



THE POETIC EDDA

A Dual-Language Edition

EDWARD PETTIT



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Vafþrúðnismál

Vafþrúðnismál (*Vm.*) ‘The Sayings of Vafþrúðnir’ is found complete in **R** (fol. 7v–8v). Stt. 20 (partial) to 55 also appear in **A** (fol. 3r–v), between *Skírnismál* (this manuscript’s name for *FSk.*) and *Grm.*; the previous folio of this manuscript is lost. Nine stanzas from *Vm.* are quoted and others paraphrased in *SnEGylf*.

The poem is mainly in *ljóðaháttur*, a common Eddic metre for dialogues, though sometimes in a lengthened form (as in stt. ?38, 55). *Ljóðaháttur* is also used for the poem’s only narrative stanza (5). Stt. 42–43 show the expanded type called *galdralag*.

Vm.’s date of composition is uncertain, as is the case for all the poems in this book. Although some metrical features may suggest a fairly early date and the poem’s subject matter suggests a predominantly heathen milieu, the possibility exists that it is wholly or partly an antiquarian work from the Christian period. It is most likely of Norwegian or Icelandic origin.

This is the third poem in **R** to concern Óðinn and giantish wisdom: in *Vsp.* the god seeks wisdom from a seeress raised by the giants; in *Háv.* he gains the mead of poetry and mighty incantations from the giants. Although in *Vm.* Óðinn’s declared motivations are a desire merely to test his wisdom against Vafþrúðnir and to see this giant’s hall, his final questions about the future suggest that here, too, he seeks information to help him avert his fate or cast doubt on its inevitability.

The poem consists mainly of two dialogues (1–4, 6–55). In the first, Óðinn asks for, but pays no heed to, advice from his wife, Frigg, regarding his proposed journey to Vafþrúðnir’s hall. As in *Vsp.* 53, Frigg seems genuinely concerned for her husband. Nonetheless, their difference of opinion might broadly reflect marital tension that is explicit elsewhere. Most notably, in the prologue to *Grm.*, Óðinn and Frigg foster different contenders for the throne, and Óðinn is tortured at his wife’s instigation. More distantly, in the seventh-century *Origo gentis Langobardum* ‘Origin of the Langobardic People’, and again in Paul the Deacon’s eighth-century *Historia Langobardum* ‘History of the Langobards’, Godan (equivalent to Óðinn) and his wife Frea (equivalent to Frigg) support opposing sides in a battle between Langobards and Vandals.

The second dialogue is a question-and-answer series between Óðinn and Vafþrúðnir about wisdom—an ancient genre with medieval representatives such as *BDr.* and the Old English dialogues of Solomon and Saturn. More precisely, it is a contest of wits, and so may broadly be compared to Old Norse flytings, such as that between Óðinn and Þórr in *Hrbl.* and between Loki and the gods in *Ls.* Aspects of this dialogue also merit comparison with other Old Norse texts, especially *Grm.*, the *Gátur Gestumblinda*

‘Riddles of Gestumblindi’ in the thirteenth-century *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks* ‘Saga of Hervor and Heiðrekr’, and, if a recent interpretation is broadly correct, an obscure (and partly Eddic) inscription on the c. 800 Rök runestone from Sweden.¹ The dialogue of Óðinn and Vafþrúðnir, however, is unknown outside this poem and derived passages in *SnEGylf*—as is the giant himself, except for his inclusion in a *þula* ‘versified list of names’ appended to *SnESkald* (*SPSMA* III, 715).

In *Grm.* the antagonism between Óðinn and Frigg is followed, as in *Vm.*, by the threat of physical harm to Óðinn. The god—disguised as so often in Old Norse literature—is tortured between two fires by King Geirrøðr, the namesake of a famous giant. Óðinn enumerates much mythological lore, including a wealth of names, and at last declares his true identity. Upon hearing this, Geirrøðr tries to take Óðinn from the fires, but it is too late—the king stumbles and falls upon his sword. In *Vm.* death similarly awaits Vafþrúðnir for his failure to recognize his opponent.

In *Gátur Gestumblindi*, Óðinn, disguised as *Gestumblindi* ‘Blind/Hidden Guest’, engages in a riddle contest to escape the judgement of King Heiðrekr’s wise men. The riddles are unlike the questions of *Vm.*, except for *Gestumblindi*’s last, which is not a true riddle: ‘What did Óðinn say in Baldr’s ear before he was carried to the fire?’ This is also Óðinn’s last question in *Vm.*, and again it results in an epiphany: ‘Only you know that, wicked creature!’ Heiðrekr draws his sword and strikes at Óðinn, who has turned himself into a hawk. As a result, Óðinn loses his tailfeathers, but Heiðrekr, rather than dying upon his own sword (as was probably the case in an earlier version of the story) lives on—for the moment.

Alv. also furnishes a useful parallel. In this poem, Þórr, in an uncharacteristically Óðinn-like role, lures the dwarf *Alvíss* ‘All-Wise’ into a vain display of linguistic terminology; the dwarf’s claim to Þórr’s foster(?)-daughter will supposedly be upheld if he tells Þórr everything he wants to know. However, *Álviss*, like Vafþrúðnir, excels in hollow nomenclature, rather than wisdom. Rather as the giant fails to recognize Óðinn despite numerous hints, so the dwarf fails to notice that day has dawned while he has been talking, whereupon, we are probably to understand, the sun turned him to stone.

As Snorri’s considerable use of *Vm.* in his *Prose Edda* suggests, the poem has great value as a source of, and guide to, Norse mythology, from the Creation to Ragnarok and its aftermath, especially as it appears largely free of editorialization and Christianization.² Clive Tolley observes that *Vm.* can be loosely categorized as a ‘cosmic history’, and warrants comparison with *Vsp.*’s tighter treatment of the same

1 It includes a series of numbered questions and some passages may be concerned with mythological matters relating to the sun and the moon, Óðinn (Yggr) and Ragnarok—interests shared with *Vm.* See P. Holmberg, B. Gräslund, O. Sundqvist and H. Williams, ‘The Rök Runestone and the End of the World’, *Futhark: International Journal of Runic Studies* 9–10 (2018–19), 7–38, <https://doi.org/10.33063/diva-401040>, the argument of which is refined in P. Holmberg, ‘Rök Runestone Riddles Revisited’, *Maal og Minne* 112 (2020), 37–55.

2 An exception may be the apocalyptic *surtalogi* ‘dark flame’ of stt. 50–51.

concerns and with *Grm.*'s 'cosmic description'.³ The differences from *Vsp.*'s accounts of the creation of the world and of life after Ragnarok demonstrate the diversity of Norse mythology.

Synopsis

Óðinn asks his wife, Frigg, for advice about his desire to test his wisdom against the wise giant Vafþrúðnir (1). She tries to dissuade him, because Vafþrúðnir is the most powerful of giants (2). He nevertheless persists (3). She wishes him luck and strength of mind (4).

Óðinn travels to Vafþrúðnir's hall and enters (5). After some unfriendly introductory words in which Óðinn, disguised as *Gagnráðr* 'Contrary (or Gainful) Counsellor', challenges his host's wisdom, and is in turn threatened with death unless he proves the wiser (6–10), Vafþrúðnir asks him four questions about mythological names, all of which he answers (11–18). Vafþrúðnir then tells Óðinn to take a seat on the bench and instigates a formal death-match: they will wager their heads upon their wisdom (19).

The rest of the poem comprises Óðinn's eighteen questions (the first twelve of which are numbered) for Vafþrúðnir on mythological topics and the giant's answers. Óðinn asks ten questions about the origins of the earth and sky, the moon and sun, day and night, summer and winter, the giants, the wind and the god Njörðr, all of which Vafþrúðnir answers (20–39). His answer to the last alludes to Ragnarok, which, together with its aftermath, is the theme of Óðinn's next seven questions, all of which Vafþrúðnir again answers (40–53). Finally, Óðinn asks what he said in his son Baldr's ear before Baldr was burnt on the pyre (54). Only Óðinn knows this, so Vafþrúðnir, at last recognizing his adversary, concedes defeat (55).

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3 C. Tolley, 'The Adaptability of Myth in Old Norse and Finnish Poetry', in G. Barnes and M. Clunies Ross, ed., *Old Norse Myths, Literature and Society: Proceedings of the 11th International Saga Conference 2–7 July 2000, University of Sydney* (Sydney: University of Sydney, 2000), pp. 498–510 at 508–09.

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Vafprúðnismál

Óðinn kvað:

1. 'Ráð þú mér nú, Frigg, allz mik fara tíðir
at vitja Vafprúðnis;
forvitni mikla kveð ek mér á fornum stöfum
við þann inn alsvinna jötun!'

Frigg kvað:

2. 'Heima letja ek mynda Herjaföðr
í gorrðum goða,
þvíat engi jötun ek hugða jafnramman
sem Vafprúðni vera!'

Óðinn kvað:

3. 'Fjöld ek fór, fjöld ek freistaða,
fjöld ek reynda regin;
hitt vil ek vita, hvé Vafprúðnis
salakynni sé.'

Frigg kvað:

4. 'Heill þú farir, heill þú aprt komir,
heill þú á sinnum sér!
Æði þér dugi, hvars þú skalt, Aldaföðr,
orðum mæla jötun!'

5. Fór þá Óðinn at freista orðspeki
þess ins alsvinna jötuns;
at hollu hann kom, ok átti Íms faðir,
inn gekk Yggr þegar.

Óðinn kvað:

6. 'Heill þú nú, Vafprúðnir! Nú em ek í holl kominn,
á þik sjálfan at sjá;
hitt vil ek fyrst vita, ef þú fróðr sér
eða alsviðr, jötunn!'

Vafprúðnir kvað:

7. 'Hvat er þat manna, er í mínum sal
verpumpk orði á?
Út þú né kemir órum hollum frá,
nema þú inn snotrari sér!'

The Sayings of Vafþrúðnir

1. Óðinn said:
'Advise me now, Frigg,¹ since I want to go
to visit Vafþrúðnir;²
I declare my great curiosity to contend in ancient staves³
with the all-wise giant!'
2. Frigg said:
'I would keep Herjafǫðr⁴ at home
in the courts of the gods,
for I have considered no giant to be as strong
as Vafþrúðnir!'
3. Óðinn said:
'Much have I travelled, much have I tried,
much have I tested the powers;⁵
I want to know this,
what Vafþrúðnir's household is like.'
4. Frigg said:
'May you travel safe, may you come back safe,
may you be safe in your fellowship!
May your mind be strong,⁶ Aldafǫðr,⁷
wherever you have to speak words to a giant!'
5. Then Óðinn went to test the word-wisdom
of that one, of the all-wise giant;
he came to a hall, and Ímr's father owned it;⁸
Yggr⁹ went in at once.
6. Óðinn said:
'Hail to you now, Vafþrúðnir! Now I have come into your hall
to see you yourself;
I want to know this first, whether you are knowledgeable¹⁰
or all-wise, giant!'
7. Vafþrúðnir said:
'What kind of man is it at whom
I shall hurl speech in *my* house?
May you not come out from our halls,
unless you are the wiser!'

8. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Gagnráðr ek heiti; nú emk af gøngu kominn
 þyrstr til þinna sala;
 laðar þurfi hefi ek lengi farit
 ok þinna andfanga, jøtunn!’
9. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Hví þú þá, Gagnráðr, mælisk af gólfi fyrir?
 Farðu í sess í sal!
 Þá skal freista, hvárr fleira viti,
 gestr eða inn gamli þulr.’
10. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Óauðigr maðr, er til auðigs kømr,
 mæli þarft eða þegi;
 ofrmælgí mikil hyggek at illa geti,
 hveim er við kaldrifjaðan kømr.’
11. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Segðu mér, Gagnráðr, allz þú á gólfi vill
 þíns um freista frama,
 hvé sá hestr heitir er hverjan dregr
 dag of dróttmøgu.’
12. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Skinfaxi heitir, er inn skíra dregr
 dag um dróttmøgu;
 hesta beztr þykkir hann með Hreiðgotum,
 ey lýsir møn af mari.’
13. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Segðu þat, Gagnráðr, allz þú á gólfi vill
 þíns um freista frama,
 hvé sá jór heitir er austan dregr
 nótt of nýt regin.’
14. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Hrímfaxi heitir, er hverja dregr
 nótt of nýt regin;
 méldropa fellir hann morgin hvern,
 þaðan kømr døggek um dala.’
15. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Segðu þat, Gagnráðr, allz þú á gólfi vill
 þíns um freista frama,
 hvé sú á heitir er deilir með jøtna sonum
 grund ok með goðum.’

8. Óðinn said:
‘I’m called Gagnráðr;¹¹ I’ve come thirsty now from
my journey to your halls;¹²
I have travelled long in need of an invitation
and your hospitality, giant!’
9. Vafþrúðnir said:
‘Why then, Gagnráðr, do you speak before [me] from the floor?
Go to a seat in the hall!
Then it shall be tested, which of us two knows more,
the guest¹³ or the ancient sage.’¹⁴
10. Óðinn said:
‘A poor man, when he comes to a rich man’s house,
should say something useful or be silent;¹⁵
I think excessive talking¹⁶ ill rewards
whoever comes up against a cold-ribbed one.’¹⁷
11. Vafþrúðnir said:
‘Tell me, Gagnráðr, since you want to test
your talent on the floor,
what the horse is called which hauls
each day over host-men.’¹⁸
12. Óðinn said:
‘He’s called Skinfaxi,¹⁹ who hauls the shining
day over host-men;
he’s thought the best of horses among the Hreiðgotar,²⁰
light always shines from the steed’s mane.’²¹
13. Vafþrúðnir said:
‘Say this,²² Gagnráðr, since you want to test
your talent on the floor,
what the horse is called which hauls night
from the east over the able powers.’²³
14. Óðinn said:
‘He’s called Hrímfaxi,²⁴ who hauls each
night over the able powers;
he lets bit-drops²⁵ fall each morning,
from there comes dew over dales.’²⁶
15. Vafþrúðnir said:
‘Say this, Gagnráðr, since you want to test
your talent on the floor,
what the river is called which divides the earth
among the sons of giants and among the gods.’

Óðinn kvað:

16. 'Ífing heitir á, er deilir með jötna sonum
grund ok með goðum;
opin renna hon skal um aldrdaga,
verðrat íss á á.'

Vafþrúðnir kvað:

17. 'Segðu þat, Gagnráðr, allz þú á gólfi vill
þíns um freista frama,
hvé sá vøllr heitir er finnask vígi at
Surtr ok in svásu goð.'

Óðinn kvað:

18. 'Vígriðr heitir vøllr, er finnask vígi at
Surtr ok in svásu goð;
hundrað rasta hann er á hverjan veg —
sá er þeim vøllr vitaðr.'

Vafþrúðnir kvað:

19. 'Fróðr ertu nú, gestr! Far þú á bekk jötuns,
ok mælumk í sessi saman;
høfði veðja vit skulum høllu í,
gestr, um geðspeki!'

Capitulum

Óðinn kvað:

20. 'Segðu þat it eina, ef þitt æði dugir
ok þú, Vafþrúðnir, vitir:
hvaðan jørð um kom eða upphiminn
fyrst, inn fróði jötunn.'

Vafþrúðnir kvað:

21. 'Ór Ymis holdi var jørð um sköpuð,
en ór beinum björg,
himinn ór hausi ins hrímkalda jötuns,
en ór sveita sjór.'

Óðinn kvað:

22. 'Segðu þat annat, ef þitt æði dugir
ok þú, Vafþrúðnir, vitir:
hvaðan Máni um kom, svá at ferr menn yfir,
eða Sól it sama.'

16. Óðinn said:
‘The river’s called Ífing²⁷ which divides the earth
among the sons of giants and among the gods;
it shall run freely during life-days,²⁸
ice doesn’t form on the river.’²⁹
- Vafþrúðnir said:
17. ‘Say this, Gagnráðr, since you want to test
your talent on the floor,
what the field is called on which Surtr³⁰ and the sweet gods
will encounter each other in battle.’
- Óðinn said:
18. ‘The field’s called Vígríðr³¹ on which Surtr and the sweet gods
will encounter each other in battle;
it’s a hundred leagues in every direction —
that’s the field determined for them.’³²
- Vafþrúðnir said:
19. ‘You’re wise now, guest! Go to the giant’s bench,
and let’s talk together on the seat;
we two shall wager our heads in the hall,
guest, on mind-wisdom!’

Capitulum³³

- Óðinn said:
20. ‘Say this as the first thing, if your mind is strong
and you, Vafþrúðnir, know:
whence the earth and sky above
first came, O wise giant.’
- Vafþrúðnir said:
21. ‘From Ymir’s flesh the earth was formed,
and from his bones boulders,
the sky from the skull of the frost-cold giant,
and from his “sweat”³⁴ the sea.’³⁵
- Óðinn said:
22. ‘Say this secondly, if your mind is strong
and you, Vafþrúðnir, know:
whence Máni³⁶ came, so that he journeys over men,
and Sól³⁷ the same.’

23. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Mundilfœri heitir, hann er Mána faðir,
 ok svá Sólar it sama;
 himin hverfa þau skulu hverjan dag,
 öldum at ártali.’
24. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Segðu þat it þriðja, allz þik svinnan kveða,
 ok þú, Vafþrúðnir, vitir,
 hvaðan Dagr um kom, sá er ferr drótt yfir,
 eða Nótt með niðum.’
25. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Dellingr heitir, hann er Dags faðir,
 en Nótt var Nörvi borin;
 ný ok nið skópu nýt regin
 öldum at ártali.’
26. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Segðu þat it fjórða, allz þik fróðan kveða,
 ok þú, Vafþrúðnir, vitir:
 hvaðan Vetr um kom eða varmt Sumar
 fyrst með fróð regin.’
27. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Vindsvalr heitir, hann er Vetrar faðir,
 en Svásuðr Sumars.’
28. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Segðu þat it fimmta, allz þik fróðan kveða,
 ok þú, Vafþrúðnir, vitir:
 hverr Ása elztr eða Ymis niðja
 yrði í árdaga.’
29. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Ørófi vetra áðr væri jörð sköpuð,
 þá var Bergelmir borinn;
 Þrúðgelmir var þess faðir,
 en Aurgelmir afi.’
30. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Segðu þat it sétta, allz þik svinnan kveða,
 ok þú, Vafþrúðnir, vitir:
 hvaðan Aurgelmir kom með jötna sonum
 fyrst, inn fróði jötunn.’

23. Vafþrúðnir said:
'He's called Mundilfæri,³⁸ he's the father of Máni,
and of Sól the same;
they must turn the sky each day,
as a year-reckoning for men.'³⁹
24. Óðinn said:
'Say this as the third thing, since they call you wise,
and you, Vafþrúðnir, may know:
whence Dagr⁴⁰ came, the one who travels over men,
and Nótt⁴¹ with dark moons.'⁴²
25. Vafþrúðnir said:
'He's called Dellingr,⁴³ he's the father of Dagr,
but Nótt was born to Nǫrr,⁴⁴
the able powers made full moon⁴⁵ and dark moon⁴⁶
as a year-reckoning for men.'
26. Óðinn said:
'Say this as the fourth thing, since they call you wise,
and you, Vafþrúðnir, may know:
whence Vetr⁴⁷ and warm Sumar⁴⁸
first came among the wise⁴⁹ gods.'
27. Vafþrúðnir said:
'He's called Vindsvalr,⁵⁰ he's the father of Vetr,
and Svásuðr⁵¹ of Sumar.'⁵²
28. Óðinn said:
'Say this as the fifth thing, since they call you wise,
and you, Vafþrúðnir, may know:
who was the oldest of the Æsir⁵³ or of Ymir's kin⁵⁴
in early days.'
29. Vafþrúðnir said:
'Countless years before the earth was created,
then Bergelmir was born;
Þrúðgelmir was the father of that one,
and Aurgelmir his grandfather.'⁵⁵
30. Óðinn said:
'Say this as the sixth thing, since they call you wise,
and you, Vafþrúðnir, may know:
from where Aurgelmir first came with the sons of giants,
O wise giant.'⁵⁶

31. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Ór Élivágum stukku eitrdropar,
 svá óx unz varð ór jötunn;
 þar órar ættir kvómu allar saman,
 því er þat æ allt til atalt.’
32. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Segðu þat it sjaunda, allz þik svinnan kveða,
 ok þú, Vafþrúðnir, vitir:
 hvé sá þörn gat, inn baldni jötunn,
 er hann hafðit gýgjar gaman.’
33. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Undir hendi vaxa kváðu hrímþursi
 mey ok mög saman;
 fótr við foeti gat ins fróða jötuns
 sexhǫfðaðan son.’
34. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Segðu þat it átta, allz þik svinnan kveða,
 ok þú, Vafþrúðnir, vitir:
 hvat þú fyrst mant eða fremst um veizt,
 þú ert alsviðr, jötunn!’
35. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Ørófi vetra áðr væri jörð um sköpuð,
 þá var Bergelmir borinn;
 þat ek fyrst um man, er sá inn fróði jötunn
 var á lúðr um lagiðr.’
36. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Segðu þat it níunda, allz þik svinnan kveða,
 ok þú, Vafþrúðnir, vitir:
 hvaðan vindr um kømr, svá at ferr vág yfir,
 æ menn hann sjálfan um sjá.’
37. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Hræsvelgr heitir, er sitr á himins enda,
 jötunn í arnar ham;
 af hans vængjum kveða vind koma
 alla menn yfir.’
38. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Segðu þat it tíunda, allz þú tíva røk
 ǫll, Vafþrúðnir, vitir:
 hvaðan Njörðr um kom með Ása sonum;
 hofum ok hǫrgum hann ræðr hunnmǫrgum,
 ok varðat hann Ásum alinn.’

31. Vafþrúðnir said:
‘From Élivágar⁵⁷ venom-drops sprang out,
[and] so grew until a giant emerged therefrom,⁵⁸
all our families came from there,
which is why they are always too fierce.’⁵⁹
32. Óðinn said:
‘Say this as the seventh thing, since they call you wise,
and you, Vafþrúðnir, may know:
how he begot children, that bold giant,
when he didn’t have a giantess’s love-play.’
33. Vafþrúðnir said:
‘They said that under the frost-giant’s arm grew
a girl and a boy together;
leg upon leg⁶⁰ of the wise⁶¹ giant begot
a six-headed son.’⁶²
34. Óðinn said:
‘Say this as the eighth thing, since they call you wise,
and you, Vafþrúðnir, may know:
what you first remember or know from farthest back,⁶³
you are all-knowing, giant!’
35. Vafþrúðnir said:
‘Countless years before the earth was created,
then Bergelmir was born;
the first thing I remember was when that wise⁶⁴ giant
was laid on a mill-frame.’⁶⁵
36. Óðinn said:
‘Say this as the ninth thing, since they call you wise,
and you, Vafþrúðnir, may know:
whence the wind comes, so that it moves over wave,
people never see it itself.’
37. Vafþrúðnir said:
‘He’s called Hræsvelgr, who sits at the sky’s end,⁶⁶
a giant in eagle’s shape;
from his wings, they say, the wind comes
over all people.’⁶⁷
38. Óðinn said:
‘Say this as the tenth thing, since you, Vafþrúðnir,
may know all the fates of the gods:
whence Njǫrðr⁶⁸ came among the sons of the Æsir,⁶⁹
he rules a hundred temples and altars,⁷⁰
and he was not born to the Æsir.’

39. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Í Vanaheimi skópu hann vís regin,
 ok seldu at gíslingu goðum;
 í aldar røk hann mun aprt koma
 heim með vísnum Vönum.’
40. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Segðu þat it ellipta: hvar ýtar túnum í
 höggvask hverjan dag.’
41. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Allir einherjar Óðins túnum í
 höggvask hverjan dag;
 val þeir kjósa ok ríða vígi frá,
 sitja meirr um sáttir saman.’
42. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Segðu þat it tólfsta, hví þú tíva røk
 ǫll, Vafþrúðnir, vitir;
 frá jötna rúnum ok allra goða
 segir þú it sannasta,
 inn alsvinni jötunn.’
43. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Frá jötna rúnum ok allra goða
 ek kann segja satt,
 þvíat hvern hefi ek heim um komit;
 nú kom ek heima fyr Niflhel neðan,
 hinig deyja ór Helju halir.’
44. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Fjölð ek fór, fjölð ek freistaðak,
 fjölð ek reynda regin:
 hvat lifir manna, þá er inn mæra líðr
 Fimbulvetr með firum?’
45. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Líf ok Lífðrasir, en þau leynask munu
 í holti Hoddmímis;
 morgindöggar þau sér at mat hafa,
 þaðan af aldir alask.’
46. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Fjölð ek fór, fjölð ek freistaðak,
 fjölð ek reynda regin:
 hvaðan kœmr Sól á inn slétta himin,
 þá er þessa hefir Fenrir farit?’

39. Vafþrúðnir said:
'In Vanaheimr⁷¹ wise powers created him,
and gave him as a hostage to the gods;⁷²
at the age's end he will come back
home among wise Vanir.⁷³
40. Óðinn said:
'Say this as the eleventh thing:
where men fight each other in enclosed fields⁷⁴ every day.⁷⁵
41. Vafþrúðnir said:
'All the unique champions in Óðinn's enclosed fields
fight each other every day;
they choose the slain and ride from battle;⁷⁶
thereafter they sit together in peace.⁷⁷
42. Óðinn said:
'Say this as the twelfth thing: how you,⁷⁸
Vafþrúðnir, may know all the fates of the gods;
about the secrets⁷⁹ of giants and of all gods
you tell the absolute truth,⁸⁰
O all-wise giant.'
43. Vafþrúðnir said:
'About the secrets of giants and of all gods
I can tell the truth,
because I have come to each world;
I came to nine worlds beneath Niflhel,⁸¹
humans die there from Hel.⁸²
44. Óðinn said:
'Much have I travelled, much have I tried,
much have I tested the powers;
which people will live when the famous Fimbulvetr⁸³
moves among men?'⁸⁴
45. Vafþrúðnir said:
'Líf and Lífþrasir,⁸⁵ and they will hide themselves
in Hoddmímir's wood,⁸⁶
morning-dews they will have for their food,⁸⁷
from there human beings will be born.⁸⁸
46. Óðinn said:
'Much have I travelled, much have I tried,
much have I tested the powers;
whence will Sól⁸⁹ come [back] to the smooth sky,
once Fenrir has destroyed this one?'⁹⁰

47. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Eina dóttur berr Álfrøðull,
 áðr hana Fenrir fari;
 sú skal ríða, þá er regin deyjja,
 móður brautir mær.’
48. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Fjölð ek fór, fjölð ek freistaðak,
 fjölð ek reynda regin:
 hverjar ru þær meyjar er líða mar yfir,
 fróðgeðjaðar fara?’
49. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Þrjár þjóðár falla þorp yfir
 meyjja Møgþrasis;
 hamingjur einar þeira í heimi eru,
 þó þær með jötnum alask.’
50. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Fjölð ek fór, fjölð ek freistaðak,
 fjölð ek reynda regin:
 hverir ráða Æsir eignum goða,
 þá er sloknar surtalogi?’
51. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Víðarr ok Váli byggja vé goða,
 þá er sloknar surtalogi;
 Móði ok Magni skulu Mjöllni hafa
 ok vinna at vígþroti.’
52. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Fjölð ek fór, fjölð ek freistaðak,
 fjölð ek reynda regin:
 hvat verðr Óðni at aldralagi,
 þá er rjúfask regin?’
53. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
 ‘Úlfr gleypa mun Aldafoðr,
 þess mun Víðarr vreka;
 kalda kjapta hann klyfja mun
 vífnis vígi at.’
54. Óðinn kvað:
 ‘Fjölð ek fór, fjölð ek freistaðak,
 fjölð ek reynda regin:
 hvat mælti Óðinn, áðr á bál stigi,
 sjálfr, í eyra syni?’

47. Vafþrúðnir said:
'Álfrøðull⁹¹ will bear one daughter
before Fenrir destroys her;
that girl must ride, when the powers die,
the paths of her mother.'⁹²
48. Óðinn said:
'Much have I travelled, much have I tried,
much have I tested the powers;
who are those maidens who move over the sea,
journey with wise minds?'⁹³
49. Vafþrúðnir said:
'Three mighty rivers fall over the village
of the maidens of Møgþrasir,⁹⁴
their guardian-spirits are alone in the world(?),⁹⁵
though they⁹⁶ are born among the giants.'
50. Óðinn said:
'Much have I travelled, much have I tried,
much have I tested the powers;
which Æsir⁹⁷ will rule the gods' possessions,
when the dark flame⁹⁸ has died?'
51. Vafþrúðnir said:
'Víðarr and Váli will settle in the gods' sanctuaries
when the dark flame dies,⁹⁹
Móði and Magni¹⁰⁰ will have Mjöllnir¹⁰¹
and work at the war's end.'¹⁰²
52. Óðinn said:
'Much have I travelled, much have I tried,
much have I tested the powers;
what will bring Óðinn to his life's end,
when the powers are ripped apart?'
53. Vafþrúðnir said:
'The wolf will swallow Aldaføðr,¹⁰³
Víðarr will avenge this;¹⁰⁴
he will cleave the cold jaws
of the wolf in battle.'¹⁰⁵
54. Óðinn said:
'Much have I travelled, much have I tried,
much have I tested the powers;
what did Óðinn say, before he stepped onto the pyre,¹⁰⁶
himself, into his son's ear?'¹⁰⁷

55. Vafþrúðnir kvað:
‘Ey manni þat veit, hvat þú í árdaga
sagðir í eyra syni;
feigum munni mæltu ek mína forna stafi
ok um ragna rök.
Nú ek við Óðin deildak mína orðspeki;
þú ert æ vísastr vera!’

55. Vafþrúðnir said:
‘No one knows that, what you in early days¹⁰⁸
said in your son’s ear;
with a doomed mouth have I have spoken my ancient staves¹⁰⁹
and about the doom of the powers.
Now I have shared my word-wisdom with Óðinn;
you are always the wisest of beings!’¹¹⁰

Textual Apparatus to *Vafþrúðnismál*

Vafþrúðnismál] The title is rubricated but illegible in the photograph in the facsimile volume of **R**; this edition therefore relies on the transcription therein

Speech directions (e.g., *Óðinn kvað* ‘Óðinn said’) appear in both **R** and **A**, but are lacking in **R** for stt. 1–17

1/1 *Ráð*] The first letter is large, inset and rubricated (but faded) in **R**

2/5 *jafnramman*] **R** *iafnrammann*

4/5 *skalt*] **R** *scalt* or

11/6 *of*] **R** *oc*

12/5 *Hreiðgotum*] **R** *reið gotom*

13/2–3 *allz þú á gólfi vill þíns um freista frama*] In **R** greatly abbreviated (so too in stt. 15 and 17); expanded on the model of st. 11

13/6 *of*] **R** *oc*

14/3 *of*] **R** *oc*

16/2 *þotna*] **R** written in the outer margin as a correction of *alda* ‘of men’

Capitulum] Rubricated

20/2 *æði*] **A**’s text begins with this word

20/3 *ok*] **A** *.æ.* (abbreviation for *eða*)

22/2–3] **R** and **A** abbreviated

22/4 *um*] **A** *of*

23/1 *Mundilfæri*] **A** *Mvndilfæri*

24/3 *ok*] **A** *.æ.* (abbreviation for *eða*)

24/5 *drótt*] so **A**; **R** *drot*

25/3 *Nótt*] so **A**; **R** *not*

26/2–3] **R** and **A** abbreviated here and subsequently

26/6 *með*] **A** *vm*

29/2 *þorð*] **A** *iorð vm*

29/3 *var*] **A** absent

30/2 *svinnan*] **A** *f.* (abbreviation for *froðan*)

31/3] *varð ór*] **A** or *varð*

31/4–6] **R** and **A** absent; lines supplied after Machan, *Vafþrúðnismál*, 64, 88 from *SnEGylf*, one manuscript of which has *komnar* ‘have come’ for *komu*

32/5 *aldni*] **R** *aldni* ‘old’, here emended for alliteration; **A** *balldni*

33/4 *fótr*] **A** *fot*

33/5 *gat*] **A** absent

- 33/6 *sexhofðaðan*] so **A**; **R** *ser hofðaþann*
- 34/2 *svinnan*] **R** and **A** *f* (abbreviation for *fróðan* ‘wise’), here amended for alliteration
- 34/4 *fyrst*] **A** *fyrst of*
- 34/5 *fremst*] **A** *fræms*
- 34/5 *um*] **A** *of*
- 35/4 *um*] **A** *of*
- 35/6 *var á*] **A** *a var*
- 36/3 *ok*] **R** *e* (abbreviation for *eða*)
- 36/5 *svá at*] **A** *sa ær* ‘the one which’
- 36/6 *æ ... sjá*] **A** *æ. maðr um sialfan hann sær* ‘one never sees it itself’
- 37/4 *hans*] so **A**; **R** *haN*
- 38/4 *um*] **A** *of*
- 38/8 *varðat*] **A** *varat* ‘was not’
- 39/5 *hann mun*] **A** *mon hann*
- 40/1–3] Stanza incomplete in **R** and **A**, the latter having only 40/1
- 41/1 *einherjar*] **A** *eins hæriar*
- 41/1–3] **R** absent; supplied from **A** and *SnEGylf*
- 42/1 *þat*] **A** absent
- 43/4 *um*] **A** *of*
- 44/2 *freistaðak*] **A** *fræistaða*
- 44/3 *ek*] **A** *ec of*
- 45/1 *Lifðrasir*] **A** and some manuscripts of *SnEGylf* have *Læifþrasir* ‘Persistent Remnant’, ‘Enduring Survival’; another *SnEGylf* variant is *Leidþrasir* ‘Persistent Way’
- 45/3 *holti*] **A** *holldi* ‘flesh’
- 45/6 *þaðan*] **A** (also manuscripts of *SnEGylf*) *ænn þaþan*
- 46/1–3] **R** and **A** abbreviated here and subsequently
- 46/6 *þá*] **R** *þa þa*
- 49/5 *þeira*] **A** *þær ær*
- 51/6 *ok vinna*] **A** (and manuscripts of *SnEGylf*) *Vingnis*
- 53/3 *vreka*] **R** *reca*; **A** *ræka*
- 53/6 *vitnis*] so **A**; **R** *vingnis*
- 54/5 *stigi*] **A** *stigi ok*
- 55/5 *ek*] **A** *æk um*
- 55/6 *um*] **A** *o*

Notes to the Translation

- 1 Óðinn's wife, a goddess.
- 2 Vafþrúðnir is a giant whose name might mean 'Wrapping/Entanglement-Powerful One' or 'Hesitation-Mighty One'. Except for a reference preceding a quotation from *Vm.* in *SnEGylf* (5, p. 10) and the inclusion of his name in a versified list of giant-names (*SPSMA* III, 715), he appears nowhere else.
- 3 I.e., points of wisdom, conceptually related to rune-staves (runic letters).
- 4 'Father of Armies', an alias of Óðinn.
- 5 Óðinn's frequent travelling is well-attested, but his testing of the *regin* '(ruling) powers' is not. The *regin* are presumably the gods collectively.
- 6 Or 'May your mind avail you'.
- 7 'Father of Men/Ages', an alias of Óðinn.
- 8 Ímr's father is Vafþrúðnir. *Ímr* 'Embers' also appears in versified lists of giant-names and has cognates in giant-names such as *Ími* and *Ímgerðr*. This line lacks alliteration, unless 'h' (dropped in pronunciation?) alliterates exceptionally with a vowel or the *Í-* in *Íms* was aspirated; it might therefore be faulty.
- 9 'Terrible/Fear-Inducing One', an alias of Óðinn.
- 10 The implication is 'merely knowledgeable'.
- 11 'Contrary Counsellor' or 'Gain(ful) Counselor'. The name is not found elsewhere, except perhaps in a derived passage in *SnEGylf* (5, p. 10; see notes on pp. 58, 74 therein). A versified list records a similar name, *Gangráðr* 'Travel Counsellor' or 'Walk-Enjoying One'; *SPSMA* III, 739.
- 12 Arguably, Óðinn is thirsty not just for drink but also for (debate about) knowledge; the two are closely related in Old Norse mythological thought. Cf. *Ls.* 6.
- 13 Since Vafþrúðnir apparently does not yet recognize his visitor, it may be ironic that he addresses him as *gestr* 'guest', because *Gestr* is elsewhere an alias of Óðinn.
- 14 As Óðinn is probably also an old *pulr* 'sage' (cf. *Hav.* 80, 111, 134(?), 142), this term, by which Vafþrúðnir describes himself, also appears unconsciously ironic.
- 15 Cf. *Hav.* 19.
- 16 Or 'boasting'.
- 17 I.e., a giant. Frost-giants inhabited the frozen wilderness, but *kaldr* 'cold' also has connotations of malice, cunning and ill-fortune.
- 18 I.e., over warriors of an army, or over humankind.
- 19 'Shining Mane'. *SnEGylf* (10, p. 13), identifies Skinfaxi as the horse of *Dagr* 'Day' and says its mane illuminates all the sky and earth. Skinfaxi is also mentioned in a versified list of horse-names (*SPSMA* III, 935, 939). *SnESkáld* (I, 58, p. 90, and p. 211 n.) records an alternative name for this horse, or perhaps the name of its partner: *Glaðr* 'Glad'. Cf. *Grm.* 37.
- 20 'Nest/Homeland Goths', an emendation of dat. pl. *Reiðgotum* 'Riding Goths'. Here the need to restore the initial *H-* for alliteration suggests a fairly early date of composition, possibly in Norway.

- 21 This stanza is paraphrased in *SnEGylf* (9, p. 13). Cf. *Grm.* 37 (and *SnEGylf* 11, pp. 13–14), where the horses *Árvakr* ‘Early Waker’ and *Alsviðr* ‘All Swift’ drag the sun up; also *Vsp.* 5. The notion of the sun being pulled by a horse (or horses) dates from at least the early Bronze Age in northern Europe: the Danish Trundholm chariot is a model of a horse pulling a gold-plated bronze disk, arguably in a two-wheeled chariot.
- 22 Literally, ‘it’ or ‘that’.
- 23 I.e., the gods.
- 24 ‘Frost Mane’. *SnEGylf* (10, p. 13) identifies *Hrímfaxi* as the horse of *Nótt* ‘Night’, and says that drops of foam fall from its bit as dew on to the earth each day. *Hrímfaxi* is also mentioned in a versified name-list; *SPSMA* III, 939. *SnESkald* (I, 58, p. 90, and p. 211 n.) records an alternative name for this horse, or perhaps the name of its partner: *Fjorsvartnir* ‘Life-Blackened’.
- 25 I.e., drops of foam from the horse’s bit (*mél*); alternatively, *meldropa* ‘honey-drops’, ‘honeydew’; cf. OE *meledeaw* ‘honeydew’. Note also *Vsp.* 19, as *Yggdrasill* was imagined as a horse-tree.
- 26 Cf. *HHv.* 28.
- 27 Or *Ifing*. The meaning might be ‘Violent One’, ‘Rippling One’ or ‘Yew River’; otherwise unknown.
- 28 I.e., forever, or at least until Ragnarok.
- 29 Possibly, if it had frozen, the giants would have been able to invade the land of the gods.
- 30 An apocalyptic fire-demon; see *Vsp.* 51.
- 31 Perhaps ‘(Place Where) Battle Rides (Out)’; otherwise unknown.
- 32 Or ‘that is the field known to them’. This stanza is quoted in *SnEGylf* (51, pp. 52–53). Cf. *Fm.* 14–15.
- 33 Latin for ‘chapter’; it marks the beginning of a new section of the poem.
- 34 Here ‘sweat’ is interpretable as a term for ‘blood’, as elsewhere.
- 35 Cf. *Grm.* 40–41, *SnEGylf* (8, pp. 11–12).
- 36 ‘Moon’.
- 37 ‘Sun’.
- 38 Cf. *SnEGylf* (11, p. 13).
- 39 In other words, as a means by which people can measure time. The key to understanding this stanza is the name *Mundilfæri*, which seems to mean ‘Mill-Handle-Mover’. Its first element, *mundil-*, looks akin to *mōndull* ‘handle of a handmill’, and perhaps plays on the words *mund* ‘hand’ and *mund* ‘time’; the second element, *-færi*, probably means ‘mover’, ‘carrier’ or ‘device (for moving something)’. *Mundilfæri* might therefore denote a personified mill-like device that, when operated by *Máni* and *Sól*, turns the sky by means of a handle, the sky being imagined as the upper of two millstones, of which the lower is the earth.
- 40 ‘Day’.
- 41 ‘Night’.
- 42 A reference to the moon’s invisible (dark/new) phase or waning.
- 43 *SnEGylf* (10, p. 13) says *Dellingr*, probably ‘Gleaming One’, is of the kindred of the gods and married to *Nótt*.

- 44 'Narrow (One)'. Cf. *Alv.* 29. In *SnEGylf* (10, p. 13) Nótt is the daughter of a giant called *Nørfi* or *Narfi*, *Nørfi* being the dat. of *Nørr*.
- 45 Or pl. ON *ný* means literally 'new moon', but the reference is to the waxing or full moon, not what is now known in English as the new moon, which is the moon during its invisible phase.
- 46 Or pl.
- 47 'Winter'.
- 48 'Summer'.
- 49 Or 'fertile'.
- 50 'Wind Cool', the name of a giant in *SnESkáld* (I, 75, p. 111). According to *SnEGylf* (19, p. 21), *Vetr*'s father is called *Vindlóni* 'Wind Still/Stop(?)' or *Vindsvalr* 'Wind Cool'. *SnESkáld* (I, 29, p. 39) also identifies winter as the son of *Vindsvalr*.
- 51 Probably 'Sweet/Mild South', the name of a giant in *SnESkáld* (I, 75, p. 111). *SnEGylf* (19, p. 21) adds that 'he has such a blissful life that it is from his name that what is pleasant is called *svásliq* "delightful"'. *SnESkáld* (I, 30, p. 39) also identifies summer as the son of *Svásuðr*.
- 52 The second half of this stanza is missing in both **R** and **A**; later, paper manuscripts complete it with the words *ár of bæði þau skulu ey fara / unz rjúfask regin* 'Years shall always journey from both, until the powers are ripped apart.' Cf. *SnEGylf* (19, p. 21).
- 53 Gods, here perhaps specifically the group led by Óðinn.
- 54 Giants.
- 55 The names are of giants, possibly 'Barley (or Rock) Sheaf/Roarer', 'Powerfully Thriving Sheaf/Roarer' and 'Ear (of Corn) Sheaf/Roarer'; see note to *Vm.* 35. *SnEGylf* (5, p. 10) says *Aurgelmir* is the frost-giants' name for *Ymir*.
- 56 Translated on the model of *Vm.* 20 and 42, at the end of which *Vafþrúðnir* is addressed as a wise giant. Alternatively, translate 'where *Aurgelmir*, the wise [or 'fertile'] giant, first came from with the sons of giants'. The second half of this stanza is quoted in *SnEGylf* (5, p. 10).
- 57 '(Snow/Hail-)Storm Waves/Seas/Bays', a collective name for various primaeval rivers in *SnEGylf* (5, pp. 9–10); cf. *Grm.* 26–29, *Hym.* 5.
- 58 The giant is presumably *Aurgelmir*.
- 59 The second half of this stanza is lacking in both **R** and **A**; it is supplied from manuscripts of *SnEGylf* (5, p. 10), which also quotes a form of the first half. Note also the variant in *SnEUpp* (8, p. 16).
- 60 Or 'foot upon foot'.
- 61 Or 'fruitful'.
- 62 R. D. Fulk, 'An Eddic Analogue to the Scyld Scefing Story', *Review of English Studies* 40 (1989), 313–22 at 318 explains this stanza in light of the growth of barley: 'The "six-headed son" may be identified as an allusion to the spike, which has six rows of kernels in the commonest type of barley, grown in Scandinavia since the Farming Stone Age, and apparently the only type grown there until the Renaissance. Thus the plant is apparently envisaged with its head in the ground, the leaves likened to arms and legs, with the six-headed son growing between the legs. Barley does in fact produce precisely four leaves before tillering. The boy and girl in the giant's armpit can only be the third and fourth leaves,

i.e. the legs themselves. This explains why a point is made of their sexual differentiation, as well as why just one armpit is mentioned.' See note to *Vm.* 35. Cf. *SnEGylf* (5, pp. 10–11).

63 Cf. *Vsp.* 1.

64 Or 'fertile'.

65 ON *lúðr* 'mill-frame' denotes more precisely 'a box or wooden trough, perhaps on legs, in which the stones of a hand-mill sit' (Fulk, 'Eddic Analogue', 316), or, by extension, an entire box-mill. Hence, the giant Bergelmir was presumably ground up, apparently as part of a creation myth comparable to that of Ymir's dismemberment in *Vm.* 21 (cf. the implicit reference to a cosmic mill in *Vm.* 23). The name *Bergelmir* may well suit this interpretation. At first sight, *Ber-* invites interpretation as 'bear', 'bare' or 'berry', but the association with milling and the enigmatic *Vm.* 33 point to the sense 'barley', from Germanic **bariz-* (although another word, *berg* 'rock', may also spring to mind). The second element, *gelmir*, may corroborate this by meaning 'handful or bundle of reaped corn' (cf. OE *gilm/gelm*) or simply 'sheaf'. Bergelmir would then mean 'Barley Sheaf'; his father, Þrúðgelmir, would be 'Powerfully Thriving Sheaf' (cf. ON *þróa* 'to thrive'); and his grandfather, Aurgelmir, would be 'Ear (of Corn) Sheaf', if *Aur-* is cognate with OE *ear* 'ear of corn' and is not ON *aurr* 'mud, clay', a word used to denote fertile mud in *Vsp.* 19 and perhaps found in the giant-names *Aurboða*, *Aurgrímmir*, *Aurnir* and *Aurrekr*. Against this interpretation of *gelmir* is its presence in two names associated not with corn or agriculture but with rivers: *Hvergelmir* in *Grm.* 26 and *Vaðgelmir* in *Rm.* 4, in which it seems to mean 'roarer' (cf. ON *gjalla* 'to yell' and the river *Gjöll*). This sense would suit *Vm.*'s giants, since Aurgelmir sprang from stormy rivers in *Vm.* 31, and several other giants have names indicating noisiness. If so, *Bergelmir* would be 'Barley Roarer', *Þrúðgelmir* 'Powerfully Thriving Roarer', and *Aurgelmir* 'Ear (of Corn) Roarer'. It would not be surprising if the original sense of these names were lost on a thirteenth-century audience; if they interpreted them at all, they may well have discerned 'Rock Roarer', 'Powerful Roarer' and 'Mud Roarer', since giants were loud and mighty creatures who lived in mountains and the earth. Additionally, word-play may be entertained. *SnEGylf* (7, p. 11) quotes this stanza but gives it a different context and interpretation (see also *SnEUpp* 10, p. 18). According to this account, Ymir was slain by the sons of Borr, and the blood from his wounds drowned the frost-giants—all except Bergelmir and his household, from which the families of frost-giants descend. Bergelmir saved himself from drowning by going up on to his *lúðr*. Here Snorri seems to interpret *lúðr* as a sea-going vessel—an 'ark' even, as his account appears influenced by Christian traditions of Noah's Ark and apocryphal ideas about the survival of giants after the Flood. However, Snorri's placing of the *lúðr* in an aquatic context may also reflect native tradition, since the magical mill Grotti ended up in the sea in *SnESkáld* (I, 43, p. 52); a stanza in *SnESkáld* (I, 25, p. 38) calls the sea an *eylúðr* 'island-box-mill'; and *lúðr* most probably denotes a whirlpool in *Gg.* 11 and *Fj.* 30.

66 *SnEGylf* (18, p. 20) adds that *Hræsvelgr* 'Corpse Swallower' sits *á norðanverðum himins enda* 'at the northern end of the sky'. Cf. Hymir's abode in *Hym.* 5.

67 This stanza is paraphrased and quoted in *SnEGylf* (18, p. 20), *SnEUpp* (25, p. 60). The name *Hræsvelgr* elsewhere appears only in versified lists of the names of giants and eagles (*SPSMA* III, 709, 950).

68 One of the Vanir gods. He is the father of Freyr and Freyja. *SnEGylf* (23, p. 23) says he rules the wind's movement.

- 69 This line lacks alliteration and may therefore be corrupt. One way to supply it would be to emend to *hvaðan Njörðr um kom með niðjum Ása* ‘whence Njörðr came among the kinsmen of the Æsir’.
- 70 This line may have been interpolated. The next is also suspect.
- 71 ‘Home of the Vanir’. The idea that Njörðr was created by ‘wise powers’ is otherwise unknown.
- 72 According to chapter 4 of *Ynglinga saga* and *SnEGylf* (23, p. 23), the Vanir gave Njörðr to the Æsir as a pledge of faith in settlement of their war; in exchange, the Æsir gave Hœnir to the Vanir. Cf. *Vsp.* 24, *SnESkald* (I, G57, p. 3).
- 73 This idea is found only here, but compare the post-Ragnarok world of *Vsp.* 58–64, in which innocent gods—including Hœnir, Njörðr’s hostage counterpart—return to live happily.
- 74 Or ‘home meadows’, ‘abodes’, ‘courtyards’.
- 75 This stanza appears fragmentary. Late, paper manuscripts have the following stanza: *Segðu þat it ellipta, allz þú tíva rök / öll, Vafprúðnir, vitir: / hvat einherjar vinna Herjafðrs at, / unz rjúfask regin* ‘Say this as the eleventh thing, Vafprúðnir, since you may know all the fates of the gods: what work the unique champions of Herjafðr [‘Father of Hosts’, i.e., Óðinn] do until the powers are ripped apart’.
- 76 This may mean that they kill each other, before being resurrected. Elsewhere in Norse myth, valkyries choose the slain by taking fallen warriors, whom Óðinn has selected, to his hall to join the unique champions.
- 77 This stanza is quoted in *SnEGylf* (41, p. 34), *SnEUpp* (25, p. 58). The *einherjar* ‘unique/only champions’ are fallen male warriors who, having been chosen by Óðinn, are (elsewhere at least) brought to his hall by valkyries, so they may fight beside him at Ragnarok.
- 78 Or ‘why you’.
- 79 Here *rúnar* apparently means ‘secrets’ or ‘mysteries’, rather than ‘runes’.
- 80 Literally, ‘you say the most truthful (thing)’.
- 81 ‘Dark/Mist Hel’. Cf. *Vsp.* 2.
- 82 An obscure line. Perhaps *Hel* (or *hel*) here denotes not the underworld land of the dead or its presiding lady, but ‘death’. Cf. *SnEGylf* (3, p. 9), according to which Niflhel is the ninth world, to which wicked people are condemned to descend.
- 83 ‘Mighty Winter’, the terrible winter that precedes Ragnarok.
- 84 Cf. *Vsp.* 40, 44, *SnEGylf* (51, p. 49).
- 85 ‘Life’ and ‘Life Impetuousness(?)’, characters unknown outside this stanza (but cf. *Fj.* 38); for variants see the textual apparatus. The neut. pronoun *þau* suggests that one is fem. and one masc.
- 86 With *Hoddmímir* ‘Hoard Mímir’ and his wood, compare *Mímameiðr* (or *Mímameiðr*) ‘Mimi’s/Mími’s Tree’, a likely manifestation of the world-tree, in *Fj.*
- 87 Cf. *Vm.* 14, *Vsp.* 19 and the Biblical manna.
- 88 It seems likely that Líf and Lífprásir will survive Ragnarok and repopulate the world. A version of this stanza is quoted in *SnEGylf* (53, p. 54); the variant in *SnEUpp* (31, p. 84) says *leynast meyjar í Mímis holdi* ‘maidens hide themselves in Mímir’s flesh’, *morgin doggva* ‘bedew the morning’ and *þar um aldr alast* ‘will be nourished there forever’.
- 89 The sun is apparently again personified, as in *Vm.* 22–23.

- 90 Or 'overtaken this one [i.e., this sun]', implicitly in a solar eclipse. Variants of the wolf Fenrir's swallowing of the sun survive in *Vsp.* 39–40 (probably), *Grm.* 39 and *SnEGylf* (12, p. 14), and on the tenth-century Gosforth Cross from Cumbria, England. Additionally, a fragment of a Viking Age stone cross from Ovingham, Northumbria, England might show a wolf being restrained from swallowing the sun.
- 91 'Elf Disc', a name for the sun; cf. *Fsk.* 4.
- 92 This stanza is quoted in *SnEGylf* (53, p. 54); *SnEUpp* (31, p. 84) has a metrically deficient second half, *sú mun renna eða ríða, / reginbrautir mæR* 'that maiden will run or ride divine/mighty-ways'. The daughter is unnamed.
- 93 An obscure reference, perhaps to personified waves. Alternatively, compare the *marlíðendr* 'sea-travelling spirits' mentioned in chapter 16 of *Eyrbyggja saga*; also perhaps *BDr.* 12.
- 94 Or 'Three of the host (*þjóðar*) of maidens fall over (= come upon?) the village(s)/fields of Møgþrasir'. Alternatively, again, 'Three of the maidens of Møgþrasir come upon the village(s) of people (*þjóðar*)'. *Møgþrasir* 'Persistent Son(?)' is otherwise unknown (is he a child of st. 45's *Lifþrasir*?), but perhaps his 'village' is the new, reinhabited world. The whole stanza is obscure.
- 95 Or 'only guardian-spirits are in their world'. Either way, the sense is obscure.
- 96 I.e., the 'three' females. Perhaps compare *Vsp.* 8.
- 97 Or 'gods'.
- 98 An apocalyptic fire, probably of Christian origin, but presumably associated at some stage with the Norse fire-giant Surtr; cf. *Vsp.* 51–52, 55 and *SnEGylf* (4, p. 9; 51, pp. 50–53). Alternatively, instead of *surtalogi*, read *Surta logi* or *Surtalogi* 'Surti's flame', **Surti* being a grammatically weak form of *Surtr*. *SnEUpp* (16, p. 34; 31, p. 84) has *svartalogi* 'black flame'.
- 99 Instead of *sloknar* 'goes out, dies', manuscripts of *SnEGylf* have *sortnar* 'turns black'.
- 100 *Móði* 'Angry One' (*Megi* in one manuscript of *SnEGylf*) and *Magni* 'Strong One' are Þórr's sons.
- 101 'Miller/Crusher', Þórr's hammer.
- 102 The idea may be that *Móði* and *Magni* will use the hammer's regenerative power to help create a new world after Ragnarok. Alternatively, translate 'Móði and Magni will have *Mjöllnir* and fight [their enemies] at the end of the war', thereby bringing Ragnarok to a close. But *Vingnis*, the reading of **A** and manuscripts of *SnEGylf*, is probably superior to **R**'s *ok vinna* 'and work/fight'; it yields the sense 'Móði and Magni will have *Vingnir*'s *Mjöllnir* at the war's end', *Vingnir*, which may mean 'Swinger', being a name of Þórr (on this name, see also note to *Vm.* 53). *SnEGylf* (53, p. 54) quotes this stanza; *SnEUpp* (31, p. 84) has a different, probably corrupt final line, *Vignigs synir at vígroði* 'Vignig's(?) sons in the battle-redness'.
- 103 Óðinn. Fenrir's devouring of Óðinn is also described in *Ls.* 58 and *SnEGylf* (51, pp. 50–52), and it lies behind *Vsp.* 52–53. Additionally, it is depicted on a fragment of a tenth-century cross from Kirk Andreas, Isle of Man; arguably on the Ledberg Stone from Östergötland, Sweden; also possibly on the west face of the Gosforth Cross and on the Skipwith Stone from North Yorkshire, England.
- 104 For this line to alliterate, an East Norse or pre-literary West Norse form of the verb *reka* is required, namely **vreka*, to which the word is emended in this edition; cf. *Háv.* 32.
- 105 Cf. *Vsp.* **R** 53, **H** 47, *SnEGylf* (51, pp. 50–52); it is presumably Víðarr, Óðinn's son, who is shown stretching the jaws of a wolf-headed serpent on the east side of the Gosforth Cross.

A's reading, *vitnis* 'of the wolf', which is adopted here, appears superior to R's *vingnis* 'of Vingnir'. The name *Vingnir* is attested as the name of a giant, of Þórr and of Óðinn; here it probably results from textual corruption (see note to *Vm.* 51).

- 106 I.e., Baldr's pyre, perhaps to light it; in Icelandic tradition, Baldr was shot dead by his blind brother Hǫðr at Loki's instigation; see *Vsp.* 31–33, *BDr.* and *SnEGylf* (49, pp. 45–46). Óðinn asks essentially the same unfair question in chapter 9 of *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks*.
- 107 I.e., Baldr's ear.
- 108 Note that, in *Vm.*, a very long time has passed since Baldr's funeral, and that his death is therefore temporally distanced from Ragnarok.
- 109 The giant's '(rune)-staves' are words of wisdom (cf. *Alv.* 35).
- 110 Literally, '(male) beings'.