór'i, 175, 384.	Sáms-Isle, 111.
Orkn'eyinga saga, 143.	Sann'getal, 72.
Orkn'ing, 351.	Sath, 72.
Orn'i, 182.	Sax'i, 322.
Orv'ar Odds saga, 156.	Saxo Grammaticus, viiif.
Orv'a Sound, 216.	Semnones, 232.
Ósk'i, 73.	senn'a (flyting), 48, 85, 105.
O'skopnir, 265.	Serpent, see Mithgarth-worm.
Oth, 6, 158.	Sev'a Fell, 229, 233f. Sif, 95, 100, 105, 117.
Oth'in 1, 4, et passim; 179f, 214, 232f, 238f, 252f, 275f, 293,	Sil, 95, 100, 105, 117.
232f, 238f, 252f, 275f, 293,	Sig'ar (brother of King Hogni),
307f, 339	225, 315.
Oth'ling, 153f.	Sig'ar (messenger), 196.
Oth'rœrir, 35, 42.	Sig'arsholm, 201.
Otr, 252f.	Sig'arsvoll (Sigars-Field), 196,
Ott'ar, 150f, 152f.	208f, 213.
Ovid, 11.	Sig'father, 72, 118.
Peder Claus'sön, ix.	Sig'geir, 219, 315.
Pliny, 143.	Sigg'trygg, 154.
Ræv'il, 258.	Sig'hvat Thórth'arson, xx.
Ragn'arsdrápa, 380.	Sig'mund (King), 151, 196, 211f,
Ragn'ars saga loð'brókar, 157.	238f, 257f, 262f, 315.
Ragn'a-Hrópt, 43.	Sig'mund (son of Sigurth), 287,
Ran, 166.	297, 300.

Sig'ný, 213, 219f. Sigr'drífa, 43, 271f, 308. Sigr'linn, 198f. Sigr'un, 210, 215f. Sigr'ur, 339. Sigruth (Sigfrit), 149, 151, 156, 196, 213, 239f, 252f, 366f. Sig'urth Ring, 220. Sig'yn, 9, 120. the Sikl'ings, 315. Silfr'intopp, 68. Sin'fiotli, 196, 211f, 229f, 238f. Sin'ir, 68. Sin'mara, 172f. Sin'rióth, 197. Síth, 67. Síth'grani, 129. Síth'hott, 72. Síth'skegg, 72. Skáf'ith, 384. Skáld'skaparmél, x, 151, 380. Skath'i, 65, 76, 89, 106, 116f, 159. Skat'alund, 309. Skegg'iold, 69. Skeith'brimir, 68. Skekk'il, 155. Skelf'ir, 153. Skilf'ing (Othin), 74. Skilf'ing (a race), 153f. Skin'faxi, 50. Skiold, 151, 179. the Skiold'ungs, 153f, 179, 271. $Skiold'unga\ saga,\ 149.$ Skirf'ir, 384. Skírn'ir, 75f, 115. Skíth'blathnir, 71. Skog'ul, 69. Skoll, 10, 70. Skrym'ir, 91, 104, 119. Skuld (a norn), 4, 5. Skuld (a valkyrie), 7. Skúr'hild, 155. Slag'fith, 187. Sleipn'ir, 71, 113, 136, 161, 252, 277. Slíth, 9, 68. Snæv'ar, 311, 351. Snœr, 145 Snorr'a Edda, ixf, et passim. Snorr'i Sturl'ason, viiif, passim. Snow Fell, 213. Sœk'in, 67. Sogn, 221. Sokk'mímir, 73. Sokkv'abekk, 64. Sól'ar, 311, 351.

Sól'biart, 178. Sól'blindi, 170. Sól'heim, 221. Sorl'a þáttr, 123. Sorl'i, 370, 377f. Spar'in's Heath, 222. sp@ 'prophecy', 1. Spor'vitnir, 222. stafn'búi (forecastle man), 202. Stag, 262. Stark'ath, 42, 215, 227f. Stave Ness, 216. Stór'verk, 230. Strond, 68. stuðl'ar, xxvi. Styr Cliffs, 230. the Suevi, 198. Sun Fell, 213. Surt, 12, 13, 51f, 59, 115, 172. Suthr'i, 383. Sutt'ung, 20, 34f, 82, 135. Sváf'nir (King), 198f. Sváfn'ir (Othin), 74. Sváf'nir (a serpent), 69. Sváfr'thorin, 169. Sval'in, 70. Svan, 153. Svan'hild, 156, 304f, 311, 369f. Svar'ang, 91. Svar'in's Hill, 196, 217, 227. Svart'hofthi, 160. Svath'ilferi, 161. Svá'va, 154f, 226. Sváv'aland, 198f. Svegg'iuth, 221. Svip'al, 72. Svip'dag, 163f. Svip'uth, 221. Svithr'ir, 73. Svith'ur, 73. Sví'ur, 383. Svol, 67. Svós'uth, 53. Sylg, 68. Tacitus, 45, 56, 147, 232. Tethys, 130. Thakk'ráth, 195. Thekk (a dwarf), 383. Thekk (Othin), 72. Thialf'i, 93, 104. Thiats'i, 64, 89, 117, 159, 182. Thioth'mar (Theodemer), 321. Thioth'numa, 68. Thioth'rek (Theodoric), 312, 321. Thióth'rœrir, 46. Thióth'vara, 176. Thioth'vitnir, 66.

Thír, 142f. Val'tam, 137. Van (nom. pl. Van'ir), 1, 5, 6, þið reks saga, 186, 192, 240, 262, 12, 56, 63, 113. 283, 289, 356. Ván (river), 115. Tholl, 68. Tholl-Isle, 205. Van'aheim, 56. Thór, 6, 14, 59, 63f, 68, 85f, 97f, 105, 111, 117f, 127f, 145, 150f. Vand'il's Shrine, 233. Var, 175. Var insfirth, 204, 217. (daughter of Hákon), Thór'a Varin's Isle, 219. 294, 314. Thór'a (wife of Dag), 155. Vár'kald, 169. Vath'gelmir, 254. Vé, 3, 15, 42, *112*, 159. Thór'ir, 155. Thór's Ness, 219. Thrá'in, 383. Thrall, 142f. Veg'drasil, 175. Veg'svinn, 68. Veg'tam, 137, 139. Thrith'i, 72. Verth'andi, 4, 5. Thrór, 73. $\mathbf{Vestr'i},\ 383.$ Thrúth, 70. Thrúth'gelmir, 54. Vethr'folnir, 69. Vé'ur, 99. Thrúth'heim, 63. Viggʻlær, 233. Thrym, 121f. Thrym'gioll, 170. Víg Dales, 233. Vigg, 383. Thrym'heim, 64. Víg'rith, 52, 265. bul 17, 34, 40, 50. Thund, 66, 74. Ví'kar, 42. Thuth, 72. Thyn, 68. Tind, 156. Tron'u Strand, 216. Víl, 68. Vil'i, 3, 15, 42, 58, 112, 159. Vil'meith, 160. Vil'mund, 324f. Vin, 68. Typhoeus, 120. Týr, 63, 97f., 106, 114, 275. Tyrf'ing, 156. Vind'alf, 383. Vind'kald, 169. Vind'sval, 53. Ulf the Gaping, 155. Ving'i, 311, 344, 351f. Ulf (son of Sæfari), 153. Ulf'heðin, 197. Ving'skornir, 271. Ulf'rún, 161. Ull, 63, 71, 339. Ving'thór, *121*, 129. Vín'ó, 68. Un'a Bay, 217. Virf'ir, 384. vís'uhelming, xxiv. Un'i, 175. Víth, 67. Víth'ar, 13, 14, 59, 66, 106, 108. U'ote, 247. Urth, 4, 5, 35, 166, 178. Uth (Othin), 72. Vith'i, 66. Uth (or Unn, river), 166, 232. Vith'ófnir, 172f. Vaf'thrúthnir, 48f, 74. Vith'olf, 160. Vithr'ir, 112. Vith'ur, 73. Vak, 74. va'la(nom. sg; gen.,volu), 'seeress', 1. Vóf'uth, 74. Val'askialf, 64. Vols'unga saga, 213, 219, 232, 279, 283*f*, 290, 295, 312, 324, 332, 369, 375. Vald'ar, 315. Val'father, 2, 13, 59, 66, 72, 274f. Val'grind, 67. the Vols'ungs, 156, 196, 224f, 297. Val'holl 7, 56, 64f, 96, 116, 128, Vol'und (Wayland), 186f, 309. 150f, 175, 219, 234f, 293. Vón, 68. Vál'i (son of Othin), 8, 138, 159, Vond, 68. 166. Vór, 126. Váľi (a wolf), 9, 120. Vos'uth, 53. val'kyries (catalogue of) 7, 69. Wel'andes geweorc', 191. Val'land, 90, 187. Wind'helm, 237.

Wind-home, 15.
Wô'den (Óthin), 4.
Wolf, see Fenrir.
Wolfdales, 187f, 309.
Wolf Lake, 187f.
Xenophon, 26.
Ý'dal, 63.
Ygg, 4, 7, 8, 15, 42, 49, 64, 73f, 98, 271.
Ygg'drasil, 2, 4, 6, 12, 42, 57, 67f, 171f.

Ylf'ing, 226. the Ylf'ings, 153, 196, 218, 224f. Ylg, 68. Ym'ir, 3, 52, 54, 70, 160. Yng'linga saga, 12. Yng'ling(s), 153f, 300. Yngv'i (a dwarf), 384. Yngv'i(-Frey), 115, 153, 222, 257, Yngv'i (son of Hring), 222. Yrs'a, 185.

