

## ATLAMÁL HIN GRÆNLENZKU (*The Greenland Ballad of Atli*)

### Bellows' Introduction (1936)

Many of the chief facts regarding the *Atlamol*, which follows the *Atlakvitha* in the *Codex Regius*, are outlined in the introductory note to the earlier Atli lay. That the superscription in the manuscript is correct, and that the poem was actually composed in Greenland, is generally accepted; the specific reference to polar bears (stanza 17), and the general color of the entire poem make this origin exceedingly likely. Most critics, again, agree in dating the poem nearer 1100 than 1050. As to its state of preservation there is some dispute, but, barring one or two possible gaps of some importance, and the usual number of passages in which the interpolation or omission of one or two lines may be suspected, the *Atlamol* has clearly come down to us in fairly good shape.

Throughout the poem the epic quality of the story itself is overshadowed by the romantically sentimental tendencies of the poet, and by his desire to adapt the narrative to the understanding of his fellow-Greenlanders. The substance of the poem is the same as that of the *Atlakvitha*; it tells of Atli's message to the sons of Gjuki, their journey to Atli's home, the slaying of Hogni and Gunnar, Guthrun's bitterness over the death of her brothers, and her bloody revenge on Atli. Thus in its bare outline the *Atlamol* represents simply the Frankish blending of the legends of the slaughter of the Burgundians and the death of Attila (cf. *Gripisspo*, introductory note). But here the resemblance ends. The poet has added characters, apparently of his own creation, for the sake of episodes which would appeal to both the men and the women of the Greenland settlement. Sea voyages take the place of journeys by land; Atli is reproached, not for cowardice in battle, but for weakness at the Thing or great council. The additions made by the poet are responsible for the *Atlamol's* being the longest of all the heroic poems in the Eddic collection, and they give it a kind of emotional vividness, but it has little of the compressed intensity of the older poems. Its greatest interest lies in its demonstration of the manner in which a story brought to the North from the South Germanic lands could be adapted to the understanding and tastes of its eleventh century hearers without any material change of the basic narrative.

In what form or forms the story of the Gjukungs and Atli reached the Greenland poet cannot be determined, but it seems likely that he was familiar with older poems on the subject, and possibly with the *Atlakvitha* itself. That the details which are peculiar to the *Atlamol*, such as the figures of Kostbera and Glaumvor, existed in earlier tradition seems doubtful, but the son of Hogni, who aids Guthrun in the slaying of Atli, appears, though under another name, in other late versions of the story, and it is impossible to say just how much the poet relied on his own imagination and how far he found suggestions and hints in the prose or verse stories of Atli with which he was familiar.

The poem is in *Malahattr* (cf. Introduction) throughout, the verse being far more regular than in the *Atlakvitha*. The compilers of the *Volsungasaga* evidently knew it in very much the form in which we now have it, for in the main it is paraphrased with great fidelity.

## OUTLINE

[line numbers according to Bellows]

1-2	Of Atli's Plot to Destroy the Gjúkungs; the Summons Sent
3-4	Of Guthrún's Secret Message
5-8	The Messengers Received
9-12	Of the Rune Message
13-19	Kostbera's Warning to Hogni
20-26	Glaumvor's Warning to Gunnar
27-33	Of the Warriors' Departure
34	The Voyage to Atli's Land
35-41	Of the Gjúkungs' Reception
42-49	Of the Battle at Atli's Court
50-56	Dialogue of the Combatants
57-60	The Ruse of Hjalli's Heart
61-63	The Deaths of Gunnar & Hogni
64-69	Dialogue of Atli and Guthrún
70-79	Of Guthrún's Banquet Feast
80-82	Dialogue of Atli and Guthrún
83-97	The Death Dialogue of Atli & Guthrún
98-99	The End of Atli / Fame of the Gjúkungs

Thorpe (1866)	Bellows (1936)	Hollander (1962)
<p>1. Of those misdeeds men have heard tell, when warriors of old / A compact made, which by pledges they confirmed, A secret consultation held: terrible it was to them after, And to Giuki's sons likewise, who were betrayed.</p> <p>2. The warriors' fate ripened, they were death-doomed: Ill advised was Atli, though he possessed sagacity: He felled a mighty column, strove hardly against himself; With speed he messengers despatched, that his wife's brothers should come quickly.</p> <p>3. Wise was the house-dame, prudently she thought; / The words in order she had heard, that in secret they had said: The sage lady was at a loss: fain would she help them; They<sup>1</sup> o'er the sea must sail, but she herself could not go.</p> <p>4. Runes she grav'd, Vingi them falsified, Before he gave them from him; of ill he was the bearer. Then departed Atli's messengers, through the branched firth, / For where the bold warriors dwelt.</p> <p>5. They with beer were cheered, and fires they kindled, Naught thought they of guile, when they were come;</p>	<p>1. There are many who know   how of old did men<sup>9</sup> In counsel gather;   little good did they get; In secret they plotted,   it was sore for them later, And for Gjuki's sons,   whose trust they deceived.</p> <p>2. Fate grew for the princes,<sup>10</sup>   to death they were given; Ill counsel was Atli's,   though keenness he had; He felled his staunch bulwark,<sup>11</sup>   his own sorrow fashioned, Soon a message he sent   that his kinsmen should seek him.</p> <p>3. Wise was the woman,<sup>12</sup>   she fain would use wisdom, She saw well what meant   all they said in secret; From her heart it was hid   how help she might render, The sea<sup>13</sup> they should sail,   while herself she should go not.</p> <p>4. Runes<sup>14</sup> did she fashion,   but false Vingi made them, The speeder of hatred,   ere to give them he sought; Then soon fared the warriors   whom Atli had sent, And to Limafjord<sup>15</sup> came,   to the home of the kings.</p> <p>5. They were kindly with ale,   and fires they kindled, They thought not of craft   from the guests who had come;</p>	<p>1. Heard have full many how that men<sup>162</sup> had gathered For counsel together—of which gain had the fewest: How that wiles they weaved then of which woe came, only, To them and the Gjúkungs who beguiled were by them.</p> <p>2. The folk-warders' fate grew:<sup>163</sup> fey were the heroes. Unwise was Atli, his insight failed him: / Threw his strong stays down,<sup>164</sup> into straights brought himself: Sent them word swiftly to seek him nor tarry.</p> <p>3. Wise was the lady, had her wits about her, Full well understood she what in stealth they whispered; A hardship she held it: would fain help give them: On sea went they sailing, but herself not with them.<sup>165</sup></p> <p>4. Runes had she graven; had ravelled<sup>166</sup> them Vingi— On their bane bent was he—ere to the brothers he gave them; / To the firth of Lim<sup>167</sup> fared, then, afar whom Atli Had sent to the Gjúkungs, Guthrún's stout kinsmen.</p> <p>5. Fires they lit for them, and as friends welcomed / From afar who had come there, nor of falsehood bethought them;</p>

<p>They the gifts accepted, which the prince sent them, On a column hung them, and of no evil thought.</p> <p>6. Then came Kostbera, she was Hogni's wife, A woman greatly cautious, and them both greeted. Glad was also Glaumvor, Gunnar's consort, / The prudent dame her duty forgot not, she to the guests' need attended.</p> <p>7. Hogni they home invited, if he would be pleased to go. Treachery was manifest, had they but reflected! Gunnar then promised, if only Hogni would, But Hogni refused what the other proposed.</p> <p>8. The noble dames bore mead, of many things there was abundance, / Many horns passed round, until it seemed they had full drunken.</p> <p>9. The household prepared their couches, as to them seemed best. Cunning was Kostbera, she could runes interpret; She the letters read by the bright fire;— Her tongue she had to guard between both her gums— So perverted were they, it was difficult to understand them.</p> <p>10. To their bed they went, she and Hogni. The gentle lady dreamed, and concealed it not, To the prince wisely said it as soon as she awoke.</p> <p>11. "From home thou art going, Hogni! give ear to counsel; Few are fully prudent: go another time.</p> <p>12. I have the runes interpreted, which thy sister graved: That fair dame has not this time invited thee. At one thing I wonder most, I cannot even conceive, Why so wise a woman so confusedly should grave; For it is so set down as if it intimated death to you both, If you should straightway come. Either she has left out a letter, or others are the cause."<sup>2</sup></p> <p>13. "They are," said Hogni, "all suspicious; I have no knowledge of them, nor will I into it inquire, Unless we have to make requital. The king will gift us with gleed-red gold. I never fear, though we may hear of terror."</p> <p>14. "Tottering ye will go, if thitherward ye tend. No kind entertainment there will ye at this time find.</p>	<p>The gifts did they take   that the noble one gave them, On the pillars they hung them,   no fear did they harbor.<sup>16</sup></p> <p>6.<sup>17</sup> Forth did Kostbera,<sup>18</sup>   wife of Hogni, then come, Full kindly she was,   and she welcomed them both;<sup>19</sup> And glad too was Glaumvor,   the wife of Gunnar, She knew well to care   for the needs of the guests.</p> <p>7.<sup>20</sup> Then Hogni they asked   if more eager he were, Full clear was the guile,   if on guard they had been; Then Gunnar made promise,<sup>21</sup>   if Hogni would go, And Hogni made answer   as the other counseled.<sup>22</sup></p> <p>8. Then the famed ones brought mead,   and fair was the feast, Full many were the horns,   till the men had drunk deep; [Then the warriors rose,   and to slumber made ready.]<sup>23</sup> Then the mates made ready   their beds for resting.</p> <p>9.<sup>24</sup> Wise was Kostbera,   and cunning in rune-craft, The letters would she read   by the light of the fire; But full quickly her tongue   to her palate clave, So strange did they seem   that their meaning she saw not.</p> <p>10.<sup>25</sup> Full soon then his bed   came Hogni to seek, [But sleep to the woman   so wise came little]<sup>26</sup> / The clear-souled one dreamed,   and her dream she kept not, To the warrior the wise one   spake when she awakened:</p> <p>11.<sup>27</sup> "Thou wouldst go hence,   Hogni, but heed my counsel,— Known to few are the runes,—   and put off thy faring; I have read now the runes   that thy sister wrote, And this time the bright one   did not bid thee to come.</p> <p>12. "Full much do I wonder,   nor well can I see, Why the woman wise   so wildly hath written; But to me it seems   that the meaning beneath Is that both shall be slain   if soon ye shall go. But one rune she missed,   or else others have marred it."<sup>28</sup></p> <p>Hogni spake:<sup>29</sup> 13. "All women are fearful;   not so do I feel, Ill<sup>30</sup> I seek not to find   till I soon must avenge it; The king<sup>31</sup> now will give us   the glow-ruddy gold; I never shall fear,   though of dangers I know."</p> <p>Kostbera spake:<sup>32</sup> 14. "In danger ye fare,   if forth ye go thither, No welcoming friendly   this time shall ye find;</p>	<p>The king's gifts took they gladly, which the guests brought with them Hung them up on the wallposts,<sup>168</sup> nor aught mistrusted.</p> <p>6. Came then Kostbera,<sup>169</sup> the queen of Hogni, A woman warmhearted, and welcomed the strangers; Glad was eke Glaumvor, whom Gunnar had married, Fulfilled what was fitting to refresh guests weary.</p> <p>7. They bade home to them Hogni, if with him they fared, rather: / Nor was hidden the falsehood, if heed they had given.<sup>170</sup> / His world gave Gunnar if with him fared Hogni, And fain was Hogni to follow his brother.</p> <p>8. Bore mead the mistresses, of meat was there plenty, Many full horns were handed, till his fill had everyone. (Then up rose the sea kings and to sleep betook them.)<sup>171</sup> Husband and wife eke, as the wise ones held seemly.</p> <p>9. Clever was Kostbera, had cunning of rune signs;<sup>172</sup> She conned o'er the letters by the light of the fire; Tied was her tongue, though, when she tried to read them: So muddled were they she could make them out nowise.</p> <p>10. To bed went both then, Bera<sup>173</sup> and Hogni; (but little slumbered the lady highborn.)<sup>174</sup> Nor hid she from Hogni what she had been dreaming, But said to the sea king so soon as she awakened:</p> <p>11. "From hence would'st, Hogni, but heed thou my counsel— But few are rune-wise—fare thou some other time! The rune signs I have guessed now, graven by thy sister: Has the white-browed one not bidden thee to her.</p> <p>12. "At one thing I wonder, nor can well make out: Why raveled the runes are which were written by Guthrún; For so seemed to me their secret meaning That your bane it would be if Atli's bidding ye follow: One rune she wanteth, or 'tis the work of another."<sup>175</sup></p> <p>(Hogni said:) 13. "Idle fears have women, which are far from my thinking; Bad deeds I reckon not till back we must pay them.<sup>176</sup> The good king will give us many glow-red armrings, No dread had I ever, dire things though boded."</p> <p>(Kostbera said:) 14. "Will be ill the ending if ye are eager thitherward: A friendly welcome awaits you not this time.</p>
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<p>Hogni! I have dreamed, I will not conceal it: In an evil hour ye will go, or so at least I fear.</p> <p>15. "Methought thy coverlet was with fire consumed; That the towering flame rushed through my dwelling."</p> <p>Hogni 16. "Here lie linen cloths, which thou hadst little noticed: These will quickly burn where thou the coverlet sawest."</p> <p>Kostbera 17. "Methought a bear came in,                   and broke down the columns; And so his talons shook, that we were terror-stricken; By his mouth held many of us, so that we were helpless: There, too, was a din far from little."</p> <p>Hogni 18. "A tempest there will be furious and sudden: The white bear thou sawest will be a storm from the east."</p> <p>Kostbera 19. "Methought an eagle flew herein, all through the house: That will largely concern us. He sprinkled all with blood: From his threats I thought it to be the 'ham'<sup>3</sup> of Atli."</p> <p>Hogni 20. "We often slaughter largely, and then red we see: Often are oxen meant, when we of eagles dream. Sound is the heart of Atli, dream thou as thou mayest." With this they ended: all speeches have an end.</p> <p>21. The high-born awoke, there the like befell: Glaumvor had perceived that her dreams were ill-boding, Adverse to Gunnar's going to and fro.</p> <p>22. "Methought a gallows was for thee erected,<sup>4</sup> Thou wentest to be hanged, that serpents ate thee,                   that I inter'd thee living, That the Powers' dissolution came—                   divine thou what that portends.</p> <p>23. "Methought a bloody glave from thy sark was drawn— Ill 'tis such a dream to a consort to recount— Methought a lance was thrust through thy middle: Wolves howled on every side."</p>	<p><sup>35</sup>For I dreamed now, Hogni,   and nought will I hide, Full evil thy faring,   if rightly I fear.</p> <p>15. "Thy bed-covering saw I<sup>34</sup>   in the flames burning, And the fire burst high   through the walls of my home."</p> <p>Hogni spake: "Yon garment of linen   lies little of worth, It will soon be burned,   so thou sawest the bed-cover."<sup>35</sup></p> <p>Kostbera spake: 16. "A bear saw I enter,   the pillars he broke, And he brandished his claws   so that craven we were; With his mouth seized he many,<sup>36</sup>                     and nought was our might, And loud was the tumult,   not little it was."</p> <p>Hogni spake: 17. "Now a storm is brewing,   and wild it grows swiftly, A dream of an ice-bear<sup>37</sup>   means a gale from the east."<sup>38</sup></p> <p>Kostbera spake: 18. "An eagle I saw flying                     from the end through the house, [Black were his feathers,   with blood was he covered.]<sup>39</sup> Our fate must be bad,   for with blood he sprinkled us; From the evil I fear   that 'twas Atli's spirit."<sup>40</sup></p> <p>Hogni spake: 19. "They will slaughter soon,   and so blood do we see, Oft oxen it means   when of eagles one dreams; True is Atli's heart,   whatever thou dreamest." <sup>41</sup>Then silent they were,   and nought further they said.</p> <p>20. The high-born ones wakened,   and like speech they had, Then did Glaumvor tell   how in terror she dreamed, <sup>42</sup>. . . . Gunnar   two roads<sup>43</sup> they should go.</p> <p>Glaumvor spake:<sup>44</sup> 21. "A gallows saw I ready,   thou didst go to thy hanging, Thy flesh serpents ate,   and yet living I found thee;<sup>45</sup> The gods' doom<sup>46</sup> descended;   now say what it boded." [Gunnar spake:]<sup>47</sup> [Banners are gleaming,   since of gallows didst dream,] [And wealth it must mean   that thou serpents didst watch.]</p> <p>22. "A sword drawn bloody   from thy garments I saw,— Such a dream is hard   to a husband to tell,— A spear stood, methought,   through thy body thrust, And at head and feet   the wolves were howling."</p>	<p>Hear my dreams, Hogni, hid them I will not: Some ill will befall you, I fear me greatly.</p> <p>15. "Thy bedclothes saw I burning in fire, The high flames whelming through our hall swept roaring."</p> <p>(Hogni said:) "Linens may lie here which little thou prizest— They will blaze suddenly, as my bedclothes seemed."<sup>177</sup></p> <p>(Kostbera said:) 16. "A bear saw I come in here, he broke up the planking And shook his paws at us,                   so that shelter we sought from him; With his muzzle he caught many, but our might had left us: There was trampling<sup>178</sup> 'neath rafters, truly not a little."</p> <p>(Hogni said:) 17. "There'll be wild weather, with windstorms dreadful: The white bear thou sawest eastern blasts betokens."</p> <p>(Kostbera said:) 18. "An eagle beheld I through our hall flying— Bad tidings bodes that—which with blood us sprinkled (From his gory pinions, ere out of gable-end flying):<sup>179</sup> In evil seeming like Atli looked he."</p> <p>(Hogni said:) 19. "Full soon we shall slaughter, and shall see much blood, then: / Often for oxen of eagles one dreameth.<sup>180</sup> No harm means us Atli, what'er thou dreamest." Then more they said not nor their mouths again opened.</p> <p>20. Awoke the well-born ones,<sup>181</sup> were their words of like things: / Aghast was Glaumvor with grievous dream-sights, But gainsaid her Gunnar with more goodly meaning.<sup>182</sup></p> <p>(Glaumvor said:) 21. "A gallows saw I threat'ning, for thee to hang on, And worms thee becrawling, unwounded otherwise—<sup>183</sup> Came the doom of all godheads:                   what deem'st thou it meaneth?<sup>184</sup></p> <p>22. "A bloody sword saw I out of thy sark taken— For a husband's hearing unhappy dreams these. A spear eke thought I thrust through thy middle, With hungry wolves howling at haft and spearhead."</p>
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<p>Gunnar 24. "Where dogs run they are wont to bark: Of bodes the bay of dogs the flight of javelins."</p> <p>Glaumvor 25. "Methought a river ran herein, through the whole house, / That it roared violently, rushed o'er the benches, Brake the feet of you brothers twain; Nothing the water spared: something will that portend!</p> <p>26. "Methought dead women in the night came hither; Not ill-clad were they: they would choose thee, Forthwith invited thee to their seats. I ween thy Disir have forsaken thee."</p> <p>Gunnar 27. "Too late it is to speak, it is now so resolved; From the journey we shall not shrink, as it is decreed to go: Very probable it seems that our lives will be short."</p> <p>28. When colours were discernible, those on journey bent all rose up: The others fain would stay them. The five journeyed together, of "hus-carls" there Were present twice that number—it was ill devised— Snævar and Solar, they were Hogni's sons; Orkning he was named, who them accompanied, A gentle shield-bearer was he, the brother of Hogni's wife.</p> <p>29. They went fair-appointed, until the firth them parted: Ever would their wives have stayed them, they would not be stayed.</p> <p>30. Glaumvor then spake, Gunnar's consort, Vingi she addressed, as to her seemed fitting: "I know not whether ye will requite us as we would: With treachery came the guest, if aught of ill betide."</p> <p>31. Then Vingi swore, little spared he himself: "May him the Jotuns have, if towards you he lies! The gallows hold him, if aught against peace he meditates!"</p> <p>32. Bera took up the word, she of gentle soul: "Sail ye prosperous, and may success attend you:</p>	<p>Gunnar spake: 23. "The hounds are running,   loud their barking is heard, Of hounds' clamor follows   the flying of spears."<sup>48</sup></p> <p>Glaumvor spake: 24. "A river the length   of the hall saw I run, Full swiftly it roared,   o'er the benches it swept; O'er the feet did it break   of ye brothers twain, The water would yield not;   some meaning there was."</p> <p>[Gunnar spake:] [The grain shall flow, since thou hast dreamed of rivers,   [And when we go to the fields, often the chaff rises above our feet."]<sup>49</sup></p> <p>25. "I dreamed that by night   came dead women hither, Sad were their garments,   and thee were they seeking; They bade thee come swiftly   forth to their benches, And nothing, methinks,   could the Norms avail thee."<sup>50</sup></p> <p>Gunnar spake: 26. "Too late is thy speaking,   for so is it settled From the faring I turn not,   the going is fixed, Though likely it is   that our lives shall be short."<sup>51</sup></p> <p>27. Then bright shone the morning,   the men all were ready, They said, and yet each   would the other hold back; Five<sup>52</sup> were the warriors,   and their followers all But twice as many,—   their minds knew not wisdom.</p> <p>28.<sup>53</sup> Snævar and Solar,   they were sons of Hogni,<sup>54</sup> Orkning was he called   who came with the others, Blithe was the shield-tree,<sup>55</sup>   the brother of Kostbera;<sup>56</sup> The fair-decked ones<sup>57</sup> followed   till the fjord<sup>58</sup> divided them, Full hard did they plead,   but the others would hear not.</p> <p>29. Then did Glaumvor speak forth,   the wife of Gunnar, To Vingi she said   that which wise to her seemed: "I know not if well   thou requitest our welcome, Full ill was thy coming   if evil shall follow."</p> <p>30. Then did Vingi swear,   and full glib was his speech, [The evil was clear when his words he uttered,]<sup>59</sup> "May giants now take me   if lies I have told ye, And the gallows if hostile   thought did I have."</p> <p>31. Then did Bera<sup>60</sup> speak forth,   and fair was her thought, [And clear was her cry to her kinsmen dear:]<sup>61</sup></p>	<p>(Gunnar said:) 23. "Small dogs will be running with din and barking; Of the hounds' baying bodes whistling of spearshafts."</p> <p>(Glaumvor said:) 24. "A stream beheld I through our hall flowing; The roaring river rushed 'gainst our benches, Breaking the legs of you brothers, Gunnar: Naught spared the waters. That forewarneth evil!"</p> <p>(Gunnar said:) ("Acres waving ween I what water thou thoughtest, Our feet oft stumble o'er the fields as we wander.")<sup>185</sup></p> <p>(Glaumvor said:) 25. "Methought in the darkness came dead women hitherward, Clad in weeds of mourning,<sup>186</sup> and wished to fetch thee, Beckoned and bade thee to their benches forthwith: I fear that the goddesses<sup>187</sup> have given thee over."</p> <p>(Gunnar said:) 26. "Too late is't to stay us: our lot is cast now. (I dread me hereafter that dire will our fate be):<sup>188</sup> Our fate we may flee not,<sup>189</sup> we shall fare on the morrow, Though likely it seemeth that our life be a short one."</p> <p>27. When the dawn lighted heaven the heroes were ready On their way to be wending; but with warnings some held them. / Five, all told, fared they, though fewer by half this Than they had housecarls: 'twas hot-brained and thoughtless.</p> <p>28. Snævar and Sólár,<sup>190</sup> sons they of Hogni; Was eke one hight Orkning who to Atli them followed, Kostbera's brother—blithe was the shield-tree.<sup>191</sup> Fair-Dight fared with them, to where the firth them parted, The women ay warning, but they would not heed them.</p> <p>29. Spake Glaumvor these words then, who was Gunnar's housewife, To Vingi spake she as well it seemed to her: "Reward ye fittingly the feastings we gave you: Were a foul shame your coming if befalls them ill hap."</p> <p>30. Answered her Vingi, nor would aught acknowledge:<sup>192</sup> "May the etins seize him<sup>193</sup> in aught who betrays you, And the gallows his body, who his faith breaketh."</p> <p>31. Spake Bera these words then, blithe in her heart she: "May ye sail safely and snatch victory."<sup>194</sup></p>
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<p>May it be as I pray, and if nothing hinder!"</p> <p>33. Hogni answered—he to his kin meant well— "Be of good cheer, ye prudent! whatever may befall. Many say the same, though with great difference; For many little care how they depart from home."</p> <p>34. On each other then they looked before they parted: Then, I ween, their fates were severed, and their ways divided.</p> <p>35. Vigorously they rowed, their bark was well nigh riven; Backward bending the waves they beat, ardently plied: Their oar-bands were broken, the rowlocks shattered. They made not the vessel fast before they quitted it.<sup>5</sup></p> <p>36. A little after—I will the end relate— They saw the mansion stand that Budli had possessed. Loud creaked the latticed gates, when Hogni knocked.</p> <p>37. Then said Vingi, what he had better not, "Go far from the house, 'tis perilous to enter; / I quickly enticed you to perdition; ye shall forthwith be slain. With fair words I prayed your coming, though guile was under them. But just bide here, while a gallows I prepare."</p> <p>38. Hogni answered—little thought he of yielding, Or of aught fearful that was to be proved: — "Think not to frighten us: try that seldom. If one word thou addest, thou wilt thy harm prolong."</p> <p>39. They rushed on Vingi, and struck him dead, Laid on their axes, while life within him throbbed.</p> <p>40. Atli his men assembled, in their byrnies they issued forth, Went prepared so that a fence was between them. Words they banded, all with rage boiling: "Already had we resolved to take your lives away."</p> <p>Hogni 41. "It looks but ill, if ye before have counselled: E'en now ye are unprepared, and we one have felled, Smitten to death: one of your host was he."</p> <p>42. Furious they became, when those words they heard; Their fingers they stretched forth, and their bowstrings seized; sharply shot, and with shields themselves protected.</p>	<p>"May ye sail now happy,   and victory have, To fare as I bid ye,   may nought your way bar."</p> <p>32. Then Hogni made answer,—   dear held he his kin,— "Take courage, ye wise ones,   whatsoever may come; Though many may speak,   yet is evil oft mighty, And words avail little   to lead one homeward."<sup>62</sup></p> <p>33. They tenderly looked   till each turned on his way, Then with changing fate   were their farings divided. [Then weeping did   Glaumvor go to her rest-bed, And sadly did Bera   her spinning wheel seek.]<sup>63</sup></p> <p>34. Full stoutly they rowed,   and the keel clove asunder,<sup>64</sup> Their backs strained at the oars,   and their strength was fierce; The oar-loops<sup>65</sup> were burst,   the thole-pins, were broken, Nor the ship made they fast   ere from her they fared.</p> <p>35. Not long was it after—   the end must I tell— That the home they beheld   that Buthli once had; Loud the gates resounded   when Hogni smote them; Vingi spake then a word   that were better unsaid.<sup>66</sup></p> <p>36.<sup>67</sup> "Go ye far from the house,   for false is its entrance, Soon shall I burn you,   ye are swiftly smitten; I bade ye come fairly,   but falseness was under, Now bide ye afar   while your gallows I fashion."</p> <p>37. Then Hogni made answer,<sup>68</sup>   his heart yielded little, And nought did he fear   that his fate held in store: "Seek not to affright us,   thou shalt seldom succeed; If thy words are more,   then the worse grows thy fate."</p> <p>38. Then Vingi did they smite,   and they sent him to hell, With their axes they clove him   while the death rattle came.<sup>69</sup></p> <p>39. Atli summoned his men,   in mail-coats they hastened, All ready they came,   and between was the courtyard.<sup>70</sup></p> <p>40. Then came they to words,   and full wrathful they were: "Long since did we plan   how soon we might slay you."<sup>71</sup></p> <p>Hogni spake:<sup>72</sup> 41. "Little it matters   if long ye have planned it; For unarmed<sup>73</sup> do ye wait,   and one<sup>74</sup> have we felled, We smote him to hell,   of your host was he once."</p> <p>42.<sup>75</sup> Then wild was their anger   when all heard his words; Their fingers were swift   on their bowstrings to seize, Full sharply they shot,   by their shields were they guarded.</p>	<p>Godspeed I wish you, let no wight gainsay it!"</p> <p>32. Hogni made answer, his own kin loved he: "Be of good cheer, ladies, whatever grief befall us; A kind fate bespeak many, yet miss it oft greatly: The wishes that go with him many a wight avail little."</p> <p>33. They looked at their lief ones and lingered ere parting, Their weirds awaited them as their ways led asunder.</p> <p>34. Amain they gan row,<sup>195</sup> then, to rift the keel almost, On the oars bent them backward wrathfully; The oar-thongs they Sundered, the tholes they shattered, Their flood-horse<sup>196</sup> they fastened not<sup>197</sup> when from it they wended.</p> <p>35. Nor long it lasted—I lag not in telling— Ere they saw the buildings which Buthli<sup>198</sup> had dwelt in; Harshly the gate grated when Gjúki's son struck it. These words said then Vingi, more wisely unspoken:</p> <p>36. "Fare ye from hence—'tis fraught with death to you; Full soon shall they slay you and swiftly burn you: With fair words I bade you, but falsehood dwelt in them— Or else wait outside till up is the gallows."</p> <p>37. Then Hogni spake forth, not to spare him thought he, Nor of aught was fearful, whatever betide them: "Think not of threat'ning, a thankless task were it: Not one more word or 'twill be worse for thee after."</p> <p>38. They hewed down Vingi, and to Hel sent him, With axes gashed him till his ghost he breathed out.</p> <p>39. Atli's men foregathered, and in mail coats arrayed them; Thus went they forward till the wall lay between them.<sup>199</sup> Each host angrily to the other cried out: "Full long had we settled to slay all of you."</p> <p>(Hogni said:) 40. "It seems but little that settled ye had it: Still unready are ye, though without here lieth One of your henchmen, Helward sent by us."</p> <p>41. Hot with wrath waxed they when these words reached them, / Bestirred their fingers in stringing their bows then, With arrows shot sharply and behind shields hid them.</p>
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<p>43. In then came the tale of what without was passing; Loud before the hall they a thrall heard speak.</p> <p>44. Then incensed was Gudrun, when the sad news she heard: / Adorned with necklaces, she tore them all asunder; So hurled the silver, that the rings in shivers flew.</p> <p>45. Then she went out, not gently moved the doors; Went forth, void of fear, and the comers hailed, Turned to the Niflungs: that was her last greeting, Truth attended it; more words she said:</p> <p>46. "I sought by symbols to prevent your leaving home,— Fate may no one resist—and yet must you come hither." Wisely she asked: might they not be appeased? No one consented, all answered no.</p> <p>47. Saw then the high-born lady that a hard game they played; A deadly deed she meditated, and her robe dashed aside, A naked falchion seized, and her kinsmen's lives defended: Skillful she was in warfare, where her hand she applied.</p> <p>48. Giuki's daughter caused two warriors to fall; / Atli's brother she struck down,—he must henceforth be borne— So she the conflict managed, that she his foot struck off. Another too she smote, so that he never rose, To Hel she sent him: her hand trembled not.</p> <p>49. A conflict then ensued, which was widely famed, But that excelled all else which Giuki's sons performed. So 'tis said the Niflungs, while yet they lived, With swords maintained the fight, corslets rent, Helmets hewed, as their hearts prompted.</p> <p>50. At morning most they fought, until mid-day had passed; All early morn, and the forenoon, Ere the fight was ended, the field flowed with blood, Until eighteen had fallen: Bera's two sons, And her brother, had them overcome.</p> <p>51. Then the fierce Atli spoke, wrath though he was: "Tis ill to look around; this is long of you. We were thirty warlike thanes, Eleven survive: the chasm is too great. We were five brothers, when Budli died; Now has Hel the half, two lie slain.</p> <p>52. "A great affinity I obtained, that I cannot deny, Pernicious woman! of which I have no benefit:</p>	<p>43.<sup>76</sup> In the house came the word   how the heroes without Fought in front of the hall;   they heard a thrall tell it; Grim then was Guthrun,   the grief when she heard, With necklaces fair,   and she flung them all from her, (The silver she hurled   so the rings burst asunder.)</p> <p>44. Then out did she go,   she flung open the doors, All fearless she went,   and the guests did she welcome; To the Niflungs<sup>77</sup> she went—   her last greeting it was,— In her speech truth was clear,   and much would she speak.</p> <p>45. "For your safety I sought   that at home ye should stay; None escapes his fate,   so ye hither must fare." Full wisely she spake,   if yet peace they might win, But to nought would they hearken,   and "No" said they all.</p> <p>46. Then the high-born one saw   that hard was their battle, In fierceness of heart   she flung off her mantle; Her naked sword grasped she   her kin's lives to guard, Not gentle her hands   in the hewing of battle.<sup>78</sup></p> <p>47. Then the daughter of Gjuki   two warriors smote down, Atli's brother<sup>79</sup> she slew,   and forth then they bore him; (So fiercely she fought   that his feet she clove off;)<sup>80</sup> Another she smote   so that never he stood, To hell did she send him,—   her hands trembled never.</p> <p>48. Full wide was the fame   of the battle they fought, 'Twas the greatest of deeds   of the sons of Gjuki; Men say that the Niflungs,<sup>81</sup>   while themselves they were living, / With their swords fought mightily,   mail-coats they sundered, And helms did they hew,   as their hearts were fearless.</p> <p>49. All the morning they fought   until midday shone, (All the dusk as well   and the dawning of day),<sup>82</sup> When the battle was ended,   the field flowed with blood; Ere they fell, eighteen   of their foemen were slain, By the two sons of Bera   and her brother as well.<sup>83</sup></p> <p>50. Then the warrior<sup>84</sup> spake,   and wild was his anger: "This is evil to see,   and thy doing is all; Once we were thirty,<sup>85</sup>   we thanes, keen for battle, Now eleven are left,   and great is our lack.</p> <p>51. "There were five<sup>86</sup> of us brothers   when Buthli we lost, Now Hel has the half,   and two smitten lie here; <sup>87</sup>A great kinship had I,—   the truth may I hide not,— From a wife bringing slaughter   small joy could I win.</p>	<p>42. In came the tidings that without were struggling, Before the hall the heroes—they heard a thrall tell it; Dreadful was Guthrún at these dire tidings, The necklace-decked on: down threw she everything, Slung down the silver, that asunder the rings<sup>200</sup> brake.</p> <p>43. Out went she eftsoon, wide open the doors flung, Nor fearful was she, to welcome her kinsmen; / To the Gjúkungs she turned her—their last greeting was it— Her mind she spoke truthfully, and eke more thuswise:</p> <p>44. "I had sought to save you, to forsake not your homestead: 'Gainst the norms wins no one: hither nathless came ye!" Many sage words said she, to settle between them; But naught would they listen, and "no" said all of them.</p> <p>45. Beheld the highborn one how they did struggle, Then took courage unwomanish, her cloak she flung off, A keen sword she caught up and her kinsmen defended: Nor light were the blows which she lavished on foemen.</p> <p>46. Felled Gjúki's daughter to the ground two warriors: Atli's brother her blade smote—they must bear him away thence—/ So fiercely fought she that his foot she sundered; And another struck she that he stood not up after, But to Hel hied him; yet her hands shook not.</p> <p>47. A fight they fought there which was famed widely, Than any deed greater which the Gjúkungs had done else. 'Tis told that, as long as alive were the Gjúkungs, They made a sword fight, slit through the byrnies, And hewed the helmets, as their hearts bade them.</p> <p>48. All morning fought they, till midday was over, At dusk and at dawn eke, and the day following. With blood flowed the battlefield ere the brush was ended: Ere they fell, over eighteen the upper hand had then The two bairns of Bera, and her brother with them.</p> <p>49. Angrily eying them, Atli spake forth thus: "Tis and ill sight to look at, I lay it at your door: Before, we told thirty, thanes of the doughtiest— But eleven live now: great loss I hold it.</p> <p>50. "We were five brothers when Buthli died from us. In Hel dwell now half of them, two hacked by your sword lie; / Great are ye Gjúkungs—gainsay I cannot— And a grim wife is Guthrún, of whom good had I never.</p>
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<p>Peace we have seldom had, since thou among us camest. Of kinsmen ye have bereft me, of riches often wronged. To Hel my sister ye have sent; that is to me most bitter."</p> <p>Gudrun 53. "This thou callest to mind, Atli! but thou so first didst act: My mother thou didst take, and for her treasures murder; My gifted niece with hunger thou didst cause to perish. Laughable to me it seems, when thou sorrows dost recount. The gods are to be thanked, that it goes ill with thee."</p> <p>Atli 54. Jarls! I exhort you the sorrow to augment Of that presumptuous woman: I would fain see it. Strive so to do, that Gudrun may lament. Might I but see that in her lot she joys not!</p> <p>55. Take ye Hogni, and with a knife hack him: Cut out his heart: this ye shall do. Gunnar the fierce of soul to a gallows fasten; Do the work thoroughly, lure up the serpents.</p> <p>Hogni 56. Do as thou listest, glad I will await it; / Stout I shall prove myself: I have ere now things much harder proved. Ye had a hindrance while unscathed we were: / Now are we so wounded that our fate thou mayest command.</p> <p>57. Beiti spake,—he was Atli's steward— Take we Hialli, but Hogni let us save. Let us do half the work; he is death-worthy. As long as he lives a slug he will ever be.</p> <p>58. Terrified was the kettle-watcher, the place no longer held him: he could be a whiner, he clomb into every nook: Their conflict was his bane, as he the penalty must pay; And the day sad, when he must from the swine die, From all good things, which he had enjoyed.</p> <p>59. Budli's cook they took, and the knife brought towards him. / Howled the wretched thrall, ere the point he felt; Declared that he had time the gardens to manure, The vilest offices to do, if from death he might escape. Joyful indeed was Hialli, could he but save his life.</p> <p>60. Hogni all this observed—few so act, As for a slave to intercede, that he may escape!— "Less 'tis, I say, for me to play this game myself. Why shall we here desire to listen to that screaming?"</p> <p>61. Hands on the good prince they laid. Then was no option</p>	<p>52.<sup>88</sup> We lay seldom together   since to me thou wast given, Now my kin all are gone,   of my gold<sup>89</sup> am I robbed; Nay, and worst, thou didst send   my sister<sup>90</sup> to hell."</p> <p>Guthrun spake:<sup>91</sup> 53. "Hear me now, Atli!   the first evil was thine; My mother didst thou take,   and for gold didst murder her, My sister's daughter   thou didst starve in a prison. A jest does it seem   that thy sorrow thou tellest, And good do I find it   that grief to thee comes."</p> <p>Atli spake:<sup>92</sup> 54. "Go now, ye warriors,   and make greater the grief Of the woman so fair,   for fain would I see it; So fierce be thy warring   that Guthrun shall weep, I would gladly behold   her happiness lost.</p> <p>55. "Seize ye now Hogni,   and with knives shall ye hew him, / His heart shall ye cut out,   this haste ye to do; And grim-hearted Gunnar   shall ye bind on the gallows, Swift shall ye do it,   to serpents now cast him."</p> <p>Hogni spake: 56. "Do now as thou wilt,   for glad I await it, Brave shalt thou find me,   I have faced worse before; We held thee at bay   while whole we were fighting, / Now with wounds are we spent,   so thy will canst thou work."<sup>93</sup></p> <p>57. Then did Beiti:<sup>94</sup> speak,   he was Atli's steward: "Let us seize now Hjalli,   and Hogni spare we! Let us fell the sluggard,<sup>95</sup>   he is fit for death, He has lived too long,   and lazy men call him."</p> <p>58. Afraid was the pot-watcher,   he fled here and yon, And crazed with his terror   he climbed in the corners: "Ill for me is this fighting,   if I pay for your fierceness, And sad is the day   to die leaving my swine And all the fair victuals   that of old did I have."<sup>96</sup></p> <p>59. They seized Buthli's cook,<sup>97</sup>   and they came with the knife, / The frightened thrall howled   ere the edge did he feel;/He was willing, he cried,   to dung well the court yard, Do the basest of work,   if spare him they would; Full happy were Hjalli   if his life he might have.</p> <p>60. Then fain was Hogni—   there are few would do thus— To beg for the slave   that safe hence he should go; "I would find it far better   this knife-play to feel, Why must we all hark   to this howling longer?"</p> <p>61. Then the brave one they seized;   to the warriors bold</p>	<p>51. "Were we happy seldom to my hands since thou camest: Hast killed my kindred, of my coffers robbed me, And to Hel sent my sister:<sup>201</sup> that my heaviest sorrow."</p> <p>(Guthrún said:) 52. "Dost hint that, Atli? And what of thy deeds? / Thou took'st my mother and didst murder her for gold rings, And my keen-thoughted sister didst in cave to death starve.<sup>202</sup> / I laugh to hear thee rehearse the wrongs done thee, / And thank the gods that have given thee sorrow."</p> <p>(Atli said:) 53. "Ye earls, I urge you to the utmost to heighten The woes of this woman: fain would I behold it; And get ye goodly Guthrún to whimper; My heart it would gladden unhappy to see her.</p> <p>54. "Seize ye bold Hogni and slit him with knife-edge, Cut the hero's heart out: hold yourselves ready; And stouthearted Gunnar on the gallows fasten; See that ye do this; to the snake den then with him!"<sup>203</sup></p> <p>(Hogni said:) 55. "Do thy worst and forbear not, I abide it gladly: Thou shalt find me steadfast, I have stood much ere this. A whaling we gave you the while hale we Gjúkungs: Now we are wounded and weary thy way thou mayst have."</p> <p>56. Up then spake Beiti—he was Atli's steward: "Let us spare Hogni, and Hjalli slaughter, The foolish fellow,<sup>204</sup> he is fey for a long time; Too long now liveth that lout, good for nothing."</p> <p>57. Scared was the scullion and scampered away fast, Crept in all corners, cackling with terror; 'Twas a sore plight, quoth he, to pay for their warfare, To end his days dolefully and die from his swinery, From the fat fare which before he had eaten.</p> <p>58. On Buthli's baster they brandished the knife then: Cried out the coward—ere the cold edge he felt e'en— He would do it this day yet, he would dung the meadow, Nor shun any drudgery, if from death they would spare him: Happy were Hjalli if he had but his life left.</p> <p>59. Pleaded then Hogni—as had done the fewest— The thrall to unfetter that thence he might hie him: "For us it were easier this ill game to play with you,<sup>205</sup> Why should we here wish to hear that yelping?"</p> <p>60. They laid hands on Hogni then; hard was it for them</p>
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<p>for the bold warriors, the sentence longer to delay. Then laughed Hogni; heard the sons of day How he could hold out: torment he well endured!</p> <p>62. A harp Gunnar took, with his foot-branches touched it. He could so strike it, that women wept, And the men sobbed, who best could hear it. He the noble queen counseled: the rafters burst asunder.</p> <p>63. There died the noble, as the dawn of day; At the last they caused their deeds to live.</p> <p>64. Atli thought himself great: over them both he strode, To the sagacious woman told the evil, and bitterly reproached her. "It is now morning, Gudrun! thy loved ones thou hast lost; Partly thou art the cause that it has so befallen."</p> <p>Gudrun 65. Joyful art thou, Atli! slaughter to announce: Repentance shall await thee, when thou hast all proved. That heritage shall be left thee—that I can tell thee— That ill shall never from thee go, unless I also die.</p> <p>Atli 66. That I can prevent; another course I see, Easier by half: the good we oft reject. With slaves I will console thee, with things most precious, With snow-white silver, as thou thyself mayest desire.</p> <p>Gudrun 67. Of that there is <i>no</i> hope; I will all reject; Atonement I have spurned for smaller injuries. Hard I was ever thought, now will that be aggravated. I every grudge concealed, while Hogni lived.</p> <p>68. We were both nurtured in one house; Many a play we played, and in the wood grew up; Grimhild us adorned with gold and necklaces; For my brothers' death never wilt thou indemnify me, Nor ever do what shall to me seem good.</p> <p>69. Mens' too great power women's lot oppresses; On the knee the hand sinks, if the arms wither; The tree inclines, if its root-fibres are severed. Now, Atli! thou mayest alone over all here command.</p> <p>70. Most unwise it was, when to this the prince gave credit: The guile was manifest, had he been on his guard. Dissembling then was Gudrun,</p>	<p>No chance was there left   to delay his fate longer; Loud did Hogni laugh,   all the sons of day<sup>98</sup> heard him, So valiant he was   that well he could suffer.<sup>99</sup></p> <p>62.<sup>100</sup> A harp Gunnar seized,   with his toes<sup>101</sup> he smote it So well did he strike   that the women all wept, And the men, when clear   they heard it, lamented; Full noble was his song,   the rafters<sup>102</sup> burst asunder.</p> <p>63. Then the heroes died   ere the day was yet come; Their fame did they leave   ever lofty to live. [Few braver shall ever   be found on the earth, Or loftier men   in the world ever give.]<sup>103</sup></p> <p>64. Full mighty seemed Atli   as o'er them he stood, The wise one<sup>104</sup> he blamed,   and his words reproached her: <sup>105</sup>"It is morning, Guthrun;   now thy dear ones dost miss, But the blame is part thine   that thus it has chanced."</p> <p>Guthrun spake:<sup>106</sup> 65. "Thou art joyous, Atli,   for of evil thou tellest, But sorrow is thine   if thou mightest all see; Thy heritage heavy   here can I tell thee, Sorrow never thou lovest   unless I shall die."</p> <p>Atli spake:<sup>107</sup> 66. "Not free of guilt am I;<sup>108</sup>   a way shall I find That is better by far,—   oft the fairest<sup>109</sup> we shunned;— With slaves I console thee,   with gems fair to see, And with silver snow-white,   as thyself thou shalt choose."</p> <p>Guthrun spake:<sup>110</sup> 67. "No hope shall this give thee,   thy gifts I shall take not, Requital I spurned<sup>111</sup>   when my sorrows were smaller; Once grim did I seem,   but now greater my grimness, There was nought seemed too hard   while Hogni was living.</p> <p>68. "Our childhood did we have   in a single house, We played many a game,   in the grove did we grow; Then did Grimhild give us   gold and necklaces, Thou shalt ne'er make amends   for my brother's murder, Nor ever shalt win me   to think it was well.<sup>112</sup></p> <p>69. "But the fierceness of men   rules the fate of women,<sup>113</sup> The tree-top bows low   if bereft of its leaves,<sup>114</sup> The tree bends over   if the roots are cleft under it; Now mayest thou, Atli,   o'er all things here rule."</p> <p>70. Full heedless the warrior   was that he trusted her, So clear was her guile   if on guard he had been; <sup>115</sup>But crafty was Guthrun,   with cunning she spake, / Her</p>	<p>The life to lengthen of the lordly hero.<sup>206</sup> Laughed then Hogni—heard it all warriors— Steadfastly bore it, well stood he the torture.</p> <p>61. His harp took Gunnar,<sup>207</sup> the strings grasped with his foot-twigs;<sup>208</sup> / Wept all the women, so well could he play it, / Men burst into tears eke who could best hear him; Of his wrongs he told her:<sup>209</sup> burst the rafters asunder.<sup>210</sup></p> <p>62. Then died the doughty ones: was the day still young then. / To the last lived in them their lofty manhood.</p> <p>63. Great thought him Atli: both Gjúkungs had he slain now, / Told her loss to the lady, with no little taunting: "‘Tis morning now, Guthrún; no more are thy dear ones; To thyself in somewhat they sorrow thy owest."</p> <p>(Guthrún said:) 64. "Right merry art, Atli, of the murdered to tell me; But thou’lt rue thy rash deed when wrought is all of it.<sup>211</sup> This left they after them, and I let thee know it: Ill hap will haunt thee the while I live, too."</p> <p>(Atli said:) 65. "In naught I believe this: another way see I,<sup>212</sup> By far more fitting—oft we fail to take such— With gifts and girl-slaves I shall gladden, wife, thee, And with snow-white silver, as yourself will have it."</p> <p>(Guthrún said:) 66. "Thy hope is hollow: I’ll have none of these: My wrath I wreaked oft for wrongs that were lesser; Willful they weened me, but worse I shall be now, Yet had I forborne it if Hogni lived still.</p> <p>67. "In one hall we both were brought up together, In the grove we grew up and gamboled playfully; Queen Grímhild gave us gold rings and necklaces: No amends canst make e’er for my murdered brothers, Nor by aught work it that e’er I forgive thee.</p> <p>68. "Women’s lot is worsened ay by warriors’ recklessness: The oak’s strength is stunted when stripped are its branches, The tree will topple when torn are its rootlets: In all mayest now, Atli, thy own will follow."<sup>213</sup></p> <p>69. The lord too lightly believed her and trusted, Nor was hidden the falsehood if heed he had given; Crafty was Guthrún, well could she shuffle,</p>
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<p>against her heart she could speak, Made herself gay appear, with two shields she played.<sup>6</sup></p> <p>71. A banquet she would prepare, her brothers' funeral feast; / The same would Atli also for his own do.</p> <p>72. With this they ended; the banquet was prepared; The feasting was too luxurious. The woman great of heart was stern, she warred on Budli's race; / On her spouse she would cruel vengeance wreak.</p> <p>73. The young ones she enticed, and on a block laid them, The fierce babes were terrified, and wept not, To their mother's bosom crept, asked what she was going to do.</p> <p>74. "Ask no questions, both I intend to kill; Long have I desired to cut short your days."</p> <p>75. "Slay as thou wilt thy children, no one hinders it; Thy rage will have short peace, if thou destroyest us In our blooming years, thou desperate woman!" It fell out accordingly: she cut the throats of both.</p> <p>76. Atli oft inquired whither his boys were gone to play, As he nowhere saw them.</p> <p>Gudrun 77. Over I am resolved to go, and to Atli tell it. Grimhild's daughter will not conceal it from thee. Little glad, Atli! wilt thou be, when all thou learnest; Great woe didst thou raise up, when thou my brother slewest.</p> <p>78. Very seldom have I slept since they fell. Bitterly I threatened thee: now I have reminded thee. "It is now morning," saidst thou: I yet it well remember; And it now is eve, when thou the like shalt learn.</p> <p>79. Thou thy sons hast lost, as thou least shouldst; Know that their skulls thou hast had for beer-cups; Thy drink I prepared, I their red blood have shed.</p> <p>80. I their hearts took, and on a spit staked them, Then to thee gave them. I said they were of calves,— It was long of thee alone—thou didst leave none, Voraciously didst devour, well didst ply thy teeth.</p>	<p>glance she made pleasant,   with two shields<sup>116</sup> she played.</p> <p>71. The beer then she brought   for her brothers' death feast, And a feast Atli made   for his followers dead No more did they speak,   the mead was made ready, Soon the men were gathered   with mighty uproar.<sup>117</sup></p> <p>72. Thus bitterly planned she,   and Buthli's race threatened, And terrible vengeance   on her husband would take; <sup>118</sup>The little ones called she,   on a block she laid them;<sup>119</sup> Afraid were the proud ones,   but their tears did not fall; To their mother's arms went they,   and asked what she would.<sup>120</sup></p> <p>Guthrun spake:<sup>121</sup> 73. "Nay, ask me no more!   You both shall I murder, For long have I wished   your lives to steal from you.</p> <p>The boys spake: "Slay thy boys as thou wilt,   for no one may bar it, Short the angry one's<sup>122</sup> peace   if all thou shalt do."<sup>123</sup></p> <p>74. Then the grim one slew both   of the brothers young, Full hard was her deed   when their heads she smote off; <sup>124</sup>Fain was Atli to know   whither now they were gone, The boys from their sport,   for nowhere he spied them.</p> <p>Guthrun spake:<sup>125</sup> 75. "My fate shall I seek,   all to Atli saying, The daughter of Grimhild   the deed from thee hides not; No joy thou hast, Atli,   if all thou shalt hear, Great sorrow didst wake   when my brothers thou slewest.</p> <p>76. "I have seldom slept   since the hour they were slain, Baleful were my threats,   now I bid thee recall them; Thou didst say it was morning—<sup>126</sup>too well I remember— Now is evening come,   and this question thou askest.</p> <p>77. "Now both of thy sons   thou hast lost   as thou never shouldst do;<sup>127</sup> The skulls<sup>128</sup> of thy boys   thou as beer-cups didst have, And the draught that I made thee   was mixed with their blood.</p> <p>78. "I cut out their hearts,   on a spit I cooked them, I came to thee with them,   and calf's flesh I called them; Alone didst thou eat them,   nor any didst leave, Thou didst greedily bite,   and thy teeth were busy.<sup>129</sup></p>	<p>Twain shields showed she him<sup>214</sup> and shammed cheerfulness.</p> <p>70. Great arvel made she after her brothers, And after his own dead did Atli likewise. No more they said, then; the mead was ready, Was the goodly gathering made with great feasting.</p> <p>71. Hardhearted, hoped she to harm his kin greatly, Most fearful vengeance she vowed on her husband: She lured her little ones, laid them 'gainst bedpost. The wild ones were frightened yet wept not nor whimpered, Sought the arms of their mother and asked what she wanted.</p> <p>(<i>Guthrún said:</i>) 72. "Ye had better not ask me: you both I shall slaughter, Was I eager ever of old age to heal you."</p> <p>(<i>The boys said:</i>) "To make away with us no wight can hinder thee: Thy wrath will be sated when 'tis wrought altogether."<sup>215</sup></p> <p>73. Unbending, she blotted out the brothers in their childhood, Their heads she hewed off—for her 'twas unseemly. Where the boys were playing, asked Buthli's son then, His small sons twain, as he saw them nowhere.</p> <p>(<i>Guthrún said:</i>) 74.<sup>216</sup> "I dare to tell now the tidings to Atli, Will Grimhild's daughter not disguise ought of it: Naught will it gladden thee, once thou knowest it: Great sorrow didst summon when thou slowest my brothers.</p> <p>75. "But seldom slept I ever since they have fallen. Grim meed I foretold thee: I mind thee now of it. Of that morrow spakest thou—<sup>217</sup>to mind I call it: 'Tis evening turned now and tidings I have for thee.</p> <p>76. "Lost hast thou thy lief sons, which should have last bedide thee: Know that their brain-pans as beakers thou usest; The mead thou drunkest was mixed with their heartblood.</p> <p>77. "The hearts of the striplings I steaked o'er the fire, Calfs' hearts I called them when I carried them to thee. Thou attest all up, nor aught of it leftist, Didst chew greedily with thy grinders working.</p>
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<p>81. Thy children's fate thou knowest, few a worse awaits. I have my part performed, though in it glory not.</p> <p>Atli</p> <p>82. Cruel wast thou, Gudrun! who couldst so act, With thy children's blood my drink to mingle. Thou hast destroyed thy offspring, as thou least shouldst; And to myself thou leavest a short interval from ill.</p> <p>Gudrun</p> <p>83. I could still desire thyself to slay; Rarely too ill it fares with such a prince. Thou hast already perpetrated crimes unexampled Among men of frantic cruelty, in this world: Now thou hast added what we have just witnessed. A great misdeed hast thou committed, Thy death-feast thou hast prepared.</p> <p>Atli</p> <p>84. On the pile thou shalt be burnt, but first be stoned; Then wilt thou have earned what thou hast ever sought.</p> <p>Gudrun</p> <p>85. Tell to thyself such griefs early to-morrow: By a fairer death I will pass to another light.</p> <p>86. In the same hall they sat, exchanged hostile thoughts, Banded words of hate: each was ill at ease.</p> <p>87. Hate waxed in a Hniflung, a great deed he meditated; To Gudrun he declared that he was Atli's deadly foe.</p> <p>88. Into her mind came Hogni's treatment; Happy she him accounted, if he vengeance wreaked. Then was Atli slain, within a little space; Hogni's son him slew, and Gudrun herself.</p> <p>89. The bold king spake, roused up from sleep; Quickly he felt the wounds, said he no binding needed. "Tell me most truly who has slain Budli's son. I am hardly treated: of life I have no hope."</p> <p>Gudrun</p> <p>90. I, Grimhild's daughter, will not from thee hide, That I am the cause that thy life passes away; But partly Hogni's son, that thy wounds make thee faint.</p> <p>Atli</p>	<p>79.<sup>130</sup> "Of thy sons now thou knowest;   few suffer more sorrow; My guilt have I told,   fame it never shall give me."</p> <p>Atli spake:<sup>131</sup></p> <p>80. "Grim wast thou, Guthrun,   in so grievous a deed, My draught with the blood   of thy boys to mingle; Thou hast slain thine own kin,   most ill it beseeemed thee, And little for me   twixt my sorrows thou leavest."</p> <p>Guthrun spake:<sup>132</sup></p> <p>81. "Still more would I seek   to slay thee thyself, Enough ill comes seldom   to such as thou art; [Thou wast foolish, Atli,   when wise thou didst feel, Ever the whole   of thy race did I hate]<sup>133</sup> Thou didst folly of old,   such that no one shall find In the whole world of men   a match for such madness. Now this that of late   we learned hast thou added, Great evil hast grasped,   and thine own death feast made."</p> <p>Atli spake:<sup>134</sup></p> <p>82. "With fire shall they burn thee,   and first shall they stone thee, So then hast thou earned   what thou ever hast sought for."</p> <p>Guthrun spake:</p> <p>"Such woes for thyself   shalt thou say in the morning, From a finer death I   to another light<sup>135</sup> fare."</p> <p>83. Together they sat   and full grim were their thoughts, Unfriendly their words,   and no joy either found; In Hniflung<sup>136</sup> grew hatred,   great plans did he have, To Guthrun his anger   against Atli was told.</p> <p>84. To her heart came ever   the fate of Hogni, She told him 'twere well   if he vengeance should win; So was Atli slain,—   'twas not slow to await,— Hogni's son slew him,   and Guthrun herself.<sup>137</sup></p> <p>85. Then the warrior spake,   as from slumber he wakened, Soon he knew for his wounds   would the bandage do nought:<sup>138</sup> "Now the truth shalt thou say:   who has slain Buthli's son? Full sore am I smitten,   nor hope can I see."</p> <p>Guthrun spake:<sup>139</sup></p> <p>86. "Ne'er her deed from thee hides   the daughter of Grimhild, / I own to the guilt   that is ending thy life, And the son of Hogni;   'tis so thy wounds bleed."</p> <p>Atli spake:</p>	<p>78. "But to few befalls worse: their fate now knowest thou: I brought it about, all; yet boast I not of it."</p> <p>(Atli said:)</p> <p>79. "Cruel wast thou, Guthrún, that thou couldn't do thuswise, To brew beer for me from the blood of my children. Thou'st slain those nearest thee, which thou never should'st have. / Naught but ill from thee has befallen me ever."</p> <p>(Guthrún said:)</p> <p>80. "In sooth, sweet were it to slay thee also; Naught is enough for so knavish a chieftain For misdeeds dreadful thou hast done ere this, Nameless, as never were known the like of.</p> <p>81. "Into greater guilt hast now, and more ghastly, fallen Than e'er was heard of: they own arvel drankest now."<sup>218</sup></p> <p>(Atli said:)</p> <p>82. "On stake they should burn thee, but stone thee beforehand: then had'st gained what thou e'er hankered after."</p> <p>(Guthrún said:)</p> <p>"On the morrow early be mindful of such things: By a fairer death shall I fare to the other light."<sup>219</sup></p> <p>83. Thus sate they together, filled with savage rancor, Words of hate they banded, but happy was neither. Waxed Hniflung's<sup>220</sup> hatred, of high deeds bethought him, Set forth to Guthrún his grim hate of Atli.</p> <p>84. To her mind she called then how they murdered her brother. / Good hap she held it if Hogni avenged were; Then laid low Atli, nor lingered in doing it Hniflung, Hogni's son, and highborn Guthrún.</p> <p>85. Quoth the stouthearted one, starting from sleep up— From the wound well knew he that it needed no binding:<sup>221</sup> "Say ye in sooth now: who slew King Atli? Not lightly ye dealt with me: my lifeblood is ebbing."</p> <p>(Guthrún said:)</p> <p>86. "Will Grímhild's daughter not disguise ought of it: 'Tis I who wrought it, that ended thy life now, And Hogni's son eke, that to Hel thou wendest."</p> <p>(Atli said:)</p>
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<p>91. To the slaughter thou hast rushed,            although it ill beseemed thee;  'Tis bad to circumvent a friend, who well confided in thee.  Besought I went from home, to woo thee, Gudrun!</p> <p>92. A widow thou was left, fierce thou wast accounted,  Which was no falsehood, as we have proved.  Hither home thou earnest, us a host of men attended;  All was splendid on our journey.</p> <p>93. Pomp of all kinds was there, of illustrious men,  Beeves in abundance: largely we enjoyed them.  Of all things there was plenty partaken of by many.</p> <p>94. A marriage gift to my bride I gave,            treasures for her acceptance,  Thralls thrice ten, seven fair female slaves:  In such things was honour; silver there was yet more.</p> <p>95. All seemed to thee as it were naught,  While the lands untouched lay, which Budli had left me.  So didst thou undermine, dist allow me nothing to receive.  Thou didst my mother let often sit weeping:  With heart content I found not one of my household after.</p> <p>Gudrun</p> <p>96. Now, Atli! thou liest, though of that I little reck.  Gentle I seldom was, yet didst thou greatly aggravate it.  Young brothers ye fought together, among yourselves  contended; / To Hel went the half from thy house:  All went to ruin that should be for benefit.</p> <p>97. Brothers and sisters we were three, we thought  ourselves invincible: / From the land we departed, we  followed Sigurd. / We roved about, each steered a ship;  Seeking luck we went, till to the east we came.</p> <p>98. The chief king we slew, there a land obtained,  The "hersar" yielded to us; that manifested fear.  We from the forest freed him whom we wished harmless,  Raised him to prosperity who nothing had possessed.</p> <p>99. The Hun king<sup>7</sup> died, then suddenly my fortune changed:  Great was the young wife's grief, the widow's lot was hers.  A torment to me it seemed to come living to the house of  Atli. / A hero had possessed me: sad was that loss!</p> <p>100. Thou didst never from a contest come, as we had  heard, Where thou didst gain thy cause, or others overcome;  Ever wouldst thou give way, and never stand,  Lettest all pass off quietly, as ill beseemed a king.</p>	<p>"To murder hast thou fared,   though foul it must seem;  Ill thy friend to betray   who trusted thee well.</p> <p>87. "Not glad went I hence   thy hand to seek, Guthrun,  <sup>140</sup>In thy widowhood famed,   but haughty men found thee;  My belief did not lie,   as now we have learned;  I brought thee home hither,   and a host of men with us.</p> <p>88. "Most noble was all   when of old we journeyed,  Great honor did we have   of heroes full worthy;  Of cattle had we plenty,   and greatly we prospered,  Mighty was our wealth,   and many received it.<sup>141</sup></p> <p>89. "To the famed one as bride-gift   I gave jewels fair,  I gave thirty slaves,   and handmaidens seven;  [Bit-champing horses and wheel-wagons bright;]<sup>142</sup>  There was honor in such gifts,   yet the silver was greater.<sup>143</sup></p> <p>90. "But all to thee was   as if nought it were worth,  While the land lay before thee   that Buthli had left me;<sup>144</sup>  Thou in secret didst work   so the treasure<sup>145</sup> I won not;<sup>146</sup>  My mother<sup>147</sup> full oft   to sit weeping didst make,  No wedded joy found I   in fullness of heart."</p> <p>Guthrun spake:<sup>148</sup></p> <p>91. "Thou liest now, Atli,   though little I heed it;  If I seldom was kindly,   full cruel wast thou;<sup>149</sup>  Ye brothers fought young,   quarrels brought you to battle,  And half<sup>150</sup> went to hell   of the sons of thy house,  And all was destroyed   that should e'er have done good.</p> <p>92. "My two brothers and I   were bold in our thoughts,  From the land<sup>151</sup> we went forth,   with Sigurth we fared;  Full swiftly we sailed,   each one steering his ship,  So our fate sought we e'er   till we came to the East.</p> <p>93. "First the king did we slay,   and the land we seized,  The princes did us service,   for such was their fear;  From the forest<sup>152</sup> we called   them we fain would have  guiltless, / And rich made we many   who of all were bereft.</p> <p>94. "Slain was the Hun-king,<sup>153</sup>   soon happiness vanished,  In her grief the widow   so young sat weeping;<sup>154</sup>  Yet worse seemed the sorrow   to seek Atli's house,  A hero was my husband,   and hard was his loss.</p> <p>95. "From the Thing<sup>155</sup> thou camst never,   for thus have we  heard, / Having won in thy quarrels,   or warriors smitten;<sup>156</sup>  Full yielding thou wast,   never firm was thy will,  In silence didst suffer,   [as beseems not a king.]<sup>157</sup></p>	<p>"Full swiftly thou slowest me, unseemly the deed, though:  'Tis ill to betray him who trusts him as his bosom-friend."<sup>222</sup></p> <p>87. "Unwilling went I to woo thee, Guthrún;  Wast praised in thy widowhood, and proud they called thee.  Nor was it falsehood: all too well I found out.  From thy home thou cam'st hither, a host of men following.</p> <p>88. "A life most lordly we led, my hall within:  Dearth was there never of noble athelings;  Well-stocked were our stables and in state lived we,  Had great wealth of gold rings which we gave to many.</p> <p>89. "A great dowry I paid thee, and adorned thee with  jewels, / Gave thee thralls thirty, seven thrifty bondmaids—  Were seeming such gifts—and of silver a great store.</p> <p>90. "Thou didst reckon it nowise, as though naught were all,  But didst long for the lands ay left me by Buthli;  With wiles thou didst work it, nor would'st have aught  else.<sup>223</sup> / My mother madest thou shed mournful tears oft;  Were we, wife and husband, unhappy ever after."</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Guthrún said:)</i></p> <p>91. "That liest thou, Atli, though little I reckon it.  I smiled on thee seldom: wast thou swelled up o'ermuch;<sup>224</sup>  E'en as striplings ye struggled, was strife 'mongst you  brothers, / To Hel half of them from thy hall wended:<sup>225</sup>  What good should have given thee, to grief it turned all.</p> <p>92. "Twain brothers Had I, headstrong they called us;  We fared from our folk-lands and followed Sigurth;<sup>226</sup>  Forth strode we stanchly, steering his ship each one,  Our fates we followed, and fought our way eastward.</p> <p>93. "We carved us a kingdom, its king overthrew we;  Fell at our feet then, fearful, the barons;  Him who fled his fellowmen freed we from outlawry,  And mighty made him without means who had been.</p> <p>94. "Fell then the Hunnish king,<sup>227</sup> my fate soon worsened;  Keen was my sorrow to be called widow;  But worse grief was it to me to be given to Atli!  A hero once had me: ill hap to lose him!</p> <p>95. "From Thing camest never—so that we heard thereof—  Having pleaded pluckily,<sup>228</sup> o'erpowered thy foeman;  Gavest in at all times, thy own never holding,  But quietly yielded (as a king should never)."<sup>229</sup></p>
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<p>Atli 101. Gudrun! now thou liest. Little will be bettered The lot of either: we have all suffered. Now act thou, Gudrun! of thy goodness, And for our honour, when I forth am borne.</p> <p>Gudrun 102. I a ship will buy, and a painted cist;<sup>8</sup> Will the winding-sheet well wax, to enwrap thy corpse; Will think of every requisite, as if we had each other loved.</p> <p>103. Atli was now a corpse, lament from his kin arose: The illustrious woman did all she had promised. The wise woman would go to destroy herself; Her days were lengthened: she died another time.</p> <p>104. Happy is every one hereafter who shall give birth To such a daughter famed for deeds, as Giuki begat: Ever will live, in every land, Their oft-told tale, wherever people shall give ear.</p>	<p>Atli spake: 96. "Thou liest now, Guthrun,   but little of good Will it bring to either,   for all have we lost; But, Guthrun, yet once   be thou kindly of will, For the honor of both,   when forth I am home."</p> <p>Guthrun spake:<sup>158</sup> 97. "A ship<sup>159</sup> will I buy,   and a bright-hued coffin, I will wax well the shroud   to wind round thy body, For all will I care   as if dear were we ever."</p> <p>98. Then did Atli die,   and his heirs<sup>160</sup> grief doubled; The high-born one did   as to him she had promised; Then sought Guthrun the wise   to go to her death, But for days did she wait,   and 'twas long<sup>161</sup> ere she died.</p> <p>99. Full happy shall he be   who such offspring has, Or children so gallant,   as Gjuki begot; Forever shall live,   and in lands far and wide, Their valor heroic   wherever men hear it.</p>	<p>(Atli said:) 96. "That liest thou, Guthrún; but little it better The lot of either: our lives are blasted. Forget thou not, Guthrún, nor grudge it to me, As honor to both of us that out I be borne well."</p> <p>(Guthrún said:) 97. "A sea-steed<sup>230</sup> will I get thee, and a stained coffin,<sup>231</sup> A sheet will I wax well to shroud thy body, To all look that is needful, as though we had loved each other."</p> <p>98. Lifeless sank Atli, great loss felt his kinsmen; Carried out the lady all she had pledged her to. To the flood she fared then, her fate to hasten; But her days were lengthened, she died another time.<sup>232</sup></p> <p>99. Happy is he who hath him begotten Children as great as Gjúki did foster: In all lands will live ay on the lips of everyone, Where'er men hear of it, their hardy bearing.</p>
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<sup>1</sup> The messengers.

<sup>2</sup> It would seem that the original runes, as graven by Gudrun, had not been so completely erased as to leave no traces of them; but that they were still sufficiently legible to enable Kostbera to ascertain the real purport of the communication.

<sup>3</sup> Ham (hamr. fem. hamingia) a guardian angel, an attendant spirit.

<sup>4</sup> Here a gallows in our sense of the word, but usually a stake on a scaffold, to which the condemned to a death of torture was bound hand and foot.

<sup>5</sup> So great was their haste to land.

<sup>6</sup> She played a double game.

<sup>7</sup> Sigurd.

<sup>8</sup> The ancient usage of laying the body in a ship and sending it adrift seems inconsistent with the later custom of depositing it in a cist or coffin.

<sup>9</sup> Men: Atli and his advisers, with whom he planned the death of the sons of Gjuki, Gunnar and Hogni. The poet's reference to the story as well known explains the abruptness of his introduction, without the mention of Atli's name, and his reference to Guthrun in stanza 3 simply as "the woman" ("*husfreyja*," goddess of the house).

<sup>10</sup> Princes: Atli, Gunnar, and Hogni.

<sup>11</sup> Bulwark: Atli's slaying of his wife's brothers, who were ready to support and defend him in his greatness, was the cause of his own death.

<sup>12</sup> The woman: Guthrun, concerning whose marriage to Atli cf. *Guthrunarkviða II*.

<sup>13</sup> The sea: a late and essentially Greenland variation of the geography of the Atli story. Even the *Atlakviða*, perhaps half a century earlier, separates Atli's land from that of the Gjukungs only by a forest.

<sup>14</sup> Runes: on the two versions of Guthrun's warning, and also on the name of the messenger (here Vingi), cf. *Dráp Niflunga* and note.

<sup>15</sup> Limafjord: probably the Limfjord of northern Jutland, an important point in the wars of the eleventh century. The name was derived from "Eylimafjory," i.e., Eylimi's fjord. The poet may really have thought that the kingdom of the Burgundians was in Jutland, or he may simply have taken a well-known name for the sake of vividness.

<sup>16</sup> Some editors assume a gap after this stanza.

<sup>17</sup> Some editions place this stanza between stanzas 7 and 8.

<sup>18</sup> Kostbera ("The Giver of Food") and Glaumvor ("The Merry"): presumably creations of the poet.

<sup>19</sup> Both: Atli's two emissaries, Vingi and the one here unnamed (Knefroth?).

<sup>20</sup> It is altogether probable that a stanza has been lost between stanzas 6 and 7, in which Gunnar is first invited, and replies doubtfully.

<sup>21</sup> Made promise: many editions emend the text to read "promised the journey."

<sup>22</sup> The text of line 4 is obscure; the manuscript reads "*nitti*" ("refused"), which many editors have changed to "*hlitti*," which means exactly the opposite.

<sup>23</sup> No gap is indicated in the manuscript; Bugge adds line 3 as given in brackets. The manuscript indicates line 4 as beginning a new stanza, and some editions make a separate stanza out of lines 1-2. Others suggest the loss of a line after line 4.

<sup>24</sup> The manuscript does not indicate line 1 as the beginning of a stanza; cf. note on stanza 8.

<sup>25</sup> Some editions combine this stanza with lines 1-2 of stanza 11. The manuscript indicates no gap.

<sup>26</sup> Grundtvig adds line 2 as given in brackets.

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- <sup>27</sup> Some editions make a separate stanza out of lines 1-2, or combine them with stanza 10, and combine lines 3-4 with stanza 12 (either lines 1-4 or 1-2). The manuscript marks line 3 as beginning a new stanza.
- <sup>28</sup> Line 5 may be spurious, or else all that is left of a lost stanza. The manuscript marks it as the beginning of a new stanza, which, as the text stands, is clearly impossible.
- <sup>29</sup> The manuscript, followed by some editions, has "Hogni spake" in the middle of line 1.
- <sup>30</sup> Ill: the manuscript and many editions have "this."
- <sup>31</sup> The king: Atli.
- <sup>32</sup> The manuscript does not indicate the speakers in this dialogue between Kostbera and Hogni (stanzas 14-19).
- <sup>33</sup> Two lines may possibly have been lost after line 2, filling out stanza 14 and making stanza 15 (then consisting of lines 3-4 of stanza 14 and lines 1-2 of stanza 15) the account of Kostbera's first dream. The manuscript marks line 3 as beginning a new stanza. In any case, the lost lines cannot materially have altered the meaning.
- <sup>34</sup> Saw I: the manuscript here, as also in stanzas 16, 18, 2r, 22, and 24, has "methought," which involves a metrical error.
- <sup>35</sup> Some editors regard lines 3-4 as the remains of a four-line stanza. Regarding Kostbera's warning dreams, and Hogni's matter-of-fact interpretations of them, cf. *Guthrunarkviða II*, 39-44.
- <sup>36</sup> The meaning of the first half of line 3 in the original is obscure.
- <sup>37</sup> Ice-bear: polar bears, common in Greenland, are very rarely found in Iceland, and never in Norway, a fact which substantiates the manuscript's reference to Greenland as the home of the poem.
- <sup>38</sup> Two lines may have been lost after line 2, but the *Volsungasaga* paraphrase gives no clue.
- <sup>39</sup> The manuscript indicates no gap, but most editors assume the loss of a line after line 1 or 2; Grundtvig adds, after line 1 the line given in brackets.
- <sup>40</sup> Atli's spirit: the poet's folk-lore seems here a bit weak. Presumably he means such a female following-spirit ("fylga") as appears in *Helgakviða Hjörvarthssonar*, prose following stanza 34 (cf. note thereon), but the word he uses, "*hamr*" (masculine) means "skin," "shape." He may, however, imply that Atli had assumed the shape of an eagle for this occasion.
- <sup>41</sup> The manuscript indicates line 4 as beginning a new stanza.
- <sup>42</sup> The manuscript indicates no gap, but none of the many attempted emendations have made sense out of the words as they stand. The proper location for the missing words is sheer guesswork.
- <sup>43</sup> Two roads: probably the meaning is that their way (i.e., their success) would be doubtful.
- <sup>44</sup> The manuscript does not indicate the speakers in this dialogue (stanzas 21-26).
- <sup>45</sup> No gap is indicated after line 2. Most editors assume the loss of two lines or of a full stanza after stanza 21 giving Gunnar's interpretation of Glaumvor's dream, but the *Volsungasaga* gives no clue, as it does not mention this first dream at all.
- <sup>46</sup> Gods' doom: an odd, and apparently mistaken, use of the phrase "*ragna rok*" (cf. *Voluspo*, introductory note).
- <sup>47</sup> Grundtvig suggests as Gunnar's answer these lines given in brackets.
- <sup>48</sup> Perhaps two lines have been lost after line 2. Possibly the concluding phrase of line 2 should be "bloody spears," as in the *Volsungasaga* paraphrase.
- <sup>49</sup> Again Gunnar's interpretation is missing, and most editors either assume a gap or construct two *malahattr* lines (out of the *Volsungasaga* prose paraphrase, which runs as given in brackets).
- <sup>50</sup> The meaning of line 4 is uncertain, but apparently it refers to the guardian spirits or lesser Norns (cf. *Fafnismol*, 12-13 and notes).
- <sup>51</sup> Possibly a line has been lost from this stanza.
- <sup>52</sup> Five: Gunnar, Hogni, and the three mentioned in Stanza 28.
- <sup>53</sup> Perhaps a line has been lost before line 1; Grundtvig supplies: "Gunnar and Hogni, the heirs twain of Gjuki."
- <sup>54</sup> Snaevar (the manuscript here has "Snevar"), Solar and Orkning appear only in this poem and in the prose narratives based on it.
- <sup>55</sup> Shield-tree: warrior (Orkning), here identified as Kostbera's brother.
- <sup>56</sup> Lines 2-3 may have been expanded out of one line, or possibly line 3 is spurious. The manuscript indicates line 4 as beginning a new stanza, and many editions make a separate stanza out of lines 4-5, many of them assuming the loss of two lines.
- <sup>57</sup> Fair-decked ones: women, i.e., Glaumvor and Kostbera.
- <sup>58</sup> Fjord: perhaps specifically the Limafjord mentioned in stanza 4.
- <sup>59</sup> The manuscript indicates no gap. Grundtvig inserts line 2 as given in brackets.
- <sup>60</sup> Bera: Kostbera; the first element in compound feminine proper names was not infrequently omitted; cf. Hild for Brynhild (*Helreith Brynhildar*, 6).
- <sup>61</sup> The manuscript indicates no gap; Grundtvig inserts line 2 as given in brackets.
- <sup>62</sup> Hogni's method of cheering his wife and sister-in-law is somewhat unusual, for the meaning of lines 3-4 is that good wishes and blessings are of little use in warding off danger.
- <sup>63</sup> Perhaps two lines have been lost after line 2; Grundtvig supplies the lines in brackets.
- <sup>64</sup> Keel, etc.: in the *Nibelungenlied*, and presumably in the older German tradition, Hagene breaks his oar steering the Burgundians across the Danube (stanza 1564), and, after all have landed, splinters the boat (stanza 1581) in order that there may be no retreating. The poet here seems to have confused the story, connecting the breaking of the ship's keel with the violence of the rowing, but echoing the older legend in the last line, wherein the ship is allowed to drift away after the travellers have landed.
- <sup>65</sup> Oar-loops: the thongs by which the oars in a Norse boat were made fast to the thole-pins, the combination taking the place of the modern oarlock.
- <sup>66</sup> The manuscript indicates line 4 as beginning a new stanza, and many editions combine it with stanza 36, some of them assuming the loss of a line from stanza 35. In the *Volsungasaga* paraphrase the second half of line 4 is made a part of Vingi's speech: "Better had ye left this undone."
- <sup>67</sup> Cf. note on preceding stanza; the manuscript does not indicate line 1 as beginning a stanza. Line 3 may be spurious.
- <sup>68</sup> In the *Volsungasaga* paraphrase the second half of line 1 and the first half of line 2 are included in Hogni's speech.
- <sup>69</sup> Possibly two lines have been lost after line 2.
- <sup>70</sup> It is probable that a considerable passage has been lost between stanzas 39 and 40, for the *Volsungasaga* paraphrase includes a dialogue at this point. The manuscript indicates no gap, and most editions combine stanzas 39 and 40 as a single stanza. The prose passage, indicating the substance of what, if anything, is lost, runs as follows: "'Be welcome among us, and give me that store of gold which is ours by right, the gold that Sigurth had, and that now belongs to Guthrun.' Gunnar said: 'Never shalt thou get that gold, and men of might shalt thou find here, ere we give up our lives, if it is battle thou dost offer us; in truth it seems that thou hast prepared this feast in kingly fashion, and with little grudging toward eagle and wolf.'" The demand for the treasure likewise appears in the *Nibelungenlied*.
- <sup>71</sup> These two lines, which most editions combine with stanza 39, may be the first or last two of a four-line stanza. The *Volsungasaga* gives Atli's speech very much as it appears here.
- <sup>72</sup> The manuscript does not indicate the speaker; Grundtvig adds as a first line: "Then Hogni laughed loud where the slain Vingi lay." Many editors assume the loss of a line somewhere in the stanza.
- <sup>73</sup> Unarmed: Hogni does not see Atli's armed followers, who are on the other side of the courtyard (stanza 39).

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<sup>74</sup> One: Vingí.

<sup>75</sup> Most editors assume the loss of one line, after either line 1 or line 3.

<sup>76</sup> The manuscript reading of lines 1-2, involving a metrical error, is: "In the house came the word | of the warring without, / Loud in front of the hall | they heard a thrall shouting." Some editors assume a gap of two lines after line 2, the missing passage giving the words of the thrall. The manuscript marks line 3 as the beginning of a stanza, and many editions make a separate stanza of lines 3-5, some of them assuming the loss of a line after line 3. With the stanza as here given, line 5 may well be spurious.

<sup>77</sup> Niflungs: regarding the application of this term to the Burgundians cf. *Atlakvíða*, 11, and *Brot*, 17, and notes. The manuscript here spells the name with an initial N, as elsewhere, but in stanza 83 the son of Hogni appears with the name "Hniflung." In consequence, some editors change the form in this stanza to "Hniflungs," while others omit the initial H in both cases. I have followed the manuscript, though admittedly its spelling is illogical.

<sup>78</sup> The warlike deeds of Guthrun represent an odd transformation of the German tradition. Kriemhild, although she did no actual fighting in the *Nibelungenlied*, was famed from early times for her cruelty and fierceness of heart, and this seems to have inspired the poet of the *Atlamol* to make his Guthrun into a warrior outdoing Brynhild herself. Kriemhild's ferocity of course, was directed against Gunther and especially Hagene, for whose slaying she rather than Etzel was responsible; here, on the other hand, Guthrun's is devoted to the defense of her brothers.

<sup>79</sup> Atli's brother: doubtless a reminiscence of the early tradition represented in the *Nibelungenlied* by the slaying of Etzel's brother, Bloedelin (the historical Bleda), by Dancwart.

<sup>80</sup> Line 3 is very likely an interpolation. The manuscript marks line 4 as the beginning of a new stanza, and some editions make a separate stanza of lines 4-5.

<sup>81</sup> Line 3 may well be spurious, for it implies that Gunnar and Hogni were killed in battle, whereas they were taken prisoners. Some editors, in an effort to smooth out the inconsistency, change "themselves" in this line to "sound." Line 5 has also been questioned as possibly interpolated. Niflungs: on the spelling of this name in the manuscript and the various editions cf. note on stanza 44.

<sup>82</sup> Line 2 is probably an interpolation, and the original apparently lacks a word.

<sup>83</sup> There is some obscurity as to the exact meaning of lines 4-5. The two sons of Bera: Snaevar and Solar; her brother is Orkning; cf. stanza 28.

<sup>84</sup> The warrior: Atli.

<sup>85</sup> Thirty: perhaps an echo of the "thirty warriors" of Thjothrek (cf. *Guthrunarkvíða III*, 5). Subtracting the eighteen killed by Snaevar, Solar and Orkning (stanza 49), and Vingí, killed by the whole company (stanza 38), we have eleven left, as Atli says, but this does not allow much for the exploits of Gunnar and Hogni, who, by this reckoning, seem to have killed nobody. The explanation probably is that lines 4-5 of stanza 49 are in bad shape.

<sup>86</sup> Five brothers: the *Volsungasaga* speaks of four (not five) sons of Buthli, but names only Atli. Regarding the death of the first two brothers cf. stanza 91 and note.

<sup>87</sup> The manuscript marks line 3 as beginning a stanza, and many editions combine lines 3-4 with stanza 52. Some insert lines 2-3 of stanza 52 ahead of lines 3-4 of stanza 51.

<sup>88</sup> Possibly a line has been lost from this stanza. The manuscript marks line 3 as beginning a new stanza, which is impossible unless something has been lost.

<sup>89</sup> Gold: the meaning of this half line is somewhat doubtful, but apparently Atli refers to Sigurth's treasure, which should have been his as Brynhild's brother.

<sup>90</sup> Sister: Brynhild; regarding Guthrun's indirect responsibility for Brynhild's death cf. *Gripisspo*, 45 and note.

<sup>91</sup> The manuscript does not name the speaker. The *Volsungasaga* gives the speech, in somewhat altered form, to Hogni. "Why speakest thou so? Thou wast the first to break peace; thou didst take my kinswoman and starved her in a prison, and murdered her and took her wealth; that was not kinglike; and laughable does it seem to me that thou talkest of thy sorrow, and good shall I find it that all goes ill with thee." This presumably represents the correct form of the stanza, for nowhere else is it intimated that Atli killed Guthrun's mother, Grimhild, nor is the niece elsewhere mentioned. Some editions make a separate stanza of lines 4-5, Grundtvig adding a line after line 3 and two more after line 5. Other editors are doubtful about the authenticity of either line 3 or line 5.

<sup>92</sup> The manuscript does not indicate the speaker.

<sup>93</sup> The text of the first half of line 3 is somewhat uncertain, but the general meaning of it is clear enough.

<sup>94</sup> Beiti: not elsewhere mentioned. The *Atlakvíða* version of this episode (stanzas 23-25) does not mention Beiti, and in the *Volsungasaga* the advice to cut out Hjalli's heart instead of Hogni's is given by an unnamed "counsellor of Atli." In the *Atlakvíða* Hjalli is actually killed; the *Volsungasaga* combines the two versions by having Hjalli first let off at Hogni's intercession and then seized a second time and killed, thus introducing the *Atlakvíða* episode of the quaking heart (stanza 24).

<sup>95</sup> The text of the first half of line 3 is obscure, and there are many and widely varying suggestions as to the word here rendered "sluggard."

<sup>96</sup> Some editions mark line 5 as probably interpolated.

<sup>97</sup> Cook: the original word is doubtful. The *Volsungasaga* does not paraphrase lines 3-5; the passage may be a later addition, and line 5 is almost certainly so.

<sup>98</sup> Sons of day: the phrase means no more than "men."

<sup>99</sup> It is probable that a stanza describing the casting of Gunnar into the serpents' den has been lost after this stanza.

<sup>100</sup> Regarding Gunnar's harp-playing, and his death, cf. *Oddrunargratr*, 27-30 and notes, and *Atlakvíða*, 34.

<sup>101</sup> Toes (literally "sole-twigs"): the *Volsungasaga* explains that Gunnar's hands were bound.

<sup>102</sup> Rafters: thus literally, and probably correctly; Gering has an ingenious but unlikely theory that the word means "harp."

<sup>103</sup> There is some doubt as to the exact meaning of line 2. After this line two lines may have been lost; Grundtvig adds the lines given in brackets.

<sup>104</sup> Wise one: Guthrun.

<sup>105</sup> The manuscript marks line 3 as beginning a new stanza.

<sup>106</sup> The manuscript does not indicate the speaker.

<sup>107</sup> The manuscript does not name the speaker.

<sup>108</sup> The negative in the first half of line 1 is uncertain, and most editions make the clause read "Of this guilt I can free myself."

<sup>109</sup> The fairest, etc.: i. e., I have often failed to do the wise thing.

<sup>110</sup> The manuscript does not name the speaker.

<sup>111</sup> Requit, etc.: it is not clear just to what Guthrun refers; perhaps she is thinking of Sigurth's death, or possibly the poet had in mind his reference to the slaying of her mother in stanza 53.

<sup>112</sup> Line 5 is very probably a later addition, though some editors question line 3 instead.

<sup>113</sup> Guthrun suddenly changes her tone in order to make Atli believe that she is submissive to his will, and thus to gain time for her vengeance.

<sup>114</sup> Line 2 in the original is thoroughly obscure; it runs literally: "On the knee goes the fist if the twigs are taken off." Perhaps the word meaning "fist" may also have meant "tree-top," as Gering suggests, or perhaps the line is an illogical blending of the ideas contained in lines 1 and 3.

<sup>115</sup> The manuscript indicates line 3 as the beginning of a new stanza.

<sup>116</sup> Two shields, etc.: i. e., Guthrun concealed her hostility (symbolized by a red shield, cf. *Helgakvíða Hundingsbana I*, 34) by a show of friendliness (a white shield).

<sup>117</sup> Many editions make a separate stanza of lines 1-2, some of them suggesting the loss of two lines, and combine lines 5-4 with lines 1-2 of stanza 72, The manuscript marks both lines 1 and 3 as beginning stanzas.

- <sup>118</sup> The manuscript marks line 3 as beginning a new stanza; some editions make a separate stanza of lines 3-5, while others combine them with lines 1-2 of stanza 73. Line 2 in the original is clearly defective, the verb being omitted.
- <sup>119</sup> The meaning of line 3 is uncertain; the *Volsungasaga* paraphrase has: "At evening she took the sons of King Atli (Erp and Eitil) where they were playing with a block of wood." Probably the text of the line as we have it is faulty.
- <sup>120</sup> Lines 4-5 may possibly have been expanded out of a single line, or line 5 may be spurious.
- <sup>121</sup> The manuscript does not name the speakers. It indicates line 3 as beginning a new stanza, in which it is followed by many editions.
- <sup>122</sup> The angry one: Atli.
- <sup>123</sup> The *Volsungasaga* paraphrases line 4 thus: "But it is shameful for thee to do this." Either the text of the line has been changed or the *Volsungasaga* compilers misunderstood it.
- <sup>124</sup> The manuscript indicates line 3 as beginning a new stanza.
- <sup>125</sup> The manuscript does not name the speaker.
- <sup>126</sup> Morning: Guthrun refers to Atli's taunt in stanza 64.
- <sup>127</sup> The manuscript indicates no gap (lines 1-2), and most editions make a single line, despite the defective meter: "Thy sons hast thou lost | as thou never shouldst lose them." The second part of line 2 is in the original identical with the second half of line 3 of stanza 80, and may perhaps have been inserted here by mistake.
- <sup>128</sup> Skulls: it is possible that line 3 was borrowed from a poem belonging to the Volund tradition (cf. *Volundarkvitha*, 25 and 37), and the idea doubtless came from some such source, but probably the poet inserted it in a line of his own composition to give an added touch of horror. The *Volsungasaga* follows the *Atlamol* in including this incident.
- <sup>129</sup> Some editions add lines 3-4 to stanza 79; Finnur Jonsson marks them as probably spurious.
- <sup>130</sup> Perhaps these two lines should form part of stanza 78, or perhaps they, rather than lines 3-4 of stanza 78, are a later addition. A gap of two lines after line 1 has also been conjectured.
- <sup>131</sup> The manuscript does not indicate the speaker.
- <sup>132</sup> The manuscript does not indicate the speaker.
- <sup>133</sup> Lines 1-2 may be the remains of a separate stanza; Grundtvig adds the two lines given in brackets. The *Volsungasaga* paraphrase, however, indicates no gap. Many editions make a separate stanza of lines 3-6, which, in the *Volsungasaga*, are paraphrased as a speech of Atli's. Lines 5-6 may be spurious.
- <sup>134</sup> The manuscript does not indicate the speakers. Many editions make two separate stanzas of the four lines.
- <sup>135</sup> Another light: a fairly clear indication of the influence of Christianity; cf. Introductory Note.
- <sup>136</sup> The manuscript marks line 3 as the beginning of a new stanza. Hniflung: the *Volsungasaga* says that "Hogni had a son who was called Hniflung," but the name appears to be nothing more than the familiar "Niflung" applied in general to the sons of Gjuki and their people. On the spelling cf. note on stanza 44. This son of Hogni appears in later versions of the story. In the *Thithrekssaga* he is called Aldrian, and is begotten by Hogni the night before his death. Aldrian grows up and finally shuts Attila in a cave where he starves to death. The poet here has incorporated the idea, which finds no parallel in the *Atlakvitha*, without troubling himself to straighten out the chronology.
- <sup>137</sup> Line 4 may be in *fornyrthislag*, and from another poem.
- <sup>138</sup> The manuscript marks line 3 as beginning a new stanza. The *Volsungasaga* makes line 2 part of Atli's speech.
- <sup>139</sup> The manuscript does not name the speakers. It marks line 4 as the beginning of a new stanza, and many editions follow this arrangement, in most cases making a stanza of lines 4-5 and line 1 of stanza 87. However, line 1 may well have been interpolated here from stanza 75. Grundtvig adds after line 3: "His father he avenged, and his kinsmen fully." Some editors assume the loss of one or two lines after line 5.
- <sup>140</sup> The manuscript marks line 2 as beginning a new stanza, and some editions make a stanza out of lines 2-4 and line 1 of stanza 88.
- <sup>141</sup> The manuscript marks line 2 as the beginning of a stanza, and many editions make a stanza out of lines 2-4, or combine them with stanza 89. Some question the genuineness of line 4.
- <sup>142</sup> Many editions assume a gap of one line after line 3; Grundtvig adds the line given in brackets.
- <sup>143</sup> Greater: i. e., the silver which Atli gave Guthrun was of greater value even than the honor of receiving such royal gifts.
- <sup>144</sup> The land, etc.: there is much obscurity as to the significance of this line. Some editors omit or question "me," in which case Atli is apparently reproaching Guthrun for having incited him to fight with his brothers to win for himself the whole of Buthli's land. In stanza 91 Guthrun denies that she was to blame for Atli's quarrels with his brothers. The *Volsungasaga* reading supports this interpretation. The historical Attila did actually have his brother, Bleda, killed in order to have the sole rule.
- <sup>145</sup> The treasure: Sigurth's hoard, which Atli claimed as the brother of Brynhild and husband of Guthrun, Sigurth's widow, but which Gunnar and Hogni kept for themselves, with, as Atli here charges, Guthrun's connivance.
- <sup>146</sup> Some editions mark line 3 as spurious or defective. The manuscript marks line 4 as the beginning of a new stanza.
- <sup>147</sup> My mother: the only other reference to Atli's mother is in *Oddrunargratr*, 30, wherein she appears as the adder who stings Gunnar to death, and in the prose passages based on that stanza.
- <sup>148</sup> The manuscript does not indicate the speaker. It marks both lines 4 and 5 as beginning new stanzas, but line 5 is presumably an interpolation.
- <sup>149</sup> The text of the second half of line 2 is obscure, and many emendations have been suggested.
- <sup>150</sup> Half: i. e., two of Atli's brothers were killed, the other two dying in the battle with Gunnar and Hogni; cf. stanza 51.
- <sup>151</sup> From the land: this maritime expedition of Guthrun and her two brothers, Gunnar and Hogni (the poet seems to know nothing of her half-brother, Gotthorm), with Sigurth seems to have been a pure invention of the poet's, inserted for the benefit of his Greenland hearers. Nothing further is reported concerning it.
- <sup>152</sup> The forest: i. e., men who were outlawed in the conquered land were restored to their rights--another purely Norse touch.
- <sup>153</sup> Hun-king: Sigurth, though most illogically so called; cf. *Sigurtharkvitha en skamma*, 4 and note.
- <sup>154</sup> The *Volsungasaga* paraphrase of line 2 is so remote as to be puzzling: "It was little to bear the name of widow." Perhaps, however, the word "not" fell out between "was" and "little."
- <sup>155</sup> Thing, etc.: here the poet makes Atli into a typical Norse land-owner, going to the "Thing," or general law council, to settle his disputes. Even the compilers of the *Volsungasaga* could not accept this, and in their paraphrase changed "Thing" to "battle."
- <sup>156</sup> The text of the second half of line 2 is uncertain.
- <sup>157</sup> The manuscript leaves a blank to indicate the gap in line 4; Grundtvig adds the words given in brackets.
- <sup>158</sup> The manuscript does not indicate the speaker. Many editors assume a gap either before or after line 1.
- <sup>159</sup> A ship: the burial of Norse chiefs in ships was of frequent occurrence, but the Greenland poet's application of the custom to Atli is somewhat grotesque.
- <sup>160</sup> Heirs, etc.: merely a stock phrase, here quite meaningless, as Atli's heirs had all been killed.
- <sup>161</sup> Long: cf. *Guthrunarhvat*, introductory prose.



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- <sup>162</sup> Atli's followers.
- <sup>163</sup> That is, approached its fulfillment.
- <sup>164</sup> That is, by bringing about the death of his kinsmen by marriage, who might otherwise have been "pillars of his might."
- <sup>165</sup> Guthrún overhears the plottings of Atli and is anxious to warn her brothers, but is not allowed to go personally with the messengers.
- <sup>166</sup> In the sense of "confused."
- <sup>167</sup> An arm of the sea, the Lim Firth (North Jutland) is here supposed to separate the domains of Atli from those of the Gjúkungs.
- <sup>168</sup> The gifts are of arms. See *Atlakviða*, St.1 and note.
- <sup>169</sup> "The Stewardess"; like Glaumvor "the Cheerful," doubtless the poet's invention. See also *Dráp Niflunga*.
- <sup>170</sup> The meaning seems to be: the messengers invite the Gjúkungs to follow Hogni as their leader, so as to inspire them with confidence.
- <sup>171</sup> Supplied after Bugge's suggestion.
- <sup>172</sup> Graven on one of Atli's presents, or else on a separate runestone.
- <sup>173</sup> The shorter form Bera, for Kostbera, occurs twice in the poem.
- <sup>174</sup> Supplied, following Grundtvig's suggestion.
- <sup>175</sup> That is, the deletion.
- <sup>176</sup> That is, until or unless, they are committed.
- <sup>177</sup> In the original, this is the only half-line ending on an accented syllable.
- <sup>178</sup> Of those trying to escape.
- <sup>179</sup> Freely supplied by the Translator.
- <sup>180</sup> Compare with Atli's dream (*Guðrúnarkviða II*, St.43).
- <sup>181</sup> Gunnar and his wife Glaumvor.
- <sup>182</sup> The rendering of the last line is doubtful because of an evident lacuna in the text.
- <sup>183</sup> The end of Gunnar in the snake den is alluded to, but the exact meaning of the line is doubtful.
- <sup>184</sup> As neither this dream nor its interpretation are mentioned in the *Völsunga saga*, we may conclude that a stanza was lacking even then.
- <sup>185</sup> Supplied following Bugge, after the paraphrase in the *Völsunga saga*, Ch.34.
- <sup>186</sup> Conjectural (Neckel).
- <sup>187</sup> They seem to be the *dísir* (see *Reginismál*, St.24 and note); beckoning to Hel him who is "fey."
- <sup>188</sup> Supplied after Grundtvig's suggestion.
- <sup>189</sup> The rendering is doubtful.
- <sup>190</sup> See *Dráp Niflunga*.
- <sup>191</sup> Kenning for "warrior."
- <sup>192</sup> A difficult line.
- <sup>193</sup> Note the ambiguity in his using the third person.
- <sup>194</sup> It was customary to wish the departing one "victory," even though no battle was anticipated.
- <sup>195</sup> It was not considered beneath their dignity for the highborn to take a hand at the oars.
- <sup>196</sup> Kenning for "boat."
- <sup>197</sup> The Germanic equivalent for "burning one's bridges behind one." They do not expect to return. Compare with the similar situation in the *Nibelungenlied* where Hagene destroys the boat on which the host has been ferried across the Danube.
- <sup>198</sup> He is dead. See Sts. 50 and 90.
- <sup>199</sup> The *Völsunga saga* here has a passage in which Atli demands the Niflung treasure, which Gunnar defiantly refuses. In the *Nibelungenlied* it is Kriemhild who makes the demand at this point.
- <sup>200</sup> Of her necklace.
- <sup>201</sup> Brynhild: possibly, a reference to Guthrún's being, indirectly, the cause of Brynhild's death.
- <sup>202</sup> A trace of this deed is found in *Piðreks saga*, Ch.428, where we are told that Hogni's son let Atli starve to death in a cave. Her other allegations stand alone.
- <sup>203</sup> Atli's hot vengefulness seems to prompt him to order two modes of death for his vanquished foe.
- <sup>204</sup> Conjectural.
- <sup>205</sup> That is, to have his own heart cut out.
- <sup>206</sup> That is, they had no other choice but to obey Atli.
- <sup>207</sup> The circumstances of Gunnar's death (*Atlakviða*, Sts.27-34) being known to his audience, the poet dispenses with their recital. Or are a number of stanzas missing?
- <sup>208</sup> Kenning for "toes."
- <sup>209</sup> That is, Guthrún. But compare the similar situation in *Oddrúnargrátr*.
- <sup>210</sup> It is not clear whether the rafters of Atli's hall are meant, hyperbolically, or the boards of the harp.
- <sup>211</sup> The ambiguity is intended: all the consequences of the deed—her murder of his sons—are to be reckoned with. As it is, she hints darkly of suicide.
- <sup>212</sup> To make atonement.
- <sup>213</sup> The meaning apparently is: to be sure, woman always is the sufferer by men's deeds. Atli is being lulled into false security by Guthrún's seeming resignation following her outburst of vengefulness.
- <sup>214</sup> That is, she played a double game: red shields indicate warlike, white shields, peaceful intentions.
- <sup>215</sup> An unexpectedly philosophical reply; but the text is fairly clear.
- <sup>216</sup> As elsewhere in the *Edda*, there is here an unannounced change of scene: Guthrún has left her woman's bower and gone over to the king's hall. Her speech is addressed to him.
- <sup>217</sup> See St.63 above.

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- <sup>218</sup> That is, by eating his own children's hearts; which necessarily draws after it his death. Hence he is darkly said by Guthrún to have drunk his own arvel [that is, "funeral feast" or "inheritance" – my note].
- <sup>219</sup> Note the Christian expression.
- <sup>220</sup> He is a son of Hogni, as is told in the following stanza. His assistance seems uncalled for.
- <sup>221</sup> That is, he was past help from bandaging.
- <sup>222</sup> In the sense of "wife."
- <sup>223</sup> The rendering of the line is doubtful.
- <sup>224</sup> Conjectural.
- <sup>225</sup> Gering points out that the historic Attila had his brother Bleda slain to become sole ruler.
- <sup>226</sup> No other source speaks of Guthrún and the Gjúkungs following Sigurth in the free Viking life described in these stanzas (92-94). Also for other reasons they seem suspicious.
- <sup>227</sup> Sigurth; the epithet if merely honorific.
- <sup>228</sup> The rendering is doubtful.
- <sup>229</sup> Supplied following Grundtvig's suggestion.
- <sup>230</sup> Kenning for "ship."
- <sup>231</sup> Note the mixture of Heathen and Christian rites: he is to be buried in a coffin which is to be sent out to sea in a (burning?) ship.
- <sup>232</sup> See *Guðrúnarhvøpt*, St.13.