

PATRICIA PIRES BOULHOSA

SCRIBAL PRACTICES
AND THREE LINES IN *VÖLUSPÁ*
IN *CODEX REGIUS*¹

VÖLUSPÁ is extant as a whole poem in two medieval manuscripts, *Codex Regius* (GKS 2365 4to, ca. 1275–1300) and *Hauksbók* (AM 544 4to, ca. 1300–25) and some of its stanzas are quoted in full or in prose paraphrases in three extant medieval versions of the *Prose Edda*.² Most scholarly editions of the poem offer a reconstructed text built from these manuscripts: the base text comes from *Codex Regius* (hereafter R) with borrowings from *Hauksbók* (hereafter H) and footnotes with textual variants from H and the *Prose Edda*. Reconstructions of *Völuspá* may be aimed at recovering lost older versions of the poem – be it a tenth-century oral composition, a first recording in parchment in the thirteenth century or a common (and older) text from the extant versions.³ Although some degree of subjectiv-

- 1 This article is based on my research for a Brazilian edition and translation of *Völuspá*, for which I received the Snorri Sturluson Icelandic Fellowship from the Stofnun Sigurðar Nordals, Reykjavík. I was also kindly welcomed by the Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum where I worked from June to August 2007. I am indebted to all scholars and staff of both institutes, but especially to Haraldur Bernharðsson, Marteinn Helgi Sigurðsson, and Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, who patiently helped me with questions raised directly in this article. I am also grateful to Paul Bibire for his patience with my questions. A version of this article was submitted and accepted for publication in *Mediaeval Scandinavia* in 2007.
- 2 These manuscripts are *Codex Regius* (GKS 2367 4to, ca. 1300–50), *Codex Upsaliensis* (DG 11 4to, ca. 1300–25), and *Codex Wormianus* (AM 242 fol., ca. 1350). For editions, see fn 18 below. Unless otherwise stated, the datings of all manuscripts mentioned in this article are taken from *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog: Registre* (Copenhagen: Den arnamagnæanske kommission, 1989).
- 3 For example, Lars Lönnroth, ‘The Founding of Miðgarðr (*Völuspá* 1–8)’, in *The Poetic Edda: Essays on Old Norse Mythology*, ed. Paul Acker and Carolyne Larrington (New York: Routledge, 2002), 5: ‘The Icelandic text which is given on the preceding pages, and which provides the basis for my translation [Neckel and Kuhn’s edition], is to be seen as a reconstruction. It may be supposed that the reconstruction gives a fairly good picture of the poem as it generally was performed on the farms of Icelandic chieftains some two hundred

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ity is involved in the reconstruction of the text according to ideas of an older poem, there is not much variance among the scholarly editions used today. This stability may be explained by the fact that the few extant texts do not greatly differ from one another, but it may also be the result of the long-lasting influence of Sophus Bugge's 1867 edition, as well as Sigurður Nordal's edition and commentary, first published in 1923.⁴ The most used edition for academic purposes, Hans Kuhn's revision (1962–68) of Gustav Neckel's edition (1914–27), is indebted to them and accordingly also presents a reconstructed text.⁵ The work involved in producing a reconstructed text of *Völuspá* from the extant texts requires scientific and imaginative effort on the part of the editor, who cannot help but assume a relation of some kind among the extant texts and make judgements of value about them.⁶ The process by which a reconstructed verse is created becomes part of the modern scholarly transmission of *Völuspá* and, as long as it is visible to the reader, the reconstructed text can be of great value for academic research. The risk of relatively stable texts such as *Völuspá* is

years after the introduction of Christianity [the year 1000]. On the other hand, one can make only vague speculations as to what the poem was like during earlier periods'. See also, *Völuspá*, ed. Nordal, 23–25 and Judy Quinn, 'Editing the *Edda*: The Case of *Völuspá*', *Scripta Islandica* 51 (2000): 72–73. There is scholarly consensus that all poems written in R are copies from older manuscripts; see Else Mundal, 'Oral or Scribal Variations in *Völuspá*: A Case Study in Old Norse Poetry', in *Oral Art Forms and their Passage into Writing*, ed. Else Mundal and Jonas Wellendorf (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2008), 209–27; Gustav Lindblad, *Studier i Codex Regius av äldre Eddan* (Lund: Gleerup, 1954), 247–53; Frands Herschend, 'Codex Regius 2365 4to: Purposeful Collection and Conscious Composition', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 17 (2002): 121–43 and references given there.

- 4 *Norræn fornkvæði: Islandsk samling af folkelige oldtidsdigte om nordens guder og heroer, almindelig kaldet Sæmundar Edda hins fróða*, ed. Sophus Bugge (Oslo: Mallings, 1867). *Völuspá: Gefin út með skýringum*, ed. Sigurður Nordal (Reykjavík: Helgafell, 1923), 111. Nordal's edition was reprinted and revised in 1952; all quotes in the present article are taken from the latter.
- 5 *Edda: Die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern*, ed. Gustav Neckel, and rev. Hans Kuhn, 2 vols. (Heidelberg: Winter & Universitätsverlag, 1962–68). Neckel's first edition was published in 1914–27.
- 6 See Judy Quinn, 'The Principles of Textual Criticism and the Interpretation of Old Norse Texts Derived from Oral Tradition', in *The Hyperborean Muse: Studies in the Transmission and Reception of Old Norse Literature*, ed. Judy Quinn and Maria Adele Cipolla (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming 2015). Quinn reviews and discusses the principles of textual criticism and editorial practices concerning Old Norse texts, especially the viability of stemmatics to explain the variability of texts derived from oral traditions, such as *Völuspá*.

that the editing process becomes less visible, or even lost.⁷ In an analogy with the learning of mathematics, Matthew Driscoll has argued that editors should be required to ‘show their workings’, that is, show the process by which they arrive at a certain result.⁸ This article will discuss some of these ‘workings’ in connection to three lines in *Völuspá* in R, and especially the editorial decisions which have been influential in the modern transmission of the poem. As my examples will show, scribal orthography, corrections and abbreviations force even the least interventionist editor to choose between possible readings, which may in turn also be considered to be variants.

In discussing how certain scribal practices force editorial intervention upon the text, this article will also consider editorial practices which might allow the reader to engage both with the text and the editorial decisions that bring it about. As will be seen, the textual ambiguity that arises from scribal practices of orthography or abbreviation makes it difficult to present a ‘scribal version’ in A. G. Rigg’s sense, that is, ‘a text that was ‘real’ for at least one person, its scribe’.⁹ Confronting a text on the manuscript page that requires interpretation before it can become a text on the printed page, all editors (except perhaps those of diplomatic editions) have to choose the text; their choice might not correspond to that which was real for the scribe. Despite their shortcomings, scribal versions can allow the reader to take the editor’s choices into account. Bugge’s edition, for example, presents a reconstructed text followed by the scribal texts in R

- 7 Judy Quinn has reviewed practices that had hitherto influenced the editing of the *Poetic Edda*, especially *Völuspá*. She discusses how editors, aiming at the reconstruction of an archetype, were engaged in a process of ‘poetic recreation’. This process, however, remains hidden to the reader as the final text is presented on the page with ‘little or no indication of the extent of editorial reconstruction and the suppression of variation that has taken place’. Quinn, ‘Editing the Edda’, 74. See also Judy Quinn, ‘*Völuspá* and the Composition of Eddic Verse’, in *Atti del 120 Congresso internazionale di studi sull’alto Medioevo*, ed. Teresa Pàroli et al. (Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro Studi, 1990), 303–20.
- 8 Matthew Driscoll, ‘The Words on the Page: Thoughts on Philology, Old and New’, in *Creating the Medieval Saga: Versions, Variability and Editorial Interpretations of Old Norse Saga Literature*, ed. Judy Quinn and Emily Lethbridge (Copenhagen: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2010), 103.
- 9 A. G. Rigg, introduction to *Editing Medieval Texts: English, French and Latin Written in England. Papers given at the Twelfth Annual Conference on Editorial Problems, University of Toronto 5–6 November 1976*, ed. A. G. Rigg (New York: Garland, 1977), 6.

and H, as well as variant readings in the *Prose Edda*.¹⁰ Bugge's notes and commentary concentrate on the reconstructed text and give much less attention to the scribal texts that follow it – an ideal edition would also have to engage with the texts individually.¹¹

The study of variant readings and versions, and of the editorial decisions about such variants and versions, may allow us to understand the history of the medieval transmission of *Völuspá* and to reflect upon the context and nature of variation. Daniel Wakelin, for instance, discusses the difficulty of distinguishing variance from correction; he argues that 'in their correcting ... we can hear people thinking'.¹² To bring scribal corrections to light allows us to engage with the culture, literature, and language of the scribes, revisers and readers. By analysing the uncertainties generated by scribal orthography, corrections and abbreviations, we are also reminded of the instability of medieval texts and the elusiveness of editorial decisions.

Himinnjódyr – himinjódyrr

Due to orthographical ambiguity regarding the indication of long and short vowels in the manuscript, the line *um himinjódyr* or *um himinjódyrr* in stanza 5 of *Völuspá* (f. 1r, l. 10) can be read either way. In the manuscript, the *y* has

- 10 *Norræn fornkvæði*, ed. Bugge, 1–11 (reconstructed text), 12–18 (R), 19–26 (H), 26–33 (*Prose Edda*). The most recent edition of *Völuspá* in *Eddukvæði*, ed. Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason, 2 vols. (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 2014), 1:292 presents the texts in R followed by that in H, although the text in R actually incorporates readings from H.
- 11 In R and H, *Völuspá* stands as a whole poem but the stanzas of *Völuspá* quoted in the *Prose Edda* are themselves the result of an editing process which consisted of harvesting the poem in order to create a coherent narrative, namely *Gylfaginning*. Each of these versions has their individual integrity and substance; editions wishing to convey each of them fully and integrally would need to integrate commentary considering their immediate literary context and also the scribal practices which influence our reading of them. See, for instance, Herschend, 'Codex Regius 2365 4to'.
- 12 Daniel Wakelin, *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft: English Manuscripts 1375–1510* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 307. See also Maja Bäckvall, 'Skriva fel och läsa rätt? Eddiska dikter i Uppsalaeddan ur ett avsändaroch mottagarperspektiv'. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Uppsala University, 2013. Bäckvall shows that the study of so-called 'scribal errors' more often than not illuminates, rather than obfuscates, the text.

a superscript dot: *himin iódyr*. This superscript dot does not designate the quantity of the vowel; the scribe uses it inconsistently in GKS 2365 4to, for example, in f. 1r: *Nýi* (l. 22), *nyraþr* (l. 26) and *ýngvi* (l. 32).¹³ The first and second elements of *himinjódyr* and *himinjódyrr*, *himinn* [sky, heaven] and *jór* [horse], do not present a problem. The third element can be understood as *dyrr* [doors] or *dýr* [beast]. The compound *jódyr* [horse-beast], which can be read in the line both as singular or plural, has parallels in prose in *bjarn-dýr* [bear-beast, for a bear] and perhaps *flugdýr* [flying-beast, for a bird].¹⁴ A literal translation of the two versions of the word would be, respectively, ‘heaven-horse-doors’ and ‘heaven-horse-beasts’, and may be interpreted as ‘doors of the celestial horses’ and ‘celestial horses’.

The first part of the stanza reads ‘Sol varp svNan // siNi mana // hendi iNi hogri // vm himin iodyr.’,¹⁵ and can be interpreted in at least the following ways:

Sól varp sunnan
sinni mána
hendi inni hægri
um himinjódyr.

[The sun, companion of the moon, threw from the south its right arm around the celestial horses.]

or

Sól varp sunnan
sinni mána
hendi inni hægri
um himinjódyr.

- 13 See Hreinn Benediktsson, *Early Icelandic Script: As Illustrated in Vernacular Texts from the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Reykjavík: Manuscript Institute of Iceland, 1965), 50–51, 60–61 and *Håndskriftet nr. 2365 4to gl. kgl. samling på det store Kgl. bibliotek i København: Codex Regius af den ældre Edda i fototypisk og diplomatisk gengivelse*, ed. Ludvig F. A. Wimmer and Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen: Møller, 1891), xxxi.
- 14 Johan Fritzner, *Ordbog over det gamle norske sprog*, 3 vols. (Oslo: Norske forlagsforening 1883–96), with additional vol. 4: Finn Hødnebo, *Rettelser og tilleg* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1972), s.v. *bjarn-dýr* and *flugdýr*.
- 15 The line breaks are not indicated in the manuscript. All transcriptions of *Völuspá* from R are my own but I have adopted the stanza numbers given in Neckel and Kuhn’s edition. All other eddic poems are quoted from Neckel and Kuhn’s edition.

[The sun threw¹⁶ the moon from the south with its right arm across the doors of the celestial horses.]

In medieval Icelandic literature, namely in all medieval versions of *Gylfaginning*, celestial horses appear in cosmological traditions about the establishment of days and nights and the reckoning of time, with echoes from eddic poems such as *Vafþrúðnismál* (stanzas 22–25) and *Grímnismál* (stanzas 37–39).¹⁷

It is said in *Gylfaginning* that Óðinn gave two horses and carriages to Nótt (the personification of the night) and her son, Dagr (the personification of the day), and put them in the sky to go around the earth. Nótt rides the horse Hrímfaxi and Dagr rides Skinfaxi. There then follows in *Gylfaginning* the myth of Máni (moon) and Sól (sun) who were set in the sky by the gods: Sól is to ride the horses which draw the chariot of the sun and Máni guides the course of the moon and controls its phases.¹⁸ That the myths as narrated in *Gylfaginning* overlap and perhaps are even irreconcilable at some points shows that a variety of cosmological traditions existed and were transmitted in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Iceland. Some of the traditions about celestial horses or horses of the sun and the moon may have been ancient, as the famous horse-drawn Bronze Age sun-chariot of Trundholm suggests.¹⁹ One might assume that the possibility that *himinjódyr/himinjódyrr* preserved ancient traditions would encourage scholars to give special attention to these enigmatic celestial horses, but that has not been the case.

16 The verb 'throw' in the first translation may be understood as the motion of the sun's rays, whereas in the second translation, 'throw' may denote a hurling, urging motion. All translations are my own, except when stated otherwise.

17 *Edda*, ed. Neckel and Kuhn, 47–48, 63.

18 For the text of *Gylfaginning* in *Codex Regius*, see *Gylfaginning: Texte, Übersetzung, Kommentar*, ed. Gottfried Lorenz (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984), 181, 186 and *Edda: Gylfaginning*, ed. Anthony Faulkes (London: University College London, 1988), 13–14. In *Codex Upsaliensis*, see *Snorre Sturlasons Edda: Uppsalahandskriften DG 11*, ed. Anders Grape et al., 2 vols. (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1962–77), 2:7. In *Codex Wormianus*, see *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar: Codex Wormianus AM 242 fol.*, ed. Finnur Jónsson et al. (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1924), 14–15.

19 *Die Lieder der Edda*, ed. Hugo Gering and Barend Sijmons, 3 vols. (Halle: Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1888–31), 3.1 (*Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda*):xvii. The artefact was found in Trundholm, Denmark, in 1902; it is a bronze wheeled statue of a horse pulling a disk which is commonly interpreted as the sun.

During its modern scholarly transmission, *himinjóðýr* or *himinjóðýrr* was emended to *himinjóðurr* [edge of the sky];²⁰ the manuscript text was relegated to the footnotes of variant readings and has not received much attention. Except for Gísli Sigurðsson's edition with Modern Icelandic spelling, all academic editions of the poem adopt the emendation.²¹ The history of this scholarly transmission shows us that the emended reading has thrown into obscurity a variety of intriguing possibilities raised by the reading in R, possibilities which add to the study of medieval mythological traditions, as well as reminding us of the inherent instability of the text.

The first printed edition of the entire *Völuspá*, edited by Peder Hansen Resen and printed together with his *Edda Islandorum* and *Hávamál* in 1665,²² was mainly based on R, but Resen's *Völuspá* was also based on the works of Stefán Ólafsson and Guðmundur Andrússon.²³ The Old Icelandic text contained the line *um Himen Jóðyr*,²⁴ and in the Latin translation, provided by Stefán Ólafsson, the first part of stanza 5 is thus rendered:

- 20 As will be seen in what follows, the emendation seems to have been inspired by the text in H.
- 21 *Eddukvæði*, ed. Gísli Sigurðsson (Reykjavík: Mál og menning, 1998), 4; the adopted text is *himinjóðýr*: 'himinjóðýr: Nótt og Dagur eru dregin frá austri til vesturs um himinn af tveimur hestum, Hrímfaxa og Skinfaxa. Sólin skín í suðri og snýr því hægri hlið að jörðinni. Þannig varpar hún geislum sínum með hægri hendi yfir hestana' [himinjóðýr: Nótt and Dagur are drawn from east to west across the sky by two horses, Hrímfaxi and Skinfaxi. The sun shines in the south and thus turns its right side to the earth. From there, it casts its rays with the right hand over the horses]. The recent Íslenzk fornrit edition of *Völuspá* adopts the reading 'himinjóðr' as a *leiðrétting* (emendation) of 'himiniodyr'; *Völuspá in Eddukvæði*, ed. Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason, 1:292.
- 22 Peder Hansen Resen's *Völuspá* was printed together with his *Edda Islandorum* (the *Prose Edda* preceded by a preface) and *Hávamál*. Although bound together, these editions are separately foliated (and, in some copies, have separate title pages and dedications), and in different copies of Resen's book they are assembled in different orders. I will quote from the version available online from Early European Books, eeb.chadwyck.com, which can also be downloaded as a searchable pdf, and will refer to the individual works (including the preface) so that the quoted passages can be found in any copy of the book. A facsimile edition of Resen's edition, with an introduction by Anthony Faulkes, is found in *Two Versions of Snorra Edda From the 17th Century*, 2 vols. (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, 1977–79), vol. 2.
- 23 Faulkes, *Two Versions*, 2:79–84. Resen's introduction to the *Prose Edda* also mentions his sources for his edition of *Völuspá*; see *Præfatío ad Lectorem benevolum & candidum de Eddæ editione*, in *Edda Islandorum*, ed. Peder Hansen Resen (Copenhagen: typis. Henrici. Gödiani, 1665), sig. h3r–v.
- 24 *Völuspá epter Sæmundar Eddu*, in *Edda Islandorum*, ed. Peder Hansen Resen (Copenhagen: typis. Henrici. Gödiani, 1665), sig. Ar.

Sol conjiciebat ex meridie suâ, lunam
Dexterâ, trans coelestis equi fores.²⁵

[From the south the sun drove forth the moon with its right hand through the gates of the heavenly horse.]

In Stefán Ólafsson's note to the translation, it can be inferred that the myths in *Gylfaginning* underlay his interpretation of the verses, as Hrímfaxi is described as Night's horse. He also observes that 'alii pro Himin Jódýr legant Himin Jaðar quod cæli marginem denotat' [in place of *Himin Jódýr* some read *Himin Jaðar* which has the sense of 'boundary of the sky'], and adds that this reading cannot be preferred over the text of the *codex vetustissimus* (which must therefore be R, as he derives most of his text from it). Although he does not ascribe the choice of *himinjaðar* to anybody in particular, he may have seen it in Guðmundur Andrússon's notes (AM 165 8vo), which were used elsewhere in Resen's edition or, as Anthony Faulkes suggests, in a copy of R sent to S. J. Stephanius.²⁶ Except for H, there is no other medieval manuscript that seems to have been known and in circulation among the antiquarians, from which the reading *himinjaðarr* could have been derived. H has the reading *of jöður* [across/around the edge] and Guðmundur Andrússon used H for his transcriptions and notes. *Himinjaðarr* is written in a margin of AM 165 8vo and it is possible that it is a derivation from the verses in R and H, very much in the same fashion that Sophus Bugge derived *himinjöðurr* [edge of the sky] two hundred years later.

Rask's edition from 1818 had *á himin jódýr*²⁷ while the 1828 edition of Guðmundur Magnússon and others adopted *um himin–iodýr* with a comment on the other possible reading:

Cum nempe lectionem *Iódýr* in casu dubio præferas. Si legas *Iódyr*, sensus verbi penitus mutabitur, tunc enim sermo foret de coeli

²⁵ *Völuspá*, in *Edda Islandorum*, ed. Resen, sig. A3v. Faulkes, *Two Versions*, 2:79–84 explains the relations between the transcription of *Völuspá*, its Latin translation and the textual notes. As will be seen in the following argument, the Latin translation did not always follow the transcribed text.

²⁶ Faulkes, *Two Versions*, 2:77–78, 83.

²⁷ *Edda Sæmundar hins Fróða: Collectio carminum veterum scaldorum Saemundiana dicta*, ed. Rasmus Rask (Stockholm: typis. Elmenianis, 1818), 1.

portis a Sole apprehensis, alias autem de eqvis solarem currum trahentibus. Boreales alias videntur *cæli* vel *solis portas* posuisse in hujus domicilio *Gladshheim*, vel signo Zodiaci quod arietum appellamus.²⁸

[In case of doubt, the reading *iódýr* is certainly preferred. If one reads *iódyr*, the meaning of the word changes deeply; then, in fact, the expression would be ‘the doors of the sky grasped by the sun’, instead of ‘the horses pull the sun carriage’. The Northern people once perceived that *the sky* or *the sun’s doors* had its domicile in *Glaðsheimr*, or what we call Aries in the Zodiac.]

In his influential 1867 edition, Bugge adopted the form *himinjódyr* in both the transcription of the R text and in the ‘Normert tekst’ [Normalised text]. Crucially, however, he observed in a footnote:

himinjódyr (Himmelstedøren), saa synes Ordet at have været forstaat af de gamle Afskrivere, og saaledes læser Br. Snorrason *himinjódyr* (Himmelstededyrene) ... Jeg formoder *himinjöður* af *jöður* d. S. S. *Jaðarr* = oldeng. *Eodor* (som *jöfurr* = oldeng. Eofor, fjöturr = oldeng. *Feotor*).²⁹

[*himinjódyr* (sky–horse–doors) so the word seems to have been understood by the old scribes, and Br. Snorrason reads thus: *himinjódyr* (sky–horse–beasts) ... I expect *himinjöður* from *jöður*, the same as *jaðarr* = Old English *eodor* (as *jöfurr* = Old English *eofor*, *fjöturr* = Old English *feotor*).]

Bugge added that paper manuscripts had, by guesswork (*efter Gjetning*), *himinjaðar*.³⁰ He cites the seventeenth-century transcriptions by Guðmundur Andrésón (AM 165 8vo mentioned above) and Björn Jónsson of Skarðsá (Stockholm Papp. fol. 38), both of whom used H for their text

28 *Edda Sæmundar hinns fróða: Edda rhythmica seu antiquior vulgo Sæmundina dicta*, ed. Guðmundur Magnússon et al., 3 vols. (Copenhagen: sumtibus Legati Magnæani et Gyldendalii, 1787–1828), 3:25.

29 *Norræn fornkvæði*, ed. Bugge, 1–2.

30 *Ibid.*, 388.

of *Völuspá*.³¹ The implication is that *himinjadarr* was not a manuscript witness, but something which was created (possibly inspired by the text in H) there and then, as there is no strong evidence that other medieval manuscripts were extant at the time. This also recalls the editorial decisions to which the poem has been subjected, from the seventeenth century to the present.

Johan Fritzner's dictionary adopted Bugge's emendation and did not provide entries for the two possible manuscript readings.³² Richard Cleasby and Guðbrandur Vigfússon's *An Icelandic-English Dictionary* adopted Bugge's *himinjöðurr* and dismissed the manuscript's texts:

himin-jöðurr, m. the corner, brim (*jadarr*, *jöðurr*) of heaven, = *himin-skaut*, *Vsp.* 5 (ἀπ- λει.) This, no doubt, is the correct form, not *himin-jó-dýr* (heaven-horse-beasts) or *himin-jó-dur* (heaven-horse-doors).³³

The manuscript text went from being rejected to being denounced. Gering and Sijmons's *Kommentar* rejected *himen-jó-dýr* and *himen-jó-dyrr* for being 'unmöglich' [impossible], although Gering's *Wörterbuch*, published earlier, provided entries for both 'himen-jó-dyrr (f. pl.) tür der himmelsrosse' [doors of the horses of the sky] and 'himen-jöþorr (m.) himmelskante, himmelsrand' [edge of the sky, border of the sky].³⁴

31 Ibid., lix/lxiii. Faulkes, *Two Versions*, 2:78. See also *Lieder der Edda*, ed. Gering and Sijmons, 3:1:8.

32 Fritzner, *Ordbog over det gamle norske sprog*, s.v. *himinjöðurr*: '*himinjöðurr*, m. Himmelrand = *himinjadarr*' [*himinjöðurr*, m. edge of the sky = *himinjadarr*].

33 Richard Cleasby and Guðbrand Vigfússon, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary supplemented by William Craigie* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957), s.v. *himin-jöðurr*.

34 *Die Lieder der Edda*, ed. Gering and Sijmons, 3:1:8; Hugo Gering, *Vollständiges Wörterbuch zu den Liedern der Edda* (Halle: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1903), s.v. *himen-jó-dyrr* and *himen-jöþorr*. R.C. Boer, Ferdinand Detter and Richard Heinzel adopted Bugge's emendation, while Karl Müllenhoff considered the whole stanza an interpolation and did not include it in his edition of the poem. See *Die Edda*, ed. R. C. Boer, 2 vols. (Haarlem: Willink & Zoon, 1922), 2:5; *Sæmundar Edda*, ed. Ferdinand Detter and Richard Heinzel (Leipzig: Wigand, 1903), 13; *Deutsche Altertumskunde V.I Ueber die Völuspá*, ed. Karl Müllenhoff, 5 vols. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1883–91), 5:1:92–93. Anne Holtsmark remarks that most scholars adopt *himinjöður*, which she also adopts, but she analyses neither this emendation nor the discarded manuscript text, see *Forelesninger over Völuspá hösten 1949* ([Oslo]: Universitets studentkontor, 1949), 8.

In his influential edition, Sigurður Nordal explains how the manuscript text came to be in R:

Á aldur 5. v. bendi orðmyndin *jöður*, sem ritari K hafi ekki skilið og gert úr vitleysuna *jódýr*.³⁵

[The word form *jöður* indicates the age of stanza 5 as the scribe of K [that is, R] did not understand it and made out of it the nonsensical *jódýr*.]

In the same vein, *Lexicon Poeticum* rejected the ‘meaningless’ manuscript readings and only provided an entry for the emended text:

himinjöðurr, m, himmelrand, horisont, Vsp 5; således er ordet ganske sikkert at opfatte (*ioður* H, *iodyr* R, hvilken skrivemåde rimeligvis beror på, at i skriverens tid var formen *jöðurr* gået af brug; jaðarr var den alm. form.; hvis ikke *u* her rent tilfældig er erstattet af *y*; *jódýr* eller *jódyrr* er meningsløst).³⁶

[*himinjöðurr*, m., sky-edge, horizon, Vsp 5.; the word is quite certainly to be understood thus (*ioður* H, *iodyr* R, which is the most likely spelling due to the fact that, at the time the scribe was writing, the form *jöðurr* had gone out of use; *jaðarr* was the usual form; unless *u* here is purely accidental in place of *y*; *jódýr* or *jódyrr* are meaningless).]

Once widely accepted, the emended text was made canonical by textual practice. Editions which are more likely to be used in academic research – Neckel and Kuhn’s and Jón Helgason’s editions – have the line *um himiniöður* with textual notes which inform the reader that *himin-* is ‘omitted’ in H and thus imply that the element *himin-* was originally in the H version of the poem (as stated previously, the line in H reads of *jöður*).³⁷ While Ursula Dronke does not follow the formula ‘omitted in H’, it is

35 *Völuspá*, ed. Nordal, 56.

36 Sveinbjörn Egilsson and Finnur Jónsson, *Lexicon poeticum antiquæ linguæ septentrionalis: Ordbog over det norsk-islandske skjaldesprog*, 2nd edn. (Copenhagen: Lyng & Søn, 1931).

37 Quinn, ‘Editing the *Edda*’, 79; *Edda*, ed. Neckel and Kuhn, 2; *Eddadigte*, vol. 1, *Völuspá. Hávamál*, ed. Jón Helgason, 2nd edn. (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1955), 2.

remarkable that she does not discuss the possible meanings of *himinjóðýr* and *himinjóðýrr*, even though she presents a complex set of ‘scribal slips’ and ‘less certain scribal slips’ in R and even ‘scribal errors’ in the archetypical *R II.³⁸

Despite this general acceptance, the meaning of *himinjóðurr* in the line remains elusive.³⁹ The ‘edge of the sky’ is believed to be the horizon; the most commonly cited interpretation was put forward by Julius Hoffory in 1889. Hoffory suggested that the lines describe the midnight sun, evoking the path of the sun during the celestial disorder which is being described at this point in the poem.⁴⁰ Dronke interprets the lines in the light of *Vafþrúðnismál* 23 and the name Mundilfæri, who is named in this stanza as father of Sun and Moon. The form *Mundilföri*, she argues, is similar to *möndull* [handle for turning a handmill]; as *möndull* seems to be related to the Sanskrit *manthati* [to stir, turn round] and *manthá* [stirring spoon], she suggests that the lines are connected ‘to the archaic concept of the cosmic mill, by which the heavens turn on the world pillar, regulating seasons and time’.⁴¹

It is not the objective of this article to discuss the literary interpretations of these lines in *Völuspá*. Even if they may plausibly or ingeniously explain the emended lines, they are only indirectly related to the text in R. The brief history analysed here shows that the scholarly transmission of the verses has driven us away from the scribal recording of the text. One may adopt *himinjóðýr* and read the lines in the light of the myth of Nótt and Dagr, Hrímfaxi and Skinfaxi as narrated in *Gylfaginning*, as did the seventeenth-century editors and Gísli Sigurðsson. On the other hand, the meaning of *himinjóðýrr*, if such a reading is adopted, may be a reference to a diverse aspect of the myth, as there is no mention elsewhere of the doors of the celestial horses. Crucially, these lines are the most unambiguous mention of celestial horses in eddic poetry, as *Vafþrúðnismál* 22–25 and *Grímnismál* 37–39, on which parts of the myths of the celestial horses in

38 *The Poetic Edda*, ed. and trans. Ursula Dronke, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 2:65–88.

39 Finnur Jónsson admits that the word is obscure; he explains it as ‘om himlens rand (o: horisonten)’ [around the edge of the sky, the horizon], see *De gamle Eddadigte*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen: Gad, 1932), 3.

40 Julius Hoffory, *Eddastudien* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1889), 83–5.

41 *Poetic Edda*, ed. and trans. Dronke, 2:116.

Gylfaginning were based, do not explicitly mention them. Could *Völuspá* 5 be the source for the celestial horses cited in *Gylfaginning*? As noted above, the myths in *Gylfaginning* overlap and are irreconcilable at some points; these contradictions, however, are not in *Vafþrúðnismál*, which was presumably the source for parts of the narratives in *Gylfaginning*. Accordingly, the unaltered lines throw a different light not only on the mythological traditions recorded in R, but also on the composition of *Gylfaginning*.

Er mæR sýdyz – er mér sýndiz

In modern editions based on R, stanza 32 of *Völuspá* (f. 2r, ll. 4–6), which deals with the killing of Baldr by the mistletoe hurled by Höðr, appears in this way:

Uarð af þeim meiði
 er mæR syndiz
 harmflæg hettlig
 haþr nam sciota.
 baldrs broðir uar
 of boriN snemma
 sa nam oþins sonr
 ein nettr uega.

[From that plant, which seemed delicate, came a sorrowful shaft: Höðr did fling (it). The brother of Baldr was born early. He, Óðinn's son, one night old, did slay.]

In the second line, the word *mæR* is interpreted as an uncommon form of the adjective *mjór* 'thin, slender, delicate'.⁴² However, as the word is written in R with the letter *m* and the abbreviation sign for *er*, a superscript open loop,⁴³ it can therefore be interpreted as *mér*, the first-person sin-

42 Adolf Noreen, *Altisländische und altnorwegische Grammatik* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1923), §§ 430, 437, 295, 298–89. Noreen does not give examples but they can be found in Sophus Bugge, 'Sjældne ord i norrøn skaldskab', *Tidskrift for philologi og pædagogik* 6 (1865): 94–97.

43 See, for example, the diplomatic edition in *Konungsbók Eddukvaða: Codex Regius*, ed. Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson et al. (Reykjavík: Lögberg, 2001), 96.

gular personal pronoun, dative case. In this case, the line could read: ‘as it seemed to me’, ‘which appeared to me’, or ‘when it appeared to me’, the first person being the *völva* who is narrating the events in the poem.

The reading is particularly tricky because the reflexive verb *sýndiz* (which has been corrected from the present tense form, *sýniz*, through a superscript *d* over the *i*) allows both readings: ‘seemed/appeared to me’ and ‘seemed delicate’. The orthographical evidence of the manuscript is also not unambiguous. Most probably, the scribe would have written the adjective *mær* with a hooked *e*. By comparison, the word *mær* ‘maid’ is only once written with a hooked-and-slashed *o* (*Hávamál* 96), but on the whole, the scribe’s use of hooked *e* to represent *æ* is fairly consistent.⁴⁴ On the other hand, the adjective *mjór*, spelt *míor*, was used to describe the mistletoe just some lines before in stanza 31, and is also used in *Skírnismál* 23 and 25, spelt *mjófan* (normalised spelling: *mjóvan*). The uncommon form *mær* was not used at the time of the writing of R and is not found anywhere in the manuscript.

Resen’s edition had *mønnum* [to men] in place of *mér* [to me] in the main text (*mier* appears in the textual apparatus), but the Latin translation had *mihi* [to me].⁴⁵ Rask’s edition from 1818 adopted *mjór* (noting that R had *mier*) and the edition of Guðmundur Magnússon and others from 1828 had *mér*.⁴⁶ Bugge’s reconstructed poem from his 1867 edition also had *mér*, a reading that he had previously defended in an article on the basis of the manuscript’s orthography, although acknowledging his preference for the reading *mjór*.⁴⁷ Later, Bugge changed his mind because of the following

44 See Lindblad, *Studier i Codex Regius av Äldre Eddan*, 107–11, 141–42; *Håndskriftet nr. 2365 4to*, ed. Jónsson and Wimmer, xxviii. It may also be noted that the abbreviation for *mær* ‘maid’ was used on only four occasions when its contextual meaning could not be confusing. In *Skírnismál* 25 the abbreviated form of *mær* appears in a refrain in which all words are abbreviated; in *Helgakviða Hundingsbana II* 9 in direct reference to Sigrún, ‘nú er sagt, mær’ [Now it is said, girl]; in *Helgakviða Hundingsbana II* 17 in ‘Högnæ mær’ [Högni’s girl], an expression which also appears unabbreviated in stanza 13; and in *Gripisspá* 28 in direct reference to Brynhildr in the previous stanza, ‘þótt mær síe fögr aliti’ [although the girl be of beautiful appearance].

45 *Völuspá*, in *Edda Islandorum*, ed. Resen, sig. A2r, B2r. For a detailed explanation of the disparities between the Old Icelandic transcription of the poem and its Latin translation, see Faulkes, *Two Versions*, 2:77, 90.

46 *Edda Sæmundar*, ed. Rask, 6. *Edda Sæmundar*, ed. Guðmundur Magnússon et al., 3:39.

47 *Norran fornkvæði*, ed. Bugge, 6; Bugge, ‘Sjældne Ord’, 96–7.

prose passages in Saxo Grammaticus's *Gesta Danorum* and in *Gautreks saga*:⁴⁸

Gesta Danorum

Ita digestis in cuneum catervis, ipse post bellatorum terga consistens ac folliculo, quem cervici impensum habebat, ballistam extrahens, **quae primum exilis visa**, mox cornu tensiore prominuit, denos nervo calamos adaptavit, qui vegetiore iactu pariter in hostem detorti totidem numero vulnera confixerunt.⁴⁹

[After he [an old man, most probably Óðinn] had distributed his companies into this wedge formation, he took up his stance behind the warriors' back and, drawing out from a small bag hung round his neck a crossbow, **which appeared thin at one end** but then projected in an extensive arc, he fitted ten shafts to its cord and, briskly shooting them all at once, gave the enemy as many wounds.]

Gautreks saga

Þá fèkk Hrosshársgrani geir í hönd honum, ok segir at þat **mundi sýnast reirsproti**.⁵⁰

[Then Hrosshárs-Grani put the spear into his [Starkarðr's] hand and says **that it would seem to be a reed** [i.e., it looked as if it were a reed].]

Since then, all editors of *Völuspá* have adopted the reading *er mār sýndiz* and editorial practice has transferred the uncertainty of this reading to the textual notes.⁵¹ Neckel and Kuhn give variant readings from other

48 Sophus Bugge, *Studier over de nordiske gude- og heltesagns oprindelse*, 2 vols. (Oslo: Cammermeyer, 1881–89), 1:47.

49 *Saxonis gesta danorum*, ed. Jørgen Olrik et al., 2 vols. (Copenhagen: Levin & Munksgaard, 1931–57), 1:31; translation from *Saxo Grammaticus: The History of the Danes Books I–IX*, ed. Hilda Ellis Davidson, trans. Peter Fisher (Bury St Edmunds: St Edmundsbury Press, 1998), 31.

50 *Gautreks saga*, in *Fornaldarsögur Norðrlanda*, ed. Carl Christian Rafn, 3 vols. (Copenhagen: n.p., 1829–30), 3:33. The earliest fragment of the saga is a single leaf from ca. 1400, and the earliest manuscript containing complete saga, AM 152 fol., is dated to ca. 1500–25.

51 Bugge's arguments were later reproduced by many commentators on the poem; for instance, *Sæmundar Edda*, ed. Detter and Heinzel, 2:44–45; *Die Lieder der Edda*, ed. Gering and Sijmons, 3.1:45.

modern editions but include the reading *mer* in R.⁵² Both Jón Helgason and Dronke note that the reading *mér* is also possible on the grounds of the manuscript's evidence, but Dronke only refers to the 'parallel forms *mær/miór*' in her commentary. Jón Helgason states that elsewhere in R the scribe abbreviated *mær* with the *er* abbreviation sign, but fails to clarify that the *mær* in question is the noun 'maid' and not the uncommon form of the adjective *mjór*.⁵³

Sigurður Nordal argues that *er mær sýndiz* refers to the story of Loki's treachery as narrated in *Gylfaginning*.⁵⁴ He explains that the passage in *Gautreks saga*, quoted by Bugge, is related to tales of Óðinn putting a reed into a man's hand which turns out to be a spear; a similar story is found in *Styrbjarnar þáttur* in *Flateyjarbók* (GKS 1005 fol.).⁵⁵ The implication is that Höðr was also misled into believing that the mistletoe, which seemed slender and flexible, would not harm Baldr. However, in the light of *Gylfaginning* at least, Nordal's suggestion is unfortunate. In *Gylfaginning*, Baldr is said not to be hurt by anything in the world, and it is written that, far from choosing harmless objects to throw at Baldr, the gods took their fun in hurling all sorts of harmful objects at him.⁵⁶ It could hardly have been the apparent fragility of the object which fooled Höðr, since the gods did not choose their projectiles for their innocuousness.

The reading *er mér sýndiz* [seemed/appeared to me] in stanza 32 is very fitting here. The story of Baldr starts in stanza 31, in which the *völva* says in direct speech: *Ek sá Baldri // blöðgum tivur* 'I saw Baldr, the bloody god'.⁵⁷ Then again, the *mér/mær* conundrum has no clear-cut solution and

52 *Edda*, ed. Neckel and Kuhn, 8.

53 *Eddadigte*, ed. Helgason, 8; *Poetic Edda*, ed. and trans. Dronke, 1:14, 139.

54 *Völuspá*, ed. Nordal, 101. *Gylfaginning*, ed. Lorenz, 548–9; *Edda: Gylfaginning*, ed. Faulkes, 45–46; *Snorre Sturlassons Edda*, ed. Grape et al., II, 30–2; *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar*, ed. Finnur Jónsson et al., 42–43.

55 *Völuspá*, ed. Nordal, 101–02; *Flateyjarbók*, ed. Sigurður Nordal et al., 4 vols. (Akranes: Flateyjarútgefán, 1944–45), 2:148–49. *Flateyjarbók* is dated to ca. 1387–94 and ca. 1475–1500. Nordal does not analyse the verse's ambiguity, but only comments that Bugge had wanted to write *mér*. The English translation of Nordal's book mistakenly implies that Nordal considered *mér* to be an emendation to the text: 'Bugge wanted at first to emend to *mér* ... but later abandoned this', see *Völuspá*, ed. Sigurður Nordal, trans. by B. S. Benedikz and John McKinnell (Durham: Durham and St. Andrews Medieval Texts, 1980), 67.

56 See references to *Gylfaginning* and the *Prose Edda* in fn. 55.

57 *Tivurr* (m.) 'god' can also be interpreted as 'sacrifice'.

it is inevitable that in paper editions only the editor's choice can make it into the main text; but there should be space in such editions to highlight the ambiguities of the text, especially when the edition is accompanied by a commentary. Bugge's explanation for his choice of the reading *er mǫr sýndiz* was tendentious and even if it can be preferred on metrical or stylistic grounds,⁵⁸ the text written by the scribe of R is our only witness of a medieval version of *Völuspá* – for this reason alone it is worth concentrating our efforts on analysing all the possibilities that the orthographic and linguistic evidence support.

Vörðr – váða – vá

In R, the seventh line of stanza 33 (f. 2r, l. 7) has undergone a series of corrections by one or more scribes, but the text without the scribal corrections reads as follows:

Þo hann ęva hendr
 ne hafuþ kembþi
 aþr a bal vm bar
 baldrs andscota.
 en friG um gret
 ifensalom
 uorþr val hallar
 vituð er enn eða hvat.

[He did not wash his hands, nor comb his head, before he bore Baldr's enemy to the pyre. But Frigg cried in Fensalir. Guardian of Valhöll. Do you know yet or what?]

The seventh line, *vörðr Valhallar* [guardian of Valhöll], may refer to him who bears Baldr's enemy to the funeral pyre, the same 'he' who in stanza 32 is called Óðinn's son, Baldr's brother, and who was born to avenge

58 For instance, Paul Bibire (pers. comm.) says that the pronoun *mér* would probably not have the necessary full stress to carry the alliteration; on the grounds of the voice of the passage, Anatoly Liberman, 'Some Controversial Aspects of the Myth of Baldr', *alvissmál* 11 (2004): 29, says about the reading *mér*: 'This reading is arguably the worst and the least reliable: who would expect a polite disclaimer in such a passage?.'

Baldr when one night old. This brother of Baldr is not named in *Völuspá* or in *Baldrs draumar*, although scholars frequently connect him to Váli on the basis of *Gylfaginning* and, accordingly, emend *Baldrs draumar* 11 by supplying his name in the first line – *Rindr berr Vála / í vestrslóm* [Rindr bears Váli in the west hall].⁵⁹ *Vörðr Valhallar* may also refer to the goddess Frigg, and although neither Frigg nor Baldr’s avenger appear in the sources as guardian of, or in connection with, Valhöll, that alone should not be a reason to discard the readings.⁶⁰

Vörðr Valhallar may also refer to Óðinn, to whom the refrain *Vituð ér enn eða hvat* may be directed.⁶¹ Valhöll [Hall of the Slain] is the hall of Óðinn, who is Valföðr [Father of the Slain] in *Völuspá*. In this case, one would need to read the last line of the stanza together with the refrain and have the *völva* addressing Óðinn directly: ‘O guardian of Valhöll, do you know yet or what?’. It must be noted, however, that in other instances where this refrain appears, it is syntactically independent from the rest of the stanza; other refrains of *Völuspá* are also syntactically separated.

It seems that the line *vörðr Valhallar* also perplexed the scribe who revised the text in R and seemed to correct it to *vá Valhallar* [for Valhöll’s woe]. This correction seems to have been made by the original scribe, but could also have been made by another contemporary reviser. I shall consider it, at least for the time being, as the work of the original scribe in deference to the analysis made by other scholars of the scribal practice in the whole manuscript.⁶²

59 *Edda*, ed. Neckel and Kuhn, 275. For a discussion of the emendation, see Klaus von See et al., *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda*, 5 vols. (Heidelberg: Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1997–2010), 3:244–47. In all three medieval versions of *Gylfaginning*, there appear two characters named Váli. One is the son of Óðinn and Rindr; the other is the son of Loki. *Gylfaginning*, ed. Lorenz, 383, 447, 581; *Edda: Gylfaginning*, ed. Faulkes, 26, 30, 49; *Snorre Sturlasons Edda*, ed. Grape et al., II, 15, 32, 34, 35; *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar*, ed. Finnur Jónsson et al., 24, 28, 46. Váli is also named in *Völuspá* 30 in H and is connected to the punishment of Loki.

60 The prose passage which precedes *Grimmismál* reads ‘Óðinn ok Frigg sátu í Hliðskjálfu ok sá um heima alla’ [Óðinn and Frigg sat in Hliðskjálf and looked into all worlds]. *Edda*, eds. Neckel and Kuhn, 54. However, one would need to assume that Hliðskjálf is in Valhöll to justify the connection between Frigg and Valhöll on the basis of this prose passage.

61 The refrain, taken as second person plural, may be directed to the audience.

62 Several scholars have studied the scribal practices in R and my work is indebted to them, particularly to the following works: *Håndskriftet nr. 2365 4to*, ed. Jónsson and Wimmer; *Konungsbók Eddukvæða*: ed. Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson et al.; Stefán Karlsson,

Many corrections were made to the text of *Völuspá* in R by the original scribe. When these corrections involved the deletion and substitution of characters, he wrote a dot under the character to be deleted and the new character above the old.⁶³ Other sets of corrections were made at a later stage and involved the scraping (with a knife or similar object) of the characters which had previously been marked for deletion, and of obvious instances of dittography – they could have been made by the original scribe or a close reviser. Another set of corrections, also made by scraping, deleted characters and letters that were not previously marked for deletion. According to Jónsson and Wimmer, these indiscriminate deletions were made at a comparatively later time by an *ukyndig læser* [ignorant reader].⁶⁴ Katrín Axelsdóttir reviews this type of correction and concludes that many of them were made by a thoughtful scholar.⁶⁵

Scholars conclude that the correction of *vörðr Valhallar* to *vá Valhallar* was made by the original scribe, but, as will be seen, they did not see all the corrections made to the line.⁶⁶ The first edition of *Völuspá* did not notice or consider the scribal correction *vörðr/vá*, and adopted the original reading *vörðr Valhallar*.⁶⁷ The edition of Guðmundur Magnússon and others noted the correction and accepted it: *vá Valhallar* [for Valhöll's woe].⁶⁸ Bugge's edition also accepted it and since then stanza 33 has been edited as follows:

'Samtíningur: Íviðjur', *Gripla* 3 (1979): 227–8; Katrín Axelsdóttir, 'Brottskafnir stafir í Konungsbók Eddukvæða', *Gripla* 14 (2003): 129–43.

- 63 When deletion only was involved, the scribe would use the subscript dot for the first letter of the word. That is the case in f. 3r, l. 2 for the word *nepp*, where the subscript dot is under the character *n* only. For a thorough analysis of the scribe's method of corrections and deletions is carried out, see *Håndskriftet nr. 2365 4to*, ed. Jónsson and Wimmer, liv–lxxii.
- 64 *Håndskriftet nr. 2365 4to*, ed. Jónsson and Wimmer, lxix.
- 65 Katrín Axelsdóttir, 'Brottskafnir', 129–43. She suggests that the scribe could have been the Abbot of the Benedictine monastery of Þingeyrar (1350–57 and 1358–61).
- 66 For instance, *Håndskriftet nr. 2365 4to*, ed. Jónsson and Wimmer, 3; *Konungsbók Eddukvæða*, ed. Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson et al., 96–97; *Poetic Edda*, ed. and trans. Dronke, 1:89.
- 67 *Völuspá*, in *Edda Islandorum*, ed. Resen, sig. A2r; *Edda Sæmundar*, ed. Rask, 6. The Latin translation in Resen's edition shows that *vörðr Valhallar* was understood as a reference to Óðinn.
- 68 *Edda Sæmundar*, ed. Guðmundur Magnússon et al., 40, has the following note for the word *vá*: 'Sic jam mbr; quam tamen aliquis emendare tentans, mutavit vocem *vaurdr* in illam *vá*' [Thus now reads the MS: someone attempting to emend it, however, transformed the word *vaurdr* into the *vá* you see here].

Þó hann æva hendir
 né höfuð kembði
 áðr á bál um bar
 baldrs andskota.
 en frigg um grét
 í fensölum
 vá valhallar
 vITUÐ ér enn eða hvat.

[He did not wash his hands, nor comb his head, before he bore Baldr's enemy to the pyre. But Frigg cried in Fensalir for Valhöll's woe. Do you know yet or what?]

Bugge also noted that the scribe had marked for deletion only the characters *o*, *r* and *r* of the word *vörðr*, which is written in R in this way: *vorþr*. The scribe had signalled the deletions by subscript dots under each of these characters, and he did not mark *þ* for deletion.⁶⁹ If he had wanted to do so, he would probably have, according to his custom, written a dot below the bow of the *þ* and not below its descender.⁷⁰ However, *vap Valhallar*, that is, *váð Valhallar* [the cloths of Valhöll], does not make sense: *váð* [a piece of stuff, cloth] is used in *kennings* for 'coat of mail', with masculine personal names as basewords, as in *Högna váðir* [the cloths of Högni].⁷¹ The solution was to interpret that the scribe intended the *þ* to be deleted and thus read the word as *vá* [woe, harm, misfortune, danger].

What has not been noticed before is that a second superscript *a* had been written above the bow of *þ* and was later scraped. This character is very faint but it is still visible in the manuscript photographs.⁷² This

69 Both *Hándskriftet nr. 2365 4to*, ed. Jónsson and Wimmer, lxxv, 3 and *Poetic Edda*, ed. and trans. Dronke, 1:89 have mistakenly noted that *orþr* was marked for deletion by subscript dots. Perhaps they took the descender of the character *þ* as a dot, although the descender of *þ* has usually a tail which extends to the left.

70 By comparison, see the correction to the word *Niðafiöllum* in f. 2r, l. 11 and the deletion of *þitt* in f. 1v, l. 27.

71 Cleasby and Vigfússon, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, s.v. *váð*. *Högna váðir* appears in the poem *Hákonardrápa* by Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld. *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning*, ed. Finnur Jónsson, 4 vols. (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1912–15), 1:156 and 3:148.

72 I first used low-resolution photographs, which can be downloaded from the website of the Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum www.arnastofnun.is and Handrit.is; the subscript *a* (over the character *þ*) can even be seen on this 182KB picture of f. 2r, albeit very faintly. I then used high-resolution photographs (35.5 MB) stored on CD-ROM by

explains why the scribe did not mark *þ* for deletion by a subscript dot; he corrected the word *vorþr* (*vörðr*) to *vaþa*, that is, *váða* (genitive singular; nominative singular *váði*). A possible explanation for this correction is that after the original scribe had corrected *vörðr* to *váða*, somebody did not understand, or did not like, the reading *váði* and then scraped the second subscript *a*.⁷³ This occurrence can be compared to the scraping of the ending *-ur* in the word *íviðjur* in f. 1r, l. 5, of the accusative ending *-o* in the personal noun *Gullveigo* in f. 1v, l. 11 and of the character *-z* in *þannz* in f. 2r, l. 16.⁷⁴ Katrín Axelsdóttir argues that the latter two corrections are not necessarily mistakes made by an ignorant person; indeed, in the case of the accusative of *Gullveig*, the deletion of the ending *-o* may be understood as an attempt to adjust the text to fourteenth-century orthography.⁷⁵ Accordingly, *vá* [damage, woe, danger] may have been thought to be a better reading than *váði* [damage, woe, accident] even though both words have at first sight very similar meanings.

On the other hand, *váði* may be of special significance in the context of Baldr's death as narrated in stanzas 31–33 of *Völuspá*. The *völva* sees that Höðr hurls the mistletoe and kills Baldr, Baldr's death is the *váða Valhallar* for which Frigg cries, an accident, an unintentional killing.⁷⁶ In

the Stofnun. I thank Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson for his generosity in letting me see an even higher resolution photograph of the leaf, and confirming that there is a subscript *a*. It is almost impossible to see the subscript *a* in both Heusler and Jónsson's facsimile editions (but once it is known to be there, one can recognise its contour).

- 73 It may also be conjectured that the original scribe corrected the word for *váða* first and then changed his mind and scraped the second *a* himself. However, the fact that he did not mark the character *þ* for deletion is strong evidence against this. The scraping of characters was not the scribe's most common method for deletion; when he used it, he made superficial scrapings which left the original text still seen on the page. See *Håndskriftet nr. 2365 4to*, ed. Jónsson and Wimmer, lxvi.
- 74 The superscript *ur* cannot be seen in the manuscript now but Stefán Karlsson saw it with the help of ultraviolet light. Stefán Karlsson, 'Samtíningur', 227. *Þannz* is a contraction of *þann er* 'the one that' – the *z* is the enclitic form of the relative particle *er*.
- 75 Katrín Axelsdóttir, 'Brottskafnir', 136–37.
- 76 In Icelandic and Norwegian laws preserved in thirteenth-century manuscripts, *váði* is used for accidental deeds, thus *váða verk*, a deed which causes unintentional harm. The choice of *váði* may have caused the audience to make a mental association between Höðr's act and his lack of bad faith. See *Grágás: Islændernes lovbog i fristatens tid udgivet efter der kongelige biblioteks haandskrift*, ed. Vilhjálmur Finsen, 4 vols. (Copenhagen: Levin & Munksgaard, 1850–52) 1:166; *Norges gamle love indtil 1387*, ed. Rudolf Keyser et al., 5 vols. (Oslo: Grøndahl, 1846–95), 1:266 (*Járnsíða*), 2:59 (*Magnus Lagabøtes landslov*); *Jónsbók: The Laws of Later Iceland*, ed. and trans. Jana K. Schulman (Saarbrücken: A–Q Verlag, 2010), 54.

the narrative of *Gylfaginning*, Baldr's death is caused by the unintentional deed of the blind Höðr who by instigation of Loki hurls the mistletoe at Baldr believing that it will not harm him.⁷⁷ This version of the events is not confirmed elsewhere in the eddic poems; *Baldrs draumar* does not mention Loki in connection to Baldr's death, but in *Völuspá* the imprisonment of Loki immediately follows stanzas 31–33 and it can be read as a part of the gods' vengeance for Baldr's death.⁷⁸ In this case, the portrayal of Höðr's killing as unintentional and the subsequent punishment of Loki in stanzas 32–33 in *Völuspá* aligns its narrative with the narrative in *Gylfaginning*.

Final remarks

The history of the emendation *himinjöðurr*, the editorial choice of the reading *mær*, and the successive scribal corrections *vörðr* – *váða* – *vá* encourage us to question whether the scholarly transmission of the poem through modern editorial practices obscures, rather than illuminates, complex questions by sweeping them to the foot of the page. The difficulty of the reading *vörðr* should not prevent editors from considering it – at the point of accepting or rejecting a correction, the editor is contrasting two readings, weighing up their possibilities and coherence within the stanza and the poem as a whole. It is in the interest of scholarship that neither these editorial decisions, nor the full textual evidence upon which they are based, are hidden from the reader. The choice between *mær* (*mjór*) and *mér* does not need to lie in a footnote encrypted by editorial convention, and even if *himinjódyrr/himinjódyr* sounds strange or ridiculous to our ears, it cannot obscure the fact that the scribe wrote it down, ambiguity and all, and did not change it after revising the text. Corrections made to the text by the scribe(s) need to be disclosed and, ideally, discussed. We should revise our

77 See previous discussion about *mær*. This aspect of the myth of Baldr has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention; see, e.g., Inger M. Boberg, 'Baldr og misteltenen', *Årbogen for nordisk oldkyndighed og historie* (1943): 103–6; John Lindow, 'The Tears of the Gods: A Note on the Death of Baldr in Scandinavian Mythology', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 101 (2002): 155–69; John Lindow, *Murder and Vengeance among the Gods: Baldr in Scandinavian Mythology*, Folklore Fellows' Communications, vol. 272 (Helsinki: Suomalainen tiedeakatemia, 1997); see also Liberman, 'Some Controversial Aspects'.

78 *Völuspá*, ed. Nordal, 101–02 considers the two different kinds of understanding of Baldr's murder.

editorial practices in such a way that would make these scribal processes more clear and transparent to the readers of our editions, and not reject readings for reasons of taste, or try to bury or conceal the readings that we have rejected.

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Aðferðir skrifara og þrjár línur í *Völuspá Konungsbókar eddukvæða*.

Lykilorð: *Völuspá*, útgáfur, skrift, skrifarar, styttingar, *Konungsbók eddukvæða*.

Í greininni er fjallað um ákvarðanir útgefenda varðandi þrjár línur í *Völuspá*, eins og þær koma fyrir í *Konungsbók eddukvæða* (GKS 2365 4to, ca. 1275–1300). Það eru (1) vísuorðið ,um himinjódyr' eða ,um himinjódyr' í 5. erindi (f. 1r, l. 10), sem hægt er að lesa á hvorn veginn sem er; (2) styttingin í annarri línu í 32. erindi (f. 2r, l. 4), sem hægt er að lesa sem ,mér' eða ,mær' (sem er óvenjuleg orðmynd af lýsingarorðinu ,mjór'); og (3) leiðréttingin sem skrifari gerði sjálfur í versinu ,vörður Valhallar' í sjöundu línu 33. erindis (f. 2r, l. 7). Þessi dæmi sýna að stafsetning, lagfæringar og styttingar neyða jafnvel þann útgefanda sem leitast við að breyta sem minnstu til þess að velja á milli ólíkra leshátta sem til greina koma. Í greininni er lagt mat á ákvarðanir útgefenda sem hafa ráðið miklu um skilning fræðimanna á *Völuspá* síðustu áratugi. Færð eru rök fyrir því að fræðimenn og lesendur hafi hag af því að í útgáfum sé öllu haldið til haga sem skiptir máli fyrir textann, ákvörðunum útgefenda ekki síður en þeim gögnum sem þau byggja á.

Dr Patricia Pires Boulhosa
Department of Anglo–Saxon, Norse, and Celtic
University of Cambridge
9 West Road
Cambridge, CB3 9DP
United Kingdom
ppb21@cam.ac.uk