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Additions to the Investigation of the Myths of Egil-Örvandil and Svipdag.

Vidofnir's Sickle.

In the poem *Fjölsvinnsmál*, when Svipdag walks up to the splendid fortress within whose ring wall the beautiful Menglad and her attending dises, worshipped by men and helpful to humans, are living, he engages the fortress' actual or declared sentry in conversation. The central point of the conversation is that a stranger has no business there and will not be admitted if he does not carry a certain sword.

That sword is called *Hævateinn*, "the sword pointed to thrust," or, according to Bugge's proposed emendation based on alliteration: *Lævateinn*, "the sword made with treacherous skill" (verse 26).

For whose ruin the sword was forged is mentioned in verse 32. There it says that the friendly and delightful hall surrounded by *vafur*-flames, which mankind has heard report over the years and which Svipdag now sees in front of him, has "long trembled on the point of the sword," (*á brodds oddi bifask*).

Thus, for the ruin of this fortress and its inhabitants was *Hævateinn* hammered. Against them, its point is directed and those who await this fate fear that the weapon will not come into their hands. If Svipdag brings it with friendly intent, the fortress' gate will open for him. Otherwise, it will not.

Of the sword's smith, we learn the following:

He was a "Lopt" (a byname of Loki), thus an enemy of the gods (verse 26). He forged it in a remote, inaccessible region in the farthest north's world of the damned (*fyr nágrindr neðan*).

Before he has time to achieve his aim with the sword, he is robbed and bereft of it (*rúinn*).

He who robs him of the sword entrusts it to a female being who is called Sinmara, "she who maims sinews."

Of the great smith and elf-prince Völund, it is said that, exiled from his own hearth, he proceeded to a winter-cold land, into the Wolfdales, where he forged a terrible sword. He had suffered an injustice that he would avenge by this forging, which

according to his intent would be extremely destructive in its consequences (*Völundarkviða* 28).

Since Völund is a ruler among elves, the beings that offended him must belong to a mythic clan more powerful than his own. But before he can use the sword, he is ambushed by King Nidhad and his queen, accompanied by armed Njars. Nidhad is king of the Njars.

Nidhad has Völund placed in shackles and takes his sword. Nidhad's queen orders Völund hamstrung.

What is said of the sword *Hævateinn* and its maker is thus identical, to the letter, to what is said of Völund's sword and its smith. The myths and the heroic sagas speak of many swords, but of none except *Hævateinn* are found details belonging to the Völund legend, among which occurs the altogether singular characteristic circumstance that a woman ordered his sinews cut once the smith was robbed of his work. Sinmara, "she who maims sinews" thus must be Nidhad's queen and *Hævateinn*, forged for the destruction of the glorious burgh, must be Völund's sword.

Thus, it is Völund's sword that Svipdag must carry if he would enter the fortress where the beautiful Menglad yearns for him.

Who is Nidhad in this myth? His name literally means "the underworld being." The clan that he rules is called the Njars, a designation that refers to Nari, Narvi, Neri, one of the mythology's oldest beings, him who "first dwelt in Jötunheim" and who, through his daughter Night, was related to the Aesir and Vanir.[1]

If these references, that Nidhad is an underworld being and *Niara drottin*,[2] put us on the right track and allow us to discover Nari-Narvi in him, so too Nidhad's queen, "she who maims sinews," in her quality as mother to Night and the night-dises, ought to have been depicted as a being united with them. Is there any suggestion of this found in *Fjölsvinnsmál*?

Definite information regarding this is found there. In verse 24, Sinmara is called "the swarthy"[3]; in verse 29 she is called "the ash-colored giantess" (*in fölva gýgur*), and the word *mara* itself during Christian centuries has become a designation for a female specter appearing at nighttime.

When we consequently have the congruous information that Nidhad is lord over the Njar clan and that his queen is swarthy in appearance, while Nari's queen is Night's mother, an unconditional methodological obligation exists to heed the connection.

Fjölsvinnsmál concludes with the glorious fortress' gate opening for Svipdag and Menglad rushing to meet and kiss him. Thus Svipdag must carry *Hævateinn*. This is still remembered in the folk-ballads about Svipdag (Sveidal, Svendal). According to one of these ballads he received "the sword hardened in dragon's blood" which "burns like a

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[1] *Gylfaginning* 10 identifies Narvi as "a giant who lived in Jötunheim." His daughter is Night.

[2] "King of the Njars."

[3] This is uncertain. The manuscripts of *Fjölsvinnsmál* 24:5 read *surt(u)r,*or *surtar* and 24:6 reads *sinn mautu, sinn mantu, sem mautu,* and *sem mantu*. These lines have been emended and translated in various ways over the years. 24:6 is generally taken to be the name Sinmara, found in line 26:5. The word *surtur, surtar* can indeed be taken to mean "swarthy" as Rydberg does and apply to Sinmara, however, it can also refer to the fire-giant Surt, and thus be read "Sinmara's Surt," suggesting that she is his mother. In *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. 1 no. 89, Rydberg demonstrates that Mimir and Surt were once co-workers, before they became estranged, and became one another's greatest foes.

pyre" when one "fares through the dark forest"; and he has this, "the good sword Adelring, by his side" when he rides to the fortress of "the proud virgin."

How did the Völund sword come into Svipdag's hands? In a few lines, *Fjölsvinnsmál* tells how it is possible to acquire it. Between the round bones of Vidofnir, the gold-glittering cock sitting high in the world-tree, is found a light sickle or scythe. This sickle must first be obtained by the person who would acquire *Hævateinn;* with the sickle he should proceed down into the underworld, where the world-mill (*luðr*) stands (*ljósan ljá skaltu í lúður bera þann er liggur í Víðófnis völum*),[4] and there he should surrender it to Sinmara (verse 30). Then the ash-colored giantess becomes happy (verse 29) and turns over the sword (verse 30) and then the one who desires to possess it must return safely from the perilous journey (verse 28).

We learn further that Sinmara, as long as she lacks the luminous sickle, finds herself "in an anxiety that can not be allayed" and that the cock Vidofnir himself feels her, the swarthy one's, anxiety (verse 24).[5] This indicates a compassion on Vidofnir's part for the swarthy sword-guardian's sorrow, and thus suggests that Vidofnir allows the luminous sickle found between his bones to come, through Svipdag, into Sinmara's possession. Without it, Svipdag of course could not perform his errand. The impossibility of receiving the sickle without Vidofnir's help is pointed out in the song itself, when it says that Vidofnir cannot be brought down from the world-tree except by *Hævateinn,* and that *Hævateinn* can never be obtained except in exchange for the sickle that Vidofnir possesses.

From this, it follows that Svipdag actually received Vidofnir's sickle; that, he went with it down into the underworld to Nari-Nidhad's swarthy queen, the mother of the night-dises, and that happy to receive the only means that could relieve her fear, she handed Svipdag *Hævateinn,* the weapon worthy of dread.

The first question that arises now is whether there are any mythological reasons that can explain the deep sorrow of Nidhad's queen.

Völundarkviða informs us that Nidhad's daughter Bödvild fell unconscious in Völund's embrace and later bore him a son. In the heroic sagas, their son is the famous Vidga (Wittich). Before Völund flies away from his prison in the Wolfdales clad in his feather-guise,[6] he persuades Nidhad to swear an oath to not kill or inflict any harm on "Völund's wife," even if she and Völund should have a child in Nidhad's hall. When Nidhad swears the oath, he does not know that his own daughter is "Völund's wife." One would completely misunderstand Völund's boundlessly vengeful nature, if he assumed that Völund would persuade Nidhad to swear this oath merely out of compassion for Bödvild and her expected son. Völund now flies away toward a new fate. The powers

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[4] "You must carry the bright sickle that lies in Vidofnir's wings to the mill."

[5] [Rydberg's footnote] **einn um ekka*
þrunguz hann örófsaman
Surt(r)ar, sem mantu

These lines, badly mistreated by the transcribers and interpreters, receive meaning and clarity in the condition in which I, with the support of various manuscripts, present them here. The prose order of the words is: *Einn hann þrunguz um surtrar sem mantu, orofsaman ekka*: "he (Vidofnir) is severely distressed by the swarthy one's (i.e. the night-dis') constant sighs, her, that you have in mind."

[6] This is an error. Völund is captured in the Wolfdales and imprisoned on the island *Sævarstöð,* from which he escapes, clad in a feather-guise.

from whom the powerful elf-prince and his brothers fled into the Wolfdales have inflicted a grave insult on him that remains for him to avenge on them when he leaves Nidhad (*Völundarkviða* 28). The poem allows him to anticipate that he shall lose his life thereby and afterward will have a son who is obligated to seek blood-revenge for his death. He then extracts an oath from Nidhad to not inflict any harm on "Völund's wife" and, since the greatest suffering that can be inflicted on a mother is the murder of her child, with this oath he has secured safety for his son so that if no other mishap befalls him, he shall grow up to avenge his father.

If we now consider the position of Narvi-Nidhad and his wife in the mythology: that they are related to the powers of Asgard through their daughter Night, and that Night is "given a name" by the gods, i.e. adopted into their family circle as one of the forces of world-order, it becomes obvious that it is dangerous for the world-order and an alarming thing for them that an avenger of Völund, i.e. an enemy of the gods, this son of Völund, will grow up by their hearth and will cause those that love him sorrow if he dies attempting his duty of blood-revenge or, if he succeeds, will bring the world to ruin.

Thus, there is an explanation for Sinmara's anxiety provided by the myths' own circumstances. Yet the question remains how a sickle found among Vidofnir's bones can relieve her unconquerable fear and why Svipdag is appointed by fate to bring her this treasure.

To answer this question, we need to recall Svipdag's family-relationship. I have demonstrated in the first volume of this work (no. 108) that he is the son of the great archer Egil-Örvandil and the dis of vegetation Groa. Egil is Völund's brother; Svipdag is thus Völund's nephew and as such obligated to become his blood-avenger, if Völund himself has not left a son.

I will not repeat the entire argument already given for Svipdag being Egil-Örvandil's son here. I will only recount its most important details.

The poem *Grougaldur* depicts Groa as the mother of the Svipdag who is the protagonist in the poem *Fjölsvinnsmál.* She appears there as a great galder-singer and as a tender mother, listening from her grave to her son's voice

Gylfaginning depicts Groa as a great galder-singer and a tender wife. There, it says that her husband is a famous archer, who as such is called Örvandil (arrow-handler).

Saxo mentions Groa and Svipdag in this connection. King Gram-Halfdan steals Groa, causing hostilities in which Groa's father dies by Halfdan's hand. Later on, the hostility is continued by Svipdag, who long makes war on Halfdan and finally becomes his bane.

We have no specific reason to assume that the myth speaks of more than *one* Groa. (See the treatise on *Mythological Method*). To proceed from the opposite assumption is not more justified than to assume that the myth depicted more than one Idun or Skadi or Gerd and, with nothing to base it on, denies the connection between the episodes reported in various places of similarly named characters.

In regard to Groa specifically, the three places cited above already provide positive evidence that she is the same person in all three. When Saxo informs us that a Svipdag fights a Gram-Halfdan who robbed a Groa and killed her father, and when *Grougaldur* makes a Svipdag a son of a Groa, this method invites us to assume that their identity in both places is probable and allows the investigation to continue in the designated direction rather than assume against all probability that the association of the

name Groa with the name Svipdag in both places is mere chance. And when the character of Groa in *Gylfaginning* as an excellent galder-singer agrees with that in *Grougaldur*, it ought to be regarded as likely that one and the same Groa is depicted in all three sources: that she thus has an archer Örvandil as husband and that their son is the same Svipdag who retrieves *Hœvateinn* and becomes the beautiful Menglad's husband.

The myth and the heroic saga's most famous archer is Egil, Völund's brother. Thus, it seems logical to ask if Örvandil, "the arrow-handler," is not another name of Egil. What is said in the Nordic sources of them confirms their identity. Örvandil has his home and place of activity by the Elivogar, as does Egil. Örvandil and Thor are visiting-friends, as are Egil and Thor. Thor bears Örvandil over the Elivogar. In *Þórsdrápa*, he bears Egil over an ice-swollen river.[7]

If we now turn to foreign sources and compare them to the Nordic sources, we find that *Thidrek's Saga af Bern* says that Völund's brother Egil shot an apple off his son's head with an arrow, and that a Swiss tradition relates the same of Wilhelm Tell. The first name Wilhelm, we must ignore for now. The oldest stories recorded about the birth of Swiss freedom mention no one with such a forename, and it seems to be the historian Tschudi[8] in his work of the year 1570 who provided the ur-cantons' hero with a first name for the first time, and probably from his own inspiration. He christens the "Prince" from Uri as Walther, Stauffacher as Werner, and Gessler as Konrad. However, the older tale, which does not use first names, mentions that the archer Tell was from Uri (a Swiss canton), and this gets its explanation in that the German form for the name Örvandil is Orentel and that in writing the name finally became Oren Tell which was understood as the Urian, Tell. The older written tradition relates that Tell was conveyed by the Austrian bailiff (Gessler) as a prisoner to a "castle in the sea." The same is told of Völund, whom Nidhad conveyed to a prison on a sea, and the same was doubtlessly also related of Egil, since in *Thidreks Saga af Bern*, Egil is on the island with Völund when he makes his feather-guise while still a prisoner of Nidhad.

Saxo tells the same story of a crack shot made by the archer Toko, who assists an Anund in his war against Halfdan. The myth only mentions a single person with the name Anund and it is Völund in *Völundarkviða* 2 who bears this name. Thus when an archer, whom Saxo called Toko, appears by Völund's side and makes the shot that others ascribe to Egil and Tell, it is necessary to assume that this Toko is Egil-Örentel.

The German story about "Christ's unsewn gray coat" is a reworking of the myth of Svipdag (See "*Investigations into Germanic Mythology*," Vol. 1, no. 107). There, the young hero is called Orentel and his father Eigil. His protecting patron is said to be Wieland. Thus, the story has connected these three names: Völund, Egil, and Örvandil. Here, Svipdag is a young Örvandil, son of the older Örvandil-Egil. When his protecting patron is said to be Wieland, we ought to remember that the Svipdag of myth receives a defense in his uncle Völund's sword, and that it is this sword that helps him get into the fortress and wins him Menglad's hand. In this sense, Völund is also the protecting patron of the mythic Svipdag.

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[7] Despite Rydberg's argument in *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. 1, no. 114, Egil does not appear in the poem *Þórsdrápa*.

[8] Giles Tschudi (1505—1572), a leading magistrate of Glarus, ennobled by the emperor Ferdinand to whom he had been sent as ambassador. His *Chronicon Helveticum* (published in 1734-6) contains the classic story of Wilhelm Tell, a Swiss patriot who inspired rebellion against Austrian rule.

This evidence that Egil and Örvandil are identical is, at the same time, additional evidence for the identity of Svipdag's mother Groa and Örvandil's wife Groa. In the area of Germanic mythology, there is not a single fact that rests on more solid ground than this result, and it receives its, admittedly not logically required but no less spectacular, confirmation in the causal connection that thereby mutually unites a multitude of isolated reports in various stories and the myths.

For example, through this fact, it thus becomes understandable why Svipdag in Saxo (who does not justify his actions) appears as the irreconcilable foe of Gram-Halfdan, the thief of Groa. It thus becomes understandable why, after Halfdan's death, Svipdag favors Gudhorm who is Halfdan's son with Groa according to Saxo, since Gudhorm is his half brother, but persecutes Halfdan's other son Hadding, who according to Saxo is not a son of Groa, with the same irreconcilable hate he had for his father. It thus becomes comprehensible why Groa's son Svipdag in *Fjölsvinnsmál* is called a "leader of the thurs-folk," when in Saxo he is the same Svipdag who battles against Gram-Halfdan who Saxo says robbed Groa in a war which, through comparison with other sources, appears to be Halfdan's war against the powers of winter and consequently against the thurses.

And finally, it becomes comprehensible why Svipdag particularly is chosen by Urd to come into possession of Völund's *Hævateinn*, since Svipdag is Völund's nephew and would have the closest right of inheritance to the sword if Bödvild had not borne Völund a son.

Before Svipdag receives *Hævateinn*, the state of affairs is this: it is incumbent on Völund's nephew Svipdag to take vengeance upon the enemies of the elf-prince until Bödvild bears him a son. Before Svipdag performs the vengeance, Bödvild bears or is about to bear Völund a son, and Bödvild and her mother are in anguish over the pre-determined fate of the child as an enemy of the gods. Into the fabric of Vidga's coming life, the Norns have woven or are about to weave a red thread of blood-revenge that cannot be removed except by one thing, namely Vidofnir's luminous sickle which Svipdag brings to Sinmara.

What is the significance of this sickle or scythe, and how can it alter Vidga's fate so that he escapes the obligation of blood-revenge, which if carried out will harm the order of the world and certainly cause his own death?

The sickle is no doubt intended to cut something, and that cannot be anything other than the thread of blood-revenge that Urd has woven into the fabric of Vidga's life.

As all mythologists have assumed, Vidofnir, the gold-glittering cock atop the world-tree among whose round bones (*völum*) the sickle can be found, is a symbol of the starry heavens. *Viðofnir* means "the wide-open." Round bones (*völur*) are used by Icelanders to this day to wind thread or yarn around. If Vidofnir is a symbol of the starry heavens, then these round objects must be the stars and the luminous sickle something that is found among them: i.e. the crescent moon. This image means that one imagined the Norns stretching the threads of men's lives through the atmosphere with the stars as the *völur* around which their threads were wound and between which they are drawn. In fact, among various peoples, we find stories that bring stars into such relationship with the threads of men's fate. Nor does Old Norse literature lack suggestions of this. There, as in that of Greece, the Norns that twist, wind, unwind, and stretch the threads of life are regarded as furnished with the ordinary tools of the home for such purposes. Thus also

with *völur*, spools, and these spools are stars. As one finds in the first verses in *Helgakviða Hundingsbana* I, it is nighttime when the stars are out when the Norns come and twist fate's threads, prepare the web of the warp, and fasten it "under the hall of the moon." Why *under* the moon's hall? Presumably, because if the threads were fastened in such a manner that they crossed the path of the crescent moon through the atmosphere, they would be severed by it. Now that such a quality has been ascribed to the crescent moon, it is clear why Sinmara wishes to come into possession of it and through it find relief for her anguish. Sinmara is the mother of Night and the Night-dises who travel through the atmosphere every day; Bödvild herself is a Night-dis. If Nari-Nidhad's queen receives the sickle, it will thus of course be possible for her to sever the thread of blood-revenge stretched for Vidga "under the hall of the moon." However, this can only happen if Svipdag surrenders the sickle, because his surrendering it means that he, Völund's nephew, takes responsibility for avenging Völund's death and liberates Völund's son from this obligation. Of course, for this to happen, one of Völund's closest kin must unconditionally assume the burden.

From Saxo and from the *Saga of Hrömund Greipsson*, we learn that the moon-god and the ward of the atmosphere, called Gevarus by Saxo (See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. 1, no. 90) and Mani Karl in *Hrömund's saga*, puts a hero in position to take possession of the myths' most famous sword, which is described so that there can be no doubt that Völund's sword is meant. Certainly, these narratives originally stood in connection with those telling how Svipdag received the moon-sickle in order to surrender it to Sinmara.

It ought to be observed that Vidofnir is said to be dejected over Sinmara's sorrow and that afterwards, the fortress where Menglad dwells is said to have long trembled on the point of the sword. From this, it follows that the fortress' inhabitants do not consider themselves and the order of the world secure, even though the evil smith has been robbed of his weapon and Sinmara keeps it hidden in something that is called "the water-requiring vessel with the nine *njarðar*-locks." So long as she keeps the sword, no one is safe because of course a mother's love might prevail and at a decisive moment Sinmara might extend to Vidga his father's sword to fight against the gods. This anxiety cannot be allayed until Svipdag and with him *Hævateinn* are secure inside of Asgard's walls.

The "water-requiring vessel" (*sægjarnker*) with its nine *njarðar*-locks, I believe refers to the world-tree, which absorbs its nourishment from the world-wells down in the underworld near the world-mill, where the meeting between Sinmara and Svipdag takes place. The nine *njarðar*-locks, I presume, refer to the world-tree's nine annual rings, corresponding to the *niu iviði* that *Völuspá* 2 mentions and that form after the seeress sees the Tree as a seed *fyr mold nedan.*[9] The memory of a mythical sword kept fast in a tree has been preserved in *Völsungasaga*.

This addition to the investigation of the myth of Svipdag and to the interpretation of the Eddaic song that concerns him is meant to shed light on the points therein which still remained to be illuminated and which remained the most mysterious. I have come to entirely different results than those that were espoused before my investigations in this work began to be made public. Prior to this, one took Svipdag for a Thurs; his mother

[9] "beneath the earth." [Rydberg's footnote]: The word *iviði* is a double entendre, and one meaning does not stand in the way of the other. In its first meaning, it can stand in analogy with *inn-viðr*, the wooden material existing within something.

Groa for a frog (unbelievable, but true!); the wonderful fortress, over which the world-tree extends foliage with fruit, for a thurs-gard; the beautiful Menglad and the Asynje of healing Eir, worshipped by mankind at altars, the helpful dises Blithe and Frith for thurs-women, and *luðr*, the world-mill, for a box in which Svipdag bears Vidofnir's sickle to Sinmara. I have kept myself above every argument with a supporter who may still probably be found for these absurdities.

Egil as Fisher

In the fable that begins *Hyndluljóð* in its current state, Freyja arrives at the giantess Hyndla's cave riding on the boar Hildsvin. The fable's author lets Hyndla proclaim that the boar upon which Freyja rides is none other than Freyja's husband Ottar, i.e. Svipdag (Oðr), in boar-guise. The explanation of how Hyndla came up with this absurd idea, it would seem, is found if one remembers that Svipdag's father, among other names, was called Ebur, Vildbur, and Ibor which mean wild boar, as I demonstrated in the first volume of this work (no. 108). It follows that the son of wild boar was clad in the guise of a boar. As we know, Egil-Örvandil lives with his foster son Thjalfi and a troop of elves in a fortress by the Elivogar, in whose waters on the opposite shore, Hymir catches whales and where Thor once nearly pulled the Midgard Serpent up out of the deep.

According to the myth, fishing is in operation on the Elivogar. All other human employment, farming, cattle-tending, seafaring, smithing, and handicrafts have their representatives among the divine powers in Germanic mythology as do the community council, military activities, poetry, runic wisdom, and healing arts. Should not fishing, so important to coastal dwellers, have one as well?

Among other things, the story of Christ's unsewn coat, derived from the myths, relates that the young Orentel long served a fisher-prince, who had a castle with seven towers and ruled over a band of 800 fishers. The castle was located on an island in the sea, over which Orentel must travel when he would seek the world's most beautiful woman, who languishes among giants and "temple-lords." (Temple-lord refers to the time when this story was put together from ancient mythic tales that were associated with the devil.) Orentel had suffered a shipwreck and come floating on a plank to the island, where the fisher-prince adopted him.

In the first volume of this work (no. 109), I have already pointed out that this appears to be a memory of a myth about Örvandil, who powerless and frostbitten is found on his skis by Thor and carried over the Elivogar. The fortress in which Egil-Örvandil lives with a troop of elves by the Elivogar is an outpost, a *setr*, constructed by the gods, against the forces of Jötunheim. Egil, who commands the watch, is called the gods' "oath-sworn friend." Egil and his elven warriors find themselves in a subservient position to the gods and particularly to Thor, who uses Egil's fortress as a rest stop and an inn when he is on his way from Asgard to Jötunheim.

In the same story, the fortress is said to be owned by Thor. When he meets Harbard on the return trip from a day's journey in Jötunheim, he says that on the morning of that same day he had eaten his meal in peace and quiet before traveling *heiman*, from

home, i.e. the fortress guarded by Egil and his elves. From this standpoint, the medieval story cited is not wrong when it regards Orentel as a servant of a fortress-ruler, and now the question is whether the story is not also correct when it speaks of Orentel and his crew as fishermen.

It is within Egil's fortress where Thor's goats are slaughtered to serve as a meal for the god there and as provisions for his journey by foot into Jötunheim. In a basket on his back, he keeps a store of provisions consisting not only of goat-meat, but also of herring: *át ek i hvild, aðr ek heiman for, silldr ok hafra*, etc. (*Hárbarðsljóð* 3).[10]

Consequently, before he sets off in the morning from Egil's fortress, Thor was accustomed to be provided not only with goat-meat but also with herring. For this meal, he himself provides the goat-meat that he eats in the company of Egil-Örvandil; but the god certainly did not carry the herring from Asgard, thus they must have been caught by the inhabitants of the fortress. The fortress, of course, is situated by the Elivogar, which in the myths is a famous fishing ground. On the north coast of this waterway the giant Hymir catches whales. Whales follow schools of herring and feed off of them. For this reason, whales are called *síldreki*, "herring drivers."[11] It follows that if whales swim in the Elivogar, then schools of herring likewise exist there and are driven by whales against the southern coast, from which Egil and his elves keep watch on the giants. The myth has obviously drawn this conclusion, and thus to the sports that distinguish Egil as an archer, hunter and skier is also added fisherman. *Þórsdrápa* also suggests that Egil offers Thor his catch (see *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. 1, pg. 706).[12]

Heimskringla (*Haralds saga Gráfeldar*, ch. 17) states that Eyvind Skaldaspiller once, when famine prevailed, manned a rowboat with his servants and tenants and rowed to a place in the outer skerries where herring were to be found and the fisher busied himself with catching them. So completely, says *Heimskringla*, were Eyvind's every means of purchase used up, that he had to enter into a bartered trade in which he exchanges his arrows for the herring he needs, and on that he composed a verse in which he says that in exchange for "the arrows of the sea" (*örum sævar*) i.e. herring, he gave "the quick-herrings of Egil's hands" (*mínar hlaupsíldr Egils gaupna*), i.e. his arrows. From the standpoint of the breath-taking, purely mechanical understanding of the Old Norse skalds' paraphrases that as a rule previously prevailed and through which these often became grossly misunderstood and never valued with reference to their mythological content, it need not appear strange or unpoetic that Eyvind calls his arrows "the quick herring of Egil's hands" since this mechanical understanding has produced so

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[10] *hafra*, which Rydberg translates as goat (acc. plural of *hafr*, "ram") , may also be interpreted as "oats" (acc. singular of *hafri*), as is common in English translations. See *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda*, volume 2 (1997), pp.175-6. There, the authors find Gering-Sijmons' (1927-31) argument that *hafra* could not mean goat, because Thor is on foot and therefore could not have his goats along, as unconvincing. They also note that while archeological evidence shows that oats were cultivated in the north as early as the late Bronze Age, that the word *hafri* itself is rare. Either way, they note that Thor's meal is rather luxurious for a traveler.

[11] *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, Cleasby and Vigfusson, 2nd edition, Oxford, 1957 s.v *síld-reki*, a, m. a herring driver, a kind of whale.

[12] This refers to Vol. 1, no. 114, the portion which discusses verse 4 of *Þórsdrápa*. There Rydberg takes the words *brœði vændr*, literally "accused of anger," "known for his quick temper," a reference to Thor, as a reference to Egil meaning "he who is wont to offer food to eat."

many tasteless interpretations that one could as easily accept the one in question, especially since it is basically correct.

If one regards this paraphrase as having reference to a mythological fact concerning the archer Egil, the feeling of the grotesque which lies in the comparison between arrows and herring disappears in favor of the inventiveness with which the skald has correctly related one of the mythic circumstances, namely that Egil's hands handle not only the arrows of the bow, but also the "arrows" of the sea, i.e. herring.

The German story about Orentel as a participant in fishing, run by the crew of a fortress situated in a sea, over which he had to travel in order to rescue the most beautiful of women from giant-power – this story – which has preserved the essential features of the myth about Örvandil and Svipdag with such particular fidelity on these points, thus stands in agreement with *Hárbarðsljóð*'s statement that Thor carries herring as provisions from his lodging by the Elivogar and with Eyvind's parallel between "the arrows of the sea" and the "quick herring" of the archer Egil's hands.

The myth about Thor bearing Egil-Örvandil over the Elivogar through darkness and storm has given origin to the legend of a gigantic heathen, thereafter called *Christophorus*,[13] who bore Jesus on his back across a swollen river on a rainy, stormy night. This identification of Örvandil with Christ leads to further results:

Örvandil's star became a symbol of Christ and a heathen hymn that praised the star-hero and his star became recast in England, as much as was needed, to apply to the savior. I have already quoted a piece of this hymn preserved in *Codex Exoniensis* (see the first volume of this work, no. 109). There, Örvandil (*Earendel*) is called "the brightest," i.e. the clearest shining (*engla beorhtast*) and "true beam of the sun" (*sodfästa sunnan leoma*). It seems that the author of *Fjölsvinnsmál* knew this hymn or a similar one in its heathen form and played on it when he let Svipdag, when asked his father's name, reply with the epithet *Sólbjartr* which sounds like Earendel's epithet *beorhtast* and with *sunnan leoma*. The tale of Christopher is one example, among many, of myths that became transformed into Christian legends.

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[13] i.e. St. Christopher, patron of travelers.

Miscellaneous Observations

Aurinia. Tacitus passes along some information that deserves closer inspection regarding the concepts the Teutons held about prophetic women around the time of Christ's birth. Namely, in his works, one finds that his Germanic reporters mention three types of such women: 1) goddesses or dises; 2) feminine beings who appear in the Germanic mythic songs not as divine and as practitioners of the art of *spæ*dom unworthy of adoration; 3) prophetesses of human birth who are purely historical, like the well-known Veleda, who was a contemporary of Tacitus.

According to the Roman historian's sources, the first two types existed *in days of yore*. In other words, they existed in the Teutons' mytho-historic songs, the only record that they possessed about the events that were supposed to have happened before human memory (*Germania*, ch. 2). Of the first class, the prophetic goddesses and dises, Tacitus assumed in accordance with his euhemeristic manner of understanding that they were originally human women who received the status of goddesses over the course of time because of "growing superstition" (*augescente superstitione*, *Hist.* IV, 61).

We must lay aside the euhemeristic explanation in order to exclusively stick to the facts that Tacitus' reporters attested to for the existence of goddesses and dises that could see into the future in the Germanic mythology of that time, as is reported in our Nordic sources of Frigg (*Lokasenna* 29), Gefjon (*Lokasenna* 21), and Svipdag's mother Groa, who foresees her own son's fate (*Grougaldur*).

The second class of prophetesses is likewise of mythological origin. According to what Tacitus heard, they lived in ancient times (*olim*). For him, this class has characteristics that sharply distinguish them both from the first and the third. From the first class of prophetesses, the second class distinguishes itself in that the type of respect they aroused in human beings did not cause them to " pay a flattering tribute or to regard them as goddesses." Among these, who despite "growing superstition" were never made into divinities or honored as mythic *spæ*-women of higher rank, is mentioned a certain Aurinia (*Sed et olim Auriniam et complures alias venerati sunt non adulatione, nec tanquam facerent deas*.)[14]

As noted, the third class consists of purely human and historical prophetesses. The Teutons, says Tacitus, believed that within the woman's being dwelt something holy and prophetic. Veleda, he adds, was regarded by many as acting on behalf of divinities (*numinis loco*). It is in connection with this statement that Tacitus speaks of Aurinia and her peers, apparently in order to establish a contrast in Germanic understanding between Veleda and other divinely inspired prophetesses on one side and Aurninia and those *spæ*-women like her on the other .The kind of reverence Veleda received among the Teutons and of which Tacitus cited evidence from then current events, Aurinia and her equals never enjoyed. The reverence for Veleda is described as actual *adulatio* (adulation), in so far as the Teutons were capable. Inspired by a divine source, she was regarded, despite her human birth, as a *numen*[15] (*Hist.* IV, 65), and in light of this Tacitus probably takes it for granted that they regarded actual goddesses, like mythic prophetesses, to be women of human birth in likeness with Veleda.

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[14] *Germania* 8: "In former times too, they venerated Aurinia, and many other women, but not with servile flatteries, or with sham deification." (Translated by Alfred J. Church and William J. Brodribb, 1942).
[15] "divinity."

Thus, after this clarification, the Germanic Aurinia of ancient times was not only not seen as a goddess, she was not even regarded as having been inspired by divine sources; in any case, with "the growing superstition," even she should have received divine worship according to Tacitus' opinion.

Within the Germanic mythology, there are found, as is well-known, such prophetesses as Aurinia. They are the valas of giant-birth, among whom the foremost is Gullveig-Aurboda.

It has already focused the attention of other mythologists that the name Aurinia, formed of *aurum*, gold, in its meaning refers to Gullveig. It refers perhaps even to the name Aurboda that can be a paraphrase for Gullveig (see *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. 1, no. 35). This will be regarded more worthy of attention, since in the treatise "Germanic Myths of Proto-Indo-European Origin," I demonstrate that the mythic personality Gullveig comes from the Proto-Indo-European era and has her equivalent within Iranian mythology in "the golden" Jahi, the origin of witchcraft. What *Atharvaveda* V, 28 says of gold, that it has a threefold birth and that three life-forces dwell within it, the Germanic mythology says of Gullveig.

Tamfana. Tacitus (*Annal* I, 51) says that Caesar in a ravaging raid on the Germanic territory leveled a temple dedicated to Tamfana, built in the land of the Marsi, which was very famous among the neighboring tribes. Only one mythological name that has survived down to our time exists that could be Latinized into this form. Our Nordic documents speak of *Danpr* as father to Drott. Drott is Skjöld-Borgar's wife and mother to Halfdan-Mannus, the Teutons second patriarch and first king (see the first volume of this work, no. 22). According to Saxo, Halfdan received divine standing. As the progenitress of the foremost Germanic hero-race, this certainly also happened to Danp's daughter. Tamfana is a feminine form and can mean Danp's daughter. Tacitus' authorities among the Teutons by the Rhine would have heard the beginning *D* pronounced as *T*. Compare Old High German *tag* (*dagr*), tâjan (*döygja*, *dägga*), *teig* (*deig*), etc. With respect to *m* in Tamfana, it may be more original than *n* in Danpr, a name that cannot be explained well, if not from the Old Germanic *damp*. According to the myth, before her marriage with Halfdan's father, Drott was married within the Hildings clan and became mother to Hildiger, Halfdan's half brother, who fell by Halfdan's sword. As I pointed out above, the Hilding clan is identical to the Brandings and originally a mythic smith-clan. The name Danp may also allude to this. Compare Lit. *dumpiu*, blow on a fire, and *dumplé*, bellows (Fick, *Wörterbuch*. III, 145). Saxo (*Hist.* Book 7) gives Drott's father Danp the name Regnaldus, which is a smith-designation, and says that he possessed remarkable swords that he buried in the earth.

Díar is an old, nearly forgotten term for the gods. The atmosphere is called *díafjörðr* (*Skáldskaparmál* 2).[16] *Heimskringla*'s information, that thereby are meant sacrificial priests, is a euhemeristic invention in connection with the assumption that Odin was a mortal king and the other Aesir his advisors and managers of the sacrifice.[17]

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[16] Found in a verse by the skald Kormak, from the lost poem *Sigurðardrápa*, the phrase actually refers to the poetic mead. The same verse is cited again in *Skáldskaparmál 55*, listing *díar* as a synonym for "gods." Anthony Faulkes identifies *díar* as a loan word from Old Irish (*Edda, Skáldskaparmál* 2, p. 256).

[17] The term *díar* occurs in *Heimkringla's Ynglingasaga*, chapters 2, 4, 5, 6, and 9. In chapter 2, speaking of the Aesir, Snorri writes: "The rule prevailed there that twelve temple priests were highest in rank. They were to have charge of sacrifices and to judge between men. They are called *díar* or chiefs. All the people were to serve them and show them reverence." (Lee Hollander translation).

Gefjon (Gefjun), an Asynje, is probably one of Njörd's nine daughters, thus a sister to Freyja. Among the Anglo-Saxons, Njörd bore the name *Geofon,* which appears to be closely connected to Gefjon. Oaths are sworn by Gefjon's name. She is a virgin and women that die unmarried come to her. Of her, Odin says in *Lokasenna* 21 that she knows the fate of generations as well as he. And like Freyja, she has a precious necklace of whose acquisition the sneering Loki in *Lokasenna* tells a tale reminiscent of one composed in Christian times about how Freyja obtained Brisingamen. According to a presumably Swedish or Danish local tale, Gefjon with four giant-oxen plowed the piece of land that is now Zealand out from Swedish territory.

Hrossþjófr, a thurs, who according to *Hyndluljóð* 23 is the son of the thurs Hrimnir, and brother to *Heiðr* (Gullveig). According to Saxo, Hrossthjof foretold Odin that he would father Baldur's avenger with Rind. The poem *Vegtamskvíða* has Odin ride down into the underworld and wake from the sleep of death a vala buried there who foretells him the same thing. The last verse of the poem suggests that the vala is Hrossthjof's sister ("the mother of three thurses"). If the circumstances of the poem are mythically correct, the gods had Gullveig-Heid's remains buried in the underworld, in Mimir's kingdom outside of the wall of Baldur's sanctuary inside of which no evil can come, in order to prevent her resurrection, after one of the occasions when they burnt the witch in vain. *Vegtamskvíða* further states that her grave there was covered by snow, even though it was situated in a meadow where cold and snow do not otherwise occur. This information is likely of mythic origin. On the grave that conceals "Gymir's primeval-cold vala," the myth has allowed a wonder to occur of the opposite kind that, according to Icelandic medieval sagas, kept certain men's graves free of frost so that they remained green both winter and summer.[18]

Svárangr, "the heavily oppressed" or the "heavy oppressor" is a personification of the fimbul-winter and *Svárang's* sons, who in *Hárbarðsljóð* 29 throw stones at Thor when he seeks to hinder them crossing "the stream" (the Elivogar) in order to mobilize into Midgard, are frost-giants.

Svithjod has been regarded as comprising much greater tracts than Svealand proper from ancient times. According to the mythic conception, Svithjod's empire stretched northward to the Elivogar (Gandvik), which in the north was the boundary water between the land of the giants and Midgard, and even included the land of the ski-Finns. Ivaldi-Svigdir is the king of the Swedes and the ski-Finns. At the same time, Svigdir's descendents, the Yngling kings, have been called "defenders of the chalet" (*setrverjendr*) [19] by the skald Thjóðólf, after the "chalet," *Geirvaðils setr, Ýsetr*, which was entrusted to him and his son Egil by the gods as an outpost against the giants. In Tacitus' time and according to his Teutonic authorities, the Swedes were the dominant people on the Scandinavian peninsula. I assume that the sharp distinction between the Swedes and the Goths came into existence after Tacitus' time and that a time existed when this name was not so definitely fixed that Goths could not also call themselves Swedes and Swedes call themselves Goths. Still as late as the eighth century, the Beowulf

[18] In *Gísla Saga Súrssonar*, ch. 18, snow never settles and no frost ever forms on the southwest side of Thorgrim's grave. This wonder is attributed to Frey. In *Landnámabók* (*Sturlubók*), ch. 28 the grave of Laugarbrekku-Einar remains green both winter and summer. See the first volume of this work, no. 95.
[19] *Heimskringla* 14.

poem allows Swedes to be the neighbors of the Jutes (*Geátas*)[20] and Danes, presumably not because of contemporary conditions, but with the support of stories that Jutes, Angles, and Saxons crossed over to England in the fifth century. From this, it seems to follow that some definite distinction between the Swedes and the Goths was well-known among or recognized by their closest neighbors in the fifth century. There was a time, when the linguistic difference between *Geats* and *Goths* did not exist, and then presumably Swedes, Geats, Jutes, and Danes and the contemporary inhabitants of Norway regarded themselves by the Germanic tribal name Goths, even while using their local names to distinguish among themselves. In 8- or 900 AD, the East Geats still regarded themselves as "Reid Goths" (see the Röksten). Traces are still found in poems that the Normans could call themselves Goths.

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[20] (Rydberg's footnote) First P. Fahlbeck and thereafter Bugge have shown with good reason that the *Geátas* are Jutes.