



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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Introduction

This book is an edition of medieval Nordic poems, interspersed with short passages of prose, in their original Old Norse-Icelandic language,¹ together with facing-page translations into modern English. These texts treat north-western European mythological and heroic subjects, including the creation, destruction and rebirth of the world, the deeds of Norse deities such as Óðinn, Þórr and Loki (the first two now more familiar to English speakers as Odin and Thor), and the tragedy surrounding legendary humans such as Sigurðr, Brynhildr and Guðrún.²

Collectively, these anonymous works have come to be known as the *Poetic Edda* or the *Elder Edda*. This collection is closely connected with, but distinct from, the *Prose Edda* or *Younger Edda* (c. 1220–30)³ of the Icelander Snorri Sturluson, to which the term *edda* was first applied by the end of the thirteenth century.⁴ Snorri's euhemeristic work has three main parts, the first two of which, *Gylfaginning* 'The Beguiling of Gylfi' (*SnEGylf*) and *Skáldskaparmál* 'The Language of Poetry' (*SnESkáld*), draw on versions of poems of the *Poetic Edda*. The notes in this edition refer frequently to *SnEGylf* and *SnESkáld*, because, as prime sources for our understanding of Norse mythology, they offer valuable insights into the meanings of many of the poems of the *Poetic Edda*.⁵ These works, the *Poetic Edda* and many prose sagas are enduring testaments to the flowering of Icelandic literature in the thirteenth century.⁶

Most of the poems in this edition survive in a single, fragmentary manuscript—it is missing one gathering of sixteen leaves—dated c. 1270, from Iceland. It is a copy of an earlier, lost original. The surviving manuscript, which probably comes from the country's west or north, was, in 1643, in the possession of Brynjólfur Sveinsson, bishop of Skálholt, who, in 1662, sent it as a gift to the king of Denmark. It is traditionally called the Codex Regius of the *Poetic Edda*, this 'Royal Codex' having long been kept in Copenhagen's Royal Library. Now, though, following its return to Iceland in 1971, the codex is officially Gammel kongelig Samling (GkS) 2365 4^{to} of the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies in Reykjavík. Henceforth in this edition it is referred to as **R**.⁷ Although the Edd(a)ic poems of **R** have each been edited and translated many times before, they have not previously all been published together in a single volume containing both new editions of the Old Norse texts and new facing-page English translations.⁸

Six of the poems also survive, in whole or part, in a related, fragmentary manuscript of the early fourteenth century, AM 748 I a 4^{to} of the Arnarnagænan

Institute in Copenhagen, Denmark (A).⁹ These poems are *Grímnismál* ‘The Sayings’¹⁰ of (or ‘about’) ¹¹*Grímnir* (*Grm.*), *Hymiskviða* ‘The Lay of Hymir’ (*Hym.*), *För Skírnis* ‘Skírnir’s Journey’ (*FSk.*),¹² *Hárbarðsljóð* ‘The Song of Hárbarðr’ (*Hrbl.*), *Vafþrúðnismál* ‘The Sayings of Vafþrúðnir’ (*Vm.*) and *Völundarkviða* ‘The Lay of Völundr’ (*Vkv.*). In addition, this Icelandic manuscript preserves the only extant text of another Eddic poem, *Baldrs draumar* ‘Baldr’s Dreams’ (*BDr.*), which is also included in the present edition. A second version of *Völuspá* ‘The Prophecy of the Seeress’ (*Vsp.*), the first and most admired poem in R, appears in the fourteenth-century AM 544 4^{to} (alias *Hauksbók* ‘Haukr’s Book’,¹³ and henceforth referenced as H); since it is substantially different from that of R, it appears separately in this edition.

Additionally, modern editors often append other poems, known only from other manuscripts, to those of R, A and H, because they similarly treat mythological and heroic subjects in ‘Eddic’ metres. Decisions vary about which of these poems to include. This edition includes three, for the second and third of which modern texts and translations may not be readily accessible to many English-speaking readers: *Rígsþula* ‘Rígr’s List’ (*Rþ.*), *Hyndluljóð* ‘The Song of Hyndla’ (*Hdl.*) and *Svipdagsmál* ‘The Lay of Svipdagr’, the latter comprising *Gróugaldr* ‘Gróa’s Incantation’ (*Gg.*) and *Fjölsvinnsmál* ‘The Sayings of Fjölsvinnr’ (*Fj.*).¹⁴

It is uncertain where in the early North the poems of the *Poetic Edda* were composed. Many probably originated—as did many prose sagas—from Iceland, where the surviving manuscripts were created. Two of the heroic poems, *Atlakviða* ‘The Lay of Atli’ (*Akv.*) and *Atlamál* ‘The Sayings of Atli’ (*Am.*), claim to be Greenlandic, though the former is thought to be older than the Norse settlement of Greenland. Others may stem ultimately from Norway, Denmark, Sweden or areas of Anglo-Scandinavian England. German traditions inform some of the heroic texts. Undoubtedly, many of the myths and legends treated in the *Poetic Edda* were known, in some form, outside Iceland in the early medieval North.

Also uncertain are the poems’ original dates of composition,¹⁵ although these obviously must be at least as old as the earliest manuscripts in which the poems were written down.¹⁶ Many of the poems may well have existed, in one form or other, centuries earlier than the surviving thirteenth- and fourteenth-century manuscripts, having been composed during the Viking Age using oral techniques.¹⁷ This likelihood is indicated, for example, by carvings of scenes apparently depicting aspects of a version of *ragna røk* ‘Ragnarok’ (literally the ‘doom/fate/end of the ruling powers’), the Norse mythological apocalypse, on a tenth-century cross in a churchyard in Gosforth, Cumbria, England; these seem likely to have been inspired by Eddic poems such as *Vsp.*¹⁸ It can at least be said that, judging from references in earlier non-Eddic poetry and visual art, many of the stories told and characters described in these poems—some of which are explicitly called ‘old’ or ‘ancient’,¹⁹ and all of whose authors are, significantly, unnamed—would have been known earlier, in some form, to the Scandinavians often now called vikings.²⁰ The transmission process most likely

involved a mixture of memorization (in the main), recomposition with deliberate variation, interpolation and accretion, omission, and various forms of scribal alteration and error. This means that many of the poems probably changed to a greater or lesser extent through time and, therefore, that their fixed presentation in this edition may well be more or less unrepresentative of their prior forms.

The great uncertainty surrounding these poems extends still further, to how, why, by whom and for whom they were performed (assuming they were). However, it is immediately obvious that any audience must have been knowledgeable about the characters and events of Norse mythology and heroic legend. Encouraged especially by the alternating speakers of some poems, such as *FSk.* and *Lokasenna* ‘Loki’s Flyting’ (*Ls.*), which are often accompanied by speech directions in the margins of **R**,²¹ some scholars detect indications of an early form, or forms, of drama in the contents of the *Poetic Edda*.²² It is certainly essential to emphasize that Eddic poems, like most medieval verse, were presumably originally intended for some form of recitation—which is to say *performance*—by one or more persons to an audience familiar with oral traditions, rather than for lone, silent reading from parchment. One scholar has observed that ‘static printed versions of the eddic poems are about as close to the nature of the “living” works as they were conceived by the “original” poets and performers as sheet music is to a performed symphony at the Last Night of the Proms in London’s Royal Albert Hall’,²³ and, more starkly, ‘the book and the original eddic poem are worlds apart’.²⁴

However it was performed, Eddic poetry was composed in two main metres, both stanzaic, stress-based and structurally alliterative.²⁵ They are called *fornyrðislag* ‘old story metre’ and *ljóðaháttir* ‘metre of songs’.

Fornyrðislag normally comprises four four-stress ‘long lines’, each divided into two ‘half-lines’ which are linked by alliteration across a notional caesura.²⁶ This metre was used mostly for narrative verse; it appears in *Vsp.*, for example.

Ljóðaháttir comprises two conjoined sets of the following: a ‘long line’ followed by a ‘full verse’ distinctive as a metrical entity for containing between two and four alliterating syllables. This metre was used mainly for dialogue- or wisdom-verse, as seen, for example, in *Ls.*

A less common, extended form of *ljóðaháttir*, called *galdralag* ‘metre of incantations’, is associated with verbal magic. It features one or more additional full verses, as, for example, in *Ls.* 62.²⁷

A fourth Eddic metre, *málaháttir* ‘metre of speeches’, features half-lines characterized by having at least five metrical positions or syllables, as seen, most prominently, in *Am.*

Modern scholars often broadly distinguish poetry in these Eddic metres from what they call ‘skaldic’ verse.²⁸ The latter term denotes the kinds of exacting poetic form, used from the late ninth century, by the court poets (‘skalds’; ON *skáld*) of Norwegian kings, but also later adopted by poets in Iceland and other Norse-speaking areas. The court poets composed frequently encomiastic verse in a complex eight-line *dróttkvætt*

‘court metre’, which, although probably a development from *fornyrðislag*, imposed, unlike Eddic prosody, extremely demanding requirements for alliteration, syllable count and rhyme, and often featured complex, fractured syntax.²⁹ That these poets, who, unlike Eddic poets, are usually named, often used complex ‘kennings’—abstruse periphrases involving two or more nouns—increases the difficulty of interpreting their verses. The distinction between ‘Eddic’ and ‘skaldic’ verse (and possibly poets) is, however, far from absolute—Eddic poems also contain kennings, for example, albeit usually comparatively simple ones,³⁰ and some seem to have been influenced by skaldic verse. Nevertheless, whereas the meaning of skaldic poetry is typically rather, and sometimes very, opaque, Eddic poetry is, by contrast, usually fairly transparent. Also, whereas skaldic verse normally deals with the contemporary and immediate, the older, Eddic verse forms generally address the past and distant.

The poems of **R**, which form the primary basis for this edition, fall into two main groups according to subject matter. First come what scholars traditionally classify as ‘mythological’ poems about the Norse gods. Second, starting with a large rubricated capital *Á* on fol. 20r, come ‘heroic’ poems about legendary humans. However, this is another blurred distinction,³¹ given firstly that gods sometimes appear in poems principally about humans, and vice versa, and secondly that a medieval Christian audience might well have interpreted the former group euhemeristically—that is, they may have viewed the gods and their actions as having originated in historical personages and events.

Below I give very brief summaries of the events of each poem.³² Readers who wish to avoid spoilers of the poems’ contents may therefore wish to skip much of the rest of this Introduction.

The first, mythological group comprises the poems from *Vsp.* to *Alvíssmál* ‘The Sayings of Alvíss’ (*Alv.*).³³ These concern Norse deities such as Óðinn, Þórr, Freyr, Freyja and Loki, along with an elven smith called *Vǫlundr*, monsters such as the wolf Fenrir and *Miðgarðsormr* (‘Snake of *Miðgarðr*’, *Miðgarðr* being a mythological place-name often anglicized as ‘Midgard’), various formidable giants and a knowledgeable but unwary dwarf called Alvíss.³⁴

In this group, the first four poems feature the god Óðinn prominently. *Vsp.* is spoken by a seeress, who, in response to a request by Óðinn, tells of the world’s creation, events leading to its destruction, the apocalypse of Ragnarok itself, and the world’s subsequent rebirth from the sea. This poem is the highlight of the collection in terms of scope and poetic accomplishment. It is considered one of the treasures of early Northern literature.

Hávamál ‘The Sayings of Hávi (an alias of Óðinn)’ (*Háv.*), the longest poem in the collection, is an altogether different and obviously composite work, but still another highlight. It offers a memorable blend of, on the one hand, commonsense, practical wisdom about how a man should act in order to survive in a harsh world and, on the other, glimpses of the doings—both sublime and ridiculous—of Óðinn. His deeds

include the acquisition of the mead of poetry from the giants and, while hanging from a tree as a sacrifice to himself, his learning of runes.

In *Vm.*, Óðinn, against the wishes of his wife, Frigg, engages (apparently incognito) in a deadly contest of knowledge with the eponymous giant Vafþrúðnir. Ultimately, the giant is found wanting.

Grm. sees Óðinn again in dispute with his wife, an argument which results in his capture by a certain Geirrøðr, who tortures the disguised god between two fires. As he suffers, Óðinn, who calls himself *Grímnir* 'Masked One', reveals divine wisdom to Geirrøðr's son, Agnarr, who has refreshed him with a drink. Ultimately, Óðinn reveals his true identity to Geirrøðr, who promptly slips and impales himself on his sword, leaving Agnarr to rule the kingdom.

In *Fsk.* the focus shifts temporarily from Óðinn to the god Freyr. He has fallen deeply in love with a radiant giantess called Gerðr, whom he saw from afar. Freyr's servant, Skírnir, undertakes to travel to giantland to acquire Gerðr for his lord, a task in which he eventually succeeds, though only by threatening the resistant giantess with rune-magic.

Hrbl. is another antagonistic dialogue involving Óðinn. This time, however, his disputant is the mighty Þórr, who requests passage across a stretch of water from a ferryman on the other side. Unknown to Þórr, the ferryman, who calls himself *Hárbarðr* 'Grey Beard', is Óðinn in disguise. *Hárbarðr* refuses Þórr passage and has the last word in their verbal duel, leaving his opponent to take the long road home by foot. This is the first of four consecutive poems to feature Þórr more or less prominently.

In *Hym.*, Þórr goes fishing with the giant Hymir, only to hook *Miðgarðsormr*, the world-encircling snake, which he strikes on the head with his hammer, *Mjöllnir*. Back at the giant's home, Þórr makes off with a huge cauldron in which the sea-giant, *Ægir*, was to brew ale for all the gods. Hymir and his giant companions pursue Þórr, who promptly slays them all.

Ls. is set in *Ægir's* home, where he had brewed ale and arranged a feast to which many of the gods came. At the feast Loki accuses each of the gods of disreputable behaviour, before finally being driven away by Þórr. A concluding prose passage describes how the gods punished Loki, according to other sources for his part in the slaying of the innocent god Baldr.

With *Þrymskviða* 'The Lay of Þrymr' (*Þrk.*), the collection's tone lightens with burlesque comedy. Þórr's hammer has been stolen by the giant Þrymr, who demands the beautiful goddess Freyja in exchange for its return. Þórr sets out for the land of giants disguised as Freyja in bridalwear, with Loki as handmaiden. The poem's climax is no less entertaining for being predictably violent.

Vkv. concerns the capture and hamstringing of an elven smith by a Swedish king called *Níðuðr*. It culminates in the captive's savage vengeance and marvellous airborne escape.

Alv. is another dialogue-poem, this time between Þórr and the eponymous dwarf *Alvíss* 'All-Wise'. The dwarf has come to take home a bride, but most unwisely without asking the permission of Þórr, who claims to be the only god with the right to give her away. Surprisingly, instead of simply smashing the dwarf's skull, Þórr keeps *Alvíss* talking above ground until dawn, when, we may infer, the first rays of the sun destroy him, probably by petrification.

The second, heroic group of poems in **R** runs from *Helgakviða Hundingsbana in fyrri* 'The Earlier Lay of Helgi Hundingsbani' (*HH. I*) to *Hamðismál* 'The Lay of Hamðir' (*Hm.*), all of which survive only in this manuscript. These poems mainly concern legendary human beings, although some also refer to gods, other supernatural beings and mythological events such as Ragnarok.³⁵ Together, with the exception of *Helgakviða Hjörvarðssonar* 'The Lay of Helgi Hjörvarðsson' (*HHv.*), they comprise the Eddic *Völsung-Niflung* cycle. This series of poems takes its name partly from the character *Völsungr* (whose descendants are *Völsungar*) and partly from the etymologically obscure Old Norse term (*H*)*niflungar* for members of the ancient Burgundian royalty.

Some of the characters in these poems have vestigial links to correspondingly named, but shadowy, historical figures of the Germanic past from the fourth to seventh centuries. Most notably, *Gunnarr*, *Atli* and *Jörmunrekkr* are reflexes of, respectively, a fifth-century Burgundian king called *Gundaharius*, *Attila* the Hun (d. 453) and an Ostrogothic king called *Ermanaric* who died in the 370s. The imperious figure of the valkyrie *Brynhildr* possibly stems from a Visigothic princess called *Brunchildis* (d. 613) who married a Frankish king named *Sigibert* (d. 575; cf. *Sigurðr*).³⁶ Additionally, *Þjóðrekr*, who plays a minor part in this cycle, probably stems from the Ostrogothic King *Theodoric* the Great (454–526).

Other, often substantially different, accounts of events recounted in these heroic poems appear in other major medieval Germanic compositions. These are the Old English poem *Beowulf* (c. 700?);³⁷ the Middle High German poem the *Nibelungenlied* 'The Lay of the Nibelungs' (c. 1200), which exists in multiple versions, and an associated poem called *Die Klage* 'The Lament';³⁸ the mid-thirteenth-century Norse (probably Norwegian) *Þiðreks saga af Bern* 'Saga of Þiðrekr of Bern (Verona)',³⁹ which draws on German traditions; and the thirteenth-century Icelandic *Völsunga saga* 'Saga of the *Völsungar*' (*VS*), for which Eddic poems were a major source.⁴⁰ Furthermore, scenes from the cycle are frequently depicted in early medieval art from Scandinavia and England.⁴¹ There are also Scandinavian ballads, as well as a continuing tradition of Faroese balladry.⁴²

Additionally, heroic (and mythological) Eddic poems, along with Snorri's *Prose Edda*, were fundamental sources for Richard Wagner's nineteenth-century cycle of music dramas, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.⁴³ They were also major influences on J. R. R. Tolkien, twentieth-century author of *The Silmarillion*, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*,⁴⁴ and George R. R. Martin, author of the recent series of novels collectively called *A Song of Ice and Fire*.⁴⁵

VS, which draws heavily on versions of many of the heroic poems in **R**,⁴⁶ is a valuable guide to these poems' interpretation, although readers will find inconsistencies of narrative and characterization between their accounts of events. This is the case even within **R**, as, although some of its poems might have been adapted to suit the purposes of the unknown compiler of this collection, they (unlike at least some of the prose passages and possibly *Grp.*) should not be imagined to have been composed for this collection, let alone in sequence for it. Each poem should be appreciated principally on its own terms, as a separate work.

R's heroic texts begin with three poems about warriors called *Helgi* 'Holy One'. The first poem, now customarily known as *Helgakviða Hundingsbana in fyrri*, is actually headed *Völsungakviða* 'Poem of the Völsungar' in **R**. It begins with a vivid description of auspicious events at the birth of the eponymous hero, who goes on to slay a king called Hundingr and his vengeful sons. Subsequently, Helgi wins the hand of the valkyrie Sigrún by killing Hǫðbroddr, a king to whom she had been betrothed unwillingly.

The first part of the next poem, *HHv.*—a text named after an ostensibly different Helgi—concerns a king called Hjörvarðr and his efforts to win the hand of the beautiful Sigrlinn, which, thanks to an earl called Atli (distinct from Atli/Attila the Hun), eventually succeed. The pair have a son, whom a valkyrie names *Helgi*. With Atli's help, Helgi avenges his maternal grandfather and kills a giant. A flyting between the giant's daughter and Atli ensues, which ends when Helgi tells the giantess to look east—the first rays of morning, we understand, petrify her. Subsequently, Helgi is betrothed to Sváva, a valkyrie whom his brother, Heðinn, having been cursed by a troll-woman, swears to marry—an oath he immediately regrets bitterly. Helgi forgives him as he expects to die shortly in a duel. He does, indeed, receive a mortal wound, and requests that Sváva love Heðinn, who sets out to avenge his brother.

Helgakviða Hundingsbana önnur 'The Second Lay of Helgi Hundingsbani' (*HH. II*) begins by describing how Helgi Hundingsbani (the hero of *HH. I*) secretly visited the court of Hundingr, who then sought him. Helgi, however, escapes Hundingr's men by dressing up as a serving-maid. He goes on to kill Hundingr and win Sigrún by killing Hǫðbroddr, but is himself killed by Sigrún's brother. Subsequently, the dead Helgi is seen riding to his burial-mound. Sigrún enters the mound, too, and falls asleep in his arms. Finally, Sigrún dies from grief, but she and Helgi are said to have been reborn.

A prose passage headed *Frá dauða Sinfjötla* 'About the death of Sinfjötli' introduces the sons of Sigmundr, son of Völsungr. Of these, the youngest, Sigurðr—the half-brother of Helgi Hundingsbani—became the foremost hero of medieval Germanic tradition and the basis for Wagner's Siegfried.

Grípisspá 'The Prophecy of Grípir' (*Grp.*) summarizes, in rather uninspired fashion, the events of Sigurðr's life, which subsequent poems in **R** treat more rewardingly. Sigurðr learns from his maternal uncle, Grípir, that, among other things, he will slay his foster-father, Reginn, and the dragon Fáfnir, and that he will take that monster's treasure. He will fall in love with, and become betrothed to, the valkyrie Brynhildr,

but subsequently forget her (under malign magical influence). He will exchange appearances with Gunnarr, son of Gjúki, and sleep (without sexual intercourse) beside Brynhildr in Gunnarr's form, thus binding Gunnarr and Brynhildr to each other. He himself will marry Guðrún, Gunnarr's sister, while Gunnarr will marry Brynhildr. Ultimately, Brynhildr, aggrieved by this shape-changing trickery, will incite Guðrún's brothers to murder Sigurðr.

Reginismál 'The Sayings of Reginn' (*Rm.*), introduces Sigurðr's foster-father, Reginn, son of Hreiðmarr. He tells Sigurðr how Loki killed Reginn's brother, Otr, and subsequently took gold from a dwarf, who cursed it. Loki used the gold to pay compensation for Otr, but Hreiðmarr withheld it from both Reginn and his surviving brother, Fáfnir. Consequently, Fáfnir slew his father and took all the gold for himself. The text goes on to record how Sigurðr avenged his father by killing the sons of Hundingr, and how Reginn incited Sigurðr to kill Fáfnir, who had become a monstrous snake hoarding the gold.

In *Fáfnismál* 'The Sayings of Fáfnir' (*Fm.*) Sigurðr stabs Fáfnir, but before Fáfnir dies, the two converse. During their discourse, the snake speaks, among other things, of Sigurðr's demise, warns him about Reginn and reveals mythological lore, including details of Ragnarok. Subsequently, Sigurðr cooks Fáfnir's heart. In doing so, he burns his thumb and puts it in his mouth, whereupon he understands the language of nearby nuthatches, which advise him, among other things, to eat Fáfnir's heart himself, kill Reginn and keep the gold—which he does.

Sigrdrífumál 'The Sayings of Sigrdrífa' (*Sd.*) centres on the runes and advice imparted to Sigurðr by the eponymous valkyrie (*Sigrdrífa* 'Victory Driver', or perhaps 'Victory Snowdrift' [i.e., 'Battle'], seems to be another name for, and perhaps was once an appellative of, Brynhildr), after he awakened her from a sleep induced magically by Óðinn as punishment for disobedience. This poem is incomplete in **R**, due to the 'great lacuna': the loss from **R** of what is thought to be eight leaves—room for about 260 stanzas, although some prose may well have been included—which contained the end of *Sd.* Fortunately, the missing stanzas of *Sd.* are recoverable mainly from paper manuscripts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the full text having apparently been copied before the loss occurred.

The missing leaves presumably also contained the first part (perhaps roughly half) of **R**'s *Brot af Sigurðarkviðu* 'Fragment of a Lay of Sigurðr' (*Br.*). What else they contained, between the end of *Sd.* and the start of *Br.* is uncertain, but *VS*, which draws heavily on poems of the *Poetic Edda*, probably supplies a few of the doubtless many missing stanzas from **R** from a poem (or poems) about Sigurðr and related characters, as well as a likely guide to its (or their) basic story. Largely on this basis, scholars have argued for the former presence in **R** of a 'Falcon Lay', a 'Dream Lay' and/or **Sigurðarkviða in meira* 'The Longer Lay of Sigurðr'.⁴⁷

What remains of *Br.* includes discussion between Gunnarr and his brother Högni (probably) about the killing of Sigurðr. The conflicting responses of Brynhildr and

Guðrún to Sigurðr's death are also recorded, as are Brynhildr's foreboding words to Gunnarr. A concluding prose passage describes differing accounts of Sigurðr's death, thus testifying to the varied, fluid nature of Northern heroic legend.

Guðrúnarkviða in fyrsta 'The First Lay of Guðrún' (*Gðr. I*) describes Guðrún's pent-up grief at Sigurðr's death, which a succession of visitors attempt to release. The third of these, Guðrún's sister Gullrönd, succeeds by exposing his corpse. Guðrún then praises her dead husband and condemns his murderers. Brynhildr curses Gullrönd, and, to defend herself against Gullrönd's consequent verbal attack, blames her own brother, Atli (Attila the Hun), for all the evil that has been done. A concluding prose passage records that Guðrún went away to Denmark, and that Brynhildr committed suicide because she did not want to live after Sigurðr.

Sigurðarkviða in skamma 'The Short Lay of Sigurðr' (*Sg.*) begins with a brief account of Sigurðr's swearing of oaths with Gunnarr and Högni, his betrothal to Guðrún, and his deception of Brynhildr on behalf of Gunnarr. Next comes a description of Brynhildr's icy distress at this deception, and her determination to leave Gunnarr unless he kills Sigurðr. A disturbed Gunnarr consults Högni and decides to request that his third brother, Guthormr, do the killing, since Guthormr had not sworn oaths to Sigurðr. Guthormr does so. The rest of the poem includes the dying Sigurðr's words to Guðrún, but focuses on the response of Brynhildr, which includes prophecies of doom and a cool determinedness to commit suicide, for which she details elaborate preparations. The poem, which is more about Brynhildr than Sigurðr, ends with her final words in life.

Helreið Brynhildar 'Brynhildr's Hel-Ride' (*Hlr.*) describes the dead Brynhildr's words to a hostile giantess whom she met while riding to Hel, land of the dead. Brynhildr recounts key aspects of her life, including details of her disobedience to Óðinn.

Dráp Niflunga 'The Slaying of the Niflungar' (*Dr.*) is a short prose passage describing how Guðrún was married to Atli, Brynhildr's brother, and how he killed Gunnarr and Högni, whom he blamed for his sister's death. Högni's heart was torn out and Gunnarr was killed by an adder in a snake-pit. Subsequent poems in **R** also treat these events.

In *Guðrúnarkviða 2nnur* 'The Second Lay of Guðrún' (*Gðr. II*) Guðrún reflects sorrowfully on Sigurðr's murder and the responses of Gunnarr and Högni. She records how she then went to Denmark, where her mother, Grímlidr, requested that Gunnarr and Högni recompense Guðrún for the killing of her husband and son. After bringing Guðrún a magical drink intended to make her forget Sigurðr, Grímlidr eventually succeeded—the drink's effect perhaps having been delayed—in persuading Guðrún to accept Atli in marriage, though not before Guðrún prophesied that he would kill her brothers and that she would kill him. Guðrún then describes her journey to Atli's home, and concludes with her account of how she gave Atli reassuring—though, to us, evidently misleading—interpretations of his violent dreams.

In *Guðrúnarkviða in þriðja* 'The Third Lay of Guðrún' (*Gðr. III*) Guðrún, now married to Atli, is accused by one of his handmaidens of having slept with King Þjóðrekr, but

Guðrún says the pair merely embraced once. She calls for her brothers, who may, however, already be dead. Forced to undergo ordeal by boiling water, Guðrún proves her innocence—unlike the accusing handmaiden, who is led away to be drowned in a bog.

Oddrúnargrátr ‘Oddrún’s Lament’ (*Od.*) tells of a woman called Borgný who, though long in labour, cannot give birth. Oddrún, Atli’s sister, visits her and recites incantations which enable her to bear a boy and a girl. Oddrún explains that she helped in fulfilment of a promise (obscure to us). She goes on to tell of her past, in which her dying father had commanded that she be married to Gunnarr, something to which Atli was implacably opposed because of the trickery which had led to the death of his other sister, Brynhildr. After discovering that Oddrún and Gunnarr had shared a bed, Atli had his men cut out Högni’s heart and throw Gunnarr into a snake-pit. Oddrún sailed to save Gunnarr, but arrived too late to prevent Atli’s ophidian mother biting his heart. Oddrún wonders how she continues to live after Gunnarr.

Akv., in full *Atlakviða in grænlenzka* ‘The Greenlandic Lay of Atli’, is one of the best and probably oldest poems in **R**; it perhaps dates from the ninth century, but appears to include some folk-tradition stemming ultimately from the fifth. It tells how Gunnarr and Högni accepted Atli’s invitation to visit him, despite a warning from their sister, Guðrún, now Atli’s wife.⁴⁸ Gunnarr is taken captive and Atli has Högni’s heart cut out, a mistake which ensures that the whereabouts of Gunnarr’s treasure (taken from Sigurðr) are now known to Gunnarr alone. Gunnarr is placed in a snake-pit, where he dies. Guðrún takes revenge by feeding Atli his own sons, stabbing him to death, and incinerating his hall, along with everyone inside.

Am., in full *Atlamáal in grænlenzku* ‘The Greenlandic Sayings/Poem of Atli’, tells a version of the same events, but at considerably greater length—it is the second-longest poem in **R**—and with many differences of detail. Not least of these is an alternative demise for Atli, whom Guðrún does not burn within his hall but lays to rest in a ship-burial. This poem is especially notable for its use of *málahátttr*.

A prose passage preceding *Guðrúnarhvøft* ‘Guðrún’s Whetting’ (*Ghv.*) describes how Guðrún, having failed to commit suicide after killing Atli, drifted over the sea to the land of King Jónakr, who married her. They had three sons: Sqrli, Erpr and Hamðir (the inclusion of Erpr in this list contradicts the next poem, *Hm.*). Also raised there was Guðrún’s daughter by Sigurðr, Svanhildr, who married King Jormunrekkr. She reportedly had an affair with the king’s son, Randvér, for which Jormunrekkr had him hanged and her trodden to death by horses. *Ghv.* records Guðrún’s recollection of her sorrows and incitement of her sons to avenge their sister. This poem also draws on folk-tradition stemming from apparently historical events of the fourth century.

Hm. concludes **R**’s heroic cycle on a savage high. In this poem, which **R** identifies as ‘ancient’ and may indeed be among the collection’s oldest compositions, Guðrún goads Sqrli and Hamðir into undertaking to avenge Svanhildr. Along the way, the pair foolishly insult and kill Erpr, who here is only their half-brother. In Jormunrekkr’s hall

they sever the king's arms and legs, but not his head, thus unwisely enabling him to command that they be stoned, since iron weapons would not harm them. As a result, they fall valiantly.

Finally, we come to the poems outside **R** that, in addition to **H**'s version of *Vsp.*, are included in this edition.

BDr., from **A**, records how Óðinn, in an attempt to explain why his son Baldr was having bad dreams, rode to Hel. There, once past an aggressive hellhound, Óðinn—incognito as so often—raises a seeress from the grave and asks her for whom the hall of Hel is prepared. She replies that it is for Baldr, and gives associated details, before, having identified her questioner as Óðinn, reminding him of the impending doom of Ragnarok.

Rþ. is an incomplete poem from *Codex Wormianus* (AM 242 fol.), a fourteenth-century manuscript which also includes a text of the *Prose Edda*.⁴⁹ According to a brief prose introduction, the poem tells of how the god Heimdallr went travelling as *Rígr* 'King'. At each of three households of ascending social standing, he fathers a child representative of the corresponding class of people—slaves, freemen and nobles—each of which goes on to have offspring of the same class. The offspring of the third union, *Jarl* 'Earl', receives instruction from *Rígr* (whose name he also comes to bear) and goes on to have twelve sons, the youngest of whom, *Konr ungr* 'Young Konr' (a pun on ON *konungr* 'king'), himself gains the title of *Rígr*. Although the end of the poem is lost, he presumably became a model king.

Hdl. survives complete in the late-fourteenth-century Icelandic *Flateyjarbók* 'Book of Flatey'.⁵⁰ It records a tense dialogue between the goddess Freyja and a giantess called Hyndla, whom Freyja awakens at the dead of night. Hyndla refuses to ride with Freyja, so the two converse on the spot about the lineage of a man called Óttarr, whom Freyja is riding in the form of a boar. Hyndla recounts his illustrious lineage, and the dialogue ends acrimoniously (though rather obscurely) with insulting words and fire.

Svipdagsmál is the modern title for two separate poems, *Gg.* and *Fj.*, which appear to be narratively linked and are found in numerous seventeenth-century manuscripts. In *Gg.*, the hero, *Svipdagr*, having been set the 'impossible' task of visiting a woman called Mengloð, visits the grave of his mother, Gróa. She awakens and recites to him nine helpful incantations. *Fj.*, which includes much obscure mythological lore, tells of how *Svipdagr* accomplished this task.

This edition of the *Poetic Edda* is intended mainly for beginning students of Old Norse, students of other medieval Germanic literatures, and interested academics in other fields, rather than advanced students and scholars of Old Norse. I hope, however, that all those interested in ancient Northern myth and legend may derive some value from the publication of original texts and modern translations of these poems, along with commentary, in a single, easily accessible volume aimed at English-speaking readers.

Some may wish that my commentary were more detailed. Much more could undoubtedly be said, but my wish to contain the poems within a single set of covers

has necessitated brevity, sometimes silence.⁵¹ My remarks attempt to furnish readers with enough information to understand and appreciate the poems as literature, but those who have prior familiarity with at least the basics of Old Norse mythology and heroic legend will undoubtedly enjoy them more. Such knowledge can be gained, for mythology, by consulting the works (listed in the Further Reading section below) by Gabriel Turville-Petre, Rudolf Simek, H. R. E. Davidson and Christopher Abram; and, for the heroic Völsung-Niflung cycle, those by Theodore Andersson, Francis G. Gentry *et al.*, and Edward R. Haymes and Susann T. Samples.⁵² Readers who want more detailed commentary will find further information in the works listed in the Further Reading sections to each poem; these listings, though not always especially short, are nevertheless highly selective, being limited mainly to works in English in order to avoid inaccessibility to most of this book's intended audience. Serious students should consult the multivolume *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda* by Klaus von See *et al.*,⁵³ for its commentaries, texts, translations and bibliographies, as well as the modern Icelandic edition of Eddic poems by Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason in the Íslenzk fornrit series. Readers wishing to understand and appreciate the poems in their original language will, having learnt the basics of Old Norse grammar and pronunciation,⁵⁴ find invaluable the *Glossary to the Poetic Edda* by Beatrice La Farge and John Tucker.⁵⁵

With two exceptions, the Old Norse texts in this edition derive from my examination of photographic facsimiles of the original manuscripts, supplemented by consultation of major prior editions.⁵⁶ This edition is based primarily on **R** whenever it is a source for a poem. The order of poems follows **R** from *Vsp.* to *Hm.* Appended are the **H** text of *Vsp.*, followed by *BDr.*, *Rp.*, *Hdl.* and *Svipdagsmál* (*Gg.* and *Fj.*), which survive only in other manuscripts. Where readings for poems attested in **R** are taken from **A**, **H** or elsewhere, this is noted in the textual apparatus, which also records manuscript readings when these have been emended in the text; only select variants (normally excluding orthographical differences) are recorded therein. Emendations are also indicated by italics within the Old Norse texts facing the English translations (not elsewhere). This convention extends to titles, which are italicized within the Old Norse texts when they do not appear in the manuscript on which the edition is primarily based—some titles are post-medieval (see also the textual apparatus). By contrast, italics in the translations denote emphasis or untranslated Old Norse words; elsewhere, italics simply distinguish Old Norse from modern English. Manuscript abbreviations are silently expanded within the Old Norse texts, but the larger or more unusual ones are noted in the textual apparatus.⁵⁷ In keeping with the usual practice for reading editions of Old Norse texts, the spelling of the manuscripts has been largely normalized (although not to the farthest extent possible), except in the manuscript readings recorded in the textual apparatus (although even these are somewhat normalized due to typographical limitations).⁵⁸

Punctuation is supplied editorially to assist comprehension, at the risk of occasional disambiguation or more serious misinterpretation. In particular, the placement of quotation marks to indicate a person's speech may sometimes be questioned, as it is not always clear who is speaking a particular stanza or stanzas. I have put framing quotation marks around poems which have an explicit first-person speaker, with the exception of *Háv.*, a composite poem in which the speaker attribution is especially unclear. Also wholly editorial is the stanza numbering, which sometimes differs from that of earlier editions of these poems, often due to differences of opinion about where some stanzas end and others begin, or about their correct order.⁵⁹ The centralized presentation of the Old Norse poetry on the page has no basis in the manuscripts, in which both poetry and prose are presented as 'prose', but merely reflects my desire to present a visually attractive edition that encourages appreciation of at least the poetry as works of art.

My translations endeavour to reflect both the meaning and at least something of the poetic spirit of the Old Norse originals in simple, unarchaic English verse. To try to convey meaning without spirit—even if these attributes *could* be dissociated—in verse form would be to do a disservice both to the Old Norse poets and to modern readers unable to read the texts in the original language. Accordingly, I have tried to reflect something of the original's character by giving the translation a lightly alliterative flavour, although the overriding importance (in my view) of fidelity to the meaning of the Old Norse has often thwarted this ambition; in such cases, a degree of euphony was aspired to, but again not always attained. My attempt to reflect the meaning of the original words is itself often undermined by the inherent ambiguity of poetry and by cases in which modern English simply has no equivalent for an Old Norse term.⁶⁰ I have not attempted to recast the Old Norse verse forms into English equivalents. Nor have I adhered especially closely to the order of the Old Norse words, as to do so would often prevent fluent translation.

I translate most of the poems' Old Norse proper nouns in the notes (often only on their first appearance in the collection), because these may contain clues to the nature of their bearers and the events in which they participate, though many are etymological senses, not immediately appreciable meanings.⁶¹ Suggestions for alternative translations of proper names and of other words and phrases are selective.

Readers may wish to compare my translations of the poems in this book with other English renderings, of which there are many.⁶²

Further Reading

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Notes to the Translation

- 1 Henceforth I refer to this language, and to works composed in it, as ‘Old Norse’.
- 2 The Old Norse letters *þ* and *ð* (the corresponding capitals for which are *Þ* and *Ð*) can be roughly equated with ‘th’ and ‘d’ in modern English; hence *þórr* is often anglicized as *Thor* and *Óðinn* as *Odin*. Among the other letters likely to be unfamiliar to newcomers to Old Norse, the most off-putting is probably *ǫ*, which, however, may simply be pronounced approximately like the ‘o’ in English ‘not’. My translation presents all proper nouns in their Old Norse nominative form, to which an English possessive ending may be appended (thus *Þórr’s* and *Óðinn’s*); so too does my commentary, except where other inflected forms occur in quoted passages of Old Norse.
- 3 Unless otherwise stated, all dates in this book are *anno Domini*.
- 4 The meaning of *edda* is uncertain. It might mean ‘art of poetry’ or ‘edition (of poetry)’, being a coinage from the Latin verb *edo* ‘I publish, tell’, perhaps with a nod to an Old Norse homonym meaning ‘great-grandmother’—it may not be irrelevant that some of these poems feature prominent female speakers, including, in the first instance, a preternaturally ancient seeress. An alternative suggestion is that *edda* means ‘little eider duck’, as some medieval Icelandic manuscripts were named after birds. See A. Faulkes, ‘Edda’, *Gripla* 2 (1997), 32–39, revised at <http://www.vsnrweb-publications.org.uk/Edda.pdf> (all Web links in this edition were last accessed on 18 May 2022); A. Liberman, ‘The Origin of the Name *Edda*’, in his *In Prayer and Laughter: Essays on Medieval Scandinavian and Germanic Mythology, Literature, and Culture* (Moscow: Paleograph Press, 2016), pp. 395–405.
- 5 References are to the editions by A. Faulkes (see ‘Other Primary Texts’ in the list of abbreviations and the Further Reading section at the end of this introduction). For a full translation, see A. Faulkes, trans., *Snorri Sturluson: ‘Edda’* (London: J. M. Dent, 1987), <http://vsnrweb-publications.org.uk/EDDArestr.pdf>; alternatively, for the *Prologue*, *Gylfaginning* and *Skáldskaparmál*, there is J. L. Byock, trans., *Snorri Sturluson: The Prose Edda: Norse Mythology* (London: Penguin, 2005).
- 6 The most famous of the sagas are the ‘family sagas’ or ‘sagas of Icelanders’, editions of which are available in the Íslenzk fornrit series published by Hið íslenska fornritafélag, Reykjavík. They are translated together in Viðar Hreinsson, ed., *The Complete Sagas of Icelanders including 49 Tales*, 5 vols. (Reykjavík: Leifur Eiríksson Publishing, 1997). For valuable analysis and synopses, see T. M. Andersson, *The Icelandic Family Saga: An Analytic Reading* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967).
- 7 For a facsimile with transcription, on which this edition relies heavily, see Vésteinn Ólason and Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, *Konungsbók Eddukvæða. Codex Regius. GL. KGL. SML. 2365 4to* (Reykjavík: Lögberg Edda, 2001); it is referred to as ‘the facsimile volume’ in the textual apparatus of this edition. For online photographs, see ‘GKS 2365 4^{to}’, [handrit.is](https://handrit.is/en/manuscript/view/is/GKS04-2365), <https://handrit.is/en/manuscript/view/is/GKS04-2365>
- 8 The main modern editions of the *Poetic Edda*, which all advanced students should consult, are G. Neckel and H. Kuhn, ed., *Edda: die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern*, Band I, *Text*, 5th edn. (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1983) (NK), and Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason, ed., *Eddukvæði*, Íslenzk fornrit, 2 vols. (Reykjavík: Hið

Íslenska bókmenntafélag, 2014); neither contains a translation. A valuable, but incomplete, modern edition with facing-page English translation and extensive commentary, is U. Dronke, ed. and trans., *The Poetic Edda*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969–2011). One recent edition includes facing-page English translations but only from three scholars of the first half of the twentieth century: J. Knipe, ed., *The Poetic Edda: Parallel Old Norse / English Edition* (Amazon Kindle e-book, 2017). O. Bray, ed. and trans., *The Elder or Poetic Edda, Commonly Known as Sæmund's Edda* (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1908) lacks the heroic poems. Gudbrand Vigfusson and F. York Powell, ed. and trans., *Corpus Poeticum Boreale: The Poetry of the Old Northern Tongue*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1883), I, is antiquated.

- 9 For a facsimile and a transcription, see Finnur Jónsson, *Håndskriftet Nr. 748, 4^o, bl. 1-6 i den Arna-magnæanske samling (Brudstykke af den ældre Edda) i fototypisk og diplomatisk gengivelse* (Copenhagen: S. L. Møllers bogtrykkeri, 1896). For online photographs, see 'AM 748 I a 4^o', *handrit.is*, <https://handrit.is/en/manuscript/view/da/AM04-0748-I-a>
- 10 Or 'Lay', 'Poem'. This ambiguity applies to other poems in the collection, but is not mentioned again.
- 11 This ambiguity also applies to other poems, but, again, it is not mentioned henceforth.
- 12 This poem is called *Skirnismál* 'The Sayings of Skírnir' in A.
- 13 Haukr was Haukr Erlendsson, a prominent Icelander who died in 1334.
- 14 For an earlier edition and translation of *Rþ.*, see U. Dronke, ed., *The Poetic Edda: Volume II. Mythological Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 161–238. Editions, with English translations, of important Eddic poems not included in the present book include C. Tolkien, trans., *The Saga of King Heidrek the Wise* (London: Nelson, 1960) (*Hervararkviða* and *Hljðskviða*); C. Tolley, ed. and trans., *Grottasöngur: The Song of Grotti* (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2008); A. Lassen, ed. and trans., *Hrafnagaldur Óðins (Forspjallsljóð)* (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2011). Many Eddic verses, often variants of those found in poems included in the present edition, also appear in Snorri's *Prose Edda*. Still more survive in other Icelandic *fornaldarsögur* 'sagas of ancient times', composed from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries, for which see Guðni Jónsson, ed., *Fornaldar sögur norðurlanda* (Reykjavík: Íslendingasagna-útgáfan, 1950) (*FSN*), and, in isolation from their surrounding prose, *SPSMA VIII*. For a list of additional named Eddic poems, see C. Larrington, J. Quinn and B. Schorn, ed., *A Handbook to Eddic Poetry: Myths and Legends of Early Scandinavia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. xii, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781316471685>; they include, among others, the c. 900 *Haraldskvæði* 'Poem of/about Haraldr' (*Harkv.*) by the Norwegian Þorbjörn hornklofi (*SPSMA I*, 91–117); the tenth-century *Hákonarmál* 'Words of Hákon' by Eyvindr skáldaspillir Finnsson (*SPSMA I*, 171–95); the anonymous c. 954 *Eiríksmál* 'Words about Eiríkr' (*Eirm.*; *SPSMA I*, 1003–13); the anonymous thirteenth-century *Sólarljóð* 'Song of the Sun' (*SPSMA VII*, 287–357); *Hugsvinnsmál* 'Sayings of the Wise-Minded One' (*SPSMA VII*, 358–449); *Darraðarljóð* 'Song of the Battle-Pennant/Spear' (in chapter 157 of *Brennu-Njáls saga* 'Saga of Burnt-Njáll'; Einar Ól. Sveinsson, ed., *Brennu-Njáls saga*, Íslensk fornrit 12 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1954), pp. 454–58; R. G. Poole, *Viking Poems on War and Peace: A Study in Skaldic Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 116–56); and the *Merlínusspá* 'Prophecies of Merlin' by Gunnlaugr Leifsson (d. 1218

- or 1219) (*SPSMA* VIII, 38–189). Snorri quotes from nameless Eddic poems and from the otherwise lost *Heimdalargaldr* ‘Heimdallr’s Incantation’, and parts of his prose might well draw on other Eddic texts now wholly disappeared (see e.g., D. Brennecke, ‘Gab es eine *Skrymiskviða*?’, *ANF* 96 (1981), 1–8)—as, too, may the twelfth-century Latin *Gesta Danorum* ‘Deeds of the Danes’ (*GD*) by the Danish writer Saxo Grammaticus. Finally, there appear to be some passages of Eddic verse among early Scandinavian runic texts, the interpretation of which is often disputed; these include the possibly early-ninth-century inscription on the Rök stone from Östergötland, Sweden, which may relate to the Norse apocalypse, a topic central to several mythological poems of the *Poetic Edda*; see P. Holmberg, B. Gräslund, O. Sundqvist and H. Williams, ‘The Rök Runestone and the End of the World’, *Futhark: International Journal of Runic Studies* 9–10 (2018–19), 7–38, and P. Holmberg, ‘Rök Runestone Riddles Revisited’, *Maal og Minne* 112 (2020), 37–55. The strong likelihood that there once existed a much larger corpus of (especially oral) Eddic verse than now survives means that the surviving texts ‘should be seen as more or less “coincidental” written examples of what once existed as an extensive oral tradition in Iceland as well as in mainland Scandinavia’, according to J. P. Schjødt, ‘Eddic Poetry and pre-Christian Scandinavia’, in Larrington *et al.*, *Handbook*, pp. 132–46 at 136, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781316471685.008>
- 15 The prose passages probably do not predate **R** or its forebear. They are most likely accretions to the ‘original’ versions of the poems.
 - 16 On this much discussed topic, see B. Fidjestøl, *The Dating of Eddic Poetry: A Historical Survey and Methodological Investigation* (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel, 1999); B. Ø. Thorvaldsen, ‘The Dating of Eddic Poetry’, in Larrington *et al.*, *Handbook*, pp. 72–91, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781316471685.005>; Haukur Þorgeirsson, ‘The Dating of Eddic Poetry — Evidence From Alliteration’, in Kristján Árnason, S. Carey, T. K. Dewey, Haukur Þorgeirsson, Ragnar Ingi Aðalsteinsson and Þorhallur Eypórsson, ed., *Approaches to Nordic and Germanic Poetry* (Reykjavík: University of Iceland Press, 2016), pp. 257–78; C. D. Sapp, *Dating the Old Norse ‘Poetic Edda’: A Multifactorial Analysis of Linguistic Features* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1075/sigl.5>, which was published too late for its findings to be considered in this edition.
 - 17 Iceland converted to Christianity in 999/1000.
 - 18 For a recent interpretation of the mythological scenes on this monument, see E. Pettit, *The Waning Sword: Conversion Imagery and Celestial Myth in ‘Beowulf’* (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2020), pp. 261–79, <https://doi.org/10.11647/obp.0190>. Other stone carvings from pre-Conquest England and early medieval Scandinavia also feature characters and events mentioned in Eddic poems; see L. Kopár, *Gods and Settlers: The Iconography of Norse Mythology in Anglo-Scandinavian Sculpture* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.1484/m.sem-eb.5.106277>; L. Kopár, ‘Eddic Poetry and the Imagery of Stone Monuments’, in Larrington *et al.*, *Handbook*, pp. 190–211, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781316471685.011>
 - 19 In **R** *Hamðismál* is also called *Hamðismál in fornu* ‘Hamðismál the Old’, and *Helgakviða Hundingsbani Qnnur* quotes from *Völsungakviða in forna* ‘The Old Poem of the Völsungar’.
 - 20 See many of the early poems in *SPSMA* and, for analysis of early visual representations of Norse myths and legends, M. Stern, ‘Runestone Images and Visual Communication

- in Viking Age Scandinavia' (PhD thesis, University of Nottingham, 2013), <http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/14291/>; also footnote 41 below.
- 21 E.g., *Óðinn kvað*: 'Óðinn said: ...' Many of these have been damaged or lost by trimming of the pages of **R**.
- 22 See especially, T. Gunnell, *The Origins of Drama in Scandinavia* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1995); T. Gunnell, 'Eddic Performance and Eddic Audiences', in Larrington *et al.*, *Handbook*, pp. 92–113, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781316471685.006>. An earlier work on this theme is B. S. Phillpotts, *The Elder Edda and Ancient Scandinavian Drama* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1920).
- 23 Gunnell, 'Eddic Performance', p. 94. Recordings on compact disc of modern performances of Eddic poems, some accompanied by traditional musical instruments, include Sequentia, *Edda: Myths from Medieval Iceland* (BMG Classics [(05472773812], 1999); Sequentia, *The Rheingold Curse: A Germanic Saga of Greed and Revenge from the Medieval Icelandic Edda* (Marc Aurel Edition [MA 20016], 2001); *Current 93 Present Sveinbjörn Beinteinsson 'Edda'* (Durtro [Durtro 005 CD], 1990); *Selected Readings from A New Introduction to Old Norse* (The Chaucer Studio, 2003). See also B. Bagby, 'Beowulf, the Edda, and the Performance of Medieval Epic: Notes from the Workshop of a Reconstructed 'Singer of Tales', in E. B. Vitz, N. F. Regalado and M. Lawrence, ed., *Performing Medieval Narrative* (Cambridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 2005), pp. 181–92. Additionally, the modern Norwegian group Wardruna composes highly atmospheric music, inspired by ancient Norse themes (including those of Eddic poetry), using a variety of traditional instruments.
- 24 Gunnell, 'Eddic Performance', p. 111.
- 25 For detailed discussion of Eddic metres, see Kristján Árnason, *The Rhythms of Dróttkvætt and Other Old Icelandic Metres* (Reykjavík: Institute of Linguistics, University of Iceland, 1991); S. Suzuki, *The Meters of Old Norse Eddic Poetry: Common Germanic Inheritance and North Germanic Innovation* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110336771>; R. D. Fulk, 'Eddic Metres', in Larrington *et al.*, *Handbook*, pp. 252–70, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781316471685.014>. On alliteration specifically, see W. P. Lehmann and J. L. Dillard, *The Alliterations of the 'Edda'* (Austin, TX: Department of Germanic Languages, University of Texas, 1954); T. Shimomiya, 'Notes on Alliteration in the Poetic Edda', *Lingua Posnaniensis* 52 (2010), 79–84, <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10122-010-0015-9>; T. Shimomiya, *Alliteration in the Poetic Edda* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.3726/978-3-0353-0095-6>
- 26 Alliteration—normally of a vowel with any other vowel or with *j*, and of a consonant (or consonant group) with the same consonant (or consonant group)—must normally fall on the first stress of the second half-line, which must alliterate with one or more of the stressed syllables in the first half-line; alliteration may not normally fall on the fourth stress.
- 27 Throughout, Eddic poems are cited by stanza number in this edition. On *galdralag*, see E. Westcoat, 'The Goals of *galdralag*: Identifying the Historical Instances and Uses of the Metre', *Saga-Book* 40 (2016), 69–90.
- 28 There are important mitigations and exceptions, however, with some Eddic poems having probably undergone skaldic revision (such as *Hym.* and *HH. I*), and others in Eddic

style being included among the ‘skaldic’ corpus (such as *Eirm.*, *Hák.* and *Sólarljóð*). As observed in J. Harris, ‘Eddic Poetry as Oral Poetry: The Evidence of Parallel Passages in the Helgi Poems for Questions of Composition and Performance’, in R. J. Glendinning and Haraldur Bessason, ed., *Edda: A Collection of Essays* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1983), pp. 210–42 at 232: ‘The opposition skaldic: Eddic is indispensable, of course, and does reflect real differences, but it may be appropriate to think of stylistic gradations rather than irreconcilably different types of poetry’. For the proposal that skaldic poets also composed poems of the *Poetic Edda*, see E. R. Haymes, ‘The Germanic *Heldenlied* and the *Poetic Edda*: Speculations on Preliterary History’, *Oral Tradition* 19 (2004), 43–62, at 54–56. See also, on distinctions between Eddic and skaldic poetry, B. Schorn, ‘Eddic Modes and Genres’, in Larrington *et al.*, *Handbook*, pp. 231–51 at 232–34, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781316471685.013>. For an introduction to skaldic poetry, see E. O. G. Turville-Petre, *Scaldic Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976). For skaldic texts, along with English translations and commentary, see especially *SPSMA*.

- 29 For detailed studies, see R. Frank, *Old Norse Court Poetry: The ‘Dróttkvætt’ Stanza* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978); K. E. Gade, *The Structure of Old Norse Dróttkvætt Poetry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).
- 30 On this topic, see J. Quinn, ‘Kennings and Other Forms of Figurative Language in Eddic Poetry’, in Larrington *et al.*, *Handbook*, pp. 288–309, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781316471685.016>. More generally, see B. Schorn, ‘Eddic Style’, in Larrington *et al.*, *Handbook*, pp. 271–87, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781316471685.015>
- 31 See further Schorn, ‘Eddic Modes’, pp. 237–41.
- 32 Fuller synopses and preparatory remarks precede the text of each poem in this edition. Plot summaries are also available in N. Tetzner, *The Poetic Edda: A Study Guide* (n.pl., 2019).
- 33 It should not, however, be assumed that Eddic poems were always known by the same titles—for example, the poem entitled *För Skírnis* in **R** is called *Skírnismál* ‘The Sayings of Skírnir’ in **A**—or even that they all had distinct names before being recorded in manuscripts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Some of the titles by which Eddic poems have come to be known appear only in other medieval texts or later manuscripts. Whether any of the titles in this edition were attached to poems much earlier than their earliest surviving manuscripts is unknown. On this topic, see J. Quinn, ‘The Naming of Eddic Mythological Poems in Medieval Manuscripts’, *Parergon* 8 (1990), 97–115, <https://doi.org/10.1353/pgn.1990.0016>
- 34 In addition to the **H** version of *Vsp.*, the four poems not in **R** but included in this edition also feature mythological beings prominently, namely the gods Óðinn (*BDr.*) and Heimdallr (*Rþ.*), the goddess Freyja and the giantess Hyndla (*Hdl.*), and a probably solar hero and a giant (*Svipdagsmál*).
- 35 See P. Hallberg, ‘Elements of Myth in the Heroic Lays of the Poetic Edda’, in B. Brogyanyi and T. Krömmelbein, ed., *Germanic Dialects: Linguistic and Philological Investigations* (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1986), pp. 213–47; D. Clark, ‘Kin-Slaying in the Poetic Edda: The End of the World?’, *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 3 (2007), 21–41, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199654307.003.0004>

- 36 See C. A. Brady, 'A Note on the Historical Prototype of Sigfried', *Modern Philology* 31 (1933), 195–96.
- 37 R. D. Fulk, R. E. Bjork and J. D. Niles, ed., *Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, 4th edn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); R. D. Fulk, ed. and trans., *The 'Beowulf' Manuscript* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).
- 38 U. Henig, ed., *Das Nibelungenlied nach der Handschrift C* (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1977); H. Reichert, ed., *Das Nibelungenlied: Nach der St. Galler Handschrift* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005); J. Heinzle, ed., *Das Nibelungenlied und Die Klage nach der Handschrift 857 der Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen* (Berlin: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2013); A. T. Hatto, trans., *The Nibelungenlied*, rev. rpt. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969); C. Edwards, trans., *The Nibelungenlied: The Lay of the Nibelungs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); W. Whobrey, ed. and trans., *The Nibelungenlied with The Klage* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2018); D. G. Mowatt and H. Sacker, *The Nibelungenlied: An Interpretative Commentary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967); T. M. Andersson, *A Preface to the Nibelungenlied* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); W. McConnell, ed., *A Companion to the Nibelungenlied* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 2010).
- 39 Guðni Jónsson, ed., *Þiðreks saga af Bern*, 2 vols. ([Reykjavík]: Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, 1954); E. R. Haymes, trans., *The Saga of Thidrek of Bern* (New York: Garland, 1988). This saga was adapted into Swedish in the fifteenth century; see G. O. Hyltén-Cavallius, ed., *Sagan om Didrik af Bern* (Stockholm: Norstedt & Söner, 1850–54); I. Cumpstey, trans., *The Saga of Didrik of Bern: With the Dwarf King Laurin* (Cumbria: Skadi Press, 2017).
- 40 See R. G. Finch, ed. and trans., *Völsunga Saga: The Saga of the Völsungs* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1965) (VS); also K. Grimstad, ed. and trans., *Völsunga saga: The Saga of the Völsungs*, 2nd edn (Saarbrücken: AQ-Verlag, 2000). Of the other English translations, the most recent, which has an extensive introduction, is J. E. Byock, *The Saga of the Völsungs: The Norse Epic of Sigurd the Dragon Slayer* (Berkeley, CA: Penguin, 1990). The story was continued in the thirteenth-century *Ragnars saga loðbrókar* 'Saga of Ragnarr Hairy-Breeches' with an account of the subsequent life of Aslaug, daughter of Sigurðr and Brynhildr, her husband Ragnarr and their sons; see M. Olsen, ed., *Völsunga saga ok Ragnars saga loðbrókar* (Copenhagen: S. L. Møller, 1906–08); M. Schlauch, trans., *The Saga of the Völsungs; The Saga of Ragnar Lodbrok together with the Lay of Kraka* (New York: American-Scandinavian Foundation, 1930).
- 41 See H. R. Ellis, 'Sigurd in the Art of the Viking Age', *Antiquity* 16 (1942), 216–36; M. Blindheim, *Sigurds saga i middelalderens billedkunst* (Oslo: Universitetets Oldsaksamling, 1972); C. B. Caples, 'The Man in the Snakepit and the Iconography of the Sigurd Legend', *Rice Institute Pamphlet – Rice University Studies* 62 (1976), 1–16; J. T. Lang, 'Sigurd and Weland in Pre-Conquest Carving from Northern England', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 48 (1976), 83–94; R. N. Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture in Northern England* (London: Collins, 1980); S. Margeson, 'The Völsung Legend in Medieval Art', in F. G. Anderson et al., ed., *Medieval Iconography and Narrative: A Symposium* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1980), pp. 183–211; K. Düwel, 'On the Sigurd Representations in Great Britain and Scandinavia', in M. A. Jazayery and W. Winter, ed., *Languages and Cultures* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988), pp. 133–56; L. Liepe, 'Sigurdssagan i bild', *Fornvännen* 84 (1989), 1–11; J. Byock, 'Sigurðr Fáfnisbani: An Eddic Hero Carved on Norwegian Stave Churches', in T. Pàroli, ed., *Poetry in the Scandinavian Middle Ages* (Spoleto: Presso

- la sede del Centro studi, 1990), pp. 619–28; Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir, ‘Gunnarr and the Snake Pit in Medieval Art and Legend’, *Speculum* 87 (2012), 1015–49, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0038713412003144>
- 42 For Faroese ballads, the most important for comparison with R’s heroic poems being *Regin smiður* ‘Regin the Smith’, *Brynhildar táttur* ‘Brynhild’s Story’ and *Høgna táttur* ‘Høgni’s Story’, see S. Grundtvig et al., ed., *Føroya Kvæði: Corpus carminum Færoensium* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1941–2003); V. U. Hammershaimb, ed., *Sjúrdar kvæði* (Copenhagen: Trykt i Brødrene Berlings bogtr, 1851). For loose English translations, see E. M. Smith-Dampier, trans., *Sigurd: The Dragon-Slayer: A Faroëse Ballad-Cycle* (Oxford: Kraus Reprint Co., 1934). For Danish ballads, see S. Grundtvig et al., ed., *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* (Copenhagen: Samfundet til den danske literaturs fremme, 1853–1976); D. Kralik, *Die dänische Ballade von Grimhilds Rache und die Vorgeschichte des Nibelungenliedes* (Vienna: H. Böhlau Nachf., Kommissionsverlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1962); H. Holzappel, *Die danischen Nibelungenballaden: Texte und Kommentare* (Göppingen: A. Kümmerle, 1974); G. Borrow, *Grimhild’s Vengeance: Three Ballads* (London: Good Press, 1913). For discussion, see W. B. Lockwood, ‘The Nibelungen Tradition in Faroese’, *German Life and Letters* 32 (1979), 265–72; E. Sarakaeva, ‘Nibelungen on the Margins: Transformation of the Nibelungen Legend in the Folklore of German-Scandinavian Frontier’, *Journal of Frontier Studies* 4 (2016), 76–94; E. Sarakaeva, ‘Archaization of “Nibelungen Legend” in the Folklore of German-Scandinavian Frontier’, in *4th International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on Social Sciences and Arts, SGEM 2017* (Sofia: STEF92 Technology Ltd, 2017), II, 661–68.
- 43 For the German text with English translation, see S. Spencer and B. Millington, ed., *Wagner’s Ring of the Nibelung: A Companion* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993). For Wagner’s debt to Old Norse texts, see Árni Björnsson, *Wagner and the Volsungs: Icelandic Sources of ‘Der Ring des Nibelungen’* (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2003).
- 44 See T. Shippey, *The Road to Middle-Earth*, rev. and expanded edn (London: Harper Collins, 2005); J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrun*, ed. C. Tolkien (London: Harper Collins, 2009); P. H. Berube, ‘Tolkien’s Sigurd & Guðrún: Summary, Sources, & Analogs’, *Mythlore* 28 (2009), 45–76.
- 45 Also televised as ‘Game of Thrones’. See C. Larrington, *Winter Is Coming: The Medieval World of Game of Thrones* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.5040/9780755693375>
- 46 In addition to the parallels noted in this edition, see the list of ‘general correspondences between *Völsunga saga* and its extant literary sources’ in Finch, *Völsunga Saga*, pp. 85–89.
- 47 See especially A. Heusler, ‘Die Lieder der Lücke im Codex Regius der Edda’, in A. Heusler, J. Hoops and P. Zimmermann, ed., *Germanistische Abhandlungen Hermann Paul zum 17 März 1902* (Strassburg: K. J. Trübner, 1902), pp. 1–98; T. M. Andersson, *The Legend of Brynhild* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980); T. M. Andersson, ‘The Lays in the Lacuna of Codex Regius’, in U. Dronke, Guðrún P. Helgadóttir, G. W. Weber and H. Bekker-Nielsen, ed., *Speculum Norroenum: Norse Studies in Memory of Gabriel Turville-Petre* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1981), pp. 6–26. For a sceptical appraisal of Andersson’s *Legend of Brynhild*, however, see F. H. Bäuml’s review in *Speculum* 57 (1982), 346–49. Note that **Sigurðarkviða in meira* is called **Sigurðarkviða in meiri* by some scholars.

- 48 Guðrún's concern for her brothers' safety in Old Norse tradition contrasts starkly with the motivation of Kriemhilt, the corresponding character in the *Nibelungenlied*, who seeks their death to avenge her husband.
- 49 For photographs, see 'AM 242 fol.', *handrit.is*, <https://handrit.is/en/manuscript/view/AM02-0242>
- 50 Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, GKS 1005 fol. For photographs, see 'GKS 1005 fol.', <https://simplebooklet.com/gks1005fol#page=1>; also *Flateyjarbók (Codex Flateyensis) Ms. No. 1005 fol. in the Old Royal Collection in The Royal Library of Copenhagen with an Introduction by Finnur Jónsson*, Corpus Codicum Islandicorum Medii Aevi I (Copenhagen: Levin and Munksgaard, 1930).
- 51 Consequently, I largely avoid referring to works of scholarship in the notes to the poems, a notable exception being my references to D. A. H. Evans, ed., *Hávamál* (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1986), <http://www.vsnrweb-publications.org.uk/Text%20Series/Havamal.pdf> (supplemented by A. Faulkes, *Hávamál: Glossary and Index* (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1987), <http://www.vsnrweb-publications.org.uk/Text%20Series/Glossary%20and%20Index.pdf>), to which I am greatly indebted.
- 52 Additionally, both fields are covered by C. Larrington, *The Norse Myths: A Guide to the Gods and Heroes* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2017).
- 53 The *Kommentar* does not cover *Svipdagsmál*, for commentary on which, see B. Sijmons and H. Gering, ed., *Die Lieder der Edda* (Halle (Saale): Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1903–31), III(1), 399–425; P. M. W. Robinson, 'An Edition of *Svipdagsmál*' (D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford, 1991); Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason, *Eddukvæði*, II, 188–202, 437–50.
- 54 From, most notably, E. V. Gordon, *An Introduction to Old Norse*, corr. 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962); S. Valfellis and J. E. Cathey, *Old Icelandic: An Introductory Course* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); M. Barnes and A. Faulkes, *A New Introduction to Old Norse*, 3 parts (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2008–11), downloadable from <http://www.vsnrweb-publications.org.uk>; J. Byock, *Viking Language 1*, 2nd edn (n. pl.: Jules William Press, 2017) and *Viking Language 2* (Los Angeles, CA: Jules William Press, 2015).
- 55 Also valuable are H. Gering, *Vollständiges Wörterbuch zu den Liedern der Edda* (Halle a. S.: Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1903), https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_-JBWvazAW0kC/page/n283/mode/2up; Sveinbjörn Egilsson, *Lexicon poeticum antiquæ linguæ septentrionalis: Ordbog over det norsk-islandske skjaldesprog*, ed. Finnur Jónsson, 2nd edn (Copenhagen: Møller, 1931), <http://www.septentrionalia.net/lex/ordbog2.pdf>; R. Cleasby and Gudbrand Vigfusson, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, 2nd edn with supplement by Sir W. A. Craigie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957).
- 56 The first exception is the texts of the verses likely to have appeared in the great lacuna. For these, I have consulted earlier editions. The second exception is the text of *Svipdagsmál* (comprising *Gg.* and *Fj.*), which survives only in many late, paper manuscripts, to which I have not had access; in this case, I have consulted, and adapted, the texts in the following: S. Bugge, ed., *Norræn fornkvæði: islandsk samling af folkelige oldtidsdigte om nordens guder*

og heroer almindelig kaldet Sæmundar Edda hins fróða (Christiania: P. T. Mallings, 1867; rpt. 1965), R. C. Boer, ed., *Die Edda mit historisch-kritischem Commentar*, 2 vols. (Haarlem: H. D. Tjeenk Willink & Sons, 1922); Sijmons and Gering, *Lieder*; Robinson, 'Edition'; Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason, *Eddukvæði*.

- 57 The textual apparatus also records enlarged initials in **R**, but only the most prominent.
- 58 Although the practice of normalization makes it easier to understand Old Norse texts, it does so at the expense of giving a misleading impression of homogeneity to a collection of originally individual works doubtless composed by different people at different times and in different places, potentially for different purposes. It eliminates much evidence of scribal practice and some evidence potentially useful for the purposes of dating and localization; it can also have implications for the study of poems' metre, as in the case of this edition's standardised use of *honum* (vs. *hánnum* or *hónnum*) for the dat. sg. masc. of the third-person pronoun, which is adopted following the example of Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason, *Eddukvæði*. Readers should, however, still expect to encounter some differences of spelling between the Old Norse texts edited in this book, between these and the book's quotations from other editions, and especially between the texts edited in this book and those of other editions, and between all these and Old Norse dictionaries. Most notably, they will encounter orthographical differences between the texts in this edition, those in the *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda* by von See *et al.*, and the entries in *Glossary to the Poetic Edda* by La Farge and Tucker. On this topic in general, see Odd Einar Haugen, ed., *Menota Handbook 3.0*, https://www.menota.org/HB3_ch10.xml#sec10.3
- 59 Recent scholarship has rejected, or at least questioned, some of the reordering of stanzas undertaken in certain passages of certain poems as they appear in *NK*, the edition to which much of the scholarly literature (including the *Kommentar* by von See *et al.*) refers. For the reader's convenience, in cases of divergence the present edition includes the stanza numbers of the fifth edition of *NK* within brackets after the main stanza numbers; in *HH. II* and *Grp.* the same approach indicates the logical narrative position of certain stanzas.
- 60 Take, for example, the Old Norse 'monster'-terms *jötunn* and *þurs*, both of which I, in common with many other translators, translate as 'giant', somewhat inadequately. One recent commentator has gone so far as to call this translation 'frankly indefensible' (see J. S. Hopkins, 'Eddic to English: A Survey of English Translations of the *Poetic Edda*', *Mimisbrunnr.info: Developments in Ancient Germanic Studies* (2017–), <https://www.mimisbrunnr.info/eddic-to-english-intro-background-purpose>). It should, however, be noted that, in *Beowulf*, the Scandinavian monster Grendel draws together three equivalent Old English terms: he is at once an *eoten* (etymologically an 'eater'; cognate with ON *jötunn*), a *þyrs* (originally perhaps a 'speedy, quick or strong one'; cognate with ON *þurs*), and associated with *gigantas* 'giants', a term which entered Old English from Latin, which in turn borrowed it from Greek, in which language it could denote the 'giants' who fought the gods. Also, the presence of the Old Norse text in this edition mitigates, I hope, the inadequacy of my translations in this case and others.
- 61 These translations of proper names are often tentative and selective. Readers wanting more detail should consult the *Kommentar* by von See *et al.*, as well as two etymological dictionaries: J. de Vries, *Altnordisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 4th edn (Leiden: Brill, 2000) and Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon, *Íslensk Orðsifjabók* ([Reykjavík]: Orðabók Háskólans, 1989, corr. rpt. 1995). Meanings for many names are also given in *SPSMA*.

- 62 Among fairly recent examples are J. C. Buddemeyer, trans., *The Elder Edda* (Eagle River, AK: Northbooks, 2009); A. Orchard, trans., *The Elder Edda: A Book of Viking Lore* (London: Penguin, 2011); J. Dodds, trans., *The Poetic Edda* (Toronto: Coach House Books, 2014); C. Larrington, trans., *The Poetic Edda*, rev. edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); J. Crawford, ed. and trans., *The Poetic Edda: Stories of the Norse Gods and Heroes* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2015). Notable older translations into English include H. A. Bellows, trans., *The Poetic Edda* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1936) and L. M. Hollander, trans., *The Poetic Edda*, rev. 2nd edn (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1962). For further details and discussion, see C. Larrington, 'Translating the *Poetic Edda* into English', in D. Clark and C. Phelpstead, ed., *Old Norse Made New: Essays on the Post-Medieval Reception of Old Norse Literature and Culture* (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2007), pp. 21–42; Hopkins, 'Eddic to English', <https://www.mimisbrunnr.info/eddic-to-english-intro-background-purpose>



