



THE POETIC EDDA

A Dual-Language Edition

EDWARD PETTIT



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Lokasenna

Lokasenna (*Ls.*) ‘Loki’s Flyting’ is Old Norse literature’s longest and most famous instance of a genre of antagonistic verse exemplified earlier in *R* by *Hrbl.*, an altogether rougher work. As a flyting, *Ls.* is especially distinguished in scope and ambition by the sheer number of personages—gods and goddesses—pierced by Loki’s verbal barbs and by the range of its mythic references. *Ls.* is also the principal showcase for Loki’s swiftness and causticity of thought and utterance. That such a trait was more widely recognized is indicated by the conclusion of a myth, recorded in *SnESkáld* (I, 35, p. 43), in which two dwarves attempt to sew Loki’s lips together but succeed merely in tearing off the edges of his mouth, a result probably shown earlier on a carving on a Viking Age stone found near Snaptun in Denmark.¹ It also explains Loki’s (contextually irrelevant) question about the fate of those who ‘wound each other with words’ in *Rm.* 3.

Ls. survives only in *R* (fol. 15r–17r) and later, paper manuscripts, though there are related passages in *SnEGylf* and *SnESkáld* (see notes to the prose and st. 29). Additionally, Snorri probably alludes to *Ls.* when describing Loki as *rægjanda ok vélandi goðanna* ‘the accuser and tricker of the gods’ and *þrætudólgr Heimdalar ok Skaða* ‘the disputatious opponent of Heimdallr and Skaði’ (*SnESkáld*, I, 16, p. 20).

Ls.’s date of composition is uncertain, though it clearly existed by c. 1225, the date of Snorri’s work. We cannot even say confidently whether it originated in heathen times or Christian (or during the transition period), as its scurrilous presentation of the Norse gods has been variously explained as tragicomedy within a strong heathen faith, disillusionment in the twilight years of paganism, Christian determination to discredit the old religion, and playful thirteenth-century antiquarianism.

It is also unclear whether similarities of wording with other Eddic poems are indications of borrowing or the shared use of oral formulas, the two most striking correspondences being with *FSk.* and *Hrbl.*:

1 The stone is described and illustrated in H. J. Madsen, ‘Loke fra Snaptun/The god Loki from Snaptun’, in P. Kjørsum and R. A. Olsen, ed., *Oldtidens Ansigt/Faces of the Past* (Copenhagen: Kongelige Nordiske oldskriftselskab, 1980), pp. 180–81. See also K. J. Wanner, ‘Sewn Lips, Propped Jaws, and a Silent Áss (or Two): Doing Things with Mouths in Norse Myth’, *JEGP* 111 (2012), 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.5406/jenglgermphil.111.1.0001>; S. Grundy, *God in Flames, God in Fetters: Loki’s Role in the Northern Religions* (New Haven, CT: Troth Publications, 2015), pp. 36–39.

<i>Ls.</i> 53/1–3:	Heill ver þú nú, Loki, ok tak við hrímkáلكi, fullum forns mjaðar.
<i>FSk.</i> 37/1–3:	Heill verðu nú heldr, sveinn, ok tak við hrímkáلكi fullum forns mjaðar.
<i>Ls.</i> 60/4–6:	sízt í hanzka þumlungi hnúkðir þú, einheri, ok þóttiska þú þá Þórr vera.
<i>Hrbl.</i> 26/3–5:	af hrœzlu ok hugbleyði þér var í hanzka troðit, ok þóttiska þú þá Þórr vera.

In either case, the poems may be drawing on a common source. The ironic twists that *Ls.* may well give to traditional myths makes it inherently more likely to be a borrower than a lender, and, if so, the possibility that it is a late work increases, though not necessarily by much.

The compositional date (or dates) of the prose prologue and epilogue are just as uncertain. We can, however, be fairly confident that a passage (probably in prose) resembling the prologue was known to Snorri, most likely in association with the poem, by *c.* 1225, since *SnESkáld* (I, 33, pp. 40–41) gives an account of the circumstances of Loki’s argument with the gods that contains several verbal similarities. In translation it reads (with similarities of wording to *Ls.* bracketed):

Why is gold called ‘Ægir’s fire’? There is this story about it, that Ægir—as was said before—went as a guest to Ásgarðr, and when he was ready for the journey home, he invited Óðinn and all the Æsir to visit him after a space of three months. On that journey were first Óðinn and Njörðr, Freyr, Týr, Bragi, Víðarr, Loki; and also the Ásynjur Frigg, Freyja, Gefjun, Skaði, Íðunn, Sif. Þórr was not there. He had gone on the eastern road to kill trolls [*Þórr var eigi þar. Hann var farinn í austrveg at drepa tröll*]. And when the gods had sat themselves in their seats, then Ægir had shining gold [*lýsigull*] brought inside onto the hall-floor, which illuminated and lit up the hall like fire, and it was used instead of lights [*ok þat var þar haft fyrir ljós*] at his feast, just as in Valhöll the swords took the place of fire. Then Loki wrangled [*sentí*] with all the gods there and killed Ægir’s slave, who was called Fimafengr. Another slave of his is called Eldir ... At the feast everything served itself, both food and ale and all the utensils that were needed for the feast.

How much earlier the prologue existed, we cannot say. But it is likely that its account of Loki’s murder of Fimafengr, which is not mentioned in the poem, means that ‘this whole prose piece is based on some older text, except only the obvious borrowings from *Lokasenna*’.² For its part, the epilogue appears to be drawn, ultimately at least, from a lost prose source also known to Snorri, though opinions differ about this. Again, we cannot determine its date.

The metre of *Ls.* is *ljóðaháttir*, apart from four instances of the expanded form, *galdratalag* (13, 54, 62 and 65), all spoken by Loki. These exceptions perhaps lend his words a magical potency.

2 A. G. van Hamel, ‘The Prose-Frame of Lokasenna’, *Neophilologist* 14 (1929), 204–14 at 205.

Ls.'s position between *Hym.* and *Þrk.* in **R** suggests that it was thought of as a Þórr-poem. And although *Ls.* is obviously Loki's tour de force, not Þórr's, it sits quite neatly there. For one thing, it apparently follows on logically from the events of *Hym.* For another, it provides an amusing prelude and contrast of mood to the light-hearted farce of *Þrk.* It also establishes a theme of sexual transgression that foreshadows Loki's appearance as a woman and Freyja's reputed licentiousness, and shows the vital importance of Þórr's hammer.

But, for all its pungent comedy, *Ls.* is fundamentally different from its neighbours in the 'Þórr-group' in its underlying seriousness. For, unlike them, it appears to be an eschatological poem, set just before Ragnarok. That this point emerges only gradually makes it all the more telling. It pervades the poem as a tragic undertow, coming to the surface only intermittently: it informs Óðinn's decision to command Víðarr to give up his seat to Loki (10); it returns in the reference to Baldr's absence (death) and Loki's role in the thwarting of his resurrection (27–28); it is explicit in stt. 39, 41–42; it is the reason for Heimdallr's eternal wakefulness in st. 48; it is referred to in st. 58 (perhaps in st. 65, too); and finally it makes its presence felt in the prose epilogue.

Synopsis

Prose: A prologue sets the scene. Many of the gods—but not Þórr, who is away killing trolls—have gathered for a feast held by the giant Ægir, who now has the huge cauldron that once belonged to Hymir. The feast is held in a hall that was a place of sanctuary.

Loki, enraged at the gods' praise for Ægir's servants, kills the one called Fimafengr. The gods shout at Loki and chase him away to the woods, before returning to their drink. But Loki turns back and greets Eldir, Ægir's surviving manservant.

Verse: The poem begins with a tense exchange of words between Loki and Eldir outside the hall. During this, Loki reveals his intention to join the feast and bring discord to the gods, despite Eldir's warnings that he is unwelcome (1–5).

Loki enters the hall and everyone inside falls silent. He introduces himself, requests hospitality (6), and rebukes them for their silence (7). Bragi, the poet-god whose duty it may be to greet visitors, is first to reply: he refuses Loki a seat on behalf of the gods (8). Loki ignores Bragi and instead addresses Óðinn, the lord of the gods, reminding him of their blood-brotherhood and of his oath never to drink ale unless it were served to them both (9). His hand forced, Óðinn commands his son Víðarr to give up his place (10).

Having joined the feast, Loki proposes a toast to all the gods—except Bragi, whose insult he now has the chance to repay (11). In reply, Bragi offers Loki compensatory gifts, if he will refrain from angering the gods (12). Loki responds with the first accusation of a formal flyting—that is, a series of one-on-one verbal duels:

Loki vs. Bragi (11–15): Loki, having spurned the offer, says Bragi will always lack treasure, since he is a coward in war; Bragi asserts that he would behead Loki if they were outside. Loki likens him to an ornament and challenges him to battle.

Intervention by Iðunn, Bragi's wife (16): She urges her husband not to insult Loki.

Loki vs. Iðunn (17–18): He accuses her of nymphomania and of sleeping with her brother's killer.

Intervention by Gefjun (19): She tries to defuse the situation by claiming that Loki is merely joking.

Loki vs. Gefjun (20): He accuses her of having been seduced by the 'white boy' (probably Heimdallr) who gave her a piece of jewellery (probably the Brísingamen).

Intervention by Óðinn (21): He calls Loki mad to anger Gefjun, since she knows the world's fate.

Loki vs. Óðinn (22–24): Loki accuses Óðinn of awarding victories unfairly; he, in turn, accuses Loki of sexual perversion in having been a milch-cow (or milkmaid) and a woman for eight years underground and in having given birth to children. Loki retorts that Óðinn was a seeress and a wandering wizard among men, which was again the sign of a pervert.

Intervention by Frigg, Óðinn's wife (25): She urges the two not to rake up past events.

Loki vs. Frigg (26–28): He accuses her of nymphomania and of having slept with Óðinn's brothers, Véi and Vili; she asserts that he would not escape if Baldr were there; he claims he is the reason she will never see Baldr again.

Intervention by Freyja (29): She calls Loki mad to speak like that, when Frigg knows all fates.

Loki vs. Freyja (30–32): He accuses her of having slept with all the assembled gods and elves; she denies this and says his tongue will hurt him one day; he reveals that the gods caught her having sex with her brother (Freyr).

Intervention by Njǫrðr (33): He declares it a small matter if a woman has several male partners, but an outrage that a male god who has given birth should be at the feast.

Loki vs. Njǫrðr (34–36): Loki recalls that Njǫrðr was sent as a hostage to the gods and that the daughters of the giant Hymir pissed in his mouth. Njǫrðr does not deny this, but takes comfort in his son (Freyr), who is loved by all; Loki discloses that the child's mother was Njǫrðr's sister.

Intervention by Týr (37): He praises Freyr's virtues.

Loki vs. Týr (37–40): Loki taunts Týr with the accusation that he can never make a fair peace between men, and that Fenrir bit off his right hand. Týr reminds him that Loki is also missing something: Hróðrsvitnir (Fenrir), who lies bound until Ragnarok. Loki retorts that he fathered a son on Týr's wife, and that Týr has received nothing in compensation.

Loki vs. Freyr (41–42): Freyr speaks up. He too refers to Fenrir's bondage, and warns Loki to keep quiet unless he wants to be bound next to him. Loki says Freyr bought Gymir's daughter (the giantess Gerðr) and gave away his sword, and so will be powerless when Muspell's sons ride against the gods at Ragnarok.

Loki vs. Byggvir (43–46): Freyr’s servant Byggvir, a barley-spirit, says that if his lineage were as noble as Freyr’s, he would grind Loki like grain and tear him apart. Loki mocks him, apparently by likening him to a small twittering bird by a millstone. In reply, Byggvir takes pride in his contribution to the feast’s ale. Loki criticizes Byggvir’s ability to share out food and brands him a cowardly absentee whenever fights break out.

Loki vs. Heimdallr (47–48): Heimdallr upbraids Loki for drunkenness and reminds him of the power of alcohol over those inclined to talk too much. Loki’s comeback is to highlight Heimdallr’s unenviable lot in having to stay continually on watch with a muddy (or aching) back.

Loki vs. Skaði (49–52): The giantess Skaði warns that Loki’s fun will not last long, as the gods will bind him on a cliff-edge(?) with the guts of his son. Loki replies that he was foremost at the killing of her father, Þjazi—a claim that gets a frosty reply. Loki ends their exchange with an assertion that Skaði spoke more sweetly when she invited him to her bed.

Loki vs. Sif (53–54): Sif gives Loki a mead-cup in a vain bid to stop him attacking her character. He drinks the mead, but accuses her of being anything but cold towards men, and of having betrayed her husband, Þórr, with him.

Loki vs. Beyla, Byggvir’s wife (55–56): She hears Þórr returning and asserts that he will silence Loki. In reply, Loki calls her a shitty dairymaid.

Þórr arrives.

Loki vs. Þórr (57–64): Þórr threatens to behead Loki with his hammer. Loki asks him why he is so angry and claims Þórr will not be daring when he has to fight Fenrir after Óðinn’s death. Þórr threatens to throw him eastwards. Loki accuses Þórr of having cowered in the glove of a giant when in the east. Þórr threatens to crush Loki with his hammer. Loki retorts that Þórr could not even manage to get at the food in the giant Skrymir’s bag. Þórr threatens to send Loki to Hel with his hammer. Loki says he will leave, because he knows Þórr will strike.

Loki’s final words are a curse on Ægir and his possessions, one that perhaps anticipates the fires of Ragnarok (65).

Prose: An epilogue tells how Loki then took the form of a salmon and hid in a waterfall. But the gods caught him and bound him with the intestines of his son Nari (another son, Narfi, had turned into a wolf). Skaði suspended a snake above Loki’s face, and Sigyn, his wife, sat by him catching the dripping venom in a basin. But when she went to empty it, the poison fell on to Loki, making him writhe and cause earthquakes.

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Frá Ægi ok Goðum

Ægir, er ǫðru nafni hét Gymir, hann hafði búið Ásum ǫl, þá er hann hafði fengit ketil inn mikla, sem nú er sagt.

Til þeirrar veizlu kom Óðinn ok Frigg, kona hans. Þórr kom eigi, þvíat hann var í austrvegi. Sif var þar, kona Þórs, Bragi ok Iðunn, kona hans. Týr var þar. Hann var einhendr: Fenrisúlfr sleit hönd af honum, þá er hann var bundinn. Þar var Njörðr ok kona hans, Skaði, Freyr ok Freyja, Víðarr, son Óðins. Loki var þar, ok þjónustumenn Freys, Byggvir ok Beyla. Mart var þar Ása ok álfa.

Ægir átti tvá þjónustumenn, Fimafengr ok Eldir. Þar var lýsigull haft fyrir eldsljós. Sjálft barsk þar ǫl. Þar var gríðastaðr mikill. Menn lofuðu mjök, hversu góðir þjónustumenn Ægis váru. Loki mátti eigi heyra þat, ok drap hann Fimafeng.

Þá skóku Æsir skjöldu sína ok æpðu at Loka, ok eltu hann braut til skógar, en þeir fóru at drekka. Loki hvarf aprt ok hitti úti Eldi.

Loki kvaddi hann:

Lokasenna

1. 'Segðu þat, Eldir, svá at þú einugi
feti gangir framarr:
hvat hér inni hafa at ǫlmálum
sigtíva synir?'

Eldir kvað:

2. 'Of vápn sín dæma ok um vígrisni sína
sigtíva synir;
Ása ok álfa er hér inni eru,
mangi er þér í orði vinr!'

Loki kvað:

3. 'Inn skal ganga Ægis hallir í
á þat sumbl at sjá;
jöll ok áfu færi ek Ása sonum,
ok blend ek þeim svá meini mjǫð!'

Eldir kvað:

4. 'Veiztu, ef þú inn gengr Ægis hallir í,
á þat sumbl at sjá,
hrópi ok rógi ef þú eyss á holl regin,
á þér munu þau þerra þat!'

Loki kvað:

5. 'Veiztu þat, Eldir, ef vit einir skulum
sáryrðum sakask,
auðigr verða mun ek í andsvörum,
ef þú mælir til mart!'

About Ægir and the Gods¹

Ægir,² who by another name was called Gyimir,³ had brewed ale for the Æsir,⁴ after he had received the great cauldron, as has now been said.⁵

To that feast came Óðinn and Frigg, his wife. Þórr did not come, because he was on the east-way.⁶ Sif, Þórr's wife, was there, and Bragi and Iðunn, his wife.⁷ Týr was there. He was one-handed: Fenrisúlfr⁸ bit off his hand when he was bound.⁹ Njǫrðr was there, as was his wife, Skaði,¹⁰ Freyr and Freyja, [and] Víðarr, Óðinn's son. Loki was there, and Freyr's servants, Byggvir and Beyla.¹¹ Many of the Æsir and elves were there.¹²

Ægir had two serving-men, Fimafengr and Eldir.¹³ Shining gold was used there instead of firelight.¹⁴ Ale served itself there.¹⁵ It was a great place of sanctuary.¹⁶ People were full of praise for how good Ægir's serving-men were. Loki could not bear to hear that, and he slew Fimafengr.¹⁷

Then the Æsir shook their shields and screamed at Loki, and chased him away to the forest, and they went to drink. Loki turned back and met Eldir outside.

Loki greeted him:

Loki's Flyting

1. 'Tell [me] this,¹⁸ Eldir, before you take
another step forward:
what do the sons of the victory-gods¹⁹
have as their ale-talk inside here?'

Eldir said:

2. 'The sons of the victory-gods converse about their weapons
and their battle-prowess;²⁰
of the Æsir and elves who are in here,
not one is a friend to you in words!²¹

Loki said:

3. 'I shall go inside, into Ægir's halls
to gaze upon that feast;
discord and dissension²² I'll bring to the sons of the Æsir,
and thus I'll mix their mead with harm!²³

Eldir said:

4. 'Know [this, that] if you go inside, into Ægir's halls
to gaze upon that feast,
if you pour slander and scorn on the gracious powers,
they'll wipe it off on you!'

Loki said:

5. 'Know this, Eldir, if we two alone
shall argue with wounding words,
I shall be rich in answers,
if you talk too much!'

Síðan gekk Loki inn í hollina. En er þeir sá, er fyrir váru, hverr inn var kominn, þögnuðu þeir allir.

Loki kvað:

6. 'Þyrstr ek kom þessar hallar til,
Lopt, um langan veg,
Ásu at biðja at mér einn gefi
mæran drykk mjaðar.

7. 'Hví þegið ér svá, þrungin goð,
at þér mæla né meguð?
Sessa ok staði velið mér sumbli at,
eða heitið mik heðan!

Bragi kvað:

8. 'Sessa ok staði velja þér sumbli at
Æsir aldregi,
þvíat Æsir vitu hveim þeir alda skulu
gambansumbl um geta!

Loki kvað:

9. 'Mantu þat, Óðinn, er vit í árdaga
blendum blóði saman?
Qlvi bergja léztu eigi mundu,
nema okkr væri báðum borit!

Óðinn kvað:

10. 'Rístu þá, Víðarr, ok lát úlfs fǫður
sitja sumbli at,
síðr oss Loki kveði lastastofum
Ægis hǫllu í!

Þá stóð Víðarr upp ok skenkti Loka. En áðr hann drykki, kvaddi hann Ásuna:

11. 'Heilir Æsir, heilar Ásynjur
ok ǫll ginnheilug goð,
nema sá einn Áss er innar sitr,
Bragi, bekkjum á!

Bragi kvað:

12. 'Mar ok mæki gef ek þér míns fjár,
ok boetir þér svá baugi Bragi,
síðr þú Ásum ǫfund um gjaldir;
gremðu eigi goð at þér!

Then Loki went into the hall. And when those who were there saw who had come in, they all fell silent.

Loki said:

6. 'Thirsty, I came to this hall,
Loptr,²⁴ from a long way off,
to ask the Æsir to give me
one magnificent drink of mead.

7. 'Why are you so silent, puffed-up²⁵ gods,
that you cannot speak?
Select a seat and a place for me at the feast,
or order me out of here!'

Bragi said:²⁶

8. 'A seat and a place at the feast
the Æsir will never select for you,
because the Æsir know the type of people they should
provide a tribute(?) -feast²⁷ for!'

Loki said:

9. 'Do you recall it, Óðinn, when in ancient days
we two blended blood together?²⁸
You said you wouldn't taste ale,
unless it were brought to us both!'

Óðinn said:

10. 'Arise, then, Víðarr, and let the wolf's father²⁹
sit at the feast,
lest Loki address us with insulting words³⁰
in Ægir's hall!'³¹

Then Víðarr stood up and poured for Loki. But before he³² drank, he toasted the Æsir:

11. 'Hail Æsir, hail Ásynjur³³
and all the most holy gods,
except for that one Áss³⁴ who sits further in,
Bragi, on the benches!'³⁵

Bragi said:

12. 'I shall give you a steed and a sword from my treasure,
and Bragi will also recompense you with a ring,³⁶
lest you requite the Æsir with ill-will,³⁷
don't make the gods angry at you!'

13. *Loki kvað:*
 'Jós ok armbauga mundu æ vera
 beggja vanr, Bragi;
 Ása ok álfa er hér inni eru,
 þú ert við víg varastr
 ok skjarrastr við skot!'
14. *Bragi kvað:*
 'Veit ek, ef fyr útan værak, svá sem fyr innan emk
 Ægis holl um kominn,
 höfuð þitt bæra ek í hendi mér;
 lítt er þér þat fyr lygi!'
15. *Loki kvað:*
 'Snjallr ertu í sessi, skalattu svá gøra,
 Bragi bekkskrautuðr;
 vega þú gakk ef þú vreiðr sér —
 hyggsk vætr hvatr fyrir!'
16. *Iðunn kvað:*
 'Bið ek, Bragi — barna sífjar duga
 ok allra óskmaga —
 at þú Loka kveðira lastastofum
 Ægis hollu í!'
17. *Loki kvað:*
 'Þegiðu, Iðunn! Þik kveð ek allra kvenna
 vergjarnasta vera,
 síztu arma þína lagðir ítrþvegna
 um þinn bróðurbana!'
18. *Iðunn kvað:*
 'Loka ek kveðka lastastofum
 Ægis hollu í;
 Braga ek kyrrri bjórreifan,
 vilkat ek, at it vreiðir vegisk!'
19. *Gefjun kvað:*
 'Hví it Æsir tveir skuluð inni hér
 sáryrðum sakask?
 Lopzki þat veit, at hann leikinn er
 ok hann fjörg öll frjá?'
20. *Loki kvað:*
 'Þegi þú, Gefjun! Þess mun ek nú geta
 er þik glapði at geði,
 sveinn inn hvíti er þér sigli gaf,
 ok þú lagðir lær yfir!'

- Loki said:
13. 'Of horse and arm-rings you'll
always be in want, Bragi;
of the Æsir and elves who are in here
you're the wariest of war
and the shyest of shots!³⁸
- Bragi said:
14. 'I know, if I were outside,³⁹ as surely as I've come
inside Ægir's hall,⁴⁰
your head I'd bear in my hand;
that's little for you [to pay] for lying!⁴¹
- Loki said:
15. 'You're bold in your seat, [but] you shan't act thus,
Bragi Bench-Ornament;
you come and do battle if you're irate⁴² —
a brave man balks at nothing!⁴³
- Iðunn said:
16. 'I ask, Bragi — the ties of blood-children
and of all adopted sons are strong —
that you don't address Loki with insulting staves⁴⁴
in Ægir's hall!⁴⁵
- Loki said:
17. 'Silence, Iðunn! I say that of all women
you're the most man-eager,⁴⁶
since you laid your splendidly washed arms
around your brother's slayer!⁴⁷
- Iðunn said:
18. 'I shan't address Loki with insulting staves
in Ægir's hall;
I'll calm Bragi, [who's] high on beer,
I don't want you two wrathful ones to fight!⁴⁸
- Gefjun said:⁴⁹
19. 'Why must you two Æsir⁵⁰ argue inside here
with wounding words?
Isn't it well known that Loptr has a playful nature⁵¹
and that all the living⁵² love him?⁵³
- Loki said:
20. 'Silence, Gefjun! Now I'll speak of the one
who lured you into lust,⁵⁴
the white boy who gave you a pendant,⁵⁵
and [whom] you put your thigh over!⁵⁶

21. *Óðinn kvað:*
 ‘Ærr ertu, Loki, ok ørviti,
 er þú fær þér Gefjun at gremi,
 þvíat aldar ørlög hygg ek at hon ǫll um viti
 jafngørla sem ek!’
22. *Loki kvað:*
 ‘Þegi þú, Óðinn! Þú kunnir aldregi
 deila víg með verum;
 opt þú gaft þeim er þú gefa skyldira,
 inum slævurum, sigr!’
23. *Óðinn kvað:*
 ‘Veiztu, ef ek gaf, þeim er ek gefa né skylda,
 inum slævurum, sigr,
 átta vetr vartu fyr jørð neðan
 kýr mólkandi ok kona,
 ok hefir þú þar *börn* borit,
 ok hugða ek þat args aðal!’
24. *Loki kvað:*
 ‘En þik síga kóðu Sámsøyju í,
 ok draptu á vétt sem vǫlur;
 vitka líki fórtu verþjóð yfir,
 ok hugða ek þat args aðal!’
25. *Frigg kvað:*
 ‘Ørlögum ykkrum skylið aldregi
 segja seggjum frá,
 hvat it Æsir tveir drýgðuð í árdaga;
 firrisk æ forn røk firar!’
26. *Loki kvað:*
 ‘Þegi þú, Frigg! Þú ert Fjörgyns mær
 ok hefir æ vergjörn verit,
 er þá Véa ok Vilja léztu þér, Viðris kvæn,
 báða í baðm um tekit!’
27. *Frigg kvað:*
 ‘Veiztu, ef ek inni ættak, Ægis hǫllum í
 Baldri líkan bur,
 út þú né kvæmir frá Ása sonum,
 ok væri þá at þér vreiðum vegit!’

- Óðinn said:
21. 'You're mad, Loki, and out of your mind,⁵⁷
when you rouse Gefjun to anger against you,⁵⁸
because I think she knows all the world's fate
just as well as I!⁵⁹
- Loki said:
22. 'Silence, Óðinn! You never knew how
to share out battles among men;
often you gave to those you shouldn't have given,
to the less valiant, victory!⁶⁰
- Óðinn said:
23. 'Know [this, that] if I gave to those I shouldn't have given,
to the less valiant, victory,
you were eight winters beneath the earth
[as] a milch-cow and a woman,⁶¹
and you've given birth to children there,⁶²
and I considered that the essence of a pervert!⁶³
- Loki said:
24. 'But you, they said, sank [down]⁶⁴ in Sámsey,⁶⁵
and struck a drum(?) as seeresses do,⁶⁶
in wizard's shape you went among⁶⁷ mankind,
and I considered that the essence of a pervert!⁶⁸
- Frigg said:
25. 'You two should never tell people⁶⁹
about your fates,⁷⁰
of what you two Æsir⁷¹ did in ancient days;
let the living always distance themselves from old destinies!⁷²
- Loki said:
26. 'Silence, Frigg! You're Fjörgynn's daughter,⁷³
and have always been man-eager,
since, Viðrir's⁷⁴ wife, you took both
Véi and Vili⁷⁵ in your embrace!'
- Frigg said:
27. 'Know [this, that] if I had inside, in Ægir's halls,
a boy like Baldr,⁷⁶
you wouldn't escape⁷⁷ from the sons of the Æsir,
and you'd then be fought by furious ones!⁷⁸

28. *Loki kvað:*
 ‘Enn vill þú, Frigg, at ek fleiri telja
 mína meistafi?
 Ek því réð, er þú ríða sérat
 síðan Baldr at solum!’
29. *Freyja kvað:*
 ‘Ærr ertu, Loki, er þú yðra telr
 ljóta leiðstafi;
 orlög Frigg hygg ek at öll viti,
 þótt hon sjálfgi segi!’
30. *Loki kvað:*
 ‘Þegi þú, Freyja! Þik kann ek fullgerva,
 era þér vamma vant;
 Ása ok álfa er hér inni eru,
 hverr hefir þinn hór verit!’
31. *Freyja kvað:*
 ‘Flá er þér tunga! Hygg ek at þér fremr myni
 ógott um gala;
 reiðir ru þér Æsir ok Ásynjur,
 hryggr muntu heim fara!’
32. *Loki kvað:*
 ‘Þegi þú, Freyja! Þú ert fordæða
 ok meini blandin mjök,
 síztik at brœðr þínum stóðu blíð regin,
 ok mundir þú þá, Freyja, frata!’
33. *Njörðr kvað:*
 ‘Þat er vältit, þótt sér varðir vers fái,
 hós eða hvárs;
 hitt er undr er Áss ragr er hér inn of kominn,
 ok hefir sá börn of borit!’
34. *Loki kvað:*
 ‘Þegi þú, Njörðr! Þú vart austr heðan
 gísl um sendr at goðum;
 Hymis meyjar hófðu þik at hlandtrogi
 ok þér í munn migu!’
35. *Njörðr kvað:*
 ‘Sú erumk líkn, er ek vark langt heðan
 gísl um sendr at goðum:
 þá ek móg gat, þann er mangi fjár,
 ok þikkir sá Ása jaðarr!’

28. Loki said:
‘Do you still wish, Frigg, that I speak more
of my wicked words?
I brought it about⁷⁹ that you’ll never again
see Baldr riding to halls!’
29. Freyja said:
‘You’re mad, Loki, when you speak your
hideous, loathsome words;⁸⁰
I think that Frigg knows all fates,
though she doesn’t say them herself!’⁸¹
30. Loki said:
‘Silence, Freyja! I know you full well,
you’re not short of vices;
of the Æsir and elves who are in here,
every one has been your lover!’⁸²
31. Freyja said:
‘Your tongue is false! I think it will yet
conjure up no good for you;
Æsir and Ásynjur are angry with you,
you’ll go home unhappy!’
32. Loki said:
‘Silence, Freyja! You’re a sorceress⁸³
and shot-through with sinister power,
for the kindly powers caught you with your brother,⁸⁴
and then, Freyja, you must have farted!’⁸⁵
33. Njǫrðr said:
‘It matters little, even if women get themselves
a husband, a lover or both,⁸⁶
it’s an outrage that a perverted Áss has come in here,
and this one’s borne children!’⁸⁷
34. Loki said:
‘Silence, Njǫrðr! You were sent east from here
as a hostage to the gods;⁸⁸
Hymir’s daughters had you as a piss-trough,⁸⁹
and peed in your mouth!’⁹⁰
35. Njǫrðr said:
‘This is my comfort, when I was sent far from here
as a hostage to the gods:
I fathered a son then, the one whom no one hates,
and he’s considered the Æsir’s protector!’⁹¹

36. Loki *kvað*:
 ‘Hættu nú, Njörðr, haf þú á hófi þik!
 Munka ek því leynd lengr:
 við systur þinni gæztu slíkan mög,
 ok era þó ónu verr!’
37. Týr *kvað*:
 ‘Freyr er beztr allra ballriða
 Ása gorrðum í;
 meyr hann né grætir, né manns konu,
 ok leysir ór höptum hvern!’
38. Loki *kvað*:
 ‘Þegi þú, Týr! Þú kunnir aldregi
 bera tilt með tveim;
 handar innar hægri mun ek hennar geta,
 er þér sleit Fenrir frá!’
39. Týr *kvað*:
 ‘Handar em ek vanr, en þú Hróðrsvitnis,
 þöl er beggja þrá;
 úlfgi hefir ok vel, er í þöndum skal
 biða ragna røkrs!’
40. Loki *kvað*:
 ‘Þegi þú, Týr! Þat varð þinni konu
 at hon átti mög við mér;
 öln né penning hafðir þú þess aldregi
 vanréttis, vesall!’
41. Freyr *kvað*:
 ‘Úlf sé ek liggja árósi fyrir,
 unz rjúfask regin;
 því mundu næst, nema þú nú þegir,
 bundinn, þölvasaki!’
42. Loki *kvað*:
 ‘Gulli keypta léztu Gymis dóttur,
 ok seldir þitt svá sverð;
 en er Muspells synir ríða Myrkvið yfir,
 veizta þú þá, vesall, hvé þú vegr!’
43. Byggvir *kvað*:
 ‘Veiztu, ef ek öðli ættak sem Ingunar-Freyr,
 ok svá sællíkt setr,
 mergi smæra mөлða ek þá meinkráku
 ok lemða alla í liðu!’

Loki said:

36. 'Leave off now, Njǫrðr, keep yourself in check!
I'll not keep this secret any longer:
you begot such a boy on your sister,⁹²
and yet that's no worse than expected!⁹³

Týr said:

37. 'Freyr is the best of all bold riders
in the Æsir's courts,⁹⁴
he doesn't make a girl weep, or a man's wife,
and he frees everyone from fetters!'

Loki said:

38. 'Silence, Týr! You never knew how to
make fair [peace] between two [parties],⁹⁵
I will refer to it, the right hand
which Fenrir tore from you!'

Týr said:

39. 'I'm wanting a hand, and you [are wanting] Hróðrsvitnir,⁹⁶
the affliction is intense pain for us both;
things don't go well for the wolf, either, who must wait
in bonds⁹⁷ for the darkness of the powers!⁹⁸

Loki said:

40. 'Silence, Týr! It befell your wife
that she had a boy by me,⁹⁹
you've never had an ell¹⁰⁰ or a penny
for this outrage, you wretch!

Freyr said:

41. 'I see a wolf¹⁰¹ lying by a river-mouth,¹⁰²
until the powers are ripped apart;
you'll be bound next, unless you keep quiet now,
mischief-maker!'

Loki said:

42. 'With gold you had Gyimir's daughter bought,
and so gave your sword,¹⁰³
but when Muspell's sons ride over¹⁰⁴ Myrkviðr,¹⁰⁵
then, wretch, you won't know how you'll fight!¹⁰⁶

Byggvir said:¹⁰⁷

43. 'Know [this, that] if I had ancestry like Ingunar-Freyr¹⁰⁸
and so felicitous a seat,¹⁰⁹
finer than marrow¹¹⁰ I'd have milled the harm-crow¹¹¹
and torn him limb from limb!¹¹²

44. *Loki kvað:*
 ‘Hvat er þat it litla er ek löggra sék
 ok snapvíst snapir?
 At eyrum Freys muntu æ vera,
 ok und kvernum klaka!’
45. *Byggvir kvað:*
 ‘Byggvir ek heiti, en mik bráðan kveða
 goð ǫll ok gumar;
 því em ek hér hróðugr, at drekka Hropts megir
 allir ǫl saman!’
46. *Loki kvað:*
 ‘Þegi þú, Byggvir! Þú kunnir aldregi
 deila með monnum mat;
 ok þik í flets strá finna né máttu,
 þá er vágu verar!’
47. *Heimdallr kvað:*
 ‘Ǫlr ertu, Loki, svá at þú ert ørviti,
 hví né lezkaðu, Loki?
 Þvíat ofdrykkja veldr alda hveim,
 er sína mælgí né manað!’
48. *Loki kvað:*
 ‘Þegi þú, Heimdallr! Þér var í árdaga
 it ljóta líf um lagit;
 aurgu baki þú munt æ vera,
 ok vaka vörðr goða!’
49. *Skaði kvað:*
 ‘Létt er þér, Loki, munattu lengi svá
 leika lausum hala,
 þvíat þik á hjörvi skulu ins hrímkalda magar
 gørnnum binda goð!’
50. *Loki kvað:*
 ‘Veiztu, ef mik á hjörvi skulu ins hrímkalda magar
 gørnnum binda goð;
 fyrstr ok øfstr var ek at fjørlagi,
 þars vér á Þjaza þrifum!’
51. *Skaði kvað:*
 ‘Veiztu, ef fyrstr ok øfstr vartu at fjørlagi,
 þá er ér á Þjaza þrifuð;
 frá mínum véum ok vøngum skulu
 þér æ kǫld ráð koma!’

- Loki said:
44. 'What's that little thing¹¹³ which I see wagging its tail¹¹⁴
and snappily snapping?¹¹⁵
At Freyr's ears you'll always be,
and under quern-stones chattering!¹¹⁶
- Byggvir said:
45. 'I'm called Byggvir,¹¹⁷ and all gods and men
declare me nimble;¹¹⁸
I'm proud of this here, that Hroptr's sons¹¹⁹
all drink ale together!¹²⁰
- Loki said:
46. 'Silence, Byggvir! You never knew how to
share out food among men,¹²¹
and they couldn't find you in the floor's¹²² straw
when men were fighting!¹²³
- Heimdallr said:
47. 'You're drunk, Loki, so that you've lost your wits,
why don't you control yourself, Loki?
Because, for every man, excess drinking ensures
that he doesn't recall his prattling!'
- Loki said:
48. 'Silence, Heimdallr! In early days
the loathsome life was allotted to you;
with a muddy back¹²⁴ you'll always be,
and stay awake as the gods' warder!¹²⁵
- Skaði said:
49. 'You're in a light mood, Loki, [but] you won't wag
your tail freely like this for long,¹²⁶
because the gods shall bind you on a cliff-edge(?)¹²⁷
with the guts of your frost-cold son!¹²⁸
- Loki said:
50. 'Know [this], if the gods shall bind me on a cliff-edge
with the guts of my frost-cold son;
I was first and last at the life-loss,¹²⁹
when we laid hands on Þjazi!¹³⁰
- Skaði said:
51. 'Know this, if first and last you were at the life-loss,
when you laid hands on Þjazi;
from my sanctuaries and fields
cold counsels shall always come to you!'

Loki kvað:

52. 'Léttari í málum vartu við Laufeyjar son,
þá er þú lézt mér á beð þinn boðit;
getit verðr oss slíks, ef vér gǫrva skulum
telja vǫmmin vár!'

Þá gekk *Sif* fram ok byrjaði Loka í hrímkálki mjöð, ok mælti:

53. 'Heill ver þú nú, Loki, ok tak við hrímkálki,
fullum forns mjaðar,
heldr þú hana eina látir með Ása sonum
vammalausá vera!'

Hann tók við horni ok drakk af:

54. 'Ein þú værir, ef þú svá værir,
vǫr ok grǫm at veri;
einn ek veit, svá at ek vita þikkjumk,
hór ok af Hlórriða,
ok var þat sá inn lævísi Loki!'

Beyla kvað:

55. 'Fjöll ǫll skjálfa, hygg ek á fǫr vera
heiman Hlórriða;
hann ræðr ró þeim er rægir hér
goð ǫll ok guma!'

Loki kvað:

56. 'Þegi þú, Beyla! Þú ert Byggvis kvæn
ok meini blandin mjök;
ókynjan meira koma með Ása sonum —
ǫll ertu, deigja, dritin!'

Þá kom Þórr at ok kvað:

57. 'Þegi þú, rǫg vaettr! Þér skal minn þrúðhamarr,
Mjöllnir, mál fyrnema;
herða klett drep ek þér hálsi af,
ok verðr þá þínu fjörvi um farit!'

Loki kvað:

58. 'Jarðar *burr* er hér nú inn kominn —
hví þrasir þú svá, Þórr?
En þá þorir þú ekki, er þú skalt við úlfinn vega,
ok svelgr hann allan Sigföður!'

Loki said:

52. 'You were lighter in speech to Laufey's son¹³¹
when you had me bidden to your bed;¹³²
such a matter must be mentioned by us,
if we're fully to count our faults!'

Then Sif¹³³ came forward and poured [mead] for Loki into a frost-cup,¹³⁴ and said:

53. 'Hail to you now, Loki, and take the frost-cup
full of ancient mead,¹³⁵
[so] you may the sooner declare her¹³⁶ alone among the Æsir's sons
to be free from fault!'

He took a horn¹³⁷ and drained it:

54. 'Alone you'd be, *if*¹³⁸ you were thus,
wary and wrathful towards a man;
I know one [man] — at least, I think I know this —
a lover [you had], even at Hlórriði's expense,¹³⁹
and that was the crafty Loki!¹⁴⁰

Beyla said:

55. 'All the mountains are shaking, I think Hlórriði's
on his journey from home,¹⁴¹
he'll force silence on the one who here defames
all gods and men!'

Loki said:

56. 'Silence, Beyla! You're Byggvir's wife¹⁴²
and shot-through with sinister power;¹⁴³
a more monstrous thing hasn't come among the sons of the Æsir —
you, dairymaid,¹⁴⁴ are all shit-spattered!¹⁴⁵

Then Þórr arrived and said:

57. 'Silence, perverted creature!¹⁴⁶ My power-hammer,
Mjöllnir, shall deprive you of speech;
I'll knock the crag of the shoulders¹⁴⁷ off your neck,
and then your life will be gone!'

Loki said:

58. 'Jǫrð's son¹⁴⁸ has now come in here —
why are you so aggressive, Þórr?
But you won't be daring then, when you ought to¹⁴⁹ fight against the wolf,¹⁵⁰
and he¹⁵¹ swallows Sigfaðir¹⁵² whole!'

Þórr kvað:

59. 'Þegi þú, röð vættr! Þér skal minn þrúðhamarr,
Mjöllnir, mál fyrnema;
upp ek þér verp ok á austrvega,
síðan þik mangi sér!'

Loki kvað:

60. 'Austrföllum þínum skaltu aldregi
segja seggjum frá,
sízt í hanzka þumlungi hnúkðir þú, einheri,
ok þóttiska þú þá Þórr vera!'

Þórr kvað:

61. 'Þegi þú, röð vættr! Þér skal minn þrúðhamarr,
Mjöllnir, mál fyrnema;
hendi inni hægri drep ek þik Hrunnis bana,
svá at þér brotnar beina hvat!'

Loki kvað:

62. 'Lifa ætla ek mér langan aldr,
þóttu hœtir hamri mér;
skarpar álar þóttu þér Skrýmis vera,
ok máttira þú þá nesti ná,
ok svaltz þú þá hungri, heill!'

Þórr kvað:

63. 'Þegi þú, röð vættr! Þér skal minn þrúðhamarr,
Mjöllnir, mál fyrnema;
Hrunnis bani mun þér í Hel koma,
fyr nágrindr neðan!'

Loki kvað:

64. 'Kvað ek fyr Ásum, kvað ek fyr Ása sonum,
þats mik hvatti hugr;
en fyr þér einum mun ek út ganga,
þvíat ek veit at þú vegr!'

65. 'Öl gærðir þú, Ægir, en þú aldri munt
síðan sumbl um gæra;
eiga þín öll, er hér inni er,
leiki yfir logi,
ok brenni þér á baki!'

59. Þórr said:
 'Silence, perverted creature! My power-hammer,
 Mjöllnir, shall deprive you of speech;
 I'll hurl you up and onto the east-way,¹⁵³
 No one will see you again!'
60. Loki said:
 'Your eastern journeys you ought never
 to tell people about,
 since, unique champion,¹⁵⁴ you cowered in the thumb of a glove,
 and you didn't seem to be Þórr then!¹⁵⁵
61. Þórr said:
 'Silence, perverted creature! My power-hammer,
 Mjöllnir, shall deprive you of speech;
 with my right hand I'll strike you with Hrungrnir's slayer,¹⁵⁶
 so that all your bones will be broken!'
62. Loki said:
 'For myself, I intend to live a long life,
 though you threaten me with your hammer;
 Skrímir's straps seemed hard to you,
 and you couldn't get your supplies¹⁵⁷ then,
 and you were dying of hunger, [though] healthy!¹⁵⁸
63. Þórr said:
 'Silence, perverted creature! My power-hammer,
 Mjöllnir, shall deprive you of speech;
 Hrungrnir's slayer will send you to Hel,¹⁵⁹
 down below corpse-gates!¹⁶⁰
64. Loki said:
 'I have said before the Æsir, I have said before the sons of the Æsir,
 that which my disposition incited me to;
 but for you alone will I go out,
 because I know that you attack!'
65. 'Ale you have brewed, Ægir, but never again
 will you prepare a feast;
 may flame¹⁶¹ play¹⁶² over all your possessions
 which are inside here,
 and burn you on the back!'

Frá Loka

En eptir þetta falsk Loki í Fránangrsforsí í laxlíki. Þar tóku Æsir hann.

Hann var bundinn með þörmum sonar Nara. En Narfi, sonr hans, varð at vargi. Skaði tók eitrom ok festi upp yfir andlit Loka. Draup þar ór eitr. Sigyn, kona Loka, sat þar ok helt munnlaug undir eitrit. En er munnlaugin var full bar hon út eitrit, en meðan draup eitrit á Loka. Þá kiptisk hann svá hart við, at þaðan af skalf jörð öll; þat eru nú kallaðir landskjálpár.

About Loki¹⁶³

And after that Loki hid in Fránangrsfors¹⁶⁴ in salmon-form. There the Æsir caught him.¹⁶⁵

He was bound with the intestines of his son, Nari.¹⁶⁶ But Narfi,¹⁶⁷ his son, turned into a wolf.¹⁶⁸ Skaði took a venomous snake and fastened it up over Loki's face. Venom dripped from it there. Sigyn, Loki's wife, sat there and held a hand-basin under the venom. But when the hand-basin was full she carried the venom away, and meanwhile the venom dripped on Loki.¹⁶⁹ Then he writhed at that so hard that all the earth shook; these [tremors] are now called earthquakes.¹⁷⁰

Textual Apparatus to *Lokasenna*

Frá Ægi ok goðum] A rubricated heading, but illegible in the photograph in the facsimile volume of **R**; the reading is therefore taken from the transcription therein. Some later, paper manuscripts have *Ægisdrekkja* 'Ægir's Drinking-Feast'.

Ægir] The first letter is a large, rubricated, lightly ornamented and inset *E* in **R**

nafni] **R** *nafi*

Byggvir] **R** *ByGvir* (cf. 45/1)

kvaði] **R** *qvadi*

Lokasenna] A rubricated heading, but illegible in the photograph in the facsimile volume of **R**; the reading is therefore taken from the transcription therein. Some later, paper manuscripts have *Lokaglepsa* 'Loki's Diatribe'.

1/1 *Segðu*] The first letter is large and rubricated, but faded, in **R**

2 *Eldir kvað*] **R** *e.* in margin. Probably originally *e.q.*, for *Eldir qvað*, but the edge of the leaf is lost. Many of the speech directions in *Ls.* were damaged or lost when the pages were trimmed.

3/4 *joll*] **R** *ioll*, apparently following an erasure of the underdotted letters *hrop* (cf. *hrópi* in 4/3)

9 *Loki kvað*] These words are not present in **R**; however, they probably were written in the margin before it was trimmed—like many other missing speaker directions for subsequent stanzas

10 *Óðinn kvað*] **R** absent

12 *Bragi kvað*] **R** absent

13 *Loki kvað*] Only *q*, for *qvad*, remains in **R**

eru] The erased letters *mang* follow this word in **R**; evidently the scribe had begun to repeat the second half of *Ls.* 2

14 *Bragi kvað*] Only *q*, for *qvad*, remains in **R**

14/1 *fyr*] **R** *þyr*

14/6 *er*] **R** *ec* (i.e. *ek* 'I')

14/6 *er*] **R** *ec* (i.e. *ek* 'I')

15 *Loki kvað*] Only *q*, for *qvad*, remains in **R**

15/5 *vreiðr*] **R** *reiþr*

16 *Iðunn kvað*] Only *q*, for *qvad*, remains in **R**

17 *Loki kvað*] Only *q*, for *qvad*, remains in **R**

18 *Iðunn kvað*] Only *q*, for *qvad*, remains in **R**

19 *Geffun kvað*] Only *q*, for *qvad*, remains in **R**

19/6 *fjörg ǫll*] **R** *fiorgvall*

20 *Loki kvað*] Only *q*, for *qvad*, remains in **R**

- 21 Óðinn *kvað*] Crossed *þ* abbreviation in **R**
- 22 Loki *kvað*] Only *q*, for *qvað*, remains in **R**
- 23 Óðinn *kvað*] Only *q*, for *qvað*, remains in **R**
- 23/7 *børn*] **R** absent
- 24 Loki *kvað*] Only a fragmentary *q*, for *qvað*, remains in **R**
- 25 Frigg *kvað*] **R** absent
- 25/4 *tveir*] **R** *ii*.
- 26 Loki *kvað*] **R** absent
- 27 Frigg *kvað*] **R** absent
- 28 Loki *kvað*] **R** absent
- 29 Freyja *kvað*] **R** absent
- 29/5 *hygg*] **R** *hvg*
- 30 Loki *kvað*] **R** absent
- 31 Freyja *kvað*] **R** absent
- 31/2 *hygg*] **R** *hyG*
- 31/2 *myni*] **R** *mý*
- 32 Loki *kvað*] Only a fragmentary *l* remains in **R**
- 32/4 *síztik*] **R** *síztv*
- 32/5 *stóðu*] **R** *síþo*
- 33 Njörðr *kvað*] Only a fragmentary *n* remains in **R**
- 34 Loki *kvað*] Only a fragmentary *l* remains in **R**
- 34/3 *gísl*] **R** *gíls*
- 35 Njörðr *kvað*] *n*. in **R**
- 36 Loki *kvað*] *l*. in **R**
- 36/6 *era*] **R** *þera* with *þ* underdotted for deletion
- 36/6 *verr*] **R** *yeR*
- 37 Týr *kvað*] *t*. in **R**
- 38 Loki *kvað*] *l*. in **R**
- 38/5 *hennar*] **R** *hiNar*
- 39 Týr *kvað*] *t*. in **R**
- 39/5 *böndum*] **R** *böndom*
- 40 Loki *kvað*] *l*. in **R**
- 41 Freyr *kvað*] Abbreviation for *fre* in **R**

42 *Loki kvað*] *l.* in **R**

43 *Byggvir kvað*] Only *ByGvir* in **R**, as part of the main text

43/3 *sællíkt*] **R** *sælic*t

44 *Loki kvað*] Only a fragmentary *l* remains in **R**

44/2 *er ek*] **R** *er ec þat*, probably influenced by *er þat* in the preceding half-line

45 *Byggvir kvað*] **R** absent

45/1 *Byggvir*] **R** *BeyGvir* (cf. prose prologue)

46 *Loki kvað*] **R** absent

47 *Heimdallr kvað*] **R** absent

47/1 *ert*] **R** *er*

48 *Loki kvað*] **R** absent

49 *Skaði kvað*] **R** absent

49/4 *skulu*] Preceded by the erasure of *ii* (the second underdotted) in **R**

50 *Loki kvað*] **R** absent

51 *Skaði kvað*] **R** absent

52 *Loki kvað*] **R** absent

52 prose *Sif*] **R** absent; the scribe omitted this name, noticed his mistake and put a sign of omission after *gecc* (*gekk*); presumably he wrote *Sif* in the margin, but the word was lost when the leaf was trimmed

53/6 *vammalausa*] **R** *vamma lausom* (*-m* is a macron abbreviation)

55 *Beyla kvað*] **R** absent

56 *Loki kvað*] **R** absent

58 *Loki kvað*] **R** absent

58/1 *burr*] **R** absent

59 *Þórr kvað*] **R** absent

59/1–3] Abbreviated *Þegi þ. r. v. þ^{er}* in **R**

60 *Loki kvað*] **R** absent

60/6 *þóttiska*] **R** *þóttis* followed by two erased or eroded letters

61 *Þórr kvað*] **R** absent

61/1–3] Abbreviated *Þegi þ. r. v.* in **R**

62 *Loki kvað*] **R** absent

63 *Þórr kvað*] **R** absent

63/1–3] Abbreviated *Þegi þv. r. v. þ^{er}* in **R**

63 *Loki kvað*] **R** absent

Frá Loka] Illegible in the facsimile volume of **R**; this reading is taken from the transcription therein, where it is bracketed

final prose *landskjálptar*] **R** *landsciaptar*

Notes to the Translation

- 1 Another version of the events described in the following prose prologue appears in *SnESkáld* (I, 33, pp. 40–41), where it explains why gold is called ‘Ægir’s fire’.
- 2 The sea-giant; see *Hym*.
- 3 Cf. *SnESkáld* (I, 25, p. 37). Gymir is the father of Gerðr, Freyr’s future wife, in *Ls.* 42, *Hdl.* 30 and *FSk*.
- 4 In *Ls.* a term for all the gods, including the Vanir.
- 5 In *Hym*.
- 6 I.e., in the east slaying giants or trolls, as stated in the related passage in *SnESkáld* (I, 33, p. 40). *Ls.* 55 possibly contradicts these accounts by describing Þórr travelling to the feast *heiman* ‘from home’; cf. *Hrbl.* 3.
- 7 Bragi is a poet-god (see *Grm.* 44). His wife, the goddess Iðunn, is best known for owning the apples that kept the gods young. She was abducted by the giant Þjazi, but reclaimed with Loki’s help (*SnESkáld*, I, 22, pp. 30–33; cf. *Ls.* 50).
- 8 The wolf Fenrir.
- 9 These details about Týr, presumably derived from *Ls.* 38–39, seem superfluous. The myth of how Týr lost a hand to the bound Fenrir is told in *SnEGylf* (25, p. 25; 34, pp. 27–29). It might explain two Viking Age carvings from northern England: a hogback stone from Sockburn on Tees, which shows a man with his right hand in the mouth of a chained, wolf-like beast; and the south face of the Gosforth Cross, which depicts a wolf-like creature escaping its bonds, above a rider with a short arm.
- 10 Njörðr, a sea-god, is one of the Vanir and the father of Freyr and Freyja; see *Vm.* 38. His wife, Skaði, is a giantess, about whom see *SnEGylf* (23, pp. 23–24), *SnESkáld* (I, G56, p. 2) and chapter 8 of *Ynglinga saga*.
- 11 For the obscure god Byggvir (here and in st. 45 spelt *Beyggvir* in **R**) and his wife Beyla, see *Ls.* 43–46, 55–56. The prose omits to mention the goddess Gefjun (*Ls.* 19–21) and the god Heimdallr (*Ls.* 47–48).
- 12 The location is Ægir’s hall.
- 13 The name *Fimafengr* ‘Quick Seizer’, is unknown outside *Ls.* and the corresponding passage in *SnESkáld* (I, 33, p. 41). The name *Eldir* suggests responsibility for tending fires (*eldar*), though in *Ls.* he may perform the traditional function of door-guardian. His name occurs in the same passage of *SnESkáld* and in a term for ‘giant’ (*SnESkáld*, I, 57, p. 87).
- 14 As in the related passage in *SnESkáld* (I, 33, p. 40), which uses the same word, *lýsigull* ‘shining gold’.
- 15 Again, as in *SnESkáld* (I, 33, p. 41). Note, however, that Loki is served by Víðarr and Sif later in *Ls.*

- 16 The holiness of Ægir's hall helps to explain subsequent events. Not only will Loki's lurid accusations defile a sacred place, but he will utter them without fear of physical punishment, at least until Þórr arrives. Cf. *SnEGylf* (34, p. 29; 49, p. 46) and *SnESkáld* (I, 1, p. 6).
- 17 In *SnESkáld* (I, 33, p. 41), the slaying of Fimafengr is not said to precede the flyting between Loki and the gods.
- 18 Literally, 'Say it'.
- 19 The 'sons of the victory-gods' are the gods themselves.
- 20 Or 'their battle-readiness/keenness'.
- 21 The gods' hostility to Loki arguably results not just from his slaying of Fimafengr, but also from his instigation of the death of Baldr at the hands of Hǫðr, both of whom are conspicuously absent from the feast. As it stands, the final line of this stanza does not alliterate according to conventional rules, since *er* 'is' ought not to bear alliterative stress here. Three possible explanations: exceptional alliteration of *v-* (in *vinr*) with a vowel; alliteration of *v-* with an earlier form of *orð* (< Germanic **wurða*); some untraceable corruption.
- 22 Whether the unique form *jǫll* 'discord, enmity, insult(?)' should stand is uncertain. It might be a mistake for *oll*, which, although not otherwise attested in Old Norse, appears several times in Old English in the sense 'scorn, insult, mockery'. Either way, a pun on serving *ǫl* 'ale' seems likely; cf. *ǫlmálum* in *Ls.* 1. Another possibility is that the text should read *í ǫlluk áfu færi ek Ása sonum* 'at the ale-ending I'll bring disgrace to the Æsir's sons'.
- 23 The image is of Loki mixing a poisonous herbal extract into the gods' mead, instead of a sweetener or other flavouring. Cf. *Sd.* 8.
- 24 An alias of Loki, probably related to *lopt* 'air', 'sky'. As a thirsty hall-visitor who uses an alias, the argumentative Loki appears comparable to Óðinn as *Gagnráðr* 'Contrary Counsellor' in *Vm.* 8. At root, the name *Loki* itself probably means 'Blamer', 'Mocker', a nature exemplified in *Ls.*
- 25 *Þrunginn*, literally 'thronged', 'pressed', implies that the gods are bursting with barely controlled rage and, perhaps, drink.
- 26 As a god of poetry (*bragr*), it may have been Bragi's duty to announce, greet or test newcomers.
- 27 If *gamban-* means 'tribute' (cf. OE *gambe*, *-an* 'tribute'; also ON *gambanteinn* 'tribute(?) twig' and *gambanreiði* 'tribute(?)-wrath' in *FSk.* 32–33), a *gambansumbl* could be a 'feast given in tribute' or a 'feast worthy of tribute'—either way, a magnificent banquet.
- 28 The blood-brotherhood of Óðinn and Loki is mentioned only in *Ls.* However, *Helblindi*, an alias of Óðinn in the **R** text of *Grm.* 46 (**A** has *Herblindr*) and *SnEGylf* (20, p. 21), is the name of one of Loki's brothers according to *SnEGylf* (33, p. 26) and *SnESkáld* (I, 16, p. 19; see also I, p. 168, note to p. 20/2).
- 29 The same term, *úlfs faðir* 'wolf's father', describes Loki in *Haust.* 8. Loki is the father of Fenrir, the monstrous wolf that Víðarr slays at Ragnarok in *Vsp.* 53 (cf. *Ls.* 58). As it stands, the first line of this stanza does not alliterate according to the usual rules. Three possible explanations: exceptional alliteration of *v-* with a vowel; alliteration of *v-* with an earlier form of *úlfr* (Germanic **wulfaz*); some untraceable corruption.
- 30 Literally '(rune-)staves'.

- 31 Many early societies founded on concepts of personal honour and shame take the prospect of public calumny very seriously.
- 32 Loki.
- 33 Goddesses.
- 34 Sg. of *Æsir*.
- 35 Loki has ignored Bragi's insult of *Ls.* 8 until now, when he gets a seat on the bench. Bragi, however, still has a more prestigious sitting position ('further in').
- 36 An arm-ring, presumably to make up for his initial rebuff to Loki. Horses, swords and arm-rings were among the most prized possessions of warriors.
- 37 The precise sense of *ofundr*, here translated 'ill-will', is uncertain; possible alternatives include 'envy', 'resentment' and '(a) malicious deed'.
- 38 Horses and arm-rings were taken by warriors from vanquished foes and given by victorious warlords to their best soldiers as rewards. Loki's accusation that Bragi is a coward finds no support in other Norse texts, but few tell us anything about him. In this stanza, as in *Ls.* 54, 62 and 65, Loki uses the extended form of *ljóðaháttir* known as *galdralag*. It gives these stanzas extra weight, perhaps even magical force. Óðinn, god of poetry and magic, also uses *galdralag* in *Ls.* 23.
- 39 Ægir's hall is a place of sanctuary, where physical violence is forbidden, as indicated in the opening prose.
- 40 *Ægis holl um kominn* lacks standard alliteration, as alliterative stress does not normally fall on *um*.
- 41 This line requires emendation in R. Even then, the wording appears elliptical, in that the literal sense, 'it's little for you for lying', must be expanded to 'it's little for you (to pay) for lying' or 'it's little (punishment) for you for lying'. A different solution corrects R's *litt* to *lit*, the first-person sg. present indicative of *líta* 'to look upon': *lít ek þér þat fyr lygi* 'I look upon it (as retaliation) for your lie'.
- 42 For the Old Norse line to alliterate, it requires an East Norse or preliterary West Norse form of *reiðr*, namely **vreiðr*; it seems likely that *vega vreiðr* is an old poetic formula; cf. *Ls.* 18. 27; *Fm.* 7, 17, 30; *Sd.* 27.
- 43 Although the exact meaning of the last, proverbial-sounding line is uncertain, it is clear that Loki calls Bragi's bluff. Alternative translations include 'a brave man has no regard for his safety', 'a brave man doesn't think ahead' and 'a brave man thinks nothing stands in his way'.
- 44 I.e., words.
- 45 The meaning of the first half of this stanza is unclear, as is the identity of the *óskmegir* 'wish-sons', 'adopted sons'. But, in addition to Loki (whose father was the giant Fárbaúti), they may include Bragi (possibly an apotheosis of the ninth-century poet Bragi Boddason the Old) and the human *einherjar*, who are known by the similar term *óskasynir* in *SnEGylf* (20, p. 21). If the term *óskmegir* is not truly gender-specific—cf. references to 'sons of the victory gods' and 'sons of the Æsir' in *Ls.* 1, 64—its field of reference may also extend to the giantess Skaði and the valkyries (Brynhildr is an *óskmær* 'wish-maiden' in *Od.* 16).
- 46 If Loki is accusing Iðunn—like Frigg in *Ls.* 26—of being lustful or even a nymphomaniac, his accusation is not supported by other texts. He may simply be claiming that, merely by marrying a posturing coward like Bragi, Iðunn has shown herself to be the woman most desperate for a man—any man.

- 47 *Hrfn.* 6 confirms that Iðunn had siblings, but her brother's identity is uncertain. The identity of Iðunn's 'brother's killer' (*bróðurbani*; cf. *FSk.* 16)—or perhaps, if the word may be interpreted more broadly, 'mortal enemy'—is also uncertain. He might be Bragi or Loki himself. If the latter, Loki may be claiming to have cuckolded Bragi.
- 48 For the last line to have standard alliteration, it requires an East Norse or preliterate West Norse form of *reiðir*, namely **vreiðir*.
- 49 The goddess *Gefjun* 'Giving One' was overlooked in the prose prologue.
- 50 Here the term *Æsir* includes Loki, perhaps as a placatory strategy on *Gefjun*'s part; cf. *Ls.* 25 and contrast Iðunn's words in *Ls.* 16.
- 51 The often grotesque antics of Loki, the Norse trickster-god, are recorded in texts such as *Þrk.*, *SnEGylf* and *SnESkáld*.
- 52 Perhaps specifically the 'living (gods)'.
- 53 The gods have a love-hate relationship with Loki, who, whilst often causing harm, also finds ingenious ways to get them out of trouble—as, for example, in *Þrk.*
- 54 Or 'who led your senses astray'.
- 55 The 'white boy' may well be *Heimdallr*, who is identified as white in *Þrk.* 15 and *SnEGylf* (27, p. 25), and who took possession of a precious object associated with a goddess (see below). If *Heimdallr* means 'Home/World Tree', he is probably identifiable with the world-ash, in which case his blondness may reflect this tree being 'sprinkled with white clay' (*Vsp.* 19 and perhaps *Ls.* 48); it may also reflect his associations with sheep (*SnEGylf* 27, pp. 25–26; *SnESkáld*, I, 75, p. 131). To judge from *Vkv.* 2, whiteness was thought attractive in a man, but here Loki's allusion to the boy's colour probably implies cowardice or effeminacy. Loki's designation of him as a *sveinn* 'boy' also appears pejorative (cf. *Hrbl.* 1–2). Alternatively, the 'white boy' might be Bragi, the cowardly god associated with jewellery by the term 'Bench-Ornament' in *Ls.* 15.
- 56 This accusation may have been especially stinging for *Gefjun*, as *SnEGylf* (35, p. 29) calls her a *mær* 'maiden' whom all those who died as maidens served, and some Christian translators equated her with the chaste classical goddesses Athena/Minerva, Artemis/Diana and Vesta. Furthermore, it is *Gefjun* who is addressed by a woman *reluctantly* grasping a horse's phallus in the Old Norse *Vǫlsa þáttur* 'Tale of Vǫlsi'. On the other hand, there is evidence to associate *Gefjun* with the sphere of love and fertility. She has four giant sons and receives plough-land from Óðinn as a reward for *skemtun* 'entertainment' (probably sexual) in *SnEGylf* (1, p. 7). She marries *Skjǫldr*, progenitor of Danish aristocracy, in *Ynglinga saga*. In addition, her name, which means 'Giving One', and her links with Freyja (see below) may suggest fecundity. She is equated with Venus in *Stjórn*, a collection of Norse texts based on the Old Testament. The story mentioned in the present stanza cannot be identified with certainty; possibly it is Loki's invention. It might, however, refer to a possible myth about *Heimdallr*'s recovery of a jewel, girdle or neck-ring—the *Brisingamen* 'torc of the *Brisingar*'—from the sea, after he and Loki had fought over it in the form of seals; cf. *Húsdr.* 2, *SnESkáld* (I, 16, p. 20) and *Beowulf* ll. 1197–1201. Elsewhere, in *Þrk.* and the fourteenth-century *Sǫrla þáttur* 'Tale of Sǫrli', the precious object is in Freyja's possession, not *Gefjun*'s. It is, however, possible that these two goddesses were once identified, since one of Freyja's names, *Gefn* 'Giver', is etymologically related to *Gefjun*.
- 57 Cf. *HH.* II 34; *Od.* 15 [11].
- 58 Or 'when you direct your wrath against *Gefjun*' (literally 'when you seize *Gefjun* to yourself in wrath').

- 59 Cf. *Hrfn.* 11–15, in which Gefjun weeps when asked about the end of the world. It is unclear why Óðinn should declare it mad of Loki to provoke a goddess who knows the fate of the world. Cf. *Ls.* 29.
- 60 Óðinn was inclined to give lesser men victory so that the better ones, having fallen in battle, could become members of the *einherjar* ‘unique warriors’ who would fight beside him at Ragnarok.
- 61 Or ‘as a milker of a cow [milking being considered lowly women’s work; cf. *Ls.* 56] and a woman’. Either way, this myth of subterranean transformation is otherwise unknown, unless it connects with Loki’s manifestation as the giantess sitting *í helli nokkvoorum* ‘in a certain cave’ in *SnEGylf* (49, p. 48). Loki is, however, famous for cross-gender metamorphosis. Comparing a man to a female animal is a serious offense in early Norse legal texts.
- 62 The early Norwegian *Gulaþingslög* ‘Gulaþing’s Law’ specifically outlaws any man who accuses another man of having *barn boret* ‘given birth to babies’. Such accusations were punishable by death under early Icelandic law.
- 63 The adjective *argr* ‘perverse’, here used substantively, implies the highly stigmatized violation of sexual and gender norms, and especially a man’s ‘unmanliness’—that is, his failure to enact the culturally expected masculinity.
- 64 Loki may mean that Óðinn collapsed upon entering a shamanistic trance involving *seiðr*, or when emerging from one. *Seiðr* was a kind of sorcery involving spirits (see *Vsp.* 22) that was deemed unacceptable for men, but which Óðinn is known to have practised: *seið Yggr* ‘Yggr [an Óðinn-alias] practised *seiðr*’, according to st. 3 of the tenth-century *Sigurðardrápa* ‘Sigurðr’s Poem’ by the Icelander Kormákr Qgmundarson (*SPSMA* III, 277–79). Cf. the sinking of the seeress in *Vsp.* 63; Óðinn’s ritualistic falling from a tree in *Háv.* 139; and the ritualistic-sounding description of a man who *sigeð sworcenferð* ‘sinks dark in mind’ from a high tree in the Old English poem *The Fates of Mortals* (l. 25). Alternatively, translate ‘you lowered (yourself)’. Alternatively again, emend *síga* to *síða* and translate ‘they said you practised *seiðr* (i.e., a form of feminine sorcery)’.
- 65 The Danish island of Samsø in the Kattegat. Cf. *HH.* I 37.
- 66 Conceivably to summon spirits, but the translation ‘struck a drum’ is uncertain; cf. *Vsp.* 22.
- 67 Or ‘over’, if we are to think of Óðinn flying like a witch (cf. *Háv.* 155).
- 68 Sorcerers often appear in Icelandic stories. In them, men who, like Óðinn, practised *seiðr* were generally despised, perhaps because of the perceived sexual perversions demanded by their art.
- 69 Cf. the similar use of *seggr* ‘man’ to denote a god in *FSk.* 4–5.
- 70 Judging from the rest of the stanza, Frigg means ‘past events that were fated to happen to you’.
- 71 Loki is again counted among the Æsir.
- 72 This line might be translated more idiomatically as ‘Let bygones be bygones!’
- 73 ON *mær* can denote ‘maiden’, ‘daughter’, ‘lover’ or ‘wife’, but *SnESkald* (I, 19, p. 30) calls Frigg *dóttur Fjörgyns* ‘daughter of Fjörgynn’ and *SnEGylf* (9, p. 13) *Fjörgvinsdóttir* ‘Fjörgvinn’s daughter’. The identity of *Fjörgynn* ‘Earth/Mountain’ is uncertain, but the name is apparently a masc. equivalent of *Fjörgyn*, the giantess also known as *Jörð* ‘Earth’ who gave birth to Þórr after a sexual union with Óðinn.
- 74 Óðinn. The name might identify him as a god of the weather (*veðr*).

- 75 Óðinn's brothers. Their names mean roughly 'Holy One' and 'Will/Desire'. Chapter 3 of *Ynglinga saga* states that they shared Frigg between them when they thought Óðinn would not return from his wanderings.
- 76 The son of Frigg and Óðinn. *SnEGylf* (49, p. 45) calls him *Baldr inn góða* 'Baldr the good'.
- 77 Literally, 'come out'.
- 78 Or 'and you'd then be fought furiously'. Frigg's intervention plays into the hands of Loki, who, according to *SnEGylf* (49, pp. 45–46), contrived the death of Baldr at the hand of the victim's brother, Hǫðr, with a branch of mistletoe and later thwarted his resurrection from Hel. Perhaps Frigg does not know of Loki's involvement. Or perhaps she does, but is too distraught to think clearly. She might even be in a state of denial about the killing, since, according to *SnEGylf*, it was she who exempted the mistletoe from swearing not to harm Baldr, and she again who unwittingly revealed this knowledge to Loki. A martial side to Baldr's character is evident from the account of his battles in the third book of *GD*. Elsewhere, it is not pronounced. For the final line of this stanza to alliterate, it probably requires an East Norse or preliterary West Norse form of *reiðum*, namely **vreiðum*.
- 79 Or 'I shall bring it about'. The line might refer to Loki's (presumed) disguise as the giantess *Þökk* 'Thanks', who alone refuses to cry for the dead Baldr and so thwarts Frigg's attempt to rescue him from Hel (*SnEGylf* 49, pp. 47–48).
- 80 Or 'hideous misdeeds'.
- 81 What prompts Freyja to intervene at this point is unclear, as is the thrust of her statement. Perhaps she is trying to bring Loki down a notch by stressing that his contemptuous words, though hurtful to Frigg, cannot tell her anything she does not know already—and that, for all his cleverness and self-confidence, he, like everyone else ('all fates'), is subject to destiny. Cf. a stanza attributed to Loki in *SnEGylf* (20, p. 21); *SnEUpp* (17, pp. 35–36). Snorri may have conflated parts of *Ls.* 29 with parts of *Ls.* 21 and 47. Alternatively, he may be quoting from a different version of the poem, since lost.
- 82 Freyja had a reputation for promiscuity: cf. e.g. *Ls.* 32, *Þrk.* 13, *Hdl.* 6, 46–47.
- 83 According to chapter 4 of *Ynglinga saga*, Freyja *var blótgyða*. *Hon kendi fyrst með Ásum seið, sem Vǫnum var títt* 'was a sacrifice-priestess. She was the first to teach sorcery, which was customary for the Vanir, among the Æsir'.
- 84 This line is corrupt in **R**, but two traditional emendations make sense of it. Firstly, the verb is pl., so **R**'s nom. sg. *sitztu* (= *sízt* 'since' + *þú* 'you') is presumably a scribal error for the acc. sg. form, which serves as this line's direct object. Secondly, **R**'s verb *sípo* 'they bewitched, enchanted, 'practised sorcery (on)' is hard to understand in context: the possibility that the passage means 'since the kind gods enchanted you to your brother' seems remote, as it is Freyja, not the gods, whom Loki accuses of witchcraft in this stanza. It is likely, therefore, that *sípo* is a scribal error for *stópu*, the idiom *standa einhvorn* 'to surprise someone' being well-attested. The brother in question is doubtless Freyr. The siblings' names suggest a pairing, as they mean 'Lord' and 'Lady'.
- 85 This line may implicitly accuse Freyja of having had anal sex.
- 86 Njǫrðr intervenes to defend his daughter. The Vanir were originally incestuous, according to chapter 4 of *Ynglinga saga*.
- 87 Accusations of men giving birth are found elsewhere in Old Norse texts, which suggests they were conventional, though outrageous.

- 88 Chapter 4 of *Ynglinga saga* reports that Njǫrðr and his son, Freyr, were sent as hostages to the Æsir at the end of that tribe's war with the Vanir. *SnEGylf* (23–24, pp. 23–24) also records that Njǫrðr was sent as a hostage to the Æsir, but says, in agreement with *Ls.* 35, that Freyr was born later. It is curious that Loki says that Njǫrðr was sent 'east from here', since that direction is usually associated with the land of hostile giants; it appears, then, that Ægir's hall is far (*Ls.* 35 *langr*) to the west of the Æsir's realm.
- 89 Probably a reference to the communal piss-trough that was often a feature of Norse households.
- 90 The relationship between the two halves of this stanza is unclear. The allusion in the second half is probably to giantesses ('Hymir's daughters'), from whom rivers of urine flow into an estuary ('piss-trough') imagined as the 'mouth' of the sea-god, Njǫrðr. Cf. a story from *SnESkald* (I, 18, p. 25) in which a giantess makes a river swell by standing astride it and almost drowns Þórr; also that tale's source in Eilífr Guðrúnarson's tenth-century skaldic poem *Þórsdrápa* (*SnESkald*, I, 18, pp. 25–28), in which the torrent is caused by the urine of two giantesses.
- 91 Freyr.
- 92 Chapter 4 of *Ynglinga saga* records that Freyr was the child of Njǫrðr and Njǫrðr's sister, though this information might simply derive from *Ls.* The name of Njǫrðr's sister is unknown.
- 93 The last line of this stanza does not alliterate according to conventional rules. Three possible explanations: exceptional alliteration of *v-* with a vowel; alliteration of *v-* with the form **vǫnu* or **vǫnu* (for *ǫnu*); some untraceable corruption.
- 94 Freyr rode a horse or a boar. His horse is mentioned in *FSk.* 8–9. According to *Húsdr.* 7, Freyr rode a golden-bristled boar. *SnEGylf* (49, p. 47) says Freyr rode in a chariot pulled by a gold-bristled boar called *Gullinbursti* 'Golden Bristle' or *Slíðrugtanni* 'Dangerously Sharp-Toothed'. *SnESkald* (I, 35, p. 42) records that Freyr's boar could cross sky and sea faster than any horse, and that its bristles lit up the darkest night.
- 95 Literally *bera tilt með tveim* means 'to carry well with two', so this line probably contains a cruel pun at the expense of Týr's one-handedness. *SnEGylf* (25, p. 25) says that Týr is not known as a peace-maker. The idea of imbalance relates to his one-handedness. However, the story of the loss of his right (more benign?) hand to Fenrir shows that Týr kept his side of the bargain with the wolf. Also, a faint memory of his trustworthiness might survive in st. 17 of the *Old English Rune Poem*, which says that *Tir biþ tacna sum; healdeð trywa wel / wiþ æþelingas* 'Tir is one of the guiding signs; it keeps faith well with princes'.
- 96 *Hróðrsvitnir* 'Glory's Wolf' is Fenrir; cf. *Hróðvitnir* in *Grm.* 39. Loki lacks his son, the wolf Fenrir, whom the gods have bound.
- 97 The third line of this stanza lacks alliteration in **R**. Possible fixes include replacing *þondum* 'bonds' with *þngum* 'constraints' or *þornum* 'irons', or substituting *betr* 'better' for *vel* 'well'.
- 98 Or 'for the twilight of the powers'—that is (either way), for Ragnarok. *Ragna rök(k)r* (or *ragnarök(k)r*, as in *SnEGylf* and *SnESkald*) might well derive by folk etymology from *ragna rök* 'doom/fate of the powers', the words used in *Vsp.* and other Eddic poems.
- 99 Týr's wife is otherwise unknown, as is the child (assuming there was one).
- 100 Ostensibly an ell (*ϑln*) of cloth, but there is probably also a punning allusion to Týr's one-handedness, since *ϑln* also means 'fore-arm' (cf. English 'elbow' from OE *el(n)boga*) and *ϑlnliðr* meant 'wrist'.

- 101 Fenrir, who was bound by the gods (*SnEGylf* 34, pp. 27–29).
- 102 The precise location appears deliberately vague (but note the Danish city of *Århus*, earlier *Áróss* ‘River Mouth’, on the *Århus* River). *SnEGylf* (34, pp. 28–29) places the bound Fenrir on an island called *Lyngvi* in a lake called *Amsvartnir*; a river of slaver called *Ván* ‘Expectation/Hope’ runs from his mouth.
- 103 Or ‘You said you bought Gymir’s daughter with gold, ...’. In *FSk*. Skírnir undertakes a quest to win *Gerðr*, radiant daughter of the giant *Gymir*, on behalf of his master, *Freyr*, having received from him his giant-slaying (and probably golden-hilted) sword. Skírnir offers her golden apples and a ring, which she refuses, initially at least (it might be that she received them later, after giving in to Skírnir’s threats). See also *Vsp.* 51 and *SnEGylf* (51, p. 50).
- 104 Or ‘through’.
- 105 *Muspell*’s sons are giants or other evil beings who advance against the gods at *Ragnarok*; see *Vsp.* 49. *Myrkviðr* ‘Murk Wood’, the archetypal ‘Black Forest’, was originally a name for the vast mountainous forest of central Europe, but came to signify a wooded mythological barrier between worlds.
- 106 Cf. *SnEGylf* (51, p. 50).
- 107 *Byggvir* (also *Beyggvir*) is an obscure figure, unknown elsewhere in Norse records. Judging from the vocabulary of milling in *Ls.* 43–44, his name may well derive from ON *bygg* ‘barley’. He is probably a barley-spirit. Cf. Sir John Barleycorn in English folklore and OE *Béow* ‘Barley’ in *Beowulf* l. 18 (an emendation), who may have been originally a grain-god. *Byggvir* is probably also related to the Estonian deity *Pek(k)o*, whose name can be derived from ON **beggw-*, an antecedent of *bygg*. Note also the likely ‘grain-giants’ *Bergelmir* and *Aurgelmir* of *Vm.* 29–35.
- 108 *Byggvir*, as *Freyr*’s servant, uses a grand, perhaps archaic, title for his lord. The meaning and etymology of *Ingunar* are uncertain. It might be the gen. sg. of **Ingun(n)*, a woman’s name, and may incorporate a descendant of a Germanic god-name, *Inguz*. Cf. *Yngvi-Freyr*, *Freyr*’s better known title; *Ingwina* ‘(of) Ing-friends’ in *Beowulf* l. 1044 and, in association with *frea* (the Old English cognate of ON *Freyr*), *fréa(n)* *Ingwina* ‘lord of Ing-friends’ in *Beowulf* l. 1319.
- 109 I.e., residence. *Freyr*’s hall may have stood in *Álfheimr* ‘Elf World’; see *Grm.* 5. *Byggvir*’s origins are presumably humble.
- 110 Bone-marrow.
- 111 I.e., ‘slanderer’ (*Loki*). This line has double alliteration in its second half.
- 112 The last line is loosely translated.
- 113 *Loki* refers to *Byggvir* in the neut., perhaps because *bygg* ‘barley’ is neut.
- 114 Cf. a wagtail.
- 115 The literal sense is ‘and (that being) snap-wise snaps’.
- 116 The comparison in the second half of this stanza seems to be to a small bird.
- 117 Spelt *Beyggvir* here in **R**, as in the prose prologue.
- 118 *Bráðr* ‘nimble’ has connotations of rashness and drunken anger; it is related to *brugga* ‘to brew’.
- 119 The *Æsir*. *Hroptr* is an alias of *Óðinn*.

- 120 Byggvir may be proud of the gods' communal drinking because barley was a basic ingredient of ale.
- 121 As a likely barley-god, Byggvir may be responsible for bread as well as drink.
- 122 ON *flet*, here translated 'floor', more specifically denotes the raised platform that ran along the wall of a Norse hall, where there were benches and tables and where people slept.
- 123 Loki might again imagine Byggvir as a hungry little bird, a creature sometimes seen in the straw during times of peace, but invariably absent at the first sign of trouble. He might also be imputing that Byggvir fails to defend straw, the natural home of a grain-god. In addition, he is probably implying that the ale in which Byggvir takes such pride as a source of conviviality also often causes men to fight.
- 124 Or 'stiff back', if **R**'s spelling of the adjective (*aurgo*) represents *ørgu* 'erect, stiff', the syncopated dat. sg. neut. of *ørðugr*. Either way, if, as elsewhere, Loki is travestying something sacred, the explanation is that *Heimdallr* 'Home/World Tree' is a manifestation of the towering world-ash, which is drenched in white mud (*aurr*) and associated with a muddy (*aurgr*) waterfall in *Vsp.* 19 and 27. Loki perhaps also alludes to bird-droppings. Alternatively, Loki may be denigrating *Heimdallr*'s eternal wakefulness by attributing it not to the resilient strength of a tree or unwavering devotion to duty, but simply to the discomfort of a stiff back. A pun on the two words is possible, perhaps also with a nod to *ørgu* 'sexually perverse' (from *argr*); cf. the possible relationship between *Heimdallr*'s alias *Rígr* and ON *rígr* 'stiffness' in *Rþ. Ls.*'s possible portrayal of *Heimdallr* as rigidly erect is not supported by *SnEGylf*, which has him sitting down on watch, before standing up at Ragnarok (*SnEGylf* 27, p. 25; 51, p. 50). The white mud might also reflect the foamy seashore where *Heimdallr* was born (cf. *Hdl.* 38).
- 125 *Heimdallr*'s unenviable duty is to watch and listen unceasingly, using his extraordinary sight and hearing, for the advance of giants at Ragnarok. When he detects their coming, he will blow his horn; see *Vsp.* 45 and *SnEGylf* (27, p. 25; 51, p. 50). In the last line of this stanza, Loki perhaps imputes that *Heimdallr*'s life is demeaning because it restricts him to one place. Guardsmen are often of low status in Norse texts.
- 126 Literally, 'you won't play with a loose tail like this for long'.
- 127 Perhaps more specifically a sharp cliff-edge, as *hjørr* (cf. ON *hjøgr* 'stone altar' or 'cairn', and Swedish dialect *har* 'stony ground') elsewhere means 'sword'. On Loki's torture, see also *Vsp.* 34, *SnEGylf* (50, p. 49) and a carving on the west face of the Gosforth Cross in Cumbria, England.
- 128 See the prose epilogue.
- 129 Literally, 'life-laying', i.e., death, killing.
- 130 *SnESkald* (I, G56, pp. 1–2) tells of Loki's part in the killing of the giant Þjazi, Skaði's father, who with Loki's help had made off with the goddess Iðunn and the apples that kept the gods young. St. 6 of Kormákr Ógmundarson's *Sigurðardrápa* records that 'the gods tricked (*vélta*) Þjazi', which suggests that Loki, the trickster-god, may have been involved (*SPSMA* III, 283–84). In *Hrbl.* 19, though, Þórr appears to claim sole credit for the killing. A very different account of Þjazi's death survives in one redaction of *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks*.
- 131 Loki. His mother, Laufey, appears briefly as an old woman, the wife of an old man called Fárbaúti (a giant according to *SnEGylf*), in a description of Loki's origins in chapter 2 of *Sǫrla þáttur* 'Sǫrli's Tale'. A versified list of names includes *Laufey* among a list of goddess-names for women (*SPSMA* III, 960–61).

- 132 No other text records this event.
- 133 Þórr's wife. Her name is supplied editorially.
- 134 Either a cup made of frosted glass or a cup covered with frost.
- 135 Cf. *FSk.* 37.
- 136 Sif refers to herself.
- 137 Unless there is an inconsistency, it seems that Loki rejects Sif's *hrímkálkr* 'frost-cup/goblet' in favour of a drinking-horn.
- 138 The alliteration falls unusually on *ef* 'if', giving it emphasis.
- 139 *Hlórríði* is a name for Þórr. That Loki claims to have cuckolded him is clear, but the grammatical construction and, hence, the translation of this passage, is not. Cf. *Hrbl.* 48.
- 140 No other text confirms that Loki slept with Sif. However, the revelation of *SnESkáld* (I, 35, p. 41) that Loki cut off all her hair 'for love of mischief' (*til lævisi*) necessitates physical proximity, because the cutting could presumably have been done only while Sif was off-guard, perhaps while asleep in bed with her hair loose; in medieval Iceland, married women usually wore their hair tied beneath headdresses when in public.
- 141 The prose prologue places Þórr in the east, not at home; cf. *Hrbl.* 3. Þórr travels in a goat-drawn chariot, beneath which rocks break and sparks fly; cf. *Þrk.* 21.
- 142 This statement can be understood as an insult, given Loki's opinion of Byggvir. Beyla (cf. ON *baula* 'cow') is unknown outside *Ls.*
- 143 Loki uses identical words of Freyja in *Ls.* 32. Here, though, he may exploit their literal sense, 'much mixed with harm', to hint that Beyla blends dirt, or worse, into the drink or food she provides: cf. *Ls.* 3, *Sg.* 8 and *Háv.* 137.
- 144 *Deigja* denotes a kind of maidservant, probably either a dairymaid or one responsible for making bread with dough.
- 145 Literally '... are all dirtied'.
- 146 *Vættr* 'wight', 'creature' is a fem. noun.
- 147 A kenning for 'head'.
- 148 The son of *Jǫrð* 'Earth' is Þórr. Alternative emendations of the first half of this line insert *sonr* 'son' or *arfi* 'heir' in place of *burr*.
- 149 Or 'shall'.
- 150 Fenrir. According to *Vsp.* 54 and *SnEGylf* (51, p. 50), Þórr will fight Miðgarðsomr at Ragnarok, not the Wolf. Possibly *Ls.* alludes to a variant tradition (cf. *Hym.* 11 and the unemended *Vsp.* 54). Alternatively, Loki may simply be asserting that Þórr will be too scared to fight the wolf; cf. his accusation of cowardice in *Ls.* 60. Note the word-play: *Þórr* will not *þorir* 'dare'.
- 151 The wolf Fenrir.
- 152 'Victory/Battle Father', an alias of Óðinn here obviously spoken mockingly (cf. *Vsp.* 53). On Óðinn's death at Ragnarok, see *Vsp.* 52-3, *Vm.* 53 and *SnEGylf* (51, p. 50).
- 153 I.e., into *Jötunheimar*, the realm of giants.
- 154 *Einheri* is the sg. of *einherjar*, otherwise the 'unique/only warriors' who, having fallen in battle, enter Valhøll and await Ragnarok, when they will help Óðinn in his doomed fight against the wolf. The term might be a survival of an Indo-European conception of the ultimate warrior, but Loki doubtless uses it mockingly. He at once scorns the 'lone (*einn*)

warrior' (cf. *Hym.* 22 *einbani* 'lone slayer') who cowers, and puns on the sense 'solitary hare' (*einn* 'one' + *heri* 'hare'), the hare being an animal likely to flee at the first sign of trouble.

- 155 Or 'and you didn't think yourself to be Þórr then!' Loki can comment because he, unlike the guests at Ægir's feast, was there. The story is told in *SnEGylf* (45, pp. 37–38); see also *Hrbl.* 26, which contains the same words.
- 156 'Hrungnir's slayer' is Mjöllnir, Hrungnir being a famous giant whom Þórr slew; see *Hrbl.* 14–15.
- 157 Of food.
- 158 An allusion to an episode in the journey of Þórr, his servants and Loki to Útgarða-Loki, alluded to in *Ls.* 60 and *Hrbl.* 26. According to *SnEGylf* (45, p. 38), the giant Skrímir gave Þórr a knapsack containing their pooled provisions, but Þórr could not undo the straps, which are later revealed to be made of (magical?) iron (*SnEGylf* 47, pp. 42–3).
- 159 The underworld of the dead, or the female who ruled it.
- 160 In *SnEGylf* (49, p. 47) the word used is *Helgrindr* 'Hel-gates'.
- 161 *Logi* 'flame' may prefigure the fire of Ragnarok, the heat from which similarly *leikr* 'plays/sports' against the sky in *Vsp.* 55. It may also pun on Loki's name; the same association of names is found in the tale of Loki's doomed attempt to consume meat faster than Logi, a personified flame, in *SnEGylf* (46, p. 40; 47, p. 43).
- 162 I.e., flicker.
- 163 This prose epilogue is related to the account in *SnEGylf* (50, pp. 48–49) of Loki's capture and punishment after the gods' failure to redeem Baldr from Hel.
- 164 Probably 'Waterfall of the Sparkling Fjord'.
- 165 The method of capture can possibly be inferred from the related account of Ægir's feast and Loki's quarrel with the gods in *SnESkáld* (I, 33, pp. 40–41), which ends *Þá urðu Æsir þess varir at Rán átti net þat er hon veiddi í menn alla þá er á sæ kómu* 'Then the gods became aware that Rán had a net in which she caught all those people who took to sea.' Presumably, in this account, Loki was caught by the net of Ægir's wife, the sea-goddess Rán 'Plunder(?)', and not, as in *SnEGylf* (50, p. 49), by the hand of Þórr.
- 166 In the Old Norse text, the possessive pronoun *síns* 'his' has perhaps dropped out before *sonar* 'son'. Nari is also known from a kenning in the skaldic poem *Hqfuðlausn* 'Head-Ransom' (in *Egils saga*) by the tenth-century Icelander Egill Skallagrímsson: Hel, goddess of the underworld, is *nipt Nara* 'sister of Nari'.
- 167 St. 7 of *Ynglingatal* 'The Tally of the Ynglingar' by Þjóðólfr of Hvin identifies Narfi as a sibling of the goddess Hel and the wolf (Fenrir).
- 168 A wolf-like creature is shown below a likely depiction of Loki's torture on the c. 800 Ardre VIII stone from Gotland.
- 169 Loki's torture is shown on the west face of the tenth-century Gosforth Cross from Cumbria and probably on the Ardre VIII stone; see also *Vsp.* 34. The Gosforth Cross shows, in addition to a prostrate Loki, the snake, and Sigyn kneeling with the hand-basin. *Vsp.* 34, like *Ls.*'s epilogue, has her sitting, but *SnEGylf* has her standing.
- 170 This explanation might indicate an origin in Iceland, a country of frequent seismic activity.

