



# THE POETIC EDDA

A Dual-Language Edition

EDWARD PETTIT



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# *Völuspá*

## (Codex Regius)

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*Völuspá* (*Vsp.*) ‘The Prophecy of the Seeress’ survives in two substantially different versions in **R** (fol. 1r–3r) and **H** (fol. 20r–21r), which are therefore presented separately in this edition. Additionally, many stanzas, apparently from a third version, are quoted in *SnEGylf*, a work for which the poem is a major source. The relationships between these versions are complex and hard to define, but probably involve both oral and scribal transmission and their associated types of textual variation.

The poem, composed in *fornyrðislag*, is spoken by a seeress in the first and third persons, an enigmatic alternation perhaps suggestive of a trance-like state. She possibly speaks following payment by the god Óðinn, who, along with humankind (and maybe other sentient beings), forms her audience. Her speech, which, in the opinion of some scholars shows the influence of the pseudo-sibylline oracles of early medieval Christian tradition, is ambitious in scope: it spans the formation, corruption and destruction of the universe and its inhabitants (gods, giants, humans, dwarves and heavenly bodies), followed by its rebirth in purity—a sequence paralleled in the mythologies of other cultures. Her speech is also rich in imagery, densely allusive and temporally complex. Together, these attributes make *Vsp.* a challenging but highly rewarding poem to interpret, one that has stimulated a wealth of (sometimes conflicting) scholarly commentary. Interpretation of *Vsp.* requires considerable knowledge of Old Norse mythology, for which we are largely dependent on Snorri’s interpretation of the poem in *SnEGylf*, which, however, should not be assumed to be wholly correct, complete or unbiased. It also demands appreciation of the distinct possibility that aspects of the poem have been influenced by Christian apocalyptic traditions.

Where, when and by whom *Vsp.* was composed is uncertain, as is the case for all the poems in this book. However, Iceland in the years leading up to or following its conversion to Christianity in 999/1000 has often been favoured. This is partly due to numerous passages suggestive of the influence of the new religion, such as the punishment of oath-breakers, murderers and adulterers in *Vsp.* 37–38, reminiscent of the fate of sinners in *Revelation* 21:8, the darkening of the sun and moon and the disappearance of the stars in *Vsp.* 54–55, similar to *Mark* 13:24–25; and the penultimate stanza of **H**’s version (absent from **R**’s), which may allude to the coming of the Christian God on Doomsday, as in *Mark* 13:26. An Icelandic origin might be indicated

by the reddening of the gods' dwellings and the darkening of the sun during the summers preceding Ragnarok (*Vsp.* 40), which could refer to the visible effects of ash clouds over Iceland, an actively volcanic country. If the opening words of *Vsp.* 55 (*Sól tær sortna, sígr fold í mar* 'Sun turns black, earth sinks into sea') echo in the opening of st. 24 of *Þorfinnsdrápa* 'Þorfinnr's Poem' (*Björt verðr sól at svartri, sökkr fold í mar dökkvan* 'The bright sun will turn to black, earth sink into the dark sea'), composed by the Christian Icelander Arnórr Þórðarson jarlaskáld, perhaps in c. 1065, we may have a rough *terminus ante quem* for *Vsp.*<sup>1</sup>

The poem's most compelling, and rather early, parallel comes not from Iceland, however, but from a northern English churchyard in what was once an Anglo-Norse context. In the grounds of the parish church of St. Mary's, Gosforth, Cumbria, stands a stone cross dating from the first half of the tenth century. In addition to a Crucifixion scene, its sides are carved with scenes highly suggestive of Ragnarok, including likely depictions of Heimdallr with his horn (cf. *Vsp.* 45); Loki's captivity and attendance by Sigyn (34); the wolf's escape from its bonds (43); and a version of Víðarr's killing of the wolf which devoured Óðinn (53). It seems very likely that poetry such as *Vsp.* inspired much of the carving on this unique monument.

## Synopsis

A seeress requests an audience and announces that the god Óðinn wants her to recount her earliest memories (1). She tells of giants who fostered her, nine worlds, a glorious tree (the world-tree, Yggdrasill) beneath the ground (2), and Ymir, a giant who lived when there was otherwise only a void (3). She recalls how the sons of Burr (Óðinn, Vili and Vé) raised up earth (4), and mentions the young sun, stars and moon, before they had established their places (5).

The gods, she says, then named night and day (6). They built a temple and an altar, and made treasures and tools (7). They happily played board games and knew no want of gold, until three giantesses arrived (8). Then the gods assembled to decide about the creation of a dwarf-lord (9). There follow lists of dwarf-names, headed by Mótsognir and Durinn (at least some of this material is probably interpolated) (10–16).

The seeress then recalls the discovery on a shore of the inanimate forms of Askr and Embla, the first man and woman (17), which three gods, Óðinn, Hœnir and Lóðurr, animated (18). Her memories then return to Yggdrasill, now standing tall above a spring (19), from which came three maidens (the Nornir, effectively the Northern Fates) who inscribed the destinies of humans on wood (20).

Next the seeress, who apparently refers to herself in the third person, recalls the world's first war. It may have been caused when an itinerant sorceress called Gullveig (possibly also known as Heiðr), who was possibly associated with the divine tribe

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1 SPSMA II, 258–59.

called the Vanir, was suspended on spearpoints and burnt three times in the hall of Hárr (Óðinn), in an unsuccessful attempt to kill her (21–22). Having deliberated on their best course of action (23), the Æsir (the tribe of gods led by Óðinn) fought the Vanir, with Óðinn casting the first shot, but the Vanir broke into the Æsir's stronghold (24).

The war apparently having ended with the two sides reconciled and combined, the new collective of deities asked who had given the goddess Freyja to the giants (25). In response, the god Þórr broke oaths, probably by killing a giant builder to whom the gods had promised Freyja as payment for his work (26).

The seeress's thoughts turn to the god Heimdallr, whose hearing is hidden beneath Yggdrasill, and to Óðinn's sacrifice of an eye in return for wisdom (27). She relates how she once sat alone outside and was visited by Óðinn, who gazed into her eyes. She asks why he questions her (or, less likely, he asks why she questions him), and then declares that she knows everything, including how he hid his eye in the spring of Mímir (a figure of wisdom), from which Mímir drinks mead each morning (28). Óðinn, we learn, then gave her treasures (probably as payment for the recitation of this poem), and she continues her vision (29).

Valkyries are her next topic (30). Following a list of their names and references to their riding there come, at the centre of the poem, four stanzas describing the death of Baldr, son of Óðinn and his wife, Frigg. This came about by a spear of mistletoe cast by the god Høðr, a deed for which the trickster-god Loki was deemed responsible and taken captive (31–34).

After referring to a river filled with swords and knives (35), a hall of the dwarves, and the hall of a giant (36), the seeress describes an ominous hall of snakes, where perjurers and adulterers suffered, where the dragon Niðhöggr sucked corpses and a wolf tore men's flesh (37–38). The seeress stays on the topic of wolves in describing their birth to 'the old one' in the forest of Járnviðr and prophesying that one of them, in troll-form, will (arguably) assault the sun on behalf of the moon (39), perhaps as a result of which subsequent summers will be dark and all weather treacherous (40). These signs herald Ragnarok, the Norse apocalypse, other indications of which the seeress describes in following stanzas.

She describes the giant Eggþér playing his harp, cockerels crowing and the waking of Óðinn's chosen warriors (41–42), before prophesying that the howling wolf (Garmr/Fenrir) will break free of its bonds (43). Kinsmen, she predicts, will kill each other before the world ends (44). She goes on to say that giants play, the god Heimdallr blows his horn, and Óðinn consults the head of Mímir (Mímir) in search of knowledge (45). Yggdrasill groans and shakes, and the giant (Garmr/Fenrir or Loki) breaks loose (46). Garmr/Fenrir howls and will break free (47). The giant Hrymr journeys from the east, the snake of Miðgarðr writhes, an eagle shrieks, and Naglfar (a ship?) breaks loose (48). A ship (Naglfar?) journeys from the east, bearing the giants, Loki and the wolf (49). The gods take council, the land of giants roars and dwarves groan (50).

The fire-demon Surtr arrives, probably with a radiant, fiery sword, cliffs collapse, witches wander, humans travel to Hel, the underworld of the dead, and the sky splits (51). Óðinn dies fighting the wolf, and Freyr dies fighting Surtr (52). Víðarr, Óðinn's son, avenges his father (53). Þórr (mortally wounded?) steps away from the snake of Miðgarðr (54). The sun turns black, the earth sinks into the sea, the stars disappear, and flame rages against the sky (55). The seeress's vision of Ragnarok concludes with a further reference to the wolf breaking free (56).

Next the seeress sees the green earth rising from the sea again (57). The surviving gods talk about the world-serpent and Óðinn's runes (58). They will recover their lost gaming pieces (59), fields will grow green without being sown, all evil will be remedied, and Høðr and Baldr will return from the dead to inhabit Óðinn's halls (60). Hœnir draws lots, and the sons of two brothers (Baldr and Høðr?) inhabit the world (61). She also sees a gleaming hall, located on Gimlé, where honourable people shall live happily forever (62). Her final image is of a flying Niðhoggr carrying corpses to Gimlé, after which she says she will sink (63).

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## Völuspá

1. Hljóðs bið ek allar kindir,  
meiri ok minni, mögu Heimdallar!  
Vildu at ek, Valföðr, vel fyrtelja  
forn spjöll fira, þau er fremst um man.
2. Ek man jötna, ár um borna,  
þá er forðum mik fœdda hofðu;  
nú man ek heima, nú íviðjur,  
mjötvið mæran, fyr mold neðan.
3. Ár var alda, þar er Ymir bygði;  
vara sandr né sær né svalar unnir;  
jörð fannsk æva né upphiminn,  
gap var ginnunga, en gras hvergi.
4. Áðr Burs synir bjöðum um yrðu,  
þeir er Miðgarð mæran skópu;  
Sól skein sunnan á salar steina,  
þá var grund gróin grœnum lauki.
5. Sól varp sunnan, sinni Mána,  
hendi inni hægri um himinjóðyr;  
Sól þat né vissi hvar hon sali átti,  
stjornur þat né vissu hvar þær staði áttu,  
Máni þat né vissi hvat hann megins átti.
6. Þá gengu regin öll á rökstóla,  
ginnheilög goð, ok um þat gættusk:  
nótt ok niðjum nœfn um gáfu,  
morgin hétu ok miðjan dag,  
undorn ok aptan, árum at telja.
7. Hittusk Æsir á Iðavelli,  
þeir er horg ok hof hátimbruðu;  
afla lögðu, auð smíðuðu,  
tangir skópu ok tól gørðu.
8. Teflðu í túni, teitir váru,  
var þeim vættermis vant ór gulli,  
unz þrjár kvómu þursa meyjar,  
ámátkar mjök, ór Jötunheimum.

# The Prophecy of the Seeress

1. 'A hearing I ask from all kindreds,<sup>1</sup>  
greater and lesser, the sons of Heimdallr!<sup>2</sup>  
You wish,<sup>3</sup> Valfǫðr,<sup>4</sup> that I well recount  
ancient tales of the living, those which I recall from longest ago.<sup>5</sup>
2. 'I recall giants, born of old,  
those who formerly had fostered me;<sup>6</sup>  
nine worlds I recall, nine wood-dwelling women(?),<sup>7</sup>  
the glorious measure-tree,<sup>8</sup> beneath the ground.<sup>9</sup>
3. 'It was early in ages<sup>10</sup> when Ymir lived,<sup>11</sup>  
there was neither sand<sup>12</sup> nor sea nor cool waves;  
no earth existed at all, nor sky above,<sup>13</sup>  
a gap of gaping abysses(?),<sup>14</sup> and grass nowhere.
4. 'Before<sup>15</sup> the sons of Burr lifted up lands,<sup>16</sup>  
they who gave shape to glorious Miðgarðr;<sup>17</sup>  
the sun shone from the south on the hall's stones,<sup>18</sup>  
then the ground was overgrown with green leek.<sup>19</sup>
5. 'Sól, companion of Máni,<sup>20</sup> cast from the south  
her right hand<sup>21</sup> over the sky-horse-deer(?);<sup>22</sup>  
Sól did not know where she had halls,  
stars did not know where they had stations,  
Máni did not know what might he had.<sup>23</sup>
6. 'Then all the great powers, the most holy gods,  
went to their doom-seats,<sup>24</sup> and deliberated about it:  
they gave names to night and its kindred,  
called them morning and midday,  
afternoon and evening, to count the years.<sup>25</sup>
- 7.<sup>26</sup> 'The Æsir met on Iðavöllum,<sup>27</sup>  
they who erected an altar and a temple high;<sup>28</sup>  
they set up forges, fashioned treasure,  
shaped tongs and made tools.
8. 'They played at tables<sup>29</sup> in the meadow,<sup>30</sup> were merry,  
there was for them no whit of a want of gold;  
until three maidens of giants came,<sup>31</sup>  
immensely mighty, from Jötunheimar.<sup>32</sup>

9. 'Þá gengu regin öll á rokstóla,  
ginnheilög goð, ok um þat gættusk,  
hverr skyldi dverga dróttin skepja  
ór Brimis blóði ok ór blám leggjum.
10. 'Þar var Mótsognir mæztr um orðinn  
dverga allra, en Durinn annarr;  
þeir manlíkun mǫrg um gørðu,  
dvergar, ór jørðu, sem Durinn sagði.
11. 'Nýi ok Niði, Norðri ok Suðri,  
Austri ok Vestri, Alþjófr, Dvalinn,  
Bívoorr, Bávorr, Þomburr, Nóri,  
Án ok Ánarr, Ái, Mjøðvitnir,
12. 'Veigr ok Gandálfr, Vindálfr, Þráinn,  
Þekkr ok Þorinn, Þrór, Vittr ok Littr,  
Nár ok Nýráðr — nú hefi ek dverga —  
Reginn ok Ráðsviðr — rétt um talða.
13. 'Fíli, Kíli, Fundinn, Náli,  
Hepti, Víli, Hánarr, Svíurr,  
Frár, Hornbori, Frægr ok Lóni,  
Aurvangr, Jari, Eikinskjalði.
14. 'Mál er dverga í Dvalins liði  
ljóna kindum til Lofars telja:  
þeir er sóttu frá Salarsteini  
Aurvanga sjöt til Jøruvalla.
15. 'Þar var Draupnir ok Dólgþrasir,  
Hár, Haugspori, Hlévangr, Glói,  
Skirvir, Virvir, Skáfiðr, Ái,
16. 'Álfr ok Yngvi, Eikinskjalði,  
Fjalarr ok Frosti, Finnrr ok Ginnarr;  
þat mun uppi, meðan öld lifir,  
langniðja tal Lofars hafat.
17. 'Unz þrír kvómu ór því liði,  
øflgir ok ástgir, Æsir, at húsi;  
fundu á landi, lítt megandi,  
Ask ok Emblu, ørloglausa.

9. 'Then all the great powers, the most holy gods,  
went to their doom-seats and deliberated about it:  
who<sup>33</sup> should devise<sup>34</sup> the lord of dwarves<sup>35</sup>  
from Brimir's blood and from blue limbs.<sup>36</sup>
10. 'There Mótsognir<sup>37</sup> was made<sup>38</sup> greatest  
of all dwarves, and Durinn<sup>39</sup> second;  
they made many man-shapes,<sup>40</sup>  
[these] dwarves, from earth,<sup>41</sup> as Durinn said.<sup>42</sup>
11. 'Nýi and Niði,<sup>43</sup> Norðri and Suðri,<sup>44</sup>  
Austri and Vestri,<sup>45</sup> Alþjófr,<sup>46</sup> Dvalinn,<sup>47</sup>  
Bívorr,<sup>48</sup> Bávorr, Bømburr,<sup>49</sup> Nóri,<sup>50</sup>  
Án<sup>51</sup> and Ánarr,<sup>52</sup> Ái,<sup>53</sup> Mjøðvitnir,<sup>54</sup>
12. 'Veigr<sup>55</sup> and Gandálfr,<sup>56</sup> Vindálfr,<sup>57</sup> Þráinn,<sup>58</sup>  
Þekkr<sup>59</sup> and Þorinn,<sup>60</sup> Þrór,<sup>61</sup> Vitr<sup>62</sup> and Litr,<sup>63</sup>  
Nár<sup>64</sup> and Nýráðr<sup>65</sup> — now I have enumerated —  
Reginn<sup>66</sup> and Ráðsviðr<sup>67</sup> — the dwarves rightly.
13. 'Fíli,<sup>68</sup> Kíli,<sup>69</sup> Fundinn,<sup>70</sup> Náli,<sup>71</sup>  
Hepti,<sup>72</sup> Víli,<sup>73</sup> Hánarr,<sup>74</sup> Svíurr,<sup>75</sup>  
Frár,<sup>76</sup> Hornbori,<sup>77</sup> Frægr<sup>78</sup> and Lóni,<sup>79</sup>  
Aurvangr,<sup>80</sup> Jari,<sup>81</sup> Eikinskjalði.<sup>82</sup>
14. 'It's time to count the dwarves in Dvalinn's company<sup>83</sup>  
for the descendants of men<sup>84</sup> — down to Lofarr.<sup>85</sup>  
they who set out from Salarsteinn<sup>86</sup>  
for the dwellings of Aurvangar at Jǫruvellir.<sup>87</sup>
15. 'There was Draupnir<sup>88</sup> and Dólgþrasir,<sup>89</sup>  
Hár,<sup>90</sup> Haugspori,<sup>91</sup> Hlévangr,<sup>92</sup> Glói,<sup>93</sup>  
Skirvir,<sup>94</sup> Virvir,<sup>95</sup> Skáfiðr,<sup>96</sup> Ái,<sup>97</sup>
16. 'Álfr<sup>98</sup> and Yngvi,<sup>99</sup> Eikinskjalði,<sup>100</sup>  
Fjalarr<sup>101</sup> and Frosti,<sup>102</sup> Finn<sup>103</sup> and Ginnarr;<sup>104</sup>  
that will be remembered as long as the world lasts,<sup>105</sup>  
the long list of Lofarr's forefathers.
17. 'Until three came from *that* company,<sup>106</sup>  
strong and kind, Æsir, to a house;<sup>107</sup>  
they found on the shore,<sup>108</sup> with little strength,  
Askr and Embla, lacking fate.<sup>109</sup>

18. 'Qnd þau né áttu, óð þau né hofðu,  
lá né læti né litu góða;  
qnd gaf Óðinn, óð gaf Hæmir,  
lá gaf Lóðurr ok litu góða.
19. 'Ask veit ek standa, heitir Yggdrasill,  
hár baðmr ausinn hvíta auri;  
þaðan koma döggar, þærs í dala falla,  
stendr æ yfir grœnn Urðar brunni.
20. 'Þaðan koma meyjar, margs vitandi,  
þrjár, ór þeim sæ er und þolli stendr;  
Urð hétu eina, aðra Verðandi —  
skáru á skíði — Skuld ina þriðju;  
þær lög lögðu, þær líf kuru  
alda börnum, ørlög seggja.
21. 'Þat man hon fólkvíg fyrst í heimi,  
er Gullveigu geirum studdu,  
ok í holl Hárs hana brendu;  
þryssvar brendu þryssvar borna,  
opt, ósjaldan, þó hon enn lifir.
22. 'Heiði hana hétu, hvars til húsa kom,  
völu velspá, vitti hon ganda;  
seið hon kunni, seið hon leikin,  
æ var hon angan illrar brúðar.
23. 'Þá gengu regin öll á rökstóla,  
ginnheilög goð, ok um þat gættusk,  
hvárt skyldu Æsir afráð gjalda  
eða skyldu goðin öll gildi eiga.
24. 'Fleygði Óðinn ok í fólk um skaut —  
þat var enn fólkvíg fyrst í heimi;  
brotinn var borðvegr borgar Ása,  
knáttu Vanir vígspá völlu sporna.
25. 'Þá gengu regin öll á rökstóla,  
ginnheilög goð, ok um þat gættusk:  
hverr hefði lopt allt lævi blandit  
eða ætt jötuns Óðs mey gefna.

18. 'They<sup>110</sup> possessed no breath, they had no inspiration,<sup>111</sup>  
no locks<sup>112</sup> or voice<sup>113</sup> or good colours;<sup>114</sup>  
Óðinn gave breath,<sup>115</sup> Hœnir gave inspiration,<sup>116</sup>  
Lóðurr<sup>117</sup> gave locks and good colours.<sup>118</sup>
- 19.<sup>119</sup> 'I know a standing ash, it's called Yggdrasill,<sup>120</sup>  
a tall tree doused with white mud;<sup>121</sup>  
from there come dews, those that fall in dales;<sup>122</sup>  
it always stands, green, above Urðr's spring.<sup>123</sup>
20. 'From there come maidens, knowing many things,  
three [maidens], from the sea which stands under the tree;<sup>124</sup>  
one was called<sup>125</sup> Urðr, the second Verðandi,  
— they inscribed on a stick<sup>126</sup> — the third Skuld,<sup>127</sup>  
they laid down laws, they chose lives  
for the sons of men, the fates of men.
21. 'She recalls it,<sup>128</sup> the first tribe-war in the world,  
when they stuck Gullveig up on spears,<sup>129</sup>  
and in Hárr's hall burned her,<sup>130</sup>  
thrice they burned the thrice-born,<sup>131</sup>  
often, not seldom, yet she still lives.
22. 'Heiðr they called her,<sup>132</sup> wherever she came to houses,<sup>133</sup>  
a seeress of good prophecies,<sup>134</sup> she drummed up spirits(?);<sup>135</sup>  
she knew sorcery, she practised sorcery while possessed,<sup>136</sup>  
she was ever the delight of an evil bride.
23. 'Then all the great powers, the most holy gods,  
went to their doom-seats and deliberated about it:  
whether the Æsir must pay a great penalty,  
or all the gods must have offerings.<sup>137</sup>
24. 'Óðinn let fly and shot into the army<sup>138</sup> —  
that was still the first tribe-war in the world;  
broken was the board-way of the Æsir's stronghold,<sup>139</sup>  
the Vanir bestrode<sup>140</sup> the plains with a battle-spell.<sup>141</sup>
- 25.<sup>142</sup> 'Then all the great powers, the most holy gods,<sup>143</sup>  
went to their doom-seats and deliberated about it:  
who<sup>144</sup> had mingled all the air with mischief,<sup>145</sup>  
and given Óðr's wife<sup>146</sup> to the giant's family.<sup>147</sup>

26. Þórr einn þar var, þrunginn móði,  
hann sjaldan sitr er hann slíkt um fregn;  
á gengusk eiðar, orð ok sœri,  
mál öll meginlig er á meðal fóru.
27. 'Veit hon Heimdallar hljóð um fólgit  
undir heiðvönum helgum baðmi;  
á sér hon ausask aurgum forsi  
af veði Valföðrs. Vituð ér enn, eða hvað?
28. 'Ein sat hon úti, þá er inn aldni kom,  
Yggjungur Ása, ok í augu leit:  
"Hvers fregnið mik? Hví freistið mín?  
Allt veit ek, Óðinn, hvar þú auga falt,  
í inum mæra Mímis brunni;  
drekkur mjöð Mímir morgin hverjan  
af veði Valföðrs!" Vituð ér enn, eða hvað?
29. 'Valði henni Herföðr hringa ok men,  
fé, spjöll spaklig ok spáganda;  
sá hon vítt ok um vítt of veröld hverja.
30. 'Sá hon valkyrjur, vítt um komnar,  
görvar at ríða til goðþjóðar;  
Skuld helt skildi, en Skoðgul önnur,  
Gunnr, Hildir, Gøndul ok Geirskoðgul;  
nú eru talðar önnur Herjans,  
görvar at ríða grund, valkyrjur.
31. 'Ek sá Baldri, blóðgum tívur,  
Óðins barni, ørlög fólgir;  
stóð um vaxinn, völlum hæri,  
mjór ok mjök fagr, mistilteinn.
32. 'Varð af þeim meiði, er mær sýndisk,  
harmflaug hættlig; Höðr nam skjóta;  
Baldrs bróðir var of borinn snemma,  
sá nam Óðins sonr einnættir vega.
33. 'Þó hann æva hendr né höfuð kembði,  
áðr á bál um bar Baldrs andskota;  
en Frigg um grét í Fensöllum  
vá Valhallar. Vituð ér enn, eða hvað?



26. 'Þórr alone was there,<sup>148</sup> swollen with anger,  
he seldom sits when he hears of such;  
oaths were stamped on, words and sworn declarations,  
all the binding speeches which had passed between them.
27. 'She knows of Heimdallr's hearing,<sup>149</sup>  
hidden under the light-accustomed holy tree;<sup>150</sup>  
she sees a river splashing in a muddy fall<sup>151</sup>  
from Valföðr's pledge.<sup>152</sup> Would you know still [more], or what?<sup>153</sup>
28. 'Alone she sat outside when the old one came,<sup>154</sup>  
Yggjungur<sup>155</sup> of the Æsir, and looked into her eyes:<sup>156</sup>  
"What do you ask me? Why do you test me?"<sup>157</sup>  
I know it all, Óðinn, where you hid your eye,  
in the famous spring of Mímir;<sup>158</sup>  
Mímir drinks mead every morning  
from Valföðr's pledge!"<sup>159</sup> Would you know still [more], or what?
29. 'Herföðr selected for her rings and torcs,<sup>160</sup>  
treasure,<sup>161</sup> wise words and prophecy-staffs;  
she saw far and wide over every world.
30. 'She saw valkyries,<sup>162</sup> come from far and wide,  
ready to ride to the god-realm.<sup>163</sup>  
Skuld held a shield,<sup>164</sup> and Sköggul<sup>165</sup> next,  
Gunnr,<sup>166</sup> Hildir,<sup>167</sup> Gøndul<sup>168</sup> and Geirskogul;<sup>169</sup>  
now Herjann's women are enumerated,<sup>170</sup>  
ready to ride the earth — valkyries.
31. 'I saw for Baldr,<sup>171</sup> for the bloody sacrifice,<sup>172</sup>  
for Óðinn's child, fates concealed,<sup>173</sup>  
[full-]grown there stood, higher than the fields,<sup>174</sup>  
slender and most fair, the mistletoe.<sup>175</sup>
32. 'From that tree,<sup>176</sup> which seemed slender,<sup>177</sup>  
came a dangerous harm-shaft; Høðr shot.<sup>178</sup>  
Baldr's brother was soon born,<sup>179</sup>  
that son of Óðinn struck when one night old.<sup>180</sup>
33. 'He never washed his hands or combed his head,<sup>181</sup>  
before he carried Baldr's opponent to the pyre;<sup>182</sup>  
but Frigg<sup>183</sup> wept in Fensalir<sup>184</sup>  
for the woe of Valhöll.<sup>185</sup> Would you know still [more], or what?

34. 'Hapt sá hon liggja undir Hveralundi,  
lægiarns líki Loka áþekktan;  
þar sitr Sigyn, þeygi um sínum  
ver velglýjuð. Vituð ér enn, eða hvat?
35. 'Á fellr austan um eitrdala,  
soxum ok sverðum, Slíðr heitir sú.
36. 'Stóð fyr norðan á Niðavöllum  
salr ór gulli Sindra ættar;  
en annarr stóð á Ókólni,  
bjórsalr jötuns, en sá Brimir heitir.
37. 'Sal sá hon standa sólu fjarri,  
Náströndu á, norðr horfa dyrr;  
fellu eitrdropar inn um ljóra,  
sá er undinn salr orma hryggjum.
38. 'Sá hon þar vaða þunga strauma  
menn meinsvara ok morðvarga,  
ok þanns annars glepr eyrarúnu;  
þar sáug Niðhoggr nái framgengna,  
sleit vargr vera. Vituð ér enn, eða hvat?
39. 'Austr sat in aldna í Járnviði  
ok fœddi þar Fenris kindir;  
verðr af þeim öllum einna nokkurr  
tungls tjúgari í trolls hami.
40. 'Fyllisk fjörvi feigra manna,  
rýðr ragna sjöt rauðum dreyra;  
svört var ða sólskin of sumur eptir,  
veðr öll válynd. Vituð ér enn, eða hvat?
41. 'Sat þar á haugi ok sló hørpu  
gýgjar hirðir, glaðr Eggþér;  
gól um honum í gaglviði  
fagrrauðr hani, sá er Fjalarr heitir.
42. 'Gól um Ásum Gullinkambi,  
sá vegr hólða at Herjaföðrs;  
en annarr gelr fyr jörð neðan,  
sótrauðr hani, at solum Heljar.

34. 'A captive she saw lying under Hveralundr,<sup>186</sup>  
like<sup>187</sup> to malevolent Loki in form,<sup>188</sup>  
there sits Sigyn, though not at all  
well-pleased about<sup>189</sup> her man.<sup>190</sup> Would you know still [more],  
or what?
35. 'A river falls from the east through venom-dales,  
with knives and swords. It's named Slíðr.<sup>191</sup>
36. 'There stood to the north on Niðavellir<sup>192</sup>  
a hall of gold of Sindri's kindred,<sup>193</sup>  
and another stood at Ókólnir,<sup>194</sup>  
the beer-hall of a giant, and he's called Brimir.<sup>195</sup>
- 37.<sup>196</sup> 'She saw a hall standing far from the sun,<sup>197</sup>  
on Náströnd,<sup>198</sup> the doors face north,<sup>199</sup>  
venom-drops fell in through the roof-vent;  
that hall is wound with the spines of snakes.
38. 'There she saw wading swift currents<sup>200</sup>  
perjured people and murder-wolves,<sup>201</sup>  
and the one who seduces another's wife;<sup>202</sup>  
there Niðhoggr sucked the corpses of the deceased,<sup>203</sup>  
the wolf<sup>204</sup> tore men. Would you know still [more], or what?
- 39.<sup>205</sup> 'East in Járniðr sat the old one<sup>206</sup>  
and there gave birth to<sup>207</sup> Fenrir's brood;<sup>208</sup>  
from among all those a certain one becomes<sup>209</sup>  
the moon's<sup>210</sup> pitchforker(?)<sup>211</sup> in troll's form.<sup>212</sup>
40. 'He fills himself<sup>213</sup> with the flesh of the doomed,<sup>214</sup>  
reddens gods' dwellings<sup>215</sup> with red blood;  
dark was the sunshine then<sup>216</sup> in following summers,<sup>217</sup>  
all weather treacherous.<sup>218</sup> Would you know still [more],  
or what?
41. 'A giantess's<sup>219</sup> herdsman, happy Eggþér,<sup>220</sup>  
sat there on a grave-mound and struck a harp;  
above him, in the gosling-tree,<sup>221</sup> crowed  
a fair-red cockerel — he's called Fjalarr.<sup>222</sup>
42. 'Gullinkambi<sup>223</sup> crowed above the Æsir,  
he wakens heroes in Herjafðr's hall;<sup>224</sup>  
but another crows beneath the earth,  
a sooty-red cockerel, in the halls of Hel.<sup>225</sup>

43. 'Geyr Garmr mjök fyr Gnipahelli,  
festr mun slitna en freki renna;  
fjöld veit hon frœða, fram sé ek lengra,  
um ragna rök rømm, sigtíva.
44. 'Brœðr munu berjask ok at bønnum verða,  
munu systrungar sífjum spilla;  
hart er í heimi, hórdómr mikill;  
skeggöld, skálmöld — skildir ru klofnir —  
vindöld, vargöld, áðr veröld steypisk;  
mun engi maðr øðrum þyrma.
45. 'Leika Míms synir, en mjötuðr kyndisk  
at inu galla Gjallarhorni;  
hátt blæss Heimdallr — horn er á lopti —  
mælir Óðinn við Míms höfuð.
46. 'Ymr it aldna tré, en jötunn losnar;  
skelfr Yggdrasils askr standandi.
47. 'Geyr nú Garmr mjök fyr Gnipahelli,  
festr mun slitna en freki renna;  
fjöld veit hon frœða, fram sé ek lengra,  
um ragna rök rømm, sigtíva.
48. 'Hrymr ekr austan, hefisk lind fyrir,  
snýsk Jormungandr í jötunmóði,  
ormr knýr unnir, en ari hlakkar,  
slítr nái neffölr, Naglfar losnar.
49. 'Kjóll ferr austan, koma munu Muspells  
um lög lýðir, en Loki stýrir;  
fara fífls megir með freka allir,  
þeim er bróðir Býleipts í fər.
50. 'Hvat er með Ásum? Hvat er með álfum?  
Gnýr allr Jötunheimr, Æsir ru á þingi;  
stynja dvergar fyr steindurum,  
veggbergs vísir. Vituð ér enn, eða hvat?
51. 'Surtr ferr sunnan með sviga lævi,  
skínn af sverði sól valtíva;  
grjótbjörg gnata en gífr rata,  
troða halir Helveg, en himinn klofnar.

43. 'Garmr howls loudly before Gniphellir,<sup>226</sup>  
the fetter will break and the ravener run free;<sup>227</sup>  
she knows much lore, I see further ahead,  
about the great doom of the powers, of the victory-gods.<sup>228</sup>
- 44.<sup>229</sup> 'Brothers will battle and slay each other,  
cousins will break the bonds of kin;  
it's harsh in the world, great whoredom,  
axe-age, sword-age — shields are cloven —  
wind-age, wolf-age,<sup>230</sup> before the world collapses;  
no one will show mercy to another.
45. 'Mímr's sons play,<sup>231</sup> and destiny is kindled  
at [the sound of?] the resonant Gjallarhorn;<sup>232</sup>  
Heimdallr blows loud — the horn's aloft<sup>233</sup> —  
Óðinn speaks to Mímr's head.<sup>234</sup>
46. 'The ancient tree groans, and the giant breaks loose;<sup>235</sup>  
the ash of Yggdrasil shakes as it stands.<sup>236</sup>
47. 'Now Garmr howls loudly before Gniphellir,  
the fetter will break and the ravener run free;  
she knows much lore, I see further ahead,  
about the great doom of the powers, of the victory-gods.
- 48.<sup>237</sup> 'Hrymr drives from the east,<sup>238</sup> heaves his shield before him,  
Jǫrmungandr writhes in giant-rage,<sup>239</sup>  
the snake lashes waves, and the eagle shrieks,  
the fallow-nosed one tears corpses,<sup>240</sup> Naglfar breaks loose.<sup>241</sup>
- 49.<sup>242</sup> 'A<sup>243</sup> ship fares from the east,<sup>244</sup> Muspell's forces<sup>245</sup>  
will come over the sea, and Loki steers;  
all the giant's<sup>246</sup> kindred travel with the ravener,<sup>247</sup>  
Býleiptr's brother is with them on the voyage.<sup>248</sup>
- 50.<sup>249</sup> 'How is it with the Æsir? How is it with the elves?<sup>250</sup>  
All Jǫtunheimr roars, the Æsir are in council;  
dwarves groan before stone-doors,  
wise ones of the wall-rock.<sup>251</sup> Would you know still [more], or what?
- 51.<sup>252</sup> 'Surtr travels from the south with the destruction of twigs,<sup>253</sup>  
the sun shines from the sword of the gods of the slain,<sup>254</sup>  
rocky cliffs collapse and witches wander,<sup>255</sup>  
men tread the Hel-way,<sup>256</sup> and the heavens are cloven.

52. Þá kœmr Hlínar harmr annarr fram,  
er Óðinn ferr við úlf vega,  
en bani Belja bjartr at Surti;  
þá mun Friggjar falla Angantýr.
53. Þá kœmr inn mikli mögr Sigföður,  
Viðarr, vega at valdýri;  
lætr hann megi Hveðrungs mund um standa  
hjør til hjarta; þá er hefnt föður.
54. Þá kœmr inn mæri mögr Hlóðynjar,  
gengr Óðins sonr við úlf vega;  
drepr hann af móði Miðgarðs véur;  
munu halir allir heimstöð ryðja;  
gengr fet nú Fjörgynjar burr,  
neppr, frá naðri niðs ókvíðnum.
55. Sól tér sortna, sígr fold í mar,  
hverfa af himni heiðar stjornur;  
geisar eimi við aldnara,  
leikr hár hiti við himin sjálfan.
56. Geyr nú Garmr mjök fyr Gnipahelli,  
festr mun slitna en freki renna;  
fjöld veit hon frœða, fram sé ek lengra,  
um ragna rök rømm, sigtíva.
57. Sér hon upp koma öðru sinni  
jörð ór ægi, iðjagrœna;  
falla forsar, flýgr qrn yfir,  
sá er á fjalli fiska veiðir.
58. Finnask Æsir á Iðavelli  
ok um moldþinur mátkan dœma,  
ok á Fimbultýs fornar rúnar.
59. Þar munu eptir undrsamligar  
gullnar tǫflur í grasi finnask,  
þærs í árdaga áttar hǫfðu.
60. Munu ósánir aktrar vaxa,  
bǫls mun alls batna; Baldr mun koma;  
búa þeir Hǫðr ok Baldr Hropts sigtóptir,  
vel, valtívar. Vituð ér enn, eða hvat?

- 52.<sup>257</sup> 'Then Hlín's second sorrow comes to pass,<sup>258</sup>  
when Óðinn goes to fight against the wolf,  
and the bright slayer of Beli against Surtr;<sup>259</sup>  
then Frigg's Angantýr will fall.<sup>260</sup>
53. 'Then comes the mighty son of Sigfaðir,<sup>261</sup>  
Viðarr,<sup>262</sup> to fight against the slaughter-beast;<sup>263</sup>  
with his hand<sup>264</sup> he lets a sword stand at the heart  
of Hveðrungr's son;<sup>265</sup> then is his father avenged.
54. 'Then comes the glorious child of Hlódyn,<sup>266</sup>  
Óðinn's son<sup>267</sup> goes to fight against the wolf(?);<sup>268</sup>  
he strikes<sup>269</sup> Miðgarðr's guardian in anger;<sup>270</sup>  
all men will abandon the homestead;<sup>271</sup>  
Fjörgyn's son<sup>272</sup> goes nine steps,  
expiring(?), from the snake unapprehensive of the dark moon(?).<sup>273</sup>
55. 'The sun turns black, earth sinks into the sea,<sup>274</sup>  
bright stars vanish from the sky;  
ember-smoke rages against the life-nourisher;<sup>275</sup>  
high heat<sup>276</sup> sports against the sky itself.
56. 'Now Garmr howls loudly before Gnipahellir,  
the fetter will break and the ravener run free;  
she knows much lore, I see further ahead,  
about the great doom of the powers, of the victory-gods.
57. 'She sees coming up for a second time  
earth, green again, from the sea;  
waterfalls tumble, an eagle flies above,  
the one who hunts fish on the fell.<sup>277</sup>
58. 'The Æsir find each other on Iðavöllr  
and talk about the mighty earth-rope,<sup>278</sup>  
and Fimbultýr's ancient runes.<sup>279</sup>
59. 'There in the grass will be found again  
wonderful golden gaming-pieces,  
those they had owned in early days.<sup>280</sup>
60. 'Unsown acres will sprout,  
all evil will be corrected; Baldr will come;  
Hqðr and Baldr will inhabit Hroptr's victory-halls<sup>281</sup>  
well, [as] gods of the slain.<sup>282</sup> Would you know still [more], or what?

61.                   ‘Þá kná Hœnir hlautvið kjósa,  
ok burir byggja brœðra tveggja  
vindheim víðan. Vituð ér enn, eða hvat?
62.                   ‘Sal sér hon standa, sólu fegra,  
                    gulli þakðan, á Gimlé;  
þar skulu dyggvar dróttir byggja  
ok um aldrdaga ynðis njóta.
63.                   ‘Þar kœmr inn dimmi dreki fljúgandi,  
naðr fránn, neðan frá Niðafjöllum;  
berr sér í fjöðrum — flýgr völl yfir —  
Niðhoggr, nái. Nú mun hon sökkvask.’



61.                   ‘Then Hœnir can select the [sacrificial] lot-twig,<sup>283</sup>  
                          and the sons of two brothers<sup>284</sup> inhabit  
the wide wind-home.<sup>285</sup> Would you know still [more], or what?
- 62.<sup>286</sup>               ‘She sees a hall standing, fairer than the sun,  
                          thatched with gold, on Gimlé;<sup>287</sup>  
                          there shall honourable hosts<sup>288</sup> settle  
                          and enjoy delight during their life-days.
63.                   ‘There the dim<sup>289</sup> dragon comes flying,  
                          the glistening snake, from beneath, from Niðafjöll;<sup>290</sup>  
Niðhöggr carries in his wings<sup>291</sup> — he flies over the field —  
                          corpses.<sup>292</sup> Now she will sink.<sup>293</sup>

## Textual Apparatus to *Völuspá* (Codex Regius)

- Völuspá*] Absent from **R**, but the title *Völuspá* appears repeatedly in *SnEGylf*
- Hljóðs 1/1] The first letter is large, inset and greenish in **R**
- 1/4 *Heimdallar*] **R** *heimdalar*
- 2/3 *þá*] **R** corrected from *þau* (cf. 1/8 *þau*)
- 2/6] *íviðjur*] **R** *-ur* abbreviation erased by a later hand, but apparently discernible under ultraviolet light
- 3/7 *ginnunga*] **R** corrected from *griNvonga*
- 4/6 *á*] **R** corrected from *af*
- 4/6 *steina*] **R** corrected from *steini*
- 5/4 *himinjóðýr*] **R** *himin iodyr*
- 6/1 *gengu*] **R** *gen | gengo*
- 8/5 *þrjár*] **R** *III*
- 9/1–4 *gengu ... gættusk*] **R** abbreviated *g. r. a. ar.*
- 9/6 *dróttin*] **R** *drótin*
- 10/1 *var*] **R** absent; supplied from **H**
- 12/1 *ok*] **R** corrected from *oc | oc*
- 12/4 *Litr*] **R** followed by *oc vitr*, with *vitr* deleted by underdotting
- 14/6 *frá Salarsteini*] **R** corrected from *Aurvanga sipt til*
- 16/3 *Frosti*] **R** *frostri*
- 17/1 *þrír*] **R** *þríar* (cf. 8/5)
- 17/6 *megandi*] **R** *megan-* illegible, so supplied from **H**
- 18/2 *né hofðu*] **R** *né hof-* illegible, so supplied from **H**
- 18/3 *né læti*] **R** illegible, so supplied from **H**
- 18/6 *gaf Hæmir*] **R** *gaf Hæn-* illegible
- 21/3 *Gullveigu*] **R** last letter erased by a later hand
- 22/6 *leikin*] **R** *leikiN*
- 22/8 *brúðar*] **R** corrected from *þjóðar* ‘of a people’
- 23/1–4 *gengu ... gættusk*] **R** abbreviated *g. r. a. a.*
- 25/1–4 *gengu ... gættusk*] **R** abbreviated *g. r. a.*
- 25/5 *hverr*] **R** *hverir* (pl.); emended from **H**
- 27/1] *Heimdallar*] **R** *heimdalar*

- 28/9 í] **R** *pitt*, with *-i-* and *-t-* deleted by underdotting
- 28/13–14 *Valföðrs ... hvat*] **R** abbreviated *v. v. e. e. h.*
- 31/4 *fólgin*] **R** *folgiN*
- 31/6 *vøllum*] **R** *vollo*
- 32/2 *mær*] **R** abbreviated *m* with superscript bar
- 33/7 *vá*] **R** corrected from *vorðr* ‘guardian’
- 33/8] **R** abbreviated *v. e. e. e. h.*
- 34/3] **R** *lægjarn*
- 34/8] **R** abbreviated *V. þ. e. h.*
- 36/2 *-vøllum*] **R** corrected from *fiollom* (cf. 64/4)
- 38/3–4 *meinsvara ok morðvarga*] **R** word order corrected from *morð vargar meins vara oc*
- 38/5 *þanns*] **R** *þaNz* with *-z* erased, but still discernible
- 38/7 *saug*] **R** *súg*; I emend from **H**
- 38/10] **R** abbreviated *v. e. e. e. h.*
- 40/8] **R** abbreviated *v. e. h.*
- 42/4 *at Herjaföðrs*] **R** preceded by *at hiarar* (probably a scribal error, though the sense ‘at/to the sword (of Herjaföðr)’ has been suggested)
- 43/8 *rømm*] **R** *røm*
- 45/1 *Leika*] The first letter is three lines deep in the inner margin of **R**
- 45/3 *inu*] **R** *en*; emended from **H**
- 46/1–2] **R** preceded by an erasure of the same words
- 47/1–8 *Garmr... sigtíva*] **R** abbreviated *g.*
- 49/8 *Býleipts*] **R** *byleipz*
- 50/8] **R** abbreviated *v. e. e. h.*
- 56/1–8] **R** abbreviated *Geyr. n.*
- 60/4 *Baldr mun*] **R** possibly marks these words for transposition (i.e., to *mun Baldr*)
- 60/8] **R** abbreviated *v. e. e. h.*
- 61/3 *burir*] **R** *byrir*, altered from *burir*
- 61/6] **R** abbreviated *v. e. e. h.*
- 64/3] **R** followed by an erasure, perhaps of *nepp*
- 64/4 *frá*] **R** faint

## Notes to the Translation

- 1 The speaker of *Vsp.* is a *vǫlva*, a staff (*vǫlvr*)-bearing seeress capable of mediumship and sorcery. She sometimes refers to herself (or another seeress) in the third person, in which case she perhaps channels the voice of a prior or future incarnation of herself; cf. the thrice-born nature of Gullveig in *Vsp.* 21 and the comments on rebirth in the prose following *HHv.* 43 and *HH. II* 4, 51. *Vsp.* **H** 1 has *allar helgar kindir* ‘all holy kindreds’, which is usually thought the metrically better reading.
- 2 The extent and nature of the seeress’s audience is uncertain. It could be all sentient beings, including the gods, but the ‘sons of Heimdallr’ are probably men; cf. *Rþ.* and *Hdl.* 43. The name *Heimdallr* is interpretable as ‘(Burgeoning) Home/World Tree’ or perhaps ‘Home/World Light’, and its divine bearer is probably identifiable on some level with the world-tree. Humans, it appears, are scions or ‘chips off the old block’; cf. *Vsp.* 17.
- 3 The form *vildu* appears equivalent to *villtu* in *Vsp.* **H** 1, which is an unambiguously second-person form. An alternative translation of *vildu*, as ‘they wished’, seems less likely in context, assuming the seeress’s recitation follows on from the events of *Vsp.* 28–29.
- 4 ‘Slaughtered-Corpse Father’, an alias of the god Óðinn. This word is partly illegible in the facsimile; this reading is taken from earlier editions.
- 5 If *Vsp.* 28–29 are interpreted correctly below, the following ‘prophecy’ (which includes recollection of past events) was possibly paid for earlier by Óðinn, after the seeress had ‘sat outside’ to communicate with the divine. Some scholars argue, by comparison with *BDr.* 4, that Óðinn has awakened her from the dead.
- 6 Or ‘had given birth to me in former days’.
- 7 The nine worlds are obscure, but *Vm.* 43 refers to ‘nine worlds beneath Niflhel’; alternatively, they might include those of gods (Æsir and Vanir), humans, giants, dwarves, elves and the dead. Also obscure are the nine women, but *íviðjur* is probably the pl. of a term for a troll-woman or giantess who, originally at least, perhaps lived ‘in (*t*) a tree/wood (*viðr*)’; the sg. *íviðja* bears this general sense in a list of names in *SPSMA* III, 727–28 and probably in *Hdl.* 48. Note, in *Hdl.* 35, 37, the nine giantess-mothers of Heimdallr. Other possibilities are that *íviðjur* refers to withies/branches or withy-like roots of the world-tree (cf. *viðja* ‘withy’, pl. *viðjur*, though the initial *i-* would be obscure), or relates to OE *inwid/inwit* ‘fraud, evil’.
- 8 *Yggdrasill*, the tree which, by defining the world, ‘measures’ its limits. Alternatively, ‘well-proportioned tree’ or ‘tree that metes out fate’; cf. *Fj.* 19–22.
- 9 Presumably as either a seed or a fully grown (inverted?) subterranean world-tree.
- 10 Or perhaps ‘It was the beginning of ages’. The same phrase appears in *HH. I* 1.
- 11 *Ymir* ‘Twin’ is a primordial giant; his name might denote a hermaphrodite, one of ‘twin kind’ (cf. *Vm.* 30, 33) or reflect an ancient Indo-European creation myth in which ‘Man’ sacrificed his ‘Twin’. Cf. *SnEGylf* (6–8, pp. 11–12), *Vm.* 21 and *Grm.* 40; also *SnEGylf* (4, p. 9), which quotes a version of this stanza that has, in addition to minor variations, *ekki var* ‘nothing was’ instead of *Ymir bygði* ‘Ymir lived’.
- 12 I.e., sandy shore.

- 13 Literally, ‘up-sky’. The alliterative pairing *jǫrð ... upphiminn* ‘earth ... sky above’, also seen in *Vm.* 20, *Brk.* 2, *Od.* 17 and paralleled in Old English, Old Saxon and Old High German poetry, probably stems from ancient Germanic oral tradition.
- 14 The meaning of *ginnunga* is uncertain. The void is now better known, from *SnEGylf* (e.g., 5, p. 10), as *Ginnungagap*.
- 15 I.e., ‘Before, that was, ...’
- 16 *SnEGylf* (6–8, pp. 11–12) says that Burr (otherwise *Borr*, as in **H**) was the son of Búri, the man formed when Auðhumla, the first cow, licked salty stones. Burr married the giantess Bestla (cf. *Háv.* 140) and they had three sons—Óðinn, Vili and Vé—who killed Ymir and used parts of his corpse to make the world; cf. *Vm.* 21 and *Grm.* 40–41. Judging from *Vsp.* 57, Borr’s sons raised lands from the sea, which, according to *Vm.* 21 and *Grm.* 40, was made from Ymir’s blood.
- 17 ‘Middle Enclosure’, the world of humans or the enclosure surrounding it. *SnEGylf* (8, p. 12) says that Burr’s sons made it from the eyelashes (or eyelids) of Ymir; cf. *Grm.* 41.
- 18 Probably a kenning for the as-yet-unvegetated earth as a home to living things; alternatively, a mythical place-name, *Salarsteinar* ‘Hall’s Stones’.
- 19 A plant with magical connotations in early runic inscriptions, possibly in connection with fertility.
- 20 The sun and moon are here personified as Sól and Máni, respectively. Cf. *Vm.* 23, where the sun and moon are personified as sister and brother.
- 21 Literally, ‘the right hand’. That the personified sun has hands is implicit in *Vm.* 23, where the sun and moon operate the handle which turns the sky each day.
- 22 Or sg. ‘sky-horse-deer/beast(?)’, a doubtful reading but just possibly a description of the horse(s) that pulled the chariot of the sun, or of the world-tree. If the former, an equivalent solar ‘horse’ that is also a ‘deer’ might feature in the Old English metrical charm *Wið dweorh* ‘Against a Dwarf’. But for more accessible sense, emend to *um himinjóðýr* to *um himinjóður* ‘over the sky-rim/horizon’. **H** has the metrically deficient *of jóður*, emended in this edition to *of himinjóður* ‘over the sky-rim’.
- 23 The last three lines of this stanza might not be original to the poem, but they are also attributed to it, albeit in variant form, in *SnEGylf* (8, p. 12).
- 24 *Røkstólar*, in which *røk* indicates ‘judgement’ but also foreshadows the ‘doom’ of the gods at *ragna røk* (Ragnarok), the heathen Norse apocalypse.
- 25 Cf. *Vm.* 24–5.
- 26 Much of *Vsp.* 7–16 is adapted, with verse quotations, in *SnEGylf* (14, pp. 15–17).
- 27 Here *Æsir* denotes the clan of gods to which Óðinn and Þórr belong, as distinct from the Vanir. The meaning of *Iðavöllr* is uncertain: possibilities include ‘Activity Plain’, ‘Eternal Plain’, ‘Eddy Plain [i.e., the sea]’ and, perhaps most attractively, ‘Renewal Plain’; *SnEGylf* (14, p. 15) places it at the centre of Ásgarðr, the divine city.
- 28 Or ‘temples high’. The distinction between *hǫrggr* and *hof*, here translated ‘altar’ and ‘temple’, is unclear. **H** has a different line.
- 29 I.e., they played board-games, such as *hnefatafl*. If they did so not just for simple entertainment, their play might have enacted the struggle between gods and giants (cf. *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks* chapter 9, st. 55) and been a means of controlling the world’s destiny.

- 30 In medieval Iceland, *tún* denoted a cultivated meadow near a farmhouse; in Norway, it meant the ‘yard’, the space between farm buildings.
- 31 *SnEGylf* (14, p. 15) remarks that the world’s golden age was destroyed by the arrival of women from *Jötunheimar*. Their names are unknown, as are their purpose and actions, though it has been suggested that they stole the gods’ gold, or that they introduced avarice to the world, so that the gods craved more than they already had.
- 32 ‘Giant Homes/Worlds’, the realm of giants, the gods’ enemies. It is often located in the east, but sometimes (later) in the north.
- 33 Masc./fem. sg.
- 34 I.e., create.
- 35 Or ‘which one of the dwarves should create a lord’; **H**’s text means ‘which dwarves should create companies’, while some manuscripts of *SnEGylf* may be translated ‘who (masc./fem. sg.) should create a company of dwarves’ or ‘that a company of dwarves should be created’. Emendation to *hvárt skyldi dverga dróttir skepja* would produce ‘whether they should create companies of dwarfs’. Dwarves were skilled miners and smiths, so perhaps the gods created them to satisfy a new-found need or craving for gold.
- 36 *Brimir* is probably here a giant-name (an alias of Ymir?) and suggestive of the sea (*brim* ‘surf’), his blood then being its waters; where **R** has ‘from Brimir’s blood’, **H** and most manuscripts of *SnEGylf* have ‘from bloody surf (*brim*)’. ‘Blue limbs’ or ‘blue legs’ is a kenning for ‘rocks’, but the colour might also suggest necrosis; **H** instead has ‘Bláinn’s limbs’, another kenning for ‘rocks’, *Bláinn* ‘Dark-Blue One’ being attested as a dwarf-name, but here perhaps serving as an alias of Ymir.
- 37 Perhaps ‘Listless/Apathetic One’ or ‘Furious Sucker’. **H** has *Móðsognir*.
- 38 Literally, ‘was become’.
- 39 Perhaps ‘Sleepy One’ or ‘Door-Keeper’.
- 40 It is unclear whether the ‘many man-shapes’ are other dwarves—as the subsequent, probably interpolated, lists of names presumably assume—or inert human beings, two of which are discovered and quickened by the gods in *Vsp.* 17 and 18. Another possibility is ‘those man-shapes, [those] dwarves, made many things, from the earth, as Durinn said’; their creations might then be neither other dwarves nor humans, but items of metalwork. **H** makes ‘dwarves’ the object (acc. *dverga*) of creation, and so lacks this uncertainty, but introduces a new doubt about whom *þeir* ‘they’ refers to, as it could be the gods of the previous stanza, rather than *Mótsognir* and Durinn. *SnEGylf* (14, p. 16) has another variant reading: *þar mannlíkun mǫrg of gerðusk, / dvergar í jörðu* ‘there many man-shapes were created, dwarves in the earth’.
- 41 According to **H** and several manuscripts of *SnEGylf*, they were made in (rather than from) the earth, which is where dwarves were thought to live.
- 42 *SnEGylf* (14, p. 15) says that dwarves took shape as maggots in Ymir’s flesh and were given intelligence by the gods. The following lists of dwarf-names are sometimes known collectively as *Dvergatal* ‘The Tally of Dwarves’. The meanings of many of the names are disputed, so those presented below are often tentative. There are many differences between **R** and **H** in these lists, some of which are noted below. The names were a prime source for J. R. R. Tolkien’s dwarves in *The Hobbit*.
- 43 ‘Full Moon’ and ‘Dark Moon’.
- 44 ‘North and South’.

- 45 'East and West'.
- 46 'All-Thief'.
- 47 Most immediately 'Delayed One', though an original sense 'Inflicter of Madness' has also been proposed.
- 48 Perhaps 'Beaver'.
- 49 'Tubby'.
- 50 'Titch'.
- 51 'Noble Friend'.
- 52 Probably 'Other/Second'.
- 53 'Great-Grandfather'.
- 54 'Mead-Wolf'.
- 55 'Intoxicating Drink'. **H** has *Veggr* 'Wall'.
- 56 'Staff/Spirit-Elf', whence J. R. R. Tolkien's wizard Gandalf.
- 57 'Wind-Elf'.
- 58 'Stubborn' or 'Yearner'.
- 59 'Agreeable'.
- 60 'Darer'.
- 61 'Thrifer'.
- 62 'Wise'.
- 63 'Colour'. The second half of this line is metrically irregular.
- 64 'Corpse'.
- 65 'New Counsel'.
- 66 Powerful One', 'Ruler'. For apparently the same character, see *Rm.* and *Fm.*
- 67 'Counsel-Swift/Wise'.
- 68 Probably 'File'.
- 69 'Wedge'.
- 70 'Finder' or 'Found One'.
- 71 Perhaps 'Needle'.
- 72 'Haft'.
- 73 These two names are combined as *Heptifíli* in *SnEGylf* (14, p. 16). **H** has *Hefti, Fíli*.
- 74 'Skilful One'.
- 75 **H** has *Sviðr* 'Swift' or 'Wise'.
- 76 'Swift'. **H** has *Frór*.
- 77 'Horn-Bearer/Borer'. **H** has *Fornbogi* 'Ancient Bow'.
- 78 'Famous'.
- 79 'Lazy'.
- 80 'Mud-Plain'.
- 81 'Warrior' or 'Muddy'.
- 82 'Oaken-Shield'. This stanza appears to constitute a formerly distinct list.

- 83 This is evidently the start of a third list of dwarf-names.
- 84 Or 'the offspring/kindred/families of peoples'.
- 85 'Praiser'.
- 86 'Hall's Stone'. Cf. 'hall's stones' in *Vsp.* 4; also chapter 12 of *Ynglinga saga*, which tells of a dwarf, a *salvprðuðr* 'hall guardian', who went into a huge stone at a farm called *Steinn* 'Stone' in Sweden.
- 87 *Aurvangar* 'Mud Plains'. The meaning of *Jörvellir*—compare *Järavall*, a Swedish place-name—is uncertain, but 'Mud Fields' and 'Battlefields' are possibilities. The dwarves' journey is otherwise unknown, though *SnEGylf* (14, p. 16) says that the dwarves who lived in stone went from *Svarinshaugr* 'Svarinn's Grave-Mound' to *Aurvangar* at *Jörvellir*.
- 88 'Dripper'.
- 89 'Enmity Keen' or 'Enemy Eager'.
- 90 'High One'.
- 91 'Gravemound Spur'.
- 92 'Lee/Shelter Plain'. **H** has *Hlévargr* 'Lee Wolf/Outlaw'.
- 93 'Glowing One'.
- 94 'Joiner'.
- 95 'Dyer'.
- 96 Perhaps 'Crooked Finn/Sámi'.
- 97 The repetition of *Ái* (*Vsp.* 11) points to interpolation.
- 98 'Elf'.
- 99 Elsewhere a name of the god Freyr and of kings associated with him.
- 100 *Eikinskjaldi* has already been named in *Vsp.* 13. This is another indication that this part of *Vsp.* comprises originally separate lists.
- 101 Possibly 'Hider'.
- 102 'Frosty'.
- 103 'Finn', 'Sámi'.
- 104 'Deceiver'.
- 105 Or 'as long as beings continue to live', or 'as long as the age lasts'.
- 106 There is a hiatus between this line and the preceding list of dwarf-names. Textual corruption is also indicated by the qualification of masc. *Æsir* by fem. *þrjár* 'three' in **R** (hence the emendation to *þrír* in the edited text), and suggested by the suspect alliteration which places unexpected emphasis on *því* 'that' in a rather short half-line; cf. *Vsp.* **H** 17's variant reading for the second half-line: *þussa bræðr(?)* 'brothers of giants'. That the first line of st. 17 presents difficulties in both **R** and **H** may well suggest an underlying textual problem.
- 107 Perhaps a metaphor for the inhabited earth; cf. *Vsp.* 4. Alternatively, emend *at húsi* 'to a house' to *at húmi* 'to the sea'.
- 108 Judging from *SnEGylf* (9, p. 13), *á landi*, literally 'on land', here means 'on the shore'; cf. the prose before *Rþ.* 1. *Askr* 'Ash' and *Embla* 'Little Elm', the first man and woman, were apparently washed up as driftwood.



- 109 It is unclear whether the masc., rather than the expected neut., gender of the adjective *orluglausa* ‘lacking fate’ is significant. It might indicate that the pair were genderless when discovered, but there are other instances of Old Norse masc. plurals denoting both sexes. Askr’s name implicitly associates him with the world-ash (*askr*) mentioned in *Vsp.* 19. The link with trees is explicit in the variant account of *SnEGylf* (9, p. 13), where the ‘sons of Borr’ created Askr and Embla from two logs (*tré*) which they picked up while walking along the seashore. Cf. *Rþ.*, in which, after walking along a seashore, the god *Heimdallr* ‘(Burgeoning) Home/World-Tree’ comes to a house where he starts to father the estates of men.
- 110 Askr and Embla.
- 111 *Óðr* ‘mind’, ‘spirit’, ‘voice’ has connotations of mental acuity, ecstasy, emotional force and poetic inspiration.
- 112 I.e., ‘locks of hair’, but the meaning of *lá* is disputed here. Other suggestions are ‘face’, ‘blood’, ‘vital warmth’ and ‘skin’.
- 113 *Læti* can also denote a person’s manner or bearing; the sense ‘movement’ has also been proposed. Another possibility, given the word’s omission from the catalogue in the second half of this stanza, is that it is a synonym for *lá* ‘locks (of hair)’.
- 114 The good colours or complexions (of the living) were possibly distinguished from the bad colours (grey and black) of the dead, but it has also been suggested that the original sense was ‘genitalia’. Additionally, a pun on *litu goða* ‘looks of the gods’ is conceivable.
- 115 The prehistoric Germanic \**Wōðanaz* (whence ON *Óðinn*) was arguably ‘Lord of the *Wōðu*’, the *wōðu* being a frenzied airborne procession of the dead. Here *Óðinn*’s role is as the literal inspirer of dead wood.
- 116 *Hœnir* is an obscure god who returns to choose lots in the post-Ragnarok age in *Vsp.* 61. His name perhaps links him with a cockerel (*hani*).
- 117 *Lóðurr* is an obscure figure. His name is possibly an alias of Loki, who is elsewhere called *Lodr*. Otherwise, *Lóðurr* might be an obscure fertility god or, if *loð-* is related to *loðinn* ‘woolly, hairy’, perhaps *Heimdallr*, who fathers the estates of men in *Rþ.* (cf. *Vsp.* 1) and is associated with sheep. According to *Hál.* 8, *Óðinn* is a friend of *Lóðurr*. *Óðinn*, *Hœnir* and *Loki* also appear together in *Haust*.
- 118 For a variant list of gifts conferred by Borr’s sons, see *SnEGylf* (9, p. 13).
- 119 A variant version of this stanza, which identifies the tree as *heilagr* ‘holy’, appears in *SnEGylf* (16, p. 19).
- 120 A name for the world-tree (cf. *Vsp.* 2), the original sense of which is uncertain. It may originally have meant ‘Terrible Colossus’, but subsequently been interpreted as ‘Yggr Steed’—referring either to *Óðinn* (*Yggr* ‘Terrible One’) as a horse or to the gallows (metaphorically the steed) on which *Óðinn* was hanged (‘rode’). The tree is also called *askr Yggdrasils* ‘Yggr-steed’s ash tree’ (e.g., *Vsp.* 46, *Grm.* 29), which perhaps imagines it as the post to which *Óðinn*’s steed was tethered.
- 121 *SnEGylf* (16, p. 19) says that the Nornir take water and mud each day from *Urðr*’s spring and pour it over the ash-tree, so that its branches do not dry up or rot. It adds that the water is so holy that everything which enters the spring becomes as white as the membrane inside an eggshell. Alternatively, perhaps *Vsp.*’s ‘white/bright mud’ is fertilizing guano or the ‘milk’ of the Milky Way. Cf. *Ls.* 48.

- 122 Honeydew, according to *SnEGylf* (16, p. 19). Ash trees were traditionally associated with honey, a key ingredient of mead, and it has been suggested that the Indo-European world-tree was originally a mead-tree (cf. note to *Vsp.* 2); cf. *Vm.* 14.
- 123 Ordinary ashes are deciduous; it is debatable whether this mythological instance is evergreen. Urðr is one of the three Nornir, supernatural women who govern fate; cf. *Háv.* 111, *Gðr.* II 21.
- 124 The *sær* 'sea' is alternatively a pool or lake, perhaps identifiable with Urðr's spring. **H** and *SnEGylf* (15, p. 18) have *sal* 'hall' instead. ON *þollr* originally meant 'fir', but came to be used as a synecdoche for 'tree', the assumed meaning here.
- 125 Literally, 'they called one'.
- 126 A close relationship seems likely between the inscribed stick which determines each person's fate, the concept of humans as scions of Heimdallr, the world-tree (*Vsp.* 1), and the plant-names of the first man and woman (*Vsp.* 17); in addition, men are often described figuratively as trees elsewhere in Old Norse poetry.
- 127 The *Nornir* (perhaps 'Twiners' or 'Secret Communicators'), northern Fates whose names are interpretable as 'That Which Has Happened' or 'Fate' (cf. ON *urðr*, OE *wyrd*, 'fate'), 'That Which Is Happening' and 'That Which Shall Happen.' They are comparable to the Roman Parcae and the Greek Moirai. Cf. *HH.* I 2–4.
- 128 Here the seeress probably refers to herself in the third person.
- 129 Gullveig is an obscure female, perhaps identifiable with the seeress Heiðr of the next stanza, or with the speaker of the poem, or with both. *Gull* means 'gold', *veig* 'intoxicating drink' or 'strength', so many scholars take *Gullveig* to mean 'Gold Power', 'Power of Gold' or 'Gold Intoxication'; cf. Heiðrún in *Grm.* 25. Who stuck Gullveig on spears is uncertain, but the location probably implicates Óðinn and his associates; **H** has *studdi* 'he/she/one stuck'.
- 130 'Her' probably refers to Gullveig. *Hárr* 'High One' or 'One-Eyed One' is an alias of Óðinn, whose hall is *Valhǫll* 'Hall of the Slain'. An earlier, disyllabic form, \**Häärs*, is metrically desirable. A reference to Óðinn's lack of vision might be appropriate here, as his burning of Gullveig not only failed but might have led to the Æsir-Vanir war.
- 131 Gullveig. Cf., in Greek myth, Pallas Athena's epithet *Tritogeneia* 'Thrice-Born(?)' and *Dimetor* 'Twice-Born' Dionysus. Alternatively, translate 'thrice they burned her, thrice [she was] born'. For reincarnation in Eddic poems, see the concluding prose to *HH.* II 51 and *Sg.* 45.
- 132 *Heiðr* frequently appears in Old Norse prose works as a common noun for a type of sorceress, but here it is often taken to be a proper noun (as in *Hdl.* 32 and several prose texts). Possible meanings include 'Bright One' (cf. *heiðr* 'bright' and the burning of Gullveig) and 'Honoured One' (cf. *heið* 'honour' or 'fee'); *heiðr* 'heath' and *heiðinn* 'heathen' may be relevant, too. It is unclear whether Heiðr should be identified with Gullveig, with the speaker of *Vsp.*, or with both. Altogether, this stanza raises a bewildering number of questions, to which there are few undisputed answers. Presumably 'they' refers to the people whose houses Heiðr visited.
- 133 In Old Norse texts seeresses called *Heiðr* are typically peripatetic and asked to prophesy at feasts.
- 134 The meaning of *velspá* is disputed: either 'accurate in prophecy' or 'of favourable prophecies'. Another possibility is *vélspá* 'of deceitful prophecies'.

- 135 The precise sense of *vitti hon ganda* is unclear, but the phrase might refer to the beating, or other use, of a *vitt/vitt* ‘drum(?)’ or ‘magical charm(?)’ in order to communicate with *gandir* ‘spirits’ who could reveal hidden information; cf. *Ls.* 24. Alternatively, *gandir* might denote wolves or broomsticks, which *Heiðr* ‘gave power to’ (*vitti*), and which witches flew upon in a *gandreid* ‘gand-ride’.
- 136 Another problematic passage. This edition takes the manuscript reading *leikiN* to represent *leikin*, a fem. nom. sg. form; cf. the compound *hugleikin* of *Vsp.* H 27.
- 137 The interpretation of the second half of this stanza is uncertain. But however we interpret it, the next stanza makes it clear that Óðinn, leader of the Æsir, goes on the attack.
- 138 The type of projectile Óðinn let fly is not stated, but his typical weapon is the spear. The army is that of the Æsir’s divine opponents, the Vanir.
- 139 *Borðvegr* ‘board-way’ may be a scribal error for *borðveggr* ‘board-wall’, ‘wall made of wooden boards’, the reading of H.
- 140 Or ‘could bestride’.
- 141 *Vsp.* 21–4 appear to describe a war between the Æsir and Vanir. Possibly the Vanir’s *vígspá* ‘battle-spell’ (or ‘holy spell’) had the power to resurrect the dead, which would explain why they were not defeated; ON *spá* may also suggest ‘prophecy’, intimating that these events were fated to occur.
- 142 Variants of *Vsp.* 25 and 26 appear in *SnEGylf* (42, pp. 35–6).
- 143 From now on in *Vsp.*, ‘gods’ presumably refers to the Æsir-Vanir collective which, to judge from other sources, was formed to resolve their conflict. In the last line of this stanza the concern about the goddess Freyja (‘Óðr’s wife’), one of the Vanir, indicates that the tribal war is over.
- 144 Pl. H has sg. *hvorr*.
- 145 Perhaps just a poetic way of saying ‘there’s treachery in the air’, but more likely an ominous allusion to a contract, described in *SnEGylf* (42, p. 34), which stipulated that the gods were to give Freyja, the sun and the moon to a giant as payment for his construction work. The use of *læ* ‘guile, treachery, mischief, harm’ might suggest that, as in *SnEGylf*, Loki (alias *Loptr* ‘Airy (One)’) is implicated; cf. *Vsp.* 34 and *Hym.* 37.
- 146 Or ‘Óðr’s girl’. Either way, the woman is Freyja. Little is known of her husband, the god Óðr ‘Inspired Mental Activity’, though his name suggests that he might once have been a double, or an aspect, of Óðinn. *SnEUpp* (26, p. 62) has *óskmey* ‘beloved maiden’ instead.
- 147 I.e., perhaps, to the giants in general. *SnEGylf* (42, pp. 34–36) quotes versions of this stanza and the next, and tells a story to illuminate them. It records how, in violation of oaths, Þórr slew a giant whom the gods had hired to build them a fortification. In *Vsp.*, it might be that the giant was hired to repair the wall which the Vanir had broken during their war with the Æsir.
- 148 H’s reading appears better: *Þórr einn þar vá* ‘Þórr alone struck there’. The name *Þórr* identifies this strong and violent god as originally a personification of thunder, though this aspect of his nature faded in the literature of Iceland, a country where thunder is uncommon.
- 149 Possibly *hljóð* ‘hearing’ actually describes Heimdallr’s ear; if he sacrificed this, his action would parallel Óðinn’s surrender of an eye. But the word can also mean ‘sound’, so another possibility is a reference to Heimdallr’s resounding horn.

- 150 Yggdrasil. The element *heið* in *heiðvanr*—an adjective probably meaning ‘used to light/brightness’, rather than ‘lacking light’—is richly polysemous; it suggests at once the bright sky above the tree, the shining mead below it, the honour conferred upon it, and perhaps the payment of sacrificial offerings. Cf. the name *Heiðr*.
- 151 Cf. the mud sprinkled on the world-tree in *Vsp.* 19. Alternatively, instead of *aurgum* ‘muddy’, possibly *þrðgum* ‘flowing’ was intended.
- 152 ‘Valfǫðr’s pledge’ must originally have described Óðinn’s eye, which he placed in Mímir’s spring (see the next stanza), but here it apparently describes the spring in which the eye was placed.
- 153 ‘You’ is pl. The question may also be translated ‘Do you know [enough] yet, or what?’ or ‘Would you know still more, and [if so] what [would you seek to know]?’ Cf. the giantess Hyndla’s questions to Freyja in *Hdl*.
- 154 The seeress seems again to refer to herself in the third person, and to describe an encounter with Óðinn (‘the old one’) that arguably lies behind the recitation of this poem. In Old Norse texts, seeresses are said to ‘sit outside’ at night by crossroads, or in caves or mounds, to gain information from supernatural beings, a practice forbidden in medieval Norwegian law. Here the seeress’s ritual sitting brought forth Óðinn himself.
- 155 An Óðinn-alias related to *Yggr* ‘Terrible One’.
- 156 Or ‘and she looked into his eyes’, though Óðinn has only one left. Cf. *Hym.* 2.
- 157 It is uncertain whether these questions are addressed by the seeress to Óðinn or vice versa. The present punctuation assumes the former.
- 158 Or ‘well of Mímir’. Mímir (cf. Latin *memor* ‘mindful’) is a puzzling figure whose decapitation is described in chapters 4 and 7 of *Ynglinga saga*. It is unclear whether he is one of the giants, as in *SnESkald* (I, 75, p. 110), or one of the Æsir, as *Ynglinga saga* might suggest. *SnEGylf* (15, p. 17), which quotes a version of this stanza, says that Mímir’s spring contains wisdom and intelligence and that it lies beneath one of Yggdrasil’s roots, the one which extends toward the frost-giants; it goes on to say that Mímir is very wise because he drinks from the spring using the Gjallarhorn, and that Óðinn left one of his eyes in the well as payment for a drink from it. Mímir’s relationship to Mímr (‘Mímr’s head’ in *Vsp.* 45 and *Sd.* 14) is also unclear; judging from their names, they may once have been separate figures, but they seem to have been conflated by the time the myths were written down. Cf. the world-tree *Mímameiðr* in *Fj.* 20.
- 159 Perhaps this revelation proved the profundity of the seeress’s knowledge, after which she received payment from Óðinn for a fuller demonstration.
- 160 *Herfǫðr* ‘Army Father’ is an Óðinn-alias.
- 161 Many editors emend *fé* ‘treasure’ to *fekk* ‘he/she got’.
- 162 Valkyries (*valkyrjur*, literally ‘choosers of the slain’), as imagined in various Eddic poems, are female riders in the service of Óðinn. Their main duties are to enact Óðinn’s will in deciding the course of battles between noblemen and to bring those chosen from among the fallen to Óðinn’s hall. There the newcomers join the *einherjar*, the ‘unique/only champions’ who will fight beside the gods at Ragnarok.
- 163 Or *til Godþjóðar* ‘to the God Realm’. However, some editors emend *godþjóðar* to *Gotþjóðar* ‘Gothic people/nation’, which they consider representative of humankind in general.
- 164 *Skuld* is also the name of one of the Nornir in *Vsp.* 20. *SnEGylf* (36, p. 30) appears to identify them as one and the same.

- 165 Perhaps 'Outstanding One'. She is named earlier, beside Gøndul, in *Hák*. 1.
- 166 'Battle'.
- 167 'Battle'.
- 168 Possibly 'Staff-Wielder'.
- 169 Possibly 'Outstanding One with a Spear' or 'One with Spear Raised High'. This word also appears in *Hák*. 12, but as an honorific for Skogul, not as a name for a separate valkyrie.
- 170 *Herjann* 'Army Leader' is an Óðinn-alias. Norse texts record widely differing numbers of valkyries. Many scholars doubt that the last two lines of this stanza are original to the poem.
- 171 Probably 'Shining One'; a god, son of Óðinn and Frigg. *SnEGylf* (49, pp. 45–6) calls him *Baldr inn góða* 'Baldr the good' and tells how Loki instigated his death. Loki learnt that the mistletoe was the only thing in the world that Frigg had exempted from swearing not to harm Baldr. One day, Loki noticed that the blind god *Høðr* 'Warrior', Baldr's brother, was not participating in the gods' sport of throwing things at the seemingly invulnerable god. He gave *Høðr* some mistletoe and guided his aim. As *Høðr* shot, the harmless sprig turned into a deadly spear, which killed Baldr instantly; see also *BDr*. Book 3 of *GD* tells a different version of Baldr's death.
- 172 ON *tíouurr*, a word found only here, probably means 'sacrifice', 'offering' (cf. OE *tíber*; Gothic *\*tibr*); cf. ON *tafn* 'holy offering', a term apparently describing either Baldr's corpse or an aspect of his funeral in *Húsdr*. 10. Another, perhaps less likely, possibility is 'god' (cf. ON *tívar* 'gods', usual sg. *týr*).
- 173 The hidden fates of Baldr—that is, fates hidden from those other than the seeress—may be both his shocking death and his marvellous resurrection in the post-Ragnarok age.
- 174 *SnEGylf* (49, p. 45) places the mistletoe *fyrir vestan Valhøll* 'west of Valhøll'.
- 175 Much superstition surrounds the mistletoe in European culture, but many scholars have struggled to reconcile the image of the slender *meiðr* 'tree/branch' with the bushy parasite that now bears this name (*Viscum album*). An attractive possibility is that the poet here refers to the plant as it was imagined before a curse, imposed because of the slaying of Baldr, transformed it into a meagre parasite, one condemned to re-enact its crime by piercing upstanding host-plants. Or maybe the poet refers to the mistletoe and the tree on which it lives as a single entity, just as people still talk of 'mistletoe-trees'. Then again, the poet, or his or her source, may have misdescribed an unfamiliar plant or substituted *misteltein* for another plant-name altogether. ON *mistiltein* 'mistletoe' may well be a calque of OE *misteltan*.
- 176 Or 'branch', 'outgrowth'.
- 177 ON *mær* is probably a variant of *mjór* 'slender', a word used in the previous stanza.
- 178 More literally, 'Høðr began to shoot'.
- 179 This brother is unnamed in *Vsp.*, but probably called *Váli* 'Little Warrior' or 'Little Van (i.e., one of the Vanir)' elsewhere.
- 180 More literally, 'began to strike'. As *Høðr* killed his brother Baldr, so it appears *Váli* kills his brother *Høðr*; cf. *Hdl*. 29. The boy avenger's birth is also mentioned in *BDr*. 11, but the only full version of the story to survive appears in the third book of *GD*.

- 181 Perhaps just an indication of extreme youth and single-mindedness, but this behaviour may also reflect an ancient Germanic tribal custom whereby a man who had yet to kill in battle went about unkempt.
- 182 Baldr's funeral is described in *SnEGylf* (49, pp. 46–7).
- 183 *Frigg* 'Beloved One' is Óðinn's wife and Baldr's mother.
- 184 'Fen Halls', presumably Frigg's abode.
- 185 'Hall of the Slain (*valr*)', more familiar now as 'Valhalla'. This is Óðinn's hall, to which are brought the slaughtered warriors whom he chooses to fight beside him at Ragnarok. See earlier *Eirm.* 1 and *Hák.* 1, 9. Here in *Vsp.* the 'woe of Valhǫll' is presumably Baldr's death and its ramifications.
- 186 'Grove of Kettle-Like Hollows' or 'Grove of Hot Springs'; this is not necessarily a proper name.
- 187 *Áþekktan* 'like', 'similar to' may pun on *þökk* 'Thanks', the ironic name of a giantess who, alone of all created things, refused to weep for the dead Baldr and thereby condemned him to remain in Hel; *SnEGylf* (49, p. 48) says she was thought to be Loki in disguise. The word may also play ironically on *þekkr* 'agreeable, liked, tractable, obedient'.
- 188 The captive is, in fact, Loki himself (whose name, which probably means essentially 'Blamer', 'Mocker' or 'Resolver', is pronounced 'locky', not 'low-key'). The expression 'like to ... in form' perhaps indicates that punishment has disfigured him. He is also associated with *læ* 'craft, guile, treachery, harm' in other texts; cf. *Vsp.* 25 too.
- 189 Or 'there sits Sigyn, above her man, though not at all well-pleased'.
- 190 Or 'husband'. *Sigyn* 'Victory Friend' is the wife of Loki. His punishment for thwarting Baldr's resurrection is severe. According to *SnEGylf* (50, p. 49), the gods bind him across three stones and the giantess Skaði suspends a snake above him. Sigyn stands by with a basin to catch the venom dripping from the snake's fangs, but when she goes to empty the basin, the venom falls on Loki's face. He then writhes in agony, causing earthquakes. This scene is depicted on the west face of the tenth-century Gosforth Cross from Anglo-Norse Cumbria, but with Sigyn kneeling. It is probably also illustrated on the eighth-century *Andre VIII* stone from Gotland.
- 191 'Dire' or 'Scabbard'; cf. *Slíð* in *Grm.* 28 and *Geirvimul* in *Grm.* 27; additionally, *GD* (1.8.14) mentions a river swirling with weapons. If this stanza once had a second half, it is now lost.
- 192 Probably 'Dark Moons' Plains' or 'Niði's Plain's', *Niði* being a dwarf in *Vsp.* 11; another possibility is 'Kinsmen's Plains'. Cf. *Niðaffjöll* in *Vsp.* 63.
- 193 *Sindri* 'Cindery' is probably a dwarf, in which case his kindred are dwarves. In *SnEGylf* (52, p. 53), however, *Sindri* is a hall for virtuous folk.
- 194 Ostensibly 'Uncold One', but an original *\*Ofkolnir* 'Exceedingly Cold One' might be entertained.
- 195 Or 'and it's called Brimir'. *SnEGylf* (52, p. 53) ascribes the name *Brimir* to a heavenly hall for virtuous people at Gimlé. Cf. *Vsp.* 9 and 62.
- 196 Variant versions of *Vsp.* 37–38 appear in *SnEGylf* (52, p. 53).
- 197 The seeress again speaks of herself in the third person, or refers to a spirit she mediates.
- 198 'Corpse Shore'. In *Vsp.* H 34 the noun is pl.
- 199 Or translate as sg.: 'the door faces'.

- 200 Literally ‘heavy currents’. Cf. *Grm.* 21, *Rm.* 3–4.
- 201 I.e., murderous criminals, murderers, who are likened to wolves. Cf. the wolf (*vargr*) which preys on them later in this stanza; cannibalism is not uncommon among wolves.
- 202 Cf. *Háv.* 115. All those suffering in this stanza are probably dead.
- 203 A dragon who reappears in *Vsp.* 63. *Niðhoggr* probably means ‘Waning/Dark-Moon Striker’, appropriately as the hall in which it sucks the dead is ‘far from the sun’; alternatively, *Niðhoggr* ‘Malicious Striker’—there may be deliberate ambiguity. *SnEGylf* (52, p. 53) says that this monster torments the bodies of the dead in the spring called Hvergelmir. According to *Grm.* 32 and 35, the creature lies beneath the world-tree and gnaws its roots. Cf. the *niðdraca* ‘waning/dark-moon(?) dragon’ of the Old English poem *Beowulf*.
- 204 Alternatively, ‘a wolf’ or ‘a/the thief/criminal’. Whether this *vargr* is distinct from the dragon *Niðhoggr* is uncertain; the Gosforth Cross shows a wolf-headed snake.
- 205 Variant versions of *Vsp.* 39 and 40 appear in *SnEGylf* (12, pp. 14–15).
- 206 *Járnviðr* ‘Iron Wood’, which *SnEGylf* (12, p. 14) places east of *Miðgarðr*. It may be a wooded Dano-German bog, from which bog-ore and iron-hardened bog-wood were extracted. The ‘old one’ is female; *SnEGylf* (12, p. 14) calls her a *gýgr* ‘giantess’ dwelling east of *Miðgarðr* in the forest called *Járnviðr* where troll-women called *Járnviðjur* live; *SnEGylf* (34, p. 27) perhaps identifies her as the giantess *Angrboða* ‘Grief-Announcer’.
- 207 Or ‘fed’, ‘reared’.
- 208 The reference is to wolves, Fenrir being the most famous wolf of Norse myth; see *Vsp.* 43 and earlier *Hák.* 20 and *Eirm.* 7.
- 209 Or ‘will become’. *SnEUpp* (12, p. 22) has *verðr af þeim öllum / íma nokkur* ‘from them all comes a certain she-wolf’.
- 210 Or, less likely, another heavenly body.
- 211 A literal translation of *tjúgari*, a user of a *tjúga* ‘pitchfork’. In chapter 10 of *The Waning Sword: Conversion Imagery and Celestial Myth in ‘Beowulf’* (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2020), pp. 235–86, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0190.10>, I suggest that the trollish wielder might be allied to the moon, for which it uses a long fork to take ‘beams’ of light from the sun. Etymologically, though, a *tjúgari* is a ‘drawer’, so here one might alternatively translate ‘drawer (to destruction)’. *SnEUpp* (12, p. 22) has a different word: *tregari* ‘causer of grief’.
- 212 Trolls/giants and wolves are closely associated in Norse myth and folklore. *SnEGylf* (12, p. 14) calls this particular monster *Mánagarmr* ‘Moon’s Dog’, and says this mightiest of creatures will swallow *tungl* (i.e., one or more heavenly bodies) and bespatter the sky with blood; it adds that *þaðan týnir sól skíni sínu* ‘as a result the sun will lose its shine’. In *Vsp.* it might be that this creature attacks the sun on behalf of the moon (cf. the lupine attacks on the sun in *Vm.* 46–47 and *Grm.* 39). But the possibility that it is rather the moon that is attacked, and forked from the sky, cannot be discounted; as often in *Vsp.*, there may be deliberate ambiguity. In chapter 10 of *The Waning Sword*, I argue that this stanza’s lupine troll and aged mother might be analogous to Grendel and his mother in *Beowulf*.
- 213 Alternatively, ‘she fills [or ‘will fill’] herself’ or ‘it fills [or ‘will fill’] itself’.
- 214 Probably humans.
- 215 At least some of these may be in the sky.

- 216 **H**'s *verða* gives slightly different sense from **R**'s *var ða*: 'sunshine (literally, pl.) becomes dark'.
- 217 This detail may reflect the sight of volcanic ash falling from a clear Icelandic sky. Alternatively (or additionally), the reference may be to solar eclipses or simply to the vanishing of the sun.
- 218 According to *SnEGylf* (51, p. 49), Ragnarok is preceded by a mighty winter (*fimbulvetr*); see also *Vm.* 44.
- 219 Identity uncertain, but perhaps 'the old one' of *Vsp.* 39, in which case translate 'The giantess's'.
- 220 Eggþér (a giant?) is obscure. His name, which means 'Edge Servant', corresponds to OE *Ecgþeow*, the name of the father of the hero of *Beowulf*.
- 221 Or 'gosling-wood' (perhaps a proper noun). Possibly *gagl*- 'gosling' denotes no more than 'bird' here. Other possibilities are that *gagl* is here a plant-name ('gale') or a word meaning 'towering', and that *gaglviði* is a scribal error for *gálgviði* 'gallows tree/wood', the reading of *Vsp.* **H** 32. This last possibility is attractive as a reference to the world-tree as Óðinn's gallows or to a sacrificial grove.
- 222 Perhaps 'Hider'. The name is otherwise that of a giant and, earlier in *Vsp.*, a dwarf.
- 223 'Golden Comb', a cockerel. Cf. *HH.* II 49.
- 224 The hall of the 'Father of Armies', i.e., of Óðinn. His hall is Valhöll.
- 225 *Hel* 'Hidden Place' is here either the goddess of the subterranean land of the dead or that land itself.
- 226 *Garmr*, ostensibly 'Tatter/Rag' but probably really 'Howler', is a mighty dog (*Grm.* 44) or perhaps an alias of the wolf Fenrir; the common noun *garmr* is translatable as 'dog' or 'damager', 'enemy' in a skaldic verse in *SnESkald* (I, 60, p. 91). *SnEGylf* (51, p. 50) says that Garmr breaks loose at Ragnarok and dies killing the god Týr. Cf. *Mánagarmr* in *SnEGylf* (12, p. 14). *Gnipahellir* (and its variant *Gnúpahellir* in **H**) means 'Cave with Overhangings', a name unrecorded elsewhere.
- 227 The 'ravener' is Fenrir or Garmr (if different). The gods bound Fenrir with a magical fetter, from which he will escape at Ragnarok; see the prologue to *Ls.* and *SnEGylf* (34, pp. 27–29; 51, p. 50).
- 228 Or 'of the battle-gods'.
- 229 A variant of this stanza appears in *SnEGylf* (51, p. 49); it lacks the final line and has *með hǫldum* 'among men', rather than *í heimi* 'in the world'.
- 230 Or 'outlaw-age'.
- 231 Mímr is possibly identical to Mímir (see *Vsp.* 28). The identity of his sons is also uncertain (perhaps giants or men).
- 232 'Horn of (the river) Gjöll'. Instead of *galla* 'resonant', **H** calls the horn *gamla* 'ancient'.
- 233 Heimdallr, the gods' sentinel, watches and listens for the advance of the giants at Ragnarok, when he blows his horn.
- 234 The last two lines of this stanza and the first two lines of the next find parallel in a single stanza in a quotation from a version of *Vsp.* in *SnEGylf* (51, p. 51). Chapter 4 of *Ynglinga saga* records that the very wise Mímir was sent, along with Hœnir, by the Æsir to the Vanir as a hostage at the end of their war. Dissatisfied with Hœnir, the Vanir decapitated Mímir



- and returned his head to the Æsir, whereupon Óðinn embalmed it and recited spells so that it would tell him secret knowledge; cf. *Sd.* 14.
- 235 The ‘giant’ is probably Loki, whom the gods bound after his instigation of the killing of Baldr (*SnEGylf* 50, p. 49; cf. *Vsp.* **R** 34, *Vsp.* **H** 30); otherwise, perhaps Hrymr, Surtr, Fenrir, Garmr or Miðgarðsormr.
- 236 These lines might belong to the preceding stanza, but in **H**, where they appear in reverse order, they are followed by two lines absent from **R** to form a separate stanza of standard length.
- 237 A variant of this stanza appears in *SnEGylf* (51, p. 51).
- 238 Hrymr, who is probably driving a chariot, is a giant; his name might mean ‘Feeble (from Age)’. *SnEGylf* (51, p. 50) says he steers the ship Naglfar at Ragnarok, whereas it may be Loki who does that in *Vsp.* 49.
- 239 *Jormungandr* ‘Mighty Monstrous-Spirit’ or ‘Enormous Magic-Staff’ is an alias of the *Miðgarðsormr*, the ‘Snake of Miðgarðr’, the world-serpent which, like the wolf Fenrir and the goddess Hel, was the offspring of Loki and the giantess Angrboða. For another *jötunn* ‘(devouring) giant’-snake, see *Fm.* 29.
- 240 ‘Fallow/pale-nosed’ (**H** has a different reading) might allude to the eagle, as some eagles’ beaks are lighter than their plumage. Cf. *Hræsvelgr* ‘Corpse Swallower’, the eagle-shaped giant whose wings create the winds in *Vm.* 36-7.
- 241 *SnEGylf* (51, pp. 50-1) identifies *Naglfar* (also *Naglfal*) as a ship. It also identifies *Naglfari* as the biggest ship and says it belongs to Muspell (43, p. 36). *Naglfar(i)* ostensibly means ‘Nail(ed) Farer’, though the first element was perhaps originally *nár* ‘corpse’. The possibility that the referent is rather a person, not a ship, is raised by a reference to a character called *Naglfari*, husband of *Nótt* ‘Night’, in *SnEGylf* (10, p. 13).
- 242 A variant of this stanza appears in *SnEGylf* (51, p. 51).
- 243 Or ‘The’.
- 244 Possibly *Naglfar(i)*.
- 245 Giants or other evil beings; cf. *Ls.* 42. The name *Muspell* (or *Múspell*) is perhaps that of a fire-giant. Other forms of the word, which scholars have interpreted as meaning roughly ‘end of the world’, occur in Christian apocalyptic contexts in Old High German and Old Saxon texts.
- 246 The ostensible literal sense is ‘the fool’s’, but *fifl* might here rather denote the name of, or a term for, a sea-monster.
- 247 Fenrir or Garmr.
- 248 *Býleiptr*’s brother is Loki. *Býleiptr*, possibly ‘Farmstead Lightning’, might well be an alias of Óðinn, Loki’s blood-brother; *Vsp.* **H** 43 has *Býleists*; cf. *Hdl.* 40.
- 249 A variant of this stanza appears in *SnEGylf* (51, p. 51).
- 250 Cf. *Þrk.* 7. The alliterative pairing ‘Æsir and elves’ is common in Eddic verse, and finds parallel in an Old English metrical charm, but ‘elves’ play no obvious part in any other Eddic poem except *Vkv.*, in which the smith *Völundr* is a ‘prince of elves’. Possibly *álfar* ‘elves’ describes, or once described, the Vanir.
- 251 Alternatively, ‘wise ones of the way-rock’, as *Vsp.* **H** 40 has it, rock being the dwarves’ highway. **R**’s *veggberg* ‘wall-rock’ may be a poetic term for ‘cliffs’, which collapse in the next stanza.

- 252 *SnEGylf* (4, p. 9) quotes this stanza, as does *SnEGylf* (51, p. 51).
- 253 *Surtr* 'Black One' is a fire-giant; cf. *Vm.* 50–51. 'Destruction of twigs' is a kenning for 'fire', here perhaps stemming from a fiery sword.
- 254 Or 'the sun of the gods of the slain shines from (his) sword'. The identity of this sword is uncertain, but its implicitly fiery (because solar) nature suggests that it might be wielded by the fire-bearing *Surtr*. Potentially relevant mythical swords include *Lævateinn* 'Twig of Treacheries' (cf. *sviga lævi* in the preceding line), this being a probably radiant weapon plucked from the branches of the world-tree by Loki, who took it to the Underworld, where it was guarded by a giantess, *Sinmara*, closely related to *Surtr* (see *Fj.*); the lost sword of the sun-controlling *Freyr*; and the fiery sword of God on Doomsday in early medieval Christian tradition.
- 255 Or 'and troll-women stumble'; the translation 'witches' for *gífr*, literally 'greedy ones', is approximate. These are perhaps allies of *Surtr*. Alternatively, they might be land-spirits made homeless by the turmoil. *SnEUp* (7, p. 14) has a different reading: *en guðar hrata* 'and gods tumble'.
- 256 The road to Hel, land of the dead. See also *Hlr.*
- 257 Variants of *Vsp.* 52–55 appear in *SnEGylf* (51, p. 52).
- 258 *Hlín* 'Defending/Protecting One' is perhaps an alias of Óðinn's wife, *Frigg*, whose first sorrow would have been *Baldr*'s death. But *SnEGylf* (35, p. 30) identifies *Hlín* as a goddess who guards people whom *Frigg* wants to protect from danger. The name often appears in skaldic kennings for 'woman'.
- 259 *Beli* was a giant whose name probably means 'Bellower'. *Freyr*, who was without his sword, slew him with a stag's antler, according to *SnEGylf* (37, p. 31). Earlier, *Freyr* is similarly 'Beli's enemy' in *Hál.* 3. For *Freyr*'s death against *Surtr* at Ragnarok, see *SnEGylf* (51, p. 50).
- 260 Here *Angantýr* 'Fragrant God', elsewhere a hero-name (cf. *Hdl.* 9), might be an alias of Óðinn, who is devoured by the wolf at Ragnarok; see *SnEGylf* (51, p. 50) and *Vm.* 53. Another possibility is *Freyr*. *H* has simply *angan* 'fragrant one'.
- 261 *Sigfaðir* 'Victory Father' is an alias of Óðinn.
- 262 Possibly 'Spear Lord' or 'Wide Ruler'.
- 263 The wolf.
- 264 Or *mundum* 'with his hands'.
- 265 *Hveðrungr*, perhaps 'Descendant of *Hveðra* [a giantess]' or 'Roarer', is a name of *Loki*; his son is the wolf *Fenrir*.
- 266 *Hlóðyn*, a word of uncertain etymology (it perhaps corresponds to *Hludana*, an ancient Germanic goddess of the Rhineland), is a name of Þórr's mother. She is called *Fjörgyn* 'Earth' later in this stanza.
- 267 Þórr.
- 268 Here *úlfr* 'wolf' could well be a mistake for *orm* 'snake', the scribe having repeated *við úlfr vega* 'to fight against the wolf' from two stanzas earlier. But it is not certainly an error (or at least not definitely a purely mechanical one), as the tenth-century depiction of Ragnarok on the Gosforth Cross includes a wolf-headed snake.
- 269 Or 'slays'.

- 270 This line is ambiguous. It could mean either ‘he [Þórr] strikes Miðgarðr’s guardian [or ‘encircler’; i.e., the world-serpent] in anger’ or ‘he/it [the wolf or world-serpent] strikes Miðgarðr’s guardian [i.e., Þórr] in anger’; the latter sense is perhaps more immediate, as Þórr is called *Véurr* in *Hym*. Some editors emend acc. sg. *véur* to nom. sg. *véurr* (found in *SnEGylf*), in which case the sense is ‘Miðgarðr’s guardian strikes him/it in rage’.
- 271 The ‘homestead’ is presumably the world.
- 272 Þórr. His mother’s name, *Fjörgyn*, means ‘Earth’ or ‘Mountain’.
- 273 The meaning of this line is disputed, but a dark (i.e., new) moon might be eclipsing the sun, which turns black in the next stanza. Alternatively, the snake might be ‘unapprehensive of hostility (*níðs*)’; deliberate ambiguity is possible.
- 274 This line might be echoed at the start of st. 24 of *Þorfinnsdrápa* ‘Þorfinnr’s Poem’ by the Icelander Arnórr Þórðarson jarlaskáld (b. after 1012, d. after 1073); *SPSMA* II, 258–59.
- 275 ‘Life-nourisher’ (*aldrnari*) is attested elsewhere as a poetic term for ‘fire’. Alternatively, here it might describe the life-sustaining world-tree, which is engulfed in smoke and flame. Again, more than one meaning might be intended.
- 276 Presumably from flames.
- 277 ‘Fell’ in the old sense of ‘mountain’, here presumably one with stretches of water on its lower slopes.
- 278 Possibly a kenning for the earth-encircling *Miðgarðsormr*; it might be a proper noun. *Vsp.* **H** 52 follows this line with one that, probably due to textual corruption, is missing from **R**: *ok minnask þar á megingdóma* ‘and there remember great dooms’.
- 279 Or ‘ancient secrets’. *Fimbultýr* ‘Mighty God’ is probably an alias of Óðinn; cf. *Fimbulþulr* in *Háv.* 80, 142.
- 280 Cf. *Vsp.* 8.
- 281 *Hroptr* is an Óðinn-alias of uncertain meaning, perhaps ‘Cryptic/Hidden One’ or ‘Invoker’.
- 282 The text makes sense as it stands, but some editors emend *vel valttívar* ‘well, (as) gods of the slain’ to *vé valttíva* ‘sanctuaries of the gods of the slain’; other possible emendations are *vés valttívar* ‘gods of the sanctuary’ and *vel veltívar* ‘well, (as) benign gods’; cf. *Vsp.* **H** 54.
- 283 Or ‘sacrificial blood twig’; *hlaut-* (*hlut-* in *Vsp.* **H** 55) denotes primarily a lot used in augury, secondarily the sacrificial blood used. Either way, Hœnir divines the future. Cf. *Hym.* 1.
- 284 The identity of the two brothers (or ‘the brothers of Tveggi [=Óðinn]’?) is unclear, but they could well be Høðr and Baldr. Their sons (a new generation of gods or men?) are also obscure.
- 285 Presumably a description of the expansive new world.
- 286 A variant of this stanza appears in *SnEGylf* (17, p. 20); it describes the hall as *gulli betra* ‘better than gold’, rather than *gulli þakðan* ‘thatched with gold’.
- 287 *SnEGylf* (52, p. 53) says that, after Ragnarok, *Gimlé* ‘Fire/Gem Lee’ will be the best place in heaven, where there will be fine drink for those in the hall called Brimir. Righteous people will dwell in it and in a hall called Sindri; cf. *Vsp.* 36.
- 288 I.e., groups of people.
- 289 I.e., dimly shining.
- 290 ‘Waning/Dark Moons’ Mountains’ or ‘Niði’s Mountains’, Niði being a dwarf in *Vsp.* 11, or ‘Kinsmen’s Mountains’. More than one sense might apply. Cf. *Niðavellir* in *Vsp.* 36.

- 291 Or 'in his feathers'.
- 292 If, at the start of this stanza, *þar* 'there' (absent from *Vsp.* H 58) refers to Gimlé, it is uncertain why the dragon should carry corpses, presumably from Náströnd (*Vsp.* 37–38), to this happy hall; but perhaps, following their torture, implicitly in the depths, the dead are now deemed fit for resurrection and to join the virtuous in a new life of bliss.
- 293 Norse seeresses reportedly sat on high-seats or platforms while performing, but this one's sinking at the end of her recitation might also (or alternatively) indicate a mental collapse as she withdraws from a trance-like state. Another possibility, entertained by scholars who believe that Óðinn had wakened the seeress from the dead, is that she sinks back into her grave. Cf. *Vsp.* 2, *Ls.* 24, *Grp.* 22.