

# RÍGSPULA (THE SONG OF KINGS)

## Bellows' Introduction (1936)

The *Rigsthula* is found in neither of the principal codices. The only manuscript containing it is the so-called *Codex Wormanius*, a manuscript of Snorri's *Prose Edda*. The poem appears on the last sheet of this manuscript, which unluckily is incomplete, and thus the end of the poem is lacking. In the *Codex Wormanius* itself the poem has no title, but a fragmentary parchment included with it calls the poem the *Rigsthula*. Some late paper manuscripts give it the title of *Rigsmol*.

The *Rigsthula* is essentially unlike anything else which editors have agreed to include in the so-called *Edda*. It is a definitely cultural poem, explaining, on a mythological basis, the origin of the different castes of early society: the thralls, the peasants, and the warriors. From the warriors, finally, springs one who is destined to become a king, and thus the whole poem is a song in praise of the royal estate. This fact in itself would suffice to indicate that the *Rigsthula* was not composed in Iceland, where for centuries kings were regarded with profound disapproval.

Not only does the *Rigsthula* praise royalty, but it has many of the earmarks of a poem composed in praise of a particular king. The manuscript breaks off at a most exasperating point, just as the connection between the mythical "Young Kon" (*Konr ungr*, *konungr*, "king"; but cf. stanza 44, note) and the monarch in question is about to be established. Owing to the character of the Norse settlements in Iceland, Ireland, and the western islands generally, search for a specific king leads back to either Norway or Denmark; despite the arguments advanced by Edzardi, Vigfusson, Powell, and others, it seems most improbable that such a poem should have been produced elsewhere than on the Continent, the region where Scandinavian royalty most flourished. Finnur Jonsson's claim for Norway, with Harald the Fair-Haired as the probable king in question, is much less impressive than Mogk's ingenious demonstration that the poem was in all probability composed in Denmark, in honor of either Gorm the Old or Harald Blue-Tooth. His proof is based chiefly on the evidence provided by stanza 49, and is summarized in the note to that stanza.

The poet, however, was certainly not a Dane, but probably a wandering Norse singer, who may have had a dozen homes, and who clearly had spent much time in some part of the western island world chiefly inhabited by Celts. The extent of Celtic influence on the Eddic poems in general is a matter of sharp dispute. Powell, for example, claims almost all the poems for the "Western Isles," and attributes nearly all their good qualities to Celtic influence. Without here attempting to enter into the details of the argument, it may be said that the weight of authoritative opinion, while clearly recognizing the marks of Celtic influence in the poems, is against this view; contact between the roving Norsemen of Norway and Iceland and the Celts of Ireland and the "Western Isles," and particularly the Orkneys, was so extensive as to make the presumption of an actual Celtic home for the poems seem quite unnecessary.

In the case of the *Rigsthula* the poet unquestionably had not only picked up bits of the Celtic speech (the name Rig itself is almost certainly of Celtic origin, and there are various other Celtic words employed), but also had caught something of the Celtic literary spirit. This explains the cultural nature of the poem, quite foreign to Norse poetry in general. On the other hand, the style as a whole is vigorously Norse, and thus the explanation that the poem was composed by an itinerant Norse poet who had lived for some time in the Celtic islands, and who was on a visit to the court of a Danish king, fits the ascertainable facts exceedingly well. As Christianity was introduced into Denmark around 960, the *Rigsthula* is not likely to have been composed much after that date, and probably belongs to the first half of the tenth century. Gorm the Old died about the year 935, and was succeeded by Harald Blue-Tooth, who died about 985.

The fourteenth (or late thirteenth) century annotator identifies Rig with Heimdall, but there is nothing in the poem itself, and very little anywhere else, to warrant this, and it seems likely that the poet had Othin, and not Heimdall, in mind, his purpose being to trace the origin of the royal estate to the chief of the gods. The evidence bearing on this identification is briefly summed up in the note on the introductory prose passage, but the question involves complex and baffling problems in mythology, and from very early times the status of Heimdall was unquestionably confusing to the Norse mind.

Thorpe (1866)	Bellows (1936)
<p>In ancient Sagas it is related that one of the Æsir named Heimdall, being on a journey to a certain sea-shore, came to a village, where he called himself Rig. In accordance with this Saga is the following:</p> <p>1. In ancient days, they say, along the green ways went The powerful and upright sagacious As, The strong and active Rig, his onward course pursuing.</p> <p>2. Forward he went on the mid-way, And to a dwelling came. The door stood ajar, He went in, fire was on the floor. The man and wife sat there, hoary-haired, by the hearth, Ai and Edda, in old guise clad.</p>	<p>They tell in old stories<sup>4</sup> that one of the gods, whose name was Heimdall, went on his way along a certain seashore, and came to a dwelling, where he called himself Rig. According to these stories is the following poem:</p> <p>1. Men say there went   by ways so green Of old the god,   the aged and wise, Mighty and strong   did Rig go striding. . . . . .<sup>5</sup></p> <p>2. Forward he went   on the midmost way, He came to a dwelling,   a door on its posts; In did he fare,   on the floor was a fire, Two hoary ones   by the hearth there sat, Ai and Edda,<sup>6</sup>   in olden dress.<sup>7</sup></p>

<p>3. Rig would counsel give to them both, And himself seated in the middle seat, Having on either side the domestic pair.</p> <p>4. Then Edda from the ashes took a loaf, Heavy and thick, and with bran mixed; More besides she laid on the middle of the board; There in a bowl was broth on the table set, There was a calf boiled, of cates most excellent.</p> <p>5. Then rose he up, prepared to sleep: Rig would counsel give to them both; Laid him down in the middle of the bed; The domestic pair lay one on either side.</p> <p>6. There he continued three nights together, Then departed on the mid-way. Nine months then passed way.</p> <p>7. Edda a child brought forth: They with water sprinkled its swarthy skin, And named it Thræl.</p> <p>8. It grew up, and well it throve; Of its hands the skin was shriveled, The knuckles knotty, * * * And the fingers thick; a hideous countenance it had, A curved back, and protruding heels.</p> <p>9. He then began his strength to prove, Bast to bind, make of it loads; Then faggots carried home, the livelong day.</p> <p>10. Then to the dwelling came a woman walking, Scarred were her foot-soles, her arms sunburnt, Her nose compressed, her name was Thy.</p> <p>11. In the middle seat herself she placed; By her sat the house's son. They spoke and whispered, prepared a bed, Thræl and Thy, and days of care.</p> <p>12. Children they begat, and lived content: Their names, I think, were Hreimr and Fiosnir, Klur and Kleggi, Kefsir, Fulnir, Drumb, Digraldi, Drott and Hosvir, Lut and Leggjaldi. Fences they erected, fields manured, Tended swine, kept goats, dug turf.</p> <p>13. The daughters were Drumba and Kumba, Okkvinkalfa, and Arinnefia, Ysia and Ambatt, Eikintiasna, Totrughypia, and Tronubeina, Whence are sprung the race of thralls.</p> <p>14. Rig then went on, in a direct course, And came to a house; the door stood ajar: He went in; fire was on the floor, Man and wife sat there engaged at work.</p> <p>15. The man was planing wood for a weaver's beam; His beard was trimmed, a lock was on his forehead, His shirt close; his chest stood on the floor.</p> <p>16. His wife sat by, plied her rock, With outstretched arms, prepared for clothing. A hood was on her head, a loose sark over her breast, A kerchief round her neck, studs on her shoulders. Afi and Amma owned the house.</p>	<p>3. Rig knew well   wise words to speak, Soon in the midst   of the room he sat, And on either side   the others were.<sup>8</sup></p> <p>4. A loaf of bread   did Edda bring, Heavy and thick   and swollen with husks; Forth on the table   she set the fare, And broth for the meal   in a bowl there was. (Calf's flesh boiled   was the best of the dainties.)<sup>9</sup></p> <p>5. Rig knew well   wise words to speak, Thence did he rise,   made ready to sleep;<sup>10</sup> Soon in the bed   himself did he lay, And on either side   the others were.</p> <p>6. Thus was he there   for three nights long, Then forward he went   on the midmost way, And so nine months   were soon passed by.<sup>11</sup></p> <p>7. A son bore Edda,   with water they sprinkled him,<sup>12</sup> With a cloth his hair   so black<sup>13</sup> they covered; Thraell<sup>14</sup> they named him,   . . . . .<sup>15</sup></p> <p>8.<sup>16</sup> The skin was wrinkled   and rough on his hands, Knotted his knuckles, [and rough his nails]<sup>17</sup> Thick his fingers,   and ugly his face, Twisted his back,   and big his heels.</p> <p>9. He began to grow,   and to gain in strength, <sup>18</sup>Soon of his might   good use he made; With bast he bound,   and burdens carried, Home bore faggots   the whole day long.</p> <p>10.<sup>19</sup> One came to their home,   crooked<sup>20</sup> her legs, Stained<sup>21</sup> were her feet,   and sunburned her arms, Flat was her nose;   her name was Thir.<sup>22</sup></p> <p>11. Soon in the midst   of the room she sat, By her side there sat   the son of the house; They whispered both,   and the bed made ready, Thraell and Thir,   till the day was through.</p> <p>12. Children they had,   they lived and were happy, Fjosnir and Klur   they were called, methinks, Hreim and Kleggi,   Kefsir, Fulnir, Drumb, Digraldi,   Drott and Leggjaldi, Lut and Hosvir;<sup>23</sup>   the house they cared for, Ground they dinged,   and swine they guarded, Goats they tended,   and turf they dug.<sup>24</sup></p> <p>13. Daughters had they,   Drumba and Kumba, Okkvinkalfa,   Arinnefla, Ysja and Ambott,   Eikintjasna, Totrughypja   and Tronubeina;<sup>25</sup> And thence has risen   the race of thralls.</p> <p>14. Forward went Rig,   his road was straight, To a hall he came,   and a door there hung; In did he fare,   on the floor was a fire: Afi and Amma<sup>26</sup>   owned the house.<sup>27</sup></p> <p>15.<sup>28</sup> There sat the twain,   and worked at their tasks: The man hewed wood   for the weaver's beam; His beard was trimmed,   o'er his brow a curl, His clothes fitted close;   in the corner a chest.</p> <p>16. The woman sat   and the distaff wielded, At the weaving with arms   outstretched she worked; <sup>29</sup>On her head was a band,   on her breast a smock; On her shoulders a kerchief   with clasps there was.</p> <p>17. Rig knew well   wise words to speak, <sup>30</sup>Soon in the midst   of the room he sat, And on either side   the others were.</p> <p>18. [Then took Amma   . . . . . The vessels full   with the fare she set, Calf's flesh boiled   was the best of the dainties.]<sup>31</sup></p>
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<p>17. Rig would counsel give to them both; Rose from the table, prepared to sleep; Laid him down in the middle of the bed, The domestic pair lay one on either side.</p> <p>18. There he continued three nights together. Nine months then passed away. Amma a child brought forth, they with water sprinkled it, And called it Karl. The mother in linen swathed The ruddy redhead: its eyes twinkled.</p> <p>19. It grew up, and well thrrove; Learned to tame oxen, make a plough, Houses build, and barns construct, Make carts, and the plough drive.</p> <p>20. Then they home conveyed a lass with pendent keys, And goatskin kirtle; married her to Karl. Snor was her name, under a veil she sat. The couple dwelt together, rings exchanged, Spread couches, and a household formed.</p> <p>21. Children they begat, and lived content. Hal and Dreng, these were named, Held, Thegn, Smith, Breidr-bondi, Bundinskegg, Bui and Boddi, Brattskegg and Segg.</p> <p>22. But [the daughters] were thus called, by other names: Snot, Brud, Svanni, Svarri, Sprakki, Fliod, Sprund, and Vif, Feima, Ristil; Whence are sprung the races of churls.</p> <p>23. Rig then went thence, in a direct course, And came to a hall: the entrance looked southward, The door was half closed, a ring was on the door-post.</p> <p>24. He went in; the floor was strewed, A couple sat facing each other, Fadir and Modir, with fingers playing.</p> <p>25. The husband sat, and twisted string, Bent his bow, and arrow-shafts prepared; But the housewife looked on her arms, Smoothed her veil, and her sleeves fastened;</p> <p>26. Her head-gear adjusted. A clasp was on her breast; Ample her robe, her sark was blue; Brighter was her brow, her breast fairer, Her neck whiter than driven snow.</p> <p>27. Rig would counsel give to them both, And himself seated on the middle seat, Having on either side the domestic pair.</p> <p>28. Then took Modir a figured cloth Of white linen, and the table decked. She then took thin cakes of snow-white wheat, And on the table laid.</p> <p>29. She set forth salvers full, adorned with silver, On the table game and pork, and roasted birds. In a can was wine; the cups were ornamented. They drank and talked; the day was fast departing, Rig would counsel give to them both.</p> <p>30. Rig then rose, the bed prepared; There he then remained three nights together, Then departed on the mid-way. Nine months after that passed away.</p> <p>31. Modir then brought forth a boy: in silk they wrapped him,</p>	<p>19. Rig knew well   wise words to speak, <sup>32</sup>He rose from the board,   made ready to sleep; Soon in the bed   himself did he lay, And on either side   the others were.</p> <p>20. Thus was he there   for three nights long, [Then forward he went   on the midmost way,]<sup>33</sup> And so nine months   were soon passed by.</p> <p>21. A son bore Amma,   with water they sprinkled him, Karl they named him;   in a cloth she wrapped him, He was ruddy of face,   and flashing his eyes.<sup>34</sup></p> <p>22.<sup>35</sup> He began to grow,   and to gain in strength, Oxen he ruled,   and plows made ready, Houses he built,   and barns he fashioned, Carts<sup>36</sup> he made,   and the plow he managed.</p> <p>23. Home did they bring<sup>37</sup>   the bride for Karl, In goatskins clad,   and keys she bore; Snor<sup>38</sup> was her name,   'neath the veil she sat; A home they made ready,   and rings exchanged,<sup>39</sup> The bed they decked,   and a dwelling made.</p> <p>24.<sup>40</sup> Sons they had,   they lived and were happy: Hal and Dreng,   Holth, Thegn and Smith, Breith and Bondi,   Bundinskeggi, Bui and Boddi,   Brattskegg and Segg.<sup>41</sup></p> <p>25.<sup>42</sup> Daughters they had,   and their names are here: Snot, Bruth, Svanni,   Svarri, Sprakki, Fljoth, Sprund and Vif,   Feima, Ristil.<sup>43</sup> And thence has risen   the yeomen's race.</p> <p>26. Thence went Rig,   his road was straight, A hall he saw,   the doors faced south; The portal stood wide,   on the posts was a ring, <sup>44</sup>Then in he fared;   the floor was strewn.<sup>45</sup></p> <p>27. Within two gazed   in each other's eyes, Fathir and Mothir,<sup>46</sup>   and played with their fingers; <sup>47</sup>There sat the house-lord,   wound strings for the bow, Shafts he fashioned,   and bows he shaped.</p> <p>28. The lady sat,   at her arms she looked, She smoothed the cloth,   and fitted the sleeves; Gay was her cap,   on her breast were clasps, Broad was her train,   of blue was her gown, Her brows were bright,   her breast was shining, Whiter her neck   than new-fallen snow.<sup>48</sup></p> <p>29. Rig knew well   wise words to speak, Soon in the midst   of the room he sat, And on either side   the others were.</p> <p>30. Then Mothir brought   a broidered cloth, Of linen bright,   and the board she covered; And then she took   the loaves so thin, And laid them, white   from the wheat, on the cloth.</p> <p>31. Then forth she brought   the vessels full, With silver covered,   and set before them, Meat all browned,   and well-cooked birds;<sup>49</sup> In the pitcher was wine,   of plate were the cups, So drank they and talked   till the day was gone.</p> <p>32.<sup>50</sup> Rig knew well   wise words to speak, Soon did he rise,   made ready to sleep; So in the bed   himself did he lay, And on either side   the others were.</p> <p>33. Thus was he there   for three nights long, Then forward he went   on the midmost way, And so nine months   were soon passed by.</p> <p>34. A son had Mothir,   in silk they wrapped him,</p>
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<p>With water sprinkled him, and named him Jarl. Light was his hair, bright his cheeks, His eyes piercing as a young serpent's.</p> <p>32. There at home Jarl grew up, Learned the shield to shake, to fix the string, The bow to bend, arrows to shaft, Javelins to hurl, spears to brandish, Horses to ride, dogs to let slip, Swords to draw, swimming to practice.</p> <p>33. Thither from the forest came Rig walking, Rig walking: runes he taught him, His own name gave him, and his own son declared him, Whom he bade possess his alodial fields, His alodial fields, his ancient dwellings.</p> <p>34. Jarl then rode thence, through a murky way, Over humid fells, till to a hall he came. His spear he brandished, his shield he shook, Made his horse curvet, and his falchion drew, Strife began to raise, the field to redden, Carnage to make; and conquer lands.</p> <p>35. Then he ruled alone over eight vills, Riches distributed, gave to all treasures and precious things; Lank-sided horses, rings he dispersed, And collars cut in pieces.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>36. The nobles drove through humid ways, Came to a hall, where Hersir dwelt; There they found a slender maiden, Fair and elegant, Erna her name.</p> <p>37. They demanded her, and conveyed her home, To Jarl espoused her; she under the linen went.<sup>2</sup> They together lived, and well thrrove, Had offspring, and old age enjoyed.</p> <p>38. Bur was their eldest, Barn the second, Jod and Adal, Arfi, Mog, Nid and Nidjung. They learned games; Son and Svein swam and at tables played. One was named Kund, Kon was youngest.</p> <p>39. There grew up Jarl's progeny; Horses they broke, curved shields, Cut arrows, brandished spears.</p> <p>40. But the young Kon understood runes, Æfin-runes, and aldr-runes; He moreover knew men to preserve, Edges to deaden, the sea to calm.</p> <p>41. He knew the voice of birds, how fires to mitigate, Assuage and quench; sorrows to allay. He of eight men had the strength and energy.</p> <p>42. He with Rig Jarl in runes contended, Artifices practised, and superior proved; Then acquired Rig to be called, And skilled in runes.</p> <p>43. The young Kon rode through swamps and forests, Hurled forth darts, and tamed birds.</p> <p>44. Then sang the crow, sitting lonely on a bough! "Why wilt thou, young Kon: tame the birds? Rather shouldst thou, young Kon! on horses ride * * * and armies overcome.</p> <p>45. Nor Dan nor Danp halls more costly had, Nobler paternal seats, than ye had. They well knew how the keel to ride, The edge to prove, wounds to inflict.<sup>3</sup></p>	<p>With water they sprinkled him,   Jarl<sup>51</sup> he was; Blond was his hair,   and bright his cheeks, Grim as a snake's   were his glowing eyes.</p> <p>35. To grow in the house   did Jarl begin, Shields he brandished,   and bow-strings wound, Bows he shot,   and shafts he fashioned, Arrows he loosened,   and lances wielded, Horses he rode,   and hounds unleashed, Swords he handled,   and sounds he swam.<sup>52</sup></p> <p>36.<sup>53</sup> Straight from the grove   came striding Rig, Rig came striding,   and runes he taught him; By his name he called him,   as son he claimed him,<sup>54</sup> And bade him hold   his heritage wide, His heritage wide,   the ancient homes.</p> <p>37. . . . .<sup>55</sup> Forward he rode   through the forest dark, O'er the frosty crags,   till a hall he found.</p> <p>38. His spear he shook,   his shield he brandished, His horse he spurred,   with his sword he hewed; Wars he raised,   and reddened the field, Warriors slew he,   and land he won.</p> <p>39.<sup>56</sup> Eighteen halls   ere long did he hold, Wealth did he get,   and gave to all, Stones and jewels   and slim-flanked steeds, Rings he offered,   and arm-rings shared.</p> <p>40. His messengers went   by the ways so wet, And came to the hall   where Hersir<sup>57</sup> dwelt; His daughter was fair   and slender-fingered, Erna<sup>58</sup> the wise   the maiden was.</p> <p>41. Her hand they sought,   and home they brought her, Wedded to Jarl   the veil she wore; Together they dwelt,   their joy was great, Children they had,   and happy they lived.</p> <p>42. Bur was the eldest,   and Barn the next, Joth and Athal,   Arfi, Mog, Nith and Svein,   soon they began-- Sun and Nithjung--   to play and swim; Kund was one,   and the youngest Kon.<sup>59</sup></p> <p>43. Soon grew up   the sons of Jarl, Beasts they tamed,   and bucklers rounded, Shafts they fashioned,   and spears they shook.</p> <p>44.<sup>60</sup> But Kon the Young<sup>61</sup>   learned runes to use, Runes everlasting,   the runes of life;<sup>62</sup> Soon could he well   the warriors shield, Dull the swordblade,   and still the seas.</p> <p>45.<sup>63</sup> Bird-chatter learned he,   flames could he lessen, Minds<sup>64</sup> could quiet,   and sorrows calm; . . . . . The might and strength   of twice four men.</p> <p>46.<sup>65</sup> With Rig-Jarl<sup>66</sup> soon   the runes he shared, More crafty he was,   and greater his wisdom; The right he sought,   and soon he won it, Rig to be called,   and runes to know.</p> <p>47.<sup>67</sup> Young Kon rode forth   through forest and grove, Shafts let loose,   and birds he lured; There spake a crow<sup>68</sup>   on a bough that sat: "Why lurest thou, Kon,   the birds to come?"</p> <p>48.<sup>69</sup> "Twere better forth   on thy steed to fare, [The sword to wield]   and the host to slay.</p> <p>49. "The halls of Dan   and Danp<sup>70</sup> are noble, Greater their wealth   than thou hast gained; Good are they   at guiding the keel, Trying of weapons,   and giving of wounds.</p>
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<sup>1</sup> A common practice: the pieces served as money.

<sup>2</sup> The nuptial veil.

<sup>3</sup> The rest is wanting.

<sup>4</sup> It would be interesting to know how much the annotator meant by the phrase *old stories*. Was he familiar with the tradition in forms other than that of the poem? If so, his introductory note was scanty, for, outside of identifying Rig as Heimdall, he provides no information not found in the poem. Probably he meant simply to refer to the poem itself as a relic of antiquity, and the identification of Rig as Heimdall may well have been an attempt at constructive criticism of his own. The note was presumably written somewhere about 1300, or even later, and there is no reason for crediting the annotator with any considerable knowledge of mythology. There is little to favor the identification of Rig with Heimdall, the watchman of the gods, beyond a few rather vague passages in the other poems. Thus in *Voluspó*, I, the Volva asks hearing "from Heimdall's sons both high and low"; in *Grimmismol*, 13, there is a very doubtful line which may mean that Heimdall "o'er men holds sway, it is said," and in "the Short Voluspó" (*Hyndluljóth*, 40) he is called "the kinsman of men." On the other hand, everything in the *Rígsthula*, including the phrase "the aged and wise" in stanza 1, and the references to runes in stanzas 36, 44, and 46, fits Othin exceedingly well. It seems probable that the annotator was wrong, and that Rig is Othin, and not Heimdall. Rig: almost certainly based on the Old Irish word for "king," "rí" or "ríg."

<sup>5</sup> No gap is indicated, but editors have generally assumed one. Some editors, however, add line 1 of stanza 2 to stanza 1.

<sup>6</sup> Ai and Edda: Great-Grandfather and Great-Grandmother; the latter name was responsible for Jakob Grimm's famous guess at the meaning of the word "Edda" as applied to the whole collection (cf. Introduction).

<sup>7</sup> Most editions make line 5 a part of the stanza, as here, but some indicate it as the sole remnant of one or more stanzas descriptive of Ai and Edda, just as Afi and Amma, Fathir and Mothir, are later described.

<sup>8</sup> A line may have been lost from this stanza.

<sup>9</sup> Line 5 has generally been rejected as spurious.

<sup>10</sup> The manuscript has lines 1-2 in inverse order, but marks the word "Rig" as the beginning of a stanza.

<sup>11</sup> The manuscript does not indicate that these lines form a separate stanza, and as only one line and a fragment of another are left of stanza 7, the editions have grouped the lines in all sorts of ways, with, of course, various conjectures as to where lines may have been lost.

<sup>12</sup> Water, etc.: concerning the custom of sprinkling water on children, which long antedated the introduction of Christianity, cf. *Hovamol*, 159 and note.

<sup>13</sup> Black: dark hair, among the blond Scandinavians, was the mark of a foreigner, hence of a slave.

<sup>14</sup> Thraell: Thrall or Slave.

<sup>15</sup> After line 1 the manuscript has only four words: "cloth," "black," "named," and "Thraell." No gap is anywhere indicated. Editors have pieced out the passage in various ways.

<sup>16</sup> In the manuscript line 1 of stanza 9 stands before stanza 8, neither line being capitalized as the beginning of a stanza. I have followed Bugge's rearrangement.

<sup>17</sup> The manuscript indicates no gap in line 2, but nearly all editors have assumed one, Grundtvig supplying the bracketed addition.

<sup>18</sup> The manuscript marks line 2 as the beginning of a stanza.

<sup>19</sup> A line may well have dropped out, but the manuscript is too uncertain as to the stanza-divisions to make any guess safe.

<sup>20</sup> Crooked: the word in the original is obscure.

<sup>21</sup> Stained: literally, "water was on her soles."

<sup>22</sup> Thir: "Serving-Woman."

<sup>23</sup> The names mean: Fjosnir, "Cattle-Man"; Klur, "The Coarse"; Hreim, "The Shouter"; Kleggi, "The Horse-Fly"; Kefsir, "Concubine-Keeper"; Fulnir, "The Stinking"; Drumb, "The Log"; Digraldi, "The Fat"; Drott, "The Sluggard"; Leggjaldi, "The Big-Legged"; Lut, "The Bent"; Hosvir, "The Grey."

<sup>24</sup> There is some confusion as to the arrangement of the lines and division into stanzas of 12 and 13. The names mean: Fjosnir, "Cattle-Man"; Klur, "The Coarse"; Hreim, "The Shouter"; Kleggi, "The Horse-Fly"; Kefsir, "Concubine-Keeper"; Fulnir, "The Stinking"; Drumb, "The Log"; Digraldi, "The Fat"; Drott, "The Sluggard"; Leggjaldi, "The Big-Legged"; Lut, "The Bent"; Hosvir, "The Grey."

<sup>25</sup> The names mean: Drumba, "The Log"; Kumba, "The Stumpy"; Okkvinkalfa, "Fat-Legged"; Arinnefla, "Homely Nosed"; Ysja, "The Noisy"; Ambott, "The Servant"; Eikintjasna, "The Oaken Peg" (?); Totrughyppja, "Clothed in Rags"; Tronubeina, "Crane-Legged."

<sup>26</sup> Afi and Amma: Grandfather and Grandmother.

<sup>27</sup> In the manuscript line 4 stands after line 4 of stanza 16, but several editors have rearranged the lines, as here.

<sup>28</sup> There is considerable confusion among the editors as to where this stanza begins and ends.

<sup>29</sup> The manuscript marks line 3 as the beginning of a stanza.

<sup>30</sup> The manuscript jumps from stanza 17, line 1, to stanza 19, line 2. Bugge points out that the copyist's eye was presumably led astray by the fact that 17, 1, and 19, 1, were identical. Lines 2-3 of 17 are supplied from stanzas 3 and 29.

<sup>31</sup> I have followed Bugge's conjectural construction of the missing stanza, taking lines 2 and 3 from stanzas 31 and 4.

<sup>32</sup> The manuscript marks line 2 as the beginning of a stanza.

<sup>33</sup> The manuscript omits line 2, supplied by analogy with stanza 4.

<sup>34</sup> Most editors assume a lacuna, after either line 2 or line 3. Sijmons assumes, on the analogy of stanza 8, that a complete stanza describing Karl ("Yeoman") has been lost between stanzas 21 and 22.

<sup>35</sup> No line indicated in the manuscript as beginning a stanza.

<sup>36</sup> Cart: the word in the original, "kartr," is one of the clear signs of the Celtic influence noted in the introduction.

<sup>37</sup> Bring: the word literally means "drove in a wagon"—a mark of the bride's social status.

<sup>38</sup> Snor: "Daughter-in-Law."

<sup>39</sup> Bugge, followed by several editors, maintains that line 4 was wrongly interpolated here from a missing stanza describing the marriage of Kon.

<sup>40</sup> No line indicated in the manuscript as beginning a stanza.

<sup>41</sup> The names mean: Hal, "Man"; Dreng, "The Strong"; Holth, "The Holder of Land"; Thegn, "Freeman"; Smith, "Craftsman"; Breith, "The Broad-Shouldered"; Bondi, "Yeoman"; Bundinskeggi, "With Beard Bound" (i.e., not allowed to hang unkempt); Bui, "Dwelling-Owner"; Boddi, "Farm-holder"; Brattskegg, "With Beard Carried High"; Segg, "Man."

<sup>42</sup> No line indicated in the manuscript as beginning a stanza.

<sup>43</sup> The names mean: Snot, "Worthy Woman"; Bruth, "Bride"; Svanni, "The Slender"; Svarri, "The Proud"; Sprakki, "The Fair"; Fljóth, "Woman" (?); Sprund, "The Proud"; Vif, "Wife"; Feima, "The Bashful"; Ristil, "The Graceful."

<sup>44</sup> Many editors make a stanza out of line 4 and lines 1-2 of the following stanza.

<sup>45</sup> Strewn: with fresh straw in preparation for a feast; cf. *Thrymskvitha*, 22.

<sup>46</sup> Fathir and Mothir: Father and Mother.

<sup>47</sup> Perhaps lines 3-4 should form a stanza with 28, 1-3.

<sup>48</sup> Bugge thinks lines 5-6, like 23, 4, got in here from the lost stanzas describing Kon's bride and his marriage.

<sup>49</sup> The manuscript of lines 1-3 is obviously defective, as there are too many words for two lines, and not enough for the full three. The meaning, however, is clearly very much as indicated in the translation. Gering's emendation, which I have followed, consists simply in shifting "set before

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them" from the first line to the second—where the manuscript has no verb,—and supplying the verb "brought" in line 1. The various editions contain all sorts of suggestions.

<sup>50</sup> The manuscript begins both line 1 and line 2 with a capital preceded by a period, which has led to all sorts of strange stanza-combinations and guesses at lost lines in the various editions. The confusion includes stanza 33, wherein no line is marked in the manuscript as beginning a stanza.

<sup>51</sup> Jarl: "Nobly-Born."

<sup>52</sup> Various lines have been regarded as interpolations, 3 and 6 being most often thus rejected.

<sup>53</sup> Lines 1, 2, and 5 all begin with capitals preceded by periods, a fact which, taken in conjunction with the obviously defective state of the following stanza, has led to all sorts of conjectural emendations.

<sup>54</sup> The exact significance of Rig's giving his own name to Jarl (cf. stanza 46), and thus recognizing him, potentially at least, as a king, depends on the conditions under which the poem was composed (cf. Introductory Note). The whole stanza, particularly the reference to the teaching of magic (runes), fits Othin far better than Heimdall.

<sup>55</sup> Something—one or two lines, or a longer passage—has clearly been lost, describing the beginning of Jarl's journey. Yet many editors, relying on the manuscript punctuation, make 37 and 38 into a single stanza.

<sup>56</sup> The manuscript marks both lines 1 and 2 as beginning stanzas.

<sup>57</sup> Hersir: "Lord"; the hersir was, in the early days before the establishment of a kingdom in Norway, the local chief, and hence the highest recognized authority. During and after the time of Harald the Fair-Haired the name lost something of its distinction, the hersir coming to take rank below the jarl.

<sup>58</sup> Erna: "The Capable."

<sup>59</sup> The names mean: Bur, "Son"; Barn, "Child"; Joth, "Child"; Athal, "Offspring"; Arfi, "Heir"; Mog, "Son"; Nith, "Descendant"; Svein, "Boy"; Sun, "Son"; Nithjung, "Descendant"; Kund, "Kinsman"; Kon, "Son" (of noble birth). Concerning the use made of this last name, see note on stanza 44. It is curious that there is no list of the daughters of Jarl and Erna, and accordingly Vigfusson inserts here the names listed in stanza 25. Grundtvig rearranges the lines of stanzas 42 and 43.

<sup>60</sup> The manuscript indicates no line as beginning a stanza.

<sup>61</sup> Kon the Young: a remarkable bit of fanciful etymology; the phrase is "Konr ungr," which could readily be contracted into "Konungr," the regular word meaning "king." The "kon" part is actually not far out, but the second syllable of "konungr" has nothing to do with "ungr" meaning "young."

<sup>62</sup> Runes: a long list of just such magic charms, dulling swordblades, quenching flames, and so on, is given in *Hovamol*, 147-163.

<sup>63</sup> The manuscript indicates no line as beginning a stanza. Most editors assume the gap as indicated.

<sup>64</sup> Minds: possibly "seas," the word being doubtful.

<sup>65</sup> The manuscript indicates no line as beginning a stanza.

<sup>66</sup> Rig-Jarl: Kon's father; cf. stanza 36.

<sup>67</sup> This stanza has often been combined with 48, either as a whole or in part.

<sup>68</sup> Crow: birds frequently play the part of mentor in Norse literature; cf., for example, *Helgakvitha Hundingsbana* I, 5, and *Fafnismol*, 32.

<sup>69</sup> This fragment is not indicated as a separate stanza in the manuscript. Perhaps half a line has disappeared, or, as seems more likely, the gap includes two lines and a half. Sijmons actually constructs these lines, largely on the basis of stanzas 35 and 38, Bugge fills in the half-line lacuna as indicated in brackets.

<sup>70</sup> Dan and Danp: These names are largely responsible for the theory that the *Rigsthula* was composed in Denmark. According to the Latin epitome of the *Skjoldungasaga* by Arngrimur Jonsson, "Rig (Rigus) was a man not the least among the great ones of his time. He married the daughter of a certain Danp, lord of Danpsted, whose name was Dana; and later, having won the royal title for his province, left as his heir his son by Dana, called Dan or Danum, all of whose subjects were called Danes." This may or may not be conclusive, and it is a great pity that the manuscript breaks off abruptly at this stanza.