Völsunga Saga
ICELANDIC TEXTS

GENERAL EDITORS
Sigurdur Nordal and G. Turville-Petre

VÖLSUNGA SAGA

* THE SAGA OF THE VÖLSUNGS
The Saga
of the Volsungs

Edited and Translated
with Introduction, Notes and Appendices
by
R. G. Finch
Senior Lecturer in German
The Queen’s University, Belfast

NELSON
CONTENTS

Introduction
1 The Volsungs and Wagner vii
2 Fornaldarsögur and Volsunga saga viii
3 Volsunga saga and its analogues ix
4 The basic themes, the major variations and their significance xiii
5 History, myth and fairytale xxxii
6 The immediate literary sources of VS and the date and place of its compilation xxxvi
7 The manuscripts xxxviii

Editions of Volsunga saga xxxix

Bibliography and Abbreviations xlv

Icelandic Text
Icelandic Text verso i

English Translation recto i

Appendices
A To visit Odin 81
B Aslaug and Heimir verso and recto 82
C The general correspondence between Volsunga saga and its extant literary sources 85

Glossary of Technical Terms 91

Index 95
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to express my thanks to Dr P. Salmon, Dr D. Slay and Professor W. Walker Chambers for their assistance with some bibliographical and other details, and to Professor H. E. Hinderks for his help and constant encouragement. I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Professor G. Turville-Petre for all his helpful advice, and to Professor P. G. Foote whose valuable suggestions have done much to improve this book. Remaining deficiencies must, of course, be set solely to my own account. Finally I wish to thank my wife for all her help, direct and indirect, at every stage of the work.

R.G.F.
INTRODUCTION

1 The Volsungs and Wagner

Although a knowledge of Iceland’s mediaeval saga literature is now becoming more widespread, it is still far from having come into its own, and Njall, Egill and Hrafnkell scarcely enjoy the fame of Beowulf, Roland or the Cid. Whereas the latter belong, if only as names, to the common literary stock of the average educated reader, the former, as yet, do not. The main characters of Völsunga saga, however, are a notable exception to the rule, and the saga-writer’s statement in ch. 23, that his hero’s name ‘is current in all the languages spoken north of the Greek Ocean and so it will be for as long as the world endures’, contains a germ of truth. There can be but few who have not heard of Sigurd (or Siegfried), his deeds of bravery, his love for Brynhild (or Brünhilde) and his murder at the hands of those he trusted best, for Richard Wagner drew largely on the lays of the Icelandic Poetic Edda for the basic material of Der Ring des Nibelungen, and on Völsunga saga which, although containing additional material and differing in certain matters of detail, is essentially a prose retelling of the relevant Eddaic lays.

Wagner’s Ring cannot, however, be equated with the ancient Scandinavian legends that it seems to tell: it is by no means a modern dramatisation of Völsunga saga or of the Eddaic lays, and Wagner, in attempting to recreate the primitive ‘myth’ became an innovator on a grand scale whose genius produced an entirely new ‘myth’ in accordance with his poetic and musical purpose. His approach to the material was eclectic and arbitrary. For example, the shattering of Wotan’s spear by Siegfried with a sword of his own forging is pure invention, as is the claim that Siegfried is the child of an incestuous union between brother and sister, although according to Völsunga saga, his half-brother, Sinfjotli, was indeed born of such a union. Sigurd’s mother in Edda and Saga was named Hjordis, not Sigelinde who appears as his mother in the MHG epic das Nibelungenlied. Odin (i.e. Wotan) is not, in the Icelandic version, solely responsible for despoiling the dwarf of his gold: moreover, the dwarf’s name was Andvari, not Alberich, whom Wagner took over from the Nibelungenlied, where he plays a different rôle. In fact, the ‘Rheingold’ springs largely from
Wagner’s fertile imagination, and the idea of the inevitable conflict between lust for power, symbolised by the ring, and true love is his alone, arising in part at least, as so many of his themes, out of the social and political situation of his day.

2 Fornaldarsögur and Völsunga saga

The *fornaldarsögur*,¹ the Sagas of Ancient Times, the genre to which *Völsunga saga* belongs, deal with semi-historical or legendary events and personages of Scandinavian history before the colonisation of Iceland (870–930), and of early East Germanic history, thus embracing both the later Viking Age and the Age of Migrations. These sagas are often termed romantic, and if one of the characteristics of Romanticism is a nostalgic looking back to the glories of a distant and largely imaginary past, then to that extent at least the majority deserve the epithet. Of course, a marked preoccupation with history characterises the bulk of Iceland’s mediaeval prose, whether it be the earliest historiography proper, such as Ari Þorgilsson’s *Book of the Icelanders* (*Íslendingabók*) and the *Book of the Settlements* (*Landnámabók*), or the Kings’ Sagas, or indeed the great Family Sagas. These latter, written before the *fornaldarsögur*,² tell of events in the comparatively recent past, Iceland’s own heroic age, extending approximately from 930 to 1030. Here, history is combined with art, fact with fiction, but however fictitious the material, the historical effect is ever striven for, and with considerable success. *Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða*, for instance, is so convincing in its realism that although almost entirely fictional, as shown by Professor Sigurður Nordal, it was long believed to rest on genuine historical tradition. It is a far cry from such a saga to the typical *fornaldarsaga* where the wondrous and fantastic tend to gain the upper hand, where the human is replaced by the well-nigh superhuman, where the heroic spirit degenerates into mere heroics and literary qualities count for little. *Völsunga saga* is unfortunately not exempt from such strictures. Sigurd himself, in the one full description given of him (ch. 23), is pictured as larger than life, nor is it enough for him merely to kill the man who has dealt him a mortal wound:

¹ The term derives from the title of C. C. Rafn’s collection, *Fornaldar Sögur Nordrlanda*, 1829–30.
² The *fornaldarsögur* have a pedigree at least as respectable as that of the Family Sagas; there is evidence to show that tales akin to the extant *fornaldarsögur* were known to early oral tradition, see C. Tolkien, *The Saga of King Heidrek the Wise*, 1960, viii, and de Vries, *Altnord. Lit.* II, 426 f.
he throws his sword which slices his murderer clean through at the 
waist (ch. 32). There are, in general, ample adventure and letting of 
blood for their own sakes. There are also some structural weaknesses, 
e.g. Signy’s two children are twice slain, Brynhild is twice betrothed 
to Sigurd, and her residence seems to vary between a ‘shield castle’, 
a normal Norse hall, and a castle surrounded by a wall of leaping flame. 
These deficiencies may not all be due to the failure of the compiler of 
the saga to remove some of the inconsistencies in his sources—a less 
skilled interpolator may be partly responsible. It must, however, be 
admitted that the compiler has on the whole little feeling for the poetry 
of his poetic originals. That he should, where necessary, use words 
and phrases more appropriate to saga style than the often purely poetic 
vocabulary of his sources is right and proper—that he should 
occasionally, e.g. in his rendering of *Sigurdarkvida in skamma*, st. 6–12 
(the beginning of ch. 32), dismiss lines of considerable force in a few 
trite sentences, is hardly excusable. 

Yet in spite of all, it is difficult not to be impressed by this tale 
which has as much to do with character and fate as it has with the clash 
of arms. Sigurd’s youthful self-confidence that defies the curse on the 
treasure changes into the realisation that he is inextricably enmeshed in 
the toils of fate. Brynhild, whose code of honour cannot but demand 
the death of the man she loves and from whom fate has kept her apart, 
voltarily ends her life in the flames of his funeral pyre. Hogni meets 
death with a laugh on his lips, and his brother Gunnar achieves true 
heroic stature in defeat. Such material, however naïvely presented, 
cannot fail to make its impact, even on the sophisticated reader of the 
twentieth century.

3 *Volsunga saga and its analogues*

(a) *Scandinavian*

(i) *Volsunga saga* (*VS*). The oldest MS dates from c. 1400. The 
saga itself was compiled not later than c. 1260–70, probably in 
Iceland, though possibly in Norway (see section 6).

(ii) The *Poetic Edda* (*PE*). The oldest MS (Codex Regius) dates 
from c. 1270.¹ The date of the original compilation is uncertain: not 
after c. 1250 and possibly as early as the second half of the twelfth 

INTRODUCTION

century. Eighteen of the lays preserved in the Codex Regius relate to the Volsung material and of these twelve, along with some of the connecting prose, were utilised by the compiler of VS, which also contains a prose redaction of a lost section of PE (a complete gathering, probably eight leaves).

(iii) The Prose Edda of Snorri Sturluson (SnE). The oldest MS dates from the early fourteenth century. The original work was not completed before 1225. The second section (Skáldskaparmál) contains a brief version of the material.

(iv) Píðriks saga af Bern (PSS). The oldest MS dates from the end of the thirteenth century. It was compiled in Norway probably c. 1250–60. The Volsung story is one of the heroic themes woven into the legendary history of Theoderic the Great, Ostro-Gothic ruler of Italy (493–526).

(v) Norna-Gests Pátrr. Preserved in two MSS of Óláfís saga Tryggvasonar, it dates from the fourteenth century and gives an abbreviated account of the earlier part of the material, ending with Sigurd’s death and Brynhild’s journey to the underworld. There are some accretions.

(vi) Völsungsírmur. These are six late mediaeval Icelandic metrical romances, corresponding to VS ch. 1–8, the oldest MS dating from c. 1550. They were probably written shortly before 1400 and may be based on a rather different and older version of VS than that extant.

(vii) Scandinavian ballads. The earliest MSS date from the sixteenth century. The ballad tradition began in Norway probably c. 1300; the Faroese ballads are at least a century later. The relevant extant ballads are—Norwegian: Sigurd Seein (there is also a Swedish version); Danish: Sivard Snarevensd (the Norwegian Sigurd Seein),


2 See Jónsson, SnE vi. There is a later paper MS which is a copy of a lost vellum dating from c. 1280: see. F. Jónsson, Litt. II, 678 f.

3 See de Vries, Altnord. Lit. II, 342

4 See Bertelsen, viii

5 See Bertelsen, iv

6 See R. C. Boer I, x

7 See de Vries, Altnord. Lit. II, 442

8 See Bj. K. Pórólfsson, Rímur fyrir 1600, 1934, 49 and 300 ff.

9 See F. Jónsson, Litt. II, 835; M. Olsen, ed. lxxii ff.; Pórólfsson, op. cit. 304, does not agree.
INTRODUCTION

Sivard og Brynhild (there are also some Norwegian fragments), Grimhilds Hævn; Faroese: Regin Smiður, Brinhild, Högni.1

(viii) The Hven Chronicle, translated from Latin into Danish in 1603, gives a markedly divergent version of the material. The original Latin is not extant.2

(b) German

(i) Das Nibelungenlied (NL). The earliest MSS date from the thirteenth century; the poem itself was written not later than the early years of that century, probably before 1204.3 The MSS containing a complete text append the Klage, probably written c. 1220–1230.4 It tells of the obsequies of the dead heroes. There are also two Middle Dutch fragments of NL (MS ‘T’).

(ii) Seifrid de Ardemont. Written by Albrecht von Scharfenberg c. 1280, this romance is preserved only in the late fifteenth-century redaction by Ulrich Füetrer in his Buch der Abenteuer.5 Siegfried is linked with Arthurian romance and becomes a knight of the Round Table. After many adventures he marries the princess Mundirosa and they live happy ever after.

(iii) The Anhang zum Heldenbuch. The Heldenbuch was first printed in 1477. Its text is close to that of a slightly older Strasbourg MS which contains a preface later published as a supplement (Anhang) to the Heldenbuch. The Anhang gives a confused version of mainly the latter half of the NL though it also contains elements of an ancient Nibelung tradition.6

(iv) Das Lied vom Hurnen Seyfrid (HS). This is only extant in printed texts dating from the sixteenth century and was probably written in the fifteenth century, though it contains some older traditional material. It deals chiefly with the hero's youthful exploits.7

(v) Der Hurnen Seufrid, a drama by Hans Sachs written in 1557 and based partly on HS, partly on the MHG der Rosengarten, and partly, perhaps, on some third, unknown, source.8 It ends with the hero's death and a promise of vengeance.

---

1 See Schneider I, 70 f.
2 See Hven. 14
3 cf. de Boor, Nibelungenlied, xxxix f.
4 See de Boor, Lit. II, 167, and Die Klage mit den Lesarten sämtlicher Handschriften, ed. K. Bartsch 1875
5 See Merlin and Seifrid de Ardemont von Albrecht von Scharfenberg, in der Bearbeitung Ulrich Füetrer, ed. Friedrich Panzer, 1902
6 cf. Schneider I, 93. The relevant text may be found in W. Grimm, Die Deutsche Heldensage, 4th ed. 1957, 332 ff.
7 There is an excellent edition by Professor K. C. King, Manchester University Press 1958.
8 See Hans Sachs, Der hurnen Seufrid, ed. E. Goetze 1880
INTRODUCTION

(vi) _Volksbuch vom gehörnten Sigfrid_. A chap-book first printed in 1726 and based on _HS_.

References to the Volsung-Nibelung legend in mediaeval literature are widespread. Sigmund and Sinfjotli (OE Fitela) are mentioned in the OE _Beowulf_ and in the fragmentary tenth-century Norse poem _Eiríksmál_; Volsung (OE Wæls), Sigmund’s father, is also named in _Beowulf_. Gjuki (OE Gifica) and his son Gunnar (OE Guðhere) are mentioned in the OE _Widsip_, and the latter and Hogni (OE Hagena) appear in the OE _Waldere_. The _Flateyjarbók_, a late fourteenth-century Icelandic compilation of Kings’ Sagas, mentions Sigurd as best bearing the torments of Hell. As Sifrit, he appears in thirteenth-century MHG poems (extant only in late MSS) of the Dietrich cycle (cf. (a) above), viz. _der Rosengarten_, _Biterolf und Dietleib_ and _die Rabenschlacht_. The thirteenth-century MHG poets Hugo von Trimberg and der Marner make passing references to Nibelung tradition. _Waltharius_, a mediaeval Latin poem dating from the Carolingian or Ottonian era, belongs to the same cycle as the OE _Waldere_ and also treats of characters known to Nibelung tradition. Even an occasional historical chronicle, such as the late thirteenth-century Latin _Chronica Hungarorum_ of Simon Kézái, makes use of Nibelung material. Names of some of the main characters, e.g. Haguno, Kriemhilt, Nipulunc, Sigfrid, Sintarfizzilo (Sinfjotli) and Welsunc (Volsung) appear as personal names in German deeds and charters as early as the eighth and ninth centuries.

A knowledge of the legend has often stimulated artistic and literary

---

1 See E. Bernböft, _das Lied vom hörnten Sigfrid_, Rostock 1910, 98
2 Klaeber, l. 874 f.
3 See F. Jönsson, _Litt._, I, 446 f. The numerous references in skaldic poetry to the Volsung cycle are listed and discussed by H. Hungerland, ‘Zeugnisse zur Volsung- und Niflungensage aus der Skaldendichtung (8–16 Jh.)’, _Arkiv XVI_ (1904), 1–43, 105–42.
4 Klaeber, l. 897
5 R. W. Chambers, _Widsith_, 1912, ll. 19 and 66
6 F. Norman, _Waldere_, 2nd ed. 1949, I 25, II 15. The names Güdere and Sigeferd appear in the OE poem _The Fight at Finnsburg_ (Klaeber, 245 ff.) which is not part of the Volsung-Nibelung cycle.
7 _Flateyjarbók_, I, 416
8 Especially st. 322–70 of the A version, see G. Holz, _Die Gedichte vom Rosengarten zu Worms_, 1893
9 See O. Jänicke, _Deutsches Heldenbuch_, Teil 1, 1866
10 E. Martin, _Deutsches Heldenbuch_, Teil II, 1866
11 In his _Renner_, ed. G. Ehrismann, 1908–11, ll. 16188–94
12 Ed. Philipp Strauch, 1876, XI 2, XV 14
13 Ed. K. Strecker, 1947, with German translation by P. Vossen
14 See Wais, _Frühe Epik_, 32 f.
15 See e.g. Heusler, NSL, 29, and Baesecke, _Vorgeschichte_, 278
INTRODUCTION

imagination. Scenes from the Volsung cycle have been found carved in wood or stone in Sweden, Norway and England and possibly on the Isle of Man. The Icel. Laxdaela Saga seems to reflect the Sigurd-Brynhild-Gudrun triangle, while the late Icel. Filipó rímur shares at least a motif with VS. Ibsen's The Vikings at Helgeland has obvious affinities with VS, and there are several nineteenth-century German literary treatments of the theme apart from Wagner's, and more recently Max Mell wrote a drama, Der Nibelunge Not.

4 The basic themes, the major variations and their significance

VS falls into five sections:

(a) Chapters 1–12. Sigurd's genealogy in narrative form.

Sigurd, outlawed for murder, is helped by Odin, his father, and founds a kingdom. Sigurd is slain but is avenged by his son, Rerir, who remains childless until he eats an apple sent by Odin. His son is Volsung, father of Sigmund and of Signy. Sigmund wins a sword plunged into the great tree growing in Volsung's hall, for he alone can draw it forth. Volsung, treacherously attacked by Siggeir, Signy's unloved husband, falls in the battle; his sons are captured, set in stocks in the forest and left to a lingering death. A she-wolf appears every night, devouring brother after brother until Sigmund alone remains. He slays the wolf, escapes and lives on in the forest, Siggeir believing him dead. Signy's two sons are too cowardly to be of help to Sigmund in avenging his kinsmen, and Signy, herself eager for vengeance, contrives to sleep unrecognised with her brother and bears him a son, Sinfjotli, who is thus doubly in the line of Volsung and with Sigmund a worthy avenger. After preliminary exploits, including a period as werewolves, they fire Siggeir's hall. Signy, her vengeance complete, chooses to perish in the flames. After further adventures, mainly with his half-brother Helgi, Sinfjotli is poisoned by his stepmother, Borghild. Sigmund falls in battle, his sword breaking against Odin's spear.

(b) Chapters 13–25. Sigurd's birth and youthful exploits.

Sigmund's second wife, Hjordis, gives birth to Sigurd at King Hjalprek's court after her husband's death. Sigurd's foster-father, Regin, a smith,

---

2 See de Vries, Altnord. Lit. I, 384
3 Ed. by Th. Wisen in Riddara-Rímur, Copenhagen 1881
4 Published 1858
5 See E. Tonnellat, La Légende des Nibelungen en Allemagne au XIXè Siècle, 1952
6 Max Mell, Der Nibelunge Not, Pt I, 1943; Pt II, 1951
persuades him to ask the guardians of his father's property for a horse. His request is granted and Odin helps him in his choice. Regin tells Sigurd of his father, Hreidmar, of his two brothers, Ott, who often assumed the semblance of an otter, and Fafnir. The god Loki, journeying with Odin and Heimir, slew Ott in his animal shape. Hreidmar demanded that in compensation they stuff the otter skin with gold and then heap gold over it. Loki extorts the necessary gold, including the ring, Andvaranaut, from the dwarf, Andvari, who lays a curse upon it. Fafnir murdered his father, appropriated the gold and guards it in the semblance of a dragon. Sigurd agrees to slay Fafnir if Regin provides a sword. Sigurd shatters his first two swords, but the third, Gram, forged from Sigmund's broken blade, stands every test. Sigurd persuades Gripir his uncle to tell his future. ThenSigurd avenges his father, afterwards seeking out Fafnir. Helped in his strategy by Odin, he slays the dragon. He roasts its heart for Regin, burns his fingers and in cooling them tastes Fafnir's blood. He immediately understands bird language, and from the twittering above him learns of Regin's proposed treachery, and of Brynhild. He slays Regin, loads Fafnir's treasure, including the sword Hrothgar on to his horse, mounts and rides off. He finds a warrior asleep in a 'shield castle'. This is Brynhild, a former valkyrie. Sigurd awakens her from an enchanted sleep, a punishment laid upon her by Odin who also doomed her to marriage, though she swore she would accept none who knew fear. Brynhild teaches Sigurd runic and other wisdom and they plight their troth. Sigurd next visits Heimir, Brynhild's brother-in-law. He finds that Brynhild is also there and they renew their vows.

(c) Chapters 26-33. Sigurd's marriage to Gudrun, his death and Brynhild's suicide.

King Gjuki and his wife, Grimhild, have three sons, Gunnar, Hogni and Gutorm, and a daughter, Gudrun, who knows Brynhild, described here as Atli's sister. Brynhild interprets Gudrun's dream as foretelling two marriages and their consequences. Sigurd arrives at Gjuki's hall and becomes a great asset. He forgets Brynhild because of a potion administered by Grimhild, and marries Gudrun, becoming blood-brother to Gunnar and Hogni. Gunnar determines to win Brynhild, but cannot pass the flame barrier surrounding her hall. Sigurd exchanges shapes with Gunnar and succeeds in his stead. Brynhild accepts the supposed Gunnar, and for three nights they share the same bed with drawn sword between them. Sigurd takes from her Andvaranaut, the ring he had earlier given her in his own person, substituting another. Brynhild later gives Aslaug, her daughter by Sigurd, into Heimir's care, and marries Gunnar. When bathing together, Brynhild claims precedence over Gudrun by wading farther into the river. Quarrelling, they argue the merits of their respective husbands, and Gudrun shows Brynhild Andvaranaut, thus revealing the deception. Brynhild feels herself betrayed and perjured, for she
INTRODUCTION

had sworn to marry him who braved the flames. To Gunnar she implies that when Sigurd slept with her in Gunnar's semblance, he betrayed Gunnar's trust, and she urges his murder. Gunnar consults Hogni, alleging Sigurd's misconduct, adding that his death would enhance their wealth and power. Hogni stresses Sigurd's value to them and advises against the killing, but Guttorm is incited to the deed; he transfixes Sigurd with a sword as he rests in bed with Gudrun. Sigurd slays his murderer, comforts Gudrun who still has her brothers, and dies. Brynhild laughs on hearing Gudrun's moaning. She now denies Sigurd's misconduct, stabs herself, mounts Sigurd's blazing funeral pyre, and so dies.

(d) Chapters 33-40. The death of Gunnar and Hogni and Gudrun's vengeance.

Gudrun reluctantly marries Atli who, greedy for her brothers' gold, treacherously invites them to a feast. Despite ill-boding dreams and Gudrun's warning they set out. On arrival at Atli's hall, they are attacked and captured. Gunnar refuses to reveal where the gold is hidden until he sees his brother's bloody heart. Hogni's heart is cut out. Gunnar exults that now he alone knows the secret which he will never disclose. He dies bravely in a snake pit. Gudrun, to avenge her brothers, slays her children by Atli, serving him a grisly meal of their hearts and blood. Later, helped by Hogni's son, Gudrun stabs Atli and fires his hall.

(e) Chapters 41-44. Gudrun, Svanhild and Jormunrek.

Gudrun tries to drown herself but the waves carry her to the land of King Jonakr whom she marries. Their sons are Hamdir, Sorli and Erp. Svanhild, Gudrun's daughter by Sigurd, is promised to Jormunrek, but he has her trampled to death beneath horses' hoofs for misconduct with his son. Hamdir and Sorli set out to avenge Svanhild. They kill Erp through a misunderstanding. After hacking off Jormunrek's hands and feet they put up a stout resistance for they are charmed against iron. On Odin's advice they are stoned to death.

VS is linked to Ragnar's saga Loðbrókar through the person of Brynhild's daughter by Sigurd, Aslaug, whom Ragnar marries (for her early history see Appendix B).

It is clear from this summary that a break occurs between sections (c) and (d): Gjuki's sons slay Sigurd, their sister Gudrun's husband, this central event being preceded by an account of his ancestors and youthful exploits (a, b, c = Part I); Gjuki's sons are slain by Atli for their gold and avenged by Gudrun, now Atli's wife, whose unsuccessful attempt at suicide leads the story a stage further (d and e = Part II). Two separate stories concerning the same family are, in fact,
XVI INTRODUCTION

loosely linked through the person of Gudrun. It is in the conception of her rôle that the main variation lies, for in NL Kriemhilt avenges, not her brothers on Etzel, but Sifrit on her brothers! Which theme is the older? More archaic is that of VS where blood ties mean more than marriage and clan solidarity enjoins acquiescence in the murder of one husband, and the vengeful destruction of another. The NL, where, through love of her dead husband a wife wreaks vengeance on his murderers, kinsmen or no, seems more 'modern', and in that it makes for the greater artistic unity of Parts I and II, less loosely linked than in VS, it is surely also the later in origin. Other considerations point to the same conclusion. How does it happen that Sifrit's murderers, while journeying to Etzel, are warned of the hostility facing them by a man who, in the service of their friend, the Margrave Rüdegër, nonetheless bears the name of Kriemhilt’s faithful follower, Eckewart? Even granting that two different characters have been confused, it is still difficult to see how ‘Eckewart’ happened to know Kriemhilt’s secret plan which Dietrich von Bern, alone of Etzel’s entourage, suspects. It is only if ‘Eckewart’ is seen as a messenger originally sent by Kriemhilt to warn her brothers of treachery that the incident makes full sense. Moreover, it is only in this same context that Kriemhilt’s joy on seeing her kinsmen arriving with ‘full many a new shield and gleaming hauber’ can be explained. There is little doubt that Kriemhilt’s rôle in the NL is an innovation and a development of Gudrun’s.

Does this imply that an Austrian poet in writing NL adapted a Scandinavian tradition? Andreas Heusler, a great scholar in the heroic Germanic field, did not think so. NL, he believed, was an expansion and fusion of two earlier poems that had evolved in clearly defined

1 In NL the name Kriemhilt appears for Gudrun, Uote for Grimbild, Sifrit for Sigurd, Etzel for Atli, Brühilt for Brybilde, Gibeche (though not as Kriemhilt’s father, whose name appears as Dancrat) for Gjuki, Gunther for Gunnar, Hagen for Hogni, while two characters, Giselher and Gernôt do duty for Guttorm. In NL Kriemhilt, Gunther and his brothers are of the Burgundian royal house.

2 SnE agrees here with VS, and PE, the other analogues which contain Part II, including PSS, agree essentially with NL. Atli’s remark on vengeance, VS ch. 38, may be a faint echo of the German tradition.

3 H. Becker, Warnlieder I, 1953, 272 ff. argues most implausibly for an earlier origin.

4 NL st. 1635

5 See Heusler NSL, 55 and cf. de Boor, Nibelungenlied, xxxiv

6 NL st. 1717

7 His Nibelungen publications began in 1905 with Lied und Epos in Germanischer Sage und Dichtung and culminated in Nibelungensage und Nibelungenlied, 1922, 5th ed. 1955.
INTRODUCTION xvii

stages. The first part of NL was the final stage III of the first poem. It was preceded by an unwritten Brünhilt Lay of the late twelfth century (stage II), which had developed from an unwritten Frankish Brünhilt Lay of the fifth to sixth century (stage I). The second part of NL was stage IV of the second poem. This was the final form of a written Austrian epic dating from c. 1160, dealing with the destruction of the Burgundians, i.e. Hagen, Gunther, etc. (stage III). This in its turn was based on an unwritten ninth-century Lay of the Burgundians in which Kriemhilt acted against her brothers (stage II), and this had developed from a fifth-century Frankish lay in which Etzel was the attacker (stage I). The Brünhilt Lay (stage II) and the Austrian epic (Lay of the Burgundians, stage III), were the major sources of PSS, while stage I of the Frankish lays gave rise to the Eddaic lays of Sigurd and Athi, and thus form the nucleus of Parts I and II of VS. Heusler also held that a second wave of German influence on Scandinavian tradition made itself felt in the thirteenth century.1

Heusler’s theory of development replaced the earlier theory of K. Lachmann 2 who had believed NL to consist of twenty linked lays, and this theory became orthodox belief, though modifications and objections have been made. A. Tonnelat 3 stressed how conjectural his theories were. Doubting the existence of the earliest stages, he suggested 4 that the lays belonged not to the fifth century, but to the eighth to ninth and were deliberately flavoured with earlier historical material. More extreme is H. Becker 5 who dismisses the idea of antecedent stages, 6 believing that NL is essentially the original work (soon revised by others) of a twelfth-century poet who drew on some traditional material including a twelfth-century lay of Sifrit’s youthful exploits which perhaps found an echo in Scandinavia. 7 The Eddaic lays of Sigurd’s and Athi’s death derive, he thinks, from NL itself via corrupt (oral) versions in which Etzel’s character was blackened. 8

2 K. Lachmann, Über die ursprüngliche Gestalt des Gedichtes von der Nibelungen Noth, 1816
3 In his La Chanson des Nibelungen : Étude sur la Composition et la Formation du Poème épique, esp. 180 ff. Tonnelat’s ideas are influenced by the theories of the French Romance scholar, J. Bédier, who in his Les Légendes épiques, 1908, denies a long literary evolution to the French Chansons de Geste.
4 Op. cit. 302
5 H. Becker, Warnlieder, 1953
D. von Kralik believed Heusler's theory too simple to fit the facts. For Heusler's Brünhilt Lay he postulated three concurrent lays, a Brünhilt Lay (Siegfried wins Brünhilt for Gunther and is murdered in consequence), a Grimhild Lay (Siegfried is murdered for his treasure), and a humoristic parody of the former, Grimhild's Wedding.

The first two, originally unconnected with the Burgundians, continued alongside new versions with the Burgundian milieu. Amid a welter of subjective argument one important concept emerges: that of originally parallel lays fused together, and Hermann Schneider, long, in most essentials, a follower of Heusler, came to express similar views.

Kurt Wais has produced the most interesting theory of recent years. He, too, believes in a complex development of early lays and his arguments are more objective than Kralik's. A Frankish Brünhilt Lay, he argues, differing markedly from Heusler's, developed into the extant German and Scandinavian versions of Sigurd-Sifrit's death. The Lay of the Burgundians, he suspects, was complete in itself, Kriemhilt's vengeance on Attila being added later. Nor did the earliest Kriemhilt Lay, Gothic in origin, deal with Attila's death, but with subsequent quarrels concerning the succession, Kriemhilt supporting her son against the sons of another wife. His argument here seems ultimately to rest on a (perhaps too) firm belief in the value of Kezai's chronicle (see above) and on the antiquity of an Eddaic lay, Guðrúnarkvida III, usually judged to be of late origin. This earliest Kriemhilt Lay became linked and intimately fused with Gunther-Attila material, Kriemhilt avenging her brothers. Kriemhilt was later equated with Sifrit's widow, originally a different person, and becomes Sifrit's avenger.

Three important corollaries emerge from his arguments: first, the

1 D. von Kralik, *Die Sigfriedtrilogie im Nibelungenlied und in der Thidrekssaga, erster Teil*, 1941, 870 ff. Subsequent volumes dealing with the genesis of the second half of the NL never appeared, but this, too, he believed, had evolved from more than one lay (p. 15); in *Von deutscher Art in Sprache und Dichtung, II*, 1941, 224 f. he speaks of a 'Grimhildrache' and a 'Nibelungennot'.

2 Op. cit. 14


4 Op. cit. 120 ff.


6 Op. cit. 66, 680

7 See H. Schneider, *Die deutschen Lieder von Siegfrieds Tod*, 1947; the idea was not entirely alien to Heusler, see NSL, III.

8 Kurt Wais, *Frühe Epik Westeuropas und die Vorgeschichte des Nibelungenliedes*, I, 1953, contains an essay by Hugo Kuhn, 'Brünhild und das Kriemhildlied'.

9 e.g. de Boor, *Attila*, n. 55; de Vries, *Altnord. Lit. II*, 147 f.; F. Jónsson, *Litt. I*, 299

10 That such a fusion could bring about the result required by the author seems rather doubtful.
INTRODUCTION

extensive interaction of early lays; second, the need to reassert the concept of legendary tradition independent of poetic form; and third, the far-reaching influence of Volsung-Nibelung material on Romance and Celtic literature.

Some scholars find fault with Heusler’s Austrian Epic, denying its existence, or modifying its content and suggesting a different time or place of origin. Others, including G. Baesecke, postulated a Siegfried Epic (instead of a Brünhilt Lay) as the stage immediately preceding the first part of NL. Baesecke also asserted that the earliest Lay of the Burgundians was actually of Burgundian (not Frankish) origin. He agreed with Heusler that the change in Kriemhilt’s rôle was due to Bavarian tradition which saw Attila in a favourable light, and not as a villain, but insisted that this new rôle was the only one known in Germany. De Boor had postulated that the conception of Attila in VS, SnB and PE was unknown to German heroic tradition and Kriemhilt’s original rôle is certainly inseparable from that conception. However, the case against an early German lay with Attila as murderer and Kriemhilt as avenger of the Burgundians is not proven, but even

1 It was axiomatic for the Heusler school that the heroic tradition was inseparable from and indeed identical with heroic poetry, see e.g. Schneider I, 19, though much later he changed his opinion, see H. Schneider, ‘Einleitung zu einer Darstellung der Heldensage’, Beiträge LXXVII (1955), 76; Askeberg, 106, also hints at a legend independent of poetic form; see also F. Genzmer, ‘Vorzeitsaga und Heldenlied’, Kluckhohn—Schneider Festschrift, 1948, 1 ff., and Hans Kuhn, ‘Heldensage vor und ausserhalb der Dichtung’, Genzmer Festschrift, 1952, 262 ff.

2 Leo Jordan, ‘Girartstudien’, Romanische Forschungen XIV (1903), 321 ff. had believed that mediaeval French epics were developed from Germanic heroic material. G. Brockstedt in several publications between 1907 and 1912 asserted the opposite, viz. the French origin of NL, and although his theory found little favour, scholars generally hold that French influence on the NL is unmistakable, e.g. S. Singer, Germanisch-Romanisches Mittelalter, 1935, 232 ff.; F. Panzer, Das Nibelungenlied, 1955, 62, 280 f., 314 f. Heusler himself agreed that certain elements were borrowed from France (Heusler, NSL, 21), and even Wais admits some cross-fertilisation (op. cit. 52 f.).

3 e.g. F. Panzer, op. cit. 275
4 e.g. H. Hempel, Nibelungenstudien, 1926, esp. 203 ff.: it also contained a version of the Sifrit story.
5 e.g. H. Hempel, op. cit. 3 ff.: Rhineland, c. 1125
6 G. Baesecke, Vor- und Frühgeschichte des deutschen Schrifttums, I, Vorgeschichte, 1940, 240 f.
7 G. Baesecke, op. cit. 270 ff. Schneider I, 442 seems to imply that the Burgundians did not create the heroic lays that have come down to us.
8 G. Baesecke, op. cit. 275 ff. and A. Heusler, NSL, 29 f.
9 G. Baesecke, op. cit. 275 f.
10 de Boor, Attila, 24
11 A passage in Waltharius (320 ff.) may be evidence of the existence of a German lay in which Kriemhilt plays her original rôle, cf. Schneider I, 198 f., and de Boor in his NL edition now follows closely in Heusler’s footsteps.
if it were, it far from follows that Kriemhilt, now in Attila’s rôle, acted from any motive other than that belonging to the rôle, viz. greed for gold. It is tempting to think that the later mediaeval interest in the manifestations of love and passion which began to set such a marked stamp on German literature in the latter part of the twelfth century, if not itself the reason for Kriemhilt’s new rôle, was at least responsible for the creation of a new motivating element, the desire for vengeance on the murderers of her now adored husband.

From the presence of Kriemhilt’s original rôle in Scandinavia and his belief in its absence in Germany, Baesecke inferred the transmission of continental Germanic heroic material to the North without German mediation, as de Boor had argued earlier. Such a theory runs counter to the Heusler school who believed that all the Burgundian-Gothic heroic themes reached Scandinavia via Germany. Fritz Askeberg, a Swedish scholar, argued vehemently against Heusler. He insisted that the absence in Northern tradition of specifically German themes (e.g. Iring, Wofdietrich, Walther) spoke against the idea, and that there was evidence that links existed between the Goths and the North during the Migrations. Askeberg also argued for an interchange of traditions between the Scandinavian Baltic and Germany along the North Sea coast. The German Sifrit material has certainly a northern orientation: Sifrit’s Nibelungen domains are in Norway, while Brünhilt is Queen of

---

1 When Kriemhilt greets her kinsmen on their arrival in Etzel’s palace, she speaks of the treasure, not her love for Sifrit.
2 The reference of the mediaeval Danish historian, Saxo Grammaticus, to a minstrel singing of Grimhild’s treachery against (not vengeance on!) her brothers in 1131 (see Saxo Grammaticus, Gesta Danorum, ed. A. Holder, 1886, 427) is not proof of the existence of the new vengeance theme at that date nor even of the changed rôle, since Saxo was writing not earlier than 1179 and probably much later. It only shows that Kriemhilt’s new rôle was known in the late twelfth century (cf. E. Tonnelet, Nibelungen 185 ff.). Wisniewski, Niflungen, 286 ff., 302 ff. argues that parallel to the stage of development showing Kriemhilt as the avenger of Sifrit, there existed a version in which both Kriemhilt and Attila act against her brothers, Kriemhilt using Attila’s greed as an instrument of vengeance.
3 Baesecke, op. cit. 268, 270
4 de Boor, Attila, 26 ff.
5 See Heusler, Alteredmanische Dichtung, 151, and Schneider I, 33, and cf. p. xiv above
6 Fritz Askeberg, Norden och Kontinenten i gammal tid, 1944
7 Askeberg, op. cit. 103. He seems to equate German Nibelungen scholarship (which he mercilessly flays) with the Heusler school, and to be unaware that German scholars had thought on lines similar to his own.
8 Askeberg, op. cit. 104. Heusler admitted the possibility of a Scandinavian tradition in the NL in one instance only, see Heusler, NSL, 92. H. Schneider and others have also argued for Scandinavian influence on the German tradition, see Schneider I, 182.
INTRODUCTION

Iceland,¹ not normally the home of princesses wooed by German knights-errant.²

Where among these theories lies the truth? That early Germanic heroes were celebrated in song is indisputable, that some of the characters belonging to the Volsung-Nibelung cycle were famed in Germany and the North long before NL and PE is certain, and that Sigurd-Sifrit, Gudrun-Kriemhilt and Atli-Etzel should be unknown to heroic tradition before the late twelfth century is scarcely credible. Heusler's belief in a lengthy development is surely justified, though the number and content of the early lays and the nature of their development cannot be finally determined from the source material extant. It is also quite possible that legendary and heroic traditions were not restricted to poetic form, that Scandinavia received the Burgundian-Gothic themes without mediation, and to answer the original question, that the Austrian poet, though not adapting a Scandinavian tradition, was using material that may have come under Scandinavian influence.

So much is certain: the German version of the Burgundian catastrophe is adapted from an older tradition to which VS is more faithful. As regards the second major variation the position is less clear. In VS, Sigurd is betrothed to Brynhild before he marries Gudrun-Kriemhilt, whereas in NL this is not the case, though in it there are passages that might indicate a German pre-acquaintance motif, deliberately, albeit imperfectly, effaced, presumably lest Sifrit's love for Kriemhilt be sullied by an earlier liaison.³ It is doubtful whether such a liaison would have had that effect—it is not unheard of in medieval literature for a knight to leave one lady for another without incurring particular censure ⁴—and it is also doubtful whether the passages in question provide the required evidence. Admittedly, Sifrit knows of Brünhilt (st. 330) and of the resplendent apparel worn at her court (st. 344), and he acts as helmsman on Gunther's voyage to Iceland because he knows the proper routes (st. 378)—but then,

¹ Panzer, Nibelungenlied, 322 ff. repeats his earlier theory that the story of Brünhilt's wooing derives from a Russian fairytale, and does not admit that the NL references to Island (Iceland) and Norway betray Scandinavian influence; he sees Island as an echo of the name of Brünhilt's stronghold, Isenstein (Iron Stone, i.e. Fortress), and Norway as an artificial parallel to it.
² Isolde, admittedly of western extraction, was princess of Ireland, but so was the unquestionably Germanic Hilde of the MHG epic Kudrun.
³ cf. Tonnellat, Nibelungen, 215
⁴ Witness Gawain's exploits in Wolfram's Parzival and those of Parzival's father, Gahmuret.
INTRODUCTION

heroes were often credited with such knowledge and Sifrit is acquainted with routes in general (the German has a plural). Thus he knows when they arrive (st. 382) and avoids a dangerous impasse through his knowledge of local etiquette (st. 407): there is no need to assume an earlier meeting with Brünhilt. Admittedly, she greets Sifrit by name (st. 419)—after a retainer had informed her (st. 411) that one of the strangers resembled Sifrit—but she may simply have addressed herself to the most outstanding man present: it need not imply that either she or the retainer had seen Sifrit previously, for Sifrit’s fame preceded him: Hagen, too, ‘knew’ Sifrit on his arrival at Worms without having seen him before (st. 86). Sifrit’s earlier confirmation that the lady Gunther singled out for special praise was none other than Brünhilt (st. 939) can perhaps be viewed in a similar light or attributed to Sifrit’s ‘heroic knowledge’. Brünhilt’s attitude towards Sifrit speaks against rather than for an earlier betrothal. She informs a retainer (st. 416) that she does not so fear Sifrit that she will submit to marrying him if he comes as a suitor, and her welcome (st. 419) is extremely uncordial. Later, she greets Sifrit differently from his companions (st. 511), and if this implies a continued lack of cordiality, such lack is not necessarily due to pique over a broken engagement—any aggressive plan she may have had would be frustrated by the reinforcements he had brought.

Brunhilt’s tears at the wedding banquet (st. 618) have been ascribed to disappointment at not marrying Sifrit. Even if this is so, her feeling for Sifrit need not antedate Gunther’s expedition. Brünhilt’s own words (st. 820) imply that she had seen neither Gunther nor Sifrit previously, and her explanation (st. 620), viz. that she is grieved because Kriemhilt, now her sister-in-law, in marrying Sifrit is marrying below her station (in Iceland Sifrit had pretended that Gunther was his lord) is entirely reasonable in a mediaeval context.

External evidence is not compelling. The account in HS of Sifrit’s

1 cf. Volker’s knowledge of trans-Danubian territory (NL, st. 1586, 1594 and Horant’s knowledge of Hagen and Hilde of Ireland (Kudrun, ed. Boesch) 1954, st. 214, 226 f.) shared by his comrade-in-arms, Wate (Kudrun, st. 241 f.),

2 Especially as the incident which leads to Sifrit’s display of knowledge is probably a later addition, modelled on st. 1745, cf. de Boor, Nibelungenlied, st. 406, note.

3 He, too, is said to have a knowledge of foreign lands (st. 82).

4 Arguments against the early existence of the pre-betrothal theme similar to those above have been advanced in other quarters, e.g. King, HS, 95, who in a footnote refers to Golther, writing in 1888, and Zarncke in 1856.

5 See, e.g. Schneider, I, 177

6 A strained interpretation on a par with the idea that Isolde loved Tristan before drinking the fateful potion.
rescuing a maiden from a dragon is almost certainly not the German version of Sigurd's awakening of Brynhild and is not proof of the existence of the pre-betrothal motif in Germany. In PSS, which purports to be based on German sources, Sigurd does meet Brynhild before Grimhild (= Gudrun-Kriemhild) though she is not asleep and no betrothal takes place; a later retrospective reference to a betrothal may be due to contamination with purely Scandinavian tradition. Moreover, the whole episode with its fight between Sigurd and Brynhild's men be a later reference to a betrothal may be largely a distorted version of the Gunther-Sifrit expedition, where success in winning Brünhilt's hand depends not on passing a flame barrier, but on superior prowess.

Lastly, the 'Lectulus Brunnehilde', the name of a particular configuration of rocks in the Taunus attested since 1043, is not necessarily connected with the Volsung-Nibelung cycle and may reflect the fame of the historical Visigothic princess, wife of Sigibert I, the Merovingian king who ruled Austrasia from 561 to 575.

The evidence is inconclusive and but for the Scandinavian tradition might never have seemed significant. Sigurd's betrothal to Gunnar-Gunther's future wife may be as native to Scandinavia as Kriemhilt's vengeance on her brothers is to Germany.

It need not, however, follow that the episode of Sigurd's awakening a maiden from an enchanted sleep is itself purely Scandinavian, since it could exist independently of any link with Gunnar-Gunther's wife. The name of the valkyrie punished by Odin may not, in fact, have been originally Brynhild. In the Eddaic Fáfnismál and Sigdrífumál she is called Sigdríf(a), nor is the exchange of vows recorded, and the Gripsipa also makes a distinction between an (unnamed) valkyrie and Brynhild. A 'Sleeping Maiden' adventure, without a specific Norse milieu, and without reference to Brünhilt, could thus also have belonged to the German Sifrit's youthful exploits, and the 'Sleeping Beauty'
story is known from Grimm¹ though there is no certain link between this and Sifrit.²

A major problem concerning Brynhild remains: her suicide. It is not an atonement for instigating the murder of the man she loved since the duty of vengeance took priority over most other considerations.³ In VS it is closely connected with her love for Sigurd—separated in life, united in death. It can also be seen as a form of ‘suttee’⁴ whereby Brynhild claims her place at Sigurd’s side, and either redeems her broken oath to marry the man who braved her fire, or heroically anticipates the doom incurred in breaking her oath. But there is no proof that Brynhild’s love for Sigurd existed outside Scandinavian tradition: in NL, Brünhilt’s tears at the wedding are poor evidence (see above), and she sheds none at his death.⁵ What of the oath? It may be significant that Brynhild’s oath to marry a fearless, or the noblest man, or the man who performed certain deeds, is always sworn when, opposed to the whole idea of marriage, she is compelled to marry someone, by Odin (ch. 21), by her father Budli (ch. 31). In NL, however, Brünhilt who likewise has no intention of marrying, and has regularly vanquished all her suitors, is a sovereign princess. Her connection with Odin is probably non-existent (see above), she is unrelated to Budli (MHG Botelunc) and under no compulsion. And she swears no oath. Nor does she commit suicide.⁶ Some scholars⁷ hold, that although absent from NL, her suicide did belong to earlier German tradition, being an atonement for her lie (which is not recorded in German tradition!) about Sigurd-Sifrit’s conduct⁸ when he slept

¹ Märchen der Brüder Grimm, ed. J. Lefitz, 1927, 81 ff.
² cf. p. xxxiv
³ The fact that Sigurd had been made to lose all memory of Brynhild and so deceived her unwittingly did not excite him the consequences of the deception (cf. de Boor, Attila, 15 and n. 24). The notion of forgetfulness is a late invention dependent on the pre-betrothal motif.
⁴ In Norse literature there are indications that in Scandinavian antiquity a dead man’s widow or betrothed might immolate herself at his funeral (see E. O. G. Turville-Petre, Myth and Religion of the North, 1964, 272 ff., H. Shetelig, ‘Traces of the custom of “Suttee” in Norway during the Viking Age’, Saga Book of the Viking Society, VI, 1908–09, 180 ff.). The fact that the earlier custom was still remembered in the hey-day of Icelandic literature is not proof that Brynhild’s suicide is itself early.
⁵ NL st. 1100 shows her indifference to the grief displayed by Kriemhilt.
⁶ Neither does PSS mention her suicide, though the A version states that she died soon after Sigurd (see Bertelsen II, 268).
⁷ e.g. Heusler, NSL, 10, Baesecke, Vorgeschichte, 243
⁸ Despite Aslaug, his son by Brynhild, introduced to provide a link with the Norwegian royal house, and despite his behaviour in PSS very likely due to a later coarsening of taste, Sigurd’s conduct was probably as described in VS, beyond reproach (cf. Heusler, NSL, 89 f.; Schneider I, 430, Baesecke, Vorgeschichte, 242).
with her in her husband’s place. But such a lie needs no atonement—it is a legitimate weapon in the pursuit of vengeance. And vengeance saves face! Her suicide would have been no ‘hara-kiri’ occasioned by dishonourable marriage, especially if she managed to doom her husband as well as Sigurd by tricking him with a lie into breaking his oath as blood-brother.  

Brynhild had triumphed, thus blotting out her degradation—why then suicide?  

Her heroic death, along with pre-betrothal and love motifs, may well be a late Icelandic innovation.

Along with Brynhild’s desire for vengeance, there appears another motive behind Sigurd’s murder. In VS (ch. 32) Gunnar exclaims that on Sigurd’s death ‘the gold and all the power will be ours’. The theme of envy (and fear) of Sigurd’s power, absent in VS apart from this instance appears in PE, pSS, NL, HS, and there is a hint of it in SnE. This was not a late addition to the dominant vengeance theme, which is only weakened by the secondary motive, though the latter may have been originally at least as important. The quarrel between the two princesses, present, though differing in detail, in all the full versions, always arises from rival claims to precedence based on the superiority of their respective husbands, and the insult offered to Brynhild may be seen as an excuse for action against a dangerous upstart whose influence threatened the royal power. To assume that Brynhild’s deception was not part of the original poetic material is unwarranted, yet it is not impossible that the envy-fear theme is central and rests on some actual historical circumstance to which imaginative material was added.

Closely associated with the envy-fear theme is Hogni-Hagen. In

---

1 The Eddaic Brot (st. 5 and 16) makes it likely that Gunnar was so tricked, despite the evidence of the (later) Eddaic Sig. in sham. where Gunnar avoids breaking his oath, for there is no hint of any betrayal on Sigurd’s part that would justify him (cf. H. Kuhn, ‘Brünhildes und Kriemhilds Tod’, ZfdA LXXXII (1950), 191 f.), but his oath was possibly a Scandinavian device, causally linking Gunnar’s death with Sigurd’s murder.  

2 Suicide in Germanic antiquity seems to have been considered more honourable than being executed, taken captive (after a battle) or, if a woman, violated (see G. Trathnigg, ‘Selbstmord bei den Germanen’, ZfdA LXXII (1936), 99 ff.). These circumstances hardly apply to Brynhild.  

3 J. de Vries believes that the late Icel. heroic elegies, including Sig. in sham, which gives the one full account of Brynhild’s suicide (apart from the dependent version in VS), are translations of postulated eleventh- and twelfth-century Danish-German poems, see also W. Mohr, ‘Jüngere Eddalieder südgermanischen Stoffes’, ZfdA LXXV (1938), 217 ff., also his ‘Wortschatz und Motive der jüngeren Eddalieder’, ZfdA LXXVI (1939), 149 ff.

4 Brot, st. 8, 9, 10, Sig. in sham, st. 16; pSS ch. 388; NL st. 870, 993; HS st. 174 ff.; SnE ch. 50.

5 NL st. 110 shows Sifrit laying claim to Gunther’s dominions at their first meeting.
INTRODUCTION

VS, PE, SnE and HS he is Gunnar-Gunther's brother, in PSS Gunnar's half-brother whose father was an elf, and in NL and Waltharius his vassal and distant kinsman. What was his original status? His name does not alliterate with his brothers' and this speaks against an original brother relationship, which relationship in HS is surely a promotion from his NL status. His supernatural antecedents in PSS are probably late, but the half-brother relationship may be early Scandinavian, with subsequent promotion to brother: half-brother Hogni in PSS is Sigurd's murderer; in PE, VS and SnE where Hogni is a full brother, it is Guttorm who is the murderer, but in SnE Guttorm is a stepbrother, probably an echo of Hogni's former status. Was Hogni-Hagen a half-brother in the primitive tradition?

Since he regularly appears as a kinsman of some sort, to deny him all kinship seems unwarranted; yet the Scandinavian texts show clear traces of his NL rôle as Gunnar's right-hand man and elder counsellor, an unusual capacity for a younger brother or half-brother, and it seems safest to assume that the North made a closer genealogical link and that here NL is nearest the original tradition.

The part played by Hagen in the murder of Sifrit in NL differs markedly from Hogni's in VS. In NL he sides with Brünhilt, insists on Sifrit's death, murders Sifrit in the forest—the younger brother having spoken in Sifrit's favour—and utters words showing that he was envious and afraid of Sifrit. In VS and PE Hogni opposes Brynhild and the murder; it is Brynhild who reveals she feared Sigurd's power (in one instance Gunnar is greedy for his wealth) and the youngest brother who murders Sigurd in his bed. A shift of balance has taken place. In Scandinavia the strengthening of Brynhild's rôle perhaps caused a transfer of Hogni's fear to her, his envy passing to Gunnar. But NL also knows Brünhilt as co-instigator and the blow aimed at her prestige and status during the quarrel scene, whether or not combined with the vengeance motive, might well have led her to consider Sigurd-Sifrit's death as politically expedient. Gunnar's greed may, however, be old. In Waltharius he behaves like a robber baron, Hagen first

1 cf. King, HS, 83
2 See de Boor, Nibelungenlied, xiv. For the contrary opinion see e.g. Schneider 1, 385 f., Panzer, 313 f.
3 SnE, 169, cf. also the late Hyndlolið, st. 27 (Neckel, 288)
4 Baesecke Vorgeschichte, 242 f. answers negatively, as does King, HS, 83 and Wisniewski, Niflungen, 242 f.; in the affirmative, e.g. Schneider 1, 193 f. Heusler, NSL, 53 believes Hagen was a retainer in the original Frankish Brünhilt Lay, and a half-brother of elfish origin in the original Frankish Lay of the Burgundians.
5 In Gdr. II he is murdered in the forest.
opposing him, though later saving him by decisive action. This is very like the pattern found in VS and PE. Hogni was certainly Gunnar’s (reluctant) accomplice, and Brot st. 5, 7, 16 and Hamðismál st. 5, 6 speak of murderers or perjurors in the plural, Hamðismál st. 6 actually referring to Hogni as murderer. The original Hogni-Hagen was perhaps a reluctant assassin whom German tradition presented as chief instigator and Kriemhilt’s main antagonist, transferring to him Gunther’s eagerness, fear and envy. These sentiments were in Scandinavia largely transferred to Brynhild, who may, however, have expressed them independently. The casting of the younger brother as murderer was surely an Icelandic innovation, designed to enable Gunnar and Hogni to avoid breaking their oaths to Sigurd, as was probably Sigurd’s vengeance on the murderer and the indoor setting of the deed. In NL the body is laid at Kriemhilt’s door, in PSS it is thrown on to the bed where she is sleeping, and a transfer of the actual murder from the forest to Gudrun’s bed seems probable.

Sigurd-Sifrit’s youthful adventures are only loosely connected with the theme of his murder. They figure prominently in the major Scandinavian sources and in HS. NL mentions them indirectly: Hagen tells how Sifrit was asked by two brothers, the princes Nibelunc and Schilbung, to divide their inheritance between them. He took in payment the sword Balmunc. Sifrit failed to complete the task and the brothers grew angry. Sifrit seized Balmunc, slew twelve giants, their friends, seven hundred warriors, then the brothers themselves, overpowered the dwarf Alberich and became master of Nibelungenland, the treasure and a cloak of invisibility. Later he slew a dragon, bathed in its blood and became largely invulnerable. Reference is later made to a gold wand, part of the treasure, that bestows unlimited power. In VS, PE and SnE the treasure is the dragon’s and there is no independent treasure adventure. Who originally owned the treasure? None of the German sources associate it with the dragon (HS expressly

1 In VS Part II he plays a not dissimilar rôle, first trying to dissuade Gunnar, but then finally helping him.

2 A similar reference occurs in Ghv. st. 4 where it is copied from Hm. (see F. Jónsson, Litt. I, 316, n. i). The Hm. reference could directly reflect the contemporary German tradition, though the Scandinavian indoor slaying is linked to it.

3 See p. xxv, n. 4.

4 Probably a development of the earlier theme found in NL where Hagen barely escapes with his life.

5 Unless it be argued that the NL version is the result of the fusion of two independent early accounts of the murder (cf. Heusler, NSL, 128). The prose section following Brot mentions a third version: Sigurd was slain while riding to the Assembly (ping)—this probably never existed, see Schneider I, 181.
denying the association in the case of Seyfrið’s second dragon, an adventure which may partly reflect the original fight), while in \textit{PhS} the connection is made only in retrospect. In German tradition it is mainly associated with dwarfs: in \textit{NL} a dwarf guards it in the hollow mountain appropriate to dwarf ownership, in \textit{HS} the setting is similar, and even in Scandinavian tradition the original owner was a dwarf, nor is it improbable that the \textit{NL} princes were dwarfs later ennobled to suit courtly taste. In Scandinavian tradition both adventures have obviously coalesced, the original inheritors being equated with the dragon and Sigurð’s fosterfather, the dwarf-smith,\footnote{That the smith was a dwarf is clear from \textit{PE}, prose introduction to \textit{Rm.}, though \textit{Fm.} st. 38. l. 2 refers to him as a giant (jötnun).} consistently enough the dragon’s brother and co-heir.\footnote{See Schneider I, 171} Unless there were two treasure adventures, the dragon’s treasure being lost to German tradition,\footnote{See Baesecke, \textit{Vorgeschichte}, 222.} the original monster probably had no treasure.\footnote{See Schneider I, 151, \textit{Panzer, Nibelungenlied}, 300}

What, then, brought about the encounter between Sigurð-Sifrit and the dragon? According to \textit{PhS} and \textit{HS} it was the smith’s wish to get rid of a foster-son whom he found troublesome, for whom—in contrast to \textit{VS} and \textit{PE}—he naturally forged no sword, though in \textit{PhS} he attempts to appease Sigurð with the present of one (along with shield and armour) after the fight. But that the original heroic dragon-slayer should be suddenly set on by his dragon, of whose existence he previously knew nothing—as is the case in \textit{PhS} and \textit{HS}—seems unlikely. It would be more natural for the smith to think of the dragon, rather than his foster-son, as troublesome and to send the foster-son to destroy the menace,\footnote{cf. King, \textit{HS.} 49, 55} providing him with a suitable weapon, in short, the position in \textit{VS} and \textit{PE} less the treasure. Moreover, the \textit{PhS} and \textit{HS} conception of Sigurð-Sifrit as a clumsy or obnoxious lout accords ill with heroic tradition, and if it is a later development, then originally the dwarf-smith would have had no cause to send his foster-son to his doom.

But a difficulty remains: the sword. In \textit{NL} the smith is suppressed and Sifrit’s sword is part of the inheritance. In \textit{Rosengarten} the sword is found at the scene of combat, presumably before, not after, the dragon’s death, since there is no mention of any treasure from which it could come, and in the \textit{HS} second dragon episode, the situation is similar. The finding of a weapon at the crucial moment is an ancient
INTRODUCTION xxix

heroic motif and it is scarcely credible that it should be a late addition. Thus the dragon slaying seems to have existed independently of the smith who may have been later grafted on to the Sigurd-Sifrit material as part of the Sigurd-Sifrit variant of the widespread foundling hero theme, and given, though not in every version, the credit for forging the sword.

The effect of the dragon’s blood differs in the two main traditions: in Scandinavia Sigurd comes to understand bird language, in Germany Sifrit becomes largely invulnerable. These themes, combined in PSS, have this in common, that in both the blood is in a sense prophylactic: Sigurd is saved from a specific danger, and Sifrit receives general protection. Further, HS tells how Seyfrid touched the dragon’s molten scales with his finger, and it is tempting to regard this as a motif cognate with Sigurd’s burnt finger of Northern tradition. But these links are tenuous and there is no real evidence to show what effect the blood originally had. To speculate whether the dragon adventure was originally Sigmund’s, later transferred to Sigurd-Sifrit, and whether Sigmund’s resistance to poison is the origin of Sifrit’s invulnerability solves little. Nor is there evidence to decide whether the treasure was originally accursed or whether the gold wand is related to Andvari’s gold ring. The cloak that renders Sifrit invisible when he helps Gunther to win Brünhilt replaces the older magic, the exchange of shapes.

The other adventures attributed to Sigurd-Sifrit, rescuing a maiden

1 Beowulf’s slaying of Grendel’s mother, a fiendish monster, provides a good example; Klaeber, l. 155 ff.
2 Witness characters as remote from each other as the biblical Moses, the classical Oedipus and the OE Scyld Scefin (Klaeber, l. 45 ff.)
3 de Boor, Nibelungenlied, xxiii, believes that this motif comes from a Celtic source. Panzer, Nibelungenlied, 431, sees quite extensive Celtic elements in Sigurd’s early history, but Schneider I, 432 is doubtful of this. See also J. de Vries, ‘Über keltisch-germanische Beziehungen auf dem Gebiete der Heldensage’, Beiträge LXXV (1953), 229 ff., his Kelten und Germanen, 1960, 130 ff., and his ‘Germanic and Celtic heroic tradition’, Saga Book of the Viking Society, XVI, 1962, 32 ff.
4 As does Schneider I, 166
5 King, HS, 57 rather doubts whether it had any effect whatsoever. However, belief in the saving qualities of blood, human and otherwise, seems ancient and widespread. See P. Cassel, Die Symbolik des Blutes und der arme Heinrich von Hartmann von Aue, 1882.
6 For arguments pro and contra see Schneider I, 158 ff.
7 See Schneider I, 165
8 The emphasis laid on the ring also suggests a special property. Snorri (Jónsson, SnE, 165) mentions that it had the power to produce more gold; it is thus akin to Odin’s ring Draupnir, also of dwarf origin, which could reproduce itself (SnE, 90, 158-60). Some such concept might lie behind the wand and Andvari’s ring.
9 This seems generally agreed.
from a dragon (HS) and avenging his father (VS), are probably
innovations in their respective traditions, and as we have seen, Sigurd"s
preliminary encounter with Brynhild may be an Icelandic innovation.

What of Sigurd"s divine descent and the appearance of Odin in his
central adventures? Odin is clearly extraneous. He belongs rather to
the Sigurd material, and the father-son relationship between Sigurd-
Sifrit and Sigmund, though known to German tradition, need not be
original, for Sigmund is an independent hero and is known as such
even outside Scandinavian tradition, witness Beowulf (II.847 ff.), and
the name Sintarfizzilo, equivalent to Sinfjotli, his close associate,
appears in OHG documents. Moreover, the links between Sigmund
and Sigurd are weak: Sigurd is born posthumously, and the broken
blade inherited from Sigmund is clearly a substitute for an earlier
weapon proper to his own exploits—it is only in German tradition that
Sigmund survives his son and has a minor part in the Sifrit story itself.
The connection between Sigurd and Odin is probably late Scandinavian,
a result of the genealogical link made between Sigurd-Sifrit and
Sigmund.

Sigurd-Sifrit"s early adventures are clearly independent of the story
of his death. They provide the victim of the murder plot with a suitable
heroic background, but whether they were transferred to him from
some other hero, or grew up around him, it is impossible to say. That
a well-known character could attract to himself standard heroic adven-
tures is shown by Theoderic the Goth, who as the legendary Dietrich
von Bern, fights dragons and giants, and this is undoubtedly the case
with Sigurd-Sifrit, who ultimately became a giant killer himself.

Apart from the major variation in Gudrun-Kriemhilt"s rôle, attention
has been focused on differences in themes from the first half of
the material. There are, however, two further variations in the second half
that need comment.

The first concerns the fate of Gunnar-Gunther and Hogni-Hagen. In
Scandinavian tradition it is Gunnar who, after ensuring Hogni"s
silence by getting him killed, refuses to betray to Atli the treasure"s

1 For the HS adventure see Schneider I, 121, and King, HS, 96; Sigurd"s
campaign to avenge his father is unknown outside Scandinavian tradition.
Contamination with the Helgi Hundingsbani material may have caused a
transfer of the adventure from Helgi to Sigurd, see below, p. xxxvi, n. 7.
3 See p. xxxv below
2 A late example of two independent heroes becoming linked genealogically
is found in the grandfather-grandson relationship of Wolfdietrich and Dietrich
von Bern, and in VS Gudrun appears as the mother of Svanhild.
4 See Baesecke, Vorgeschichte, 278
5 In HS
whereabouts, whereas in NL their rôles are reversed. But here Kriemhilt is the enemy, and it is her new rôle that brought about the change in theirs, for Hagen, as Sifrit’s murderer, is Kriemhilt’s natural antagonist, and it is he who must defy and thwart her at the last. Here, too, VS is nearer the original plot.

The second concerns Gudrun-Kriemhilt’s fate: in NL (and in PSS) she is put to the sword, in Scandinavian tradition she unsuccessfully attempts suicide by drowning. Her death seems a fitting conclusion to either of her rôles, for in both, unlike Brynhild, she behaves in a monstrous fashion.

But her original death was not by drowning. Her unsuccessful attempt at suicide by that method is a literary device that brings her to King Jonakr by whom she has sons who link her more closely with the Ermanaric (Jormunrek) cycle—to which she is already linked through being equated with Svanhild’s mother. She may originally have died in the flames of Atli’s hall—in NL she also fires a hall, though here, true to her new rôle, her action is directed against her brothers.

A third tradition, found in the Hven Chronicle tells how Gudrun-Kriemhilt was later starved to death by Hogni’s son, begotten after Hogni had been mortally wounded. In PSS it is Attila who starves, while in the Faroese Högni, both Atli and Gudrun-Kriemhilt meet their death in this way.

Hogni’s son was clearly invented as an instrument of vengeance—but against whom? Any version in which Hogni-Hagen outlives Gunnar-Gunther must surely portray Kriemhilt in her changed rôle as her brothers’ enemy. Thus she, not Attila must have been the original object of vengeance. In the PSS, where Grimhild is slain by Thidrek, Hogni’s son was included, but his vengeance had to be directed against Attila, and in Högni the two acts of vengeance were combined.3

There remains the question of variations in the characters’ names. In some instances they result from normal phonological development in the respective languages, e.g. Atli: Etzel, but this is not so in the case of Sigurd-Sifrit, where the former is equivalent to a German

3 H. Kuhn, ‘Brünhilds und Kriemhilds Tod’, ZfdA LXXXII (1950), 194 ff. believes that the link between Gudrun-Kriemhild and the Ermanaric cycle was a German innovation and that there must have been an early form of the legend in which Kriemhild did not die.

2 Hogni’s son (H)Niflung who helps Gudrun to murder Atli in VS and Am. is probably a faint echo of this tradition.

8 H. de Boor, Die Färöischen Lieder des Nibelungenszyklus, 1918, 209 ff. reaches the same conclusion on different grounds. Wiśniewski, Niflung, 200 f. argues that the original object of the son’s vengeance was Attila.
Siegwart and the latter a contraction of Sigfrit, while Gudrun and Kriemhilt are different names altogether, and the root syllable of the latter appears in various forms. How important are these differences? Kralik sees in them support for his theories. It is doubtful whether they are so significant. The variations may be fortuitous and of no greater importance than the substitution in ‘SS of the name Mimir for Regin, and of Regin for Fafnir.

This examination of the major themes reveals that VS enshrines inherited traditions with a long history and a complex and regrettable obscure development. Yet although the main stories involved are not native to Scandinavia, there can be little doubt that Scandinavia was creative as well as receptive. Not everything came from or via Germany, and some of the most effective scenes in VS may well owe their existence to the fertility of imagination which created native Norse poetry and saga, and made Norse literature unique in mediaeval Europe.

5 History, myth and fairytale

It has long been an axiom that all Germanic heroic poetry derives from some historical event and the names Gjuki-Gibich, Guttorm-Giselhêr-Gernòt and Gunnar-Gunther have historical counterparts in Gibica, Gislaharius and Gundaharius, members of the Burgundian royal house. The destruction of Gunnar, Hogni and their followers by Atli echoes the destruction of the Burgundian kingdom by the Huns (not led by Attila) in 437, linked to an imaginative account of Attila’s death in 451: he was found dead at the side of his Germanic concubine, Ildico, probably Hildico, a diminutive of Hild, whence is said to derive Kriemhilt. Germanic imagination saw his death as an act of vengeance, identified Hildico as Gunnar’s sister and avenger, and thus turned two unconnected events into the story of a family feud.

But what historical personage is reflected in Sigurd-Sifrit? The question has been variously answered. He has been sought for in the

1 See p. xviii and Kralik, op. cit. 444 ff.
2 cf. H. de Boor, ‘Hat Siegfried gelebt?’, Beiträge LXIII (1939), 63, and Wais, Frühe Epik, 42.
3 These names occur in the Lex Burgundionum of the early sixth century (L. R. de Salis in Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Leges I, ii, i), and the name Gundicarius (Gundaharius) occurs in other historical documents.
4 cf. Heusler, NSL, 25, Schneider I, 201
Merovingian period and identified as Sigibert,¹ the ruler of Austrasia who was murdered in 575. He has been equated with the Ostrogoth Araja,² with the German national hero Arminius³ who defeated the Roman Varus in A.D. 9, and with Victorinus,⁴ a Christian Roman officer, martyred at Birten, c. 286. H. de Boor argues for an historical basis not far removed from the power-political theme of the extant texts (see p. xxv): a noble Frankish exile marries into the Burgundian royal house,⁵ becomes too powerful and is assassinated. His cogent arguments are based on the intermingling of Frankish and Burgundian names in the later Burgundian dynasty. F. Panzer⁶ and others held that Sigurd-Sifrit was not an historical personage but a fairytale character, recast in the heroic mould, while earlier a mythical origin for the Sigurd-Sifrit material had been postulated.⁷ The Arminius theory and the idea of an ultimate origin in myth have recently been revived. O. Höfler⁸ sees Sigurd-Sifrit’s victory over the dragon as Arminius’s victory over the Romans transferred to a mythical plane. In the various references of the extant texts to Sigurd-Sifrit in terms of a stag or beast he sees, not a literary motif, but a link with the animal symbolism and cultic ritual of Arminius’s tribe, the Cherusi, a name deriving from Germanic *herut-, ‘stag’. One such instance seems to be the name ‘Hind Fell’ (Hindarfjall) where Sigurd awakens Brynhild, an episode

¹ Early by L. Ernst, Über die Entstehung der mittelalterlichen Gedichte, welche die deutsche Heldensage behandeln, 1839, and most recently by Hugo Kuhn in a study ‘Brühild und das Kriemhild-Lied’, which precedes the main argument in Wais, Frühe Epik. The most thorough study on these lines is G. Schütte, Sigrfrid und Brühild. Ein als Mythus verkannter historischer Roman aus der Merowingerzeit, 1935.


³ e.g. G. Vigfusson and G. York Powell, Grimm Centenary. Siegfried-Arminius and other papers, 1886; A. Beneke, Siegfried ist Armin!, 1911.

⁴ A. Crüger, Der Ursprung des Nibelungenliedes, 1841.

⁵ See de Boor, Nibelungenlied, viii and de Boor, ‘Hat Siegfried gelebt?’, Beiträge LXIII (1939), 250 ff.—revolutionary in the assumption that the Burgundian saga is an integral element in the Sifrit story, and not a later addition.

⁶ In a series of studies extending from 1910 (Studien zur germanischen Sagengeschichte) to 1955 (Das Nibelungenlied. Entstehung und Gestalt). Cf. also F. Schröder, Nibelungenstudien, 1921.

⁷ cf. e.g. Karl Steiger, Die verschiedenen Gestaltungen der Siegfriedsage in der germanischen Literatur, 1873, 33: Siegfried is seen as the redeeming god who in spring slays the winter dragon, frees the gold of the sun, and awakens to life sleeping nature with his sword, a sunbeam. Steiger, with others, associates Sigurd-Sifrit with the Norse god, Freyr (op. cit. 35), K. Lachmann and others with Baldur (cf. K. Lachmann, ‘Kritik der Sage von den Nibelungen’, Rheinisches Museum III (1832), 435 ff.).

⁸ O. Höfler, Siegfried, Arminius und die Symbolik, 1961, esp. 50 ff.
which, if the name is indeed a genuine survival from ancient times before the separation of the Scandinavian and German traditions, may have its roots in the erotic element of the cultic stag-ritual: the stag seeks its hind. In this case, the German Sifrit may have had a similar adventure (see above p. xxiii). F. R. Schröder,\textsuperscript{1} admitting fairytale influence and the presence of elements derived probably from more than one historical personage, lays stress on the mythical basis of the material. His ideas in the last analysis are based on C. G. Jung’s theory of archetypes (also drawn on by O. Höfler). Behind Sigurd-Sifrit Schröder sees the Divine Son in various rôles: his death parallels that of the vegetation god; his slaying of the dragon parallels the destruction of primaeval chaos by the Divine Son, cf. Indra’s similar victory; Sigurd and Brynhild are, he postulates, akin to Indra and Indrani, Freyr and Freyja, pairs which each represent an originally single hermaphrodite divinity, son of Sky God and Earth Goddess, hermaphrodite through acquiring the functions of both parents. This field of inquiry is certainly fruitful, but the derivation of literary motifs from archetypes does not necessarily mean that the archetypes concerned crystallised into literary form at the same time and place or round the same hero. Moreover the story of the historical Sigurd-Sifrit’s murder, influenced by the archetypal pattern, could have drawn to itself the dragon slaying and later the ‘sleeping maiden’ theme.

It seems very probable, as suggested by F. R. Schröder and O. Höfler, that the Sigurd-Sifrit material is a blend of myth, history, fairytale and cultic ritual, though the extant texts also reveal the hand of the creative literary artist.

Is the same true of the early chapters of VS, introductory to the Sigurd material? Sigmund may be a reflection of the Burgundian king Sigismund who reigned from 516 to 523 and who likewise led the life of a fugitive, though the Sigmund story in VS parallels the Fall of the Burgundians and seems modelled on it.\textsuperscript{2} In both a king sends a treacherous invitation to his brothers-in-law who are warned by their sister, the king’s unloving wife, but are overpowered, captured and given over to a cruel death. The sister takes vengeance on her husband: their two sons are slain\textsuperscript{3} and the hall goes up in

\textsuperscript{1} Franz Rolf Schröder, ‘Mythos und Heldensage’, Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift XXXVI (1955), 1 ff.

\textsuperscript{2} Karl Müllerhof, ‘Die alte Dichtung von den Nibelungen, I. Von Sigfrids Ahnen’, ZfdA XXIII (1879), 146 ff. believed that the influence was in the reverse direction.

\textsuperscript{3} Signy’s two sons by Siggeir are twice slain, Sigmund is twice condemned to death before securing vengeance (see Baesecke, Vorgeschichte, 282). Further ‘doublets’ are suspected by Wais, Frühe Epik. 118 ff.
flames.\(^1\) Literary influence is unmistakable. Obvious fairytale elements\(^2\) are the shape-changing episodes, the leaf that restores Sinfjotli, the imperviousness to poison, the tests to which Signy subjects her children,\(^8\) the kneading in of the serpent, the disappearance of Sinfjotli’s body in Odin’s boat.

Sigmund’s father, Volsung, has no historical counterpart. Müllenhof declared the name related to German ‘wählen’, i.e. ‘choose’,\(^4\) Volsung, Odin’s ‘chosen hero’ being destined to destroy Siggeir’s family which, though also descended from Odin, had become degenerate. This etymology is not impossible, but the link between Siggeir and Odin lacks foundation. A sounder link is that postulated\(^5\) between the names Volsung and Volsi which latter appears in \textit{Volsa þâttr}\(^6\) as the name of a phallic fetish, and itself probably means ‘phallus’.\(^7\) There are, in fact, definite traces of a fertility cult in the Volsung-Sigmund material,\(^8\) e.g. the apple sent to Rerir, the tree in Volsung’s hall,\(^9\) the incest motif,\(^10\) the werewolf episode, and it is here that the basic substance of the Volsung-Sigmund story must be sought. Volsi was probably a lesser deity closely associated with Odin in his fertility aspect, or else an hypostasis\(^11\) of that God. That Odin should appear instead of Volsi in \textit{VS} as founder of the Volsung line is thus understandable—less understandable is the appearance of Volsung as Odin’s great-grandson. The name Volsung is a patronymic, as is Wælsing in Beowulf, but Wælsing, i.e. son of Wæls (Volsi), is Sigmund himself.\(^12\) It would thus seem that the Sigi and Rerir of \textit{VS} are later interlopers and that Volsi-Odin’s son

\(^1\) See Schneider I, 148; Baesecke, \textit{Vorgeschichte}, 282; Wais, \textit{Frühe Epik}, 119 f. who also sees parallels between the Volsung-Sigmund story and earlier hypothetical stages of the Burgundian-Kriemhilt-Attila material.

\(^2\) See Baesecke, \textit{Vorgeschichte}, 282.

\(^3\) Perhaps a reflection of ancient initiation rites, see Baesecke, ibid.

\(^4\) A. Heusler (Hoops IV, 444) and H. Kuhn (AfA LVI (1937), 156) similarly relate the name to Gothic \textit{wulis}, ‘chosen’, from the same root.


\(^6\) In Flateyjarbók, II, 331 ff.

\(^7\) The name is related to Icelandic \\textit{völur}, Gothic \textit{valu}, ‘staff’, see F. R. Schröder, op.cit. 222 f.

\(^8\) See de Vries, \textit{Altgerman. Religion} I, 455.

\(^9\) That the tree was connected with the idea of fertility was early suspected by Bugge, \textit{Vols.}, 193, and in ‘Iduns Æbler’, 5 f.; see also p. 4, n. 1.

\(^10\) This motif has been regarded as an example of Celtic influence (see Baesecke, \textit{Vorgeschichte}, 282), though F. R. Schröder argues that it is an element proper to the fertility myth background (see F. R. Schröder, op. cit. 227 f., 233). The withdrawal of the sword from the tree and the disappearance of Sinfjotli’s body in Odin’s boat are certainly reminiscent of the Celtic legend of Arthur (Baesecke, op. cit. 283 ff., cf. Schneider I, 161 ff.).

\(^11\) See F. R. Schröder, op. cit. 223 ff.

\(^12\) \textit{Beowulf}, II, 877–97
was originally Sigmund,¹ the patronymic being later regarded in Scandinavian tradition as the name of a distinct person.

The Volsung-Sigmund material would therefore seem to draw on sources akin to those of the Sigurd story proper.

6 The immediate literary sources of VS and the date and place of its compilation

As mentioned earlier, VS is largely a prose version of certain Eddaic lays preserved in the Codex Regius (CR).² Nothing in PE answers to VS ch. 24–31 (inclusive), for this section preserves in prose form the poems of the lost leaves of CR. Some scholars held that the whole section derives from lays,³ others early denied this for ch. 24 and 25,⁴ while P. Wieselgren sought to demonstrate⁵ that not only did these two chapters never exist in lay form, being largely interpolative (along, as he thinks, with ch. 22), but that even ch. 26, 27 and 28 did not necessarily derive from lays⁶ and also showed evidence of the later redactor. The first section of VS that derives from Eddaic sources is Sigmund's marriage to Borghild and the adventures of their son Helgi.⁷ All the preceding narrative⁸ and that following which had no equivalent in PE (excluding ch. 23, but including certain elements in ch. 24–31) derive from a no longer extant Sigurðar saga,⁹ dating from c. 1200,

¹ F. R. Schröder, op. cit. 225. Þórólfsson, Rimur, argues that the Breði episode was of late origin, specially written in explanation of the word breðaforn, a common enough thirteenth-century procedure. S. Bugge, ‘Bidrag til den germanske Heltegjønning’, Arkiv xiii (nyfødt 1901), 41 ff., sees in it a reflection of an eighth-century Frankish historian’s (‘Fredegar’s’¹⁰) version of the origin of the Langobards.

² Appendix C shows the general correspondence between saga and Edda.
³ e.g. A. Heusler, ‘Lieder der Lücke’, 31 ff.
⁴ e.g. W. Grimm, Die deutsche Heldensage, 4th ed. 1957, 398
⁵ Wieselgren, Quellenstudien, II, 161 ff., 220 ; III, 351
⁶ There has been much speculation as to precisely what the lost leaves of the Codex contained, see e.g. Heusler, ‘Lieder der Lücke’. If Wieselgren is correct, then Heusler’s hypothesis of a German ‘falcon lay’ as the source of the dream motif in ch. 26 is untenable. F. Panzer held that the motif was borrowed from NL itself (see F. Panzer, ‘Nibelungische Ketzereien’, Beiträge LXXV (1953), 261 f.).
⁷ The Heigi story was originally independent of VS and Poetic Edda; Sigmund was turned into Heigi's father only at a later date.
⁸ Þórólfsson, Rimur, 301, argues that the first eight chapters of VS did not exist previously in any one single source.
⁹ See de Vries, Altnord. Lit. II, 207 f. ; F. Jónsson, Litt. II, 837 f. ; Wieselgren, II, 221. The Sigurðar saga has also been thought the source of the Sigurd story in Snorri’s Prose Edda, Norna-Gests þáttr and the prose passages in the Poetic Edda, cf. Jónsson, Litt. II, 838, and it may have been the main recipient of the last wave of German influence on the Scandinavian tradition, see Wieselgren, III, 348, and cf. p. xvii, n. 1.
INTRODUCTION

which may itself draw on earlier lays and in which a lesser or greater number of verses appeared.¹

An extant saga on which VS draws is pSS. Three short passages may derive from it: (a) VS ch. 32: and had I known . . . wild boar (cf. Bertelsen, II 266, ll.17-24); (b) VS ch. 34: Now everyone . . . world endured (cf. Bertelsen, II 268, ll.9–17); (c) VS ch. 35: there's no hiding the fact . . . profit by this (cf. Bertelsen, II 281, ll.9–14). But such derivation is doubtful: it is hard to see why these stray passages should have been taken over and P. Wieselgren suggests² that they derive on both sides from the Sigurðar saga.³ There is, however, no doubt⁴ that Sigurd's description, VS ch. 23, is borrowed from pSS ch. 291.⁵

It would thus seem that VS must have been compiled after pSS, which dates from 1250–60.⁶ In support of this it has been argued that only the example of pSS, compiled at the behest of Hakon Hakonarson, king of Norway (1217–63) could have supplied an incentive for the compilation of VS which also provides, in the person of Odin, divine descent for Hakon whose ancestor, Ragnar Lodbrok, in the saga bearing his name, marries Aslaug, Sigurd's daughter by Brynhild (and VS is not extant except as a 'prelude' to Ragnars saga). Moreover, it is argued, VS is based on CR which is usually assigned a date somewhat later than pSS.⁷

These arguments are not convincing. Firstly, P. Wieselgren argues⁸ that ch. 23 is the work of the interpolator; if so, the date of pSS is not significant. Secondly, that an incentive should have been necessary for expanding the Sigurðar saga with Eddaic material is hard to see. Thirdly, it seems likely that Aslaug did not appear in the original VS but was deliberately introduced to link VS with Ragnars

¹ Sometimes de Vries actually refers to the Sigurðar saga as a 'book of lays' ('Liederbuch', e.g. Altnord. Lit. II, 207, 210) and in fact many, if not all, lays may have needed an accompanying prose narrative (see F. Genzmer, 'Vorzeitssaga und Heldenlied ', Kluckhohn-Schneider Festschrift, 1948, 1–31, and H. Kuhn, 'Heldensage vor und ausserhalb der Dichtung ', Genzmer Festschrift, 1952, 262–78).
³ He believes that other passages in Part II also derive from the Sigurðar saga (op. cit. III, 246 ff.), this would then have included a version of the Atlí material. Wisniewski, Niftingsen, 267 ff., 284, argues that certain passages in part II which have no equivalent in PE derive from a postulated independent version of the Atlí material, drawn on in part by Am. itself, and by a postulated second source of pSS.
⁴ cf. Jónsson, Litt. II, 836; de Vries, Altnord. Lit. II, 438
⁵ Bertelsen I, 344–7
⁶ See p. x, n. 5
⁷ See p. ix
INTRODUCTION

saga. Lastly, not CR itself, but an earlier no longer extant MS of the relevant Eddaic lays was very likely the compiler's source. All that can be said with any certainty is that VS was written between c. 1200 and c. 1270, that it was linked to Ragnars saga, and that a redactor interpolated certain material.

There are certain Norwegian elements amidst the predominantly Icelandic text of our oldest MS of VS which have been thought to indicate that a Norwegian exemplar was used by an Icelandic scribe, and M. Olsen suggested that VS might have originally been Norwegian, though he admitted that the Norwegian elements could have crept in through the copying of an Icelandic MS by Norwegian scribes. There seems little need to postulate an origin other than Icelandic.

7 The Manuscripts

There is only one vellum MS extant, dating from c. 1400: Ny kgl. Saml. 1824 b 40 in the Royal Library, Copenhagen (V). There is also a number of paper MSS, dating from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, which have no independent value since they ultimately derive from V. This is shown by the fact that they not only in general follow V closely, but that for some of the passages where V is now illegible or only partially legible, they substitute a form of words that could only be due to the failure of an early copyist to read those selfsame passages. There are also differences between CR and V where the paper MSS agree with V.

The condition of V has deteriorated since M. Olsen's excellent diplomatic edition (= Ol). His readings for words then legible but now illegible are adopted in this edition, the illegibility being recorded in the textual notes. Some pages have suffered badly, the worst being folio 17 which Olsen found illegible in parts, and which is now totally undecipherable. Examination under ultra-violet light and infra-red photography have proved unavailing.

The text in this edition is in normalised spelling. Emendations,

1 See Wieselgren, op. cit. III, 351. M. Olsen, ed. lxxxi f. holds that VS never existed independently but was specially compiled as an introduction to it.

2 There are a number of factors that speak against CR having been his direct source, e.g. VS st. 11 gives in full Sd. st. 8, defective in CR, and supplements (in prose) the likewise defective Fm. st. 3 and 18.

3 The two sagas were joined before this interpolator set to work, see Wieselgren, op. cit. III, 351 f.

4 See M. Olsen, ed. lxvi ff. D. A. Seip, 'Har Nordmenn skrevet opp Edda-Diktningen ', Maal og Minne, 1955, 3-33 holds that MS Ny kgl. Saml. 1824 b probably derives from an Icelandic exemplar, but that the original work may still have been Norwegian.
INTRODUCTION

other than those of minor scribal vagaries, are indicated in the textual notes, as are the more important differences in Bugge’s text (B).

EDITIONS OF VOLSUNGA SAGA

\textit{Völsunga saga} has previously been edited by:
E. J. Björner (\textit{Nordiska kämpadater XI}), Stockholm 1737
F. H. von der Hagen (\textit{Altnordische Sagen und Lieder}), Breslau 1814
C. C. Rafn (\textit{Fornaldarsögur Nordlands I}) Copenhagen 1829
S. Bugge (\textit{Norrøne Skrifter af Sagnhistorisk Indhold II}), Christiania 1865
E. Wilken (\textit{Die prosaische Edda im Auszuge nebst Völsungasaga und Norna- gestsþátr}), Paderborn 1877, 2nd ed. Paderborn 1912
W. Ranisch (following Bugge’s text), Berlin 1891, 2nd ed. Berlin 1908
T. Hannaas (including a modern Norwegian translation), Christiania 1907
M. Olsen (Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur) 1906–8
Copenhagen
Guðni Jónsson, Reykjavik, 1943-44
Guðni Jónsson (\textit{Fornaldarsögur Nordurlanda I}), Reykjavik 1950

\textit{Previous English Translations of Völsunga saga}

There have been two, the first by William Morris and Eiríkr Magnússon first published in London in 1870 and recently reissued by Collier Books, New York, with an introduction by R. W. Gutman; the second by M. Schlauch published in 1930 (2nd edition 1949).

Professor Schlauch criticises the heavily archaic style of the Morris-Magnússon translation, but none the less aims at a somewhat archaic style on the grounds that ‘even to the Sagaman it was a tale of remote, ancient days of gods and demigods and half mythical kings.’ It was. But there can be little doubt that the legendary heroes were as real to the people of the mediaeval North as those of the more immediate past, and the compiler of \textit{Völsunga saga} aims at presenting his poetic material in straightforward saga style and language. The present translation attempts to provide an English version as free as possible from unnecessary archaisms. In the translation of the verses no sort of claim is made for any close approximation to the original alliterative metres or to the poetic qualities of the Icelandic.
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ABBREVIATIONS

AfdA  Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum
Akv.  Atlakviða (see PE)
Am.  Atlamál (see PE)
Arkv  Arkiv für nordisk filologi
Askeberg  Fritz Askeberg, Norden och kontinenten i gammal tid, 1944
Baesecke,  G. Baesecke, Vor- und Frühgeschichte des deutschen Vorgeschichte, 1940
Bertelsen  Piðris saga af Bern (S.T.U.A.G.N.L.), two vols, 1905-11
R. C. Boer  Die Edda, mit historisch-kritischem Kommentar, ed. R. C. Boer, two vols, 1922
de Boor, Attila  H. de Boor, Das Attilabild in Geschichte, Legende und heroischer Dichtung, 1932
de Boor, Lit.  H. de Boor, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von H. de Boor und R. Newald, 1949 (the volumes dealing with the mediaeval period are by de Boor)
de Boor, Nibelungenlied  Das Nibelungenlied nach der Ausgabe von K. Bartsch, ed. H. de Boor, 13th ed., 1956
Brot (also Br.)  Brot af Sigurðarkviðu (see PE)
Bugge, Vols.  Völsunga saga (Norrsyne Skrifter af Sagnhistorisk Indhold), ed. S. Bugge, 1864
Cleasby-Vigfusson  R. Cleasby and G. Vigfusson, An Icelandic-English Dictionary, 1874
CR  Codex Regius of the Poetic Edda
Detter-Heinzel  Sæmundar Edda mit einem Anhang, ed. F. Detter and R. Heinzel, two vols, 1903
Dr.  Dráp Niflunga (see PE)
Ellis  H. R. Ellis, The Road to Hel, 1943
Fas.  Völsunga saga (Fornaldar sögur Nordrlanda I) ed. C. C. Rafn, 1829
Flateyjarbók  Flateyjarbók, ed. G. Vigfusson and C. R. Unger, 3 vols, 1860-8
Fm.  Fáfnismál (see PE)
Fritzner, Ordbog  J. Fritzner, Ordbog over Det gamle norske Sprog, 1883-96
Grimm  Grimm’s Teutonic Mythology translated by J. S. Stallybrass, 1888
Ghø.  Guðrúnarhvøgt (see PE)
Gðr. II  Guðrúnarkviða II (see PE)
INTRODUCTION

Grp. Gripisspá (see PE)
Heusler, NSL A. Heusler, Nibelungensage und Nibelungenlied, 5th ed., 1955

HH I Helgakviða Hundingsbana I (see PE)
Hm. Hamðismál (see PE)
Hoops *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, ed. J. Hoops, 4 vols, 1911–19
HS Das Lied vom Hűrnen Seyfrid (see King)
Jónsson, SnE *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar*, ed. Guðni Jónsson, 1935
F. Jónsson, Litt. F. Jónsson, Den oldnorske og oldislandske Litteraturs Historie, 3 vols, 1920–4
King, HS *Das Lied vom Hűrnen Seyfrid*, ed. K. C. King, 1958
MHG Middle High German

NL Das Nibelungenlied (the references are to de Boor’s edition, see de Boor, Nibelungenlied)
OE Old English
OHG Old High German
Panzert, Nibelungenlied Fr. Panzer, *Das Nibelungenlied: Entstehung und Gestalt*, 1955

PE The Poetic Edda (where belong Avc., Am., Br., Dr., Fm., Ghr., Gdr. II, Grp., HH I, Hm., Rm., Sd., Sf., Sg.). References are to Neckel’s edition (see Neckel)
PBB *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, begründet von Wilhelm Braune, Hermann Paul, Eduard Sievers, 1874
Rm. Regimn (see PE)
Sd. Sigdrífumál (see PE)
Sf. Frá dauða Sinfjötla (see PE)
Sg. (also Sig. in skam.) Sigurðarkviða in skamma (see PE)
SnE Snorra Edda (see Jónsson, SnE)
INTRODUCTION

S.T.U.A.G.N.L. Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk Litteratur
Tonnellat, E. Tonnellat, La chanson des Nibelungen, Étude sur la Composition et la Formation du Poème épique, 1926
Nibelungen Turville-Petre, G. Turville-Petre, The Heroic Age of Scandinavia, 1951

Turville-Petre, G. Turville-Petre, Origins of Icelandic Literature, 1953
Heroic Age

de Vries, J. de Vries, Altermannische Religionsgeschichte, two vols (Grundriss der germanischen Philologie), 2nd ed., 1956

Altgerm. Religion de Vries, J. de Vries, Altnordische Literaturgeschichte, 2 vols (Grundriss der germanischen Philologie), 1941–2

Altnord. Lit. Völonsunga saga

V.S. Kurt Wais, Frühe Epik Westeuropas und die Vorgeschichte des Nibelungenliedes, 1953

Wais, Frühe Epik P. Wieselgren, Quellenstudien zur Völungsasaga,' Acta et Commentationes Universitatis Tartuensis, vols. 34–8, 1935–6

Quellenstudien

Wisniewski, R. Wisniewski, Die Darstellung des Nifflungenunterganges in der Thidrekkasaga, 1961

Nifflungen ZfdA Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum

Þórólfsson, Rimur Bj. K. Þórólfsson, Rimurfyrir 1600 (Safn Fræðafjelagsins, 9), 1934

þjóðs saga (the references are to Bertelsen's edition see Bertelsen)
ICELANDIC TEXT
AND
ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Hér hefr upp ok segir frá þeim manni, er Sigi er nefndr, ok kallaðr at héti sonr Óðins. Annarr maðr er nefndr til sogunnar er Skaði hét. Hann var ríkr ok mikill fyrrir sér, en þó var Sigi þeira inn ríkari ok ættstórri at því er menn mæltu í þann tíma.

Skaði átti þráð þann er nökkut verðr at geta við soguna. Hann hét Breði. Hann er fróðr við þat er hann skyldi at hafask. Hann hafði íþróttir ok atgervi jafnframt hinum er meira þóttu verðir, eða umfram nökkura.

Þat er at segja eithvert sinn at Sigi ferr á dýraveiði, ok með honum þrállinn, ok veiða dýr um daginn allt til aptans. En er þeir bera saman veiði sínar um aptaninn, þá hafði Breði veit miklu fleira ok meira en Sigi, hvat honum líkaði stórell, ok segir at sik undri at einn þráll skuli sik yfirbuga í dýraveiði, hleyp því at honum ok dreip hann; dysjar síðan líkt í snjófönn.

Nú ferr hann heim um kveldit, ok segir at Breði hafi riðit frá honum á skóginn,— ok var hann senn þó augliti mér, ok veit ek ekki til hans.’ Skaði grnar sögn Siga ok getr at vera munu svik hans, ok mun Sigi hafa dreipit hann; fær menn til at leita hans, ok lýkr svá leiinni, at þeir fundu hann í skafli einum, ok mælti Skaði at þann skalf skyldi kalla Breðafönn heðan af, ok hafa menn nú þat eptir síðan ok kalla svá hverja fønn er mikil er. Þá kemr upp at Sigi hefr dreipit þrállinn ok myrdan. Þá kalla þeir hann varg í véum, ok má hann nú eigi heima vera með sér sínum.

---

\[a\] Ol found fol. 1r, difficult to read, especially the last nine lines (Nú ferr begins fol. 1v). Apart from the words ok meira, B’s conjecture, the text from fleira to snjófönn is that of the paper MSS. Fol. 1r is now completely undecipherable.

\[b\] Thus Ol, mann V

\[1\] Volsung, the grandfather of Sigurd and eponymous ancestor of the Volsungs is the grandson of this Sigi. Various royal houses, e.g. the legendary skjoldungar (see Jónsson, SnE, Prologus ch. 11) and the historic Anglo-Saxon dynasties (see Grimm, IV, 1709 ff.) were credited with or claimed descent from Odin (see also de Vries, Allgern. Religion II, 85), though the connection between Odin and the Volsungs may have a significance of its own, see Introduction pp. xxxv f.

\[2\] For Skaði and his thrall Breði see Introduction p. xxxvi, n. 1

\[3\] myrdan: to commit ‘first-degree’ murder and by extension: to conceal the body, see Glossary under mörð.
THE SAGA OF THE VOLSUNGS

I

The tale begins here and tells of a man called Sigi who was said to be the son of Odin. Another man features in the story, and his name was Skadi. He was powerful and important, but, even so, Sigi was the more powerful of the two, and the higher born, as people said at that time.

Skadi had a thrall who must be mentioned in the story. His name was Bredi. He was most efficient in the duties he was given to perform. In his accomplishments and ability he was as good as people who counted for more than he did, and better than some.

You must now hear how Sigi once went out after deer with this serf, and they hunted on through the day into the late afternoon. When they then brought together the deer they had slain, Bredi had accounted for both more and larger than Sigi had, and he took this very badly indeed. He said he was astonished that a serf should be better at hunting deer than he was, and with that he attacked and killed him, afterwards burying the body in a snow-drift.

That evening he returned home and said that Bredi had ridden off into the woods: ‘I soon lost sight of him, and I don’t know what’s become of him.’ Skadi was suspicious of Sigi’s story and guessed there had probably been foul play and that Sigi had really killed him. He got together a party to search for him, and their search ended with their finding him in the snow-drift. Skadi said he would call it ‘Bredi’s Drift’ from then on, and people have kept to this ever since, and every big drift is called by that name. It was then quite clear that Sigi had murdered the serf and hidden his body. He was forthwith declared an outlaw, and so could not remain at home with his father.

4 Literally ‘a wolf in holy places’, an expression normally used of a man who slays another in a hallowed place or sanctuary (e.g. at an assembly), and is forthwith declared a ‘wolf’, i.e. an outlaw. Vargr without further qualification is also used in the general sense of ‘outlaw’ and is equivalent to the term skógarmaðr (i.e. ‘wood-man’), the outlaw from society who roams the forests, the like of wolves, and with them to be hunted down and slain.
Öðinn fylgir honum nú af landi brott, svá langa leið at stóru bar, ok eigi létti hann fyrir en hann kom honum til herskipa. Nú tek Sigi at leggjask í hernað með þat líð er faðir hans fekk honum áðr þeir skilðu, ok varð hann sigrsæll í hernaðinum. Ok svá kemr hans máli at hann fekk herjat sér land ok réki um síðir. Ok því næst fekk hann sér göfgugt kvánfang, ok gerði hans ríkr konungur ok mikill fyrir sér, ok réð fyrir Húnalandi ok er inn mesti hermaðr. Hann á son við konu sinni er hét Rerir. Hann vex þar upp með feðr

Nú gerði Sigi gamall maðr at aldri. Hann átti sér marga ofundarmenn, svá at um síðir réðu þeir á hendr honum er hann trúði bezt, en þat váru broðr konu hans. Þeir gera þá til hans, er hann varir sízt ok hann var fáliðr fyrir, ok bera hann ofrliði; ok á þeim fundi fell Sigi með híð sinni allri. Sonr hans, Rerir, var ekki í þeim háaska, ok fær hann sér a mikit líð af vinum sinum ok landshófðingjum, svá at hann eignaðið bæði land ok konungdóm eptir Siga, feðr sinn. Ok nú er hann þýkkisk hafa fórum undir komísk í ríki sínu, þá minnisk hann á þær sakir er hann átti við móðurbroðr sína, er drepit hofðu fóstur hans, ok safnur konungur sér nú liði miklu ok ferrar nú á hendr fræendum sínum með þenna her, ok þýkkja þeir fyrir gert hafa sakar við sík, þó at hann meti lítils frændsemi þeira, ok svá gerir hann fyrir því at eigi skilsk hann fyrri við en hann hafði drepit alla feðrbana sína, þó at óskapliga væri fyrir alls b sakir. Nú eignask hann þond ok ríki ok fé. Gerisk hann nú c meiri fyrir sér en faðir hans.

Rerir fekk sér nú herfang mikit d ok konu þá er honum þótti við sitt hefi, ok eru þau mjók lengi ásamt, ok eigu þau c engan erfingja ok ekki barn. Þat hugar þeim báðum f illa, ok bídja þau goedin með miklum áhuga at þau geti g sér barn. þat er nú sagt at Frigg h heyrir þen þeira, ok segir Öðni h hers þau bídja. Hann verður eigi þprifráða ok tekr l óskmey 4 sína, dóttur Hrímnis jötuns, ok fær í hónd henni

a svá B
b Final letter doubtful (also Ol), allar B, who thought it might read alla.
c Hann nú illeg. V. a herfang mikit illeg. V
 ásamt . . . þau illeg. V. For eigu B reads eiga.
 f barn . . . báðum illeg. V
g þau goedin . . . geti illeg. V
 h svá Öðinn B
i þat er nú . . . tekr, blurred largely to illeg. V

As opposed to being sent away to be brought up by 'foster-parents', a by no means uncommon practice, e.g. Regin was Sigurd's 'foster-father' (see p. 23), Brynhild was Heimir's 'foster-daughter' (see p. 42).

The slaying of a kinsman was held to be a particularly odious offence. It was proper and natural to be frændsáskinn, attached to one's kin, cf. p. 10, and not merely for sentiment's sake: the family or rather 'clan' was the essential social and ethical reality. The individual's strength, confidence, his
Odin now went with him when he left the country and accompanied him for a remarkably long way, not giving up until he had brought him to several fighting ships. Sigi now embarked on free-booting expeditions with the force his father had secured for him before they parted. He was successful in his raids, and his affairs so progressed that he managed to carve out land for himself, and eventually a kingdom. Next he made an important match, and became a powerful and important king, ruling over the land of the Huns, and he was a truly great warrior. By his wife he had a son called Rerir. He was brought up there with his father, and soon grew into a tall and able lad.

And now Sigi had grown old in years. There were many who were jealous of him, and so in the end those whom he trusted most—his brothers-in-law—plotted against him. They turned on him when he was least expecting anything, having only a few men there with him, and they got the better of him, and Sigi and all his followers were killed in the fight. His son Rerir was away at the time of danger, and he gathered a strong force of friends and influential nobles, with the result that he took over the domains and the royal power in succession to his father, Sigi. Now when he thought that he had found his feet in his kingdom, he remembered his grievances against the uncles who had killed his father. And so the king got together a powerful army and immediately marched with it against these kinsmen of his. And if he set but little store by the ties of kinship between them, they, after all, seem to have been the first to do him wrong. And that is how he acted, for he did not rest until he had killed all his father’s murderers, though from every point of view it was a bad business. And now he took over lands, authority and wealth, and became a man of greater consequence than his father had been.

Rerir now acquired a great deal of plunder through his raids, and married a woman who seemed likely to make him a suitable wife, and they lived together for a very long time, but had no heir, nor any child at all. Neither was at all happy about this and they earnestly prayed to the Gods to let them have a child. And we are next told how Frigg heard their prayer and spoke to Odin about their request. He was not at a loss what to do and fetched a valkyrie of his, the daughter of personal qualities in general, were in him but not in the first instance of him: they came to him from his membership of the ‘clan’. (Cf. de Vries, *Allgerm. Religion* I, 173 f.).

Odin’s consort, goddess of hearth and home. Her aid with Freyja’s was often invoked during childbirth.

The Icel. *óskmey*, lit. ‘wish-maiden’, is one of the names given to the valkyries, Odin’s handmaids (see Glossary s.v. *valkyrja*).
eitt epli ok biðr hana færa konungi. Hon tók við eplinu ok brá á sik krákuham ok flýgr til þess er hon kemr þar sem konungrinn er, ok sat á haugi. Hon lét falla eplit í kné konunginum. Hann tók þat epli ok þöttisk vita hverju gegna mundi; gengr nũ heim af hauginum ok til sinna manna, ok kom á fund dróttningar ok etr þat epli sumt.2

pat er nú at segja at dróttning finnr þat brátt at hon mundi vera með barni, ok ferr þessu fram langar stundir at hon má eigi ala barnit. Pat kemr at því, at Reirir skal fara í leiðangr, sem siðvenja er til konunga, at friða land sitt. Í þessi ferð var þat til tíðenda, at Reirir tók sótt ok því næst bana ok ætlæi at sökja heim Óðin,3 ok þótti þat morgum fýsiligt í þann tíma.

Nú ferr inu sama fram um vanheilsu dróttningar at hon fær eigi alit barnit, ok þessu ferr fram sex vetr at hon hefir þessa sótt. Nú finnr hon þat, at hon mun eigi lengi lífa, ok bað nú at hana skylldi síra til barnsins, ok svá var gert sem hon bað. Pat var sveinbarn, ok sá sveinn var mikill vexti þá er hann kom til, sem ván var at. Svá er sagt at sjá sveinn kyssti móður sína aðr hon deiri.4 þessum er nú naðin gefi5 ok er kallaðr Völsungr. Hann var konungr yfir Húnalandi eptir ferð sinn. Hann var snemma mikill ok sterkr ok áráðisfullr um þat er mannaun þótti í ok karlnennska. Hann gerisk6 inn mesti hermaðr ok sigsæll í orrostum þeim sem hann átti í herförum.

Nú þá er hann var alroskinn at aldri, þá sendir Hrímnir honum Hljóð, döttur sína, er fyrir er7 getið, þá er hon fór með eplit til Reiris, feðr Völsungr. Nú gengr hann at eiga hana, ok eru þau lengi ásamt, ok eru góðar samfarar þeira. Þau áttu tíu sonu ok eina döttur. Inn elzi sonir þeira hét Sigmundr,8 en Signý9 döttir. Þau f várþ tvíburar, ok várþ þau fremst ok vænst um alla hluti barna Völsungs konungs, ok várþ þó allir mikill fyrir sér, sem lengi hefir uppi verit haft ok at

---

1 The ‘howe’ or grave-mound, particularly of a forebear, was thought to be the source of various supernaturally bestowed gifts, including, in cases of infertility, the power to beget offspring (see N. K. Chadwick: ‘Norse Ghosts’, Folklore LVII (1946), 64), here reinforced by Ódin’s apple which seems to be efficacious in promoting fertility or virility (see Introduction p. xxxv). It is of interest in this connection that the Æsir were prevented from ageing by the apples of the goddess Idun (see Jónsson, SnE 48, and Bugge, ‘Iduns Æbler’, 13 ff.). At the same time there is reason to suppose that the howe was the
Hrimnir the Giant, put an apple in her hand and told her to take it to the king. She seized the apple, assumed the form of a crow and flew until she came to where the king was sitting on a howe. She dropped the apple into the king's lap. He picked the apple up and guessed what it was all about. Then he left the howe and went back to his men, had a talk with the queen and ate part of the apple.

You must now hear how the queen soon found that she was going to have a child, but her condition continued for a very long time without her being able to give birth to the child. Then Rerir found it necessary to set off on a campaign—quite a usual thing for a king to do—in order to keep his country peaceful. As it happened, Rerir was taken ill on the expedition and died soon after. He meant to join Odin, and many people in those days thought this a good thing to do.

The queen's morbid condition, her inability to give birth to the child, remained unchanged, and after six years she was still not free of it. She then realised that she had not long to live and thereupon ordered that the child should be cut out of her, and what she ordered was done. It was a boy, and, as might be expected, the lad was a fair size when he was delivered. People say that the boy kissed his mother before she died. A name was now given to him and he was called Volsung. He succeeded his father as king of Hunland. From an early age he was big and strong and ready for anything that seemed to need grit and courage. He grew into a most able soldier, and luck was on his side in the battles he fought while campaigning.

Now when he reached manhood Hrimnir sent his daughter, Hliod, to him—she has already been mentioned as bringing the apple to Rerir, Volsung's father. He now married her. They lived together a long time and their marriage was a happy one. They had ten sons and one daughter; their eldest son was called Sigmund, and their daughter Signy. They were twins and in every way the best looking and the most remarkable of King Volsung's children, though, indeed, all of them were outstanding, a fact long recognised, just as the Volsungs...
ágætum gert verit, hversu Völungsar hafa verit ofrakkappsmenn miklir ok hafa verit fyrir fæstum mœnnum sem getit er í fornsgum, bæði um fröðleik ok ípróttir ok alls háttar kappgírni.

Svá er sagt at Völungr konungr létt gera holl eina ágæta, ok með þeim hætti at ein eik mikil stöð í höllinni, ok limar trésins með fgrum blónum stöðu út um ræft hallarínnar, en leggrinn stöð niðr í hölina, ok kölluðu þat barnstokk.¹

3

Siggeirr a ² hefir konungr heitit. Hann réð fyrir Gautlandi.³ Hann var ríkr konungr ok fjölmennr. Hann för á fund Völungs konungs, ok bað hann Signýjar til handa sér. Þessu tali tek konungr vel ok svá synir hans, en hon sjálf var þessa ófús, biðr þó fæðr sinn ráða ⁶ sem öðru því sem til hennar tæki. En konunginin síndisk e þat ráð at gipta hana, ok var hon fostnuð Siggeir konungi.

En þá er sjá ⁴ veizla ok ráðahagr skal takask, skal Siggeirr konungr söka veizluna til Völungs konungs. Konungr bjósk við veizlunni eptir inum bærum fngum. Ok þá er þessi veizla var albúin, kömu þar bðsmenn Völungs konungs ok svá Siggeirr konungs at nefndum degi, ok hefir Siggeirr konungr marga víðuliga menn með sér. Svá er sagt at þar váru miklir eldar gerðir eptir endilangri höllinni, en nú stendr ⁵ sjá inn mikli apaldr í miðri höllinni, sem fyrr var nefndr.

Nu er þess við getit, at þá er menn sáti við eldana um kveldit, at mæðr einn gekk inn í hölлина. Sá mæðr er mœnnum ókunnr at sýn. Sjá mæðr hefir þess háttar búnning, at hann hefir heklu flekkötta yfir sér. Sá mæðr var berfætr ok hafði knýtt línbrókum at beini. Sá mæðr hafði sverð í hendi ok gengr at barnstokkinum, ok hött f sicán á hóði. Hann var hárr mjök ok eldiligr ok einsýnn.⁴ Hann bregðr sverðinu ok stingr því í stokkinn, svá at sverðit sökkra at hjóltum upp. Óllum mœnnum fellusk kveðjur við þenna mann. Þá tekir hann til orða ok mælti:

a The preceding ch. heading is illeg. (also for Ol).
b ß adds þessu
c Konungrinn tök B
d Fol. 3³ ends here: much of it is now blurred to illegibility, especially from med þeim hætti at ein eik (end of ch. 2). For sjá B reads þessi. 
⁵ thus Ol, sendir V ¹ illeg. V

¹ This is not only an echo of the great world ash, Yggdrasil, around which, according to Snorri (Jónsson, SnE 34 ff.) the universe was constructed and which towered up into the heavens, overshadowing the earth. Barnstock may originally have been an apple tree and an essential element in a fertility cult.
have long been famed for their autocratic inflexibility of purpose, and for being far ahead of most people, as old stories tell, in knowledge, attainments and in enterprise generally.

The tale goes that King Volsung had a magnificent hall built, and in such a way that there was a great tree standing inside, its branches with their colourful flowers spreading out through the roof, while its trunk stretched down into the hall, and they called it Barnstock.¹

There was a king whose name was Siggeir.² He ruled over Gautland ³ and was a powerful king with a large band of followers. He paid a visit to King Volsung and asked him for Signy's hand in marriage. The king was favourably disposed to the idea, as were his sons, but she herself was against it, though she asked her father to decide about this as he did about other matters concerning her. And the king thought it advisable for her to be married, and she was betrothed to King Siggeir.

And when the time came for the marriage-feast and the wedding, Siggeir was to go to King Volsung's for the festivities. The king made preparations for a splendid feast, and when all was in readiness for the feast both King Volsung's and King Siggeir's guests arrived on the appointed day, and King Siggeir had many people of note with him. It is said that big fires were lighted down the length of the hall, and as was mentioned before, the great apple-tree stood there in the middle of the hall.

Now the story goes that while the men were sitting round the fires in the evening, a man came into the hall. It was a man whose appearance was unfamiliar. This is how he was dressed: he had on a mottled cape, he was bare-footed and had bound his linen breeches round the leg. The man held a sword in his hand and went up to Barnstock and had a low hood over his head; he was very grey, venerable and had but one eye.⁴ He drew back the sword and plunged it into the trunk, so that the sword sank in up to the hilt. No one was able to utter a word of welcome to the man. Then he started to speak, and these were his words:

Its name means 'child-trunk' (see Bugge, Vols. p. 87, l. 10, n., and Introduction p. xxxv).
² See Introduction p. xxxv ³ i.e. modern Götland in Sweden ⁴ This is none other than Odin: his appearance is often described in these or similar terms.
Sá er þessu sverði bregður ór stokkinum, þá skal sá þat þiggja at mér at gjof, ok skal hann þat sjálfir sanna at aldri bar hann betra sverð sér í hendi en þetta er.\textsuperscript{a}

Epír þetta gengr sjá inn gamli maðr út ór höllinni, ok veit engi hvern hann er eða hvort hann gengr. Nú standa þeir upp ok metask ekki við at taka sverðit. Þykkisk sá bezt hafa er fyrst nár. Síðan gengu til inir gögustu menn fyrst, en þá hvern at þörunum. Engi kemr sá til er nái, því at engan veg bifask er þeir taka til. Nú kom til Sigmundr, sonr Völungs konungs, ok tók ok brá sverðinu ór stokkinum, ok var sem laust lægi fyrir honum. Þetta vápn síndisk þollum svá gott, at engi þóttisk sét hafa jafngott sverð, ok byðr Siggeirr\textsuperscript{b} honum at veiga þrú jafnvægi gulls. Sigmundr segir:

‘Þú máttir taka þetta sverði eigi síðr en ek þar sem þat stóð, ef þér semði\textsuperscript{c} at bera, en nú fær þú þat aldri, er þat kom áðr í mina hond, þótt þú þjóðir við allt þat gull er þú átt.’

Siggeirr konungr reiddisk við þessi ord, ok þóttí sér háðuliga svarat vera. En fyrir því at honum var svá varit at hann var undirhyggjumáðr mikill, þá lætr hann nú sem hann híði ekki um þetta mál, en þat sama kveld hugði hann laun fyrir þetta, þau er síðar kömu fram.

Nú\textsuperscript{d} er þat at segja at Siggeirr gengr í rekkju hún Signýju þenna aptan. En næsta dag eptir þá var veðr gott. Þá segir Siggeirr konungr at hann viljum heim fara ok þíða eigi þess er vindr yxi eða sjá gerir ófærar. Ekki er þess getit at Völungs konungr letti hann eða synir hans, allra helzt er hann sá at hann vildi ekki annat en fara frá veizlunni.\textsuperscript{1}

Nú mátti Signý við feðr sinn: ‘Eigi vilda ek á brott fara með Siggeiri, ok eigi gerir hugr minn hlæða við honum, ok veit ek af framvísí minni ok af kynfylgju\textsuperscript{2} várri at af þessu ráði stendr oss mikill ófagnadr, ef eigi er skjótt brugðit þessum ráðahag.’\textsuperscript{2}

‘Eigi skaltu þetta mæla, döttir,’ sagði hann, ‘því at þat er skömm

\textsuperscript{a} Of en þetta er only first e is visible.
\textsuperscript{b} thus Ol., om. V.
\textsuperscript{c} semði B
\textsuperscript{d} The initial N is illeg. V. The preceding ch. heading now illeg. Ol made out an S followed by for at a space of two or three letters, but nothing more.

\textsuperscript{1} These often continued for several days.
\textsuperscript{2} It is just possible that kynfylgja should be taken here as the equivalent of Ættarfylgja (see Glossary s.v. fylgja) and interpreted concretely as ‘family guardian spirit’ (see de Vries, Áltn. Religion, I, 227), but G. Turville-Petre, ‘Liggja fylgjur þinár til Islannda’, Saga Book of the Viking Society (1937–45), 125, argues convincingly against this.
'The man to pull out this sword from the trunk shall receive it from me as a gift, and he will find out for himself that he never bore in hand a better sword than this.'

After that the old man went out of the hall and no one knew who he was or where he was going. They now got up, and no one hung back in taking hold of the sword. He counted himself best off who got it out first. Then the most notable among them went up first, and afterwards the others, one by one. And not one who went up succeeded, for when they took hold, the sword would not budge. Then Sigmund, the son of King Volsung, came up, gripped the sword and pulled it out of the trunk as if he found it quite loose. It seemed to everyone such an excellent weapon that no one thought he had ever seen such a fine sword, and Siggeir offered to weigh him out three times its weight of gold.

'You could have taken it from where it was fixed as easily as I did, if it were right for you to bear it,' replied Sigmund, 'but as it is, my hand was the first it came to, and you'll never get it, even if you offer all the gold you possess for it!'

King Siggeir grew angry at these words and considered that he had been given an insolent answer, but since he was a great dissembler, he now made as if he didn't mind about this matter, yet that very evening he thought of how he could pay him back, and that is what later came about.

That night, as we are told, Siggeir slept with Sigyn. The next day the weather was fine, so King Siggeir said that he would return home and not wait for the wind to rise and make the sea impassable. The story does not say that King Volsung dissuaded him, nor that his sons did so, especially when he saw that Siggeir wanted only to be off and to leave the wedding festivities.¹

Sigyn now spoke to her father: 'I don't want to go away with Siggeir, nor do I feel at all warmly towards him, and my gift of second sight which runs in the family ² tells me that this business will result in a great deal of misery for us, unless this marriage is speedily annulled.'

'You must not speak like that, daughter,' he said, 'because it
mikil bæði honum ok svá oss atbrigða þessu við hann at saklausu, ok
eigum vör þá engan trúnað undir honum né vingan ef þessu er brugðit,
ok mun hann gjalda illu oss, slíkt er hann má, ok samir þat eina at halda
af várri hendi.

Nú býsk Siggeirr konungr til heimferðar. Ok áðr þeir fóru frá
búðinu, þá baðð hann Völsungi konungi, mági sínum, til sín á Gautland
ok sonum hans ðllum með honum á þriggja mánaða fresti ok því þollu
lidi sem hann vildi með sér hafa ok honum væri til vegsemðar. Vill
nú Siggeirr konungr gjalda í því þat er á skorti brúðlaupsgerðina, fyrir
þess sakir er hann vildi eigi meir vera en eina nótt, ok er ekki þat síðr
manna at gera svá. Nú heitr Völsungi konungr ferðinni, ok koma á
nefndum degi. Þá skiljask þeir mágar, ok furr Siggeirr konungr heim
með konu sína.

5

Nú a er at segja frá Völsungi konungi ok sonum hans at þeir fara at
ákveðinni stundu til Gautlands at bæði Siggeirs konungs, mágs síns,
ok hafa þirú skip ír landi ok þll vel skipuð, ok verða vel reiðfara ok
koma skipum sínum við Gautland, en þat var síð um aptan.

En þann sama aptan kom Signý, dóttir Völsungs konungs, ok kallar
feðr sinn á einnæli ok bræðr sína, segir nú ætlan sína ok Siggeirs
konungs at hann hefir dregit saman óvígjan her,—‘ ok ætlar at svíkja
yðr. Nú bíð ek yðr,’ segir hon, ‘at þér farið þegar aprí í yðart ríki ok
fáð yðr líð sem mest ok farið higat síðan ok hefníð yðar sjálfr ok gangið
eigi í ófærur, því at eigi missi þér svíka af honum, ef eigi taki þer þetta
bragð sem ek beði yðr.’

Þá mælti Völsungr konungr: ‘ Pat munu allar þjóðir at orðum gera
at ek mælta eitt orð òborinn, ok strengða ek þess heit at ek skylda hværki
flyjía eld né járn fyrir hraðlu sakir, ok svá hefi ek enn gert hér til, ok hví
munda ek eigi efna þat á gamals aldri ? Ok eigi skulu meyjar því bregða
sonum mínun í leikum at þeir hraðisk bana sinn, því at eitt sinn skal
hverr deyja, en má engi b undan komask at deyja um sinn. Er þat
mitt rúð at vör flyjum hvergi ok gerum af várri hendi sem hreystiligast.
Ek hefi barizk hundrað sínumm, ok hefi ek haft stundum meira líð, en

a The initial N now illeg. Of the preceding ch. heading Fall Volsungs
decipherable, but nothing else (as for Ol).

b B emends to engi má.
would be most shameful for him, and for us, to make void the agreement
with him without just cause, and if it is annulled, then we can neither
trust him, nor keep his friendship, and he will pay us back as best he
can, and the only proper thing to do is for us to keep our part of the
bargain.

King Siggeir now made ready for the journey home, but before
they left the scene of their wedding he invited his father-in-law, King
Volsung, to visit him in Gautland in three months’ time, accompanied
by all his sons and by as many men as he desired, and as would befit
his state. In this way, King Siggeir wanted to make up for his lack of
courtesy at the wedding celebrations in not wishing to stay for more than
one night, which was not at all the usual way for anyone to behave.
King Volsung then promised to make the journey and arrive on the
appointed day. Then son-in-law and father-in-law parted, and Siggeir
returned home with his wife.

At the appointed time, so the story tells us, King Volsung and his
sons set off for Gautland in compliance with their in-law Siggeir’s
request. They put off from the land in three ships, all well manned,
had a very good voyage and got their ships to Gautland, arriving in the
late evening.

That same evening, Signy, King Volsung’s daughter, came to ask
her father and her brothers to have a private talk with her. She then
said that in her opinion—it was also King Siggeir’s own!—Siggeir had
got together a large force that was invincible—‘And he means to break
faith with you. So I beg you,’ she said, ‘to get back to your own country
immediately. Get hold of as large a number of men as you can, then
return and get your revenge, rather than walk into this trap, for you’ll
find no lack of treachery in him if you don’t adopt the plan I desire
you to.’

Then King Volsung said: ‘All nations will make a byword of it,
seeing that while yet unborn I spoke one word and swore an oath that
fear would make me run from neither fire nor iron. Up to this moment
I have acted accordingly, and why should I not keep to it in old age?
And when the games are on there’ll be no young women pointing a
finger at my sons for fearing to meet death, for everybody must die
sometime—there’s no escape from dying the once! And my decision
is that we do not run, and let us act our part as bravely as we can. I
have fought on a hundred occasions, sometimes I had a bigger force,
stundum minna, ok hefi ek jafnan sigr haft, ok eigi skal þat spyrjask at ek flýja né fríðar biðja.’

Nú gretr Signý sárliga ok bað at hon skyldi eigi koma til Siggeirs konungs.

Völsungr konungr svarar: ‘Þú skalt at visu fara heim til bónda þins ok vera samt mēð honum, a hversu sem mēð oss ferr.’

Nú gengr Signý heim, en þeir búa eptir um nóttina. Ok um myrigininn þegar er dagar, þá bior Völsungr konungr upp standa sína menn alla ok ganga á land upp ok búask við bardaga. Nú ganga þeir á land upp allir alvápnaðir, ok er eigi langt at bǐða áðr þar kemr Siggeirr konungr með allan sinn her, ok verð þar í hærðasta orrosta mēð þeim, ok eggjar konungr lið sitt til framgongu sem hærðligast, ok er svá sagt at Völsungr konungr ok synir hans gengu átta sinnum í gegnum fylkingar Siggeirs konungs um daginn, ok hovgva á tvær hendr. Ok er þeir ætla enn svá at fara, þá fellur Völsungr konungr í mōði fylkingu sinni ok þar allt lið hans mēð honum, nema synir hans tju, því at miklu meira ofrefl var í móti en þeir mætti við standa. Nú eru synir hans allir teknir ok í bónd reknir ok á brott leiddir.

Signý varð vor við at faðir hennar var drepinn en bræðr hennar hōndum teknir ok til bana rāðnír. Nú kallar hon Siggeirr konung á einmæli. Nú mælti Signý:

‘Þess vil ek bíðja þik at þú láðir eigi svá skjótt drepa bræðr mín, ok látið þá heldr setja í stokk, ok kemr mēr at því, sem mælt er, at unir auga meðan á sér, ok því bíð ek þeim eigi lengra, at ek ætla at mēð muni ekki tjóa.’

Þá svarar Siggeirr: ‘Ær eurtu ok ørvita er þú bior bræðrum þínun meira bols en þeir sé hovgnir, en þó skal þat veita þér því at þess betr þykki mēr er þeir pola verra ok hafa lengri kvöl til bana.’

Nú lætr hann svá gera sem hon bað, b ok var tekinn einn mikill stokkr ok feldr á fretr þeim tíu bræðrum í skógi einsvers staðar, ok sitja þeir nú þar þann dag allan til nætr. En at mōði nótt þá kom þar ylgr ein ór skógi gotum at þeim er þeir sátu í stokkinum. Hon var baði mikil ok illilig. Henni varð þat fyrir at hon bíðr einn þeira til bana. Síðan át hon c þann upp allan. Eptir þat fór hon í brott. En eptir um morganinn þá sendi Signý mann til bræðra sinnna, þann er hon trúði betzt, at vita d hvat títt sé. Ók er hann kemr aptr, segir hann henni at dauðr sé einn þeira. Henni þótti þetta mikit, ef þeir skulu svá fara

a thus Ol, hann V
b B emends to bað which is more usual in this general context.
c thus Ol, om. V

d at vita, thus Ol, ok V
and sometimes it's been smaller, but I've always been the victor, and there'll be no report of my running away or of my suing for peace.'

Then Signy wept bitterly and begged not to have to go back to King Siggeir.

'Of course you must go back to your husband,' King Volsung replied, 'and stay with him, whatever happens to us.'

So Signy went back and they stayed where they were that night. But at daybreak the next morning King Volsung ordered all his men to get up, go ashore and prepare for action. So they all went ashore fully armed, and there was not long to wait before King Siggeir came up with the whole of his army. The battle that now ensued between them was very fierce: the king hotly urged on his men to the attack, and we are told that King Volsung and his sons went right through the enemy ranks eight times that day, slashing right and left, and just as they were about to do so again King Volsung fell in the middle of his line and so, too, all his men, except his ten sons, with him, for they were faced by a superior force, far greater than they could stand against. All his sons were then taken prisoner, bound and marched off.

Signy discovered that her father had been killed and her brothers captured and sentenced to death. She then asked King Siggeir for a word in private, and Signy then said:

'I want to ask you not to have my brothers executed so swiftly, have them put in the stocks instead. There's a saying that fits my case: "happy the eye that gazes its fill," but I'm not asking for them to be given any longer, since I imagine it would be useless.'

'You must be quite out of your mind to ask a worse fate for your brothers than being instantly put to the sword,' answered Siggeir, 'but I'll do as you ask, for the more they suffer and the slower they die, the better I like it.'

He then had what she desired carried out, and a large pair of stocks was fetched, and at a certain spot in the forest the ten brothers had their legs clamped in, and there they sat all day, and night came on. And at midnight an old she-wolf came out from the forest to where they were sitting in the stocks. She was large and evil-looking. What she did was to bite one of them to death, thereupon devour him, and then go away. The following morning Signy sent her most trusted man to her brothers to find out what had happened. And when he came back he told her that one of them was dead. She thought it would be terrible if they were all to go the same way, yet she could do nothing to help
allir, en hon mátti ekki duga þeim. Skjött er þar frá at segja. Nú nætr í samt kom sjá í sama ylgr um miðnætti ok etr einn þeira senn til bana unz allir eru dauðir, nema Sigmundr einn er eptir. Ok nú, áðr þiunda nótt kemr, sendir Signý trúnaðarmann sinn til Sigmundar, bróður síns, ok seldi í hond honum hunang ok mælti at hann skyldi ríða á andlit Sigmundar ok leggja í munn honum sumt. Nú fér hann til a Sigmundar ok gerir sem honum var bøði ok för heim síðan.

Um nöttina eptir þá kemr sú í sama ylgr at vanda sínum ok ætlæði at bíta hann til bana sem bróðr hans. En nú dregr hon vedrit af honum, þar sem hunangit var á riðt, ok sleikir andlit hans allt með tungu sér ok réttir síðan tunguna í munn honum. Hann lætr sér verða óbílt ok beit í tunguna ylginni. Hon bregnir við fast ok henykkir at sér hardt ok rak fættra í stokkinn svá at hann klofsnæði allr í sundr, en hann helt svá fast at tungan gekk ór ylginni upp ór tungurótunum, ok fekk af því bana. En þat er sogn sumra manna at sú í sama ylgr væri módir Siggeirs konungs ok hafi hon brugðit á sik þessu líki fyrir trollskapar sakir ok fjölkynghi.

Nú b er Sigmundr lauss orðinn, en brotinn er stokkrinn, ok hefsk Sigmundr þar nú við í skóginum. Enn sendir Signý at vita hvat titt er eða hvart Sigmundr lífir. En er þeir koma, þá segir hann þeim allan atburð, hvé farit hafði með þeim ok ylginni. Nú fara þeir heim ok segja Signýju hvat titt er. Fór hon nú ok hittir bróður sinn, ok taka þau þat ráð at hann gerir þar jarðhús í skóginum, ok fær nú því fram um hríð at Signý leytnir honum þar, ok fær honum þat er hann þurfti at hafa. En Siggeirr konungr ætlar at þeir sé allir dauðir Völsungar.

Siggeirr konungr áttri þá tvá sonu við konu sinni, ok er frá því c sagt, þá er inn ellri sonr hans er tíu vetra, d at Signý sendir hann til móts við Sigmund, at hann skyldi veita honum líð, ef hann vildi nokkut leita við at hefna feðr síns. Nú fær sveinninn til skógarins ok kemr síð um aptaninn til jarðhúss Sigmundar, ok tekr hann við honum vel at hófri, ok mælti at hann skyldi gera til brauð þeira,—‘en ek mun søkja eldvið,’—ok selr í hond honum einn mjóbelg, en hann fær sjálfr at søkja viðinn. Ok er hann kemr aprtr, þá hefri sveinninn ekki at gert um brauðgerðina. Nú spyr Sigmundr hvárt bút sé brauðit.

a ferr hann til illeg. V
b Initial N now illeg. The preceding ch. heading illeg. (also for Ol).
c þeim B
d er tíu vetra illeg. V
them. What happened is soon told: on nine successive nights that same wolf appeared at midnight, and each time she killed and ate one of them until all were dead and Sigmund alone remained. And now, before the tenth night came, Sigyn sent her trusted servant to her brother, Sigmund. She had handed him some honey with instructions to smear it over Sigmund’s face and to put some of it in his mouth. He now went off to Sigmund, did what he’d been told to do, and so returned.

That night the same wolf came as usual, intending to bite him to death as she had his brothers. But then she sniffed the honey that had been smeared on him, and she licked his face all over with her tongue, and then thrust her tongue into his mouth. He took heart and bit into the wolf’s tongue. At this she gave a violent jerk and strained backwards, pressing hard with her paws against the stocks which as a result split apart. But he held on so firmly that the wolf’s tongue was torn out by the roots, and that finished her. And some people have it that the wolf was King Siggeir’s mother who had assumed that shape on account of witchcraft and magic.

So Sigmund was freed and the stocks were broken, but he stayed on in the woods. Sigyn sent again to find out what had happened and whether Sigmund was alive. And when they arrived he told them all the details of his encounter with the wolf. Then they returned and told Sigyn what had taken place. So she went and found her brother, and they decided that he should build an underground retreat in the woods, and what now happened for a time was that Sigyn hid him there and provided him with everything he needed. And King Siggeir imagined that all the Volsungs were dead.

King Siggeir had two sons by his wife, and we are told that when the elder son was ten years old, Sigyn sent him off to find Sigmund so that he could help him, should he wish to make any attempt to avenge his father. So the boy made his way to the forest, and late in the evening he came to Sigmund’s retreat where he was given a tolerable welcome and told that he could make bread for them both—‘And I’ll go and look for firewood.’ And handing him a bag of flour, Sigmund himself went to look for the wood. But when he came back the lad had still done nothing about making the bread. Then Sigmund asked whether the bread were ready.
Hann segir: 'Eigi þóða ek at taka mjólselginn fyrir því at þar lá nokkut kykt í mjólinu.'

Nú pykkisk Sigmundr vita at þessi sveinn mun eigi svá vel hugaðr, at hann vili hann með sér hafa. Nú er þau systkin finnask, segir Sigmundr at hann þótti ekki manni at nær, þótt sveinninn væri hjá honum.

Signý mælti: 'Tak þú hann þá ok drep hann. Eigi þarf hann þá lengr at lífa.'

Ok svá gerði hann.

Nú líðir a sjá vetr. Ok einum vetri súðar þá sendir Signý inn yngra son sinn á fund Sigmundar, ok þarf þar eigi súgu um at lengja, ok fór sem samt sé, at hann drep þenna svein at ráði Signýjar.

Þess b er nú við getit eitthvert sinn þá er Signý sat í skemmu sinni, at þar kom til hennar ein seiðkona1 fjölkunnig hardla mjók. Þá talar Signý við hana:

'Þat vilda ek,' segir hon, 'at vit skiptum hómum.'

Hon segir, seiðkonan: 'Þú skalt fyrir ráða.' Ok nú gerir hon svá af sínum brogðum at þær skipta litum, ok seðk seiðkonan nú í rúm Signýjar at ráði hennar ok fær í rekkju hjá konungi um kveldit, ok ekki finnr hann at eigi sé Signý hjá honum.

Nú er þat frá Signýju at segja at hon fær til jarðhúss bróður síns ok bíðr c hann veita sér herbergi um nóttina,— því at ek hefi villzk á skóginum úti, ok veit ek eigi hvar ek fer.

Hann mælti at hon skyldi þar vera, d ok vildi eigi synja henni vistar, einni konu, ok þóttisk vita at eigi mundi hon svá launa honum göðan beina at segja til hans. Nú fær hon í herbergi til hans, eð skjask til matar. Honum varð opt lítit til hennar ok lízk konan væn ok frið. En er þau eru mett, þá segir hann henni at hann vill at þau hafi eina rekkju um nóttina, en hon brýzk ekki við því, ok leggr hann hana hjá sér þrjar nætr samt. Eptir þat fær hon heim ok hittir seiðkonuna ok bað at þær skipti aprt litum, ok svá gerir hon.

Ok er f fram liðu stundir, f öður Signý sveinbarn. Sjá sveinn var

a líðir illeg. V
b The preceding ch. heading now barely legible. Ol reads Signy gat Sinfjotla.
c illeg. V
d þar vera illeg. V
e vita, at illeg. V
f til hans illeg. V
g thus Ol, om. V
h stu- illeg. V

1 See Glossary s.v. seiðkona
2 A magic process whereby each, it was believed, assumed the exact appearance of the other, the personality remaining unchanged.
'I didn't dare touch the bag,' he replied, 'because there was something alive in the flour.'

Then Sigmund thought to himself that he could see that the lad was not so plucky that he'd want to keep him there. The next time Sigmund and his sister met, he said he seemed no nearer to getting a man, even though the boy was staying with him.

'Then seize and kill him,' said Signy. 'There's no need for him to live any longer.'

And that's what he did.

The winter passed, and the next winter Signy sent the younger son to stay with Sigmund, but there's no need to make a long story of it, as the upshot was much the same: he killed the boy at Signy's bidding.

The next thing to be told is how Signy was sitting one day in her private quarters when a sorceress, highly skilled in magic arts, came to her there. Then Signy spoke to her:

'I should like the two of us to exchange shapes,' she said.

'What you desire shall be done,' the sorceress replied, and then by her arts she brought about an exchange of appearances, and after that the sorceress took Signy's place as she was to do. That night she slept with the king, and he didn't notice that it wasn't Signy who was with him.

Signy, we are now told, went to her brother's retreat and asked him to give her shelter for the night—'For I am lost here in the forest, and I don't know where I'm going.'

He said she could stay there, and that he would not refuse her shelter, all alone as she was, and he felt that she would not repay his hospitality by giving him away. So she joined him in the shelter and they sat down to a meal. He often glanced at her and she appeared to be a good-looking and attractive woman. And when they were satisfied, he told her that he wanted them to sleep together that night. She made no objection and for three nights in succession he laid her next to him. Afterwards she went back and found the sorceress, told her that they must now change back to their own shapes again, and the woman saw to it.

And after some time had passed, Signy gave birth to a son. The
Sinfjötli\(^1\) kallaðr. Ok er hann vex upp, er hann baði mikill ok sterkr
ok vænn at álti ok mjók í ætt Volsunga, ok er eigi allra tíu vetra er
hon sendir hann í jardhúsit til Sigmundar. Hon hafið þá raun gert við
ina fyrri sonu sína, áðr hon sendi þá til Sigmundar, at hon saumaði at
hondum þeim með holdi ok skinni. Þeir þoldu illa ok kriktu um. Ok
svá gerði hon Sinfjotla. Hann brásk ekki við. Hon fló hann þá af
kyrtlinum svá at skinnit fylgði ermunum. Hon kvað honum mundu
sárt við verða. Hann segir:

‘Litlit mundi slíkt sárt þykka Volsungi.’ Ok nú kemr sveinninn til
Sigmundar.

Þá bað Sigmundr hann knoða ór mjöli þeira, en hann vill sækja
þeim eldvíð, fær í hond honum einn belg. Síðan ferr hann at viðinum.
Ok er hann kom aprtr, þá hafið Sinfjóttl ok lokit at baka. Þá spurði
Sigmundr ef hann hafi nokkut fundit í mjólinu.

‘Eigi er mér grunlaust,’ sagði hann, ‘at eigi hafi í verit nokkut
kykt í mjólinu, fyrst er ek tók at knoða, ok hér hefi ek með knoðat þat
er í var.’

Þá mælti Sigmundr ok hló við: ‘Eigi get ek þik hafa mat af þessu
brauði í kveld því at þar hefir þú knoðat með inn mesta eitorm.’
Sigmundr var svá mikill fyrir sér at hann mátti eta eitr, svá at hann
skafaði ekki, en Sinfjóttla hlýðdi þat at eitr kömi útan á hann, en eigi
a hlýðdi honum at eta né drekka.

\(\text{\textit{Pat}}\)\(^b\) er nú at segja at Sigmundi þykkr Sinfjótli of ungr til hefnad með
sér ok vill nú fyrst venja hann með nokkut hardráði. Fara nú um
sumrum víða um skóga ok drepa menn til fjár sér. Sigmundi þykkr
hann mjók í ætt Volsunga, ok þó hyggr hann at hann sé sonr Siggeirs
konungs, ok hyggr hann hafa illsku feðr síns;\(^c\) en kapp Volsunga, ok
ætlað hann eigi mjók færendrækkinn því at \(d\) hann minnir opt Sigmund á
sína harma ok eggjar mjók at \(e\) drepa Siggeir konung.

Nú er þat eitt hvort sinn at þeir fara enn á skúginn at afla sér fjár,

\(^a\) hann, en eigi \textit{illeg.} \(V\)
\(^b\) \textit{The preceding ch. heading now almost illeg.}; \(Ol \ reads \) þeir Sigmundr fóru í
hamina.
\(^c\) feðr síns \textit{illeg.} \(V\)
\(^d\) mjók færendrækkinn því at \textit{illeg.} \(V\). \(B \ adds \) mann \textit{after} færendrækkinn.
\(^e\) mjók at \textit{illeg.} \(V\)

\(^1\) The name probably means ‘he of the ash- (literally ‘cinder ’) gold fetter’,
and is thus a kenning for ‘wolf’, though -\textit{jótt}i may be a variant of Germanic
\textit{fetale, ‘spotted’}, \textit{sin-} being a later addition for alliterative purposes (in OE
boy was called Sinfjotli, and when he grew older he was tall, strong and handsome, and took after the Volsung family very markedly, and he was scarcely ten years old when she sent him to join Sigmund in his retreat. Before sending her first two sons to Sigmund, she had submitted them to the following test: she sewed their tunics on to their arms, stitching through skin and flesh. They stood up to it badly, and screamed as it was being done. She did the same to Sinfjotli. He did not flinch. Then she stripped the tunic from him, so that the skin came off with the sleeves, and said that this would hurt him.

‘No Volsung would think much of a pain like that,’ was the reply, and so the lad came to Sigmund.

Sigmund then told him to use their flour to make dough, saying that he would go and look for firewood for them, and handed him a sack. He then went to fetch the wood, and when he came back Sinfjotli had finished baking. Then Sigmund asked if he had found anything in the flour.

‘I’m not at all sure that there wasn’t something alive in the flour when I first started kneading,’ he said, ‘but I kneaded in whatever was there.’

Sigmund laughed at that and said: ‘I don’t think you’ll eat any of this bread tonight, for you’ve kneaded in a huge poisonous snake.’ Sigmund was so hardy that he could take poison and yet come to no harm. But though Sinfjotli was able to stand outward contact with poison, he could neither eat nor drink it.

The story now tells how Sigmund thought Sinfjotli too young to go with him in search of vengeance, and decided he would first gain him experience in something that called for grit and determination. For some summers they roved far and wide through the forest and killed people for plunder. Sigmund thought that he took after the Volsungs, and markedly so, but he believed him to be King Siggeir’s son with his father’s evil inclinations, even if he did have the keenness and energy of the Volsungs; although he did not imagine he felt very attached to his family, for he often reminded Sigmund of his wrongs and kept urging him to kill King Siggeir.

Now one day they went again to the forest in order to find them—

he is called simply ‘Fitela’, see Introduction p. xii) and his name could thus reflect his incestuous origin.
en þeir finna eitt hús ok tvá menn sofandi í húsínu með digrum gullhringum. Þeir hofðu òrðit fyrir ósköpun því at ûlfahamir hengu í 9 húsínu yfir þeim. It tûnda hvert degr máttu þeir komask ór húsmunum. Þeir váru konungasynir. Þeir Sigmundr fórú í hamina ok máttu eigi ór komask, ok fylgði sú náttúra sem ádr var, léru ok vargsróðdu. Þeir skilðu båðir röddina. Nú leggjask þeir ok á merkr, ok ferr sína leið hvárr þeira. Þeir gera þann mála með sér at þeir skuli til hætta, þótt sjau menn sé, en eigi framar, en sá láta 8 úlfsróðd er fyrir þöfði yrði.

‘Bregðum nú eigi af þessu,’ segir Sigmundr, ‘því at þú eft ungr ok áræðisfullr. Munu menn gott hyggja til at veiða þik.’

Nú ferr sína leið hvárr þeira. Ok er þeir váru skilðir, finnr Sigmundr sjau 4 menn ok lætr 5 úlfsróðdu. Ok Sinfjölti heyrir þat, ferr 6 til þegar ok drepr alla. Þeir skiljask enn. Ok er Sinfjölti hefir eigi lengi farit um skógin, finnr hann ellifu 7 menn ok bersk við þá, ok ferr svá at hann drepr þá alla. Hann verðr ok sárr mjók, 8 ferr undir eina eik, hvílisk þar. Þá kemr Sigmundr þar at ok mælti:

‘Því kallaðir þú ekkir?’
Sinfjölti sagði: ‘Eigi vilda ek keðja þik til liðs.’ 9 þú þátt lið til at drepa sjau menn, en ek em barn at aldri hjá þér, ok kvadda ek eigi liðs at drepa ellifu menn.’

Sigmundr hleypr at honum svá hart at hann stakar við ok fellr. Sigmundr bítir í barkann framan. Þann dag máttu þeir eigi komask ór ûlfahúsmunum. Sigmundr leggr hann nú á bak sér ok berr heim í skálann, ok sat hann yfir honum, en bað troll 1 taka ûlfháminna.

Sigmundr sér einn dag hvar hreysíkettir tveir váru, ok bítr annarr í barkann qðrum, ok rann sá til skógar ok hefur eitt blæð ok férr yfir sárit, ok sprettr upp hreysíkottinni heill. Sigmundr gengr út ok sér hvar hrafn flýgr með blæði, ok férrði honum. Hann dregr þetta yfir sárit Sinfjöltu, en hann sprettr upp þegar heill, sem hann hefði aldri sárr verit. Eptir þat fara þeir til jarðhúss ok eru þar til þess er þeir

---

9 The space between hvílisk þar and at drepa sjau menn (at the foot of fol. 8v) was mostly illegible for Ol who read E . . . d . . . ge ok fara . . . hann mælti til . . . att lið til. For the passage between hvílisk þar and eigi liðs (hjá þér—eigi liðs beginning the next fol. and still legible) the paper MSS substitute þa kemr

a thus Ol, indistinct V, hafa B
b illeg. V, Ol reads yfir and emends to í.
c illeg. V, látí B
d illeg. V, and for Ol. Sigmund seems to have fought seven men to judge from Ol’s (and B’s) reading drepa sjau menn (now illegible) a few lines below.
e lét B
f adds hann.
9 illeg. V, Ol doubtful. A few lines below Sinfjölti says he slew ellifu menn.
6 sárr mjók illeg. V, lúnn B
THE SAGA OF THE VOLSNINGS

riches, and they came to a cabin, and in the cabin there were two
men asleep, wearing heavy gold rings. An evil fate had overtaken them,
for there were wolf skins hanging above them in the cabin. They
could shed the skins once every ten days. They were princes. Sigmund
and Sinfjotli got into the skins, and could not get out of them again—
the strange power was there, just as before, and they even howled like
wolves, both understanding what was being said. They now went off
into the woods, each of them his own way, but they made an arrange­
ment that they would risk it against up to seven men, but not against
more, and if one of them should meet with trouble, then he was to howl.

'And let's keep to that,' said Sigmund, 'because you are a young
dare-devil people will think it grand to hunt down.'

Then they each went off on their own. And after they had separated,
Sigmund came across seven men and howled with his wolf's voice.
Sinfjotli heard it, was on the spot, and killed all of them. They
separated once more. And before Sinfjotli had been roving about
the forest very long, he encountered eleven men and fought with them,
and the result was that he killed them all. He, too, was badly hurt,
got under an oak and rested there. Then Sigmund came up and said :

'Why didn't you call out?'

'I didn't want to call on you for help,' said Sinfjotli. 'You were
given help in killing seven men, yet I'm no more than a child compared
with you, and I didn't call for help to kill eleven.'

Sigmund went for him so violently that he staggered and fell.
Sigmund bit him in the throat. That day they were unable to shed the
wolf skins. Sigmund then hoisted him over his shoulder and carried
him back to the hut, and watched over him, and wished the wolf skins
to the devil. ¹

One day Sigmund chanced to see two weasels, and one bit the other
in the throat, then ran to the woods and fetched a leaf, and laid it on
the wound, and the weasel leapt up well again. Sigmund went out and
saw a raven flying along with a leaf which it brought to him. This he
drew across Sinfjotli's wound and he immediately jumped up quite
recovered, just as if he had never been hurt. After that they went to
their underground lair and stayed there until they could throw off the

¹ See Glossary s.v. troll
skyldu fara ör úlfhörunum. Þá taka þeir\(^a\) ok brenna í eldi ok bánu engum at meini verða. Ok í þeim öskopum\(^b\) unnu þeir morg frægðarverk í riki Siggeirs konungs.

Ok er Sinfjötli er frumvæhti, þá þykktisk Sigmundr hafa reynt hann mjök. Nú líðr eigi langt áðr Sigmundr vill leita til fóðurfénda, ef svá vildi takask. Ok nú fara þeir í brott frá jarðhúsinu einn hvem dag ok koma at bæ Siggeirs konungs síð um aptan ok ganga inn í forstofuna þá er var fyrir hóllinni, en þar váru inni ǫkker, ok leyask þar. Dróttningin\(^c\) veit nú hvar þeir eru ok vill hitta þá. Ok er þau finnsk, gera þau þát ráð at þeir leitaði til fóðurfénda er náttáði.

Þau Signý ok konungr eigu tvau börn ung at aldri. Þau leika sér á göflinu at gulli ok renna því eptir göflinu hallarinnar ok hlaupa þar eptir. Ok einn gullhringr hryðr útar í húsit þar sem þeir Sigmundr eru, en sveinhinn hleypr eptir at leita hringsins. Nú sér hann hvar sitja tveir menn miklir ok grimmlegir ok hafa síða hjálma ok hvitar brynjar. Nú hleypr hann í hollína innar fyrir feðr sinn ok segir honum hvat hann hefir sét. Nú grunar konungr at vera munu svik við hann. Signý heyrir nú þeir segja. Hon stendr upp, tekr börnin bæði ok ferr útar í forstofuna til þeira ok læiti at þeir skyldu þat vita at þau hæfði sagt til þeira—

'Ok ræð ek ykkr at þit drepið þau.'

Sigmundr segir: 'Eigi vil ek drepa börn þín, þótt þau hafi sagt til mín.'

En Sinfjötli lét sér ekki feilskað ok bregðr sverði ok drepr hvárteggja barnit ok kastar þeim innar í hollína fyrir Siggeir konung. Konungr stendr nú upp ok heitr á menn at taka þá menn er leyzn hóðu í forstofunni um kveldit. Nú hlaupa menn útar þangat ok vilja hondla þá, en þeir verja sik vel ok drengiliga, ok þykktisk þá sá verst hafa lengi er næst er. Ok um síðir verða þeir ofrilliði bornir ok verða handteknir ok því næst í bónð reknir ok í fjótra settir, ok sitja þeir þar þá nótt alla.

Nú hyggr konungr at fyrir sér, hvern dauða hann skal fá þeim þann er kenndi lengst. Ok er morginn kom, þá lætr konungr haug mikinn gera af grjóti ok torfi. Ok er þessi haugr er gerr, þá lét hann setja hellu mikla í miðjan hauginn, svá at annarr jáðarr hellunnar hörfði upp, en

\(^a\) B addur þá.
\(^b\) usko- illeg. \(V\)
\(^c\) dróttning \(B\), dróttinn \(V\)
wolf skins. They seized them and fed them to the flames saying they should trouble no one again. While under that curse they had carried out many daring exploits in King Siggeir’s territory.

And by the time Sinfjotli had grown up, Sigmund believed that he’d tested him thoroughly. And it wasn’t long before Sigmund wished to set about avenging his father, if only it could be done. So one day they left their forest retreat, coming to King Siggeir’s estate late in the afternoon, and they went into the outer room at the front of the hall. Inside there were some ale barrels and they hid themselves there. Now the queen got to know where they were, and wanted to go and see them, and when they met, they decided that they would attempt to avenge their father after nightfall.

Signy and the king had two children of tender years. They were amusing themselves on the floor with golden playthings, bowling them along the hall floor and running after them. And a gold ring rolled out into the room where Sigmund and his companion were, and the lad ran after the ring to look for it. And then he spied two tall, fierce-looking men sitting there, wearing helmets which came down low over their faces, and shining coats of mail. Then he ran back into the hall to his father and told him what he had seen. So the king suspected that there must be treachery afoot. Now Signy heard what they said. She stood up, took both children and went into the outer room to them and said that they ought to know that the children had given them away—

‘And I think you had better kill them.’
‘I’ll not kill your children, even if they have given me away,’ said Sigmund.

But Sinfjotli was nothing daunted. He drew his sword and killed both the children, throwing them into the inner part of the hall right in front of King Siggeir. Then the king stood up and called to his retainers to seize the men who had been hiding in the outer room throughout the evening. So some of his men ran to the outer room, intending to lay hands on them, but they put up an able and courageous defence and for a long time the man who felt he was the worst off was the one nearest them. But in the end they were overpowered, seized, and then bound and shackled, and there they sat all that night.

Meantime the king pondered what would be the slowest way he knew of putting them to death, and when morning came, the king had a huge burial-mound made out of stones and turf, and when the mound was ready he had a great stone slab fixed in the middle in such a way that one end of the slab pointed up and the other down. It was big
annarr niðr. Hon var svá mikil at hon tök tveggja vegna, svá at eigi mátti komask hjá henni. Nú lætr hann taka þá Sigmund ok Sinfjötli ok setja í hauginn sínum megin hvárn þeira, fyrir því at honum þótti þeim þat verra at vera eigi nóttum saman, en þó mátti heyra hvárr til annars. Ok er þeir váru at tyrfa hauginn, þá kemr Signý þar at ok hefir hálmi í fangi sér ok kastar í hauginn til Sinfjótla ok þóðr þælana leyta konunginn þessu. Þeir já því, ok er þá lokit aðr hauginum.

Ok er náttu tekur, þá mætti Sinfjötli til Sigmundar:

‘Ekki ætla ek okkr mat skorta um hrið hér; hefir dróttningin kastat fleski inn í hauginn ok vafit um útan hálmi.’

Ok enn þeifar hann um fleskit ok finnr at þar var stungít í sverði Sigmundar, ok kenndi at hjóltunum er myrkt var í hauginum, ok segir Sigmundi. Þeir fagna því báðir. Nú skýtr Sinfjötli blöðreflínun fyrir ofan helluna ok dregr fast. Sverðit bítr helluna. Sigmundr tekur nú blöðreflínna, ok ristu nú í milli sín helluna ok þetta eigi fyrir en lokit er at rísta, sem kevðir er:

(1) Rístu af magni
mikla hellu
Sigmundr hjörvi
ok Sinfjötli.

Ok nú eru þeir lausir báðir saman í hauginum ok rísta bæði grjót ok járn a ok komask svá út ór hauginum.

Þeir ganga nú heim til hallarinnar. Éru menn þá í svefní allir. Þeir bera við at hóllinni ok leggja eld í viðinn, en þeir vakna við gufuna er inni eru, ok þat at hóllin logar yfir þeim. Konungr spyr þverir eðlana gerði.

‘Hér eru vit Sinfjötli, systursonr minn,’ sagði Sigmundr, ‘ok ætllum vit nú at þat skulir þú vita at eigi eru allir Völsungar dauðir.’

Hann biðr systur sínu út banga ok þiggja af honum gðði metord ok mikinn sóma ok vill svá boeta henni sínna harma.

Hon svarar: ‘Nú skaltu vita hvárt ek hefi munat Siggeirí konungi dráp Völsungs konungs. Ek lét drepa þorn okkur er mér þóttu of sein til fðurhhefnda, ok ek for í skóg til þín í völvalía, ok er Sinfjötli okkarr sonr. Hefir hann af því mikit kapp at hann er bæði sonarsonr ok dötursonr Völsungs konungs. Hefi ek þar til unnti alla hluti at

a Probably a mistake for torfi, cf. above haug mikinn af grjóti ok torfi (cf. Ol).
b B adds att.
enough to reach right across from side to side, so that it was impossible to get round it. Then he had Sigmund and Sinfjotli brought out and put inside the mound, one on each side by himself, for he thought it would be worse for them if they were not both together, but could none the less hear each other. And while they were busy covering over the mound with turf, Signy came up with an armful of straw. She threw it into the mound to Sinfjotli, and told the serfs to conceal this from the king. They said they would do so, and then the mound was closed in.

Now when it began to grow dark, Sinfjotli said to Sigmund:

'I don't think we'll go short of food in here for a time. The queen threw down some pork into the mound—she wrapped it up in straw.'

Once more he felt the pork over and discovered that Sigmund's sword had been thrust into it—he recognised it by the hilt for it was dark in the mound, and he told Sigmund. They were both overjoyed. Then Sinfjotli thrust the point of the sword up over the stone slab and pulled down hard. The sword bit into the stone. Sigmund now took hold of the sword point, and then they sawed through the stone, not giving up until the sawing was completed, as the poet says:

(1) They cut with might
the massive slab,
Sigmund with his blade
and Sinfjotli.

So both were now free together in the mound, and they sawed through stones and iron, too, and in this way they got out of the mound.

They then went back to the hall where everyone was asleep. They brought up wood to the hall and set fire to the wood, and those inside were awakened by the smoke and the hall all ablaze above them. The king asked who had started the fire.

'Here we are, myself and Sinfjotli, my sister's son,' said Sigmund, 'and now we intend you to know that not all the Volsungs are dead.'

He told his sister to come out and receive from him every consideration, and high esteem, meaning in this way to make up for what she had suffered.

'You'll know now whether or not I have remembered King Siggeir's killing of King Volsung against him!' she answered, 'and I had our children killed when they seemed to me all too tardy in avenging our father, and in the shape of some sorceress I came to you in the forest, and Sinfjotli is your son, and mine. His immense vigour comes from being King Volsung's grandson on his father's as well as his mother's
Siggeirr konungr skyldi bana fá. Hefn ek ok svá mikit til unnit at fram kemisk hefnindin, at mér er með engum kosti líft. Skal ek nú deyja með Siggeirr konungi lestig er ek áttta hann nautið."

Siðan kyssti hon Sigmund, bróður sinn, ok Sinfsjótl, ok gekk inn í eldinn ok bað já vel fara. Siðan fekk hon þar bana með Siggeirr konungi ok allri hírð sinni.

Þeir frændr fá sér líð ok skipa, ok heldr Sigmundr til ættleifðar sinnar ok rekkr ór landi þann konung er þar hafði í sék eptir Völus

konung. Sigmundr gerisk nú ríkr konungr ok ágætr, vitr ok stórráðr. Hann átti þa konu er Borghildr hét. Þau áttu tvá sønu. Hét Helgi annarr, en annarr Hámundr. Ok er Helgi var fæddr, kómu til nornir ok veittu honum formála ok mæltu at hann skyldi verða allra konunga frægastr. Sigmundr var þa kominn frá orrostu ok gekk með einum lauk í móti syni sínum, ok hér með geir hann honum Helga nafn ok petta at nafnfesti: Hringstaði ok Sólfaðr ok sverð, ok bað hann vel fremjask ok verða í selt Völusunga. Hann gerisk stórlyndr ok vinsæll ok fyrir flestum mænum þórum at allri atgervi. Þat er sagt at hann rézk í hernað þa er hann var fimmtan vetra gamall. Var Helgi konungr yfis líðinu, en Sinfsjótl var fæginn til með honum, ok réðu báðir líði.

Þat er sagt at Helgi finnr þann konung í hernaði er Hundingr hét. Hann var ríkr konungr ok fjólmennr ok réð fyrir lóndum. Þar tekks orrost með þeim, ok engfr Helgi fast fram, ok lýsk með því sjá bardagi at Helgi fær sigr, en Hundingr konungr fellr ok mikill hluti líðs hans. Nú þykkir Helgi hafa vaxit mikit, er hann hefr fellt svá ríkan konung. Synir Hundings bjóða nú út her í móti Helga ok vilja hefna fóður síns. Þeir ciga harda orrostu, ok engfr Helgi í gegnum

1 See Glossary s.v. nornir
2 Lauk is etymologically identical with and often connotes the Eng. 'leek'. It can also, as here, mean 'garlic' which was considered effective in warding off evil of various kinds (cf. also st. 11).
3 See Introduction p. xxxvi. Helgi appears as the son of king Halfdan of Denmark in Snorri's Ynglinga saga, in Hrólf's saga Kraka, in Beowulf (as Hálu) and in Saxo Grammaticus who alone of the non-Volusung texts tells of his victory over Hunding and Hoddbrodd.
4 See Glossary s.v. nafnfestr
5 Sólfaðr is unidentified; Hringstaði may be Ringsted in Zealand, at times the seat of the Danish kings.
side. Everything I have done has been to bring about King Siggeir's death. And I have done so much to achieve vengeance that to go on living is out of the question. I shall now gladly die with King Siggeir, reluctant though I was to marry him.'

Then she kissed her brother Sigmund, and Sinfjotli, and walking into the inferno she bade them farewell, and thereupon she perished there with King Siggeir and all his men.

The two kinsmen got together a following and ships, and Sigmund set off for his ancestral lands, and he drove from the country the king who had established himself there in succession to King Volsung. Sigmund now became a powerful king, and was famous, intelligent and ambitious. He married a woman whose name was Borghild. They had two sons, Helgi was one and Hamund the other. And when Helgi was born, the Norns appeared, and they granted him knowledge of his destiny, saying that of all kings he would be the most famous. Sigmund had just returned from battle, and taking with him some garlic he went to see his son, and thereupon gave him the name of Helgi, and his gifts for the occasion were Hringstaðir and Solfell and a sword, and he told him he must get on in life, and be a real Volsung. He grew into a noble-minded and well-loved man, and his talents in every field outstripped those of most others. It is told that he went raiding when he was fifteen years old. Helgi was in charge of the troops, but Sinfjotli was put in with him, and they shared the command between them.

We are now told that while on a raiding expedition Helgi came across a king whose name was Hunding. He was a powerful king with men at his command and lands under his sway. Battle ensued between them and Helgi pressed on vigorously, and the battle ended with Helgi victorious, King Hunding falling with a large part of his following. So Helgi was held to have greatly increased his fame by the killing of such a powerful king. Hunding's sons then called out an army against Helgi, meaning to avenge their father. They had a violent battle, and Helgi fought his way through the brothers' serried ranks and made for

6 Hunding is known as a Norwegian king in Flateyjarbók, and as the son of the Saxon king, Syrik, in Saxo Grammaticus.
7 Thus emphasising that Hunding was no mere herkonungr or sákonungr whose authority did not extend beyond his army or fleet.
fylkingar þeira brœðra ok søkur at merkjum sona Hundings konungs ok felldi þessa Hundings sonu: Álf ok Eyjólfr, Hervarð ok Hagbarð, ok fekk hér ágetan sigr.

Ok er Helgi ferv frá orrostu, þá fann hann við skóg einn konur margar ok virðuligur sýnum, ok bar þó ein af öllum. Þær riðu með ágetiligum búniningi. Helgi spyrð þá at nafni er fyrir þeim var. En hon nefndisk Sigrún ok kvæk vera dóttir Hógrna 1 konungs.

Helgi mælti: 'Farið heim með oss, ok verið velkomnar.'

Þá segir konungsdóttir: 'Annat starf liggr fyrir oss en drekka með þér.'

Helgi svarar: 'Hvat er þat, konungsdóttir?'

Hon svarar: 'Hógní konungr heitit mik Hoddbroddi, syni Granmars konungs, en ek hefi því heitit at ek vil eigi eiga hann heldr en einn krákuunga. En þó mun þetta fram fara, nema þú bannir honum ok komir í mótt honum með her ok nemir mik á brott, því at með engum konungi vilda ek heldr setr þúa en með þér.'

'Ver kát, konungsdóttir,' sagði hann. 'Fyrri skulum vit reyna hreysti okkra 2 en þú þró honum gipt, ok reyna skulum vit að hrí hvárr af þórum berr, ok hér skal láfit á leggja.'

Eptir þetta sendir Helgi menn með fæggjafum at stefna at sér mónnum, ok stefnir þoll liðinu til Rauðabjarga. Beið Helgi þar til þess er mikill flokkr kom til hans ór Heðinsey, 3 ok þá kom til hans mikill lið ór Norvasundum 4 með flogrum skipum ok stórum. Helgi konungr kallar til sín skipstjórnarmann sinn er Leifr 5 hét, ok spurði ef hann hefði talit lið þeira. En hann svarar:

'Eigi er høgt at telja, herra, skip þau er komin eru ór Norvasundum. Eru á tólf þúsundir manna, ok er þó hálfu fleira annat.'

Þá mælti Helgi konungr at þeir skyldu snúa á þann fjörd er heitir Varinsfjörðr, 6 ok svá gerðu þeir. Nú gerði at þeim storm mikinn ok svá stóran sío at því var líkast at heyra er bylgjur gnúðu á borbúnum, sem þá er bjorgum lysti saman. Helgi báð þá ekki öttask ok eigi svipta seglunum, heldr setja hvert herra en aðr. Þá var við sjálft at yfir mundi

---

1 Not, of course, the same Hogni as Gunnar’s brother. A king Hogni of Eystra Gautland appears in Snorri’s Ynglinga saga (ch. 42) where he is related by marriage to Granmar, referred to in VS as father of Hoddbrodd whom Saxo mentions as the son of the Swedish king Regner.

2 The Baltic island of Hiddensee

3 The Straits of Gibraltar! This can hardly be the place originally meant. HH I, st. 24, 1.4, the equivalent passage in PE, reads Örvasund of which nothing is known: perhaps Stralsund, cf. Detter-Heinzel II, 329. The modern Öresund was Eyrasund in Old Icelandic.

\[ \text{a} \text{ thus } B, \text{ Ol okkar} \\
\text{b} \text{ thus } Ol, \text{ om. } V \]
THE SAGA OF THE VOLSUNGS

Of these sons he struck down the following: Alf, Eyjolf, Hervard and Hagbard, and in this he won an outstanding victory.

And on his way from the battle Helgi met a large party of women near a forest. Their appearance was impressive, but there was one who stood out among them all. They were riding along magnificently arrayed. Helgi asked the woman who was leading them what her name was, and she said she was called Sigrun and that she was the daughter of King Hogni.¹

¹ Come with us, and welcome,’ said Helgi.

‘Drinking with you is not the business we have ahead of us,’ said the princess then.

‘What is that, Princess?’ was Helgi’s answer.

‘King Hogni,’ she replied, ‘has promised me in marriage to Hoddbrodd, King Granmar’s son, but I have vowed to have him no more than I’d have a fledgling crow as a husband—but it will none the less come to that, unless you stop him and come against him with an army and take me away, for there is no king I would rather make a home with than with you.’

‘Take heart, Princess,’ he said. ‘We shall try out our courage rather than have you married to him, and we shall first prove which of us shall prevail against the other, and I pledge my life to this.’

And then Helgi dispatched men with gifts of money to invite people to join him, and he made Raudabjorg the assembly point for the whole force. There Helgi waited until a large body of men joined him from Hedinsey,² and then there joined him a great number from Norvassund³ with fine large ships. King Helgi summoned the ship’s captain—who’s name was Leif⁴—and asked if he had counted their numbers, and he replied:

‘It’s not easy to count them, Sir. On the ships come from Norvassund there are twelve thousand men, but the other force is far greater.’

King Helgi then ordered them to turn into the firth called Varinsfjord,⁵ and they did so. And then a heavy storm hit them: the sea was so high that when the waves roared against the sides of the ship, it sounded just as if boulders were being clashed together. Helgi then told them not to be afraid, and not to strike sail, but instead to hoist each of them higher than before—they were then on the verge of

² A common enough name. HH I, st. 23, 1. 6, reads Hjorleif, ‘sword Leif’, which may be a reference to an early Icelandic settler of that name.
gangafadirl þeirr kæmi at landi. Þá kom þar Sigrún, döttir Högnakonungs, af landi ofan með miklu liði, or snýr þeim í göða hofn er heitir at Gnúpalundí.1 þessi tíðendi sá landsmenn, ok kom af landi ofan bróðir Hoddbrodds konungs er þar reð fyrir er heitir at Svarins-
haugi.2 Hann kallar á þá ok spyrri hvarr styrði inu mikla liði. Sinfjötli stendr upp ok hefir hjálmt á hofnini skyggðan sem glynnu hvítan sem snjó, spjót í hendi með ágætliga merki ok gullrendan skjöld fyrir sér. Sá kunnt at mæla við konunga:

'Seg svá er þú hefir gefið svínnum ok hundum ok þú finnr konu þína at hér eru konmr Volsungar, ok mun hér hittask í liðinu Helgi konungr ef Hoddbroðir vill finna hann, ok er þat hans gaman at berjask með frama, meðan þú kyssir ambáttir við eðl.'

Granmarr 3 svarar: ‘Eigi muntu kunna mart virðuligt mæla eða a forn minni at segja, er þú lýgr á hofsingja. Mun hitt sannara at þú munt lengi hafa fæð á morkum á utí við vargamot ok dreipt broðr þína,6 ok er kynligt er þú þórir at koma í her með göðum þornum, er mælt hraða hefr sogit til blóðs.’

Sinfjötli svarar: ‘Eigi muntu gloggt muna nú er þú vart völgan 6 í Varinsey 7 ok kvazk 6 vilja mann eiga ok kaust mik til þess embættis at vera þinn maðr. En síðan vartu valkyrja 8 í Æsgardr,9 ok var við sjálft at allir mundi berjask fyrir þínar sakar, ok ek gat við þér nuf værag á Láganesi,10 ok var ek faðir allra.’

Granmarr svarar: ‘Marti kanntu ljúga. Ek hygg at engis faðir mættir þú vera síðan þú vart geldr af dætrum jötunsins á Þrasnesi,11 ok ertu stjúpsonr Siggeirs konungs ok látt á morkum utí með vorgum, ok kómur þéroll öpp senn at hendi. Þú drapt broðr þína ok gerðir þik at illu kunnan.’

Sinfjötli svarar: ‘Hvárt mantu 6 þat er þú vart merrin með hestinum Grana, ok reið ek þér á skoð á Brávelli? 12 Síðan vartu geitasveinn Gölnís jötuns.’ 13

---

1 Unidentified
3 He appears in Snorri’s Ynglinga saga (ch. 40-42) where he is king of Sudrmanaland (Södermanland) and related by marriage to king Hogni of Gautland (see p. 15, n. 1). Granmarr, Hoddbrods father, has been erroneously substituted here and in the following conversion for Hoddbrodds brother Gudmund (see HH I, st. 32, l. 2).
4 See p. 10
5 See p. 12
6 See Glossary s.v. völva. This and the two following charges contain the implication of homosexuality.
7 Unidentified, seemingly connected with Varinsjórðr, cf. n. 5, p. 15.
foundering before they could make land. Then Sigrun, King Hogni’s daughter, came down to the shore with a large party and directed them to a good harbour called Gnibalund. The inhabitants of that region saw what was happening, and down to the shore came King Hoddbrodd’s brother who governed the district known as Svarinshaug. He called to them and asked them who was in command of that large force. Sinjotli stood up, and on his head was a helmet that shone like glass, and he wore a coat of mail as dazzling as snow, a spear with a fine pennant was in his hand and before him he held a shield inlaid with gold. He knew how to parley with kings:

‘Say this, when you have fed your pigs and dogs and you meet your wife: the Volsungs are here, and King Helgi can be found here with his troops, if Hoddbrodd wants to find him, and it is his pleasure to fight with glory while you kiss serving girls by the fire.’

‘You don’t seem able to say anything very honourable or talk of old memories, you who tell lies about men of rank’, answered Granmar.‘It’s probably truer to say that you have long fed on wolf’s fare out in the forests and have killed your brothers, and it is extraordinary that you who have sucked the blood of many a cold corpse should dare to come in an army with decent men.’

‘You probably won’t now remember clearly the time you were the Sibyl on Varinsey,’ answered Sinjotli, ‘and declared you desired a mate and chose me for this office of husband. And later on you were a valkyrie in Asgard and they were all on the point of fighting because of you, and in Laganess I begot nine wolves on you, and I was the father of them all.’

‘You’re a great hand at lying,’ answered Granmar. ‘I don’t think you could be any one’s father, since you were castrated by the giant’s daughters on Thrasness, and you are King Siggeir’s stepson, and you roamed abroad with wolves in the forest, and every stroke of evil fate descended on you at once. You killed your brothers and got yourself an evil name.’

‘Do you remember the time you were the mare with the steed Grani,’ Sinjotli answered, ‘and I rode you at full gallop on Bravoll? Later you were the giant Golnir’s goat-herd.’

---

8 See Glossary s.v. valkyrja
9 The abode of the Æsir
10 Substituted for á nesi Ságo of PE (HH I, st. 39, l. 2).
11 Substituted for Thor’s Ness (á þórsnessi) of PE (HH I, st. 40, l. 8).
12 Possibly a specific reference to the famous battle of Brâvellir, near modern Norrköping in Sweden, fought c. 750 (see Turville-Petre, Heroic Age, 56 f.).
13 See Glossary s.v. troll
Granmarr segir: 'Fyrir vilda ek seðja fugla á hræi þínu en deila við þik lengr.'

Pá mælti Helgi konungr: 'Betr a væri ykkur ok meira snjallráði at berjask en mæla slíkt er skömm b er at heyra, ok ekki eru Granmars synir vinir mínir, en þó eru þeir harðir menn.'

Granmarr ríðr nú í brott ok til fundar við Hoddbrodd konung þar sem heita Sólfjöll. Hestar þeira heita Sveipuðr ok Sveggjuðr. Þeir mættusk í borgarhlöði ok segja honum hersogu. Hoddbroodd konungr var í brynju ok hafði hjálm á hofði. Hann spyrr hverir þar væri,—

'Eða hví eru þér svá reiðulírgr?'

Granmarr segir: 'Hér eru konmir Völsungar ok hafa tólf þusundir manna við land ok sjau þusundir við ey þá er Sök heitir, en þar sem heitir fyrir Grindum er þó mestr fjöldi, ok hygg ek nú at Helgi muni ný berjask vilja.'

Konungr segir: 'Gerum þá boð um allt vár fíki ok sækjun í mótt þeim. Siti só engi heima er berjask vill. Sendum orð Hrings sonum ok Hogn konungi ok Álfi inum gamla. Þeir eru bardagamenn miklir.'

Fundusk þeir þar er heitir Frekasteinn, ok tösk þar hörð orrosta. Helgi gengr fram í gegnum fylkingar. Þar varð mikit mannfall. Þá só þeir skjaldmeyjaflokki mikinn, svá sem í loga sæi. Þar var Sigrún konungsdóttir. Helgi konungr sótti í mótt Hoddbrodd konungi ok fellir hann undir merkjum.

Pá mælti Sigrún, 'Haf þókk fyrir þetta þrekvirki. Skipt mun nú lónum. Er mér þetta mikill tímadagr, ok muntu fá af þessu veg ok ágæti, er þú hefir svá ríkan konung felldan.'

Pat fíki tók Helgi konungr ok dvalðisk þar lengi ok fekk Sigrúnar ok gedisk frægr konungr ok ágætr, ok er hann hér ekki síðan við þessa sognu.

Völsungar e fara nú heim ok hafa enn mikit aukit sitt ágæti. Sinfjölti

---

\textsuperscript{a} illeg. \textsuperscript{V} \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{b} er skömm illeg. \textsuperscript{V} \\
\textsuperscript{c} The preceding ch. heading reads Frá Völsungum.

\textsuperscript{1} See pp. 14, n. 3, 15, n. 1 \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{2} See p. 14, n. 5
\textsuperscript{3} Substituted for sogn of PE (HH 1, st. 50, l. 3) \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{4} Substituted for PE (HH 1, st. 50, l. 1) \textit{i grímond}, 'within the stakes' (that form a harbour), wrongly understood as a place name.
\textsuperscript{5} Sigurd Hring was the nephew of King Harald War-tooth who was reputed to have vanquished his uncle at the battle of Bravellir (see p. 16, n. 12), he married a certain Alfhild, a descendent of Alf the Old who appears with him here.
I would rather feed birds on your carcase than wrangle with you any longer,' said Granmar.

It would be better for you both and a more sensible plan to fight,' said King Helgi then, 'rather than say things that are shameful to hear, and Granmar’s sons are no friends of mine, hardy men though they are.

Granmar now rode away to a meeting with King Hoddbrodd at a place called Solfell. The names of their horses were Sveipud and Sveggjud. They met at the castle gate and he was told of the enemy’s approach. King Hoddbrodd was clad in mail and a helmet was on his head. He asked who they were—

'And why are you looking so angry?'

'The Volsungs are here with twelve thousands men just off shore, and seven thousand off the island of Sok,’ said Granmar, ‘but their largest force is off Grindir, so I think that Helgi probably means to fight.’

'Then let us send a summons throughout all our kingdom,’ said the king, ‘and march against them. No staying at home for those who wish to fight! Let us send word to Hring’s sons and to King Hogni and to Alf the Old—they are great warriors.’

They met at a place called Frekastein and there a fierce battle began. Helgi pressed forward through the enemy ranks. Casualties became heavy there. They saw a large party of warrior-maids; it was like gazing into flame. Sigrun, the king’s daughter, was there. King Helgi made at King Hoddbrodd and struck him down beneath his banners.

'My thanks for this great feat,’ said Sigrun then. ‘The lands will now change hands. This is a happy day for me, and from this you will win honour and renown, striking down so powerful a king.’

King Helgi took over the kingdom and lived there long. He married Sigrun, becoming a renowned and distinguished king, but he does not appear again in this saga.

So the Volsungs returned home and once more they had considerably

---

§ Unidentified

The *skjaldmaer* (lit. ‘shield-maiden’) was a maiden armed for battle, cf. also Brynhild’s statement, p. 43, and p. 69 where Gudrun sides with her brothers against her husband Atli. The term was sometimes used of valkyries. See Glossary s.v. *valkyrja*.

The effect produced by highly polished armour.
leggsk nú í hernað af nýju. Hann sór eina fagra konu ok girnisk mjökk at fá hennar. Þeirar konu bað ok bróðir Borghildar er átti Sigmundr konungr. Þeir þreyta þetta mál með orrostu, ok fellir Sinfjótil þenna konung. Hann herjar nú víða ok á margar orrostur ok hefur ávalt sigr. Gerisk hann manna frægstr ok ágetastr ok kemr heim um haustit með órgum skipum ok miklu fé.

Hann segir feðr sínum tóðendin, en hann segir dröttningu. Hon biðt Sinfjótils fara brottr ór ríkinu ok læzk eigi vilja sjá hann. Sigmundr kvezk eigi láta hann í brottr fara ok býðr at bota henni með gulli ok miklu fé, þótt hann hefði engan fyrri bætt mann; kvað engi frama at sakask við konur. Hon má nú þessu eigi á leið koma.

Hann mælti, ‘Þér skuluð ráða, herra---pat samir.’

Hon gerir nú erfi bróður síns með rúði konungs, byr nú þessa veizlu með ínum beztum fongum ok bauð þangat órgu stórmenni. Borghildr bar mónum drykk. Hon kemr fyrir Sinfjótils með miklu horni.

Hann mælti, ‘Drekk nú, stjúpsnor.’

Hann tók við ok sá í hornit ok mælti,

‘Gjörótt er drykkinn.’

Sigmundr mælti, ‘Fá mér þá.’ Hann drakk af.

Dröttningin mælti, ‘Hví skulu aðrir menn drekka fyrir þik þí? ’

Hon kom í annat sinn með hornit, ‘Drekk nú,’ ok frýdi honum með órgum ordum. Hann tekr við horninu ok mælti, ‘Flærðr er drykkinn.’

Sigmundr mælti, ‘Fá mér þá.’

It þríðja sinn kom hon ok bað hann drekka af ef hann hefði hug Völsunga.

Sinfjótil tók við horninu ok mælti, ‘Eitir er í drykknum.’

Sigmundr svarar, ‘Lát grón sía, sonr,’ sagði hann. Þá var konunger drúkkinn mjökk, ok því sagði hann svá. Sinfjótil drekkr ok fellir þegar niðr. Sigmundr riss upp ok gekk harmr sinn nær bana ok tók líkt í fang sér ok ferr til skógar ok kom loks at einum fírði. Þar sá hann mann á einum báti litlum. Sá maðr spyr ef hann vildi þiggja at honum far yfir fjördinn. Hann jattar því. Skipit var svá lítt at þat bar þá eigi, ok var líkt fyrst flutt, en Sigmundr gekk með fírðinum. Ok því næst hvarf

---

1 i.e. for the killing of her brother by Sinfjótil. See Glossary under mórð.
2 It was common for the lady or sometimes the daughter of the house to show hospitality in this way (cf. Wealththeow in Beowulf, Klaeber, ll. 612 ff.).
3 This is Odin once again.
added to their reputation. Sinfjotli went off raiding again. He saw a good-looking woman and desired her very much. The brother of Borghild, King Sigmund’s wife, was also seeking this woman’s hand in marriage. They fought a battle over their differences and Sinfjotli struck down the king concerned. He now went raiding over a wide area, fought many battles and was always victorious. He became a most famous and distinguished man and returned home that autumn with a large number of ships and wealth in plenty.

He told his father the news, and his father told the queen. She ordered Sinfjotli to leave the realm and said that she had no wish to see him. Sigmund declared he would not allow him to leave, and offered to compensate her\(^1\) with gold and great riches, though previously he had never paid compensation to anyone. He said there was no distinction to be won in choosing to quarrel with a woman. So she was not able to get her own way in the matter.

‘Yours must be the decision, Sire, that is only proper,’ she said.

Then, with the king’s consent, she set about the arrangements for her brother’s funeral feast, providing the best of food and drink, and she invited many important men to it. Borghild carried the drink round to the men.\(^2\) She came to Sinfjotli with a large drinking horn and said:

‘Now drink, stepson.’

He took the horn, peered in and said:

‘The drink is cloudy.’

‘Give it to me, then,’ said Sigmund. He drank it off.

‘Why should other people drink ale for you?’ said the queen.

She came a second time with the horn.

‘Drink now,’ she said, and roundly jeered at him. He grasped the horn and said: ‘The drink has been tampered with.’

‘Give it to me, then,’ said Sigmund.

She came a third time and told him to drain the horn if he had the courage of the Volsungs. Sinfjotli grasped the horn and said: ‘This drink has been poisoned.’

‘Strain it through your moustache, my son,’ exclaimed Sigmund in reply. The king was very drunk at the time, and that is why he spoke as he did. Sinfjotli drank and immediately collapsed. Sigmund rose to his feet, almost succumbing to his grief, and he took the body in his arms and went to the forest, and eventually came to a firth. There he saw a man\(^3\) in a small boat. The man asked if he wanted to be ferried across the firth. He said he did. The boat was so small that it would not hold them, and the body was taken first, Sigmund walking alongside the firth. The next instant the ship vanished from
Sigmundi skipit ok svá maðrinn.¹ Ok eptir þat snýr Sigmundr heim, rekr nú í brott drottningina, ok litlu síðar dó hon. Sigmundr konungr ræðr nú enn ríki sínu ok þykkir verit hafa inn mesti kappi ok konungr í fornun síð.

Eylimi² hefur konungr heitit, ríkr ok ágætr. Dóttir hans hét Hjordís, allra kvenna vænst ok vitrust. Ók þat spyrr Sigmundr konungr at hon var við hans eði eða engi ella.

Sigmundr seekir heim Eylima konung. Hann gerir veizlu í móti honum mikla ef hann hefði eigi herferð þangat. Fara nú boð þeira í milli at með vinsemð var nú farit, en eigi með herskap. Veizla þessi var ger með inum beztum fongum ok með miklu fjölmennti. Sigmundi konungi var hvarvetna sett torg ok annarr farargreiði. Koma nú til veizlu ok skipa báðir konungar eina höll. Þar var ok kominn Lyngvi konungr, sonn Hundings konungs, ok vill hann ok mægjask við Eylima konung. Hann³ þykkisk sjá at þeir munu eigi hafa eitt ørendi, þykkisk ok vita at ófríðar mun af þeim ván er eigi fær.

Nú mælti konungr við dóttur sína, ’Þú eft vitr kona, en ek hefi þat mælt at þú skalt þér mann kjósa. Kjós nú um tvá konungu, ok er þat mitt ráð hér um sem þitt er.’

Hon svarar, ’Vant sýnísk mér þetta mál, en þó kýs ek þann konung er frægstr er, en þat er Sigmundr konungr, þótt hann sé mjók aldri orpinn.’

Ók var hon honum gefin, en Lyngvi konungr fór í brott. Sigmundr kvángadisk ok fekk Hjordísar. Var þar annan dag ðörum betr veitt eða með meira kappi. Eptir þat fór Sigmundr konungr heim í Húналand ok Eylimi konungr, mágur hans, við honum ok gættir nú ríkis sín.

En Lyngvi konungr ok bræðr hans safna nú her at sér ok fara nú á hendir Sigmundi konungi, því at þeir höfuð jafnan minna hlut ór málum, þótt þetta biti nú fyrir. Vilja þeir nú fyrir koma kappi Úlsvunga. Koma nú í Húnaland ok senda Sigmundi konungi orð ok vilja eigi stelask á hann, en þykkjask⁴ vita at hann mun eigi flýja. Sigmundr

---

¹ It has been suggested (see Ellis, p. 44) that this episode is one of the indications for an earlier belief in a land of the dead across the sea. See, however, Introduction p. xxxv, n. 10.
² He is mentioned occasionally in PE, but nothing is known of him.
³ Presumably King Eylimi
⁴ The preceding ch. heading illeg. (also for Ol).
Sigmund's sight, and with it the man. After this Sigmund returned home and he now banished the queen, who soon afterwards died. King Sigmund now ruled his kingdom as before, and he is thought of as the greatest and most valiant king in heathen times.

II

There was a powerful and famous king named Eylimi. His daughter's name was Hjordis. She was the best looking and the most intelligent woman there was. And King Sigmund heard that she and none other would suit him.

Sigmund now set out to visit King Eylimi, who prepared a great feast to welcome him, if his journey there was without hostile intent. Messages now passed between them to the effect that they came in friendship, and did not mean war. The feast was supplied with the best of everything, and a large number of people was there. Markets were provided for King Sigmund all along the route, and other amenities to help him on the journey. Thus they arrived at the feast, and the two kings shared the same hall. King Lyngvi, King Hunding's son, had also appeared, and he, too, would have liked to have King Eylimi as a father-in-law. He didn't imagine their mission would end in the same way for both of them, and he rather thought that the one who failed would very likely make trouble.

Then said the king to his daughter: 'You are an intelligent woman and I said that you should choose your own husband. So choose between the two kings, and your decision in the matter will be mine, too.'

'I don't find this easy,' she replied, 'but I'll choose the king who has the highest renown, and that is King Sigmund, even though he is well on in years.'

So it was to him she was given, and King Lyngvi went away. Sigmund married, taking Hjordis as his wife. Every day they were feasted better and with more zest than the day before. Afterwards King Sigmund returned to Hunland, and King Eylimi, his father-in-law, with him, and he saw to his kingdom.

But now King Lyngvi and his brothers gathered an army about them and moved against King Sigmund, for they had always had the worst of it, but this was the last straw. They now meant to dampen the ardour of the Volsungs. So they arrived in Hunland and sent word to King Sigmund, not wishing to take him by surprise, and being confident that he wouldn't run from them. King Sigmund said he would give battle.
konungr kvækk koma mundu til orrostu. Hann dró saman her, en Hjördís var ekt til skógar við eina ambátt, ok mikit fé för með þeim. Hon var þar meðan þeir börðusk.

Víkingar hljópu frá skipum við óvígjan her. Sigmundr konungr ok Eyliymi settu upp merki sín ok var þá blásit í líðra. Sigmundr konungr lætr nú við kvæða sitt horn er fædir hans hafði átt, ok eggjar sínna menn. Hafði Sigmundr líð miklu minna. Teksk þar nú hörð orrostu, ok þótt Sigmundr væri gamall, þá barðisk hann nú hart ok var jafnan fremstr sinna manna. Helzk hváarki við honum skjöldr né brynja, ok gekk hann jafnán í gegnum líð óvina sinna á þeim degi, ok engi mátti sjá hversu fora mundi þeira í millum. Mart spjót var þar á lofti ok þorvar. En svá hlifðu honum hans spáðísir 1 at hann varð ekki sárr, ok engi kuni töl hversu margr maðr fell fyrrir honum. Hann hafði bæðar hendr blóðgar til axlar.

Ok er orrostu a hafði staðið um hrito, þá kom maðr 2 í bardagann með síðan hótt ok heklu blá. 3 Hann hafði eitt auga ok geir í hendi. Þessi maðr kom á möt Sigmundri konungi ok brá upp geirinnum fyrrir hann. 4

Ok er Sigmundr konungri hjó fast, kom sverði í geirinn ok brast í sundr í tvá hluti. Síðan snéri mannfallinu, ok váru Sigmundi konungi horfin heill, ok fell mjók liðit fyrrir honum. Konungrinn hlifði sér ekki ok eggjar mjók liðit. Nú er sem mælt, at engi má við margnum.

Í þessi orrostu fell Sigmundr konungr ok Eyliymi konungr, mágr hans, í öndverðri fylkingu ok mestri hluti liðs hans.

Lyngvi konungr sökur nú til konungsbejarins ok ætlar at taka þar konungsdöttur, en þat brásk honum. Fekk hann þar hvárki konu né fé. Hann ferr nú yfir landit ok skipar þar sínum munnun ríkit. Þykkisk nú hafa drepit alla ætt Volsunga ok ætlar d þá eigi munu þurfa e at óttask heðan frá.

Hjördís gekk í valinn eptir orrostuna um nóttina ok kom at þar sem Sigmundr konungr lá, ok spyrr ef hann væri græandi.

---

1 The Icelandic here has spáðísir, beings that seem akin to both norns and disir (see Glossary s.v. disir and nornir).

---

2 Thus Ol, honum V

3 I and the preceding ch. heading are now illeg. Ol thought he could see traces of the initial I and made out . . . ok Eyliuma . . . gs, also B who first thought he could also make out fall Si . . .

4 Between ok and ætlar there is space for 8 or 9 letters of which traces seem visible.

5 Thus Ol, þyfa V

---

6 Orrostan B
He gathered together an army and Hjordis was driven over to the woods, accompanied by a bondwoman, and a large amount of treasure went with them. She was there throughout the fighting.

The vikings leaped from their ships in overwhelming numbers. King Sigmund and Eylimi raised their standards and the trumpets were sounded. And then Sigmund blew the horn that had been his father's, and urged on his men. Sigmund's force was smaller by far. Now a fierce battle began there, and Sigmund, old as he was, fought savagely and he was always in the forefront of his men. Neither shield nor coat of mail could stand against him, and on that day he constantly pierced clean through the ranks of his enemies, and no one could see how the fight between them would turn out. Numerous spears hurtled through the air, and arrows, too, but his norns looked after him, so he remained unscathed, and no one kept count of the men who fell before him. Both his arms were bloody to the shoulders.

Now when the battle had gone on for some time, a man who had on a black cloak and a hat coming down low over his face entered the fray. He had but one eye and in his hand he held a spear. The man advanced towards King Sigmund, raising the spear to bar his way, and when King Sigmund struck fiercely, his sword hit against the spear and snapped in two. After this the balance of the casualties shifted: King Sigmund's good luck had turned and his losses were heavy. The king gave no thought for himself, and he urged on his men hotly. The saying that 'numbers count' was now an apt one.

In this battle King Sigmund fell, as did his father-in-law, King Eylimi, at the head of his troops, along with the best part of his force.

King Lyngvi then paid a visit to the royal residence, expecting to find and seize the king's daughter, but in this he was thwarted. He found neither woman nor treasure there. Then he went through the country and shared out the land among his men. He now thought that he had wiped out the whole Volsung family, so he supposed that from then on there would be no cause for alarm.

The night after the battle, Hjordis went out to the men who had fallen, came to the spot where King Sigmund was lying, and asked if he could be made well again.

---

1 Odin once again
2 Any colour in clothing is worth special mention since only men of rank could afford to wear anything better than the native undyed homespun.
Hon svarar, 'Margviðnar ör litlum vánnum, en horfin eru mér heill, svá at ek vil eigi láta græða mik. Vill Óðinn ekki at vör bregðum sverði, síðan er nú brotnaði. Hefi ek haft orrostur meðan honum líkaði.'

Hon mælti, 'Enkis þætti mó avánt ef þú yrðir græðdr ok hefndir fæð mins.'

Konungr segir, 'Qðrum er þat ætlat. Þú fær med sveinbarn ok fæð þat vel ok vandliga, ok mun sá sveinn ágætr ok fremstr af várri ætt. Varðveit ok vel sverðsbrotin. Þar af má gera gotr sverð heita mun Gramr ok sonr okkarr mun bera ok þar morg störverk með veina þau er aldri munu fyrnask, ok hans nafn mun uppi meðan verððin stendr. Uni nú við þat, en mik mæða sáð ok ek mun nú vitja frænda værra framgenginna.'

Hjörðís sitr nú yfir honum unz hann deyr, ok þá lýsir af degi. Hon sér at morg skip eru konin við land.

Hon mælti til ambáttarinnaðar, 'Vit skulum skipta klæðum, ok skaltu nefnask nafni mínu ok segsk konungsdóttir.'

Ok þær gera svá.


Ambáttin svarar, 'Meiri ván at vér vitim,' ok visar til fjárins. Ok finna þeir auð mikinn, svá at eigi þóttuski menn sét hafa jafnmikit koma í einn stað eða fleiri gerismar. Bera til skipa Álf's konungs. Hjörðís

---

*a thus Ol, om. V
*b V adds meðan verðoldin stendr, clearly a scribal deviation and here omitted as in earlier editions.
*c sa V, sjá B. Ol bases his svá on svá hverir gert hain some lines farther on.
*d illeg. V
*e þat B
*f illeg. V

1 Odin, god of war and of death, was the ruler of battles, either directly as here, or through his valkyries, and thus along with Alþóðr (Alffather) with whom he became identified, and above the norns, the supreme arbiter of men's fate. Yet even Odin is doomed (see p. 39, n. 2) and Sigmund now joins the other heroes, the Einherjar, whom Odin gathers in Valhall against the day of his last desperate battle.

2 This is the Norse equivalent of Chilperic. There were two Merovingian rulers of this name; the first was the historical Brynhild's brother-in-law who
‘Many have recovered when there was little hope,’ he answered, ‘but my good luck has turned and so I do not wish to be made well. Odin does not want me to draw sword, for now it lies broken. I have fought battles while it was his pleasure.’

‘I should think,’ she said, ‘that nothing would be lacking if you were made well and avenged my father.’

‘That is left for others,’ said the king. ‘You are with child—a boy. Give him a good and careful upbringing—the boy shall be famous and the foremost of our house. Look after the pieces of the sword as well. A fine sword can be made from them—it will be called Gram, and our son will bear it and perform many great deeds with it, deeds which shall never be forgotten, and his name shall live as long as the world endures. Now be content with that. But my wounds are troubling me, and I shall now go to join our kinsmen who have gone before.’

Then Hjordis watched over him until he died, and then dawn came. She saw that a good many ships had put in to the shore.

‘We’ll exchange clothes,’ she said to the bondwoman, ‘and you call yourself by my name and say you are the king’s daughter.’

And this is what they did.

The vikings saw the carnage and also saw the women making for the woods, and they realised that something of great moment must have occurred, and they sprang from the boats. Alf, son of Hjalprek, King of Denmark, was in command of the force. He had been sailing along the coast with his army. They now came to the place of battle. They saw the carnage there. The king now commanded that the women should be looked for and found, and this they did. He asked the women who they were, and then an unlikely thing happened: the ‘bondwoman’ answered for them and told how King Sigmund had fallen in battle, along with King Eylimi and many other high-ranking men, and told also who had done this thing. The king asked whether they knew where the king’s treasure was hidden.

‘It would seem rather likely we’d know that,’ answered the ‘bondwoman’, and she showed the way to the treasure. They found a vast amount of wealth, so much so that they did not believe they had ever seen so much collected together in one place, or a larger number of precious things. They carried it to King Alf’s ships. Hjordis went

---

died in 584. As the father of Alf, Sigurd’s stepfather, he may provide a link between Sigurd and Merovingian history (see Introduction pp. xiii and xxxiii). His son Alf is probably the Half with whom Gudrun takes refuge after Sigurd’s death (pp. 62 f.).
fylgði honum ok svá ambáttin. Hann ferr nú heim í ríki sitt en lætr at þar sé fallnir þeir konunar er frægstir váru.

Konungr sezk við stjórn, en þær sátu í fyrirrúmi á skipinu. Hann á tal við þær ok leggr virðing á rœður þeira.

Konungr kom heim í ríki sitt við miklu fé. Álfr var manna gerviligastr. Ok er þau hafa skamma stund heima verit, spyr dróttingin Álf, son sinn,

'Hví hefir in fegri kona færi hringa eða verra búnad? Ok virðisk mér at sú muni œðri er þér hafð minna yfir látit.'

Hann svarar, 'Grunat hefir mik þat at eigi sé ambáttarmót á henni, ok þá er vör fundumk, þá tóksk henni vel at fagna tignum mœnnum, ok hér til skal gera eina raun.'

Þat er nú eitt sinn við drykkjju at konungr sezk á tal við þær ok mælti, 'Hvat hafi þér at marki um dœgrfar, þá er nótt eldir, ef þér sjáði eigi himintungí?'

Hon svarar, 'Þat mark hœfum vér hér til at ek var því von í œsku at drekka mjók í öttu, ok er ek lét af því, vöknuðu vér eptir því síðan, ok er þat mitt mark.'

Konungr brosti at ok mælti, 'Illa var konungs-döttir vœnd.'

Hann hittir þá Hjörðis ok spyr hana sliks ins sama.

Hon svarar honum, 'Faðir minn gaf mér eitt gull lítit við náttúru. Þat kölnar í öttu á fingri eða. Þat er mitt mark hér um.'

Konungr svarar, 'Gnótt var þar gulls er ambáttir báru, ok munu þér eðrit lengi leynzk hafa fyrir mér, ok svá munda ek til þin gert hafa sem vit værim eins konungs þorn bæði. Þóttu heðir þetta sagt, ok enn skal gera verðleikum betr við þik, því at þú skalt vera mínn kona, ok skal ek gjalda mund við þér, þá er þú hefir barn getit.'

Hon svarar ok segir allt sanna um sitt ráð. Er hon þar nú í miklum sóma ok þykkir in vírðuligasta kona.

Þat er nú sagt at Hjordis fœðir sveinbarn, ok er sveinninn fœðir Hjálprek konungi. Konungrinn varð glaðr við er hann sá þau í hvössu augu er hann bar í hofði, ok sagði hann engum mundu líkan

---

*a thus Ol, lát V
b illeg. V
c illeg. V
d *B emends to þá, at deleting the stop after náttúru.
e illeg. V
f illeg. V

* The preceding ch. heading is blurred to illegibility. Ol reads Fœðdr Sigurðr.
along with him, and so did the bondwoman. He now returned to his kingdom, where he announced that the most famous kings of all had fallen in that place.

The king sat down at the helm and the women sat on the first bench. He conversed with them and what they said met with his approval.

The king arrived back in his country with a large amount of treasure. Alf was a most capable man. And when they had been back for a short time, the queen asked her son, Alf, this:

'Why is it that the better-looking woman has fewer rings and poorer clothes? I think that the one you have made less of is really the higher.'

'I suspected that her manner was not that of a bondwoman,' he answered, 'and when we met she knew well how to receive men of noble rank, and I'll put it to the test.'

So once when they were drinking the king sat down to talk to them. 'What tells you that dawn has come, if you can't see moon, stars or sun?' he said.

'I can tell because when I was small I used to have a deep drink just before daybreak,' she answered, 'and after I left off doing this, I went on waking up as usual, and that's how I can tell.'

The king smiled at this. 'That was a poor upbringing for a princess,' he said.

Then he went to Hjordis and asked her the same question.

'My father gave me a little gold ring which has a strange power,' she answered him. 'Just before daybreak it grows cold on my finger. That is how I can tell.'

'There was plenty of gold about if bondwomen wore it,' answered the king, 'and you've concealed your identity from me quite long enough, but I'd have treated you as if the two of us were the children of the same king, if you had spoken, and I shall treat you even better than that, for you shall be my wife and I shall pay the marriage settlement, when you have borne a child.'

She answered and told the whole truth about her circumstances. She was now held in great honour there and was thought a most noteworthy woman.

The saga now tells how Hjordis gave birth to a son, and the boy was brought to King Hjalprek. The king was glad when he saw the keen eyes he had in his head, and said that no one would be like him or a
verða eða samjafnan, ok var hann vatni ausinn\(^1\) með Sigurðar nafni. Frá honum segja allir eitt, at um atferð ok vøxt var engi hans maki. Hann var þar fæðdr með Hjálpreki konungi af mikilli ást. Ok þá er nefndir eru allir inir ágeztu menn ok konungar í fornsögum,\(^a\) þá skal Sigurðr fyrir ganga um afi ok atgervi, kapp ok hreysti \(^b\) er hann hefir haft um hvern man fram annarra í norðrálfu heimsins.\(^2\) Sigurðr óx þar upp með Hjálpreki, ok unni hvert barn honum. Hann fastnáði Álf konungi Hjórðisí ok mælti henni mund.

Reginn\(^3\) hét fóst\(^4\) Sigurðar ok var Hrœðmars sonr. Hann kenndi honum íþróttir, taflß\(^5\) ok rúnar ok tungur margar at mæla sem þá var titt konungasonum, ok marga hluti aðra. Eitt sinn spurði Reginn Sigurð, er þeir váru bæðir saman, ef hann vissi hversu mikit fé fæðir hans hefði átt eða hverir þat varðveittu. Sigurðr svarar ok segir at konunger varðveittu.

Reginn mælti, 'Trúir þú þeim allvel ?'

Sigurðr svarar, 'På samir at þeir varðveiti þar til er oss hallkvæmisk, því at þeir kunnu betr at gæta en ek.'

Annatt sinni\(^6\) kemr Reginn at máli við Sigurð ok mælti, 'Kynligt er þat er þú vilt vera hestasveinn konunga eða fara sem hlautparar.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Eigi er þat, því at vér ráðum öllu með þeim. Er oss ok heimult þat er vör viljum hafa.'

Reginn mælti, 'Bið hann gefa þér einn hest.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Þegar mun þat er ek vil.'

Sigurðr hittir nú konunga. Þá mælti konungr við Sigurð, 'Hvat viltu af oss þiggja ?'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Ein hest viljum vör þiggja oss til skemtanar.'

Konungrinna mælti, 'Kjós þér sjálfr hest ok slikt er þú vill hafa af várri eigu.'

Annan dag eptir fór Sigurðr til skógar ok mætt einum gömlum manni með síðu skeggi. Sá var honum ökunnigr. Hann spyrr hvert Sigurðr skyldi fara.

Hann svarar, 'Hest skyldum vör kjósa. Ráð um með oss.'

Hann mælti, 'Fórum ok rekum til árinnar er busíltjörn heitir.'

\(^a\) fornum sögum B. n of form- now illeg.

\(^b\) -ti illeg. V

\(^c\) -ns illeg. V

\(^d\) sinn B

\(^1\) See Glossary s.v. nafnestr

\(^2\) See Introduction p. xxi-ii

\(^3\) See p. 2, n. 1

\(^4\) The Icelandic word tafl is a name applied to more than one board game. The writer of the saga might have thought of it as chess, which was not known
match for him, and he was sprinkled with water and named Sigurd. Everyone says the same thing about him: in energy and stature none was his peer. He was brought up there in King Hjalprek's household with great affection. And when all the most famous men and kings in ancient tales are mentioned, it is Sigurd who must come first in strength and ability, in eagerness and courage, of which he had far more than any other man in Europe. Sigurd grew up there in King Hjalprek's household, and everyone loved him. He it was who betrothed Hjordis to King Alfr and fixed the settlement for her.

Regin was the name of Sigurd's foster-father, and he was Hreidmar's son. He taught him various accomplishments, chequers, runes, and also how to speak many languages, as was then customary for princes, and much else besides. Once when the two were together, Regin asked Sigurd if he knew how much wealth his father had possessed and who the people were that looked after it. Sigurd answered saying that the kings were looking after it.

'Do you altogether trust them?' said Regin.

'It is right,' answered Sigurd, 'that they should look after it until it will be of use to me, for they are better able to guard it than I am.'

Regin came a second time to talk to Sigurd and said:

'It's odd that you're willing to be a horse-boy for kings and to go around like a runagate.'

'Rather not,' replied Sigurd, 'for I have my say with them in everything, and anything I want is at my disposal.'

'Tell him to give you a horse,' said Regin.

'He'll give it me the moment I want it,' replied Sigurd.

Sigurd then went to visit the kings. Then a king said to Sigurd:

'What do you want from us?'

'I want a horse for my sport,' Sigurd answered.

'Pick out a horse yourself,' said the king, 'and anything of ours you may want.'

The following day Sigurd went to the woods and came across an old man with a long beard, a man he didn't know. He asked where Sigurd was going.

'I was going to choose a horse,' he replied. 'Give me some advice about it.'

'Let us go and drive them to the river Busiltjorn,' he said.

---

in Iceland before the twelfth century. It may well have been the ancient game of hneftafl described in Fríðþófs saga, ch. 3, in which one of the players defends the hnef (literally 'fist') with the red pieces, the other attacking with the white. (See C. Tolkien, The Saga of King Heidrek, 1960, Appendix D.)
Þéir reka hrossin út á djúp árinnar, ok leggjask at landi nema einn hestr. Hann tók Sigurðr. Hann var grár at lit ok ungr at aldri, mikill vexti ok vænn. Engi hafði honum á bak komit. Skeggmaðrinn mælti, 'Þessi hestr er kominn frá Sleipni, ok skal hann vandliga upp fræða, því at hann verðr hverjum hesti betri.'

Maðrinn hverfr þá. Sigurðr kallar hestinn Grana, ok hefir sá hestr þeir verðr verit. Óðinn hafði hann híttan.

Enn mælti Reginn til Sigurðar,

'Of lítit fè eigu þér. Þat harmar oss er þér hlaupið sem þóparra sveinar, en ek veit mikla féván at segja þér, ok er þat meiri ván at þat sé sómi at sækja ok víðing, ef þú nædir.'

Sigurðr spyrð hver væri eða hvör varðveítti.

Reginn svarar, 'Sá heitið Fáfnir er hér líggir skammt heðan á brott. Þat heitið Gitaheðr. Ók er þú kemr þar, þá müntu þat mæla: Aldri sáttu meira fè í gulli í einum stað, ok eigi þarfðu meira, þóttu verðir allra konunga elzt ok frægstr.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Kann ek kyn þessa orms, þótt vér sém ungir, ok hefi ek spurt at engi þórir at koma á mótt honum fyrir vaxtar sakir ok illsku.'

Reginn svarar, 'Þat er ekki. Sá vöktör er eptir haetti lyngorma, ok er gert af miklu meira en er, ok svá mundi þótt hafa inum fyrrum frændum þínun. Ok þótt Völsunga ætt sé at þér, þá mun þú eigi hafa þeira skaplyndi er fyrst eru talðir til alls frama.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Vera má at eigi höfum vér mikat af þeira kappi eða snílld, en eigi berr nauðsyn til at frýja oss, er vér erum a enn lítt af barnsaldri. Eða hví eggjar þú þessa svá mjók?'

Reginn svarar, 'Saga er til þess, ok mun ek segja þér.'

Sigurðr mælti, 'Lát mik heyra.'

14

'Þat b er upphaf c sogu þessar at Hreiðmarr hét faðir minn, mikill ok auðigr. Sonr hans hét Fáfnir, en annarr hét Otr, ok var ek inn þríði,

a thus Ol, om. V
b No trace of a preceding ch. heading. Ol thought there may never have been one.
c thus Ol, -haf om. V

1 Sleipnir was Odin's eight-footed steed. Snorri (Jónsson, SnE, 65 f.) tells how Loki turned himself into a mare in order to hinder a giant from claiming his reward for completing a stronghold for the Æsir on time by enticing away the great horse that was essential to his labours, and how he eventually gave birth to Sleipnir as a result.
They drove the horses out into the deep part of the river, and all swam to the shore except one. That was the one Sigurd took. He was grey in colour, young, large, and a handsome horse. No one had ever mounted him. The man with the beard spoke:

'This horse is sired by Sleipnir. He must be carefully reared for he'll turn out better than any other horse.'

Thereupon the man vanished. Sigurd called the horse Grani—that horse was the best ever. The man who had met him was Odin.

Regin again spoke to Sigurd:

'You've too little wealth. It annoys me to see you running around like a peasant lad. But I can tell you where great wealth is likely to be found, and in all probability there's honour to be had, and fame, too, should you win it.'

Sigurd asked where it was and who was guarding it.

'His name is Fafnir,' answered Regin, 'and he's lying but a short distance away. The place is called Gnimathiad. And when you get there you will say that you have never seen a greater hoard of gold in any one place. And you'll not need more, even if you become the most senior and most renowned of all kings.'

'Even though I'm young,' replied Sigurd, 'I know what that dragon's like, and I've heard that no one dares to face him because of his size and malignity.'

'That's not so,' answered Regin. 'His size is the usual for serpents, and it's been made out to be far greater than it actually is, and that's what your ancestors would have thought, but even though you are of the Volsung line, you'll scarcely have the Volsung temperament—in courage they're reckoned second to none.'

'Perhaps I've not got much of their energy or ability,' replied Sigurd. 'But there's no need to find fault with me, seeing that I'm hardly more than a child. Why are you so very keen on this business?'

'There's a story behind it,' replied Regin, 'and I'll tell it you.'

'Let me hear it,' said Sigurd.

'The story begins with my father whose name was Hreidmar, an important and wealthy man. His son's name was Fafnir, a second son

---

2 For the dragon and its treasure see Introduction pp. xxxv f.
3 Several scholars who hold the theory that Sigurd was historically Arminius (see Introduction pp. xxxiii f.) identify Gnimathiad as Knetterheide, a heath between Minden and Paderborn, not far from the Teutoburger Wald.
VÖLSUNGA SAGA

ok var ek minnstr fyrir mér um atgervi ok yfirlát. Kunna ek af járnigera ok af silfri ok gulli, ok hverjum hlut gerða ek nókkut nýtt. Otr, bróðir minn, hafði aðra íðn ok náttúru. Hann var veiðimaðr mikill ok um fram aðra menn ok var í ötr liiki um daga ok var jafnan í ánni ok bar upp fiska með munní sér. Veiðifélongin færði hann fæð sínum, ok var honum þat mikill styrkr. Mjök hefur hann ötr liiki á sér, kom síð heim ok át blundandi ok einn saman, því at hann mátti eigi sjá at þyrr. Fáfnir var miklu mestr ok grimmastað ok vildi sitt eitt kalla láta allt þat er var.

‘Einn dvergr1 hét Andvari,’ segir Reginn. ‘Hann var jafnan í forsínum, er Andvarafors heitir, í geddu líki ok fekk sér þar matar, því at þar var fjöldi fiska í þeim forsí. Otr, bróðir minn, þör jafnan í þenn fors ok bar upp fiska í munní sér ok lagði einn senn á land.’

‘Ódinn, Loki,2 Hænir3 fórur leiðar sinnar ok kömu til Andvarafors. Ótr hafði þá tekít cinn lax ok át blundandi á árbakkanum. Loki ík einn stein ok laust ötrinn til bana. Æsir4 þottusk mjök heppnir af veiði sinni ok flógu belg af ötrinum.

‘Þat kveld kömu þeir til Hreiðmars ok síndu honum veiðina. Þá tóku vör þá hóndum ok soggum7 á þá gjald ok fjörlausn at þeir fylldi belginn af gulli ok hylði hann útan með rauðu gulli. Þá sendu þeir Loka at afla gullsins. Hann kom til Ránar5 ok fekk net hennar, för þá til Andvarafors ok kastadí netinsu fyrir gedduna, en hon hljóp í netit. Þá møtti Loki,

(2) Hvat er þat fiska er rennr flóði í, kannat sér við viti varask?
Hofuð þitt leystu
helju6 ör
ok finn mér lindar5 loga.7

(3) Andvari ek heiti,
Ódinn c hét minn faðir,

1 See Glossary s.v. dvergar
2 The trouble-maker among the gods who varies between being an outright enemy and a comparatively harmless rascal.
3 He appears along with Ödin and Loki in a number of tales. The Æsir sent him as a hostage to the Vanir on the conclusion of peace between them.
4 All the chief gods of the Northern pantheon were called Æsir (sing. Ćsí).
5 The wife of Ægir the sea giant, and ruler of an underworld beneath the
was called Otr, and I was the third, the least gifted and made least of. I could fashion things in iron, in silver and gold, too, and I could make something useful out of anything. My brother Otr's work and bent were different. He was a great fisherman, far more expert than others, and during the day he assumed the shape of an otter and was always in the river, bringing up fish with his mouth. What he caught he brought to his father, and this was a great help to him. He had many of the characteristics of an otter, he came home late, eating alone and with his eyes shut, for he couldn't bear to watch it growing less. Fafnir was by far the biggest and fiercest, and he wanted everything to be called his.

"There was a dwarf \(^1\) whose name was Andvari," said Regin. "He was always in a waterfall known as the Andvari Falls in the semblance of a pike, and he got food there for himself, for there was a very large number of fish in the falls. My brother Otr always used to go into these falls and would bring up fish in his mouth and lay them on the bank one by one.

"Odin, Loki\(^2\) and Hœnir\(^3\) were journeying along, and they came to the Andvari Falls. Otr had just caught a salmon and was eating it with his eyes shut on the river bank. Loki took up a stone, struck the otter and killed him. The Æsir\(^4\) thought they were very lucky in their hunting and they skinned the otter.

"That evening they came to Hreidmar's house and showed him what they had caught. Then we laid hands on them, and by way of compensation and ransom we stipulated that they should fill the skin with gold, and cover it up on the outside with red gold. So they sent Loki to get the gold. He went to Ran,\(^5\) got her net, and then went to the Andvari Falls, cast the net in front of the pike, and it ran into the net. Then Loki said:

\begin{verbatim}
(2) What fish is this
that swims in the flood,
and from punishment knows no protection?
Ransom your head
out from Hel\(^6\)
and of Linden find me flame?
\end{verbatim}

(3) Andvari's my name,
Odin my father's,

waves. She had a net with which she drew down all those who were drowned at sea to dwell in her domain (see Jónsson, SnE 151 f.).
\(^1\) See Glossary s.v. Hel
\(^2\) A kenning for 'gold'
Loki sér gull þat er Andvari átti. En er hann hafði fram reitt gullit, þá hafði hann eptir a einn hring, ok tók Loki hann af honum. Dvergrinn gekk í steininn ok mælti at hverjum skylði at bana verða er þann gullhring ætti ok svá allt gullit.

Æsirnir reiddu Hreiðmari féit ok trúðu upp otrbelginn ok settu á fætr. Þá skyldu Æsirnir hlæða upp hjál gullinu ok hylja útan. En er þat var gert, þá gekk Hreiðmarr fram ok sá eitt granahár ok bað hylja. Þá dró Óðinn hringinn af hendi sér, Andvaranaut,1 ok hulði hárit. Þá kvað Loki,

(4) Gull er þér nú reitt,
    en þú gjöld hefur
    mikil mins hofuðs.
    Syni þínun verðrat
    sæla skopuð,
    þat er ykkarr begga bani.

Siðan drap Fáfnir fóður sinn,’ segir Reginn, ‘ok myrði b hann, ok náða ek engu af fénu. Hann gerðisk svá illr at hann lagðisk út ok unni engum at njóta fjárins nema sér ok varð siðan at ínum versta ormi og liggr nú á því fé. Siðan för ek til konungs ok gerðumk ek smiðr hans. Ók er þessi ræða til minnar sögu at ek missi fóðurarfsins ok þróðurgjaldanna. Gullit er siðan kallat otrsgjöld ok hér dæmi af tekin.’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Míkít hefur þú látit, ok stórillir hafa þínir frændr verit.’

15

Ger b nú eitt sverð af þínum hagleik, þat er ekki sé jafngott gert ok ek mega vinna stórverk, ef hugr dugir, ef þú vill at ek drepa þenna inn mikla dreka.’

a thus Ol, CR; om. V
b Preceding ch. heading reads Reginn gerði Gram.

1 An object is called the nautr of the person from whom it comes, whether it be as a gift or even as booty (see Cleasby-Vigfusson s.v. nautr). The derivation of the name Andvari is uncertain; it is probably not the same word as andvari, ‘fear’.

2 See Glossary s.v. morð
Loki saw the gold that was Andvari's. And when he proffered the gold, he kept back one ring, but Loki took it from him. The dwarf went into the rock and said that to possess the ring, or any of the gold, meant death.

'The Æsir handed over the treasure to Hreidmar, stuffed the otterskin full and set it on its feet. Then the Æsir had to pile the gold alongside and cover it up. When that was completed, Hreidmar went up and saw a single whisker, and told them to cover that. Then Odin drew the ring Andvaranaut from his arm and covered up the hair. Then Loki spoke:

(4) Gold is now rendered,
  recompense for you,
  much for my head.
  'Tis not luck will be
  the lot of your son:
  Death to you both it brings.

Later on Fafnir killed his father,' said Regin, 'hiding his murdered body,' and I didn't get any of the treasure. He grew so malevolent that he went off to live in the wilds and allowed none but himself to have any pleasure in the riches, and later on he turned into a terrible dragon and now he lies on the treasure. Afterwards I went to the king and became his smith. And the upshot of my story is that I'm left without patrimony or compensation for my brother. Since then gold has been called "Payment for Otr," and that is the reason why.'

'You've lost a great deal,' answered Sigurd, 'and your family has been very evil.'

'Now use your skill to make such a fine sword that no other sword can be made to equal it, and so that I shall be able to perform great deeds, if my courage serves—should you want me to kill this great dragon.'
Reginn segir, 'Þat geri ek með trausti, ok muntu mega drepa Fafni með því sverði.'

Reginn gerir nú eitt sverð ok fær í hónd Sigurði. Hann tók við sverðinu ok mælti,

'Þetta er pitt a smíði, Reginn,' ok høggj í steðjann, ok brotnaði sverðit. Hann kastar brandinum ok báð hann smíða annat betra. Reginn gerir annat sverð b ok fær Sigurði. Hann leit á.

'Þetta mun þér líka, en vant mun yðr at smíða.'

Sigurðr reynir þetta sverð ok brýtr sem itfyrra. Þá mælti Sigurðr til Regins,

'Þu munt líkr vera inum fyrrum frændum þínun ok vera ótrúr.'

Gekk nú til móður sinnar. Hon fagnar honum vel. Talask nú við ok drekkja.

Þá mælti Sigurðr, 'Hvárt hofum vér rétt til spurt at Sigmundr konungr seldi yðr sverðit Gram í tweim hlutum ?'

Hon svarar, 'Satt er þat.'

Sigurðr mælti, 'Fá mér í hónd, ek vil haфа.'

Hon kvad hann líkligan til frama ok fær honum sverðit. Sigurðr hittir nú Regin ok báð hann þar gera af sverð eptir efnum. Reginn reiddisk ok gekk til smiðju með sverðsbrotin ok þykkir Sigurðr framgjarn um smíðina.

Reginn gerir nú eitt sverð. Ók er hann bar þar aflínun, sýndisk smiðjuveinum sem eldar brynni þr eggjunum. Bídru nú Sigurð við taka sverðinu ok kvezk eigi kunna sverð at gera ef þetta þilar. Sigurðr hjó í steðjann ok klauf niðr í fótinn, ok brast eigi né brotnaði. Hann lofandi sverðit mjök ok förr til árinnað með ullarlagð ok kastar í gegn straumi, ok tók í sundr er hann brá við sverðinu. Gekk Sigurðr þá gladir heim.

Reginn mælti, 'Efna muni þér heit yður nú er ek hefi gert sverðit, ok híttu Fáfni.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Efna munu vér ok þó annat fyr, at hefna fóður míns.'

Sigurðr varð því ástæðli, sem hann var ellri, af óllu fóliki, svá at hvert barn unni honum hugástum.

\textsuperscript{a} B emends to it.
\textsuperscript{b} thus Ol, sverðit V
'I shall make it with confidence,' said Regin. 'With that sword you'll be able to kill Fafnir.'

So Regin made a sword and placed it in Sigurd's hands. He grasped the sword.

'This is what your work's like, Regin,' he said, striking at the anvil—and the sword broke. He flung away the blade and told him to forge a second and better one. Regin made a second sword and brought it to Sigurd. He examined it.

'You'll be pleased with this one, though you're not an easy man to work metal for.'

Sigurd tried out the sword, and broke it just like the first. Then Sigurd said to Regin:

'You're like your forebears—untrustworthy.' He now went to his mother. She made him welcome, and they talked and drank together.

'Is what I've heard true?' said Sigurd then. 'Did King Sigmund entrust you with the sword Gram, in two pieces?'

'That is so,' she replied.

'Let me have them,' said Sigurd. 'I want them.'

She said he seemed likely to win fame, and brought him the sword. Sigurd then sought out Regin and told him to fashion a sword from them to the best of his ability. Regin got angry and went to the smithy with the pieces of the sword, thinking that Sigurd was very exacting when it came to forging.

Then Regin made a sword. And when he drew it from the furnace, it seemed to the lads working in the smithy as if the edges were all aflame. He next told Sigurd to take the sword, saying that if this one failed, then he didn't know how to make a sword. He struck at the anvil and cleft it right down to its base, and the sword neither shattered nor snapped. He praised the sword highly and went down to the river, taking along a tuft of wool which he threw in against the stream, and it was sliced through when he held the sword against it. So Sigurd went back happy.

'You'll keep your promise,' said Regin, 'now that I've made the sword, and seek out Fafnir.'

'I shall keep it,' replies Sigurd. 'But first there's something else—vengeance for my father!'

The older Sigurd grew, the more popular he was with everybody, so much so that one and all loved him dearly.
Grípir a hét maðr ok var móðurbróðir 1 Sigurðar. En litlu síðar en sverðit var gert, för hann á fund Grípis, því at hann var framviss ok vissi fyrir orlog manna. Sigurð leitar eptir hversu ganga mun ævi hans. En hann var þó lengi fyrir ok sagði þó loksins við ákafliga þen Sigurðar þil forlog hans, eptir því sem eptir gekk síðan.

Ok þá er Grípir hafði þessa hluti sagða sem hann beiddi, þá reið hann heim. Ok brátt eptir þat finnask þeir Reginn. Þá mælta hann, 'Dref Fássni sem þér hétuð.'

Sigurð svarar, 'Gera skal þat ok þó annat fyr, at hefna Sigmundar konungs ok annarra frænda vára er þar fellu í þeiri orrostu.'

17

Nú b hittir Sigurð konunga ok mælti til þeira,

'Hér höfum vör verit um hrið ok eigum vör yðr ástsemð a launa ok mikla virðing. En nú viljum vör ör landi fara ok finna Hundings sonu, ok vilda ek at þeir vissi at Völunsar væri eigi allir dauðir. Viljum vör hafa þar til yðarn styrk.'

Konungar kváðusk allt vilja til þá þat er hann beiddisk.

Er nú bútt líð mikit ok allt vandat sem mest, skip ok allr herðunaðr, svá at hans ferð væri þá veglagri en áðr. Sigurðr stýrir dreka 2 þeim er mestr var ok ágætligastur. Segl þeira váru mjöck vónduð ok ítarlig at sjá. Sigla þeir nú göðan byr.

Ok er fá dægr váru líðin, þá kom á véðr mikit með stormi, en svá var sjárinn sem í roðru sæi. Eigi báð Sigurðr svipta seglunum þótt rifnuðu, heldr báð hann herra setja en áðr.

Ok er þeir sigldu fram fyrir bergrnögs nokkura, þá kallaði maðr upp á skipit ok spyrir hverr fyrir lóðinu eigi at ráða. Honum var sagt at þar var hofðingi Sigurð Sigmundarson er nú er frægstr ungra manna.

Maðrinn svarar, 'Allir segja þar eitt frá honum, at eigi megi

a The preceding ch. heading is illeg. Ol made out Sigurð varð (? ) vis ( ? ) [er]log sn ( ? ).

b The preceding ch. heading reads Sigurð drap Lyngva ok Hjörvarð ok þá alla . . .

1 From the earliest times the mother's brother seems to have been an especially important kinsman. (See Tacitus, Germania, ch. 20.)

2 dreki, literally 'dragon', was frequently used of ships whose prow was shaped to resemble a dragon.
There was a man named Gripir who was Sigurd's uncle on his mother's side, and soon after the sword was made he went to visit Gripir, because he had the gift of second sight and knew in advance what a man's fate would be. Sigurd asked about his own life and how it would turn out. However, for a long time he was unwilling, but at Sigurd's urgent entreaty he finally told him his entire destiny, just as it afterwards came to pass.

And when Gripir had told him of these matters as he had been asked, Sigurd rode home. And shortly after that he and Regin met. Then Regin said:

'Kill Fafnir as you promised.' And Sigurd answered:

'I'll do so, but first there's something else—vengeance for King Sigmund and the other kinsmen of ours who fell in that battle.'

Sigurd now paid a visit to the kings:

'I've been here for some time, and I stand in your debt for the affection and high honour shown me,' he said to them. 'But now I mean to leave the country and find Hunding's sons: I want them to know that not all the Volsungs are dead. I'd like your help in this.'

They said they'd get him everything he asked for.

A large force was now made ready and everything prepared as carefully as possible, ships and all the military equipment, so that his whole expedition was more resplendent than would have otherwise been the case. Sigurd captained the largest and finest of the warships. Great pains had been taken with the sails, and they made a wonderful sight. They now sailed on a favourable breeze.

But when only a few days had elapsed, a violent storm of wind came up, and the sea looked bathed in gore. Sigurd gave no command to reef the sails, even though they were ripping, but instead ordered them to be hoisted higher than before.

Now as they sailed by a certain promontory, a man shouted up to the ship, asking who was in command. He was told that their chief was Sigurd Sigmundarson—now the most famous of all young men.

'As for that, everyone says the same of him,' replied the man,
konungasynir jafnskvið hann. Vilda ek at þér fellðið seglin á nökkuru skipinu ok teki þér við mér.'

Þeir spurðu hann at naðni. Hann svarar,

(5) Hnikarr héru mik, 
þá er ek Hugin gladda, 
Volsungr ungi, 
ok vegið hafða.
Nú máttu kalla 
karl af bjargi
Feng eða Fjólni.
Far vil ek þiggja. ¹

Þeir viku at landi ok tóku karl á skip sin. Þá tók af veðrit, ok fara unz þeir koma at landi í ríki Hundings sona. Þá hvarf Fjólnir.

Þeir láta þegar geisa eld ok járn, drepa menn, en brenta byggðina 
ok eyða þar sem þeir fara. Stækkr fjöldi undan á fund Lyngva konungs, 
ok segja at herr er kominn í laðit ok ferr með meira geysingi en dømi 
finnisk til. Kváðu Hundings sonu eigi langsýna, þá er þeir sogðusk 
eigi mundu hræðask Volsunga,—

'En nú stýrir þessum her Sigurðr Sigmundarson.'

Lyngvi konungr lætr nú fara um allt sitt ríki herboð; vill eigi á 
flötta leggjask, stefnir til sín þöllum þeim mönnun er honum vilja lið 
veita. Kemr nú á mótt Sigurði með allmikinn her ok bröðr hans með 
honum.

Teksk þar in hárðasta orrosta með þeim. Mótti þar á lopti sjá mart 
spjót ok orvar margar, öxí harti reidda, skjoldu klaða ok brynjur slitnar, 
hjálma skýða, hausa klaða ok margan mann steypask til jarðar.

Ok er orrostan hefir svá staðit mjók langa hrið, sæðir Sigurðr fram 
um merkin ok hefir í hendi sverðit Gram. Hann hagr bræði menn ok 
hesta ok gengr í gegnum fylkingar ok hefir báðar hendr blóðgar til axlar, 
ok stókkr undan fólk þar sem hann fór, ok helzk hvárki við hjálmr né 
brynja, ok engi maðr þóttisk fyrr sét hafa þvílikan mann. Þessi orrosta 
stóð lengi með miklu mannfalli ok ákafri sókn. Ferr þar, sem sjaldnar 
kann henda, þá er landherrinn sæðir til, at þat kom fyrir ekki. Fell 
þar svá mart fyrir Hundings sonum at engi maðr vissi töl á. Ok ²

¹ B adds er, with a comma after fylkingu.

² It is Odin who is speaking. Hugin and Munin, two ravens, were Odin's faithful companions. Odin sent them out at daybreak to fly over all the world, and on their return they sat on his shoulders and whispered to him all they had heard and seen. Their names imply 'thought' and 'memory' respectively.
'that no prince can call himself his equal. Please lower sail on one of your ships and take me on board.'

They asked him his name. He replied:

(5) Hnikar they called me
when Hugin I gladdened,
vанquished and slew,
O Volsung youth!
The man from the cliff
call by the name
of Feng or Fjolnir,
I would fare hence with you.¹

They put into land and took the man on board ship. Then the storm abated, and they sailed until they reached land in the kingdom of Hunding's sons. Then Fjolnir vanished.

Immediately they let loose a riot of fire and slaughter. They killed, they burnt down settlements, and wherever they went they laid waste. A good number fled to King Lyngvi and told him that a hostile army had entered the country, and that the violence of their passage was unheard of. They said that Hunding's sons hadn't been very far-sighted when they declared that there was nothing to fear from the Volsungs:

'And now Sigurd Sigmundarson is commander of the enemy army.'

King Lyngvi sent out a call to arms throughout the whole of his kingdom—he refused to take flight and summoned every man prepared to support him. He now marched to meet Sigurd with a huge army—his brothers were with him.

A fierce battle now took place between them. Many a spear and many arrows could be seen hurtling through the air, the fierce sweep of the axe, cleft shields, gashed hauberks, helms slashed open, cleft skulls, and many a man was seen to fall to the ground.

After the battle had gone on in this way for a very long time, Sigurd pressed on past the banners, holding in his hand the sword Gram. He felled men and horses, too, advancing through the enemy line: both his arms were bloody to the shoulders, and people fled wherever he moved. Neither helm nor hauberk was proof against him, and there was not one who thought that he'd ever seen such a man before. The battle with its great slaughter and savage fighting went on a long time. What developed there was something that can happen but rarely when the home-based army attacks: it got them nowhere. Hunding's sons lost so many men that no one could keep count. And Sigurd was well
Sigurðr var framarla í fylkingu. Þá koma á mótt honum synir Hundings konungs. Sigurðr høggir til Lyngva konungs ok klýfr hjálm hans ok høfuð ok brynjaðan bük, ok síðan høggir hann Hjörvarð, bróður hans, sundr í tvá hluti, ok þá drap hann alla Hundings sunn er eptir lifðu, ok mestan hluta líðs þeira.

Ferr Sigurðr nú heim með þögrum sigri ok miklu fé ok ágæti er hann hafði fengið í þessi ferð. Váru nú veizlur gervar í mótt honum heima í ríkinu.

Ok er Sigurðr hefir skamma stund heima verit, kemr Reginn at máli við Sigurð ok segir,

'Nú munu þér vilja steypa hjálmunum Fáfnis svá sem þér hétuð, því at nú hefir þú hefnt fóður þíns ok annarra frændu þína.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Efna munu vér þat sem vér høfum þar um heitit, ok ekki fellr oss þat ór minni.'

18

Nú  ríða þeir Sigurðr ok Reginn upp á heidina á þann farveg er Fáfnir var vanr at skriða er hann fór til vatns, ok þat er sagt at sá hamarr var þrútugr er hann lát at vatni, þá er hann drakk.

Þá mælti Sigurðr, 'Þat sagðir þú, Reginn, at dreki sjá væri eigi meiri en einn lyngormr, en mér sýnask vegar hans æfar miklir.'

Reginn mælti, 'Ger grof eina ok sezk þar í. Ok þá er ormrinn skriðr til vatns, legg þá til hjarta honum ok vinn honum svá bana. Þar fyrir fær þú mikinn frama.'

Sigurðr mælti, 'Hversu mun þáveita ef ek verð fyrir sveita ormsins?'

Reginn svarar, 'Eigi má þér ráð ráða er þú eft við hvatvetna hræddr. Ok ertu öllkr þínum fræendum at Hughreysti.'

Nú ríðr Sigurðr á heidina, en Reginn hverfr í brott yfrít hræaddr. Sigurðr gerði grof eina. Ok er hann er at þessu verki, kemr at honum einn gamall maðr 1 med síðu skeggji ok spyrð hvat hann gerir þar. Hann segir.

Þá svarar inn gamli maðr, 'Þetta er óráð. Ger fleiri grafar ok lát þar í renna sveitann, en þú sit í einni ok legg til hjartans orminum.'

Þá hvarf sá maðr á brottu. En Sigurðr gerir grafar eptir því sem fyrir var sagt. 4

Ok er ormrinn skreið til vatns, varð mikill landskjálfti, svá at þil

---

1Thus Ol, sinna V
2The preceding ch. heading reads Nu ríða þeir Reginn ok Sigurðr.
3hvart-V
4lagt B
to the fore. Then King Hunding’s sons came at him: Sigurd struck at King Lyngvi and clef his helm, head and armoured body. Next he cut in half his brother, Hjorvard, and then struck down all the sons of Hunding that were left, and the best part of their force.

So Sigurd set out for home. A splendid victory was his, and also much wealth and renown which he had won on the expedition. Back in his own country a festive welcome was prepared for him.

And when Sigurd had been at home a short time, Regin came to talk to him:

‘You’ll surely be ready now to bring low Fafnir’s helm as you promised, seeing that you’ve avenged your father and your other kinsmen,’ said Regin.

‘I’ll keep my promise,’ answered Sigurd. ‘It won’t slip my memory.’

Now Sigurd and Regin rode up to the moors, to the track along which Fafnir used to crawl when he went to drink, and the crag he lay on to get at the water when he drank, was said to be thirty fathoms high.

‘You told me, Regin,’ said Sigurd then, ‘that this monster was no bigger than any serpent, but his tracks look very big to me.’

‘Dig a pit,’ said Regin, ‘and sit in it, and when the dragon comes crawling to the water, stab him to the heart and so destroy him. Then you’ll win great distinction.’

‘What if I get in the way of the dragon’s blood?’ said Sigurd.

‘It’s not possible to advise you,’ replies Regin, ‘if you’re scared of everything—you’ve nothing like the courage of your kinsmen.’

So Sigurd rode up to the moors and Regin went off in great fright. Sigurd dug a pit, and while he was about this an old man with a long beard came up to him and asked what he was doing there. He told him.

‘That’s ill-advised,’ the old man then replied. ‘Dig other pits and let the blood run into them—you are to sit in one and stab the dragon to the heart.’

Then the old man vanished, and Sigurd dug the pits as he had been told.

And when the dragon crawled to the water, the earth tremors were

---

1 This is Odin once again.
jörð skalft í ná. Hann fnýsti eitri alla leið fyrir sik fram, ok eigi hreiddisk Sigurðr né öttask við þann gný. Ok er ormrinn skreið yfir grofina, þá leggir Sigurðr sverðinu undir bœxlit vinstra, svá at við hjöltum nam. Þá hleyr Sigurðr upp ór grofínni ok kippir at sér sverðinu ok hefir allar hendr blöðgar upp til axlar. Ok er inn mikli ormr kenndi sins banasárs, þá laust hann hófðinu ok sporðinum svá at allt brast í sundr er fyrir varð. Ok er Fáfínir fekk banasár, spurdí hann,

‘Hvurr ertu, eða hvurr er þinn fádir, eða hver er ætt þín, er þú vart svá djarfr at þú þorir a at bera vápn á mik?’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Étt mín er monnum ókunnig. Ek heiti gefugt dýr ok á ek engan fódur n ré módur, ok einn saman hefi ek farit.’

Fáfínir svarar, ‘Ef þú átt engan feðr n ré mæðr, af hverju undri ertu pá alinn? Ok þótt þú segir mér eigi þitt nafn á banadægri mínu, þá veiztu at þú lýgr nú.’

Hann svarar, ‘Ek heiti Sigurðr, en fádir minn Sigmundr.’

Fáfínir svarar, ‘Hvurr eggjaði þik þessa verks, eða hví léztu at eggjask? Hafðir þú eigi frétt þat, hversu allt fólk er hrætt við mið ok við minn ægishjálm? Inn fráneygi sveinn, þú áttir feðr snarpan.’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Til þessa hvátt mið inn harði hugr, ok stoðaði til at gert yrði þessi í sterka hónd ok þetta it snarpa sverð, er nú kenndir þú, ok fárr er gamall harð er hann er í bernsku blautr.’

Fáfínir segir, ‘Veit ek, ef þú yxir b upp með frændum þinum, at þú mundir kunna at vega reiðr, en þetta er meiri furða er einn bandingi hertekinn c skal þorat hafa at vega at mér, því at fár hernuminn er fækn til vigs.’

Sigurðr mælti, ‘Bregðr þú mér at ek væra fjarrri mínum frændum? En þótt ek væra hernuminn, þá var ek þó eigi heptr, ok þat fanntu at ek var lauss.’

Fáfínir svarar, ‘Heiptyrði tekr þú hvetvetna því er ek mæli. En gull þetta mun þér at bana verða, er ek hefi átt.’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Hvurr vill fé hafa allt til ins eina dags, en eitt sinn skal hvver deyja.’

Fáfínir mælti, ‘Fátt vill þú at mínum dœnum gera, en drukna

---

[a] B emends to þordir
[b] vex V, emended following B’s conjecture.
[c] thus Ol, om. V

1 Sigurd at first refuses to give his name. There is a prose note at the equivalent passage in PE that refers in explanation to a belief held in ancient days that a dying man’s curse, if he cursed his enemy by name, was especially efficacious (in Gingu-Hrólfs Saga, ch. 33, a mortally wounded magician is gagged to prevent him from laying a curse on his enemy). R. C. Boer (note to Fáfnismál, st. 2, l. 1) suggests that gefugt dýr (‘Noble Beast’) may be a term for human being. See Introduction p. xxxiii.
so violent that all the land round about shook. He breathed out poison all over the path ahead, but Sigurd was neither frightened nor dismayed by the noise. And when the dragon crawled across the pit, Sigurd thrust in the sword under the left shoulder, and it sunk in up to the hilt. Then Sigurd leapt out of the pit, wrenching back the sword, and getting his arms bloody right up to the shoulders. And when the huge dragon felt its death wound, it lashed with its tail and head, shattering everything that got in its way. And when Fafnir received his death wound he asked:

'Who are you? Who is your father and what is your family, you who have been bold enough to dare to bear arms against me?'

'No man knows of my family,' replied Sigurd. 'I'm called "Noble Beast", I've neither father nor mother, and I've journeyed alone.'

'If you've no father or mother,' Fafnir answered, 'what strange thing gave you life? And even though you won't tell me your name on this, the day I shall die, you know that you are now lying.'

'My name is Sigurd,' he answered, 'and my father is Sigmund.'

'Who prompted you to do this deed, and why did you follow his prompting?' replied Fafnir. 'Hadn't you heard how everyone was frightened of me and my terrible armoured head? Your eyes flash, boy, and you had a gallant father.'

'A stout heart urged me on to do it,' was Sigurd's reply, 'and a strong arm and this keen sword that you've now felt, helped me to carry it through, and few are resolute when old, if timid in youth.'

'I know that you'd be an angry man in a fight,' said Fafnir, 'had you grown up among your kinsmen, but it's even more amazing that a captive taken in a raid² should have dared to fight against me—few prisoners are courageous in battle.'

'You reproach me for being far from my kinsmen,' said Sigurd. 'But even if I was a prisoner, I wasn't fettered, and you have learned that I was free.'

'Everything I say you take to be said in hate,' answered Fafnir, 'but the gold I possessed will be your death.'

'Everyone wants to keep hold on wealth until that day come, but everyone must die some time,' replied Sigurd.

'You'll not be guided much by what I say,' said Fafnir, 'but if

---

² A reference to the events described on p. 22, where his mother is taken off by a raiding party to the land of King Hjalprek.
munve ef þú ferrar um sjá óvarliga, ok þú heldr á landi unz logn er.’

Sigurðr mælti, ‘Seg þú þat, Fáfnir, ef þú eft fróðr mjök: hverjar eru þær nornir 1 er kjösna mogu frá mæðrum?’

Fáfnir svarar, ‘Margar eru þær ok 2 sundriusar. 6 Sumar eru Åsa ættar, sumar eru álfa 3 ættar, sumar eru dótr Dvalins.’ 3

Sigurðr mælti, ‘Hvé heitir sá hólmr 4 er blanda hjörlegi 6 Surtr 5 ok Æsir saman?’

Fáfnir svarar, ‘Hann heitir Óskaprtr.’ 6 Ok enn mælti Fáfnir, ‘Reginn, bróðir minn, veldr mínúm dauða, ok þat hlægir mik er hann veldr ok þínnum dauða, ok ferrar þá sem hann vildi.’ Enn mælti Fáfnir, ‘Ek bar ægishjálm þarf óllu folki, síðan ek lá á arfi míns bróður, ok svá frýsta ek eitri alla vegu frá mér í brott at engi þórði at koma í nánd mér, ok engi vápn hræðumk ek, ok aldri fann ek svá margan mann fyrir mér at ek þættumk eigi miklu sterkari, en allir váru hræddir við mik.’

Sigurðr mælti, ‘Sá ægishjálmr, er þú sagðir frá, gefr fám sigir því at hverr sá er með morgum kemr, má þat finna eithvert sinn at engi er einna hvatastr.’

Fáfnir svarar, ‘Þat ræð ek þer, at þú takir hest þinn ok ríðir á brott sem skjótastr, því at þat hendir opt at sá er banasár fær, hefnir sín sjálfr.’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Þetta eru þín ráð, en annat mun ek gera. Ek mun ríða til þíns þols ok taka þar þat it mikla gull er frændr þínir hafa átt.’

Fáfnir svarar, ‘Ríða muntu þar til er þú finnr svá mikit gull at örrit 4 er um þína daga, ok þat sama gull verð þinn bani ok hvers annars er þat á.’

Sigurðr stóð upp ok mælti, ‘Heim munda ek ríða, þótt ek missta þessa ins mikla fjár, ef ek vissu at ek skylda aldri deyja, en hverr frækn maðr vill fé ríða allt til ins eina dags. En þú, Fáfnir, ligg í fjörbrotum, þar er þik Hel hafn.’

Ok þá deyr Fáfnir.

---

1 thus Ol, om. V
2 -un- illegible V
3 -or- illeg. V
4 gert B

1 See Glossary s.v. nornir
2 See Glossary s.v. dísar
3 A dwarf. See Glossary s.v. dvergar
4 The hólmr, basically signifying ‘islet’ is to be understood here as a place of battle, a subsidiary connotation, arising out of the ancient custom of engaging in a form of single combat called holmganga on an islet appointed for that purpose, a properly marked out piece of ground being sometimes substituted.
you're careless in crossing the sea you'll be drowned: better wait on shore until it's calm.'

'Tell me, then, Fafnir,' said Sigurd, 'if you are so wise: who are the Norns that deliver mothers of their sons?'

'They are many and varied,' replied Fafnir. 'Some belong to the Æsir, some belong to the elves, and some are Dvalin's daughters.'

'What is the name of the islet where Surt and the Æsir will shed each other's blood?' said Sigurd.

'It is named Oskapt,' replied Fafnir. Fafnir spoke again: 'My brother Regin has brought about my death, and I am glad that he will bring about your death, too—that will be just what he wanted.' Fafnir spoke again:

'I raised a crest of terror above all men ever since I couched on my brother's inheritance, and I breathed out poison all around me so that no one dared to come near me, and I feared no weapon, and never found so many against me that I didn't think myself by far the stronger, and they were all afraid of me.'

'This crest of terror you spoke of,' said Sigurd, 'gives victory to few, for anyone who mixes with many people may one day find that no man is the superior of all others.'

'I advise you to take your horse,' replied Fafnir, 'and ride away as quickly as you can, for it often happens that he who suffers a mortal wound avenges himself.'

'That is your advice,' answered Sigurd, 'but I shall act differently. I shall ride to your lair and there seize the vast treasure that belonged to your kinsmen.'

'You'll be riding to a place where you'll find so much gold,' Fafnir answered, 'that it will last you all your days. But that same gold will be your death, and the death of any other man that possesses it.'

Sigurd stood up. 'If I knew I'd never die, I'd ride back,' he said, 'even though I were to forfeit all the wealth. But every valiant man desires to have wealth until that day comes. But you, Fafnir, lie in your death-throes until Hel takes you.'

And then Fafnir died.

---

6 Surt was the giant with the flaming sword, the chief adversary of the Æsir in the final battle when the gods are destroyed by the giants, aided by the World-serpent and other allies. Surt slays Frey and consumes the world with fire. (See Jónsson, SnE, 98.)

8 The name literally implies 'not fashioned', 'not created'. 
Eptir a þetta kom Reginn til Sigurðar ok mælti,

‘Heill, herra minn; mikinn sigur hefri þú unnit er þú hefri drepit Fáfnis, er engi varð fyrir svá djarfr at á hans gotu þordi sitja, ok þetta fremðarverk mun uppi meðan verðldin stendr.’

Nú stendr Reginn ok sér niðr í jörðina langa hróð. Ok þegar eptir þetta mælti hann af miklum móði,

‘Bróður minn hefri þú drepit, ok varla má ek þessa verks saklauss vera.’

Nú tek Sigurð sitt sverð, Gram, ok þerrir á grasinu ok mælti til Regins,

‘Fjarri gekk þú þá, er ek vann þetta verk ok ek reynda þetta snarpa sverð með minni hendi, ok minu afli atta ek við orms megin, meðan þú látt í einum lyngrunni, ok vissir þú eigi hvárt er var himinn eða jörð.’

Reginn svarar, ‘Þessi ormr mætti lengi liggja í sínu bóli ef eigi hefðir þú notit sverðs þess er ek gerða þér minni hendi, ok eigi hefðir þú e þetta enn unnit, ok engi annarra.’

Sigurð svarar, ‘Þá er menn koma til vígs, þá er manni betra gott hjarta en hvasst sverð.’

Þá mælti Reginn við Sigurð af áhyggju mikilli, ‘Þú drapt minn bróður, ok varla má ek þessa verks saklauss.’

Þá skar Sigurð 4 hjartat ór orminum með því sverði er Ríðill hét.

Þá drakk Reginn blöð Fáfnis ok mælti,

‘Veit mér eina bœn er þér er lítt fyrir: gakk til elds með hjartat ok steik ok gef mér at eta.’

Sigurð fór ok steikti á teini. Ok er freyddi ór, þá tók hann fingr sínnum á ok skynjaði hvárt steikti væri. Hann 5 brá fingrinum í munn sér. Ok er hjartablóð ormsins kom á tungu honum, þá skilði hann fuglarðd. 6 Hann heyrði at ígður klókuðu á hrísinu hjá honum.

---

* The preceding ch. heading reads Reginn drakk blöð Fáfnis.
* thus Ol, om. V
* thus Ol, om. V
* 4 ? mistake for Reginn (CR)
* 5 B adds (in brackets) brann ok from CR.

1 The belief that birds (and other animals) were able to give warning of impending danger was widespread in Europe and elsewhere (see Alexander H. Krappe, “Warning Animals”, Folklore LIX (1948), 8–15). At the turn of the century there was still a belief in Iceland that the gift of understanding the
After this Regin came to Sigurd and said:

'Greetings, my lord. You have won a great victory by killing Fafnir, when before no man was daring enough to lie in wait for him, and this great deed will live for as long as the world shall last.'

Regin now stood looking down at the ground for a long time. And thereupon he said in great anger:

'You have killed my brother, but I can scarcely be free of blame for the deed.'

Then Sigurd took up his sword Gram, wiped it on the grass and said to Regin:

'You went a good way off while I performed the deed, and I tried out this keen sword with my own hand, and with my own strength I strove against the might of the dragon—while you were lying in a heather bush, not knowing whether you were on your head or your heels!'

'That dragon might have lain in his lair a long time,' replied Regin, 'if you hadn't had the use of the sword I fashioned for you with my own hands—neither you nor anyone else would have done it yet!'

'When men come to do battle,' answered Sigurd, 'then a stout heart is better for a man than a keen sword.'

Regin then said to Sigurd in great distress:

'You killed my brother, but I can scarcely be free of blame for the deed.'

Then Sigurd cut out the dragon's heart with the sword called Ridill. Regin then drank Fafnir's blood and said:

'Do something for me—it's a small matter for you. Take the heart to the fire, roast it and give it me to eat.'

Sigurd went and roasted it on a spit. And when the juice sputtered out he touched it with his finger to see whether it was done. He jerked his finger to his mouth, when the blood from the dragon's heart touched his tongue he could understand the language of birds. He heard some titstwittering near him in the thicket.
‘Dar sitr Sigurdr ok steikir Fafnis hjarta. Pat skyldi hann sjálfur eta. Pá mundi hann verða hverjum manni vitrari.’

Qnnur segir, ‘Dar liggr Reginn ok vill vélja þann sem honum trúir.’ Pá mælti in þríoja,

‘Höggvi hann þá hofuð af honum, ok má hann þá ráða gullinu því inu miklu einn.’

Pá mælti in fjórða, ‘Pá væri hann vitrari ef hann hefði þat sem þær hofðu ráðit honum, ok riði síðan til bóls Fafnis ok tæki þat í mikla gull er þar er, ok riði síðan upp á Hindarfjall þar sem Brynhildr 1 sefr, ok mun hann nema þar mikla speki, ok þá væri hann vitr ef hann hefði yður ráð ok hygði hann um sína þurf, ok þar er mér úlfsins ván er ek eyrun sá.’ Pá mælti in fimmta,

‘Eigi er hann svá hóskr sem ek ætla 3 ef hann vægir honum, en dreipit aðr bróður hans.’ Pá mælti in sétta,

‘Pat væri snjallráði ef hann dræpi hann ok réði einn 4 fénu.’

Pá mælti Sigurdr, ‘Eigi munu þau óskop at Reginn sé minn bani, ok heldr skulu þeir fara báðir broður einn veg.’

Bregdr nú sverðinnu Gram ok hógr hofuð af Regin.

Ok eptir þetta eitr hann suman hlut hjartans ormsins, en sumt hótir hann; hleypr síðan á hest sinn ok rði eptir slöð Fafnis ok til hans herbergis ok fann at þat var opit, ok af járni hurðirnar allar ok þar með allr dyrumbúningrinni, ok af járni allir stokkar í húsinu, ok grafit í þró niðr. Sigurdr fann þar stórmikit gull ok sverðit Hrotta, ok þar tók hann ægisjálm ok gullbrynjuna ok marga dýrgripi. Hann fann þar svá mikit gull at honum þótti ván at eigi mundi meira bera tveir hestar eða þr. Pat gull tekr hann allt ok berr í tvær kístur miklar, tekr nú 2 í tauma hestinum Grana. Hestinn vill nú eigi ganga, ok ekki tjár at keyra. Sigurdr finnr nú hvat hestinn vill; hleypr hann á bak ok lýstr hann sporum, ok rennr sjá hestr sem lauss væri.

---

a The preceding ch. heading reads Sigurdr át hjartat ormsins.
b thus Ol, sitr þu V, the þu best omitted because of the following hann construction.
c B emends to ætlaða
d thus Ol, enn V

1 See Introduction pp. xxi f., xxxiii

2 There seems to be a stage missing: the prose conclusion of Fáfnismál in PE has ‘ok klyfjaði þar með Grana’, i.e. ‘and loaded them on to Grani’. 
'There sits Sigurd, roasting Fafnir's heart. He should eat it himself, and then he'd be wiser than any man.'

'There lies Regin meaning to play false the man who trusts him,' said a second. Then said a third:

'Let him then strike off his head. Then he can have the great treasure all to himself.'

'He would be wiser to do as they advised,' said then a fourth, 'and afterwards ride to Fafnir's lair, taking the great treasure that lies there, and then ride up to Hind Fell where Brynhild is sleeping, and there he will learn much wisdom. And he would be wise if he followed your advice and thought of his own needs. I'd expect to find a wolf where I spied his ears.' Then said a fifth:

'If he spares him, having previously killed his brother, he's not as wise as I imagine.' Then said the sixth:

'It would be a sound plan if he killed him and had the treasure all to himself.'

'Death at Regin's hands is not my evil destiny,' said Sigurd then. 'Better instead for both brothers to go the same way.' Then he drew the sword Gram and struck off Regin's head.

And after that he ate some of the dragon's heart, and some he put by. Then he leapt on his horse and rode along following Fafnir's tracks up to his lair. He found that it was open, and that all the doors were made of iron, and the whole of the door-frame as well. Of iron, too, were all the posts of the building, which was anchored deep in the earth. There Sigurd found a vast store of gold, and the sword Hrotti, and there he took possession of the helm of terror, the gold hauberk and many valuables. He found so much gold there that he thought it probable that two horses or even three would scarcely carry more. He took all the gold and put it into two large chests, then took his horse Grani by the bridle. But the horse wouldn't move and whipping did no good. Then Sigurd saw what the horse wanted. He leapt on his back, clapped spurs to him, and the horse galloped away as if unladen.
Sigurðr a ríðr nú langar leiðir ok allt til þess er hann kemr upp á Hindarfjall, ok stéfní á leið suðr til Frakklands. Æ fjallinu sá hann fyrir sér ljós mikit sem eldr brynni, ok ljómaði af til himins. En er hann b kom at, stóð þar fyrir honum skjaldborg 1 ok upp ór merki. Sigurðr gekk í skjaldborgina ok sá at þar svafr maðr ok lá með öllum hervápnunum. Hann tók fyrst hjálminn af hófði honum ok sá at þat var kona. Hon var í brynju, ok var svá fóst sem hon væri hólgróinn. Þá reist hann ofan ór hófuðsmátt ok í gegnum niðr ok svá út í gegnum báðar ermar, ok beit sem klaði. Sigurðr kvad hana helzti lengi sofð hafa. Hon spurði hvat svá var mättugt er beit brynjuna,—

'Ok brá mínunm svefni, eða mun hér kominn Sigurðr Sigmundarson er hefir hjálm Fáfnis ok hans bana í hendi?'

Þá svarar Sigurðr, 'Sá er Völsunga ættar er þetta verk hefir gert, ok þat hefi ek spurt at þu rít ríks konungs dóttir, ok þat sama hefir oss sagt verit frá ýðrum venleik ok vitru, ok þat skulu vör reyna.'

Brynhildr segir at tveir konungar bördusk. Hét annarr Hjálmgunnar. Hann var gamall ok inn mesti hermaðr, ok hafði Óinn honum sigri heitit, en annarr Agnarr eða Audabróðir.

'Ek fellða Hjálmgunnar í orrostu, en Óinn stakk mik svefnþorni í hefnd þess ok kvað mik aldri síðan skyldu sigri hafa ok kvað mik giptask skulu. En ek strengða þess heit þar í mótt at giptask engum þeim er hræðask kynni.' c

Sigurðr mælti, 'Kenn oss ráð til stórra hluta.'

Hon svarar, 'Þér munuð betr kunna, en með þókkum vil ek d kenna ýðr, ef þat er nokkut er vör kunnun, þat er ýðr mætti líka, í rúnum eða þórum hlutum er liggja til hvers hlutar, ok drekkum bæði saman, ok gefi godin okkr göðan dag, at þér verði nyt ok frægð at mínunm vitreik ok þú munir eptir þat er vit raðum.'

Brynhildr fylldi eitt ker ok færði Sigurði ok mælti:

(6) Björ fari ek þér,
  brynþinga valdr,
  magni blandinn
  ok megintíri.

a The preceding ch. heading reads frá Sigurði
b thus Ol, CR; om. V

c thus Ol, CR; kunni V

d thus Ol, vil ek om. V

1 Skjaldborg literally signifies 'shield rampart' though the banner out on
Sigurd now rode a long way until he arrived right up on Hind Fell and turned off south to Frankland. On the fell he saw a bright glow ahead as if there were a fire blazing, and it lit up the sky. And when he got up to it there stood before him a fort with a banner out on top. Sigurd went inside the fort and saw a man there, asleep and lying fully armoured. First he removed the helmet from his head and saw that it was a woman. She had on a hauberk and it was as tight as if grown into the flesh. Then he sheared right down from the neck, then right along both sleeves, and the blade bit in as if cutting cloth. Sigurd said she'd been asleep too long. She asked what was strong enough to bite into the hauberk—

'And to interrupt my sleep. And is it Sigurd Sigmundarson who has come here with Fafnir’s helm, bearing Fafnir's doom in his hand?'

'He who has done this deed is of the Volsung line,' then replied Sigurd. ‘And I have heard that you are the daughter of a powerful king, and I’ve also been told of your beauty and your wisdom—and this I shall put to the test.'

Brynhild told how two kings had been fighting. One was called Hjalmgunnar—he was old and a fine warrior, and Odin had promised him the victory; and the other was called Agnar or Audabrodir.

'In the battle I struck down Hjalmgunnar, and in retaliation Odin pricked me with the sleep thorn, said that I should never again win a victory, and that I was to marry. And in return I made a solemn vow to marry no one who knew the meaning of fear.'

'Give me good advice on things that matter,' said Sigurd.

'You are better able to do that,' she said. But I'll teach you gladly if I know anything that might please you, whether of runes or of other matters pertaining to everything; and let us both drink together, and may the Gods grant us a good day, so that my wisdom may profit you and bring you fame, and that you may remember what we two talk of.'

Brynhild filled a cup, brought it to Sigurd and said:

(6) Ruler of battles,  
I now bring you ale  
mixed with great power,  
mingled with fame,

---

top and Brynhild's hospitality would seem to indicate that the saga writer had an actual building in mind.
Fúlr er ljóða
ok líknstafa,
góðra galdra
ok gamanræðna.

(7) Sigrúnar skaltu kunna
ef þú vill snotr vera,
ok rísta á hjalti hjörurs,
á véttrum
ok á valbostum
ok nefna tysvar Tý.¹

(8) Brímurúnar skaltu gera
ef þú vill borgit hafa
á sundi seglumur.
Á stafni skal þær rísta
ok á stjórnar blaði
ok leggja eld í ár.
Fellrat svá brattr breki
né blár unnir,
þó kemsk heill af hafi.

(9) Málurúnar skaltu kunna,
ef þú vill at manngi þér
heiptum gjaldi harm.
þær um vindr,
þær um vefr,
þær um setr allar saman
á því pingi,²
er þjóðir skulu
í fulla dóma fara.³

(10) Ólurúnar skaltu kunna,
ef þú vill at annars kván

¹ thus Ol, CR ; ljóna V
² v illeg. V
³ thus Ol, CR ; rist V
⁴ thus Ol, CR ; vett runum V
⁵ thus Ol, CR ; emended from valbystum V, only valb- now legible.
⁶ v illeg. V
⁷ fallat V
⁸ thus Ol, CR ; undir V
⁹ thus Ol, CR ; om. V
¹⁰ thus Ol, CR ; magni V, magni CR (Neckel emends to manngi).
¹¹ thus Ol, CR ; gjalda V
¹² thus Ol, CR ; menn V
¹³ illeg. V
¹⁴ thus Ol, om. V
filled with versed charms
and friendship runes,
with goodly spells,
with gay talk brimming.

(7) War runes you must know
if wise you would be.
On sword-guard grave them,
on hilt-sockets,
on hilt's iron grip,
and twice say Tyr's 1 name.

(8) Wave runes you must cut
to watch over with care
your sailed steeds in swimming.
On prow put them,
place them on steering oar,
and burn them also on oars.
No blue wave shall fall,
nor breaker steep,
but you'll return safe from the sea.

(9) Speech runes you must know,
to be spared, if you wish
repayment of grief rendered.
Wind them about,
weave them around,
side by side set them
there at that Thing 2
where throngs shall come,
all to full session faring.

(10) Ale runes you must know,
lest another's wife

---

1 i.e. twice carve the symbol that bears his name. Snorri (Jónsson, SnE 48) says of Tyr that he is the boldest and most valiant of the Æsir. The tale is told how he put his hand in the wolf Fenrir's mouth as a pledge of the Æsir's good faith, only to lose it when his companions refused to loose the wolf's bonds. He was also considered to be a god of battle (hence his intimate connection with the victory runes alluded to in st. 7), and to be possessed of considerable wisdom. He plays a rather subordinate role in Norse mythology, though seems at one time to have enjoyed considerably greater fame. His name supplies the first element of our Tuesday, a translation of the Latin 'Dies Martis'.

2 The provincial or national legislative and judicial assembly
véli þik eigi í a tryggð, ef þú trúir.
Á horni skal þær b rísta
ok á handarbaki
ok merkja á nagli nauð.4

(11) Full c skaltu signa
ok við fári sjá
ok verpa lauk í lög.
Þá ek þat veit,
at þér verðr aldri
meinblandinng mjoðr.

(12) Bjargrúnar skaltu nema,
ef þú vill borgit fá
ok leysa kind frá konu.
Á lófa skal þær rísta
ok um liðu spenna
ok biðja disir2 duga.

(13) Limrúnar skaltu kunna,
ef þú vill lækningar vera
ok kunna sár at sjá.
Á berki skal þær rísta,
ok á barri viðar
þess er lúti austr limar.

(14) Hugrúnar skaltu nema,
ef þú vill hverjum vera
göðorskari guma.
þær of réð,
þær of reist,
þær of hugði Hropt.3

(15) Á skildi váru ristnar,
þeim er stendr fyrir skínanda guði,4

a thus Ol, om. V  b thus Ol, þat V  c thus Ol, CR;ól V

1 The name of one of the characters of the runic alphabet
2 See Glossary s.v. disir
3 One of Odin's names
4 i.e. the sun. In PE, Grímmismál, st. 38, the shield referred to here is called Svalin, the name deriving from svalr, 'cool'. Its purpose seems to be to protect the earth from the sun's fiery heat since, should it fall from its position, 'braes and breakers all shall burn' (Grímmismál st. 38).
THE SAGA OF THE VOLSUNGS

betray trust if you trust her.
On the horn you must carve them,
on hand's back, too,
and mark on nail Need.¹

(11) Filled cup you must bless
against bane to guard,
cast garlic into the goblet.
Then this I promise,
that poisoned mead
will not fall to your fate.

(12) Life runes you must learn
for those labouring with child,
to deliver babe safe and sound.
On palm you must carve them,
clasp them round limbs,
and aid of the Disir² desire.

(13) Twig runes you must know
for treating the sick,
to see wisely to wounds.
Lay them on bark,
on the leaves of the tree
whose boughs bend to the east.

(14) Mind runes you must learn
if other men you would
quite outweigh in wisdom.
He who devised them,
he who divined them
and hewed them out, 'twas Hropt.³

(15) On the shield were they graved
before the shining god,⁴
á eyra Árvakrs
ok á ¹ Alsvinns¹ hofdi
ok á því hveli, er stendr
undir reið Rögnis,²
á Sleipnis³ taumum ⁴
ek á sleða fjótrum.

(16) Á bjarnar hrammi
ok á Braga ⁴ tungu,
á úlf klóm
ok á arnar nefi,⁵
á blóðum vængjum
ok á brúar sporði,
á lausnar löfa
ok á ⁶ líknar spori.

(17) Á gleri ok á gulli
ok á góðu silfri,
í víni ok í virtri
ok á völ ⁶ sessi,
i guma holdi,
ok Gaupnis⁷ oddi
ok á gýgjar ⁷ brjósti,
á nornar ⁸ nagli
ok á nefi ugli.

(18) Allar váru af skafnar,
þær er á váru ristnar,
ok hræðar við inn helga mjóð
ok sendar á víða vegu.
Þær eru með álñum,⁹
sumar með Æsum

¹ á eyra Árvakrs ok á om. V.; inserted by Ol following CR.
² Mistake for Hrungris, CR has originally Rögnis altered to Rungnis and emended by Neckel to Hrungris.
³ Perhaps mistake for þönnun, cf. CR.
⁴ thus Ol, CR; nefu V ⁵ thus Ol, om. V.
⁶ mistake for Gungnis (CR)

¹ The names Árvak and Alsvið, literally signifying ‘Early Waker’ and ‘All Swift’ (or possibly ‘All Wise’) respectively, were those of the horses that drew the sun chariot through the heavens. The chariot itself was made by the gods from sparks out of Mýspellshelm, the abode of fire, that the universe should have light. It was driven by Sól, a personification of the sun (see Jónsson, SnE 29 f.).
The Saga of the Volsungs

On Arvak's ear
and Alsvid's head.¹
Carved there on the wheel
'neath the wain of Rognir,²
on Sleipnir's³ reins,
and on sleigh's traces.

(16) On bear's paw too,
on Bragi's⁴ tongue,
on both wolf's claw
and beak of eagle,
on bloody wings,
on bridge's head,
on freeing palm
and path of mercy.

(17) On glass and gold,
and on good silver,
in wine and wort,
on witch's⁵ throne,
on Gaunir's⁶ point
and pelt of men,
and put them on hag's⁷ breast,
on Norn's⁸ nail too,
and neb of owl.

(18) All scored in these
were scraped away,
and mingled with mead most holy,
and sent on far flung ways.
They are with elves,⁹
with the Æsir some,

¹ Another name for Odin. It probably derives from regin, 'the gods', and connotes 'the ruler of the gods', 'the supreme god'. Cleasby-Vigfusson suggests that Rognir Wain is in fact the constellation ursa major.

² See p. 24 n. 1

³ Bragi was the god of poetry. His wife was the goddess Idun (see p. 3, n. 1). Bragi may originally have been an hypostasis of Odin, the god most concerned with the poetic art, who ultimately developed into an independent deity (see de Vries, Allgern. Religion II, 272 f.), though some scholars see in him the ninth-century skald Bragi Bodilsen raised to divine rank (see e.g. Turville-Petre, Origins, 35).

⁴ See Glossary s.v. eplea

⁵ Gungnir of CR (see textual note) was the name of Odin's spear.

⁶ A female giant, an ogress, see also Glossary s.v. troll

⁷ See Glossary s.v. nornir

⁸ See Glossary s.v. alfar
VÖLSUNGA SAGA

ok með vísum Vönum,\(^1\)
sumar \(^a\) hafa mennskir menn.

(19) Þat eru bókrúnar
ok bjargrúnar
ok allar ölrúnar \(^b\)
ok mærar \(^c\) megínrúnar
hverjum, er þær kná óvilltar
ok öspilltar \(^d\)
þér at heillum hafa.
Njóttu, ef þú namt,
unz rjúfask \(^e\) regin.\(^5\)

(20) Nú skaltu kjósa,
alls þér er kostr of boðinn,
hvassa vápna hlynr.\(^3\)
Sógð eða þogn
haf þú þér sjálfr of hug.
Öll eru mál of metin.

Sigurðr svarar,

(21) Munkat ek fleiða
þótt mik feigan vitir,
emkat ek með \(^9\) bleyði borinn.
Ástráð þín
vil ek Óll of hafa,
svá lengi sem ek lifi.

Sigurðr\(^h\) mælti, ‘Aldri finnsk þér vitrari kona í verðldu, ok kenn enn fleiri spekiráð.’
Hon svarar, ‘Heimult er þat at gera at yðrum vilja ok gefa heilræði fyrir yðra eptirleitan ok vitreik.’ Þá mælti hon,
‘Ver vel við frændr þína ok hefn lítt mötgerða við þá ok ber við

\(^{a}\) thus Ol, CR ; sumir \(V\)
\(^{b}\) thus Ol, CR ; allrúnar \(V\)
\(^{c}\) thus Ol, mærar ok \(V\), metar CR
\(^{d}\) thus Ol, CR ; of villtar \(V\)
\(^{e}\) thus Ol, CR ; rjúfa \(V\)
\(^{f}\) thus Ol, CR ; þong \(V\) (MS spelling Savnhg)
\(^{g}\) thus Ol, CR ; om. \(V\)
\(^{h}\) The preceding ch. heading reads spekiráð Brynhildar

\(^1\) The Vanir were a race of gods originally distinct from the Æsir who had at one time waged war against them.
and with Vanir\(^1\) of vast wisdom, and some are found midst men.

(19) Beech runes are these and birth runes, too, and all ale runes, great, glorious runes for all who use them unspoilt and true to lead luck thence. Possess them and prosper 'til the gods are gone.\(^2\)

(20) Now you must choose, a choice of all's offered, O maple tree of true weapons.\(^3\) Speech or silence, you yourself shall decide. Now all the words are weighed.

Sigurd answered:

(21) I shall not fly, though you know me foredoomed; I was created no craven. Your friendly counsel in full I would have, as long as I may live.

'In all the world there'll never be a wiser woman than you,' said Sigurd. 'Give me more good advice.'

'I owe it to you to do as you wish and to give you sound advice,' she replied, 'because you desired it and because you are intelligent,' and then she said:

'Behave well towards your kinsmen and take but scant revenge on

---

\(^1\) A reference to *Ragnarök*, 'the doom of the gods' (later *rökr*, 'twilight' was substituted for *rök*, 'doom'). Even the gods, the arbiters of men's destiny, are caught up in a fate from which there is no escape, and they perish at the onslaught of their adversaries (see p. 32, n. 5).

\(^2\) Kenning for 'warrior'

Sigurðr mælti, 'Engi finnsk þér vitrari maðr, ok þess sver ek at þik skal ek eiga, ok þú ert við mið æði.'

Hon svarar, 'þik vil ek helzt eiga, þótt ek kjósa um alla menn.' Ok þetta bundu þau eðum með sér.

Nu e réð Sigurðr á brott. Hans skjöldr var margfaldr d ok laugaðr í raðu gulli ok skriðar á einn dreki. Hann var dökkbrúnaðr it efra, en fagranðr it neðra, ok þann veg var markaðr hans hjálmr ok sóðull ok vánræður. Hann haði gullbrunynjuna, ok òll hans vápn váru gulli búinn. Ok því var dreki markaðr á hans vápnnum öllum at, er hann er senn, má vita hverr þar ferrar af öllum þeim er frétt hafa at hann drap þann mikla dreka er Væringjar 2 kalla Fáfnir. Ok fyrir því eru vápn hans òll gulli

a thus Ol, ætlar V. B emends to ætladr (? ætlat).
b thus Ol foll. CR (Sd. 35); om. V
c The preceding ch. heading reads Frá yfirtilum Sigurðar
d B emends to svá markaðr, om. ok. The scribe may have meant to write this (cf. PSS ch. 291), but svá is scored out and margfaldr indisputable.

2 i.e. to be cornered in one's own home by enemies who set fire to the house and refuse permission to leave (cf. p. 45). The most famous instance of this in Icelandic literature is the burning of Njál in Njál's Saga.
them for their offences. Bear with them, and you will win lasting praise. Be on your guard against things that are harmful, both against a maid’s love and a man’s wife, ill often comes of them. Don’t argue over much with fools at crowded meetings. They often say worse things than they know, and then you are straightway called a coward, and people think the charges are true. Kill him another day and pay him back that way for his hostile remarks. If you go along a road where there are evil spirits, then be wary. Even if overtaken by nightfall do not seek shelter near the path—harmful spirits that lead men astray are often there. Don’t get entangled with good-looking women—even though you see them at banquets—so that it stops you from sleeping, or brings you heartache. Don’t entice them with kisses or other endearments. And if you hear drunks making stupid remarks, don’t fall out with them when they’re sodden with wine and have lost their wits. Things of that sort bring deep sorrow, or even death, to many. It’s better to fight against your enemies than to be burned. And don’t swear a crooked oath, for dire vengeance follows on breach of truce. Do right by dead men, whether dead of disease, drowned or struck down. See to their bodies carefully. And don’t trust anyone if you’ve killed his father, brother, or any other near relative, even though he’s a young man. There’s often a wolf in a young son. Watch out for trickery from your friends. And I can’t foresee much of your life if the hatred of your wife’s kinsmen does not fall upon you.’

‘No one is wiser than you,’ said Sigurd, ‘and I swear it is you I shall marry, and we are ideally suited.’

‘I should wish to marry you,’ she answered, ‘even though I might have the choice of all the men there are.’ And this they swore, each to the other.

Then Sigurd rode away. His shield was of many thicknesses. It was platted with red gold, and on it was pictured a dragon. Its upper part was dark brown, and its lower light red, and his helm, saddle and surcoat were emblazoned in the same way. His hauberk was of gold, and all his weapons were decked with gold. And the reason for the dragon being emblazoned on all his weapons was so that all those who had heard that he’d killed the great dragon the Vænings called Fafnir, would know on seeing him who he was. And the reason for his weapons being

---

2 Here used with the meaning ‘Scandinavians’. It was also the name given to the Scandinavian body-guard of the emperors of Constantinople.
búin ok brútn ok lit, at hann er langt umfram aðra menn at kurtéisi ok allri hefðsoku ok náliga at Óllum hlutum. Ok þá er taldir eru allir ínir stærstu kappar ok inir ágeztu hofþíngjar, þá mun hann jafna fremstr talðr, ok hans nafn gengr í Óllum tungum fyrir nördan Grísklands hafr,² ok svá mun vera meðan verðoldin stendr. Hár hans var brúnt at lit ok fagr í lyta ok för í stórlókka. Sprekkit var þykkj ok skammt ok með sama lit. Hánefjaðr var hann ok hafði breitt andli ok stórbeinót. Augu hans váru svá snór at fár einn þórði at líta undir hans brúrn. Herðar hans váru svá miklar sem tveir menn varð í at sjá. Hann líkami var skapaðr allr við sík á hróð ok digrileik ok þann veg sem bezt má sama. Ok er þat mark um hans hróð, at þá er hann gyði sík sverðiðu Gram, en þat var sjau spanna hátt, ok er hann Íð rúgrakinn fullvakinn, þá tók niðr doggskórrinn á sverðiðu akrrinn uppstandanda. Ok hans aflu er meira en vóxtr. Vel kann hann sverðið at beita ok spjóti at skjota ok spennti at verpa ok skildi at halda, boga at spanna eða hesti a at rúða, ok margi konar kurtéisi nam hann í Ócsku. Hann var vîtr maðr, svá at hann vissi fyrir órfóna hluti. Hann skilði fuglsrótt. Ok af sliktum hlutum kómu honum fáir hlutir á óvara. Hann var langtalaðr ok málsnjallr svá at ekki tók hann þat orandi at maðla, at hann muni fyrir hrættu en svá sýnisk Óllum sem enga leið muni eiga at vera nema svá sem hann segir. Þó þát er hans skemtan at veita lið sínun munnum ok reyna sjálfan sík í stórræðum ok taka f é af sínun óvinum ok gefa sínun vinum. Eigi skorti hann hug, ok aldri varð hann hræddr.

24

Sigurðr b ríðr nú þar til er hann kemr at einum miklum bœ. Þar ríð fyrir einn mikill hofþíngi, sá er Heimir hét. Hann átti systur Brynhildar er c Bekkhlídr a hét, því at hon hafði heima verit ok numit hannyrði, en Brynhildr fór með hjálom ok brynju ok gekk at a vígum. Var hon því kolluð Brynhildr. Heimir ok Bekkhlídr áttu einn son er Alsvíðr hét, manna kurtéisastr. Þar léku menn úti. Ok er þeir sjá ríð mannsins at bœnum, hættu þeir leiknum ok undrask mannnin, því at þeir hofðu engan slíkan sét. Gengu í móti honum ok fognuðu honum vel.

a thus Ol and PSS ch. 291 ; hest V
b The preceding ch. heading reads Sigurðr kom til Heimis.
c thus Ol, om. V
d thus Ol; & B, V

¹ i.e. the Ægean Sea
² The first element of the name signifies ‘bench’, a reference to the long wooden benches used as seats in the old Scandinavian ‘hall’, whereas the
THE SAGA OF THE VOLSUNGS

all decked with gold and gleaming bright was that he far excelled others in fine manners, in all the social graces and well-nigh in everything. And when all the greatest heroes and the most famous leaders are spoken of, he is the one who will always be spoken of as foremost of all, and his name is current in all the languages spoken north of the Greek Ocean,¹ and so it will be for as long as the world endures. His hair, which fell in long locks, was brown and handsome to look on. His beard was short and thick and of the same colour. He had a high-bridged nose and broad, large-boned features. His eyes were so piercing that few dared look him in the face. His shoulders were so wide that to look at him was like looking at two men. His body was well proportioned as regards height and breadth and just as it should be. And an indication of his height is that when he belted on the sword Gram—it was over five feet long—and walked through a field of full grown rye, the scabbard-chape brushed the top of the standing grain. And his size was outdone by his strength. He was expert in sword-play, in throwing a spear or hurling a javelin, in shield work, in archery and in riding, and many and varied were the arts of chivalry he had acquired in his youth. He was a wise man having foreknowledge of future events. He could understand the language of birds. And for these reasons there was little that took him unawares. He could speak long and eloquently, and if he started on a speech he never stopped until everyone saw that his was the only way possible. And he loved to come to the aid of his men, to tax his powers in dangerous ventures, to rob his enemies of their wealth and to give to his friends. He never lacked courage and he was never afraid.

Sigurd now rode until he came to a large estate ruled over by an important chieftain named Heimir. He was married to Brynhild's sister who was called Bekkhild ᵃ because she had stayed at home and taken up the distaff, while Brynhild was concerned with helmet and hauberk and went to battle. This is why she was called Brynhild. Heimir and Bekkhild had a son named Alsvid, a man of most courtly bearing. Outside were people taking part in various sports, but when they saw the man riding up to the buildings they stopped, and they were amazed because they had never seen such a man. They went to meet him and

¹ first element of Brynhild's name means 'coat of mail'. 'Hild' was an element in a number of female names: it was a poetic word for battle.
Alsvidr þyðr honum med sér at vera ok af sér at þiggja slíkt er hann vill. Hann þiggr þat. Honum er ok skipat vegliga at þjóna. Fjórir menn höfu gullit af hestinum, inn fimmti tók við honum. Þar mátti sjá margr góða gripi ok fáséna. Var þat at skemtan haft at sjá brynjur ok hjálma ok stóra hringa ok undarliga mikil gullstaup ok alls konar hervápn. Sigurðr dvelsk þar lengi í mikilli sæmd. Spyrsk nú þetta fragðarverk um òll lónd, er hann hafði drepit þann inn ógurliga dreka. Þeir undu sér nú vel, ok var hvárr þöðrum hollr. Þat hofðu þeir sér at skemtan at búa vápn sók ok skepta þarvar sínar ok beita haukum sínum.

Þá var heim komin til Heimis Brynhildr, fostra hans. Hon sat í einni skemmu við meyjar sínar. Hon kuni meira hagleik en aðrar konur. Hon lagði sinn borda með gulli ok saumaði á þau stórmernki er Sigurðr hafði gert, dráp ormsins ok upptóku fjárins ok dauða Regins. Ok einn dag er frá því sagt at Sigurðr reið á skóg við hundum sínum ok haukum ok miklu fjölmenni. Þok er hann kom heim, fló hans haukur á havan turn ok settisk við einn glugg. Sigurðr fór eptir haukínun. Þá sér hann eina fagra konu ok kennir at þar er Brynhildr. Honum þykkur um vert allt saman, fegð hennar ok þat er hon gerir. Kemr í höllina ok vill enga skemtan við menn eiga.

Þá máæli Alsvidr, ‘Hví eru þer svá fálátir? Þessi skipan þín harmar oss ok þína vini. Eða hví máttu eigi gleði halda? Hawkar þínir hvípa ok svá hestrin Grani, ok þessa fám vör seint bóta.’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Góð rvinr, heyr hvat ek hugsa. Minn haukr fló á einn turn, ok er ek tók hann, sá ek eina fagra konu. Hon sat við einn gulligan borda ok las þar á mín lóðin ok framkomin verk.’

Alsvidr svarar, ‘Þú hefthr sét Brynhdildi Buðladóttur er mest skorungr er.’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Þat mun satt vera. Eða hversu b kom hon hér?’

Alsvidr svarar, ‘Þess var skammt í milli ok þer kómud.’

Sigurðr segir, ‘Þat vissu vér fyrir fám dogum. Sú kona hefhir oss bezt síýzk í veröldu.’

a The preceding ch. heading reads Viðræl Sigurðar ok Brynhildar.

b B conjectures hversu longu which gives better sense.
welcomed him. Alsvid invited him to be his guest and to have anything he wanted, and this was accepted. Arrangements were made for him to be nobly waited on. Four men unloaded the gold from his horse, and a fifth attended him. Many precious and rare treasures were to be seen there. It was considered good sport to look at the hauberks and helmets, the big rings, the amazingly large golden goblets and weapons of every kind. Sigurd stayed there a long time and was held in great esteem. Word of his magnificent feat, the slaying of the terrible dragon, now spread through every country. They now had a good life and got on well together. They amused themselves by seeing to their weapons, making arrow-shafts and hawking.

25

At that time Brynhild, Heimir's foster-daughter, was back with him. She lived in her own quarters with her maidens. She was more skilled in the domestic arts than other women. She was working her tapestry with gold thread and embroidering on it the great deeds performed by Sigurd, the slaying of the dragon, the seizure of the treasure and the death of Regin. One day, as we are told, Sigurd rode to the forest with his hounds and hawks and a large body of men. On his return, his hawk flew up onto a high tower and settled near a window. Sigurd went after the hawk. Then he saw a good-looking woman and perceived that it was Brynhild who was there. Her good looks and her task made a deep impression on him. He entered the hall but would not join in the men's amusements.

'Why are you so silent?' said Alsvid then. 'This change in you worries us, your friends. Why can't you enjoy yourself? Your hawks are pining, and so is your horse, Grani, and we'll not find a speedy cure for it.'

'My good friend,' answered Sigurd, 'let me tell you what's on my mind. My hawk flew to a tower, and as I caught him I saw a beautiful woman. She was sitting over a golden tapestry, embroidering on it the deeds I've accomplished in the past.'

'You saw Budli's daughter, Brynhild,' replied Alsvid, 'a woman of real character and presence.'

'That's surely true,' answered Sigurd, 'but how did she get here?'

'There was but little time between your arrival and hers,' replied Alsvid.

'I knew that just a few days ago,' said Sigurd. 'She seemed to me the finest woman in the world.'
Alsviðr mælti, 'Gef ekki gaum at einni konu, þvílíkr maðr. Er þar illt at sýta er maðr fær eigi.'

' Hanna skal ek hitta,' sagði Sigurðr, ' ok gefa henni gull ok ná hennar gamni ok jafnaðarþokka.'

Alsviðr svarar, 'Engi fannsk sá enn um ald r er hon léði rúms hjá sér eða geisti òl at drekka. Hon vill sik í herskap hafa ok alls konar frægð at fremja.'

Sigurðr mælti, 'Vér vitum eigi hvárt hon svarar oss eða eigi eða lér oss sess hjá sér.'

Ok annan dag eptir gekk Sigurðr til skemmunnar. En Alsviðr stód hjá skemmunnin úti ok skepti þorvar sínar.

Sigurðr mælti, 'Sit heil, frú, eða hversu megi þér?'

Hon svarar, 'Vé Megu vér, frændr lífa ok vinir, en háttung er í hverja giptu menn bera til sín endadags.'

Hann sezk hjá henni. Siðan ganga þar inn fjórar konur með stórum borðkerum af gulli ok með inu beza víni ok standa fyrir þeim.

Þá mælti Brynhildr, 'Þetta sæti mun fám veitt vera, nema faðir minn komi.'

Hann svarar, 'Nú er veitt þeim er oss líkar.'

Herbergi var tjaldat af inum dýrstum tjóldum ok þaktt klæðum allt gólfit.

Sigurðr mælti, 'Nú er þat fram komit er þér hétuð oss.'

Hon svarar, 'Þér skuluð hér velkomnir.'

Siðan reis hon upp ok fjórar meyjar með henni, ok gekk fyrir hann með gullker ok bað hann drekka. Hann réttir í möt honðina kerinu ok tók hond hennar með ok setti hana hjá sér. Hann tók um hals henni ok kyssti hana ok mælti,

'Engi kona hefir þér fégrí fœz.'

Brynhildr mælti, 'Vitligrá ráð er þat at leggja eigi trúnað sinn á konu vald, því at þær rjúfa jafnan sín heit.'

Hann mælti, 'Sá kömi beztr dagr yfir oss at vér mættim njótask.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Eigi er þat skipat at vit búum saman. Ek em skjalmdær, ok á ek með herkonungum hjálm, ok þeim mun ek at líði verða, ok ekki er mér leitt at berjask.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Þá frjóumsk vör mest ef vér búum saman, ok meira er at þola þann hann harm er hér liggj á en hvoss vápn.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Ek mun kanna líð hermanna, en þú munt eiga Guðrúnu Gjúkadóttur.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Ekki tælir mik eins konungs dóttir, ok ekki lér

1 See Glossary s.v. valkyrja
A man like you shouldn’t get interested in any one woman,’ said Alsvid. ‘It’s bad to fret about what can’t be had.’
‘I shall go to her,’ said Sigurd, ‘and give her gold, and gain her delight and love.’
‘She’s never suffered any man to sit by her, or given him ale to drink,’ replied Alsvid. ‘She wants to be off to battle, and generally increase her fame.’
‘I don’t know if she’ll reply, or not,’ said Sigurd, ‘or let me sit by her.’

The next day Sigurd went to the women’s apartments, and Alsvid stood close by outside making arrow-shafts.
‘Greetings, my lady,’ said Sigurd. ‘Is all well with you?’
‘All is well,’ she answered. ‘My kinsmen and friends are alive. But none of us can tell what sort of luck we’ll have down to the day we die.’

He sat down by her side. Then four women entered bearing large golden cups and the finest wine, and stood before them.
‘Not many are this seat, apart from when my father comes,’ he answered.
The room was hung with the most costly tapestries, and the whole floor had coverings.
‘Your promise to me is now fulfilled,’ said Sigurd.
‘You are welcome here,’ she replied.
Then she arose, and the four maidens with her, and brought him a golden cup and told him to drink. He reached for the cup and at the same time took her hand and drew her down beside him. Embracing her, he kissed her and said:
‘No woman born is lovelier than you.’
‘Wiser not to surrender your trust to a woman, for they always break their vows,’ said Brynhild.
‘The day we wed would be our happiest,’ he said.
‘We’re not fated to share our lives together,’ Brynhild replied. ‘I am a shield-maiden, wearing a helmet along with warrior kings. I help them and I don’t find battle distasteful.’
‘We shall prosper best if we share our lives together,’ answered Sigurd. ‘The pain of all this is worse to bear than sharp weapons.’
‘I shall muster the troops,’ replied Brynhild, ‘and you will marry Gudrun, Gjuki’s daughter.’
‘No king’s daughter shall ensnare me,’ replied Sigurd. ‘I’m not
mér tveggja huga um þetta, ok þess sver ek við guðin at ek skal þik eiga eða enga konu ella."

Hon mælti sílt. Sigurðr þakkar henni þessi ummæli ok gaf henni gullhring, ok svøðu nú eða af nýju, ok gengr hann í brott til sinna manna ok er þar um hríð með miklum blóma.


Buðli ñ hét konungr. Hann var ríkari en Gjúki ok þó báðir ríkir. Atlí c hét bróðir Brynhildar. Atlí var grimmar maðr, mikill ok svartr ok þó tíguligr ok inn mesti hermaðr. Grímhildr var grimmhugud kona. Ráð Gjúkungu stóð með miklum blóma ok mest fyrir sakir barna hans er mjökk váru umfram ñ flesta.

Eitt sinn segir Guðrún meýjum sínum at hon má eigi d glöð vera. Ein kona spyrð hana hvat henni sé at ógledi.

Hon svarar, ñ 'Eigi fengum vér tíma í draumum. Er því harms í hjarta mér. Ráð f drauminn, þar er þú fréttir eptir.'

Hon svarar, 'Seg mér ok lát þik eigi hryggja, því at jafnan dreymir fyrir vórum.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Þetta er ekki veðr. þat dreymði mik at ek sá cinn fagran hauk mér á hendi. Fjáðr hans váru með gullugum lit.'

Kona svarar, 'Margir hafa spurt af þörum vænleik, vísku ok kurteisi. Nókkurs konungs sonr mun bidja þín.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Engi hlutr þótti mér haukinum betri, ok allt mitt f eilda ek heldr láta en hann.'

Kona svarar, 'Sá er þú fær mun vera vel munnr, ok muntu unna honum mikit.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Þat angrar mik at ek veit eigi hverr hann er, ok skulum vör hitta Brynhildi. Hon mun vita.'

Þær bjuggusk með gulli ok mikillí fegrð ok fóru með meýjum sínum,

a The preceding ch. heading reads Frá Giúka konungi ok sonum.
b thus Ol, hann V
c um- illeg. V d illeg. V e hon svarar illeg. V f mér. Ráð illeg. V ; Ol doubtful
in two minds about this, and I swear by the gods that I either marry you or no one at all.'

She spoke to the same effect. Sigurd thanked her for what she had said and gave her a gold ring. Then they again repeated their vows, and Sigurd went off to his men and there he prospered for a time.

There was a king named Gjuki. His kingdom lay south of the Rhine. He had three sons called Gunnar, Hogni and Guttorm. Gudrun was his daughter, a maiden who was widely famed. The children outdid other kings' children in natural gifts and attainments, in good looks as in stature. They were always out raiding, and performed many brilliant feats. Gjuki's wife was Grimhild, a sorceress.

There was a king named Budli. He was more powerful than Gjuki, though both were powerful. Brynhild's brother was Atli, a stern man, tall and dark, but of noble bearing and a great warrior. Grimhild had an evil disposition. Gjuki's house prospered, and chiefly because of his children who outshone most people.

One day, Gudrun told her maids of honour that she couldn't be happy. One woman asked her what she was unhappy about.

'I had no luck in my dreams,' she replied, 'and so there is grief in my heart. Interpret the dream, since you ask about it.'

'Tell it me,' she replied, 'and don't worry, for dreams always mean storms.'

'This is no storm,' replied Gudrun. 'I dreamed I saw a splendid hawk on my hand. His plumage was gold in colour.'

'Many have heard of your beauty, wisdom and courtliness. Some king's son will ask for your hand,' answered the woman.

'I thought nothing finer than the hawk,' Gudrun replied, 'and I would rather have lost all my wealth than him.'

'You'll marry a manly husband,' answered the woman, 'and you'll love him dearly.'

'It worries me, not knowing who he is,' replied Gudrun. 'We will go to see Brynhild—she will know.'

They arrayed themselves in gold and many things of great beauty,

---

1 For Gjuki and his sons see Introduction p. xxxii
3 See Introduction p. xvi, n. 1
4 He is probably a reflection of the historical Bleda, Attila's brother, who also appears in NL as Bödelin.
5 See Introduction p. xxxii
unz þær kómu at hóll Brynhildar. Sú hóll var búin með gulli ok stóð á eínu bergi. Ok er sén er ferð þeira, þá er Brynhildi sagt at margar konur öku at borginni með gylltum vognum.

‘Þar mun vera Guðrún Gjúkadóttir,’ segir hon. 4 ‘Mík dreymði um hana í nöttr, ok gongum út í mótt henni. Ekki sökja oss fríðari konur heim.’

Þær gengu út í móti þeim ok foðnuðu vel. Þær gengu inn í þá ína foðru hóll. Salrinn var skrifaðr innan ok mjók silfri búinn. Klæði várú breiða undir fæktr þeim, ok þjónuðu allir þeim. Þær höfðu margða konar leika. Guðrún var fáord. 5

Brynhildr mælti, ‘Hví megi þér eigi gleði bella? Ger eigi þat. Sketum oss allar saman ok réðum um ríka konunga ok þeira stórvirki.’ 1

‘Gerum þat,’ segir Guðrún. ‘Eða hverja veiztu fremsta konunga verit hafa?’

Brynhildr svarar, ‘Sonu Hámundar, 2 Haka ok Hagbarð. Þeir unnu mörð frægðarverk í hernaði.’

Guðrún svarar, ‘Míklar várú þeir ok ágætur, en þó nam Sigarr systur þeira, en hefir aðra inni brennda, ok eru þeir seinir at hefna. Eða hvi nefndir þú eigi bræðr mína, er nú þykka fremstir menn?’

Brynhildr segir, ‘Þat er í góðum efnum, en eigi þeir enn mjók reyndir, ok veit ek einn mjók af þeim bera, en þat er Sigurðr, sonr Sigmundar konungs. Hann var þá barn er hann drap sonu Hundings konungs ok hafndi þóður sín s ok Eylima, móðurf þóður sín.’ 3

Guðrún mælti, ‘Hvat var til merkja um þat? Segir þú hann borinn, þá er faðir hans fell?’

Brynhildr svarar, ‘Móðir hans gekk í valinn ok fann Sigmund konung sáran ok bauð at binda sár hans, en hann kvezk of gamall sikan at berjask, en bað hana við þat huggask at hon mundi oætvan son ala, ok var þar spá spaks geta. Ok eptir andlát Sigmundar konungs för hon með Álf konungi, ok var Sigurðr þar upp faðdr í mikill virðingu, ok vann hann mörð afreksverk á hverjum degi, ok er hann ágætr maðr í veröldu.’

Guðrún mælti, ‘Af ást hefir þú fréttum til hans halðit. En af því kom ek hér at segja þér drauma mína, er mér fengu mikillar áhyggju.’

4 segir hon thus Ol, om. V
5 Guðrún var fáord illeg. V
6 thus Ol, B who refer to S. Grundtvig, Danmarks gamle Folkeviser, I, 1853, 259, n. 1; om. V.

1 It was a by no means uncommon practice to pass the time in discussing and comparing the achievements of various outstanding personalities. Trouble often ensued.
and with their maids in waiting they set out and came to Brynhild's palace. The palace was ablaze with gold and stood on a hill. And when their approach was seen, Brynhild was told that many women were driving towards the castle in gilded carriages.

'Gjuki's daughter, Gudrun, must be there,' she said. 'I dreamed of her last night—let's go out to meet her. No lovelier women come to visit us.'

They went out and welcomed them. They entered the magnificent palace. There were paintings on the inside of the hall and it shone with silver. Floor coverings were spread beneath their feet, and everyone waited on them. They had all kinds of games. Gudrun had little to say.

'Why can't you be gay?' said Brynhild. 'Don't be like this. Let's all have a happy time together and talk about mighty kings and their great deeds.'

'Let's do that,' said Gudrun. 'Which kings do you feel were the most eminent?'

'The sons of Hamund, Haki and Hagbard,' replied Brynhild. 'They performed many exploits in battle.'

'They were great and famous,' replied Gudrun, 'but Sigurd took their sister, and burned to death another in her house, and they're slow about vengeance. Why didn't you mention my brothers who are now thought to be most eminent men?'

'That's true,' said Brynhild, 'but they are still rather untried and I know one man who quite outstrips them—Sigurd, King Sigmund's son. When he killed King Hunding's sons and avenged his father and Eylini, his grandfather, he was still a child.'

'What was there to show that?' said Gudrun. 'Do you say he was born when his father fell?'

'His mother went to the battle-field,' replied Brynhild, 'and found King Sigmund wounded and offered to bandage his wounds, but he said he was too old to fight again, and told her to take comfort from the fact that she would give birth to an outstanding son. And here a wise man's guess was second sight. And after King Sigmund's death she was with King Alf, and Sigurd was brought up there in high esteem, and he performed many great feats every day, and he's the most famous man in the world.'

'Love led you to find out about him,' said Gudrun, 'but I came to tell you my dreams—they cause me much anxiety.'

---

2 Presumably Helgi's brother. The events referred to here are recounted by Saxo Grammaticus in Book VII of his History. 3 On his mother's side
Brynhildr svarar, 'Lát þik eigi slíkt angra. Ver með frændum þínun, er allir vilja þik gledja.'

27


Brynhildr svarar, 'Ek mun ráða sem eptir mun ganga. Til ykkar mun koma Sigurð, sá er ek kaus mér til manns. Grínhildr gefr honum meinblandið mið þó òllum oss kemr í b mikit stríð. Hann muntu eiga ok hann skjótt missa. Þú munt eiga Atla konung. Missa muntu broðra þína, ok þá muntu Atla vega.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Ofríhármar er oss þat at vita slíkt.' Ok fara þær nú í brott ok heim til Gjúka konungs.

28

Sigurð ríðr nú í brott með þat mikla gull. Skiljask þeir nú vinir. Hann ríðr Grana með òllum sínum herbúnaði ok farmi. Hann ríðr þar til er hann kom at höll Gjúka konungs. Ríðr nú í borgina. Ok þat sér einn af konungs mönnum ok mæti,

'þat hygg ek at hér fari einn af godunum. Þessi maðr er allr við gull búinn. Hestr hans er miklu meiri en aðrir hestar, ok afburðarvænn vápnabúnaðr. Hann er langt um aðra menn fram, en sjálfr berr hann þó mest af òðrum d mönnum.'

Konungrinn gengr út með hirð sína ok kvaddi manninn ok 'spyr, 'Hverr efti, er ríðr í borgina, er engi þordi nema at leyfi sona f minna ?'

Hann svarar, 'Ek heiti Sigurðr, ok em ek sonr Sigmundar konungs.'

Gjúki konungr mælti, 'Vel skaltu hér kominn með oss, ok þigg hér slíkt sem þó vill.'

Ok hann gengr inn í hollina, ok váru allir lágir hjá honum, ok allir þjónuðu honum, ok var h hann þar í miklu yfiræti. Þeir ríða allir

---

\* The preceding ch. heading reads Draumr Guðrúnar ráðinn af Brynhildi.
\* illeg. V
\* The preceding ch. heading reads Sigurði var blandað óminnisöl.
\* ím leg. V
\* ím leg. V
\* illeg. V
\* illeg. V
THE SAGA OF THE VOLSUNGS

‘Don’t let such things worry you,’ replied Brynhild. ‘Stay among your family who all want to make you happy.’

27

‘I dreamed,’ said Gudrun, ‘that a good number of us left our quarters, and we saw a great stag. It was far superior to other deer. Its hair was golden. We all wanted to capture that deer, but I alone managed it. The deer seemed to me more precious than anything else. Then you shot down the deer at my feet. At this, my grief was so great that I could hardly bear it. Then you gave me a wolf cub. It spattered me with my brothers’ blood.’

‘I’ll interpret it just as it will come to pass,’ Brynhild answered. ‘Sigurd, whom I chose as my husband, will come to you. Grimhild will give him drugged mead. This will bring great sorrow to us all. You will marry him and soon lose him. Then you will marry King Atli. You will lose your brothers and then kill Atli.’

‘To know such things overwhelms me with grief,’ answered Gudrun. And now they went away back to King Gjuki.

28

Sigurd now rode away with all the gold. They now parted as friends. He rode Grani with all his gear and equipment. He rode until he came to King Gjuki’s hall. He now rode into the castle. One of the king’s men saw this and said:

‘I think one of the gods is approaching. This man is gold all over. His horse is far bigger than other horses. His weapons and armour are magnificent. He leaves other men far behind and he himself most surpasses other men.’

The king went out with his retainers and addressed the man:

‘Who are you,’ he asked, ‘riding into the castle, which no one has dared to do without my sons’ leave?’

‘I am Sigurd,’ he answered, ‘son of King Sigmund.’

‘You’re welcome among us here,’ said King Gjuki. ‘Whatever you want is yours.’

And he went into the hall and they were all short when compared to him, and they all waited on him, and he was held there in great
saman, Sigurðr ok Gunnarr ok Högni, ok þó er Sigurðr fyrir þeim um alla atgervi, ok eru þó allir miklir menn fyrir sér.

Þat finnr Grímhildr hvé mikit Sigurðr ann Brynhildi, ok hvé opt hann getr hennar; hugsa fyrir sér at þat væri meiri gipta at hann staðfestisk þar ok ætti döttur Gjúka konungs, ok sá at engi mátti við hann jafnask, só ok hvert traust at honum var, ok hafði ofr fjár, miklu meira en menn vissi dømi til. Konungr var við hann sem við sonu sína, en þeir virðu hann framar en sik.

Eitt kveld er þeir sátu við drykk, ríss dróttning upp ok gekk fyrir Sigurð ok kvaddi hann ok mælti,

‘Føgnudr er oss á pinni hérvist, ok allt got til viljum vér til yðar leggja. Tak hér við horni ok drekk.’

Hann tók við ok drakk af.

Hon mælti, ‘Þinn faðir skal vera Gjúki konungr, en ek módir, bröðr þínir Gunnarr ok Högni ok allir er eïða vinnid, ok munu þa eigi yðir jafningjar fásk.’

Sigurðr tók því vel, ok við þann drykk munði hann ekki til Brynhildar. Hann dvaldisk þar um hrið.

Ok eitt sinn gekk Grímhildr fyrir Gjúka konung ok lagði hendr um hál honum ok mælti,

‘Hér er nú kominn inn mesti kappi er finnask mun í veroldu. Væri at honum mikit traust. Gipt honum döttur þína með miklu fæ ok slíku ríki sem hann vill, ok mætti hann hér yndi nema.’

Konungr svarar, ‘Fattit er þat at bjóða fram dætr sínar, en meiri vegr er at bjóða honum en aðrir biði.’

Ok eitt kveld skenkir Guðrún. Sigurðr sér at hon er ven konu ok at öllu in kurteisasta. Fimm misseri var Sigurðr þar svá at þeir sátu með fragð ok vingan, ok ræðask konungur nú við.

Gjúki konungr mælti, ‘Mart gott veitir þú oss, Sigurðr, ok mjók hefir þú styrt kað ríki.’

Gunnarr mælti, ‘Allt viljum vér til vinna at þér dvelizz hér lengi, bæði ríki ok vára systur með bæði, en eigi mundi annarr fá, þótt bæði.’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Hafð þókk fyrir yðra sæmd, ok þetta skal þiggja.’

Þeir sverjask nú í bræðralag, sem þeir sé sambornir bræðr. Nú er ger ágætl vegla ok stóð marga daga. Drekkir Sigurðr nú brúðlaup til Guðrúnar. Mátti þar sjá margs konar gleði ok skemtan, ok var hvern dag veitt öðrum betr. Þeir fóru nú viða um lánd ok vinna mærg

* Only op legible. Ol reads opp and emends to opt.
honour. Sigurd, Gunnar and Hogni all rode together, but Sigurd's accomplishments went far beyond theirs, though they were all great men.

Grimhild noticed how deeply Sigurd loved Brynhild, and how often he talked of her. She thought that it would be a good thing if he settled there and married King Gjuki's daughter, and she saw how no one could claim to be his equal, and what an asset he was, having immense wealth, far greater than any heard of before. The king treated him like one of his sons, and they reckoned him more outstanding than they were themselves.

One evening as they sat drinking, the queen got up, went to Sigurd and addressing him said:

' We are delighted that you are here. We wish to give you all that's good. Take this horn and drink.'

He took it and drank it off.

' King Gjuki shall be your father and I your mother,' she said, 'and Gunnar and Hogni, and all who take the oaths, shall be your brothers, then none will be found to equal you.'

Sigurd took this well, and with that drink he lost all memory of Brynhild. He stayed there for a time.

One day Grimhild went to King Gjuki, embraced him and said:

' The greatest champion to be found anywhere in the world is here with us now. He would prove a great asset. Give him your daughter in marriage, a large sum of money and whatever dignities he would like, and perhaps he will live here happily.'

' It's unusual to offer a daughter's hand, but to offer it to him is a greater honour than for others to ask for it,' the king answered.

One evening Gudrun was serving wine. Sigurd saw that she was a beautiful woman and most courtly in every way. Sigurd was there for two and a half years, and they thus lived in amity and were widely spoken of—and the kings were now conversing:

' You're doing a great deal for us, Sigurd,' said King Gjuki, 'and you've greatly strengthened our power.'

' We'll do anything to persuade you to stay here a long time,' said Gunnar. ' Dignities, and the offer of our sister's hand—no one else would be granted it, even if he asked.'

' Thank you for the honour you do me,' replied Sigurd. ' I accept.'

They now swore to be brothers as if born of the same parents. A sumptuous feast was now prepared and it lasted many days. And Sigurd now married Gudrun. Many different amusements and entertainments were to be found there and each day's feasting was better than the last. They now roamed far and wide, performing many glorious
frægðarverk, drápu marga konungasonu, ok engir menn gerðu slík afrek sem þeir; fara ná heim með miklu herfangi. Sigurðr gaf Guðrúnun at eta af Fáfnis hjarta, ok síðan var hon miklu grimmari en áðr ok vitrari. Þeira sonr hétt Sigmundr.

Ok eitt sinn gekk Grimhildr at Gunnari, syni sínum, ok mælti,

' Yðirt ráð stendr með miklum blóma fyrir útan einn hlut, er þér eruð kvánlausir. Bídö Brynhildar. Þat er gosgast ráð, ok mun Sigurðr riða með yðr.'

Gunnarr svarar, ' Vist er hon væn, ok eigi em ek þessa öfuss',—ok segir nú feðr sínum ok bréðrum ok Sigurði, ok eru allir fýsandi

29


Sigurðr mælti, ' Hví hopar þú, Gunnarr?'

Hann svarar, 'Eigi vill hestrinn hlaupa þenna eld,' ok biðr Sigurð ljá sér Grana.

'Heimult er þat,' segir Sigurðr.

Gunnarr riðr nú at eldimum, ok vill Grani eigi ganga. Gunnarr má nú eigi riða þenna eld. Skipta nú litum, sem Grimhildr kenndi þeim Sigurði ok Gunnari. Síðan riðr Sigurðr ok hefur Gram í hendi ok bindr gullspora á feitr sér. Grani hleypr fram at eldimum er hann kenndi sporans. Nú verð gnýr mikill er eldrinn tók at ösask, en jörð tók at skjálfar. Loginn stóð við himin. Þetta þorði engi at gera fyrri, ok var sem hann riði í myrkva. Þá lægðisk eldrinn, en hann gekk af hestinum inn í salinn.

Svá er kvæðit b:

a The preceding ch. heading reads Sigurðr reið vaflogan Brynhildar Buðladóttur.
b er kvæðit illeg. V
deeds, killing many princes, and no one accomplished such great feats as they did. They now returned home with much booty. Sigurd gave Gudrun some of Fafnir's heart to eat, and she was then far grimmer than before, and wiser, too. Their son's name was Sigmund.

Grimhild went one day to her son, Gunnar.
'Your affairs are flourishing,' she said, 'except in one particular—you've no wife. Ask for Brynhild's hand; it will be a splendid match, and Sigurd will ride with you.'
'She's certainly beautiful,' replied Gunnar, 'and I'm nothing loath.'
And then he told his father, his brothers and Sigurd, and they were all strongly in favour.

They now prepared carefully for their journey. Then they rode over hill and dale to King Budli. They put forward their proposal. He received it favourably, provided that she did not refuse, saying she was so proud that she would only marry the man of her choice. Then they rode to Hlymdalir. Heimir gave them a hearty welcome. Gunnar explained their business. Heimir said that hers was the decision as to whom she should marry. Then he said that her hall was a short way off and gave his opinion that she would only marry the man who rode through the burning fire that surrounded her hall. They found the hall and the fire, and what they saw was a stronghold, its gable-head mounted in gold, and fire burning all round it. Gunnar rode Goti and Hogni rode Holkvir. Gunnar spurred on his horse towards the fire, but he shied back.

'Why shy back, Gunnar?' said Sigurd.
'The horse won't leap the fire,' he answered, and he asked Sigurd to lend him Grani.
'By all means,' said Sigurd.
Gunnar then rode at the fire, but Grani wouldn't go on. So Gunnar could not ride through the fire. Sigurd and Gunnar then exchanged appearances as Grimhild had taught them. Then Sigurd rode with Gram in hand and golden spurs bound on his heels. Grani charged at the fire when he felt the spur. Then there came a mighty roar as the fire began to rage and the earth to tremble. The flames mounted to the sky. No one had dared do this before, and it was like riding in dense fog. Then the fire died down and dismounting he entered the hall.

As is said:
(22) Eldr nam at æsask
en jörd at skjalfa
ok hár logi
við himni gnæfa.
Fár treystsk þar
fylkis rekka
eld at riða
né yfir stíga.

(23) Sigurðr Grana
sverði keyrði.
Eldr sloknaði
fyrir qíslingi,
logi allr lægðisk
fyrir lof gjörnum.
Bliku reiði,
c
er Reginn átti.

Ok er Sigurðr kom inn um logann, fann hann þar eitt fagrt herbergi, ok þar sat í Brynhildr. Hon spyrð hvern sá maðr er. En hann nefndisk Gunnarr Gjúkason—

'Ertu ok ætlud mín kona með jáyrði fédr þíns, ef ek riða þínn vafrloga,1 ok fóstra þíns með yðru atkvæði.'

'Eigi veit ek gerla hversu ek skal þessu svara,' segir hon.d

Sigurðr stóð réttar á góðfinu ok studdisk á sverðshjóltin ok mælti til Brynhildar,

'Þér í mót skal ek gjalfa mikinn mund í gulli ok góðum gripum.'
Hon svarar af áhyggju af sínu sæti sem álpt af báru ok hefir sverð í hendi ok hjálm á hofði ok var í bryaju:

'Gunnarr,' segir hon, 'ræð ekki slíkt við mik, nema þú sér hverjum manni fremri, ok þá skaltu drepa er mín hafa bæðit, ef þú hefir traust til. Ek var í orrostu með Gardakonungi,2 ok váru vápn vár lituð í manna-blóði, ok þess gírnumk vár enn.'

Hann svarar, 'Mög stórvíkri hafi þér unnit, en minnizk nú á heit yður, ef þessi eldr væri riðinn, at þér mundið með þeim manni ganga er þetta gerði.'

Hon finnr nú hér sönn svór ok merki þessa máls, stendr upp ok

---

a El- illeg. V
b thus Ol, man V
c thus Ol, reið V
d segir hon Ol, om. V
(22) The fire grew great,  
the ground did shake  
and tall flame  
towered to the sky.  
Few warrior kings  
were willing to ride  
or fare onwards through  
the fire's rage.  

(23) With sword did Sigurd  
spur Grani onwards.  
Before the prince  
the fire then died.  
The flames all ceased  
for the seeker of glory,  
resplendent the harness  
Regin had owned.  

And when Sigurd went in past the flames he found a fine dwelling,  
and Brynhild was sitting within. She asked who the man was. He  
said he was Gunnar, Gjuki's son.  
'And you are to be my wife—your father consented if I rode through  
your leaping flames,¹ as did your foster-father, if you so decided.'  
'I hardly know how to answer,' she said.  
Sigurd stood erect on the floor, leaning on the hilt of his sword,  
and said to Brynhild:  
'In return I shall make you a large marriage-settlement in valuables  
and gold.'  

From her seat like a swan on the wave she made solemn reply. She  
had sword in hand, a helm on her head, and she was clad in armour.  
'Gunnar,' she said, 'do not talk to me of this, unless you are a  
better man than any other, and you must kill all who have asked for  
my hand, if you're resolute enough. I have fought in battle with the  
King of Gardariki,² and my weapons were stained with men's blood, and  
this is what I still long for.'  

'You have performed many great deeds,' he replied, 'but now think  
of your oath, that if any one rode through the fire you would go with  
the man who did so.'  

She realised that what he said was true and saw the point of his  

¹ It was her foster-father, Heimir, who mentioned flames see (p. 48).  
² Gardariki or Gardar was the kingdom created by the Swedish Varangians  
in Russia.
fagnar a honum vel. Þar dvelsk hann þrjár nætr, ok búa eina rekju.6
Hann tekr sverðit Gram ok leggr í meðal þeira bert. Hon spyrr hví þat sætti. Hann kvæð sér þat skipat at svá gerði hann brúðlaup til konu
sinnar eða fangi ella bana. Hann tók þá af henni hringinn Andvaranaut
er hann gaf henni, en fekk henni nú annan hring af Fáfnis arfi. Eptir
þetta ríðr hann brott í þann sama eld til sinna félaga, ok skipta þeir
aptr litum ok ríða söðan í Hlymdali ok segja hvé farit hafði. Þann sama
dag fór c Brynhildr heim d til fóstrs síns ok segir honum af trúnaði at
til hennar kom einn konungr——

1 Ok réð minn e vafrloga ok kvazk kominn til ráða við mik ok nefndisk
Gunnarr. En ek sagða ð at þat mundi Sigurðr einn gera, er ek vann
eða á fjallinu, ok er hann minn frumverr.’ 9
Heimir kvæð nú svá búit vera mundu.

Brynhildr mælti, ‘Dóttur okkar Sigurðar, Áslaugu, 1 skal hér 4 upp
fæða með þér.’

Fara konungar nú heim, en Brynhildr fótil fór séins. Grímhildr d
fagnar þeim vel ok þakkar Sigurði sínna fylgð. Er þar búizk við veizlu.
Kom þar mikill mannfjöldi. Þar kom Budli konungr með döttur sína,
ok Atlí, sonr hans, ok hefir þessi veizla staðit marga daga. Ok er lokit
þessi veizlu, minnir Sigurð allra eða við Brynhildi ok lætr þó vera
kyrt. Brynhildr ok Gunnarr sátu við skemtan ok drukku gott vin.

30

þat f er einn dag er þær gengu til árinnar Rínar k at þvá sór,1 þá óð

Brynhildr segir, ‘Hví skal ek um þetta jafnask við þik heldr en um
annat? Er þá húgða 2 at minn fáðir væri ríkari en þinn, ok minn maðr
unntit morg 3 snildarverk 4 ok riði eld brennanda, en þinn bóni var
þráull Hjálpreks 5 konungs.’

Guðrún svarar með reiði, ‘Pá væri þú vitiðar ef þú þegðir 6 en
lastaðir mann minn. Er þat allra manna mál at engi hafi slík komit f
veroldina fyrir hversvetna sakir, ok eigi samir þér vel at lasta hann, því
at hann er þinn frumverr, ok drap hann Fáfní ok reið vafrlogann, er þú
answer. She arose and made him welcome. He stayed there three
nights and they shared the same bed. He took the sword Gram and
laid it naked between them. She asked the reason. He said it was
ordained that he should marry his wife in this way, or else die. Then
he took from her the ring Andvaranaut which he had given her, and
gave her another from Fafnir's inheritance. After this he rode off into
the fire and to his comrades. They changed back their appearances
and then rode to Hlymdalir and told how things had gone. That same
day Brynhild went back to her foster-father's and told him in confidence
that a king had come to her—

'And he rode through my leaping flames, and said he had come to
make me his own, and that his name was Gunnar. But I said that
Sigurd alone would do this, he to whom I gave my vows on the
mountain—he is my first lover.'

Heimir then said that things would have to stay as they were.

'Aslaug,¹ Sigurd's daughter and mine, shall be brought up here with
you,' said Brynhild.

The kings now returned and Brynhild went to her father's.
Grimhild welcomed them and thanked Sigurd for his help. Preparations
were then made for a feast. A large number of people arrived. King
Budli came with his daughter, and his son, Atli, came. The feast lasted
many days. And when it was over, Sigurd remembered all his vows
to Brynhild, but he gave no sign. Brynhild and Gunnar sat enjoying
themselves and drank good wine.

One day they went to bathe in the river Rhine. Brynhild then
waded out farthest in the river. Gudrun asked what this meant.

'Why should I think we're of equal standing in this more than in
anything else?' said Brynhild. 'I thought my father was more
powerful than yours, and that my husband had performed many
outstanding feats, and rode through the burning fire, while your husband
was King Hjalprek's thrall.'

'You'd be wiser to hold your peace,' answered Gudrun angrily,
'than to speak slightingly of my husband. Everyone says that no man
born into this world is in any way like him. And it is not fitting for
you to speak slightingly of him, for he is your lover, and he killed Fafnir
and rode through the leaping flames when you thought it was King

¹ See Introduction pp. xv, xxxvii and Appendix B
hugðir Gunnar konung, ok hann lá hjá þér ok þók af hendi þér hringinn Andvaranaut, ok máttu nú hér hann kenna.'

Brynhildr sér nú þenna hring ok kennir. Þá fólnar hon, sem a hon dauð væri. Brynhildr fór heim ok mælti ekki orð um kveldit. Ok er Sigurðr kom í rekkju, spyrr Guðrún,

' Hví er Brynhildr svá ókát ?'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Eigi veit ek glöggt, en grunar mik at vér munum vita brátt nökkuru gerr.'

Guðrún mælti, ' Hví unir hon eigi auð ok sélu ok allra manna lofti, ok fengit þann mann sem hon vildi ?'

Sigurðr mælti, ' Hvar var hon þá er hon sagði þat, at hon þættisk inn œæta eiga eða þann er hon vildi helzt eiga ?'

Guðrún svarar, 'Ek skal eptir spyrja á morgin hvern hon vill helzt eiga.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Þess let ek þik, ok iðrask muntu ef þú gerir þat.'

Ok um morgininn sáttu þær í skemmu sinni, ok var Brynhildr hljóð. Þá mælti Guðrún,

' Ver kát, Brynhildr. Angrar þik okkert viðtal ? Eða hvat stendr þér fyrir gamni ?'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Ílt eitt gengr þér til þessa, ok hefir þú grimmt hjarta.'

' Virð eigi svá,' segir Guðrún, 'øk seg heldr.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Spyr þess eina at betr sé attu vitir. Þat samir ríkum konum. Ök er got göðu at una, er yðr gengr allt at óskum.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Snemt er því enn at hæla, ok er þetta nökkur sú forspá. Hvat reki þér at oss ? Vér gerðum yðr ekki til angrs.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Þess skaltu gjalda er þú átt Sigurð, ok ek ann þér eigi hans at njóta né gullins mikla.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Eigi vissa ek yður ummæli, ok vel mætti faðir minn sjá ræð fyrir mér, póttu væri ekki at hitt.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Eikki hofum vér launmæli haft ok pó hofum vit eða svarit, ok vissu þér þat, at þér véltuð mik, ok þess skal hefna.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Þú eft betr geín en makligt er, ok þinn ofsi mun illa sjatna, ok þess munu margir gjalda.'

' Una mundu vér,' segir Brynhildr, ' ef eigi ættir þú gofgara mann.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Áttu svá gofgan mann at óvíst er hvert meiri konungr er, ok gnótt fjár ok ríkis.'

a hon, sem illeg. V
Gunnar, and he slept with you and took from your arm the ring Andvaranaut, and here—now you can see for yourself!"

Brynhild then saw the ring and recognised it. Then she turned deathly pale. Brynhild went back and did not utter a word that evening. And when Sigurd went to bed, Gudrun asked:

'Why is Brynhild so dejected?'

'I don't know for sure,' answered Sigurd, 'but I suspect we shall soon know rather more fully.'

'Why isn't she content with wealth and happiness, with praise from everyone, and with getting the husband she wanted?' said Gudrun.

'Where was she when she said she thought she had the most distinguished husband, or the one she most wanted?' said Sigurd.

'Tomorrow I'll ask whom she would most like to have,' replied Gudrun.

'I advise you not to do that,' answered Sigurd. 'You'll regret it if you do.'

And in the morning they were sitting in their private quarters and Brynhild was silent. Then Gudrun said:

'Be cheerful, Brynhild. Are you upset because of our conversation, or what is it that stops you from being happy?'

'This is prompted by nothing but malice,' replied Brynhild, 'and you have a cruel heart.'

'Don't talk like that,' said Gudrun, 'and instead tell me.'

'Only ask about what is good for you to know,' replied Brynhild. 'That is fitting for women of rank, and it's good to be content with good things—when everything's going as you'd wish.'

'It's early yet to boast of that,' replied Gudrun, 'and there's something prophetic in this. What do you reproach me with? I've done nothing to cause you grief.'

'You'll pay for having Sigurd,' replied Brynhild. 'I grudge your enjoyment of him, and of all the gold.'

'I knew nothing of the vow you'd made,' answered Gudrun, 'and my father could surely arrange my marriage without consulting you.'

'What we said was no secret, making vows as we did, and you knew you were playing me false, but I'll be revenged,' answered Brynhild.

'You've made a better match than you deserve,' replied Gudrun.

'But your pride won't abate without mischief, and many will pay for it.'

'I'd be content,' said Brynhild, 'if only you didn't have the more eminent husband.'

'Your husband is so eminent,' replied Gudrun, 'that none can say who is a greater king, with wealth and power in plenty, too.'
Brynhildr svarar, 'Sigurðr vá at Fáfní, ok er þat meira vert en allt ríki Gunnars konungs,'—svá sem kveðit er:

(24) Sigurðr vá at ormi,
en þat síðan mun
engum fyrnask,
meðan old lifir.
En hlýri þinn
hvárdi þorði
eld at ríða
né yfir stíga.

Guðrún svarar, 'Grani rann eigi eldinn undir Gunnari konungi, en hann þorði at ríða, ok þarf honum eigi hugar at frýja.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Dyljumk a eigi við at ek hygg Grímhildi eigi vel.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Ámæl henni eigi, því at hon er til þín sem til dótur sinnar.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Hon veldr þllum upphofum þess þóls er oss bætr. Hon bar Sigurði grímmt ðl, svá at eigi mundi hann mitt naðn.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Mart rangt orð mælið þú, ok mikil lygi er slíkt.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Njóti þér svá Sigurðar sem þér hafð mik eigi svíkit, ok er yðart samveldi ómáklit, ok gangi yðr svá sem ek hygg.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Betr mun ek njóta en þú mundir vilja, ok engi gat þess, at hann ætti of gott við mik né eitt sinn.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Illa mælið þú, ok er af þér rennr, muntu ðrásk, ok hendum eigi heiptyrði.'

Guðrún segir, 'Þú kastaðir fyrir heiptarðum á mik. Lætr þú nú sem þú munir yfir þaða, en þó byr grímmt undir.'

'Leggjum niðr önytt hjal,' segir Brynhildr. 'Ek þagða lengi yfir mínun harmi, þeim er mér bjó í brjóstni, en ek ann þínnum bróður at eins, ok þokum annat tal.'

Guðrún segir, 'Langt sér hugr þinn um fram.'

Ok þar af stóð mikill ófagnaðr, er þær gengu á ána ok hon kenndi hringinn, ok þar af varð þeira viðrvæða.

a thus Ol, dyljisk V
'Sigurd struck at Fafnir,' replied Brynhild, 'and that's worth more than all King Gunnar's power. As the poem says:

(24) Sigurd struck at the dragon
that deed shall be told
for as long as ever
there's life on earth.
No wish had your brother
to win over
or fare onwards through
the fire's rage.

'Grani did not gallop through the fire when King Gunnar mounted, but he essayed the ride, and his courage can't be called in question,' replied Gudrun.

'I can't pretend that I'm well disposed towards Grimhild,' answered Brynhild.

'Don't blame her,' replied Gudrun, 'for she treats you like a daughter.'

'She is responsible for the whole onset of the misfortune now afflicting us,' answered Brynhild. 'She brought Sigurd a harmful draught of ale so that he couldn't recall my name.'

'You're telling a lot of untruths,' said Gudrun. 'It's a monstrous lie.'

'Enjoy Sigurd to the extent you've not deceived me—you don't deserve your life together, and I hope things turn out for you as I expect,' replied Brynhild.

'I'll enjoy him more than you'd like,' answered Gudrun, 'and no one thought he'd been over intimate with me, not once.'

'You're talking offensively, and when you're calmer you'll be sorry,' replied Brynhild. 'Let's not indulge in spiteful language.'

'You first hurled spiteful words at me,' said Gudrun. 'Now you act as if you'll put things right, but there's malice behind it all.'

'Let's have done with this pointless chatter,' said Brynhild. 'For a long time I kept silent about the grief that was in my heart, and I love no one but your brother, and let's talk of something else.'

'Your thoughts are looking far beyond this,' said Gudrun.

And much unhappiness came about because they went to the river and she recognised the ring which led to their conversation.
Eptir a þetta tal leggsk Brynhildr í rekkju, ok kómu þessi tíðendi fyrir Gunnar konung, at Brynhildr er sjúk. Hann hittir hana ok spyr hvar henni sé, en hon svarar engu ok liggr sem hon sé dauð. Ok er hann leitar eptir fast, þá svarar hon,

'Ívat gerðir þú af hring þeim er ek selda þér, er Buði konungr gaf mér at efsta skilnaði, er þér synir Gjúka konungs b kómuð til hans ok hétuð at herja eða brenna, nema þér næðid mér? Síðan leiddi hann mik á tal, ok spyr hvern ek kóra af þeim sem komnar váru, en ek þudumk til at verja landit ok vera hofðingi yfir þrigjungi líðs. Váru þá tveir kostir fyrir hendi, at ek munda þeim verða at giptask sem hann vildi, eða vera án alls fjár ok hans vináttu; kvad þó sina vináttu mér mundu betr gegna en reiði. Þá hugasda ek með mér, hvárt ek skylda hlýða c hans vilja eða drepa margan mann. Ek þóttumk vanþær til at þreyta við hann, ok þar kom at ek hétumsk þeim er riði hestinum Grana með Fáinis arf ok riði minn vafirliga ok drépi þá menn er ek kvad á. Nú treystisk engi at riða nema Sigurðr einn. Hann reið eldinn, því at hann skorti eigi hug til. Hann drap orminn ok Regin ok fimm konunga, en eigi þú, Gunnarr, er þú fólnaðir sem nár, ok ertu engi konungr né kappi. Ok þess strengða ek heit heima at feðr míns, at ek munda þeim einum unna, er ágeætr væri alinn, en þat er Sigurðr. Nú erum vér eððrofa, er vér eigum hann eigi, ok fyrir þetta skal ek råandi þíns dauða. Ok eigum vér Grímhildr íllt at launa. Hanni finnsk engi kona huglausari né verri.'

Gunnarr svarar svá at fáir heyrðu,

'Mórg færðaróð hefir þú mælt, ok ertu illúðig kona, er þú ámælir þeirí konu er mjök er um þik fram, ok eigi undí a hon verr sínu, svá sem þú gerir, eða kválí dauða menn, ok engan myrði hon, ok lífir við løf.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Ekkic hofum vér launþing haft né ódóðir gert, ok annat er várt eðli, ok fúsari værim vér at drepa yðr.'

Síðan vildi hon drepa Gunnar konung, en Hogni setti hana í fjótrra. Gunnarr mælti þá,

'Eigi vil ek at hon búi í fjótrum.'

Hon svarar, 'Híðr eigi þat, því at aldri sér þú mik gláda síðan í

a Ol reads the preceding ch. heading as Harmr Brynhildar vóx at eins; Harmr now illeg.

b synir Gjúka konungs, thus Ol (cf. same phrase p. 55), Gjúkungar B (cf. Sig. in skam. 32), Gjúki konungr V.

c thus Ol, om. V

d thus Ol, undí V
After their talk, Brynhild took to her bed, and Gunnar heard the news that Brynhild was ill. He visited her and asked what was the matter. But she made no reply and lay like one dead. But when he pressed his question, she answered:

‘What did you do with the ring I gave you, King Budli’s gift to me at our last parting, when you sons of King Gjuki came to him, swearing to harry and burn if you didn’t get me? Then he took me aside and asked which one I chose from those who’d come. But I offered to defend the country and command a third of the army. There were then two alternatives to hand: I had to marry the one, as he desired, or lose all my wealth and his favour, and he said his favour would serve me better than his anger. Then I deliberated whether to bow to his will, or kill many men. I considered I was incapable of fighting him, and so I promised to marry the man who would ride the steed Grani with Fafnir’s inheritance, and ride through my leaping flames, and kill the men I named. Now none dared the ride save Sigurd alone. He rode through the fire, for he did not lack the courage for the feat. He it was who killed the dragon, and Regin and five kings—and not you, Gunnar, for you turned pale as a corpse, and you’re no king, nor a hero. And back at my father’s I swore I would love only the noblest man born, and that is Sigurd. Now I am perjured, for he is not mine, and for this reason I shall be the cause of your death. And I’ve to pay back Grimhild for her malice. There’s no woman more cowardly or worse than she is.’

Gunnar answered so that not many heard:

‘You’ve made a lot of lying statements, and it’s wicked of you to speak ill of a woman who is far superior to you—she wasn’t badly discontented with her lot as you are, nor has she tormented dead men, nor murdered anyone, and she is held in esteem.’

‘I’ve held no secret meetings,’ replied Brynhild, ‘nor committed any outrage—that’s not my nature—but I’d be quite ready to kill you.’

Then she would have killed Gunnar, but Hogni put her in chains.

Then said Gunnar:

‘It’s not my wish that she should be in chains.’

‘Pay no heed to that,’ she answered, ‘for you’ll never again see
VÖLSUNGA SAGA

Þinni holl eða drekka né tefla né hugat mæla né gulli leggja góð klæði né yóð ráð gefa.'

Kvað hon sér þat mestan harm at hon átti eigi Sigurð. Hon settisk upp ok sló sinn borða svá at sundr gekk, ok báð svá lúka skemmudyrum at langa leið mætti heyra hennar harmtölur. Nú er harmr mikill, ok heyrir um allan beinn.

Guðrún spyrð skemmumeyjar sínar hví þær sé svá ókátar eða hryggar—

'Eða hvat er yóð, eða hví fari þér sem vitlausir menn, eða hverr gyzki er yóð orðinn ?'

Þá svarar hirðkona ein er Svafrlóð hét, 'Þetta er ótímadagr. Vár holl er full af harmi.'

Þá mætti Guðrún til sinnar vinkonu:

'Stattu upp, vér hófum lengi sofít. Vek Brynhildi, gongum til borða ok verum kátar.'

'þat geri ek eigi,' sagði hon, 'at veckja hana né við hana mæla, ok morg degr drakk hon eigi mjóð né vín, ok hefðr hon fengit góða reiði.'

Þá mætti Guðrún til Gunnars:

'Gakk at hitta hana,' segir hon, 'ok seg oss illa kunna hennar meini.'

Gunnarr svarar, 'þat er mér bannat at hitta hana eða hennar fé at skipta.'

Þó ferr Gunnarr at hitta hana ok leitar margr vegna málsenda við hana ok fær ekki af um svörin. Gengr nú á brott ok hittir Högrna ok biðr hann finna hana. En hann kvezk vera ófús ok ferr þó ok fekk ekki af henni. Ok er hittir Sigurðr ok beðinn at finna hana. Hann svarar engu, ok er svá búit um kveldit.

Ok annan dag eptir er hann kom heim* af dýraveiði, hitti hann Guðrúnú ok mælti,

'þann veg hefðr fyrir mik borít sem þetta muni til mikils koma hrollr sjá, ok mun Brynhildr deyja.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Herra minn, mikil kynsl fylgja henni. Hon hefðr nú sofít sjau degr, svá at engi þorði at veckja hana.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Eigi sefr hon, hon hefðr stórræði með hóndum við okkr.'

Þá mælti Guðrún með grátí,

'þat er mikill harmr at vita þinn bana. Far heldr ok finn hana, ok vit ef sjatni hennar ofsi. Gef henni gull, ok myk svá hennar reiði.'

* om. B
me happy in your hall, neither drinking, nor playing at chequers, nor speaking in friendly tone, nor working fine materials in gold, nor giving you advice.'

She said her deepest sorrow lay in not being married to Sigurd. She raised herself up and struck her tapestry work, tearing it apart, and then she ordered the door of the apartment to be opened so that her lament could be heard afar off. There was now great sorrow and it was heard over all the precincts.

Gudrun asked her attendants why they were so depressed and sad:

'What's the matter with you? Why go about like people demented? What has so strangely come over you?'

Then one of her suite called Svafrlod answered:

'This is an evil day, our hall is full of sorrow.'

Then Gudrun spoke to her confidante:

'Get up, we have long been asleep. Rouse Brynhild, and let's set to weaving and be gay.'

'I'll not do it,' she said, 'neither rouse her, nor talk to her—for many a day she's drunk no mead or wine, and the wrath of the gods has come upon her.'

Then Gudrun spoke to Gunnar:

'Go and see her,' she said, 'and say we take no pleasure in her misery.'

'I'm forbidden to see her,' replied Gunnar, 'or to have any part in what is hers.'

But Gunnar went to see her, and tried in numerous ways to talk with her, but got nothing in reply. He then went away, met Hogni, and asked him to visit her. He said he was reluctant, but he went, and got nothing out of her. And he met Sigurd and asked him to visit her. He returned no answer, and such was the position that evening.

And the following day, when he returned from the hunt, he found Gudrun and said:

'I've had a presentiment that the feverish shivering will come to something, and Brynhild will die.'

'My lord,' replied Gudrun, 'there are great portents all about her. She has now slept for seven days, and no one has dared to wake her.'

'She's not asleep,' answered Sigurd. 'She's busy with some deep scheme against us both.'

Then, weeping, Gudrun said:

'How great is the sorrow to hear of your death! It would be better to go and visit her, and see if her pride will abate. Give her gold and so mollify her anger.'
Sigurðr gekt út ok fann opin salinn. Hann hugði hana sofa ok brá af henni klæðum ok mælti,

‘Vaki þú, Brynhildr, sól skinn um allan bæinn, ok er ærit sofit. Hritt af þér harmi ok tak gleði.’

Hon mælti, ‘Hví sætir þinni a dirfd er þú ferr mik at hitta? Mér var engi verri í þessum svikum.’

Sigurðr spyrt, ‘Hví mælir þú eigi við menn, eða hvat angrar þik?’
Brynhildr svarar, ‘Þér skal ek segja mínra reiði.’

Sigurðr mælti, ‘Heilluð ertu, ef þú ætlar grimman mín hug við þik, ok er sjá þinn maðr er þú kaust.’

‘Nei,’ segir hon, ‘eigi reið Gunnar eðlinn til vár, ok eigi galt hann mérr at mundi felldan val. Ek undrudumk þann mann er kom í mín sal, ok þóttumk ek kenna þvíur augu, ok fekk ek þó eigi víst skílit fyrir þéirí hugðu er á lá á mínna hamínja.’

Sigurðr segir, ‘Ekk erum vér gotgari männ en synir Gjúka. Þeir drápdu Danakonung ok mikinn höfdingja, bróður Buðla konungs.’

Brynhildr svarar, ‘Márt illt eigm vér þeim upp at inna, ok mín oss ekk á harma vára. Þú, Sigurðr, vátt orminn, ok reitt eðlinn, ok of mín sok, ok várú þar eigi synir Gjúka konungs.’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Ekk varð ek þinn maðr ok vatru mín kona, ok galt við þér mund ágætr konungur.’

Brynhildr svarar, ‘Eigi sá b ek svá Gunnar, at mínna huggur gerði c hlæja við honum, ok grimm em ek við hann, þótt ek hylma yfir fyrir þóðum.’

‘Þat er ógurligt,’ segir Sigurðr, ‘at unna eigi sílikum konungi, eða hvat angrar þik mest? Mér sýnisk sem hans ást sé þér gulli betri.’

Brynhildr svarar, ‘Þat er márr sárást mínna harma at ek fæ eigi því til leiðar komit at bittr sverð verði roðit í þínu blóði.’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Kvíða eigi því. Skammt mun at þíða áður bittr sverð mun standa í mínu hjarta, ok ekki muntu þér verra bídja, því at þú munt eigi eptir mik lífa. Munu ok fár várir lífðagar heðan í frá.’

Brynhildr svarar, ‘Eigi standa þín orð af litlu fári, síðan þér svikuð mik frá Ólru yndi, ok ekki hirði ek um líft.’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Lif þú ok unn Gunnari konungi ok mér, ok allt mitt fé vil ek til gefa at þú deyir eigi.’

a B emends to pín.
b B emends to sé.
c thus Ol (cf. same phrase p. 64), om. V

1 See Glossary s.v. hamingja
Sigurd went and found the hall open. He thought she was asleep and threw back the bed clothes from her and said:

'Wake up, Brynhild. The sun is shining all round the house—you've done enough sleeping. Shake off your cares and be happy.'

'How can you dare come to see me?' she said. 'No one behaved worse in deceiving me than you.'

'Why don't you speak to people?' Sigurd asked. 'What's troubling you?'

'I'll tell you about my anger,' Brynhild answered.

'You're bewitched if you imagine I bear you ill will, and your husband is the man you chose,' said Sigurd.

'No,' she said. 'Gunnar did not ride through the fire to me, nor did he make me a marriage-payment of slaughtered dead. I was puzzled by the man who came into my hall, and I thought I recognised your eyes, but I wasn't able to see things clearly because of the veil which shrouded my good fortune.'

'I'm not a nobler man than Gjuki's sons,' said Sigurd. 'They killed the Danish king, and a great prince, King Budli's brother.'

'I've a heavy score to settle with them,' answered Brynhild, 'and don't remind me of my sorrows. You, Sigurd, struck at the dragon, and rode through the fire, even for my sake, and King Gjuki's sons weren't there.'

'I was never your husband, nor you my wife,' replied Sigurd, 'and a famous king put down the marriage payment for you.'

'I've not looked at Gunnar so that my heart smiled upon him,' answered Brynhild, 'and I bear him ill will though I hide it from others.'

'It's monstrous not to love such a king,' said Sigurd. 'What is it that troubles you most? It seems to me that his love should mean more to you than gold.'

'The most hurtful for me of my sorrows,' answered Brynhild, 'is that I can't get a keen sword reddened in your blood.'

'Have no fear on that score,' replied Sigurd. 'There'll not be long to wait before a sharp sword is embedded in my heart, and you'll not ask for anything less for yourself, because you'll not survive me—there'll not be many days left to us from now on.'

'No slight malice prompts your words since you cheated me of all happiness,' answered Brynhild, 'and life is nothing to me.'

'Live, love King Gunnar and me,' replied Sigurd. 'I'll give all I have if only you'll not die.'
Brynhildr svarar, 'Eigi veizt þú gerla mitt eðli. Þú berr af öllum mönnum, en þér hefir engi kona ordit leiðari en ek.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Annat er sannara. Ek unna þer betr en mér, þótt ek yrða fyrir þeim svikum, ok má því nú ekki bregða, því at ávallt er ek gáða mins geðs, þá harmaði mik þat er þú vart eigi mín kona. En af mér bar ek sem ek máttta, þat, er ek var í konungshóll, ok unda ek því þó at vér várum öll saman. Kann ok verða at fram verði at koma þat sem fyrir er spát, ok ekki skal því kvíða.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Of seinat hefir þú at segja at þik angrar minn harmr, en nú fám vér enga líkn.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Gjarna vilda ek at vit stigim á einn þeð bæði ok værir þú mín kona.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Ekki er slíkt at mæla, ok eigi mun ek eiga tvá konunga í einni höll, ok fyr r skal ek lif láta en ek svíkja Gunnar konung,'—

ok minnisk nú á þat er þau fundusk á fjallinu ok sórusk eída,—

'En nú er því öllu brugðit, ok vil ek eigi lifa.'

'Eigi munða ek þitt nafn,' sagði Sigurðr, 'ok eigi kennda ek þik fyr r en þú vart gipt, ok er þetta inn mesti harmr.'

Pá mælti Brynhildr, 'Ek vann eïð at eiga þann mann er riði minn vafáloga, en þann eïð vilda ek halda eða deyja ella.'

'Heilr en þú deyir, vil ek þik eiga, en fyrílaða Guðróunu,' segir Sigurðr, en swá þrútnuðu hans síður at í sundr gengu brynjuhringar.

'Eigi vil ek þik,' sagði Brynhildr, 'ok engan annarra.'

Sigurðr gekk í brott.
Svá segir í Sigurðarkviðu:

(25) Út gekk Sigurðr
andspjalli frá,
hollvinir loðöa,
ok hnipnaði, a
svá at ganga nam
gunnarfúsum
sundr of síður
serkr járnofinn.

Ok er Sigurðr kom í höllina, spyrr Gunnarr hvárt hann viti hverr meintregi henni væri eða hvárt hon hefir mál sitt. Sigurðr kvað hana

a thus Ol, B; hnipaði V (unlikely as pret. of hnipa, cf. B).
'You don't really know my nature,' answered Brynhild. 'You are the most outstanding of all men, and no woman grew more hateful to you than I did.'

'The truth is rather different,' replied Sigurd. 'I loved you more than myself—though I met with trickery, and now that can't be changed—for when my wits were unclouded it always grieved me that you weren't my wife. But I bore up as best I could, for I was in a royal hall. And yet I was glad that we were all together. It may be that what was formerly prophesied will come true, but I shan't worry about it.'

'You're too late in saying that my grief distresses you,' answered Brynhild, 'and now I shall find no relief.'

'I would like us to sleep together,' replied Sigurd, 'and you would be my wife.'

'Such things must not be said,' answered Brynhild. 'Nor will I have two lords in one hall. I'd die sooner than deceive King Gunnar' —and then she recalled how they met on the mountain and made their vows—

'But now all has changed, and I don't want to live.'

'I had no memory of your name,' said Sigurd, 'nor recognised you before you were married—and that is my greatest sorrow.'

'I swore an oath,' said Brynhild then, 'to marry the man who rode through my leaping flames, and that oath I would keep, or die.'

'Rather than you should die, I'll marry you and leave Gudrun,' said Sigurd, and his breast so heaved that the links of his hauberk snapped.

'I don't want you,' said Brynhild, 'nor any other man.'

Sigurd went away.

As the lay of Sigurd says:

(25) Out went Sigurd away from that talk, staunch friend of men, so strong his grief, the shirt, iron woven, at the warrior's sides it sprang then wide and split apart.

And when Sigurd came into the hall, Gunnar asked if he knew what was grieving her, and if she were capable of speech. Sigurd said
mæla mega. Ok nú ferr Gunnarr at hitta hana í annat sinn ok spyrr hví gegndi hennar meini a eða hvárt nökkur bótt mundi til liggja.

1 Ëk vil eigi liða," sagði Brynhildr, 'því at Sigurðr hefir mik velt ok eigi sölð þik, þá er þú lézt hann fara í mína sæng. Nú vil ek eigi tvá menn eiga senn í eini höll, ok þetta skal vera bani Sigurðar eða þinn eða minn, því at hann hefur þat allt sagt Guðrúnú, en hon brígzlar mér.'

Eptir b þetta gekk Brynhildr út ok settisk c undir skemmuvegg sinn ok hafði margar harmþólur, kvæð sér allt leitt, bæði land ok d ríki, er hon átti eigi e Sigurð. Ok enn kom Gunnarr til hennar. Pá mælti Brynhildr,

'Pú skal f láta bæði ríkit ok féit, líft ok mik, ok skal ek fara heim til frænda minna ok sitja þar hrygg, nema þú dreipir Sigurð ok son hans. Al eigi upp úlfhvelpinn.'

Gunnarr varð nú mjók hugsjúkr ok þóttisk eigi vita hvat helzt lá til, alls hann var í eðum við Sigurð, ok lék ýmist í hug, þótti þat þó mest svívirðing ef konan gengi frá honum.

Gunnarr mælti, 'Brynhildr er mér òllu betri, ok frægst er hon allra kvenna, ok fyrir skal ek líf láta en týna hennar ást.' Ok kallar til sín Hognar, bróður sinn, ok mælti,

'Fyrir mik er komit vandmæli mikit,'—segir at hann vill drepja Sigurð, kvæð hann hafa vélt sik í tryggð,—

'Ráðum vit þá gullinu ok òllu ríkinu.'

Hogni segir, 'Ekki samir okkr seein g at rjúfa með ófriði. Er oss ok mikit traust at honum. Eru engir konungrar oss jafnir ef sjá inn hynski konungr lífar, ok slíkan mág fám vör aldrí, ok hygg at hversu gott væri ef vért ættim slíkan mág ok systursonu, ok sé ek hversu þetta stenzk af. Þat hefir Brynhildr vakti, ok hennar råð koma oss í mikla svívirðing ok skáða.'

Gunnarr svarar, 'Þetta skal fram fara, ok sé ek ráðit. Eggjum til Guttorrn, bróður okkarn. Hann er ungr ok fás vitandi ok fyrir útan alla eída.'

Hogni segir, 'Þat ráð lízk mér illa sett, ok þótt fram komi, þá munu vör gjöld fyrir taka at svíkja slíkan mann.'

Gunnarr segir Sigurð deyja skulu,—

| a | B emends to mein. |
| b | The preceding ch. heading illeg. Ol. reads Svikinn Sigurð. |
| c | B sæk |
| d | land ok, illeg. V |
| e | thus Ol, om. V |
| f | skalt illeg. V |
| g | thus Ol, sarin V |
she could speak. And now Gunnar went to see her a second time, asked what her grief meant and whether there was any remedy for it.

'I don't want to live,' said Brynhild, 'for Sigurd betrayed me, and he betrayed you no less when you let him sleep with me. Now I'll not have two husbands at one and the same time in one hall, and this will mean Sigurd's death—or yours or mine, for he's told Gudrun everything, and she taunts me with it.'

After this, Brynhild went out and sat beneath the wall of her private quarters, and gave vent to her grief. She said that everything was hateful to her, land and power, too, since Sigurd was not hers. And Gunnar came to her once more. Then Brynhild said:

'You'll lose both power and wealth, your life and me, and I shall go back to my family and live there sorrowfully, if you don't kill Sigurd and his son. Don't rear the wolf cub.'

Gunnar now grew very distressed. He did not know, he thought, what had best be done, for he was bound to Sigurd by oath, and his mind toyed now with this, now with that, but he thought it would be a terrible disgrace if his wife left him.

'I treasure Brynhild above all else,' said Gunnar. 'She is the most famous of all women, and I would sooner die than lose her love.' And he summoned his brother, Hogni.

'I am faced with a difficult problem,' he told him, and said he meant to kill Sigurd, who, he declared, had broken faith with him—

'Then the gold and all the power will be ours.'

'It would not be right,' said Hogni, 'to break our oaths by a hostile act. And he's a great asset to us. No kings are a match for us if this Hunnish king is alive, and never again shall we get a brother-in-law like him, and think how fine it would if we had a brother-in-law like him and nephews, too! But I see where all this started. Brynhild is behind it, and her plans will do us harm and bring us deep shame.'

'It will have to be carried out,' said Gunnar, 'and I see a way. Let's urge on our brother Guttorm to do it. He is young and simple and free from any oath.'

'I think the plan ill advised,' said Hogni, 'and even if successful we shall still pay dearly for betraying such a man.'

Gunnar said that Sigurd must die—
VÖLSUNGA SAGA

' Eða mun ek deyja ella.'
Hann bîðr Brynhildi upp standa ok vera káta. Hon stóð upp ok segir þó, at Gunnarr mun eigi koma fyrr í sama rekkju henni en þetta er fram komit.

Nú ræðask þeir við broðr. Gunnarr segir at þetta er gild banasök at hafa tekit meydóm Brynhildar,—

' Ok eggjum Guttorm at gera þetta verk.'
Ok kalla hann til sín ok bjóða honum gull ok mikit ríki at a vinna þetta til. Þeir töku orm einn ok af vargsholdi ok létu sjóða ok gáfu honum at eta, sem skáldit kvað:

(26) Sumir viðfiska 1 töku,
simir vitnishræ skîðu,
simir Guttormi gáfu
gera hold
við mungáti
ok marga hluti
ôdra í tyfrum.

Ok við þessa fæðlu vîð hann svá ceðr ok ágjarn ok allt saman ok fortölur Grímhildar at hann hét at gera þetta verk. Þeir hétu honum ok mikill semð í móti. Sigurðr vissi eigi ván þessa vélæða. Mâtti hann ok eigi við skópum vinna né sínu aldralagi. Sigurðr vissi sik ok eigi vela verðan frá þeim.

Guttormr gekk inn at Sigurði eptir um morgininn er hann hvíldi í rekkju sinni. Ök er hann leit við honum, þörði Guttormr eigi at veita honum tilræði ok hvarf út aprtr, ok svá ferr í annat sinn. Augu Sigurðar váru svá snór at fár einn þörði gegn at sjá. Ök it þriðja sinn gekk hann inn, ok var Sigurðr þá sofnaðr. Guttormr brá sverði ok leggr á Sigurði svá at blóðrefillinn stóð í dýnum undir honum. Sigurðr vaknar við sárit, en Guttormr gekk út til dyranna. Pá tôk Sigurðr sverðit Gram ok kastar eptir honum, ok kom á bakit ok tôk í sundr í midjú. Fell annan veg fótahlutr, en annan hofuðit ok hendrar aprtr í skemmuna. Guðrún var sofnuð í faðmi Sigurðar, en vaknaði við öumræðiligan harm er hon flaut í hans blóði, ok svá veinaði b hon með grát ok harmtölur at Sigurðr reis upp við hregendit ok mælti:

' Grát eigi,' sagði hann. ' Þínir bróðr lifa þér til gamans, en þess til ungan son á ek, er kann eigi at varask fjándr sína, ok illa hafa þeir fyrir sínum hlut sét. Ekki fá þeir slíkan c mág at rîða í her með sér né

a thus B, ok Ol, V. B's emendation adopted as making better sense.
b kveinadì B

* thus Ol, B (cf. Sig. in skam. 27); sér líkara V
'Or else I shall die.'

He told Brynhild to get up and be gay. She got up but said that Gunnar would not share her bed until it was done.

The brothers now talked it over. Gunnar said that to have robbed Brynhild of her virginity fully deserved death—

'Let's urge on Guttorm to do the deed.'

And they called him over and offered him gold and great power if he would do it. They took a serpent and some wolf's flesh, boiled them up and gave him to eat of, as the skald says:

(26) Some took forest fish, some wolfish flesh sliced, some carved for Guttorm carrion of wolf, gave it with ale and with other things besides in magic spells.

And what with the food and Grimhild's arguments he grew so fiery and impetuous that he promised to do the deed. And they in return promised him high honours. Sigurd was not expecting such treachery, but he could not fight against fate and his destiny. Nor was Sigurd aware that he deserved any double dealing at their hands.

The following morning, Guttorm went in to Sigurd when he was resting in bed. But when Sigurd looked at him, Guttorm dared not attack him, and went out again. This happened a second time. Sigurd's eyes were so piercing that few dared meet them. He went in a third time, and Sigurd was now asleep. Guttorm drew his sword and lunged at Sigurd so that the point pierced the bed beneath him. Sigurd awoke with the wound just as Guttorm was going out through the door. Then Sigurd picked up the sword Gram and hurled it after him. It caught him across the back and severed him at the waist. The lower half fell one way, and the other, the head and arms, fell back into the room. Gudrun had been asleep in Sigurd's arms, and she awoke in unutterable grief, bathed in his blood, and she so groaned and wept and sorrowed that Sigurd raised himself on the pillow and spoke:

'Do not weep,' he said. 'Your brothers live to cheer you, but I have a son who is too young to be on guard against his enemies—and they've done badly for themselves! They'll not find a brother-in-law like me to ride in the army with them, nor such a nephew, should he

A kenning for serpents
systurson, ef sjá næði at vaxa. Ok nú er þat fram komiti er fyrir lóngu
var spáti ok vér hófin dulizk við, en engi má við skópum vinna. En
þessu veldr Brynhildr er mér ann um hvern mann fram, ok þess má
ek sverja, at Gunnari gerða ek aldri mein, ok þyrmða ek okkrum eitum,
ok eigi var ek of mikill vinr hans konu. Ok ef ek hefða vitat þetta
fyrir ok stiga ek af mín faetr með mín vápn, þá skyldu margir týna sinu
líf áðr en ek fella, ok allir þeir bróðir dreptr, ok torveldra mundi þeim
at drepa mik en inn mesta vísidum eða villigolt.'

Konunginn lét nú líf sitt. En Guðrún blæs mæðiliga qndunni.
Þat heyrir Brynhildr ok hló er hon heyrði hennar andvapr. Þá mælti
Gunnar,
‘Eigi hlær þú af því at þér sé glatt um hjartarætr, eða hví hafnar
þú þínum lít? Ok mikit forað ertu, ok meiri ván at þú sér feig, ok engi
væri makligri til at sjá Atla konung dreppin fyrir augum þér, ok ættir
þú þar yfir at standa, 'Nú verðum vör at sitja yfir mági vörum ok
bróðurbana.'

Hon svarar, ‘Engi frýr at eigi sé fullvegit, en Atli konungr híðir
ekki um hót yður eða reiði, ok hann mun yðr lengr lífa ok hafa meira
vald.'

Hogni mælti, ‘Nú er fram komiti þat er Brynhildr spáði, ok þetta it
illa verki er 'vér fám aldri bóti.'

Guðrún mælti, ‘Frændr mínir hafa dreptit mínann. Nú munu
þér réða í her fyrst, ok er þér komið til bardaga, þá munu þér finna at
Sigurð er eigi á Íðra hónd yðr, ok munu þér þá at Sigurð var
yður 9 gæfa ok styrkr, ok ef hann ætti sér slika sonu, þá mætti þér
styrkjask við hans afkvæmi ok sína frændr.'

Nú þóttisk engi kunna at svara at Brynhildr beiddi þess hlæjrandi er
hon harnarma með gráti. Þá mælti hon,
‘Þat dreymði mik, Gunnarr, at ek átta e kalda sæng, en þú réðr 4 í
hændr óvinum þínum, ok òll ætt yður mun illa fara er þér erud eiføra,
ok munðir þat ogløggt er þit blónduðuð blóði saman, Sigurðr ok
þú, er þú rétt hann, ok hefir þú honum allt illu launat þat er hann gerði
vel til þín ok lét þik fremstan vera, ok þá reyndi þat, er hann kom til
vár, hvé hann helt sína eíða, at hann lagði okkar í millit snarpeggjaða
sverð þat er citrí var hert. Ok snemma réðu þér til saka við hann ok
við mik, þá er ek var heima með féðr mínum, ok hafða ek allt þat er
ek vilda, ok ætlaða ek engan yðarn minn skyldu verða, þá er þér réðuð
þar at garði þrír konungar. Síðan leiddi Atli mik á tal ok spyrr ef ek

---

*a thus Ol, om V. B reverses vör fám. b thus Ol, þeira V
* B emends to ætta (cf. Brot. 16 l. 4).
* B emends to ridir (cf. Brot. 16 l. 5).
manage to reach manhood. And what was long since prophesied has now come to pass. I could never bring myself to believe it, but no one can fight against fate. But Brynhild is responsible, she who loves me above all men. But I can swear that I never wronged Gunnar and I kept the oaths sworn between us, nor was I too close a friend of his wife’s. And had I known of this before, and got on my feet with my weapons, many would lose their lives before I fell, and the brothers would all be slain, and they would find me harder to kill than the greatest bison or wild boar.’

Then the king died. And Gudrun gave a deep moan. Brynhild heard it and laughed when she heard Gudrun sobbing. Then Gunnar said:

‘You’re not laughing because you feel happy deep down in your heart—else why does your colour leave you? You’re a monster and very likely a doomed woman. None more deserving than you to see King Atli killed before your eyes—and you’d have to be present! But I must watch by my brother-in-law and by my brother’s slayer.’

‘No one will complain that there’s not been enough killing,’ she replied. ‘But King Atli cares nothing for your threats or anger, and he’ll outlive you, and wield greater power.’

‘What Brynhild prophesied has now come to pass,’ said Hogni, ‘and this evil deed which we can never make undone.’

‘My kinsmen have killed my husband,’ said Gudrun. ‘Now you will ride first in the army, and when you do battle you’ll find that Sigurd’s not at your side, and then you’ll see that Sigurd was your luck and your strength, and if he’d had sons like himself, you’d have been strengthened by his offspring and their kin.’

No one then thought he could explain why Brynhild had laughing asked for what she was weeping over. She then spoke:

‘Gunnar, I dreamed that my bed was cold, and you are riding into the hands of your enemies, and things will go badly with all your family for you broke your trust, nor did you remember very clearly when you betrayed him, how you and Sigurd mingled your blood together, and you’ve repaid him solely with evil for all that he did for you, and for giving you a pre-eminent position. And when he came to me he proved how he kept his oaths by laying between us that keen-edged, venom-tempered sword. But you early did wrong to him and to me when I was at home with my father and had everything I wanted, not meaning that any one of you should be mine, when you three kings rode up to the stronghold. Then Atli took me aside and
vilda þann eiga er riði Grana. Sá var yör ekki líkr, ok þa hétumk ek syni Sigmundar konungs ok engum ðrðum, ok eigi mun yör farask, þótt ek deyja.’

Þá reis Gunnarr upp ok lagði hendr um háls henni, ok bað at hon skylði lífa ok piggja fé, ok allir aðrir léttu hana at deyja. En hon hraft hverjum frá sér er at henni kom, ok kvæð ekki tjóða mundu at letja hana þess er hon ætlæði. Síðan hét Gunnarr á Högna, ok spyrr hann ráða, ok bað hann til fara ok vita ef hann fengi mykt skaplyndi hennar, ok kvæð nú eðra þórf vera á høndum ef sefask mætti hennar harmr, þar til er frá liði.

Högni svarar, ‘Leti engi maðr hana at deyja, því at hon varð oss aldri at gagni ok engum manni síðan hon kom hígat.’

Nú bað hon taka mikit gull, ok bað þar koma alla þá er fé vildu piggja. Síðan tók hon eitt sverð ok lagði undir hønd sér ok hneig upp við dynur ok mælti,

1 Taki hér nú gull1 hverr er piggja vill.’
Allir þogðu.
Brynhildr mælti, ‘Piggði gullit ok njótíð vel.’
Enn mælti Brynhildr til Gunnars,


33

1 Núb bið ek þik, Gunnarr, efstu bænar. Lát gera eitt bál mikit á
2 thus Ól, verðr B; om. V
3 The preceding ch. heading reads Bæn Brynhildar.

1 In PE the corresponding passage (Sig. in skam., st. 40) undoubtedly implies an invitation to her free-born attendants to die with her, hence ‘all were silent’. This idea is not brought out in the saga.
2 See Introduction p. xxxi
3 Atlí’s sister and a late-comer to the Volsung cycle.
4 The historical Ermanaric. He was ruler of the Ostrogothic kingdom when it fell before the onslaught of the Huns in 375. In the legends that grew up
asked if I would marry the man riding Grani. He was not like you. Then I was betrothed to King Sigmund's son and none other. Things won't go smoothly for you, even though I die.'

Then Gunnar stood up and embraced her and begged her to live and to accept riches, and all the others urged her not to die. But she rebuffed all who came to her and said it was useless to try to turn her from her purpose. Then Gunnar appealed to Hogni and asked him for advice and told him to go and see if he might soothe her, and said it was now very necessary if her grief could be lessened until time healed it!

'Let no one tell her not to die,' answered Hogni, 'for she's been no use to us, or to anyone else, since she came here.'

She now ordered a large amount of gold to be brought and ordered all those who desired to approach. Then she took a sword and stabbed herself beneath the arm and sank back against the cushions and said:

'If any of you want gold, here—take it now.'
All were silent.

'Accept the gold,' said Brynhild, 'and enjoy it.'
Brynhild spoke to Gunnar once more:

'Now I shall tell you in brief what is going to happen: On the advice of that sorceress Grimhild, you and Gudrun will soon be reconciled. The daughter of Gudrun and Sigrud will be named Svanhild—and she will be far fairer than any woman born. Gudrun will be married to Atli against her will. You will want to marry Oddrun, but Atli will forbid it. Then you will have secret meetings together, and she will love you. Atli will betray you and put you in a snake pit, and then Atli and his sons will be slain. Gudrun will kill them. Then mighty waves will carry her to King Jormunrek's castle. There she will bear noble sons. Svanhild will be sent out of the country and married to King Jormunrek. Bikki's plotting will be her downfall. And then all your line will have passed away and Gudrun's sorrows will be the greater.'

'I now ask you, Gunnar, to grant a last request. Have a great pyre

\[\text{33}\]

\[\text{around the historical Theodoric the Great (see Introduction p. x) which reverse the facts and show Theodoric as driven from his throne by Odoaker, Ermanaric eventually took over the latter's role as Theodoric's main opponent.}\]

\[\text{4 He is the Sifka of PSS, the Sibiche of the MHG Dietrich (Theoderic) poems; in Saxo Grammaticus he is known as Bicco, and in OE as Becca. He regularly appears as the legendary Ermanaric's evil counsellor.}\]
slétum velli öllum oss, mér ok Sigurði ok þeim sem dreppir váru með honum. Lát þar tjalda yfir af raðuð mannlóði ok Brenna mér þar á aðra hønd þennan hín ynska konung, en á aðra hønd honum mina menn, tvá at høfið, tvá at fotum, ok tvá hauka. Þá er at jafnaði skipt. Látíð þar á milli okkar brugðit sverð sem þyr, er vit stigum á einn beð, ok hétum þa hjóna nafni." Ók eigi fellr honum þa hurð á hæla ef ek fylgi honum, ok er vár leiðla þá ekki aumlig ef honum fylgja fimm ambáttir ok átta þjónar er fæðir minn gaf mér, ok þar Brenna ok þeir er dreppir váru með Sigurði. Ók fleira munda ek mæla ef ek vera eigi sár, en nú þýtr undin, en sár til opnask, ok sagða ek þó satt.’

Nú er búið um lík Sigurðar at fornnum síð, ok gert mikit bál. Ok er þat er mjök í kynt, þá var lagt á ofan lík Sigurðar Fáfnisbana ok sonar hans þrévets, er Brynhildr lét drepa, ok Gutorms. Ok er bálit var allt loganda, gerk Brynhildr þar á út ok mælti við skemmmumeyjar sínar at þær teki gull þat er hon vildi geða þeim. Ók eptir þetta dýr Brynhildr ok brann þar með Sigurði, ok lauk svá þeirra ævi.

34

Nú segir þat hvert er þessi tíðendi heyrir, at engi maðr mun þvíflkr eptir í verðldunní, ok aldri mun síðan borinn síflkr maðr sem Sigurðr var þyrir hversvetna sakar, ok hans nafn mun aldri fyrnask í þýðverskri tungu ok sí Nordrlandum meðan heimrinn stendr.

Þat er sagt einhverns dag, þá er Guðrún sat í skemmu sinni, þá mælti hon,

‘Berta var þa várt líf er ek átta Sigurð. Svá bar hann af öllum munnnum sem guf af jární eða laukr af þórrum grósum eða hjörfr af þórum dýrum, unz broðr mínir fyrirmundu mér sliks manns er öllum var fremri. Eigi mättu þeir sofia áðr þeir drápu hann. Míkinn gný gerði Grani, þá er hann sá sáninn sinn lánardróttinn. Síðan roedd er við hann sem við mann, en hann hnípti í þóðina ok vissi at Sigurðr var fallinn.’

\[a\] thus Ol, B (cf. Sig. in skam. 68 l. 8), om. V

\[b\] u- is barely legible and, as Ol remarks, could be corrected from o or d. Ol and B both read þýtr undin which, B thinks (though Ol doubts) corresponds to Sig. in skam. 71 l. 6 undir svella. Ol suggests the words might be a distortion of þverr ómon, cf. Sig. in skam. 71 l. 5 ómon þverr.

\[c\] thus Ol, optast V

\[d\] The preceding ch. heading reads Brothvarf Guðrúnar.

\[e\] i.e. as it seemed to the later Christian saga teller. In fact, pagan Scandinavia knew not only cremation but also inhumation which latter was thus not a specifically Christian innovation. According to Snorri’s prologue to
built on the level ground for all of us, for myself, for Sigurd and for those killed with him. Let there be a covering dyed in men's red blood, and burn there at my one side the Hunnish king, and at his other side my men, two at his head, two at his feet, and two hawks—an equal division. Lay there between us a drawn sword as of old when we shared the same bed—when we were called man and wife, and if I accompany him the door will not swing shut on his heels, nor will our funeral be paltry if five bondswomen and eight servants given me by my father accompany him, and also burn there those who were killed with Sigurd, and I would say more if I were not wounded, but now the wound is frothing, the gash opening, and I have told the truth.'

So Sigurd's body was laid out according to the ancient custom, and a great pyre was built. And when it was properly alight the body of Sigurd Fafnirsbane was laid upon it, also the body of his three year old son whom Brynhild had ordered to be slain, and Guttorm's. And when the pyre was blazing, Brynhild went out on to it and told her maids in waiting to take the gold she desired to give them. And after that Brynhild died and was burnt there with Sigurd, and so their days ended.

Now everyone who heard of these events said that there was surely not a man like him left in the world, and that never again would there be born a man such as Sigurd was in every respect, and his name would never be forgotten wherever German was spoken, nor yet in the Northern lands, as long as the world endured.

The story goes that one day Gudrun was sitting in her room and said:

'I had a better life when I was married to Sigurd. He outclassed all men, just as gold does iron or garlic other herbs, or the stag other animals, until my brothers grudged me a husband such as he, superior as he was to all. They could not sleep until they had killed him. Grani made a terrible noise when he saw his lord wounded. Then I spoke to him as I would to a man, but he hung down his head to the ground, and knew that Sigurd had fallen.'

_Heimskringla_ cremation was practised longer in Norway and Sweden than in Denmark, and archaeological evidence seems to support him (see Ellis, p. 11). It was not usual in Iceland (see G. Turville-Petre, _Heroic Age_, 100).
Síðan hvarf Guðrún á brott á skóga, ok heyrði alla vega frá sér varga þyt, ok þótti þá blíðara at deyja. Guðrún b för unz hon e kom til hallar Hálfs 1 konungs ok sat þar með þóru Hákonardóttur d í Danmörku sjau misseri ok var þar í miklum fagnaði, ok hon e sló borða fyrir f henni ok skrífaði þar á morg ok stór verk ok fagra leika er tíðir váru í þann tíma, sverð ok brynjur ok allan konungs búaði, skip Sigmundar konungs er skríðu fyrir land fram. Ok þat byrðu þær er þeir þordusk Sigarr ok Siggeirr á Fjöni 2 suðr. Síkt var þeira gaman, ok huggaðisk Guðrún nú nökkt harms síns.

Þetta spyrr Grímhildr hvar Guðrún er niðr komin, heimtir á tal sonu sína ok spyrr hverju þeir vilja bæta Guðrúnu son sinn ok mann; kvæð þeim þat skylt. Gunnarr segir, kvezk vilja gefa henni gull ok bæta henni svá harma sína. Senda eptir vinum sínum ok búa hesta sína, hjálma, skjóldu, sverð ok brynjur ok alls konar herklaði. Ok var þessi ferð búin it kurteisligasta, ok engi sá kappi, er mikill var, sat nú heima. Hestar þeira váru brynjaðir, ok hverr riddari hafði annathvárt gyiltan hjálm eða skyggðan. Grímhildr ræsk í ferð með þeim, ok segir þeira orendí svá fremi fullert munu verða at hon siti eigi heima. Þeir hófdu alls fimm hundrúð manna. Þeir hófdu ok ágæta menn með sér. Þar var Valdamarr 3 af Danmörk ok Eymóðr ok Jarisleifr. 4 Þeir gengu inn í höll Hálfss konungs. Þar váru Langþarðar, Frakkar ok Saxar. Þeir föru með öllum herbúnaði ok hófdu yfir sér loða rauða, sem kveðit er:

(27) Stuttar brynjur,
steypa hjálma,
skálmum gyðrír,
ok hófðu skarar jarpar.

Þeir vildu velja systur sinni góðar gjafir ok mæltu vel við hana, en hon trúði engum þeira. Síðan færði Grímhildr 4 henni meinsamligan drykk, ok varð hon við at taka ok mundi síðan engar sakar.

Sá drykkr var blandinn með jarðar magni ok sæ ok dreyra sonar

1 om. B
2 thus Ol, Grani V; same mistake for Guðrún after hvarf, but corrected in margin.
3 thus Ol, hann V
4 thus Ol, þóra Hákonardóttur V
5 thus Ol following B's conjecture; om. V
6 yfir V
7 Fivi CR. Neckel and others emend to VS reading.
8 thus Ol (cf. Gdr. II, 21 l. 1), Gunnar V

1 See p. 21 n. 2
2 Fyn, the Danish island
Then Gudrun vanished into the woods and heard all around her the howling of wolves and thought it would be pleasanter to die. Gudrun went on until she came to King Half's hall, and there in Denmark she dwelt with Hakon's daughter, Thora, for three and a half years, and was shown great hospitality, and she wove a tapestry for her, showing on it many great deeds and noble sports such as were customary at that time, swords and coats of mail, and all the equipment of a king, and King Sigmund's ships as they sailed along the coast. And they worked in Sigur and Sigeir fighting south in Fjon. This was their pastime, and Gudrun was now to some extent comforted in her grief.

Grimhild heard what had become of Gudrun. She summoned her sons to talk with her, and asked how they meant to compensate Gudrun for her son and husband, that they were in duty bound to do so. Gunnar said he would give her gold and in that way compensate her for her sorrows. They sent for their friends and made ready their horses, helmets, shields, swords and coats of mail, and armour of every description. The expedition was magnificently fitted out and no champion of any standing stayed behind. Their horses were clad in mail, and each knight had either a gilt or else a brightly polished helmet. Grimhild accompanied them on the expedition and said that their mission would be successful as long as she did not stay behind. They had five hundred men in all. They also had famous men with them. Valdamar of Denmark was there, and Eymod and Jarisleif. They entered King Half's hall. There were Langobards, Franks and Saxons there. They journeyed with full equipment and they wore red fur cloaks, as the lay says:

(27) Short coats of mail,
girt with short swords,
high soaring helmets
and sorrel haired.

They wanted to choose out fine gifts for their sister and spoke kindly to her, but she would trust none of them. Then Grimhild brought her a doctored drink, and she had to take it and afterwards she had no memory of any of her wrongs.

That drink was mixed with the power of the earth, with the sea and

---

3 Valdamar is the name of more than one historical Danish king but here something is amiss since Half is presented as King of Denmark. Valdamar is probably a substitution for the meaningless Valdarr Dønum of Gøfr. II, st. 19, l. 1.
4 Probably the Russian Jaroslav the Great (1015-54) who was helped against his brother by a certain Eymund, probably the Eymod mentioned here.
hennar, ok í því horni váru ristnir hvers kyns stafr ok rodhir med blóði, sem hér segir:

(28) Váru í því horni
hvers kyns stafr
ristnir ok rodhir,
ráða ek né máttak:
lyngfískr a langr b
lands Haddingja,
ax óskorit,
innleið dyra.

(29) Váru þeim bjóri
ból mórg saman:
urt alls viðar
ok akarn bruninn,
umdøgg arins,
iðrar blótnar,
svíns lifr sodn,
því at sakar deyði.

Ok eptir þat er vili þeira kom saman, gerðisk fagnaðr mikill. Þá mælti Grímhildr, er hon fann Guðrúnu,

‘Vel verði þer, dóttir. Ek gef þer gull ok alls konar gripi at þiggja eptir þinna feðr, dýrliga hringa ok ársal hýnskra meyja, þeira er kurteisastar eru: þá er þer þætt þinna maðr. Síðan skal þik gipta Atla konungi ínum ríka. Þá muntu ráða hans auði. Ok lát eigi frændr þína fyrir sakir eins manns, ok ger heldr sem vör biðjum.’

Guðrúnsvarar, ‘Aldri vill ek eiga Atla konung, ok ekki samir okkr ætt saman at auka.’

Grímhildr svarar, ‘Eigi skaltu nú á heiptir hyggja, ok lát sem lífi Sigurð ok Sigmundr ef þú átt sonu.’

Guðrún segir, ‘Ekki má ek af d honum hyggja. Hann var öllum fremri.’

Grímhildr segir, ‘Þenna konung mun þer skipat at eiga, en engan skaltu elligar eiga.’

\[ a \text{ thus Ol, CR; fisk V } \]
\[ b \text{ thus Ol, CR; lagar V } \]
\[ c \text{ thus Ol, CR; itrar blótna V } \]
\[ d \text{ thus Ol, om. V } \]

1 The saga writer seems to have misunderstood his source. In Grð. II, st. 21, l. 8) the correct reading is very probably sónarðreyri, ‘blood of atonement’ or sonarðreyri, ‘swine’s blood’, which the saga writer read as sonar dreyri, ‘son’s blood’.
her son's blood. In the horn characters of all kinds were engraved and reddened with blood, as this verse says:

(28) There appeared in the horn
all manner of letters,
graved and reddened,
read them I could not:
the long ling-fish of the land of the Haddings,
ear of corn uncut,
animals' jaws.

(29) Many were the ills
mixed with that ale:
herbs of all the wood,
and acorns scorched,
the dew of the hearth,
hallowed entrails,
pig's liver boiled
for blunting wrongs.

And after this, when they were agreed, there was great rejoicing. Then when she found Gudrun, Grimhild said:

'Greetings, my daughter. I will give you gold and treasures of all kinds, an inheritance from your father, precious rings and the bed hangings of the most graceful Hun maidens, and then your husband will be atoned for. Afterwards I shall give you in marriage to that powerful king, Atli. Then you'll have control of his wealth. And don't forsake your relatives for the sake of one man. Do rather as we ask.'

'I will never marry King Atli,' replied Gudrun. 'It would not be seemly for us to continue the line together.'

'You must not now think of your feud,' answered Grimhild. 'Act as if Sigurd and Sigmund were alive, if you have sons.'

'I cannot forget him,' said Gudrun. 'He was superior to all.'

'You are destined to marry this king,' said Grimhild, 'and you shall marry none other.'

---

2 A 'ling (or 'heather') fish' is a kenning for serpent, the 'land of the Haddings' (who were vikings) a kenning for 'sea'. Thus the expression as a whole would signify 'fish' or 'eel'. On the other hand it is possible to take 'ear of corn uncut' with the 'land of the Haddings', thus possibly connoting 'seaweed' (see Detter-Heinzl note to Grø. II st. 23, ll. 5-7).

3 Possibly a kenning for 'soot'
Guðrún segir, ‘Bjödí þér mér eigi þenna konung, er illt eitt mun af standa þessi ætt, ok mun hann sonu þína illu beita, ok þar eptir mun honum grimmu hefmt vera.’

Grímhildr varð við hennar fortölur illa við um sonu sína ok mælti,

‘Ger sem vér beiðum, ok muntu þar fyrir taka mikinn metnæð ok vára vináttu ok þessa staði, er svá heita: Vínbjǫrg ok Válbjǫrg.’

Hennar ord stóðusk svá mikit at þetta varð fram at ganga.

Guðrún mælti, ‘Þetta mun verða fram at ganga ok þó at mínun óvilja, ok mun þat líttil ynðis, heldr til harma.’

Síðan stiga þeir á hesta sína, ok eru konur þeira settar í vagna, ok föru svá sjau daga á hestum, en aðra sjau á skipum ok ina þriðju sjau enn landveg, þar til er þeir kómu at einti hári holl. Henni gekk þar í móti mikit fjölmenni, ok var þar búin ágætlig veiðla, sem áðr hofðu ord í milli farit, ok för hon fram með sæmð ok mikilli prýði. Ok at þessi veiðlu drekkr Atli brúðlaup til Guðrúna. En aldri gerði hugr hennar við honum hlæja, ok með líttilli blíðu var þeira samvista.

Nú er þat sagt einhverja nótt at Atli konungr vaknar ör svefni. Mælti hann við Guðrúnu:

‘Þat dreymdí mik,’ segir hann, ‘at þú legðir á mér sverði.’

Guðrún réð drauminn ok kvæð þat fyrir eldi er járn dreymdí,—

‘Ok dul þeiri er þú ætlað þik Óllum fremra.’

Atli mælti, ‘Einn dreymdí mik sem hér væri vaxnar tveir reyrteinar, ok vilda ek aldri skedja. Síðan váru þeir rifnir upp með rótum ok roðnír í blóði ok bornir á bekki ok boðnír mér at eta. Enn dreymdí mik at haukar tveir flygi mér af hendi ok væri bráðalauðir ok fóru til heljar. Þótti fær þeira hjortum við hunang blandt, ok þottumk ek eta. Síðan þótti mér sem hvælpar fagrir lægi fyrir mér ok gullu við hátt, ok át ek hra þeira at mínun óvilja.’

Guðrún segir, ‘Eigi eru draumar góðir, en eptir munu ganga. Synir þínir munu vera feigir, ok margir hlutir þungir munu oss at hendi koma.’

---

*a* thus *Ol, B (cf. Guðr. II 51); sína V*

*b* Grímhildr *Ol, B; abbrev. in V could be expanded to Grímhildr or Grimhildi.*

*c* við um sonu sína, *thus Ol, við sonu sína V, om. B*

*d* thus *Ol, B (cf. Gðr. II, 35 ll. 5-9); fjöra V*

*e* The preceding ch. heading reads Guðrún reist rúnar.
Don't force this king on me,' said Gudrun. 'From him there'll come nothing but evil for this family, and he'll deal evilly with your sons, and afterwards terrible vengeance will be taken on him.'

Her arguments made Grimhild unhappy about her sons; she said:
'Do as we ask and in return you shall have great honour and our friendship, and the districts of Vinbjorg and Valbjorg.'

Her words carried such weight that it had to be so.
'Then so it must be,' said Gudrun, 'though against my will, and there'll be little cause for rejoicing, but rather for grief.'

Then the men mounted their horses and the women were given carriages, and thus they journeyed a week on horse-back, another week on board ship, and a third over land, until they reached a lofty hall. A great crowd went to meet her, and a magnificent feast had been got ready there, word having previously passed between them, and it proceeded with great pomp and circumstance. And Atli married Gudrun at this feast. But her heart never smiled upon him and they had little happiness from their life together.

Now the story goes that one night King Atli awoke from his sleep. He spoke to Gudrun:
'I dreamed,' he said, 'that you lunged at me with a sword.'

Gudrun interpreted the dream and said that to dream of iron meant fire—
'And the conceit of thinking yourself superior to everyone.'
'I had another dream,' said Atli. 'It seemed as if two reeds had sprung up here, and I wished never to harm them. Then they were torn up by the roots and reddened in blood and carried to the bench and given me to eat. I had another dream: two hawks flew from my wrist, but they found no prey and perished. It seemed to me as if their hearts were mingled with honey, and I thought I ate of them. Then it seemed to me as if there were fine young dogs lying before me, and at this they yelped aloud, and I ate their flesh against my will.'
'These are not good dreams,' said Gudrun, 'and they'll be fulfilled. Your sons are surely doomed and many trials will come upon us.'

\[1\] thus Ol, póttu V
\[2\] Literally: 'Went to Hel' (q.v. in Glossary)
‘Pat dreymði mik enn,’ segir hann, ‘at ek lægi í kór, ok væri ráðinn bani minn.’

Nú líðr þetta, ok er þeirra samvista fálig.

Nú hlugar Atli konungr hvar niðr mun komit þat mikla gull er átt hafði Sigurðr, en þat veit nú Gunnarr konungr ok þeir bræðr.

Atli var mikill konungr ok ríkr, vîr ok fjölmennr; gerir nú ráð við sína menn hversu með skal fara. Hann veit at þeir Gunnarr eigu miklu meira fjór en né einir menn megi við þá jafnask; tekr nú þat ráð at senda menn á fund þeira bræðra ok bjóða þeim til veizlu ok at sáma þá morgum hlutum. Sá mæðr var fyrir þeim er Vingi er nefndr.

Dróttningin veit nú þeira einmæli ok grunar at vera muni vélar við bræðr hennar. Guðrún rístr runar, ok hon tekr einn gullhring ok knýtti í varghár ok fær þetta í hendr sendimönnum konungs. Síðan fóru þeir eptir konungs bōdi. Ok áðr þeir stigi á land, sá Vingi rúnarnar ok sneri á aðra leið ok at Guðrún fýsti í rúnum at þeir kvæmi á hans fund. Síðan kómu þeir til hallar Gunnars konungs, ok var tekt við þeim vel, ok gervir fyrir þeim eldar stórir. Ok síðan drukku þeir með gleði inn bezta drykk. Pá mælti Vingi:

‘Atli konungr sendir á mik hingat, ok vildi at þit sættið hann heim með miklum söma ok þægið af honum mikinn söma, hjálma ok skjöldu, sverð ok brynjur, gull ok göð klæði, herlið ok hesta ok mikit lén, ok ykkr lézk hann bezt unna síns ríkis.’

Pá brá Gunnarr hofði ok mælti til Hóagna,

‘Hvat skulum vit af þessu boði piggja? Hann býðr okkr at piggja mikit ríki, en enga konunga veit ek jafnmikit gull eiga sem okkr, því at vit hofum þat gull allt er á Gnitahēði lá, ok eigum vit stórar skemmar fullar af gulli ok inum beztum hoggvápnun ok alls konar herklaðum. Veit ek minn hestinn beztan ok sverðit hvassast, gullit ágætast.’

Hógni svarar, ‘Undrunk ek boð hans, því at þat hefir hann sjaldan gert, ok óráðligt mun vera at fara á hans fund, ok þat undrunk ek, er ek sá gersimar þær er Atli konungr sendi okkr, at ek sá varghári knýt í einn gullhring, ok má vera at Guðrúnu þykti hann úlfshug við okkr hafa ok vili hon eigi at vit farim.’

Vingi sjínir honum nú rúnarnar þær er hann kváð Guðrúnu sent hafa.

Nú gengr alþýða at sofa, en þeir drukku við nokkura menn. Pá gekk at kona Hóagna er hét Kostbera, kvenna fríðust, ok leit á rúnarnar.

\[a\] B emends to sendi (cf. Akv. 3, l. 1).
'I had another dream,' he said. 'I was lying in bed and my death had been plotted.'

Then it was over, but they knew no affection in their life together.

King Atli then wondered what had become of all the gold that Sigurd had possessed, but that was now known to King Gunnar and his brother. Atli was a great and powerful king, he was clever and had many subjects. He now took counsel with his men as to how he should proceed. He knew that Gunnar and his family had far greater riches and that no one could be compared to them. He now decided to send men to visit the brothers and to invite them to a feast and to honour them in many ways. They were led by a man named Vindi.

The queen knew of their private talks and suspected treachery against her brothers. Gudrun carved runes, and she took a gold ring and knotted to it a hair from a wolf and handed it to the king's envoys. They then set off as the king had commanded. But before they went ashore Vindi saw the runes and altered them, making it seem as if Gudrun urged them in the runes to come and visit him. Then they came to King Gunnar's hall and they were made welcome and large fires were lighted for them. After that they drank merrily the best of drink. Then Vindi spoke:

'King Atli sends me here, desiring you to visit him in great honour, and to receive from him great honour, helmets and shields, swords and coats of mail, gold and fine apparel, troops and horses and broad lands in fee—and upon you both, he declared, he is best pleased to bestow his power.'

Then Gunnar turned his head and said to Hogni:

'How are we to receive this offer? He invites us to assume great power, but I know of no kings who possess as much gold as we do, for we have all the gold that lay on Gmitaheid, and we have great rooms full of gold, the finest cutting weapons and armour of all kinds. I know my horse is the finest, my sword the sharpest, and the gold fabulous.'

'I'm surprised at his offer,' replied Hogni, 'for he has seldom done this sort of thing, and it would be ill-advised to go and visit him—and I was surprised to see a wolf's hair knotted to a gold ring when I looked at the jewels King Atli sent us, and it may be that Gudrun thinks he has wolfish feelings towards us, and that she doesn't want us to go.'

Vindi now showed him the runes which he said Gudrun had sent.

Everyone now went to bed but they remained drinking with a few men. Then Hogni's wife, whose name was Kostbera, a very beautiful woman, went up and looked at the runes. Gunnar's wife was named
Kona Gunnars hét Glaumvör, skörungr mikill. Þær skenktu. Konungar gerðusk allmjók drukknir. Þat finnr Vingi ok mælti,

‘Ekk er því at leyta at Atlí konungr er þungfær rþ mjók ok gamlaþr mjók at verja sitt ríki, en synir hans ungir ok til engis færir. Nú vill hann gefa ýðr vald yfir ríkinu meðan þeir eru svá ungir, ok ann ýðr bezt at njótta.’

Nú var bæði at Gunnarr var mjók drukkinn, en boðit mikit ríki, mátti ok eigi við skopum vinna, heitr nú ferðinni ok segir Höguna, bróður sínum.

Hann svarar, ‘Ýðart atkvæði mun standa hljóta, ok fylgja mun ek þér, en öfúss em ek þessarar ferðar.’

Ok er menn drukkit sem líkaði, þá fóru þeir at sofa. Tekr Kostbera at líta á rúnarnar ok innti stafina, ok sá at annat var á ristit en undir var, ok viltar váru rúnarnar. Hon ferk þó skilit af vízkvi sinni. Eptir þat þeir hon til rekkju hjá bóna sínum. Ok er þau vöknuðu, mælti hon til Höguna,

‘Heiman sélar þú, ok er þat óráðilt. Far heldr í annat sinn, ok eigi muntu vera gloggrýnn ef þér þykkr sem hon haft í þetta sinn boðit þér, systir þín. Ek réð rúnarnar, ok undrumk ek um svá vítr konu er hon hefur villt ristit. En svá er undir sem bani ýðrar liggi á, en þar var annathvárt at henni varð vant stafs, eða ellígar hafa aðrir villt. Ok nú skaltu heyra draum minn.’

‘Þat* dreymóði mik at mér þótti hér falla inn á hardla strong ok bryti upp stokka í hóllinni.’

Hann svarar, ‘Þér eruð opt illúðgar, ok á ek ekki skap til þess at fara illu í mótt við menn, nema þat sé nakligt. Mun hann oss vel fagna.’

Hon segir, ‘Þér munnuð reyna, en eigi mun vinátha fylgja boðinu. Ok enn dreymóði mik at önnur á felli hér inn ok þyti grímmliga ok bryti upp alla palla í hóllunni ok bryti fœtt ykkra begja brœðra, ok mun þat vera nökkut.’

Hann svarar, ‘Þar munu renna akrar er þú hugðir ána, ok er vér göngum akrinn, nema opt stórar agnir fœtr vára.’

‘Þat dreymóði mik,’ segir hon,þ at blæja þín brynni, ok bryti eldrinn upp af hóllunni.’

---

* The preceding ch. heading reads Högni réð drauma konu sínar.
þ thus Ol, om. V
Glaumvor, she was of great presence and character. The women poured out and the kings became very drunk. Vingi noticed this and spoke:

'There's no hiding the fact that King Atli is very infirm and very advanced in years for defending his kingdom, and his sons are young and fit for nothing. He now desires to give you control of the kingdom while they are so young. It is you he wishes to profit by this.'

Now it happened that Gunnar was very drunk, and also that great power had been offered, nor could he fight against destiny—he now promised to make the journey, and informed his brother Hogni.

'Your decision will have to stand,' he answered, 'and I shall accompany you, but I'm not enthusiastic about the journey.'

And when the men had drunk all they wanted, they went to bed. Kostbera began looking at the runes and read the characters and saw that something different had been carved over them from what was underneath, and the runes were confusing. But by reason of her astuteness she managed to see through them. After this she went to bed and lay at her husband's side. And when they awoke she said to Hogni:

'You mean to set off, but that's unwise. Better go another time. And you're not so good at reading runes if you think your sister is sending for you on this occasion. I read the runes and I'm surprised if such a clever woman carved them in a confused way. But underneath your death seems to be shown, and either she missed out a letter, or else others tampered with them. And now you must hear my dream.'

'I dreamed that a raging river seemed to sweep in and it smashed up the partition posts in the hall.'

'You're often distrustful,' he answered, 'but I've no mind to expect evil from people without cause. He will welcome us.'

'You'll find out,' she said, 'but there's nothing friendly about the offer. I again dreamed that another river swept raging in and it smashed up all the benches in the hall, and it smashed your legs and your brother's, and that must mean something.'

'Cornfields run where you thought there was a river,' he answered, 'and when we go through a cornfield big husks often cling to our legs.'

'I dreamed,' she said, 'that your bed-clothes were blazing and that fire was shooting up from the hall.'
Hann svarar, ‘Þet veit ek gerla hvat þat er. Klæði vár liggja hér lítt rokt, ok munu þau þar brenna er þú hugðir blæjuna.’

‘Björn hugða ek hér inn koma,’ segir hon, ‘ok braut upp konungs hásetit, ok hrísti svá hrammana at vér urðum ðill hrædd, ok hafði oss ðill senn sér í munni svá at ekki mátum vör, ok stóð þar af mikil ógn.’

Hann svarar, ‘Þar mun koma veðr mikit er þú ætlaðir hvítabjörn.’

‘Orn pótti mér hér inn koma,’ segir hon, ‘ok eptir höllunni, ok dreifði mik blóði ok oss ðill, ok mun þat illt vita, því at mér pótti sem þat væri hamr Atla konungs.’

Hann svarar, ‘Opt slátrum vör orliga ok hoggum stór naut oss at gamni, ok er þat fyrir yxnum er þrnu dreymir, ok mun heill hugr Atla við oss.’

Ok nú hætta þau þessu tali.

Nú a er at segja frá Gunnari at þar er sams deimi er þau vakna, at Glaumvør, kona Gunnars, segir drauma sín márga, þá er henni þótti líkligir til svíka, en Gunnarr réð alla því á móti.

‘Þessi var einn af þeim,’ sagði hon, ‘at mér þótti blóðugt sverð bórit hér inn í höllina, ok vartu sverði lagð Íi gegnum, ok emjuðu úlfar á báðum endum sverðsins.’

Konungrinn svarar, ‘Smáir hundar vilja oss þar bítá, ok er opt hundagøll fyrir váþum með blóði lituðum.’

Hon mælti, ‘Enn þótti mér hér inn koma konur, ok várú daprligur, ok þik b kjósa sér til manns. Má vera at þínar disir hafi þat verit.’

Hann svarar, ‘Vant gerisk nú at ráða, ok má ekki fordask sitt aldrlag, en eigi ólíkt at vör verðum skammaþir.’

Ok um morgininn spretta þeir upp ok vilja fara, en aðrir lóttu. Síðan mælti Gunnarr við þann mann er Fjörnir hét,

‘Statt upp ok gef oss at drekka af stórum kerum gott vín, því at vera má at sjá sé vár in síðarsta veizla, ok nú mun inn gamli úlfirinn komask at gullinu ef vör deyjum, ok svá c bjórninn mun eigi spara at bítá sínum vígtnum.’

Síðan leiddi liði þá út með gráti.

Sonr Högna mælti,

a Ol reads the preceding ch. heading as Heimanferð þeira bræðra ; Heiman now illeg.

b Perhaps ok vildu þik, remarks Ol, citing B (cf. Am. 28, l. 4 and ok vill hann kjósa p. 75), and notes that o in ok might be corrected from v.

c thus Ol, sà V, cf. p. 21c
THE SAGA OF THE VOLSUNGS

‘I know just what that is,’ he answered. ‘Our clothes are lying here carelessly, and these are what will burn though your thoughts were running on bed-clothes.’

‘I thought a bear came in,’ she said, ‘and smashed up the king’s dais and menaced us with his paws so that we were all frightened, and he had all of us in his mouth together so that we were helpless, and this caused great terror.’

‘A violent storm will come,’ he answered, ‘where you thought there was a polar bear.’

‘I thought an eagle came in,’ she said, ‘right down the hall, and spattered me, and all of us with blood, and that foreshadows evil, for it looked to me like the fetch of King Atli.’

‘We do a lot of slaughtering,’ he answered, ‘and we kill large beasts for our enjoyment, and dreaming about an eagle has to do with oxen, and Atli is sure to be well-disposed towards us.’

And now they stopped talking about it.

Of Gunnar we are now told that when they woke up the same thing happened—Glaumvor, Gunnar’s wife, told of her many dreams which to her seemed to point to treachery, but Gunnar gave an opposite explanation.

‘This was one of them,’ she said. ‘I thought a bloody sword was brought into the hall and you were run through with the sword, and at both ends of the sword there were howling wolves.’

‘Small hounds will snap at me, and blood-stained weapons often stand for the snarling of dogs,’ answered the king.

‘Then again,’ she said, ‘I thought that women came in. They looked downcast and they chose you as their husband. They may have been your disir.’

‘It’s now getting hard to give an interpretation,’ he replied, ‘and no one can escape his fate, nor is it unlikely that I’m soon to die.’

And in the morning they jumped up and wanted to be off, but others tried to dissuade them. Then Gunnar addressed a man called Fjornir.

‘Up and give us great goblets of good wine to drink. This may be our last festive occasion. And now the old wolf will get the gold if we die, nor will the bear be slow to use his fangs.’

Then amidst weeping the retainers sent them on their way.

Hogni’s son said:
‘Farið vel ok hafði a gðan tíma.’

Eptir var meiri hlutur lýs þeira. Sólarr ok Snævarr, synir Högna, fór, ok einn kappi mikill er Orkningar hét. Hann var bróðir Beru. Fólkir fylgði þeim til skipa, ok lóttu allir þá fararinnar, en ekki tjóði. Þá mælti Glaumver,

‘Vingi,’ segir hon, ‘meiri ván at mikil óhamingja standi af þinni kvámu, ok munu stórtíðendi gerask í fór þinni.’

Hann svarar, ‘Þess sver ek at ek lýg eigi, ok mik taki hár gálgi ok allir gramir ef ek lýg nokkut ord.’ Ök lítt eíði hann sér í síkum orðum. Þá mælti Bera,

‘Farið vel ok möð gðum tíma.’

Högna svarar, ‘Verið kátar, hversu sem möð oss ferr.’ Þar skiljask þau möð sinum forlögum.

Síðan eru þeir svá fast ok af miklu afli at kjörlinn gekk undan skipinu mjökk svá hálfr. Þeir knúðu fast árar möð stórum bakflokkum, svá at brotnudu hlumir ok háir. Ök er þeir kómu at landi, festu þeir ekki skip sín. Síðan riðu þeir sinum ágætum hestum myrkan skóg um hröð. Nú sjá þeir konungsbæinn. Þangat heyra þeir mikinn gný ok vápnaðrak ok sjá þar mannfjölda ok mikinn viðrúnað er þeir hofiðu, ok òll borgarhlíð váru full af mönnnum. Þeir riða at borginni, ok var hon byrgð. Högna braut upp hliðit, ok riða nú í borgina. Þá mælti Vingi.

‘Þetta mættir þú vel ógert hafa, ok bídú nú hér meðan ek sækj yðr gálgatré. Ek bað yðr með bliðu hér koma, en flátt bjó undir. Nú mun skammt at bída áðr þer munuð upp festir.’

Högna svarar, ‘Eigi munu vær fyrir þer vægja, ok lítt hygg ek at vær hrykkim þar er menn skyldu berjask, ok ekki tjóar þer oss at hræða, ok þat mun þer illa gefask.’

Hrundu honum síðan ok bórdu hann ðkarþormrum til bana.

Þeir ðiða nú at konungshollininni. Atli konungr skipar liði nú til orrostu, ok svá vikusk fylkingar at garð nokkurr varð í millum þeira.

* Crossed out with insertion marks, but nothing in margin, and B conjectures med, cf. same expression a few lines below.

* thus Ol, cf. Am. 30 and Dr., gævar V

* The preceding ch. heading reads Órrosta i borginni ok s’, presumably sigir.

1 i.e. Kostbera, here and below
‘Fare well and good luck.’

The majority of the retainers stayed behind. Hogni’s sons, Solar and Snævar, went, as did a man named Orkning, a great warrior. He was Bera’s brother. The household went with them to the ships, and all tried to dissuade them from the journey, but without avail. Then Glaumvor spoke:

‘Vingi,’ she said, ‘it’s very likely that your arrival here spelt disaster, and great events will follow from your departure.’

‘I swear I’m not lying,’ he answered, ‘and may a high gallows and all the fiends take me if I’m telling a single word of a lie.’ And he didn’t in the least spare himself in the use of such expressions. Then Bera spoke:

‘Fare well and good luck go with you.’

‘Be cheerful,’ said Hogni, ‘however things go with us.’

There they parted, each following his destiny.

They rowed with might and main, so stoutly, that well-nigh half the keel came away from the ship. They pulled at the oars with such great sweeps that oar looms and gunwale-pins broke. And when they reached land, they did not make fast their ships. Then for a while they rode on their noble horses through a dark wood. They saw the royal dwelling. They heard a din from there and the clatter of arms, and saw a large number of men there and the great preparations they were making, and the castle gates were crowded with men. They rode up to the castle but it was shut. Hogni forced open the gate and now they rode into the castle. Then Vingi spoke:

‘You would have been well advised not to do this, and now wait here while I seek out a gallows-tree for you. I asked you to come here in friendly fashion, but there was deceit behind it. It won’t be long now you’re strung up.’

‘We’ll not yield to you,’ answered Hogni, ‘and I hardly think we would shrink back where men should fight, and frightening us won’t help you, and this is going to turn out badly for you.’

Then they knocked him down and beat him to death with the back of their axes.

They now rode up to the king’s hall. King Atli drew up his men for battle, the troops so positioned that there was a court-yard between them.
' Verið velkomnir með oss,' segir hann, a 'ok fáð mér gull þat it mikla er vör erum til komnir, þat fér er Sigurðr átti en nú á Guðrún.'

Gunnarr segir, 'Aldri fær þú þat fé, ok dugandi menn munu þér hér fyrir hitta áðr vör látim líft, ef þér bjóðið oss öfrið. Kann vera þú veitir þessa veizlu stórmannliga ok af lítilli eymd við Órn ok úlf.'

'Fyrir longu hafða ek þat mér í hug,' segir Atli, b 'at ná yðru lífi, en ráða gullinu ok launa yðr þat níðingsverk er þér svikuð yðarn inn bezta mág, ok skal ek hans hefna.'

Hógni svarar, 'Jat kemr yðr verst at haldi at liggja lengi á þessu ráði, en eruð c þó at engu búnir.'

Nú slær í orrostu harda, ok er fyrst skothríð. Ok nú koma fyrir Guðrúnu tíðendin. Ok er hon heyrir þetta, verðr hon við gneyp ok kastar af sér skikkjunni. Eptir þat gekk hon út ok heilsaði þeim er komnir váru, ok kyssti bröðr sína ok sýndi þeim ást, ok þessi var þeira kvæðja í söðarsta. Pá mælti hon,

'Ek þöttumk ráð hafa við sett at eigi kömi þér, en engi má við skopum vinna.' Pá mælti hon, 'Mun nokkut þjóa at leita um sættir?'

En allir neitudu því ýverliga. Nú sér hon at sárt er leikit við bröðr hennar; hyggr nú á hardræði, fór í brynju ok tók sér sverð ok bardisk með bröðrum sínun, ok gekk svá fram sem inn hraustasti karlmóðr, ok þat sogðu allir á einn veg at varla sæi meiri vörn en þar. Nú gerisk mikit mannfall, ok bær þó af framganga þeira bröðra. Orrostan stendr nú lengi fram, allt um miðjan dag. Gunnarr ok Hógni gengu í gegnum fylkingar Atla konungs, ok svá er sagt at allir vóllr flaut í blóði. Synir Hógnaga ganga nú hart fram.

Atli konungr mælti, 'Vér hofðum d lið mikit ok frítt, ok stóra kappa, en nú eru margir af oss fallnir, ok eigum vér yðr íllt at launa—drepit nítján kappa mín, en ellifu e einir eru eptir.'

Ok verðr hvíld á bardaganum.

Pá mælti Atli konungr,

'Fjórir váru véi bröðr, ok em ek nú einn eptir. Ek hlaut mikla mægð, ok hugða ek þér þat til frama. Konu átta ek væna ok vitra, stórlynda ok harðöðga, en ekki má ek njóta hennar vízk, því at sjaldan váru vit sátt. Þér hafið nú drepit marga mín, frændr, en svikit mik frá fíkinu ok fénú, ráðit sýstur mín, ok þat harmar mik mest.'

a segir hann, thus Ol, om. V
b segir Atli, thus Ol, om. V
c thus Ol (cf. Am. 43, 1. 3), eru V
d thus Ol fol. B (cf. Am. 53), hofum V
e thus Ol fol. B (cf. Am. 54) sex V
‘Welcome among us,’ he said, ‘and give up all the gold to which I am entitled, the treasure that was Sigurd’s and is now Gudrun’s.’

‘You’ll never get the treasure,’ said Gunnar, ‘and you’ll find intrepid men here before we die, if you show us hostility. It may be that you will furnish this feast sumptuously, with little stinting of eagle or wolf.’

‘It’s long been in my mind to bring about your death,’ said Atli, ‘and get control of the gold, and reward you for your infamy in betraying your distinguished brother-in-law, and I shall avenge him.’

‘You do worst in having planned this for a long time,’ answered Hogni, ‘and yet you are now ready for nothing.’

A fierce battle now began, and there was first a shower of missiles. And now the news reached Gudrun. And when she heard about it she grew angry and flung off her mantle. After that she went out and greeted those who had come, and kissed her brothers, and showed them affection, and this was their last exchange of greetings. Then she spoke:

‘I thought I’d found a way to stop you coming. But no one can fight against destiny.’ Then she said: ‘Is there any use in trying for a reconciliation?’

But to this they all flatly said no. She now saw that her brothers were having a hard time of it, and so she decided on stern action. She put on a coat of mail, took up a sword and fought alongside her brothers, and advanced to the attack as boldly as the boldest man, and everyone said the same, that they would hardly see a stouter defence than that. Casualties were now heavy, but the valour of the brothers surpassed that of all others. Now the battle went on for a long time, until well past midday. Gunnar and Hogni fought their way through King Atli’s troops, and it is said that the field was all running with blood. Hogni’s sons now pressed forward fiercely.

‘I had a large and splendid body of men, and great champions,’ said King Atli. ‘But many of us have now fallen, and we have evil to thank you for—nineteen of my champions slain and only eleven left.’

And then there was a lull in the fighting.

Then King Atli spoke:

‘There were four of us brothers, and now I alone am left. I allied myself by marriage to a great family, and thought it would be to my advantage. I had a wife—she was beautiful and wise, magnanimous and resolute, but I cannot profit by her wisdom, for we were rarely on good terms. Now you have slain many of my kinsmen, cheated me of dominion and riches, and brought about my sister’s death, and this it is that grieves me most.’
Hogni segir, ‘Hví getr þú slíks? Þér brugðuð fyrri friði. Þú tókt mina færendkonu ok sveltir í hel ok myrðir ok tókt féit, ok var þat eigi konungligt, ok hlæglítýr pykkir mér er þú tínið þinn harm, ok göðunum vil ek þat þakka er þér gengr illa.’

Nú a eggjar Atli konungr líðit at gera harða sókn. Berjask nú snarpliga ok sækja Gjúkunga at svá fast at Atli konungr hrókkr inn í höllina, ok berjask nú inni, ok var orrostan allhorg. Sjá bardagi varð með miklu mannspeilli, ok lýkr svá at fellr allt líð þeira bregðra, svá at þeir standa tveir upp, ok fór ár margr maðr til heljar fyrir þeira vápnun. Nu er sótt at Gunnari konungi, ok fyrir sakir ofréflis var hann hónund tekinn ok í fjeðra settir. Siðan bardisk Hogni af mikilli hreysti ok drengaskap, ok fellið ina stærstu kappa Atla konungs tuttugu. Hann hratt morgum í þann eld er þar var gerr í höllunni. Allir urðu á eitt sáttir, at varla sæi slíkman mann. En þó varð hann at lyktum ofþliði borinn ok hónund tekinn.

Atli konungr mælti,

‘Mikil furða er þat hvé margr maðr hér hefir farit fyrir honum. Nú skeri ór honum hjartat, ok sé þat hans bani.’

Hogni mælti,

‘Gerði sem þer líkur. Glaðliga mun ek hér bóða þess er þer vilið at gera, ok þat muntu skilja at eigi er hjarta míttr hrætt, ok reyni hefi ek fyr r harða hluti, ok var ek gjarn at þóla mannaun, þá er ek var ósárr. En nú eru vér mjók sárir, ok muntu einn b ráða várum skiptum.’

þá mælti ráðgjafi Atla konungs,

‘Sé ek betra ráð. Þókum heldr þrállinn Hjalla,1 en forðum Hóguna. Þráll þessi er skapduði. Hann lísir eigi svá lengi at hann sé eigi dálígr.’

Þrállinn heyrir ok eðir hátt ok hleypr undan, hvert er honum pykkir skjóls ván. Kveþk illt hljóta af ofþriði þeira ok vass at gjalda. Kveðr þann dag illan vera er hann skal deyja frá sínnum göðum kostum ok svína geymslu. Þeir þrifu hann ok brugðu at honum knifi. Hann æpti hátt áðr hann kenndi oddsinns.

þá mælti Hogni sem færum er tít, þá er í mannaun koma, at4 hann árnaði þrállinum lífs ok kevþk eigi vilja skráktun heyra,5 kvað sér

1 According to Am., st. 62, Hjalli was the cook.
'Why talk like that?' said Hogni. ‘You were the first to break the peace. You seized my kinswoman and starved her to death, murdering her and seizing her wealth, and that was no kingly act, and I think it ridiculous for you to enlarge on your grief, and I'll thank the gods that things are going badly with you.'

And now King Atli urged on his troops to make a violent onslaught. Now they fought gallantly, but the Gjukungs attacked so strongly that King Atli was forced back into the hall, and now they fought inside and the battle was fierce. The fighting was accompanied by great slaughter and it ended with all the brothers' troops falling so that just the two of them were left standing, and many a man soon went down before their weapons. King Gunnar was now the object of attack, and because of overwhelming odds he was taken prisoner and put in irons. Then Hogni fought with great valour and courage, and felled King Atli's greatest champions, twenty of them. Many he thrust into the fire that was burning in the hall. On one point they were all agreed, that they hardly ever saw a man like him. Yet in the end he was overpowered and taken prisoner.

King Atli spoke:

‘It's quite astounding how many men have met their doom at his hands. Now cut out his heart and so let him die.’

Hogni spoke:

‘Do as you please. I'll cheerfully await what you intend to do, and you'll see that my heart is unafraid, and I've experienced grim ordeals before, and when unwounded I readily submitted to trials of valour. But I am now badly wounded, and you alone will settle the account.’

Then a counsellor of King Atli's spoke:

‘I've a better plan. Let's seize Hjalli the thrall instead, and spare Hogni. The thrall deserves to die. He'd not live long enough to be anything but contemptible.’

The thrall heard, screamed loudly and ran off to where he thought he'd likely be safe. He said he was suffering for their quarrels, and thus he paid for his hard life. He said it was an evil day if he was to die and leave his good food and his pig-keeping. They seized him and turned a knife on him. He screamed loudly before he felt the point.

Then Hogni spoke in a way that not many are accustomed to do when they get into sore straits: he pleaded for the thrall's life—he
minna fyrir at fremja penna leik. Þráellinn varð þigga a þá fjórít. Nú
eru þeir báðir í fjótra settir, Gunnarr ok Högni. b Þá mælti Atli
konungr til Gunnars konungs at hann skyldi segja til gullins, ef hann
vill líf þigga.

Hann svarar, ‘Fyr skal ek sjá hjarta Högna, bróður mín, blóðugt.’
Ok nú þrifu þeir þráellin í annat sinn, ok skáru ór honum hjartat
ok báru fyrir konunginn Gunnar.

Hann svarar, ‘Hjarta Hjalla má hér sjá ins blauða, ok er ólíkt
hjarta Högna ins frækna, því at nú skelfr mjök, en hálfu meir, þá er í
brjósti honum lá.’

Nú gengu þeir eptir eggjun Atla konungs at Högna, ok skáru ór
honum hjartat. Ok svá var mikill prótr hans at hann hló meðan hann
beð þessa kvöI, ok allir undruðusk þrek hans, ok þat er síðan at minnum
haft. Þeir sýndu Gunnari hjarta Högna.

Hann svarar, ‘Hér má sjá hjarta Högna e ins frækna, ok er ólíkt
hjarta Hjalla ins blauða því at nú hrerísk lítt, en miðr meðan í brjósti
honum lá. Ok svá muntu, Atli, látu þitt líf, sem nú láttum véré. Ok
nú veit ek einn hvar gullit er, ok mun eigi Högni segja þér. Mér lék
ýmist í hug, þá er vit líðum báðir, en nú hefi ek einn ráðit fyrir mér.
Skal Rín nú ráða gullinu fyr Ir Hýnir beri þat á honum sér.’

Atli konungr mælti, ‘Farið á brott með bandingjann.’ d Ok svá var
gert.

Guðrún kveðr nú með sér menn ok hittir Atla ok segir;‘
 ‘Gangi þer nú illa ok eptir því sem þer helduð orð við mik ok
Gunnar.’ f

Nú er Gunnarr konungr settr í einn ormgarð. Þar váru margir
ormar fyrir, ok váru hendr g hans fast bundnar. Guðrún sendi honum
hörpu eina, en h hann syndi sína list ok sló hörpuna með mikilli list,
at hann drap strengina með tánum, ok lék svá vel ok afbragðoga at
fáir þottusk heyr hafa svá með hondum sleget, ok þar til lék hann
þessa íprótt at allir sofnudu ormnarín, nema ein naðra mikil ok illilig
skreid til hans ok gróf inn sínum rana þar til er hon hjó hans hjarta, ok
þar lét hann sitt líf með mikilli hreysti.

a thus Ol foll. B, cf. Am. 63 l. 10 ; lacuna V
b ok Högni, thus Ol foll. B ; lacuna V
c Hann svarar—Högna, thus Ol, B (cf. Akv. 25) ; om. V
d thus Ol, B ; first i and half n in lacuna V
 e ok segir, thus Ol foll. B ; lacuna V
f thus Ol foll. B, cf. Akv. 30 ; lacuna V
g thus Ol foll. B ; lacuna V
h eina, en, thus Ol, B ; lacuna V
didn't want to hear the shrieking, he said, and declared it was an easier matter for him to play out the game himself. So the thrall's life was spared. Gunnar and Hogni were now both put in irons. King Atli then told King Gunnar that he must reveal the whereabouts of the gold if he wanted his life spared.

'I must first see my brother Hogni's bloody heart,' he answered.

And now they seized the thrall again, cut out his heart and brought it to King Gunnar.

'What we can see here,' he answered, 'is the heart of that coward Hjalli. It's not like gallant Hogni's heart, for it is quaking violently now, and did so far more when in his breast.'

Then, urged on by Atli, they made for Hogni and cut out his heart. And so great was his valour that he stood the agony laughing, and they were all astounded at his courage, and it has never been forgotten. They showed Gunnar Hogni's heart.

'Here we can see the gallant Hogni's heart,' he answered, 'and it's not like the heart of that coward Hjalli for it is not trembling much now, and did so still less when in his breast. And you, Atli, will lose your life as we are now losing ours. And now I alone know where the gold is, and Hogni won't tell you. My mind was uneasy while we were both alive, but now the decision is mine alone. The Rhine shall have the gold before Huns wear it on their arms.'

'Away with the prisoner,' said King Atli. And it was done.

Gudrun now called on some men to go with her, sought out Atli and said:

'May things now go badly for you—in the way that you kept your word to me and Gunnar.'

King Gunnar was now put into a snake pit where there were many snakes, and his hands were tightly bound together. Gudrun sent a harp to him and he showed his skill in that he struck the strings with his toes, playing with great skill, and he performed so outstandingly well that few thought they'd heard playing such as that even with the hands, and he plied this art until all the snakes fell asleep, except for one large, vicious adder that slid up to him and dug in its snout until it struck into his heart, and he died there with great courage.

---

1 Hogni's statement does not necessarily imply that the gold had actually been sunk in the Rhine, but merely that he would prefer the Rhine to have it rather than the Huns. (See R. C. Boer's note to Akv., st. 27, ll. 5–8.)
Atli a konungr þöttisk nú hafa unnit mikinn sigri, ok sagði Guðrúnu svá sem með nókkuru spotti eða svá sem hann hælðisk:

‘Guðrún,’ segir hann, ‘misst hefir þú nú bræðra þinna, ok veldr þú því sjálf.’

Hon svarar, ‘Vel líkar þér nú er þú lýsir vígum þessum fyrrir mér. En vera má at þú íórisk, þá er þú reynir þat er eptir kemr, ok sú mun erfðin lengst eptir lífa at týna eigi grimðinni, ok mun þér eigi vel ganga meðan ek lífi.’

Hann svarar, ‘Vit skulum nú gera okkra sett, ok vil ek bêta þér bræðr þína með gullir ok dýrum gripum eptir þínum vilja.’

Hon svarar, ‘Lengi hefi ek eigi verit hegg viðreignar, ok mátti um hvæfa meðan Högni lífði. Muntu ok aldrí bêta bræðr mína svá at mér hugni, en opt verðu vér konurnar ríki bornar af ýðru valdi. Nú eru mínir fræandr allir dauðir, ok muntu nú eínn við mik ráða. Mun ek nú þenna kost upp taka, ok látum gera mikla veizlu, ok vil ek nú erfa bræðr mína ok svá þína fræandr.’

Gerir hon sík nú bliða á ordum, en þó var samt undir raunar. Hann var talhlýðinn ok trúði á hennar orð, er hon gerði sér létt um reður.

Guðrún gerir nú erfi eptir sína bræðr ok svá Atli konungr eptir sína menn, ok þessi veizla var við mikla svorfan.6 Nú hyggr Guðrún á harma sína ok sitr um þat at veita konungi nókkura mikla skómm. Ok um kveldit tók hon sonu þeira Atla konungs er þeir léku við stokki. Sveinarnir glúpnuðu ok spurðu hvat þeir skyldu.

Hon svarar, ‘Spyrið eigi at. Bana skal ýkkr báðum.’

Þeir sporfða, ‘Ráða muntu þornum þínum sem þú vill, þat mun engi banna þér, en þér er skómm í at gera þetta.’

Síðan skar hon þá á háls.

Konunginn sporfði eptir hvar synir hans væri.

Guðrún svarar, ‘Ekk mun þat segja þér ok glaða þitt hjarta. Þú vaktir við oss mikinn harm þá er þú drapt bræðr mína. Nú skaltu heyra mína reðu. Þú hefir misst þína sona, ok eru þeira hausar hér at börðkerum hafðir,4 ok sjálfir drakktu þeira blöð við vín blandit. Síðan tók ek hjörtu þeira ok steiktka ek á teini, en þú ázt.’

a The preceding ch. heading reads viðtal Atla ok Guðrúnar.

b illeg. V

c thus Ol, bana V

d thus Ol, B (cf. Am. 82, l. 4); þáðir V
King Atli thought now that he had won a great victory, and he spoke to Gudrun somewhat mockingly, or as if he were boasting:

'Gudrun,' he said, 'you've lost your brothers now, and it's your own doing.'

'You enjoy telling me of these killings now,' she answered, 'but you may be sorry when you find out what is to follow. Unceasing malice is the legacy that will longest survive, and while I'm alive things won't go well for you.'

'We must now be reconciled,' he replied, 'and I'll compensate you for your brothers with gold and costly treasures in accordance with your own wishes.'

'For a long time I've not been easy to get on with,' she replied, 'but it wasn't too bad as long as Hogni was alive. And you will never pay compensation for my brothers so as to satisfy me—but we women are often subdued by your strength. My kinsmen are now all dead, and you alone have jurisdiction over me. I shall now accept the situation—and let us now give a great feast to honour the memory of my brothers, and of your kinsmen, too.'

And she now spoke agreeably, though at heart she was unchanged. He was easily taken in and trusted her words when she made herself cheerful of speech.

Gudrun now gave the funeral feast for her brothers, and King Atli did so for his men, and it was a turbulent banquet. Then Gudrun thought of her wrongs and watched for an opportunity to inflict some grievous shame upon the king. And in the evening she seized hold of the sons she'd had by King Atli as they were playing along the wall-bench. They were frightened and asked what was to happen to them.

'Don't ask that,' she answered. 'I'm going to kill you both.'

'You can do what you like with your own children,' they answered.

'No one will prevent you, but this deed will bring shame upon you.'

Then she cut their throats.

The king inquired where his sons were.

'I'll tell you,' replied Gudrun, 'and gladden your heart. You caused me great suffering when you killed my brothers. Now you shall hear my words. You've lost your sons, and here are their skulls used as drinking cups and you yourself drank their blood mixed with wine. Then I took their hearts and roasted them on a spit and you've eaten them.'
Atli konungr svarar, 'Grimm ertu, er þú myndir sonu þína ok gaft mér þeirra hold at eta, ok skammt lætr þú ills í milli.'

Guðrún segir, 'Væri minn vili til at gera þér miklar skammir, ok verðr eigi fullilla farit við slíkan konung.'

Konungr mælti, 'Verra hefir þú gert en menn viti dæmi til, ok er mikil óvîzka í slikum hardræðum, ok makligt at þú værir á báli brendd ok barin áðr grjóti í hel, ok hefir þú þat er þú ferr á leið.'

Hon svarar, 'Þú spár þat þér sjálfum, en ek mun hljóta annan dauða.'
Pau mæltusk við morg heiptarorð.


Atli konungur vaknar við sárit ok mælti,
'Eigi mun hér þurfa um at binda eða umbúð at veita. Eða hverr veitur mér þenna áverka?'

Guðrún segir, 'Ek veld nokkurum um, en sumu sonr Högna.'

Atli konungur mælti, 'Eigi semði þér þetta at gera, þó at nokkur sok væri til, ok vartu mér gipt at frænda ráði, ok mund galt ek við þér, þrýja þigðra riddara ok sæmilagra meyja ok marga menn aðra, ok þó léztu þér eigi at höfi, nema þú réðir þondum þeim er átt hafði Buðli konungr, ok þína sveður léztu opt með gráti sitja.'

Guðrún mælti, 'Mart hefir þú mælt ósatt, ok ekki hirði ek þat, ok opt var ek óheg í minu skapi, en miklu jök þú á. Hér hefir verit opt mikil styrjóld í þínun garði, ok þordusk opt frændr ok vinir, ok yfðisk hvat við annat, ok var betri ævi vár þá er ek var með Sigurði. Drápum konunga ok réðum um eignir þeirra ok gáfum gríð þeim er svá vildu, en hofdingjar gengu á hendr oss, ok léttum þann ríkan er svá vildi. Síðan misstum vör hans, ok var þat lítit at bera ekkju nafn, en
'You're a cruel woman,' replied King Atli, 'murdering your sons and giving me their flesh to eat, and you leave little interval between your evil deeds.'

'My heart would indeed be bent on bringing deep disgrace upon you,' said Gudrun. 'There's no treatment bad enough for a king like you.'

'The evil you've done is worse than any precedent men know of,' said the king, 'and there's great folly in such harshness, and you deserve to be burnt on a pyre after first being stoned to death—then you'd have got to where your path is leading.'

'You make this prophecy of yourself,' she replied, 'and I shall die a different death.'

Many bitter words passed between them.

Hogni left a son called Niflung. He felt a deep hatred towards King Atli, and told Gudrun that he wanted to avenge his father. She received this favourably, and they made their plans. She said it would be greatly to their advantage if it could be done. And in the evening when the king had done with drinking, he went to bed, and when he was asleep Gudrun came, and Hogni's son. Gudrun seized a sword and thrust it through King Atli's breast. The two had a hand in it, she and Hogni's son.

King Atli awoke with the wound.

'No need here for bandaging or treatment,' he said. 'Who inflicted this hurt on me?'

'I had a hand in it, and so did Hogni's son,' said Gudrun.

'There was no honour for you in doing this,' said King Atli, 'though you had some cause—but you were married to me with your family's consent, and I made you a marriage portion of thirty good horsemen and maidens such as befit you, and many other men, yet you said it would not be proper unless you had charge of the lands that King Budli had possessed, and you often had your mother-in-law in tears.'

'You've told many untruths,' said Gudrun, 'but I don't care about that, and I was often in an evil mood, but you greatly added to it. Here in your house there's often been a lot of trouble: friends and kinsmen often fought, and each provoked the other, and I had a better life when I was with Sigurd. We slew kings and did as we pleased with their domains, and we gave quarter to those who wanted it, and great men made submission to us, and we raised up any for the asking. Then I lost him, but to bear the name of widow was nothing—what grieves me most is that I came to you while before I was married to.
that harmar mik mest er ek kom til þín, en átt áðr inn ágæsta konung, ok aldri komtu svá ór orrostu at eigi bærir þú inn minna hlut.’

Atli konungr svarar, ‘Eigi er þat satt, ok við slíkar fortölur batnar hvárigra hluti, því at vér hofum skarðan. Ger nú til mín sömasamliga, ok lát þúa um lík mitt til ágætis.’

Hon segir, ‘þat mun ek gera at láta þér gera vegligan groft, ok gera þér virðuliga steinþró, ok vefja  a þik í fógrum dúkum, ok hyggja þér hverja þorrf.’

Eptir þat deyr hann. En hon gerði sem hon hét. Síðan lét hon slá eldi í hóllina. Ók er hirdin vaknaði við óttann, þá vildu menn eigi þola eldinn ok hjuggusk sjálfor ok fengu svá bana. Lauk þar ævi Atla konungs allrar hirðar hans.

Guðrún vildi nú eigi lífa eptir þessi verki, en endadagr hennar var eigi enn kominn.

Volsungar ok Gjúkungar, at því er menn segja, hafa verit mestir ofrugar ok ríkismenn, ok svá finnsk í öllum fornkvæðum.

Ok nú stóðvaðisk þessi öfrið  b með þeima hætti at lidnum þessum tíðendum.

41

Guðrún  c átti dótter við Sigurði er Svanhildr hét. Hon var alla kvenna vænst, ok hafði snór augu sem fáðir hennar svá at fár einn þorði at sjá undir hennar brýnn. Hon bar svá mjök af öðrum konum um vænleik sem sól af öðrum himintungrum.

Guðrún gekk eitt sinn til sævar, ok tók grjót  e í fang sér ok gekk á seinn út, ok vildi tapa sér. Þá hófu hana stórar bárur fram eptir sjánum, ok fluttisk hon með þeira fulltingi ok kom um síðir til borgar Jónakrs konungs. Hann var ríkr konungr ok fjölmennr. Hann fekk Guðrúnar. Þeira børn váru þeir Hamðir ok Sørli ok Erpr. Svanhildr var þar upp fædd.

a -ja illeg. V
b -fríð- illeg. V

c The preceding ch. heading reads frá Guðrúma.
d öðrum him- illeg. V
e illeg. V
the noblest king. But you never came out of a battle without having had the worst of it.'

'That is not true,' replied King Atli. 'But arguing like this will improve neither your fate nor mine, for I've come off badly. Now act honourably towards me and see that I have a splendid funeral.'

'I shall have a magnificent tomb made for you,' she said, 'and a splendid stone sarcophagus, and wrap you in fine cloths, and think of everything needful for you.'

After this he died. And she did as she had promised. She then had the hall set on fire. And when the king's body-guard awoke in terror, the men would not face the fire, but cut each other down and in that way met their death. And this was the end of King Atli and of all his followers.

Gudrun had now no wish to live after these deeds. But her last day was not yet come.

The Volsungs and Gjukungs were, as people say, eminent men and the most dauntless, and this is found in all the ancient lays.

And that is how with these events the strife now ended.

Gudrun had a daughter by Sigurd whose name was Svanhild. She was the most beautiful of all women and she had her father's piercing eyes, so that few dared look her in the face. In her beauty she outshone other women as does the sun the other heavenly bodies.

Gudrun once went to the sea, took up an armful of stones and walked into the sea, intending to do away with herself. Then huge waves bore her along over the sea, and with their aid she was carried away and came at length to the castle of King Jonakr. He was a powerful king with a great following. He married Gudrun. Their children were Hamdir, Sorli and Erp. Svanhild was brought up there.
Jörmunrekr¹ hefir konungr heitit. Hann var ríkr konungr í þann tíma. Hans sonr hét Randverr. Konungr heimtir á tal son sinn ok mælti,

‘Pú skalt fara mána sendisgor til Jónakrs konungs, ok minn ráðgjati er Bikkí heitir. Þar er upp fædd Svanhildr, dóttr Sigurðar Fáfnisbana er ek veit fegrsta mey undir heimsólu. Hana vilda ek helzt eiga, ok hennar skal tu bídja til handa mér.’

Hann segir, ‘Skylt er þat, herra, at ek fara yðra sendisgor.’

Leitr nú búu ferð þeirra semiliga. Fara þeir nú unz þeir koma til Jónakrs konungs, sjá Svanhildi, pykkir b mikils um vert hennar friðleik. Randverr heimtí konung á tal ok mælti,

‘Jörmunrekr konungr vill bjóða ýðr mægi sitt. Hefir hann spurn til Svanhildar, ok vill hann kjósa hana sér til konu, ok er ósýnt at hon sé gefin rikara manni en hann er.’

Konungr segir at þat var virðuligt ráð,—

‘Ok er hann mjök frægr.’

Guðrún segir, ‘Valt er hamingjunní at treystask at eigi bresti hon.’

En með fýsing konungs ok ðlíu því er á lá, er þetta nú ráðit, ok ferr nú Svanhildr til skips með virðuligu fóruneyti ok sat í lyptingu hjá konungs syni.

Þa mælti Bikkí til Randvers,

‘Sannlítg væri þat at þér ættið svá fríða konu, en eigi svá gamall maðr.’

Honum fellsk þat vel í skap, ok mælti til hennar með blíðu ok hvárt til annars. Koma heim í land ok hitta konung.

Bikkí mælti, ‘Þat samir, herra, at vita hvat títt er um, þótt vant sé upp at bera, en þat er um vélar þær er sonr þinn hefir fengið fulla ást Svanhildar, ok er hon frílla, ok lát d slitk eigi óhegnt.’

Mörk ill ráð hafði hann honum áðr kennt, þó at þetta biti fyrir of hans ráð ill. Konungr hlyðdi hans mörum vándum ráðum. Hann mælti, ok mátti eigi stilla sik af reiði, at Randver skyldi taka ok á gáliga

---

¹ The preceding ch. heading reads Gilp Svahnhrd ok troðin undir hrossafótum til bana (the final n of bana is missing in V).
² ok pykkir B ³ thus Ol, vatt V ⁴ thus Ol, om. V

¹ The sixth-century historian Jordanes includes in his History of the Goths an account of the Svanhild legend. He tells how Sarius (Sorli) and Ammius (Hamdir) take vengeance on Ermanaric for the slaying of Sunilda their sister whom he had torn apart by horses, though not for the same reasons as mentioned
There was a king called Jormunrek. He was a powerful king of those days. His son's name was Randver. The king summoned his son to an audience.

'You must go on a mission for me to King Jonakr,' he said, 'and Bikki, my counsellor, shall go too. Svanhild, daughter of Sigurd Fafnisbane, has been brought up there. I know her for the most beautiful maiden under the sun. She it is whom I would marry above all others, and you shall ask for her hand on my behalf.'

'It is my duty, Sir, that I should go on your mission,' he said.

He now had worthy preparations made for their journey. They now travelled until they reached King Jonakr. They saw Svanhild and were most impressed with her beauty. Randver sought an audience of the king and said:

'King Jormunrek wishes to offer you an alliance by marriage. He has heard of Svanhild and wishes to choose her as his wife, and there's no certainty that she would be married to a man more powerful than he is.'

The king said it was a magnificent match—

'And he is greatly renowned.'

'It's unreliable to trust to good luck not breaking,' said Gudrun.

But due to the urging of the king and all that went with it, this was now agreed on, and Svanhild now went to the ship with a magnificent retinue and sat on the stern deck at the prince's side.

Then Bikki spoke to Randver:

'If it would be more fitting for you than for such an old man to possess so beautiful a woman.'

This was greatly to his liking, and he spoke to her tenderly, as she did to him. They arrived back in their country and went to the king.

'It is only right, Sir,' said Bikki, 'that you should know what is going on, though it is not easy to speak of it—it is a question of trickery whereby your son has enjoyed to the full Svanhild's love, and she is his mistress. Don't let this go unpunished.'

He had already given him much evil advice, but of all his evil advice this was the crown. The king listened to his many wicked counsels. He could not contain himself for anger and said that Randver should
festa. Ok er hann var til leiddr gálgans, þá tók hann hauk einn ok plokkæði af honum allar fjaðrirnar, ok mælti at sýna skyldi feðr hans. Ok er konungrinn sá, mælti hann,

‘Þar má nú sjá at honum þykkir ek þann veg hnjögn sem haukrinn fjóðrunum.’ Ok bíd hann taka af gálanum. Bikki hafði þar um velt á meðan, ok var hann dauðr.

Enn mælti Bikki,

‘Engum manni áttu verri at vera en Svanhildi. Lát hana deyja með skómm.’

Konungr svarar, ‘þat ráð munu vér taka.’

Síðan var hon bundin í borgarhliði ok hleypt hestum at henni. En er hon brá í sund augum, þá þordu eigi hestarnir at sporna hana. Ok er Bikki sá þat, mælti hann at belg skyldi draga á hofuð henni, ok svá var gert, en síðan lét hon líf sitt.

43

Guðrún spyrr nú líflát Svanhildar ok mælti við sonu sín,

‘Hví siti þær svá kyrrið eða mælði gleðiorð, þar sem Jormunrekr drap systur ykkra ok trað undir hesta fóturn með svívirding? Ok ekki hafði þit líkt skaplyndi Gunnari eða Hóagna. Hefna mundu þeir sinnar frændkonu.’

Hamðir svarar, ‘Lítt lofaðir þú Gunnar ok Höguna, þá er þeir drápú Sigurð ok þú vart roðin í hans blóði, ok illar váru þínar breðra hefndir er þú drapt sonu þína, ok betr mættim vör allir saman drepa Jormunrek konung, ok eigi munu vör standask frýjuroð, svá harti sem vör erum eggjaðir.’

Guðrún gekk hlæjandi ok gaf þeim at drekka af stórum kerum, ok eptir þat valði hon þeim stórar brynjur ok góðar ok önnur herklæði. Þá mælti Hamðir,

‘Hér munu vör skilja efsta sinni, ok spyrja muntu tíðendin, ok muntu þá erfi drekka eptir okkr ok Svanhildi.’

Eptir þat fóru þeir. En Guðrún gekk til skemmu, harmi aukin, ok mælti,

‘Þrimr munnum var ek gipt, fyrrst Sigurði Fáfnisbana, ok var hann svikinn, ok var þat mér inn mesti hármar. Síðan var ek gefin Atla konungi, en svá var grimmt mitt hjarta við hann at ek drap sonu okkra í

\(^{a}\) B emends to hnjögn.

\(^{b}\) thus Ol, spora V

\(^{c}\) The preceding ch. heading reads Guðrún eggjar sonu sína at hefna Svanhildar.

\(^{d}\) thus Ol, drápúð V
be seized and hanged on a gallows. And when he was led to the gallows he took a hawk and plucked out all its feathers and said that it was to be shown to his father. And when the king saw it he said:

'This shows that he thinks I'm just as bereft of honour as the hawk of feathers.' And he ordered him to be taken down from the gallows. But in the meantime Bikki had been at work there, and he was dead.

Said Bikki again:

'There's no one you have to be harsher towards than Svanhild. Let her die shamefully.'

'I shall take this advice,' said the king.

She was then tied in the gate-way of the castle, and horses were made to charge at her. But when she opened wide her eyes the horses dared not trample And when Bikki saw this, he said that a bag should be drawn down over her head. This was done and then she met her death.

Gudrun heard now of Svanhild's death and spoke to her sons:

'Why do you sit there so calmly and talk so cheerfully when Jormunrek has killed your sister, shamefully trampling her to death beneath horses' hoofs? You've neither of you the spirit of Gunnar or Hogni. They would avenge their kinswoman.'

'You had little praise for Gunnar and Hogni when they killed Sigurd and you were smeared with his blood,' answered Hamdir, 'and killing your sons was an evil vengeance for your brothers, and we should be better able to kill Jormunrek if all of us were together. And we cannot stand your taunts, so hard do you press us.'

Gudrun went laughing and gave them to drink from great goblets, and after this she sought out for them large and excellent coats of mail, and other armour. Then Hamdir said:

'We shall part here for the last time, and you'll hear the news and then you can give a funeral feast for us and for Svanhild.'

After this they set out. And Gudrun, her sorrow the greater, went to her room and said:

'I have been married to three husbands, first to Sigurd Fafnisbane. He was betrayed and that was my greatest sorrow. Then I was wedded to King Atli, and my heart was so ill-disposed towards him that I slew
harmi. Síðan gekk ek á sjáinn, ok hóf mik at landi með bárum, ok
var ek nú gefin þessum konungi. Síðan gipta ek Svanhildi af landi í
brott með miklu fé, ok er mér þat sárast minna harma er hon var troðin
undir hrossa fó tum, eptir Sigurð. En þat er mér grimmast er Gunnarr
var í ormgard settr, en þat hardast er ór Hógnar var hjarta skorit, ok
betr væri at Sigurðr kæmi mér á móti ok fétri ek með honum. Hér sitr
nú eigi eptir sonr né döttir mik at hugga. Minnstu nú, Sigurðr, þess
er vit mæltum, þá er vit stigum á einn beð, at þá mundir mín vitja
ok ór helju bída.

Ok lykr þar hennar harmtólum.

44

Þat er nú at segja frá sonum Guðrúnar at hon haði svá búit þeira
herklæði at þá bitu eigi járn, ok hon bað þá eigi skedja grjóti nê óðrum
stórum hlutum, ok kvæð þeim þat at miini mundu verða ef eigi gerði
þeir svá. Ok er þeir varu komnir á leið, finna þeir Erp, bróður sinn, ok
spyrja hvat hann mundi veita þeim.

Hann svarar, ‘Slíkt sem hónd hendi eða fótr fæti.’

Þeim þótti þat ekki vera ok drápu hann.1 Síðan fóru þeir leiðar
sinnar ok litla hrið áðr Hamðir rataði ok stakk niðr hendi ok mælti,
‘Eþr mun satt hafa sagt. Ek munda falla nú ef eigi styddumk ek
víð hóndina.’

Litlu síðar ratar Sǫrli ok brásk á fótinn ok fekk staðísk ok mælti,
‘Falla munda ek nú ef eigi stydda ek mik víð báða sætr.’

Kváðusk þeir nú illa hafa gert víð Erp, bróður sinn. Fóru nú unz
þeir kómu til Jormunreks konungs, ok gengu fyrir hann ok veittu
honum þegar tilraði. Hjó Hamðir af honum hendr báðar, en Sǫrli
fær báða. Þá mælti Hamðir,

‘Af mundi nú hofuðit ef Erp lífði, bróðir okkarr, er vit vágum á
leiðinni, ok sám vit þat of síð.’

Sem kvedi er:

(30) Af væri nú hofuðit,
    ef Erp lífði,

* The preceding ch. heading reads Frá sonum Guðrúnar. Capitolum.

1 Snorri explains further that they slew Erp because he was their mother’s
favourite and they wanted to pay her back for her taunts and jeers (see
Jónsson, SnE 174), though Hm. st. 13 describes him as born of a different
mother.
our sons in my grief. Then I walked into the sea and waves carried me ashore, and then I was wedded to this king. Afterwards I married off Svanhild into a foreign land with great wealth. And the keenest of my sorrows, after Sigurd, was when she was trampled down beneath the horses' hoofs. And most bitter when Gunnar was put in the snake pit, and the hardest when Hogni's heart was cut out. It would be better if Sigurd were to come to me and I to go with him. No son or daughter is now left to comfort me here. Remember, Sigurd, what we said when we shared the same bed, that you would visit me from the underworld, and wait for me there.'

And here her lamentations ceased.

The story now tells of Gudrun's sons, how she had so treated their armour that no iron could bite home, but she told them to do no damage to stones or other large objects, and said it would be a bad thing for them if they did not do as she said. And after they'd started out they came across their brother, Erp, and asked how he would help them.

'Like hand helps hand, or foot helps foot,' he answered.

They thought that this meant not at all, and they killed him. Then they went on and it was only a short while before Hamdir tripped, thrust out a hand and said:

'Erp must have spoken the truth—I'd have fallen then if I hadn't steadied myself with my hand.'

Shortly afterwards Sorli tripped, shot out his foot, managed to recover his balance, and said:

'I'd have fallen then if I hadn't steadied myself with both feet.'

They now declared that they had acted wrongly towards their brother Erp. They travelled now until they reached King Jormunrek. They came into his presence and immediately attacked him. Hamdir struck off both his hands, and Sorli both his feet. Then Hamdir said:

'His head would now be off if our brother Erp, whom we killed on the way, were alive, but we've found this out too late.'

As the verse has it:

(30) Off now were his head,
    were Erp alive,
Í því hofðu þeir af brugðit bòði móður sinnar er þeir hofðu grjóti skatt.1 Nú sækja menn at þeim, en þeir varðusk vel ok drengiliga ok urðu morgum manni at skaða. Þá bitu eigi járn. Þá kom at einn maðr,² hárr³ ok eldiligr, með eitt auga ok mælti, 'Eigi eru þér vísir menn er þér kunnið eigi þeim mænum bana at veita.'

Konungrinn svarar, 'Gef oss ráð til ef þú kannt.'
Hann mælti, 'Þér skuluð berja þá grjóti í hel.'
Svá var ok gert, ok þá flugu þr óllum áttum steinar at þeim, ok varð þeim þat at aldrlagi.

¹ *thus Ol (cf. p. 5 Hann var hárr mjók ok eldiligr), om. V*

² The 'damage' presumably consists in the pollution of the stones of the road with their murdered brother's blood.

³ Odin.
They had disregarded their mother's instructions by causing damage to stones. They were now attacked. And they defended themselves valiantly and well, and were the death of many a man. No iron bit home. Then a grey-haired man of aged appearance and with one eye came up and said:

'You people aren't clever if you don't know how to slay these men.'

'Give us advice about it if you can,' replied the king.

'You should stone them to death,' he said.

So it was done, and then stones flew at them from all quarters, and this ended with their death.
APPENDICES

A  To visit Odin  81
B  Aslaug and Heimir  verso and recto  82
C  The general correspondence between
    Volsunga saga and its extant literary sources  85
APPENDIX A

TO VISIT ODIN

At sekja heim Ódin and similar expressions such as hjá Óhani gista, all meaning literally ‘to visit Odin’ or ‘be Odin’s guest’, are used in the sense of ‘to die in battle’ (Odin was known as Valféðr: father of the slain), this ensuring entry into Odin’s hall, Valhalla (Valhóll: hall of the slain), which was certainly ‘a good thing’ (see p. 3) from the heroic pagan point of view. Snorri tells us in Ynglinga saga (ch. 10): gaf hann þá sumum sigr, en sumum bauð hann til sin; þótt hvártveggi kostr góðr—to some he then gave victory, others he called to him; either way seemed good. Rerir does not die in battle, but of sickness, and there are grounds for the belief (see H. M. Chadwick, The cult of Othin, London 1899, 13 f.) that a man mortally ill might be marked with the point of a javelin, being thereby dedicated to Odin (the javelin was a weapon especially associated with him), and thus presumably made one with the Einherjar, the dead heroes who spend their days in fighting and carousing with Odin in Valhalla (SnE, Gylfaginning ch. 41) until the Doom of the Gods is at hand (SnE, Gylf. ch. 51).
APPENDIX B

ASLAUG AND HEIMIR

Heimir í Hlymdplum spyrð nú þessi tóðendi at dauer er Sigurðr ok Brynhildr en Áslaug, döttir þeira, en fóstra Heimis, var þá prévetr. Veit hann nú at eptir mun leitað at týna meyjunní ok ætt hannar. Er honum svá mikill harmr eptir Brynhildr, fóstra sínna, at hann getti ekki ríkis sínís nē fjár. Sér nú at hann fær eigi meyjunní þar leynt. lætr nú gera eina hórpú svá mikla at þar lét hann meyna Áslaugu í koma ok margar gersimar í gulli ok sílfri, ok gengr á brott síðan víða um lond, ok um síðir hingat á Norrænrönd. Svá var harpa hans hagliga ger at hana mátti taka í sunndr ok saman atfellumgum, ok var hann því vanr um daga, þá er hann fór í hjá vatnsföllum ok hvergi í nánd bæjum, at hann tók hórpuna í sunndr ok þó meyjunní. Ók hann hafði vínlaug einn ok gaf henni at eta. En þat er náttúra þess laukur at maðr má lengi lifa, þótt hann hafi enga áðra fæðu. Ók þá er merin grét, sló hann hórpuna, ok þagnaði hon þá, fyrir því at Heimir var vel at íþróttum búinn þeim er þá váru tíðar. Hann hafði ok morg klæði dýrðög hjá henni í hórpunni ok mikit gull.

Ók nú fær hann þangat til unz hann kemr í Nóreg ok kemr til eins byjar lítils þess er heitir á Spangarheidi, ok þó þar karl sá er Áki hét. Hann átti konu, ok hét hon Gríma. þar var eigi fleira manna en þau.

þann dag var karl farinn í skóg, en kerling var heima, ok heilsar hon Heimi ok spyrð hvat manna hann væri. hann kevzkr vera einn stafkarl, ok þá kerlingu húsa. Hon segir at eigi kemmi þar fleira en svá at hon kevzkr mundu vel við honum taka, ef hann þeittisk þurfa þar at vera. En er á leið, þá segir hann at honum þeitti þat mest beinabót at eldr væri kevkykt fyrir honum, ok síðan væri honum fylgt til svennhúss þar er hann skyldi sofa. Ók þá er kerling hafði kevkykt eldinn, þá settar hann hórpuna upp í set hjá sér, en kerling var ðamálug. Ópt varð henni lítit til hórpunnar fyrir því at trefr á einu dýrðugi klæði kómu út ór hórpunni. Ók er hann bakaðisk við eldinn, þá sér hon einn dýrðigen gullhring koma fram undan þotrum hans, því at hann var illa klæðr. Ók er hann hafði bakað sem hann kunni sér þþef til, þá hafið hann náttverð. En eptir þat þá hann kerlingu fylgja sér þangat til sem hann skyldi sofa um nóttina. Þá segir kerling at honum mundi betra vera úti en inni—

'því at vítt karl míninn erum opt máluug er hann kemr heim.'

Hann bíðr hann ráða, gengr nú út ok svá hon. Hann tekr hórpuna ok hefir með sér. Kerling gengi út ok fær þar til er bygghlaða ein er, ok fylgir honum þar til, ok mælti at hann skyldi þar um búask, ok kevzk þess vænta at hann
Heimir heard the news in Hlymdalir that Sigurd and Brynhild were dead, and Aslaug, their daughter, Heimir's foster-daughter, was then three years old. He knew they would seek to kill the girl and her family. So great was his grief for his foster-daughter, Brynhild, that he gave no heed to kingdom or wealth. He now saw that he would be unable to hide the girl there. So he had a harp made big enough for him to get the girl into it along with many treasures of gold and silver, and then he went away, journeying far and wide, and eventually came up here to the northern countries. His harp was so skilfully made that he could take it apart and put it together again at the joints, and during the day when he was near water courses and nowhere in the neighbourhood of dwellings he was accustomed to take the harp apart and wash the girl. And he had a certain herb and gave her to eat of it, and such is the nature of this herb that a man may live for a long time even if he has no other food. And when the girl cried, he played the harp, and she would then grow quiet, for Heimir was highly skilled in the arts then practised. He also had many magnificent garments and a great deal of gold with her in the harp.

And now he journeyed until he came to Norway, to a small farmstead called Spangarheid, where there lived a man named Aki. He had a wife and she was named Grimr. Apart from them, there were no other people there.

That day the man had gone into the woods, but the woman was at home and greeted Heimir and asked who he was. He said he was a beggar and asked the woman for shelter. She declared that so few people came there that, as she said, she would welcome him if he thought he needed to stay there. And after a while he said he would think it most hospitable if a fire were to be lit for him, and if he were then shown to the room he was to in. And when the woman had lit the fire, he placed the harp beside him on the seat. But the woman was very talkative. She often glanced at the harp, for the fringe of a valuable piece of cloth was protruding from the harp. And when he warmed himself at the fire she saw a valuable ring appear from beneath his rags, for he was poorly clad. And when he had warmed himself as much as he thought was necessary, he had his supper. And after this he asked the woman to show him to where he was to spend the night. The woman then said that he would be better off outside rather than inside—

'Because when my husband comes home, the two of us often talk a lot.'

He said she knew best. So he went out, and so did she. He took the harp and kept it by him. Going out, the woman went over to a barley-barn, showed him to it and said that he was to bed down there, adding that she expected he
mendi þar njótta svefnis síns. Ok nú gengur kerling í brott ok annask þat er hon þurfti, en hann gerir sér svefn.

Karl kemur heim er aptanninn líðr, en kerling hefur fátt unnit þat er hon þurfti. En hann var móður er hann kom heim, ok illr viðskiptis, er allt var óbúit þat er hon skyldi annazk hafa. Sagði karl at mikill væri munr sælu, er hann vann hvern dag meira en hann mátti, en hon vildi til enkis taka þess er gagn var at.

' Ver eigi reiðr, karl minn,' sagði hon, 'fyrir því at þat kann at vera at þú mættir nú skamma stund vinna til þess at vit værim sæl alla ævi.'

' Hvát er þat ?' segir karl.

Kerling svarar, ' Hér er kominn til herbergis okkars einn móður, ok ætla ek at hann hafði allmiðit fél með at fara, ok er hnjíginn á efnal almur, ok mun verit hafa inn mestri kappi ok er nú þó móður mjók, ok eigi þykkjumk ek hans maka sét hafa, ok þó ætla ek hann meðdan ok syfjaðan.'

Þá segir karl, ' Þat sýnisk mér óráðilt at svíkja þá ína fá sem hér koma.'

Hon svarar, ' Því muntu lengi lýtil fyrir þér at þér vex allt í augu, ok ger nú annathvárt, at þú drep hann, eða ek tek hann mér til manns, ok munu vit reka þik í brott. Ok segja kann ek þér þá reðu er hann mælti við mik í gærkveld, en lýtil mun þér þykkja um vert. Hann mælti kvensamliga við mik, ok þat mun mitt ráð vera at taka hann mér til manns, en reka þik í brott eða drepa ef þú vill eigi eptir því gera sem ek vil.'

Ok er þat sagt at karl hafði kvánrikí, ok telr hon um þangat til er hanní lætr at eggjan hennar, tekr Óxí sína ok snarbrýnir mjók. Ok er hann er búinn, fylgir kerling honum þar til er Heimir sefr, ok var þar hrytr mikill. Þá mælti kerling til karls at hann skyldi látu verða tilræði sem bezt—

' Ok skunda brott með hlauti, því at ekki máttu standask látt hans ok óp ef hann faer þik húndum tekít.'

Hon tekr hörpuna ok hleypri á brott með. Nú gengur karl þar til er Heimir sefr. Hann hóggir til hans, ok verðr þat mikit sár, ok verðr honum laus Óxin. Hann hleypri þegar í brott sem hann mátti hraðast. Nú vaknar hann við áverkann, ok vannsk honum at fullu. Ok þat er sagt at svá mikill gnýr varð í hans fjörbrotum at undan gengu sókur í húsínu ok ofan fell húsít allt, ok varð landskjalfti mikill, ok lýkr þar hans ævi.

Nú kom karl þar sem kerling var, segir nú at hann hefir drepit hann—

' Þó þat þar at þrif er ek vissa eigi hvé fara mundi, ok þessi máðr var furðu mikill fyrir sér, en þó væntir mik at hann sé nú í helju.'

Kerling mælti at hann skyldi hafa þókk fyrir verkit—

' Ok væntir mik at nú hafim vit ærit fé, ok skulum vit reyna hvárt ek hefi satt sagt.'
would sleep well there. And now the woman went away and busied herself
with necessary tasks, and he settled down to sleep.

Later in the evening the man came home, but the woman had got through
very few of her tasks. And he was weary when he came home and surly in
manner, for all the things she should have been seeing to were not done. The
man said there was a great difference in the happiness of his lot and hers—
every day he worked more than his strength allowed, while she would never
get on with anything useful.

'Don't be angry, husband,' she said, 'because perhaps you might quickly
contrive for us to be happy all our days.'

'How?' said the man

'A man has come to our home,' the woman replied, 'and I imagine he has a
great deal of wealth along with him, and he's stricken in years and must have
been a mighty champion, but now he's very weary, and I don't think I've ever
seen his like, but I imagine he's exhausted and sleepy.'

Then the man said: 'I don't think it's wise to betray the few people that
come here.'

'You'll be a nobody for a long time,' she answered, 'because you've got
scruples about everything. And now do one thing or the other—either you
kill him, or I shall take him for my husband, and the two of us will drive you
away. And I can tell you the words he spoke to me this very evening, but
you won't care! He spoke to me amorously, and my plan will be to take him
for my husband and to drive you away or kill you if you won't do as I wish.'

And it is said that the man was henpecked, and she kept on about it until
he gave way to her goadings—he took his axe and put a good, keen edge on it.
And when he was ready the woman showed him to where Heimir was sleeping,
and there was a loud snoring. The woman told her husband to attack him as
best he might—

'And make off quickly for you'll not be able to stand his shrieks and
screams if he gets his hands on you.'

She picked up the harp and ran off with it. Then the man went up to where
Heimir was sleeping. He struck at him, making a deep wound, but dropped
his axe. He immediately made off as quickly as he could.

He awoke with the wound, and it had done for him completely, and it is
told that he made such an uproar in his death throes that the supports in the
house gave way, and the whole house collapsed, and there was a violent earth-
quake, and there his life ended. The man now went to the woman, and now
told her that he had killed him—

'Though for a time I didn't know how things would turn out, and that man
was very strong, but I expect that he's now in the underworld.'

The woman said that she thanked him for the deed—

'And I expect that we've now ample wealth, and we'll find out whether I've
told the truth.'
Nú kveykva þau eld, en kerling tekr þórpuna ok vildi upp koma ok mátti eigi annars kostar en hon varð at brjóta því at hon hafði eigi hagleik til. Ok nú fær hon upp komit þórpunni, ok þar sér hon eitt meybarn, at hon þóttisk ekki sílt sét hafa, ok þó var mikit fé í þrópunni. Nú mælti karl,

‘Þat mun nú verða sem opt, at illa man gefask at svíkja þann er honum trúir. Sýnísk mér sem komin muni ömegð á hendr okkr.’

Kerling svarar, ‘Eigi er þetta eptir því sem ek ætlaða, en þó skal nú ekki um sakask.’

Ok nú spyrð hon hværr aðrar hon væri. En þessi in unga mær svarar engu, svá sem hon hefði eigi mál numit.

‘Nú ferr sem mik varði, at okkart ráð mundi illa fara,’ segir karl. ‘Vit hófum unnit gleop mikinn. Hvat skulum vit sjá fyrir barni þessu?’

‘Auðvitat er þat,’ sagði Gríma. ‘Hon skal eptir móður minni heita Kráka.’

Nú mælti karl, ‘Hvat skulum vit sjá fyrir barni þessu?’

Kerling svarar, ‘Ek sé gott ráð til. Vit skulum segja hana okkra döttur ok upp fæða.’

‘Því mun engi trúá,’ sagði karl. ‘Miklu er barn þetta geðsligra en vit. Erum allóven bæði, ok muni engi ískendi á þykkja at vit munum eiga þvílíkt barn, svá endemlig sem vit erum bæði.’

Nú mælti kerling, ‘Eigi veiztu nema ek hafa í nokkur brogð at þetta megi eigi óvänt þykkja. Ek mun látu gera henni koll ok ríða í tjóru ok öðru er vænst er at sízt komi hár upp. Hon skal eiga hótt síðan. Eigi skal hon ok vel klæð vera. Mun þá saman draga vár yfirlit. Má vera at menn trúi því, at ek hafa mjökk væn verit, þá er ek var ung. Hon skal ok vinna þat er verst er.’

En þat hugðu þau karl ok kerling at hon mætti ekki mæla er hon svarar þeim aldri. Nú er þat gert sem kerling hefir fyrir hugat. Nú vex hon þar upp í miklu fáðeki.

\* thus B, emending ætla V (Ol retains MS reading)
They now kindled a fire and the woman took hold of the harp and tried to open it, and she had no choice but to break it open, for she hadn’t the skill. And now she managed to get the harp open, and there she saw a little girl, the like of whom she thought she’d never seen before, and there was also a large amount of treasure in the harp. The man now said:

‘It’s going to turn out badly—it often does when you betray a person who trusts you. It looks to me as if we have a helpless waif on our hands.’

‘That is not what I thought,’ answered the woman. ‘But we’ll not complain about it now.’

And now she asked who her family was. But the young girl made no reply as if she had never learned to speak.

‘It’s just as I thought,’ said the man, ‘that things would go badly with us. We’ve committed a terrible crime. What are we to do with this child?’

‘That’s easy,’ said Grima. ‘She shall be called Kraka after my mother.’

Then the man said: ‘What shall we do with this child?’

‘I have a good plan,’ answered the woman. ‘We’ll say she is our daughter and we’ll bring her up.’

‘No one will believe it,’ said the man. ‘The child is far more attractive than either of us. We’re both very ugly and no one will think it likely that we would have a child like this, queer-looking as we both are.’

The old woman now said: ‘You don’t know but what I may have a trick or two to make it seem not improbable. I shall shave her head and rub in tar and other things, making it unlikely that any hair would grow. She shall have a long hood and she won’t be well dressed, either! Then we shall look more like each other. Perhaps people will believe that I was very pretty when I was young. She shall also do the worst chores.’

And the man and his wife thought that she couldn’t talk because she never answered them. What the old woman had planned was now done. She now grew up there in great poverty.
**APPENDIX C**

*THE GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN VOLSUNGA SAGA AND ITS EXTANT LITERARY SOURCES*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VS ch. 8</th>
<th>p. 14</th>
<th>på konu er Borghildr hét</th>
<th>cf. <em>PE, Sj.</em> ll. 2–3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p. 14</td>
<td>–Hámundr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VS ch. 14</td>
<td>p. 25</td>
<td>Einn dvergr hét–pá mælti Loki</td>
<td>cf. <em>PE,</em> Prose introduction to Rm. ll. 9–21 (end)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p. 25</td>
<td>st. 2–3</td>
<td>cf. <em>PE,</em> Rm. st. 1–2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p. 26</td>
<td>Loki sér gull–pá kvað Loki</td>
<td>cf. <em>PE,</em> Rm. st. 5 and the prose passages immediately before and after it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VS ch. 16</td>
<td>p. 28</td>
<td>Gripir hét maðr-gekk síðan (a very brief summary of the <em>PE</em> equivalent)</td>
<td>cf. <em>PE,</em> Grp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VS ch. 17</td>
<td>p. 29</td>
<td>st. 5</td>
<td>cf. <em>PE,</em> Rm. st. 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VS ch. 18</td>
<td>p. 31</td>
<td>Hverr ertu–p. 32 Hann heitir Óskaptr</td>
<td>cf. <em>PE,</em> Fm. st. 1–15 l. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p. 32</td>
<td>Reginn bróðir minn–pá sem han vildi</td>
<td>cf. <em>PE,</em> Fm. st. 22 ll. 1–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p. 32</td>
<td>Ek bar ægishjálm–míns bróður</td>
<td>cf. <em>PE,</em> Fm. st. 16 ll. 1–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p. 32</td>
<td>ok sva fnýsta–f nánd mér</td>
<td>cf. <em>PE,</em> Fm. st. 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p. 32</td>
<td>ok engi vápn–hvatastr</td>
<td>cf. <em>PE,</em> Fm. st. 16–17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p. 32</td>
<td>þat ræð ek–sem skjótast</td>
<td>cf. <em>PE,</em> Fm. st. 20 ll. 1–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p. 32</td>
<td>þetta eru þín ráð–hafa átt</td>
<td>cf. <em>PE,</em> Fm. st. 21 ll. 1–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p. 32</td>
<td>ok þat sama gull–er þat á</td>
<td>cf. <em>PE,</em> Fm. st. 20 ll. 4–6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p. 32</td>
<td>en hverr frækn maðr–dags</td>
<td>cf. <em>PE,</em> Fm. st. 10 ll. 1–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VS ch. 19</td>
<td>p. 33</td>
<td>Heill, herra minn–sitja 85</td>
<td>cf. <em>PE,</em> Fm. st. 21 ll. 4–6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

85
APPENDIX C

VS ch. 19
p. 33  Bróður minn-á grasinu
        cf. PE, Fm. st. 25 ll. 1–3 (also prose passage after st. 22)
        cf. PE, Fm. st. 28–30
p. 33  Fjarri gekk þú–
hvasst sverð
p. 33  þú dræpt-saklauss
p. 33  þá skar Sigurðr–eta
cf. PE, Fm. prose passage after st. 26, st. 27
p. 33  Sigurðr för ok steikt-
ch. 20, p. 34 þat it
mikla gull
p. 34  ok riði síðan upp–speki
p. 34  ok þá varri hann vitr–
en sumt híðir hann
p. 34  ok reið eptir slóð–ch. 21,
p. 35  færdi Sigurði ok
mælti
cf. PE, Fm. st. 35–9, and the
following prose passage
p. 35  cf. the prose passage at the end
of Fm., the prose passage at
the beginning of Sd., Sd.
st. 1–2, and the prose
passage after Sd. st. 2.

VS ch. 20
p. 35  st. 6
p. 36  st. 7–10
p. 37  st. 11–15
p. 38  st. 16–18
p. 39  st. 19–21
p. 39  ver vel við frændr þína–
p. 40  á pik koma
p. 40–41
p. 57  Eptir þetta–gængi frá
homun
p. 57  Brynhildr er mér–
hennar ást
p. 57  ok kalla–bróður sinn
p. 57  fyrir mik–alla eýda
p. 58  st. 26
p. 58  þá tók Sigurðr sverðit–
p. 59  vínir hans konu
p. 59  ok ef ek hefða vitat–
vílligót
cf. PE, Sd. st. 5
p. 33  cf. PE, Sd. st. 6, 10, 12, 7,
15
p. 37  cf. PE, Sd. st. 8, 9, 11, 13,
15
p. 38  cf. PE, Sd. st. 16–18
p. 39  cf. PE, Sd. st. 19–21
p. 39  cf. PE, Sd. st. 22, 32, 24–31,
23, 33–5, 37
p. 40–41
cf. PSS, ch. 291
p. 57  cf. PE, Sg. st. 6–14 l. 6
p. 57  cf. PE, Sg. st. 15
p. 57  cf. PE, Sg. st. 14 ll. 7–10
p. 57  cf. PE, Sg. st. 16–20
p. 58  cf. PE, Br. st. 4. (VS st. 26
is a poor and incomplete
variant)
cf. PE, Sg. st. 22–8
cf. PSS, Bertelsen II, 266 ll.
17–24 (but see
Introduction p. xxxvii)
APPENDIX C

VS ch. 32  p. 59  En Guðrún bláss-hafa meira vald
           cf. PE, Sg. st. 29–33
           p. 59  Frendr mínir–í her fyrost
           cf. PE, Br. st. 6
           p. 59  Nú póttisk engi–eitri var hert
           cf. PE, Br. st. 15–19
           p. 59  Ok snemma réðu– p. 60 engum gđrum
           cf. PE, Sg. st. 34–6, 38–39
           p. 60  ok eigi mun yðr–deyja
           cf. PE, Sg. st. 53 ll. 5–8
           p. 60  þá reis Gunnarr–ch. 33,
           cf. PE, Sg. st. 42–51, 53 l. 4,
                 p. 61 sagða ek þó satt
                 54–6, 58–60, 62–71 (end)
           VS ch. 34  p. 61  Nú segir þat–heimrinn stendr
           cf. ÞSS, Bertelsen II, 268,
                 ll. 9–17 (but see
                 Introduction p. xxxvii)
           p. 61  Betra var þá–p. 62
                   lóða rauða
           cf. PE, Gdr. II, st. 1–5,
                 11–19 l. 8
           p. 62  þeir vildu velja–p.63
                   með blóði
           cf. PE, Gdr. II, st. 20–1
           p. 63  ok eptir þat–ch. 35,
                   p. 65 at ek lægi í kör
                   cf. PE, Gdr. II, st. 22–3
                   stórir
           p. 65  gerir nú ráð–eldar
                   cf. PE, Am. st. 1–5, Akv. st. 1
                   ok síðan drukku–drykk
           cf. PE, Am. st. 8, Akv.
                   st. 2
           p. 65  Atli konungr sendi–af vit farim
           cf. PE, Akv. st. 3–8
           p. 65  Nú gengr alþýða– p. 66 allmjók drukknir
           cf. PE, Am. st. 9, 6
           p. 66  Ekki er því–bezt at
                   njóta
           cf. ÞSS, Bertelsen II, 281,
                 ll. 9–14 (but see
                 Introduction, p. xxxvii)
           p. 66  heitr nú ferðinni–
                   aðrir villt
           cf. PE, Am. st. 7 l. 5–st. 12
           VS ch. 36  p. 66  þat dreymsö mik at mér
                 –stokka í hóllini
           cf. PE, Am. st. 26 ll. 1–4
           p. 66  þér eruð opt–bóðinu
           cf. PE, Am. st. 13, 14 ll. 1–4
           p. 66  ok enn dreymsö mik–
                   vera nökkt
           cf. PE, Am. st. 26
           p. 66  þat dreymsö mik–ch. 37,
                   p. 67 aðrir líttu
           cf. PE, Am. st. 15–21, 24, 25,
                 28–30 l. 4
| VS ch. 37 | p. 67 | Fjørnir hét—p. 68 gøðan tína | cf. PE, Akv. st. 10–12 |
| VS ch. 37 | p. 68 | eptir var meiri–ekki skip sírn | cf. PE, Am. st. 30 l. 5—st. 37 |
| VS ch. 37 | p. 68 | Síðan riðu þeir–konungsbeinn | cf. PE, Akv. st. 13 ll. 1–4, 14 l. 1, Am. 38 ll. 3–4 |
| VS ch. 37 | p. 68 | þangat heyræ–full af mónnum | cf. PE, Akv. st. 14 ll. 2–8 |
| VS ch. 37 | p. 68 | þeir riða at–ch. 38, f millum þeira | cf. PE, Am. st. 38 l. 5–st. 42 l. 4 |
| VS ch. 38 | p. 69 | Fyrir lónu–ná yðru lifi | cf. PE, Am. st. 42 l. 7 |
| VS ch. 39 | p. 69 | þat kemr yðr–ch. 39, p. 70 harða sokn | cf. PE, Am. st. 43–58 |
| VS ch. 39 | p. 70 | Nú er sótt at Gunnari–höndum tekinn | cf. PE, Akv. st. 18–19 |
| VS ch. 39 | p. 70 | Mikil fyrða–hans bani | cf. PE, Am. st. 59 ll. 1–4 |
| VS ch. 39 | p. 70 | Geri sem þér likar–p. 71 fjarit | cf. PE, Am. st. 60–4 |
| VS ch. 39 | p. 71 | Nú eru þeir–Gunnarr ok Hógnir | cf. PE, Akv. st. 18 |
| VS ch. 39 | p. 71 | þá malti Atli konungr–i brjósti honum lá | cf. PE, Akv. st. 20–3 |
| VS ch. 39 | p. 71 | Nú gengu þeir–at minnumhaft | cf. PE, Akv. st. 24 l. 1–4, Am. st. 65 |
| VS ch. 39 | p. 71 | þeir síndu–fast bundnar | cf. PE, Akv. st. 24 l. 5–31 l. 2 |
| VS ch. 39 | p. 71 | Guðrún sendi honum–höndum sleit | cf. PE, Am. st. 66 |
| VS ch. 40 | p. 72 | Atli konungr–vid mik ráða | cf. PE, Am. st. 67–73 |
| VS ch. 40 | p. 72 | Gerir hon sik–bæðr mína | cf. PE, Am. st. 74–80 |
| VS ch. 40 | p. 72 | Nú skaltu heyræ–en þú ázt | cf. PE, Am. st. 81 l. 8–st. 83 |
| VS ch. 40 | p. 73 | Grimm ertu–at frændu ráði | cf. PE, Am. st. 85–Am. st. 93 |
| VS ch. 40 | p. 73 | ok mund galt–p. 74 gerði sem hon hét | cf. PE, Am. st. 95–104 l. 4 |
| VS ch. 40 | p. 74 | síðan lét hon slá–hirðar hans | cf. PE, Akv. st. 41–2 |
| VS ch. 40 | p. 74 | Guðrún vildi nú–fornkvæðum | cf. PE, Am. st. 104 ll. 5–8, st. 105 |
| VS ch. 41 | p. 74 | Guðrún gekk eitt sinn- | cf. PE prose introduction to  |
| VS ch. 43 | p. 76 | upp fredd | Ghv. and Ghv. st. 13-15  |
| VS ch. 44 | p. 77 | Guðrún spyrr- | cf. PE, Ghv. st. 1 l. 4-st. 19  |
|           |       | òr helju bía |  |
|           | p. 77 | Ok er þeir váru komnir | cf. PE, Hm. st. 11-13, 15  |
|           |       | -ok dráp Hann |  |
|           | p. 77 | Hjó Hamþir- | cf. PE, Hm. st. 24, 28  |
|           |       | of síð | cf. PE, Hm. st. 281 ll. 1-4  |
|           | p. 78 | på bitu-end | cf. PE, Hm. st. 25  |

(N.B. The prose sections of PE were not necessarily used by the compiler for the equivalent passages of VS—see Introduction p. xxxvi, n. 9.)
GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

Alfar  It is possible that the alfæ were originally the souls of the dead, or the souls of the unborn or of those awaiting rebirth, though they have also been thought of as fertility spirits. The term came to signify a class of mythical beings who were occasionally mentioned together with the Æsir and were possessed of supernatural powers, but in some respects akin to men and capable of forming intimate relationships with them (e.g. in Hröðs saga Kraka, King Helgi’s daughter, Skuld, is born of an elfwoman, in Píðriks saga Hogni’s father is an elf), and finally confused with the dwarfs (see Glossary s.v. dvergar). Snorri (SnE, Gylf. ch. 17) divides the elves into Ljósálfar (‘light elves’) who dwell in Alfheim and are fairer than the sun, and Dykkálfar who dwell in the earth and are blacker than pitch. The God Frey is associated with Alfheim in Grimmismál st. 5 (PE). (See de Vries, Altgerm. Religion I, 257 ff. and N. K. Chadwick, ‘Norse Ghosts,’ Folklore LVII (1946), 58).

Disir  These were supernatural female beings who acted as guardian spirits and may have come to be considered as dead members of the same family. At one time they probably enjoyed a cult of their own. The disir often merged into other supernatural Norse women: as protective spirits they are akin to ettarfylgjur and fylgjukonur, at times they are thought of as helping in child birth and performing other functions often ascribed to the Norns. The appearance of the disir could also herald battle and death. It is probable that they were originally spirits connected with fertility (see de Vries, Altgerm. Religion II, 297 ff.).

Dvergar  These were the dwarfs, mythical beings of small stature, human in shape, and held to dwell underground or in rocks and cliffs, and to shun the light. They were renowned as metal workers. According to one source (PE, Voluspá, st. 10) the Æsir created the first pair of dwarfs who then seemingly fashioned more of their own kind from the earth; according to Snorri (SnE, Gylf. ch. 14) they originated as maggots in the flesh of the primæval giant, Ymir, out of whose body the world was created. They appear to be later more sophisticated representations of what were originally the spirits of the dead, or nature spirits (see de Vries, Altgerm. Religion I, 252 ff.).

Fylgja  A personification of the essential nature or power of an individual or family. It often appeared in the form of an animal whose nature corresponded to the name or character of the individual it represented. The family wraiths (ettarfylgjur) were protective spirits who were often seen in female form,
Glossary of Technical Terms

Hamingja The word *hamingja* could mean the 'luck' that a given person is born with and which could be transferred to others. At the same time, it seems to have had a rather more concrete connotation and to have been thought of as a kind of guardian spirit. The word may derive from *hamr*, combining its two meanings of 'the external (visible) shape the spirit could assume' and 'caul' (see de Vries, *Altgerm. Religion I*, 174, 222 f.).

*Hel* often used simply to connote 'death', was the dread goddess of the principal underworld known to Norse mythology: Snorri (*SnE, Gylf*. ch. 34) describes her as ruling over those who die of sickness or old age, thus making a neat contrast with his description of Odin's hall, Valhall, the abode of those slain in battle (*SnE, Gylf*. ch. 20), though literary art rather than genuine belief may be uppermost. The name *Hel* is also given to the underworld itself, Snorri, perhaps due to Christian influence, hinting at a degree of misery probably absent from actual pagan belief (*SnE, Gylf*. ch. 34).

*Mord* 'murder' (*morð*) as opposed to 'manslaughter' (*vig*) was considered to be a particularly odious crime which put the perpetrator outside the law. The distinction between *morð* and *vig* did not lie in the presence or absence of 'malice aforethought', but in that of *viglysing*, the immediate avowal of the deed at one of the three nearest houses to the scene of the crime. Killing without such avowal was considered to be *morð*, unless, according to *Gísla saga* ch. 13, an identifiable weapon were left in the wound (in which case the term *launvíg*, 'secret manslaughter' was used). *Vig* could be atoned for by paying compensation to the bereaved family (or if none existed to those prosecuting the suit) if they were agreeable. This was not normally the case with *morð* which carried with it the penalty of outlawry (see Fritzner, *Ordbog II*, 731; Cleasby-Vigfusson, 434; Hoops IV. 342).

*Mundr* The marriage settlement (*mundr*) was an agreed sum payable by the groom for his bride, without which no marriage was valid, and which became her personal property.

*Nafnfestr* The formal naming of a child (called *nafnfestr*) was normally preceded by the sprinkling of the child with water (*ausa barn vatni*) a pagan rite distinct from but having certain elements in common with Christian baptism (*skírn*), and followed by the bestowal, then or later, of a gift (also called *nafnfestr*). This pagan 'baptism' may ultimately owe its origin
GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

93
to early contacts between pagan Northmen and Christian Anglo-Saxons. It certainly had a legal significance since until the ceremony was performed the child could be exposed and did not have full legal rights. For a full discussion see K. Maurer, Über die Wasserweihe des germanischen Heidentumtes, Abhandlungen der königlichen bayrischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (philosophisch-philologische Classe) XV, 1881. Against the idea of a Christian origin see de Vries, Altgerm. Religion I, 179 f. W. Baetke, Christliches Lehngut in der Sagareligion, 1952, 25 ff. strongly supports the theory of Christian provenance.

Nornir The Norns were a personified expression of the Norse conception of fate (skóp). They were sometimes thought of as female supernatural beings who were present at every birth, both to render assistance as midwives and also to shape the child's destiny (see esp. SnE, Gylfaginning ch. 15). There seems to have been an indefinite number of these supernatural women but they tend to appear in groups of three. A second conception arising partly out of this belief was akin to that of the Roman Parcae; there were in particular three Norns, known as Urðr, Verðandi and Skuld, who were held to determine men's fate and who at times, like their classical counterparts, seem to be associated with weaving and spinning (cf. Poetic Edda, Helgakviða Hundingsbana I, st. 3, l. 1, Reginsmál, st. 14, ll. 7–8). The Norns, as is the case with most of the supernatural or supernaturally endowed women of Norse literature, do not form a clear-cut conception. Sometimes they are called dstir (or spádisir), which is also used occasionally of Valkyria (who exercise some influence on men's fate).

Seiðkona The seiðkona was a woman (kona) highly skilled in the exercise of the magic art (seiðr) whereby she could effect an exchange of appearances, or lay a curse on an enemy, cause madness, foretell the future, etc. She was not seldom malignant. The seiðkona had a male counterpart in the seiðmaðr.

Troll Trolls were generally conceived of as monstrous, gigantic beings, usually, if not always, evilly disposed. Troll hafi pik was a pagan equivalent of 'go to the devil'. They are not clearly distinguishable from jötunn and pursar, the giants. The origin of trolls and giants is not clear. They may be in part personified aspects of natural phenomena, in part they may be the result of hallucinatory images produced by various conditions such as hunger. They figure largely in Norse mythology as the enemies of the gods and as the primaeval inhabitants of the world. In the beginning was Ymir the giant. A good account of giants and trolls in their Norse and more general Germanic setting is given by de Vries, Altgerm. Religion I, 241 ff.

Valkyria Valkyria. The word basically signifies 'chooser of the slain'. The valkyries were Odin's handmaidens whose main duty it was to sway the
course of battles and conduct the slain to Valhalla. The conception of valkyries as armed, mounted supernatural warrior-maidens is very probably a poetic development of an earlier and cruder belief in savage elemental beings who rejoiced in bloodshed and carnage (cf. Hoops IV, 475; Nora K. Chadwick, 'The Monsters and Beowulf' in The Anglo Saxons, studies... presented to Bruce Dickens, 1959, 177). In Norse literature the valkyries are sometimes confused with skjaldmeyjar (shield-maidens), a conception akin to the amazon idea. (From the earliest Germanic times women had taken part in battles, cf. Tacitus, Germania, ch. 8).

Volva The volva was a seidkona (q.v.) who exercised a predominantly mantic function. She always carried a staff (völfr) which may well account for her name. An excellent description of the volva and her art is to be found in Eiriks saga rauða ch. 4.
INDEX

I PERSONAL NAMES

Agnarr or Auðabróðir, fights against Hjálmgunnar, 35
Álfr inum gamla, Álf the Old, 17
Álfr Hjálpreksson, 21–23, 45
Álfr Hundingsson, 15
Alsviðr Heimisson, 41–3
Andvari, a dwarf, 25, 26
Áslaug, daughter of Sigurd and Brynhild, 50
Átl Budason, 44, 46, 50, 60, 63–74, 76
Aúabráðir: see Agnarr

Bekkildr Buðladóttr, 41
Bera: see Kostbéra
Bikki, King Jormunrek’s counsellor, 60, 75, 76
Borghini, King Sigmund’s wife, 14, 18
Bragi, god of Poetry, 38
Breði, Skadi’s thrall, 1
Brynhildr Buðladóttr, 34, 35, 41–61
Buðli, 42, 44, 48, 50, 53, 55, 73

Dvalinn, a dwarf, 32

Erljón Jónakrssson, 74, 77
Eyjólfr Hundingsson, 15
Eyjólm, father of Hjordis, 19–21, 45
Eyjómr, 62

Fáfnir, a dragon, 24–8, 30–5, 40, 48, 50, 52, 53
Fengr, one of Ódin’s names, 29
Fjölnir, one of Ódin’s names, 29
Fjörnir, Gunnar’s cupbearer, 67
Frigg, Ódin’s wife, 2

Gjúki, 43–7, 49, 53, 55
Gjúkungar, 70, 74
Glaumvör, Gunnar’s wife, 66–8
Granmarr, Hoddbrodd’s father, 15–17
Granmarr, Hoddbrodd’s brother, 16–17
Grímhildr, Gjúki’s wife, 44, 46–8, 50, 52, 53, 48, 60–4
Gripir, Sigurd’s uncle, 28

Guðrún Gjúkadóttr, 43–8, 50–2, 54, 56–65, 69, 71–7
 Gunnarr Gjúkason, 44, 47–60, 62, 65–71, 76, 77
Guttormr Gjúkason, 44, 57, 58, 61
Goðnir, a giant, 16

Haddingjar, 63
Hagbardr Hámundarson, 45
Hagbardr Hundingsson, 15
Haki Hámundarson, 45
Hákon, 62
Hálfr, king of Denmark, 62
Hamðir Jónarkrssson, 74, 76, 77
Hámundr Sigmundarson, 14, 45
Heimir, Brynhild’s foster-father, 41, 42, 48, 50
Hel, goddess of the underworld, 32
Helgi Sigmundarson, 14–17
Hervárðr Hundingsson, 15
Hjalli, a thrall, 70, 71
Hjálmgunnar, 35
Hjálprekr, king of Denmark, 21–3, 50
Hjóðe Eýlimadóttr, 19–23
Hjorvarðr Hundingsson, 30
Hljóð, daughter of giant Hrúnmir, 3
Hnukarr, one of Ódin’s names, 29
Hoddbroddr Granmarsson, 15–17
Hreidmarr, Regin’s father, 23–6
Hrúnmir, a giant, 3
Hring’s synir, King Hoddbrodd’s allies, 17
Hropt, one of Ódin’s names, 37
Hundirg, killed by Helgi, 14, 15, 19
Hundings synir, 15, 28, 29, 30, 45
Hýmir, Huns, 71
Högni, ally of Hoddbrodd, 17
Högni, Sigrun’s father, 15, 16
Högni Gjúkason, 44, 47, 48, 53, 54, 57, 59, 60, 65–73, 76, 77
Högni, a god, 25

Jarisleifr, 62
Jónakr, Gudrun’s third husband, 60, 74, 75
Jórnunrek, Svanhild’s husband, 60, 75–7
INDEX

Kostbera, Hogni’s wife, 65, 66, 68
Leifr, Helgi’s sea-captain, 15
Loki, a god, 25, 26
Lyngvi Hundingsson, 19, 20, 29, 30
Niðurgr Hognason, 73
Oddrún, 60
Óðin, chief of the gods, 1–3, (4), (20), 21, (23), 24–6, (28), (30), 35, (78)
Orkningr, Kostbera’s brother, 68
Ott, Hreiðmarsson 25, 26
Rán, a goddess, 25
Randverð Jórmunreksson, 75
Reginn Hreiðmarsson, Sigurd’s fosterfather, 23–8, 30, 32–4, 42, 49, 53
Rerir Sigason, 2, 3
Rognir, one of Ódin’s names, 38
Sigarr, 45
Sigarr’s warriors at Fjón, 62
Siggeirr
Siggeirr, king of Gautland, 4–8, 10, 12–14, 16
Sigi Óðinsson, 1, 2
Sigmundr Sigurðarson, 48, 63
Sigmundr Völungsungr, king of Húnland, 3, 5, 8, 9–14, 18–21, 27, 28, 31, 45, 46, 60
Signý Völungsóttir, 3–9, 12
Sigrún Hognadóttir, 16, 17
Sigurðr Sigmundarson, 23, 24, 26–35, 39–61, 63, 65, 69, 73–7
Sinfjötli Sigmundarson, 10–14, 16, 18
Skaði, Bredi’s lord, 1
Snævarr Hognason, 68
Sólarr Hognason, 68
Surtr, a giant, 32
Svafirlóð, one of Gudrun’s suite, 54
Svanhildr Sigurðardóttir, 60, 74–7
Sóri Jónakrsson, 74, 77
Týr, a god, 36
Valdamarr of Denmark, 62
Vingi, Atlí’s messenger, 65, 66, 68
Völungsar, descendants of Volsung, 3, 4, 8, 10, 14, 16–20, 24, 28, 29, 35, 74
Völungsung Rerisson, 3–7, 13, 14
Dóra Hákonardóttir, 62

PLACE NAMES

Andvørafors, Andvari Falls, 25
Ásagárdr, 16
Breðafjönn, Bredi’s Drift, 1
Brávöllir, 16
Buslítjón, 23
Danmark, Denmark, 21, 62
Fjón, 62
Frakkland, Frankland, 35
Frekasteinn, 17
Gautland, 4, 6
Gnipalundr, 16
Gnitaheiaor, 48
Grikklandshaf, the Greek Ocean, 41
Grindir, 17
Heðinssey, 15
Hindarfjall, Hindfell, 34, 35
Hlymdalir, 48, 50
Hringstaðir, 14
Húnalanr, Húnland, 2, 3, 19
Láganess, 16
Nórvasund, 15
Óskaptr, 32
Raudabjörg, 15
Rán, the Rhine, 44, 50, 71
Sólfsjóll, Solfell, 14, 17
Svarinshaugr, 16
Sók, 17
Valbjörg, 64
Varinsey, 16
Varinsfjöðr, 15
Vinbjörg, 64
Prasnes, Thrasness, 16
INDEX

3 OTHER NAMES

Alsvid, a horse, 38
Andvaranautr, a gold ring, 26, 50, 51
Anvákr, a horse, 38

Barnstókkur, Barnstock, a tree, 4

Danakonungr, King of the Danes, 55

Frakkar, Franks, 62

Garðakonungur, King of Gardariki, 49
Gaupnir, a sword, 38
Goti, Gunnar’s horse, 48
Gramr, Sigurd’s sword, 21, 27, 29, 33, 34, 41, 48, 50, 58
Grani, Sigurd’s horse, 24, 34, 46, 48, 49, 52, 53, 60, 61

Hrotti, a sword, 34
Huginn, one of Odin’s ravens, 29
Hǫlkur, Hogni’s horse, 48

Langvarður, Langobards, 62

Risill, a sword, 33

Saxar, Saxons, 62
Sleipnir, Odin’s horse, 24, 38
Sveggjuðr, a horse, 17
Sveipuðr, a horse, 17

Vanir, 39
Væringjar, 40

Æsir, 25, 26, 32, 38