

## ATLAKVIÐA (*The Lay of Atli*)

### Bellows' Introduction (1936)

There are two Atli poems in the *Codex Regius*, the *Atlakvitha* (Lay of Atli) and the *Atlamol* (Ballad of Atli). The poems are not preserved or quoted in any other old manuscript, but they were extensively used by the compilers of the *Volsungasaga*. In the manuscript superscription to each of these poems appears the word "Greenland," which has given rise to a large amount of argument. The scribe was by no means infallible, and in this case his statement proves no more than that in the period round 1300 there was a tradition that these two poems originated in the Greenland settlement.

The two Atli poems deal with substantially the same material: the visit of the sons of Gjuki to Atli's court, their deaths, and the subsequent revenge of their sister, Guthrun, Atli's wife, on her husband. The shorter of the two, the *Atlakvitha*, tells the story with little elaboration; the *Atlamol*, with about the same narrative basis, adds many details, some of them apparently of the poet's invention, and with a romantic, not to say sentimental, quality quite lacking in the *Atlakvitha*. Both poems are sharply distinguished from the rest of the collection by their metrical form, which is the *Malahattr* (used irregularly also in the *Harbarthsljoth*), employed consistently and smoothly in the *Atlamol*, and with a considerable mixture of what appear to be *Fornyrthislag* lines (cf. Introduction) in the *Atlakvitha*.

It is altogether probable that both poems belong to the eleventh century, the shorter *Atlakvitha* being generally dated from the first quarter thereof, and the longer *Atlamol* some fifty years or more later. In each case the poet was apparently a Christian; in the *Atlamol* (stanza 82) Guthrun expresses her readiness to die and "go into another light," and in the *Atlakvitha* there is frequent use of mythological names (e.g., Valhall, Hliithskjolf) with an evident lack of understanding of their relation to the older gods. These facts fit the theory of a Greenland origin exceedingly well, for the Greenland settlement grew rapidly after the first explorations of Eirik the Red, which were in 982-985, and its most flourishing period was in the eleventh century. The internal evidence, particularly in the case of the *Atlamol*, points likewise to an origin remote from Iceland, Norway, and the "Western Isles"; and the two poems are sufficiently alike so that, despite the efforts of Finnur Jonsson and others to separate them, assigning one to Greenland and the other to Norway or elsewhere, it seems probable that the manuscript statement is correct in both instances, and that the two Atli poems did actually originate in Greenland. An interesting account of this Greenland settlement is given in William Hovgaard's *Voyages of the Norsemen to America*, published by the American-Scandinavian Foundation in 1914, and an extraordinarily vivid picture of the sufferings of the early settlers appears in Maurice Hewlett's *Thorgils*, taken from the *Floamannasaga*.

From the standpoint of narrative material there is little that is distinctively Norse in either the *Atlakvitha* or the *Atlamol*. The story is the one outlined in the prose *Drap Niflunga* (largely based on these two poems), representing almost exclusively the southern blending of the Attila and Burgundian legends (cf. introductory note to *Gripisspo*). In the *Atlakvitha*, indeed, the word "Burgundians" is actually used. Brynhild is not mentioned in either poem; Sigurth's name appears but once, in the *Atlamol*. Thus the material goes directly back to its South-Germanic origins, with little of the Northern making-over which resulted in such extensive changes in most parts of the Sigurth story. The general atmosphere, on the other hand, particularly in the *Atlamol*, is essentially Norse.

As has been said, the *Atlakvitha* is metrically in a chaotic state, the normal *Malahattr* lines being frequently interspersed with lines and even stanzas which apparently are of the older *Fornyrthislag* type. How much of this confusion is due to faulty transmission is uncertain, but it has been suggested that the composer of the *Atlakvitha* made over in *Malahattr* an older Atli poem in *Fornyrthislag*, and this suggestion has much to recommend it. That he worked on the basis of an older poem is, indeed, almost certain, for in oral prose tradition a far larger number of distinctively Norse traits would unquestionably have crept in than are found in the material of the *Atlakvitha*. As for the *Atlamol*, here again the poet seems to have used an older poem as his basis, possibly the *Atlakvitha* itself, although in that case he must have had other material as well, for there are frequent divergences in such matters as proper names. The translation of the *Atlakvitha* is rendered peculiarly difficult by the irregularity of the metre, by the evident faultiness of the transmission, and above all by the exceptionally large number of words found nowhere else in Old Norse, involving much guesswork as to their meanings. The notes do not attempt to indicate all the varying suggestions made by editors and commentators as to the reconstruction of defective stanzas and the probable meanings of obscure passages; in cases which are purely or largely guesswork the notes merely point out the uncertainty without cataloguing the proposed solutions.

## OUTLINE

[*line numbers according to Bellows*]

P1	Summary of forthcoming story
1-2	Atli Sends an Emissary to Gunnar
3-5	Atli's Summons Given, Gifts Offered
6-7	Gunnar Scoffs
8	Hogni Receives Guthrún's Ring
9-11	Gunnar Rises to the Challenge
12-13	The Gjúkings journey forth
14-15	Arrival at Atli's hall
16-17	Guthrún's Warning
18	Gunnar's Defiance
19-20	Gunnar Captured / Hogni Fights On
21	Atli asks a Ransom for Gunnar's Life
22-26	Gunnar Demands Hogni's Heart (as Proof of his Death)
27-29	Gunnar Refuses to give up the Rhinegold
30-31	Gunnar taken away by wagon
32	Gudrún's Curse
33-34	Gunnar cast into a Dungeon, plays a Harp
35	Atli Returns Home
36-40	Guthrún's Special Banquet Feast
41	The Huns' Reaction /
42	Guthrún's Gold-Giving
43	Atli Drunk
44-45	Guthrún Slays Atli & Burns the Hall
46	Guthrún's End

Thorpe (1866)	Bellows (1936)	Hollander (1962)
<p>Gudrun, Giuki's daughter, avenged her brothers, as is well known. She first killed Atli's sons, and afterwards Atli himself, and burnt the palace with all the household. On these events was this lay composed.</p> <p>1. Atli sent riding a messenger to Gunnar, A crafty man, Knefrud was his name. To Giuki's courts he came, and to Gunnar's hall, To the seats of state,<sup>1</sup> and the glad potation:</p> <p>2. There drank the courtiers wine in their Valhall— But the guileful ones<sup>2</sup> silence kept—the Huns' wrath they<sup>3</sup> feared. / Then said Knefrud, with chilling voice:— The southern warrior on a high bench sat—</p>	<p>[P1] Guthrun, Gjuki's daughter, avenged her brothers,<sup>11</sup> as has become well known. She slew first Atli's sons, and thereafter she slew Atli, and burned the hall with his whole company. Concerning this was the following poem made:</p> <p>1. Atli sent   of old to Gunnar<sup>12</sup> A keen-witted rider,   Knefroth<sup>13</sup> did men call him; To Gjuki's home came he   and to Gunnar's dwelling, With benches round the hearth,<sup>14</sup>   and to the beer so sweet.</p> <p>2. Then the followers, hiding   their falseness,<sup>15</sup> all drank Their wine in the war-hall,<sup>16</sup>   of the Huns' wrath wary; And Knefroth spake loudly,   his words were crafty, The hero from the south,   on the high bench sitting:</p>	<p>Guthrún, Gjúki's daughter, avenged her brothers, a deed which has become widely famed. She first slew Atli's sons, then she slew Atli himself and burned his hall, and all his court in it. Of these matters this poem telleth.</p> <p>1. Of yore sent Atli on errand to Gunnar A cunning king's man—Knéfræth was he hight; To Gjúki's court came he, and to Gunnar's beer hall, To the benches hearth-girding,<sup>109</sup> to the beer of welcome.</p> <p>2. The doughty ones<sup>110</sup> drank, their dark thoughts hiding, In the hall of Gunnar, fearing Hunnish wrath. Called out the Knéfræth with coldhearted words— Was he sent from Southland—as he sate on high-seat:</p>

<p>3. "Atli has sent me hither on his errand riding On a bit-gripping steed, through the unknown Murkwood, To pray you, Gunnar! that to his bench ye come, With helms of state, Atli's home to visit.</p> <p>4. "Shields ye there can choose, and smooth-shaven spears, Gold-red helms, and of Huns a multitude, Silver-gilt saddle-cloths, sarks gory-red, The dart's obstruction, and bit-gripping steeds.</p> <p>5. "The plain he will also give you, the broad Gnitaeid, Whistling javelins, and gilded prows, Vast treasures, and Danp's towns, With that famed forest, which men the Murkwood call."</p> <p>6. Gunnar his head then turned, and to Hogni said: "What counselest thou, bold warrior? now suchlike we hear? / Of no gold I knew on Gnita's heath, To which we possess not other equal.</p> <p>7. "Seven halls have we filled with swords, Of each of which the hilt is gold. My horse I know the best, and my sword the keenest; My bow adorns my seat, my corslets are of gold, My helm and shield the brightest, brought from the hall of Kiar: / Mine alone are better than all the Hunnish ones.</p> <p>8. "What thinkest thou the woman<sup>4</sup> means, by sending us a ring / In a wolf's clothing wrapt? I think that she caution enjoins. / Wolf's hair I found twined in the red-gold ring: Wolfish is the way we on our errand ride."</p> <p>9. No sons persuaded Gunnar, nor other kinsman, Interpreters nor counsellors, nor those who potent were. Then spake Gunnar, as beseemed a king, Great in his mead-hall, from his large soul:</p> <p>10. "Rise now up, Fjornir! let along the benches pass The golden cups of heroes, from the attendants' hands.</p> <p>11. "The wolf shall rule the Niflungs' heritage, O bearded sages! if Gunnar perish; Black-coated bears earth's fruit tear with their teeth, To the dogs' delight, if Gunnar come not back."</p> <p>12. Honoured men, weeping led The land's ruler from the Huns' court. Then said Hogni's youthful heir: "Go now,</p>	<p>3. "Now Atli has sent me   his errand to ride, On my bit-champing steed   through Myrkwood the secret,<sup>17</sup> / To bid you, Gunnar,   to his benches to come, With helms round the hearth,<sup>18</sup>   and Atli's home seek.</p> <p>4. "Shields shall ye choose there,   and shafts made of ash-wood, Gold-adorned helmets,   and slaves<sup>19</sup> out of Hunland, Silver-gilt saddle-cloths,   shirts of bright scarlet,<sup>20</sup> With lances and spears too,   and bit-champing steeds.</p> <p>5. "The field shall be given you   of wide Gnitaeith,<sup>21</sup> With loud-ringing lances,   and stems<sup>22</sup> gold-o'er-laid, Treasures full huge,   and the home of Danp,<sup>23</sup> And the mighty forest   that Myrkwood<sup>24</sup> is called."</p> <p>6. His head turned Gunnar,   and to Hogni he said: "What thy counsel, young hero,   when such things we hear? / No gold do I know   on Gnitaeith lying So fair that other   its equal we have not.</p> <p>7. "We have seven halls,   each of swords is full, (And all of gold   is the hilt of each;) My steed is the swiftest,   my sword is sharpest, My bows adorn benches,   my byrnies are golden, <sup>25</sup>My helm is the brightest   that came from Kjar's<sup>26</sup> hall, (Mine own is better   than all the Huns' treasure.)"</p> <p>Hogni spake:<sup>27</sup></p> <p>8. "What seeks she<sup>28</sup> to say,   that she sends us a ring, Woven with a wolf's hair?   methinks it gives warning; In the red ring a hair   of the heath-dweller<sup>29</sup> found I, Wolf-like shall our road be   if we ride on this journey."</p> <p>9. Not eager were his comrades,   nor the men of his kin,<sup>30</sup> The wise nor the wary,   nor the warriors bold. But Gunnar spake forth   as befitted a king, Noble in the beer-hall,   and bitter his scorn:</p> <p>10. "Stand forth now, Fjornir!<sup>31</sup>   and hither on the floor The beakers all golden   shalt thou bring to the warriors. [Give us to drink in great cups, for it may well be That this shall be our last feast.]<sup>32</sup></p> <p>11. "The wolves then shall rule   the wealth of the Niflungs,<sup>33</sup> / Wolves aged and grey-hued,   if Gunnar is lost, / And black-coated bears<sup>34</sup>   with rending teeth bite, And make glad the dogs,<sup>35</sup>   if Gunnar returns not."<sup>36</sup></p> <p>12. A following gallant   fared forth with the ruler, Yet they wept as their home<sup>37</sup>   with the hero they left; And the little heir   of Hogni called loudly:</p>	<p>3. "Atli hath sent me his errand to ride, On charger bit-champing, through cheerless Myrkvith,<sup>111</sup> To bid you, Gunnar, that to his benches ye come, With helmets ring-dight,<sup>112</sup> to the halls of Atli.</p> <p>4. "Shields may ye choose there, spearshafts of ash tree, Eke helmets gold-burnished, sword blades full many, Silver-gilt saddle cloths, Welsh sarks gory red, Darts and barbed spears, and bit-champing steeds.</p> <p>5. "He will give you the gold<sup>113</sup> of Gnita Heath vast, Will give shrilling shafts and ship-prows<sup>114</sup> gilded— Much that is hoarded and hidden, eke the halls of Danp,<sup>115</sup> And the mighty forest which is Myrkvith hight."</p> <p>6. His head turned Gunnar, and to Hogni said: "What sayest thou, young hero, when of such we hear? Red gold I ween not on Gnita Heath hidden But we two do own of it even as much.</p> <p>7. "Seven lofts have we, with swords filled each one, Whose hilts are made of heavy gold; My steed I ween swiftest, and my sword sharpest, Are my bows bench-seemly,<sup>116</sup> my byrnies all golden; And my helmet ring-dight, from the hall of Kíar,<sup>117</sup> To me liefer is than thy liege's hoard."</p> <p>(Hogni said:)</p> <p>8. "What, pray, meant our sister to send us a finger ring All wound with wolf's hair? Some warning it betokens.<sup>118</sup> The heath dweller's hair was hanging on it: Wolfish would be our way to the Huns."</p> <p>9.<sup>119</sup>Neither whetted nor letted the lordly kinsmen, Nor did faithful friends further the emprise; Quoth then Gunnar as a king befitteth, And a mighty warrior, in his mead hall sitting:</p> <p>10. "Arise now, Fjornir!<sup>120</sup> Thou shalt fill with mead, And hand to the heroes, the horns all golden. (Let us wine drink unwincing, for well may it be That in this world ne'er more ye thanes sit together.)<sup>121</sup></p> <p>11.<sup>122</sup> "The Niflung gold hoard old grey-coated wolves May grasp greedily, once Gunnar is fallen, And black-skinned bears, biting with their fangs, To god packs give game if Gunnar return not."</p> <p>12. The lord of the land was led out by weeping, Faithful kinsmen from the court within. Said then the last-born son of Hogni:<sup>123</sup></p>
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<p>Prudent and prosperous, whither your wishes lead."</p> <p>13. The warriors made their bit-gripping steeds Over the mountains fly, through the unknown Murkwood. The whole Hunnish forest trembled where'er the warriors rode; / Over the shrubless, all-green plains they sped.</p> <p>14. Atli's land they saw, and the high watch-towers; Bikki's people stood on that lofty fortress; The south people's hall was round with benches set, With well-bound bucklers, and white shields, the javelin's obstruction. / There Atli drank wine in his Valhall: His guards sat without, Gunnar and his men to watch, Lest they there should come with yelling dart, To excite their prince to conflict.</p> <p>15. Their sister forthwith saw, when the hall they / Had entered, her brothers both--beer had she little drunken-- "Betrayed art thou now, Gunnar! though strong, how wilt thou contend / With the Huns' deadly wiles? Go quickly from this hall!</p> <p>16. "Better hadst thou, Gunnar! in corslet come, Than with helm of state, to see the home of Atli; Thou in the saddle wouldst have sat whole sun-bright days, And o'er the pallid dead let the Norns weep, The Hunnish shield-maids misery suffer; But Atli himself thou shouldst into the serpent-pen have cast; / But now the serpent-pen is for you two reserved."</p> <p>17. "Sister! 'tis now too late the Niflungs to assemble, Long 'tis to seek the aid of men, Of valiant heroes, over the rugged fells of Rhine."</p> <p>18. Then the Burgundians' friends<sup>5</sup> Gunnar seized, In fetters laid, and him fast bound.</p> <p>19. Hogni hewed down seven, with the keen sword, But the eighth he thrust into the raging fire. So should a valiant man defend himself from foes.</p> <p>20. Hogni had Gunnar's hands<sup>6</sup> protected. The bold chief they asked, if the Goths' lord Would with gold his life redeem?</p> <p>21. "Hogni's heart in my hand shall lie,</p>	<p>"Go safe now, ye wise ones,   wherever ye will!"<sup>38</sup></p> <p>13. Then let the bold heroes   their bit-champing horses /On the mountains gallop,   and through Myrkwood<sup>39</sup> the secret; All Hunland was shaken   where the hard-souled ones rode, On the whip-fearers<sup>40</sup> fared they   through fields that were green.</p> <p>14. Then they saw Atli's halls,<sup>41</sup>   and his watch-towers<sup>42</sup> high, / On the walls so lofty   stood the warriors of Buthli;<sup>43</sup> The hall of the southrons   with seats was surrounded, With targets bound   and shields full bright.<sup>44</sup></p> <p>15. Mid weapons and lances   did Atli his wine<sup>45</sup> In the war-hall drink,   without were his watchmen, For Gunnar they waited,   if forth he should go, With their ringing spears   they would fight with the ruler.</p> <p>16. This their sister saw,   as soon as her brothers Had entered the hall,--   little ale had she drunk: "Betrayed art thou, Gunnar!   what guard hast thou, hero, 'Gainst the plots of the Huns?   from the hall flee swiftly!</p> <p>17.<sup>46</sup> "Brother, 'twere far better   to have come in byrnie, With thy household<sup>47</sup> helmed,   to see Atli's home, And to sit in the saddle   all day 'neath the sun, (That the sword-norns<sup>48</sup> might weep   for the death-pale warriors, And the Hunnish shield-maids   might shun not the sword,) And send Atli himself   to the den of the snakes;<sup>49</sup> (Now the den of the snakes   for thee is destined.)</p> <p>Gunnar spake:<sup>50</sup> 18. "Too late is it, sister,   to summon the Niflungs, Long is it to come   to the throng of our comrades, The heroes gallant,   from the hills of the Rhine."<sup>51</sup></p> <p>19.<sup>52</sup> Then Gunnar they seized,   and they set him in chains, The Burgundians' king,<sup>53</sup>   and fast they bound him.</p> <p>20.<sup>54</sup> Hogni slew seven   with sword so keen,<sup>55</sup> And an eighth he flung   in the fire hot;<sup>56</sup> A hero should fight   with his foemen thus, As Hogni strove   in Gunnar's behalf.<sup>57</sup></p> <p>21.<sup>58</sup> The leader they asked   if his life he fain With gold<sup>59</sup> would buy,   the king of the Goths.</p> <p>Gunnar spake:<sup>60</sup> 22. "First the heart of Hogni   shall ye lay in my hands,</p>	<p>"May no ill befall you wherever you may fare!"</p> <p>13. Through the hills the heroes in haste did spur The chargers bit-champing, through cheerless Myrkvith; Shook the Hunnish heath where they haughtily rode, Their steeds lash-fearing on green fields did trample.</p> <p>14.<sup>124</sup> Atli's halls they beheld then, the high-built towers; / On the bastions above stood Buthli's<sup>125</sup> warriors; Was the Southrons' hall with seats engirded, With long rows linked of white linden shields.</p> <p>15. Within hall, Atli (and his earls)<sup>126</sup> drank wine; Without it, his watchmen on the walls were placed, To warn him if Gunnar with war shield drew nigh, With shrilling spearshafts and unsheathed swords.</p> <p>16. Their sister first saw them as the seats they neared, Both her dear brothers—little beer had she drunk: "Betrayed art, kinsman; for how could'st thou, Gunnar, Against the Huns hold thee? From the hall flee quickly!</p> <p>17. "Better were it, brother, if in byrnie clad And ring-covered helmet, thou had'st ridden against Atli, In the saddle had'st sat all the sun-hot day, (and the raven had'st fed on reddened battlefield.)<sup>127</sup></p> <p>18. "Had'st made the women weep their war-dead heroes, And Hunnish shield-maidens to shame had'st put,<sup>128</sup> But Atli himself amongst the adders had'st thrown. Now that loathly life-end your lot will be."</p> <p>19. (Then gainsaid Gunnar, the gold-ring-breaker:)<sup>129</sup> "Too late now, sister, to summon the Niflungs: 'Twould take long to look for our liege men doughty, / For the brave ones and bold ones from the banks of the Rhine."</p> <p>20.<sup>130</sup> They held Gunnar fast, and in fetters laid Burgundy's king, and bound him firmly.</p> <p>21. Seven Hogni slew with sword sharp-cutting, The eighth he hurled into hottest fire:<sup>131</sup> So shall stouthearted thane stem the foes' tide, As 'gainst Hunnish hosts Hogni shielded Gunnar.</p> <p>22. They asked the liege if his life he would, The Gothic<sup>132</sup> king, with his gold hoard buy.</p> <p>23. (Then gainsaid Gunnar, the gold-ring-breaker:)<sup>133</sup> "First shall Hogni's heart in my hand be laid,</p>
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<p>Cut bloody from the breast of the valiant chief, The king's son, with a dull-edged knife." They the heart cut out from Hialli's breast; On a dish bleeding laid it, and it to Gunnar bare.</p> <p>23. Then said Gunnar, lord of men: "Here have I the heart of the timid Hialli, Unlike the heart of the bold Hogni; For much it trembles as in the dish it lies: It trembled more by half, while in his breast it lay."</p> <p>24. Hogni laughed, when to his heart they cut The living crest-crasher; no lament uttered he. All bleeding on a dish they laid it, and it to Gunnar bare.</p> <p>25. Calmly said Gunnar, the warrior Niflung: "Here have I the heart of the bold Hogni, Unlike the heart of the timid Hialli; For it little trembles, as in the dish it lies: It trembled less, while in his breast it lay.</p> <p>26. "So far shalt thou, Atli! be from the eyes of men As thou wilt from the treasures be. In my power alone is all the hidden Niflungs' gold, Now that Hogni lives not.</p> <p>27. "Ever was I wavering, while we both lived; Now am I so no longer, as I alone survive. Rhine shall possess men's baleful metal, the mighty stream, The As-known Niflungs' heritage. In the rolling water the choice rings shall glitter, Rather than on the hands of the Huns' children shine.</p> <p>28. "Drive your wheel-chariots, the captive is now in bonds."</p> <p>29. Atli the mighty, their sister's husband, Rode with resounding steeds, with strife-thorns<sup>7</sup> surrounded. / Gudrun perceived the heroes' peril, She from tears refrained, on entering the hall of tumult.</p> <p>30. "So be it with thee, Atli! as towards Gunnar thou hast Held the oft-sworn oaths, formerly taken— By the southward verging sun, and by Sigtyr's hill, The secluded bed of rest, and by Ullr's ring." Yet thence the more did the bit-shaker<sup>8</sup> the treasure's</p>	<p>All bloody from the breast   of the bold one cut With keen-biting sword,   from the son of the king."<sup>61</sup></p> <p>23.<sup>62</sup> They cut out the heart   from the breast of Hjalli,<sup>63</sup> On a platter they bore it,   and brought it to Gunnar.</p> <p>24. Then Gunnar spake forth,   the lord of the folk: "Here have I the heart   of Hjalli the craven, Unlike to the heart   of Hogni the valiant, For it trembles still   as it stands on the platter; Twice more did it tremble   in the breast of the man.</p> <p>25. Then Hogni laughed   when they cut out the heart Of the living helm-hammerer;<sup>64</sup>   tears he had not. On a platter they bore it,   and brought it to Gunnar.<sup>65</sup></p> <p>26. Then Gunnar spake forth,   the spear of the Niflungs:<sup>66</sup> "Here have I the heart   of Hogni the valiant, Unlike to the heart   of Hjalli the craven, Little it trembles   as it lies on the platter, Still less did it tremble   when it lay in his breast.</p> <p>27. "So distant, Atli,   from all men's eyes, Shalt thou be as thou   . . . . from the gold."<sup>67</sup></p> <p>28.<sup>68</sup> "To no one save me   is the secret known Of the Niflungs' hoard,   now Hogni is dead; Of old there were two,   while we twain were alive, Now is none but I,   for I only am living."<sup>69</sup></p> <p>29. "The swift Rhine shall hold   the strife-gold of heroes, That once was the gods',   the wealth of the Niflungs,<sup>70</sup> <sup>71</sup>In the depths of the waters   the death-rings shall glitter, And not shine on the hands   of the Hunnish men."</p> <p>Atli spake:<sup>72</sup> 30. "Ye shall bring the wagon,<sup>73</sup>   for now is he bound."</p> <p>31. On the long-maned Glaum<sup>74</sup>   rode Atli the great, About him were warriors   . . . . .<sup>75</sup> But Guthrun, akin   to the gods of slaughter,<sup>76</sup> Yielded not to her tears   in the hall of tumult.<sup>77</sup></p> <p>Guthrun spake:<sup>78</sup> 32. "It shall go with thee, Atli,   as with Gunnar thou heldest / The oaths oft-times sworn,   and of old made firm, By the sun in the south,   by Sigtyr's mountain,<sup>79</sup> By the horse of the rest-bed,<sup>80</sup>   and the ring of Ull."<sup>81</sup></p>	<p>From the bold one's breast all bloody cut, From the son of Gjúki, with sword sharp-gashing."</p> <p>24. (Beguile they would the greathearted king, / When a gibbering thrall they threw down and slaughtered:)<sup>134</sup></p> <p>25. Then said this Gunnar, Gjúki's first-born: "Here have I the heart of Hjalli the thrall, Unlike the heart of Hogni the fearless, Since much it beats on the board as it lies: But e'en more it beat in his breast as it lay."</p> <p>26. Then laughed Hogni, to the heart as they cut The shittler-of-shields, for whine he would never. (Took the hard one's then the Hunnish warriors),<sup>135</sup> On a board laid it and brought it to Gunnar.</p> <p>27. Then spoke this Gunnar, the spear-Niflung: "Here have I the heart of Hogni the fearless, Unlike the heart of Hjalli the thrall, Since little it beats on the board as it lies; But even less it beat in his breast as it lay.</p> <p>28. "As little, Atli, will eyes behold thee As our hoard in thy hands thou wilt hold ever."<sup>136</sup></p> <p>29. "To no one but me is known where lieth The hoard of the Niflungs, now Hogni lives not. Mistrust had I ever whilst we two did live: Now alone I live I no longer fear."<sup>137</sup></p> <p>30. "Let the Rhine rather the red gold hide, The fast-flowing flood, evil Fáfnir's hoard; Let the rings rather under rolling waves shine Than shine on the hands of Hunnish maidens."</p> <p>31. (Called then Atli, the king of the Huns:)<sup>138</sup> "Let the wheel wain fetch now fettered Gunnar." To his death then drew the doomed hoard-warder,<sup>139</sup> The bold brand-wielder, a bit-shaking steed.</p> <p>32. Rode Atli Glaum, his goodly charger, Hedged round by shields and shining swords; But white-armed Guthrún, sprung from gods on high, Her tears withheld as in hall she came.<sup>140</sup></p> <p>(Guthrún said:) 33. "May it go with thee, Atli, as to Gunnar thou swarest<sup>141</sup> With holiest oaths, oft and anon, By the southward sun and by Sigtyr's<sup>142</sup> cliff, By his steed-of-ease<sup>143</sup> and by Ull's temple-ring."<sup>144</sup></p>
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<p>guardian, the warrior chief, drag to death.</p> <p>31. The living prince then did a host of men Into a pen cast down, which was within With serpents over-crawled. But Gunnar there alone A harp in wrathful mood with his hand struck: The strings resounded. So should a daring chief, A ring-dispenser, gold from men withhold.</p> <p>32. Atli turned his brass-shod<sup>9</sup> steed, his home to revisit, Back from the murder. Din was in the court With horses thronged, men's weapon-song, From the heath they were come.</p> <p>33. Out then went Gudrun, Atli to meet, With a golden cup to do her duty to the king. "Thou canst, O King! joyful in thy hall receive From Gudrun the arms of the departed."</p> <p>34. The drinking-cups of Atli groaned with wine heavy, When in the hall together the Huns were counted. Long-bearded, bold, the warriors entered.</p> <p>35. Hastened the bright-faced dame to bear their potions to them, / The wondrous lady to the chiefs; And reluctantly to the pallid Atli the festal dainties offered, And uttered words of hate.</p> <p>36. "Thou, swords' dispenser! hast thy two sons' hearts, Slaughter-gory, with honey eaten. I resolved that thou, bold chief! shouldst of a human dish Eat at thy feasting, and to the place of honour send it. Henceforth thou wilt not to thy knees call Erp and Eitil, joyous with beer the two: Thou wilt not henceforth, see them from thy middle seat, Gold-dispersing, javelins shafting, Manes clipping, or horses urging."</p> <p>38. Uproar was on the benches, portentous the cry of men, Noise beneath the costly hangings. The children of the Huns wept, / All wept save Gudrun, who never wept, Or for her bear-fierce brothers, or her dear sons, Young, simple, whom she had borne to Atli.</p> <p>39. Gold scattered the swan-fair dame; With ruddy rings the household gifted. Fate she let ripen, but the bright gold flow. The woman spared not the treasure-houses.</p>	<p>33.<sup>82</sup> Then the champer of bits<sup>83</sup>   drew the chieftain great, The gold-guarder, down   to the place of death.</p> <p>34. By the warriors' host   was the living hero Cast in the den   where crawling about Within were serpents,   but soon did Gunnar With his hand in wrath   on the harp-strings smite; The strings resounded,—   so shall a hero, A ring-breaker, gold   from his enemies guard.<sup>84</sup></p> <p>35. Then Atli rode   on his earth-treading steed, Seeking his home,   from the slaughter-place; <sup>85</sup>There was clatter of hoofs   of the steeds in the court, And the clashing of arms   as they came from the field.<sup>86</sup></p> <p>36. Out then came Guthrun   to meeting with Atli, With a golden beaker   as gift to the monarch: "Thou mayst eat now, chieftain,   within thy dwelling, Blithely with Guthrun   young beasts<sup>87</sup> fresh slaughtered."</p> <p>37. The wine-heavy ale-cups   of Atli resounded, When there in the hall   the Hunnish youths<sup>88</sup> clamored, And the warriors bearded,   the brave ones, entered.<sup>89</sup></p> <p>38. Then in came the shining one,<sup>90</sup>   . . . . .<sup>91</sup> . . . . .   and drink she bore them; Unwilling and bitter   brought she food to the warrior, Till in scorn to the white-faced   Atli did she speak:</p> <p>39. "Thou giver of swords,<sup>92</sup>   of thy sons the hearts All heavy with blood   in honey<sup>93</sup> thou hast eaten; Thou shalt stomach, thou hero,   the flesh of the slain, To eat at thy feast,   and to send to thy followers.<sup>94</sup></p> <p>40. "Thou shalt never call   to thy knees again Erp or Eitil,   when merry with ale;<sup>95</sup> Thou shalt never see   in their seats again The sharers of gold<sup>96</sup>   their lances shaping, (Clipping the manes   or minding their steeds.)<sup>97</sup></p> <p>41. There was clamor on the benches,   and the cry of men, The clashing of weapons,<sup>98</sup>   and weeping of the Huns, Save for Guthrun only,   she wept not ever<sup>99</sup> For her bear-fierce brothers,   or the boys so dear, So young and so unhappy,   whom with Atli she had.<sup>100</sup></p> <p>42. Gold did she scatter,<sup>101</sup>   the swan-white one, And rings of red gold   to the followers gave she; The fate she let grow,   and the shining wealth go, Nor spared she the treasure   of the temple itself.</p>	<p>34. Living they laid into loathly dungeon, Alive with adders, the lordly Niflung: But Gunnar, unyielding, grim in his mind, With his hands did strike the harp, undaunted.<sup>145</sup> The strings rang out strongly. With stout heart thus Should highborn hero hold to his own.</p> <p>35. His horse Atli spurred, to his halls returning, The earth-stamping steed, straight from the murder. In the courtyard was din of capering chargers, Eke of clash of weapons, from the woods as they came.</p> <p>36. Out went then Guthrún forth to Atli the king, With golden goblet to greet the folk-warder: "Thou art welcome to have in thy hall, my lord, Most gladly Guthrún's young game to eat."<sup>146</sup></p> <p>37. Atli's gold cups did clink wine-filled, When the Hunnish heroes in the hall foregathered; Long-bearded henchmen benchward in strode: (Those who in Myrkheim had murdered Gunnar).<sup>147</sup></p> <p>38. Forth bore then the beer (who had borne him sons, The daughter of Niflungs.)<sup>148</sup> bedight with gold rings; Grudging she brought to the Buthlung<sup>149</sup> his meat, And unwilling; then wildly spoke these words of hate:</p> <p>39. "Now hast thou, sword-giver, of thy sons twain eaten The blood-dripping hearts, with honey seasoned; Hast swallowed the flesh of slaughtered kinsmen, As tid-bits which to the high-seat were sent you.</p> <p>40. "Wilt thou nevermore now to thy knees call the twain, Erp and Eitil, when ale hath cheered thee, Nor see them sitting on settles in hall, Gold rings dispending and spears shafts smoothing, Mastering horses and their manes shearing."<sup>150</sup></p> <p>41. Rose uproar on benches, men's angry shouts, / Wept Hunnish warriors, there was wailing 'neath hangings;<sup>151</sup> But one wept not—Guthrún, who wept not ever Her bearhearted brothers, nor her boys so dear, So young and so guileless, begot with Atli.</p> <p>42. Sowed then gold snares the swan-white lady, And with ruddy rings enriched the housecarls; To fulfill their fate she flung out treasure, Nor recked aught the woman to rob the coffers.<sup>152</sup></p>
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<p>40. Atli incautious had himself drunk weary; Weapon he had none, nor was 'gainst Gudrun guarded. Oft had their sport been better, when they lovingly Embraced each other before the nobles.</p> <p>41. With the sword's point she gave the bed of blood to drink / With death-bent hand, and the dogs loosed, Out at the hall-door drove them, And the lady wakened the household with burning brand. That vengeance she for her brothers took.</p> <p>42. To fire she then gave all that were therein, / And from her brothers' murder were from the dark den<sup>10</sup> returned. The old structures fell, the treasure-houses smoked, / The Budlungs' dwelling. Burnt too were the shield-maids within, / Their lives cut short; in the raging fire they sank.</p> <p>43. Of this enough is said. No such woman will henceforth arms again bear, To avenge her brothers. That bright woman had to three Kings of men the death-doom borne, before she died.</p> <p>Yet more clearly is this told in "Atlalalum inum Groenlenzkum" (the Groenland lay of Atli).</p>	<p>43. Unwise then was Atli,   he had drunk to wildness, No weapon did he have,   and of Guthrun bewared not; Oft their play was better   when both in gladness Each other embraced   among princes all.<sup>102</sup></p> <p>44. With her sword she gave blood   for the bed to drink, With her death-dealing hand,   and the hounds she loosed, The thralls she awakened,   and a firebrand threw In the door of the hall;   so vengeance she had.<sup>103</sup></p> <p>45. To the flames she gave all   who yet were within, / And from Myrkheim had come   from the murder of Gunnar;<sup>104</sup> The timbers old fell,   the temple<sup>105</sup> was in flames, / The dwelling of the Buthlungs,   and the shield-maids burned,<sup>106</sup> They were slain in the house,   in the hot flames they sank.</p> <p>46. Now the tale is all told,   nor in later time Will a woman in byrnie   avenge so her brothers; The fair one to three<sup>107</sup>   of the kings of the folk Brought the doom of death   ere herself she died.<sup>108</sup></p> <p>Still more is told in the Greenland ballad of Atli.</p>	<p>43. Unwary was Atli, his wits were befuddled, Had not with him his weapons, nor bewared of Guthrún. Erstwhile the athelings more ease did have, The time king and queen fondly clasped in hall.</p> <p>44. To their bridal bed she gave blood<sup>153</sup> to drink With murderous hands, and the hounds she loosed;<sup>154</sup> Into hall hurled she—the housecarls were waked— Burning firebrands—thus her brothers avenged.</p> <p>45. To the fire she gave all who within did sleep. Flaming fell then the far-famed temples,<sup>155</sup> The Buthlung's beer hall; burned eke the shield-maids, Bereft of their lives, in the roaring flames.</p> <p>46. This tale is ended; nor will ever after thus Byrnie-clad woman her brothers avenge; To death she did dear folk-lords three,<sup>156</sup> The swan-white lady, ere herself she died.</p> <p>Yet more fully is spoken (of this) in "The Greenlandish Lay of Atli."</p>
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<sup>1</sup> The epithet *aringreypr* is applied both to benches and helmets (see Strophes 3 and 16). Its meaning is doubtful: it has been rendered *iron-bound*, *brass-bound*, *hearth-encircling*, *curved like an eagle's beak*, etc. Benches and helmets of ceremony are evidently intended, probably ornamented with brass-work or figures of eagles. But to whichever substantive applied, I take its meaning to be the same.

<sup>2</sup> The messengers of Atli.

<sup>3</sup> The Giukungs.

<sup>4</sup> Gudrun: she had sent, by Atli's messengers, a ring to her brothers, as a warning, in which a wolf's hair was entwined, together with a note in runes, which were falsified by Vingi.

<sup>5</sup> Atli's men.

<sup>6</sup> That is Gunnar himself.

<sup>7</sup> Spears.

<sup>8</sup> The horse.

<sup>9</sup> The original word is *eyrskan*, a word of doubtful signification.

<sup>10</sup> The serpent-pen.

<sup>11</sup> On the marriage of Guthrun to Atli at the instigation of her brothers, Gunnar and Hogni, and on the slaying of Atli and his two sons, Erp and Eitil, cf. *Drap Niflunga* and note.

<sup>12</sup> Line 1 apparently is in *fornyrthislag*.

<sup>13</sup> Knefroth (the name is spelt in various ways, and its meaning is uncertain): in the *Atlamol* (stanza 4) there are two messengers, one named Vingi and the other unnamed; the annotator combines the two versions in the *Drap Niflunga*.

<sup>14</sup> Benches, etc.: the adjective rendered "round the hearth," which etymologically it ought to mean, is made obscure by its application to "helmets" in stanzas 3 and 17.

<sup>15</sup> Falseness: i.e., Gunnar's followers concealed their fear and hatred of the Huns at the feast; but the word may mean "fear of treachery."

<sup>16</sup> War-hall: the word used is "Valhall," the name of Othin's hall of slain warriors.

<sup>17</sup> Myrkwood the secret (the adjective is literally "unknown"), the which divided Atli's realm from that of the Gjukungs; cf. *Oddrunargratr*, 23 and note.

<sup>18</sup> Around the hearth: the adjective is the same one which is applied to "benches" in stanza 1 (cf. note); it may be an error here, or it may possibly have the force of "of your followers," i.e., Gunnar is to arm the men of his household (those who are round his hearth) for the journey.

<sup>19</sup> Slaves, etc.: some editions have "swords in plenty."

<sup>20</sup> Scarlet: the word apparently means "slaughter-red," "blood-red," but it may mean something entirely different.

<sup>21</sup> Gnitaheith: here the dragon Fafnir had his lair (cf. *Gripisspo*, 11). Sigurth doubtless owned it after Fafnir's death, and the Gjukungs after they had killed Sigurth. Possibly they had given it to Atli in recompense for the death of his sister, Brynhild, and he now offered to restore it to them, or--as seems more likely--the poet was not very clear about its ownership himself.

<sup>22</sup> Stems: i.e., the gilded stems of ships, carved like dragons,--an evident northern touch, if the word is correct, which is by no means certain.

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- <sup>23</sup> Danp: this name was early applied to a mythical Danish king (cf. *Rigsthula*, 49 and note) but it may have been fabricated by error out of the word "Danparstayir" (the phrase here used is "stayi Danpar"), used in the *Hervararsaga* of a field of battle between the Goths and the Huns, and quite possibly referring to the region of the Dnieper. The name seems to have clung to the Atli tradition long after it had lost all definite significance.
- <sup>24</sup> Myrkwood: cf. note on stanza 3.
- <sup>25</sup> The stanza is clearly in bad shape; the manuscript indicates line 5 as beginning a new stanza. In line 5 the manuscript has "and shield" after "helm."
- <sup>26</sup> Kjar: Gering ingeniously identifies this Kjar with Kjar the father of Olrun, mentioned in the *Volundarkviða*, introductory prose and stanza 2, on the basis of a genealogy in the *Flatexjarbok*, in which Authi, the grandfather of Kjar (by no means certainly the same man) and Buthli, father of Atli, are mentioned as making a raiding voyage together. This identification, however, rests on slight evidence.
- <sup>27</sup> The manuscript does not name the speaker. One editor gives the first sentence to Gunnar.
- <sup>28</sup> She, etc.: Guthrun, seeking to warn her brothers of Atli's treachery, sends them a ring with a wolf's hair as a sign of danger; in the *Atlamol* (stanza 4) she sends a message written in runes; cf. *Drap Niflunga*.
- <sup>29</sup> Heath-dweller: wolf.
- <sup>30</sup> In line 1 the manuscript has "His comrades did not urge Gunnar," but the name, involving a metrical error, seems to have been inserted through a scribal blunder.
- <sup>31</sup> Fjornir: Gunnar's cup-bearer.
- <sup>32</sup> The manuscript indicates no lacuna, but probably two lines have dropped out, for the *Volsungasaga* paraphrase runs as that given in brackets.
- <sup>33</sup> Niflungs: regarding the application of this name to Gunnar's Burgundians cf. *Brot*, 17 and note.
- <sup>34</sup> Bears: these "black" bears have been used as arguments against the Greenland origin of the poem.
- <sup>35</sup> And make glad the dogs: i.e., by giving them corpses to eat; but the phrase in the original is more than doubtful.
- <sup>36</sup> Bugge thinks this stanza is spoken by Gunnar's terrified followers; Grundtvig assigns it to Hogni. Apparently, however, Gunnar means that if he and his men are not valiant enough to make the journey and return safely, it matters little what may happen to them.
- <sup>37</sup> Some editions in line 2 read "home of the Niflungs" instead of "their home," and others "home of the Huns," the manuscript reading being "home of the men."
- <sup>38</sup> Heir: the *Atlamol* (stanza 28) names two sons of Hogni, Snaevar and Solar, both of whom make the journey with their father and are killed. The *Volsungasaga*, combining the two versions, says that Snaevar and Solar went with their father, and implies that it was a third and still younger son who said: "Farewell, and have a good time" (thus literally).
- <sup>39</sup> Myrkwood: cf. stanza 3 and note; the journey is here made by land, whereas in the *Atlamol* it is made partly by boat; cf. *Atlamol*, 34 and note.
- <sup>40</sup> Whip-fearers: horses, but there is some uncertainty as to the word.
- <sup>41</sup> In line 1 the manuscript has "land" instead of "halls," which involves a metrical error.
- <sup>42</sup> Watch-towers: the word used is identical with the name of Othin's watch-tower, Hlithskjolf (cf. *Grimnismol*, introductory prose).
- <sup>43</sup> Buthli: the manuscript has "Bikki," which has led some editors to transfer this stanza to the *Hamthesmol*, placing it between stanzas 16 and 17; it seems more likely, however, that "Bikki" was a scribal error for "Buthli." Regarding Bikki cf. *Sigurtharkviða en skamma*, 63 and note.
- <sup>44</sup> Line 4 is apparently in *fornyrthislag*.
- <sup>45</sup> Line 1 in the manuscript is apparently incorrectly copied, and some editions omit "Mid weapons and lances" and assume a gap in either line 1 or line 3.
- <sup>46</sup> This may be the remains of two stanzas, the manuscript marks line 5 as beginning a new stanza. Editorial conjectures are numerous and varied. Some editions insert a conjectural line after line 3.
- <sup>47</sup> Household: the phrase is the same "helms round the hearth" commented on in stanza 3.
- <sup>48</sup> Sword-norns, etc.: the line is exceedingly obscure, and the phrase rendered "sword-norns" may mean "corpse-norns." Apparently it refers to the warrior-women of the Huns, the "shield-maids" of line 5 and of stanza 45. Roman writers refer to the warrior-women among the early Germanic tribes, and the tradition, closely allied to that of the Valkyries, attached itself readily to the ferocious Huns.
- <sup>49</sup> Den of snakes: concerning the manner of Gunnar's death cf. *Drap Niflunga*.
- <sup>50</sup> The manuscript indicates no lacuna and does not name the speaker; perhaps a line similar to line 1 of stanza 24 (or 26) should be inserted here.
- <sup>51</sup> Rhine: Gunnar's Burgundian home is here clearly localized. After this stanza it is probable that a passage describing the battle has been lost.
- <sup>52</sup> These two lines, apparently the remains of a full stanza, may belong after stanza 20.
- <sup>53</sup> Burgundians' king: the phrase may mean "Burgundians' men," i.e., they bound all the Burgundians who were left alive after the battle. This is the only place in the poems in which the name "Burgundian" appears; that the poet had no very clear conception of its meaning is indicated by the fact that in stanza 21 he calls Gunnar "king of the Goths."
- <sup>54</sup> Apparently a *fornyrthislag* stanza, though most editions have attempted to expand the lines into *malahattr*.
- <sup>55</sup> The exploits of Hogni (Hagene), with the names of many of his victims, are told in the *Nibelungenlied*.
- <sup>56</sup> The fire: in the *Nibelungenlied* Kriemhild has the hall set on fire, and the Burgundians fight amid the flames.
- <sup>57</sup> Line 4 is clearly defective, and some editors regard the name "Gunnar" as all that is left of the first two lines of stanza 21.
- <sup>58</sup> Again apparently the remains of a *fornyrthislag* stanza. Editors have attempted various combinations of the lines.
- <sup>59</sup> Gold: presumably Sigurth's treasure.
- <sup>60</sup> The manuscript does not indicate the speaker; perhaps a first line similar to line 1 of stanza 24 should appear here. Some editors, however, assume that a line is missing after line 3.
- <sup>61</sup> Gunnar demands proof that Hogni is dead because, as stanza 29 shows, he is unwilling to die himself until he is assured that the secret of the treasure will perish with him. He did not, of course, intend that the heart should be cut from the living Hogni.
- <sup>62</sup> Most editions assume a gap (lines 1-2, 2-3 or 3-4).
- <sup>63</sup> Hjalli: Atli's cook, killed to deceive Gunnar, as Atli hoped to wring the secret of the hoard from Hogni if Gunnar remained silent. In the *Atlamol* (stanzas 59-60) Atli's men prepare to kill Hjalli, but he is spared at Hogni's intercession.
- <sup>64</sup> Helm-hammerer (literally "helmet-smith"): warrior, i.e., Hogni.
- <sup>65</sup> No gap indicated in the manuscript.
- <sup>66</sup> Line 1 may belong elsewhere (stanzas 18 or 22).
- <sup>67</sup> Apparently the remains of two *fornyrthislag* lines; the manuscript combines them with lines 1-2 of stanza 28. Gunnar foretells Atli's speedy death.
- <sup>68</sup> Apparently in *fornyrthislag*. The manuscript indicates line 3 as the beginning of a stanza, and many editions combine lines 3-4 with stanza 29.
- <sup>69</sup> This stanza explains Gunnar's demand for Hogni's heart in stanza 22.

- <sup>70</sup> Rhine, etc.: the stanza shows the blending of three different traditions with regard to the treasure: the German tradition of the gold of the Rhine (cf. *Volundarkviða*, 16, and *Sigurtharkviða en skamma*, 16), the tradition, likewise German, of the hoard of the Nibelungen (Niflungs), early blended with the first one, and finally the northern tradition of the theft of Andvari's treasure by Othin, Honir, and Loki (cf. *Reginismol*, 1-9).
- <sup>71</sup> The manuscript marks line 3, and not line 1, as the beginning of a stanza.
- <sup>72</sup> Apparently all that is left of a full stanza. The manuscript does not name Atli as the speaker, and Grundtvig inserts: "Then Atli called, | the king of the Huns," as a first line. Some editors combine this line with the two lines of stanza 33.
- <sup>73</sup> Wagon: in *Brot*, 16, Gunnar is led to his death in the serpents' den on horseback, not in a wagon.
- <sup>74</sup> Glaum: this horse of Atli's is mentioned by name elsewhere. Long-maned: uncertain.
- <sup>75</sup> The stanza in the original is hopelessly confused. The manuscript indicates no gap, but something has evidently been lost.
- <sup>76</sup> Gods of slaughter: perhaps the phrase, usually applied to Othin and the other gods, is here used simply to mean "heroes," i.e., Atli, Gunnar, and Hogni.
- <sup>77</sup> Line 4 suggests Guthrun's tearlessness after Sigurth's death (cf. *Guthrunarkviða II*, 11)
- <sup>78</sup> The manuscript does not indicate the speaker.
- <sup>79</sup> Sigtyr ("Victory-God"): Othin; what particular mountain (if any) is meant is unknown.
- <sup>80</sup> Horse of the rest-bed: probably this means "bedpost," i.e., the support of the marriage-bed.
- <sup>81</sup> Ull: the archer god, cf. *Grimnismol*, 5 and note. Nothing is known of his ring.
- <sup>82</sup> Apparently the remains of a *fornyrthislag* stanza. Some editors combine the two lines with the line here indicated as stanza 30. The manuscript indicates no gap.
- <sup>83</sup> Champer of bits: horse.
- <sup>84</sup> Six *fornyrthislag* lines which editors have tried to reconstruct in all sorts of ways. The manuscript marks line 5 as the beginning of a new stanza, Regarding the serpents' den, Gunnar's harp-playing, and the manner of his death, cf. *Dráp Niflunga* and *Oddrunargratr*, 27-30, and notes. In *Atlamol*, 62, Gunnar plays the harp with his feet, his hands being bound, and some editors change hand in line 4 to "foot." Lines 5-6 may be interpolated, or, as Bugge maintains, lines 1-4 may have been expanded out of two lines.
- <sup>85</sup> The manuscript marks line 3 as beginning a new stanza. Two (possibly three) of the lines appear to be in *fornyrthislag*.
- <sup>86</sup> Field: so the manuscript, involving a metrical error; many editions have "wood."
- <sup>87</sup> Young beasts: Guthrun means Atli's sons, Erp and Eitil, but of course he thinks she refers to newly slaughtered beasts; cf. *Guthrunarkviða II*, 41-45.
- <sup>88</sup> Youths: a conjectural addition. The brave ones is also conjectural, the manuscript having "each."
- <sup>89</sup> No gap indicated in the manuscript; some editions insert as line 3 or line 4 a slightly altered version of line 2 of stanza 45.
- <sup>90</sup> The shining one: Guthrun.
- <sup>91</sup> No gap indicated in the manuscript, but the two fragments cannot be fitted together as one line.
- <sup>92</sup> Giver of swords: generous prince, i.e., Atli.
- <sup>93</sup> Honey: cf. *Guthrunarkviða II*, 42.
- <sup>94</sup> To send to thy followers: literally, "to send from thy high seat."
- <sup>95</sup> Merry with ale: presumably this refers to Atli, but the manuscript reading makes it apply to the two boys.
- <sup>96</sup> Sharers of gold: princes.
- <sup>97</sup> Apparently a *fornyrthislag* stanza. Line 5 is either interpolated or all that is left of a separate stanza.
- <sup>98</sup> Weapons: the word literally means "good-weaving," and may refer to silken garments, but this hardly fits the noun here rendered "clashing."
- <sup>99</sup> Wept not: cf. stanza 31 and note.
- <sup>100</sup> The text of the whole stanza has required a considerable amount of emendation. Lines 3-5 may have been expanded out of two lines, or line 5 may be an interpolation, possibly from stanza 12 of the *Guthrunarhvot*.
- <sup>101</sup> Line 1 appears to be in *fornyrthislag*. Guthrun distributes Atli's treasures among his followers apparently to prevent their wrath at the slaying of Erp and Eitil from turning against her; Atli, as stanza 43 shows, is too drunk to realize or prevent what she is doing.
- <sup>102</sup> The second half of line 4 is apparently an error, but none of the editorial suggestions have improved it.
- <sup>103</sup> Guthrun allows the dogs and the house-thralls, who had no part in Gunnar's death, to escape before she burns the dwelling with all who are left therein. In *Atlamol*, stanzas 83-84, Atli is slain by a son of Hogni (Hniflung?) with Guthrun's help.
- <sup>104</sup> Some editions transfer line 2 to stanza 37; others reject line 3 as interpolated. Myrkheim ("Dark-Home"): probably identical with Myrkwood; cf. stanza 3.
- <sup>105</sup> Temple: probably both here and in stanza 42 the word means little more than the place where Atli's treasures were kept; the poet was by no means literal in his use of terms connected with the heathen religion.
- <sup>106</sup> Buthlungs: sons of Buthli, i.e., Atli and his family. Shield-maids: cf. stanza 17 and note.
- <sup>107</sup> Three kings: Atli and his two sons, Erp and Eitil.
- <sup>108</sup> The entire stanza is very likely a later addition.
- <sup>109</sup> Before the introduction, in the Middle Ages, of the hearth properly speaking, the fireplaces were on the ground, in the middle of the hall, flanked by rows of benches on the longer sides. In the North, the "highseats" were located in the middle of these, one occupied by the host, the one opposite, by the most honored guest. The benches (and walls) were hung with arms.
- <sup>110</sup> The Gjúkung.
- <sup>111</sup> The "Dark Forest," conceived here as the boundary between Gunnar's and Atli's dominions. See St.5 below, and also *Oddrunargratr*, St.23.
- <sup>112</sup> Conjectural. Helmets of Old Germanic times were ornamented with bands of plaited rings.
- <sup>113</sup> Accepting Bugge's emendation.
- <sup>114</sup> *Pars pro toto* for "ships." [i.e. synecdoche – my note]
- <sup>115</sup> See *Rígsþula*, St.49.
- <sup>116</sup> See note at Stanza 1 above.
- <sup>117</sup> Possibly identical with the King Kíar mentioned in the Introductory Prose of *Volundarkviða*.
- <sup>118</sup> See *Dráp Niflunga* and *Atlamáll* for similar warnings attempted by Guthrún.
- <sup>119</sup> One or more stanzas must have dropped out here in which Gunnar's sudden change of mind was motivated.

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<sup>120</sup> Gunnar's cupbearer.

<sup>121</sup> Supplied after the corresponding passage in the *Völsunga saga*, Ch.35.

<sup>122</sup> The translation of this stanza is largely conjectural. The compiler of the *Völsunga saga* did not understand it any better! The meaning seems to be that, for aught he cares, the beasts of the wild (symbolic for enemies?) may occupy the halls should the Gjúkungs perish.

<sup>123</sup> See *Dráp Niflunga*. In *Atlamál*, St.28, Hogni's other two sons accompany them to Atli's realm.

<sup>124</sup> A difficult stanza.

<sup>125</sup> Following Bugge. Buthli is Atli's father.

<sup>126</sup> A gap in the manuscript is here supplied, following Bugge's suggestion.

<sup>127</sup> Supplied after Grundtvig.

<sup>128</sup> Doubtful.

<sup>129</sup> These lines are transposed here from their original position before St.25, following Grundtvig. The Niflungs rode with only a few followers.

<sup>130</sup> It would seem that some stanzas are lacking here which describe the battle and the slaughter of all the Burgundians (here for Gjúkungs, Niflungs) except Gunnar and Hogni.

<sup>131</sup> The battle rages in the hall. The following lines are defective and are translated *ad sensum*.

<sup>132</sup> Only honorific here.

<sup>133</sup> Supplied as in St.19.

<sup>134</sup> Supplied, after Grundtvig's suggestion. See *Atlamál*, St.56ff.

<sup>135</sup> The evident gap supplied after the *Völsunga saga*, Ch.37.

<sup>136</sup> Both lines are doubtful.

<sup>137</sup> That the secret of the treasure might be betrayed by someone.

<sup>138</sup> Supplied after Grundtvig.

<sup>139</sup> That is, to the place of execution? According to *Atlamál*, St.54, Atli has Gunnar first hanged on the gallows, then cast into the snake den.

<sup>140</sup> These stanzas seem to defy proper ordering. In the original, the last two lines of St.32 follow after st.33. They are transposed here, following Bugge. The translation of the entire stanza is doubtful. This much seems clear: the following speech is Guthrún monologue, spoken when she descends into the hall where the fight has raged.

<sup>141</sup> As it should go with him if he violated these oaths.

<sup>142</sup> Óthin. See the similar oath in *Helgakviða Hundingsbana II*, St.30.

<sup>143</sup> Kenning for "couch": The bedposts were carved in the likeness of horseheads. The horse was sacred to Óthin—Following the explanation of Holtsmark in *Maal og Minne*, 1974 (XXIII), 1 ff.

<sup>144</sup> See *Grímnismál*, St.5, note.

<sup>145</sup> According to the paraphrase of the *Völsunga saga*, Ch.37, it was Guthrún who conveyed the harp to him. See also *Oddrúnargrátr*, St.26ff.

<sup>146</sup> She expresses herself ambiguously on purpose—she has slaughtered her "cubs."

<sup>147</sup> Transferred here (with Grundtvig) from its original position in St.45. Myrkheim, "the Dark Abode," is possibly identical with the Myrkvith above.

<sup>148</sup> Supplied freely by the Translator.

<sup>149</sup> Atli, the son of Buthli.

<sup>150</sup> Occupations of the nobly born. See *Rígsþula*, Sts.27ff.

<sup>151</sup> Rich cloths and tapestries were hung on the walls.

<sup>152</sup> She bribes them to maintain silence and to lull their suspicions about her further designs. We may also think of a sleep potion given them.

<sup>153</sup> Atli's blood.

<sup>154</sup> They are loosed, and the housecarls wakened, so that they may no perish in the flames.

<sup>155</sup> In the sense of "treasure-houses" (?).

<sup>156</sup> Atli and his sons.