



THE POETIC EDDA

A Dual-Language Edition

EDWARD PETTIT



<https://www.openbookpublishers.com>

© 2023 Edward Pettit



This work is licensed under an Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0). This license allows you to share, copy, distribute and transmit the text, and to adapt the text for non-commercial purposes, providing attribution is made to the authors (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work). Attribution should include the following information:

Edward Pettit, *The Poetic Edda: A Dual-Language Edition*. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0308>

Further details about the CC BY-NC license are available at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

All external links were active at the time of publication unless otherwise stated and have been archived via the Internet Archive Wayback Machine at <https://archive.org/web>

Digital material and resources associated with this volume are available at <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0308#resources>

ISBN Paperback: 978-1-80064-772-5

ISBN Hardback: 978-1-80064-773-2

ISBN Digital (PDF): 978-1-80064-774-9

ISBN Digital ebook (EPUB): 978-1-80064-775-6

ISBN Digital ebook (AZW3): 978-1-80064-776-3

ISBN XML: 978-1-80064-777-0

ISBN HTML: 978-1-80064-778-7

DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0308

Front cover image: 'The Two Corbies' by Arthur Rackham, from *Some British Ballads* (London, [1919])

Back cover image: The god Heimdallr blowing his horn, from a seventeenth-century Icelandic manuscript (AM 738 4to, fol. 35v)

Images on pp. 27 and 861: 'Two Ravens' (CC-BY 4.0) by M. Barran, <https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/MarleenaBarranDesign>

Cover design by Katy Saunders.

Hávamál

Hávamál (*Háv.*) ‘The Sayings of Hávi’ survives only in **R** (fol. 3r–7v) and derivative post-medieval paper manuscripts. Its first stanza is also quoted in *SnEGylf*. Additionally, the second half of stanza 84 appears in *Fóstbræðra saga* ‘The Saga of the Sworn Brothers’, a work dated c. 1260.

At 164 stanzas, *Háv.* is much the longest poem in **R**. It is also its most intractable, while at the same time being one of its most fascinating. Written in a variety of metres, but mainly *ljóðaháttr*, it appears to be a collection of poems, or stanza-sequences, that have been brought into loose unity by a compiler, though none of these putative contributing poems or sequences survives elsewhere and the divisions between them are not always clear. A recurring theme, however, is the impartation of wisdom through the words of the god Óðinn (alias *Hávi*), or his human representative. The listener learns especially what a lone man needs to know in a dangerous world, and how he should behave in relation to friends, strangers, the perilous attraction of women and the inevitability of death. Another unifying thread concerns relations between visitors and hosts, a theme evident in several mythic narratives about Óðinn’s dealings with giants.

Parts of *Háv.* may well have become disordered or lost in the course of transmission, and some stanzas are probably interpolations or the creations of a late compiler. In any event, it is unlikely that we simply have several once-separate poems in a pristine state strung together end-to-end; rather, as one scholar observes, ‘we can glimpse the half-submerged hulks of such poems’.¹ The full extent of any disorder or interpolation cannot be determined, though, and scholarly opinions vary. Indeed, at one extreme, at least one interpreter maintains that *Háv.* ‘is a coherent poem’ as it stands.² The same scholar observes that ‘wisdom poetry has no prescribed form’, and that *Háv.* ‘is not linear in its progression; rather, it takes up a theme, examines it, drops it to turn to another, then picks up the original theme in a variation’. This is true, but there are, nonetheless, jarring disjunctions at stanzas 80 and 111–12, and many puzzling passages, transitions and metrical variations elsewhere, which together strongly suggest corruption, lacunae, interpolation or the rough yoking together of formerly separate poetic entities. As

1 D. A. H. Evans, ed., *Hávamál* (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1986), p. 8.

2 C. Larrington, *A Store of Common Sense: Gnostic Theme and Style in Old Icelandic and Old English Wisdom Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 65.

another scholar, who thinks the poem ‘incoherent’, says, ‘it is inconceivable that these 164 strophes were originally composed as one poem’.³

Háv.’s composite nature, together with its many problems of sense and arrangement, has sparked much discussion about the ‘original’ form of the poem(s), with a bewildering number of opinions being voiced, and numerous rearrangements and reconstructions proposed. The degree of subjectivity and the number of assumptions inevitable in reconstructions of a precursor of a text that is probably at least partly oral in origin, and that survives in only one manuscript, mean that little agreement has been reached. However, John McKinnell has made a persuasive case for discerning four ‘original’ poems—all in *ljóðahátr*—of various dates, which were disrupted by interpolations in the course of transmission and combined by an editor at a fairly late date. He identifies these four originals as follows (see also the synopsis):

- A. The Gnostic Poem (roughly stanzas 1–79)
- B. The Poem of Sexual Intrigue (stanzas 84; 91–110)
- C. *Loddfáfnismál* (stanzas 111, lines 4–8 and 11; 112–36)
- D. An anthology comprising part of *Rúnatal* and most of *Ljóðatal* (stanzas 138–41; 146–61; 162, lines 1–3; 163)

The date and place of *Háv.*’s composition are uncertain. Scholars’ opinions differ widely, ranging from essentially early (tenth century or before), genuinely heathen and Norwegian, to essentially late (twelfth or thirteenth century), pseudo-heathen and Icelandic—and one’s view on this matter determines the extent to which one deems *Háv.* an oral poem or the work of a monastic scriptorium. Of course, different parts of the poem may very well have originated at different times and in different places (stanza 129 shows Irish influence), and some passages may have been altered in the course of transmission. Happily, there are clues to the origins of parts of the poem, but we cannot determine when these parts first came together.

SnEGylf’s prominent quotation of stanza 1 may well indicate that *Háv.*, or at least its first part, existed in some form by about 1220; and a likely echo of st. 164 toward the end of *SnEGylf* hints that Snorri knew more of the poem. Internal evidence points to a much earlier date for at least some parts. References to *bautarsteinar* ‘memorial stones’ (72), cremation (81) and a reindeer on a mountain (90), among other things, together with linguistic evidence and a complete absence of Icelandic colour, make pre-Christian Norway a likely home for oral versions of the first two sections described above. Such a date is supported by the appearance of the first lines of stt. 76–77 in Eyvindr Finnsson *skáldaspillir*’s *Hák*. Eyvindr’s reputation as a *skáldaspillir* ‘plagiarist(?)’ means that he may well have echoed *Háv.*, in which case these two stanzas—and conceivably the rest of the ‘Gnostic Poem’—would have existed by c. 960 when Eyvindr composed his

3 Evans, *Hávamál*, p. 7.

poem. The self-centred ethos of the ‘Gnomic Poem’ and the absence of references to the Christian God also suggest an early date.

John McKinnell has marshalled metrical and linguistic evidence that points to a tenth-century heathen origin for the twelve narrative stanzas (*Háv.* 96–101; 104–9) of his reconstructed ‘Poem of Sexual Intrigue’.⁴ But he thinks the non-narrative stanzas of this ‘thoroughly urbane’ section probably have cultural links to twelfth-century Iceland.

The overtly pagan religious character of the later parts of *Háv.*, notably Óðinn’s self-sacrifice by hanging on a tree (*Háv.* 138–39), also favour an early date. For all its apparent correspondences to the Crucifixion of Christ, this myth is almost certainly heathen; it informs skaldic kennings and may well help to explain the best-known name of the world-tree, *Yggdrasil*. *Háv.*’s roots in native pagan tradition are also apparent from its references to the story of Óðinn’s acquisition of the mead of poetry (*Háv.* 13–14, 104–10), which appears in variant form in *SnESkáld*, informs skaldic kennings, and broadly parallels the god Indra’s theft of the sacred *soma* in ancient Indian mythology.

But even if *Háv.* displays knowledge of heathen Norse myths, and if most of the supposed Christian or foreign sources that scholars have proposed appear largely unconvincing (due to the universality of much of the advice offered), there remains the possibility that parts of the text were remoulded or even invented by a late Christian antiquarian. If they were, we might broadly compare the vivid description of a heathen temple in chapter 4 of *Eyrbyggja saga* ‘The Saga of the Dwellers of Eyr [in Iceland]’, an Old Norse work composed in the thirteenth century, when Iceland had been Christian for over two hundred years.

All we can safely say is that the basis of much of *Háv.*’s content *appears* purely heathen—and that at least the ‘Gnomic Poem’ and *Rúnatal* probably are. This impression is supported by the poem’s many difficulties and obscurities, and its total lack of reference to Christian beliefs and morals. But the poem’s realization in manuscript form obviously means that one or more people working in Christian Iceland had a hand in it, even if only to collect, assemble and transcribe.

Wherever and whenever *Háv.* derives from, its present position in **R** is not accidental. Although palaeographical and linguistic evidence indicates that *Háv.*, like *Alv.*, need not have been incorporated into the putative anthology that lies behind the mythological section of **R** until comparatively late, the poem continues the theme of Óðinn’s search for wisdom, perhaps specifically from the giants, evident in *Vsp.* 1–2, 28. More obviously, by indicating Óðinn’s knowledge and showing how he obtained it, *Háv.* introduces the next two poems, which may also be classed broadly as wisdom-verse. In *Vm.* Óðinn defeats a wise giant in a battle of knowledge. In *Grm.* he imparts wisdom and long-lasting rule to Agnarr, a young man who—unlike the witnesses to

4 J. McKinnell, ‘*Hávamál B: A Poem of Sexual Intrigue*’, *Saga-Book* 29 (2005), 83–114.

Óðinn's ordeal on the windswept tree in *Háv.* 138—refreshes him during his torture by Agnarr's father, a man with the giant-like name of Geirrǫðr who is too stupid to recognize his god and too ready to violate the custom of hospitality required by *Háv.* 2–4, 132.

Synopsis

On the basis of sense, metre and the initials to stanzas 1, 111 and 138 in **R**, the following sections can be discerned in *Háv.*:

1. Stt. 1–77 (or 79), which scholars sometimes call the 'Gnomic Poem'. These stanzas, many of them paired thematically and linguistically, and almost all composed in *ljóðahátttr*, offer largely commonsense advice and have been described as 'essentially a guide to survival in the Viking-Age world, aimed at the small farmer'.⁵ They are spoken at least partly by Óðinn (13–14) and their focus is secular, with an emphasis on pragmatic self-interest, wariness and moderation in everyday human affairs. A man should, for example, stay alert when visiting strangers, beware of excessive drunkenness, ask discerning questions, be reserved of speech (but not to the point of appearing stupid), give generously (sometimes), cherish friends, travel armed, avoid both foolishness and excessive learning, appreciate that nobody is completely useless, and strive to gain a lasting posthumous reputation. Stt. 13–14 record a version of the myth of Óðinn's acquisition of the mead of poetry from the giantess Gunnlǫð (cf. 104–10), but put to mundane use as a warning against excessive drinking.
2. Next, after a seemingly isolated—perhaps misplaced or interpolated—and metrically irregular strophe about the divine creation of runes (80), come ten stanzas (81–90), mainly in *málahátttr*. They are mostly on the theme of the untrustworthiness of nature and of certain objects and people, notably women.
3. *Háv.* reverts to *ljóðahátttr* in st. 91, where Óðinn continues the theme of fickleness in sexual relations by observing that men are also untrustworthy. He then illustrates in stt. 92–102 how lust for a woman can make a fool of any man by telling a story of his deception by the teasing daughter (or wife) of Billingr (perhaps a giant).
4. St. 103, about the need for a man to have good things to say, perhaps serves as a none-too-smooth link to Óðinn's account in stt. 104–10 of how he acquired the mead of poetry from Gunnlǫð (variants of this version of the myth

5 T. Gunnell, 'Eddic Poetry', in R. McTurk, ed., *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), pp. 82–100 at 85, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470996867.ch6>

survive in stt. 13–14 and *SnESkáld*). This tale showing Óðinn’s successful sexual deception of a woman counterbalances his deception by Billingr’s daughter (or wife). The identity of the speaker of st. 110, which censures Óðinn for perjury and theft, is unclear.

5. Stt. 111–37 are often known as *Loddfáfnismál* ‘The Sayings of/for Loddfáfnir’. An unnamed speaker—possibly Óðinn or the poet as Óðinn’s representative—says he heard people discussing ‘runes’ (secrets or runic letters) and exchanging counsels in the hall of Hávi, and grandly announces that it is time to repeat their words ‘from the sage’s seat at the spring of Urðr [one of the Nornir]’. He addresses someone called Loddfáfnir in stanzas (mainly of *ljóðahátttr* and *galdralag*) mostly comprising the words ‘I counsel you, Loddfáfnir, and you should take my counsels; you’ll profit if you take them, they’ll be good for you if you get them’, followed by guidance on miscellaneous topics, some of it curiously mundane, perhaps even consciously bathetic. There are, for instance, injunctions not to get up at night unless you are on watch or needing to pee, not to sleep with other men’s wives, and not to mock beggars or old men; tips on friendship and seduction; and, finally, a list of remedies.
6. Stt. 138–45 form a metrically varied section, often called *Rúnatal* ‘The Tally of Runes’. Here *Háv.* acquires an obscure, religious quality as Óðinn, perhaps following on from the reference to ‘runes’ in stanza 111, describes how he ‘picked up runes’ after hanging for nine days on a tree, ‘wounded by a spear and given to Óðinn, myself to myself’; how (during this ordeal?) he ‘learnt nine mighty songs from the famous son of Þorþórr’; and how he got a draught of the mead of poetry, thereby becoming eloquent and productive—the poem’s third account of how Óðinn obtained this drink. This section concludes with four stanzas focused on the carving and colouring of runic letters, especially by Óðinn (alias *Fimbulþulr/Hroptr/Þundr*), but which also allude to sacrificial rites. These four stanzas, if not interpolated, may also be spoken by Óðinn (or his human avatar); if it is Óðinn speaking, he refers to himself in the first person, perhaps because he recites traditional lore of which his actions are part.
7. Stt. 146–63, nowadays often called *Ljóðatal* ‘The Tally of Magical Songs’, form a numbered list of the effects of eighteen (not nine) magical songs, presumably spoken by Óðinn and apparently addressed to Loddfáfnir (162). They are for purposes such as healing illnesses, protecting allies, defeating enemies, calming the wind, extinguishing fires, seducing women, thwarting evil females and resurrecting the dead. But the actual words of the incantations are given neither to Loddfáfnir nor to us.

8. *Háv.* ends in *galdratalag* with a framing stanza (164), perhaps composed by the poem's compiler. It revives the image of the speaker in a hall from st. 2 and, by referring to *Háva mál* 'sayings of Hávi', links back to the reference to the speech of men in Hávi's hall in st. 111. This reference presumably gives the poem its name.

Further Reading

- Clunies Ross, M., 'Voice and Voices in Eddic Poetry', in T. Pàroli, ed., *Poetry in the Scandinavian Middle Ages* (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro studi, 1990), pp. 219–30.
- Cohen, S., "'Nine Nights" in Indo-European Myth', *Comparative Mythology* 5 (2019), 33–43, <https://www.compmyth.org/journal/index.php/cm/article/view/20>
- Crawford, J., trans. and ed., *The Wanderer's Havamal* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2019).
- Dronke, U., 'Óminnis hegrí', in B. Fidjestøl et al., ed., *Festschrift til Ludvig Holm-Olsen* (Bergen: Øvre Ervik, 1984), pp. 53–60 [rpt. as chapter 8 of her *Myth and Fiction in Early Norse Lands* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996)]
- Dronke, U., ed., *The Poetic Edda: Volume III. Mythological Poems II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011).
- Evans, D. A. H., ed., *Hávamál* (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1986), <http://www.vsnrweb-publications.org.uk/Text%20Series/Havamal.pdf>; accompanied by A. Faulkes, *Glossary and Index* (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1987), <http://www.vsnrweb-publications.org.uk/Text%20Series/Glossary%20and%20Index.pdf>
- Evans, D. A. H., 'More Common Sense about *Hávamál*', *Skandinavistik* 19 (1989), 127–41.
- Haugen, E., 'The *Edda* as Ritual: Odin and His Masks', in R. J. Glendinning and Haraldur Bessason, ed., *Edda: A Collection of Essays* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1983), pp. 3–24.
- Jackson, E., 'Some Contexts and Characteristics of Old Norse Ordering Lists', *Saga-Book* 23 (1991), 111–40.
- Jackson, E., 'A New Perspective on the Final Three Sections of *Hávamál* and on the Role of *Loddfáfnir*', *Saga-Book* 24 (1994), 33–57.
- Jackson, E., 'Eddic Listing Techniques and the Coherence of "Rúnatal"', *alvissmál* 5 (1995), 81–10.
- Kure, H., 'Hanging on the World Tree: Man and Cosmos in Old Norse Mythic Poetry', in A. Andréén, K. Jennbert and C. Raudvere, ed., *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, Changes, and Interactions: An International Conference in Lund, Sweden, June 3–7, 2004* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2006), pp. 68–71.
- Larrington, C., *A Store of Common Sense: Gnostic Theme and Style in Old Icelandic and Old English Wisdom Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).
- Lassen, A., *Odin's Ways: A Guide to the Pagan God in Medieval Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2022).
- McKinnell, J., '*Hávamál* B: A Poem of Sexual Intrigue', *Saga-Book* 29 (2005), 83–114; also shortened as '*Hávamál* B: A Reconstructed Poem of Sexual Intrigue', in J. McKinnell, *Essays on Eddic*

- Poetry*, ed. D. Kick and J. D. Shafer (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2014), pp. 96–122, <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442669260-006>
- McKinnell, J., ‘The Making of *Hávamál*’, *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 3 (2007), 75–116; also revised and shortened as ‘The Evolution of *Hávamál*’, in J. McKinnell, *Essays on Eddic Poetry*, ed. D. Kick and J. D. Shafer (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2014), pp. 59–95, <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442669260-005>
- McKinnell, J., ‘Wisdom from the Dead: The *Ljóðatal* Section of *Hávamál*’, *Medium Ævum* 76 (2007), 85–115; also shortened as ‘Wisdom from Dead Relatives: The *Ljóðatal* Section of *Hávamál*’, in J. McKinnell, *Essays on Eddic Poetry*, ed., D. Kick and J. D. Shafer (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2014), pp. 123–52, <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442669260-007>
- McKinnell, J., ‘Personae of the Performer in *Hávamál*’, *Saga-Book* 37 (2013), 27–42.
- McKinnell, J., ‘Tradition and Ideology in Eddic Poetry’, in I. G. Losquiño, O. Sundqvist and D. Taggart, ed., *Making the Sacred Profane: Essays in Honour of Stefan Brink* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), pp. 141–55, <https://doi.org/10.1484/m.tcne-eb.5.119344>
- Oosten, J. G., *The War of the Gods: the Social Code in Indo-European Mythology* (London: Routledge, 1985).
- Quinn, J., ‘Liquid Knowledge: Traditional Conceptualisations of Learning in Eddic Poetry’, in S. Rankovic, L. Melve and E. Mundal, ed., *Along the Oral-Written Continuum: Types of Texts, Relations and Their Implications* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 175–217, <https://doi.org/10.1484/m.usml-eb.3.4283>
- Sayers, W., ‘Birds and Brains of Forgetfulness: Old Norse *óminnis hegri*, Old Irish *inchinn dermailt*’, *Journal of Indo-European Studies* 43 (2015), 393–422.
- Sundqvist, O., ‘The Hanging, the Nine Nights and the “Precious Knowledge” in *Hávamál* 138–45: The Cultic Context’, in W. Heizmann, K. Bödl, H. H. Beck, ed., *Analecta Septentrionalia: Beiträge zur nordgermanischen Kultur- und Literaturgeschichte* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), pp. 649–68.
- Svava Jakobsdóttir, ‘Gunnloð and the Precious Mead’, in P. Acker and C. Larrington, ed., *The Poetic Edda: Essays on Old Norse Mythology* (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 27–57.
- Van Hamel, A. G., ‘Óðinn Hanging on the Tree’, *Acta Philologica Scandinavica* 7 (1933), 260–88.
- Von See, K., B. La Farge and K. Schulz, *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda*. Band I: *Götterlieder*, I (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2019).
- Wallenstein, F., ‘What Does Óðinn Do to the *Túnriðor*? An Interpretation of *Hávamál* 155’, in K. Wikström af Edholm, P. Jackson Rova, A. Nordberg, O. Sundqvist and T. Zachrisson, ed., *Myth, Materiality, and Lived Religion in Merovingian and Viking Scandinavia* (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2019), pp. 397–415 (with response by T. Gunnell on pp. 416–21), <https://doi.org/10.16993/bay.n>

Hávamál

1. Gáttir allar áðr gangi fram
um skoðask skyli,
um skygnask skyli;
þvíat óvíst er at vita hvar óvinir
sitja á fleti fyrir.
2. 'Gefendr heilir!' Gestr er inn kominn.
Hvar skal sitja sjá?
Mjök er bráðr, sá er á bröndum skal
síns um freista frama.
3. Elds er þörf þeims inn er kominn
ok á kné kalinn;
matar ok váða er manni þörf,
þeim er hefir um fjall farit.
4. Vatns er þörf þeim er til verðar kómr,
þerru ok þjóðlaðar,
góðs um æðis, ef sér geta mætti,
orðs ok endrþögu.
5. Vits er þörf þeim er víða ratar;
dælt er heima hvat;
at augabragði verðr sá er ekki kann
ok með snotrum sitr.
6. At hyggjandi sinni skylit maðr hröesinn vera,
heldr gætinn at geði;
þá er horskr ok þögull kómr heimisgarða til,
sjaldan verðr víti vörum;
þvíat óbrigðra vin fær maðr aldregi
en manvit mikit.
7. Inn vari gestr, er til verðar kómr,
þunnu hljóði þegir,
eyrum hlýðir en augum skoðar;
svá nýsisk fróðra hverr fyrir.
8. Hinn er sæll er sér um getr
lof ok líknstafi;
óðælla er við þat er maðr eiga skal
annars brjóstum í.

The Sayings of Hávi¹

1. Before advancing through all doorways,
one must look around,
one must peer around;
for one never knows for certain where enemies
are sitting on the boards.²
2. 'Hail to the givers!³ A guest has come in.⁴
Where shall he sit?
He's very anxious,⁵ the one who has
to test his fortune on the firewood.⁶
3. Fire is required for the one who has come in
and is chilled at the knee;
food and clothes are required for the man
who has travelled over mountains.
4. Water is required for the one who comes to a meal,
a towel and a warm invitation,
a good disposition,⁷ if he can get it,
conversation and silence in return.⁸
5. Wits are required by the one who wanders widely;
everything is easy at home;
he who knows nothing and sits among the wise
becomes the subject of winking.⁹
6. One shouldn't be boastful of one's brains,
but rather be reserved of mind;
when a wise and reticent man comes to homesteads,
misfortune seldom befalls the wary;¹⁰
for one never gets a more unfailing friend
than great common sense.¹¹
7. The cautious guest, when he comes to a meal,
is silent with strained hearing;
he listens with his ears and looks with his eyes;
so every wise man spies things out before himself.
8. Happy is that one who earns himself
praise and kindness-staves;¹²
it's less easy to deal with what one has to own
in the heart of another.¹³

9. Sá er saell er sjálfr um á
lof ok vit meðan lifir;
þvíat ill ráð hefir maðr opt þegit
annars brjóstum ór.
10. Byrði betri berrat maðr brautu at
en sé manvit mikit;
auði betra þikkir þat í okunnum stað;
slíkt er válaðs vera.
11. Byrði betri berrat maðr brautu at
en sé manvit mikit;
vegnest verra vegra hann velli at
en sé ofdrykkja ǫls.
12. Era svá gott sem gott kveða,
ǫl, alda sonum;
þvíat færa veit er fleira drekkir,
síns til geðs gumi.
13. Óminnishegri heitir sá er yfir ǫlðrum þrumir,
hann stelr geði guma;
þess fugls fjǫðrum ek fjǫtraðr vark
í garði Gunnlaðar.
14. Ǫlr ek varð, varð ofrǫlvi,
at ins fróða Fjalars;
því er ǫlðr bazt at apr of heimtir
hverr sitt geð gumi.
15. Þagalt ok hugalt skyli þjóðans barn
ok vígdjarft vera;
glaðr ok reifr skyli gumna hverr,
unz sinn bíðr bana.
16. Ósnjallr maðr hyggsk munu ey lifa,
ef hann við víg varask;
en elli gefr honum engi frið,
þótt honum geirar gefi.
17. Kópir afglapi er til kynnis kǫmr;
þylsk hann um eða þrumir;
allt er senn ef hann sylg um getr,
uppi er þá geð guma.

9. Happy is he who himself possesses
acclaim and intelligence while he lives;
for a man has often had bad advice
from another's breast.
10. One doesn't bear a better burden on the road
than great common sense;
better than wealth it seems in a strange place;
such is a poor man's means of existence.¹⁴
11. One doesn't bear a better burden on the road
than great common sense;
one can't carry worse provisions through the country¹⁵
than overindulgence in ale.
12. It's not as good as they say it's good,
ale, for the sons of men;
for the more a man drinks,
the less he knows his mind.
13. It's called the heron of oblivion,¹⁶ the one that stands quietly¹⁷
over ale-feasts;¹⁸
it steals a man's wits;¹⁹
with this bird's feathers²⁰ I was fettered²¹
in the court²² of Gunnloð.²³
14. I got drunk, got extremely drunk,
at the house of wise Fjalarr;²⁴
in that case²⁵ the best ale-feast is one where each man
gets his faculties back.²⁶
15. A ruler's child must be reserved and thoughtful
and brave in battle;
every man must be merry and cheerful
until he meets his death.
16. A foolish²⁷ man thinks he will live forever,
if he bewares of²⁸ battle;
but old age will give him no peace,
even if spears give it to him.
17. A fool stares when he comes to a friend's house;
he mumbles to himself or stays silent;
all at once, if he gets a swig,
the man's wits are gone.²⁹

18. Sá einn veit er víða ratar
ok hefir fjölð um farit,
hverju geði stýrir gumna hverr;
sá er vitandi vits.
19. Haldit maðr á keru, drekki þó at hófi mjöð;
mæli þarft eða þegi;
ókynnis þess vár þik engi maðr,
at þú gangir snemma at sofa.
20. Gráðugr halr, nema geðs viti,
etr sér aldrtreaga;
opt fær hlægis, er með horskum kómur,
manni heimskum magi.
21. Hjarðir þat vitu, nær þeir heim skulu,
ok ganga þá af grasi;
en ósviðr maðr kann ævagi
síns um mál maga.
22. Vesall maðr ok illa skapi
hlær at hvívetna;
hittki hann veit er hann vita þyrfti,
at hann era vamma vanr.
23. Ósviðr maðr vakir um allar nætr
ok hyggr at hvívetna;
þá er móðr er at morni kómur,
allt er víl, sem var.
24. Ósnotr maðr hyggr sér alla vera
viðhlæjendr vini;
hittki hann fiðr, þótt þeir um hann fár lesi,
ef hann með snotrum sitr.
25. Ósnotr maðr hyggr sér alla vera
viðhlæjendr vini;
þá þat finnr er at þingi kómur
at hann á formælendr fá.
26. Ósnotr maðr þikkisk allt vita,
ef hann á sér í vá veru;
hittki hann veit, hvat hann skal við kveða,
ef hans freista firar.

18. Only the one who wanders widely
 and has journeyed much
 knows what disposition commands each man;
 he's knowing about the mind.
19. One mustn't hog the bowl, but drink mead in moderation;³⁰
 let one say something useful or be silent;
 nobody will blame you for such bad manners,
 if you go to bed early.
20. A greedy man, unless he knows his inclination,
 eats himself into life-sorrow;
 the stomach often brings scorn on a foolish man,
 when he comes among the wise.
21. Herds know it, when they must go home,
 and then go from the grass;³¹
 but a foolish man never knows
 the measure of his maw.³²
22. A wretched man and one of wicked character³³
 laughs at everything;
 he doesn't know what he needed to know,
 that he's not short of faults.
23. A foolish man stays awake through all nights
 and thinks about everything;
 then he's exhausted when morning arrives,
 [and] all his trouble is as it was.
24. A foolish man thinks all who laugh with him
 are his friends;
 he doesn't notice, though they speak ill of him,
 if he sits among the wise.
25. A foolish man thinks all who laugh with him
 are his friends;
 then he finds it [out] when he comes to the assembly³⁴
 that he has few speakers on his behalf.
26. A foolish man thinks he knows it all,
 if he has a safe spot for himself in a corner;³⁵
 he doesn't know this — what he must say in response,
 if people put him to the test.

27. Ósnotr maðr, er með aldir kœmr,
þat er bazt at hann þegi;
engi þat veit at hann ekki kann,
nema hann mæli til mart;
veita maðr, hinn er vætki veit,
þótt hann mæli til mart.
28. Fróðr sá þykkisk er fregna kann
ok segja it sama;
eyvitu leyna megu ýta synir,
því er gengr um guma.
29. Ærna mælir, sá er æva þegir,
staðlausu stafi;
hraðmælt tunga, nema haldendr eigi,
opt sér ógott um gelr.
30. At augabragði skala maðr annan hafa,
þótt til kynnis komi;
margr þá fróðr þikkisk ef hann freginn erat
ok nái hann þurrfjallr þruma.
31. Fróðr þikkisk, sá er flóttá tekr,
gestr at gest hæðinn;
veita gǫrla, sá er um verði glissir,
þótt hann með grómum glami.
32. Gumnar margir erusk gagnhollir,
en at vírði vrekask;
aldar róg þat mun æ vera,
órir gestr við gest.
33. Árliga verðar skyli maðr opt fá,
nema til kynnis komi;
sitr ok snópir, lætr sem sólginn sé,
ok kann fregna at fá.
34. Afhvarf mikit er til ills vinar,
þótt á brautu búí;
en til góðs vinar liggja gagnvegir,
þótt hann sé firr farinn.
35. Ganga skal, skala gestr vera
ey í einum stað;
ljúfr verðr leiðr ef lengi sitr
annars fletjum á.

27. When a foolish man comes among men,
 it's best that he keep quiet;
 no one will know that he knows nothing,
 unless he talks too much;
 the man who knows nothing doesn't even know
 when he talks too much.
28. He who can ask and also answer
 is considered wise;
 the sons of men can conceal nothing
 of what goes around men.³⁶
29. He who is never silent speaks too many
 staves of senselessness,³⁷
 a fast-talking tongue, unless it has guards,³⁸
 often invokes no good for itself.
30. One shouldn't make mock of another³⁹
 when one visits an acquaintance;
 many [a man] may then seem wise if he isn't questioned
 and he manages to sit quietly with his skin dry.⁴⁰
31. A guest scornful of a [fellow] guest
 is thought wise — [that is,] the one who [in this situation]
 takes flight;⁴¹
 the one who's sneering at a meal can't be sure
 whether he's scoffing among enemies.
32. Many men are entirely friendly⁴² towards each other,
 but abuse one another at a feast,⁴³
 there will always be strife among men,⁴⁴
 guest will fall out with guest.
33. One should often have one's meal early,
 unless one visits an acquaintance;⁴⁵
 [otherwise] one sits and craves food restlessly, acts as if famished,
 and can ask about few things.
34. It's a very roundabout route to a bad friend's house,
 even if he lives on your way;
 but straight roads lead to a good friend,
 even if he's gone further away.⁴⁶
35. One must go, not always be
 a guest in one place;
 a loved man becomes loathed if he stays for long
 on the floor of another.

36. Bú er betra, þótt lítit sé;
 halr er heima hvern;
þótt tvær geitr eigi ok taugreptan sal,
 þat er þó betra en bæn.
37. Bú er betra, þótt lítit sé,
 halr er heima hvern;
blóðugt er hjarta þeim er biðja skal
 sér í mál hvert matar.
38. Vápnnum sínum skal maðr velli á
 feti ganga framarr;
þvíat óvíst er at vita nær verðr á vegum úti
 geirs um þörf guma.
39. Fannka ek mildan mann eða svá matargóðan
 at ei væri þiggja þegit,
eða síns fjár svá gjöflan
 at leið sé laun, ef þegi.
40. Fjár síns, er fengit hefr,
 skylit maðr þörf þola;
opt sparir leiðum þats hefir ljúfum hugat,
 mart gengr verr en varir.
41. Vápnnum ok váðum skulu vinir gleðjask;
 þat er á sjálfum sýnst;
viðrgefendr ok endrgefendr erusk lengst vinir,
 ef þat bíðr at verða vel.
42. Vin sínum skal maðr vinr vera
 ok gjalda gjöf við gjöf;
hlátr við hlátri skyli hólðar taka,
 en lausung við lygi.
43. Vin sínum skal maðr vinr vera,
 þeim ok þess vin,
en óvinar síns skyli engi maðr
 vinar vinr vera.
44. Veiztu, ef þú vin átt, þann er þú vel trúir,
 ok vill þú af honum gott geta,
geði skaltu við þann blanda ok gjöfum skipta,
 fara at finna opt.

36. A farmstead is better, even if it's little;⁴⁷
everyone's a free man at home;
even if one has [only] two goats and a rope-raftered⁴⁸ hall,
that's still better than begging.
37. A farmstead is better, even if it's little;⁴⁹
everyone's a freeman at home;
bloody is the heart of the one who must beg
for his food at every meal.
38. One mustn't go a foot from
one's weapons in the field;
for, out on the roads, a man never knows for certain
when he'll have need of his spear.
39. I haven't encountered a man so kind or generous with food
that to accept was not [to be reckoned as having] accepted,⁵⁰
or so liberal with his wealth
that a reward would be loathed, if he could receive one.
40. Of his wealth, when he has acquired it,
a man shouldn't endure need,⁵¹
often one saves for the loathed what's meant for the loved;
many things turn out worse than one expects.
41. With weapons and apparel friends should gladden each other;
that's most evident on themselves;⁵²
givers in return and repeat givers are friends longest,
if it lasts long enough to turn out well.
42. One should be a friend to one's friend,
and repay gift with gift;
men should requite laughter with laughter,⁵³
and lying with a lie.
43. One should be a friend to one's friend,
to him and to his friend;
but no one should be a friend
of his enemy's friend.
44. Know that if you have a friend whom you trust well,
and you want to get good from him,
you must mingle your mind with his and exchange gifts,
go to see him often.

45. Ef þú átt annan, þanns þú illa trúir,
vildu af honum þó gott geta,
fagrt skaltu við þann mæla en flátt hyggja,
ok gjalda lausung við lygi.
46. Þat er enn of þann er þú illa trúir
ok þér er grunr at hans geði:
hlæja skaltu við þeim ok um hug mæla;
glík skulu gjöld gjöfum.
47. Ungr var ek forðum, fór ek einn saman,
þá varð ek villr vega;
auðigr þóttumsk er ek annan fann;
maðr er manns gaman.
48. Mildir, frœknir menn bazt lifa,
sjaldan sút ala;
en ósnjallr maðr uggir hotvetna,
sýtir æ glöggr við gjöfum.
49. Váðir mínar gaf ek velli at
tveim trémönnum;
rekkar þat þóttusk er þeir rípt hofðu,
neiss er nøkkviðr halr.
50. Hrørnar þöll, sú er stendr þorpi á,
hlýrat henni þorkr né barr;
svá er maðr, sá er mangi ann:
hvat skal hann lengi lifa?
51. Eldi heitari brennr með illum vinum,
friðr fimm daga,
en þá sloknar er inn sétti kœmr,
ok versnar allr vinskapr.
52. Mikit eitt skala manni gefa,
opt kaupir sér í litlu lof;
með hálfum hleif ok með hollu keru
fekk ek mér féлага.
53. Lítilla sanda, lítilla sæva,
lítill eru geð guma;
því allir menn urðut jafnspakir,
hálf er ǫld hvár.

45. If you have another, whom you mistrust,
 yet you want to get good from him,
 you must speak fair with him but think false,
 and repay lying with a lie.
46. That's also the case with the one whom you mistrust
 and whose disposition you suspect:
 you must laugh with him and mince the truth;⁵⁴
 there should be like repayment for gifts.
47. I was young once, I travelled alone,
 then I was astray on the roads;⁵⁵
 I thought myself rich when I met another;
 man is man's delight.⁵⁶
48. Generous, brave men live best,
 they seldom nurse sorrow;
 but a foolish man fears everything,
 a niggard is always nervous about gifts.
49. Out in the country,⁵⁷ I⁵⁸ gave my clothes
 to two tree-men,⁵⁹
 they thought themselves champions⁶⁰ when they had fine clothing;
 a naked man is shamed.
50. The fir-tree that stands in a farmstead withers,
 neither bark nor needles protect it;⁶¹
 so it is with the man whom no one loves:
 how is he to live for long?
51. Love burns hotter than fire for five days
 among false friends,
 but then dies down when the sixth comes,
 and all friendship worsens.
52. One shouldn't give a man only great⁶² things,
 one can often buy oneself love⁶³ with little;
 with half a loaf and with a tilted cup⁶⁴
 I got myself a comrade.
53. Of little sands,⁶⁵ of little seas,
 little are the minds of men;⁶⁶
 that's why all people haven't become equivalently wise;⁶⁷
 each class of humankind is half[-wise].⁶⁸

54. Meðalsnotr skyli manna hverr,
æva til snotr sé;
þeim er fyrða fegrst at lifa
er vel mart vitu.
55. Meðalsnotr skyli manna hverr,
æva til snotr sé;
þvíat snotrs manns hjarta verðr sjaldan glatt,
ef sá er alsnotr er á.
56. Meðalsnotr skyli manna hverr,
æva til snotr sé;
ørlog sín viti engi fyrir,
þeim er sorgalausastr sefi.
57. Brandr af brandi brenn, unz brunninn er,
funi kveykisk af funa;
maðr af manni verðr at máli kuðr,
en til dølskr af dul.
58. Ár skal rísa, sá er annars vill
fé eða fjör hafa;
sjaldan liggjandi úlfr lær um getr,
né sofandi maðr sigr.
59. Ár skal rísa, sá er á yrkendr fá,
ok ganga síns verka á vit;
mart um dvelr þann er um morgin sefr;
hálftr er auðr und hvötum.
60. Þurra skíða ok þakinna næfra,
þess kann maðr mjöt,
ok þess viðar er vinnask megi
mál ok misseri.
61. Þveginn ok mettr ríði maðr þingi at,
þótt hann sét væddr til vel;
skúa ok bróka skammisk engi maðr,
né hests in heldr, þótt hann hafit góðan.
62. Snapir ok gnafir, er til sævar kœmr,
örn á aldinn mar;
svá er maðr er með mǫrgum kœmr
ok á formælendr fá.

54. Every man should be moderately wise,
let him never be too wise;
those people who know just enough
live the pleasantest lives.⁶⁹
55. Every man should be moderately wise,
let him never be too wise;
for the heart of a wise man seldom becomes happy,
if he who owns it is all-wise.
56. Every man should be moderately wise,
let him never be too wise;
let no one have foreknowledge of his fate,
one's mind is [then] freest from sorrows.
57. Brand⁷⁰ catches fire from brand, until it is burnt,
flame is kindled from flame;
man becomes wise from man by speech,
and too foolish from reticence.⁷¹
58. He must rise early, the one who wants to have
another's wealth or life;
a lounging wolf seldom gets the ham,
nor a sleeping man the victory.
59. He must rise early, the one who has few workmen,
and go to inspect his work;⁷²
many things will hinder the one who sleeps through the morning,
wealth is half in the hands of the willing.
60. Of dry sticks and bark for roofing,
a man knows his measure of this,
and of the wood that can suffice
for three months and for six.
61. Washed and fed let a man ride to the assembly,
even if he isn't too well attired;
of his shoes and breeches let no man be ashamed,
or of his horse either, even if he hasn't a good one.
62. When an eagle comes to the sea it snaps
and stretches at the ancient ocean;
so is a man who comes among many
and has few speakers on his behalf.⁷³

63. Fregna ok segja skal fróðra hverr,
sá er vill heitinn horskr;
einn vita, né annarr skal,
þjóð veit, ef þrír ru.
64. Ríki sitt skyli ráðsnotra hverr
í hófi hafa;
þá hann þat finnr, er með fræknum kómr,
at engi er einna hvatastr.
65. Orða þeira er maðr qðrum segir,
opt hann gjöld um getr.
66. Mikilsti snemma kom ek í marga staði,
en til síð í suma;
ql var drukkit, sumt var ólagat,
sjaldan hittir leiðr í lið.
67. Hér ok hvar myndi mér heim of boðit,
ef þyrftak at málungi mat;
eða tvau lær hengi at ins tryggva vinar,
þars ek hafða eitt etit.
68. Eldr er beztr með ýta sonum
ok sólar sýn,
heilyndi sitt, ef maðr hafa náir,
án við lqst at lifa.
69. Erat maðr alls vesall, þótt hann sé illa heill:
sumr er af sonum sæll,
sumr af frændum, sumr af fé cernu,
sumr af verkum vel.
70. Betra er lifðum en sé ólifðum,
ey getr kvíkr kú;
eld sá ek upp brenna auðgum manni fyrir,
en úti var dauðr fyr durum.
71. Haltr ríðr hrossi, hjqrð rekr handarvanr,
daufr vegr ok dugir;
blindr er betri en brenndr sé;
nýtr mangi nás.
72. Sonr er betri, þótt sé síð of alinn
eptir genginn guma;
sjaldan bautarsteinar standa brautu nær,
nema reisi niðr at nið.

63. Every wise man who wants to be called sensible
must ask and answer;
one man should know, but not a second,
the nation will know, if there are three.
64. Every man wise in counsel should keep
his power in check;
he will find it [out], when he comes among the brave,
that no one is boldest of all.⁷⁴
65. For the words that one says to another,
one often receives repayment.⁷⁵
66. Much too early I came to many places,⁷⁶
and too late to some;
the ale had been drunk, [or] some was unbrewed,
the hated one seldom hits the mark.⁷⁷
67. Here and there I would be invited home
if I didn't need food at meal-times;
or two hams might hang in the true friend's house
when I had [already] eaten one.⁷⁸
68. Fire is best among the sons of men,
and the sight of the sun,⁷⁹
his health, if a man can keep it,
to live without disability.⁸⁰
69. A man isn't entirely wretched, even if he's in bad health:
one man is blessed in sons,
one in kinsmen, one in sufficient wealth,
one is well-[blessed] in deeds.
70. It's better for the living than the unliving,
the live man always gets the cow;
I saw fire blaze up before a rich man,⁸¹
but death was outside the door.⁸²
71. A limping man rides a horse, a one-handed man drives a flock,
a deaf man fights and wins;
it's better to be blind than burnt,⁸³
no one has use for a corpse.
72. A son is better, even if he's born late,
after the father has passed on;⁸⁴
memorial stones seldom stand by the road
unless kinsman raises them for kinsman.

73. Tveir ru eins herjar; tunga er höfuðs bani;
er mér í heðin hvern handar væni.
74. Nótt verðr feginn, sá er nesti trúir;
skammar ru skips rár;
hverf er haustgríma;
fjölð um viðrir á fimm dögum,
en meira á mánaði.
75. Veita hinn er vætki veit:
margr verðr *af aurum* api;
maðr er auðigr, annarr óauðigr,
skylit þann vítká vár.
76. Deyr fé, deyja frændr,
deyr sjálfr it sama;
en orðstírr deyr aldregi
hveim er sér góðan getr.
77. Deyr fé, deyja frændr,
deyr sjálfr it sama;
ek veit einn at aldri deyr:
dómr um dauðan hvern.
78. Fullar grindr sá ek fyr Fitjungs sonum;
nú bera þeir vánar vǫl;
svá er auðr sem augabragð,
hann er valtastr vina.
79. Ósnotr maðr, ef eignask getr
fé eða fljóðs munuð,
metnaðr honum þróask, en manvit aldregi,
fram gengr hann, drjúgt í dul.
80. Þat er þá reynt, er þú at rúnum spyrr,
inum reginkunnum,
þeim er gørðu ginnregin
ok fáði Fimbulþulr;
þá hefir hann bazt ef hann þegir.
81. At kveldi skal dag leyfa, konu er brennd er,
mæki er reyndr er, mey er gefin er,
ís er yfir kœmr, ǫl er drukkit er.

73. Two⁸⁵ are the destroyers of one; the tongue is the head's slayer,⁸⁶
I expect a hand inside every fur cloak.⁸⁷
74. Night is welcome to the one who trusts his provisions;
short are a ship's yard-arms;⁸⁸
an autumn night⁸⁹ is changeable;
a wealth of weather in five days,
and⁹⁰ more in a month.
75. He who knows nothing doesn't know it:
many a man becomes an ape⁹¹ through money;
one man is wealthy, another unwealthy,
one shouldn't blame him for his misfortune.
76. Cattle die, kinsmen die,⁹²
one dies oneself the same;
but reputation never dies
for whoever gets himself a good one.
77. Cattle die, kinsmen die,
one dies oneself the same;
I know one thing that never dies:
the renown of every dead man.⁹³
78. Full cattle-pens I saw for Fitjungr's sons;⁹⁴
now they bear a beggar's staff;⁹⁵
wealth is just like the winking of an eye,
it's the most fickle of friends.
79. If a foolish man gets hold of wealth
or a woman's love,
his pride increases, but his intelligence never;
forward he goes, headlong into folly.
80. It's proven then, when you enquire of the runes,⁹⁶
those of divine descent,
those which mighty powers⁹⁷ made
and Fimbulþulr⁹⁸ coloured;⁹⁹
he does best then if he keeps quiet.¹⁰⁰
81. One should praise a day in the evening, a woman¹⁰¹
when she's been burned,¹⁰²
a sword when it's been proven, a girl when she's been given in marriage,
ice when it's been crossed, ale when it's been drunk.¹⁰³

82. Í vindi skal við höggva, veðri á sjó róa,
myrkri við man spjalla; mörög eru dags augu;
á skip skal skriðar orka, en á skjöld til hlífar,
mæki höggs, en mey til kossa.
83. Við eld skal ǫl drekka, en á ísi skriða,
magran mar kaupa, en mæki saurgan,
heima hest feita, en hund á búi.
84. Meyjar orðum skyli mangi trúa,
né því er kveðr kona;
þvíat á hverfanda hvéli váru þeim hjörtu sköpuð,
brigð í brjóst um lagit.
85. Brestanda boga, brennanda loga,
gínanda úlfi, galandi kráku,
rýtanda svíni, rótlausum viði,
vaxanda vági, vellanda katli,
86. fljúganda fleini, fallandi báru,
ísi einnættum, ormi hringlegnum,
brúðar beðmálum eða brotnu sverði,
bjarnar leiki eða barni konungs,
87. sjúkum kálfi, sjálfráða þraeli,
völu vilmæli, val nýfelldum,
88. akri ársánum, trúi engi maðr,
né til snemma syni —
veðr ræðr akri, en vit syni;
hætt er þeira hvárt —
89. bróðurbana sínum, þótt á brautu moeti,
húsi hálfbrunnu, hesti alskjótum —
þá er jór ónýtr ef einn fótr brotnar —
verðit maðr svá tryggir at þessu trúi ǫllu!
90. Svá er friðr kvenna, þeira er flátt hyggja,
sem aki jó óbryddum á ísi hálum,
teitum, tvévetrum ok sé tamr illa,
eða í byr óðum beiti stjórnlausu,
eða skyli haltr henda hrein í þáfjalli.
91. Bert ek nú mæli, þvíat ek bæði veit —
brigðr er karla hugar konum;
þá vér fegrst mælum, er vér flást hyggjum —
þat tælir horska hugi.

82. One should fell a tree in a wind,¹⁰⁴ row to sea in fine weather,¹⁰⁵
chat with a girl in the dark; many are the eyes of day;
one should look to a ship for speed, and to a shield for protection,
a sword for a blow, and a girl for kisses.
83. One should drink ale by the fire,¹⁰⁶ and skate on ice,
buy a lean horse, and a dirty sword,¹⁰⁷
fatten a horse at home, but a hound at [another's] house.
84. No one should trust a girl's words,
or what a woman¹⁰⁸ says,
because their hearts were shaped on a whirling wheel,¹⁰⁹
fickleness was laid in their breast.¹¹⁰
85. In a breaking bow, in a burning flame,
in a gaping wolf, in a cawing crow,¹¹¹
in a grunting boar, in a rootless tree,
in a rising wave, in a boiling cauldron,¹¹²
86. in a flying shaft, in a falling wave,
in one-night-old ice, in a coiled snake,¹¹³
in a bride's bed-talk or in a broken sword,
in a bear's play or in a king's child,
87. in a sick calf, in a self-willed slave,
in a seeress's satisfying words,¹¹⁴ in a newly-felled man,
88. in a field sown early, let no one have faith,
nor in a son too soon —
weather rules the field, and sense the son;
each of them is at risk —
89. in one's brother's slayer, if one should meet him on the road,
in a half-burned house, in a very fast horse —
a horse is useless if it breaks one leg —
let no man become so trusting that he puts faith in all these!¹¹⁵
90. Loving women,¹¹⁶ those who think deceitful thoughts,
is like driving a horse without spikes on slippery ice,
a frisky two-year-old and ill-trained,
or like tacking a rudderless ship against a raging wind,
or having, as a limping man, to lay hands on a
reindeer on a thawing mountain.¹¹⁷
91. I shall now speak plainly, for I know both —
men's feelings for women are fickle;
when we speak most sweetly, we think most deceitfully —
that deludes wise minds.

92. Fagrt skal mæla ok fé bjóða,
sá er vill fljóðs ást fá,
líki leyfa ins ljósa mans,
sá fær er frjár.
93. Ástar firna skyli engi maðr
annan aldregi;
opt fá á horskan, er á heimskan né fá,
lostfagrir litir.
94. Eyvitar firna er maðr annan skal
þess er um margan gengr guma;
heimska ór horskum gørir hólða sonu
sá inn mátki munr.
95. Hugr einn þat veit er býr hjarta nær,
einn er hann sér um sefa;
øng er sóft verri hveim snotrum manni
en sér øngu at una.
96. Þat ek þá reynda er ek í reyri sat
ok vættak míns munar;
hold ok hjarta var mér in horska mær,
þeygi ek hana at heldr hefik.
97. Billings mey ek fann beðjum á
sólhvíta sofa;
jarls ynði þótti mér ekki vera,
nema við þat lík at lifa.
98. 'Auk nær apni skaltu, Óðinn, koma,
ef þú vilt þér mæla man;
allt eru ósköp, nema einir viti
slíkan løst saman!'
99. Aptr ek hvarf ok unna þóttumsk,
vísuð vilja frá;
hitt ek hugða, at ek hafa mynda
geð hennar allt ok gaman.
100. Svá kom ek næst, at in nýta var
vígdrótt qll um vakin;
með brennandum ljósum ok bornum viði,
svá var mér vílstígr of vitaðr.

92. He must speak sweetly and offer wealth,
the one who wants to win a woman's love,
praise the radiant girl's body,
he who woos wins.
93. No one should ever find fault
with another over love;
often ravishingly fair looks enthrall a wise man,
when they don't enthrall a fool.
94. One should find fault with another
for nothing that happens to many a man;
that mighty desire¹¹⁸ makes dolts
out of wise sons of men.
95. The mind alone knows that which lives near the heart,
he¹¹⁹ is alone with his thoughts;
no sickness is worse for any wise man
than to be content with nothing.
96. I¹²⁰ proved that¹²¹ when I sat in the reeds
and waited for my love;¹²²
the wise girl was flesh and heart to me,
yet I have her none the more for that.
97. I found Billingr's daughter¹²³ in bed,
sleeping, sun-white;
an earl's delight seemed as nothing to me,
unless I could live with that body.¹²⁴
98. 'You must come again towards evening, Óðinn,
if you want to win the girl with words;
all will be undone, unless we alone
know of such shame together!¹²⁵
99. Back I turned and thought myself in love,
from certain delight;¹²⁶
I thought this, that I would have
her whole heart and love-play.
100. Thus [it was when] I came next,
that the able warband was all awake;
with burning lights and raised wood,¹²⁷
thus was a misery-path¹²⁸ appointed for me.

101. Ok nær morni, er ek var enn um kominn,
þá var saldrótt um sofin;
grey eitt ek þá fann innar góðu konu
bundit beðjum á.
102. Mǫrg er góð mær, ef gǫrva kannar,
hugbrigð við hali;
þá ek þat reynda, er it ráðspaka
teygða ek á flærðir fljóð;
háðungar hveirrar leitaði mér it horska man,
ok hafða ek þess vætki vífs.
103. Heima glaðr gumi ok við gesti reifr
sviðr skal um sik vera,
minnigr ok málugr, ef hann vill margfróðr vera;
opt skal góðs geta;
fimbulfambi heitir sá er fátt kann segja:
þat er ósnotrs aðal.
104. Inn aldna jötun ek sótta, nú em ek aprt um kominn;
fátt gat ek þegjandi þar;
mǫrgum orðum mæltu ek í minn frama
í Suttungs solum.
105. Gunnloð mér um gaf gullnum stóli á
drykk ins dýra mjaðar;
ill iðgjöld lét ek hana eptir hafa
síns ins heila hugar,
síns ins svára sefa.
106. Rata munn létumk rúms um fá
ok um grjót gnaga;
yfir ok undir stóðumk jötna vegir,
svá hætta ek hofði til.
107. Vel keypts litar hefi ek vel notit;
fás er fróðum vant;
þvíat Óðrerir er nú upp kominn
á alda vés jaðar.
108. Ifi er mér á at ek væra enn kominn
jötna gǫrðum ór,
ef ek Gunnlaðar né nytak, innar góðu konu,
þeirar er lögðumk arm yfir.

109. Ins hindra dags gengu hrímþursar
 Háva ráðs at fregna Háva hǫllu í;
 at Þolverki þeir spurðu, ef hann væri með þöndum kominn,
 eða hefði honum Suttungr of sóit.
110. Baugeið Óðinn hygg ek at unnit hafi,
 hvat skal hans tryggðum trúa?
 Suttung svikinn hann lét sumbli frá,
 ok grœtta Gunnlǫðu.
111. Mál er at þylja þular stóli á,
 Urðar brunni at;
 sá ek ok þagðak, sá ek ok hugðak,
 hlýdda ek á manna mál;
 of rúnar heyrða ek dæma, né um ráðum þögðu,
 Háva hǫllu at,
 Háva hǫllu í;
 heyrða ek segja svá:
112. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, at þú ráð nemir,
 njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
 þér munu góð ef þú getr:
 nótt þú rísat, nema á njósn sér
 eða þú leitir þér innan út staðar!
113. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, at þú ráð nemir,
 njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
 þér munu góð ef þú getr:
 fjölkunnigri konu skalaftu í faðmi sofa,
 svá at hon lyki þik liðum.
114. Hon svá gørir at þú gáir eigi
 þings né þjóðans máls;
 mat þú villat né mannskis gaman,
 ferr þú sorgafullr at sofa.
115. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, at þú ráð nemir,
 njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
 þér munu góð ef þú getr:
 annars konu teygðu þér aldregi
 eyrarúnu at.
116. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
 njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
 þér munu góð ef þú getr:
 á fjalli eða firði ef þik fara tíðir,
 fástu at virði vel.

117. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
 njóta mundu, ef þú nemr,
 þér munu góð, ef þú getr:
 illan mann láttu aldregi
 óhopp at þér vita,
 þvíat af illum manni fær þú aldregi
 gjöld ins góða hugar.
118. Ofarla bíta ek sá einum hal
 orð illrar konu;
 fláráð tunga varð honum at fjørlagi,
 ok þeygi um sanna sök.
119. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
 njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
 þér munu góð ef þú getr:
 veiztu, ef þú vin átt, þanns þú vel trúir,
 farðu at finna opt,
 þvíat hrísi vex ok hávu grasi
 vegr er vætki trøðr.
120. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
 njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
 þér munu góð ef þú getr:
 góðan mann teygðu þér at gamanrúnum,
 ok nem líknargaldr meðan þú lifir.
121. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
 njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
 þér munu góð ef þú getr:
 vin þínum ver þú aldregi
 fyrri at flaumslitum;
 sorg etr hjarta ef þú segja né náir
 einhverjum allan hug.
122. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
 njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
 þér munu góð ef þú getr:
 orðum skipta þú skalt aldregi
 við ósvinna apa.
123. Þvíat af illum manni mundu aldregi
 góðs laun um geta,
 en góðr maðr mun þik gørva mega
 líknfastan at lofi.

117. I counsel you, Loddfáfnir, and you should take my counsels;
you'll profit if you take them,
they'll be good for you if you get them:
never let a bad man
know your misfortunes,¹⁶⁶
because from a bad man you will never get
a reward for the good intention.
118. I saw the words of an evil woman
bite a man high up;¹⁶⁷
a deceitful tongue was the death of him,
and yet the accusation was untrue.
119. I counsel you, Loddfáfnir, and you should take my counsels;
you'll profit if you take them,
they'll be good for you if you get them:
know [this, that] if you have a friend, one whom you trust well,
go to visit him often,
because a road that no one treads becomes overgrown
with brushwood and tall grass.¹⁶⁸
120. I counsel you, Loddfáfnir, and you should take my counsels;
you'll profit if you take them,
they'll be good for you if you get them:
draw a good man into a pleasing friendship with you,
and learn soothing charms¹⁶⁹ while you live.
121. I counsel you, Loddfáfnir, and you should take my counsels;
you'll profit if you take them,
they'll be good for you if you get them:
never be the first to sever
happy relations with your friend;
sorrow eats the heart if you can't speak
your whole mind to someone.
122. I counsel you, Loddfáfnir, and you should take my counsels;
you'll profit if you take them,
they'll be good for you if you get them:
you must never exchange words
with an unwise ape.¹⁷⁰
123. Because from a bad man you'll never
get a reward for the goodwill,
but a good man can make you assured
of esteem by his praise.¹⁷¹

124. Sifjum er þá blandat, hverr er segja ræðr
einum allan hug;
allt er betra en sé briggðum at vera,
era sá vinr ǫðrum er vilt eitt segir.
125. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
þér munu góð ef þú getr:
þrimr orðum senna skalattu þér við verra mann;
opt inn betri bilar
þá er inn verri vegr.
126. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
njóta mundu, ef þú nemr,
þér munu góð, ef þú getr:
skósmiðr þú verir né skeptismiðr,
nema þú sjálfum þér sér;
skór er skapaðr illa eða skapt sé rangt,
þá er þér þols beðit.
127. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
njóta mundu, ef þú nemr,
þér munu góð ef þú getr:
hvars þú þol kannt, kveðu þat þolvi at,
ok gefat þínum fjándum frið.
128. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
þér munu góð ef þú getr:
illu feginn verðu aldregi,
en lát þér at góðu getit.
129. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
þér munu góð ef þú getr:
upp líta skalattu í orrostu —
gjalti glíkir verða gumna synir —
síðr þík um heilli halir.
130. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
þér munu góð ef þú getr:
ef þú vilt þér góða konu kveðja at gamanrúnum
ok fá fognuð af,
fognu skaltu heita ok láta fast vera:
leiðisk mangi gott, ef getr.

124. Kinship¹⁷² is exchanged when anyone decides
to tell his whole mind [to another];
anything is better than for one to be unreliable,
he who says only what's agreeable is no friend to another.
125. I counsel you, Loddfáfnir, and you should take my counsels;
you'll profit if you take them,
they'll be good for you if you get them:
you mustn't utter [even] three words in dispute
with a worse man than you;
often the better man fails
when the worse man fights.
126. I counsel you, Loddfáfnir, and you should take my counsels;
you'll profit if you take them,
they'll be good for you if you get them:
be neither a shoe-maker nor a shaft-maker,¹⁷³
unless you be one for yourself;
[if] the shoe is badly made or the shaft is crooked,
then evil will be invoked for you.¹⁷⁴
127. I counsel you, Loddfáfnir, and you should take my counsels;
you'll profit if you take them,
they'll be good for you if you get them:
wherever you perceive evil, declare it as evil,
and don't give your enemies peace.
128. I counsel you, Loddfáfnir, and you should take my counsels;
you'll profit if you take them,
they'll be good for you if you get them:
never be gladdened by evil,
but let yourself be pleased with good.
129. I counsel you, Loddfáfnir, and you should take my counsels;
you'll profit if you take them,
they'll be good for you if you get them:
you mustn't look up in battle —
the sons of men become like a madman¹⁷⁵ —
lest men cast a spell on you.¹⁷⁶
130. I counsel you, Loddfáfnir, and you should take my counsels;
you'll profit if you take them,
they'll be good for you if you get them:
if you want to persuade a good woman¹⁷⁷ into secret love with you
and get delight from her,
you must make fine promises and let them be firm:
no one loathes a good thing, if one gets it.

131. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
þér munu góð ef þú getr:
varan bið ek þik vera, en eigi ofvaran;
ver þú við ǫl varastr ok við annars konu,
ok við þat it þriðja, at þik þjófar né leiki.
132. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
þér munu góð ef þú getr:
at háði né hlátri hafðu aldregi
gest né ganganda.
133. Opt vitu ógorla þeir er sitja inni fyrir,
hvers þeir ru kyns, er koma;
erat maðr svá góðr at galli né fylgi,
né svá illr at einugi dugi.
134. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
þér munu góð ef þú getr:
at hárum þul hlæðu aldregi;
opt er gott þat er gamlir kveða;
opt ór skorpum belg skilin orð koma,
þeim er hangir með háam
ok skollir með skráam
ok váfir með vílmögum.
135. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
þér munu góð ef þú getr:
gest þú né geþa né á grind hrekir;
get þú váluðum vel.
136. Rammt er þat tré er ríða skal
ǫllum at upploki;
baug þú gef, eða þat biðja mun
þér læs hvers á liðu.
137. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
þér munu góð ef þú getr:
hvars þú ǫl drekkir, kjós þú þér jarðar megin,
þvíat jörð tekr við ǫlðri, en eldr við sóttum,
eik við abbindi, ax við fjölkyngi,
höll við hýrógi — heiptum skal mána kveðja —
beiti við bitsóttum, en við þólvi rúnar;
fold skal við flóði taka.

131. I counsel you, Loddfáfnir, and you should take my counsels;
you'll profit if you take them,
they'll be good for you if you get them:
I bid you be wary, but not overwary;
be wariest with ale and with another's wife,
and, third, that thieves don't outwit you.
132. I counsel you, Loddfáfnir, and you should take my counsels;
you'll profit if you take them,
they'll be good for you if you get them:
never treat a guest or a tramp
with scorn or derision.
133. Often those sitting inside are unsure
what kind of men¹⁷⁸ are those who come;
no one is so good as to have no fault,
nor so bad as to be good for nothing.
134. I counsel you, Loddfáfnir, and you should take my counsels;
you'll profit if you take them,
they'll be good for you if you get them:
never scoff at a grey-haired sage;
often what old men say is good;
often shrewd words come from a shrunken bag,¹⁷⁹
from the one who hangs among hides
and dangles among skins
and swings among wretches.¹⁸⁰
135. I counsel you, Loddfáfnir, and you should take my counsels;
you'll profit if you take them,
they'll be good for you if you get them:
don't bark at a guest or drive him to the gate;
provide well for a poor man.
136. Strong is the beam¹⁸¹ that must slide
to open up for all;
give an arm-ring, or visitors will invoke
every kind of injury upon your limbs.
137. I counsel you, Loddfáfnir, and you should take my counsels;
you'll profit if you take them,
they'll be good for you if you get them:
wherever you may drink ale, choose for yourself earth's power,¹⁸²
for earth has strength against ale,¹⁸³ and fire against illnesses,¹⁸⁴
oak against constipation,¹⁸⁵ ear of corn against witchcraft,¹⁸⁶
elder(?)¹⁸⁷ against household strife — for hatreds
one must call on the moon¹⁸⁸ —
earthworm¹⁸⁹ against bite-illnesses,¹⁹⁰ and runes against evil;
one must take earth for the flux.

138. Veit ek at ek hekk vindga meiði á
nætr allar nú,
geiri undaðr ok gefinn Óðni,
sjálfr sjálfum mér,
á þeim meiði er mangi veit
hvers hann af rótum renn.
139. Við hleifi mik sældu né við hornigi,
nýsta ek niðr, nam ek upp rúnar,
œpandi nam; fell ek aptr þaðan.
140. Fimbulljóð nú nam ek af inum frægja syni
Bólþórs, Bestlu fœður,
ok ek drykk of gat ins dýra mjaðar,
ausinn Óðreri.
141. Þá nam ek frævask ok fróðr vera
ok vaxa ok vel hafask;
orð mér af orði orðs leitaði,
verk mér af verki verks leitaði.
142. Rúnar munt þú finna ok ráðna stafi,
mjök stóra stafi,
mjök stinna stafi,
er fáði Fimbulþulr
ok gørðu ginnregin
ok reist Hroptr rögna,
143. Óðinn með Ásum, en fyr álfum Dáinn,
Dvalinn dvergum fyrir,
Ásviðr jötnum fyrir,
ek reist sjálfr sumar.
144. Veiztu hvé rísta skal? Veiztu hvé ráða skal?
Veiztu hvé fá skal? Veiztu hvé freista skal?
Veiztu hvé biðja skal? Veiztu hvé blóta skal?
Veiztu hvé senda skal? Veiztu hvé sóa skal?
145. Betra er óbeðit en sé ofblótit;
ey sér til gildis gjof;
betra er ósent en sé ofsóit;
svá Þundr um reist fyr þjóða rök;
þar hann upp um reis, er hann aptr of kom.

138. I know that I hung on a windy tree¹⁹¹
 for all of nine nights,¹⁹²
 wounded by a spear¹⁹³ and given to Óðinn,
 myself to myself,
 on that tree of which no one knows
 the kind of roots it runs from.¹⁹⁴
139. They blessed¹⁹⁵ me with neither bread nor horn,¹⁹⁶
 I peered down,¹⁹⁷ I took up runes,¹⁹⁸
 screaming I took them;¹⁹⁹ I fell back from there.²⁰⁰
140. Nine mighty songs I learnt²⁰¹ from the famous son
 of Þǫlpórr, father of Bestla,²⁰²
 and I got a drink of the precious mead,
 poured from Óðrerir.²⁰³
141. Then I began to produce seed and be fertile,²⁰⁴
 and to grow and feel well;
 word sought word from my word,
 deed sought deed from my deed.
142. Runes you will find and readable staves,²⁰⁵
 very great staves,
 very stiff staves,
 which Fimbulþulr²⁰⁶ coloured²⁰⁷
 and great powers created
 and Hroptr²⁰⁸ of the ruling powers carved,²⁰⁹
143. Óðinn among the Æsir,²¹⁰ and Dáinn for the elves,²¹¹
 Dvalinn for the dwarves,²¹²
 Ásviðr for the giants,²¹³
 I carved some myself.²¹⁴
144. Do you know how one must carve?²¹⁵ Do you know how one must read?²¹⁶
 Do you know how one must colour?²¹⁷ Do you know how one must test?²¹⁸
 Do you know how one must invoke? Do you know how one must offer?²¹⁹
 Do you know how one must send?²²⁰ Do you know how one must immolate?
145. Uninvoked is better than over-offered;²²¹
 a gift always looks for repayment;
 unsent²²² is better than over-immolated;
 thus Þundr²²³ carved before the history of peoples;²²⁴
 there he rose up, when he came back.²²⁵

146. Ljóð ek þau kann er kannat þjóðans kona
ok mannskis mögr;
'hjálp' heitir eitt, en þat þér hjálpa mun
við sökum ok sorgum, ok sítum görvøllum.
147. Þat kann ek annat, er þurfu ýta synir,
þeir er vilja lækna lifa.
148. Þat kann ek it þriðja: ef mér verðr þorfr mikil
hapt við mína heiptmøgu,
eggjar ek deyfi minna andskota;
bitat þeim vápn né velir.
149. Þat kann ek it fjórða: ef mér fyrðar bera
bönd at bóglimum,
svá ek gel at ek ganga má;
sprettr mér af fótum fjoturr,
en af höndum hapt.
150. Þat kann ek it fimmta: ef ek sé af fári skotinn
flein í fólki vaða:
flýgra hann svá stinnt at ek stöðvigak,
ef ek hann sjónum of sék.
151. Þat kann ek it sétta: ef mik særir þegn
á rótum ráms viðar,
ok þann hal er mik heipta kveðr,
þann eta mein heldr en mik.
152. Þat kann ek it sjaunda: ef ek sé hávan loga
sal um sessmøgum,
brennrat svá breitt at ek honum bjargigak;
þann kann ek galdr at gala.
153. Þat kann ek it átta, er øllum er
nytsamlikt at nema:
hvars hatr vex með hildings sonum,
þat má ek bæta brátt.
154. Þat kann ek it níunda: ef mik nauðr um stendr
at bjarga fari mínu á floti,
vind ek kyrri vági á
ok svæfik allan sæ.

146. I know those songs that a ruler's wife doesn't know,
and no one's son;
one is called 'help', and it will help you
against disputes and sorrows, and each and every suffering.²²⁶
147. I know it, a second, which the sons of men need,
those who want to live as healers.²²⁷
148. I know it, the third:²²⁸ if I have great need
of a fetter²²⁹ for my foes,
I blunt the edges²³⁰ of my enemies;
for them neither weapons nor staffs will bite.
149. I know it, the fourth: if people put
bonds on my arms and legs,²³¹
I chant so that I can walk;
the fetter springs from my legs,
and the shackle from my arms.
150. I know it, the fifth: if I see a shaft shot
in malice flying in battle,²³²
it doesn't fly so forcefully that I can't stop it,
if I see it with my sight.²³³
151. I know it, the sixth: if a warrior²³⁴ wounds me
on the roots of a strong²³⁵ tree²³⁶ —
so too with that man who provokes my hatred²³⁷ —
harm will devour him, rather than me.
152. I know it, the seventh: if I see a high hall²³⁸
blazing around bench-mates,
it doesn't burn so broadly that I can't save it;
I know the incantation to chant.
153. I know it, the eighth, which is useful
for all to learn:
wherever hatred grows between a warrior's sons,
I can swiftly settle it.
154. I know it, the ninth: if need arises for me
to save my ship when it's afloat,
I calm the wind on the wave
and lull all the sea to sleep.

155. Þat kann ek it tíunda: ef ek sé túnriður
leika lopti á,
ek svá vinnk at þeir villir fara
sinna heim hama,
sinna heim huga.
156. Þat kann ek it ellipta: ef ek skal til orrostu
leiða langvini,
undir randir ek gel, en þeir með ríki fara,
heilir hildar til,
heilir hildi frá,
koma þeir heilir hvaðan.
157. Þat kann ek it tólpta: ef ek sé á tré uppi
váfa virgílná,
svá ek ríst ok í rúnum fák
at sá gengr gumi
ok mælir við mik.
158. Þat kann ek it þrettánda: ef ek skal þegn ungan
verpa vatni á,
munat hann falla, þótt hann í fólk komi,
hnígra sá halr fyr hjörum.
159. Þat kann ek it fjórtánda: ef ek skal fyrða liði
telja tíva fyrir,
Ása ok álfa ek kann allra skil;
fár kann ósnotr svá.
160. Þat kann ek it fimmtánda, er gól Þjóðreyrir,
dvergr, fyr Dellings durum:
afl gól hann Ásum, en álfum frama,
hyggju Hroptatý.
161. Þat kann ek it sextánda: ef ek vil ins svinna mans
hafa geð allt ok gaman,
hugi ek hverfi hvítarmri konu
ok sný ek hennar ǫllum sefa.
162. Þat kann ek it sjautjándá, at mik mun seint firrask
it manunga man.
Ljóða þessa mun ðu, Loddfáfnir,
lengi vanr vera,
þó sé þér góð ef þú getr,
nýt ef þú nemr,
þörf ef þú þiggr.

155. I know it, the tenth: if I see fence-riders²³⁹
sporting in the air,
I bring it about that they go astray²⁴⁰
to the home of their shapes(?),
to the home of their minds(?).²⁴¹
156. I know it, the eleventh: if I have to lead
long-standing friends into conflict,
I chant beneath the shield-rims, and they journey with strength,²⁴²
safe to battle,
safe from battle,
they come safe from anywhere.
157. I know it, the twelfth: if I see a halter-corpse²⁴³
dangling up in a tree,
I so carve and colour-in runes
that that man walks
and talks with me.
158. I know it, the thirteenth: if I have to throw
water on a young warrior,²⁴⁴
he won't fall, even if he comes into battle,²⁴⁵
that man won't sink before swords.
159. I know it, the fourteenth: if I have to count the gods
before a company of people,
of Æsir²⁴⁶ and elves I know all their attributes;
few fools can do that.
160. I know it, the fifteenth, which Þjóðreyrir, a dwarf,²⁴⁷
chanted before Dellingr's doors:²⁴⁸
he chanted strength to the Æsir,²⁴⁹ and courage²⁵⁰ to the elves,
intellect to Hroptatýr.²⁵¹
161. I know it, the sixteenth: if I wish to have the whole heart
and sexual pleasure of the wise girl,
I turn the feelings of the white-armed woman
and I twist her whole heart.
162. I know it, the seventeenth, so that the girly girl
will be slow to leave me.
These songs, Loddfáfnir, you will²⁵²
long be lacking,
though it would be good for you if you get them,
[they would be] useful if you take them,
needful if you receive them.

163. Þat kann ek it átjándá, er ek æva kennik
mey né manns konu —
allt er betra er einn um kann;
þat fylgir ljóða lokum —
nema þeiri einni er mik armi verr,
eða mín systir sé.
164. Nú eru Háva mál kveðin Háva hollu í,
allþörf ýta sonum,
óþörf ýta sonum!
Heill sá er kvað! Heill sá er kann!
Njóti sá er nam!
Heilir þeirs hlýddu!

163. I know it, the eighteenth, which I never teach
 to a girl or a man's wife —
 everything is better when only one knows;
 it²⁵³ marks the end of the songs —
 except to her alone who enfolds me in her arms,
 or who might be my sister.²⁵⁴
164. Now Hávi's sayings have been spoken in Hávi's hall,
 most useful to the sons of men,
 useless to the sons of men(?)!²⁵⁵
Hail to the one who spoke! Hail to the one who knows!
 Let the one who learned profit!²⁵⁶
 Hail to those who listened!

Textual Apparatus to *Hávamál*

- Hávamál*] **R** rubricated but faded
- 1/1 *Gáttir*] **R** the first letter is large, rubricated and inset
- 6/8 *maðr*] **R** has the m-rune, standing for *maðr*, here and subsequently
- 11/4 *verra*] **R** *vera*
- 12/3 *sonum*] **R** *sona*
- 14/4 *ǫldr*] **R** originally written *auðr*
- 14/4 *bazt*] **R** *baztr*
- 18/6 *vits*] **R** *er vitz*
- 21/6 *mál*] **R** *mals*
- 22/6 *era*] **R** *er*
- 27/1 *maðr*] **R** absent
- 28/1 *þykkisk*] **R** *þycceriz*
- 32/3 *virði*] **R** *v^ríþi* (perhaps first written *viði* ‘wood’)
- 32/3 *vrekask*] **R** *recaz*
- 35/1 *skal*] **R** absent (haplography)
- 36/6 *bæn*] **R** *bǫN*
- 37/1–3 *betra ... hverr*] **R** abbreviates *b. Þ. L. s. h. h. hv^{er}*
- 39/5 *svá gjöflan*] **R** *svagi*
- 49/2 *ek*] **R** *ek | ek* (i.e., repeated across line division)
- 49/5 *ript*] **R** *rift*
- 50/3 *hlýrat*] **R** *hlýrar*
- 55/1–3] **R** abbreviates *Meðal snotr s. maNa h.*
- 56/1–3] **R** abbreviates *Meðal s. s. maNa h(ver)*
- 56/5] The scribe seems to have cancelled an instance of the m-rune (for *maðr* ‘man’) after *engi*
- 58/1–2 *rísa, sá er*] **R** *ri | sa er*
- 60/3–4 *mjot, ok*] **R** *miotvðc* with *v* underdotted
- 62/1–6] The scribe wrote this stanza after the following one, but indicated the need for transposition
- 63/6 *þrír ru*] **R** *þrír v*
- 70/2] *en sé ólifðum*] **R** *ok sæl lifðom*
- 71/2 *handarvanr*] **R** *hundur vanr*

- 75/3 *af aurum*] **R** *aflavðrom*
- 77/2–3] **R** abbreviates *d. f^{vendr}*
- 86/8 *eða*] **R** *eð*
- 94/4 *horskum*] **R** *horscaN*
- 95/4 *sótt*] **R** *sot*
- 102/9 *vætki*] **R** *vætkis*
- 107/6 *jaðar*] **R** *iarðar*
- 111/1 *Mál*] **R** the first letter is large and lightly ornamented in the inner margin
- 111/2 *á*] **R** a later hand has written *at* above this blurred (erased?) word
- 113/3 *Urðar*] **R** the same later hand has written a + sign above this blurred (erased?) word, linking to + *urðar* in the margin
- 112/5 *þú*] **R** followed by *n*, which is marked for deletion by underdotting
- 113/1–4] **R** abbreviates *Raðomc þer l. a. Þ. R. n. n.*
- 113/6 *skalattu*] **R** *scalatv* (corrected from *scaltv*); after this word, the words *fiRa þic* are marked for removal by underdotting
- 115/1–4] **R** abbreviates *Raðomc Þ. L.*
- 116/1–4] **R** abbreviates *Raðomc þer l. f. e^(nm)*
- 117/1–4] **R** abbreviates *Rað. Þ.*
- 118/2 *sá*] **R** after this word, the word *bíta* is marked for deletion by underdotting
- 119/1–4] **R** abbreviates *Raðomc þer*; likewise in stanzas 120–22, 125–32, 135, 137
- 125/6 *skalattu*] **R** *scalatv* (corrected from *scaltv*)
- 127/6 *þat*] **R** *þ* (with abbreviation mark), which could also stand for *þér*
- 129/9 *þik*] **R** *þit'*
- 131/6 *en*] **R** Tironian sign for *oc*
- 131/10 *þik*] **R** absent
- 134/1–4] **R** abbreviates *Rað. Þ^{ér}*
- 135/5 *geya*] **R** *geyia*
- 135/6 *hrekir*] **R** *hrþkir* 'spit'
- 138/1 *Veit*] **R** the first letter is ornamented and half-inset, presumably indicating the start of a new section
- 139/1 *sældu*] **R** *seldo*
- 139/6 *þaðan*] **R** *þatan*
- 140/3 *fþður*] **R** the letters *syn* or *syni* (cf. *syni* in 140/2) have been erased before this word

- 143/2–3 *Dáinn, Dvalinn*] **R** the scribe wrote *dvaliN daiN*, but then marked these words for transposition; after *daiN* comes a point and the Tironian sign for *oc* ‘and’ (removed from this edition)
- 144/3 *Veiztu hvé*] **R** abbreviates *v. h.*, and in the subsequent five instances
- 147/1 *annat*] **R II** (and accordingly in following stanzas)
- 148/1 *it*] **R** absent
- 151/3 *ráms*] **R** *rás*
- 164/4 *yta*] **R** corrected to *iotna* ‘of giants’ in the margin by a later hand

Notes to the Translation

- 1 *Hávi* ‘High One’, an alias of Óðinn, is the weak form of the adjective *hár* ‘high’.
- 2 The boards are those of a Norse hall’s wooden platform, which featured benches. A variant of this stanza is quoted in *SnEGylf* (2, p. 8); for another variant, see *SnEUpp* (5, p. 12).
- 3 That is, to the hosts. These words are presumably spoken by a visitor to a hall, in expectation of hospitality.
- 4 The anonymous ‘guest’ perhaps functions as both Everyman and Óðinn, who is called *Gestr* ‘Guest’ elsewhere in Old Norse literature.
- 5 Or ‘impatient’.
- 6 The sense of the second half of this stanza is uncertain, but it may be that unexpected visitors had to sit on a stack of firewood near the hall’s entrance until they were granted a reception inside commensurate with their perceived importance.
- 7 I.e., on the part of the host.
- 8 I.e., words from the host, followed by silence in which the guest can himself speak.
- 9 I.e., he is mocked by those who wink at each other.
- 10 Or ‘the wary man seldom commits a culpable blunder’ (Evans, *Hávamál*, p. 78).
- 11 Or ‘innate intelligence’ (*manvit*).
- 12 I.e., praise and high esteem.
- 13 The sense of the second half of this stanza is rather obscure.
- 14 In other words, ‘a poor man’s existence depends on this’.
- 15 Literally, ‘field’, ‘plain’.
- 16 Or ‘forgetfulness’, ‘unawareness’, of the kind experienced the morning after a bout of heavy drinking. The literal sense of *óminni* is ‘un-memory’, but there is a likely pun on **árminni* ‘river-mouth, estuary’, a natural location for a hunting heron. Contrast Óðinn’s informative raven *Muninn*, whose name relates to *muna* ‘to remember’.
- 17 Or ‘motionless’, the image being of a heron watching for fish to catch with its spear-like bill. Additionally, the heron was known proverbially for its vomiting and popularly associated with drunkenness. It may well be relevant to this stanza, and the next, that Óðinn, having taken the form of an eagle (originally a heron?), spewed and possibly defecated the mead of poetry after stealing it from the giant Suttungr, according to *SnESkáld* (I, G58, pp. 4–5). Conceivably, some Norse halls might have contained avian ornamentation related to the imagery in this stanza (cf. *Grm.* 10).

- 18 Or 'over ales'.
- 19 Or 'men's/people's wits'. There might be an implicit contrast with how Óðinn, who lives on wine alone (*Grm.* 19), enhanced his wits when drunk on the mead of poetry. In *geð* 'wits', there might be a pun on *gedda* 'pike'.
- 20 Possibly, Óðinn was himself in the form of a heron. This reference might also contain a wry allusion to feathers stuffing bedclothes which surround and cover the drunken victim.
- 21 Perhaps implicitly as a *fiskr* 'fish', given this line's *f*-alliteration.
- 22 Or 'enclosure', here perhaps alluding to Gunnlǫð's bedchamber and a bed with side-rails.
- 23 I.e., the speaker—presumably Óðinn or a human who identifies with this god—became incapacitated by drink. *Gunnlǫð* 'Battle Invitation' is a giantess. For Óðinn's seduction of her, by which he gains a drink of mead that filled him with poetic wisdom, see *Háv.* 104–10.
- 24 The identity of the 'wise' (or 'fertile') Fjalarr is uncertain. Perhaps he is Gunnlǫð's father, though that role is assigned to Suttungr in *Háv.* 104, 109–10 and *SnESkáld*. Elsewhere, the name *Fjalarr* (cf. *fela* 'to conceal') denotes the giant also known as Skrýmir, a cockerel that lives in a tree (*Vsp.* 41), and a dwarf—perhaps significantly, according to *SnESkáld* (I, G57, p. 3), one of the dwarves who brewed the mead of poetry, which was later taken from them by Suttungr.
- 25 I.e., when one gets overly drunk.
- 26 I.e., recovers from drunkenness.
- 27 Or 'cowardly'.
- 28 I.e., beware of and avoids.
- 29 Or 'the man's mind is revealed'.
- 30 The scene seems to be a drinking-party, in which a drinking-bowl is passed from man to man.
- 31 I.e., 'leave the pasture'.
- 32 I.e., stomach.
- 33 The Old Norse line may present a relatively rare instance of *v*- (in *vesall*) alliterating with a vowel (*i*- in *illa*); cf. *Háv.* 117.
- 34 Or 'he finds when the assembly comes round'. The assembly is a legal gathering.
- 35 Or 'in (a time of) misfortune'.
- 36 Alternatively, 'of what is said about a man/men/people', or 'of what befalls a man/men/people', or 'of what is current about a man/men/people'. In other words (whatever the words' precise meaning), people gossip.
- 37 I.e., senseless words.
- 38 Or 'unless guards possess it', the guards, literally 'holding (ones)', being a metaphor for self-control.
- 39 Literally, 'one shouldn't have another (as a subject) for winking at'.
- 40 This line appears metaphorical, meaning 'and if he manages to sit quietly and isn't caught out'.
- 41 The first half of this stanza may be corrupt. Its second line is metrically suspect, as the first syllable of a disyllabic word at the end of a 'full line' of *ljóðaháttir* is normally short.

- 42 Or 'loyal'.
- 43 For this line to alliterate, an East Norse or pre-literary West Norse form of the verb *rekask* is required, namely **vrekask*; cf. *Vm.* 53.
- 44 Literally, '(hu)mankind's strife, it will always be'.
- 45 Or 'friend'. The idea is probably that one should usually eat early, so as to be able to get on with one's work, unless one is going to visit someone, in which case it is better to eat later, so as not to be famished on arrival.
- 46 Or perhaps 'though he is (to be) met with further off'.
- 47 I.e., it is better to have a small house than none at all. This line lacks alliteration in the Old Norse and may therefore be corrupt; emendation of *lítit* 'little' to *bert* 'bare' has been suggested.
- 48 Or 'withy-raftered'.
- 49 This line may well be corrupt, as it lacks alliteration; see note to previous stanza.
- 50 I.e., as Evans, *Hávamál*, p. 91 explains: 'that accepting (of hospitality from him) was not (in his eyes) a gift (and therefore demanding repayment)'.
- 51 I.e., a wealthy man should spend some of his riches, not suffer need from hoarding it.
- 52 Or 'on oneself'. Evans, *Hávamál*, p. 92 explains: 'the reciprocally exchanged gifts which they bear on their bodies give the most manifest testimony to their mutual generosity'.
- 53 The implication may that one should requite *scornful* laughter with the same, though advice to reciprocate kind-hearted laughter would also make sense.
- 54 Literally, 'speak around one's thought'.
- 55 Or perhaps 'then I became wild in my ways'. The speaker may be Óðinn, the aged, wandering god.
- 56 The observation 'man is man's delight' is also made in the *Icelandic Rune-Poem*.
- 57 Or perhaps '(For use) in the field' (*velli at*)—i.e., 'On the battlefield'. The 'clothes' might then be armour.
- 58 Probably Óðinn.
- 59 The nature of these 'tree-men' is uncertain. Possibilities include scarecrows, road signs, farmstead trees used for hanging clothes out to dry, and human-shaped idols carved from wood. Then again, warriors are often described as trees in skaldic poetry. Cf. also *Vsp.* 17, where Óðinn bestows a gift on the first man and woman, *Askr* 'Ash' and *Embla* 'Little Elm(?)'.
- 60 Or 'warriors', 'upstanding men' (*rekkar*).
- 61 A fir-tree's roots, shoots and bark are eaten by various farm animals, and its bark was used to make flour.
- 62 I.e., large.
- 63 Or 'praise'.
- 64 'Tilted' either because it is only half full or because the cup-holder has tilted it to pour his friend half.
- 65 I.e., sand-banks, stretches of sands or sea-shores.
- 66 An obscure passage, but perhaps the sense is that people whose lives are restricted to islets have small minds because of their lack of experience of the world at large.

- 67 There is perhaps an implicit contrast between the knowledge of stay-at-homes and people who travel far afield.
- 68 The interpretation of the whole stanza is uncertain.
- 69 Evans, *Hávamál*, p. 100 observes that ON *vel mart* otherwise means not ‘just enough’ (as translated here) but ‘a good many things’, and that to avoid contradicting the first half of the stanza, it may therefore be better to emend the second half to *þeim era fyrða fegrst at lifa, er vel mart vitu* ‘those people who know a good many things don’t live the sweetest lives’ or *þeim er fyrða fegrst at lifa, er vel mart vitut* ‘those people who don’t know a good many things live the sweetest lives’.
- 70 I.e., a piece of firewood.
- 71 Or ‘from folly’.
- 72 Perhaps emend to *ok ganga verka á vit* ‘and go to inspect (his) works’ (Evans, *Hávamál*, p. 102).
- 73 This man is perhaps to be imagined making his case frantically, turning his head this way and that, and snatching at every opportunity amid a ‘sea’ of opponents.
- 74 Perhaps the lesson here is to avoid throwing one’s weight around, as one day one will face someone even bolder than oneself. Cf. *Fm.* 17.
- 75 If there was once a second half to this stanza, it is lost.
- 76 The speaker is perhaps Óðinn again.
- 77 Literally, ‘seldom hits in the joint’.
- 78 Possibly the idea is that, just as niggardly folk often invite the speaker home when they know he will not want food, so he is often unfortunate enough to have eaten before arriving at the house of a good friend whose larder turned out to be stocked for two people.
- 79 I.e., either ‘the appearance of the sun’ or ‘the ability to see the sun’, but the former is more likely.
- 80 Or ‘to live without moral failing’.
- 81 Possibly the fire of his hearth.
- 82 Alternatively, ‘I saw fire blaze up for a rich man, but he was dead outside the door’; or ‘I saw fire blaze up to the disadvantage of a rich man [by burning his house down?], and he was dead outside the door.’
- 83 I.e., cremated; cf. *Háv.* 81.
- 84 I.e., it is better to have a son than no son, even if he is born after his father’s death.
- 85 I.e., two people.
- 86 That ‘careless talk costs lives’ is a familiar idea, but in societies founded on principles of honour and shame, speech can also be used as a weapon to destroy people’s reputations—and lives.
- 87 Literally, ‘for me there is expectation of a hand in every fur cloak’. This stanza is in *málaháttr*. It is often considered an interpolation, as is the next.
- 88 A statement of uncertain significance. Evans, *Hávamál*, pp. 110–11 outlines three possibilities: i) because short yard-arms—needed for gusty journeys through narrow fjords—support only small sails and, therefore, only slow speeds, be sure of your provisions, as you may face many overnight stops before reaching your destination; ii) make sure you have food for a long voyage, as shipwrights invariably make yard-arms shorter than you would wish;

- iii) if your ship sinks, do not count on clinging to a yard-arm to save you from drowning, as they are short and may not support your weight.
- 89 Literally, an 'autumn-mask/covering'.
- 90 Or 'but'.
- 91 I.e., a fool.
- 92 The first line of this stanza also appears in *Hák*. 21. Cf. line 108 of the Old English poem *The Wanderer*: *Her bið feoh læne, her bið freond læne* 'Here property [literally 'cattle'] is transitory [literally 'loaned'], here a friend is transitory'.
- 93 Or 'the judgement about every dead man'.
- 94 Fitjungr and his sons are otherwise unknown. They might be fabrications or the inhabitants of a large farm called *Fitjar* 'Water-Meadows' on the island of Storð in Hordaland, Norway, who lost their home when Haraldr hárfagri took it. Another possibility is that *fitjungr* is a common noun for 'rich man', in which case the line would mean 'Full cattle-pens I saw for a rich man's sons'.
- 95 I.e., they are now beggars.
- 96 Or 'That will be proven (or 'tested'), what you enquire of (or 'ask about') from the runes'. What *þat* 'it/that' refers to is unclear—perhaps the results of one's enquiry or simply the advisability of silence. Here runes are runic letters, as in *Háv*. 142–45; the 'runes' that Óðinn acquires by self-sacrifice on the windy tree in *Háv*. 139 are harder to define.
- 97 I.e., gods.
- 98 'Mighty Sage' could be a name of Óðinn, the rune-master, as in *Háv*. 142 (cf. *Fimbultýr* in *Vsp*. 58). Alternatively, it may be a common noun. Cf. *Hav*. 111, 134.
- 99 Colours were used to paint runic inscriptions; cf. *Háv*. 142, 144 and 157. Red is mentioned several times, as in *Gðr*. II 22.
- 100 There are several possible interpretations, depending on whether *þú* 'you' and *hann* 'he' refer to two different people or just one: i) if you ask someone about (or 'to interrogate?') the runes, let that person work silently, in order to obtain the best result; ii) if you ask someone about (or 'to interrogate?') the runes, listen quietly to the answer, because it will be important; iii) do not waste your breath asking someone about the runes, as their secret will not be divulged; iv) if you yourself interrogate the runes(?), keep quiet while doing so. This is a difficult and metrically irregular stanza.
- 101 Or 'wife'.
- 102 I.e., cremated; cf. *Háv*. 71.
- 103 *Háv*. 81–83 are in *málahátr*.
- 104 Perhaps so that one knows which way the tree will fall.
- 105 Perhaps because rowing into a wind is hard work.
- 106 Or 'one typically drinks ale by the fire'.
- 107 Presumably because they will cost less but be just as good in the long run.
- 108 Or 'wife'.
- 109 Perhaps a potter's wheel, or the waxing and waning moon, which is called a *hverfanda hvél* 'whirling wheel' by the inhabitants of Hel (*Alv*. 14). An allusion to the Wheel of Fortune is also possible. Cf. *Sg*. 40.

- 110 A close variant of the second half of this stanza appears in chapter 21 of the thirteenth-century *Fóstbræðra saga* ‘Saga of the Sworn Brothers’.
- 111 There is evidence that Norsemen believed crows were wise creatures whose calls were interpretable by those who knew the language of birds.
- 112 *Háv.* 85–87 are traditionally presented as two-and-a-half stanzas of *málaháttr*, but whether this is correct is debatable.
- 113 Snakes often coil themselves in a defensive posture before striking.
- 114 Like modern fortune-tellers, Norse seeresses were presumably more inclined to give their clients good news than bad; cf. *Vsp.* 22.
- 115 *Háv.* 89–90 are in *málaháttr*.
- 116 Literally ‘Thus is the love of women’.
- 117 The image in the last line is comically absurd. Evans, *Hávamál*, p. 117 observes ‘the scene is plainly Norwegian, not Icelandic ... The point of the lines is that reindeer can be caught only on skis, which cannot be used in a thaw’.
- 118 Love or lust.
- 119 I.e., a troubled person. Alternatively, ‘it [i.e., the mind] is alone with its thoughts’.
- 120 Óðinn; see *Háv.* 98.
- 121 If *þat* ‘that’ refers to the previous stanza, we should translate its final words as ‘than to find contentment with nothing’ (i.e., not to get the girl). Otherwise, the reference seems better suited to earlier stanzas about the troublesomeness of love for women. Perhaps an immediately preceding stanza has dropped out or a misplacement has occurred.
- 122 Or perhaps ‘for the fulfilment of my desire’.
- 123 More specifically, probably, ‘unmarried, virginal daughter’. ON *mær* can also mean ‘wife’ or ‘woman’, but this sense is rarer in poetry. *Billigr* ‘Twin’ is the name of a dwarf in *Vsp.* H 13, but here the name may well denote a giant: cf. *Gilligr*, the name of a giant who plays a part in the story of the mead of poetry in *SnESkald*. Possibly *Billigr* is the father of the Suttungr mentioned in *Háv.* 104, 109–10. With his daughter’s radiance, compare that of the giantess Gerðr in *FSk*.
- 124 The story of Óðinn and *Billigr*’s daughter is known only from *Háv*.
- 125 I.e., ‘of such a great social disgrace’. The words in this stanza are presumably spoken by *Billigr*’s daughter (or wife).
- 126 The interpretation of the first half of this stanza is disputed.
- 127 Possibly as cudgels. Alternatively perhaps, ‘with wood borne in (as torches?)’.
- 128 Or *vilstígr* ‘path of desire’. Word-play seems likely.
- 129 Or ‘household’.
- 130 ‘Good’ appears at least partly ironic here.
- 131 Again, ‘good’ seems rather ironic.
- 132 Presumably *Billigr*’s daughter (or wife).
- 133 Or ‘shrewd concerning himself’.
- 134 The sense of this line is uncertain.
- 135 The speaker is Óðinn. The giant is Suttungr (see footnote 137, below).

- 136 An understatement; in other words, Óðinn gained a great deal by speaking up. He is probably referring to his seduction of the giantess Gunnlǫð, by which he gained the precious mead that her father, Suttungr, had denied him (see footnote 137, below).
- 137 Suttungr (also *Suttungi*) is named as a giant in *SnESkáld*; giants are called ‘sons of Suttungr/ Suttungi’ in *Alv.* 34 and *Fsk.* 34. The only other tale about him, including a variant version of the story told in *Háv.* 105–10, appears in *SnESkáld* (I, G57–58, pp. 3–5), though a third version of the myth seems to be outlined in *Háv.* 13–14.
- 138 Similarly *Háv.* 13, but contrast *Háv.* 138–41, which give an entirely different account of how Óðinn gained the sacred mead. *Gunnlǫð* ‘Battle Invitation’ is a giantess, Suttungr’s daughter, and we are to understand that she serves Óðinn without her father’s consent. The gift of the mead possibly symbolizes a marriage between god and giantess.
- 139 By abandoning her and taking all the mead (*Háv.* 107).
- 140 *SnESkáld* (I, G58, p. 4) records that *Rati* ‘Augur’ is an auger or gimlet; whether it truly is a proper noun is uncertain. Its ‘mouth’ must be its point.
- 141 A kenning for ‘rocks’, where the giants live.
- 142 I.e., for the mead. In *SnESkáld* Óðinn has the giant Baugi bore into a mountain, so that he can crawl inside as a snake to meet Gunnlǫð.
- 143 The translation of this line is uncertain, as *keyptr* can mean ‘exchanged’ as well as ‘bought’, and there is a possibility that the correct reading is *vel keypts* ‘wile-bought’, ‘bought by craftiness’, not *vel keypts*. More problematically, the grammatical object, *litr*, can mean various things, and we cannot tell which applies here: i) ‘look’, ‘outward appearance’, perhaps with reference to an item of clothing or an ability that Óðinn acquired which enabled him to turn into a snake or a bird, or to masquerade as a workman called *Bǫlverkr* ‘Evil Doer’ or a handsome young man; ii) ‘looks’ or ‘complexion’, conceivably referring to Gunnlǫð’s beauty; iii) ‘colour’, perhaps referring to the mead.
- 144 The name of a vat in which the mead of poetry was kept, according to *SnESkáld* (I, G58, p. 4). But the word’s etymological sense ‘Inspiration Stirrer’, ‘Spirit Rouser’ (cf. *Óðinn* and *Óðr*) seems more suited to the mead itself, and this might be the meaning here (the reference in *Háv.* 140 is ambiguous).
- 145 Possibly the fence surrounding *Miðgarðr* or *Ásgarðr*, or perhaps the horizon (effectively the same thing), but the interpretation of this emended line is uncertain.
- 146 Or ‘enjoyed the help of’.
- 147 Or ‘over whom I laid my arm’.
- 148 Or perhaps ‘the day after the wedding’ (of Óðinn and Gunnlǫð?).
- 149 Or ‘to ask about Hávi’s situation’.
- 150 According to *SnESkáld* (I, G58, p. 4), *Bǫlverkr* is the name Óðinn used when obtaining the mead of poetry. But whether it is a proper noun here is uncertain: the frost-giants may simply be asking after the ‘evil-doer’.
- 151 The identity of the speaker is uncertain. Perhaps it is the poet, or maybe it is the leader of the frost-giants upon learning—or deducing—that Óðinn was the thief. Alternatively, again, Óðinn might be sarcastically voicing the words of his detractors. Oaths sworn on rings are well-attested in Old Norse literature (cf. e.g., *Akv.* 30).
- 152 The sacred mead.
- 153 Literally, ‘on’ or ‘at’.

- 154 The sage might well be Óðinn, who is probably the *Fimbulþulr* 'Mighty Sage' of *Háv.* 80, 142 (cf. 134). According to *SnEGylf* (15, p. 17), the gods' place of judgement is by Urðr's spring.
- 155 One of the Nornir. Her spring or well is beneath the world-tree; see *Vsp.* 19–20 and cf. *Gðr.* II 21.
- 156 Again, the identity of the speaker is uncertain.
- 157 Here, whether *rúnar* denotes 'runes' (i.e., runic letters)', 'secrets' or 'messages written in runes' (or all of these) is unclear. 'Runes' are mentioned only fleetingly in the following section (in *Háv.* 137), but become the focus of attention in *Háv.* 142–45.
- 158 Or 'readings'.
- 159 This impressive but obscure stanza evidently begins a new section (its first letter is ornate and enlarged in **R**), which was perhaps originally a separate poem.
- 160 This character is otherwise unknown. His name is also obscure: *lodd-* might be related to *loddari* 'juggler', 'jester', 'tramp' (cf. OE *loddere* 'beggar'), *loddi* 'shaggy dog' and *loðinn* 'shaggy'; *fáfnir* 'embracer' is otherwise the name of the treasure-hoarding dragon of the Sigurðr-poems (see *Fm.*); cf. note to *Háv.* 164. Stt. 111–37 are often known as *Loddfáfnismál* 'Words for Loddfáfnir'.
- 161 Or 'learn', 'accept', 'ingest'. Cf. the ambiguous use of *nema* in *Háv.* 139.
- 162 Or 'so that she locks you in your limbs', i.e., leaves you unable to move, perhaps in a state of paralysis.
- 163 Or 'a ruler's business'.
- 164 Cf. *Vsp.* 38.
- 165 I.e., mountain.
- 166 The Old Norse line may present a relatively rare instance of *v-* (in *vita*) alliterating with a vowel (*ó-* in *óhopp*), even though that vowel would normally be unstressed; cf. *Háv.* 22.
- 167 I.e., in the head (possibly).
- 168 Cf. *Grm.* 17.
- 169 It is unclear what is meant by the unique compound *líknagaldr*. ON *galdr* (here pl.) normally denotes a 'sung spell', 'incantation' (cf. OE *g(e)aldor*), and *líkna-* is related to *líkn* 'help', 'benevolence', so the etymological meaning is 'helpful spells' or 'kind incantations'; cf. the *ljóð* 'magical songs' mentioned later in the poem. But perhaps the intended sense is merely 'the art of making yourself loved (by being charming?)'; cf. *líknstafi* (acc. pl., 'kindness-staves', i.e., high esteem) in *Háv.* 8.
- 170 I.e., oaf.
- 171 The interpretation of the last line is somewhat uncertain.
- 172 *Sif* 'kinship' is here used metaphorically.
- 173 Specifically, a maker of spear-shafts.
- 174 I.e., the owner will curse you.
- 175 ON *gjalti* (dat. sg.) 'madman' is a borrowing of Old Irish *geilt*, and the belief that warriors who looked up in battle were liable to be driven mad is probably of Celtic origin. The most famous instance appears in a medieval Irish story about a man called Suibhne who looked up during a battle and was promptly transformed into a bird-like creature in fulfilment of a saint's curse. Similarly, medieval Welsh tradition records that Merlin saw a terrible

- monster when he looked up during a battle, the sight of which drove him mad. Again, Scottish tradition tells of a wildman called Lailoken who went mad in a battle when he saw bands of warriors in the sky and heard a voice claiming he was responsible for the carnage.
- 176 These 'men' (*halir*) are mysterious, but, judging from the tale of Lailoken (mentioned in footnote 175, above), they may be supernatural sky-warriors. Another puzzle is presented by R's possessive pronoun *þitt* 'your', which ought to qualify a neut. noun (such as *andlit* 'face' or *líf* 'life', perhaps), which is lacking; it is therefore emended *þik* 'you'.
- 177 Here 'good' appears somewhat ironic, though the woman might be good-looking or of good family.
- 178 Or perhaps 'of whose kin'.
- 179 Apparently an unflattering description of an old man.
- 180 The significance of the last three lines is obscure, but the image might be of an old man (Óðinn?) hanging in a tree among the skins of sacrificed beasts and humans. Óðinn, the old god and sage, hangs himself from a windy tree in search of wisdom in *Háv.* 138–39.
- 181 A door-bar.
- 182 Earth was thought to have magical properties; cf. e.g., *Hdl.* 38 and 43 and an Old English metrical charm against *wæterælfadl* 'water-elf disease' whose speaker must repeat the words *Eorþe þe onbere eallum hire mihtum and mægenum* 'May earth carry you away with all her mights and mains'; see also note to *Gðr.* II 21.
- 183 Perhaps ale adulterated by bearded darnel.
- 184 Whether through cautery or the use of flames and smoke to combat evil spirits.
- 185 Or tenesmus, often a symptom of dysentery.
- 186 Ears of corn were used in Scandinavian folk-medicine to ward off malevolent creatures.
- 187 Conjectural. Possibly the reference is to a 'household tree', in which lived spirits that protected the home from strife and illness. Alternatively, perhaps read *høll* 'hall'.
- 188 This instruction is obscure.
- 189 ON *beiti* can also mean 'pasturage'. Other meanings that have been proposed are 'beet' and 'alum'.
- 190 This use of earthworms (if present here) has precedents in classical antiquity and parallels in Old English medical texts; see Evans, *Hávamál*, pp. 133–34.
- 191 The speaker is Óðinn. The tree is probably Yggdrasill, the world-tree which served as his gallows. In *Hál.* 5 *vingameiðr* 'swaying [or perhaps 'windy'] tree' similarly refers to a tree that serves as a gallows.
- 192 That is, nine days and nights—the Germanic peoples measured time by nights, rather than by days. A period of 'nine nights' was often associated with suffering followed by transformation or fulfillment; cf. *Grm.* 2, *FSk.* 39, 41.
- 193 The spear is Óðinn's special weapon. According to chapter 9 of *Ynglinga saga*, Óðinn had himself marked with a spearpoint on his death-bed.
- 194 Or, less likely, 'from whose roots it runs'. Possibly *hvers* should be emended to *hverjum*, to give the sense 'from what roots it runs'. Cf. *Fj.* 20, *Grm.* 31. Scholars often refer to *Háv.* 138–45 as *Rúnatal* 'The Rune-List'.
- 195 Or 'refreshed'. Who 'they' are is unspecified.
- 196 I.e., a drinking-horn.

- 197 The semantic range of the verb *nýsa* includes ‘peer’, ‘look’, ‘pry’, ‘search’, ‘enquire’ and ‘investigate’, so there could be an intellectual or spiritual dimension to this act; perhaps Óðinn is not just looking down physically but also scouring the depths of his unconscious or of Hel, the subterranean land of the dead.
- 198 ON *rún* can denote a ‘letter of the runic alphabet’, an ‘inscription written in runes’, a ‘mystery’ and a ‘secret’. Any or all of these senses may be present here, as *nema* (*upp*) ‘to take (up)’ could refer to either the lifting of physical objects or the acquisition of abstract knowledge.
- 199 Or, perhaps, ‘I learnt [literally ‘picked up’] secrets, screaming I learnt them’.
- 200 Or, just possibly, ‘I fell again from there’, but it seems unlikely that Óðinn would undergo this ordeal of discovery more than once. *Háv.* 145 may describe Óðinn’s subsequent resurrection. Some editors present *Háv.* 139 as *ljóðahátttr*, but the alliteration of the second full line is then somewhat suspect.
- 201 Or ‘took’.
- 202 Taken by itself, the text is ambiguous: it could mean either ‘from the famous son of Bǫlþórr, [from the son who was also the] father of Bestla’ or ‘from the famous son of Bǫlþórr, [Bǫlþórr being the] father of Bestla’. But *SnEGylf* records that Bestla, Óðinn’s mother, was the daughter of the giant Bǫlþorn, who is presumably the person here called Bǫlþórr. The identity of Bǫlþórr’s famous son is uncertain—though the giant Mímir has been suggested—but it is significant that he is apparently Óðinn’s maternal uncle, as the uncle-nephew relationship was important in early Germanic societies.
- 203 Or ‘and I got a drink of the precious mead, [having been] sprinkled with Óðrerir’. It is, therefore, unclear whether Óðrerir is here the name of the container in which the mead was kept, or of the mead itself.
- 204 Or ‘wise’. Both senses may be operative.
- 205 Or ‘interpretable/meaningful staves’. The reference is to runic letters.
- 206 Probably Óðinn; cf. *Háv.* 80 and 111.
- 207 Or perhaps ‘carved’; cf. *Háv.* 80.
- 208 An alias of Óðinn.
- 209 Or ‘and Hroptr carved among the ruling powers’. Óðinn has already referred to himself in the third person in *Háv.* 138, and may do so again here, and at the start of the next stanza, and in *Háv.* 145.
- 210 Or ‘the gods’.
- 211 *Dáinn* ‘Dead One’ is a dwarf in *Vsp.* H 11 and 13 and *Hdl.* 7, but dwarves and elves seem to some extent interchangeable. *Dáinn*, like *Dvalinn*, is also the name of one of four stags which gnaw the shoots of the world-tree in *Grm.* 33.
- 212 *Dvalinn* ‘Delayed One’ is a dwarf; see *Vsp.* 11. *Dvalinn*, like *Dáinn*, is also the name of one of four stags which gnaw the shoots of the world-tree in *Grm.* 33.
- 213 *Ásviðr* ‘God/Beam Wood(?)’ or ‘Extremely Wise’ is otherwise unknown.
- 214 Perhaps Óðinn again; if not, the speaker is unknown.
- 215 Alternatively, ‘Know how one must carve! Know how one must read!’, etc. Runic inscriptions are the object of at least the first three statements in this stanza.
- 216 Or ‘interpret’.

- 217 Cf. *Háv.* 80.
- 218 How one was to ‘test’ or ‘make trial of’ runes—assuming they are the topic in question—is unclear.
- 219 I.e., in sacrifice.
- 220 Here *senda* seems to mean ‘send (in relation to sacrifice)’, as in *Háv.* 145 *ósent* ‘unsacrificed’, but the precise sense is elusive.
- 221 I.e., over-sacrificed.
- 222 I.e., unsacrificed.
- 223 An alias of Óðinn, possibly meaning ‘Thunder(er)’.
- 224 Alternatively, ‘before the origin of peoples’, ‘before the destiny of humankind’ or ‘before the doom of nations’.
- 225 Or ‘(in the place) where he rose up, when he came back.’ Either way, the meaning is obscure. It might, however, describe Óðinn’s resurrection, after he ‘fell back from there [i.e., from the windy tree]’ in *Háv.* 139, in an echo that forms a concluding frame to the *Rúnatal* section; it would make sense for Óðinn to carve runes as soon as he returned from the deathly ordeal during which he had learnt them.
- 226 Scholars often call *Háv.* 146–63 the *Ljóðatal* ‘List of Songs’. Snorri Sturluson probably knew these verses and understood their *ek* ‘I’ as Óðinn, as he seems to draw on them for his description of Óðinn’s skills in *Ynglinga saga*.
- 227 If there was once a second half of this stanza, it is lost.
- 228 Literally, ‘I know it/that (as) the third’.
- 229 Here the ‘fetter’ is presumably metaphorical.
- 230 I.e., sword-edges.
- 231 Alternatively, *boglimum*, with the same meaning, ‘limbs’, ‘arms and legs’.
- 232 Or ‘into a host’.
- 233 I.e., ‘with my eyes’.
- 234 Or ‘thane’, ‘man’.
- 235 If, instead of the adopting the emendation *ráms* ‘strong’, the manuscript reading *rás* is emended to *hrás*, the sense would be ‘sappy’, ‘young’, but the line would lack alliteration.
- 236 Presumably by carving runes on them. The preposition *á* might have instrumental force here: ‘by using the roots’ (an interpretation that raises the possibility of poisoning). Alternatively, *á* may reflect a belief that the act of carving a spell in harmful runes on roots was indistinguishable from the concomitant wounding of the spell’s victim; hence the injury could be said to occur ‘on the roots’.
- 237 Literally ‘hatreds’.
- 238 This line’s alliteration (*sjaunda ... sé*) appears faulty, as the verb *sé* ought not to take precedence over adjectives and nouns unless displaced from its normal syntactic position.
- 239 Or ‘home-meadow riders’. This refers to evil women who were believed to sit astride fences or gates at night, or to ride over the home meadows of farms.
- 240 Whereas the *túnriður* are female, in *þeir villir fara* ‘they go astray/wild’ the first two words are grammatically masc. (fem. would be **þær villar fara*). If not a mistake, this might indicate that their straying involved an actual or, if they are mentally confused, self-perceived change of gender.

- 241 The interpretation of the second part of this stanza is disputed, but it ‘clearly refers to the well-evidenced Norse belief that a person’s soul (*hugr*) could in certain circumstances depart temporarily from his body and range abroad by itself ..., sometimes taking on a new physical shape (*hamr*), while the owner’s body lay in a trance’ (Evans, *Hávamál*, p. 140). It may be that Óðinn knows a shamanistic spell which causes the females’ external, flying souls to get lost when they try to return to their normal bodies and states of mind, and which, by preventing or greatly delaying this return, destroys these women.
- 242 Or they journey ‘triumphantly’.
- 243 I.e., the corpse of a man hanged with a halter round his neck.
- 244 Or ‘thane’, ‘man’. Comparably, perhaps, new-born babies are splashed with water in several Icelandic sagas in a kind of heathen rite similar in this respect to Christian baptism.
- 245 Or ‘comes into (i.e., joins) an army’.
- 246 Or ‘gods’.
- 247 *Þjóðreyrir* may mean ‘One of the Great Stone-Heap’ or ‘Great One of the Stone Heap’; he is otherwise unknown. If this Old Norse line contains alliteration, it is of an unorthodox type.
- 248 In Old Norse literature, dwarves are several times imagined standing by stony doors (cf. *Vsp.* 50). *SnEGylf* (10, p. 13), following *Vm.* 25, identifies *Dellingr* ‘Descendant of Brightness’ as the father of *Dagr* ‘Day’ and of the kindred of the Æsir. *Dellingr* also appears amid a list of apparently dwarven builders in *Fj.* 34.
- 249 Or ‘gods’.
- 250 Or ‘advancement’, ‘profit’, ‘ability’, ‘prowess’.
- 251 An alias of Óðinn in which *-týr* means ‘god’; the meaning of *Hropta-* (like the Óðinn-alias *Hroptr*) is uncertain; perhaps ‘God of Hidden Things’.
- 252 This line and the rest of this stanza are arguably misplaced, having originally come after st. 163. If so, the bulk of st. 162 has been lost.
- 253 I.e., the eighteenth song.
- 254 As far as we know, Óðinn had no sister.
- 255 A taunting, enigmatic conclusion, which might reflect the fact that, although useful but largely mundane advice is given in *Háv.* 1–145, Óðinn’s magical knowledge in *Háv.* 146–63 is tantalizingly withheld from—and therefore useless to—Loddfáfnir and the ‘sons of men’ (i.e., humans). In **R**, a later hand has inserted a marginal correction of the second instance of *ýta* ‘of men/humans’ to *þotna* ‘of giants’, a change adopted by many subsequent editors; this emendation might, however, have been mistakenly prompted by the appearance, in the outer margin of the facing leaf in **R** (fol. 8r), of the same word, *þotna*, as a justified emendation of *alda* ‘of men’ in *Vm.* 16, perhaps encouraged by *Háv.*’s account of how the giants lost the mead of poetry to Óðinn. Then again, if *þotna* is accepted in *Háv.* 164, it might allude to Loddfáfnir’s potential association with the man-turned-dragon Fáfñir, who is called a *þotunn* ‘giant’ in *Fm.* 29.
- 256 Cf. Hár’s parting words to Gylfi in *SnEGylf* (53, p. 54): ‘*Ok njóttu nú sem þú namt’* “And now profit from that which [or ‘to the extent that’?] you have learnt!”

