Viktor Rydberg's
Investigations into Germanic Mythology
Volume II

Translated by William P. Reaves

TOWARDS THE BALDUR MYTH

I.

THE PROTO INDO-EUROPEAN ORIGIN OF THE BALDUR MYTH.

1.

THE TRAGIC MYTH OF THE DIVINE BROTHERS.

1) A comparative investigation of the Iranian and Vedic documents, of which I will give an account here, leads to the conclusion that the following myth existed in the Indo-Iranian time of unity:

The god Vivasvat (identical to Vâta-Vâyu, the Germanic Odin) had handsome twin sons, who, although different in character, were united in brotherly love for one another and active for the good of the world. One was the guardian of peace and reconciliation. The other was a mighty warrior and sportsman who conquered many world-threatening demons in open battle, but was himself overcome by the demon-world's intrigue and magic. He came under the influence of a female demon that enchanted him and who, together with a male ally, arranged that the warrior twin, against his will, killed his peaceful brother. The murdered brother descended to the underworld and became a ruler there in an immortal grove, whose inhabitants shall repopulate the earth when the renewal of the world is completed.

The murderer, who deeply regretted his actions, was himself murdered and also descended to the underworld, where he, deep in sleep, awaits the last battle against the forces of evil. When it is time, he shall wake and hasten to battle the demons.

2) After the Iranian reformation and by the time the Zoroastrian doctrine got written documents, the myth existed in two variants. One of them speaks about the brothers Urvakhshaya and Keresaspa.

Their birth is said to be a blessing and a reward to their father. Urvakhshaya, whose name is an epithet meaning "the wide ruler," "the wide defender," becomes a judge, whose decisions are justice's own, a spreader of fairness, an example of righteousness and charity. So arose the proverb: "as charitable and as open as Urvakhshaya!"

Keresaspa distinguished himself above all others as a warrior. He was a young, handsome, curly-headed hero, who fought demons dangerous to the world, and by Ranha's shores felled many of them with club, spear, or arrow. As a club-wielding warrior, he was celebrated, but even more so as an archer. With arrows, he felled the demonic bird Kamak, who shaded the world with outstretched wings and intercepted the rain. The Brahmanic tradition, which speaks of him as Krisasva, says that he was father to *castra devatâ*, arrows that possessed life and served their owners as if they were people. Among other monsters he conquered are mentioned the serpent, Sruvara (one furnished with a horn or claw) "on which the green poison floated thumb deep," and Snavidaka, "who wanted to make the vault of heaven into his chariot and the earth into its wheel and wanted to attach both the holy and the wicked spirit before the chariot."[1]

The name Keresaspa means "the one with the fine-limbed horses."

The brothers loved one another dearly. The good that Urvakhshaya spread over the earth was defended by Keresaspa, who, although always quick to act, did not seek armed exploits for their own sake, but performed them for the good of the world. Therefore it is said of Keresaspa (*Yasht* XIII, 136): "we worship his essence (*fravashi*), in order that we can ward off violence and attacking enemy armies, in order that we can ward off the evil and destruction that they want to inflict on us."[2]

But Keresaspa, the hero so mighty in open battle, nevertheless was unable to defend himself against the demon-world's trickery. The prince of evil in the darkness of the deep created a sorceress, a *pairika*, Khnathaiti, beautiful in appearance, but the quintessence of everything demonic and hostile to the world. In *Vendidad*, we learn that she "attached herself to Keresaspa"; the Parsi tradition explains the expression as Keresaspa falling in love with her beauty. He came under her influence.

Consequently, the old Indo-Iranian myth spoke of an event in Keresaspa's life, when he was no longer the gods' warrior and no longer his brother's friend, but, through a spell that bound his noble nature, was degraded to a pawn in the service of darkness. During this time, the evil powers prepared his brother Urvakhshaya's death, and he was murdered. According to *Yasht* XV, 28, the author of the murder was a person, most certainly a demon, who was called Hitaspa "with golden tufts of hair." Urvakhshaya's death broke the spell under which Keresaspa was imprisoned and he asked: "may it be granted me to proceed forth with vengeance for my brother Urvakhshaya; may it be granted me to kill Hitaspa!"[3]

Concerning the details of the killing of Urvakhshaya, the Parsi documents observe a silence that is probably intentional. Keresaspa, even today, under the name Gustasp, is still one of Iran's celebrated national heroes. Already in the Zoroastrian religion's oldest writings, he is transformed from a god to an Iranian national hero, whose story's obscure phase is indicated, but not more closely described. *Bundehesh* says that he sinned without

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[1] *Khorda Avesta*, 19. *Zamyad Yasht* VII.
[2] *Avesta: Khorda Avesta*, 13. *Frawardin Yasht.*
[3] *Avesta: Khorda Avesta*, 15. *Ram Yasht.*

stating how, and that for his transgression he should be subjected to death. According to later tradition, he died of a spear-wound inflicted by a Turk, Nijas (necessity, need).[4] Watched over by a thousand *fravashi,* Keresaspa sleeps the sleep of death until the last battle between good and evil is to be fought. Then he is to be awakened by a threefold call of appeal, rush to the battle, seek the demon Azhi Dahaka there, and fell him.[5]

The second variant of the same myth is the legend about Yima and his brother Tahmurath (*Takhma urupa*). Yima is the same character as Urvakhshaya; Tahmurath is Keresaspa. The basic features of their history are also the same, and a comparison of the Vedic and the Iranian sources completely confirms the identity of Yima (Yama) and Urvakhshaya, even with respect to their original genealogical position in the world of the gods. Of importance for the establishment of the character of the ancient Indo-Iranian myth concerning the details of the death of Urvakhshaya is that Yima, according to *Yasht* XIX, was killed by his brother[6] and that, according to tradition, the demon Azhi Dahaka caused his death. Azhi Dahaka is the same mythic figure as Hitaspa. The demon is the actual killer; his tool is the victim's "blinded" brother, whose desire to get revenge on Hitaspa, his enticer, is finally fulfilled when Keresaspa becomes Azhi Dahaka's bane in the Iranian battle of Ragnarök.

3) When benevolent gods necessary for the world's order are removed from their activity in the upper world to the underworld through death, the myth must provide them with substitutes. Thus, in the Germanic mythology, the loss of Baldur, who is removed to the underworld, is compensated by his son Forseti, who is like him in character, and in place of the warring Hödur appears the warring Vali. In the Indo-Iranian mythology, the brothers Yima-Urvakhshaya and Tahmurath-Keresaspa are replaced by the two handsome twin-gods who are called the Asvins. The Asvins' qualities as replacements for the older pair of brothers are obvious, although previously not noted, and explain many previously unexplained circumstances in the myth concerning them. According to *Rigveda* X, 17, Yama (Yima) and his brother are sons of Vivasvat (the god of the bright atmosphere, the same as Thrita and Vâta-Vâya) and Tvashtar's daughter Saranyû.[7] That this marriage originates from the Indo-Iranian time is confirmed in that Yima is also the son of Vivasvat (Vivaghat) in the Persian documents. But according to the same place in

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[4] *Bundehesh* (also spelled *Bundahis*) 30.

[5] *Dadestan-i Denig* Chapter 17, 6.

[6] This is not stated directly. *Zamyad Yasht* (19), VIII, 46 says: "The Evil Spirit flung a dart, and so did Akem-Mano, and Aeshma of the wounding spear and Azhi Dahaka and Spityura, he who sawed Yima in twain." (Darmesteter tr.). In a footnote to this verse in *Zend-Avesta*, Part II, Darmesteter writes: "Spityura was a brother of Yima's (*Bund*. XXXI, 3: "Spitur was he who, with Dahak, cut up Yim" ibid. 5, tr. West). Nothing more is known of him, though he appears to have played a great part in the original Yima legend, and to have stood to his brother in the same relationship as Barmayun and Katayun to Feridun, or Shagad to Rustam, ..." etc.

Chapter 31 of the West translation of *Bundehesh* in part reads: "2. Tahmurasp was son of Vivangha, son of Yanghad, son of Hooshang. 3. Yim [Jamshed], Tahmurasp, Spitur, and Narsih, whom they also call 'the Rashnu of Chino,' were all brothers. 4. From Yim [Jamshed] and Yimak, who was his sister, was born a pair, man and woman, and they became husband and wife together; Mirak the Aspiyan and Ziyanak Zardahim were their names and the lineage went on. 5. Spitur was he who, with Dahak [Zohak], cut up Yim [Jamshed]."

[7] *Rigveda* X, 17, 1 (Ralph Griffith translation): 1. "Tvastar prepares the bridal of his Daughter: all the world hears the tidings and assembles. But Yama's Mother, Spouse of great Vivasvan, vanished as she was carried to her dwelling." 2 "From mortal men they hid the Immortal Lady, made one like her and gave her to Vivasvan. Saranyu brought to him the Asvin brothers, and then deserted both twinned pairs of children."

the *Rigveda* (X, 17, 1), Saranyû afterward also bears twins, the Asvins, to Vivasvat once she chooses to withdraw herself from Vivasvat's embrace, presumably mourning the fate of their older sons and attempts to conceal herself from him. The qualities and the functions that Yama and his brother possess from birth while they still live in the upper world are consequently transferred with their birthright to the Asvins. Likewise, the name *Yama* (twin) becomes *Yamâ* in plural form, and is an epithet for them (*Rigveda* III, 39, 3).[8] The distinct characters of the older brothers are also inherited by their successors. *Rigveda* I, 181, 4 speaks of a difference in character between the otherwise inseparable Asvin youths. There, one of them is characterized as "the auspicious" son of heaven, like Yima.[9] (According to the tradition, happiness and prosperity are spread over the whole earth through Yima's fortune-bringing activity.) In their capacity as the envoys of the older brothers who have departed to the underworld, the Asvins, who perform their duties in the upper world, are called *Nâsatyas* in many places in *Rigveda* (I, 20, 3; I, 173, 4; IV, 1, etc.), a designation that otherwise belongs to Yama's underworld envoys, his two hounds (who are also twins) and which is actually only suitable to them, because it seems to mean: "the scenting," "those with nostrils."[10] As envoys of Yama, who was transported to the underworld and rules there, a prayer is directed to the Asvins in *Rigv.* X, 40, 11 for a blessed dwelling-place after death. In *Rigv*. I, 116, 2, a battle that the Asvins fought is called "Yama's contest," without doubt because they fight on Yama's behalf.[11] The word Asvins means "those with horses"; Yama is the one who sent horses to the gods and mankind (*Rigv*. I, 163, 2).[12] These circumstances ought to be sufficient to support what I have pointed out, that the Asvins succeed their older brother Yama and his brother in their functions in the upper world, and that in the Asvins' functions we consequently find the character of the activity that formerly belonged to the older brothers, before the demon world succeeded in enticing one and causing both of their deaths.

The Asvins are the sons of the bright atmosphere, Vâta-Vivasvan. Scarcely has the rosy dawn lit up the edge of heaven before they fare up into space in their wonderful wagon-ship built by the Ribhus, the primeval geniuses, and pulled by gold-winged horses. Yet without it, they fare faster than the speed of thought through all space, in all weather conditions, in the ether's waves and on the sea, wherever there is help to give to the pious and just. From the wagon's spokes, fertility falls onto the fields. This wagon has three wheels and three seats: one for each of the brothers and one for the light-dis and daughter of the sun, Sûryâ, who herself chose the young heroes' beauty for her own, and chose them both as husbands with all the gods' consent. Many myths tell of their

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[8] *Rigveda* III, 39, 3: "The Mother of the Twins hath borne Twin Children: my tongue's tip raised itself and rested silent. Killing the darkness at the light's foundation, the Couple newly born attains their beauty."

[9] *Rigveda* I, 181, 4: "Here sprung to life, they both have sung together, with bodies free from stain, with signs that mark them; One of you Prince of Sacrifice, the Victor, the other counts as Heaven's auspicious offspring."

[10] The term "those with nostrils," "the breathing" may simply distinguish them from their deceased counterparts. However, twin hounds are also well-known in Germanic tradition (cp. Odin's hounds, Geri and Freki; *Geri and Gifr*of *Fjölsvinnsmál* 14*;* and the wolves that pursue the sun and moon, Sköll and Hati.)

[11] *Rigv.* I, 116, 2: "Borne on by rapid steeds of mighty pinion, or proudly trusting in the Gods' incitements. That stallion ass of yours won, O Nasatyas, that thousand in the race, in Yama's contest."

[12] *Rigveda* I, 163, 1: "What time, first springing into life, thou neighedst, proceeding from the sea or upper waters, Limbs of the deer hadst thou, and eagle pinions. O Steed, thy birth is nigh and must be lauded." 2. "This Steed which Yama gave hath Trita harnessed, and him, the first of all, hath Indra mounted."

goodness and how they come to rescue the distressed on land and at sea, in the throng of battle or in the misery of disease. They are remarkable healers, helping the blind to see, the lame to walk, and have medicine against everything harmful, and rejuvenating means against old age. They promote the formation of bonds of marriage. They bring the earth fertility and bees honey. The Asvins cause wells to swell and springs to rise up under the hooves of their horses. They drive away hate and disfavor. They grant prosperity and wealth. They bless homes with children and help women in labor. They are singers and they rip asunder the web of anxiety. In relationship to each other, they are inseparable. They are always invoked together and, although of different characters, they are so united in the Vedic hymns' imagination that it never occurs to them to name each one by his own name.

From the above, one finds that the Asvin myth, as it has come down to us, contains a predominately moral stamp and presents the two youths so personally that any meaning they originally may have had as natural phenomena is nearly obliterated. Also, every nature-mythologist has his own theory in this regard, and, on this subject, one can never be said to succeed with certainty, if one sticks to the myth of the Asvins alone and does not consider them in connection with the myth of the Asvins' brothers and predecessors, Yama and his brother.

The myth of Vivasvat's sons has descended as a legacy among the Greeks in their stories about the Discouri[13] and among the Germans in theirs about Baldur and Hödur. Even the Celts worshipped a twin pair of gods in which classical antiquity believed they recognized the Discouri (Diodorus Siculus. Book 4, 56).

The name Discouri means "Zeus' sons," "Heaven's sons" and has its counterpart in the epithet *divo napâtâ* , "Heaven's sons," which is connected with the Asvins in the *Rigveda*. Among the Greeks, their maternal grandfather is called Thestios, in the *Rigveda*, Tvashtar, which ought to be the same name. Their mother in the Greek and in the Vedic stories wants to withdraw from their father's embrace and thus clothes herself in animal-guise. Their epithet *Tyndaridai* refers to them by one of the many epithets with which their father Vivasvat-Vâta is designated, and that is perhaps found again in one of the epithets of the Norse Odin.

In a curious manner, the story inherited by the Greeks has combined certain essential features of the Indo-European myth about the two twin brothers, Vivasvat's sons. The devotion and complete unity that distinguishes the younger pair of brothers, the Asvins, is found again in the faithful love that unites Castor and Polydeukes, but at the same time, the tradition is preserved among the Greeks that one of Vivasvat's sons is killed by a kinsman's hand. The information that unites these traditions has been lost, so that two pairs of Discouri, the Tyndarids and the Apharids, become engaged in a war against each other, and Castor falls in the battle and descends to the underworld. In connection with this, the light-dis Sûryâ, who is the Asvins' joint wife, is also doubled into two light-dises, Helaira "the soft glistening" and Phoebe "the clear," over whose possession the pair of Discouri fight. Both of these names particularly designate the moon, which is of interest, because in the Germanic Discouri myth, as I have demonstrated (*Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Volume 1, no. 92), Baldur's wife Nanna, with whom Hödur falls in love under the influence of sorcery, is also a moon-

[13] [Rydberg's footnote] "*Die Acvins oder arischen Diskuren*" (1876) by Leronymos Myriantheus (1838-1898). Compare Kaegi: "*Der Rigveda*" p. 182.

goddess. In Greek as well as in Germanic myth, it is the love of a woman that consequently causes one of Heaven's sons to die and take up residence in the kingdom of death. It lies close at hand then to mention that a similar reason drove Keresaspa, under the influence of witchcraft, to kill his brother Yima-Urvakhshaya. At any rate, it is remarkable and lends support to the theory that the younger pair of twins, the Asvins, also love one and the same light-dis Sûryâ. That they both peacefully possess her as their wife and that the gods, as *Rigveda* assures, give this two-man marriage their solemn blessing, is best to interpret as a guarantee that the myth institutes to prevent the unfortunate fate that afflicted the elder brothers, who both loved the same woman but wanted to possess her each for himself, from also befalling the younger pair.

As is well known, one of the Greek Discouri is named Castor. According to the rules, this name can hark back to the Sanskrit word *catru*, hunter, inciter, attacker. With *catru* is also connected the proto-Germanic *Hadu* --war, the Norse *Haðr, Höðr* --warrior. The Germanic Discouri-name Hödur could thus be the same name as the Greek Castor.

Under these circumstances, it is extremely tempting to see in the Germanic Baldur-name *Fol, Falr*, a cognate of the name which the Romans called the second Discouri: *Pol-lux, Pol-luces* and (when used as an interjection**)** *Pol,* where the initial Greco-Roman *p*, according to the rules, corresponds to the Germanic *f*. *Pollux* has nothing to do with the Greek name of the same Discouri *Polydeukes*, if *πσλν-* arose through an analogizing distortion. *Pol* in *Pollux*, *Polluces*, like the Baldur-name *Fol, Falr,* can refer to the root *pal* with the meaning "to take care of," "to defend." Under this condition, what Pollux should mean is "care-illuminator," "defense-illuminator," a designation that becomes understandable when one is reminded that the Italian sailors saw St. Elmo's fire flickering on the mast ropes as proof of the Discouri's protecting presence.[14] But all the same, I dare not include this in my argument with certainty. *Pol-* in *Pollux,* as in *polliceor, pollingo, polluo*, might have arisen through assimilation out of a *pot-ποτί.*

Having said this, it ought to be appropriate to give an overview of the features of affinity between the Asiatic Indo-European Discouri myth and the Germanic one regarding Baldur and Hödur:

a) The Indo-Iranian pair of brothers are sons of Vivasvat, the god of heaven, the ruler of the atmosphere, the same as Vâta-Vâyu. Vivasvat's and Vâta's identity is clear not only from their position in the natural world, which ties in well with both names, but also from many specific details, among which may be cited: Vivasvat is the husband of Tvashtar's daughter according to *Rigv*. VIII 26, 21, 22.[15] The Asvins have their home with Vivasvat, *Rigv*. I, 46, 13[16]; the Asvins live in the same house as Vâya, *Rigv*. VIII, 9,

[14] The Discouri were believed to come to the aid of mariners in distress, and they were associated with the phenomenon known as " St. Elmo's fire," the electric charge sometimes seen playing around the masts of ships during a storm. If only one flame was seen, the Romans called it Helen and said that the worst of the storm was yet to come. They called two or more flames Castor and Pollux, and said their presence meant that the end of the storm was near.

[15] *Rigveda* VIII, 21: "Wonderful Vayu, Lord of Right, thou who art Tvastar's son-in-law, Thy saving succour we elect."; 22: "To Tvastar's son-in-law we pray for wealth whereof he hath control."

[16] *Rigveda*. I, 46, 13: "Ye dwellers with Vivasvan come, auspicious, as to Manu erst; come to the Soma and our praise."

12.[17] One and the same ruler of the atmosphere is designated with these epithets, one referring to the clear heaven and the other to the wind.

Baldur and Hödur are sons of the god of heaven and the atmosphere, Odin, who is also identical with Vâta in name.

b) In both the Indo-Iranian and the Germanic myth-cycles, the pair of brothers are characterized in entirely similar ways, and the differences in character between the brothers of each pair is also the same. Yima-Urvakhshaya is a prince of peace and a judge, who spreads a just empire over the world. Likewise, Baldur is a prince of peace and a judge. He is, says *Gylfaginning*, the wisest, the most eloquent, the gentlest. He carries the surname: the good. His judgments are unbiased. His son Forseti, who "reconciles all matters," in this regard, is a replica of him.

Keresaspa and Hödur likewise resemble one another. Foremost, both are hunters, warriors, and sportsmen. Keresaspa is renowned as an archer; so too Hödur. With the bow, he goes to battle Egil (see *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Volume 1, no. 112) and upon Hödur's bowstring Loki lays the arrow that pierces Baldur. Keresaspa conquers one of the demon-world's great serpent-giants; of Hödur, as I shall demonstrate below, a similar feat is told. Like Keresaspa's, Hödur's hunts were struggles against demons in animal-guise. Besides the bow, the club is Keresaspa's weapon of choice. In Greek mythology, one of the Discouri is a boxer. Fists bound by leather straps weighted with lead replace the club. According to Saxo, Hödur is a boxer.

c) A change occurs in Keresaspa's life. He succumbs to the demon-world's cunning onslaught, is seduced by a sorceress, and ceases to be the gods' warrior. Of Hödur, Saxo says that a sorceress, whom he met in the woods, provoked him to fight against Baldur. In narratives from Christian times, which gathered their material from the myth about Hödur, he appears under the name Hedin. Thus in the song about Helgi Hjörvardsson, Hedin meets a sorceress during a hunt in the woods who inspires the evil thought in him to rob his older brother of his wife. Compare the story about Hedin in *Sörla Þáttr*.[18]

d) Yima-Urvakhshaya is killed by his brother. The actual author of the murder however is not his brother, but the demon Hitaspa. Baldur is killed by his brother Hödur. The actual murderer however is not Hödur, but Loki.

e) Keresaspa himself is killed by a "Turk." Hödur is killed by Vali.

f) Keresaspa shall sleep the sleep of death until Ragnarök, when he shall take part in a battle that annihilates evil and makes the renewal of the world possible. Hödur shall return in Ragnarök with Baldur in order to live in the renewed blessed world with him.

g) Yima-Urvakhshaya owns a restricted place in the underworld, inside of which are preserved for thousands of years beings who, after the conflagration of the world, shall repopulate the earth. Baldur lives in the underworld together with the children that await the renewal of the world in Mimir's grove and who shall be the progenitors of a blessed race of men after the conflagration of the world.

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[17] *Rigveda* VIII, 9, 12: "Whether with Indra ye be faring, Asvins, or resting in one dwelling-place with Vayu, In concord with the Rbhus or Adityas, or standing still in Visnu's striding-places."

[18] In *Sörla Þáttr* (*The Saga of Hedin and Högni*), the warrior Hedin is enchanted by a sorceress named Göndul whom he meets in the wood. She gives him a strong drink and urges him to steal his beloved foster-brother Högni's daughter and kill Högni's wife. Under the sorceress' influence, he does as directed. Once the spell is broken, he realizes what he has done and flees. When Högni finally catches up to him, they are doomed by Odin to fight to the death, and rise to fight again, until a Christian warrior slays them both.

h) The Asvins are "Horse-guiders." Their Greek counterparts the Discouri are as well. Of Yama, *Rigveda'*s Yima-Urvakhshaya, it is specifically stated that he sent the horse to the gods and mankind. In the Germanic mythology, Baldur is the one among the gods most often mentioned in connection with the horse. After his death, Frey foremost becomes "the boldest rider" among the Aesir.[19] Baldur is spoken of as a rider in *Lokasenna, Gylfaginning*, the Danish folk-histories, in the *Merseburg Charm*, and the German medieval poetic compositions. His horse is burned with him. *Vigg-Baldr*, horse-Baldur, is an expression that occurs in the Norse poetry.[20]

i) A well springs up under the hooves of the Asvins' horses (*Rigv*. I, 116, 7; I, 117, 6),[21] so too under Baldur's horse according to a Danish popular tradition. The Asvins are the protectors of springs. According to Saxo, Baldur digs wells for his thirsty warriors. A "Baldur's *brunn* (spring)" exists in the district of Roeskilde; German tradition speaks of a *Pholesbrunn* (*Phulsborn*) in Thüringen and a *Falsbrunn* in Franconian Steigerwald.[22]

k) The Asvins have a wonderful wagon-ship and come to the rescue of the shipwrecked. The Greek Discouri are invoked by sailors in need. Baldur owned a ship, Hringhorn, which might have played a prominent role in the myth, since it is spoken of at his funeral procession and is utilized for his pyre. In the poem about Helgi Hjörvardsson derived from the Baldur myth (see further), this replica of Baldur owns a splendid ship, which is described as well equipped against the attack of the powers of witchcraft (verse 13).

l) The Asvins are singers (*Rigv*. VIII 9, 16, 17). Saxo says of Hödur that he was a remarkably dexterous string-player and also understood how to play other musical instruments, so that with his music he was able to arouse joy, sorrow, pity and hate. A particular form of verse in the North was called *Haðarlag.* In Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regnum Brittanniæ*, where Baldur appears under the name Baldulf, and Hödur appears under the name Cador, Baldur is spoken of as a harp-player. Medieval Astrology has inherited the concept from antiquity that Castor and Pollux, the pair of twins who appear in the Zodiac, are string-players and that the best artists are born under the sign of the twins.[23] One can thereby draw the conclusion that the Greek Discouri, like the Norse, also inherited musical skill as a legacy from their Proto-Indo-European forerunners.

m) The Asvins are extremely beautiful youths. So too Castor and Polydeukes. In Norse mythology, Baldur's beauty is praised before that of all others. According to Saxo, the hero Hedin, a replica of Hödur, was spared by an enemy for the sake of his youth and beauty.

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[19] *Lokasenna* 37; Baldur's death is mentioned in verse 28.

[20] *Plácítúsdrápa* 30. *Plácítúsdrápa* is a 59 stanza Christian poem found in AM 673b 4to, dating from about 1200 AD, which tells the story of St. Eustace, a Roman warrior named Placidus before his conversion by a stag bearing a crucifix.

[21] *Rigveda* I, 116, 7: "Ye poured forth from the hoof of your strong charger a hundred jars of wine as from a strainer"; I, 117, 6: "When from the hoof of your strong horse ye showered a hundred jars of honey for the people."

[22] See Jakob Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologi*, Chapter 11, Palter (Baldur)

[23] Manilius, *Astronomica*, translated by G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library, 1977: Book 4, 525 ff: "When Ocean displays and conceals equal portions of the Twins (Gemini), it will bestow zeal for study and direct men to learned arts. It creates no gloomy disposition, but hearts imbued with a pleasant charm and furnishes blessings of voice and tuneful lyre combining with wit, a dowry of melody."

n) The Asvins are healers. They make the blind see and cure the crippled and lame. A hint survives which seems to refer to the existence of an ancient myth in which Baldur too was an aid to the blind and lame. When the skald Gisli Sursson dreams that his *fylgja* reveals herself to him and stresses a humanitarian message, she does so in a paraphrase with reference to Baldur's relationship to the blind, lame, and handless:

Baugskyndir, hjalp blindum,
Baldr, hygg at því, skjaldar,
illt kveða háð ok höltum,
handlausum tý, granda.[24]

["Help the blind and handless,
ring-giver, shield of Baldur (warrior).
Beware, evil resides in scorn
shown to the lame and the needy."] [25]

o) The Asvins help women in labor. So too does Baldur, as shall be demonstrated below.

p) The Asvins are mediators of marriage. Of Hödur, Saxo says that he successfully won a wife for Helgo, Halogaland's king: the Finnish princess Thora, whose hand he had previously requested in vain through a proxy. That Hödur succeeded is more remarkable, because Helgo had such a severe defect of the mouth that he spoke shyly not only to strangers, but also to those around him.

q) The Asvins love one and the same woman, a light dis. The dises over which the Greek pair of Discouri fight bear the names of moon-goddesses, Phoebe and Helaira, and are daughters of Leukippos, whose name means "the one with white horses." Nanna, for whose sake Hödur becomes hostile toward Baldur, is a moon-goddess, identical to Sinhtgunt "the battle maid, who travels night after night," according to Bugge's shrewd interpretation of this name.

r) Astrology in its classical form gave the Discouri a place on the vault of heaven and made them representatives of the mild spring and warm summer. They are depicted as naked youths with their arms slung around one another, looking in different directions.[26] The Roman astrologer Manilius (*Astronomica.* II, 163 f., 182 ff.) based this on ancient tradition so that one directs his gaze towards the vanishing spring, while the other one looks to meet the "thirsting" summer, and they are naked in order that

"both feel the heat,

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[24] *Gísla Saga Súrssonar*, chap 22, verse 18. The accompanying prose reads: "Then my good dream-woman came in and said that this signified how many years I had left to live, and she advised me to stop following the old faith for the rest of my life, and to refrain from studying any charms or ancient lore. And she told me to be kind to the deaf and the lame and the poor and the helpless, and that is where my dream ended." (Translated by Martin S. Regal, *The Complete Sagas of the Icelanders*, Volume II.)

[25] Translation by Martin S. Regal, *The Complete Sagas of the Icelanders*, Volume II.

[26] Manilius, *Astronomica*, translated by G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library, 1977. 163ff: "Look among the constellations for the two Fishes (Pisces) and the Twins (Gemini) of like number with limbs unclad. The arms of the twins are forever in mutual embrace." 265ff: "Summer comes with the Twins (Gemini)."

One from the aging spring and the other from the approaching summer." [27]

That the Asvins also have significance in regard to the seasons is already clear in that the geniuses of the seasons, the Ribhus, manufacture their car from whose spokes fertility falls upon the earth. And that these seasons were spring and summer is confirmed by what is related about Yima-Urvakhshaya and Keresaspa. Yima receives the assignment from Ormuzd "to make the world fruitful." Ormuzd gives a golden plow and a golden shepherd's staff to him. Copious life spreads over the earth during Yima's reign, when he "traveled up toward the light of midday to the sun's path." Of him, it says further: "Yima is like the sun among mortals. Through his power, he ordained that men and cattle did not die (as long as he governed), that the water and trees did not dry up, and that man ate a food that did not diminish. During his reign no cold or heat prevailed, no old age or death, no jealousy produced by the demons" (*Yasna* 9, 5; *Yasht* XV, 15).

It is clear from this account that in the annual cycle Yima-Urvakhshaya represents the season that spreads vegetation and the abundance of life over the earth and, that in the epic mythology, he represents the golden age of humanity, which, with his death, comes to an end in a storm-age when the powers of evil and destruction are in the process of destroying creation.

His brother Keresaspa rules beside him; but his activity, which amounts to a constant battle against the demons, particularly suggests a time when the existence of the golden age is threatened, when the powers of storm, cold, and darkness have already begun their assault, which Keresaspa beats back until he himself succumbs to the demon-world's sorcery and destructive arts and becomes his brother's killer, not without guilt, but nevertheless against his will. He himself finally falls by another's weapon. A Persian tradition relates that it was in Keresaspa's time that mankind first traveled over the sea that divided their primeval home from other parts of the earth—an echo of the myth about the migration from the Proto-Indo-European homeland caused by the fimbul-winter.

The Germanic mythology has also spoken of a peaceful- and golden age, when Jötunheim's powers were still quiet; nothing interrupted the regular workings of the world's institutions, and the world-mill turned beneath songs that brought blessings. It was the time when the nature smiths provided the gods everything that they needed and desired in the way of golden world-benefiting treasures— *var þeim vettergis vant ór gulli*.[28] It was before the three dangerous thurs-maidens, that is to say the thrice reborn Gullveig-Heid-Aurboda, came out of Jötunheim and interfered in world affairs. Thereafter misfortune after misfortune befell the gods and their world. Freyja, the goddess of vegetation, was delivered to the giant world. The goddess of rejuvenation was as well. The fimbul-winter approached and there was nothing that could stop its outbreak once Balder was killed by his brother Hödur's arrow through the ruse of the demon Loki. The Teutons had to leave their primeval home in search of new dwelling places.

In regard to the epic, Baldur's and Yima-Urvakhshaya's deaths occupy exactly the same position. The mythic epic describes one world-year whose seasons follow one another like that of the common year. After the summer of the Golden Age has passed, comes the time when evil and good battle one another, a time resembling stormy autumn.

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[27] Manilius, *Astronomica* 182 ff.

[28] "For them there was no want of gold," *Völuspá* 8.

This lasts until a fimbul-winter comes and annihilates the ethically defiled race of man. The sun goes out during the battle between good and evil and the world goes up in flames. This prepares the way for a new world-Spring, eternally green and of unstained bliss, a new and permanent Golden Age in which Urvakhshaya and Keresaspa, Baldur and Hödur, shall rule anew.

By the Baldur myth and the Baldur name Fol (Phol), one can explain *Pful-tag* (Pful-day), which is reported in the Rhine-district and occurs on May 2nd. Fol also seems to have had a *Phol-mânôt* (Phol-month), which ends on the autumn equinox (Grimm: *Deutsche Mythology*).[29] Thus Phol's day begins the season that corresponds to Baldur's power; his month concludes it.

[29] *Deutsche Mythology* (Stalleybrass translation) ch. 20: "I identified him with the German Phol; and it is of extraordinary value to our research, that in the Rhine districts we come upon a Pfultag, Pulletag (P.'s day), which fell precisely on the 2nd of May (Weisth. 2, 8. 3, 748). We know that our forefathers very generally kept the beginning of May as a great festival, and it is still regarded as the trysting-time of witches, i.e. once of wise-women and fays... Pholtag then answers to Bealteine, and moreover Baldag is the Saxon form for Paltar (p. 229); Chapter 24: Phol, who had his Phol-day (p. 614), seems to have ruled over a Phol-mânôt, Phol-month (May and Sept.).

2.

NATURE'S SWORN OATH. HEALING CHARMS.

Gylfaginning and the poem "*Baldur's Dreams*" report that when Baldur dreamed grave dreams which indicated that his life was threatened, the gods sought to keep these dreams from being fulfilled by taking oaths from all beings, all natural things, and all diseases not to harm Baldur. However, they neglected to take an oath from a sapling called mistletoe and Loki used it, via Hödur, to cause Baldur's death. Hödur shot the mistletoe, crafted into an arrow, at Baldur, who he believed was invulnerable to all projectiles, cuts, and blows, and Baldur died from the wound.

The idea that one can swear or obligate all elements, all beings, and all diseases not to harm a person one wants to protect is Proto-Indo-European and found again in Vedic literature. I refer to the excerpt from *Atharvaveda* that A. Ludwig cites in "*Die Mantralitteratur*,"[30] consisting of prayers and incantations for this purpose.

The Proto-Indo-European concepts about the plant kingdom and its relationship to the gods deserve special attention, since mistletoe belongs to this kingdom. According to these concepts, plants have sentient life and can consequently be plighted with oaths. They form five principalities governed by the soma plant. *Atharvaveda* V, 4, 18 ff. says that all plants were once commanded to assemble by the gods, when it became of the highest importance for them to take measures against the demon-world's arts. At this meeting, it was decided that Apamarga (*Achyranthes aspera*, compare Zimmer *Altindisches Leben* p. 66)[31] with its backward-growing flowers would be the protector against bad dreams, curses and black arts.[32] According to the gods' decision, a second herb, Arundhati, which is a parasitic plant like mistletoe, would be the protector against wounds caused by blows, spears or arrows.[33] To stop the evil powers that avail themselves of herbs in battle against them, the gods send out numerous spies into the kingdom of plants. *Rigveda* VII, 61, 3: "O Mitra and Varuna, you great-gifted, from the wide world, from the high heavens, you have put out spies, *even among the plant families* you have spies that travel everywhere and watch and do not close their eyes."[34]

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[30] Alfred Ludwig (1832-1912) *Mantralitteratur und das Alte Indien als ein Leitung zur Übersetzung des Rigveda*, Prague, 1878.

[31] Heinrich Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben: Die Culture der Vedischen Arier nach dem Samhita Dargestellt*, Berlin, 1879.

[32] *Hymns of the Atharva-ved*a, translated by Maurice Bloomfield*; Sacred Books of the East*, Volume 42, 1897. Speaking of Apâmârga, *Atharvaveda* IV, 17, 2 says: "Her, the unfailingly victorious one, that wards off curses, that is powerful and defensive; (her and) all the plants have I assembled, intending that she shall save us from this (trouble)!" [Rydberg's reference to V, 4, 18 appears to be an error].

[33] *Athararveda* IV, 5: 3. "Every tree thou dost climb, like a wench lusting after a man. 'Victorious,' 'firmly founded,' 'saving,' verily, is thy name." 4. "The wound that has been inflicted by the club, by the arrow, or by fire, of that thou art the cure: do thou cure this person here!" 5. "Upon the noble plaksha-tree (*ficus infectoria*) thou growest up, upon the asvattha (*ficus religiosa*), the khadira (*acacia catechu*), and the dhava (*grislea tomentosa*); (thou growest up) upon the noble nyagrodha (*ficus indica*, banyan-tree), and the parna (*butea frondosa*). Come thou to us, O *arundhatî*!" 6. "O gold-coloured, lovely, sun-coloured, most handsome (plant), mayest thou come to the fracture, O cure! 'Cure,' verily, is thy name!"

[34] Rydberg follows Ludvig's translation, "auch in die geschlechter der planzen"; Griffith has "in fields and houses " and Geldner (1951) "in Pflanzen und Ansiedelungen" (in plants and settlements).

I hardly need to point out that these concepts are identical with those that appear in the Baldur myth. According to it, the gods have also aligned themselves with the plant kingdom, so that no member of it would serve the demons as a harmful tool. And while a parasitic plant is obligated to defend against wounds caused by blow, spear or arrow in the Vedic story, it is a parasitic plant that the gods overlook in their oaths of obligation that is made into an arrow that kills one of the gods, threatened by the demon world in the Nordic story.

The herb, named *Arundhâti*, personified as a goddess, occurs in a Vedic incantation that is of special interest for our subject. In *Atharvaveda* IV, 12, it is said:

> "It is you, you Rohanî that causes
> the broken bone to heal.
> Arundhâti, cause this to heal!
> That which is injured,
> that which is broken,
> that bone of yours,
> Dhâtar [the Creator] shall kindly knit it together again,
> joint with joint.
> Thy marrow with the marrow,
> thy joint with the joint;
> the skin with the skin,
> the flesh grows together with the flesh!"

With this Vedic formula, a Germanic incantation against a sprained joint, the so-called *Second Merseburg Charm*, should be compared:

Phol ende Uuodan	
uuoron zi holza,	
du uuart demo Balderes volon	Fol and Wodan
sin vuoz birenkit;	rode into the woods,
thu biguolen Sinthgunt,	There the foot of Baldur's foal
Sunna era suister;	went out of joint.
thu biguol en Friia,	It was charmed by Sinthgunt,
Volla era suister,	Sunna her sister;
thu biguolen Uuodan,	It was charmed by Frigg,
so he uuola conda:	Fulla her sister;
sose benrenki	It was charmed by Wodan,
sose bluotrenki,	as he well knew how:
[sose lidirenki]	Thus Bone-sprain,
ben zi bena,	like blood-sprain:
bluot zi bluoda,	[Like limb-sprain]
lid zi geliden,	Bone to bone,
sose gilimida sin.	blood to blood;
	Limb to limb,
	as if they were glued.

First and foremost, both incantations resemble one another in that they consist of two factors: a mythological and an actual healing-formula. Concerning the latter, the Vedic and the Germanic agree in an eye-catching manner. In the Vedic formula, the mythological elements have reference to the Creator; in the Germanic charm, they refer to Odin, accompanied by female divinities, who are depicted as healers. But in the end, it is the Creator in one, and Odin in the other, whose healing art reunites that which had come out of joint. However, in the Vedic variant, Yama and his horse, which correspond to Baldur and his horse, are missing. The Vedic formula is valid for sprains in general, while the Germanic charm is only good for horses' sprains. But nevertheless, when the Vedic priest utilized this formula, he must have had Yama and his horse in mind, for in another place in the *Atharvaveda*, it is said that Yama's horse is Arundhatî's father (compare Zimmer *Altindisches Leben*, p. 67)[35]

Rohanî, who appears by the side of Arundhatî in the Vedic formula, is, as her name suggests, a vegetation-dis and there is every reason to assume that she is the same as Rohinî, who, according to *Atharvaveda* XIII, 1, 22, is "the golden Sûri, the tall one with strong luster, with which we will win strong means of nourishment and prevail in all slaughtering." She corresponds to the sun-dis Sunna in the Merseburg Charm, sister to "the battle-maid who fares night after night."

Thus, the Vedic and the Germanic incantations against sprains come fairly close to one another in mythological respect as well. They are variants of a Proto-Indo-European formula and refer to a common circle of gods.

That such a formula could survive from the Proto-Indo-European era into the final era of Germanic heathenism is not surprising. One of the results from the field of comparative mythology presented in this volume is that the Germanic doctrine lived a long life of slow development with an uninterrupted continuity proceeding from the Proto-Indo-European era right up until its collision with the Roman doctrine and Christendom. On the other hand, it is surprising that related incantations, even more disintegrated, could survive the fall of heathendom and be preserved on the lips of people into our day through a thousand years of Christendom's reign and struggle against the remaining heathen traditions (see further).

In closing, a final formula from *Atharvaveda* (Ludwig, *Die Mantralitteratur*, pg. 430) deserves mentioning, because, although it is intended for common usage and as protection for ordinary mortals, it is reminiscent of the protection that the Aesir requested from nature for Baldur:

> "All *vasu*s, all *âditya*s, watch over this! May he not meet death by a brother's hand, nor by the hand of one who is not related, not by human hand ... This I transfer, all oaths provide to him welfare and old age. All divine beings that are in heaven, on earth, in the air, in plants, in animals, and in water, to him you should dispatch lasting life of many years. The hundred other ways to die (from disease) shall he avoid."

[35] *Atharvaveda* V, 5: 8. "With the blood of the brown horse of Yama thou hast verily been sprinkled." 9. "Having dropped from the blood of the horse she ran upon the trees, turning into a winged brook. Do thou come to us, O Arundhatî!"

Compare *Gylfaginning*'s words: *Frigg tók svardaga til þess að eira skyldu Baldri eldur og vatn, járn og allskonar málmur, steinar, jörðin, viðirnir, sóttirnar, dýrin, fuglarnir, eitur, ormar.* ("Frigg took oaths so that Baldur should not be harmed by fire and water, iron and all metals, stones, earth, trees, diseases, animals, birds, poisons and snakes"). According to "*Baldur's Dreams*," the gods extracted oaths from the *vættir*, the beings inherent in these elements and things.[36]

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[36] Here Rydberg is quoting from an alternate version of the poem. The poem *Baldrs Draumar* or *Vegtamskviða* is found only in AM 748 I 4to, and late paper manuscripts. Interestingly, the paper manuscripts contain four full verses between verses 1 and 2, as well as two more half-verses and some additional lines not found in the vellum manuscript. Sophus Bugge catalogs these in his *Norroen Fornkvæði*, pp. 138-140 "*Anmærking til Vegtamskviða*" [Online at http://etext.old.no/Bugge/]. These additional lines and verses can be found in English translation in Benjamin Thorpe's "The Edda of Saemund the Learned" (1865) [Online at http://www.northvegr.org/lore/poetic2/index.php].

Because these lines contain accurate mythic information, Rydberg saw no reason not to regard them as authentic. They are no longer included in scholarly editions of the poem. The lines in question read: *Út skyldi senda allar vættir griða at beiða, granda ei Baldri*; "On a course they resolved/ that they would send/ to every being (*vættir*)/ assurance to solicit/ Baldr not to harm." (Thorpe translation)

II.

THE GERMANIC DISCOURI IN TACITUS.

Among the Germanic gods mentioned by Tacitus are two brothers whom he compares to the Discouri.

In chapter 43 of *Germania*, he writes:

"All these people (the Suebian tribes Marsigni, Cotini, Osi, and Buri) dwell in an area consisting in part of little level country, and in part of highland forests, mountain peaks, and ridges. Through Suebia runs an unbroken mountain range that divides the land into two parts and thus puts up a dividing wall between them, beyond which a multitude of people live. Of these, the Lygii name is most widespread as they extend into several communities. It will suffice to mention the most important among them: Harii, (*Harios*), Helvecones (*Helveconos*), Inanimani (*Inanimos*, variant *Manimos*), Elysii (*Elisios*), and Nahanarvali (*Nahanarvalos*). Among the Nahanarvali is found a grove. It is of ancient sanctity and in the charge of a priest in women's clothes. But the gods worshipped there are said, in Roman interpretation, to be Castor and Pollux. That is the character of their divinity; their name is *alk* (or *alks*: the name *Alcis*). There are no images of the gods (in the grove) and no trace of foreign import – it is the brothers, it is the young men themselves that are worshiped (there). – Of the other tribes just enumerated, none surpass the Harii in strength, and with their bravado is united an innate ferocity that is enhanced by their art and choice of timing (for attack). With black shields and painted bodies, they choose pitch-black nights for battle. With their dreadful appearance, they inspire terror as a war-host belonging to the realm of death; no opponent can bear so strange a sight, as if stemming from the underworld, because in all battles, it is the eyes that are conquered first."

Before I enter into an investigation of this chapter of "*Germania*," some observations should be made.

At the time of Christ's birth and in the first centuries thereafter, the Romans were closely acquainted with the Germanic tribes on their border. Into the Roman archives flowed intelligence about the Germanic country, tribes, social order, customs, practices, and religion, which was accurate and reliable to the same degree as the German people that it concerned lived in proximity to the Rhine or the coastal waters conquered by the Romans or the trade routes used by them. It is out of such sources that Tacitus gathered the material for his incomparable, but all too brief, description of Germania as it existed at the time.

As one learns from his work, the Roman historian's plan was, so far as it was possible, to describe in a short space the *whole* of Germania along with its borderland. Regarding Germania's farthest reaches, he had to stick to what his Roman or Germanic informers had heard said of it. He had to supplement the information that was based on his informers' personal experience with stories about remote peoples and conditions, the accuracy of which he could not adduce other than by what he heard reported and what he believed to be correct.

But the Teutons had as small a dividing line as the Greeks and the Romans had between actual ethnography and geography on one side, and mythological ethnography

and geography on the other. As far as they believed in their divine stories and hero-sagas, they were convinced that eastward and northward from their territory lay the Ironwood, inhabited by monsters, and Jötunheim, populated by frost-giants, and that beyond a high mountain range were descents to the underworld with its different kingdoms inhabited by divine beings and by blessed and damned hell-goers. All these imaginary lands were as real to the faithful among the Teutons as the ground they walked on, and should they report to the eager-to-learn Romans what they knew of the distant districts of Germania and its borderlands, they could not help but speak of them as well.

The result of this was that even Tacitus' *Germania* came to include a piece of mythic ethnography and mythic geography alongside a real description of Germania, as it existed then.

Tacitus himself was not unaware of this. In the 46th Chapter, after he speaks of the Finnish people and their lifestyle, he adds: *cetera jam fabulosa*, ("all else is fable") and he cites what his informer told him of the Hellusii and Oxiones, who had "faces like humans, but bodies or limbs like wild animals." With this, it is undoubtedly Jötunheim's giant-clans and the Ironwood's *fiflmegir*, its kin of Fenrir, its serpent- and wolf-demons that are meant. *Austr sat in aldna í Járnvíði ok fæddi þar Fenris kindir.*[37] In *Völuspá*, one of them appears *í trolls hami*[38] and swallows the moon. Another appears in Saxo (Book 6) as *tricorpor bellua*, a monster, composed of three different beings.[39] On the Gallehus horns,[40] one finds similar demons, whose bodies are composed of human and animal-limbs. The concept reported by Tacitus about beings such as these living on the borders of Midgard is consequently rediscovered in our own mythic sources. The names Hellusii and Oxiones themselves can be explained from the Germanic store of words. Helusii can mean cliff-dwellers, the inhabitants of mountain caves, and be like *bergdanir*, *bergmærir*, *fjallbúi*, *hellisbörr*, an ancient giant-epithet derived from *hallr*, Gothic *hallus*, cliff, to which the Swedish *häll*, the Icelandic *hella* and *hellir* are related. Oxiones can be explained by the giant-name *Oegir*, which in its Gothic form would have the form *Ôgeis* and mean "the frightening" from *ôgjan*, terrible.

My conviction, based on decisive facts, is that in the 43rd chapter of *Germania*, as quoted above, Tacitus has already passed from the area of real land into that of mythology. The borderline between them is the high mountain range that cleaves Suebia into two parts according to his informers' information. It bears mentioning that Tacitus, before he reached this mountain range in his description of the Swedish country, knew it to be near "the concealed districts of Germania" (*secretiora Germananiæ*, ch. 41), to regions about which only unsubstantiated rumors were known. What I will now demonstrate is that beyond this dividing wall of mountains, with its highland forests and mountain peaks, drawn through Suebia itself, the Germanic informers from which Tacitus' remotest information flowed located the descent to the underworld and the underworld itself with its different kingdoms, its fields of bliss, and its haunt of spooks and demons, and that one of Tacitus' middlemen or possibly even Tacitus himself, in the

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[37] *Völuspá 40: "In the east, the old one sat in the Ironwood and gave birth to Fenrir's children."*

[38] "*in troll guise*."

[39] Saxo, *Gesta Danorum*, Book 6: "Since thou art a giant of three bodies..." Oliver Elton translation.

[40] The Gallehus Horns discovered in 1639 and 1734 were a pair of gold, horn-shaped artifacts from 5th-century Scandinavia, which were later stolen and melted down. Replicas of the horns reproduced from drawings made of them still exist and indeed show human figures with animal heads and horns.

belief that these were still reports of actual tribes of people and actual kingdoms, sought to adapt the mythic information to the demands of reality as best as he could. That said, we should remind ourselves that when any one of the adventurers in the Norse sagas wants to seek the descent to the underworld in order to witness its wonders and its horrors firsthand, he must either sail into a northern sea concealed in darkness or else travel over a high mountain range like Saxo's Hotherus. Here, the Suebian mountain range serves this purpose.

Beyond this mountain range, Tacitus writes, live many people, among whom the Lygii name is most widespread. The name Lygii is also written Ligii, Logii, and Lugii. Although the matter is uncertain, I will already willingly concede that we may yet have here the name of an actual Germanic tribe who, around the year 277 under the chieftain Semno, broke into Gallien and fought against the Roman Caesar Probus. If this assumption is correct, then the Lygii in Tacitus' time were settled in easternmost Suebia, little known or unknown regions for the remaining Teutons, and his informers had heard hearsay concerning them. But when we come to the community over which the Lygii name was supposed to extend, I do not entertain the slightest doubt that mythic information was put into service as evidence for it, and that this "community" was assigned the name Lygii because, as I shall demonstrate below, the name Lygii can also have a mythological meaning.

The inhabitants of the communities in question are:

a) *Harii*;

b) *Heluecones* or *Heluetones* (as the name is written in Vatican manuscript no. 1862 and in the Leyden manuscript);

c) *Inanimi* (as the name is written in the Stuttgart manuscript. The variant *Manimi* is easily explained as a misreading. When *i* is joined with *n*, it can be difficult to distinguish from *m* in manuscripts.);

d) *Elysii, Elisii*;

e) *Nahanarvali* or *Naharuali*.

Of these five names, three are of Germanic origin; however, the other two are obviously *romana interpretatione*, that is to say, are translated into Latin by an informer who chose to give his Roman questioner the meanings of the words. These two names are *Inanimi*, "those who are lifeless" or, literally and mythologically more correct, "those who are without spirit" (compare *náir*), and *Elysii, Elisii*, "those that dwell on the fields of bliss."

Now, if one wanted to suppose that pure chance was at work here and that it made an actual Germanic tribe's name resemble the Latin words *Inanimi* and *Elysii*, I will not deny the possibility of such chance, although these names would then be left unexplained by the Germanic store of language. But then it would also be chance that these names, which in their Roman form refer to beings that belong to the kingdom of death, are connected with a name such as *Harii* and with a description of these Harii that likewise refers to inhabitants of the kingdom of death—and further connected with names such as Heluecones or Heluetones and Nahanarvali or Naharuali, which however one seeks to interpret them, observing all linguistic caution, ventures into the same area, namely the

Germanic kingdom of death. He who gives chance such a wide margin throws probability, and with it scientific method, overboard.

Of the Harii, it is said that: "With black shields and painted bodies, they choose pitch-black nights for battle. With the fear-awakening appearance of spooks, like a war-host from the *kingdom of death*, they inspire terror; no opponent can bear the startling sight, as if *stemming from the underworld*."[41]

If we consider this information to be a description of an actual Germanic tribe, we first and foremost have to admit that one existed that was completely different in character and manner of battle than what Tacitus himself, the remaining Roman authors, and all our native sources have to say of the character of Germanic people and Germanic warriors. One would have to suppose that these Harii made it a personal operative principle to fight at night and during it play the role of a ghost-army from the underworld, and that their neighbors could either never figure out that mortal warriors and not ghosts from the underworld had attacked them, or likewise that they could never conquer the fear that such a masquerade inspired in them, even though they perceived that these warriors with black shields and painted bodies were mortal men, or through habit and experience never came so far that the masquerade ceased to strike them with terror. It is also remarkable that the neighbors and foes of these Harii would always allow them to choose night as the time of battle, when of course the former were free to choose the day in order to attack them in turn.

What the description actually and in the most definite manner shows is that within the Teutons' belief system was included the concept of an army of ghost-like warriors with black shields, who could climb out of the underworld at night and spread horror and panic around them. The necessary prerequisite would be that the neighboring tribes, who were frightened by the reported masquerade so regularly, actually believed in the existence of a *feralis exercitus* ("army of ghosts"), of hosts of *umbræ* ("shades") of *infernus aspectus* ("hellish appearance"), and that the pretend or actual Harii profited from this belief, so that they could conquer them more easily.

Here the supposition thrusts itself upon us that these *Harii* never existed as a tribe of people, that they never performed the masquerade that was ascribed to them, but that the Germanic authority from which the Roman historian's description of the remote *Harii* came, related in complete innocence that far to the east behind the Suebian mountain-range's high peaks and deep forests lay the way to the realm where the blissful dead, *Elysii*, and other dead, *Inanimi*, dwell, and that from one of these regions, an army of ghosts, a host of *Harii*, sometimes arose at night to spread fear and panic. And because the authority thought of these *Elysii*, *Inanimi*, and *Harii* as actual beings and their dwelling places as actual districts, as the tribes and the tracts that existed on the other side of the mountain range, the Roman questioner understood these *Elysii, Inanimi,* and *Harii* as actual Germanic tribes and turned their *infernus aspectus* into a masquerade and their nightly appearance into a ruse of war.

This solution is confirmed by the name *harius* itself, which still exists in the mythological meaning of warrior from the world of death, namely in the compound *ein-heri, ein-herjar*, dead heroes, who are adopted into Asgard's halls. In this compound, the prefix *ein* give an enhanced and at the same time refined meaning to *heri*, which the

[41] Rydberg has intentionally reworded the passage here, from the way he first presented it at the beginning of this chapter to emphasize the meaning of specific words and phrases.

corresponding *harius* by itself does not possess. The Harii Tacitus' informer mentions were evidently not Valhall's hosts, but ghost-warriors, such as *Atharvaveda* speaks of and whose existence in the Germanic imagination is also confirmed by many pieces of evidence, among others by the story about the Hjadnings, Hedin's warriors,[42] which flows from out of the myths.

In the same category as *Elysii*, *Inanimi*, and *Harii*, Tacitus' informer heard of a fourth people whom he calls the *Nahanarvali* or *Naharuali*. Beside them, the Nahanarvali constitute a "*civitas*" (community) and are included with them under the Lygii name. Already then from a methodological standpoint, there is a strong reason to also consider the Nahanarvali as one of the tribes belonging to the Germanic kingdom of death. Their name and the information Tacitus relates about them lend increased weight to this methodological reason.

The name is evidently a compound. The first question then is how it should be divided *naha-narvali* or *nahanar-vali*. The manner in which the word is Latinized (*nahanarvali*, not *nahanarvales*) tells us that the correct division is *nahanar-vali*. The suffix then must be the Old Germanic *valu*, the Old Norse *valr*, which means an assembly selected, or chosen for the destiny that awaits it in another world.

What the name Nahanarvali refers to is sufficient to show that they too deserve the place they receive from Tacitus beside the Elysii, Inanimi, and Harii. An attempt to interpret the name's prefix, I can thereby save myself, but nevertheless dare to refer to the Old Germanic *nah*, the Gothic ga-*nauhan*, ga- *nôhjan*, satisfaction, happiness. According to this interpretation, Nahanarvali are beings that are chosen for a particular part of the Germanic realm of bliss.

Now, it is said by Tacitus: "Among the Nahanarvali is seen a grove. It is of ancient sanctity and in the charge of a priest in women's clothes. But the gods worshipped there are said, in Roman interpretation, to be Castor and Pollux. That is the character of their divinity; their name is *Alcis*. There are no images of the gods (in the grove) and no trace of foreign import – it is the brothers themselves, it is the young men themselves that are worshiped there."

That the Nahanarvali are underworld beings follows from the grove, which is seen among them, being a mythic grove located in the Germanic underworld. We know of course that a grove also exists there: Yima's pleasure-garden, Mimir's grove, where Baldur and Hödur and the Asmegir await Ragnarök and the regeneration of the world.[43] This grove is, as it is in Tacitus, "of ancient sanctity" because it was established when the first fimbul-winter threatened the world. What Tacitus' informer tells him but Tacitus himself apparently could not correctly understand, namely that it is not icons that are found in the grove, but rather *"the brothers themselves, the young men themselves that are worshiped there,"* thus finds its complete explanation. It is of course Baldur and Hödur themselves who dwell in Mimir's grove and are surrounded by and receive honor there from its holy children, the Asmegir, who are selected to be the progenitors of the coming age's pious race. We then also understand why Tacitus' informer compares these divine brothers to Castor and Pollux. The Greek Discouri, who were taken as symbols of death and resurrection particularly in the time of the Roman Caesars, are themselves

[42] At the end of *Sörla þáttur*, Hedin and Högni are doomed to die in battle and rise to fight again repeatedly until a Christian warrior comes along and slays them all.
[43] See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. 1, no. 52-53.

originally identical to Baldur and Hödur as demonstrated above, and this identity ought to have been more conspicuous in the time of Tacitus' informers than it is in our Nordic documents, where the Baldur myth exists only in fragments and, as far as the *Prose Edda* is concerned, is partially disfigured.

One of the epithets with which Baldur and Hödur were commonly designated in the first century among the Teutons from which Tacitus' information is derived was the *Alcis*, as we see in Latinized form. Only two possible meanings exist for this word and of these only one is probable. *Alcis* can refer to the old Germanic *ahl*, to protect, to defend which has its counterpart in the Greek *άλχή* protect, defend, and its descendant in the Gothic *ahl-s*, protected space, sanctuary, in the Old English *ealgian*, to defend, and perhaps even in *Jálkr* the Norse god-epithet arisen through accent. The other possibility is to refer Alcis to the Old Germanic *elha*, elk, reindeer. In the first case, *Alcis* would mean "defenders," a meaning in harmony with the Discouri's nature, as they typically bore the markedly strong character of protectors and saviors from distress ever since the Proto-Indo-European time. A connection with elk or reindeer however, I cannot grasp and therefore set this possibility aside, yet in regard to it nevertheless observe that the great similarity in appearance between the derivative of *alh* and *elha* could have allowed the Germanic imagination to make elk, reindeer, or harts symbols of "defenders" so that Worsaae[44] may be right when he interprets the hart-figures on the Gallehus-horns as signifying Baldur. The Nordic god-name *Jálkr* is not a standing epithet for Odin, as one usually assumes, but according to *Grímnismál* 49, is an epithet that Odin borrowed when he sought Asmund to reconcile warring brothers (see *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Volume 1, no. 39) and consequently performed a function that Baldur played while he lived in Asgard, i.e. peacemaker.

Finally, I should point out that when Tacitus' informer designates the underworld beings Elysii, Inanimi, Harii, and Nahanarvali as Lygii, this may be because the underworld beings actually were collectively designated by a single name, derived from the Old Germanic word *lug* with its derivative, *laugnja*, hidden, concealed, which is a synonym of the Old Germanic *hal*, hidden, concealed, out of which the underworld name *halja*, *hel* has its origin. Thus, while Lygii is a tribal name, it can at the same time be a mythic name meaning underworld beings and synonymous with the Nordic *heljarmaðr*, *heljarmenni*.

The priest in woman's clothes who is the head of the Germanic Discouri's grove according to *Germania* is presumably Mimir because in the Nordic sources the grove is called *Mimis holt*, Mimir's grove. Paulus Diaconus preserves a story that the famous sleepers in the underworld, which I demonstrated were Mimir's sons, wore Roman clothes[45] (See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Volume 1, no 94).

Saxo also speaks of clothing stored in the underworld, and as the context shows--in Mimir's realm, consisting of "a royal robe *with splendid headgear affixed*" [46] (See

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[44] Jens Jacob Asmussen Worsaae, (1821-1885), Danish archaeologist. author of *Danmarks Oldtid oplyst ved Oldsager og Gravhøie* (The Primeval Antiquities of Denmark), 1843 and *Minder om de Danske og Nordmaendene i England, Skotland, og Irland* (An Account of the Danes and Norwegians in England, Scotland, and Ireland), 1851.

[45] *The History of the Langobards*, ch. 4, Paul the Deacon [Translated by William Foulke, 1907].

[46] Saxo, Book 8, 243: Elton translation: "Among these were seen a royal mantle, a handsome hat, and a belt marvelously wrought"; Fisher-Davidson: "Among them they saw a royal military cloak with an elegant hat attached to it and a sword-belt of marvelous workmanship"

Investigations into Germanic Mythology, Volume 1, no. 46). Here consequently, it seems a cloak with a cowl is meant. Such a piece of clothing existed among the Romans in the time of the Caesars and was worn by monks, which is why Paulus Diaconus with good reason can call it Roman. A Swedish grave-monument from the Bronze Age depicts a sacrificial scene with a procession of priests, clad in cowls, according to the preserved representation. Therefore, perhaps the myth about such priestly robes worn by Mimir and his sons has its heritage in the Bronze Age. If it actually is a hooded cape that Tacitus' informer meant here, it follows that it was worn by Germanic women, but no longer in use among Germanic priests in Tacitus' time. To realize that the description that Tacitus' informer gave him is apt, we need only remember that Mimir was understood as a priest because he was the author of the sacred fimbul-songs, and Odin's counselor, and was originally identical to *Rigveda*'s king Soma, who is the mythic representative of the Vedic priests.[47]

We have now seen that the myth about Baldur and Hödur is rediscovered in the Indo-Iranian myth-cycle in all of its fundamental features and in a considerable amount of its extremely characteristic details occurring nowhere else. We have seen further in Tacitus' testimony that the Germanic Discouri of his time were worshipped as youths who dwell in a grove located in the underworld's kingdom of bliss. Here Yima's and Mimir's groves consequently occur in connection with these Discouri. To the Romans in Tacitus' time, the Discouri were symbols of death and resurrection. Baldur and Hödur were as well. The same tragic fate that robbed the Indo-Iranian world of their just judge and peacemaker, Yima-Urvakhshaya and his warring brother Keresaspa, rob the Germanic world of its just judge and peacemaker, Baldur and his warring brother Hödur. Death befalls them and, during the historic age, they abide in an underworld dwelling, in order to be resurrected at the end of time and rule in a renewed world. As representatives of resurrection, they are celebrated by *Völuspá*: "All evil may be remedied and Baldur comes. Hödur and Baldur build on Hropt's victory-site..."

Regrettably, mythology is still not a science, at least not in the vast amount of mythological dissertations. And it will not be until it allows itself to be ruled by scientific method and, like natural sciences, by the power of probability recognized by the historic disciplines. (See the treatise *Toward the Mythology's Method*, which ends this work.) [48] Above, I have presented direct evidence for the Baldur Myth's Indo-European origin and for its continued existence as witnessed by Tacitus in the era after Christ's birth. With this evidence, more will be furnished below which proves that Baldur was a pan-Germanic god during heathendom's last centuries, known in Germany and England as well as in Scandinavia.

Assume now that despite this evidence, a certain school will persist in its belief that the Baldur myth owes its origin to the Norse Vikings in heathendom's last era, and has to thank for its genesis a (very odd) mixture of what they heard from Irish monks about Christ and about Greek gods and heroes, rising in their minds. This school's adherents must then assume that the Germanic branch of the Indo-Europeans had forgotten the Proto-Indo-European myth about the two divine brothers; but thereafter, some centuries before Christ, spontaneously composed a myth about divine twin brothers, who by chance resembled the Proto-Indo-European brothers; and must further

[47] See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. 2, Part 1, no. 21.
[48] See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. 2, Part 1.

assume that even this myth (the one told by Tacitus) was forgotten by the Teutons in the following centuries, in order to rise again in heathendom's last hours among Norse Vikings through the mixing of Christian and Roman-pagan elements, thereby producing a myth which, surprisingly enough, was identical to the Indo-Iranian myth about Vivasvat's twin sons in all its essential features and distinguishing details. On which side probability stands in this matter --and with probability, science-- I need not say.

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III.

THE BALDUR MYTH AND THE STEPHANUS LEGEND. THE NAME FOL (*FALR*).

We turn now to the Second Merseburg Charm:

Fol and Wotan
rode into the woods,
there the foot of Baldur's foal
went out of joint.
It was charmed by Sinhtgunt,
Sunna her sister;
It was charmed by Frigg,
Fulla her sister;
It was charmed by Wotan,
as he well knew how:

In his work "*Studier over de nordiske Gude- and Helte-sagns Oprindelse*," ("Studies into the Sources of the Nordic God- and Heroic Sagas" 1881-1889), Professor Sophus Bugge defends the opinion that Baldur was not a pan-Germanic god nor one known in Germany, and that the name Baldur here is an appellative—certainly not in the relics of the Gothic or German language, but nevertheless in Anglo-Saxon—with the meaning "Lord" and referring to Odin. He assumes that Fol is an evil god corresponding to Loki, and that this evil god was the cause of Odin's horse being lamed. According to this opinion, it was consequently the owner of the injured horse that cured his own steed.

Professor Bugge primarily supports this idea with an analogy that arises from two magic formulas recorded in Småland. There, Dr. Artur Hazelius has provided the following:

"*Oden rider öfver sten och bärg*
han rider sin häst ur vred och i led,
ur olag och i lag, ben till ben, led till led,
som det bäst var, när det helt var."

["Odin rides over rock and hill;
he rides his horse out of a sprain and into joint
out of disorder and into order, bone to bone, joint to joint,
as it was best, when it was whole."]

The second magic charm reads:

"*Oden står på bärget,*

han spörjer efter sin fåle,
fläget har han fått."

["Odin stands on the mountain,
he inquires after his steed,
it has colic"]

In both of these formulas, it is Odin's horse that suffers injury, and in one formula when it is mentioned who cured him, the healer is Odin himself. With this as support, Bugge cites the Merseburg Charm as evidence for his hypothesis that the god, whom the Icelanders called Baldur, was a special Norse creation arising during the last age of Scandinavian heathendom through contact with the Christian British or Irish.

However, when considered alone, it is clear that the Merseburg Charm invites the opposite opinion. There, two riders accompanied by four goddesses are said to proceed into the forest. These two riders are Fol and Odin according to the first line of the charm. When Fol is not named again and when, as early as the second line, it says that Baldur's horse was lamed during this ride, it lies close at hand to identify Fol with Baldur and see in him the same god known by this name, Odin's son. All the more reason since 1) the event can be ranked among the signs which foreboded Baldur's death, according to the Norse mythic sources; 2) Saxo says that Baldur, before his death, became weak footed and was carried on a stretcher, instead of using his wonderful horse, also known in the Danish tradition; 3) In the Merseburg Charm, Baldur is surrounded by a protecting watch of divinities, among whom one recognizes precisely those who stand closest to him according to Norse tradition, namely his father Odin, his mother Frigg, and Fulla, to whom Baldur's wife Nanna sent a ring from the underworld. And since all mythologists have previously been united in seeing the Baldur myth as a myth about the victory of cold and darkness over sunlight and summer, they must also find it in harmony that the sun-dis Sunna and her sister the moon-dis Sinhtgunt appear in the protective watch around the threatened light- and summer- god in the Merseburg Charm.

The situation presented in the Merseburg Charm further invites the assumption that Sinhtgunt rode closest to Baldur when the misfortune to his horse occurred, and that for this reason she is named first among those who seek to heal the injury; thereafter comes her sister, then the pair of sisters, Frigg and Fulla, and finally Odin, who as "galder's father" and possessor of the most powerful incantations, succeeds in abolishing one of Jötunheim's ills conjured by witchcraft, against which the goddesses' galder-songs proved powerless. From this standpoint, it is even less possible to identify the Baldur of the Merseburg Charm with Odin. Because why would all the goddesses be called on to cure Odin's horse that he himself was closest to and best equipped to heal? That Baldur himself was not able to heal his own horse of course has its natural explanation in that he was "*feigr*" (fated to die) and according to Saxo suffered from consumption before death befell him.

Finally, regarding the comparison Bugge proposes between the Merseburg Charm and the two charms from Småland, they are certainly related to one another conceptually. But from that it does not follow that they originally referred to one and the same mythological event. A tale could have been told in which Odin's horse, Sleipnir, got a sprain while he was out riding it alone and that Odin rode him into joint again. From that

the Småland charms could stem. Because of this, it is risky to draw the conclusion from them that Odin is the one whose horse got a sprain in the Merseburg Charm, because there the horse's owner is called Baldur, a name that was not used as an appellative in any relic of the German language, and because, as was pointed out above, internal evidence speaks for this Baldur being the same as the Norse Baldur.

In *Tidskrift för Landsmålen*,[49] Axel Kock published an article dated Lund, May 1887, which is of particular interest for our subject and therefore from which I quote the following:

"Grimm and others with him have assumed that *Phol* and *Balderes* designate the same god, namely the god *Baldur*, that it is his horse whose foot comes out of joint and that Wodan, in whose company Baldur rides, heals the injury.

"Bugge on the other hand believes that *Balderes* (i.e. *balderes*) is the *nomen appellativum* "lord's" which refers to Wodan, and that it consequently is Odin's horse that gets hurt and Odin himself who remedies it. The word *balderes* would therefore have nothing to do with *Phol* (as Bugge himself suggests, *Stud*. pg. 288, understanding *Phol* as a variation of *Apollo*). As support for his opinion he refers, among other things, to a modern Swedish magic formula a*gainst sprains* recorded in Småland:

Oden rider öfver sten och bärg, etc. (see above)

"And he adds: 'Since here it is Odin's own horse that has twisted its foot and is made whole by him, then it is probable that in the Merseburg Charm, which provides another record of the same magic formula, it is Wodan's horse that twists its foot and is thus made whole.' That *balderes* should refer to Wodan is evidently the main reason for Bugge to assume that the god Baldur was unknown among heathens in central Germany. Bugge also refers to another magic formula in modern Swedish according to which Odin's horse became sick ('got colic'), but this is not really like the Merseburg Charm and therefore has no weight as evidence.

"As Bugge cites modern Swedish magic charms, I shall cite another one from Sweden of older date as an antithesis to it. Dr. Ludvig Larsson first made me aware of this magic formula and the great similarity that exists between it and the Merseburg Charm. Through a comparison of the Swedish and the Old High German charms, I believe I have found that the former one powerfully attests to *Phol* and *Balderes* in the Merseburg Charm actually designating the same person.

"The Swedish charm utilized *against sprains* is gathered from *Sörbygdens dombok* (The Court Record of Sörbygden)[50] for the year 1672 and provided by Carl Ohlson Arcadius in his academic treatise *Om Bohusläns införlivande med Sverige* (*On Bohuslän's incorporating with Sweden*, a Lund dissertation published in Stockholm 1883), pg. 118, notes. It reads:

'*Vår herre Jesus Kristus och S. Peder de gingo eller rede öfver Brattebro. S. Peders häst fick vre eller skre. Vår herre steg af sin häst med, signa S. Peders häst vre eller skre: blod vid blod, led vid led. Så fick S. Peders häst bot i 3 name o.s.v.*'

[49] *Tidskrift för landsmålen* is probably the periodical commonly known as *Svenska landsmålen*, published in Stockholm from 1879 onwards, whose exact title was *Nyare bidrag till kännedom om de svenska landsmålen och svenskt folkliv*. ("New contributions to the knowledge of dialects and folk-life in Sweden.")

[50] [Rydberg's footnote] Sörbygden is a distant well-known mountain town within Bohuslän on the border of Dalsland. To our day, the inhabitants still are relatively uninfluenced by modern culture.

['Our Lord Jesus Christ and Saint Peter walked or rode over Brattebro. St. Peter's horse got a twist or sprain. Our Lord dismounted, blessed St. Peter's horse's twist or sprain: blood to blood, joint to joint. So St. Peter's horse was cured in 3 names,[51] etc.']

"The connection makes it probable that the words *vre* and *skre* are approximately similar in meaning and this is confirmed in that *bog-skre* in Helsingland means 'a shoulder sprain, when the shoulder of a horse or other creature slips out of joint.' (see Rietz, page 597)[52.] *Skre* from *skred* (slide, glide) is connected with *skrida* for which verb Aasen[53] also gives the meaning 'slide, come loose, come out of position.'

"Agreement between the magic charms from Merseburg and Sörbygden is obvious and the likeness between them is greater, particularly in a much more substantial respect, than that between the charm from Merseburg and those from Småland. In the first two examples, two people travel together when one's horse is injured. In contrast, in the Småland charm, Odin is alone. Now, according to Bugge *Studier*, page 287, note 3, in the many Germanic charms against sprains (*vred*), when only *one* person, Jesus, appears, 'so that the person whose horse sprained its foot is the same person who cures the sprain,' the close relationship between the Merseburg and Sörbygden charms becomes that much more evident. By the same token, these charms are also closer to one another than the Merseburg and the Småland charms, since in both of the former charms it is clearly stated that the horse is injured and afterwards that it is cured by magic. In the Småland charms by contrast, it says rather obscurely: 'he (Odin) rode his horse out of sprain and into joint,' etc.

"For the interpretation of the Merseburg Charm, the Sörbygden charm is thus decidedly more competent a witness than the charms from Småland.

"The traveling companions in the Merseburg Charm, Wodan and Phol, are obviously equivalent to Christ and St. Peter in the Sörbygden charms. This is already clear in that whoever Phol was, the high god Odin must have been the more prestigious of the two, as Christ was more prestigious than St. Peter. In view of this, Wodan is the healer of the horse in the Merseburg Charm, while Christ is in the Sörbygden Charm. And a similar agreement exists between Odin and Christ in other magic formulas against sprains. For example in the Småland Charm, Odin, who is out riding alone, heals his horse, and, of Christ riding alone in the same manner, it is said in a formula from the place in *Kungelf's dombok* (for 1629) referred to by Arcadius,[54] which is closely connected with the Småland charms and which provides a magic charm against a sprain:

'Vår herre red ad hallen ned. Hans foles fod vrednede ved, han stig aff, lagde leed ved leed, blod ved blod, kiöd ved kiöd, ben ved ben, som vor herre signet folen sin, leedt ind igjen, i naffn, o.s.v.'

["Our Lord rode down to the hall. His foal's foot became sprained, he dismounted, laid joint with joint, blood with blood, sinew with sinew, bone with bone, as our Lord 'signed' his foal, led in again, in the name of, etc."]

"So too for example, in a very close Danish and a close Scottish magic charm (see Grimm, *Deutsche Mythol*. II, chapter 38.)[55]

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[51] The three names being that of The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
[52] Johan Ernst Rietz, *Svenskt Dialekt-Lexikon. Ordbok öfver Svenska Allmoge-Språket*. (1862-7).
[53] Ivar Aasen, *Ordbog over det norske folkesprog*, 1850.
[54] Carl Olof Arcadius, *Ur lifvet i en nordisk småstad (Kungälf) på 1600-talet*.
[55] Grimm: "What sounds more significant is a Scotch tradition I take out of Chamber's Fireside stories, Edinb. 1842. p. 37: 'When a person has received a sprain, it is customary to apply to an individual practised in casting the wresting thread. This is a thread spun from black wool, on which are cast nine knots, and tied

"But then this connection, in association with the two magic formulas' great similarity and because in the Sörbygden charm Christ heals his riding companion's (and not his own) horse, speaks strongly for Wodan in the Merseburg Charm also healing his riding companion's (and not his own) horse. In other words, *Balderes* (or *balderes*) does not refer to Wodan, but to Phol.

"From this, it obviously does not *necessarily* follow that *Balderes* actually is a proper name identical to our god named *Baldur*. If one still understands *balderes* as the appellative "lord," it *can* refer to Phol. If Bugge's opinion of the word (in *Stud.*, pg. 284 ff.) is correct, and it consequently *does* refer to Wodan, the possibility that the god Baldur is mentioned in the Old High German poem is eliminated. On the other hand, if *Balderes* (*balderes*) refers to Phol, is it very possible that it really is a proper name --our Balder.

"I have privately provided Professor Bugge the Sörbygden Charm and my understanding of it, and I do not believe I am committing any impropriety when I say that Professor Bugge now shares my view that this charm speaks for the Merseburg Charm's *Balderes* (*balderes*) alluding to Phol.

"Addition: Dr. Lundell has brought to my attention *I. Nordlander i Sv. landsm*. II, page XIVII,[56] which provides a magic charm closely akin to the charm from Sörbygden, recorded in a diary from Sunnerbo in the year 1746. According to it, St. Peter's horse is also injured and healed by our Lord, but besides that the Sunnerbo charm has a shorter original form than the one from Sörbygden."

Thus Dr. Kock.

The last doubt that can be raised about Baldur being identical to Phol and the German Baldur being the same as the heathen Scandinavian god known by this name is completely dispelled, it seems to me, for the following reason:

Grimm has pointed out the existence of a magic charm translated into Latin in the Middle Ages, related to the Merseburg Charm with the following wording: *Petrus, Michael et Stephanus ambulabant per viam. Sic dixit Michahel: Stephani equus infusus, signet illum Deus, signet illum Christus, et herbam comedat et aquam bibat.*

Here, three persons ride together. One of them, Stephanus, injures his horse. Like Baldur, who injures his horse in the Merseburg Charm, he does not heal it himself. Here, as in the Merseburg Charm, a riding companion heals the injury. In the heathen charm it is the warring high-god Odin; in the Christian charm, it is the warring archangel Michael, who in other stories also occupies Odin's place. Phol-Baldur's place is occupied by Stephanus.

This has compelled me to study the legends of Stephanus told in the Bollandist work *Acta Sanctorum,* and I have found extremely remarkable features there, for which no other explanation is possible than that elements belonging to the Baldur myth as we know it from our Nordic sources were incorporated into the legend of Stephanus after the mainland Teutons' conversion to Christianity or, which outright generated the legend among them.

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round a sprained leg or arm. During the time the operator is putting the thread round the affected limb, he says, but in such a tone of voice as not to be heard by the bystanders, nor even by the person operated upon:

The Lord rade, set joint to joint,
and the foal slade; bone to bone,
he lighted, and sinew to sinew
and he righted, Heal in the Holy Ghost's name!'

Here the spell serves for sprains even in the human body, though it set out with the sliding of the foal; and to the whispered words is added a ligature of woolen thread in nine knots."

[56] This is not a valid Roman numeral; perhaps XVIII was meant.

The heathen god's transformation into a Christian saint must have been furthered by Baldur's own characteristic piety, which of course invited such a transformation. And that this saint became Stephanus has its natural explanation in that the myth about Baldur's death was particularly suited to be melded in the people's imagination with the narrative of Stephanus the first martyr's manner of death.

The Acts of the Apostles Chapter 7 relates that the Jews "rushed together toward him and stoned him." The Acts of the Apostles adds that the stoning of Stephanus was a sign of the first great persecution of Christians.

When Baldur receives his bane, he stands within a circle of men who shoot and cast stones at him. *Sumir skjóta á hann, sumir höggva til, sumir berja gróti*, ("shoot at him, hew, or throw stones") says *Gylfaginning*. And Baldur's death caused the world the greatest harm, after which the powers of evil brought the devastation and suffering of a fimbul-winter.

As is well known, many saints bear the name Stephanus. Of a *beatus Stephanus*, an abbot in a Frankish Monastery, *Acta Sanctorum*, among other things, says the following:

"When he died, a grief arose in which the heavens and the entire earth took part. All activity ceased; no one was in a condition to do anything. Rumbles and whimpers were heard among the constellations. Multitudes of lamentation streamed together. It was as if the whole world emitted a moaning cry." *Nec absolvendi aut quodlibet officium pergendi ulla erat facultas: tantum erat crepitus signorum et concursus turbarum plangentium: omnis siquidem terra luctibus personabat.*

This of course is a purely mythic account that has its only parallel in what is said about the effect caused by Baldur's death. The powers of the world, represented by the Aesir, are paralyzed. They do not speak or move about until they finally burst into tears. And with their tears are united those of the entire world. Everything cries: *menninir ok kykvendin ok jörðin ok steinarir ok tré ok allr málmr* ["people and animals and earth and stones and trees and all metals"]. Even frost-giants and mountain-giants show their sorrow, according to the account of the artwork at Hjardarholt (see further).

Baldur's death was foreboded by bad dreams that disturbed his rest, caused those around him great anxiety, and moved Frigg to request all nature not to harm Baldur. Saxo says that the queen of the underworld revealed herself to him in his sleep. Of the *beatus Stephanus* in question, it is said that before his death he was afflicted by fiends with such persistence that he could not enjoy even one night's rest. The brothers, awakened by his cries, held nightlong vigil around him, saying prayers. *Tanta eum instantia diabolus persequabatur, ut nec per noctem quiescere ei liceret: unde ejus clamboribus excitati Fratres stratis exiliebant, et orationibus ac vigiliis totam noctem insomnem cum eo ducebant*.

Oddly enough, the same *beatus Stephanus* wore a heavy coat of mail*: loricam sibi Pater Stephanus comparavit,* etc. The coat of mail finally fell apart by supernatural intercession**.** Baldur's coat of mail might also have played a role in the myth: in *Hamðismál* 25, Jormunrek resembles *inn reginnkunngi Baldr í brynju* ["the one of divine descent, Baldur in mail"].[57] Saxo says that iron could not pierce Baldur's "sacred bodily strength." But this invulnerability must have finally failed, no doubt through the

[57] As in all kennings of this kind, the name of the god [in this case Baldur] is used to designate its human subject.

intercession of witchcraft, because Hotherus inflicts a wound in Baldur's side that kills him.

As is well known, a saint after his death becomes the recognized patron of the profession or vocation to which he belonged and healer of the sicknesses that he himself suffered. After his death, Saint Stephanus heals leg pain and diseases of the feet and frees prisoners from foot-shackles. Baldur –and in the Merseburg Charm, his horse –is afflicted by ills of the feet. In this regard, Saxo says of Baldur: *adeo in adversam corporis valitudunum indicit, ut ne pedibus quidem incedere posset* [he "fell into such ill health that he could not so much as walk," Elton translation].[58]

The feast day of St. Stephanus falls, like Phol's Day, at the beginning of May.

From the legend of Stephanus in *Acta Sanctorum*, we may now turn to a song of St. Steffan still sung in north Sweden, which I cite from R. Bergström's and L. Höijer's edition of Geijer's and Afzelius' "*Svenska folkvisor*" [Swedish Folk-Ballads]:

1.) *Staffan var en stalledräng.*
Vi tackom nu så gärna.
Han vattna' sina fålar fäm,
Allt för den ljusa stjärna.
Ingen dager synes än,
Stjärnorna på himmelen de blänka.

"Steffan was a stablehand –
We thank the Lord now so gladly
He watered his five horses,
All for the bright star.
No daylight was yet seen,
The stars in heaven twinkle."

2.) *Två de voro röda,*
De tjänte väl sin föda.

"Two of them (the horses) were red,
They well earned their keep."

3.) *Två de voro vita,*
De va' de andra lika.

"Two of them were white,
They looked like the others."

[58]In *Skáldskaparmál* 56, when the giantess Skadi comes to Asgard seeking compensation for her father's death, the gods allow her to choose a husband from among their ranks. Like "brides," the gods are veiled so that she can only see their feet. Her aim is to choose Baldur, but instead she picks Njörd, based on the beauty of his feet. If Rydberg is correct here, Baldur might have had some blemish on his feet caused by an injury that marred their appearance, before his death.

4.) *Den fämte han var apelgrå,*
Den rider själva Staffan på.

"The fifth it was dapple-gray
Steffan himself rode it."

5.) *Innan hanen galit har,*
Staffan uti stallet var.

"Before the rooster crowed,
Steffan was out in the stall."

6.) *Innan solen månd' uppgå,*
Betsel och guldsadel på.

"Before the sun could rise,
The bridle and gold saddle were on."

7.) *Staffan rider till källan—*
Vi tackom nu så gärna—
Han öser upp vatten med skällan,
Allt för den ljusa stjärna.
Ingen dager synes än,
Stjärnorna på himmelen de blänka.

"Steffan rides to the well—
We thank the Lord now so gladly—
He scoops out water with the ladle
All for the bright star.
No daylight was yet seen,
The stars in heaven twinkle."

A variant of the ballad, describing St. Stephanus as a rider, who "*leder de Foler i Vand alt ved den ljuse Stærne*" ("led the foals to water, all by the bright star") is recorded in Denmark. In Helsingland, a story is related that "he made his journey following the sun's path" (Bergström and Höijer II, p. 354). Like the Latin magic formula mentioned above, the Ballad of Steffan makes Saint Stephanus a rider without having the slightest basis in the *Acts of the Apostles* or the Catholic tradition of the first martyr. Before daybreak and while stars still twinkle in the heavens, he lays the golden saddle on his horse and rides to the well, where he waters five horses, after which he "makes his journey following the sun's path." The tradition adds that he was killed. The author, who handled the existing story of Steffan in this ballad and bound the tradition to it, had already seen that he was a Germanic god masquerading as a saint, who was associated

with the sun's path, with the horse and the well, and who was ultimately killed. It should not be overlooked that the ballad speaks not only of one horse, but of five. Among these five, there is one, a dapple-gray, that is ridden by Steffan himself. Of the four others, it is said that "they well earned their keep"; thus they presumably have been used as riding horses, but by which horsemen or horsewomen it is not said. Therefore it has freely been assumed that Steffan rode them all in turn, although the ballad makes only the dapple-gray the riding horse of "Steffan himself." It merits notice that the four others are divided into two pairs: a red pair and a white pair. It ought also be noted that the Merseburg Charm, in which Odin follows Phol-Baldur on his journey "into the wood," also allows them to be accompanied by four riders, which, like the red and the white horses in the Ballad of Steffan, are divided into two pairs: the pair of sisters Sunna and Sinhtgunt, and the pair of sisters Frigg and Fulla. One pair of horses is red colored, the other white. Sunna is a sun-dis, as her name states, and the color of the sun in our mythic sources is designated as red. The sun is called *röðull*, *Alfröðull* and *rauðbrik*, red-disk. Baldur is "the red-disk's powerful promoter" *rauðbrikar ríkr rækir* (*Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Volume 1, no. 53).[59] The color of the moon, when it rises, is more or less white. Sunna's sister, Sinthgunt, "the battle-maiden who fares night after night," is a moon-dis. Here a connection between the Merseburg Charm and the mythic tradition that forms the basis of the Ballad of Steffan is revealed which deserves to be recognized.

The "wood" to which Odin, accompanied by Baldur and his four mounted female-attendants, proceeds is also spoken of in a Nordic mythic source. It is the forest of the Varns, *Varna viðr* (*Grímnismál* 39), located beneath the western horizon and the destination for the sun and the moon's journey over the heavens (*Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Volume 1, no. 53).[60] *Grímnismál* says that when the wolf Sköll, Hati's relative, pursues the sun, he persists until he reaches the Varns' wood. There dwells Billing, ruler of the Varns (*Billing veold Vernum*, *Widsith*, *Codex Exon*. 22). There his Varns "with burning lights and lit torches" watch over "the sun-glittering maiden" as she rests after her journey (*Hávamál* 100).

If we now compile the details that the Ballad of Steffan tells us about Stephanus with what *Acta Sanctorum* relates about him, we gather the following mythic elements concerning him:

1) Stephanus makes his journey "after the sun's path" (the story from Helsingland). Baldur is "the sun-disk's powerful promoter."

2) Stephanus is a rider and a keeper of horses (the Latin formula about Michael, Peter, and Stephanus, and the Ballad of Steffan). Baldur is mentioned as a rider in *Lokasenna*, the Danish folk-history, the Merseburg Charm, and German medieval poetry. Compare the designation *Vigg-Baldr*, horse-Baldur. Yama, who is his Proto-Indo-European prototype, sent the horse to the gods and mankind (see above).

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[59] While the sun was seen as red, this interpretation is faulty. Taken from a verse in Einar Skálaglamm's *Vellekla*, the passage reads: *Og herþarfir hverfa,/ Hlakkar móts, til blóta,/rauðbríkar fremst rækir/ ríkur, ásmegir, slíku./Nú grær jörð sem áðan*, etc. Rather than identifying Baldur as the "promoter of the red-disk," the accepted modern reading takes Hakon, the poem's subject, as "the attender of the red shield of Hlökk's meeting" i.e. "the mighty shield-bearer."

[60] Most English translators do not interpret *varna* as a proper name, and instead translate the phrase *varna viðr* as "protecting wood." However, since both translations are possible, Rydberg's interpretation and reasoning here are sound. The passage from *Widsith* lends weight to taking *Varn* as a proper name.

3) The Ballad of Steffan relates how Stephanus waters the horse he rides and four others by a "spring," while the stars still twinkle. This watering-ceremony is the ballad's actual subject. Baldur is the defender of springs and wells. Springs rise up under his horse's hooves and wells are called by his name.

4) Stephanus wears a coat of mail that is broken shortly before his death through supernatural intercession (*Acta Sanctorum*). Of Baldur's coat of mail, "his sacred bodily strength," I have spoken above. Everything in nature was sworn not to harm him and one can amuse himself by throwing and shooting at him without injuring him. But this, his "strength," ultimately did not withstand the test.

5) Shortly before his death, Stephanus is plagued by bad dreams that greatly worry those around him and that they seek to drive away with prayers and vigils. The devil reveals himself to him in his sleep. Baldur is plagued by bad dreams that greatly worry those around him and cause them to take oaths from all things to do him no harm (*Poetic Edda, Gylfaginning*). Saxo says that Proserpina reveals herself to him in dreams.

6) Stephanus dies a violent death (the tradition from Helsingland, transferred on Helsingland's apostle). Baldur likewise.

7) The heavens and the whole earth mourn Stephanus' death. All activity ceased. Whimpers arose among the constellations. A multitude of complaining streamed together. It was as if the whole world emitted a moaning cry (*Acta Sanctorum*). This is an account of the world's grief over Baldur's death.

8) A saint cures the ailments from which he suffered in his lifetime. Baldur suffered from ailments in his feet; Phol-Baldur's horse sprained one of his feet. Stephanus cures ailments of the legs and feet.

9) The Ballad of Steffan shows points of contact with the Merseburg Charm about Phol-Baldur, which are noted above.

10) The feast day of Stephanus falls, like Phol's day, at the beginning of May.

Taken together, these circumstances should dispel any doubt that the Stephanus discussed is Baldur himself in Christian and popular medieval clothing. In content, the Ballad of Steffan is partly related to the Merseburg Charm, partly to the above cited Latin formulas, which in turn are related to the High German magic charms, and these again hark back to the Indo-European healing-formula that I presented from *Atharvaveda.* The reason that the memory of the Baldur myth was united to the name Stephanus, I have also stated: Stephanus, the first martyr, dies surrounded by people who throw missiles at him; so too does Baldur. Thus, with this, complete proof exists that Phol of the Merseburg Charm is identical to the god Baldur, and that the Baldur myth among the continental Teutons was the same as the Baldur myth in the north, in all points available for study.

The Baldur myth was current even among the heathen Anglo-Saxons, and there is every reason to assume that it arrived in England with the Saxon-Scandinavian migration during the fifth century. Composed in the eighth century, the Christian Beowulf poem, whose constituent parts are memories of the Germanic myths of gods and heroes euhemerized and strung together, speaks of two princely brothers, one of whom dies by the other's hand followed by inconsolable sorrow. The lethal weapon is an arrow shot from the horn bow of the killer brother, who nevertheless had no criminal intent. The brother killed in this manner is named Herebeald; the other is named Hædcyn. The names, like the narrative itself, refer to Baldur and Hödur. In regard to the position the

Beowulf poem places Herebeald and Hædcyn in relationship to its hero Beowulf, I refer the reader to the treatise on the *Brisingamen Smiths* (see further). It confirms that Herebeald and Hædcyn originate in the mythology, where they have their only parallels in Baldur and Hödur.

In closing, I gather together the places and the circumstances where the name Phol with its Norse variant Falr occurs:

1) The Merseburg Charm.

2) The temporal terms *Pholtag, Pulletag,* [Phol's day], which falls on May 2nd, and *Pholmânôt* [Phol's month], which is thought to have ended with the autumn-equinox. These terms designate the span of time inside of which Baldur, as the light god and promoter of vegetation, was considered to rule the year.

3) *Pholesauwa, Pholesouwa,* the present village Pfalsau in the neighborhood of Passau. Regarding this name, Grimm (*Deutsche Mythology,* Volume 1, ch. XI) says: "Its composition with *aue* (*auwa*) quite fits in with the supposition of an old heathen cult," and he associates it with *Baldrshaugi*. After what has been stated above, this association can now be regarded as fully justified.

4) *Phulsborn, Pholesbrunno* [Phol's well]. To be compared with the *Baldersbrunnen* in Germany and Denmark.

5) Over the whole of the Germanic world, it seems certain flowers were named after Baldur. The name Baldur's brow (*Baldrsbrá*, Baldur's eyelash), with which partly *anthemis cotula* and partly *matricaria inodorata* were designated, still occurs in southern Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, the Faeroes, and Northern England (*Baldeyebrow*). In certain parts of Germany, Lily-of-the-valley is called *weisser Baldrian* (Baldrian is a by-form of Baldur, as Wolfram is of Wolf, Sintram of Sindri, etc). In upper Austria, it is called *Faltrian*; in districts of Salzburg, *Villumfalum*; and in Tyrol, *Fildron-faldron*. This should be compared to the Baldur name Phol, Fal. The botanical name Valerian with which one might attempt to explain these designations has nothing to do with them.

6) In early Christian times, Baldur was transformed into a king in Vestphal. The information regarding this, collected from Anglo-Saxon or German sources, made its way into the prologue to *Gylfaginning*.[61] According to the belief of the time, nearly all countries and people took their names from some ancient ruler: The Franks from Francio, the Angles from Angul, Denmark from Dan, etc. The name Phalen, Westphalia was explained in the same manner and because Baldur was named Phol, Fal, his name was said to have given rise to these districts.

7) By the same argument, the German poem "*Biterolf*" makes Baldur (Paltram) into a king *ze Pülle*. Compare the place-name Pölde, which was written in documents as Polidi and Pholidi according to J. Grimm. "*Biterolf*" has preserved the memory that Baldur was not only one of the tallest and stateliest heroes to be found, but that he also kept himself morally pure in a "spoiled" age (spoiled by "foreign customs").

8) After his death, Baldur descends to Mimir's underworld kingdom, which is the same place that the Icelandic medieval sagas call *Ódáinsakr*, as demonstrated in the first volume of this work. Saxo (Book I) says that a prince named Fjallerus was exiled by an enemy "to a place unknown to our people called Undensakre (*Ódáinsakr*)." In the first

[61] Prologue to *Gylfaginning* (Faulkes' translation): "Odin's second son was called Beldegg, whom we call Baldr; he had the country that is now called Westphalia."

volume of this work (no. 92), I have already given reasons why Fjallerus can be none other than Fal.

9) Likewise, I have already pointed out in the first volume of this work (no. 92) that the expressions *Fals regn* and *Fals böljofalkars vágs drifvas herrskare* occurring in Norse poetry are evidence that Fal was also known and used as a Baldur-name in the North. From a skald giving thanks to him (*Skáldskaparmál* 2, in a verse by Refr), Odin receives this designation in his capacity as heaven's ruler and lord of everything: *Fals hrannvala brautar fannar salar valdi*.[62] Analyzed, the paraphrase yields the following result:

Fannar salr, "drift's hall" is the land. The ruler of the drift's hall is consequently the land's, earth's ruler.

Hrannvala brautar fannar salr "wave-falcon's way's drift's hall" is the sea. Wave-falcon is a paraphrase for ship. The wave-falcon's way is thus an expanse of water. The drift of the wave-falcon's way is consequently the white-capped waves. Their hall is the sea, and the hall's ruler, the sea's ruler.

Fals hrannvala brautar fannar salr "Fal's wave-falcon's way's drift's hall" is the atmosphere, the heavens. The ruler of Fal's wave-falcon's way's drift's hall is an epithet of Odin perceived as the god of the atmosphere and the sky. The "drift" that belongs to the sky, not to the land or the sea, is the cloud. The sky is "the cloud's hall." But in order for the word "drift" to be used in this manner, it must be united with a suitable designation that indicates that the cloud is meant by it. This happens with the additional designation: "Fal's wave-falcon's way." By itself, "the drift of the wave-falcon's way" could not possibly mean anything other than "the drift of the ship's way," that is to say the foaming waves. Through the addition of the name *Falr*, the sea's drift is transformed into the sky's cloud. Thus with Fal's wave-falcon, an object whose way is the air, which passes through the drifts of the sky, must be meant, since the ship's way is the sea. Such a paraphrase cannot possibly evoke in the imagination of the listener or reader anything other than the sky sprinkled with sunbeams passing through the atmosphere, which is of course Odin's hall. Baldur is a light-god and a summer-god, as his epithet *rauðbrikar rikr roekir*, "the sun-disk's powerful promoter" (see *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Volume 1, no. 53) definitely demonstrates. Like Baldur, Fal is consequently a being who sends sunbeams down through the drifts of the sky; like him, he stands in a rain of weapons, "Fal's rain"; and like him, he is sent to *Óðáinsakr* by an opponent. Thus Fal and Baldur must have been identical in the North too.

10) When Baldur is killed by Hödur's arrow, he stands amidst a rain of weapons. This is the mythical explanation of the paraphrase *Fals regn* that occurs in the last verse of a poem, composed by the skald Gisli Sursson:

Fals hallar skal Fulla
fagrleit, sús mik teitir,
rekkilát at rökkum,

[62] Anthony Faulkes translates this verse: "To you we owe Fal's cup [the mead of poetry], noble Slaughter-Gaut [Odin], practiced controller of wave-horse's [ship's] snow-road's [sea's] hall [sky]." Here Fal is taken as a dwarf-name. In the glossary that accompanies his scholarly edition of *Skáldskaparmál*, Faulkes acknowledges that *hrannvala* can also mean "wave-falcon," i.e. ship.

regns, sínum vin fregna;[63]

Surrounded by his attackers, he is supposed to have sung the verse in question. In the poem, Gisli is likened to Baldur, his wife to Nanna, his death to Baldur's death and the rain of weapons under which he fell, to Fal's rain (see *Investigations into Germanic Mythology,* Volume 1, no.92). Without exaggeration, it can be said that this paraphrase has previously been interpreted in a monstrous manner so that it should mean "the spears' rain." There is a word *falr*, which means the hole in the end of the spear into which the iron spearhead is set. This hole is supposed to have been used rhetorically to designate the entire spear! And a rain of spear, with this word used in singular form, is supposed to designate the raining objects, while the Icelandic skalds otherwise always use the word in plural form. Compare *regn geira, regn odda, regn branda, regn benja, hagl brodda, hagl benja, hregg geira, hregg stála, hregg vapna, fleina drífa*.[64] On the other hand, the possessive singular naturally can be used of the object of the rain of weapons, as in *regn randar, regn randargards,*[65] the rain directed against the shield. Here Falr, the god of this name, is the object of the rain.

The final result of this investigation is that Baldur and Hödur are pan-Germanic gods with lineage from the Proto-Indo-European era.

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[63] ***Gísla Saga Súrssonar*, chapter 36, verse 39. In *Complete Sagas of Icelanders*, Vol. 2 (1997), Martin S. Regal translates this verse: "Goddess of the golden rain/ who gives me great joy/ may boldly hear report/ of her friend's brave stand." Typically however, the kenning "*fals regn*" is taken to mean "battle." (REVISE)**

[64] *regn geira*, rain of spears; *regn odda*, rain of points; *regn branda*, rain of swords; *regn benja*, rain of wounds; *hagl brodda,* hail of spikes; *hagl benja*, hail of wounds; *hregg geira*, storm of spears; *hregg stála,* storm of swords; *hregg vapna*, storm of weapons; *fleina drífa*, storm of shafts.

[65] *regn* [*garðs randar*] "rain of shield" (battle).

IV.

DESCENDANTS OF THE BALDUR MYTH.

THE POEM ABOUT HELGI HJÖRVARDSSON.

To the degree that Christianity spread among the Teutons and the ancient myth-structure disintegrated, building-blocks were drawn out of its ruins by degrees for the heroic sagas and, as we have seen, for legends as well. In Christianized England, the work was already far advanced in the seventh century, as is evident from the Beowulf poem. Within Scandinavian literature, episodes from the Baldur myth have been used as material for the heroic poem about Helgi Hjörvardsson, for the historic-legend about the king Olaf Geirstadaalf, for Saxo's narrative about the Swedish king Hotherus and his battle with the Danish king Baldur, as well as a tale in *Sólarljóð*. Furthermore, elements of the myth, as far as Hödur is concerned, are blended into Sigurd Fafnisbane's saga and into the different variants of the Hjadnings saga.

In the poem about Helgi Hjörvardsson, the protagonist is Baldur transformed into the hero. Beside him, Hödur appears under the name Hedin (from *Höðr*, gen. *Haðar*, dat. *Heði*). Helgi and Hedin are brothers. The poem's main motif is that Helgi and Hedin, like Baldur and Hödur, love the same woman and thus come into conflict.

The author informs his readers that Helgi is not the hero's only name, i.e. the one his parents gave him. The actual name is not provided and need not have been provided for those who still remembered the Baldur myth when the song about Helgi Hjörvardsson was composed. He receives the name Helgi from his beloved, the valkyrie Svava.

However, the author does not conceal such details that anyone could conclude with certainty that his Helgi was originally found among the Aesir. Helgi is said to be born in *Glasislunðr*, the same name as the grove in Asgard, outside of Valhall's doors (*Skáldskaparmál* 34).[66] The kingdom that he is called to rule is named *Röðulsvellir*. *Rödull* is a sun-epithet; *Röðulsvellir* means sun-fields.

The name of Helgi's beloved, the valkyrie Svava, *Sváfa* is borrowed from the myth. It is Nanna's mother's name.[67] Here the daughter bears her mother's name.

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[66] *Glasir* is probably a name of Yggdrasil itself. Since *Veðrglasir* and *Aurglasir* in *Fjölsvinnsmál* 24 and 28 respectively are best understood as "Weather-Glasir," the part of the Tree that is exposed to the weather, i.e. the part above Midgard; and "Mud-Glasir," the part of the Tree that is covered by soil, i.e. the part below Midgard.

[67] [Rydberg's footnote] Compare *Hyndluljóð* verses 17, 20. In verse 20, it says that Nanna was Nökkvi's daughter i.e. the ship-captain's daughter, and with the words *næst þar*, it says that Nökkvi and another daughter of his were already mentioned in the song. This occurs in verse 17, where *sækonungr*, "sea-king," a synonym of "ship-captain," is said to have sired *Hildigunn* with *Sváfa*. Consequently, she and Nanna are sisters. In analogy with *Hildigunn-Hiltegunt*, Nanna herself in the Second Mersesburg Charm bears the name *Sinhtgunt* "battle-maiden who travels night after night." Hildigunn is the sun-dis Sunna; Nanna is the moon-dis Sinhtgunt. Both were portrayed as battle-maidens because the sun and the moon are threatened by giant-powers on their daily journeys. In accordance with this, Helgi's Svava is a valkyrie.

Svava's father is called Eylimi. In the first volume of this work (nos. 91 and 123), I have already given reasons why Eylimi is an epithet of Nanna's father. In Saxo, one Olimarus (a Latinization of *Eylimi*) fights with Hithinus (a Latinization of *Heðinn*), and the conflict between them has its explanation in the myth where Hödur would wed Nanna by force.

In that poem, Svava possesses features that belong to Nanna as a moon-dis. Svava rides with the valkyries through the atmosphere and over the sea and watches the coastal harbors at night (*reð hafnir skoða fyrri nótt*, v. 26). She is *margullin mær*, "the maid with the glittering horse."[68]

Helgi has a comrade, Atli. In Saxo, Nanna has a foster brother, Atislus. Atislus is a Latinization of Atli.

Helgi and Atli wage a battle against the giant, Hati. In the myth, the wolf-giant Hati is the moon's pursuer, therefore Nanna's enemy and thereby also Baldur's.

Thus the entire surroundings in which we meet Helgi Hjörvardsson: his birthplace *Glasislundr*, the realm he is destined to rule *Röðulsvellir*, his brother's name, his lover's name and her appearing as a valkyrie riding in the atmosphere at night on a glittering horse, his comrade, and his battle with the moon's foe Hati—all this refers in the most unmistakable manner to his prototype, Baldur, as does Helgi's character. So too the episode itself that the song about Helgi Hjörvardsson gathered from the myth, namely Hedin's love for his brother's wife inflamed by a sorceress, the complications that arise, and the resolution which follows.

Helgi is described with an idealism that has no parallel in any other Germanic people's heroic sagas, although they do not lack ideal figures. It pains him to hear uncivil talk. He does justice to even his enemies' good qualities. Although he is a warrior, he regrets all feuds that do not have valid causes. He smoothes over and forgives what others do to him, and dying, he bids Svava to give her love to Hedin, who attempted to take her from him by force.

Helgi is tall and handsome like Baldur. Long was he *þögull*, taciturn. The same might have been said of Baldur. In a verse in *Bjarkamál*, *þögull* is used as an epithet of Baldur in the formulaic expression: *varði hann Baldr þögli*: "Save him, Baldur the silent!"[69]

Hedin, like his prototype Hödur, is a hunter. During a hunt, he meets a sorceress who solicits him, but is rejected. For revenge, she inspires the evil thought in him to possess his brother's wife. That such a meeting was also spoken of in the myth about Baldur and Hödur is corroborated by what Saxo says of Hotherus, of what *Hávamál* relates in circumstances that shall be presented below, by what *Sörla Þáttr* says about Hedin's meeting with Gandul, and by the myth about Hödur's Indo-European prototype, Keresaspa (see above).

Hedin is gripped by regret and goes into voluntary exile. In Saxo, Hotherus-Hödur proceeds to the Finns and the Bjarms, who in the Danish historical documents are the historical equivalents of the giants, and he, in his conflict with Baldur and the other Aesir, gets an advisor whom Saxo calls Helgo of Halogaland. This can be none other than

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[68] The text of *Codex Regius* indeed reads *margullin*. (*Sæmundar Edda hins fróða*, Sophus Bugge, p. 175). The modern emended form is *marggullin*, meaning "much-golden." However, this is a conjectured form, not attested to in other texts (*Glossary to the Poetic Edda*, LaFarge/Tucker).

[69] *Skáldskaparmál* 45.

Halogi of Halogaland from the story of Norway's history, who according to the saga's own statement is identical with the mythic Logi, who is in turn identical to Loki.[70] The myth that Loki's mouth was disfigured by Sindri's awl resurfaces in Saxo in the form that Halogi's mouth was disfigured by a nasty disability. In the preserved Icelandic myth fragments, Loki is Hödur's evil genius and Baldur's *ráðbani*;[71] thus there is no reason to suspect that Saxo's statement is not mythically correct when he says that "Halogi of Halogaland" i.e. Loki, was involved in Hödur's decision to fight against the gods and to possess Nanna. The warrior for whom he undertook the battle must have belonged to the giant world. It is his stay there that the song about Helgi Hjörvardsson depicts as Hedin's voluntary exile. That the Icelandic mythic tradition, in agreement with Saxo, spoke of a feud between Baldur and Hödur, although *Gylfaginning* says nothing of it, is clear from *Skáldskaparmál* 4, where Baldur is called *dólgr Haðar* ("Hödur's enemy"), an expression that was ill chosen if he and Hödur had not been enemies at one time in the Icelandic tradition.

The same fact is clear by *Völuspá* designating Hödur as *Baldrs andskoti* ("Baldur's adversary") and by *Vegtamskviða* (*Baldur's Dreams*) 10 speaking of *vinna hefnt hæipt Höði.*[72]

Hedin is found by his brother, Helgi, who forgives and consoles him. The reconciliation must have had its basis in the myth. Otherwise, one would not find Hödur in Asgard again, the scene of the disturbance in which he had involuntarily killed Baldur.

Finally, of Helgi and Svava, it is said that they were born anew. In the myth, Baldur returns, presumably Nanna as well, after Ragnarök to a renewed world.

The song about Helgi Hjörvardsson is an extremely enlightening example of how a mythic episode is transformed into a heroic saga. The departures that the copy makes from the original are deliberate. When the song was written, the Baldur myth in its entirety was still fresh in memory, and if no deviations had been made from it, the song would be considered as heathen, whereas, on the other hand, the intent was to save for the Christian era beautiful features from our fathers' godsaga, accordant with the spirit of Christianity: Baldur's brotherly love, feelings of righteousness, and never yielding goodness.

THE STORY OF OLAF GEIRSTADAALF AND ITS CONNECTION WITH THE POEM ABOUT HELGI HJÖRVARDSSON.

The same literary movement in Iceland from which the song about Helgi Hjörvardsson progressed created the historicized story about king Olaf Geirstadaalf, with

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[70] Presumably Rydberg is referring to *Hversu Noregr Byggðist,* which contains the story of the history of Norway. However in *Þorsteins Saga Vikingssonar*, translated by Esaias Tegnér, the following statement is found: **"**The beginning of this Saga is, that a king named Loge ruled that country which is north of Norway. Loge was larger and stronger than any other man in that country. His name was lengthened from Loge to Haloge, and after him the country was called Halogeland (Hálogaland, *i.e.* Haloge's land). Loge was the fairest of men, and his strength and stature were like unto that of his kinsmen, the giants, from whom he descended."

[71] "contriver of murder."

[72] "who will wreak vengeance on Hödur for this villainy." Ursula Dronke translation (*Poetic Edda*, Volume 2, 1997).

the Baldur myth as its basis. It also interpolated the genealogical mythic poem *Hyndluljóð* with its verses 18, 19 and may well have made other modifications to it.

Before I present evidence that a mytho-historic connection existed between the poem about Helgi Hjörvardsson and the narrative about Olaf Geirstadaalf, an account should be given of the latter's substance.

From the story of Olaf the Saint, chapter 106 (*Flateyjarbók*), one learns that a great many of his contemporaries believed that he, Olaf Haraldsson, was the ancient king Olaf Geirstadaalf, who had ruled Vestfold, reborn to mortal life. This belief was widespread among his friends and admirers. The king, it adds, knew this but labeled it heathen superstition.

It lies in the nature of things that such a belief could not have arisen, if a story had not been preserved honoring the memory of this actual or alleged ancient king, ascribing to him the character traits that one wished to recognize in the champion of Christianity, Olaf Haraldsson.

The story of Olaf Geirstadaalf, as it appears in *Flateyjarbók*, relates the following about him:

He ruled in two counties, Upsi and Vestmar, and had his throne in Geirstadir in Vestfold. He was one of the most popular men of his time (*Fornaldarsögur* II, 105 adds that he was unusually large, strong, and handsome in appearance).[73] He defended his kingdom bravely against foes, and under his leadership, happiness and good harvests prevailed and for the most part, peace, so that the people multiplied greatly. Yet, once he dreamed a worrisome dream but would not speak of it before he was goaded to do so. The dream's substance was such that a common Thing was called concerning it. At this Thing, king Olaf revealed that he had dreamed of a big, black, malicious ox that came from the east and traveled around his entire country and killed so many people with its breath that those who died numbered as many as those who survived. Afterward, the ox even killed king Olaf's retinue.

Once the king had told of this, he asked the people to interpret the dream. But first the people wanted to hear his own interpretation, which was this: "Long has peace reigned in this kingdom and good harvests, but the population is now greater than the land can bear. The ox means that a plague will come to the country from the east and cause many deaths. My retinue will also die of it and even I, myself." He requested that the people not sacrifice to him after his death.

King Olaf's dream came true. After his death, the survivors laid him in a mound with great treasures. But later, when bad harvests occurred, the people sacrificed to him, despite his prohibition, and called him Geirstada-alf. ("the elf of Geirstad").

In the first year of king Olaf Tryggvesson's reign, Olaf Geirstadaalf revealed himself in a dream to a man by the name of Hrani and ordered him to open his gravemound and give its treasures to Hakon jarl's son, Sven. The dream-figure said that a man (Olaf Geirstadaalf himself) sits in the middle of the mound with a gold ring on his arm, with a knife and a belt. On his knees lies a sword. With the gold ring, the belt, and the sword he shall go to Harald Grenski and Asta Gudbrandsdotter, who lies in childbed, and with the belt Hrani shall facilitate her delivery. The son she bears shall be called Olaf

[73] The reference is to C. C. Rafn's *Fornaldarsögur* II, 105 (1829). The uniform title of this tale from the *Fornaldarsagas* is *Af Upplendinga Konungum*. ("Of the Kings of Uppland").

and receive Olaf Geirstadaalf's ring and sword, Besing. Thereafter, Hrani shall go to king Olaf Tryggvesson and allow himself to be baptized.

Hrani did what Olaf Geirstadaalf told him to do in the dream. At eight years old, Olaf Haraldsson received the sword, Besing, from his mother. And, as has already been said, many believed that Harald Grenski's and Asta's son was none other than Olaf Geirstadaalf reborn.

This story, told in the *Flateyjarbók*, is associated with an authentic or fabricated, but in any case older, verse in *Ynglingatal*, which is known in different variants in the *Flateyjarbók* and *Heimskringla* and concerns an actual or imaginary uncle of Harald Fairhair: one king Olaf in Vestfold, a brother to Halfdan the Black. The verse in *Flateyjarbók* has the following wording:

Red Olafr
***Upsa** fordum*
***ok** Vestmari*
godum likr
***ok Grenlands fylki**,*
undz fotverkr
*vid **folldar** þrom*
*vigs **fromozstum***
vard at grande.
Nu liggr gunndjarfr
a Gœirstodum
herkonungr sea
hauge orpinn[74]

What this verse says is that Olaf, the king of Upsi, Vestmar and Greenland, was the "gods' equal" and a brave warrior, that "foot-ache became the death of him," and that he lies buried in a mound in Geirstad. Nothing else of importance is said about him here, and no specific evidence that he was believed to be reborn as Olaf Haraldsson can be immediately discovered.

However, in the Christian era when one considered the old myths from a euhemeristic point of view and looked for features in them that could be interpreted historically and, in the same way, when one transformed Odin and the other gods into ancient kings, it could hardly escape those that adapted them that the authentic or fabricated Thjóðólf-verse quoted above contains two elements that seem to refer to the mythology. One element is the expression "gods' equal." This seems of course to clearly mean that king Olaf in Vestfold had received divine worship and a place among the gods in their heathen fathers' imagination. The author of the story about Olaf Geirstadaalf has also obviously availed himself of this. The story lets "Geirstada-alf" believe that the

[74] The verse in *Heimskringla* (*Ynglingasaga* 49) reads: *Réð Ólafr / ofsa forðum/ **víðri grund**/ of Vestmari/ Uns fótverkr/ við Foldar þröm/ vígmiðlung/ of viða skyldi./ Nú liggr gunndjarfr/ á Geirstöðum/ herkonungr/ haugi ausinn.*

Lee Hollander translates this as "Of yore ruled his realm Óláf, wide domains in Westmarir, till foot-ill by Folden's shore overwhelmed the hardy king. Now buried in barrow lies the glad liege at Geirstathir." (*Heimskringla*, 1964).

people will promote him to divine rank after his death and sacrifice to him, and allows this to happen in spite of "Geirstada-alf's" request.

But into which of the known gods was Olaf Geirstadaalf transformed? Under which name was he adopted into our fathers' pantheon? Even to this question the verse cited seems to hint at an answer, when it says that the "gods' equal" in question met his death via a foot-injury. Among the gods, only one exists about whom the story is told that some time before his death he was attacked by a disease. This god is Baldur. We may remind ourselves what Saxo says of him: that he fell so ill that *ne pedibus quidem incedere posset*.[75]

If we consider the story about Olaf Geirstadaalf more closely, we find in the same work that certain elements of the Baldur myth return, historicized and localized to Vestfold. Baldur dreams fateful dreams. The gods seek the meaning of the dreams and for this purpose gather all the inhabitants of Asgard to the Thing; *senn voru æsir allir a þingi ok asynjur allir a mali* (*Vegtamskvíða* 1).[76] Olaf Geirstadaalf dreams a dream so worrisome that all the people in his kingdom gather to the thingstead so that the dream may be interpreted and its meaning made known. Baldur's dreams involve portents of his death and of the hard misfortunes that the summer god's death will cause the world. Olaf's dreams involve portents of his death and a plague from the east that will snatch half of the country's inhabitants. Baldur is strong, handsome, pious, and peaceful, as is Olaf Geirstadaalf. When Baldur lived, the world had its golden age; after his death came a severe universal winter. During Olaf Geirstadaalf's reign, happiness and good harvests prevailed, but after his death bad harvests occurred.

The story finally reports that Olaf Geirstadaalf owned a belt that had the quality of facilitating childbirth. Information from the mythological content of a verse that I shall present later shows that Baldur owned a *tól* (tool), with which he eased the labor of childbearing women. In association with this, it should be noted that the Vedic Discouri, to which Baldur and Hödur are mytho-historically related, are spoken of as helpers of childbearing women, and that *Atharvaveda* (see Ludwig *Mantralitteratur* p. 477), in a delivery-charm, speaks of a "hand-ring" (*parahasta*) with the same qualities as Olaf Geirstadaalf's belt.

I now come to the evidence which demonstrates that the partial heroicizing of the Baldur myth in the song about Helgi Hjörvardsson and its partial heroicizing in the story of Olaf Geirstadaalf are elements of one and the same myth-transformation process and have one and the same mytho-historic point of origin.

Hyndluljóð 18 states that Dag was married to *Thora drengamoder* and in their line was born the finest warriors, among whom are counted Fradmar, Gyrd, two Frekis, Am, Josurmar, and Alf the old. The verse occurs between verses 17, which speaks of "Sea-king's and his wife Svava's daughter Hildigun, and verse 20, which speaks of Nökkvi's i.e. "the ship-captain's" second daughter Nanna, Baldur's wife. The saga-cycle to which Fradmar, Gyrd, the two Frekis, Am, Josurmar and Alf the old belong, and in which the exploits which justify their epithet "the finest warriors" are told, has been lost without leaving any other trace than what shall be pointed out below.

The Norwegian or Icelandic creator of this family tree has adopted Dag and Thora's clan into Olaf Haraldsson's family tree. Among their descendants in the

[75] Saxo, Book 3, "he could not so much as walk.," (Oliver Elton translation).
[76] "Together were the Æsir all in council, and the Asyniur all in conference" (Benjamin Thorpe translation).

women's line is counted king Olaf Geirstadaalf. His mother is named Alfhild, his maternal grandfather, Alfgeir or Alfarin, his mother's grandfather, Alf the old. Dag and Thora, mother of champions, are his father's paternal grandmother's parents. Gyrd, who in *Hyndluljóð* is named as a member of Dag and the mother of champions', Thora's, line, is also mentioned in the Norse-lists as Olaf Geirstadaalf's stepmother's brother. Thus, there can be no doubt that the story about king Olaf Geirstadaalf is associated genealogically with verse 18 in *Hyndluljóð*.[77]

We now go to the story of Helgi Hjörvardsson, where we meet the names Fradmar (Franmar), Alf, and Alfhild, common to the cast of this story and to Olaf Geirstadaalf's pedigree. Besides that, in the story of Helgi Hjörvardsson, a Sigar is mentioned and Saxo knows a Sigar as father of the brothers Alf and Alfgerus, i.e. Alfgeir. Alfgeir is, as was pointed out above, the name of king Olaf Geirstadaalf's maternal grandfather. The woman's name, Alof, which is borne by a daughter of Franmar in *Helgakviða Hjörvardsson* and by a daughter of king Alfarin-Alfgeir in Olaf's family tree, is also common to both. This broad commonality of names, names such as Franmar, Alfarin, and Gyrd, which occur nowhere else, makes it certain that Helgi Hjörvardsson's and Olaf Geirstadaalf's stories belong to a common oral tradition, of which *Hyndluljóð*'s verse 18, interjected as it was into the survey of Baldur's genealogy, has also preserved the memory.

Here are the common epic features: 1) the clan to which Franmar and Alof belong is hostile toward Helgi Hjörvardsson's father; the clan of Alof's father, Alfarin-Alfgeir, is hostile toward Olaf Geirstadaalf; 2) Helgi's father has a wife named Alfhild, as does Olaf Geirstadaalf. The father of each is married more than once. One, like the other, has his marriage proposal rejected when it was delivered by a messenger, and therefore both take up weapons against the intended father-in-law; 3) Helgi's father, like Olaf Geirstadaalf, is king in a southern part of Norway, and, like him, Helgi has a brother born by another mother; 4) of Helgi and Olaf Geirstadaalf, it is said that they were reborn; 5) Helgi and Olaf are both characteristic of Baldur, and their stories, as demonstrated above, present different episodes from out of the Baldur myth.

In the Christian era, Baldur has subsequently been turned into a Norwegian-Icelandic ruler, particularly a king in Vestfold, partially under the name Helgi Hjörvardsson and partially under the name Olaf Geirstadaalf. The Danish Saxo made him a king in Denmark; Scanian law (C*odex Runicus*) made him a king on Zealand; Saxon tradition, conveyed via the prologue to *Gylfaginning*, made him a king in Westphalia and a second German tradition, a king in "Pullet" (Pölde, later understood as Apulien). It

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[77] *Af Upplendinga Konungum* ("Of the Kings of Uppland") reads: "His son was named Halfdan, and he took the kingdom after him. ...He married Lifa, daughter of Dag, king of Vestmar. He died in Vestfold, and was buried there. Their son was named Gudrod, and he took the kingdom after his father. He was called Gudrod the generous. He married Asa, daughter of King Harald Redbeard, who was king of Agder. They had two sons. One was named Halfdan, the other Olaf. Gudrod the Generous was killed at Geirstad in Vestfold, where he was killed with a halberd, and he died on his ship in Stiflusund, in the evening. Asa, his wife, had egged on a man to kill him, because King Gudrod had killed King Harald, her father, and Gyrd, his son. King Gudrod had also married the daughter of Alfarin of Alfheim and had received half Vingulmark with her, as a dowry. Their son was Olaf. He was full-grown when his father fell, and he took the kingdom after his father. He was the best of all men, and strongest and most handsome to be seen. He was called Olaf, the Elf of Geirstad." Translated by Gavin Chappell.
Source: http://www.northvegr.org/lore/oldheathen/index.php

should be more than a coincidence that Vestfold, chosen in Norway when the myth was localized, has the ring of Westphalia and Pölde, which was the historicized Baldur's kingdom in Germany. The cause has its explanation, as has already been pointed out, in the Baldur synonym Phol, Falr.

The person that the story has deliver Olaf Geirstadaalf's sword to Olaf Haraldsson's parents is called Hrani. In agreement with Bugge (*Norroen Fornkvæði, Sæmundar Edda hins fróða,* footnote p. 339), I regard this name to be the same as Ranr, which occurs in *Grougaldur* v. 6. There, it appears to be an epithet of Rind's son, the young brother of Baldur, Vali. In Hrolf Kraki's saga, Hrani also appears as a sword-bestower, and he does so there in a most mystical manner, suggesting his origin in heathen myth.[78] That Vali was in possession of a precious sword is also clear from *Hyndluljóð*. The kernel in this genealogical poem is of heathen origin, but it was revised in the eleventh century and then placed in connection with Olaf Haraldsson's family tree, as I have shown above. The reviser began the song with a fable that he probably composed himself, which has the sorceress Hyndla describe the family-relationships that one needs to know for the sake of unraveling a question of inheritance. The inheritance over which the two heroes fight is Vali's sword (*Vala malmr*, *Hyndluljóð* 9).[79]

This statement is of interest because the genealogy that Hyndla sets forth, in which Baldur and Nanna are mentioned, includes exactly the members of the same family that play a role in the poem about Helgi Hjörvardsson and the story about Olaf Geirstadaalf. Among the persons enumerated by Hyndla, with which the heir to Vali's sword must be connected, is mentioned on Gyrd, who according to Olaf Haraldsson's pedigree is Olaf Geirstadaalf's stepmother's brother, and Alf the Old, who according to the same family pedigree is Olaf Geirstadaalf's maternal grandfather's father. Thus, on one side we find that Vali's sword should have been an heirloom within this family and, on the other side, that a descendant of the same family, Olaf Haraldsson, receives Olaf Geirstadaalf's sword through a person that bears Vali's byname, Hrani. When we remind ourselves that Olaf Geirstadaalf himself is Baldur transformed into a king in Vestfold, it is clear that the mythic kernel of the euhemeristic story is Vali, who inherits his brother Baldur's sword. Perhaps this was also the case in the fabricated myth, and Vali, one night old avenges his brother and kills Hödur with Baldur's sword. In any case, this relationship constitutes additional evidence for the origin of Olaf Geirstadaalf's story from the Baldur myth.

Long before these euhemeristic revisions of the Baldur myth, one had already been composed in Christianized England. In the Beowulf poem (8th century), Baldur and Hödur appear under the names Herebeald and Hædcyn as young princes within a Scandinavian clan, who are neighbors of the Swedes. Herebeald and Hædcyn are

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[78] Here Hrani is usually interpreted as a name of Odin himself. In chapter 30 of *Hrolf Kraki's Saga*, a one-eyed old farmer named Hrani attempts to give Hrolf a sword, a shield, and a coat of mail, but is rejected. Hrolf thereby loses the gift of victory provided by Hrani in chapter 26 after testing Hrolf's men.

[79] Rydberg understands this as "Vali's metal" (i.e. Vali's sword), whereas modern translators understand this as "Welsh metal"; i.e. foreign gold. Both readings are possible. *Malmr* carries the meaning metal (and by extension gold) or sword. The word occurs 5 times in Eddaic poetry: *Sigurðkviða hin skamma* 16, *Rínar malmi*, Rhine gold; *Sigurðkviða hin skamma* 68: *Ligge okkar enn í mille malmr hringvareþr egghvast earn*, "Let also lie between us both the sword with rings adorned, the keen-edged iron"; *Atlakviða*, 39, *skop lét hón vaxa, skíran malm vaþa*, "Fate she let ripen, but the bright gold flow*; Hervarar saga* 20, *Gota malmi*, as Hervor is being described with all her armor and arms, Gothic metal here is best understood as a sword.

brothers. Hædcyn accidentally kills Herebeald "with an arrow from a horn-bow." It was, says the poem, a heart-breaking case of manslaughter, for which no recompense could be given and although unintentional, it involved immeasurable guilt. No one in the family would lift his hand against Hædcyn, and his aged father, weighed down by sorrow, had no desire to wait "within his fortress" for another heir. In the myth, no Asa-god who had witnessed the sorrowful event lifted his hand against the unlucky, morally innocent killer; Odin must acquire an heir outside of his fortress and it is he who will assume the duty of blood-revenge.

On British soil, the Baldur myth appears yet again historicized in Geoffrey of Monmouth's narrative about Baldulf and Cador.

Finally even *Sólarljóð*'s verses about Sváfaðr and Skarthedin may be reckoned here. As we see, one of these two bears Hödur's common heroic epithet, Hedin. The other's name, Sváfaðr, refers to Sváfa, who in the hero poem about Helgi Hjörvardsson corresponds to Nanna and in *Hyndluljóð* is Hildigun's and Nanna's mother. Of these youths it is said that they played together, were always together and could not do without one another, until their hearts were enflamed with love for the same maiden, "a bright form," and it caused both of their deaths.

11. *Sáttir þeir váru*
Sváfaðr ok Skartheðinn,
hvárgi mátti annars án vera,
fyrr enn þeir æddusk
fyr einni konu:
hon var þeim til lýta lagin.

"United were
Svafud and Skarthedin
neither might without the other be,
until to frenzy they were driven
for a woman;
she was destined to be their undoing."[80]

12. *Hvárskis þeir gáðu*
fyr þá hvítu mey,
leiks né ljósra daga;
öngvan hlut
máttu þeir annan muna
en þat ljósa lík.

"On account of that fair maid
neither of them cared
for games or joyous days;
no other thing
could they in memory bear

[80] Modified from the translation of Benjamin Thorpe.

than that bright form."

HÖDUR-LODDFAFNIR. THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE MYTH ABOUT HÖDUR TO THE STORY OF SIGURD FAFNISBANE'S YOUTH.

The last part of *Hávamál*, in the form that this song has come into our hands, is composed of a didactic poem placed in Odin's mouth, in which the father of the Aesir gives good advice to a youth called Loddfafnir.

The poem begins with a verse (*Hávamál* 111) in which Loddfafnir says that he received the advice that follows from Odin himself. He says that when he received it, he was in Valhall (*Háva höllu at, Háva höllu í*).[81] Now on the other hand, when he speaks of the advice formerly given to him by Odin, he is not in Valhalla, but in the underworld, on the speaker's chair by Urd's well (*þular stóli á, Urðarbrunni at*).[82]

The mythic person who bears the strange name or epithet Loddfafnir consequently must have been one of Asgard's inhabitants and stood in particularly close connection to Odin, because the skald presents him in Odin's own hall, Valhalla, receiving instruction that should lead him on his life's path. Silent and attentive, he listens to the advice-giver, as a pupil to his teacher, as a son to his father. Nevertheless, Odin is not convinced that the youth will always take his appeal to heart (compare the expression: *ef þú nemr, ef þú getr*)[83]; even Odin predicts that in the long run, he will not (verse 162: *ljóða þessa mun þú, Loddfafnir, lengr vanr vera*).[84] Among the advice must thus be found some that contains hints about Loddfafnir's fate; there must occur warnings that he brushed aside.

The Song of Loddfafnir is burdened with numerous interpolations. Even a crude minstrel has had a finger in it (verse 112, line 7)[85], presumably the same person that disfigured the poem by turning the phrase *ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir*, "I counsel you, Loddfafnir," *etc.* into a refrain repeated to the point of being unbearable. Among the verses and parts of verses whose authenticity no one suspects or need suspect, one must seek those that contain clues regarding what the myth said of Loddfafnir. In this way, we can be provided with information about the young inhabitant of Asgard who appears with this epithet. In this regard, the following verses are important:

113. *Fjölkunnigri konu*
skal-at-tu í faðmi sofa,
svá at hon lyki þik liðum.

.

"In an enchantress's embrace
you may not sleep

[81] "At the High One's hall. In the High One's hall."
[82] "on the sage's seat at Urd's well," cp. *Sólarljóð* 51 where the dead man sits *á norna stóli*, on norns' seats.
[83] "if you take it, if you get it"
[84] "these spells Loddfafnir, you will long lack"
[85] This line speaks of getting up and going outside to urinate during the night.

so that in her arms she clasp you.” [86]

114. *Hon svá gerir*
at þú gáir eigi
þings né þjóðans máls;
mat þú villat
né mannkis gaman,
ferr þú sorgafullr að sofa.

“She will be the cause
that you care not
for the Thing or prince’s words;
food you will shun
and human joys,
sorrowful will you go to sleep.”

115. *Annars konu*
teygðu þér aldregi
eyrarúnu at.

“Another’s wife
never entice
to secret converse.”

117. *Illan mann*
láttu aldregi
óhöpp at þér vita,
Því at af illum manni
fær þú aldregi
gjöld ins góða hugar.

“Never let
A bad man
know your misfortunes;
for from a bad man
you will never obtain
a return for your good will.”

118. *Ofarla bíta*
ef sá einum hal
orð illrar konu;

[86] Modified from the translation of Benjamin Thorpe, and hereafter. Rydberg simply quotes the verses in Old Norse without translation.

fláráð tunga
varð hánum at fjörlagi
ok þeygi um sanna sök.

"I saw a wicked woman's
words mortally
wound a man;
a false tongue
caused his death,
and most unrighteously."

121. *Vin þínum*
ver þú aldregi
fyrri at flaumslitum;
sorg etr hjarta,
ef þú segja né náir
einhverjum allan hug.

"With your friend
never be
first to quarrel.
Care gnaws the heart,
If you can disclose
your whole mind to no one."

126. *Skósmiðr þú verir*
né skeftismiðr
nema þú sjálfum þér séir,
skór er skapaðr illa
eða skaft sé rangt,
þá er þér böls beðit.

"Be not a shoemaker,
Nor a shaftmaker,
Unless for yourself it be,
for a shoe if ill-made
or a shaft if crooked,
will call down evil on you."

131. *Ver þú við öl varastr*
ok við annars konu

"at drinking be most wary,

and with another's wife."

134. *At hárum þul*
hlæ þú aldregi,
oft er gótt þat er gamlir kveða;

"At a hoary speaker
never laugh;
often what the aged utter is good."

Thus Odin advises the young Loddfafnir:

1) not to sleep in the embrace of a sorceress. If he doesn't listen to this advice, he shall be afflicted with such dispassion for life that he will care little for the most important business, lose his desire for food and good company, and go to bed burdened by sorrow;

2) never to attempt to win the secret confidence of another's wife. Loddfafnir is particularly requested to be especially wary of drink in matters concerning another man's wife;

3) to take to heart that an evil woman's false tongue can unjustly cause a man's death;

4) never to break the bonds of true friendship;

5) not to confide his troubles and misfortunes to an evil man;

6) not to scorn an old man's advice;

7) to make shafts (of arrows and spears) for himself, if he can. He who makes these for another or uses another's does himself harm, if the shaft is defective.

Now, if we gather the information we have gained about Loddfafnir in this manner, it is clear:

1) that Loddfafnir was an inhabitant of Valhalla in his youth and received fatherly advice from Odin that he nevertheless ignored during part of his life;

2) that he became enchanted by a witch and, through her, unhappy;

3) that he was careless in a drinking bout and desired another man's wife;

4) that he abandoned a reliable friend and in his place entrusted himself to a false friend, who repaid his confidence with evil;

5) that he received, but rejected, good advice from an old man;

6) that an evil woman's tongue, perhaps that of the previously mentioned witch, caused an innocent man's death;

7) that a casting weapon, with a defective shaft not made by him who shot or threw it, played some role in Loddfafnir's history;

8) that Loddfafnir was transported from Asgard to the underworld.

All these elements are found again in the myth about Hödur.

With verses 113 and 114, one should compare the stories about Hödur by Saxo, and about Hedin in the poem about Helgi Hjörvardsson, and in the remaining legends about Hedin according to which he fell under the influence of a witch (or three witches) who enticed him unto evil ways. In Saxo, it is this influence that prods Hotherus to attempt to acquire Nanna and to make war on Baldur. In the poem about Helgi Hjörvardsson, it is a witch who inspires the thought in Hedin to acquire his brother Helgi's beloved. He announces his intentions over the Bragi-cup. *Um kveldit óru heitstrengingar. ...ok strengðu menn þá heit at bragarfulli. Heðinn strengði heit til Sváfu Eylima dóttur, unnustu Helga bróður síns.* ("In the evening, solemn vows were made. …and then made solemn vows at the Bragi-cup. Hedin bound himself with a vow to possess Svava, the beloved of his brother Helgi.") Compare this with Odin's advice to Loddfafnir: *ver þú við öl varastr ok við annars konu* ("at drinking be most wary, and with another's wife"), advice that indicates that Loddfafnir was thoughtless at the cups and that his thoughtlessness concerned another man's wife.

When Odin describes the state of mind that Loddfafnir shall succumb to if he allows himself to be deceived by a witch, one is unconditionally reminded of Saxo's description of Hotherus after he engaged in an unfortunate feud with Baldur, provoked to it by three bewitching women. Odin says that Loddfafnir shall lose all interest for important business: *þú gáir eigi þings né þjóðans máls* ("She will be the cause that you care not for the Thing or prince's words"); Saxo speaks about *regis inertia*,[87] Hödur's lack of desire for his royal duties. For Loddfafnir, Odin foresees a dispassion for life that makes him unwilling to eat or take part in human joy. Saxo says: *lucis ac vitæ pigere se dixit*: "he (Hödur) said he was tired of daylight and of life." Odin says that Loddfafnir shall go to bed burdened by sorrow. Saxo speaks of Hotherus' *insolublis animi dolor*.[88] Even the song about Helgi Hjörvardsson describes Hedin as deeply unhappy in awareness of his offense. It seems as if all these descriptions have one and the same basis in some heathen song wherein Hödur's mental state after his break with Baldur was celebrated in a manner, of which we now have these harmonious echoes left.

Odin's appeal to Loddfafnir not to break with a true friend and not to place his trust in an evil man, because "from him you will never receive repayment for a kind heart," has its correspondence in Hödur's conflict with Baldur and in the full trust that Hotherus, according to Saxo, places in Halogi of Halogaland, i.e. the evil natured Loki. He does him a great service, according to Saxo, and that he is ill-paid for it merely follows from Loki's character. Likewise, Saxo says that Hotherus rejects an older friend's advice, and that Loddfafnir did the same during some crisis in his life is clear from Odin's appeal: "never scorn the advice of the gray-haired; often what the old say is good."

Odin's warnings further imply that an ill-shafted arrow or an ill-shafted spear, whose user did not make the shaft, played some role in Loddfafnir's history and that herein lies a tragic episode in which an innocent man receives his bane through an evil woman's tongue.

All these circumstances, in conjunction with the evidence that Loddfafnir, the former resident of Asgard, finds himself in the kingdom of death when he speaks of the

[87] "The sloth of the king," Oliver Elton translation.
[88] "Inconsolable trouble of spirit," Oliver Elton translation; "Inconsolable grief," Peter Fisher translation.

warnings he received in his youth from Odin, are like many testimonials in concert with one another that say that Loddfafnir is Hödur.

But where did he acquire the peculiar epithet Loddfafnir?

Fafnir, *Fáfnir*, is the name of a giant-monster in serpent form; either this is his original nature or he became that way through transformation. Sigurd slays the treasure-sitting Fafnir Hreidmarsson in serpent- or dragon-shape; Ragnar kills the serpent *Gráfafnir*. The word is used rhetorically for a serpent in general. If, as I suppose, the word is derived from the Proto-Indo-European *pap*, its original meaning is bloated, swollen, distended, whose meaning well befits a treasure-brooding giant-being, who according to the common conception is filled with an ample supply of "poison gas." (Compare: *en er Fáfni skreið af gullinu, blés hann eitri, etc.*, "When Fafnir crawled from the gold, he blew forth venom," etc.). *Loddfáfnir* means Slow-Fafnir, a slow moving serpent or dragon.

The reason a god or a hero could receive such an epithet is that, if he conquered such a monster, he was commonly called his bane (compare *Sigurðr Fáfnisbani*), but he could also inherit the name of the slain demon-animal. Thus, *Thidreks Saga af Bern* relates that the warrior Heimir received this name because he had conquered and killed a serpent or dragon with the name Heimir.[89] This transference of name can subsequently be attributed to the hero, who, if asked his name by the serpent-demon he attacks, unwillingly provides it, but gladly states a name that belongs to the victim himself or refers to his nature. The reason for this is found again in *Fáfnismál*, which says: "Sigurd concealed his name (from the dying Fafnir), because it was the belief in those times that the words of dying persons were of great power, if they cursed an enemy by his name." Thus had the dying person, with his question, intended to curse his killer with his own name, the killer could cast the curse back on him by calling himself a name that referred back to the questioner. And once the killer assumed such a name or epithet, the myth allowed him to bear it ever after. This much is clear, that the warrior Heimir is called by this name, because he killed a dragon Heimir and that Hödur could be called Loddfafnir or Fafnir by the skalds, because he killed a dragon with this name.

It is on the speaker's chair by Urd's well that Loddfafnir describes the advice and rules of life Odin gave him in his youth. Loddfafnir appears here as a teacher of wisdom who learned the value of the advice through his own life experience and the consequences of not following it. While he provides practical knowledge here, he had appeared teaching the mythology's secrets in another poem, of which the greatest part is now lost. Of that poem, two verses remain, in which he tells who the norns are who choose mothers for the souls of children selected for mortal lives, and speaks of events during Ragnarök. The person who edited *Fáfnismál* into its current form knew these two verses of the old heathen poem and knew that they were placed on the lips of a mythic person who was called Loddfafnir or Fafnir. From the name of the sage, he allowed himself to believe that it belonged the dragon Fafnir, and interpolated these verses into

[89] According to *Thidreks Saga*, chapter 18: A man named Studas, son of Studas, "did not have many friends, but with those he had he was stingy with money and with support, and for this reason he had lost his real name and was called Heimir, because one particular dragon has that name and he is more vicious than all other dragons, and all the other dragons are afraid of him if they come near his lair. For this reason, Studas took his name so that he would be compared to the dragon, and for this reason the Vaeringjar call him Heimir." (Edward R. Haymes translation).

the conversation that he lets Sigurd and the dying dragon have with one another.[90] Lüning has already pointed out this senseless interpolation.[91]

I have now given the reasons I consider Hödur identical to Loddfafnir. It should be added that Hödur was portrayed as a hunter. It was during a hunt that Saxo's Hotherus fell under the influence of sorcery. The quarry that warring gods hunted was, in the Germanic mythology as well as in the Vedic and Iranian, giant beings and demons in various animal guises. From one such demon, killed by Hödur during one of his hunts, he must have acquired the epithet Loddfafnir.

I come now to the relationship that I find to exist between the saga of Sigurd Fafnisbane's youth and the myth about Hödur-Loddfafnir. I shall present reasons from which I must conclude that the adventure with which the Sigurd saga begins was formed in the Christian era from the ruins of the myth concerning Hödur and the adventures of his youth.

As a start, and only in passing, I will note that in *Fáfnismál*, when the mortally wounded serpent asks Sigurd his name, he replies: *Göfugt dýr ek heiti*, "I am called Slowbeast." Because Loddfafnir means Slowfafnir, it seems that one designation refers to the other; one has the other as a model (compare *göfa* to be slow and *loddari*, English *loiterer*, OHG *lottir*, to loiter).

The poem *Grípisspá* represents a period in the Nordic Sigurd saga in which the valkyrie Sigrdriva still is decidedly distinct from, and as far as character is concerned a complete opposite of, Brynhild with whom she is ultimately fused into one. Gripir foretells of his nephew Sigurd that once he kills Regin and the serpent Fafnir and proceeds to Gjuki with the treasure upon which Fafnir broods, he shall ride from his estate, up a mountain on which a mail-clad princess (Sigrdriva) sleeps. With his sword, Sigurd shall cut off her mailcoat. Then she will wake and instruct Sigurd in all the runes that the human race desires to know. Once he has obtained this wisdom, he shall go to King Heimir, the foster father of Brynhild, Budli's daughter, and there meet Brynhild, the beautiful maid, who will become his heart's desire and his bane.

In the period of the Sigurd saga's development that *Grípisspá*, *Fáfnismál*, and the song about Sigrdriva represent, Sigrdriva plays no other role than that she gives the young hero noble runic wisdom and good advice. The saga-cycle to which she actually belongs and in which she actively appears, with its personalities Agnar, Helgi-Hjolmgunnar, and Auda, is originally foreign to Sigurd's saga, whose formation one can follow in *Skáldskaparmál*, the later Eddaic poems, and *Volsungasaga*.

The meeting between Sigurd and Sigrdriva is portrayed in *Sigrdrífumál*. This poem, although revised, still bears conclusive testimony of its birth in heathen times and is undoubtedly the oldest or next to the oldest of all the poems that became drawn into the Sigurd cycle or composed within it. The much older song about Sigrdriva originally had nothing to do with the story of Sigurd Fafnisbane. Not only did Sigrdriva play no active part in Sigurd's fate before a later author allowed her to become fused with Brynhild, as has already been mentioned; but in all the advice and wisdom she gives Sigurd are found few elements that refer to or have some application to Sigurd's later deeds and life's

[90] Here Rydberg is speaking of *Fáfnismál* 13 and 15. Rather than verses from a lost poem interpolated into the text, current scholarship professes the more likely explanation that it was common to ask a dying supernatural creature of mysteries beyond the ken of human knowledge.
[91] Hermann Lüning, *Die Edda*, 1859.

events. Instead, the song shows many significant points of contact with the poem about Loddfafnir. Strong reasons exist for the assumption that it was the redactor of *Fáfnismál* who first revised and pulled *Sigrdrífumál* into the Sigurd cycle; that it was he who first gave the hero, who wakes Sigrdriva and receives runes from her, the name Sigurd Fafnisbane, whereas the hero was originally Hödur-Loddfafnir, and that that redactor, when he did this and when he gave *Fáfnismál* its current form, also had in mind the song about Loddfafnir that was incorporated into *Hávamál* and also the song in which Loddfafnir relates mythological information about the norns of children's souls and about Ragnarök. As has already been pointed out, the redactor placed the later song, as far as he knew it or wanted to use it, in the serpent Fafnir's mouth in the most incompetent manner. Of the former, he had the actual words in mind during the redaction of *Fáfnismál*. Compare verse 11 in *Fáfnismál* with verse 122 in *Hávamál*. In both of these verses occur the expression used in *Grímnismál* 34: *ósvinnr api* ("weak-minded fool"). Compare further *Fáfnismál* 20: *ræð ek þér nú, Sigurðr, en þú ráð nemir*, ("I counsel you, Sigurd, to heed advice" with the song of Loddfafnir's: *ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir* ("I counsel you, Loddfafnir, to take advice"). Compare further the song of Loddfafnir's *ráðna stafi* ("explained characters," verse 142)[92] with *Sigrdrífumál*'s expression about the runes *þær of réð* ("those interpreted," verse 13).

Now to the points of contact between *Hávamál*'s song of Loddfafnir and the song about Sigrdriva.

Odin warns Loddfafnir, verses 113 and 114: "You should not sleep in the embrace of an enchantress, so that she will not enclose you in her arms. She will make it so you care little for the Thing or prince's words; meals and men's merriment will not please you, and you will go to sleep sorrowful." Sigrdriva warns Sigurd, verse 26: "If a witch, a nefarious one, lives by your route, then it is better to continue your journey than be her guest, even if night overtakes you." In the story of Sigurd Fafnisbane, no episode occurs to which this warning is applicable, but does so in the narratives concerning Hotherus and Hedin.

Odin urges Loddfafnir to be extremely cautious with the cup and another man's wife: *við öl ok við annars konu*, verse 131. Sigrdriva warns Sigurd not to entice a maid or a man's wife; she reminds him that *öl* (ale) has been the harm of many; some it killed, others it injured (verses 32, 30), and she advises (verse 8) that the cup be signed and an herb placed in the drink, so that the hero may not be hurt by harm-mixed mead.

From Sigurd Fafnisbane's story, one absolutely does not gather that he wants to obtain another man's wife, but the warning is fully applicable to Hödur-Hedin, who made a vow over ale to acquire another's beloved.

Both songs also have in common that they provide a summary of sorts of the runic knowledge that is of importance to know. The song about Sigrdriva especially states that it could happen that the pupil to whom the wise valkyrie speaks may come before the judgment seats in the underworld to answer accusations that demand punishment for the "harm" he has caused and that it would be good for him then, if he had speech-runes for his defense. (verse 12; compare *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Volume 1, no. 70). The reference can easily be explained from the myth

[92] This verse actually occurs outside *Loddfáfnismál* (111-137) and falls within the following segment commonly designated as the *Rúnatal* (*Hávamál* 138-145). Since Rydberg opens this segment with the statement that *Loddfáfnismál* is the "last part of *Hávamál*," he likely did not separate the two.

about Hödur, who descended down into the underworld charged with the murder of his brother Balder, and that it happened that he demonstrated before the judges that the murder was unintentional, although it might seem deliberate, because he made war on Baldur and wanted to take his wife.

The warning Sigrdriva gives her pupil in verse 35 to guard himself against one whose brother or father he has killed, because "a wolf is in the young son" ought to be pointed out in connection with this. This warning has no relevance to Sigurd Fafnisbane's fate. The young Gudhorm, urged to it by his half-brother, assassinates Sigurd, without any blood-revenge to demand for his father or brother. Odin's young son Vali, on the other hand, avenges a brother's death on Hödur.

In the song about Sigrdriva, verse 24 encourages the young hero not to contend with *heimska hali* or *ósviðr maðr* (a foolish or unwise man); Odin gives Loddfafnir similar advice (*Hávamál* 125). In Sigurd's saga one finds nothing to which this advice could allude. Hödur on the other hand, according to Saxo, was famous for the sensibility he displayed at the assembly. He says his judgment was decreed from a high mountain.

In *Loddfáfnismál* (*Hávamál* 147), Odin informs his pupil what he who wishes to live as a healer ought to know. On her part, Sigrdriva desires for herself and the young hero "healing hands while we live" (verse 4); she speaks of limb-runes that the hero ought to know, if he wants to be a healer and treat wounds (verse 11), and of help-runes to assist women in the throes of birth (verse 9). The runes should be drawn in the palm and on something that can be placed around the part that is suffering, thus presumably on a belt.[93] The story of Sigurd Fafnisbane contains nothing to which this advice and learning can apply. On the other hand, as far back as the Proto-Indo-European time, the divine brothers, who are represented by Baldur and Hödur in the Germanic mythology, have been spoken of as healers, and out of the Baldur myth has arisen the story about Olaf Geirstadaalf, as we have already seen, which allows him to own a belt that eases pregnant women's labor.

In verse 31, Sigrdriva says to her pupil that it is better to fight than let oneself be burnt indoors. This advice does not apply to any episode in the story of Sigurd Fafnisbane, but applies well to an episode in the myth of Hödur, specifically the one spoken of by Saxo, where Hödur's foster father and Nanna's father was ambushed and burnt.

In verses 34 and 35, Sigrdriva urges the young hero to show respect for a dead man's remains, whether he was drowned, killed by weapons, or had fallen on the battlefield. The corpse ought to be bathed and combed, laid in a casket, and bidden blessed sleep. No episode in the story of Sigurd Fafnisbane remotely resembles this advice; but of Hödur, Saxo says that he showed his slain opponent's body great respect and prepared a magnificent pyre and a beautiful gravemound.

In the first volume of this work (no. 120), I have put forth evidence that this Gelderus is identical to Gjuki. In Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of British Kings*, a Saxon saga-hero, Cheldricus, appears in association with a Saxon prince, Baldulf, fighting against Cador. Bugge has long since fixed attention that Baldulf is a historicizing of Baldur, Cador of Hödur, and Cheldricus of Gelderus. The name Cheldricus, again, is a Latinizing of Elderich, Helderich, and this name is in turn related to the Gjuki-synonym

[93] In actuality, such a belt, applied during childbirth, may have been intended to compress the mother's abdomen, forcing the baby farther down the birth canal.

Aldrian as Elberich to Albrian. The name Gelderus thus corresponds to the German name-form Aldrian, and, in *Thidreks Saga af Bern*, Aldrian is a synonym of Gjuki. Aldrian is king of Niflungaland and has the sons Högni, Gunnar, Gernoz, and Gizler. In the Eddaic poems, Gjuki is a Niflung and has the sons Högni and Gunnar. Even *Nibelunge Noth* knows Aldrian as the father of Högni (Hagen). Aldrian's consort is named Oda; Gjuki's too. The identity of Gelderus and Gjuki is thereby demonstrated.

Saxo says that after certain extraordinarily precious treasures came into Hödur's possession, Gelderus took up arms against him. That Saxo justifies Gelderus' behavior toward Hödur cannot be explained in any other way than that Gelderus-Gjuki considers himself more closely entitled than Hödur to the treasure in question or that Hödur came into possession of valuables that belonged to the famous Gjukunga- or Niflunga-hoard. It follows that this treasure played a role in the myth about Hödur, before it came to play a role in the story of Sigurd Fafnisbane, and that the Sigurd of the heroic sagas succeeded the godsaga's Hödur as the winner of the treasure.

In *Skáldskaparmál*, it is said that Fafnir possessed and wore a helmet called *Ægishjalmr*, the sight of which terrified all living creatures. In *Fáfnismál* 16, the dragon Fafnir himself says that he bore the *Ægishjalmr* while he brooded on his treasure. Reason exists to suppose that in the myth Hödur possessed and bore the "terror-helm," after he had slain Fafnir, after which he himself was called Loddfafnir. The terror-helmet has since also been called *herkuml Héðins*, Hedin's helmet, in a menacing prophecy in which the seeress sees Hild, Bellona[94] in the heroic saga, come clad in this "horrifying" headdress: *hefir sér á höfði hjálm upspentan, herkuml harðlig Héðins* (*Saga af Halfi ok Halfs Rekkum*; *Fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda*). That Hild appears here with Hedin's terror-helm has its explanation in that the heroic saga made her into Hedin's "maid," *Héðins mær*, *Héðins man*. To Hedin's terror-helm also refers the expression *Héðins reikar fur*, the fire of Hedin's crown. (*Þórsdrápa* 11; Olaf Tr. 50).[95] The connection between Hedin and Hild that the hero-saga weaves has its counterpart in Sigurd Fafnisbane's connection with Brynhild.

Hotherus, according to Saxo, receives a taste of a strengthening dish of which serpent-juice was a part, and in another place Saxo relates that there exists a serpent whose juice grants wisdom. In the myth about Hödur there seems to have occurred an episode in which the hero tasted the juices of a serpent and through it became empowered both physically and spiritually, likewise in the Sigurd saga.

A brother to Olaf Geirstadaalf, in whom we rediscover a historicized Baldur, has fought a difficult battle against King Gandalf and his sons. Sigurd Fafnisbane, according to *Norna Gests saga*, participated in a battle against Gandalf's sons. While Gandalf and his sons are never mentioned in this story, both pieces of information must have their roots in the same myth and thus the matter becomes understandable, that Sigurd Fafnisbane had also stepped into Hödur's place and that the myth talked about a feud that

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[94] The Roman goddess of war who accompanied Mars into battle.

[95] *Þórsdrápa* 11:5-8 *Áðr hylriðar, hrjóðendr fjöru þjóðar, hæði skálleik reikar Heðins við skyld-Breta skytju*, i.e. "before the crossers of the deep, the destroyers of the nation of the sea-shore [Thor and Thjalfi], were able to conduct the bowl-play of the hair-parting of Heðin [battle] against the kin-Briton of the cave [Geirröðr]." The actual kenning here is *skálleikr Heðins reikar* "the play of Hedin's head-bowl [helmet]" i.e. battle. Hedin is supposedly the name of a famous legendary king, whose wife's name was Hild ("battle"). The couple's names are frequent in war-kennings, hers as a *heiti* for "battle," his as a *heiti* for "warrior" (the husband of "battle"). Source: http://www.hi.is/~eybjorn/ugm/thorsd22.html

Baldur and Hödur had with a bewitching being that the hero-saga designates as Gandalf (troll-elf). The evil creatures that Baldur fought are designated there as kin to Aegir, consequently to the same giant whose helmet, Aegir's helmet, Hödur-Hedin seized and that Hild, "his maid" wore in the heroic saga.

In *Nibelunge Noth, Klage, Biterolf,* and other German medieval poems, Siegfried-Sigurd's mother bears the name Siegelind. The mother of the historicized Baldur, Helgi Hjörvardsson, is called Sigrlinn, which is the same name. When Siegfried's mother thus received the name of Helgi-Baldur's mother, Siegfried-Sigurd, even in this point, has shared in the rights belonging to Baldur's brother Hödur. Finally, it may be added that when Sigmund is made the father of Helgi Hjörvardsson as well as Siegfried-Sigurd, this still signifies a reference to the original identity of Sigurd with a brother of Baldur. In the Beowulf poem, the name Sigmund is borne by a hero, Fitelas' (Sinfjölti's) father, who like the later hero of the Sigurd saga must have conquered a dragon and taken a treasure. But, at the same time, the name Sigmund is an epithet of Baldur's and Hödur's father Odin (*Pros. Edda* II, 472, 556)[96] and both of these circumstances in connection explain sufficiently why Sigurd, when he inherits Hödur's youthful adventures, receives one Sigmund as his father. The second component of Siegelind, Sigrlinn, can be a distorted echo of *Hlín*, which is a synonym for Frigg, Baldur's mother in *Völuspá*.

Nibelunge Noth and *Thiðreks Saga of Bern* relate that Siegfried-Sigurd, as a boy, lived with a smith. According to *Thiðreks Saga of Bern*,[97] the smith was Mimir. *Sigurðarkviða Fáfnisbana II* (*Reginsmál*) lets him stay in his youth with his mother's stepfather king Hjalprekr and there make an acquaintance with the smith Regin. The name Hjalprekr is a folk-etymologic translation of Elberich, the name of a famous mythic smith in the German sagas, whose identity with Mimir I shall demonstrate in a treatise on the *Brisingamen Smiths* (see further). *Nibelunge Noth* says that Siegfried in his boyhood was mischievous and displayed this characteristic in the smithy, where he, with a hammer, struck asunder the iron that he would work and drove the anvil down into the earth, and when the master and journeyman wanted to punish him, he pursued them with strikes and blows around the smithy. Even this episode in the story of Siegfried-Sigurd's youth is gathered from the mythic story about Hödur's youth. This is clear from an analysis of a verse in *Kristnisaga* chapter 8, that, at the time of Christianity's introduction into Iceland, was composed on account of the priest Thangbrand or his Christian companion Gudleif Arison having killed the heathen skald, Veðrliði, in the year 998, and whose mythological kernel refers to the myth about Baldur and Hödur. The verse has the following wording:

Ryðfjónar gekk reynir
randa suðr á landi
beðs í bœna smiðju

[96] Although not found as an Odin-name in modern editions of the *Prose Edda*, Anthony Faulkes confirms that Sigmund was listed as an Odin-name in *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* I-III, (1848, 1852, 1880-87), Hafniæ, the edition cited here. Based on other references to this edition, these likely occur in *Skáldskaparmál* and the *Nafnaþulur*.

[97] Rydberg refers to *Thiðreks Saga of Bern* as *Vilkinasaga*, after an early edition of the text. The *Vilkina Saga* proper only covers chapters 21-56 of the complete work. Hereafter, I will refer to this text as *Thiðreks Saga of Bern.*

Baldrs sigtólum haldit.
Siðreynir lét síðan
snjallr morðhamar gjalla
Hoðrs í hattarsteðja
hjaldrs Vetrliða skáldi.

Translation[98]: "The tester of the sword, the shield's Baldur (that is to say one of the two missionaries Thangbrand and Gudleif) in the land held the victory tools (i.e. the cross, the baptismal font, and other religious objects) in the prayer-bed's workplace (i.e. the place where the prayer and sacred duty are held). Thereafter, the quick tester of belief (the second of the two missionaries), Hödur of the din of battle, broke the death-hammer on the hat-stand (i.e. the head) of the skald *Veturliði*."[99]

The pure prose meaning of the verse is that one of the missionaries successfully performed his mission-activities by means of prayer and religious ceremony in the southern part of Iceland and that the other missionary killed the skald *Veturliði* who was hostile toward Christianity.

The idea receives its poetic clothing in the usual manner: by referring to well-known mythological persons and circumstances. The one missionary, he who used the religious "victory-tools" is likened to Baldur; the other missionary, who utilizes the violent weapon and kills the heathen skald is likened to Hödur, who in the myth was portrayed as passionate and quick to act.

The verse's author allows both Baldur and Hödur to have "workplaces" as the scene of some of their activities. Accordingly, so do both missionaries who are compared to them. The workplace of the missionary likened to Baldur is "the prayer bed's workplace." The one belonging to missionary likened to Hödur is a smithy in which he is depicted standing, hammer in hand, and letting it come down on the anvil, which is Veturliði's head. How one must proceed in the analysis of the synthetic comparison that is characteristic of the Old Norse poetic art, I shall point out later on in a treatise on the method of the mythology. An analytical reading of the verse mentioned above takes on the following appearance:

Like the peaceful Baldur holds tools in the bed's workplace (where women in labor work), so the warlike Baldur (the missionary, Thangbrand, spoken of in *Heimskringla* as "very violent and murderous man")[100] holds victory-tools in the prayer bed's workplace (i.e. the place where Christian worship is conducted). And like Hödur lets the hammer break on the anvil (so that it sinks down into the earth), so Hödur of the quick tester of faith (the second missionary, also a man of violence) lets the death-hammer break on the skald Veturliði's hat-stand (his head, so that he sinks in death).

Thus the mythological kernel in the verse is: "Baldur holds tools in the bed's workplace; Hödur lets the hammer break on the anvil (*Baldr gat tólum haldit í beðs*

[98] [Rydberg's Footnote] Compare Bugge: *Studier*, p. 267.
[99] The modern accepted reading of this verse is: *Ryðfjónar gekk reynir/ randa suðr á landi /beðs í bæna smiðju /Baldrs sigtólum* ***halda****./Siðreynir lét síðan /snjallr morðhamar gjalla /****hauðrs*** *í hattar steðja / hjaldrs Vetrliða skaldi*. ("The tester of shields/ took his victory tools south/ to smite the Baldur of weapons/ in his smithy of prayers./The brave battler for faith/ brought down with a clang/his axe of awful death/ on the anvil of Veturlidi's head") *Njal's Saga* 102, translated by Robert Cook, *The Complete Saga of the Icelanders*, Volume III.
[100] *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar*, ch. 73.

smiðju; Hoðr lét hamar gjalla i steðja). From the above, we already know that Baldur was the helper of women in labor and had a belt, which aided delivery when wrapped around a woman in the throes of childbirth. This belt with the runes drawn on it (see above) are the "tools" that Baldur holds in the "bed's workplace," i.e. the workplace in which the distressed woman in labor works. Through the addition of the word "prayer" this workplace is transformed into one in which the prayer is born from the inside of the worshipper into a room for Christian worship. By making the hammer a "death-hammer" and the anvil Veturliði's head, the skald makes an actual event applicable to an episode that the myths relate about Hödur and thus this must have been a famous test of strength with the hammer on the anvil. It must then be this episode from the myth of Hödur, transferred to Sigurd's youthful adventures, that *Nibelunge Noth* preserves for us in the lines: *Den eysen schlug er entzweye den amposs in die erdt*. ("He smashed the iron in two, the anvil into the earth.")

I have now presented, it seems to me, the reasons which completely prove that Loddfafnir and the hero who comes to Sigrdriva were originally Hödur, and that the story of Sigurd Fafnisbane's youth has its origin in the myth about Hödur's childhood adventures. After the dragon's death and the visit to Sigrdriva, the Sigurd saga assumes an independent attitude towards the Hödur-myth and goes its own way, or more correctly its own ways, in Germany and in the North, acquiring its material from and associating itself with other distinct saga-cycles. But, nevertheless, certain features still mirror the myth. Hödur comes in contact with a sorceress, who causes a family feud and the hero's death. This motif occurs again in the heroic poem, where the evil woman corresponds to Brynhild to a certain degree. Hödur falls before the young Vali, Sigurd before the young Gudhorm. This similarity is nevertheless not of the nature that the later part of Sigurd's saga can be said to depend on its mythic prototype.

The birthplace of the Sigurd Saga is northwest Germany. It is there – and most likely among the Christian Franks—as I pointed out, that the material first utilized for the story of the dragonslayer Siegfried, son of the dragonslayer Sigmund, was gathered from the myth about Hödur. The story first came to the North in the eleventh century and gradually developed on its own there.

On its way north, probably in the North Saxon or Danish area, the Siegfried saga met an ancient heroic saga about the Hegelings and thereby underwent considerable changes that have since become the characteristic dividing line between the German Siegfried saga and its Nordic variant. In that saga, a young Hegeling, whose sister is named Gudrun and whose mother is named Hild, appears. The Hegeling in question is now made one with the Gjuking Gunnar. Thus it happens that Gunnar's sister is named Gudrun in the Nordic variant, while Günther-Gunnar's sister in the German poem is named Kreimhild, and that the name Kreimhild (Grimhild) in the Nordic appears in place of Hild. Thereby, it also happens that Gunnar in the Nordic version is cast into a snake pit, a fate that originally befell the Hegelings' saga young hero. The German Siegfried's saga knows nothing about the snake pit. Among the poems in which this partial melding of the Hegeling saga and the Siegfried saga still displays itself on the surface, one has been preserved in the *Poetic Edda* under the name *Oddrúnargrátr*. The saga-persons who appear or are spoken of here: Heidrik, Borgny, Vilmund, Oddrun, and Geirmund are altogether foreign to the original Siegfried-Sigurd saga. Likewise, the scene of events and the events themselves can be fitted into the Sigurd saga only through serious artifices. On

the other hand, the persons named Geirmund (the same name as Garmund, which after what the Anglo-Saxon poems inform us is a synonym of Varmund), Vilmund, and Oddrun belong to the the Hegelingic saga cycle which is the common root for the Varmund-Offa saga on one hand and the Nordic Lodbrok saga (*Ragnars Saga Loðbrókar*) on the other, where the Lodbrokids are still known as *Hæklingar* i.e. Hegelings. This connection is only pointed out in passing here. Detailed argumentation for this shall be presented in a separate work that treats the saga cycle of the Hegelings, Sigurd Fafnisbane, and the Lodbrokids.[101]

HÖDUR'S SUPPOSED BLINDNESS.

To all that has been said of Hödur above, one statement in *Gylfaginning* stands in the sharpest and most irreconcilable contrast: the statement that Hödur, the warrior, dragonslayer, archer, and sportsman was blind! The uncritical manner in which *Gylfaginning* has previously been handled has enabled this statement to remain in mythological textbooks far too long. In order to support it, the untenable conjecture of a Danish variant of the myth, according to which Hödur was not blind, and an Icelandic-Norwegian variant, according to which he was blind, was purposed. Sufficient evidence has been given above that Hödur was not blind according to the Icelandic mythic tradition, and thus I need not add that when the skald Halvard likens Knut the great to Hödur and speaks of "Hödur's sword" and Egil Skallagrimsson of "Hödur's mail-coat," such comparisons would have been impossible if those who had heard or read the song imagined a blind man as the referent of the comparison, one who could not use his weapon except under another's guidance.[102] So how did *Gylfaginning* come to the conclusion that Hödur was blind?

Of Baldur's death and funeral pyre, *Gylfaginning* relates the following story, whose source shall be pointed out below:

> "Once it became known to all that nothing could harm Baldur, it became a pastime for Baldur and the Aesir that he should stand up at the thingstead and all the others would either shoot at him, hew, or throw stones. But whatever one did to him, he remained unharmed, and they all thought that this was a great honor. When Loki, Laufey's son saw this, it annoyed him that Baldur was not hurt. He went to Fensalir and Frigg and transformed himself into the guise of a woman, whom Frigg asked if she knew what the Aesir were doing at the Thing. She replied that they all shoot at Baldur without causing him injury. Frigg then said "Neither weapon nor wood harms Baldur, because I have taken oaths from them all." "Have all things sworn an oath to spare him?" asked the woman. Frigg replied: "There is a tender sapling growing east of Valhall whose name is Mistletoe; it seemed too young to me to make an oath."
>
> Thereafter the woman went on her way. But Loki took Mistletoe, plucked it, and brought it to the Thing. There stood Hödur at the edge of the circle of men, since he was blind. Loki said to him: "Why don't you shoot at Baldur?" He replied: "because I cannot see where he stands, and moreover I am without a weapon." Loki said: "Do as the others do, and like them, show Baldur honor. I will show you where he stands. Shoot at him with this sapling!" He took Mistletoe and,

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[101] To my knowledge, this work was never published.

[102] The actual kennings here are *Höðr* [*heinlands*],"Höður of sword" and *Höðr brynju*, "Hödur of mail-coat" both of which simply mean "warrior." To name any god with an attribute of weapons or armor signifies a human warrior. Still it is strange to think that poets would use Hödur's name in such kennings if they indeed thought he was an incompetent blind man.

under Loki's guidance, shot it at Baldur. The missile went through Baldur and he fell dead to the ground. …So the Aesir took Baldur's body and bore it to the sea. Hringhorn was the name of Baldur's ship, the biggest of all. The gods wanted to launch it into the sea in order to make Baldur's pyre upon it; but they could not move the ship. They sent word to Jötunheim for a *gyg* (a giantess), named Hyrrokkin. She came, riding on a wolf with vipers for reins, and leapt off her steed. Odin ordered four beserkers to hold it, but they could not get power over the wolf, except to throw him down. Hyrrokkin went to the ship's prow and with her first shove set it in such a pace that fire shot out from the rollers and the whole land quaked. Then Thor grew angry and gripped his hammer and would have crushed her head, if all the gods had not begged him for peace. Thereafter, Baldur's body was brought out to the ship; but when his wife Nanna, Nep's daughter, saw it, she collapsed from grief and died. She was carried out onto the bale, and it was ignited. As Thor stood there and hallowed the pyre with Mjöllnir, a dwarf, named Lit (*Litr*) leapt before his feet and Thor kicked him so that he flew into the fire and was burnt. To this funeral came many different kinds of folk. First to tell of is Odin, and with him were Frigg and the valkyries and Odin's ravens. Frey drove in a chariot pulled by the boar called Gullinbursti or Slidrugtanni. Heimdall rode on his horse Gulltop and Freyja fared with her cats. Many frost-giants were there and mountain giants too."

The burlesque stamp that this narrative bears, even though its subject is the Germanic epic's most tragic event, cannot escape some readers. The narrative's absurdity gives it a character that contrasts most sharply with all we know of the Old Norse skaldic and narrative art. I need not point out the most puerile manner in which *Gylfaginning*'s author seeks to reconcile his assumption that Hödur was blind with the mythological fact that Baldur, as a target for shots and volleys, fell before one of the weapons cast at him. For this purpose, he allows Loki to ask a "blind" man why he does not shoot or throw something at the target and allows the blind man to shoot at the target under another person's direction! Such an explanation has demonstrated that it can satisfy a mythologist who sincerely believes in *Gylfaginning*, but it would undoubtedly produce laughter and ridicule if it were presented to our forefathers, who were disposed toward realism and sensitive to comedy.

Nevertheless, *Gylfaginnin*g's author had a heathen source for what he says. His mistake is that from beginning to end he misunderstood its nature. He imagined that the heathen song, which he ostensibly followed, contained an accurate account of the circumstances surrounding Baldur's death and cremation, whereas it accurately described only those circumstances that were not blended with the peculiarities of a work of art whose creator depicted episodes out of the Baldur myth and other stories of the gods in a series of symbolic-allegorical pictures. Surely, the truer the song was to the work of art's mode of pictorially expressing the myth and the idealistic elements found there depicted for the eye —for example the world's sorrow over Baldur's death— the more it must deviate from reality wherever the artist had to resort to symbolic-allegorical means to make the pictorial work intelligible and thus easily recognizable to its viewers.

The song in question is the Icelandic skald Ulf Uggason's *Húsdrápa*, of which some fragments sufficient as evidence have been preserved into our time.

Around the years 985-990, the magnificent Icelandic chieftain Olaf Höskuldsson held a feast at which he inaugurated a newly erected dwelling on his estate, Hjardarholt. Of this, *Laxdæla Saga* 29 says: "That summer Olaf had built at Hjardarholt a larger and grander dwelling than had previously been seen. Memorable tales were depicted on the wainscoting, crossbeams and ceiling, and these were so well done that one thought the hall looked more splendid when the roof and walls were not covered with tapestries. Ulf

Uggason attended the feast and composed a poem about Olaf Höskuldsson and about the stories that were depicted in the hall, and he presented the poem at the feast. This poem was called *Húsdrápa* and was well composed."

From *Skáldskaparmál*[103] and from fragments of the poem preserved there and in *Gylfaginning*[104] one learns that the pictorial work represented Heimdall's battle with Loki when they were both in seal-guise, Thor's battle with the Midgard serpent in Hymir's boat, and episodes of the Baldur myth, among others.[105]

We now return to *Gylfaginning*'s account of Baldur's death and funeral procession that has a much different appearance, depending on the preconceived ideas with which one reads them. If one assumes it is a direct account of the Baldur myth itself, the contents seem overly puerile—altogether too puerile even for a children's tale. If, on the other hand, one realizes that the author of *Gylfaginning* derived his account from *Húsdrápa, and that it extolled not the myth in question, but an artwork and the artist's method of presenting the myths he chose to handle in pictures*, then the impression of puerility vanishes, the absurdities disappear, and one gets an interesting insight into the means that the creator of the artwork at Hjardarholt chose in order to make his account intelligible and meaningful.

In order to shed light on this, the account of Baldur's funeral pyre may first be taken into consideration.[106] Without doubt, heathen songs were composed that described Baldur's funeral pyre solemnly and poignantly. Among other features, it must have been sung in a poem that Odin laid the ring Draupnir on his beloved son's lifeless breast and whispered into his ear what no one may know. On the other hand, such a song could not possibly have depicted such a grotesque funeral procession in Baldur's honor as *Gylfaginning* describes, one in which ravens, cats, a boar, and a large host of hostile frost giants and mountain giants take part.

But the grotesqueness disappears if here we see before us a series of pictorial works in which the artist endeavors to make as clear as possible which mythic person his figure represents and which myth about them is meant through associated symbols. *How* he went about it on that occasion is precisely *Húsdrápa*'s task to illustrate in words. In other words: Ulf Uggason's task was to represent a faithful copy of the artwork's particulars in words and extol the symbolic-allegoric elements for the guests' entertainment as though they were real. What is left of *Húsdrápa* confirms my opinion of

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[103] Here Rydberg is referring to the statement in *Skáldskaparmál* 5: "Ulf Uggason composed a long passage in *Húsdrápa* based on the story of Baldur" (Anthony Faulkes, *Edda*), which indeed suggests that Snorri was not aware of the circumstances of the composition of the poem.

[104] No verses of *Húsdrápa* are directly preserved in *Gylfaginning*; however, a comparison of the verses preserved in *Skáldskaparmál* with Snorri's narrative account in *Gylfaginning* makes it clear that Snorri had these verses in mind when he wrote the corresponding prose.

[105] In an apparent reference to *Húsdrápa* 6, which speaks of Thor's fishing expedition for the Midgard serpent and which is generally understood to mean that Thor slew the Midgard serpent during the fishing expedition, Snorri writes: "But Thor threw his hammer after [the serpent], and they say that he struck off his head by the sea-bed. But I think in fact the contrary is correct to report to you that the Midgard serpent lives still and lies in the encircling sea." [*Gylfaginning* 48, Faulkes' translation]. Noticeably, this statement immediately precedes Snorri's retelling of the Baldur myth in *Gylfaginning* 49, lending support to Rydberg's supposition that *Húsdrápa* was the ultimate source of Snorri's Baldur myth and that Snorri misunderstood the nature of the poem, taking literally what was meant symbolically.

[106] The surviving portion of *Húsdrápa* that speaks of the Baldur myth only concerns the funeral procession, thus this is the only direct evidence we have for examination.

the poem's nature. In itself, this poem is the most dry and wooden opus one can imagine; the intrigue and entertainment for the guests can only have lain in the skald extolling what was meant symbolically as if it were real.

When the artist wanted to make clear that one of the many figures that took part in the funeral procession was Odin, it was not enough to depict him riding the eight-footed Sleipnir, because Sleipnir had also carried another rider (Svipdag-Skirnir, Svipdag-Hermod), so he let Odin be accompanied by his ravens, which are characteristic birds for him, and by valkyries. A figure on an eight-footed horse is unmistakably Odin, if he also has ravens and mounted spear-bearing women in his company. Thus, Ulf Uggason sang that not only valkyries, but also ravens, took part in the funeral procession. That *Gylfaginning*'s author gathered these features from Ulf Uggason is made clear by the following lines in *Húsdrápa*:

Ríðr at vilgi víðu
víðfrær (en mér líða)
Hroptatýr (of hapta
hróðrmál) sonar báli.

"Swiftly the Far-Famed Hropta-tyr [Odin] rides to the broad pyre of his son; Through my cheeks flow songs of praise."[107]

Þar hykk sigrunni svinnum
sylgs valkyrjur fylga
heilags tafns ok hrafna.
Hlaut innan svá minnum.

"There I think valkyries and ravens follow the wise victory-tree [Odin] to the blood of holy Baldur. With old tales the hall was painted."

Here both valkyries and ravens are mentioned as accompanying Odin as he rides to his son's pyre.

After Odin, Frigg and valkyries, one saw Frey in the row of pictures. Since he is spoken of in the myth as a remarkable rider, one would expect him to be represented on horseback in Hjardarholt's pictorial work.[108] But all the Aesir and Vanir, with the exception of Thor, are riders,[109] and to place Frey on a horse would not distinguish him sufficiently from the other gods, of which at least two, Odin and Heimdall, were depicted as riders. Probably for this reason the artist let Frey be pulled by his gold-glittering boar, which was his symbol and which clearly distinguished him as the beneficial Vana-god. When *Gylfaginning* says: *En Freyr ók í kerru með gelti þeim er Gullinbursti heitir*

[107] The translations from *Húsdrápa* are modified after those of Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur (1916) from *Skáldskaparmál* 2, 3, and 8.

[108] In *Lokasenna* 37, Týr calls Frey the "best of all bold riders." Frey is said to ride the horse Bloodyhoof in two skaldic verses preserved in *Skáldskaparmál* 58.

[109] *Grímnismál* 29, 30 which states that all the gods, presumably including Frey, ride over Bifröst daily to judge by Urd's well, with the exception of Thor who must wade.

("While Frey drove in a chariot pulled by a boar called Gullinbursti"), one finds the source of this in *Húsdrápa*'s lines:

Ríðr á börg til borgar
böðfróðr sonar Óðins
Freyr ok fólkum stýrir
fyrst ok gulli byrstum

"The battle-bold Frey rides first on the golden-bristled boar to the bale-fire of Odin's son [Baldur] and leads the people."

After Frey, Heimdall came on horseback. Here, *Húsdrápa* is also the source:

Kostigr ríðr at kesti
kynfróðs þeim er goð hlóðu
hrafnfreistaðr heti
Heimdallr at mög fallin.

"The lordly Heimdall rides his horse to the pyre built by the gods for the fallen son of Odin, the All-wise Raven-ruler."

Gylfaginning says further that when the gods would launch Baldur's ship, Hringhorn, on which his pyre was prepared, they were unable to do so and had to summon the giantess Hyrrokkin from Jötunheim, who came and with a shove pushed the ship out into the water with such force that the rollers on which it stood burst into flames and the earth shook. From Jötunheim, she came riding on a wolf with vipers as reins and, when she leapt off the steed, Odin had to send four berserkers in order to hold the wolf, which they were unable to do without knocking it down.

Even this is gathered from *Húsdrápa,* and is thus a description of one of Hjardarholt's artworks. *Húsdrápa* says:

Fullöflug lét fjalla
fram haf-Sleipnir þramma
Hildr, en Hropts of gildar
hjámelda mar feldu

"The very mighty Hild of the mountain [giantess] made the sea-Sleipnir [ship] roll forward, while the champions of Hropts's [Odin's] helm-fire felled her steed."[110]

Further it is said that when Hyrrokkin, with her grasp on the prow, succeeded in pushing the ship out to sea, Thor became angry and wanted to crush her head with his hammer and that when he hallowed the pyre with his hammer, a dwarf named *Litr* leapt in front of his feet and Thor gave him a kick, so that he flew into the fire.

The whole of this episode forms a chain of absurdities if one considers it an account of what the myth actually related about Baldur's funeral pyre. That one giantess

[110] *Skáldskaparmál* 49.

was stronger than Thor and all the Aesir combined is something that a faithful heathen could never fall for. What the myth relates about Thor most definitely contradicts this. It is absurd to think that the gods would humiliate themselves by sending a message to their enemies, the giants, to solicit such help from a giantess and more absurd that Thor would want to kill her when she had done them the service they requested of her. For what reason the benevolent Thor would kick a dwarf into the fire cannot be understood, and his behavior in this instance as in the other is ill-suited for such a solemn and moving occasion, during which it was supposed to have occurred.

On the other hand, all this is explained satisfactorily once we are convinced through *Húsdrápa* that it is the artwork at Hjardarholt, and not the myth, that explains this behavior.

The giantess' name, Hyrrokkin, tells us who she is. The name, a compound of *hyrr* (fire) and *rjúka* (smoke), means the fire-smoked and is, as I demonstrated in the first volume of this work (no. 35), an epithet of the thrice-burnt in vain Gullveig-*Heiðr*, the myth's female Loki. Hyrrokkin has avenged herself on the gods by causing Baldur's death with Loki's assistance. When the artist allows her to push Baldur's ship out to sea, he has thereby given understandable symbolic expression to the mythic fact that, if Hyrrokkin did not exist, Hringhorn would never have been put out to sea with Baldur's corpse, because then Baldur would not have fallen victim to the giant world's treachery.

By the description, one learns what means the artist used to make clear that the giantess was Hyrrokkin. He allows her to come riding on a wolf, in order to point out that she is a giantess. But since wolves are also the steeds of other thurs-women, this was not enough. The wolf that is Hyrrokkin's must be the strongest and most dangerous of all, namely her son Fenrir. Therefore, he is depicted as knocked down and held by four of Odin's "berserkers," that is to say Aesir or einherjes. Further, the artist drew flames beneath the ship, because Hyrrokkin was burnt by the gods and Baldur's death was one way she extracted vengeance, as was Hringhorn's launching with Baldur's pyre on board. For greater clarification, the artist let Thor raise his hammer toward the giantess, because according to the myth Thor killed Hyrrokkin with his hammer. Compare *Völuspá* 27 with Thorbjörn Disarskald's verse in *Skáldskaparmál* 4, which lists Hyrrokkin among the giantesses killed by Thor.

By the ship's stern the artist had applied a figure that *Húsdrápa* called *Litr* and that *Gylfaginning* took to be a dwarf, because the name Litr appears in the dwarf-list, *Völuspá* 12. But, Litr, among other things, also means salmon and is used as a byname of Loki who of course appears in salmon-guise. For the same reason *Hæingr*, salmon, is also a byname of Loki.[111] When Egil Skallagrimsson had to save his life by means of a song of praise to Erik Bloodaxe, he compares his head with Loki's, when it was put at stake in a wager with Sindri: *Þó bólstrverð of bera þorðak maka hæings*: Yet I dare offer the county's king a pillow-prize, corresponding to Hæing's (pillow-prize i.e. the head).[112] As

[111] *Litr* ("colored") does not mean salmon, and since Rydberg provides no supporting evidence here, his claim is untenable. The name occurs as a dwarf-name in *Völuspá* and a *Þula*; as a giant's name in a kenning found in *Ragnarsdrápa* 18 (quoted below); and as an ox-name in a *Þula*. Since this and the following examples are incorrect, Loki's identification with Litr, while logical, is unsupported.

[112] This is from the 6th verse of *Arinbjarnarkviða* found in chapter 80 of *Egil's Saga*, Rydberg seems to have confused the circumstances of this poem's composition with that of Egil's *Höfuðlausn* (Head Ransom). The modern accepted reading of this verse does not agree with his interpretation.

a Loki-epithet, Litr is used in a verse ascribed to Bragi skald, *Skáldskaparmál* 42, and has reference to Thor as he fished for both Loki and his son, the Midgard serpent:

Þá forns Litar flotna
á fangbóða öngli
hrökkviáll of hrokkinn
hekk Völsunga drekku

"The wriggling serpent [Midgard serpent] of the Völsung's drink [poison] writhed, when on the hook of the foe [Thor] of old Lit's kin [the giants]."[113]

In applying Hyrrokkin by the funeral ship's prow and a salmon as a symbol of Loki down by its stern the artist thus wanted to express that Hyrrokkin and Loki were the ones that actually caused Baldur's death and thereby brought it about that his ship with his own pyre onboard was pushed out into the sea on its rollers. That Thor is represented kicking the salmon into the fire has its explanation in that Thor was the one who dispatched Loki out of Franangr's falls into the cavern of subterranean fire where he lies bound until Ragnarök as revenge for his misdeeds.

However, it was Hödur's mistletoe arrow that killed Baldur. That Hödur acted without evil intent and only as a blind tool of Gullveig (Hyrrokkin) and Loki, the artist expressed in this manner: he had Hödur stand with his eyes closed while shooting and placed Loki beside him, directing his weapon. By this method, also used by other symbolic artists, he illustrated the mythic circumstance that Hödur was Baldur's *handbani* (actual murderer), but Loki his *ráðbani* (contriver of murder).

After all this, it ought to be clear how *Gylfaginning*'s author came to the conclusion that Hödur was blind. Hödur's supposed blindness is only one of many examples of false conclusions drawn from a misunderstanding of symbolic artwork or symbolic expressions. In all literatures and among all people, the word *blind* not only has its original physical meaning, but also a derived intellectual meaning, and when symbolic artwork wants to refer to the later, it does so by making use of the former. One faces danger blind, if one does not know of it or wants to know nothing of it. One rushes into battle blind (*cæcus ruere in certamen,* Livy), when one does not weigh his powers against the opponent's. One acts blindly when, as the tool of another, he unintentionally injures one that he loves. In this sense, Hödur was blind when Baldur fell before his weapon, and it was this that the creator of the Hjardarholt-artwork wanted to say, when he let Hödur fire the deadly shot with his eyes closed and placed the murder's conscious killer, Loki, by his side.

That Loki would actually stand beside him and direct his weapon, the myth cannot have said, because from the standpoint of epic coherence it is an impossibility. The Aesir, standing around Baldur in a *mannhringr* (circle of people), would of course immediately have seen whom the murder's actual author was, whereas the epic connection demands that Loki, as cunningly as possible, hide his involvement in the

[113] Here Litr is understood as a generic giant's name. The phrase in question calls Thor "the foe of old Lit's kin." If Rydberg is correct and Litr is a byname of Loki, who himself is a giant, this passage is the only piece of evidence left to support it.

death and choose Hödur to carry it out, because he previously was Baldur's rival for Nanna and therefore could be mistaken to entertain plans of revenge against his brother.

That hosts of rime-thurses and mountain-giants, enemies of the gods and the world according to the myth, would have been guests in Asgard when Baldur was cremated is improbable. But it is nevertheless understandable that the artwork at Hjardarholt allowed them to do so, because the artist could not express in a better way that Baldur's death plunged the world, including most of Jötunheim's inhabitants, into sorrow.

The way in which *Gylfaginning* misunderstood Ulf Uggason's description of the pictures in the hall at Hjardarholt is not an isolated occurrence. On the contrary, one can point out another incorrect statement and absurd story that arose through a misunderstanding of symbolic artwork. In the legend about the blind Longinus, one finds an apt parallel to *Gylfaginning'*s tale about the blind Hödur.

The legend of Longinus is tied to the *Gospel of Saint John* 19:34 "But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water flowed out." From the beginning of the 5th century, there is evidence of the existence of a story, according to which the warrior was named Longinus. Perhaps the story is even older. The name also includes the centurion that commanded the soldiers and who, when he witnessed signs at Jesus' death, said: "Truly he was the Son of God" (*Matthew* 27:54). In a variant of Nicodemus' Gospel found in *Codex Mon. B.* (See *Thilos Codex Apocr. New Test*.), it is the soldier who is called Longinus; in two other codices of the same Gospel, it is the centurion; the oldest existing codex of the apocryphal writing in question, *Codex Par. A*., knows nothing about Longinus at all.

Now, was it assumed from the beginning that the soldier or centurion Longinus was physically blind? By no means. The assumption that an enlisted Roman centurion or an enlisted Roman soldier could perform his tour of duty physically blind is in itself so improbable that it could not have arisen spontaneously.

In Bugge's "*Studier över de nordiske gude- og heltesagns oprindelse*" p. 37, he writes: "*Det kan her være os ligegyldigt, om det fra først af kun har været forstaaet aandeligt, at Stridsmanden, som stak med Spyd, fik sit Syn ved Kristi Blod; I Middelalderen blev det ialfald almindelig tillige legemligt*." ("It is unimportant here if the story that the soldier who wounded Christ with a spear and gained his sight through Christ's blood was only understood figuratively; at any rate, in the Middle Ages, it was commonly understood in the literal sense as well.").

Bugge's statement that it was commonly presumed that Longinus was blind in the Middle Ages is not correct. Contrary evidence exists that during many centuries of the Middle Ages, it was presumed that Longinus was able to see. Evidence that one believed him to have been blind first turns up during the later part of the Crusade period. An old legend relates that when the blood and water were flowing out of Jesus' side, Longinus caught the fluid in a lead box. In the year 804 in Mantua, when Longinus' body should have disintegrated, his remains were sought and found beside the lead box *cum sacro cruore*.[114] The narrative about this mentions nothing of Longinus' blindness; on the contrary, it assumes he was able to see when he stuck the spear in Jesus' side, because he had a lead box in order to catch the expected fluids. A poem translated from Greek to Latin, ascribed to the fourth century poet, Apollinaris Laodicenus, depicts Longinus as

[114] "with sacred blood."

able to see when he makes the spear thrust and allows him to catch Jesus' blood with both hands and moisten his eyes with it, not to work some healing act on his eyes, but *lustrationis scilicet ritu sacre* (as a rite of purification). Hrabanus Maurus (†856) mentions one *libellus martyrii St. Longini* ("Booklet of the Martyr St. Longinus") and its contents. Not a word there suggests that Longinus was blind and became cured by Jesus' blood. On the contrary, it says that when he *saw* the signs that happened at the savior's death, he believed in him. Afterward he would become a monk and suffer martyrdom in Cappadocia. The same narrative in the same words is found 50 years later in the Martyrologies of Notker, an abbot of St. Gallen. The Bollandist *Acta Sanctorum* rebukes him for referring to Isidorus Hispalensis[115] (†636) as the source of the statement that Longinus was blind. Isidorus says nothing of this. *Acta Sanctorum* cites two Latin manuscripts in which say that Longinus *saw* the signs that happened, believed in the Lord, and *thereafter* penetrated Jesus' side, shouting "This is truly the Son of God."

As a result of the research into the matter, the Bollandist work says that "the ignorance of the masses only gradually applied the spiritual blindness to the physical." Baptista Mantuanus (1448-1516) says that Longinus eyes were running or inflamed (*oculi lippi*) and his sight weak (*lumen tardum*). In the realm of literature, Martinus of Troppau ("Polonus" †1279),[116] in his first chronicle, first mentions the story that Longinus was blind and became healed through Jesus' blood dripping into his eyes. Through this chronicle, which was one of the most studied books in the 14th century, the story spread over the whole of Western Europe. That it arose through a misunderstanding of a symbolic artwork is the only reasonable explanation at hand. An Irish manuscript in St. Gallen from the 9th century shows Christ on the cross and the soldier who stabs him with a spear in the side. From the wound, a red zigzag line runs to the soldier's eyes (see Bugge "*Studier*," pg. 36). But from the same monastery and from the same and the following century, we have literary evidence that there was no legend known in which Longinus was physically blind. Then and long after, it was understood that a description such as the one mentioned above was symbolic and meant to say that the heathen soldier who stuck Jesus in the side had his eyes opened that Jesus was the son of God by the signs he witnessed. But there finally came a time when such symbols caused the same misunderstanding in regard to the Roman soldier as *Gylfaginning*'s understanding of Ulf Uggason's poem caused in regard to Hödur. That a blind man used a spear or a bow in order to strike a target is in itself so improbable that it must be made intelligible in some manner. For this reason, one wrote that a soldier who had his senses intact placed a spear in Longinus' hands and directed him as to how he should make the thrust. It was the only explanation possible here. Thus we find the legend used in roughly the same way as *Gylfaginning*'s that used a motif taken from Ulf Uggason's poem about the artwork at Hjardarholt. It is not impossible that the legend in this latest form was known by *Gylfaginning'*s author, who was an older contemporary to Martinus of Troppau, and that it contributed to the motif taken from the heathen poem becoming misunderstood and handled as it was.

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[115] Saint Isidore of Seville (c.560 - 636)

[116] Martinus Polonus (Martinus Oppaviensis or Martin of Troppau), author of *Chroniconpontificum et imperatorum*, The Chronicle of Popes and Emperors.