



THE POETIC EDDA

A Dual-Language Edition

EDWARD PETTIT



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

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

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Sigrdrífumál

The title *Sigrdrífumál* (*Sd.*) ‘The Sayings of Sigrdrífa’ is not found in **R**, but supplied editorially, following modern convention. The distinction between *Fm.* and *Sd.* is itself an editorial intervention, made on the basis of later, paper manuscripts. Some of these have a different title for *Sd.*: *Brynhildarkviða Buðladóttur in fyrsta* ‘The First Poem of Brynhildr, Buðli’s Daughter’.

The text of *Sd.* is incomplete in **R** (fol. 31v–32v), due to the loss of a gathering: it ends amid st. 29. Fortunately, paper manuscripts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries preserve the rest of the poem, the full text having apparently been copied before the loss occurred. Additionally, the second half of st. 8 is supplied from *VS* 21. A version of *Sd.* was obviously a source for *VS*, as the same chapter also quotes stt. 5–13 and 15–21, albeit in a different order and with some significant variants, in its corresponding description of the meeting of Sigurðr and the valkyrie Brynhildr. *Brynhildr* is the saga’s name for the valkyrie called *Sigrdrífa* in the prose following st. 4 of *Sd.*¹ *Hlr.* may also identify the two figures. The basis of the equation is uncertain, however.

Sd. is another *prosimetrum*, possibly stitched together from different sources. Its verses, comprising the words exchanged by Sigurðr and Sigrdrífa, are mostly in the usual Eddic metre for wisdom dialogue, *ljóðaháttir*. There are, however, also instances of *fornyrðislag* and *galdralag*.

After some arresting opening stanzas, in which Sigrdrífa awakens from a magically induced sleep induced by Óðinn and addresses gods and goddesses, she identifies the different types of rune-magic that Sigurðr must know, albeit with few specifics about the actual runes. These details are possibly contained within the magical beer that she brings him, which represents another manifestation of the theme (also present in *Vsp.*, *Háv.*, *Vm.*, *Grm.*, *Fm.* and *Hdl.*) of the acquisition, retention or revelation of knowledge by imbibing liquid, and which presumably reflects the belief of a largely illiterate society that knowledge, principally released from the mouth as speech (enabled by saliva and sometimes projected with it), was acquired through the mouth in the form of a liquid. Sigrdrífa also describes the Óðinnic origin of certain runes in an otherwise unknown episode, and confers more general advice in a manner similar to *Háv.*

1 *Sigrdrífa* does not appear as a name in the verses of *Sd.* It appears in verse only in *Fm.* 44.

As John McKinnell has observed, structural and verbal correspondences to the second half of *Háv.* raise the possibility of influence by *Háv.*, in which case *Sd.* may be a relatively late composition.² With this possible relationship may be compared the potential echo of *Háv.* 112 (*et seq.*) in *Fm.* 20, as well as the broad parallels between *Fm.* and both *Vm.* and *Grm.*, the wisdom poems which follow *Háv.* in **R.**

Events described in *Sd.* are touched on in *Grp.*, *Fm.* and *Hlr.* They are also treated in prose and verse in *VS* 21–22, and briefly in prose in *SnESkáld* (I, 41, p. 47) and chapter 6 of *Norna-Gests þáttr.*

Comparison may also be made with the Faroese ballad *Brynhildar táttur* ‘Brynhild’s Story’.

Synopsis

Prose: Sigurðr rode up to Hindarfjall where he saw a light shining up to the sky and then, as he approached it, a stronghold. He went inside the stronghold and saw an armoured man lying there. He removed the man’s helmet and saw that it was actually a woman. He cut off her mail-coat with his sword, whereupon she awoke and spoke to him.

Verse: She asks what cut through her mail-coat, why she has awoken, and who freed her. Sigurðr tells her (1). She reveals that she has slept long, due to the magic of the god Óðinn (2).

Prose: Sigurðr sat down and asked her name. She gave him a drink to strengthen his memory.

Verse: She greets the personified day, night and earth, as well as the gods and goddesses. She requests their favour for herself and for Sigurðr (3–4).

Prose: She named herself Sigrdrífa. She was a valkyrie who had disobeyed Óðinn’s command by killing a king called Hjálmgunnarr in battle. Óðinn punished her by piercing her with a magical thorn which sent her to sleep, and said, in addition, that she would never again win victory in battle and that she would marry. She replied that she had vowed to marry no man who knew fear. Sigurðr asks her to teach him wisdom.

Verse: After bringing Sigurðr a magically beneficial drink (5), Sigrdrífa lists the runes that he needs to know, along with details of their purpose and use: victory-runes (6); ale-runes (7–8); protection-runes (for women in childbirth) (9); surf-runes (10); limb-runes (11); speech-runes (12); mind-runes, which originated from Óðinn (13). Óðinn

2 J. McKinnell, *Meeting the Other in Norse Myth and Legend* (Cambridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 2005), pp. 210–13.

(probably), we learn, once stood on a cliff with a sword, when Mímr's head spoke wisdom (14), apparently concerning the many different things on which runes were (or should be) carved (15–17), and their dispersion, within mead, among gods, elves and humans (18). Sigurðr is then urged to use these runes, if he learns them (19), and to decide whether to speak or remain silent (20). He declares that he will not flee as he knows no cowardice, and that he wants all of Sigrdrífa's advice (21). She advises him to be blameless toward his kin (22); to avoid breaking oaths (23); to avoid disputing with fools at assemblies (24); to answer when spoken to, and postpone revenge until an opportune moment (25); to avoid staying with a witch (26); to be watchful when men fight and to beware of evil women at roadsides (27); to avoid fixating on dowries and luring women for kissing (28); to avoid disputing when drunk (29); to remember that the combination of song and ale is often a source of misery (30); to fight, if he has to, rather than be burned alive inside a house (31); to guard against evil and deceit, and avoid seducing women (32); to bury corpses (33); to prepare the dead for the coffin (34); to distrust a criminal's son (35); to remember that lawsuits and hatreds never sleep, so intelligence and weapons are necessary to get ahead in life (36); to guard against evil in every way, as strong dissensions have arisen (37).

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Sigrdrífumál

Sigurðr reið upp á Hindarfjall ok stefndi suðr til Frakklands. Á fjallinu sá hann ljós mikit, svá sem eldr brynni, ok ljómaði af til himins. En er hann kom at, þá stóð þar skjaldborg ok upp ór merki. Sigurðr gekk í skjaldborgina ok sá at þar lá maðr ok svaf með öllum hervápnum. Hann tók fyrst hjálminn af höfði honum. Þá sá hann at þat var kona. Brynjan var fóst, sem hon væri holdgróin. Þá reist hann með Gram frá höfuðsmátt brynjuna í gögnum niðr, ok svá út í gögnum báðar ermar. Þá tók hann brynju af henni, en hon vaknaði, ok settisk hon upp ok sá Sigurð ok mælti:

1. 'Hvat beit brynju? Hví brá ek svefni?
Hverr feldi af mér fólvar nauðir?'

Hann svaraði:
'Sigmundar burr — sleit fyr skömmu
hrafns hrælundir hjörr Sigurðar.'

2. 'Lengi ek svaf, lengi ek sofnuð var,
löngr eru lýða læ;
Óðinn því veldr, er ek eigi máttak
bregða blunnstöfum.'

Sigurðr settisk niðr ok spyrr hana nafns. Hon tók þá horn fullt mjaðar ok gaf honum minnisveig.

3. 'Heill, Dagr! Heilir, Dags synir!
Heil, Nótt ok nipt!
Óreiðum augum lítið okkr þinig,
ok gefið sitjendum sigr!

4. 'Heilir, Æsir! Heilar, Ásynjur!
Heil, sjá in fjölnýta fold!
Mál ok manvit gefið okkr mærum tveim,
ok læknishendr meðan lifum!'

Hon nefndisk Sigrdrífa, ok var valkyrja. Hon sagði at tveir konungar þorðusk. Hét annarr Hjálm-Gunnarr. Hann var þá gamall ok inn mesti hermaðr, ok hafði Óðinn honum sigri heitit. En annarr hét Agnarr, Hauðu bróðir, er vætr engi vildi þiggja. Sigrdrífa feldi Hjálm-Gunnar í orrostunni. En Óðinn stakk hana svefnþorni í hefnd þess ok kvað hana aldri skyldu síðan sigr vega í orrostu ok kvað hana giptask skyldu. 'En ek sagðak honum at ek strengðak heit þar í mót, at giptask öngum þeim manni er hræðask kynni.'

Hann segir ok biðr hana kenna sér speki, ef hon vissi tíðindi ór öllum heimum.

The Sayings of Sigrdrífa

Sigurðr rode up to Hindarfjall¹ and headed south to Frakkland.² On the fell he saw a great light, as if a fire were burning, and it shone up to the sky. But when he came there, then a shield-stronghold³ stood there and above it a standard. Sigurðr went into the shield-stronghold and saw that a man lay there and was sleeping with all war-weapons. First he took the helm from his⁴ head. Then he saw that it was a woman. The mail-coat was stuck fast, as if it were flesh-grown. Then he cut through with Gramr⁵ from the head-opening of the mail-coat downwards, and so out through both sleeves. Then he took the mail-coat off her; and she awoke, and she sat herself up and saw Sigurðr and said:

1. ‘What bit the mail-coat? Why have I shaken off sleep?
 Who caused the pale constraints⁶ to fall from me?’

 He answered:⁷

 ‘Sigmundr’s son — a short time ago
 Sigurðr’s sword slit a raven’s corpse-morsels.’⁸

2. ‘Long I slept, long was I asleep,
 long are the misfortunes of men;
 Óðinn caused this, that I couldn’t
 shake off sleep-staves.’⁹

Sigurðr sat himself down and asked her name. She then took a horn full of mead and gave him a memory-drink.¹⁰

- 3.¹¹ ‘Hail, Dagr!¹² Hail, Dagr’s sons!¹³
 Hail, Nótt¹⁴ and her kinswoman!¹⁵
 Look upon us both here with unwrathful eyes,
 and give victory to those sitting [here]!’

4. ‘Hail, Æsir!¹⁶ Hail, Ásynjur!¹⁷
 Hail, the multiply-helpful earth!
 Give eloquence and commonsense to us two glorious ones,
 and healing hands as long as we live!’

She named herself Sigrdrífa,¹⁸ and she was a valkyrie. She said that two kings had fought each other. One was called Hjálmgunnarr.¹⁹ He was by then old and the greatest warrior, and Óðinn had promised him victory. And the other was called Agnarr, Hauða’s²⁰ brother, whom no one wanted to receive.²¹ Sigrdrífa felled Hjálmgunnarr in the battle. But Óðinn pierced her with a sleep-thorn in revenge for this and told her that she would never win victory in battle thereafter and said that she would marry. ‘But I said to him that I had sworn an oath to the contrary, to marry no man who could be afraid.’²²

He²³ speaks and asks her to teach him wisdom, if she knew tidings from all worlds.

Sigrdrífa kvað:

5. 'Bjór færi ek þér, brynþings apaldr,
magni blandinn ok megintíri;
fullr er hann ljóða ok líknstafa,
góðra galdra ok gamanrúna!
6. 'Sigrúnar þú skalt rísta ef þú vilt sigr hafa,
ok rísta á hjalti hjors,
sumar á véttrimum, sumar á valþostum,
ok nefna tysvar Tý.
7. 'Qlrúnar skaltu kunna ef þú vill annars kvæn
vélit þik í tryggð, ef þú trúir;
á horni skal þær rísta ok á handar baki
ok merkja á nagli Nauð.
8. 'Full skal signa ok við fári sjá,
ok verpa lauki í lög:
*þá ek þat veit, at þér verðr aldri
meinblandinn mjöðr.*
9. 'Bjargrúnar skaltu kunna ef þú bjarga vilt
ok leysa kind frá konum;
á lófa þær skal rísta ok of liðu spenna,
ok biðja þá dísir duga.
10. 'Brimrúnar skaltu rísta ef þú vilt borgit hafa
á sundi seglmörom;
á stafni skal rísta ok á stjórnar blaði
ok leggja eld í ár;
era svá brattr breki, né svá blár unnir,
þó kómztu heill af hafi.
11. 'Limrúnar skaltu kunna ef þú vilt læknir vera
ok kunna sár at sjá;
á berki skal þær rísta ok á baðmi viðar,
þeim er lúta austr limar.
12. 'Málrúnar skaltu kunna ef þú vilt at mangi þér
heiptum gjaldi harm;
þær um vindr, þær um vefr,
þær um setr allar saman,
á því þingi, er þjóðir skulu
í fulla dóma fara.

Sigrdrífa said:

- 5.²⁴ I bring you beer, apple-tree of the mail-coat-assembly,²⁵
 mixed with might and great glory;
 it's full of spells and helpful staves,²⁶
 good incantations and pleasure-runes!²⁷
- 6.²⁸ 'Victory-runes you must inscribe²⁹ if you want to have victory,
 and inscribe them on a sword's hilt,
 some on the battle-boards(?), some on the slaughter-cords(?),³⁰
 and name Týr³¹ twice.
- 7.³² 'Ale-runes³³ you must know if you desire that another's wife
 shouldn't betray you, if you trust [her];
 on a horn one must carve them and on the back of the hand
 and mark Nauðr³⁴ on the nail.
- 8.³⁵ 'A full goblet one must sign³⁶ and guard against mischief,
 and throw leek³⁷ into the liquid:
 then I know it, that never for you
 will mead be mixed with harm.
- 9.³⁸ 'Protection-runes you must know if you want to protect
 and loosen children from women;³⁹
 on the palms one must carve them⁴⁰ and clasp them around the limbs,⁴¹
 and then ask the *dísir*⁴² to do good.⁴³
- 10.⁴⁴ 'Surf-runes you must carve if you want to have protected
 sail-steeds⁴⁵ at sea;
 on the stem one must carve them and on the rudder's blade,
 and burn them into the oar;⁴⁶
 the breaker isn't so high, nor the waves so dark-blue,⁴⁷
 that you won't come safe from the sea.
- 11.⁴⁸ 'Limb⁴⁹-runes you must know if you want to be a healer
 and to know how to look at wounds;
 on bark one must cut them and on a tree of the wood,
 one whose limbs incline eastward.
- 12.⁵⁰ 'Speech-runes you must know if you desire that no one
 should repay you for a harm with hateful deeds;
 one winds them, one weaves them,
 one sets them all together,
 at the assembly, when people must proceed
 into full courts of justice.

13. 'Hugrúnar skaltu kunna ef þú vilt hverjum vera
geðsvinnari guma;
þær of réð, þær of reist,
þær um hugði Hroptr,
af þeim legi er lekit hafði
ór hausi Heiðdraupnis
ok ór horni Hoddrofnis.
14. 'Á bjargi stóð með Brimis eggjar,
hafði sér á hofði hjálm;
þá mælti Míms hofuð
fróðlíkt it fyrsta orð
ok sagði sanna stafi.
15. 'Á skildi, kvað, ristnar, þeim er stendr fyrir skínanda goði,
á eyra Árvaks ok á Alsvinns hófi,
á því hvéli er snýsk undir reið Rungnis,
á Sleipnis tönnum ok á sleða fjotrur,
16. 'á bjarnar hrammi ok á Braga tungu,
á úlfs klóm ok á arnar nefi,
á blóðgum vængjum ok á brúar sporði,
á lausnar lófa ok á líknar spori,
17. 'á gleri ok á gulli ok á gumna heillum,
í víni ok virtri ok vilisessi,
á Gungnis oddi ok á Grana brjósti,
á Nornar nagli ok á nefi uglu.
18. 'Allar váru af skafnar, þær er váru á ristnar,
ok hverfðar við inn helga mjöð,
ok sendar á víða vega;
þær ru með Ásum, þær ru með álfum,
sumar með vísum Vönum,
sumar hafa mennskir menn.
19. 'Þat eru bókrúnar, þat eru bjargrúnar,
ok allar qlrúnar,
ok mætar meginrúnar,
hveim er þær kná óviltar ok óspilltar
sér at heillum hafa;
njóttu, ef þú namt,
unz rjúfask regin!

- 13.⁵¹ 'Mind-runes you must know if you want to be
of wiser mind than any [other] man;
he⁵² read them, he carved them,
Hroptr⁵³ thought them up,
from the liquid which had leaked
from Heiðdraupnir's skull⁵⁴
and from Hoddrofnir's horn.⁵⁵
14. 'On a cliff he⁵⁶ stood with Brimir's edges,⁵⁷
he had a helmet on his head;
then Mímr's head⁵⁸ spoke
wisely the first word
and said true staves.⁵⁹
- 15.⁶⁰ 'On a shield, he⁶¹ said, [runes were] carved,⁶² the one which stands
before the shining god,⁶³
on Árvakr's ear and on Alsvinnr's hoof,⁶⁴
on the wheel which turns under Rungnir's chariot,⁶⁵
on Sleipnir's teeth⁶⁶ and on a sledge's fetters,⁶⁷
- 16.⁶⁸ 'on a bear's paw and on Bragi's tongue,⁶⁹
on a wolf's claws and on an eagle's beak,
on bloody wings⁷⁰ and on a bridge's fish-tail,⁷¹
on a midwife's palm⁷² and on a helper's footprint,⁷³
- 17.⁷⁴ 'on glass and on gold and on men's amulets,
in wine and wort⁷⁵ and a favoured seat,
on Gungnir's point⁷⁶ and on Grani's breast,⁷⁷
on a Norn's nail and on an owl's nose.⁷⁸
- 18.⁷⁹ 'All were scraped off, those which were carved on,
and mixed with the holy mead,
and sent on wide ways;
they are with Æsir, they are with elves,
some with wise Vanir,
some human beings have.
- 19.⁸⁰ 'Those are book-runes,⁸¹ those are protection-runes,
and all ale-runes,
and worthy might-runes,
for anyone who can have them, unconfused and unspoilt,
for himself as amulets;
use [them], if you learn them [them],
until the powers are ripped apart!⁸²

20. 'Nú skaltu kjósa, allz þér er kostur um boðinn,
hvassa vápna hlynur:
sögn eða þögn — hafðu þér sjálfr í hug!
Öll eru mein of metin.'
21. 'Munka ek flœja, þótt mik feigan vitir,
emka ek með bleyði borinn;
ástráð þín ek vil öll hafa,
svá lengi sem ek lifi!'
22. 'Þat ræð ek þér it fyrsta, at þú við frændr þína
vammalaust verir;
síðr þú hefnir, þótt þeir sakar gøri —
þat, kveða, dauðum duga.
23. 'Þat ræð ek þér annat, at þú eið né sverir,
nema þann er saðr sé;
grimmir símar ganga at tryggðrofi;
armr er vára vargr!
24. 'Þat ræð ek þér þriðja, at þú þingi á
deilit við heimska hali;
þvíat ósviðr maðr lætr opt kveðin
verri orð en viti.
25. 'Allt er vant ef þú við þegir —
þá þykkir þú með bleyði borinn
eða sönnu sagðr;
hætr er heimiskviðr,
nema sér góðan geti;
annars dags láttu hans öndu farit,
ok launa svá lýðum lygi!
26. 'Þat ræð ek þér it fjórða ef býr fordæða,
vammafull, á vegi:
ganga er betra en gista sé,
þótt þik nótt um nemi.
27. 'Fornjósnar augu þurfu fira synir,
hvars skulu vreiðir vega;
opt þölvísar konur sitja brautu nær,
þær er deyfa sverð ok sefa.
28. 'Þat ræð ek þér it fimmta, þóttu fagnar sér
brúðir bekkjum á:
sífa silfr látaðu þínum svefni ráða;
teygjattu þér at kossi konur!

- 20.⁸³ 'Now you must choose, since a choice is offered to you,
maple of sharp weapons:⁸⁴
speech or silence — keep it in mind yourself!⁸⁵
All misfortunes are measured.'⁸⁶
- 21.⁸⁷ 'I won't flee, even if you know me to be doomed,
I wasn't born with cowardice;
I want to have all your loving counsel,
as long as I live!'
- 22.⁸⁸ 'I advise you this as the first thing, that you be
faultless toward your kin;
[that you] avenge less,⁸⁹ even if they give cause —
that, they say, does good for the dead.⁹⁰
23. 'I advise you this second, that you don't swear an oath,
unless it's a true one;
grim bonds follow upon a breach of troth;
wretched is the wolf⁹¹ of vows!⁹²
24. 'I advise you this third, that you don't dispute
with stupid men at an assembly;
because an unwise man often lets slip
a word that's worse than he knows.⁹³
25. 'All is wanting if you're silent in response⁹⁴ —
then you seem [to have been] born with cowardice,
or [to be] accused in truth;
home-repute⁹⁵ is risky,
unless one gets oneself a good one;
have his breath destroyed another day,⁹⁶
and so repay his lying to people!
26. 'I advise you this as the fourth thing if a witch dwells,⁹⁷
full of vices, on your way:
it's better to walk on than be her guest,
even if night should overtake you.
27. 'The sons of men need scouting eyes,
wherever wrathful ones shall fight;⁹⁸
often women wise in evil⁹⁹ sit near the way,
they who blunt sword and spirit.¹⁰⁰
28. 'I advise you this as the fifth thing, even though you see
fair brides¹⁰¹ on the benches:
don't let [their] relatives' silver¹⁰² rule your sleep;¹⁰³
don't lure women to you for kissing!

29. 'Þat ræð ek þér it séttá, þótt með seggjum fari
 plðrmál til ofug:
 drukkinn deila skalattu við dólgvíðu —
 margan stelr vín viti.
30. 'Söngr ok pl hefr seggjum verit
 mörqum at móðtrega:
 sumum at bana, sumum at þolstøfum;
 fjölð er þat er tregr fira.
31. 'Þat ræð ek þér it sjaunda ef þú sakar deilir
 við hugfulla hali:
 berjask er betra en brenna sé
 inni auðstøfum.
32. 'Þat ræð ek þér it átta, at þú skalt við illu sjá
 ok firrask flærðarstafi;
 mey þú teygjat né manns konu,
 né eggja ofgamans!
33. 'Þat ræð ek þér it níunda, at þú nám bjargir,
 hvars þú á foldum finnr,
 hvárts eru sótt dauðir eða eru sædauðir
 eða eru vápndauðir verar.
34. 'Laug skal gøra þeim er liðnir eru,
 þvá hendr ok hofuð,
 kempa ok þerra, áðr í kistu fari,
 ok biðja sælan sofa.
35. 'Þat ræð ek þér it tíunda, at þú trúir aldri
 várum vargðropa,
 hvártstu ert bróður bani
 eða hafir þú feldan fōður:
 úlfr er í ungum syni,
 þótt sé hann gulli gladdr.
36. 'Sakar ok heiptir, hyggjat svefngar vera,
 né harm in heldr;
 vits ok vápna vant er jōfri at fá,
 þeim er skal fremstr með firum.
37. 'Þat ræð ek þér it ellipta, at þú við illu sér
 hvern veg at vegi;
 langt líf þikkjumsk ek lofðungs vita,
 rōmm eru rōg of risin!'

29. 'I advise you this as the sixth thing, even if ale-talk
turns too hostile among men:
when drunk, you mustn't dispute with a battle-tree¹⁰⁴ —
wine steals the wits from many.
30. 'Song and ale have for many men
been a source of mood-sorrow:
for some through death, for some through evil-staves,¹⁰⁵
many's the thing that grieves men.
31. 'I advise you this as the seventh thing if you dispute cases¹⁰⁶
against courageous men:
for treasure-staves,¹⁰⁷ it's better to fight
than to be burned inside.¹⁰⁸
32. 'I advise you this as the eighth thing, that you must guard against evil
and distance yourself from deceit-staves;¹⁰⁹
don't seduce a maiden or a man's wife,
or incite them to excessive pleasure!¹¹⁰
33. 'I advise you this as the ninth thing, that you protect corpses,¹¹¹
wherever you encounter them on earth,
whether they are sickness-dead or are sea-dead
or are weapon-dead men.
34. 'One must prepare a bath for those who have passed away,
wash their hands and head,
comb and dry them, before they go in the coffin,
and pray that they sleep blessedly.
35. 'I advise you this as the tenth thing, that you never trust
the vows of an outlaw's¹¹² offspring,
whether you're his brother's slayer
or you have felled his father:
there's a wolf in a young son,
even if he's gladdened with gold.
36. 'Lawsuits and hatreds, don't think that they're sleepy,¹¹³
nor sorrow¹¹⁴ any the more;
there's a need for a boar¹¹⁵ to obtain wit and weapons,
for the one who shall be foremost among men.
37. 'I advise you this as the eleventh thing, that you guard against evil
in every way along the way;¹¹⁶
I believe I know the praiseworthy one's life will be long;¹¹⁷
strong are the strifes that have arisen!'

Textual Apparatus to *Sigrdrífumál*

Sigrdrífumál] This title is not in **R**, nor does this manuscript contain any other indication that a new text begins at this point. The distinction between *Fm.* and *Sd.* is an editorial perception, which has become traditional, on the basis of later, paper manuscripts. Some of these have a different title: *Brynhildarkviða Buðladóttur in fyrsta* 'The First Poem of Brynhildr, Buðli's Daughter'.

Stefni] **R** *stefni*

1/4 *nauðir*] **R** *nauþr*

8/4–6 *þá ... mjǫðr*] **R** absent; supplied from VS 21

9/4 *lófa*] **R** *lofo*

12/2 *mangi*] **R** *magni*

27/3 *vreiðir*] **R** *reiþir*

29/2 *fari*] After this word comes a major lacuna in **R**. The text of the remaining stanzas of *Sd.* is based on texts in paper manuscripts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which seem to derive from **R** before the lacuna's occurrence, as recorded in the third part of Jón Helgason, *Eddadigte* (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1952–56). For details of these manuscripts and of emendations, see that work.

Notes to the Translation

- 1 'Hind's Fell', as in *Fm.* and VS. Chapter 6 of *Norna-Gests þáttur* has *Hindarheiðr* 'Hind's Heath'.
- 2 Francia, kingdom of the Franks.
- 3 A protective wall made from shields placed side by side, a shield-wall.
- 4 I.e., the man's.
- 5 Sigurðr's sword.
- 6 This term denotes the grey rings of her mail-coat, but may also suggest the metaphorical fetters of the woman's magically induced, death-like sleep (cf. *Akv.* 16).
- 7 Sigurðr's answer is treated as st. 2 in Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason, *Eddukvæði, Íslenzk fornrit*, 2 vols. (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 2014), II.
- 8 Or perhaps 'a raven's corpse-strips' (i.e., shrouds on a dead body). The precise meaning of this passage is uncertain. It might allude to Sigurðr's killing of Fáfnir and Reginn, whose unburied bodies would have become food for ravens, or to his cutting of the sleeping woman's mail-coat, which is compared to the white windings around a corpse.
- 9 Sleeping spells carved in runes on a thorn. See below and *Fm.* 43–44.
- 10 I.e., a drink to strengthen his memory. Cf. *Sd.* 5 and *Hdl.* 45.
- 11 This stanza and the next are presumably spoken by the newly awoken woman, Sigrdrífa.
- 12 'Day', personified. In *SnEGylf* (10, p. 13), Dagr's mother is *Nótt* 'Night'.
- 13 Presumably gods or men; cf. *HH.* I 7.
- 14 'Night', personified.

- 15 Possibly *Jörð* 'Earth', whom *SnEGylf* (10, p. 13) identifies as Nótt's daughter; cf. *Sd.* 4.
- 16 Gods, sometimes specifically the tribe led by Óðinn.
- 17 Goddesses.
- 18 'Victory Driver' or perhaps 'Victory Snowdrift' (i.e., 'Battle'). In *VS* 21 she is called *Brynhildr*. The question of her name is further complicated by *SnESkáld* (I, 41, p. 47), which does not mention the name *Sigrdrífa* but records that *vaknaði hon ok nefndisk Hildr. Hon er kǫlluð Brynhildr ok var valkyrja* 'she awoke and named herself Hildr. She is called Brynhildr and was a valkyrie.' In *Hlr* 7 *Brynhildr* says she was formerly called 'Hildr under helm'.
- 19 'Helmet Gunnarr'.
- 20 Or *Hǫða's*. In *Hlr.* 8 and *VS* 21 the name is *Auða*.
- 21 Some editors present this sentence as a half-stanza of *fornyrðislag*, with emendation of *Hauðu* to *Auðu*: *Annarr hét Agnarr, Auðu bróðir, / er vætr engi vildi þiggja*.
- 22 Cf. *Hlr.* 9.
- 23 *Sigurðr*.
- 24 *VS* 21 has a close variant of this stanza; instead of *gamanrúna* 'pleasure-runes' (cf. *Háv.* 120, 130), it has *gamanræðna* 'pleasing talks'.
- 25 A kenning for 'warrior', the 'assembly' of mail-coats being battle.
- 26 I.e., infused with magical songs and helpful runes.
- 27 Cf. *Háv.* 120, 130.
- 28 *VS* 21 has a variant of this stanza (7); notably, instead of *ef þú vilt sigr hafa* 'if you want to have victory', it has *ef þú vill snotr vera* 'if you want to be wise'.
- 29 It would perhaps be better to replace this stanza's first instance of *rísta* 'to inscribe' with *kunna* 'to know'.
- 30 *Vétrim* and *valbost* are obscure terms for parts of a sword. If they are parts of the hilt, perhaps the former is a metal plate or ring, the latter (also in *HHv.* 9) a winding around the grip.
- 31 A god of victory, one of the Æsir.
- 32 *VS* 21 has a close variant of this stanza (10).
- 33 Presumably with a secondary or underlying sense of 'good-fortune runes', *alu* being an early Norse word for 'good luck'.
- 34 Presumably an 'n' rune, *Nauðr* being its name. It means 'need', 'necessity' or 'distress'.
- 35 *VS* 21 has a variant of this stanza, from which the second half is here supplied.
- 36 Consecrated by marking with a holy sign.
- 37 A plant of supposedly magical power.
- 38 *VS* 21 has a variant of this stanza.
- 39 I.e., hasten childbirth. Cf. *Od.* 7.
- 40 Cf. *Sd.* 16.
- 41 Or 'joints'.
- 42 Supernatural women similar to, or identifiable with, the Nornir, who were associated with fate and childbirth; cf. *Fm.* 12.
- 43 I.e., to help.

- 44 VS 21 has a variant of this stanza.
- 45 Ships.
- 46 Literally 'lay fire in (the) oar'.
- 47 A colour associated with death in Old Norse literature.
- 48 VS 21 has a variant of this stanza.
- 49 Either the limb of a tree (i.e., a branch or twig) or that of a person—or both.
- 50 VS 21 also has this stanza.
- 51 VS 21 has a shorter version of this stanza, ending at *Hroptr*.
- 52 *Hroptr*.
- 53 An alias of Óðinn. It might mean 'Cryptic/Hidden One' or 'Invoker'.
- 54 The identity of *Heiðdraupnir* is obscure. The name appears to mean 'Bright/Honour/Heath Dripper'. Cf. *Grm.* 25.
- 55 *Hoddrofnir*'s identity is also obscure. The name might mean 'Hoard/Treasure Destroyer'. Cf. *Grm.* 26.
- 56 Probably Óðinn.
- 57 Cf. *HH. II* 10. *Brimir* is here presumably the name of a sword; cf. *Grm.* 44. The events of this stanza are obscure.
- 58 *Mímr* is probably better known as *Mímir*; see note to *Vsp.* 45.
- 59 'Staves' as in runic wisdom, words about runic letters.
- 60 VS 21 has a variant of this stanza.
- 61 Presumably *Mímr*'s head.
- 62 VS 21 explicitly has *váru ristnar* 'were carved'.
- 63 The shining god is the sun. For the shield, see *Grm.* 38.
- 64 *Árvakr* and *Alsvinnr* (*Alsviðr*) are the horses that draw the sun; see *Grm.* 37.
- 65 The Old Norse line's lack of alliteration suggests textual corruption. The identity of *Rungnir* (*Raugnir* or *Røgnir* in VS 21) is uncertain. Possibilities include the giant *Hrungnir*, *Pórr* and Óðinn.
- 66 *Sleipnir* is Óðinn's horse.
- 67 B. La Farge and J. Tucker, *Glossary to the Poetic Edda* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1992), p. 62 defines these as 'metal clamps or pieces of wood which attach the upper parts of a sleigh to the runners'.
- 68 VS 21 also has this stanza.
- 69 *Bragi* is a god of poetry.
- 70 Perhaps an allusion to the gruesome 'blood-eagle', supposedly a rite associated with sacrifices to Óðinn; see *Rm.* 26. If so, the 'bloody wings' are the victim's splayed lungs.
- 71 The foot of a bridge.
- 72 Cf. *Sd.* 9.
- 73 Or 'trail'.
- 74 VS 21 has a significantly different version of this stanza: *Á gleri ok á gulli ok á góðu silfri, / í víni ok í virtri ok á völu sessi, í guma holdi ok Gaupnis oddi ok á gýgjar brjósti, / á nornar nagli ok á nefi uglu* 'On glass and on gold and on good silver, in wine and in wort and on a seeress's

- seat, in men's flesh and on Gaupnir's point and on a giantess's breast, on a Norn's nail and on an owl's nose'.
- 75 Unfermented beer.
- 76 *Gungnir* 'Wavering/Shaking One' is Óðinn's spear.
- 77 Grani is Sigurðr's horse.
- 78 Beak.
- 79 VS 21 has a close variant of this stanza.
- 80 VS 21 has a close variant of this stanza.
- 81 Or 'beech-runes'; another possibility is a mistake for *bótrunar* 'remedy-runes'.
- 82 The ruling gods, including Óðinn, will die violently at Ragnarok.
- 83 VS 21 has a variant of this stanza.
- 84 A kenning for 'warrior'.
- 85 The sense and significance of this line are not entirely clear.
- 86 I.e., they are (proportionately?) preordained. VS 21 has *mál* 'words, speeches' instead of *mein* 'misfortunes'.
- 87 That Sigurðr speaks this stanza is explicit in VS 21, where a close variant is quoted.
- 88 Sigrdrífa resumes speaking.
- 89 I.e., take no revenge against them (probably).
- 90 Presumably because one's kin will then dispose of one's body properly and recall one with affection.
- 91 Or 'criminal'.
- 92 I.e., an oath-breaker.
- 93 Literally, 'lets a worse word [or 'speech'] be spoken than he knows'.
- 94 I.e., to an accusation.
- 95 Probably a rumoured reputation about oneself.
- 96 I.e., kill your false accuser another day.
- 97 Instead of a *fordæða* 'evil-doer,' 'witch', VS 22 refers to *váandar vættir* 'evil (female) creatures/spirits'.
- 98 For the Old Norse line to alliterate, it requires an East Norse or preliterate West Norse form of *reiðr*, namely **vreiðr*; cf. *Fm.* 7, 17, 30; *Ls.* 15, 18, 27.
- 99 VS 22 refers to *illar vættir* 'evil (female) creatures/spirits'.
- 100 These women may well be supernatural. Cf. *Rm.* 24, *Hm.* 15, 28.
- 101 Presumably potential brides, young women.
- 102 I.e., for a dowry.
- 103 I.e., dominate your dreams, or, perhaps, keep you awake at night.
- 104 Warrior.
- 105 Evil runes or words.
- 106 Lawsuits.
- 107 Wealthy men.

- 108 I.e., inside your house, like, most famously, Njáll and members of his family in the thirteenth-century Icelandic *Brennu-Njáls saga* 'Saga of Burnt-Njáll'.
- 109 Perhaps runic charms for seduction, or simply deceitful or wanton words or ways.
- 110 I.e., excessive sexual pleasure.
- 111 Presumably by burying them.
- 112 *Vargr* can also mean 'wolf'.
- 113 I.e., dormant.
- 114 Or 'harm'.
- 115 Prince, warrior.
- 116 The interpretation of this line is uncertain.
- 117 Possibly *þikkjumsk* should be emended to *þikkjumska* to give the meaning 'I don't believe I know ...' (i.e., 'I know the praiseworthy one's life will be short').