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NORSE GHOSTS II

BY N. K. CHADWICK

(Continued from page 65)

THE close association of the *draugr* or *haugbúi* with *skaldskap* is also attested by the instances related in the sagas of the occupant of the barrow singing or reciting poetry while he himself is actually inside. The instance of King Ögvàldr has already been mentioned. Again in *Njálssaga*, (ch. 77), we read that Gunnarr is heard singing in his barrow after death, while a shepherd and a maidservant are driving cattle past the spot. The story goes on to relate that at a later date Högni, the son of Gunnarr, and his friend Skarphethinn are out of doors one evening, on the southern side[35] of Gunnarr's barrow, which is seen standing open, and Gunnarr, who has been placed in the barrow in his chair, sitting upright,[36] is seen to have turned round, and to be gazing at the moon,[37] with a cheerful countenance and singing loudly. There are said to have been four lights burning in the barrow, and none of them cast any shadow.[38] The strophe which Gunnarr sings follows in the text, and we are told that immediately afterwards the barrow closes again.

A particularly interesting instance of the chanting of poetry by a dead man in his barrow occurs in *Landnámabók*[39] in reference to a certain Ásmundr, the son of Atli, son of Vali the strong, a member of the retinue (a *hirthmathr*) of King Harold the Fair-haired. Vali was outlawed and went to the Hebrides, but his sons, including Atli, went to Iceland, and Atli's son Ásmundr dwelt at Langaholt at a spot known as Thóru-roptir, "Thóra's mounds". He is said to have married Thóra of Langaholt, but to have parted from her in his old age on account of the number of visitors, and to have gone to live at Öxl till his death. There he was ultimately buried in a barrow in his ship, and with him his thrall, who

[35] Cf. the *Helreith Brynhildar*, str. 10. So also the ghost of the dead Klaufi is found outside the house "south beside the wall" (*Svarfdaela Saga*, ch. 23).

[36] Cf. the picture of the *draugr* Thráinn in the *Hrómundar Saga Greipssonar*, ch. 4; cf. also Karr the Old in *Grettissaga*, ch. 18.

[37] The moonlight on the upturned eyes of the animated corpse Glámr is similarly emphasised in the *Grettissaga*, ch. 35.

[38] The absence of shadow is similarly emphasised in the Bjarmian hall lighted from the vessel in *Örvar-Odds Saga*, ch. 4. So also in the temple of Thorgerthr Hörthabrúthr in the *Flateyjarbók* I, p. 144, but here the light appears to come from the windows.

[39] *Hauksbók*, cap. 60; *Sturlubók*, ch. 72. (Jónsson's ed., p. 24).

slew himself, refusing to survive Ásmundr,[40] and who was placed in the opposite end of the ship to his master.

Some time later Ásmundr was heard reciting this verse by someone who passed by his barrow :[41]

> " I occupy the lofty fo'csle platform alone.
> There is no crowd of people on the benches ;
> I occupy the ship. Yet better is an empty
> deck for a hero like me than a bad retinue.
> This will be always remembered by men :
> I am the steersman of my ship."

After this an investigation was made of the barrow, and the thrall was removed from the ship. The saga writer adds only the curious note that Thóra had a hall (*skáli*) erected across the highway, and inside it a table always stood, and she herself sat outside on a chair, inviting all who would eat to enter.

Sometimes we have a dialogue in verse between the *haugbúi* and those who break into the barrow or disturb the peace of its inmate. When Hervör visits the barrow of her father Angantýr in the *Hervarar Saga*, (ch. 4 f.), the barrow opens of its own accord, as in the case of Gunnarr cited above, and it is noteworthy that in both these instances the dead man has hopes that his visitors will exact vengeance for his death. Hervör and Angantýr carry on a long dialogue in verse, and though the poem as we have it is probably late, we find other dialogues between the *haugbúi* and his visitors in single skaldic strophes. Thus in the *Harthar Saga ok Hólmverja*, (ch. 15), when Hörthr and his companions break into the barrow of a certain Sóti Víkingr, Sóti, who is found, like Ásmundr in *Landnámabók*, seated in the prow of his ship, addresses Hörthr in a verse, asking him why he is " breaking into the house of the *moldbúi* ", seeing that he has never given him any provocation, to which Hörthr replies that he has sought out the " old draugr " because of his evil deeds. And again, when Hörthr seizes Sóti's gold ring and wrests it from him by force, Sóti protests in a verse, prophesying that the ring will cause the death of Hörthr himself and all who possess it. Evidently the *draugr*,

[40] Cf. the Arabic account of the vikings in Azerbaijan given by Ibn Miskawaih, quoted by Chadwick, *Beginnings of Russian History* (Cambridge, 1946), Appendix I.

[41] There is considerable divergence between the texts as to who heard the song and under what circumstances. According to the text contained in the *Hauksbók*, Thóra dreamed that Ásmundr made complaint about the thrall. The *Sturlubók* states that " men heard the verse recited in his barrow when he (*sic*) was passing beside it ", and Thóra is not mentioned at this point.

like the dwarfs, can lay a curse on objects which they are forced to give up. In this case Sóti's use of poetry is perhaps magical. He lays a curse on the ring.

It is worth remarking that whereas the verse spoken by the *draugr* prophesies that the ring will be a curse on whoever shall possess it, the prose which follows, while repeating, and evidently paraphrasing this, adds the words " unless it be a woman ". The addition suggests that the composer of the saga knew a second strophe, which he does not quote, in which ownership by a woman is referred to, and that the single strophe is part of a longer poem, of which the four strophes of the dialogue given in the text form a part. The addition also suggests that the composer of the saga is deriving his material, at least for this part of the saga, from lost skaldic poetry. These conclusions are supported by a passage later in the saga. Here we are told that Hörthr's son Grímkell[42] burns the temple which he had set up to Thorgerthr Hörgabrúthr in Iceland, when Thorgerthr expresses a grudge against Hörthr for the injuries which she accuses Grímkell of having done to her brother Sóti, including the theft of the gold ring. The connection of the *draugr* with Thorgerthr is therefore very close. Has this any bearing on the story of Ásmundr and Thóra of Thóru Toptir in *Landnámabók* ?

The questions how these verses came to be composed, why they were attributed to the *draugar* and *haugbúar*, and how they were transmitted, are very difficult to answer. It may be supposed, in view of certain comparatively modern poems attributed to *draugar*, that such poetry formed an early genre of which the tradition was carried on later by the composers of the sagas. It would seem, however, from such fragments as the strophe attributed to Ásmundr in the *Landnámabók*, that a certain amount of early skaldic verse of this type had survived from heathen times, and it is possible that some of the single strophes which we possess originally formed parts of longer poems, which in some cases may have had a wide circulation. In support of this suggestion we may point to the strophe recorded in ch. 2 of *Hálfs Saga*, which, as we have seen, is almost identical with the first strophe of a poem consisting of four consecutive strophes recorded in ch. 21 of *Ragnars Saga Lothbrókar*. The context of the two poems is, however, quite different.

The chanting of poetry by the dead is indeed not confined to the dead

[42] Grímkell, the owner of the temple to Thorgerthr Hörgabrúthr and other gods, had come to Iceland as a colonist from Orkadal in Norway, not far from the temple to Thorgerthr owned jointly by Jarl Hákon and his friend Guthbrandr in the neighbourhood of North Möre, which was burnt by Víga-hrapp (*Njáls Saga*, ch. 86 ff.). Probably, therefore, the temple in Iceland was a branch establishment.

man in his barrow. Skarphethinn is suspected of singing after death as he is imprisoned in the burning house in *Njálssaga*, (ch. 59); and though it is not certain that he is actually dead when he sings—the chant might be his death-song—we have a whole anthology of songs in *Svarfdæla Saga* chanted by Klaufi on various occasions after his death, and even after his head has been cut off.[43] Sometimes he sings from the air overhead. He is seen on one occasion by two men as he rides through the sky on a grey horse, drawing a sledge behind him from which protrude the heads of the two men who are looking at the vision, and as he rides he recites a verse, adding the words: "I expect you home to me this evening"[44]. The scene recalls the *gandreith*. It is clear that here the association of poetry is primarily with the dead, rather than with their burial place.

The association of the barrow dweller with *skaldskap* and music is found already in the poetry of the *Older Edda*. Perhaps the most striking instance occurs in strophe 42 of the *Völuspá* where we read that the "joyous (*glathr*) Eggthér, the shepherd (*hirthir*) of the witch (*gýgr*) sat on a barrow (*haugr*) and struck the harp". No indication is given in the *Völuspá* as to Eggthér's identity; but we learn from Saxo[45] that a certain Egtherus (Eggthér), who is described as king (*rex*) and leader (*dux*) of the Bjarmer along with Thengillus[46] (Thengill), king of Finnmark, was killed by Arngrimus pugil Sueticus (Arngrímr, a champion from Sweden). When in the *Hervarar Saga*, Arngrímr's son Angantýr is buried in a great barrow, where he is visited by his daughter Hervör in the evening, it is notable that she is met outside the barrow by a man who is described in the poem on which this part of the saga (ch. 4) is based as a *seggr at hjörthu*, and a *féhirthir*, and who seeks to deter her from entering. It is tempting to associate this *féhirthir* with the *glathr Eggthér*, the *gýgjar hirthir* of the *Völuspá*, and both with the prince of the Bjarmar slain by Arngrímr. This is conjecture; but it would be quite in line with the curious and unexplained association of shepherds with the barrows of the dead, and also with music, which we find as a constant feature in sagas, and which appears to be traditional. It is noteworthy that in the poem in *Hervarar Saga*, the *féhirthir*, *seggr at hjörthu*, addresses Hervör in a verse, and the two are represented as carrying on a dialogue in poetry. The position of the *gýgjar hirthir á haugi* in *Völuspá* may be compared

[43] See e.g. ch. 23. [44] *Ib.*, ch. 26. [45] VII, p. 164 f.

[46] The name *Thengillus* seems to be equivalent to the Norse word *thengill*, "a prince", and is probably in reality a common noun. The word *thengill*, however, seems to be confined to poetry, which suggests that the passage in Saxo referred to above is based on an early Norse poem like other traditions relating to Arngrímr.

with that of the *hirthir*, *féhirthir*, who is referred to as sitting *á haugi* in the *Skirnismál*, str. 11 (and the preceding prose), while the verse dialogue in which he attempts to warn Skirnir of his danger in approaching Gerthr may perhaps be compared to the scene in *Hervarar Saga* just described.

It is to be suspected that the references to Gunnarr, in the *Elder Edda*, in which he is represented as playing on his harp after he has been placed in an *ormgarthr*, or " snake enclosure ", by Atli, have reference to some kind of tomb, perhaps a barrow. In the *Sigurtharkvitha en Skamma*, str. 58, Gunnarr is referred to as *lagethr í öngan ormgarth*, " laid in a narrow snake enclosure ". Again in *Oddrúnargrátr*, str. 26, he is spoken of as " laid in an *ormgarthr* " and as " striking the harp strings " (*hörpo sveigja*). The circumstances are made clearer in str. 34 of the *Atlakvitha*, where we are told that the prince was laid alive (*lifanda*) in the *garthr*, in the interior of which snakes were gliding, and that " with embittered heart he struck the strings with his hand ". Finally in the *Atlamál*, str. 55, Atli gives the order to hang Gunnarr on the gallows and to " invite the snakes to him " (*bjótheth til ormum*), while in str. 62 of the same poem it is stated that Gunnarr struck his harp with his " foot-branches ", or " toes " (*ilkvistum*), to such effect that those who heard it wept.

The use of the word *ilkvistr* for " toes " is highly figurative, and it is to be suspected that the *ormgarthr* is figurative also.[47] The only place in which the word occurs, in addition to those already cited, is the *Ragnars Saga Lothbróka* (ch. 15), where King Ella[48] gives orders to throw (*kasta*) Ragnarr into an *ormgarthr*, and to leave him there for some time, so that if he utters anything they may know whether he is Ragnarr. At first the snakes leave him untouched, but when Ella causes him to be stripped of his protective clothing the snakes attack him, and Ragnarr dies after composing two verses on his plight, which enable Ella to identify his victim.

The death meted out to Ragnarr by Ella in the Norse Saga has no precedent in English custom, and is in itself a very unlikely story. Roger of Wendover, it is true, also places the death of Ragnarr in England; but the story which he gives is completely different from the one given

[47] It would seem clear that the composers of the *Edda* poems, and more particularly the poet of the *Atlakvitha*, thought of Gunnarr's place of torture as some kind of an enclosure where snakes were actually to be found, such as, probably, a barrow. In this he may of course be misinterpreting and misunderstanding, and imaginatively expanding an earlier piece of skaldic diction in which *ormgarthr* is used of the place of the dead, even Hell. Cf. the use of the words *wyrmgeard*, *wyrmsele* in Anglo-Saxon; cf. also *Völuspá*, str. 38, 39.

[48] I.e. K. Ælla of Northumbria (863–7); here, however, described as king of England.

above.[49] On the other hand, both Norse and English tradition associates Ragnarr's sons with barrow burial,[50] and it seems to me that in the *Edda* passages cited above the word *ormgarthr* is used figuratively for some kind of burial chamber, probably a barrow, and that the snakes and the " gallows " support this interpretation. Gunnarr plays his harp and no doubt chants his death-song inside or beside his snake-ridden tomb, like Örvar-Oddr after his fatal bite by the adder, and as Ragnarr chants his verses after receiving the fatal snake-bite. Tradition associates at least three of the sons of Ragnarr Lothbrók with barrows, and the natural interpretation of the *ormgarthr* is that it is a similar structure.

The reference just made to the two strophes spoken by the dying Ragnarr Lothbrók in the *ormgarthr* raises an interesting question. We have elsewhere an elaborate death chant, generally referred to as the *Krákumál*, in which Ragnarr makes reference to the events of his past life, and announces that the hour of his death has come. It is an ambitious and impressive poem in some twenty-nine strophes. Its artificial and rhetorical character, and the conscious use of the refrain, are among the features which mark it as late, and it has nothing in common with the two strophes put into the mouth of Ragnarr in the *ormgarthr*. Yet both must be regarded as his death chants. Is it possible that the two strophes just referred to are fragments of an earlier poem and an earlier traditional type of death-chant, and that the Krákumál is a later type? The reference to his sons, and their ignorance of their father's fate, as young pigs unaware of the sufferings of the old boar, which occurs in both the second of these verses and in the prose which precedes the first, suggests that this part of the saga is based on an early skaldic death chant. Perhaps we may also suspect that here the barrow is covertly referred to under an alternative skaldic kenning to that which we have already suggested, that of a *svínabaeli*, or " hogs' stye ". Both the terms *ormgarthr* and *svínabaeli* are rare.

It is not impossible that in other cases besides those already cited, single verses chanted by a dying man may have formed parts of more ambitious death chants, such as the strophe chanted by Jökull Bárthar-son when dying.[51] We have it on record that the poet Thormóthr Kol-

[49] Roger of Wendover, *s.a.* 878. The passage in question is translated and discussed by C. E. Wright, *The Cultivation of Saga in Anglo-Saxon England* (Edinburgh, 1939), p. 138 ff. Roger's account has itself no claim to credibility.

[50] For references, see the paper by the late Sir Allen Mawer, " Ragnarr Lothbrók and his sons ", *The Saga-Book of the Viking Club* (1909), p. 15 ff.

[51] *Jökuls Tháttr Bártharsonar, Fjörutiu Islendinga-thaettir* (Reykjavik, 1904), p. 186 f.

brúnarskald died with a single unfinished strophe on his lips, and that it was completed for him by Harold Harthráthi.[52] Innsteinn, the follower of King Hálfr, chants three strophes at the point of death.[53] Hildebrandr's death song breaks off in the middle of the fifth strophe in *Ásmundar Saga Kappabana*, (ch. 9).

An interesting instance of the transference of a single strophe from one death chant to another is to be found in the first strophe chanted by the dying giant (*mathr mikinn vexti*) Hallmundr, Grettir's friend, in the *Grettissaga*, (ch. 62), when he enters his cave mortally wounded. His daughter asks him why he is all covered with blood, and he replies: "Now you must listen while I tell you all that has happened to me, and I will chant a song, and you must inscribe it on a *kefli* (rod)." This she does, and he sings the *Hallmundarkvitha*. Five strophes are given; but in the middle of the sixth the saga teller breaks off, and tells us that Hallmundr sang of many of his "deeds" (or ? "adventures", *athafna*) in that song, for he had travelled throughout the land. The song is evidently Hallmundr's death song, and it makes allusion in general terms to his prowess and great deeds at various periods of his life, though there is no element of biography, or even narrative. We are told that as the song proceeded, Hallmundr's strength gradually failed, and it was no sooner ended than he died. At this point Grímr, Hallmundr's slayer, enters the cave, and having won the favour of his daughter, he "remained many nights in the cave and acquired (*nam*) the poem". Finally we are told that Grímr became a great traveller, and that there was a long story about him.

The story is interesting from many points of view—the chanting of poetry till the point of death, in which allusion is made to the events of the life which is closing: the writing of it in runes on wood by the girl: the learning of the poem by the stranger. This is no isolated statement of the writing of a poem in runes on wood. We see Egill's daughter[54] writing the *Sonatorrek* on wood from the lips of her father, himself in process of starving himself to death. We see Guthrún writing runes in *Atlamál*, str. 4 ff., in the *Elder Edda*, and we recall the Anglo-Saxon poem of the *Husband's Message* which purports to be written on a message-stick in the form of a letter apparently from a husband to his wife. The statement that the stranger learnt the poem, or acquired it from the daughter of Hallmundr (*nam*), suggests one means by which such death

[52] *Flateyjarbók*, II, p. 366.
[53] *Hálfs Saga*, ch. 13.
[54] *Egils Saga*, ch. 78.

chants may have been transmitted. This is emphasised also by the additional statement that Grímr became a great traveller, and the subject of a long saga. We may compare what is said about Hallbjörn in the *Thorleifs Tháttr Jarlsskalds* above. Both offer clear testimony to the important part played by skaldic poetry in the formation of sagas.

It is not certain whether the single strophe recited by Hallmundr as he enters the cave wounded is thought of as forming a part of the poem which he bids his daughter write immediately afterwards, though this would seem probable. It is, however, a curious fact that a strophe closely resembling it is chanted by the hero Ásbjörn, when he is being tortured by the *jötunn* Brúsi in his cave on Sauthey.[55] Here also the strophe stands in isolation, though almost immediately afterwards Asbjörn recites his death-song in nine strophes, at the close of which he expires. In this case the death-song has something of the function of an autobiography, like the *Krákumál* already referred to.

It is difficult to doubt that some kind of connection exists between the death-song and the gift of poetry attributed to the *haugbúi*. The death-song was evidently very widely cultivated, and was, at least in its later forms, very elaborate. The earlier type would seem to be lyrical and emotional in character. Hjálmarr's death-song is believed by some scholars to be among the earliest specimens of such compositions which have survived, and to belong to the heathen period, and to date probably from before 1,000.[56] Nerman compares it with *Guthrúnarkvitha* I. He also places it in the same class as the death-song of Hildibrandr Húnakappi, the hero slain by his brother Ásmundr in *Ásmundar Saga Kappabana*, (ch. 9); and he regards the latter poem as actually influenced by Hjálmarr's death-song. The death-song of Ásmundr was evidently known to Saxo, who gives a close paraphrase of it in hexameter verse.[57] It was apparently widely current, therefore, before the close of the twelfth century. Like Hjálmarr's death-song it is lyrical in character, and while making casual reference to Ásmundr's previous slaying of his son, it concentrates—again like Hjálmarr's death-song—on the immediate situation of the slaying of Hildibrandr by his brother Ásmundr, and its emotional implications.

Other famous death-songs, probably of later date in their present form,

[55] *Orms Tháttr Stórólfssonar*, ch. 7.

[56] See Birger Nerman, *Studier över Svärges Hedna Litteratur* (Uppsala, 1913), p. 148 ff.

[57] Book VII, p. 244 (Elton's translation, p. 293 f.). In Saxo's version, Hildibrandr is called Hildigerus, and Ásmundr is called Haldanus.

are those of Örvar-Oddr, Ragnarr Lothbrök, and Starkathr. These are less lyrical and emotional, and favour the catalogue form, amounting to a summary chronicle of the principal events of the hero's life. The death-song of Örvar-Oddr, which purports to be composed by the hero while his funeral pyre and his coffin are being prepared, is a long and elaborate poem in which the hero reviews his life in a series of allusions. The *Krákumál* is also a biography consisting of a series of allusions to events summarily referred to, or narrated in roughly chronological order. Paraphrases of other death-songs are given by Saxo. The most famous are those attributed to Starkatherus (Starkathr),[58] recited even while in his old age he is persuading Hatherus (Höthr) to cut off his head with his sword—a true hero's death, and one suitable to a devotee of Othinn. We may compare death-songs attributed by Saxo to Hagbarthus (Hagbarthr) immediately before he is strangled[59]; and to Grimmo (Grímr) the son of Gunno (Gunnr), *dux* of Telemark,[60] when father and son were found slain in Ethascog (Heitharskógr).

These longer and more elaborate death-chants may have taken the place of earlier compositions, and it is probable that these lost earlier poems have contributed to the material on which the sagas are based. It is not difficult to see how this may have come about finally by the expansion of the allusions in the more autobiographical type of poems, though in some cases the later specimens alluded to above (e.g. that of Örvar-Oddr) are thought to have been composed specifically for their present place in the sagas. Hjálmarr's death-song, on the other hand, is thought with great probability to be the original nucleus on which an earlier saga of Hjálmarr was based, and so to have formed the basis of the part of *Örvar-Oddr's Saga* in which Hjálmarr figures.[61]

The lyrical and topical nature of Hjálmarr's death-chants, as compared with the later specimens, is characteristic also of the brief and fragmentary skaldic death-chants which appear to belong to an early tradition. These topical and personal poems may well have formed the basis on which the later poets and saga writers composed their more autobiographical "death-chants", and the sagas in which they are preserved, and for which in some cases they are believed to have been composed. But what can have been the purpose of the original death-chants? How did the genre arise? The widespread use of the convention, and the elaboration

[58] Book VIII, cap. LXXX f. (Elton's translation, p. 324 ff.).
[59] Book VII, cap. LXX (Elton, p. 284 f.).
[60] *Ib.* Book VII, cap. LXXV, (Elton, p. 303).
[61] See Birger Nerman, *op. cit.*, p. 148 f.

of the later examples make it difficult to doubt that it was at one period regarded as proper for a hero to die chanting his death-song. Is it possible that the clue lies in the closing strophes of the *Krákumál*, in which Ragnarr Lothbrók claims that the *dísir* are calling him and that he has received his invitation from the *Æsir*, and is about to drink ale joyfully with Óthinn? Is it possible that the death-song originally constituted the claim of the hero who dies a violent death to a place in Valhöll, and that the reference to the circumstances of his death, or the allusions to his past adventures, are calculated to make valid his appeal for the favour of the god of poetry and of battle?

Whatever the explanation, there can be no doubt that the death-chant is an ancient Teutonic institution, and that it is closely associated with the barrow already in ancient times. It is found both in the *Elder Edda* and in *Beowulf*. We may refer in particular to the *Sigurtharkvitha enn Skamma*, str. 33, where Brynhildr, after stabbing herself with a mortal wound as an act of suttee for Sigurthr, reviews her past life and her relations with the Gjúkings and Sigurthr in a long death-chant, at the close of which she expires. So also the closing strophes of *Guthrúnarkvöt* make clear that Guthrún's previous speech is a death-chant in which her life is passed in review. These closing strophes refer to the pyre on which she proposes to give up her life, in accordance with the suttee, actual or ritual, which, so she declares, she has vowed to Sigurthr, when he promised to come from Hel to meet her as she comes to him from the world of the living. It is probable that the final speech of Guthrún in *Guthrúnarkvitha* II is also a death-chant, and possibly also *Oddrúnargrátr*. Str. 33 of the latter contains a hint of suttee, though it is not clear that it is Oddrún's intention actually to perform the act. The speech of Brynhildr to the *gýgr* in the *Helreith Brynhildar* seems to be the spiritual counterpart of the death-chant which we have already seen her reciting after stabbing herself in *Sigurtharkvitha enn Skamma*; but it is interesting to note that it is also her apologia, her justification of her right to die, in other words of her right to commit suttee, and so join herself with Sigurthr (who was not her husband) in the spirit world—the same right which Guthrún (Sigurthr's own wife) claims in str. 20 of *Guthrúnarkvöt*. These death-chants of heroic women are the feminine counterparts of the death-chants of the men who announce at the point of death their right to rank as heroes and warriors.

The death-chant was undoubtedly known in Anglo-Saxon England. We may refer to a passage in *Beowulf* (ll. 2425–2537) in which Beowulf is pictured, immediately before attacking the dragon, as seated, doomed

to die and chanting what is virtually his death-song. In this chant he makes reference to some of the principal events of his life, beginning with his fosterage at the hands of King Hrethel, and dwelling more especially on the part which he had played in Hygelac's battle with the Frisians. He concludes with the declaration that he will never retreat, but will encounter the dragon and obtain his gold or die in the struggle. An earlier passage in the poem (l. 2267 ff.), which relates the speech of the man who, long before, had placed the treasure in the barrow, the last survivor of an extinct line, is to be regarded as a dirge on his dead family, rather than his own "praise poem", and the chant contains no autobiographical elements. But that it is nevertheless a form of death-chant seems to be the natural interpretation of the lines which immediately follow.

"Thus did the sole survivor lament in his sorrow with desolate heart; sorrowfully he wept by day and night, until the tide of death touched his heart."

We may compare Bede's death-song, which would seem to be a Christian adaptation of the theme.

"In preparation for the inevitable journey, it is impossible for a man to ponder too deeply, before his departure from this world, as to what of good or evil shall be adjudged to his soul after the day of his death."

We have suggested the possibility that originally the chanting of the death-song is the hero's passport to Valhöll, enumerating his credentials as a hero worthy of admission among the *einherjar*, even when he has failed to die in battle. It is noteworthy that Ragnarr Lothbrók refuses to reveal his name till he finally pronounces his death-song. It would seem to be something in the nature of a hero's introduction to the spirit world. If such were, indeed, the traditional idea associated with the death-song, and as these songs may have been chanted within the tomb in the case of those who entered the tomb alive, it would be by a natural transition that poetry and song should come to be associated with the barrow, and the power to inspire with similar gifts those who came to visit them. By a similar association of ideas the *draugr* who emerged would be regarded as a repository of the stories of the Heroic Age, to which period the custom probably dates back.

It may perhaps be of assistance to us in our attempts to connect the *draugr*, and his previous entry alive into the barrow, with the poetry and inspiration, as well as with the belief in rebirth associated with them, if we turn for a moment to some stories of the first Christian king, Óláfr Tryggvason, and his relations with *draugar*. For we are here fortunate

in having an important figure whose experiences with *draugar* are related in some detail. What do they teach us of the nature of the *draugar* themselves? What can we learn from them of King Óláfr's relationship to the heathenism which he had abandoned? How far do these stories illuminate the overlap from heathenism to Christianity? What is their real significance?

It is told in the "Saga of Óláf Tryggvason" (*Heimskringla*) (ch. 71), that while the king was on his missionary journey to the north of Norway, he paused to spend Easter at Ögvaldsnes, to which reference has already been made above. During the course of the evening an old man arrived, one-eyed, and with a long hood, who was very eloquent and knew many stories of all lands; and he entertained the king till far into the night. The king asked who the Ögvaldr was who had given his name to the headland, and he was told that he had been a mighty king and warrior who had been killed in battle against a certain Varinn, and had then been laid in the neighbouring barrow on Ögvaldsnes. A favourite cow belonging to King Ögvaldr, from whom he had always refused to be separated, and to whom he had always paid heathen honours (*blót*) had also been laid in a separate barrow near by.[62] The stranger related many stories to the king; but the bishop, evidently mistrusting him, and disliking the tenor of his stories, persuaded the king to retire to rest, the night being now far spent. Even then, however, the stranger seated himself on the footboard of the king's bed, and continued telling him stories of the past till far into the night, when the bishop again intervened, telling the king that it was now time to sleep. Next morning the stranger had disappeared, first having attempted to tamper with the king's victuals, and the king made no doubt that he had been Óthinn. It is clear that he had come with the intention of killing the king, doubtless seeking, by his attractive stories of heathen days, to win his soul before destroying his body.

There can be no doubt that the presence of Óthinn, the god of the dead, is connected with the neighbouring cemetery. Ögvaldsnes seems to have been haunted by Óthinn, and King Óláfr's question as to who had been buried there brought from him the story of the dead king and warrior—a story of a hero after Óthinn's own heart—and also many others. The barrows on Ögvaldsnes seem to have constituted an Óthinn sanctuary, whence the god of the dead himself issued on harmful expeditions to those kings who visited the spot. Óláfr Tryggvason escaped, however,

[62] We may compare the cow Sibilja, which figures prominently in *Ragnars Saga Lothbróhar*. The cow was apparently the *fylgja* or *fylgjukona* of King Eysteinn of Uppsala, who defended him against Lothbrók's sons till she was finally slain by Ivarr Beinlausi.

by the good offices of his Christian bishop. Not the least interesting aspect of the incident is the close association of sagas of the past with the barrow sanctuary, and its dead occupant. We have seen that the barrows are closely associated with poetic inspiration, of which Óthinn is the chief divine exponent and expert; and there is reason to suppose that much of our earliest legendary and saga material is derived ultimately from poems associated with the *draugar*, to whom many of them are traditionally ascribed. The stone barrows themselves must also have served to keep alive the traditions of their occupants.

The story of King Óláfr Tryggvason and the malicious visitor from King Ögvaldr's tomb recalls another strange visitor to King Óláfr's court at Trondhjem, which is sometimes regarded as a variant version of the last story. The story is told in the *Flateyjarbók*, in the *Saga of Óláfr Tryggvason*, (ch. 282 ff.), and relates how one night, about the third year of the king's reign, an old man comes to his court, craving hospitality. He calls himself *Gestr*, or "guest" of the Norns, as the Norse Fates are called, Gestr being a favourite name of Óthinn. On the first night of his sojourn with the king an elf appeared in the hall, and revealed to the king that the stranger had not been christened. Gestr, however, was an accomplished harper, and could recite stories and poems relating to the Heroic Age, and in particular to the Sigurthr Cycle. The king, after listening for a long time, eventually became uneasy and evidently suspected his stories as smacking of heathenism, and though the rest of the court were obviously enjoying them, Gestr was obliged to desist from the entertainment, and pass on to other stories. He told the king that at his birth the norns had presented him with a candle, prophesying that he should live no longer than the candle itself; and when the king lit the candle, Gestr having been duly christened, expired as the candle came to an end.

It is noteworthy that in connection with his visit came two emissaries to the court, who are known as the Grímar, and who have been sent by Guthmundr of Glasisvellir. They bring with them two costly horns as presents from Guthmundr, and the horns are here said to be also called Grímar. The duplication of the name is curious; but the word seems to denote some kind of mask or disguise, and is also another name of Óthinn, as we see in the *Grímnismál*. The significance of the names, and of the ill-omened presents, is made clear by the fact that when the bishop blesses them and the visitors are invited to drink from them, the visitors themselves disappear, and leave three of the king's retinue dead behind them.[63]

[63] *Thátt Helga Thórissonar, Flateyjarbók*, vol. I, p. 361.

It is clear that Guthmundr has sent the horns with designs on the life of the king; but here also an attempt has first been made, apparently by Óthinn, to gain spiritual ascendancy over the king by means of stories and poems of the great days of heathenism, both at home and abroad. The story adds that when King Óláfr left the land for the last time, he took the horns with him, and that when he disappeared from his warship, the Long Serpent, in the Battle of Svöldr, the horns also disappeared. The disappearance of two magic horns with King Óláfr from the Long Serpent is referred to elsewhere also, but the names of the horns are different, as we shall see.[64]

It will be seen that the story has many features in common with that of the stranger who relates the story of King Ögvaldr. In particular we notice the nocturnal visit of the stranger, one from the tomb of the dead king, the other apparently from Guthmundr of Glasisvellir, with his ill-omened emissaries, the Grímar, the convoys of the doomed Helgi Thórisson in the saga which bears his name.[65] In both stories the strangers have an extensive, and evidently an attractive repertoire of stories relating to the Heroic Age, and both are skilled raconteurs. Both are, however, virtually heathens,[66] and their presence is regarded by Christians as an unwholesome presence at the court. Whether we regard the two stories as variants of a common original or not, it is clear that they belong to a similar genre. It is indeed probable that a whole cycle of a similar type was in existence, for we also find in the *Flateyjarbók* the *Tóka Háttr Tókason*[67] which bears a general resemblance to the story of Nornagestr's sojourn at the court of Óláfr Tryggvason. The *háttr* relates how the aged Tóki comes to the court of Saint Óláfr and gives him an account of his sojourn at the courts of Hrólfr Kraki, and of Hálfr, and of the heroes whom he met there, notably Útsteinn and Innsteinn, Hrókr the Black, Björn, Bárthr, and Böthvarr Bjarki. Like Nornagestr, Tóki in answer to the king's question, says that he has been primesigned, but not christened, and accepts baptism before he dies. The *háttr* is said to be based on the *Hrólfs Saga Kraka* and the *Hálfs Saga*.[68]

[64] King Óláfr is credited in saga tradition with several pairs of horns. Thus in the same *háttr* (i.e. of Helgi Thórisson) we are told that he also possessed two excellent horns known as the *Hyrningar*.

[65] *Flateyjarbók* I, p. 359 ff.

[66] Gestr (Nornagestr) claims to have been "prime-signed", which is a preliminary ceremony to christening; but the nature of the story suggests that he belongs to the old heathen world of ideas.

[67] The text is contained in the *Flateyjarbók*, vol. II, p. 135 ff.

[68] For a critical discussion of both stories, see F. Panzer, "Zur Erzählung von Nornagest" in *Vom Werden des deutschen Geistes (Festgabe Gustav Ehrismann)*, Berlin, 1925, p. 27 ff.

Now the visit from the barrow of King Ögvaldr with evil intention to King Óláfr's Christian court recalls another story[68] of the sudden appearance by night of a supernatural being, described variously as a *draugr*, a *dólgr* and a *púki*. One of King Óláfr's men, a certain Thorsteinn Skelkr, is in an outbuilding, when to his horror a *draugr* seats himself beside him, as Óthinn seats himself beside King Óláfr, and similarly tells him stories of heroes who have died in the past. The *draugr* says that he himself has been Thorkell the Thin, a hero killed at the Battle of Brávöllr long ago, where he fought in the army of Harold Hilditönn, king of Denmark. He relates to Thorsteinn the fates of Sigurthr Fáfnisbani and Starkathr the Old in the realm of the dead, and gives him a demonstration of the howling of these unfortunate heroes in the fires of the Underworld. It would seem that these *draugar* love to tell stories of great warriors of the Heroic Age. The noise of the howling brings King Óláfr to the spot, for he has a shrewd idea of what is occurring, and on the appearance of the Christian king, the *draugr*, or *púki*, sinks down into the earth, but his booming is heard for a long time underground.

It will be seen that all three stories have something in common. In the last, the *draugr*, or *púki*,[70] has come by his own telling from the land of the dead, while the manifestation of Óthinn in the first seems to be associated with the *draugr* in the neighbouring barrow. In the story of Nornagestr, the stranger's arrival appears to be connected with that of King Guthmundr's emissaries, the murderous Grímar, and he has probably come, like them, from Glasisvellir, which, curiously enough, is also called Ódáinsakr, the " field of the one not dead ". Is this the barrow, into which, as we have seen, men interred themselves living ? Can this be what is meant by the " one not dead " ? In all three cases the stories told by the ghosts or supernatural visitors relate to the Heroic Age, or the far past, and this would seem to be a characteristic of the story telling spirits of the barrow.

We may compare the *dólgr*, or *púki*, or *draugr*—all three names are used of him in the same text—and his appearance through the hole in the floor to Thorsteinn Skelkr, with the action of Jarl Agthi, who, as we have seen above, built a barrow for himself and entered it with all his treasure. Shortly before we are told of his barrow building, the hero of the saga, Thorsteinn Bæarmagn, a member of the retinue of Óláfr

[68] *Flateyjarbók*, vol. I, p. 416 ff.

[70] The word *puki* appears to be identical with the Lettish *puke*, formerly used in the heathen religion of Latvia of the sacred house snake. The word suggests that a possible link might be found between the cult of the *draugr*, and the Latvian and Old Prussian religion, in which sacred snakes formed the most striking feature of both the national and the family cults.

Tryggvason, has stolen Jarl Agthi's daughter, and also his two magic horns called *Hvítingar*. But on the wedding night, Agthi is said to have broken into the bridal chamber, apparently through a hole in the floor, and to have taken away the two precious horns which Thorsteinn had stolen from him. He also attempts to slay Thorsteinn himself. Here again, however, King Óláfr, guessing what is afoot, comes into the room in the nick of time and strikes him on the head with his gold adorned staff, so that Agthi falls down headlong into the earth. The appearance and disappearance of the *draugr* through the hole in the ground, and the intervention of the king in the two stories, are very similar. It is interesting to note also that this story, like those of Nornagestr and the two Grímar, is associated with Guthmundr of Glasisvellir, who is a close friend of Thorsteinn, and whom Thorsteinn assists to supplant King Geirröthr on the throne. In the story of Jarl Agthi, moreover, we find Guthmundr making a compact with a magic horn known as Grímr, which is said to be the death of a man every time it is drunk. It would seem, therefore, that Agthi's horns, the Hvítingar, correspond to the horns Grímar of the *Tháttr af Nornagesti*, and the *Tháttr af Helga Thórissonar*. It should be added that Thorsteinn Bæarmagn eventually succeeds in once more stealing Jarl Agthi's horns, and in presenting them to King Óláfr.

The horns figure once more in a story relating to a later time; and they figure in a very peculiar way. We are told in the story of Thorsteinn Bæarmagn that King Óláfr had the Hvítingar with him on the Long Serpent at the Battle of Svöldr; and that when, towards the close of the battle, he plunged overboard and disappeared in the sea, the horns disappeared with him. We have already seen that according to a variant tradition the name of the horns which he had with him on the Long Serpent was not *Hvítingar*, but *Grímar*. The actual end of the king is unknown. It is not stated that he was drowned, and no one knows how or when he died. Various stories are related in the *Flateyjarbók* to account for his end, one being that he disappeared in a flash of light.[71] The *Saga of Thorsteini Bæarmagni* as we have said, relates that he disappeared into the sea, and that the horns Hvítingar disappeared at the same time. Snorri of course says nothing of the horns, but relates that the king plunged into the sea; and that according to one tradition he was picked up alive by a ship of the Wends belonging to Ásta, the daughter of King Burizleifr, and taken to land.[72] But Snorri is in agreement with the compiler of the *Flateyjarbók* that the King's fate is un-

[71] *Flateyjarbók*, vol. I, p. 492.

[72] "Saga of Óláf Tryggvason", (*Heimskringla*), ch. 121.

known, and that various stories were current to account for his disappearance.

What is the significance of these curious stories? We have seen King Óláfr alternately represented as fascinated by the stories of heathendom, and then as rejecting them, suspecting Guthmundr's presents of the horns and rebuffing his advances, and combating and sometimes—not always—defeating the *draugar*, or emissaries of Guthmundr, who make attempts on the life or faith of his men. Yet in the end it would seem that Guthmundr triumphs. For in the story of Thorsteinn Bæarmagn, Guthmundr allies himself with the hero, Thorsteinn himself, who is one of Óláfr's men, and Thorsteinn thereupon prevails upon the king to accept the magic horns, the Hvítingar. This we can only conclude from the evidence to be the cause of his final disappearance. King Óláfr, in fact, like Helgi Thórisson, and Eirikr Víthförli, and the *draugar*, does not "die". He disappears for ever while still alive, like those who visit Guthmundr and Odáinsakr, and like those who enter the barrow alive, sometimes with their ship and crew.

What, then, is the part which the horns actually play, and why are they so constantly associated with Guthmundr? We have seen that they contain poison, though it was intended that the king should drink them. We have seen that one of them, Grímr the Good, was the death of a man every time it was drunk; yet to drink Grímr empty was compulsory on all who visited Geirröthr's court. In the *Saga af Thorsteini Bæarmagni* we are told that Guthmundr had made a compact with Grímr, and so survived and succeeded Geirröthr in his kingdom. These horns can hardly be unconnected with the great aurochs horn full of poison and spells, which lay on the table before the colossal image of Thor in the great temple of the Bjarmar in *Sturlaugs Saga Starfsama*, (ch. 17 f.). Can the drink contained in such horns be the drink which made King Svegthir enter the *steinn*, when, as we have seen, it shut on his heels and he never returned?—the drink which had previously drowned his father Fjölnir at the funeral feast of Fróthi? or Hundingr at the funeral feast of Haddingr (cf. p. 52 above)?—the drink which King Herlaugr took with him into the barrow when he entered it alive?—perhaps also the drink which Thráinn was brewing in his cauldron when found by Hrómundr Greipsson? Is it the *óminnis-öl*, the "drink of forgetfulness" drunk as the preliminary to euthanasia on entering the barrow alive? And is King Guthmundr, by sending the horns to Óláfr, merely urging him to revert to heathenism, and to die as his ancestors had done before him? If so, it would seem that, whatever the truth may have been about King

Óláfr Tryggvason's death, traditions were current according to which Guthmundr was ultimately successful.

Snorri, of course, makes no mention of Guthmundr or the Horns, or of supernatural visitors to King Óláfr except Gestr at Ogvaldsnes; but he stresses the mystery which hung around the disappearance of the king from the Long Serpent, and the wealth of variant traditions to which it gave rise. And he adds that the mystery of the disappearance and actual fate of the king were never solved. For the rest, we know from many other stories in the *Flateyjarbók* that in the more popular milieu which is there represented (as compared with the respectable stories recounted by Snorri), many heathen spirits made attempts on the life of King Óláfr[73] after the death of the staunch heathen Jarl Hákon for which he was responsible. These stories, like that of Thorsteinn and the Hvitingar, have come to us in the last instance from a Christian source; but they certainly suggest that some reactionary member of King Óláfr's retinue succeeded at the eleventh hour in weakening the king's faith and winning him back to the religion of his ancestors. It may be added that Saxo also knew traditions in which King Oláfr was represented as having leanings towards heathen practices; for he describes him as wholly devoted to auspices and omens, and as making efforts to probe the future.[74] Even after being baptised and instructed in the Christian faith he could not be deterred from these practices.

On the whole it may perhaps be said that the evidence justifies us in tentatively suggesting that originally the *draugar* or *haugbúar* were those who had "not died", but had entered the barrow alive as an act of voluntary death or euthanasia. They hoped to be reborn, "living on", in this way, "from generation to generation". They are, moreover, a source of poetic inspiration and of knowledge of the far past; in some measure also, prophetically, of the future. It is, of course, possible that such poetic and prophetic *draugar* may have had these gifts before death; but except in a few cases evidence is lacking. They are harmful unless treated according to the prescribed ritual, but capable of conferring benefits, especially on their descendants, whether direct or collateral. Their barrows also seem sometimes to have been treated as sanctuaries and sources of inspiration and knowledge in later times.

The cult of the *draugr* was primarily a family affair. It seems to have

[73] It is curious that Thorsteinn Baearmagn should have been in league with them, as his saga certainly suggests, for his father is said to have been a certain Srynjólfr, a *bóndi* of Goulardal, who attacked the trolls of Heitharskóg opposed to King Óláfr Tryggvason (*Flateyjarbók*, vol. I, p. 233 f.).

[74] Book X, p. 339.

played an important part in the religious life of some of the leading Scandinavian dynasties, notably that of Hálfdan the Black and his brother Óláfr Geirstatha-Álfr of southern Norway, and of the early rulers of Hálogaland,[75] such as the mythical King Helgi, king Herlaugr in Naumudalr, and perhaps the great Jarl Hákon of Hlathir. Both these lines are probably traceable to Sweden, and it would seem probable that the same cult of the *draugr*, and the ritual interment of a living companion with him, may lie behind the series of death-stories of the pairs of princes, simultaneously dead and buried, in the early chapters of the *Ynglinga Saga*. The Swedish law which the *Flateyjarbók* tells us enacted that the Swedish queen must die with her husband would, it seems, add weight to these and other indications of Swedish provenance for the original cult of the *draugr*.

There are other hints which point to Sweden as the source from which this cult spread to the rest of Scandinavia, and perhaps ultimately even to Iceland. One of these indications is to be found in Snorri's description of the death of the god Freyr.[76] Here we are told that Freyr had a wealthy temple at Uppsala in Sweden, with which the welfare of the Swedes was closely bound up.

"Freyr fell sick; and when his illness increased, a decision was arrived at to debar people in general from access to him, and a great barrow was built, containing a door and three windows. And when Freyr was dead, they carried him secretly into the barrow; but they told the Swedes that he was still alive. And they kept watch over him for three years, and they consigned all the tribute to the barrow, the gold through one window, the silver through another, and the copper pennies through a third. Thereupon peace and plenty continued."

Saxo knows a similar story current in Denmark relating to the early Danish peace-king Fróthi.[77] The secrecy which invested the death of Freyr recalls that of Eiríkr Víthförli and Helgi Thórisson, both of whom are said not to die, but to disappear mysteriously; and it also recalls the disappearance of Óláfr Tryggvason from the Long Serpent, equally mysteriously, and finally. The fact that Freyr is here said to be dead

[75] In the *Hálleygjatal*, the line is said to be descended from a certain Saemingr, son of Yngvi-Freyr (prologue to the *Heimskringla*) or of Óthinn and Skathi (*ib.*, ch. 9). In the Prologue to the *Prose Edda* by Snorri Sturluson also he is said to be the son of Óthinn, and the kings and great men of Norway trace their descent from him. The reference is here again given to the *Hálleygjatal*. The word is thought to be connected with Suomi (Finn). This Saemingr is perhaps identical with the Saemingr, king in Sweden, referred to in *Hrómundar Saga Greipssonar*, ch. 4; and also the son of Arngrímr referred to in *Hervarar Saga*, ch. 2.

[76] *Ynglinga Saga*, ch. 12.

[77] Saxo, V, p. 170 (Elton, p. 210).

when carried into the mound, though his followers pretend that he is still alive, suggests that either ritual death had been substituted in the cult for euthanasia, as we have seen grounds for believing in other cases; or, less probably, that the original ritual had been forgotten or obscured in the tradition which Snorri is following. But the description of the death of Freyr as a whole leaves little room to doubt that the cult of the *draugr* at the barrow which we have been considering is closely connected with the cult of Freyr at Uppsala; and it seems to follow that from its connection with Freyr the barrow has acquired the epithet *svínabaeli*, " boars' house ", Freyr's symbol being that of a boar.

One other story must be mentioned which points to Sweden, and the cult of Freyr as the more immediate source of many of the features of the cult of the *draugr* and the barrow. This is the story told by King Óláfr Tryggvason, according to the *Flateyjarbók*,[78] to the men of Inner Trondhjem when he was about to burn their statue of the god. After the death of Freyr in Sweden, so says the king, it was decided that some men must be interred with him in the barrow; but no-one was willing, so the Swedes made two *trémenn* " wooden men ", and placed them with gold in the barrow for his companionship and pleasure. Later, continues the narrative, some robbers broke into the barrow, and extracted the images, and eventually it was decided to retain one of the images, and to send the other to Trondhjem, and both were subsequently worshipped as the god Freyr himself. The story is interesting, not only as pointing to a tradition that Uppsala was the source of the cult of Freyr, but also for the statement that not one, but two *trémenn* were placed together in the barrow. The story might almost justify us in supposing that in Uppsala ritual euthanasia and ritual suttee had alike been substituted in late times, or at least in late tradition, for the original human victim.

Now these two *trémenn* sacrificed to Freyr can hardly be unconnected with the *Fröblót*, the great festival of the Swedes at Uppsala. Saxo tells us[79] that Freyr, on taking up his abode at Uppsala, had instituted a new method of sacrificing to the gods by offering human victims; but the *Fröblót* itself is said to have been instituted by Haddingr,[80] an early mythical king of the Danes who according to Saxo was fostered in Sweden, and about whom Saxo has many stories. Elsewhere, however, we generally hear of " the two Haddingjar "[81] a mysterious pair who have never been satisfactorily explained. Can they be the two wooden men placed

[78] Vol. I, p. 401 ff. [79] Book III, p. 120; Elton, p. 90.

[80] Book I, p. 49 f.; Elton, p. 36 f.

[81] *Haddingjar* is the plural of *Haddingr*, the early Norse equivalent of the form *Hadingus* found in Saxo.

in Freyr's barrow as *blót*, to serve as substitutes for the human victims formerly sacrificed according to Freyr's innovation?

It has been mentioned earlier in this paper that according to traditions preserved by both Snorri and Saxo, it seems to have been extremely common in the royal families of both Sweden and Denmark for a king to have two sons and apparently two only, who are even in some cases stated to have been buried in the same barrow. These "royal pairs" seem to come in groups. In Denmark they are found in the earliest period: Dan and Angul; Humblus and Lotherus; Guthorm and Hadding. The Swedish lists given by Snorri in the *Heimskringla* are particularly interesting. There are two groups in early times. First there are Alrekr and Agni, the two sons of King Agni, who was hanged in Finland. His father Dagr had been killed by a fall from his horse. Alrekr and Agni both ruled, both were great horse-breakers, and slew one another with bridle bits. Alrekr had two sons, Álfr and Yngvi. Again both ruled, and these two also slew one another with swords, and were buried in a barrow on Fyrisvellir. Yngvi again has two sons, of whom Jörundr was hanged on the sea-shore, and then buried in a barrow. We may note the prominence of the horse, the sword, hanging, and the barrow burial. It was Jörundr's great grandson Athils who was so famous for his horses. All these instances occur, of course, in the prehistoric period; but they point to a tradition that two kings ruled together, died violent deaths, perhaps by one another's hands, and were buried together. Moreover we notice on the Swedish royal line given by Saxo the same tendency for a king to have two sons, though the names on this pedigree are not the same as those which occur in the *Ynglingasaga*. For instance, Saxo tells us that Asmundus has two sons, Ubbo and Hundingus, while Hundingus in his turn has two sons, Regnerus (Ragnarr), and Thoraldus (Thorvaldr). The story of Herlaugr and Hrollaugr suggests that something of the kind may have been known also in Norway.

It can hardly be the case that so many kings had two sons, and two only, and a system of ritual foster-brotherhood would seem to offer the most natural explanation of the traditions as they stand. With this system a further ritual is also implied, according to which if one of the foster-brothers dies, his companion accompanies him alive into the tomb. But whatever the explanation, it seems clear that traditionally the early Swedish kings had two sons and two only; and that in some cases these fought and killed one another and were buried simultaneously. It may be added that something which looks like a recurrence of the same prac-

tice occurs in much later times among the Ynglingar. Thus Óláfr Trételgja has two sons, Ingjaldr and Halfdan Whiteleg, and the latter has two sons, Eysteinn and Guthröthr; while Eysteinn's grandson, Guthröthr the Proud, has two sons, Óláfr Geirstatha-Álfr and Halfdan the Black. The two latter may be regarded as historical persons, and no suggestion is made that either enters the barrow of the other. It is interesting to note, at the same time, that both seem to be closely associated with the cult of the barrow (cf. p. 50 ff. above), and to have built barrows or a barrow for themselves during their lifetime. It would almost seem as if Snorri himself hints that this later group constitutes a revival of the cult of Óthinn; for we are told that Óláfr Trételgja was little given to *blót*, and so the Swedes considered that famine resulted from this and burnt him in his house, and "gave him to Óthinn, and sacrificed to him for good seasons" (*ok blótu honum til árs sér.*). It is noteworthy, therefore, that immediately the pairs of sons begin again.