

REGINSMÁL
(*"The Sayings of Regin"*)
or,
SIGURÐARKVIÐA FÁFNISBANA II
(*"The Second Lay of Sigurd, Fáfnir's Slayer"*)

Bellows' Introduction (1936)

The *Reginsmol* immediately follows the *Gripisspo* in the *Codex Regius*, and in addition stanzas 1, 2, 6, and 18 are quoted in the *Volsungasaga*, and stanzas 11-26 in the *Nornageststhattr*. In no instance is the title of the poem stated, and in *Regius* there stands before the introductory prose, very faintly written, what appears to be "Of Sigurth." As a result, various titles have been affixed to it, the two most often used being "the Ballad of Regin" and "the First Lay of Sigurth Fafnisbane."

As a matter of fact, it is by no means clear that the compiler of the Eddic collection regarded this or either of the two following poems, the *Fafnismol* and the *Sigrdrifumol*, as separate and distinct poems at all. There are no specific titles given, and the prose notes link the three poems in a fairly consecutive whole. Furthermore, the prose passage introducing the *Reginsmol* connects directly with *Fra Dautha Sinfjotla*, and only the insertion of the *Gripisspo* at this point, which may well have been done by some stupid copyist, breaks the continuity of the story. For convenience I have here followed the usual plan of dividing this material into distinct parts, or poems, but I greatly doubt if this division is logically sound. The compiler seems, rather, to have undertaken to set down the story of Sigurth in consecutive form, making use of all the verse with which he was familiar, and which, by any stretch of the imagination, could be made to fit, filling up the gaps with prose narrative notes based on the living oral tradition.

This view is supported by the fact that not one of the three poems in question, and least of all the *Reginsmol*, can possibly be regarded as a unit. For one thing, each of them includes both types of stanza commonly used in the Eddic poems, and this, notwithstanding the efforts of Grundtvig and Mullenhoff to prove the contrary, is almost if not quite conclusive proof that each poem consists of material taken from more than one source. Furthermore, there is nowhere continuity within the verse itself for more than a very few stanzas. An analysis of the *Reginsmol* shows that stanzas 1-4, 6-10, and 12, all in Ljothahattr stanza form, seem to belong together as fragments of a poem dealing with Loki's (not Andvari's) curse on the gold taken by the gods from Andvari and paid to Hreithmar, together with Hreithmar's death at the hands of his son, Fáfnir, as the first result of this curse. Stanza 5, in Fornyrthislag, is a curse on the gold, here ascribed to Andvari, but the only proper name in the stanza, Gust, is quite unidentifiable, and the stanza may originally have had to do with a totally different story. Stanza 11, likewise in Fornyrthislag, is merely a father's demand that his daughter rear a family to avenge his death; there is nothing in it to link it necessarily with the dying Hreithmar. Stanzas 13-18, all in Fornyrthislag, give Regin's welcome to Sigurth (stanzas 13,14), Sigurth's announcement that he will avenge his father's death on the sons of Hunding before he seeks any treasure (stanza 15), and a dialogue between a certain Hnikar, who is really Othin, and Regin, as the latter and Sigurth are on the point of being shipwrecked. This section (stanzas 13-19) bears a striking resemblance to the Helgi lays, and may well have come originally from that cycle. Next follows a passage in Ljothahattr form (stanzas 19-22 and 24-25) in which Hnikar-Othin gives some general advice as to lucky omens and good conduct in battle; the entire passage might equally well stand in the *Hovamol*, and I suspect that it originally came from just such a collection of wise saws. Inserted in this passage is stanza 23, in Fornyrthislag, likewise on the conduct of battle, with a bit of tactical advice included. The "poem" ends with a single stanza, in Fornyrthislag, simply stating that the bloody fight is over and that Sigurth fought well—a statement equally applicable to any part of the hero's career.

Finnur Jonsson has divided the *Reginsmol* into two poems, or rather into two sets of fragments, but this, as the foregoing analysis has indicated, does not appear to go nearly far enough. It accords much better with the facts to assume that the compiler of the collection represented by the *Codex Regius*, having set out to tell the story of Sigurth, took his verse fragments pretty much wherever he happened to find them. In this connection, it should be remembered that in the fluid state of oral tradition poems, fragments, and stanzas passed readily and frequently from one story to another. Tradition, never critical, doubtless connected with the Sigurth story much verse that never originated there.

If the entire passage beginning with the prose *Fra Dautha Sinfjotla*, and, except for the *Gripisspo*, including the *Reginsmol*, *Fafnismol*, and *Sigrdrifumol*, be regarded as a highly uncritical piece of compilation, rendered consecutive by the compiler's prose narrative, its difficulties are largely smoothed away; any other way of looking at it results in utterly inconclusive attempts to reconstruct poems some of which quite possibly never existed. The twenty-six stanzas and accompanying prose notes included under the heading of *Reginsmol* belong almost wholly to the northern part of the Sigurth legend; the mythological features have no counterpart in the southern stories, and only here and there is there any betrayal of the tradition's Frankish home. The story of Andvari, Loki, and Hreithmar is purely Norse, as is the concluding section

containing Othin's counsels. If we assume that the passage dealing with the victory over Hunding's sons belongs to the Helgi cycle (cf. introductory notes to *Helgakvitha Hjorvarthssonar* and *Helgakvitha Hundingsbana I*), there is very little left to reflect the Sigurth tradition proper. Regarding the general development of the story of Sigurth in the North, see the introductory note to the *Gripisspo*.

Hollander's Introduction (1962)

The present title of this collection of fragments (two or more) was suggested by the great Norwegian scholar Bugge, in analogy with the traditional title of the following poem. In the Introductory Prose the fateful Niflung gold is traced to its source in dim antiquity, when the gods walked the earth and became involved in guilt through Loki. In scattered stanzas we are told of its baneful influence on the kin of Hreithmar. Sigurth is introduced: through him Regin hopes to obtain the treasure. But first the hero feels called to avenge his fallen kinsmen on the sons of Hunding. In this portion we note the fine passage in the heroic style, describing a storm at sea.

With some good will we might consider these stanzas to hang together, though it is hardly credible that this was the original shape of the lay—the two patches of gnomic and dialogue stanzas in *ljóðahátttr* stand out too clearly from the remainder, which is cast in narrative *fornyrðislag*.

The complete text is found in *Codex Regius*, a number of stanzas also in the paraphrases of the *Volsunga saga* and *Nornagests Þátttr*. There are no clues as to where and when the lay originated, though it seems in spirit to belong to the heathen period (before 1000).

OUTLINE ¹

[P = Prose, L = *Ljóðahátttr*, F = *Fornyrðislag*]

	P1	Regin Speaks of Andvari's Waterfall
1-4	L1	Loki Confronts Andvari
	P2	Loki Acquires Andvari's Gold: First Mention of The Ring
5	F1	Andvari Curses the Gold
	P3	Hreithmar's Ransom Price Paid
6-9	L2-a	Loki's Curse of the Gold
	P4	Fáfnir Slays His Father
10	L2-b	Hreithmar's Cry for Vengeance / Lyngheith's Reply
11	F2	Hreithmar's Cry for Vengeance (cont'd)
	P5	Fáfnir Takes the Gold, Refusing Regin his Share
12	L3	Lyngheith's Advice to Regin
	P6	Regin Welcomes Sigurth
13-14	F3-a	Regin's Intentions
	P7	Of Fáfnir's Fear-Helm & the Forging of Gram
15	F3-b	Sigurth's Vow of Vengeance
	P8	Hjalprek's Fleet in the Raging Storm
16-18	F3-c	Hnikar-Odin's Dialogue with Regin
	P9	Odin Aboard / the Storm Abates
19-22	L4	Hnikar-Othin's Battle-Omens (proto-Hávamál)
23	F4	Concerning Conduct in Battle
24-25	L5	Proto-Hávamál Continued
	P10	Of Sigurth's Battle with Hunding's Sons
26	F5	Of Sigurth's Battle Victory
	P11	Sigurth returns Home to Hjalprek

Thorpe (1866)	Bellows (1936)	Hollander (1962)
<p>Sigurd went to Hjalprek's stud and chose himself a horse, which was afterwards named Grani. Regin, Hreidmar's son, was then come to Hjalprek; he was the most skilful of men, and a dwarf in stature; he was wise, cruel, and versed in magic. Regin undertook the rearing and instruction of Sigurd, and bore him great affection. He informed Sigurd of his parentage, and how it befell that Odin, and Hoenir, and Loki came to Andvarafors (the waterfall of Andvari). In the fall there was an abundance of fish. There was a dwarf named Andvari, who had long lived in the fall in the likeness of a pike, and in which he supplied himself with food. "Our brother," continued Regin, "was named Otr, who often went into the fall in the likeness of an otter. He had caught a salmon, and was sitting on the bank of the river with his eyes shut eating it, when Loki killed him with a stone. The Æsir thought themselves very lucky, and stripped off the otter's skin. That same evening they sought entertainment with Hreidmar, and showed their prize. Thereupon we laid hands on them, and imposed on them, as the redemption of their lives, that they should fill the otter's skin with gold, and cover it over with red gold. They thereupon sent Loki to procure gold. He went to Ran, and obtained her net, and thence proceeded to Andvarafors, and cast the net before a pike, which leapt into the net.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Whereupon Loki said:</p> <p>1. What fish is this, that in the river swims, And cannot from harm itself protect? Redeem thy life from Hel, And find me the water's flame.²</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Pike</p> <p>2. Andvari I am named, Oin was my father named; Many a cataract have I passed. A luckless Norn in times of old decreed, That in the water I should wade.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Loki</p> <p>3. Tell me, Andvari! if thou wilt enjoy Life in the halls of men, What retribution get the sons of mortals, If with foul words they assail each other.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Andvari</p> <p>4. Cruel retribution get the sons of mortals, Who in Vadgelmir wade: For the false words they have against others uttered, The punishments too long endure.</p>	<p>[P1] Sigurth went to Hjalprek's⁶ stud and chose for himself a horse, who thereafter was called Grani.⁷ At that time Regin,⁸ the son of Hreithmar,⁹ was come to Hjalprek's home; he was more ingenious than all other men, and a dwarf in stature; he was wise, fierce and skilled in magic. Regin undertook Sigurth's bringing up and teaching, and loved him much. He told Sigurth of his forefathers, and also of this: that once Othin and Honir and Loki¹⁰ had come to Andvari's waterfall,¹¹ and in the fall were many fish. Andvari was a dwarf, who had dwelt long in the waterfall in the shape of a pike, and there he got his food. "Otr was the name of a brother of ours," said Regin, "who often went into the fall in the shape of an otter; he had caught a salmon, and sat on the high bank eating it with his eyes shut.¹² Loki threw a stone at him and killed him; the gods thought they had had great good luck, and stripped the skin off the otter. That same evening they sought a night's lodging at Hreithmar's house, and showed their booty. Then we seized them, and told them, as ransom for their lives, to fill the otter skin with gold, and completely cover it outside as well with red gold. Then they sent Loki to get the gold; he went to Ron¹³ and got her net, and went then to Andvari's fall and cast the net in front of the pike, and the pike leaped into the net."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Then Loki said:</p> <p>1. "What is the fish that runs in the flood, And itself from ill cannot save? If thy head thou wouldst from hell redeem, Find me the water's flame."¹⁴</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Andvari spake:¹⁵</p> <p>2. "Andvari am I, and Oin¹⁶ my father, In many a fall have I fared; An evil Norn¹⁷ in olden days Doomed me in waters to dwell."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Loki spake:¹⁸</p> <p>3. "Andvari, say, if thou seekest still To live in the land of men, What payment is set for the sons of men Who war with lying words?"</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Andvari spake:¹⁹</p> <p>4. "A mighty payment the men must make Who in Vathgelmir's²⁰ waters wade; On a long road lead the lying words That one to another utters."</p>	<p>Sigurth went to Hjalprek's⁵⁶ stud and chose for himself a horse, which later bore the name of Grani.⁵⁷ At that time had come to Hjalprek's court Regin,⁵⁸ the son of Hreithmar. He was more skilled in crafts than any other man. He was a dwarf in size, wise and cruel, and a wizard. Regin fostered up Sigurth, taught him, and loved him greatly. He told Sigurth about his own forbears and of how, once upon a time, Óthin and Hœnir⁵⁹ and Loki had come to the waterfall of Andvari. In that waterfall there were many fish. A dwarf named Andvari dwelled in it in the shape of a pike and got food for himself there. "Otr was the name of our brother," said Regin, "and he often came to the waterfall in the shape of an otter. He had caught a salmon and was eating it with half-closed eyes.⁶⁰ Then Loki threw a stone at him and killed him. The gods thought they had made a lucky catch and flayed the otter. That same evening they came to Hreithmar for night quarters and showed him their bag. Then we bound them and laid on them as a ransom to stuff the otterskin, and also to cover it on the outside, with red gold. Then they sent Loki to fetch the gold. He went to Rán⁶¹ and borrowed her net. Then he fared to the waterfall of Andvari and cast the net for the pike, and it leapt into the net.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Then said Loki:</i></p> <p>1. "What fish is this in the flood that swims And cannot keep him from harm? To Hel's dark hall art headed now, But thou fetch me the fire-of-the-flood."⁶²</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Andvari said:)</i></p> <p>2. "I am Andvari hight, is Óin my father, In many a flood have I fared; In days of yore was I doomed by norms In swirling waters to swim."</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Loki said:)</i></p> <p>3. "Tell me, Andvari, if on earth thou wilt, Dwarf, live a longer life: What is the doom which is dealt to men Who wound each other with words?"</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Andvari said:)</i></p> <p>4. "A heavy doom is dealt to men Who in Vathgelmir's⁶³ waters wade; He who untruth utters and on others lies, Long will he linger there."</p>

<p>Loki viewed all the gold that Andvari owned; but when he had produced the gold, he retained a single ring, which Loki also took from him. The dwarf went into his stone and said:</p> <p>5. That gold which the dwarf possessed, Shall to two brothers be cause of death, And to eight princes, of dissension. From my wealth no one shall good derive.</p> <p>The Æsir produced the gold to Hreidmar, and with it crammed the otter's skin full, and set it up on the feet. They then had to heap up the gold and cover it; but when that was done, Hreidmar, stepping forward, observed a whisker, and required it to be covered; whereupon Odin drew forth the ring "Andvaranaut," and covered the hair.</p> <p>Loki said:</p> <p>6. There is gold for thee, And thou hast a great redemption for my life. For thy son no blessing is decreed; Of both it shall prove the bane.</p> <p>Hreidmar</p> <p>7. Gifts thou hast given, friendly gifts thou hast given not; With a kind heart thou hast not given. Of your lives ye should have been deprived, Had I foreknown that peril.</p> <p>8. But that is worse, what I seem to know,— A strife of kinsmen for a woman. Princes yet unborn I think them to be, For whose hate that gold is destined.</p> <p>9. The red gold, I trust, I shall possess while I am living; Of thy threats I entertain no fear; So take yourselves hence home.</p> <p>Fafnir and Regin demanded of Hreidmar their share of the blood-fine for their slain brother Otr, which he refused, and Fafnir stabbed his father with a sword while sleeping.</p> <p>Hreidmar called out to his daughters:</p> <p>10. Lyngheid and Lofnheid! Know my life is departing. To many things need compels.³ Lyngheid Few sisters will, although they lose a father, Avenge a brother's crime.</p>	<p>[P2] Loki saw all the gold that Andvari had. But when he had brought forth all the gold, he held back one ring,²¹ and Loki took this from him. The dwarf went into his rocky hole and said:</p> <p>5.²² "Now shall the gold that Gust²³ once had Bring their death to brothers twain,²⁴ And evil be for heroes eight;²⁵ joy of my wealth shall no man win."</p> <p>[P3] The gods gave Hreithmar the gold, and filled up the otter-skin, and stood it on its feet. Then the gods had to heap up gold and hide it. And when that was done, Hreithmar came forward and saw a single whisker, and bade them cover it. Then Othin brought out the ring Andvaranaut²⁶ and covered the hair.</p> <p>Then Loki said:²⁷</p> <p>6. "The gold is given, and great the price Thou hast my head to save; But fortune thy sons shall find not there, The bane of ye both it is."</p> <p>Hreithmar spake:</p> <p>7. "Gifts ye gave, but ye gave not kindly, Gave not with hearts that were whole; Your lives ere this should ye all have lost, If sooner this fate I had seen."</p> <p>Loki spake:²⁸</p> <p>8. "Worse is this that methinks I see, For a maid²⁹ shall kinsmen clash; Heroes unborn thereby shall be, I deem, to hatred doomed."</p> <p>Hreithmar spake:³⁰</p> <p>9. "The gold so red shall I rule, methinks, So long as I shall live; Nought of fear for thy threats I feel, So get ye hence to your homes."</p> <p>[P4] Fafnir and Regin asked Hreithmar for a share of the wealth that was paid for the slaying of their brother, Otr. This he refused, and Fafnir thrust his sword through the body of his father, Hreithmar, while he was sleeping.</p> <p>Hreithmar called to his daughters:</p> <p>10. "Lyngheith and Lofnheith, fled is my life, And mighty now is my need!" Lyngheith spake: "Though a sister loses her father, seldom Revenge on her brother she brings."³¹</p>	<p>Loki saw all the gold which Andvari owned. Now when he had given up all the gold but one ring⁶⁴ which he kept for himself, Loki took that from him too.</p> <p><i>The dwarf went into his cave and said:</i></p> <p>5. "The glittering gold which Gust⁶⁵ had owned The bane shall be of brothers twain, And to eight athelings⁶⁶ bring untimely death: He who holds my hoard shall e'er hapless be."</p> <p>The Æsir gave Hreithmar the gold. They stuffed the otterskin with it and raised it on its feet. Then were the gods to heap the gold round about it until it was covered altogether. When that had been done, Hreithmar stepped near and saw one beard hair of the otter, and bade them cover that too. Then Óthin took forth the ring which Andvari had owned and covered up the hair. <i>Loki said:</i></p> <p>6. "The gold thou hast gotten, but great has been The worth thou laid'st on my life; 'Twill sorrow bring to thy son and thee, It will work the bane of you both."</p> <p><i>Hreithmar said:</i></p> <p>7. "Gifts thou gavest, but grudgingly, Nor gavest with whole heart; But little life were left to thee, If aware I had been of this woe."⁶⁷</p> <p><i>(Loki said:)</i></p> <p>8. "Still worse by far—I ween to know— Is kinsmen's clash for the gold:⁶⁸ Unborn the lords, I believe, as yet, On whose life this curse will alight."</p> <p><i>(Hreithmar said:)</i></p> <p>9. "My hoard of gold to hold I mean The while my life does last; Not a whit dread I thy deadly threat: Now hie you home hence!"</p> <p>Fáfñir⁶⁹ and Regin asked Hreithmar for their share of the weregild for their brother Otr. But he would not yield it up. Then Fáfñir thrust his sword into his father Hreithmar while he slept.</p> <p><i>Hreithmar called out to his daughters:</i></p> <p>10. "Lyngheith and Lofnheith! Know that my life is ended: Much I crave of my kin!" <i>Lyngheith answered:</i> "Though their father be felled, few sisters would Seek their brother's blood."</p>
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<p>Hreidmar</p> <p>11. Then bring forth a daughter, wolf-hearted fury! If by a chief thou have not a son. Get for the maid a spouse, in thy great need; Then will her son thy wrong avenge.</p> <p>Hreidmar then died, and Fafnir took all the gold. Regin then requested to have his share of the patrimony, but met with a refusal from Fafnir. Regin thereupon sought counsel of his sister Lyngheid, how he might obtain his patrimony. She said:</p> <p>12. Thou of thy brother shalt mildly demand Thy patrimony and a better spirit. It is not seemly, that with the sword thou shouldst Demand thy property of Fafnir.</p> <p>The foregoing is what Regin related to Sigurd. One day, when he came to Regin's dwelling, he was kindly received, and Regin said:</p> <p>13. Hither is come the son of Sigmund To our hall, that man of energy: Courage he has greater than I aged man: Now of a conflict have I hope from the fierce wolf.⁴</p> <p>14. I will nurture the bold-hearted prince: Now Yngvi's kinsman is to us come; He will be a king under the sun most powerful; Over all lands will his destinies resound.</p> <p>Sigurd was thence forward constantly with Regin, who related to him how Fafnir lay on Gnitahaid in the likeness of a serpent. He had an "Oegis-helm,"⁵ at which all living beings were terror-stricken. Regin forged a sword for Sigurd, that was named Gram, and was so sharp that immersing it in the Rhine, he let a piece of wool down the stream, when it clove the fleece asunder as water. With that sword Sigurd clove in two Regin's anvil. After that Regin instigated Sigurd to slay Fafnir. He said:</p> <p>15. Loud will laugh Hunding's sons, They who Eylimi of life deprived, If the prince is more desirous to seek red rings, Than to avenge his father.</p> <p>King Hjalprek collected a fleet to enable Sigurd to avenge his father. They encountered a great storm, and were driven past a certain promontory. A man was standing on the cliff who said:</p>	<p>Hreithmar spake:</p> <p>11. "A daughter, woman with wolf's heart, bear, If thou hast no son with the hero brave; If one weds the maid, for the need is mighty, Their son for thy hurt may vengeance seek."³²</p> <p>[P5] Then Hreithmar died, and Fafnir took all the gold. Thereupon Regin asked to have his inheritance from his father, but Fafnir refused this. Then Regin asked counsel of Lyngheid, his sister, how he should win his inheritance. She said:</p> <p>12. "In friendly wise the wealth shalt thou ask Of thy brother, and better will; Not seemly is it to seek with the sword Fafnir's treasure to take."</p> <p>[P6] All these happenings did Regin tell to Sigurth. One day, when he came to Regin's house, he was gladly welcomed. Regin said:</p> <p>13.³³ "Hither the son of Sigmund is come, The hero eager, here to our hall; His courage is more than an ancient man's, And battle I hope from the hardy wolf."³⁴</p> <p>14. "Here shall I foster the fearless prince, Now Yngvi's heir³⁵ to us is come; The noblest hero beneath the sun, The threads of his fate all lands enfold."³⁶</p> <p>[P7] Sigurth was there continually with Regin, who said to Sigurth that Fafnir lay at Gnitahaid,³⁷ and was in the shape of a dragon. He had a fear-helm,³⁸ of which all living creatures were terrified. Regin made Sigurth the sword which was called Gram;³⁹ it was so sharp that when he thrust it down into the Rhine, and let a strand of wool drift against it with the stream, it cleft the strand asunder as if it were water. With this sword Sigurth cleft asunder Regin's anvil. After that Regin egged Sigurth on to slay Fafnir, but he said:</p> <p>15. "Loud will the sons of Hunding⁴⁰ laugh, Who low did Eylimi lay in death, If the hero sooner seeks the red Rings to find than his father's vengeance."</p> <p>[P8] King Hjalprek gave Sigurth a fleet for the avenging of his father. They ran into a great storm, and were off a certain headland.⁴¹ A man⁴² stood on the mountain, and said:</p>	<p>(Hreithmar said:)</p> <p>11. ⁷⁰["Wolf-hearted woman, if in wedlock a son Be not born to thee, then bear thou a daughter; Give the maid to a man in thy mighty need: Will their son then to thy need see."]⁷¹</p> <p>Then Hreithmar died; but Fáfñir took all the gold.⁷² Regin asked for his share of the inheritance after his father; but Fáfñir said no to that. Then Regin sought counsel of his sister Lyngheid, how he should win his share. She said:</p> <p>12. "Thy kinsman shalt in kindness ask Thy fee and a fairer mind; Not seeming is it with the sword thou should'st Ask of Fáfñir thy own."</p> <p>All this told Regin Sigurth. One day when he came to Regin's abode, he was greatly welcomed. Regin said:</p> <p>13. "Hither has come the kinsman of Sigmund, The keen atheling, to our hall; Hardier he is than hero tried: From warlike wolf I wait me strife."⁷³</p> <p>14. "Foster shall I the fearless lordling, Now Yngvie's⁷⁴ kinsman has come to us; Under high heaven among heroes first, His fate-thread is spun to overspread all lands."⁷⁵</p> <p>Sigurth stayed with Regin. He told Sigurth how Fáfñir lay on the Gnita Heath in the shape of a dragon and had the Helm of Terror, of which all living things are adread. Regin made Sigurth a sword called Gram,⁷⁶ which was so sharp that when he dipped it into the Rhine, and let a flock of wool float down with the stream against it, the flock was cut in two as though it had been water. With this sword did Sigurth cleave asunder Regin's anvil. Thereafter Regin egged on Sigurth to slay Fáfñir. But Sigurth said:</p> <p>15. "Soon would sneer then the sons of Hunding, They who ended Eylimi's life,⁷⁷ If more keen the king⁷⁸ to crave red gold Than blood for blood of his father's banesmen."</p> <p>King Hjalprek gave Sigurth a fleet and men so that he might avenge his father. A great storm arose⁷⁹ when they were weathering a promontory. A man stood on the cliff and said:</p>
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<p>16. Who ride yonder, on Rævils horses, The towering billows, the roaring main: The sail-steeds are with sweat bedewed, The wave-coursers will not the wind withstand.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Regin</p> <p>17. Here am I and Sigurd in sea-trees; A fair wind is given us for death itself: Higher than our prows the steep waves dash, The rolling horses plunge. Who is it that inquires?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hnikar</p> <p>18. They called me Hnikar, when I Hugin gladdened, Young Volsung! and battles fought. Now they mayest call me the ancient of the rock, Feng, or Fjolnir.—I desire a passage.</p> <p>They turn to the land, the old man goes on board, and the storm abates. Sigurd said:</p> <p>19. Tell me, Hnikar! since thou knowest the omens Both of gods and men, Which omens are the best—if to fight 'tis needful— At the swing of glaves?</p> <p>Hnikar</p> <p>20. Good omens there are many, if men but knew them, At the swing of glaves, a faithful fellowship, I think, is the dark raven's, With the sworded warrior.</p> <p>21. The second is, if, when thou art gone out, And about to depart, Thou seest two renown-seeking men Standing in the fore-court.</p> <p>22. The third omen is, if wolves thou hearest Howl under the ash-boughs, It will victory to thee announce over helmed warriors, If thou seest them go before thee.</p> <p>23. No man should fight against The moon's late-shining sister. They have victory, who can see keenly At the play of swords, or to form the wedge-array.</p> <p>24. Most perilous it is, if with thy foot thou strikest, When thou to battle goest. Wily Disir stand on either side of thee, And wish to see thee wounded.</p>	<p>16. "Who yonder rides on Raevil's steeds,⁴³ O'er towering waves and waters wild? The sail-horses all with sweat are dripping, Nor can the sea-steeds the gale withstand."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Regin answered:</p> <p>17. "On the sea-trees⁴⁴ here are Sigurth and I, The storm wind drives us on to our death; The waves crash down on the forward deck, And the roller-steeds sink; who seeks our names?"</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Man spake:</p> <p>18.⁴⁵ "Hnikar⁴⁶ I was when Volsung once Gladdened the ravens and battle gave; Call me the Man from the Mountain now, Feng or Fjolnir; with you will I fare."</p> <p>[P9] They sailed to the land, and the man went on board the ship, and the storm subsided. Sigurth spake:</p> <p>19.⁴⁷ "Hnikar, say, for thou seest the fate That to gods and men is given; What sign is fairest for him who fights, And best for the swinging of swords?"</p> <p>Hnikar spake:</p> <p>20. "Many the signs, if men but knew, That are good for the swinging of swords; It is well, methinks, if the warrior meets A raven black on his road.</p> <p>21. "Another it is if out thou art come, And art ready forth to fare, To behold on the path before thy house Two fighters greedy of fame.</p> <p>22. "Third it is well if a howling wolf Thou hearest under the ash; And fortune comes if thy foe thou seest Ere thee the hero beholds.</p> <p>23.⁴⁸ "A man shall fight not when he must face The moon's bright sister⁴⁹ setting late; Win he shall who well can see, And wedge-like⁵⁰ forms his men for the fray.</p> <p>24. "Foul is the sign if thy foot shall stumble As thou goest forth to fight; Goddesses⁵¹ baneful at both thy sides Will that wounds thou shalt get.</p>	<p>16. "What men ride there on Rævil's steeds⁸⁰ The weltering waves, the wild-tossing sea? Doth salty sweat the sea-nags fleck, Will the wave-horses not weather the storm."</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Regin made answer:</i></p> <p>17. "On the sea-trees sit young Sigurth's men, Toward Hel bears us a heavy wind; Over stern and stern the storm-waves fall, Plunge the roller-horses: who is it asks?"</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(The man said:)</i></p> <p>18. "I was Hnikar hight when hawks were gladdened, Son of Sigmund, and slain were many. Man of the mountain may'st now call me, Feng or Fjolnir:⁸¹ let me fare with you!"</p> <p>They sailed near to the land, and the man came on board. Then the storm abated. <i>Sigurth said:</i></p> <p>19. "Tell me, Hnikar, for the twain thou know'st: What be good signs for gods and men; What bodeth best on battleground, The time that swords are swung?"</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Hnikar said:</i></p> <p>20. "Signs there are many, if men but knew, Which are good at the swinging of swords: To doughty hero the dusky raven's Flight is a following fair.</p> <p>21. "Another this: when outbound art, And ready art forth to fare, And beholdest good heroes twain, And stouthearted, stand on the path.</p> <p>22. "A third is this: if thereafter A wolf howl in the woods; Good hap thou'lt have among helmet-bearers, If first thou see'st them fare.</p> <p>23. "His foe let no one fight withershins;⁸² Into setting sun see thou never; For victory is theirs whose view is best, Of the war-workers who in wedges⁸³ array them.</p> <p>24. "Then art thou fey if thy foot stumbles, When bound for the swinging of swords. Will guileful ghosts glower at thee—⁸⁴ Would fain see thee fall.</p>
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<p>25. Combed and washed let every brave man be, And at morning fed; For 'tis uncertain whither he at eve may come. 'Tis bad to succumb to fate.</p> <p>Sigurd fought a great battle with Lyngvi, Hunding's son, and his brothers, in which Lyngvi and his three brothers fell. After the battle Regin said:</p> <p>26. Now is the bloody eagle, with the trenchant blade, Graven on the back of Sigmund's slayer. No son of king, who the earth reddens, And the raven gladdens, is more excellent.</p> <p>Sigurd returned home to Hjalprek, when Regin instigated him to slay Fafnir.</p>	<p>25. "Combed and washed shall the wise man go, And a meal at morn shall take; For unknown it is where at eve he may be; It is ill thy luck to lose."⁵²</p> <p>[P10] Sigurth had a great battle with Lyngvi,⁵³ the son of Hunding, and his brothers; there Lyngvi fell, and his two brothers with him. After the battle Regin said:</p> <p>26. "Now the bloody eagle⁵⁴ with biting sword Is carved on the back of Sigmund's killer; Few were more fierce in fight than his son, Who reddened the earth and gladdened the ravens."</p> <p>[P11] Sigurth went home to Hjalprek's house; thereupon Regin egged him on to fight with Fafnir.⁵⁵</p>	<p>25. "Combed and clean washed should keen man be, And have early eaten his fill;⁸⁵ For unsure is it where at eve he be: 'Tis ill to forego one's gain."</p> <p>Sigurth fought a great battle with Lyngvi, the son of a Hunding, and his brothers. <i>After the battle Regin said:</i></p> <p>26. "With the bitter brand now the bloody eagle⁸⁶ Was slashed in the back of Sigmund's banesman; Bolder in battle no baron ever Dyed red the earth and the ravens gladdened."</p> <p>[Then fared Sigurth home to Hjalprek; but Regin egged on Sigurth to slay Fafnir.]⁸⁷</p>
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¹ [Outline and numbering given in brackets inserted by this compiler - RSJ]

² One of many periphrases for gold.

³ To wit, *to avenge my death on your brothers*.

⁴ Sigurd.

⁵ A terrific helm or headpiece.

⁶ Hjalprek: father of Alf, Sigurth's step-father; cf. *Fra Dautha Sinffotla*, and note.

⁷ Grani: cf. *Gripisspo*, 5 and note.

⁸ Regin ("Counsel-Giver"): undoubtedly he goes back to the smith of the German story; in the *Thithrekssaga* version he is called Mimir, while Regin is there the name of the dragon (here Regin's brother, Fafnir). The *Voluspo* (stanza 12) names a Regin among the dwarfs, and the name may have assisted in making Regin a dwarf here.

⁹ Hreithmar: nothing is known of him outside of this story.

¹⁰ Othin, Honir and Loki: these same three gods appear in company in *Voluspo*, 17-18.

¹¹ Andvari's fall: according to Snorri, who tells this entire story in the *Skaldskaparmal*, Andvari's fall was in the world of the dark elves, while the one when Loki killed the otter was not; here, however, the two are considered identical.

¹² With his eyes shut: according to Snorri, Otr ate with his eyes shut because he was so greedy that he could not bear to see the food before him diminishing.

¹³ Ron: wife of the sea-god Aegir, who draws down drowning men with her net; cf. *Helgakvitha Hjorvarthssonar*, 18 and note. Snorri says that Loki caught the pike with his hands.

¹⁴ Snorri quotes this stanza. Water's flame: gold, so called because Aegir, the sea-god, was wont to light his hall with gold.

¹⁵ Snorri quotes this stanza. The name of the speaker is not given in the manuscripts.

¹⁶ Oin: nothing further is known of Andvari's father.

¹⁷ Norn: cf. *Voluspo*, 20.

¹⁸ Stanzas 3-4 may well be fragments of some other poem. Certainly Loki's question does not fit the situation, and the passage looks like an extract from some such poem as *Vafthruthnismol*. In *Regius* the phrase "Loki spake" stands in the middle of line 1.

¹⁹ The manuscript does not name the speaker.

²⁰ Vathgelmir ("Raging to Wade"): a river not elsewhere mentioned, but cf. *Voluspo*, 39.

²¹ Snorri says Andvari's ring had the power to create new gold. In this it resembled Baldr's ring, Draupnir; c.f. *Skirmismol*, 21 and note.

²² This stanza apparently source from a different source from stanzas 1-4 (or 1-2 if 3-4 are interpolated) and 6-10; cf. Introductory Note. In the *Volsungasaga* Andvari lays his curse particularly on the ring.

²³ Gust: possibly a name for Andvari himself, or for an earlier possessor of the treasure.

²⁴ Brothers twain: Fafnir and Regin.

²⁵ Heroes eight: the word "eight" may easily have been substituted for something like "all" to make the stanza fit the case; the "eight" in question are presumably Sigurth, Gotthorm, Gunnar, Hogni, Atli, Erp, Sorli and Hamther, all of whom are slain in the course of the story. But the stanza may originally not have referred to Andvari's treasure at all.

²⁶ Andvaranaut: "Andvari's Gem."

²⁷ Snorri quotes this stanza, introducing it, as here, with "Then Loki said" in the prose. *Regius* omits this phrase, but inserts "said Loki" in line 1.

²⁸ The manuscript does not name the speaker, and many editions assign this stanza to Hreithmar.

²⁹ The word translated "maid" in line 2 is obscure, and "gold" may be meant. Apparently, however, the reference is to the fight between Sigurth and the sons of Gjuki over Brynhild.

³⁰ The manuscript includes "said Hreithmar" (abbreviated) in the middle of line 1, and some editors have followed this.

³¹ Hreithmar's daughters do not appear elsewhere. It has been suggested that originally stanza 10 was followed by one in which Lofnheith lamented her inability to avenge her father, as she was married and had no son.

- ³² Apparently an interpolation (cf. Introductory Note). Vigfusson tries to reconstruct lines 2 and 4 to fit the *Ljothahattr* rhythm, but without much success. Hreithmar urges his daughter, as she has no sons, to bear a daughter who, in turn, will have a son to avenge his great-grandfather. Grundtvig worked out an ingenious theory to fit this stanza, making Sigurth's grand-father, Eylimi, the husband of Lyngheith's daughter, but there is absolutely no evidence to support this. The stanza may have nothing to do with Hreithmar.
- ³³ This and the following stanza may be out of place here, really belonging, together with their introductory prose sentence, in the opening prose passage, following the first sentence describing Regin. Certainly they seem to relate to Regin's first meeting with Sigurth. Stanzas 13-26, interspersed with prose, are quoted in the *Nornagestthatr*. Stanzas 13-18 may be the remnants of a lost poem belonging to the Helgi cycle (cf. Introductory Note).
- ³⁴ Hardy wolf: warrior, i. e., Sigurth.
- ³⁵ Yngvi's heir: Yngvi was one of the sons of the Danish king Halfdan the Old, and traditionally an ancestor of Helgi (cf. *Helgakvitha Hundingsbana* I, 57 and note). Calling Sigurth a descendant of Yngvi is, of course, absurd, and the use of this phrase is one of the many reasons for believing that stanzas 13-18 belonged originally to the Helgi cycle.
- ³⁶ The threads, etc.: another link with Helgi; cf. *Helgakvitha Hundingsbana* I, 3-4. As Helgi was likewise regarded as a son of Sigmund, stanzas 15-14 would fit him just as well as Sigurth.
- ³⁷ Gnitaheith: cf. *Gripisspo*, 11 and note.
- ³⁸ Fear-helm: the word "aegis-hjalmr," which occurs both here and in *Fafnismol*, suggests an extraordinarily interesting, and still disputed, question of etymology.
- ³⁹ Gram: according to the *Volsungasaga* Regin forged this sword from the fragments of the sword given by Othin to Sigmund (cf. *Fra Dautha Sinfjotla* and note).
- ⁴⁰ Regarding the sons of Hunding and Eylimi, father of Sigurth's mother, all of whom belong to the Helgi-tradition, cf. *Fra Dautha Sinfjotla* and note.
- ⁴¹ The fleet, and the subsequent storm, are also reminiscent of the Helgi cycle; cf. *Helgakvitha Hundingsbana* I, 29-31, and 11, prose after stanza 16.
- ⁴² A man: Othin.
- ⁴³ Raevil's steeds (Raevil was a sea-king, possibly the grandson of Ragnar Lothbrok mentioned in the *Hervararsaga*), sail-horses and sea-steeds all mean "ships."
- ⁴⁴ Sea-trees and roller-steeds (the latter because ships were pulled up on shore by means of rollers) both mean "ships."
- ⁴⁵ The *Volsungasaga* quotes this stanza.
- ⁴⁶ Hnikar and Fjolnir: Othin gives himself both these names in *Grimnismol*, 47; Feng ("The Seizer") does not appear elsewhere. According to the *Volsungasaga*, no one knew Othin's name when he came to Volsung's house and left the sword there for Sigmund.
- ⁴⁷ This and the following stanzas are strongly suggestive of the Hovamol, and probably came originally from some such collection.
- ⁴⁸ This stanza is clearly an interpolation, drawn in by the common-sense advice, as distinct from omens, given in the last lines of stanza 22.
- ⁴⁹ Moon's sister: the sun; cf. *Vafthruthnismol*, 23 and note.
- ⁵⁰ Wedge-like: the wedge formation (prescribed anew in 1920 for the United States Army under certain circumstances) was said to have been invented by Othin himself, and taught by him only to the most favored warriors.
- ⁵¹ Goddesses: Norse mythology included an almost limitless number of minor deities, the female ones, both kind and unkind, being generally classed among the lesser Norns.
- ⁵² This stanza almost certainly had nothing originally to do with the others in this passage; it may have been taken from a longer version of the *Hovamol* itself.
- ⁵³ Lyngvi: the son of Hunding who killed Sigmund in jealousy of his marriage with Hjordis; cf. *Fra Dautha Sinfjotla* and note. The *Volsungasaga* names one brother who was with Lyngvi in the battle, Hjorvarth, and Sigurth kills him as readily as if he had not already been killed long before by Helgi. But, as has been seen, it was nothing for a man to be killed in two or three different ways.
- ⁵⁴ Bloody eagle, etc.: the *Nornagestthatr* describes the manner in which the captured Lyngvi was put to death. "Regin advised that they should carve the bloody eagle on his back. So Regin took his sword and cleft Lyngvi's back so that he severed his back from his ribs, and then drew out his lungs. So died Lyngvi with great courage."
- ⁵⁵ In *Regius* there is no break of any kind between this prose passage and the prose introduction to the *Fafnismol* (cf. Introductory Note).
- ⁵⁶ See *Frá dauða Sinfjotla*, note.
- ⁵⁷ According to the *Volsunga saga*, Ch.13, Othin himself gave Sigurth the horse, which is stated to descend from the god's own steed, Sleipnir.
- ⁵⁸ "Counsellor" [sic] (?).
- ⁵⁹ See *Völuspá*, St.18 and note.
- ⁶⁰ The *Volsunga saga*, Ch.14, explains that he was wont to eat his food with half-closed eyes and alone because he could not bear to see it diminish.
- ⁶¹ The sea goddess. See *Helgakviða Hjorvarþssonar*, St.18 and note.
- ⁶² Kenning for "gold." See *Helgakviða Hundingsbana* I, St.21 and note.
- ⁶³ A river in Hel, mentioned only here, but similar to the river in which the mainsworn and murderers are condemned to wade (*Völuspá*, Sts.35-36). It has been suggested that Loki wishes by his question to induce the dwarf to tell the truth.
- ⁶⁴ According to Snorri's *Gylfaginning*, Ch.46, this ring, like Óthin's ring Draupnir (*Skírnismál*, St.21), had the power to renew itself. It is the "Ring of the Niflungs."
- ⁶⁵ Andvari himself, or one of the former owners of the ring.
- ⁶⁶ The two brothers are Fáfñir and Regin; the other eight athelings, possibly, Sigurth, Guthorm, Gunnar, Hogni, Atli, and the three sons of Guthrún by Jónakr.
- ⁶⁷ The guests' lives must be spared since weregild has been offered and accepted; Hreithmar would not have accepted it had he known of the curse attached to the gold.
- ⁶⁸ This line is doubtful. The reference seems to be to the fateful feuds among the Gjúkings.
- ⁶⁹ "He Who Surrounds with His Arms," Regin's brother.
- ⁷⁰ The following stanza very evidently does not fit in properly. It is (possibly with stanza 12) the fragment of another lay.
- ⁷¹ Since the daughter refuses to avenge her father on her brother, Fáfñir, this duty devolves upon her son, or, if she bears a daughter, on the son born of the daughter in wedlock. We may then suppose, with Grundtvig, that either Lyngheith or her daughter marries King Eylimi. Their grandson Sigurth, who slays Fáfñir, would thus be the avenger [this discounts Gripir, Eylimi's son – my note]. To be sure, this connection is not authenticated by any source [nor is Sigurd ever said to slay Fáfñir for revenge – again, my note].
- ⁷² Then, according to *Skáldskaparmál*, Ch.38 (and the *Volsunga saga*, Ch.14), "Fáfñir fared to the Gnita Heath and made him a lair and transformed himself into a dragon and brooded on his gold."
- ⁷³ An Icelandic proverb.
- ⁷⁴ The fabled divine progenitor of the royal Swedish line; but here more generally used as an honorific epithet.
- ⁷⁵ For the figure see *Helgakviða Hundingsbana* I, Sts.3-4.
- ⁷⁶ "Ogre," "Troll." According to the *Volsunga saga*, Ch.15, it was made from the fragments of Sigmund's sword, which Hjordis had preserved.
- ⁷⁷ According to *Frá dauða Sinfjotla*, it was his father, Sigmund, who fell in this battle.
- ⁷⁸ Sigurth.

⁷⁹ *Nornagests Þáttur*, Ch.6, tells us that this is a magical storm produced by the sons of Hunding.

⁸⁰ Rævil is the name of a sea king. As to “roller-horse,” see *Hymiskviða*, St.20 and note. Various kennings for “ship” appear throughout this and the following stanza.

⁸¹ For these names of Óthin see *Grímnismál*, St.48. Feng signifies “Gain.”

⁸² In duels, sun and wind were shifted fairly. See also *Hávamál*, St.129.

⁸³ The “wedge” or phalanx was supposed to be Óthin’s invention, taught by him to his favorite heroes.

⁸⁴ In the text, “guileful disir [female spirits] on either side of thee.”

⁸⁵ Compare with *Hávamál*, Sts.33 and 61. The meaning of the last line presumably is that he who is untidy, or he who has to cast about for food at midday, is not likely to be fortunate in his dealings.

⁸⁶ In the oldest times, enemies were often sacrificed to the gods by severing their ribs from the backbone and pulling out the lungs. This was called “carving the blood-eagle.”

⁸⁷ [Hollander places this prose passage at the beginning of the *Fáfnismál* – my note]