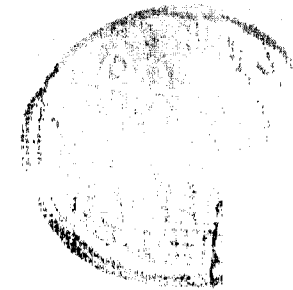


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Hun slechte gedrag tegenover ouders en anderen in de samenleving, bracht teweeg dat ze zeer weinig respect kregen en dat hun ouders zich schaamden en teleurgesteld waren in hun zonen, in het bijzonder de vaders. Maar als de kolenbijters de volwassen leeftijd bereiken, verdwijnt de *kolbitsgangr*. Vaak gebeurt dit vanwege heftige ouderkritiek. Dan treden er gedragveranderingen op en beginnen ze zich te verzorgen, dat tot een beter uiterlijk leidt en vertonen ze normaal en geaccepteerd gedrag, wat ze tot gewone, ja soms zelfs gerespecteerde leden van de samenleving maakt.

Kijkend naar het gedrag van kolenbijters, lijkt het er sterk op dat ze zich exact zo gedroegen als hedendaagse jongens (en meisjes) dat in preadolescente leeftijd doen: als pubers dus. Voor kolenbijters was het moeilijk om te gaan met alle drastische veranderingen die voorkomen in de overgang van kind naar (jong)volwassene. Vele kinderen lukte dit wel, en worden dan ook nauwelijks genoemd in de saga's, daar dit immers volkomen normaal was. Maar zij die het niet lukte snel genoeg volwassen te worden, werden gezien als afwijkend, en gedroegen zich daardoor ook zo. Vanwege de hormonale veranderingen in het lichaam van een jongen (en meisje), zagen ze niet in wat de gevolgen konden zijn van hun onbesuisdheid. Echter, als het hormonale evenwicht weer hersteld was, realiseerden de kolenbijters zich dat hun gedrag hen nu niet bepaalt tot gerespecteerde leden van de samenleving maakte. De typische pubertijdsverschijnselen verdwenen en schaamte overviel hen. Ze pasten hun gedrag aan, en werden normale, gewaardeerde mensen.

De overeenkomsten met moderne pubers zijn groot: kolenbijters hielden zich voornamelijk op rond het vuur/in de keuken – vandaar de schimpnamen *kolbitr* en *eldhúsfjfl* – evenals een deel pubers vandaag de dag zich het grootste deel van hun tijd voor tv of pc bevinden. Kolenbijters werkten niet, ze irriteerden graag andere familieleden, waren niet sociaal en riepen verachting en ergernis op, vooral bij hun ouders, die zich vaak geneerden voor een zo moeilijk kind. Andere, typisch puberale kenmerken is lelijkheid en slechte kledingsmaak, naar verhouding te lange ledematen, waarschijnlijk het gevolg van onregelmatige en sterke groei. Dit zorgde ervoor dat ze sterk afweken van het ideaalbeeld in de vikingtijd, wat ze nog meer in een marginale positie bracht. Evenals tegenwoordige pubers, hadden kolenbijters moeite met opgroeien en aanpassen in een veranderende samenleving, waartegen ze ageren met hun typisch asociale gedrag. Maar uiteindelijk verworpen kolenbijters en moderne pubers tot gewone leden van de maatschappij.

Kolbitsgangr kan dus toegeschreven worden aan hormonale veranderingen in de puberteit, die men in de vikingtijd niet voldoende wist te verklaren zoals wij dat heden ten dage kunnen. Men begreep klaarblijkelijk het hormoonstelsel en de veranderingen daarin niet voldoende, en beschouwde pubers in sommige gevallen als afwijkend, zeker als ze niet graag en moeilijk in de omgang waren. Puberteit was onverklaarbaar voor de middeleeuwer en men bestempelde pubers als afwijkend en beschimpde ze met namen als *kolbitr* en *eldhúsfjfl*. Het eenduidige en stereotypische gedrag van deze figuren is gemakkelijk te interpreteren als literair motief, en het is goed mogelijk dat het ook als zodanig werd gebruikt. Maar hieraan kan weinig anders ten grondslag liggen dan een hormonale verandering/ 'afwijking'.

De terminologie van de abortus in de vroege Middeleeuwen

Marianne Elsackers

In de Vroegmiddeleeuwse teksten over abortus, die een verschil maken tussen vroegtijdige en late abortus, worden verschillende termen gebruikt om een gevormde en een ongevormde foetus aan te duiden. Termen die we in de vroege Oudgermaanse wetten en in de Middeleeuwse boeteboeken vinden, zijn aan de orde gekomen; deze termen zijn afkomstig uit

theologische, filosofische en medische bronnen die grotendeels terug gaan op klassieke teksten. De Oudfriese embryologie die deel uitmaakt van de Oudfriese abortuswetgeving is een verrassende vertaling van de Vroegmiddeleeuwse Latijnse embryologie van Vindicianus, waarbij de geleerde Oudfriese vertaler interessante wijzigingen in de embryologische tekst heeft aangebracht.

Anthropogenesis in *Völuspá*

Kees Samplonius

In my paper I discuss the background of the imagery of *Völuspá* 17-18, and, secondly, related to this, the possible function of the stanzas in relation to the poem as a whole. Arguments are presented suggesting that the passage represents a product of medieval thinking, rather than, as generally assumed, an ancient myth about the creation of man.

The stanzas are as follows:

<p>17 Unz þriár kvómo ór því líði öflgir ok ástgir æsir at húsi, fundo á landi lítt megandi Ask ok Embla orlögláusa.</p>	<p>18 Önd þau né áttó, óð þau né höfðo, lá né læti né lito góða; önd gaf Óðinn, óð gaf Hœnir, lá gaf Lóðurr ok lito góða.</p>	<p>63 Þá kná Hœnir hlutvið* kíosa ok burir byggia broðra tveggia vinðheim víðan - vitoð ér enn, eða hvat? * v.l. hlautvið (R)</p>
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And then three came
from that group,
mighty and loving
æsir to a house
On the land they found,
of little capable
Ask and Embla,
without destiny.

Önd they had not,
Óðr they had not,
neither *lá* nor *læti*
nor good colours.
Óðinn gave *önd*,
Hœnir gave *óðr*,
Lóðurr gave *lá*
and good colours

As point of departure I take *lá* in stanza 18, for which four different interpretations have been proposed: 'vital warmth', 'hair', 'mien' and, finally, 'water close to the shore'. The first three of these must be dismissed, because evidence for it is either missing, or confined to a single occurrence that may well derive from an attempt to read meaning into the passage.

At present the word is commonly regarded as identical with the well recorded Old Norse word *lá* 'water close to the shore, wave at the shore', which in the basic sense 'liquid' constitutes the base-word of kennings denoting the mead of poetry, often extended to 'poem', i.e. the cited poem as such. Those scholars who subscribe to this identification agree that the reference must be blood, but opinions differ as to how such meaning formally can be arrived at. Three approaches can be distinguished.

1. It has been suggested that *lá* in stanza 18 constitutes an elliptic kenning for 'blood', and some scholars refer to Eyvindr skáldaspillir's *umðu oddláar í Óðins veðri*, the word *oddlá* of which they view as a blood-kenning 'sword-liquid'. There is a problem, however: elliptic kennings are conceivable only in distinctly skaldic poetry, which *Völuspá* is not, and in order to get a meaning 'blood' we need an additional qualifier.

2. Holtsmark assumes that, in using *lá*, the poet compares the rhythmic sound of the waves on the shore with the beating of the blood as it pulses through the body, but *lá*, in itself, i.e. without a verb denoting sound, has no features justifying a primary association with ‘pulse’ (as a metonymic for ‘blood’).

3. Some scholars, finally, have tried it the informal way. Finnur Jónsson thus posits a semantic sequence: “væske, livsvæsken, blodet”, without formal justification, as does, with a question mark in the glossary, Hermann Pálsson: “liquid, life’s liquid, blood”.

The difficulty of interpreting *lá* as ‘blood’ under the rules of poetic diction raises the question whether a meaning ‘liquid’ (as distinct from ‘blood’) makes sense in the context of the stanza. Some hundred years ago Hjalmar Falk pointed out a passage in Notker of St Gall’s (d. 1022) Old High German adaptation of Remigius of Auxerre’s (d. 908) commentary on Martianus Capella’s *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, where reference is made to a former belief that people had “blood from Mars, speech from Mercury, health from Jupiter, tardiness from Saturn”. Falk compared *lá* with OHG *bluot*, ON *litu goða* with OHG *heili*, and equated Saturn’s gift, *lázi* with ON *læti* (st. 18), failing to notice the different quantities of the stem-vowels. Even so, Falk was on the right track. The source of the Notker passage is ultimately Isidore of Seville, who in *De natura rerum* (III, 4) deals shortly with the influences of the planets. Of interest here is the slightly different list in Isidore’s *Etymologiae* (V, 30.8):

And the pagans gave names to the days from the seven stars because they thought that some influence was active upon themselves through the same [stars], saying that they had *spiritus* from Sol, *corpus* from Luna, *lingua* and *sapientia* (eloquence) from Mercury, *voluptas* from Venus, *sanguis* from Mars, *temperantia* from Jupiter, and *humor* (the humors) from Saturn. Such indeed was the folly of the pagans who created such ridiculous imaginations.

Isidore’s *humor* may relate to the four cardinal fluids or *humors*, which were thought to govern man’s physical and mental constitution: “According to these four humours,” Isidore says in Book IV, “the well are governed, and from them the diseases of the infirm arise”. If Saturn’s gift, *humor* ‘liquid, fluid’ gives good meaning in Isidore, there is no reason why the same would not hold good for *Völuspá* 18 *lá* ‘liquid’, especially when we observe that the other faculties bestowed by the *æsir* also have a counterpart in the influences attributed to the planets in medieval tradition. ON *önd* corresponds closely to Latin *spiritus*, and ON *óðr* resembles Mercury’s gift *ingenium et lingua*. There is accordingly a case for arguing that the imagery of *Völuspá* 17- 18 is indebted to the *Etymologiae*, or a medieval text derived from it. Special attention deserves the occurrence of the *Etymologiae* passage in the Old English *Enchiridion*, written in 1011 AD by Byrhtferth of Ramsey. Interestingly, Byrhtferth speaks, not of gentiles (Isidore: *gentiles*), but of *ure yldran* ‘our ancestors’, which shows that in early-eleventh century England the passage could in retrospect be interpreted as referring to notions current among the pagan Anglo-Saxons.

Are we to infer, then, that the three *æsir* depicted in stanzas 17-18 exert their powers as planets rather than as beach-combing gods? We are, indeed. What makes the point is *þriár*, which in both manuscripts introduces the coming of the *æsir* on the scene. The word is traditionally regarded as problematic, in that the feminine plural form seems at odds with the masculine gender of the *æsir*, who in the next line are called *öflgir* and *ástgir*. The form *þriár*, however, makes good sense when we take it as alluding to Óðinn, Hlœnir and Lóðurr in their stellar capacities. In Old Norse the planets (*stjörnur*) are of feminine gender, and predicative adjectives are governed, not by the natural gender of the antecedent pronouns, but by the grammatical gender of the predicate nouns which they define: *Hún var drengir góðr* (cf. AM 624, 4to: *Þar yfir stendr hin goða Iupiter. Hun* [sic] *er yfer Mars*). If we take *þriár*, not

as a corruption of **þriár*, but as a reference to *þriár* [*stjörnur*], with the accompanying noun unexpressed but understood, all hindrance for linking the word to the following *öflgir ok ástgir æsir* disappears.⁴ That *gefa* could be used in this way is shown by an astrological passage in AM 624, 4to: *Solin ... gefur reisugt* (good-looking) *kiot*. The interpretation derives additional support from the expression *koma at húsi* (Vsp. 17), the word *hús* of which is problematic because of the existence of a house prior to the arrival of the first humans. Kummer (1961) and others have suggested that *hús* invokes the concept of Miðgarðr as an enclosed dwelling-place, which is conceivable, but it is just as possible that *hús* denotes a part of the celestial vault considered as the seat of a particular planet. In that case *hús* translates Lat. *domus* in the sense ‘sphere/location of a planet’, making it the equivalent of Middle English *hou*: *whan the planetis intrede in-to theirre houses*. The word *hús* occurs in this sense in AM 624, 4to: ... *Saturnus. Hun byr i hæsta huse*. The astrological character of the imagery would be in neat accordance with the epithet *örlöglauss* ‘(still) without fate’, which, unaccounted for in the traditional interpretation, now receives an unexpected significance.

As to the function, if any, of the imagery (Vsp. 17-18) in relation to the rest of the poem, Marold (2003), on different grounds, recently suggested that Óðinn’s companions in *Völuspá* 18 represent antagonist ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ powers. This is an attractive thought, given that according to medieval view some planets – sun, moon, and Jupiter – were beneficent (*stellae beneficae*), while others, Venus, Saturn and Mars, were not (*stellae maleficae*). The idea would allow us to view the enigmatic reference *þá kná Hænir hlutvið* [H] *kiósa*, (Vsp. 63) as colloquial or proverbial speech for ‘then Hænir [the beneficent planet] only chooses (= destines/rules over) the fates [of the righteous]’. In the new world there is only good, evil being eliminated (or confined to Hell). It is worth noting that in describing the blissful abode of the righteous, the *Book of Revelation* (XXII, 16) refers to the presence of the morning star (*stella splendida et matutina*) as a figurative image of the lasting peace that Christ symbolizes. This may be coincidence, but the likeness illuminates the *Völuspá* passage. Perhaps we may even include *Völuspá* 19-20 into the picture. Why should the poet continue with this tree image if not to be of use to the audience? The tree is introduced in stanza 2 as *miðvið mæran* (acc.) ‘measure-tree’, a reference, possibly, to the *lignum scientiae mali et boni*, the tree of the knowledge of good and bad. If so, we might be dealing with an contrast between *Völuspá* 17-18, where new-born man is equipped with the faculties to cope with (the moral perils) of earthly life, and the poem’s concluding stanzas, describing the fates of those who stood to the test, and of those who did not (Vsp. 63-65 and 66 respectively).

Leaving this last interpretation aside as perhaps too speculative (though hardly more, I would think, than most ‘pagan’ interpretations), the fact remains that most, if not all, of the imagery of *Völuspá* 17-18 can be explained in a medieval Christian perspective, and there is accordingly no need to regard the stanzas as the reflection of an ancient pagan myth kept on ice in the poem in the centuries following the conversion.

Een paar opmerkingen bij de Oudhoogduitse versie van de *Lex Salica* Tette Hofstra

Op de in 802 of 803 ontstane redactie van de Latijnstalige *Lex Salica* (de *Lex Salica Karolina* in 70 titels) is de in een Triers handschrift fragmentarisch bewaard gebleven Oudhoogduitse (Oostfrankische) vertaling van de *Lex Salica* gebaseerd. Braune’s *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*

⁴Unclear is *ástgir* ‘loving’, for which I cannot offer an explanation. Or is the reference to the medieval concept of the planets as embedded in their respective spheres, which carried them with motions that were preserved and continued by their love of God?