



THE POETIC EDDA

A Dual-Language Edition

EDWARD PETTIT



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Svipdagsmál

(*Gróugaldr* and *Fjolsvinnsmál*)

The poems *Gróugaldr* (Gg.) ‘Gróa’s Incantation’ and *Fjolsvinnsmál* (Fj.) ‘The Sayings of Fjolsvinnr’, both of which are in *ljóðahátttr*, survive in neither **R** nor **A** nor any other medieval source, but only in numerous seventeenth-century manuscripts. The essence of the eponymous hero Svipdagr’s quest is also known from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Scandinavian ballads about a certain *ungen Sveidal* ‘young Sveidal’ (and variants of this name), although these do not derive immediately from the Eddic poems, from which they differ substantially by, among other things, omitting much of the dialogue.¹ On this basis, Gg. and Fj., which appear to represent the start and conclusion of the hero’s quest, are often presented together in editions under the modern title of *Svipdagsmál* ‘The Lay of Svipdagr’. The date of the Eddic poems’ composition is uncertain, but it is likely that they at least draw on medieval story-elements, themes and imagery.

Among the undoubtedly medieval Eddic poems, *Fsk.* contains the most apparent parallels to Svipdagr’s quest. Despite gaps in the story of Svipdagr—whether due to textual loss or because knowledge of the missing events was assumed—and many textual difficulties in *Fj.*, it seems that in both *Fsk.* and *Svipdagsmál* the hero (in *Fsk.*, Skírnir) undertakes a perilous journey to an Otherworldly complex in the land of giants, one implicitly visited otherwise only by the dead. He does so to win a female associated with light (respectively, Gerðr and Menglǫð), who inhabits a residence rich with gold and surrounded by ‘discerning flicker-flame’. In both cases the hero converses with an unwelcoming giant, passes ferocious guard-dogs and, it seems likely, acquires a remarkable twig-weapon with which he finally wins the object of his bridal quest.

Collectively, these similarities appear more than coincidental. They invite the proposal that *Svipdagsmál* is informed by a mythic theme akin to that of *Fsk.* (insofar as that can be discerned), which, I have argued elsewhere, may well be celestial (solar/lunar) in nature.² It is, however, debatable to what extent this theme, if present, was

1 For an English translation of one Swedish ballad, in which the object of the hero’s quest is called *Spegelklar* ‘Mirrorclear’, see I. Cumpstey, trans., *The Faraway North: Scandinavian Ballads* (Cumbria: Skadi Press, 2016), pp. 71–76.

2 See E. Pettit, *The Waning Sword: Conversion Imagery and Celestial Myth in ‘Beowulf’* (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.11647/obp.0190>, especially chapters 7 and 16.

apparent to the composers of these poems and their audiences, and how completely and coherently the surviving poems communicate it.

Synopsis

Gróugaldr

Prose: An initial sentence explains that this poem is called ‘Gróa’s Incantation’, which Gróa chanted to her son (later named as Svipdagr) when she was dead.

Verse: Svipdagr calls on his mother to awaken at her grave (1). She asks him the nature of his trouble (2). He says that his (unnamed) stepmother has set him an impossible task—to visit a certain Menglǫð (3). Gróa replies that his journey will be long, if it proves successful (4), whereupon the fearful Svipdagr asks her for incantations to protect him (5).

Gróa chants him nine incantations: the first, which Rindr chanted to Rani, to enable Svipdagr to thrust aside something terrible (6); the second, associated with the Norn Urðr, to aid him on roads he would rather not travel (7); the third, to subdue dangerous rivers as he passes them (8); the fourth, to pacify enemies (9); the fifth, to loosen shackles (10), the sixth, to calm a maelstrom and grant safe passage (11); the seventh, to prevent frostbite (12); the eighth, to protect against a dead Christian woman at night (13); the ninth, to elicit wisdom from the giant Mímir (14).

Gróa then gives Svipdagr a parting blessing and stresses that he must remember her words (15–16).

Fjølsvinnsmál

Verse: This poem begins with Svipdagr observing a fortress of the giants, which rises into view as he approaches it, and a voice—probably that of a giant (or possibly a dwarf)—telling him to be off (1). Svipdagr asks what sort of ‘ogress’ (actually probably a male giant) he sees moving amid the flames that surround at least part of the stronghold, and the giant asks him his purpose (2). Svipdagr again asks for the ‘ogress’s’ identity and remarks on his lack of hospitality, at which the giant again tells him to be on his way (3). The giant adds that he is called Fjølsviðr, and tells him to depart a third time (4). Svipdagr expresses his desire to live in the glowing courts and golden halls that he sees (5).

Fjølsviðr asks for Svipdagr’s origins, and Svipdagr conceals his true identity in reply (6). Svipdagr asks who controls the stronghold (7). Fjølsviðr says it is Menglǫð (8). Svipdagr asks the name of the highly dangerous gate before him (9). Fjølsviðr identifies it as Þrymgjöll, which was made by the sons of Sólblindi (probably dwarves), and which fetters every visitor who tries to open it (10). Svipdagr enquires about the dangerous courtyard he sees (11). Fjølsviðr identifies it as Gastropnir, an enclosure of clay, which will stand as long as the world endures (12). Svipdagr asks about the

fierce dogs he sees (13). Fjølsviðr identifies them as Gífr and Geri (14). Svipdagr asks whether anyone can get inside while these dogs sleep (15). Fjølsviðr says no, because one dog sleeps by night, the other by day (16). Svipdagr asks whether they can be distracted by any meat (17). Fjølsviðr says only by pieces of Viðófnir, a cockerel (18).

Svipdagr asks the name of the tree whose branches spread through all lands (19). Fjølsviðr calls it Mímameiðr, whose demise will be unexpected, as neither fire nor iron can harm it (20). Svipdagr asks what comes from that tree's spirit(?) (21). Fjølsviðr says that exposing its fruit to fire (to produce smoke?) helps women with complaints of the womb(?) (22).

Svipdagr asks the name of the golden cockerel sitting in the tree (23). Fjølsviðr calls him Viðófnir, who oppresses the giantess Sinmara (wife or daughter of the fire-giant Surtr) with a single sorrow (24). Svipdagr asks whether any weapon can kill Viðófnir (25). Fjølsviðr says it is called *Lævateinn* 'Twig of Treacheries', but that Loptr (Loki) plucked it and took down to the world of the dead, where it resides in a strongly locked chest beside Sinmara (26). Svipdagr asks whether anyone can go after that twig and escape alive (27). Fjølsviðr indicates that this is possible, if that person can bring a rare object to Sinmara in exchange (28). Svipdagr asks for the object's identity (29). Fjølsviðr identifies it as a radiant sickle that Viðófnir keeps hold of (30).

Svipdagr asks the name of the flame-surrounded hall (31). Fjølsviðr calls it Lyr, and says it trembles on a spike and, for humans, is the subject of hearsay alone (32). Svipdagr asks who made it (33). Fjølsviðr lists the names of its makers, who are apparently dwarves (34).

Svipdagr asks the name of the rock on which he sees a bride (presumably Menglǫð) (35). Fjølsviðr calls it Lyfjaberg and identifies it as a pleasure for the sick and for infertile women, if they climb it (36). Svipdagr asks the names of the maidens who sing (or sit) before Menglǫð (37). Fjølsviðr names them (38). Svipdagr asks whether they protect women who sacrifice to them (39). Fjølsviðr says they protect everyone who sacrifices to them (40).

Svipdagr enquires whether any man can sleep in Menglǫð's arms (41). Fjølsviðr says none can, except Svipdagr, who is destined to marry her (42). Svipdagr immediately commands that the doors be opened, reveals his true name, and asks whether Menglǫð will receive him warmly (43). Menglǫð is informed of the arrival of the newcomer, whom, the messenger thinks, is Svipdagr (44). She declares that ravens shall blind the messenger if he is lying (45). She asks Svipdagr his origin and name (46). He identifies himself as *Svipdagr*, son of *Sólbjartr* 'Swooping/Fleeting Day, son of Sun-Bright' (47), whereupon Menglǫð welcomes him with a kiss and her love (48). She says that, having waited for him for ages, her wish has finally come true (49), that their painful love-longings are over, and that they shall live passionately together for the rest of their days (50).

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Gróugaldr

Gróugaldr, er hon gól syni sínum dauð:

1. 'Vaki þú, Gróa! Vaki þú, góð kona!
Vek ek þik dauðra dura,
ef þú þat mant, at þú þinn mög bæðir
til kumbl dysjar koma!'
2. 'Hvat er nú annt mínnum einga syni?
Hverju ertu nú þölví borinn,
er þú þá móður kallar,
er til moldar er komin
ok ór ljóðheimum liðin?'
3. 'Ljótu leikborði skaut fyr mik hin lævís kona,
sú er faðmaði minn föður;
þar það hon mik koma, er kvæmtki veit —
móti Menglōðu!'
4. 'Lōng er fōr, langir ru farvegar,
langir ru manna munir,
ef þat verðr at þú þinn vilja bíðr,
ok skeikar þá Skuld at skōpum.'
5. 'Galdra þú mér gal, þá er góðir eru —
þjarg þú, móðir, megi!
Á vegum allr hygg ek at ek verða muna,
þykkjumk ek til ungr afi!'
6. 'Þann gel ek þér fyrstan, þann kveða fjōlnýtan,
þann gól Rindr Rani,
at þú of ǫxl skjótir því er þér atalt þykkir —
sjálfr leið þú sjálfan þik.
7. 'Þann gel ek þér annan, ef þú árna skalt
viljalauss á vegum:
Urðar lokur haldi þér ǫllum megum,
er þú á *sinnum* sér.
8. 'Þann gel ek þér inn þriðja, ef þér þjóðár
falla at fjōrlotum:
Horn ok Ruðr snúisk til Heljar meðan,
en þverri æ fyr þér.

Gróa's Incantation

'Gróa's¹ Incantation',² which she chanted to her son³ when [she was] dead:

- 1.⁴ 'Awake, Gróa! Awake, good woman!
I awaken you at the doors of the dead,⁵
[to see] if you recall it, that you invited your boy
to come to your monument-mound!'⁶
2. 'What is it now which concerns my only son?
By what evil are you now overcome,
when you call on that mother [of yours],
when she's come to earth
and passed from people-homes?''⁷
3. 'An ugly playing-board⁸ the mischief-wise woman pushed before me,⁹
she who embraced my father;
there she commanded me to come, where she knows one can't come —
to meet Menglǫð!¹⁰
4. 'Long is¹¹ the journey, long are¹² the journey-ways,
long are¹³ men's desires,¹⁴
if it turns out that you attain your wish,
and Skuld¹⁵ then wends her way according to the fates.'
5. 'Chant me incantations, those which are good —
save, mother, your son!
I think I'll be wholly destroyed on the ways,
I seem to me too young a youth!'
6. 'That one I chant for you first,¹⁶ the one they call very useful,
the one Rindr chanted to Rani,¹⁷
so that you may thrust from your shoulder that which seems
to you terrible —
let yourself lead yourself!
7. 'That one I chant for you second, if you must quest
unwillingly¹⁸ on ways:
may Urðr's locks(?)¹⁹ guard you on all sides,
when you're on your way.
8. 'That one I chant for you as the third, if mighty rivers
fall to your life's betrayal(?):²⁰
may Horn and Ruðr²¹ turn to Hel while [you pass by],
and always dwindle before you.

9. 'Þann gel ek þér inn fjórða, ef þik fjáendr standa,
 gørvir á gálgsvegi:
 hugr þeim hverfi til handa þér,
 ok snúisk þeim til sátta sefi.
10. 'Þann gel ek þér inn fimmta, ef þér fjöturr verðr
 borinn at boglimum:
 Leifnis elda læt ek þér fyr legg of kveðinn,
 ok stækkr þá láss af limum, en af fótum fjöturr.
11. 'Þann gel ek þér inn séttu, ef þú á sjó kœmr
 meira en menn viti: logn ok lög
 gangi þér í lúðr saman ok ljái þér æ friðdrjúgrar farar.
12. 'Þann gel ek þér inn sjaunda, ef þik sækja kœmr
 frost á fjalli há: hrævakulði
 megit þínu holdi fara, ok haldit þér líki at liðum.
13. 'Þann gel ek þér inn átta, ef þik úti nemr
 nótt á niflvegi, at því firr megi þér
 til meins gøra — kristin dauð kona.
14. 'Þann gel ek þér inn njunda, ef þú við inn naddgøfga
 orðum skiptir jötun:
 máls ok manvits sé þér af Mímis hjarta
 gnóga of gefit.
15. 'Farir þú nú æva þar er forað þykkir,
 ok standit þér mein fyr munum;
 á jarðföstum steini stóð ek innan dura,
 meðan ek þér galdra gól!
16. 'Móður orð ber þú, mögr, héðan,
 ok lát þér í brjósti búa!
 Því nóga heill skaltu of aldr hafa,
 meðan þú mín orð of mant!'

9. 'That one I chant for you as the fourth, if enemies beset you,
prepared,²² on the gallows-way:²³
may their heart come²⁴ into your hands,²⁵
and their spirit incline²⁶ to reconciliations.
10. 'That one I chant for you as the fifth, if a fetter is
borne to²⁷ your bending limbs:²⁸
I let Leifnir's flames(?)²⁹ be spoken over your leg,³⁰
and the shackle then springs from your limbs, and the fetter from your feet.
11. 'That one I chant for you as the sixth, if you come upon a sea
greater than men may know: may calm and water
go together for you in the mill³¹ and always grant you a peace-rich passage.
12. 'That one I chant for you as the seventh, if frost comes seeking you
on a high mountain: may corpse-coldness³²
be unable to destroy your flesh, and may it not bind your body
by the limbs(?).³³
13. 'That one I chant for you as the eighth, if night [over]takes you
outside on the mist-way,³⁴ so that she may be less able³⁵
to do you harm — a dead Christian woman.³⁶
14. 'That one I chant for you as the ninth, if you have to exchange words
with the stud-ennobled³⁷ giant:³⁸
may sufficient eloquence and commonsense be given to you
from Mímir's heart.³⁹
15. 'May you never now go where it's thought a danger,
and may misfortune not stand in the way of your wishes;
on an earth-fast⁴⁰ stone I stood within doors,⁴¹
as long as I chanted incantations for you!
16. 'Bear your mother's words hence, boy,
and let them lodge in your breast!
In that way you shall have enough luck throughout your life,
as long as you remember my words!'

Fjølsvinnsmál

1. Útan garða hann sá upp um koma
þursa þjóðar sjöt;
‘Úrgar brautir árnaðu aptr heðan —
áttattu hér, verndarvanr, veru!’
2. ‘Hvat er þat flagða er stendr fyr forgörðum
ok hvarflar um hættan lög?’
‘Hvers þú leitar, eða hvers þú á leitum ert,
eða hvat viltu, vinlauss, vita?’
3. ‘Hvat er þat flagða er stendr fyr forgarði
ok býðrat líðöndum lög?’
‘Sæmðarorða lauss hefir þú, seggr, of lifat,
ok haltu heim héðan!’
4. ‘Fjølsviðr ek heiti, en ek á fróðan sefa,
þeygi em ek míns mildr matar;
innan garða þú kemr hér aldregi,
ok dríf þú nú, vargr, at vegi!’
5. ‘Augna gamans fýsir aptr fán,
hvars hann getr svást at sjá;
garðar glóa mér þykkja of gullna sali —
hér munda ek eðli una!’
6. ‘Segðu mér hverjum ertu, sveinn, borinn,
eða hverra ertu manna mögr?’
‘Vindkaldr ek heiti, Várkaldr hét minn faðir,
þess var Fjølkaldr faðir.
7. ‘Segðu mér þat, Fjølsviðr, er ek þik fregna mun
ok ek vilda vita:
hverr hér ræðr ok ríki hefir
eign ok auðsolum?’
8. ‘Menglög of heitir, en hana móðir of gat
við Svafþorins syni;
hon hér ræðr ok ríki hefir
eign ok auðsolum.’
9. ‘Segðu mér þat, Fjølsviðr, er ek þik fregna mun
ok ek vilda vita:
hvat sú grind heitir, er með goðum sáat
menn it meira forað.’

The Sayings of Fjolsvinnr

- 1.⁴² Outside the courts he⁴³ saw come up
the stronghold⁴⁴ of the people of giants;⁴⁵
'On moist ways take your message back⁴⁶ from here —
you'll have no refuge here, vagabond!'⁴⁷
2. 'What kind of ogress is it which stands before the forecourts
and moves to and fro through dangerous flame?'⁴⁸
'Whom are you searching for, or whom are you in search of,
or what, friendless one, do you want to know?'⁴⁹
3. 'What kind of ogress is it which stands before the forecourt
and doesn't offer hospitality to travellers?'
'Bereft of fitting words you have lived, fellow,
and be on your way home from here!'⁵⁰
4. 'I'm called Fjolsviðr,⁵¹ and I have a wise mind,
although I'm not at all generous with my food;
you'll never come inside these courts here,
and now be off,⁵² wolf,⁵³ on your way!'
5. 'Rare [is] the man repulsed by his eyes' delight(?),⁵⁴
wherever he gets to see something sweet;
the courts glow, it seems to me, around golden halls —
here I'd be happy with a homeland!'
6. 'Tell me, boy, from whom were you born,
or which men's⁵⁵ son are you?'
'I am called Vindkaldr,⁵⁶ my father was called Várkaldr,⁵⁷
[and] his father was Fjolkaldr.'⁵⁸
7. 'Tell me, Fjolsviðr, that which I will ask you
and which I would know:
who here controls and has power over
properties and treasure-halls?'⁵⁹
8. 'She's called Menglǫð, and her mother begat her
with Svafrþorinn's son;⁶⁰
she here controls and has power over
properties and treasure-halls.'
9. 'Tell me, Fjolsviðr, that which I will ask you
and which I would know:
what that gate is called, a greater danger than which
people haven't seen among the gods.'

10. 'Þryngjöll hon heitir, en hana þrír gerðu,
Sólblinda synir;
fjöturr fastr verður við faranda hvern
er hana hefr frá hliði.'
11. 'Segðu mér þat, Fjolsviðr, er ek þik fregna mun
ok ek vilda vita:
hvat sá garðr heitir er með goðum sáat
menn it meira forað.'
12. 'Gastropnir heitir, en ek hann gørvan hefk
ór Leirbrimis limum;
svá hefik studdan at hann standa man
æ, meðan öld lifir.'
13. 'Segðu mér þat, Fjolsviðr, er ek þik fregna mun
ok ek vilda vita:
hvat þeir garmar heita er gífrari hefik
þnga fyrr í lǫndum litit.'
14. 'Gífr heitir annarr, en Geri annarr,
ef þu vilt þat vita;
varðir ellifu, er þeir varða,
unz rjúfask regin.'
15. 'Segðu mér þat, Fjolsviðr, er ek þik fregna mun
ok ek vilda vita:
hvárt sé manna nokkut, þat er megi inn koma,
meðan sókndjarfir sofa.'
16. 'Missvefni mikit var þeim mjök of lagit,
síðan þeim var varzla vituð;
annarr of nætr sefr, en annarr of daga,
ok kemsk þá vætr, ef þá kom.'
17. 'Segðu mér þat, Fjolsviðr, er ek þik fregna mun
ok ek vilda vita:
hvárt sé matar nokkut, þat er menn hafi,
ok hlaupi inn, meðan þeir eta.'
18. 'Vængbráðir tvær liggja í Viðófnis liðum,
ef þú vilt þat vita:
þat eitt er svá matar, at þeim menn of gefi,
ok hlaupi inn, meðan þeir eta.'

10. 'It's called Brymgjöll,⁶¹ and three made it,
the sons of Sólblindi;⁶²
a firm fetter will be forthcoming for every traveller
who raises it from the gateway.'⁶³
11. 'Tell me, Fjolsviðr, that which I will ask you
and which I would know:
what this courtyard is called, a greater danger than which
people haven't seen among the gods.'
12. 'It's called Gastropnir,⁶⁴ and I've made it
from Leirbrimir's limbs;⁶⁵
I've supported it,⁶⁶ so that it will stand
always, as long as the world lives.'
13. 'Tell me, Fjolsviðr, that which I will ask you
and which I would know:
what those dogs are called, than which I've seen
none fiercer before in lands.'⁶⁷
14. 'One is called Gífr,⁶⁸ and the other Geri,⁶⁹
if you want to know it;
eleven women, when they guard(?),⁷⁰
until the powers are ripped apart.'⁷¹
15. 'Tell me, Fjolsviðr, that which I will ask you
and which I would know:
whether there is anyone who can come inside,
while the attack-daring ones⁷² sleep.'
16. 'Much-opposed sleep⁷³ was strictly laid down for them,
after the watch was assigned to them;
one sleeps by night,⁷⁴ and the other by day,⁷⁵
and no one comes [past], if he came then.'⁷⁶
17. 'Tell me, Fjolsviðr, that which I will ask you
and which I would know:
whether there's any meat,⁷⁷ that which men may bring,⁷⁸
and [then] run in, while they⁷⁹ eat.'
18. 'Two wing-morsels lie in Viðófnir's⁸⁰ limbs,
if you want to know it:
that's the only meat that men may give them,
and [then] run in, while they eat.'

19. 'Segðu mér þat, Fjolsviðr, er ek þik fregna mun
ok ek vilda vita:
hvat þat barr heitir er breiðask
um lōnd ōll limar.'
20. 'Mímameiðr hann heitir, en þat fáir vita,
af hverjum rótum renn;
við þat hann fellr, er fæstan varir —
flærat hann eldr né járn.'
21. 'Segðu mér þat, Fjolsviðr, er ek þik fregna mun
ok ek vilda vita:
hvat af móði verðr þess ins mæra viðar,
er hann flærat eldr né járn.'
22. 'Út af hans aldni skal á eld bera,
fyr kélisjúkar konur;
útar hverfa þats þær innar skyli —
sá er hann með mōnnum mjōtuðr.'
23. 'Segðu mér þat, Fjolsviðr, er ek þik fregna mun
ok ek vilda vita:
hvat sá hani heitir er sitr í inum háva viði —
allr hann við gull glóir!'
24. 'Viðófnir hann heitir, en hann stendr Veðrglasi,
á meiðs kvistum Míma;
einum ekka þryngr hann ørófsaman
Surtar *Sinnmōru*.'
25. 'Segðu mér þat, Fjolsviðr, er ek þik fregna mun
ok ek vilda vita:
hvárt sé vǫpna nōkkut, þat er knegi Viðófnir fyr
hníga á Heljar sjōt.'
26. 'Lævateinn heitir, en hann gōrði Loptr rúinn
fyr nágrindr neðan;
í segjárns kerri liggr hann hjá *Sinnmōru*,
ok halda Njarðlásar níu.'
27. 'Segðu mér þat, Fjolsviðr, er ek þik fregna mun
ok ek vilda vita:
hvárt apr kemr, sá er eptir ferr
ok vill þann tein taka.'

19. 'Tell me, Fjolsviðr, that which I will ask you
and which I would know:
what the tree is called which spreads
its limbs across all lands.'
20. 'It's called Mímameiðr,⁸¹ but few know it,⁸²
from what roots it runs;⁸³
it will fall by that which the fewest⁸⁴ expect —
neither fire nor iron will flay it.'
21. 'Tell me, Fjolsviðr, that which I will ask you
and which I would know:
what comes forth from the spirit(?) of that glorious tree,
since neither fire nor iron flay it.'
22. 'One must expose some of its fruit to a fire,
for womb-sick(?)⁸⁵ women;
further out goes that which they should [keep] further in —
that one, it's a meter of fate among men.'⁸⁶
23. 'Tell me, Fjolsviðr, that which I will ask you
and which I would know:
what the cockerel is called which sits in the high tree⁸⁷ —
he's all glowing with gold!'
24. 'He's called Viðófnir, and he stands on Veðrglasir,⁸⁸
on twigs of the tree⁸⁹ of Mími;
with one sorrow he oppresses immeasurably⁹⁰
Surtr's Sinmara.'⁹¹
25. 'Tell me, Fjolsviðr, that which I will ask you
and which I would know:
whether there's any weapon by which Viðófnir can [be made]
to sink⁹² into Hel's seats.'⁹³
26. 'It's called Lævateinn,⁹⁴ but Loptr⁹⁵ caused it to be plucked
down beneath corpse-gates;⁹⁶
in a chest of tough-iron⁹⁷ it lies besides Sinmara,
and nine Njörðr⁹⁸-locks guard it.'
27. 'Tell me, Fjolsviðr, that which I will ask you
and which I would know:
whether he'll come back, the one who goes after
and wants to take that twig.'

28. 'Aptr mun koma, sá er eptir ferr
ok vill þann tein taka,
ef þat færir sem fáir eigu
Eiri Aurglasis.'
29. 'Segðu mér þat, Fjolsviðr, er ek þik fregna mun
ok ek vilda vita:
hvárt sé mæta nokkut, þat er menn hafi,
ok verðr því in fólva gýgr fegin.'
30. 'Ljósan ljá skaltu í lúðr bera —
þann er liggr í Viðófnis vølum —
Sinnmøru at selja, áðr hon sòm telisk
vápn til vígs at ljá.'
31. 'Segðu mér þat, Fjolsviðr, er ek þik fregna mun
ok ek vilda vita:
hvat sá salr heitir er slunginn er
vísuðm vafirloga.'
32. 'Lýr hann heitir, en hann lengi mun
á brodds oddi bifask;
auðranns þess munu um aldr hafa
frétt eina fírar.'
33. 'Segðu mér þat, Fjolsviðr, er ek þik fregna mun
ok ek vilda vita:
hverr þat gærði er ek fyr garð sæk
innan, ásmaga.'
34. 'Uni ok Íri, Bari ok Óri,
Varr ok Vegdrasill;
Dóri ok Úri, Dellingr, Atvarðr,
Liðskjálfr, Loki.'
35. 'Segðu mér þat, Fjolsviðr, er ek þik fregna mun
ok ek vilda vita:
hvat þat bjarg heitir, er ek sé brúði á
þjóðmæra þruma.'
36. 'Lyfjaberg þat heitir, en þat hefir lengi verit
sjúkri ok sárri gaman;
heil verðr hver, þótt hafi árs sótt,
ef þat klífr, kona.'

28. 'He'll come back, the one who goes after
and wants to take that twig,
if he brings that which few possess⁹⁹
to the Eir¹⁰⁰ of Aurglasir.¹⁰¹
29. 'Tell me, Fjolsviðr, that which I will ask you
and which I would know:
whether there's any treasure, that which men may have,
and in which the pale giantess¹⁰² will be pleased.'
30. 'A radiant sickle you must bear into the mill¹⁰³ —
the one which lies in Viðófnir's knuckles¹⁰⁴ —
to give it to Sinmara, before she reckons herself willing
to lend¹⁰⁵ you the weapon¹⁰⁶ for the killing.'
31. 'Tell me, Fjolsviðr, that which I will ask you
and which I would know:
what the hall is called which is cast about
with discerning flicker-flame.'¹⁰⁷
32. 'It's called Lýr,¹⁰⁸ and long will it tremble
on the point of a spike;¹⁰⁹
of this treasure-house,¹¹⁰ throughout the ages,
humans will have only hearsay.'
33. 'Tell me, Fjolsviðr, that which I will ask you
and which I would know:
who of the sons of the Æsir¹¹¹ made that
which I see within the enclosure.'¹¹²
- 34.¹¹³ 'Uni¹¹⁴ and Íri,¹¹⁵ Bari¹¹⁶ and Óri,¹¹⁷
Varr¹¹⁸ and Vegdrasill;¹¹⁹
Dóri¹²⁰ and Úri,¹²¹ Dellingr,¹²² Atvarðr,¹²³
Liðskjálfr,¹²⁴ Loki.'¹²⁵
35. 'Tell me, Fjolsviðr, that which I will ask you
and which I would know:
what that rock is called, on which I see a most renowned
bride¹²⁶ remaining quietly.'
36. 'It's called Lyfjaberg,¹²⁷ and it's long been
a pleasure to the poorly [woman] and the pained [woman];
every woman becomes sound, even if she has fertility's sickness,¹²⁸
if she scales it.'

37. 'Segðu mér þat, Fjolsviðr, er ek þik fregna mun
ok ek vilda vita:
hvat þær meyjar heita er fyr Menglaðar knjám
syngja sáttar saman.'
38. 'Hlíf heitir *ein*, önnur Hlífþursa,
þriðja Þjóðvarta,
Björt ok Blíð, Blíðr, Fríð,
Eir ok Aurboða.'
39. 'Segðu mér þat, Fjolsviðr, er ek þik fregna mun
ok ek vilda vita:
hvert þær bjarga þeim er blóta þær,
ef gørask þarfar þess.'
40. 'Bjarga *svinnar* hvar er menn blóta þær
á stallhelgum stað;
ei svá hátt forað kemr at hólða sonum,
hvern þær ór nauðum nema.'
41. 'Segðu mér þat, Fjolsviðr, er ek þik fregna mun
ok ek vilda vita:
hvárt sé manna nokkut, þat er knegi á Menglaðar
svásum armi sofa.'
42. 'Vætr er þat manna, er knegi á Menglaðar
svásum armi sofa,
nema Svipdagr einn — honum var sú in sólbjarta
brúðr at kván of kveðin.'
43. 'Hrittu á hurðir! Láttu hlið rúm!
Hér máttu Svipdagr sjá!
En þó vita far ef vilja muni
Menglð mitt gaman!'
44. 'Heyrðu, Menglð! Hér er maðr kominn,
gakk þú á gest sjá!
Hundar fagna, hús hefir upp lokisk —
hygg ek at Svipdagr sé!'
45. 'Horskir hrafnar skulu þér á hám gálga
slíta sjónir ór,
ef þú þat lýgr, at hér sé langt kominn
mogr til minna sala!'

37. 'Tell me, Fjolsviðr, that which I will ask you
and which I would know:
what those maidens are called who sing¹²⁹ together
peacefully before Menglǫð's knees.'
38. 'One¹³⁰ is called Hlíf,¹³¹ the second Hlífþursa,¹³²
the third Þjóðvarta,¹³³
Björt¹³⁴ and Blíð,¹³⁵ Blíðr,¹³⁶ Fríð,¹³⁷
Eir¹³⁸ and Aurboða.'¹³⁹
39. 'Tell me, Fjolsviðr, that which I will ask you
and which I would know:
whether they protect those who sacrifice to them,
if there should be need for this.'
40. 'The wise ones offer protection wherever people sacrifice to them
at an altar-holy place;¹⁴⁰
danger doesn't come upon the sons of men so severely¹⁴¹
[that] they [can't] free¹⁴² each one from constraints.'
41. 'Tell me, Fjolsviðr, that which I will ask you
and which I would know:
whether there's anyone who can sleep
in Menglǫð's sweet arms.'¹⁴³
42. 'There's no one at all who can sleep
in Menglǫð's sweet arms,
except Svipdagr¹⁴⁴ alone — for him was that sun-bright bride
appointed as wife.'
43. 'Push open the doors! Give the gate room!¹⁴⁵
Here you can see Svipdagr!
But yet go to find out whether Menglǫð will
wish my pleasure!'
44. 'Hear, Menglǫð! A man has come here,
go to see the guest!
The hounds rejoice, the house has opened itself up —
I think that it's Svipdagr!'
45. 'Astute ravens shall tear out your eyes
on a high gallows,
if you're lying about it, that the boy has come
a long way to my halls!

46. 'Hvaðan þú fórt? Hvaðan þú fõr gørdir?
 Hvé þik hétu hjú?
 At ætt ok nafni skal ek jartegn vita,
 ef ek var þér kván of kveðin!'
47. 'Svipdagr ek heiti, Sólbjartr hét minn faðir,
 þaðan rákumk vindar kalda vegu;
 Urðar orði kveðr engi maðr,
 þótt þat sé við lōst lagit!'
48. 'Vel þú nú kominn! Hefi ek minn vilja beðit —
 fylgja skal kveðju koss!
 Forkunnar sýn mun flestan glaða,
 hvars hefir við annan ást.
49. 'Lengi ek sat ljúfu bergi á,
 beið ek þín dægr ok daga;
 nú þat varð, er ek vætt hefi,
 at þú ert kominn, mōgr, til minna sala!
50. 'Þrár hafðar er ek hefi til þíns gamans,
 en þú til míns munar!
 Nú er þat satt, er vit slíta skulum
 ævi ok aldri saman!'

46. ‘Whence have you come? Whence did you make your journey?
 What do your family call you?
 I must have¹⁴⁶ proof of your lineage and name,
 if I was appointed to be your wife!’
47. ‘I’m called Svipdagr, my father was called Sólbjartr,¹⁴⁷
 from there I wandered the wind’s cold ways,¹⁴⁸
 no one [gain]says¹⁴⁹ Urðr’s word,¹⁵⁰
 even if it’s laid down with injustice!’
48. ‘You’re welcome now! I’ve got my wish —
 a kiss shall accompany the greeting!
The sight of one’s desire will gladden most [people],¹⁵¹
 wherever one has love for another.
49. ‘Long I sat on the beloved rock,¹⁵²
 I waited for you for days¹⁵³ and days;
 now it’s come to pass, that which I’ve hoped for,
 that you’ve come, boy, to my halls!’
- 50.¹⁵⁴ ‘I’ve suffered pains for your love-play,
 and you [have likewise] for desire of me!
Now it’s [come] true,¹⁵⁵ since we two shall tear through¹⁵⁶
 life and age¹⁵⁷ together!’

Textual Apparatus to *Svipdagsmál*

The contents of the following textual apparatus to *Svipdagsmál* are highly selective, noting only the most significant changes from the two primary manuscripts, both of which date from c. 1675: Rask 21 a (**Ra**), pp. 56–58 and Stockholm Papp. 15 8vo (**St**), pp. 50–56. For fuller details of emendations and variant readings, see the editions by Bugge and Robinson listed in the Further Reading section.

Gróugaldr

- 3/2 skaut] **Ra, St** skauts þú
 3/5 *kvæmtki*] **Ra, St** *kveðki*
 3/6 *Mengloðu*] **Ra** *menglauðum*, **St** *mengloðum*
 7/6 *sinnum*] **Ra, St** *sman*
 8/2 *þjóðár*] **Ra, St** *þiöpir*
 9/4] *hverfi*] **Ra, St** *hryggvi*
 9/5 *tíl*] **Ra, St** absent
 9/5 *þér*] **Ra, St** *þér mætti*
 10/2 *verðr*] **Ra, St** *verða*
 10/4 *Leifnis elda*] **Ra** *leifins elda*, **St** *Leifnis eldu*
 11/6 *ljái*] **Ra, St** *ljá*
 12/6 *þér*] **Ra, St** *or*
 12/6 *líki*] **Ra, St** *lík*
 13/4 *megi*] **Ra, St** *megi at*
 14/1 *inn*] **Ra, St** absent
 14/5 *af*] **Ra, St** *á*
 14/5 *Mímis*] **Ra** *mimis*, **St** *minniss*
 15/1 *Farir*] **Ra, St** *far*
 15/2 *þar er*] **Ra, St** *þér*
 16/4 *því*] **Ra, St** *þi*

Fjolsvinnsmál

- 4/6 *at*] **Ra, St** *af*
 7/6 *auðsolum*] **Ra, St** *auþsaulun*
 8/3 *Svafþorins*] **Ra, St** *Svafur þorins*
 8/6 *auðsolum*] **Ra** *auþaulun*, **St** *auþsaulun*

9/4 súa] **Ra, St** absent

10/4 fjöturr] **Ra, St** fjötrar

11/5 sáat] **Ra, St** sjáat

13/5 gífrari hefík] **Ra, St** gífur rekar

13/6 *þnga fyrr í lönðum litit*] Manuscript readings vary here, but it appears that none is comprehensible. I take the present emendation, and that of 13/5, from the edition by Bugge. For 13/5–6, Robinson's emended text reads *er gífurir rekask / þ giorþa fyrir löndin lim þ*, only the first part of which he translates, as 'that roam ravenous ...'.

16/2 of] **Ra, St** absent

16/6 kemsk] **Ra** komt, **St** kemt

16/6 ef] **Ra, St** of

18/1 Vængbráðir] so **Ra; St** Vegnbraðir

18/2 liðum] **Ra** liðum, **St** viðum

18/6 hlaupi] **Ra** laupa, **St** laufa

20/6 flærat] **St** flær at, **Ra** flær

21/6 flærat] **Ra, St** flær ei

21/6 eldr] **Ra, St** eld

22/5 þats] **Ra** þess, **St** þoss

24/2 Veðrglasi] **Ra** veðir-/glasi, **St** veðir glasi

24/6 Sinnmøru] **Ra** sinn mantu, **St** sinn mautu

26/1 Lævateinn] **Ra, St** Hevateinn

32/1 Lýr] **Ra, St** Hyr

33/5 sék] **Ra, St** sok

34/4 Úri] **St** Uri, **Ra** Óri

36/1 Lyfjaberg] **Ra** Hyfoia berg, **St** Hyfuia ber

36/3 sjúkri] **Ra, St** sjúk

38/1 ein] **Ra, St** absent

40/1 Bjarga svinnar] **Ra, St** Sumur

48/6 hvars] **Ra, St** hvers

49/6 ert kominn] **Ra, St** ert aptr kominn 'have come back'

50/6 ok] **Ra, St** absent

Notes to the Translation

- 1 The name *Gróa*, which is also a sword-name, relates to the verb *gróa* ‘to grow’ or ‘to heal’. *SnESkald* (I, 17, p. 22) tells how a seeress called Gróa, wife of Aurvandill the Bold, began chanting incantations to loosen a piece of whetstone in Þórr’s skull, an incident mentioned earlier in *Haust*.
- 2 In this title the multiple incantations described in the poem are apparently treated collectively.
- 3 Svipdagr.
- 4 This stanza is spoken by Svipdagr, Gróa’s son.
- 5 I.e., at her grave.
- 6 I.e., a burial site topped by stones.
- 7 I.e., the world of living humans. There might be a pun on ‘(magical) song homes’.
- 8 A metaphor for a dreadful challenge.
- 9 I.e., presented me with. The woman is Svipdagr’s evil stepmother. Cf. the giantess Skaði, Freyr’s stepmother in *FSk.*, who commands Skírnir to find out why Freyr is so upset and thereby sets in motion Skírnir’s dangerous quest for Gerðr.
- 10 ‘Torc/Necklace Glad (One)’. Perhaps compare Freyja’s possession of the *Brísingamen* ‘Torc of the Brísingar’.
- 11 Or ‘will be’.
- 12 Or ‘will be’.
- 13 Or ‘will be’.
- 14 Cf. *FSk.* 42.
- 15 One of the Nornir, supernatural females who govern people’s fates. Her name is interpretable as ‘That Which Shall Happen’.
- 16 The actual words of this incantation, and the following ones, are not given.
- 17 Rindr is the mother of Váli, the son of Óðinn who will avenge Baldr’s death, according to *BDr.* 11. Her name (perhaps earlier **Vrindr*) is of uncertain meaning. She might be a giantess, but is included among the goddesses in *SnEGylf* (36, p. 30). *Rani* ‘Snout’ is otherwise unknown, but the name suggests an unattractive, perhaps giantish or animalistic figure. It has also been suggested that *Rani* might be a name of Óðinn, who has a similar-looking alias in *Hrani* ‘Blusterer’. Consequently, some commentators have proposed that the event mentioned here might relate to the story behind the words *seið Yggr til Rindar* ‘Yggr [Óðinn] practised *seiðr* [feminine magic] to [get?] Rindr’ in the tenth-century *Sigurðardrápa* of Kormákr Ögmundarson (*SnESkald*, I, 2, p. 9; *SPSMA* III, 277). A version of what may be essentially the same story is told at length in *GD* (3.4.1–8, 13). It describes how a Russian princess called *Rinda* (cf. *Rindr*) rebuffed the amorous advances of a disguised Othinus (Óðinn) by hitting and shoving him, before he, after earlier afflicting her with a piece of bark inscribed with spells, succeeded in binding and raping her. However, not only was *Rinda* ultimately unsuccessful in rebuffing Othinus (who calls himself *Rosterus* and *Wecha*, not *Rani*), but her initially successful rejections of him did not involve magic. Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason, ed., *Eddukvæði*, Íslenzk fornrit, 2 vols. (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 2014), II, 438 emends *þann gól Rindr Rani* to *þann gól Rindi Rani* ‘the one Rani [Óðinn] chanted to Rindr’, but this raises the objection

that Óðinn wanted to get close to Rindr, not thrust her away. Another possibility is that the name is not *Rani* but *Ráni* and refers to Rán, the sea-giantess who drowns sailors; this would suit the context of Gróa's offering of protection for her son on his perilous journey (cf. Gg. 8 and 11 especially), but would be metrically abnormal because the first syllable of a disyllabic word at the end of a 'full line' of *ljóðaháttur* is normally short.

- 18 Or perhaps 'despairingly'.
- 19 *Urðr* 'That Which Has Happened' or 'Fate' is one of the Nornir; see *Vsp.* 19–20. Her *lokur* 'locks(?)', or *lok(k)ur* 'enticements/incantations(?)', are presumably some sort of protective magic. They might relate to a (similarly obscure) magical song called *Varðlok(k)ur* which attracts spirits when recited by a woman in chapter 4 of *Eiríks saga rauða* 'The Saga of Eiríkr the Red'.
- 20 I.e., in such a way as to threaten your life.
- 21 These are presumably the names of mythical rivers; they might mean 'Horn' and 'Ruddy One'. Cf. *Hrönn* and *Hríð*, which are among the rivers that 'fall near men, and fall from here to Hel', in *Grm.* 28.
- 22 I.e., armed and ready; this describes the enemies.
- 23 I.e., on the way to the gallows; presumably, these would be people intent on hanging Svipdagr, or at least on bringing about his death in some way.
- 24 Literally, 'turn'.
- 25 I.e., into your keeping, your power.
- 26 Literally, 'turn'.
- 27 I.e., brought to and placed on.
- 28 Literally, 'bowed/curved limbs'; alternatively, *bóglimum* 'arms' (and/or 'legs?').
- 29 Possibly the name of an incantation, perhaps one deemed capable of melting metal, but the identities of *Leifnir* (or *Leifinn*) and his flames (fiery breath?) are obscure. *Leifnir* is elsewhere a poetic term for a ship and the name of a sea-king; it also appears in a poetic term for a sword, *Leifnis-grand* 'Leifnir's hurt'. Many editors, however, emend *Leifnis elda* to *leysigaldur* 'a loosing incantation'.
- 30 Literally, (bone of the) leg or arm.
- 31 Literally, 'the frame of a hand-mill', but this is a metaphor for the 'milling' waters of a whirlpool. The incantation promises to protect Svipdagr against them. Cf. *Fj.* 30.
- 32 I.e., deadly cold.
- 33 The text of this stanza's last half-line is problematic and its meaning is uncertain.
- 34 I.e., a misty or dark road, perhaps with a hint of the road to *Niflhel* 'Dark/Mist Hell'.
- 35 I.e., that she may be unable.
- 36 The reason for the attribution of potential harm to a dead Christian woman is obscure.
- 37 Or 'spear-ennobled'. If 'stud/nail-ennobled' is correct, it possibly alludes to the Pole Star as the 'stud' about which the sky was thought to revolve; cf. *Hdl.* 35.
- 38 This is presumably *Fj.*'s *Fjölsviðr*/*Fjölsvinnr*, who might be *Mímir*/*Mími* incognito.
- 39 On *Mímir*, a giant of wisdom, see *Vsp.* 28. Not all editors, however, accept that this stanza mentions *Mímir*, as manuscript readings vary and the text is therefore uncertain.
- 40 I.e., a stone fixed in the ground.

- 41 I.e., the notional 'doors of the dead'—the entrance to the stone and to the world of the dead—mentioned in *Gg.* 1.
- 42 *Fj.* begins with *Svipdagr* outside *Mengloð's* fortress, having completed most of his journey.
- 43 I.e., *Svipdagr*.
- 44 Literally, 'seats'.
- 45 Or *þursa þjóðar sjot* 'the palace of the people of giants'. Some manuscripts have *þursa broþir* '(the) brother of giants'.
- 46 Or simply 'Go back'.
- 47 Literally, 'protection-wanting one'. These words are addressed to the (as yet unnamed) *Svipdagr* by a giant (probably), who assumes the visitor wants shelter.
- 48 The stronghold is apparently surrounded by flame; cf. *FSk.* 8–9. This question is asked by the undaunted *Svipdagr*; it appears insulting, as he is addressing a male.
- 49 Although sense can be made of the manuscript order, editors often reorder *Fj.* 1 and 2 as follows: 1/1–3, 2/1–3; 2/4–6, 1/4–6.
- 50 The speaker probably takes exception partly to being called an ogress. Alternatively, the second half of this stanza might be attributed to *Svipdagr*.
- 51 'Very Wise/Swift One', a variant of *Fjolsvinnr*. Here it is probably the name of a giant (possibly an alias of *Mími*), though elsewhere in Old Norse texts it is the name of a dwarf and an alias of *Óðinn*.
- 52 Literally, 'drive'.
- 53 Or 'criminal'.
- 54 The precise sense of this line, which may be partly corrupt, is uncertain.
- 55 I.e., his male ancestors.
- 56 'Wind Cold'.
- 57 'Spring Cold'.
- 58 'Very Cold'.
- 59 I.e., either 'treasuries' or 'richly adorned halls'; cf. *Fj.* 32.
- 60 The identities of *Svafrþorinn* 'Sleep-Daring One(?)' and his son are unknown.
- 61 Roughly 'Clashing Yell'.
- 62 'Sun-Blind(ed) One'; he is otherwise unknown, but his name suggests a dwarf or a giant.
- 63 I.e., in order to open it.
- 64 The meaning of *Gastropnir* (or *Gastrópnir*) is uncertain, perhaps 'Guest Pincher'.
- 65 *Leirbrimir* means 'Clay Brimir', *Brimir* being a giant-name formed from *brim* 'surf'. The 'limbs' of *Leirbrimir* are presumably clay. In Indo-European mythologies, the 'house/enclosure of clay' appears to be a metaphor for the grave.
- 66 I.e., with pillars.
- 67 The conclusion of this stanza is conjectural, being based on a speculative emendation.
- 68 'Savage One'.
- 69 'Ravenous One' (also the name of one of *Óðinn's* wolves). If *Gastropnir* represents the grave, part of the Otherworldly land of the dead, *Gífr* and *Geri* may be hellhounds or at least akin to such creatures.

- 70 This line is evidently corrupt, but no emendation commands much confidence. Perhaps emend *varðir ellifu* 'eleven women' (only ten women are named in *Fj.* 37–38) to *verðir ellifu* 'eleven guards', the intended sense being that, when these two dogs are guarding, it is as if there are eleven guards. But other suggested emendations have the dogs guarding for eternity (*at eilifu*) or guarding the gods' remedy for old age (*ellilyf*).
- 71 I.e., at Ragnarok.
- 72 I.e., the guard-dogs.
- 73 I.e., alternate sleeping patterns.
- 74 Literally, 'during nights'.
- 75 Literally, 'during days'.
- 76 I.e., at any time, day or night.
- 77 Or 'food'.
- 78 Literally, 'have'.
- 79 I.e., the guard-dogs.
- 80 Identified as a cockerel in *Fj.* 23–24. *Viðófnir* may mean 'Wood/Tree Crower'; alternatively, *Viðófnir* could mean 'Wide Crower' (i.e., 'One Whose Crowing Is Widely Heard').
- 81 'Mími's Branch/Tree', *Mími* possibly being another name for the giant Mímir.
- 82 This line lacks alliteration in the Old Norse, unless the second half is emended to *en þat mangi veit* 'and no one knows it'.
- 83 Cf. *Háv.* 138, *Grm.* 31.
- 84 I.e., no one.
- 85 Or 'hysterical'. If, as seems more likely, the reference is to women with uterine problems, perhaps smoke from the tree's fruit acted as an abortifacient. Alternatively, if the women are 'hysterical' for some other reason, perhaps the smoke enabled them to reveal, and thereby relieve themselves of, disturbing emotions which, Fjolsviðr thinks, it would be better for them to keep hidden. Cf. *Fj.* 36.
- 86 This obscure line might identify Mímameiðr with the *mjótvið mæran* 'glorious measure-tree' of *Vsp.* 2, which is better known as the world-tree Yggdrasill. Here the fate it metes out is perhaps the abortion or premature birth of a child.
- 87 Presumably Mímameiðr.
- 88 This emended name could mean either 'Weather/Wind Shining One' or 'Wether Shining One'; the second possibility is conceivable because Heimdallr, whose name invites identification with the world-tree, is identifiable as a white ram-god. Cf. Glasir, a mythological tree or grove with golden foliage that stands before Valhöll in *SnESkáld* (I, 34, p. 41; 45, p. 60).
- 89 Or 'branch'.
- 90 Or possibly 'continuously'. The 'sorrow' is perhaps the knowledge (crowed by Viðófnir?) that she would be robbed and, it may be, killed by Svipdagr.
- 91 *Surtr* 'Black One' is the name of a fire-demon or fire-giant who will kill Freyr at Ragnarok; see *Vsp.* 51–52. That Sinmara is a giantess is indicated by *Fj.* 29; she is probably Surtr's wife or daughter. Her name (here emended) is interpretable as 'Sinew Mara' or perhaps 'Perpetual/Great Mara', but might originally have been **Sindrmará* 'Cinder Mare'. A *mara*

- 'mare' (cognate with English 'nightmare') was a kind of physically suppressive female monster.
- 92 I.e., in death.
- 93 I.e., residences, halls with seats. Hel is here either the underworld land of the dead or its female ruler.
- 94 'Twig of Treacheries/Harms', an obscure name for a weapon. This interpretation relies on an emendation of the manuscript reading *Hevateinn* to give the line expected alliteration; cf. the comparable emendations *Lýr* and *Lyffjaberg* in *Fj.* 32, 36. As a weapon, *Lævateinn* could well be a sword, a 'twig-sword'; cf. *Skírnir's gambanteinn* 'tribute-twig' in *Fsk.* 32, and *Mistleiteinn* 'Mistletoe', another 'twig-sword' of Norse mythology. Also noteworthy is the term *læva lundr* 'grove of deceits' in an obscure passage of *Haust.* (11) concerning Loki and his instigation of the abduction of the goddess *Iðunn* to the land of giants (*SPSMA* III, 447–48). Note, too, the reference to the 'treachery (*læ*)-blended sword', which *Guðrún* explains in relation to fire and burning, in *Gðr. II* 38.
- 95 'Lofty', an alias of *Loki*.
- 96 These gates presumably guard an underworld of the dead.
- 97 Some editors treat *segjárn* as a proper name.
- 98 *Njörðr* was a god of the sea, which, together with other evidence, suggests that *Lævateinn* was locked within a submerged chest, probably beneath a maelstrom. Perhaps the nine locks relate to the sea-giant's daughters, who personified waves.
- 99 I.e., no one possesses.
- 100 *Eir* 'Mercy' is elsewhere the name of a goddess, but here it seems to denote the giantess *Sinmara*. Cf. *Fj.* 38.
- 101 'Mud-Shining One', a mythical place-name.
- 102 *Sinmara*.
- 103 I.e., whirlpool; cf. *Gg.* 11. The sickle is obscure.
- 104 I.e., foot-joints, in which case *Viðófnir* is possibly imagined as holding the sickle with one or both of its feet. Another possible translation is 'rods', i.e., perhaps, bones or feather-shafts.
- 105 Or 'grant'.
- 106 I.e., *Lævateinn*.
- 107 Cf. *Fsk.* 8–9.
- 108 The manuscript reading *Hyr* might be interpreted as *Hyrr* 'Fire' or *Hýrr* 'Fitting for a Household', but with neither of these readings does the line alliterate conventionally; this shortcoming favours emendation to *Lýr* 'Pollack/Whitefish/Fish'; similarly desirable emendations of *H-* to *L-* produce *Lævateinn* and *Lyffjaberg* in *Fj.* 26, 36. For my thoughts on the possible significance of *Lýr*, an ostensibly bizarre name for a hall, see *Pettit, The Waning Sword*, pp. 203–05.
- 109 Possibly the tip of a sword or knife (*Lævateinn?*), or a spearhead.
- 110 The compound *auðrann* (*auð-* + *rann* 'house, hall') occurs only here. Its likely primary sense is 'treasure-house' or 'richly adorned house' (cf. *auðsplum* 'treasure-halls' in *Fj.* 7, 8), with the first element being the combining form of masc. *auðr* 'riches, wealth, treasure'. But *auð-* is ambiguous, perhaps deliberately. It could also be a combining form of fem. *auðr* 'fate, destiny' (also attested as a fem. proper name), in which case it would be a 'destiny-house', one that contained *Svipdagr's* destined bride, *Mengloð* (alias *Auðr?*). There may also be

an ironic nod to *auð-* 'easy', given the inaccessibility and puzzling nature of this 'easy house'. Finally, a deliberately misleading suggestion of an 'empty house' (*auðr* 'empty') is conceivable, to dissuade Svipdagr from going there.

- 111 The Æsir are the gods. Their 'sons' in this case apparently are, or include, dwarves.
- 112 Alternatively, 'who made that which I see within the enclosure of the sons of the Æsir'.
- 113 Most, if not all, of the names in this stanza appear to be of dwarves.
- 114 Perhaps 'Calm/Satisfied One'.
- 115 Perhaps 'Irish One'.
- 116 Perhaps 'Eager One' or 'Rough One'; alternatively, *Bári* (perhaps from *bára* 'wave, billow').
- 117 Perhaps 'Quarrelsome One' or 'Raver'; this name also appears amid lists of dwarf-names in *SnEGylf* (14, p. 16). The Old Norse line's alliteration appears faulty, but it could be corrected by placing *Óri* before *Bari*.
- 118 'Wary One'. Two smiths of the name appear in chapters 4–5 of *Hrólfs saga kraka*.
- 119 'Way Steed'.
- 120 This name, which possibly relates to modern Icelandic *dór* 'auger', 'iron drill', also appears in a list of dwarf-names in *SnEGylf* (14, p. 16).
- 121 The name might relate to Modern Icelandic *úr* 'sparks (from iron working)'.
- 122 'Gleaming One'; Delligr is the father of *Dagr* 'Day' in *Vm.* 25; Delligr's 'doors' are mentioned in *Háv.* 160.
- 123 This name possibly arose as a corruption of **at var þar* '(Delligr) was thereat' or **ok var þar* '(Delligr) was also there'.
- 124 Ostensibly 'Limb/Joint-Shaking One', but Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason, *Eddukvæði*, II, 447 discerns two separate names: *Liðski*, *Alfr*; see also the next footnote.
- 125 Elsewhere, *Loki* is the name of the Norse trickster-god. However, the last line should perhaps be emended to *liðskjálfar loki* '(as) troop-shelf's finisher', in which case Delligr would be identified as the smith who completed the work. If so, there may originally have been only nine (the typically 'perfect' Germanic number), not twelve, smiths in this list: Uni, Íri, Bari, Óri, Varr, Vegdrasill, Dóri, Úri and Delligr.
- 126 Presumably Menglǫð.
- 127 'Rock of Healing Herbs/Medicines' (cf. *Fj.* 49); with the emendation of *H-* to *L-* in *Lyfjaberg*, cf. *Lævateinn* and *Lýr* in *Fj.* 26, 32. The presence of this medicinal rock, and the maidens of the next stanza, in an Otherworld with attributes suggestive of an enclosure of the dead is curious; perhaps the idea is that those who scale it return to health/life by climbing away from the land of the dead.
- 128 I.e., even if she is barren. Cf. *Fj.* 22.
- 129 Instead of *syngja* 'sing', some manuscripts have *sitja* 'sit'.
- 130 *Ein* 'one' is supplied editorially for both metre and sense.
- 131 'Cover', 'Shelter'.
- 132 Interpreted as *hlífþursa*, the sense would be 'protection of giants', but *Hlífþursa* is probably a corruption of some other name; some editors emend to *Hlífþrasa*, which might mean roughly 'Protective Fighter'. Cf. *Líf ok Lífþrasir* in *Vm.* 45.

- 133 This name also appears corrupt. Some editors emend *Þjóðvara*; the element *þjóð-* means 'people', 'nation', but sometimes it serves merely as an intensifier, in which case the emended name might mean 'Very Wary One'.
- 134 'Bright One'.
- 135 'Blithe One'. But in view of the very similar following name, perhaps emend to *Blik* 'Shining One'.
- 136 'Blithe One'. Perhaps emend to *Blíð*.
- 137 'Pretty One'.
- 138 'Mercy'; also the name of a goddess and a valkyrie, and applied generically to Sinmara in *Fj.* 28.
- 139 'Mud Bidder/Offerer'; elsewhere a giantess, the wife of Gymir and mother of Gerðr.
- 140 I.e., a place made holy by the presence of an altar.
- 141 Literally, 'highly'.
- 142 Literally, 'take'.
- 143 Literally, 'arm'.
- 144 Probably 'Swooping Day' or 'Fleeting Day'.
- 145 I.e., room to open.
- 146 Literally, 'know'.
- 147 'Sun-Bright (One)'. Earlier, Svipdagr had named his father *Várkaldr* 'Spring Cold'. In *Fj.* 42 *Menglǫð* is in *sólbjarta brúðr* 'the sun-bright bride'.
- 148 Perhaps emend to *vindkalda vegu* 'wind-cold ways'. Svipdagr refers back to his pseudonym *Vindkaldr* 'Wind Cold' in *Fj.* 6.
- 149 Possibly *við* should be added to the Old Norse line, to produce the literal sense 'speaks against'.
- 150 I.e., destiny, *Urðr* being one of the Nornir. Cf. *Urðar lokur* 'Urðr's locks(?)' in *Gg.* 7.
- 151 An understatement.
- 152 Some editors emend *ljúfu bergi* 'on (a/the) beloved rock' to *Lyfjabergi* 'on Lyfjaberg'; cf. *Fj.* 36.
- 153 Or 'half-days' (periods from dawn to dusk).
- 154 It is unclear whether this final stanza is spoken by *Menglǫð* or *Svipdagr*.
- 155 I.e., our mutual desire has come to pass.
- 156 The verb *slíta* 'to tear (apart)' perhaps implies an intensely passionate consumption of their time together; cf. *Hlr.* 14.
- 157 I.e., 'this age of the world' or 'old age'.



