

**Weird and wonderful deaths: the commemoration of kings in *Ynglingatal***

1) The 'skulu + verb of dying' construction:

a meat-vat 'of viðá skyldi' [was to destroy] the king (1.8)  
a witch 'of troða skyldi' [was to tread] on the king (3.6)  
people 'of sóa skyldi' [were to sacrifice] the king (5.12)  
Hel 'kjósa skyldi' [was to chose] the king (6.8)  
a pitchfork 'of geta skyldi' [was to get] the king (8.14)  
a gallows 'of bera skyldi' [was to carry] the king (12.8)  
a witch 'of viðá skyldi' [was to destroy] the king (16.4)

the king 'temja skyldi' [was to tame] the gallows (9.10)  
the king 'of fara skyldi' [was to journey] (8.4)  
the king 'falla skyldi' [was to fall] from his horse (16.8)  
the king 'deyja skyldi' [was to die] (16.14).

Es hann sjalfr  
sínu fjörvi  
frœknu fyrstr  
of fara skyldi. (20.13-16)

The valiant man himself was to  
leave his life first.

2) Þjóðólfr ór Hvini, *Ynglingatal*, stanza 1:

Varð framgengt,  
þars Fróði bjó,  
feigðar orð,  
es at Fjölni kom;  
siklingi  
svigðis geira  
vagr vindlauss  
of viðá skyldi.

A fateful verdict came to Fjölir where Fróði  
lived: the windless sea of the ox's spears (=>  
horn => drinking horn) was to destroy the  
king.

3) Þjóðólfr ór Hvini, *Ynglingatal*, stanza 2:

En dagskjarr  
Dúrnis niðja  
salvörðuðr  
Sveigði vélti,  
þás í stein  
enn stórgeði  
Dusla konr  
ept dvergi hljóp,  
ok salr þjartr  
þeira Sökmímis  
jötunbyggðr  
við jöfri gein.

But the day-fearing kinsman of Dúrnir, the  
house-warder, tricked Sveigðir, the great-  
minded one who is in stone. Dusla's noble  
kinsman leapt after the dwarf, and Sökmími's  
shining hall, the giant-dwelling, gaped around  
the king.

4) Þjóðólfr ór Hvini, *Ynglingatal*, stanza 7:

Kveðkat dul,  
nema *Dyggva* hrør  
**Glitnis gnö**  
at **gamni hefr**,  
þvit **jódis**  
**Ulf ok Narfa**  
*konungmann*  
**kjósa skyldi**;  
ok *allvald*  
*Yngva þjóðar*  
**Loka mæ**  
of **leikinn hefr**.

I do not deny it, but Glitnir's goddess (=>  
Hel) has Dyggvi's corpse for amusement;  
therefore the sister of the wolf and Nari (=>  
Hel) was to choose the kingly man. And  
Loki's daughter (=> Hel) has the all-powerful  
king of Yngvi's people as a plaything.

5) Þjóðólfr ór Hvini, *Ynglingatal*, stanza 3:

En á vit  
Vilja bróður  
vitta véttr  
Vanlanda kom,  
þás trollkund

And a creature of witchcraft brought Vanlandi  
to Vili's brother (=> Óðinn); the trollish  
night-battle (=> valkyrie) was to tread on the

of troða skyldi  
liðs grímhildr  
ljóna bága,  
ok sá brann  
á beði Skútu  
menglotuðr,  
es mara kvaldi.

enemy of troops of men; and the necklace-  
destroyer who was tormented by the  
nightmare burned by the bank of the Skúta.

temja skyldi  
svalan hest  
Signýjar vers.

6) Þjóðólfr ór Hvini, *Ynglingatal*, stanza 16:

Þat frá k enn,  
at Aðils fjörvi  
vitta véttr  
of við a skyldi  
ok dáðgjarn  
af drasils bógum  
Freys óttungr  
falla skyldi,  
ok við aur  
ægir hjarna  
bragnings burs  
of blandinn varð,  
ok dáðsæll  
deyja skyldi  
Ála dolgr  
at Upsølum.

I also heard that a witch-being was to destroy  
Aðil's life. And Frey's bold descendant fell  
from the horse's shoulders and the brain of  
the mightiest son of Ægir (=> sea-king)  
became mixed with the mud. And the bold  
enemy of Áli died at Uppsala.

7) Þjóðólfr ór Hvini, *Ynglingatal*, stanza 9:

Þat telk undr,  
ef Agna her  
Skjalfr róð  
at sköpum þóttu,  
þás gæðing  
með gollmeni  
Loga dís  
at lopti hóf,  
hinn's við Taur

I call it a scandal if Skjalfr's plan seemed  
reasonable to Agni's army, when Logi's sister  
raised the noble chief into the air with a  
golden necklace. He was to tame the chill  
horse of Signý's husband by the Taur.

8) Þjóðólfr ór Hvini, *Ynglingatal*, stanza 22.1-4:

Þar frá hverr,  
at Halfdanar  
sökmíðlendr  
sakna skyldu.

Everyone hears that the strife-mediators felt  
the loss of Halfdan.

Þjóðólfr ór Hvini, *Ynglingatal*, stanza 24.9-12:

ok buðlung  
á Borrói  
sigrhafendr  
síðan fölu.

And the victory-having men (=> warriors)  
buried the king at Borre after that.

9) Þjóðólfr ór Hvini, *Ynglingatal*, stanza 26:

Ok niðkvísl  
í Nóregi  
þróttar Þrós  
of þróazk hafði;  
réð Áleifr  
Upsa forðum  
viðri grund  
ok Vestmari,  
[goðum glíkr,  
ok Grenlands fylki,]  
unz fótverkr  
við Foldar þröm  
virða vin  
of við a skyldi;  
liggr gunndjarfr

And the race of Þrór's strength had  
increased in Norway. Óláfr ruled a  
wide land formerly – Upsi and  
Vestmare, like the gods, and the  
district of Greenland – until foot-  
disease cut down men's friend on the  
shore of Vestfold. The battle-bold  
king of armies lies buried in a mound  
at Geirstaðir.

á Geirstóðum  
herkonungr  
haugi ausinn.

10) Þjóðólfr ór Hvini, *Ynglingatal*, stanza 27:

Þat veitk bazt  
und blóum himni  
kenninafn,  
svát konungr eigi,  
es Rognvaldr,  
reiðar stjóri,  
heiðum-hárr  
of heitinn es.

I know that under the blue skies the  
king has the best family name;  
Rognvaldr, the steerer of chariots, is  
called high-of-honours. And the  
gentle king is master of the forest.

Text taken from the *Skaldic Project Homepage*, ed. Margaret Clunies Ross et al.  
<<http://www.skaldic.arts.usyd.edu.au/db.php>>. Translations are my own.

Burial mound at Borre National Park, Horten, Norway:



<[http://www.vikingtid.no/bilder/gravhaug\\_borre.jpg](http://www.vikingtid.no/bilder/gravhaug_borre.jpg)>